Leadership Influence and Organizational Culture Influence in Private Schools: A Comparative Multiple Case Study on the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Strategic Leadership

Julia E. Tucker-Lloyd
Leadership Influence and Organizational Culture Influence in Private Schools: A Comparative Multiple Case Study on the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Strategic Leadership

By Julia Tucker-Lloyd

B.A, English, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, 1991
MA.Ed, Curriculum and Instruction, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, 1993

A Dissertation Submitted to:

The Faculty of the Graduate School of Education
of The Virginia Commonwealth University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of Doctor of Education

April 2019

Dissertation directed by

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Robin R. Hurst, Ed.D
Assistant Professor, Teaching and Learning, School of Education
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Richard, for his support and encouragement, and to my children, Marc, Nicholas, and Elizabeth, for their love and belief in me.

And

In memory of my grandfather, Matthew Tucker, my first encourager on this educational journey who taught be to believe in myself and to keep moving forward. Kiki, I miss you and I will keep moving forward.
Acknowledgments

There is a crowd of people in my life who led me to begin this educational marathon and finish every step. I know as well that it was God who led me to this research and stayed with me each step. I would also like to thank James Gaines, Pat Bowers, Katie Butler, Jennifer Miller, Lorie Williams, Dr. Bruce Hunter, Andrea Woodard, Chuck Ward, Dr. Marie Teodori and Dr. Mac Grogan, colleagues from four different organizational cultures in the course of my professional life, who encouraged me to complete my doctoral studies in the scholarship areas for which I am passionate. I would like to give particular thanks to Katie Butler, who encouraged me to speak with Dr. Carter at Virginia Commonwealth University when Curriculum and Instruction at another institution just didn’t seem to fit for me any longer, after it had been such a great fit for my master’s program. Pursuing a doctoral degree that engaged me in adult learning, e-learning, organizational culture and leadership brought me to a place of excitement and engagement and helped me become retroactively fascinated with organizational cultures with which I’d been a part and the dynamics of organizational culture. Thank you, Katie Butler, for encouraging me to get a “second opinion” on my scholarly pursuits. It has made all the difference in the world.

The Urban Services Leadership Program in Adult Learning has been a surprise and delight. I have been able to engage with scholars with a vast array of experiences from all different walks of life. I have a special gratitude for Irene Lubker, Rena, who has been my conference buddy, my study partner for exams, and my encourager when I felt like I wasn’t moving forward fast enough.
I want to thank the faculty and staff at the School of Education for their support and direction. I want to recognize Dr. James McMillan, who not only helped me understand qualitative and quantitative research, but also helped me understand the powerful excitement involved in well-designed research. I learned this from the two research courses that Dr. McMillan taught in my program of studies. Dr. McMillan, thank you for asking tough and meaningful questions in every course. The tough and meaningful ones are the most encouraging in the end. Thank you to Dr. Kurt Stemhagen who helped me look less linearly as I tried to determine my area of focus. Most importantly, I want to thank Dr. Robin Hurst for her unflagging engagement with me in my studies. There are so many courses that compete to be "my favorite," -- Groups and Teams, Organizational Culture and Learning, and Seminal Readings. More importantly, these courses for jumping off points for me into the field of HRD and Adult Learning as you consistently encouraged me to be an active member of AHRD and AAACE and engage in those conferences deeply as a scholar-practitioner. These organizations were intersections for business and education, scholarship and practice, and they sharpened my sense of my field and my ability to be a contributor to the fields. Thank you for providing that wonderful intersection between the classroom experience, the conference experience, and that of the scholar-practitioner.

I want to thank my committee for not giving up on me in the stops and starts that this study has undergone. Thank you for understanding the strained balance between life and work as I worked through my dissertation. I could not have done this without your guidance and encouragement; after my prospectus hearing your feedback stimulated new excitement in me about my study. Your comments brought into focus those areas for which I was myopic initially in my conceptual framework. Dr. McMillan, you pushed me to produce more effective writing
and more solid research design; plus, you pulled the reins on me when I needed to scale back my design to finish my degree. Dr. Reina, you pushed me to look outside of the field of education and push confidently into business research. Dr. Driver, you encouraged me as an educational leader about the relevance of what I was studying. Dr. Hurst, your timely and detailed response to my writing and willingness to share examples when I just needed to see structure in format made you the most effective coach I’ve ever had.

Personally, I want to thank my extended family and friends for supporting me and encouraging me even though it impacted time we could share together. To my parents, Brenda and Rick Tucker, and to my sisters and their families, Janet Fisher and Amanda Team -- I appreciate that you always thought I could do this, reminded me to take periods of rest as needed, and reminded me of the celebration we would have upon completion. Vicki Warren, Sally Chewning, and Mary Damon -- I have missed running with you regularly and I appreciate your support of my endeavor. Sue Manahan, your encouragement and prayerful support were the glue that held me together at key moments.

Lastly, my children, Marc, Nicholas, and Elizabeth thought it was awesome that Mom was pursuing a doctorate and simply took for granted that I would one day be done, even when I doubted it myself. Thank you for the moments when you came into my study to check on me. My very special thanks to my husband, Richard, who provided financial and emotional support and invested in me when he invested these resources. I know that I would not have been able to do this without you all.
Abstract of Dissertation

Leadership Influence and Organizational Culture Influence in Private Schools: A Comparative Multiple Case Study on the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Strategic Leadership

The top leader of an organization influences the organizational culture, and the organizational culture influences the leader. Strategic thinking on the part of the leader is a result of organizational culture and/or will impact organizational culture. This qualitative study is a comparative multiple-case study that examines the relationship between leaders and organizational culture and what the leader’s strategic decision-making and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between leadership and organizational culture. The organizational context of private schools is used to better understand the dynamics between leadership and organizational culture.

This study uses an interview protocol with CEOs of private schools, a macroculture in the United States, to solicit the leaders’ perspectives on their school’s organizational culture and their perspectives on the specific strategic decisions made by those leaders in the context of that organizational culture.

This study focuses on six different schools in Virginia, all approved through accrediting procedures by the Virginia Council for Private Education -- a shared organizational context. Individual focal points for data collection and analysis include individual school websites, published school documents, and required accreditation documents as well as structured interviews with the CEOs of each school. This study examines the cycle of influence that the
leader has on the organization through strategic thinking and the influence that the organizational culture has on the leader.

Three findings expressed how the leader influences the organizational culture. There were also three findings on how the organizational culture influences the leaders. Two additional findings are on what change indicates about the relationship between the leader and the organizational culture. These findings reveal that a focus on relationships in the school, a willingness to target specific growth for the individual school, and goals that were expressed spiritually as well as academically are key to the leaders. The study also found that the school cultures identified strongly and positively with that of being a family, spiritual focus operationally distinguishes the school cultures, and spiritual identity is also expressed as the relationship the school has to church. Two findings were identified relating to strategic decisions and change; these findings were that evidence of change should be visible and explicit within the organization and organizational change relates directly to focus for growth from the leader.

These findings from this study support the conclusions that 1) Christian school leaders have a direct influence on the values and direction of the school’s organizational culture; 2) the Christian school’s organizational identity has a direct influence on the focus of the leader, and 3) changes targeted in Christian schools reflect the focus of the leader on growth. Findings from this research suggest that organizational culture is highly contextualized and as a result strategic thinking and decision-making on the part of the leader are also highly contextualized. Contextualization increases as the leader seeks to grow the organization or to change the organization. Understanding contextualization that exists, and how organizational culture changes as strategic decisions are made by the leader, has implications for further research in effective leadership, effective change, strategic thinking, and growing effective organizational
cultures including private and public institutions of higher education and public and private corporate institution.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ii  
Abstract of Dissertation vi  
List of Figures xi  
List of Tables xii

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*Organizational Context: Stage, Identity and Culture*  
*Organizational Processes: Strategic Decisions and Changes*  
*Leadership: Models and Characteristics*  
Problem Statement 11  
Purpose and Research Questions 13  
Significance of Study 14  
Overview of Methodology 19  
Limitations of Study 23  
Delimitations of the Study 25  
Definition of Key Terms 26  
Summary 28

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

*Organizational Context: Stage, Identity and Culture* 30  
*Organizational Processes: Strategic Decision-Making and Organizational Change* 40  
*Leadership: Models and Characteristics* 44  
Strategic Leadership 52  
Private School Leadership 56  
Summary 61

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions 64  
Research Method 65  
Research Sites and Populations 68  
Data Collection Methods 71  
Data Analysis 77  
Trustworthiness 79  
Human Subjects and Ethical Considerations 80  
Summary 81

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Organizational Context 82
List of Figures

FIGURE 1.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .................................................. 16
FIGURE 3.1 COLLECTED STUDY DATA BY SITE ..................................... 73
FIGURE 4.1 DATA STRUCTURE: BLUE RIVER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ............... 101
FIGURE 4.2 DATA STRUCTURE: ORANGE GROVE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY .......... 109
FIGURE 4.3 DATA STRUCTURE: LAKEVIEW CHRISTIAN ACADEMY ............... 116
FIGURE 4.4 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP: COMPARISON OF THEMES ........................................................................................................ 125
FIGURE 4.5 STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND CHANGE: COMPARISON OF THEMES ........................................................................................................ 129
List of Tables

TABLE 2.1 GRENIER’S ORGANIZATIONAL STAGES 32
TABLE 2.2 SCHEIN’S ORGANIZATIONAL STAGES 33
TABLE 2.3 MARTIN’S ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES 37
TABLE 2.4 SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE LITERATURE 40
TABLE 2.5 KOTTER’S EIGHT STEPS FOR CHANGE 42
TABLE 2.6 FULLER’S THEMES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE 43
TABLE 2.7 SCHEIN’S EMBEDDING MECHANISMS 50
TABLE 2.8 GOLEMAN’S SIX STYLES OF LEADERSHIP 52
TABLE 2.9 SUMMARY - LEADERSHIP LITERATURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE 56
TABLE 3.1 PILOT STUDY OBSERVATIONS 74
TABLE 3.2 LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS AT CRYSTAL LAKE LEARNING ACADEMY 75
TABLE 3.3 THEMES FROM ARTIFACT ANALYSIS AT CRYSTAL LAKE LEARNING ACADEMY 75
TABLE 3.4 DATA COLLECTION MATRIX 78
TABLE 4.1 BRCS LEADERSHIP INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE 101
TABLE 4.2 OGCA LEADERSHIP INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE 109
TABLE 4.3 LCA LEADERSHIP INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE 124
TABLE 4.4 BRCS ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES ON LEADER 127
TABLE 4.5 OGCA ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES ON LEADER 128
TABLE 4.6 LCA ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES ON LEADER 128
TABLE 4.7 BRCS STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE 131
TABLE 4.8 OGCA STRATEGIC DECISIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE 132
TABLE 4.9 LCA ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES ON LEADER 132
TABLE 4.10 COMPARISON OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS 133
TABLE 5.1 FINDINGS AND RELATED THEMES 140
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) cites that in 2012 there were 30,861 private schools in the United States, serving 5.3 million students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 (PK-12). Private schools thus account for 24 percent of the nation's schools and enroll 10 percent of all PK-12 students. Most private school students (80 percent) attend religiously-affiliated schools. CAPE also reports that school choice is about parents matching their expectations of what a school should be with actual schools, and that this is a source of satisfaction (Retrieved June 27, 2016, from www.capenet.org). With the appointment of Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education in January of 2017, the potential for an increase in school choice through private schools has gained even more public attention due to her advocacy for school choice. In her first public address as Secretary of Education in February of 2017, which was held at the Brookings Institute, Ms. De Vos stated in her address:

Our nation’s commitment is to provide a quality education to every child to serve the greater public, common good. Accordingly, we must shift the paradigm to think about education funding as investments made in individual children, not in institutions or buildings (Green, 2017, para 3).

The financial investment of which she speaks at the time of this address includes $168 million in spending on charter schools and $250 million for providing families with vouchers to use at private schools (Green, 2017). Kane (1991) supports that there are organizational characteristics that culturally distinguish private schools from public schools that include the elements of self-governance, self-support, self-defined curriculum, self-selected students and faculty, and small size. Turan and Becktas (2013) propose that in educational institutions, particularly in schools, it is critical that there is a creation of a common culture that depends on the presence and the
cohesiveness of a group of people who interact with one another. Additionally, all stakeholders need to engage in this common culture; leaders are responsible for the association that employees have with school culture (Turan & Bektas, 2013).

The purpose of this study is to examine the context of private school culture and private school leadership within that culture because this context has not been examined in the literature thus far. Although the relationship between organizational culture and leadership has been deemed as important by both scholars and practitioners in many of these studies (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Cetin & Kinik, 2014; Schein, 2010; Turkas & Bektas, 2013; Whetton & Cameron, 2005) the study of the relationship between leadership and organizational culture within the context of private school leadership and private school culture does not appear to be present in the literature except from the perspective of teachers (Cetin & Kinik, 2014). The culture of a group is defined as a “pattern of basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration and taught new members how to think, feel, and relate to problems presented” (Schein, 2010, p.6). Nations, ethnic groups, religious groups and other social units such as global occupations where members are trained in the same way to the same skillset and values are considered macro cultures (Schein, 2010). The term organizational culture differentiates the overall culture of the organization from that of individuals who have values, preferences, or tendencies; the term organizational culture also differentiates from that of society and language norms and philosophies of a nation (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). The other three categories of culture, according to Schein (2010), that are in operation with groups of people include specific organizational culture and subcultures, or groups within organizations, and micro cultures (or microsystems) with or within organizations.
According to Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003), who conducted a study involving interviews with administrators and teachers from 21 public, private, charter, contract, and magnet schools in four cities in four states, the organizational cultural context within which school leaders effectively lead schools is critical. The conclusions Portin, et al., (2003) discovered about individual school leadership within a school culture are that: (1) the leader’s basic job is to diagnose the school’s particular needs and decide how to meet them; (2) leadership is needed in seven key areas: instructional, cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external and micropolitical; (3) leaders must insure that leadership happens from others; (4) the governance structure of a school affects how leadership is performed; and (5) leaders learn by doing and acquire skills on the job in the context of their particular organizational culture. Additionally, there is an intimate and important connection at work between organizational culture and leadership:

The connection between culture and leadership is clearest in organizational cultures and microcultures. What we end up calling a culture in such systems is usually the result of the embedding of what a founder or leader has imposed on a group that has worked out. In this sense, culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders (Schein, 2010, p. 3).

When Whetten and Cameron (2005) interviewed over 400 individuals named by top executives to determine what critical skills they possessed that characterized effective leadership in their organizations, they were able to identify a list of 40 skills that effective managerial leaders possessed that contributed to effective organizations, which supports what Drucker (1967) said about executives, “Effective executives differ widely in their personalities, strengths, weaknesses, values and beliefs. All they have in common is that they get the right things done” (, p. 7). However, Whetten and Cameron (2005) attempt to enumerate and make visible those
differences in terms of skills on the part of leadership. Stephen Covey (1992) wrote a national best-seller about the eight traits of effective leaders, whom he calls, “principle-centered leaders” (p. 33). What this best-seller about general leadership principles fails to capture, however, is the context of organizational culture within which a leader operates or the differing skills of executives as these relate to individual organizational cultures. Cameron and Quinn (2006) clustered the skills identified by Whetten and Cameron (2005) into competency categories that they called the Competing Values Framework so that skills on the part of leaders provided categories that fit into each of following culture quadrants: Clan culture, adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture, and market culture. Internal focus and integration are organizational culture values in juxtaposition and in competition with external focus and differentiation; flexibility and discretion are culture values in juxtaposition and in competition with stability and control – hence, cultures are shaped by the push-and-pull competing values and the skills sets leaders demonstrate within those cultures. Cameron and Quinn (2005) acknowledge that their perspective lies in an integrationist view (Martin, 1992) and that the power of culture “lies in its ability to bring people together, to overcome the fragmentation and ambiguity that characterize the external environment, and to lead toward extraordinary success when their competitors struggle” (Cameron & Quinn, 2005, p. 61). Martin (1992) argues that three perspectives of culture can be considered legitimate: integration (culture holds people together), differentiation (culture is riddled with conflicts of interest and consensus is not possible), and fragmentation (culture is unknowable and describes the nature of the organization only).

The lion’s share of research regarding the relationship between leadership and organizational culture in the literature is examined within the corporate organizational culture with corporate leaders (Alvesson, 2011; Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Schein, 2010; Tohidi &
Jabbari, 2012; Whetton & Cameron, 2005). Turan and Bektas (2013) examine the relationship between leadership and culture within the specific context of leadership practices within an educational setting and specifically within individual primary school cultures. Using a correlational study design, their study focused specifically on perceptions of teachers in primary education; positive and significant relationships were found between the scores of school culture and leadership practices of teachers in primary education. Turan and Bektas (2013) support that the formation of an organizational culture is a complex process that includes variables such as socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology and influence; Turan and Bektas (2013) also place a particular emphasis on the importance of context in schools because they see schools as products of the cultural paradigm of the society in which the school exists. For this reason, Turan and Bektas (2013) conclude by recommending that those future studies consider a qualitative investigation of exemplary school culture and leadership practices and that those be completed within the specific context of socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology and influence. Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) assert that leadership discussions are dominated by Western and intellectual frameworks and that additional lenses focusing on theories and method of administration and organization throughout the world should be examined. Cetin and Kinik (2014) explore within school organizational cultures the leadership responsibilities that are necessary for forming what they call a purposeful community: culture, ideals and beliefs, communication, visibility, relationships, situational awareness and affirmation. Like Schein (2010), Cetin and Kinik (2014) assert that the leader has a critical responsibility in forming the organizational culture as a purposeful community. The study by Cetin and Kinik (2014) examines the balanced leadership framework that creates a purposeful community through examining teacher perceptions of leadership impacts on student success.
To reiterate, this study seeks to examine the context of private school culture and private school leadership within that culture because this context has not been examined in the literature thus far. Although the relationship between organizational culture and leadership has been deemed as important by both scholars and practitioners in many of these studies (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Cetin & Kinik, 2014; Schein, 2010; Turkas & Bektas, 2013; Whetton & Cameron, 2005), the study of the relationship between leadership and organizational culture within the context of private school leadership and private school culture does not appear to be present in the literature except from the perspective of teachers (Cetin & Kinik, 2014). Again, Turkas and Bektas (2013) cite the need for qualitative research within the context of organizational culture of schools regarding leadership because this may help us understand organizational culture and leadership better broadly as a society. This echoes the broader perspective of Schein (2010) when he writes in Organizational Culture and Leadership, “If we understand culture better, we will understand ourselves better and recognize some of the forces acting within us that define who we are” (p. 9).

Organizational Context: Stage, Identity and Culture

Grenier (1997) indicates that the stage of an organization disrupts the culture at regular and predictable actions and reactions, or cycles and responses. There are five key dimensions that provide context for an organization that leaders need to consider as they impact the organizational culture. According to Grenier (1997) these dimensions are age, size, stage of evolution, stage of revolution, and growth rate of the industry. Schein (2010) associates the stages of the organization with seasons of change: founding/early growth and incremental change, midlife and systemic change with infusion of outsiders, and maturity/decline with large
change including mergers, acquisitions and even rebirth. However, despite these stages and changes, Albert and Whetten (1985) and Whetten (2006) describe organizational identity as attributes that are central, enduring and distinctive to an organization; without a central attribute; the history of the organization would be different without this organizational culture or it would not have any history. Organizational identity comes from a need for a situated sense of self in order to interact with others long-term (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000). There is a reciprocal relationship between image and identity, making identity a fluid concept that allows for adaptation to change (Corley, Gioia, & Schultz, 2000). The complexity of identity is complex as a result of interactions among stakeholders (Lane & Scott, 2000). Identity makes organizational life possible because it is externally shared and negotiated as well as internalized among the collective of the organization (Ellemers & Haslam 2003). Organizations need to define their identity as that of a bridge between the external position of the organization as well as internal meanings formed within the organizational culture (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Schein (2010) suggests that while culture is an abstraction, if we do not understand the operation of the forces that are a result of culture then the organization and the leadership can fall victim to these forces. Alvesson (2011) suggests that to understand leadership in an organization, one must understand the social context in which leadership occurs. Hatch (1993) argues this context is dynamic, rather than static, and includes processes of realization, symbolization, interpretation and manifestation. “Cultural dynamics doesn’t undermine Schein’s interests; it reaches beyond them to a more complex, process-based understanding or organizational culture” (Hatch, 1993, p. 661). Martin (2001) acknowledges that the range of scholarly assumptions about organizational culture is broad and diverse and that culture crosses both disciplinary and methodological boundaries. In perspective on organizational culture, Martin (1992) offers three to consider:
integration where there is organizational consensus, differentiation where consensus only occurs in subcultures, and fragmentation where no stable consensus exists. This study considers organizational culture from the perspective of integration and consensus on organizational culture.

Organizational Processes: Strategic Decisions and Changes

An organization’s performance is dependent on the ability to adjust the approach to leading strategically with internal and external circumstances; the organization may benefit from the several forms of strategic leadership operating simultaneously within the organization that depend on the specific leadership role assumed (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016). “One of the many functions of strategic leadership in an organization is effectively mobilizing available human and social capital in the firm” (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016, p. 31.) Cameron and Quinn (2006) explain the core dimensions of culture so that leaders understand culture forms as leaders make strategic decisions for organizational change and leaders can understand the relationship between individual change, particularly that of leaders, as it relates to organizational change. Cameron and Quinn (2006) also recognize the universal need for culture change in organizations in response to the global shift from an industrial-age economy to an information-age economy and that organizational improvement is dependent on organizational culture change; they also recognize that their approach to diagnosing culture and changing culture is just one of many in the literature. Organizational change is inevitable in an organization and change is a process of management by leaders of an organization; Except for Lewin’s work (1947), the literature on organizational change reflects a direct relationship to leadership behaviors (Fullen, 2011; Grenier, 1997; Kotter, 1996; Lewin, 1947). Schein (2010) recommends that change goals be focused strategically on solving concrete problems and that culture assessment should follow
identification of those problems; culture assessment should not precede assessment of problems within the organization. When faced with strategic decisions involving change, leaders will inject their own experiences, personalities and preferences into the situation in order to figure out what to do; additionally, the strategic situation within the context of the organizational culture consists of facts, trends, and events that are internal and external to the organization and contributes to the strategic choices on the part of the leaders of the organization (Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2019). Marquardt (2005) proposes that leaders universally find the right solutions to organizational problems, which Schein (2010) says must occur before organizational culture is assessed, when leaders look for the right solutions by knowing what to ask in terms of organizational problems and promoting a questioning culture within the organization.

**Leadership: Models and Characteristics**

Most organizations in business field invest heavily in leadership development, and leader development is often the largest expense item in the overall development budget within and outside of the United States (Arcdichvili, Manderscheind, & Natt och Dag, 2016). Global leadership competencies encompass personality traits, knowledge, skills and behaviors, and there is an ongoing need to synthesize empirical studies to help practitioners successfully select and groom global leaders in the context of their strategic management objectives (Alagaraja, Cumberland, Herd, & Kerrick, 2016). There is a difference between management and leadership as these are distinguished by the relationship that leadership has with culture. Leaders are concerned about environment and context of culture and managers are not (Jabbar & Tohidi, 2012). While Schein (2010) suggests that the best way to understand culture and leadership is to consider how they are entwined, Wilderom, van den Berg, and Wiersma (2012) found that organizational culture and the charisma of leadership were significantly related to perceived
performance. Azana and Molero (2013) speak to the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational outcomes, while Manderscheid and Harrower (2016) discuss the polarities that leaders recognize in order to adjust to situations and that a certain mindfulness about these priorities and the resulting tension speaks to the consciousness of the leader and what the leader pays attention to; this tension is akin to Schein’s (2010) six embedding mechanisms of leaders. The leader’s internal focus affects the external environment as a part of organizational changes; strategic thinking is a result of the internal context of the leader and the external context of the organizational culture (Yegenah, 2016; Kinsler, 2014; Schein, 2010). Understanding the internal focus of a leader has universal application across macro cultures: medicine, healthcare, public health, legal services, education and business; this also has applications as well for understanding leadership development in those macro cultures (Santorelli, 2011). The style of leadership that one employs is almost synonymous with results that a leader can achieve strategically within the organization, according to the literature (Boyatzis, Goleman, & McKee, 2002; Finkelstein et al., 2009). There are different streams of research on leadership theory, of which Boal and Hooijberg (2001) place into three streams: strategic leadership theory, new leadership theories (charismatic, transformational, and visionary) and emergent theories (behavioral theory, cognitive complexity, social intelligence). Boal and Hooijberg (2001) believe these are all integrated into the essence of strategic leadership. Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2016) examine the role that charismatic, transformational and transactional leaders have on organizational strategy and specific acts of decision-making. The GLOBE theoretical model integrates culture, leadership, and organizational effectiveness and asserts that attributes that differentiate culture also differentiate what effective organizational practices and leadership behaviors are effective (House, Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, & de Luque, 2013).
Problem Statement

The importance of the relationship between organizational culture and leadership has only been examined minimally within educational organizations. The importance of the relationship between organizational culture and leadership has been even more minimally examined within private educational institutions. This becomes a potential barrier to understanding how educational leaders and educational organizations can be more effective. As Turan and Bektas (2013) point out, more qualitative research is needed within the context of the organizational culture of specific schools. This is exactly what this study proposes to do. This study qualitatively examines the relationship between organizational culture and leadership within the context of specific schools.

According to Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach (2003), the core of a leader’s job within a school’s organizational culture is to diagnose the needs of that organization and respond within the organizational context of resources and talents. The job of the leader is to make strategic decisions about how to meet the instructional, cultural, managerial, human resource, development and micro-political needs. This is true whether the educational institution is public or private). Not every school needs the same kind of leadership; a school’s needs and resources change over the life cycle of the school, the demands on leadership change (Portin, et al., 2003). The demands of the private school organizational culture include recruiting and retaining stakeholders (students and parents) and managing business responsibilities that include extensive marketing. For new leaders in new schools, the demands may also include acquiring and retaining capital resources, including adequate facilities, and experienced leaders in private schools may face managing growth (Portin, et al., 2003). “In the great scheme of things, schools may be relatively small organizations, but their leadership challenges are far from simple”
(Gundlach, 2003, p. i). Given the number of private schools just within the United States—i.e., 24 percent of the nation's schools and 10 percent of all PK-12 students--there are insufficient empirical studies that focus on the organizational cultures of private schools (Retrieved January 9, 2018, from www.capenet.org). Also, the Council for American Private Education reports that school choice is about parents matching their expectations of what a school should be with actual schools, and that this is a source of satisfaction, which indicates that parents as stakeholder are identifying and being drawn to a particular type of organizational culture within a particular private school setting and perhaps under specific school leadership (Retrieved January 9, 2018, from www.capenet.org/). However, there are an insufficient number of studies on school leadership in private school settings particularly this it relates to the relationship between leadership and organizational culture.

The debate over school choice and private education is not a new debate. For example, Spring (2018) has updated a now tenth edition on a study of American schools from the Puritan era to the Trump era and includes discussion on a variety of interpretations on the right and left sides of the political spectrum. Spring (2018) looks at the religious traditions in American schools as well as connecting traditional fundamentalist religious ideals and the twentieth century free market arguments from the Chicago school of economists to Trump. This is what Spring (2018) refers to as the Alt-Right. Levin (2018) continues to ask the question about the efficacy of moving education from the public to the private sector in the newest edition of his collection of essays of authors who examine the efforts of educators, reformers, politicians, and investors. This volume is the result of a conference that took place at Columbia University’s Teacher’s College; this resulted in the formation of the National Study for the Privatization in Education. The focus of these essays is to answer whether the school marketplace can deliver
social cohesion, efficiency, choice, equity, etc. These two volumes, Spring (2018) and Levin (2018) speak representatively to the volume of literature that questions the organizational culture of private schools, and perhaps particularly private religious schools. Understanding the relationship between leadership and organizational culture within the context of private schools may very well add to the body of literature regarding organizational culture and leadership broadly, but it will provide insight into the debate about whether the private sector education can deliver the social cohesion, efficiency, choice, and equity as Levin (2018) asks.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the relationship between leadership and organizational culture within the context of schools, specifically private schools. As a nation, the Census Bureau compiles data on spending per pupil by state for public education annually and reports that while significant variance exists across states because of factors such as cost of living, student demographics, and class sizes, the most recent data reports that an average of $11,362.00 is spent on public education per student (“Education Spending Per Student by State,” 2018, para. 2). The study of the relationship between leadership and organizational culture may provide insights for both private and public schools as well as contribute to the research about school choice.

The research questions that emerge from the current literature are as follows:

1. How does a leader influence an organizational culture?
2. How does an organizational culture influence a leader?
3. What do a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture?
Strategic decisions are often the result of a response to needed organizational change and impact both the organizational culture and the leadership within that organizational culture. Cameron and Quinn (2006) reflect on the multiple studies that focus on highly effective executives within organizations. From this study, Cameron and Quinn distinguish (2006) leadership skills and competencies that led to developing their Competing Values Framework and critical competencies of leaders. However, the literature does not reflect this application within educational settings or private educational settings. Portin et al., (2003) specifically examine the leadership role of a principal across a sample of private, traditional public, magnet, and charter schools. These schools were categorized as traditional public, independent, and entrepreneurial schools to reflect the funding streams that each type of school used, but across types after the extensive interviews with school leaders the authors concluded that, “In every school visited during this study, the leader had to understand their particular school’s goals and commitments, make everyday decisions in light of them, and create a strategy for balancing conflicting demands,” (Portin et al., 2003, p. 14). This study will focus on the leaders’ understanding of the organizational culture of the school and the decisions they make strategically to balance demands and bring change to the organizational culture.

**Significance of Study**

This study focused on what Schein (2010) and Cameron and Quinn (2006) did not. This study looks at the relationship between leadership and organizational culture - within an *academic* macro culture, or educational institutions. Schein (2010) and Cameron and Quinn (2006) focused their studies of organizational culture in corporate settings predominantly. Like Schein, this study looks at private schools as Schein did the organizational cultures in the private sector, as “corporate culture.” This study thus represents a meaningful addition to Schein’s
already robust work in the relationship between leadership and organizational culture based on his extensive study and experiences in corporate culture. However, this study doesn’t only address a different macro culture alone. It also addresses the age and stage of an organization, as organizational change may be a factor in the strategic decision-making of the leader (Greiner, 1997; Kotter; 1996; Lunenberg, 2010).

This study goes further than Schein (2010) in that it specifically examines the context of dynamic culture (Hatch, 1993) and the strategic decision-making that leaders express through embedding mechanisms (Schein, 2010) and leadership models and characteristics (Ardihvili et al, 2016; Cumberland et al, 2016; Finkelstein, 2009; Goleman, 2000; House et al, 2013; Kinsler, 2014; Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016; Turan & Bektas, 2013; Yeganeh & Good, 2016). This study also considers the view of Alversson (2011); local shared meanings are associated with the context of leadership relations and acts. The context of the role of the private school leader is to be strategically expressed most succinctly as this: the leader’s basic job is to diagnose the school’s needs and decide how to meet them (Portin, Schneider, et al., 2003). As Turan & Bektas (2013) recommend, this is also a qualitative study that addresses the local shared meanings through the specific context of socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology, and influence. Unlike the work of Cetin & Kinik (2014), which focuses in a qualitative study about the perceptions of teachers of leadership impacts on student outcomes, this study instead focuses on directly on the leaders themselves and their perceptions of how they impact their specific organizational culture. This study focuses on and how specific organizational culture impacts leaders through the decisions they consider strategic and conducive to change. This study will add to the body of literature on leadership and organizational culture as well as to research that focuses specifically on private school leadership and private school culture by
examining leadership perceptions of the specific organizational culture that influences specific decisions on the part of that educational leader. The focus is on the relationship between the leader and the organizational culture. This study also acknowledges the concept of the authentic leader, as Azanza & Molero (2013) do, as the leader that must be examined within the specific organizational culture in which the leader operates.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual theoretical framework for this study is based on the work of Schein (2010) and Hatch (1993) regarding organizational culture and the dynamics of organizational culture, as well as their work related to organizational stages and ages. The theoretical framework also includes what leaders do to influence culture (Schein, 2010; Kriger & Zhovtobruyukh, 2016) as well as how leaders influence organizational change (Schein, 2010). This conceptual framework is based predominantly on an integrationist perspective that culture is what brings an organization together, like the glue of the organization (Martin, 1992). Specifically, Hatch adds significantly to Schein’s framework by adding symbolization. Schein (2010) treats culture as a static process that involves making connections between artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. Hatch (1993) presents a more complex description of organizational culture in the articulation that there are forward and backward processes; the same process could drive stability as well as change. While organizational culture manifestation to Hatch (1993) connects to assumptions and recognized values (Schein, 2010), it is critical to note that manifestation is both proactive and retroactive. In other words, proactive manifestation drives values that inform actions and experiences; retroactive manifestation is reflection and interpretation. To Hatch (1993) there are also
realization processes within organizational culture that are also both proactive and reactive by transforming values into artifacts; however, reactive processes transform the value from the proactive version of the value in that organizational culture. Also included in this framework is the theory that organizational behavior is person-oriented and that the characteristics of people define an organization (Goldstiein, Schneider, & Smith, 1995). The identity of an organization is defined by the people in the organization over time as a result of the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) cycle, and founders and top managers have long-term effects on the organization as a result of this natural cycle (Schneider et al., 1995). In other words, the leadership of an organization over time will affect the organizational culture and identity and change the organization. Notably, this theory (Schneider et al., 1995) also suggests that organizations can become homogeneous over time. Like-minded people attract and select like-minded people with an attrition of those who are not like-minded. This finding indicates that the need for organizational change and change in leadership may be influenced by the organizational age and stage (Schein, 2010).

Leaders are charged with navigating the natural processes of change (Schein, 2010). The conceptual framework for this study is also based on three organizational stages by Schein (2010): founding and early growth, midlife, and maturity and decline. The conceptual model for organizational change implicit in the relationship between organizational culture and leadership is that stage one involves creating the motivation to change, stage two includes learning new concepts or new meanings of old concepts and stage three is the internalization of new concepts, meanings and standards (Bennis & Schein, 1965). Figure 1 below represents graphically the convergence of these theories into a conceptual framework.
The models/characteristic a leader employs influences the processes of decision and change which affect the stage and culture of the organization, which may influence the leader. Organizational context is, operationally, dynamic always.
Overview of Methodology

This qualitative study utilizes a multiple-case comparative study to explore the relationship between leadership and organizational culture. Qualitative study is most appropriate for this study on the strategic decisions a leader makes within an organizational culture of a private school because of the nature of organizational culture, which can be described accurately as a “single bounded unit” (Merriam, 2009). According to Maxwell (2012), qualitative research is meant to help you understand better the meanings and perspectives of the people studied; in this study, the focus is on the meanings and perspectives of private school leaders. Additionally, Maxwell (2012) defines qualitative research as research that examines how these perspectives of individuals are formed by physical, social and cultural contexts as well as how those perspectives, in turn, contribute to shaping physical, social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research of this nature relies on textual and visual data to accomplish understanding these perspectives but also to understand specific processes (like strategic decision-making) that are involved in maintaining or altering the relationship between perspective and physical, social, and cultural contexts (Maxwell, 2012). The multiple-case comparative study of three schools and six individual leaders (two from each school) allows for an in-depth examination of a process and related situations that surround the issue being investigated in three separate cases studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The aim of this qualitative comparative case study focuses on the relationship between leadership and organizational culture within a private school culture. This comparative case is one in which the researcher is studying the phenomenon of the leader of three private schools to determine the answers to the research questions. Because this is a multiple case research study, the researcher can be receptive to local idiosyncrasies, but cross-
case comparability may be harder to get unless factors such as type of school and state of school locations are considered in the study design (Miles, et al., 2014). In addition to the leadership interviews based on the researcher-designed interview tool for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E) based on questions around organizational context, organizational processes, and leadership of each organizational culture in each private school, a descriptive analysis provides detail regarding the organizational context, organizational processes, and leadership of each organization based on the analysis of each organization’s promotional/tour documents, website, and accreditation documents through researcher-designed tools (see Appendix). Also, descriptive analysis is provided by the researcher observations during a scheduled on-site tour of the school. As a qualitative comparative case study, this research reflects the characteristics typical of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). The data will be collected in the natural setting, which is in this case on the school site itself. The researcher is the key instrument for gathering information through interviewing the leadership (CEO) of a private educational institution, and by observing the behavior and actions of the CEO and analyzing documents provided by the CEO, including the school website, thereby using multiple sources of data. The data analysis is inductive, building themes as a result of working back and forth between the themes and database until the set of themes is comprehensive. The study is collaborative with the subjects so that they have a chance to comment and member-check the themes that emerge from the process.

In-depth studies of a single entity may raise concerns in terms of generalizability of the findings (McMillan, 2012). In this study the researcher attempts to find not just one typical case to study, but several in order to be able to better generalize to a larger group or in other situations. In this study, the researcher implements a multi-case, or collective; several different independent entities are studied (McMillan, 2012). This study also benefits from a pilot study in
which all the tools and artifacts developed and determined by the researcher are analyzed for efficacy as well as for adjustments for to the scope of questions and sequence of study of artifacts as needed. During the pilot, the researcher performed all the procedures as planned, including member-checking, and uses this as feedback for adjustment for the study.

The worldview of this research is constructivist, which recognizes that the individual’s reality is socially-constructed and that multiple realities and meanings can be constructed socially as well as historically; this multiple case comparative study allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, gathers multiple subject meanings, and develops patterns through the data (Creswell, 2003). The contribution to the literature on the relationship between leadership and organizational culture is an in-depth study and findings of three organizations as these organizations attempt to make strategic decisions and navigate change within the organizational culture.

The sites for these studies are private schools in Virginia – one rural, one suburban in a small city, and one suburban to a major city. Each school is in a separate region of the state – southern, central and northern; no school in the study would share or compete with one another for students unless the student moved across the region within the state during their educational career. All schools have full accreditation through the Association for Christian Schools International and are recognized by the Virginia Association for Independent Schools, as designated by the Virginia Department of Education, as fully- accredited and approved private, religious-exempt schools. All schools are non-denominational. One school is a non-denominational ministry of a denominational church, one is a non-denominational in a partnership with a denominational church, and one is non-denominational and independent from any one church association. The schools vary in size of student population. One school has a
population of under 150 students, one school has a just over 400 students, and one has just over 800 students. The schools represent various ages and stages. Two schools have been in continuous operation for more than four decades; one school has been in operation for less than one decade.

The populations examined in this study are three leaders who occupy the role equivalent to that of CEO in the organization and another administrator within their organization who provides leadership in a key administrative area; the titles may vary according to school (Head of School, Headmaster, Principal, etc.), but each of the three primary leaders has the highest role in the organization and reports only to an established School Board—each school has an established School Board. Each of the three secondary leaders in the school may also vary in title (Principal, Director, Coordinator, etc.) but they all operationally provide leadership that impacts multiple stakeholders within their organizations. Each of the primary leaders holds at least one advanced degree in education and pertinent certifications related to the educational role and has operated for at least five years in role. This type of sampling is a purposive sampling technique (Creswell, 2009). Face-to-face interviews with these six leaders are included in this study, plus the two leaders from the pilot study using another school. Two males and four females were interviewed for this study within offices onsite to the school that they selected. The interview of more than one leader within a school organization provided more in-depth view of the culture of the organizations, as did the interviewing of leaders at more than one school (Martin, 2002).

The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews, direct observations at each location, and review of documents (including public websites) pertaining to the organizations. Observations were made during day-long visits to school sites and through a scheduled formal tour of the school. Observations included artifacts from the school and general observations of
interactions of individuals. Each of these methods was integral in understanding the relationship between leadership and organizational culture even though the presence of the researcher has the potential to impact the interactions of individuals (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009).

Interviews were recorded and then transcribed using a software program (Trint) which converted the audio files to transcripts. A transcriptionist reviewed the transcriptions against the audio files for translation accuracy and prior to the researcher engaging in content analysis. Themes emerged through content analysis when coding was conducted, and a list of codes was developed. The coding process was used to allow for the themes to be placed into categories. By combining content analysis with coding against the website review and document reviews (accreditation and tour/promotional documents), a pattern analysis (Yin, 2009) was used to help ensure internal validity. Triangulation of data from all sources was performed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure validity along with member checks. The findings are reported in a narrative form with tables supporting and explaining the themes that emerged.

**Limitations of Study**

This study focuses on three private school organizations and two leaders from each private school. The study is limited to private Christian schools in Virginia accredited through the Association for Christian Schools International and approved by the Virginia Association for Independent Schools. The multiple-case comparative study was used, collecting data only from the three schools in the study (in addition to the pilot school that preceded the study). These parameters may limit the transferability to other school settings and other industries since some aspects of organizational culture is specific to each organization or this specific type of organization.
Leadership is also an integral part of this study, and so findings may not be transferrable to other studies of leadership in other school settings or other industries because of differences in leadership models and characteristics, as well as because of the small sample size. The self-identification of the leaders who have been interviewed as Christian leaders may also be determined as a limitation since leaders, even with the same religious heritage, often do not choose this same mode of self-identification or allow this identification to shape decision-making in their leadership consciously.

This study also takes an integrationist perspective (Martin, 2002) to organizational culture, which assumes shared values, artifacts, and basic assumptions by organization members. Even though this model assumes organizational culture is dynamic (Hatch, 1993), it also assumes that at some point there exists a sharing of values, artifacts, and symbols. Leadership models and characteristics are viewed through the lens of Cameron and Quinn (2006) in that diagnosing and changing organizational culture is the role and the responsibility of the leader using skills and competencies as response to the organizational culture.

As this is a qualitative research study, the researcher is the primary mechanism for data collection and is both interactive and active in the data-gathering process. The presence of the researcher, and the knowledge that the researcher has experience in both public and private schools, may have impacted the subject behavior and responses. The researcher is also the interpreter of the data, which could lead to bias at some levels. Since the researcher is associated with a private Christian school, a private Christian school perspective may have influenced the interpretations. Software was used to create transcriptions for the interviews and a research assistant was used to verify the accuracy of the audio files against the transcriptions, but the
research assistant did not encounter subjects so there is no opportunity for influence on subject response in that regard.

**Delimitations of the Study**

All the participating schools will be ACSI (Association for Christian Schools International)/AdvancED dually accredited schools. AdvancED is the agency that provides SACS accreditation – the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Attention is paid to this point because each school will have gone through the same accreditation process that is approved by a state school board and there is a measure of assurance that these schools are comparable in terms of operational and instructional standards and that these standards are comparable to public school standards.

The schools selected will be from Virginia, although the resource from which the subjects are available are from the entire southeast region of the United States. Virginia is selected because the School Board for the state of Virginia authorizes the Virginia Council for Private Education to approve accreditation performed by acceptable accrediting agencies such as ACSI and AdvancED. There is also a network of CEOs in Virginia through the local ACSI conference each October held in Virginia.

Subjects are selected to show some range of ages, gender, and geographical location – rural, suburban, and urban. Additionally, subjects are selected show a range of length of leadership in their organization – new leaders with three to five years of experience in addition to leaders with twenty or more years of experience with that organization. Subjects were selected from relatively new organizations (less than ten years as an organization) to more established organizations (more than forty years as an organization).
Definition of Key Terms

**Leader**

Leaders create organizational culture or embed and transmit organizational culture. Organizational cultures are formed from the beliefs, values and assumptions of leaders as founders and the new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and new leaders (Schein, 2010).

**Leadership Model**

Leadership models are the internal or external guides that suggest specific behaviors as applied in a specific environment or situation for a leader and reflect a variety of competencies; several models may be in operation within a leader or within an organization (Ardichvili et al, 2016; Cetin & Kinik, 2014; Cumberland, 2016; Finkelstein et al, 2009; Goleman, 2000; Kinsler, 2014; Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016).

**Leadership Characteristics**

Leadership characteristics are patterns of traits by leaders that reflect a range of individual differences and contribute to diversity in leader effectiveness across a variety of organizational situations and reflect the leaders’ cognitive and social functions, personality, motives, self-belief, knowledge and skills (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004).

**Organizational Context**

Organizational context refers to the collected body of related terms that include organizational age/stage, organizational identity, and organizational culture.
Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has been defined to be the unique social and psychological environment of an organization that reflects organizational behavior and shared values. Schein (2010) also argues that culture as a concept is an abstraction, and culture refers to a wide range of observable events and underlying forces like observed behaviors when people interact. Culture includes the shared values of a group, or at least those expressed as shared values, or espoused values (Schein, 2010), and the philosophy of the organization, like the mission and the vision. Culture also includes what the organization celebrates, uses as symbols, the specific language choices and patterns, the climate and the formal and informal rituals demonstrated (Schein, 2010). Organizational culture is dynamic, not static (Hatch, 1993). There are three perspectives on organizational cultures, all of which may be valid: integration says organizational culture holds people together, differentiation that says culture is riddled with conflicts of interest and consensus isn’t possible, and fragmentation says that culture is unknowable and describes the nature of the organization only (Martin, 1992).

Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is what members of an organization consider distinctive, central, and enduring in the organization and what influences the behaviors of leaders and members of the organization (Albert & Whetton, 1985). Organizational identity may relate to the image of the organization projects (Gioia et al., 2000), and there is a relationship between organizational culture, identity, and image (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Organizational identity emerges from complex interactions among leadership, members, and other stakeholders (Scott & Lane, 2000).
**Organizational Stage**

Organizational stage reflects the point in time that an organization appears to demonstrate in the lifecycle of an organization (Lewin, 1947; Grenier, 1997; Kotter, 1996).

**Strategic Decisions**

Strategic decisions are defined as decisions that are concerned with the whole environment of an organization, the entire resources, and all the people that form the organization (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Fuller, 2011).

**Summary**

The leader operates within the context of culture; the context of culture is specific to the organization. Part of the context of the organizational structure of a private school is that it demonstrates self-governance, self-support, self-defined curriculum, self-selected students and faculty, and small size. Strategically, the leader must pay attention to the culture that is operational in order to make decisions. With private schools accounting for 24 percent of the nation's schools and enrolling 10 percent of all PK-12 students, 80 percent of which are religiously affiliated, private school share a macro-culture within which the relationship between organizational culture and strategic leadership can be studied. Schein (2010) insists that while research is overwhelming for both organizational culture and leadership, the focus should be on how these concepts are intertwined. An understanding of three specific case studies on how culture and leadership within the context of private school culture these cultures will provide valuable insight into the relationship between leadership and organizational culture within the context of an educational setting, specifically a private school setting. This chapter has presented an overview of seminal and recent studies involving organizational culture and private schools as
a macro-culture which provides an introductory background for the study. Despite the magnitude of private school options, very little empirical research has focused on the relationship between organizational culture and strategic leadership in private schools. A conceptual framework was presented to view the relationship between organizational culture and leadership. Based upon Schein’s (2010) Organizational Culture Model and Hatch’s (1993) Dynamics of Culture Model, this framework views the relationship between organizational culture and leadership as a dynamic one in which one influences the other and vice-versa. The conceptual framework presented in this study is based on ages and stages of an organization (Schein & Bennis, 1965) as well as the embedding mechanisms of leaders to influence a culture (Schein, 2010). Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature on organizational culture, leadership models, leadership private schools and strategic decision-making such as organizational change in the context of private schools. Chapter Three discusses the research methodology and design for a qualitative study to address these issues as well as the pilot study used to test the tools developed by the researcher (See Appendix). Chapter Four presents the results of the study and findings, while Chapter Five discusses the conclusions of the study along with implications for further research and practice. This study adds to the scholarly literature on the relationship between organizational culture and leadership and the scholarly literature on organizational culture and leadership in educational settings, particularly private schools.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the relevant literature regarding the relationship between leadership and organizational culture and the influence that leadership and organizational culture have on one another. This review begins with an examination of the relevant literature on organizational context (organizational identity, organizational stage, organizational culture); this continues with examining the relevant literature on the related organizational processes of strategic decision-making by the leader and organizational change. The final element of the literature review focuses on leadership models and characteristics.

Sources used in this review were numerous including ERIC, dissertations, and numerous on-line journals. Google Scholar was also used to locate relevant articles and books. Article and book references lists helped identify other relevant sources. A search on Amazon. com on “Organizational Culture,” and “Leadership,” also resulted in several relevant books on the topic. As stated in Chapter One, the areas of theory selected for the literature review are those defined in the list of definitions of terms related to the research questions. The area of theory related to organizational context (Organizational Stage, Organizational Identity, and Organizational Culture) is reviewed first. The area of theory related to leadership is reviewed next (Leadership Models and Characteristics, Strategic Leadership and Private School Leadership).

Organizational Context: Stage, Identity and Culture

According to Greiner (1997), five key dimensions provide context for an organization that a leader needs to consider: (1) age of the organization, (2) size of the organization, (3) stages of evolution, (4) stages of revolution, and (5) the growth rate of the industry. By articulating phases in terms of evolution and revolution, Greiner (1997) is pointing out that the stage of the
organization affects the leadership of the organization in a very predictable pattern that can and should not only be observed but which should also be utilized by leadership to manage and grow the organization, recognizing that the solution in one stage prompts the crisis of the next stage.

The stage of an organization is connected to response by members of the organization, including the leadership, and is characterized by a relatively calm period of growth followed by a management crisis and five distinguishable stages of development, with each phase being influenced by the previous one (Greiner, 1997). Additionally, Greiner (1997) indicates that the stage of the organization disrupts the culture at regular and predictable intervals as actions and reactions, or as he calls it, revolutions and evolutions. Each evolutionary phase is calm, without disruption, and corresponds with a revolutionary period of disruption as described in Table 2. 1:

Table 2. 1.

Organizational Stages. Greiner (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Evolution</th>
<th>Stage of Revolution</th>
<th>Example of Disruption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existence</td>
<td>Creative Expansion</td>
<td>Organizational growth leads to need for additional site development in an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>Leads to a Leadership Crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Keeping</td>
<td>Directional Crises</td>
<td>Newly developed sites for the organization depend on the leadership from the organizational site of origin but local culture influences direction of processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Active</td>
<td>Leads to an Autonomy Crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival/Growth Pursued</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Management/Hierarchy trying to Safeguard Growth</td>
<td>Expansion through Delegation Leads to a Control Crisis</td>
<td>New leadership delegated for new sites develop new processes that differ from original processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Renewal leads to Matrix Style which leads to Creativity

- Expansion through Coordinator Leads to a Red Tape Crisis
- New coordinator between sites creates a backlog of processing issues and too many communication channels between leadership

Decline leads to Death of Organization, Focus on Authority of Organization

- Collaboration and Potential Exhaustion of Team Members
- Team collaboration between sites is established towards effective processing management issues between sites

Greiner advises that, “Top leaders should be ready to work with the flow of the tide rather than working against it; yet they should be cautious, since it is tempting to skip phases out of impatience. Each phase will result in certain strengths and learning experiences in the organization that will be essential for success in subsequent phases” (1997, p. 45). Schein (2010) offers a comparatively simpler representation of organizational stages, and therefore simplifies the calls and demands on the part of leadership, by only acknowledging three levels of organizational stages. However, Schein identifies that there are culture change mechanisms relevant at each stage for the organization:

Table 2. 2.

Organizational Stages Schein (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Change Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founding and Early Growth – culture comes from the founders and their assumptions and the focus is on survival. Culture is explicit and taught to new members of organization as part of identity.</td>
<td>Incremental change, insight, promotion of hybrids in the culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlife - founder/owners control given to appointed or general managers. The most important elements of</td>
<td>Systemic promotion from subcultures, technological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32
No matter the stage of the organization, the identity of the organization is the attributes that are central, enduring, and distinctive to an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Organizational identity is closely related to organizational culture. Without a central attribute, the history of the organization would be different. Enduring attributes are embedded in organizational history. Distinguishing attributes differentiate the organization from others and can set minimum standards or norms. While an organization can go through stages, elements of identity are constants throughout the stages. Organizational identity and identification are powerful terms because they speak to the definition of an entity and exist as root constructs in organizational phenomena; this sense of organizational identity comes from a need for situated sense of self in order to interact with others long-term (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000). This sense of identity through attributes applies to an organization, a group, or an individual and this is not new to organizational literature. However, on the macro side of an organization this sense of identity through attributes in an organization becomes important as organizations becomes dynamic and complex through growth and has a felt need to have an internalized cognitive structure of what the organization stands for and where it intends to go (Ashforth et al., 2000).

Traditionally viewed as a stable concept, identity can also be an unstable and relatively fluid concept because of the reciprocal relationship between image and identity; this instability
makes the idea of organizational identity an unstable one, but this instability may be effective for adapting to change (Corley, Gioia, & Schultz, 2000). When considering organizational identity, the question also emerges as to who is identifying the organization – the manager, the members, or other stakeholders such as the customers or the consumers (Scott & Lane, 2000). Organizational identity may be both complex and dynamic because it is a result of complex and reciprocal interactions among stakeholders – managers, members, and others; organizational identity would then be a negotiated construct among different systems of organizational membership and meaning (Scott & Lane, 2000). Despite the complexity and dynamics, Haslam and Ellemers (2003) argue that organizational identity isn’t merely a metaphor; organizational identity makes organizational life possible because the power as an applied and theoretical construct is it a capacity among stakeholders to be externally shared, a negotiated product, and an internalized aspect of the collective of the organization. Essentially, the psychology of members of an organization is socially structured and the identity-based facts of an organization are important to understand if one is to understand organizational life (Ellemers, & Haslam, 2003).

There is a relationship between organizational culture, identity and image. Ravasi and Schultz (2007) offer that there is a dynamic relationship between organizational culture and organizational identity and that causes re-evaluation or reconsideration of one to the other. Hatch and Schultz (1997) argue that organizations need to define their identity as that of a bridge between the external position of the organization in its marketplace and other relevant environments, as well as the internal meanings formed within the organizational culture. In other words, identity is defined as the external image that is projected and articulated to others as
well as the internal definition formed within the organization. Hatch and Schultz (1997) speak to the system in three parts of culture, identity, and image:

We believe that culture, identity and image form three related parts of a system of meaning and sense-making that defines an organization to its various constituencies. Thus, the mutual influences of organizational culture, identity and image suggest a specific model of ways in which properties and processes, formerly seen as either internal or external aspects of organization, interpenetrate one another. (p. 356).

Martin (2001) captures the landscape of organizational culture by recognizing that the range of scholarly assumptions about organizational culture is broad and diverse and that it crosses both disciplinary and methodological barriers. To “map the terrain” of culture, Martin (2001) takes the approach of discussing dilemmas that any cultural researcher would face in working on a cultural research project. In doing so, Martin (2001) reviews theoretical distinctions between three different perspectives of culture show that organizational culture is distinct from organizational climate, identity, and image. Martin’s earlier work, *Cultures in Organizations: Three Perspectives* (1992), examines organizational culture through the social science perspectives of integration, differentiation and fragmentation. Integration is, essentially, the idea that culture is what people share-- or what binds people in an organization together. Differentiation makes no assumption that consensus exists but rather proposes that organizations are composed of different interest groups that are full of conflicts and may very well represent different cultures. (Integration as a perspective offers that shared culture does exist; smaller groups, subcultures, create this differentiation.) Fragmentation as a perspective though asserts that there are confusions, paradoxes, and unknown variables that create ambiguity in the organizational culture – especially because individuals and groups change constantly.
Martin (1992) argues that the purpose of studying organizational culture is to understand organizational life more fully. As such, Martin (1992) also argues (see Table 2.3) that when a single organization is viewed from all three perspectives, there is a greater understanding that results than if one only considered a singular view.

Table 2.3.

Organizational Perspective Martin (2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Differentiation</th>
<th>Fragmentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All cultural manifestations reinforce the same themes</td>
<td>Cultural manifestations are inconsistent</td>
<td>No stable consensus exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational consensus</td>
<td>Consensus only occurs in subcultures</td>
<td>Consensus and dissensus are issue specific and always changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ambiguity; all is clear</td>
<td>Ambiguity is channeled by subcultures</td>
<td>Ambiguity is the essence of an organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a wealth of definitions of culture in the social science literature (Martin, 2002). Since the 1970’s, organizational culture has been used to refer to both the values and the behaviors of members, that which the organizational members had in common that were specific to that organization (Pettigrew, 1979). The view of organizational culture grew to become a perspective that would be able to explain how effectively an organization worked (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). While many scholars have focused on the description of culture through symbols and artifacts (Hatch, 1993; Martin, 2002, Schein, 2004) and others have focused on identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Ravasi & Schulz, 2006), organizations have been determined to have their own cultures. Schein (2010) also
Schein (2010) formally defines culture as:

A pattern of shred basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 18).

Schein (2010) acknowledges that culture is an abstraction, but also asserts that if one does not understand the operation of the forces that are a result of organizational culture then one can become victim to these forces, which tend to operate frequently outside of our consciousness of them. What Schein calls “forces” is what Argyris and Schon (1974, 1996) seem to refer to as the “theories in use” that guide behavior of all individuals and groups (Argyris & Schon, 1996). The power of culture is that the assumptions of culture are shared and mutually reinforced by an organization, and leadership is both the original source of beliefs and the change agent for changing beliefs and changing the culture (Schein, 2010).

Organizational culture has also been described as that which we can observe: building structure and décor, policies and procedures, interactions between individuals, common stories, common uses of language, stories and inside jokes, manners of dress (Hatch, 1993; Martin, 2002, Schein, 2010). There are invisible aspects of culture, like the espoused values that drive what one could see, and then foundational assumptions that underlie values (Hatch, 1993; Schein, 2010). Hatch (1993) further develops Schein’s (2010) levels of culture by adding to the artifacts, values, and assumptions that he espouses the notion of symbols and the idea that an organization’s values and assumptions can be challenged and changed by the introduction of new artifacts and symbols to the organization. Hatch (2010) acknowledges that there is objectivity
in both realization and symbolization, but interpretation and manifestation are inherently subjective and not recognized, or at least not easily, by those outside of the organizational culture. These dynamics processes of organizational culture (Hatch, 2010) explain both the phenomena of culture change and culture stability.

Also, Hatch (1993) argues for two fundamental changes to Schein’s model for organizational culture which are important to consider in examining the relationship between organizational culture and leadership: (1) the introduction of symbols and (2) the elements of culture – assumptions, values, artifacts and symbols. These changes become less central on their own and the focus shift to being that of the relationship among assumptions, values, artifacts, and symbols in an organization. Hatch argues that the processes of realization, symbolization, interpretation, and manifestation link assumptions, values, artifacts and symbols dynamically instead of statically – as Schein’s model indicates. “Cultural dynamics doesn’t undermine Schein’s interests; it reaches beyond them to a more complex, process-based understanding of organizational culture,” (Hatch, 1993, p. 661). In other words, to understand Schein’s indicators of organizational culture as a leader, one must understand the relationship among the indicators. Chatman and Jehn (1994) add that indicators of organizational culture are determined in part by the specific industry of which they are a part. Barley (1983) suggests that a job role or occupation determines organizational culture.

Organizational culture in the literature offers a wealth of studies that contribute to an understanding of organizational life. Below is a summary of some of the most relevant work discussed within this chapter regarding the specific subject of organizational culture, particularly as it contributes to the examination of organizational culture within private schools.
Table 2. 4.

*Summary Overview of Relevant Organizational Culture Literature*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Element</th>
<th>Scholar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Organizational culture” is a term to help explain the behaviors, purpose and</td>
<td>Pettigrew, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference points for meanings shared by members of an organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Corporate culture” affects performance and strategy of an organization</td>
<td>Deal &amp; Kennedy, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture has artifacts, values, and assumptions shared by</td>
<td>Schein, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organization members which can be abstract and no easily articulated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture is a dynamic process that adds a fourth element to</td>
<td>Hatch, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schein’s, which is symbolization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A dynamic link exists between organizational culture and organizational</td>
<td>Albert &amp; Whetten,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity, and it is the culture that allows members to analyze situations and</td>
<td>1985; Ravasi &amp; Schultz, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate the organizational identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture characteristics are determined by the specific</td>
<td>Chatman &amp; Jehn, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>industry of which they are a part</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture may be determined by occupation or by job role</td>
<td>Barley, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture cannot be viewed from just one perspective</td>
<td>Martin, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The context that is missing from the organizational literature is that educational institutions, which are part of a specific industry (Chatman & Jehn, 1994), have specific occupations and job
roles related to it (Barley, 1983). However, educational institutions have not been studied as organizational cultures within the literature to the degree that business and industry has at all. This missing context is particularly true perhaps of those educational organizational cultures that are part of the private school industry; these have not been examined as organizational cultures with any degree of fullness in the literature.

**Organizational Processes: Strategic Decision-Making and Organizational Change**

Organizational change is a large body of discussion in the literature as it relates to organizational stage, culture, and identity beginning with the seminal model of Lewin (1947) that focuses on organizational processes that happen over time – unfreezing, moving, and refreezing. Often, leaders are brought into an organization or retained by an organization because the organization is responding to the need or the presence of organizational change as represented by Lewin’s model. While Grenier’s (1997) six-stage process of organizational evolution (discussed earlier as organizational stages) captures the change that occurs at each stage of development. There are four major models of organizational change in addition to Greiner’s six-stage process (1997). Greiner’s model focuses greatly on the change agent. Regarding a change agent, Lunenburg (2010) posits that Greiner defines a change agent as “the individual, from inside or outside the organization, who takes a leadership role in initiating the change process,” (2010, p. 7). Based on Lewin’s model of organizational change, John Kotter (1996) developed a more detailed description of the errors that leaders make when change fails. Like Greiner (1997), Kotter (1996) focuses on the action of the leaders as a change agent and asserts that a leader must strategically follow the steps below (Lunenburg, 2010, p. 3) for successful organizational change to occur:
### Kotter’s (1996) Eight-Step Process for Implementing Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish a sense of urgency</td>
<td>Unfreeze the organization – create compelling reason for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create a guiding coalition</td>
<td>Cross-functional, cross-cultural group created to lead change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Develop a vision and strategy</td>
<td>Create vision and strategic plan to lead change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communicate the change vision</td>
<td>Create and implement a communication plan that consistently communicates the new vision and strategic plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Empower broad-based action</td>
<td>Eliminate barriers to change; use target elements of change to transform the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Generate short-term wins</td>
<td>Create short-term improvements and; recognize and reward those to contribute to the wins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Consolidate change and produce more change</td>
<td>Guiding coalition uses credibility from short-term wins to create more change; additional people brought into change process as change continues through organization. Invigoration efforts towards change efforts are made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Anchor new approaches in the culture</td>
<td>Reinforce changes by pointing out connections between change and organizational success. Methods developed for leadership development and succession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adding to this body of literature on organizational change and leadership, Fullen (2011) says that there are seven basic themes and applications from the current knowledge and literature on leading change efforts strategically:

### Fuller’s (2011) Themes on Organizational Change
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Application</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change is learning</td>
<td>Each member of the organization is learning about the organization as it was, as it is, and the vision for what it is to become.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change is a journey, not a blueprint</td>
<td>There are actions and reactions as the organization moves towards change, but these are not scripted. Any one organization cannot create change in an identical fashion to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems are our friends.</td>
<td>Friction and barriers offer an opportunity for problem-solving, innovation, process improvement, and effective leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change is resource-hungry</td>
<td>Change requires social capital as well as financial capital. The resources as well as resourcefulness of people and resources may very well be stretched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change requires the power to manage it</td>
<td>Leadership must have a clear vision, specific action-items, an understanding of change-management, the ability to build buy-in, the ability to communicate change effectively, and the ability to communicate the effectiveness of the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change is systematic</td>
<td>Change is not a single effort but a series of sustained efforts over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All large-scale change is implemented locally</td>
<td>Leaders must engage all levels of the organization, not just the guiding coalition, or change will not be actualized because it will not reach the local level; it will only remain, at the top.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This change literature speaks to the strategic decision-making process on the part of the leader being critical in making organizational change occur effectively as a process. Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret (1976) speak to the body of literature on techniques for decision-making, but they go on to claim that decision-making at the top level of leadership, is where attention should be paid because that is where decisions can be. Mintzberg et al., (1976) define decision as a specific commitment to action; a decision process as a set of actions that begin with a specific stimulus and end with a commitment to action. Unstructured, to Mintzberg et al., (1976), are decisions that require processes that have not been encountered before; strategic is
simply defined as important to the organization because of either resources that are committed or precedents that are set. Dean and Sharfman (1993) argue that rationality is at the center or strategic management and decision-making literatures but that little is known about why some strategic decision-making procedures are more rational than others. In their study of 57 strategic decisions in 24 companies, using a multiple-informant, structured interview protocol Dean and Sharfman’s (1993) results indicated that environmental competitive threat, perceived external control of the organization, and the uncertainty of the strategic issues being addressed related directly to rationality in decision-making. A related study by Dean and Sharfman (1996), examined 52 decisions in 24 companies to determine if procedural rationality and political behavior influence decision success and concluded that decision-making processes are indeed related to decision success and that strategic choice may be important to organizations. According to Gans, Scott, and Stern (2018), when it comes to strategy there are at least four domains of strategy that are crucial for any venture in an organization. The first domain, customers, focuses on identifying customers and understanding their needs; in today’s market the second domain is technology and understanding how customer choices and technology are interrelated. The third domain encompasses identity, culture, and capabilities; “Choices in this category both create a narrative about what the company will stand for and communicate to all stakeholders what behaviors to expect and what capabilities it will develop,” (Gans et al, 2018, p. 50). The fourth domain related to strategy is understanding who the competitors are. Organizations will face choices that are particular to context, but these four decisions contribute to creating and capturing value on a sustainable basis, particularly for innovative organizations (Gans et al., 2018).
Pitilis and Wagner (2018) propose that the purposeful sharing of strategic decisions and the process of making decisions between the dominant coalition of an organization should be initiated and supported by a focal strategic leader or small team; this action will engender organizational dynamic capabilities that result in stable and relevant change. Whittle, Housely, Gilchrist, Mueller and Lenney (2014) show that discursive leadership enables leaders to re-frame organizational structure categories in order construct a definition of the situation that needs change and then proceed to build a compelling vision and concrete plan for strategic change. They argue that strategic decision-making is a key leadership competence that plays a key role in strategic change processes in an organization.

**Leadership: Models and Characteristics**

There is extensive literature on the topic of leadership to the degree that this literature can accurately be called both overwhelming and ever-expanding. “Leadership development is the largest expense item in the overall training and development budget of the majority of business organizations in the United States and many other countries in the world,” (Arcdichvili, Manderscheind, & Natt och Dag, 2016, p. 275). The common theme in this volume seems to be that of “leadership input.” In other words, what a leader puts into the organization will impact the organization – theoretically, the output of the organization – the change, culture and the identity of the organization.

To this end, the literature reflects a focus on various leadership models or types of leadership and leadership characteristics. Leaders are responsible for organizational effectiveness and viability and put forth strategy that offers formal logic for goals shared by people within the organization; culture expresses those goals through group norms, values, and
beliefs; they even guide activities (Cheng, Groysberg, Lee & Price, 2018). In a review of the literature for commonalities and central concepts between leaders and organizational cultures, Groysberg et al. (2018), state that there are two primary dimensions that apply regardless of type, size, or location of the organization: people interactions and response to change. As a result of decades of analysis of organizations, leaders, and employers, Groysberg et al., (2018), assert that eight cultures seem to emerge when mapping cultures along two dimensions - how people interact (independence to dependence) and response to change (flexibility to stability). Every culture style has strengths and weaknesses, or advantages and disadvantages, and the culture styles can be listed as follows: caring, purpose, learning, enjoyment, results, authority, safety, and order. “When aligned with strategy and leadership, a strong culture drives positive organizational outcomes,” (Groysberg et al., 2018, p. 50).

The inverse can be true as well, however, according to this research. When misaligned with strategy, culture can be a liability. In this study based on cultures of more than 230 companies along with leadership styles and values of more than 1,300 executives across a range of industries (excluding education) and a range of geographies world-wide, the public, private, and non-profit cultures diagnosed came from survey responses of approximately 25,000 employees, the authors assert in conclusion that, “Leading with culture may be among the few sources of sustainable competitive advantage left to companies today. Successful leaders will stop regarding culture with frustration and instead use it as a fundamental management tool,” (Groysberg, et al., 2018, p. 52).

What adds to the complexity of the literature is that topic of leadership and leadership development development is highly contextualized by macro culture; for instance, there are two defined bodies of leadership research that relate to private school organizational culture -
educational leadership and business leadership. Cumberland, Herd, Alagaraja, and Kerrick (2016), however, assert that global leadership competencies encompass personality traits, knowledge, skills and behaviors. These personality traits, knowledge, skills, and behaviors are transferrable across industries, but Cumberland et al. (2016), conclude also that there is an ongoing need to synthesize empirical studies to help practitioners successfully select and groom global leaders in the context of their critical strategic management objectives.

The literature also supports a difference between management and leadership. For example, Tohidi and Jabbari (2012) assert that culture is the way that organizations and leaders can learn about their environment, or context. And while there are many definitions for culture, leadership is different from management because leadership is concerned about the environment and organizational context of culture. One model for effective leadership development is action learning, according to Volz-Peacock, Carson, and Marquardt (2016). Their research focuses specifically on how leadership skills are developed through action learning and how those skills are embodied and consequently transferred to the workplace. The action learning model is a coach-facilitated methodology that the researchers argue has been demonstrated to be an effective approach while leaders work; in other words, action learning occurs within the organizational cultural context in which the leader operates. Marquardt (2005) proposes that leaders universally find the right solutions when they know what to ask. Marquardt (2005) also took an international/cross cultural research approach to leadership by interviewing 22 leaders from all over the world in order to question them about the questions they used in order to lead effectively proposing that “questioning is actually the ultimate leadership tool” (Marquardt, 2005, p. 5). Questioning leaders promote a questioning culture that strengthens learning by the individual and by the organization. This, in turn, promotes decision-making and problem-
solving and helps with change as well as empowerment. The opposite holds true as well, according to Marquardt (2005) in situations such as the *Challenger* explosion, the Bay of Pigs Invasion, and the Titanic tragedy which share the commonality that members of the organizations related to these events were not empowered to ask questions. When leaders learn to ask questions effectively, Marquardt (2005) argues, their questions can transform individuals, groups and organizations. Effective strategic leadership and decision-making depend on effective questions, but also on developing a questioning culture by the leadership. A questioning culture is one in which responsibility is shared and ownership of results is shared (Marquardt, 2005). “Institutions that succeed over the long term do so because they continuously regenerate leaders at all levels. Questioning leaders strengthen leaders at all levels” (Marquardt, 2005, p. 102).

Wilderom, van den Berg, and Wiersma (2012) investigated the combined effects of charismatic leadership and organizational culture on perceived and objective company performance using a longitudinal design and found that culture and charisma of leadership were significantly related to perceived performance, and they also concluded that it wasn’t just culture and leadership that were intertwined as Schein (2010) suggested, but more specifically it was culture and charisma of leadership that were interrelated. Azanza and Molero (2013) rely on defining effective leadership as authentic leadership - a positive process that relies heavily on a highly developed organizational context. This process involves a high level of self-awareness on the part of the leader as well as those associated with the organization. In this study by Azanza and Molero (2013), a specific element that they studied among 571 associates in several Spanish private companies was that of the positive relationship between flexibility-orientation of the organization and employees job satisfaction. The study held that authentic leadership that
responded to the specific context of flexibility in the organization increased employee job satisfaction. Azanza and Molero (2013) support by virtue of their study that context continues to be critical for examining the relationship between organizational culture and leadership.

In a qualitative study of leadership, Manderscheid and Harrower (2016) identified the idea that as a leader transitions to a new culture, team, and process, she confronts a series of five polarities and uses five strategies to manage these polarities. The polarities that create tension in the leaders included: (1) drive change/maintain status quo, (2) work/family, (3) tradition/innovation, (4) action/reflection and (5) task/relationships. The premise of Manderscheid and Harrower’s (2016) work is that mindfulness about these polarities will allow leaders to recognize and adjust to situations in which polarities may arise using strategies such as collaboration, learning, developing talent, reflecting on self, and decision-making. This consciousness on the part of the leader--awareness of what they pay attention to--echoes Schein’s six embedding mechanisms of leaders (2010).

Table 2. 7.

*Schein’s (2010) Embedding Mechanisms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis</td>
<td>Organizational design and structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises</td>
<td>Organizational systems and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How leaders allocate resources</td>
<td>Rites and rituals of the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design of the physical space, facades, and buildings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schein’s model focuses on what the leader does that affects the organization. Yegenah (2016) writes about the disruptive approach of mindfulness for the development of a leader and focuses on what is internal to the leader. Yegenah (2016) focuses on mindful thinking (what a leader pays attention to) the five senses (what a leader experiences), and the automatic routines of the leader (what regular actions a leader takes); this discusses the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBS) in the workplace and the relationship of the nature of autopilot and mindlessness as well as the impact of automaticity in the way of thinking. Comparative to Schein, Yegenah (2016) focuses more on the leader’s internal focus than on external change agent behaviors. What this suggests is that the leader’s internal focus affects the external environment and may contribute to affecting organizational changes in culture.

The leader’s internal focus may inform the strategic decision-making that the leader performs. Similarly, Kinsler (2014) discusses how mindful leadership practices are related to strategic decisions in that the pillars of authentic leadership are self-awareness and self-regulation. Schein (2010) speaks to the value of context of the organizational culture to the strategic decisions of the leader; Kinsler (2014) speaks to the value of the context of the leader himself to organizational culture and change. If a leader is more self-aligned and authentic, Kinsler (2014) seems to argue, the organization is more likely to be a company-wide
commitment that results in a more authentic organization in which the organization’s espoused values are aligned with employee and customer experiences. Santorelli (2011) points out that mindfulness for leadership development has universal application across macro cultures including medicine, healthcare, public health, legal services, education, and business. Indeed, Santorelli (2011) offers that meditative practice itself may provide leaders with a way to understand themselves and learn how to use skillfully the routine and extraordinary work-related demands that they need for effective leadership in their organization.

Effective leadership research is almost synonymous with the results that a leader can achieve in an organization based on the model or type of leadership she employs. Goleman (2000) articulates, for instance, six leadership styles that appear to have direct and targeted impacts on the working atmosphere of an organization. These styles are related to the degree of emotional intelligence one possesses, which he defines as the specific competencies related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skill. The six leadership styles come from the different components of emotional intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

Table 2. 8.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>Leadership that moves people towards shared dreams and made to feel their work matters. This is effective when an organization needs change or needs to be turned around.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coaching  
Focuses on personal development and yields an emotional response from members of the organization. This is most effective with employees who show initiative and want more professional development.

Affiliative  
Values people and their feelings and puts less emphasis on accomplishing tasks and goals. This style builds team resonance and harmony.

Democratic  
Revolves around teamwork, collaboration, conflict management, and influence. This style is collaborative and helps a leader determine direction and create harmony and minimize conflict.

Commanding  
Focuses on immediate compliance with orders without explaining the reasons behind them. This style does not delegate authority and seeks tight control. This style may be useful in dealing with crisis and with problem employees.

Pacesetter  
This type of leader sets high standards of performance and is obsessive about doing things better and faster. This style focuses on goals first and consistently seeks to improve performance.

Goleman’s (2000) findings indicate two key points: (1) that the more styles that a leader exhibits, the better – which means the leader must be flexible as well as skilled, and (2) this flexibility can be accomplished by building a team with a collective of leadership styles or the leader must diversify his own leadership style and be flexible.
Strategic Leadership

Finkelstein, Hambrick, and Cannella, (2009) seek to examine the body of literature that represents two decades of explosive growth in the domain of strategic leadership, much of which they describe as immensely diverse in methods and perspectives. Additionally, they seek to provide a new platform for research and theory on strategic leadership. In contemporary organizations, strategic leadership considers the individual executive, although strategic leadership can imply a top management team (Finkelstein et al., 2009). Essentially, Finkelstein et al., (2009) examine the fundamental question about whether top managers have an important effect on organizational outcomes. By exploring theorists on both sides of this answer in their meta-analysis of strategic leadership, Finkelstein et al., (2009) note that there is a tendency for leaders to attribute success to the credit of leadership decisions and blame external factors for unfavorable outcomes when asked about impacts on organizational development. When faced with strategic decisions, leaders will inject their own experiences, personalities and preferences into the situation in order to figure out what to do. In other words, leaders act within what they know, believe, want or perceive and this action will vary from leader to leader.

Additionally, the strategic situation--the organizational context within which a decision needs to be made--consists of facts, trends, events, and other factors external and internal to the organization that also contribute to the strategic choice (Finkelstein et al., 2009). The essence of strategic leadership involves the capacity to learn, change, and the wisdom needed to manage as well as understanding under what conditions, when, and how strategic leadership matters (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001). Three streams of research prevail about leadership, according to Boal and Hooijberg (2001); strategic leadership theory, new leadership theories (charismatic, transformational and visionary) and emergent theories in reference to behavioral theory,
cognitive complexity, and social intelligence – all of which the authors believe can be integrated within the essence of strategic leadership. Also, towards an examination of the essence of strategic leadership, the 20-year Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program set a goal for determining the role of culture in leadership behavior and practices in terms of their strategic leadership behaviors across cultures (House, Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, & de Luque, 2013). They found that leaders are perceived to be effective if their behaviors match societal expectations, which would vary across cultures. The GLOBE theoretical model integrated culture, leadership and organizational effectiveness with the central proposition that the attributes and characteristics that differentiate cultures from each other may also differentiate organizational practices and leadership attributes/behaviors that are effective within that culture (House et al., 2013). In other words, cultural context is important for understanding organizational culture and leadership effectiveness in terms of strategic decision-making.

Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2016) examine the role that charismatic, transformational and transactional leaders have on strategic leadership and decision-making. Charismatic leaders will offer an appealing strategic vision, rely on effective timing, take actions that involve risk-taking, exhibit high self-confidence and strong convictions, and they may manage impressions of themselves in a positive way. There is a dark side, however, in that charismatic leaders can be subject to limited perspective and hubris. However, transformational leaders, “encourage and stimulate followers to question core assumptions about the competitive environment, reformulate problems, and revise proposed solutions. They give followers more room for exploration and mistakes, solicit their ideas and use those ideas in decision-making” (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016, p. 89).
Transactional leaders, by contrast, rely on the rewards and punishments that result from follower behavior of achieved goals or results. Transactional leaders improve the organizational and operations efficiencies; transformative and transactional leadership can be complementary and even appropriate depending on the organizational situation (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh 2016). In their text, *Strategic Leadership for Turbulent Times*, Kriger & Zhovtobryukh (2016) consider four generic forms of strategic leadership:

- **Stars** – single actor leadership, hero-leaders
- **Clans** – distributed strategic leadership at the top and centralized down the hierarchy of the organization
- **Teams** – shared leadership with leader-follower roles shifting as the problems change
- **Leadership Networks** – a dynamic set of leader-follower relationships where individual actors influence and coordinate tasks, objectives and visions of the organization

Each of these four generic forms have advantages when addressing deficiencies; these deficiencies are essentially individual and group level responses to organizational pressures at the macro and micro level within organizations and even within industries (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016).

With the depth and breadth of literature about leadership models and characteristics, the table below provides a summary overview of the relevant leadership literature regarding leadership models and characteristics as these relate to organizational culture.

Table 2. 9.

*Summary Overview of Relevant Leadership Literature Relating to Organizational Culture*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Element</th>
<th>Scholar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are six leadership styles related to emotional intelligence that leaders employ for different situations</td>
<td>Goleman et al., 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing what to ask is the ultimate leadership tool and questioning leaders develop leaders at all levels</td>
<td>Marquardt, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are six imbedding mechanisms to organizational culture that leaders use</td>
<td>Schein, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership is different from management because of the need for leaders to focus on organizational culture</td>
<td>Tohidi and Jabbari, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders are found to more effective strategically when their behaviors match societal expectations</td>
<td>House et al., 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic, transformational, and transactional leaders have different approaches and outcomes to strategic leadership and decision-making</td>
<td>Kriger and Zhovtobryukh, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leaders internal focus affects the external environment</td>
<td>Yegenah, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are five polarities a leader confronts when managing change</td>
<td>Manderscheid and Harrower, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture styles affect leadership styles</td>
<td>Groysberg et al., 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The literature on models and characteristics of literature is robust; however, the context that is missing from the literature is relationship that leadership has within the organizational culture of educational institutions, particularly private school institutions.
Private School Leadership

There is one connection that Schein makes to education specifically in *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. He writes, “As teachers we encounter the sometimes-mysterious phenomenon that different classes behave completely differently from each other even though our teaching style remains the same,” (Schein, 2010, p. 8). Turan and Bektas (2013) propose that in educational institutions, particularly in schools, it is critical that there is a creation of a common culture and that it depends on the presence and the cohesiveness of a group of people who interact with one another. They also state that all stakeholders need to engage in this common culture and that leaders are responsible for the association that employees have with school culture. Turan and Bektas (2013) wanted to determine the relationship between leadership and culture within the specific context of leadership practices in school culture. Using a correlational design, this study focused specifically on perceptions of teachers in primary education, 349 teachers in 15 different schools. All received both a “Leadership Practices Inventory” and a “School Culture Inventory.” Positive and significant relationships were found between the scores of school culture and leadership practices of teachers in primary education. Turan and Bektas (2013) support that the formation of an organizational culture is a complex process that includes variables such as socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology, and influence. In their study, all primary schools in the study were schools in Turkey that shared many, if not all, of these variables. That was important based on their understanding and expression of organizational culture, which aligns with that of Alvesson (2011) and Schein (2010). However, Turan and Bektas (2013) place emphasis on the importance of context in schools because they see schools as products of the cultural paradigm of the society in which the school exists. In their conclusion, Turan and Bektas (2013) recommend
that future studies consider a qualitative investigation of exemplary school culture and leadership practices, and that those are completed within the specific context of socialization, rituals, language, authority, economy, technology, and influence.

On the topic of change, as applied to organizational culture of schools, Harris (1975) says that while the five phases of change with instructional institutions can come in a sequential order; they often overlap.

- Planning and Initiation – purpose, goals and activities get selected and individuals develop interest
- Momentum – activities are underway, interest increases, leadership and organizing are heavily employed
- Problems – challenges emerge, resources are less available, conflicts with other priorities arise, individual interest plateaus and drops, and leadership investment is critical
- Turning Point – the problems in the previous phase either grow or are minimized; quality of leadership continues to be crucial
- Termination – goal directed activities come to a complete halt because interest has waned; however, if momentum can be reestablished then the change process can continue

Lunenburg (2010) points out, in respect to this model, that this sequence underscores the importance of leadership at various phases of program implementation. Rather than examining leadership within a specific organizational culture, Hallinger and Leithwood (1998) propose looking through a cross-cultural lens at leadership in educational settings. They assert that leadership discussions are dominated by Western and intellectual frameworks and that additional lenses focusing on theories and methods of administering and organizing education throughout the world should be examined since cultural context matters greatly. Another area of literature in school culture and leadership tries to look through the more narrowed lens of the relationship
between leadership and student success or student outcomes versus that of specific leadership and specific organizational culture. For example, Cetin and Kinik (2014) explored the seven leadership responsibilities that are necessary to form what Cetin and Kinik (2014) consider a purposeful community:

- Culture – fosters shared beliefs, a sense of community and cooperation
- Ideals and Beliefs – communicate and operate from strong ideals about schooling
- Communication – establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and students
- Visibility – has quality contact with teachers and students
- Relationships – demonstrates personal awareness of teachers and staff
- Situational Awareness – uses this information to address potential and existing problems
- Affirmation – recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges school failures

Like Schein (2010), Cetin and Kinik (2014) assert that the leader has a critical responsibility in forming the organizational culture, which is synonymous with purposeful community. This study included responses from 15 teachers who were asked how leadership responsibilities affect student success. The study group included primary and secondary school teachers selected from private and state supported schools, from different fields of study in the 2013-2014 academic year. While this study attempts to examine school culture specifically with a qualitative lens, the study is really about teacher perceptions of leadership on student success, with student success defined as being accomplished through a balanced leadership framework that creates a purposeful community.

The culture of a private Christian school is a unique hybrid, according to Pue (2016). “A Christian school is an educational organization, a ministry organization, and a business.
You cannot long survive, much less thrive, until you embrace that reality” (Pue, 2016, p. 33).
Pue writes (2016) that as a result of a research project he conducted on Christian schools and strategic planning he found that there were few schools that actually had chosen to engage in any type of strategic planning because of the cost, inability to perceive a felt need, the time commitment, and a failure to perceive the benefits to the organization. Additionally, the strategic planning with which schools did engage was tied directly to accreditation processes, for which a strategic plan was a necessary product which led to a more minimalist process in strategic planning. Pue (2016) reports that Christian schools seem to identify best with being a culture of education and ministry; however, Christian schools identified less with being a business as a part of the culture. Pue (2016) explains that Christian school leaders identify less with being a business within their school culture because leadership training for Christian school administrators focused on administration and supervision of the educational institution and Christian principles of ministry. Little training had occurred in reference to business management or development. Leadership of Christian schools depends on those who have little training in business management including marketing, resource management, building a leadership team, crafting a budget, or crafting a strategic plan. Pue (2016) asserts that the hybrid nature of the culture of Christian schools means that a leader needs to strategically pursue excellence simultaneously in business, education and ministry with equal fervor. For Christian schools, Pue (2016) underscores the need for leadership to understand first what strategic planning is:

Planning is not an event. It is a continuous process of strengthening what works and abandoning what does not, making risk-taking decisions with the greatest knowledge of their potential effect, of setting objectives, appraising performances and results through
systemic feedback, and making ongoing adjustments as conditions of change (Drucker, 2008, 8).

New research by Barna and the Association for Christian Schools International (2017) points to two macro trends for which Christian school leadership need to respond strategically: (1) the number of self-identified Christians is shrinking, especially among millennials, and (2) the proliferation of school options like public charter schools and online academies. “The overall number of Christian parents who would consider Christian school is currently on the decline, and those who are left are savvy consumers with many viable educational options, and who require evidence of the return on investment (ROI) of Christian education,” (Barna Group, 2017, p. 6). Additionally, Miller, Latham and Cahill (2017) assert that the current system is failing to graduate students who are prepared for the demands of a 21st century work world and Christian schools been slow to identify research-based practices which engage students and prepare them for a changing and complex world. “There are no silver bullets. Complex problems are never solved but can only be navigated or reframed,” (Miller et al., p. 18; emphasis in original).

In examining the relationship between leadership and culture, the critical point of focus for research is on critical internal considerations - alignment with strategy, leadership and organizational design. A culture must support the strategic goals and plans of the organization and strategies related to an organization’s life cycle are linked to organizational culture (Groysberg, et al., 2018). “It’s hard to overestimate the importance of aligning culture and leadership. The character and behaviors of a CEO and top executives can have a profound effect on culture. Conversely, culture serves to either constrain or enhance the performance of the leaders,” (Groysberg, et al., 2018, p. 56-57).
Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature relating to organizational contexts – organizational stage, organizational identity, and organizational culture. This chapter also reviewed the relevant literature regarding organizational processes of strategic decision-making and organizational change as well as the organizational literature around leadership models and characteristics.

Private school institutions, as macro culture (an occupation that exists globally), have had little focus especially in terms examining the relationship between organizational culture and leadership. Leadership principles have been a focal point in the literature, and these have been broadly applied across a variety of organizational cultures. However, research on organizational stages, identity, and culture supports that each organization is highly contextualized and this context is important for the leaders to understand. Additionally, the research supports leaders are influenced by the organizational culture and, in turn and in various stages, those leaders execute organizational change to influence the culture. While the organizational culture is an external influence on leaders, the leadership model and characteristics are influences to a culture. Strategic decision-making about organizational change is then a result of the external and internal influences on the leader.

The literature does not reflect qualitative study on the relationship between organizational culture and leadership within the context of private schools or private Christian schools. “Context matters when assessing a culture’s strategic effectiveness. Leaders must simultaneously consider culture styles and key organizational and market conditions if they want their culture to drive performance,” (Groysberg et al., 2018, p.56). As comprehensive as the study by Groysberg et
al., (2018) is across industries and regions, the missing industry in that recent study is that of education. Chapter three discusses the methodology used to investigate the relationship between leadership and organizational culture in the context of private Christian school settings.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This multiple-case comparative study described the relationship between leaders and organizational cultures. The study also described what the leaders’ strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between leaders and organizational cultures. The factors that contributed to this relationship between leadership and organizational culture were described based on the data collected through semi-structured interviews with leaders, director observations, and document reviews. The purpose of this case study was to add to the scholarly literature on the organizational cultures and leaders in the macro culture of education in general and private school education in particular. This study also provided practitioners with information on the process of strategic decisions and organizational change by leaders within the context of understanding organizational culture.

The methodology used in this study was a multiple-case comparative study, with three cases and multiple units of analysis within each case. A case study approach was used because it allowed the researcher to focus on processes rather than outcomes in order to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation in three separate cases and allows for “how” and “why” questions (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) and allowed for an understanding of context. Multiple cases were used along with multiple units of analysis due to the complexity of the organizational cultures (Yin, 2009). It was necessary to collect data from three distinct organizations, from two leaders at different levels within each organization, as well as conduct a review of documents (promotional/tour, website, and accreditation) to gain a full understanding of each organization’s culture and the influence the organization may have on the leader, and vice-versa. The multiple data points also allowed for understanding how the leader influences organizational culture.
Multiple perspectives were required to gain a firsthand understanding of the organizational culture and leadership (Patton, 2002). These case study sites can be considered as typical cases (Yin, 2009) and these sites are representative of many private schools that are involved in Christian education. These sites were also selected because of convenience; each of the three sites was willing to participate in the study.

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used for the study. The study took a subjective/interpretive approach (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and used a social constructivist perspective which recognizes that reality for any individual is socially constructed and requires thick description because human thought is social in all ways – in its origins, functions, forms and applications (Geertz, 1973). This researcher believed in multiple realities and meanings and that meanings are constructed socially and historically. A qualitative study best addressed this epistemology and theoretical perspective (Cresswell, 2009). This chapter described research questions and research methods, research sites and population, data collection, data analysis, precautions taken to ensure the data are trustworthy, and a description of the ethical precautions employed for organizations and subjects. There was also a pilot study included. The conclusions reached from the pilot study resulted in the adjustment of the methodology for the study. These adjustments came as a result of the experience of conducting and analyzing the data within the pilot study.

**Research Questions**

The best way to answer a research question that begins with “how,” is through a qualitative study (Cresswell, 2009). The research questions explored through this study are as follows with
the first two as purposeful inverses of one another as this study examines the reciprocal relationship of organizational culture and leadership:

1. How does a leader influence an organizational culture?
2. How does an organizational culture influence a leader?
3. What do a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture?

These questions spoke to the ability of qualitative research to preserve chronological flow, see which events led to different outcomes, and result in robust explanations (Miles et al., 2014). The answers to these questions can provide scholars and practitioners additional insights into the relationship between leadership and organizational culture and what strategic decisions and organizational changes may indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture.

**Research Method**

This study used a qualitative approach to explore the relationship between leadership and organizational culture. Qualitative study was most appropriate for this study because of the nature of organizational culture, which can be described accurately as a “single bounded unit” (Merriam, 2013). The researcher encountered the organizations of private schools and the manifestations of organizational culture. The cultural member, the leader of the private school, interpreted the meanings of these manifestations to the researcher so the researcher can determine the patterns or configurations of the interpretations (Martin, 2002). According to Maxwell (2012), qualitative research is meant to help one better understand the meanings and perspectives of the people studied. In this study, the focus was on the meanings and perspectives
of private school leaders. Additionally, Maxwell (2012) defines qualitative research as research that examines how these perspectives of individuals are formed by physical, social and cultural contexts as well as how those perspectives, in turn, contribute to shaping physical, social and cultural contexts. Qualitative research of this nature relies on textual and visual data to accomplish understanding these perspectives but also to understand specific processes (like strategic decision-making) that are involved in maintaining or altering the relationship between perspective and physical, social, and cultural contexts (Maxwell, 2012). This study met the characteristics of a qualitative study, as described by Creswell (2009):

- Data will be in the natural setting and the researcher is the key instrument.
- There are multiple sources of data (interview, observations, documentation) and inductive data analysis occurs through building themes.
- The design is emergent as the researcher expects shifts after data collection begins.
- The researcher interprets what is seen, heard, and understood and this study attempts to develop a holistic account of a complex phenomenon.

This study uses a multiple case comparative study approach to explore the relationship between leadership and organizational culture. In a multiple case comparative study, the researcher can be receptive to local idiosyncrasies, but cross-case comparability may be harder to achieve unless factors such as type of school and state of school locations are considered in the study design (Miles et al., 2014). As a case study, this strategy of inquiry is based on exploring in depth six individuals who are leaders for private schools (Creswell, 2009). In-depth studies of a single entity may offer concerns in terms of generalizability of the findings (McMillan, 2012). In this study the researcher attempted to find not just one typical case to study, but several in order to be able to better generalize to a larger group or in other situations. In this study, the researcher implemented a multi-case, or a collection of cases; several different independent entities are studied (McMillan, 2012). This study sought to be interpretive and holistic as a case
study as it reported multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2009) and offered an in-depth analysis of individuals within their setting and individuals who are characterized by time and place (McMillan, 2012). Another way of describing this would be in-depth analysis of a bounded system (Merriam, 2009). In this research, this was the in-depth study of several bounded systems (private schools) that may share some commonalities. This is also known as a study using more than one case. The more multisite case studies, or the more cases included in the study, the greater the variation; this approach makes a more compelling interpretation (Merriam, 2009). The unit of analysis, rather than the topic of the investigation, was the focal point of a case study (Merriam, 2009). The unit of analysis was the leader and his specific organizational culture. Anthropology, sociology, and psychology are the fields in which there are antecedents for modern case studies as methodology. According to Merriam (Merriam, 2009), characteristic features of a case study include:

- Particularistic – the case focuses on a specific situation; in this study, the leaders and cultures at private educational institutions

- Descriptive – the product employs rich descriptions, complete detail provided of the entity being investigated; in this study, the language used by the researcher to convey the readers understanding of each leader at their private educational institution and the culture at that institution

- Heuristic – illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study and the questions asked in relation to the product. In this study, this approach may help the readers understand and extend their own experiences, discover new meaning, or confirm what is known about leadership and organizational culture and the relationship between the two.

The intended product or outcome, as stated above, was rich description of the phenomenon being studied, but it is also description that seeks to provide knowledge that is concrete, contextual,
developed by reader interpretations, and based on reference populations determined by the reader. In other words, readers generalize the findings with some population in mind (Merriam, 2009).

**Research Sites and Populations**

The first site for this study was a private Christian school located in southwestern Virginia that has been in continuous operation for just over four decades serving as a ministry of a church. This organization was referred to by the pseudonym *Blue River Christian School* throughout this study to protect the confidentiality of the organization as well as of study subjects from the school. Blue Ridge Christian School serves the families of just over 400 students, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, with approximately 40 students receiving services for special learning needs. This school is fully accredited by the Association for Christian Schools International (ACSI) and AdvancEd. Therefore, the school is approved as a private school in Virginia by the Virginia Association for Independent Schools (VAIS) as authorized by the Virginia Department of Education. Blue Ridge Christian School has a single campus location with multiple connected buildings and sports facilities in a rural suburban area of a small city in Virginia. According to Grenier (1997), this school may be considered in Stage 4 in that it has experienced a renewal which led to a matrix style of leadership and creativity within the organization for development. Schein (2010) might put this organization squarely within midlife in that founders have given control to appointed others and elements of culture are imbedded.

The second site for this study was a private Christian school located in a Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C. The school has been in continuous operation for more than 40 years, is a
non-denominational independent school and is not a ministry of any one church. This organization was referred to by the pseudonym Orange Grove Christian Academy throughout this study. This school serves a population of over 800 Pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students on two separate campus locations, one for preschool through elementary school and one for middle school and high school. Transportation is provided to and from the school from various bus stop locations within the region and transportation is provided between the two campus locations located about ten minutes apart from one another by car. The lower school shares space with a small local church, but the upper school does not. At one time, the school has had multiple locations but has been in the process of consolidating into one large campus location. Orange Grove Christian School shares the same accreditation and approval status as a private Christian school that Blue River Christian School has. According to Grenier (1997), this school may be considered in Stage 4 in that it has experienced a renewal which led to a matrix style of leadership and creativity within the organization for development. Schein (2010) might put this organization squarely within midlife in that founders have given control to appointed others and elements of culture are imbedded.

The third site for this study was a private Christian school located in Central Virginia in a suburb of the state capital of Richmond. This school has been in continuous operation for less than ten years, although it has the same accreditation status that the other two schools share, albeit more recently acquired. This organization was referred to by the pseudonym Lakeview Christian Academy throughout this study. Lakeview Christian Academy serves just under 150 students, sixth through twelfth grade. The school shares building space and limited outside space with a church, but the school operates in partnership with the church. There is one board for the school and another board for the church, and the two boards collaborate with one another and
with the leadership of the school and church for day-to-day operations as well as long-term planning and development. Lakeview Academy, according to Grenier (1997) might be considered in Stage 2 in that survival and growth are being pursued, although is may still have some vestiges of Stage 1 with the entrepreneurial status of a relatively young school. Schein (2010) might place this school in the Founding and Early Growth stage, especially since founders are still a vibrant part of the organizational culture and culture is explicit and taught to new members as a part of identity.

The population for data collection in this study was three leaders who occupy the role equivalent to that of CEO in the organization; this title may vary according to school (Head of School, Headmaster, Principal), but each leader had the highest role in the organization and report only to an established School Board, if one is present. Additionally, one other leader for each school was interviewed and was be the equivalent of Director, Principal, Coordinator. However, the second leader interviewed at each school had direct oversight and leadership over a key area within the school and engaged with most, if not all, of the stakeholders in the organizational culture on some level.

Collectively these leaders shared the responsibility of overseeing the growth and development of a school and not simply day to day operations. Each school that participated had a shared accreditation experience in the same state, thereby all the leaders worked with common standards for credentialing students as is the role of an educational institution. The top management of these schools had either worked collaboratively with the founders of the school or were appointed and mentored by founders of the school. In total, six individuals were interviewed at their school site in person by the researcher. Martin (2002) suggests that it is important to discover the perceptions and views of more than senior-level leaders within an
organization about culture in order to better reflect the phenomenon under study. The interviews were collected from June to September 2018.

Data Collection Methods

Multiple collection methods were utilized in order to understand the relationship between organizational culture and leadership. These methods included semi-structured interviews, on-site observations, a review of school website data, a review of accreditation data, and a review of promotional/tour document data. Each leader of a private school was operating within the bounded system of the private school in which they serve (Merriam, 2009). The research study was approached with inquiry that examines the bounded system and the leader through interviews, field observations, and documents that are integral to case study research (Merriam, 2005). The documents important to this study included the school website (the public expression of identity and culture to current and prospective stakeholders), published school documents (also public expressions of identity and culture to current and prospective stakeholders) and accreditation documents that articulate how each organization meets different standards for accreditation within their organizational culture. This accreditation report included commendations as well as recommendations for improvement; these documents were public-facing documents as well and became part of the annual report on continuous improvement that each school provides.

A pilot study of the interview protocol and all artifact analysis tools was conducted with a private school in Richmond, Virginia. For the purposes of this study, this organization was referred to by the pseudonym Crystal Lake Learning Academy at the end of Chapter Three in the
discussion of the pilot to ensure the confidentiality of the organization as well as the confidentiality of study subjects from the school.

Based on the literature review, the researcher developed an interview tool with three categories of questions for each leader to answer orally in a semi-structured interview. These categories were: Organizational Context (Stage, Identity, Culture), Organizational Processes (Strategic Decisions and Changes), and Leadership (Models and Characteristics). The researcher also designed analysis question tools for the website review, tour packet/document review, accreditation document review designed with these same categories and demonstrated a parallel structure. All tools reflected the literature as supported by the structure of the literature review. Figure 3.1 below reflects the methods included in all sites, including the pilot study.

*Figure 3.1 Collected Study Data Per Site*
The pilot subjects were interviewed, artifact analyses were conducted, and two changes were made to the protocol in that an original software for analyzing sentiment in within transcripts of human language, Clarabridge, was dropped as it added little to the themes that emerged and were analyzed using ATLAS. Additionally, the protocol for analysis of artifacts was changed from doing the website analysis prior to the interview with leadership to doing it afterwards so the analysis protocols started with the leadership interviews. Table 3.1 shows the analysis order of artifacts, the primary audience for each artifact and key observations from the study of each artifact made by the researcher in the pilot study.

Table 3.1:

*Pilot Study Observations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Order</th>
<th>Primary Audience</th>
<th>Key Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Accreditation Document Review</td>
<td>3rd School Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Commendations - continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommendations - prioritize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Current Stakeholders - receive commendations &amp; recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Website Review</td>
<td>5th Potential Stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Every page had a link to detailed inquiry form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Every page featured students from the school predominantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tour Packet/Promotional Document Review</td>
<td>4th Potential Stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotional documents featured students predominantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Three distinct programs featured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership Interviews</td>
<td>2nd* Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Both leaders interested in the other’s perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Both leaders referred to one another in interview questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tour/Observations On Site</td>
<td>1st* Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Students welcome and interact with visitors directly on a tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers welcome and interact with visitors on a tour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key observations were noted by the researcher to determine the efficacy of the data being analyzed and potential relative contribution to the rich description of the relationship between
organizational culture and leadership. Table 3.2 shows the themes that emerged from the analyzing the leadership interviews at the pilot school after conducting the interviews.

Table 3.2.

**Leadership Interviews at Crystal Lake Learning Academy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Context</th>
<th>Organizational Process/Change</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide-Range Special Needs/Individualized Instruction</td>
<td>New Head of School (2nd year)</td>
<td>“Family”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years - mature</td>
<td>Instructional Technology Integration</td>
<td>“Relationships”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repurposed building</td>
<td>“Special Sauce” - no changes</td>
<td>“Individual Abilities”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 shows the themes that began to emerge from the analysis of the other artifacts as they were analyzed by the researcher using the question protocols established for organizational context, organizational processes, and leadership.

Table 3.3.

**Themes from Artifact Analyses at Crystal Lake Learning Academy**
The following details apply to both the pilot study as well as the schools that were subjects of the study. All interviews were recorded on an iPhone video camera and then converted electronically to transcripts using Trint software by first converting the video files to audio file. A hired transcriptionist then reviewed the recordings against the transcripts and performed edits when necessary to clarify the transcript; this occurred when the speaker’s volume faded, or pronunciations of words created inaccuracies in the transfer to transcript. As all speakers interviewed were native English speakers, no other translation was necessary.

Direct observations were made at each location visited and notes were taken and transcribed by the researcher. Photographs were taken in order to capture detail for later analysis by the researcher. All promotional data available during the tour onsite the day of the site visit as well as accreditation documents provided by the school leaders were part of the data collection. Websites were considered part of the data collection and were analyzed. Data were collected over five months, June 2018 to October 2018.

After the pilot was concluded, interviews were conducted with subjects that included three heads of school, one director of admissions, one curriculum coordinator and one principal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotional Documents</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Tour &amp; Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Abilities</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Customized Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Individual Abilities</td>
<td>Specialized Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Individual Needs</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>People Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These interviews were held in person onsite at the school within the timeframe of a single-school day site visit. Since case studies study events within context (Yin, 2003), the researcher traveled to the schools to conduct the interviews and gathered additional information after an initial phone interview and written invitation to participate in the study was received and approved by the subjects at the school (see Appendix A and B). The interviews were selected in order to learn about the organization and the leader (Yin, 2009). The semi-structured interview format allowed for open-ended and follow-up questions (Merriam, 1998), although generally the subjects provided answers to all interview questions in some form. Subjects were given a hard copy of the questions just as the interview was started. Subjects were allowed to keep a copy of the questions. Subjects were also given a copy of the questions the researcher would use to examine the other data for the study. The 25 semi-structured interview questions were intended to elicit views from the subjects around the subjects of organizational context, organizational processes, and leadership models and characteristics (Cresswell, 2009). Member checks (Cresswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), or providing each interviewee a copy of his or her interview for verification, were also conducted with all subjects. Member checks are important to ensure that the interpretation and recording of the interview questions accurately represents the intention and words of the interviewee. All transcripts were deemed to be accurate with no changes. Additionally, copies of the dissertation were provided to the subjects and a presentation of the dissertation was scheduled post-defense of the study with each of the subjects.

Observations on site provided the researcher the opportunity to view behaviors and environments that provide insight into the organizational culture and leadership of the schools (Yin, 2003). Observations were included to gather these insights. The researcher was a non-subject observer at these sites and observed interactions by touring the site with the personnel
tasked with conducting all site tours with any potential stakeholders: students, parents, or community members. The physical spaces, décor, dress, and interactions between people provided insights into each organization’s culture (Hatch, 1993; Martin, 2002, Schein, 2010). Tours are normal occurrences in the school settings, although researcher tours are not the norm and might be considered more intrusive on some level if the researcher engaged with personnel directly (Creswell, 2009). Table 3.4 below provides a summary of the research questions and the data collection method used to investigate the questions. Please see the specific questions in the matrices provided in the appendix.

Table 3.4

Data Collection Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Context</th>
<th>Organizational Processes</th>
<th>Leadership Models &amp; Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Interviews</td>
<td>Leadership Interviews</td>
<td>Leadership Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation Documents</td>
<td>Accreditation Documents</td>
<td>Accreditation Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour/Promotional Documents</td>
<td>Tour/Promotional Documents</td>
<td>Tour/Promotional Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation Notes</td>
<td>Observation Notes</td>
<td>Observation Notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

Qualitative research is emergent research (Creswell, 2009). Content analysis was performed allowing common patterns and these to emerge for each school site studied (Miles &
Huberman, 1994). In content analysis the actual words used or implied by the leaders bring to the surface the themes of the interviews, documents, websites and observations. A coding process was employed in analysis of the data using ATLAS.ti to allow for the themes to be placed into categories. By combining these two processes (Yin, 2009), the researcher performed a pattern analysis. Triangulation of the data from all sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was performed to provide validity along with member checks. A review of researcher field notes and journal of feelings and experiences were completed in a confirmability audit which asked if the data and interpretations made by the researcher are supported by the material, are internally coherent, and represent more than just the mind of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All transcripts for each school site were coded using ATLAS.ti. All transcripts were reviewed with the hired transcription assistant, who is also a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University. This transcription assistant also served as a peer coder order to come to agreement about the secondary categories by school site and across school sites Each response from each subject was coded as it related to one of the research questions - Leadership Role (LR), School Culture (SC), or Strategic Decision/Change (LS). Each response by each subject was coded by the content of the response and then organized into categories. The peer coder reviewed the coding and the second order categories with the researcher for accuracy. This process reflected 92% agreement between the researcher and the research assistant based on in the secondary categories with further discussion and examination needed on only two of the categories, which the researcher performed. Themes emerged from second-order categories that had the greatest measures of groundedness reflected after the coding process was completed in ATLAS.ti. A process map for coding and a list of codes and themes can be found in Appendix H.
**Thematic Analysis.** Using the ATLAS.ti software and assigned codes, data were retrieved for each coded segment, themes emerged, and new thematic codes were assigned. These themes formed the basis for exploring each of the research questions with each of the school sites studied. These themes also allowed a comparison of themes across the samples of each organization’s member responses which informed the findings.

**Multiple Case Comparative Study.** Since the study of the relationship between leadership and organizational culture was studied among three separate schools, the data were analyzed and segregated into three separate cases to better understand the phenomena. This process allows for a cross-case analysis (Patton, 2002). Cross-case analysis allows for grouping answers from different people to the common question. This process was used to analyze the findings to the research questions regarding the relationship between leadership and organizational culture from Blue River Christian School, Orange Grove Christian Academy, and Lakeview Christian Academy.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in this study was founded upon triangulation of the sources of data and methodologies used. This study sought convergence of findings, or cross validation, through triangulation by using data collected from different individuals at different times in different places, and looking at several sources of data (interview, observation, artifacts/documents) to see if the results are consistent (McMillan, 2009). In addition to member-checking through allowing subjects to review individual school transcripts as well as the final dissertation and dissertation presentation, the interviewer provided an overview and a paper copy of all the tools used for the study so that the subjects can see the type and nature of all the questions and how they related
back to organizational context, organizational processes, and leadership. All the study subjects gave their individual accounts and perspectives on their organizational culture, organizational processes, and leadership models and characteristics. Using semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and reviews of documents including accreditation documents, websites, and tour/promotional documents increased the credibility of the study. The use of peer-coding review and member checks also increased credibility. Transferability of data was provided through detailed and thorough description, also described as thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Detailed descriptions were provided in the findings in chapter four using direct quotations from the interviewees and documentation. The findings were generalizable to theory because they are based on the combination of several theories combined into the theoretical framework (see Appendix A).

**Human Subjects and Ethical Considerations**

All research for this study was conducted under the guidelines provided by the Institutional Review Board of Virginia Commonwealth University. Each subject was given a document that outlined the parameters of the study (see Appendix C) and explained the provisions the researcher would provide to ensure confidentiality. Subjects were allowed to refuse to participate or not answer questions that they were not comfortable answering. All notes and transcriptions were handled in a confidential manner that provided for secure storage and use of material on a university-established safe server with double encryption with access limited to that of the researcher and the hired transcriptionist as the research assistant, who only had access to the transcripts. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement prior to transcription. A final copy for publication of this study and any subsequent articles published, were be provided to the organizations for review and to ensure that confidentiality
has been maintained. Subjects were identified by pseudonyms for both the school at which they worked and individually assigned pseudonyms.

Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology used to explore the relationship between leadership and organizational culture. The research sites and populations were discussed, along with methodology, data collection and analysis methods and processes, and trustworthiness and ethical precautions for subjects. Interview questions, along with the method of discovery were included. Results of a pilot study were also included. The research methods used in this multi-case comparative study provide evidence that converges to show the relationship between leadership and organizational culture.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings from three case studies that form this multiple-case comparative study. The case studies inform the following research questions: A) How does a leader influence an organizational culture? B) How does an organizational culture influence a leader? C) What does a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture? The research results represented data collected from June 2018 through October 2018 at three different private Christian school locations in the state of Virginia:

- Blue River Christian School is a single-site campus that has been established for just over 40 years as a ministry of a church in southern Virginia.
- Orange Grove Christian Academy has also been established for just over 40 years in northern Virginia, but it is independent from any church.
- Lakeview Christian Academy has been established for less than ten years in central Virginia and is a result of a partnership with a church. Pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the organization as well as study subjects.

This chapter is organized into three sections: 1) organizational context and leadership of the three organizations; 2) analysis and emergent themes in these private Christian schools as described by the leaders of these organizations; and 3) analysis and comparison of each organization to the emergent themes of the relationship between organizational culture and leadership.

Organizational Context

Evidence collected from semi-structured interviews, web-site and document review, and direct observations was used to provide contextual information about the three research sites. This study involved established and fully-accredited schools in Virginia and the identity of these organizations as private institutions with processes that reflected the priorities of academic
education, spiritual ministry, and business practice. Focus is placed on the organizational context (stage, identity, and culture), the organizational processes of strategic decisions and change, and leadership models and characteristics.

**Blue River Christian School**

This school was established in 1973 for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students as a ministry of a denominational Christian church. Currently, there are almost 1,300 former students who are alumni of the school. The mission of the school is equally expressed as both spiritual and academic in vision, as two parts of the same whole. The written mission of the school is one in which the school, “...makes disciples of Christ in obeying the command of God to train students in truth.”

The majority of the school’s graduates enter college, and the curriculum is college preparatory in nature, using a variety of resources from both secular and Christian vendors. All educational objectives are infused with biblical connections. Blue River offers a standard diploma requiring 24 credits for graduation from grades 9-12, as well as an advanced diploma requiring 28 credits from specific courses for graduation. Teachers are qualified college graduates who are also committed to the goals of Christian education and who are certified by the Association for Christian Schools International. Teacher bios are publicly posted on the school website and include not only educational credentials and teaching experience but also the number of years of Christian experience. Many of the teachers have been at Blue River Christian School longer than they have served professionally in any other organization. A recent accreditation review commended the school for encouraging faculty pursuit of higher education, engaging parents in student learning, investing in a mentoring program for new teachers and establishing standardized testing report practices. In terms of teaching and learning, the school
also received recommendations for growth in the accreditation cycle to plan and schedule professional development and to train faculty to participate in an ongoing process of collaboration. There was also a need expressed by the accreditation team to increase the communication channels between the faculty and the School Committee.

The campus-style educational facilities are interactive, with a variety of instructional technology tools including smartboard technology. In addition to the sports fields and playground facilities on the rural green campus, the school has labs for science and computers, libraries, and a large gymnasium. The multiple buildings are connected by walkways in a space shared with the church when school is not in session for multi-purpose use of space almost every day of the week. While there is a dress code that includes elements such as wearing collared shirts and closed-toe shoes, there is no formal uniform policy in place any longer at Blue River Christian School.

The *Family School Guide* focuses on the processes of daily life at the school and the structure and operation of the school, but it opens with a first-person narrative from the Head of School clarifying the admissions process and expressing the value of Christian education and the concept that the school exists as a partnership with the family. The *Family School Guide* expresses that Blue River Christian School has a biblical role, “…to work in conjunction with the home to mold students to be Christ-like. Of necessity, this goal involves the school’s understanding and belief of what qualities or characteristics exemplify a Christ-like life.” The school reserves the right, under the biblical morality policy in the *Family School Guide*, within sole discretion to refuse admission of an applicant or discontinue enrollment of a student if the atmosphere or conduct within a particular home or the activities are in opposition to the biblical
lifestyle the school teaches; these principles are expressed explicitly in terms of predominantly sexual practices and gender identification.

As a part of the application process, Blue River Christian School seeks to establish harmony between the home and school and recognizes that the parents are responsible, ultimately, for the training of their children. To establish harmony, each family is asked to sign the Family-School Covenant/Cheating Policy. There are six “Life Principles” that are part of this agreement: respect, obedience, discipline, holiness, wisdom and responsibility. Each of these principles is defined in a single sentence summary definition and includes 3-5 biblical references to support the definition. The Policy Regarding Cheating also contains a definition of cheating, with biblical references to support the definition; the policy goes on to enumerate examples of cheating and consequences of cheating expressed both academically and spiritually. Each stakeholder – parents, students, and school representative – signs a “Family-School Covenant/Cheating Policy.” Signing the agreement by the parents indicates support of the Biblical Morality Policy, educational philosophy, objectives, *Family School Guide*, standards of conduct, cheating policy and principles of the covenant as well as the commitment to withdrawing children if the school and parents cannot work together in unity. Signing the agreement by the student is agreeing that the teachers are an extension of the parent and that obedience of policies results in glorifying Jesus Christ and disobedience can result in dismissal. The school representative signs the agreement pledging to uphold the principles and guidelines of this covenant. All signatures and statements are on the same page and a hard copy is kept on file by the school.

The *Family School Guide* outlines many other operational processes beyond the Life Principles and Biblical Morality Policy. These are likely to be considered standard operating
procedures in any number of schools: phone calls, lost and found, medication and illness/injury, chapel, lockers, schedules, traffic and transportation, lunch ordering, academic information (grading, report cards, homework, field trips, library, guidance), attendance information, dress code information, fundraising, celebrations, bullying, demerits and detentions. There are other elements of the Family-School Guide that outline operational processes that are distinct to a Christian school: expectations for chapel, athletic spectator guidelines including prayer behavior and good sportsmanship that demonstrates Christ-like character, and adherence to an annual World Missions Conference which occurs on school property during a specific week.

A change in emphasis within the last five years has placed greater focus on the internal processes of spiritual and academic development rather than external dress. The rationale for the change is attributed to the School Committee, who expresses a desire to:

make disciples of Christ and obey the command of God to train students in truth. Students are requested to dress in a manner that enhances the reputation of the Gospel. With institutional preferences in the areas of neatness and appropriateness, students are requested to demonstrate a heart condition of humility as they abide by the guidelines which are interpreted and applied by faculty.

The dress code policy reminds families that conformity to a dress code does not make one more Christian or more spiritual than another, but that the simplified dress code is an effort to complement educational processes. The dress code asks that modesty be the key principle in the selection of formal wear and daily wear.

**Orange Grove Christian Academy**

The researcher was able to analyze two websites: the current website and the newly-developed and updated site that was scheduled to be released during this school year. The latter offered insight into cultural change at the school through the elements that changed between the
old and new websites and the elements that remained the same. The school was established in 1979 by a gentleman and his wife at a Christian church with only four teachers with a vision to serve a region in an interdenominational spirit. As the first Head of School, he served as principal, bus driver, playground supervisor, secretary, and even janitor. By 1988, the school had grown out of its space with 468 students and across a broad region in a Northern Virginia bedroom community of Washington, D.C., and the school grew into multiple locations. Just four years after the first senior class graduated, the school began construction on their own land rather than continuing to share space with different churches across the region. In 1997, the Upper School doors were opened and a total of 885 students enrolled across all campuses. At one time, the school had as many as five campuses. At present, the school has two campus locations – a lower school that shares space with a church about ten minutes from the Upper School location on the school-owned property. This first Head of School is currently active as a board member of the school although his wife, who began the school with him, has died. Featured prominently in a recent issue of the school’s magazine, the founder and first Head of School writes, “This year…one of our high school graduate’s father and mother were students in our school. And now their daughter is going to graduate from (our school) this year. And I will have the privilege, I trust, of being on stage when she receives her diploma.” The new tagline for the school, the vision statement, is “Educating Christian Leaders for Life.” The mission statement is: “Orange Grove Christian Academy is an evangelical, non-denominational school dedicated to a strong academic program with Christian character and biblical truths integrated into every area, in order that students develop a lifelong Christian worldview.”

The lower and upper school campuses are less than ten miles apart. A bus system provided by the school not only provides transportation from designated bus stops across the
region, but it also allows transportation to and from campus locations for siblings who are at the
two campus locations. Bus service is provided by a small fleet of buses owned and operated by
the school, but there is an additional schedule of fees for those who use the transportation
services provided by the school.

The lower school buildings are almost hidden down a winding road not far from a major
four-lane highway. The lower school buildings consist of two buildings close to one another, and
one is a church building used for school purposes as the school building uses every available
space for multiple classes at each grade level. The parking lot is clearly marked with cones for
drop-off and pick-up purposes. There is a two-sided lettered sign that identifies the front entrance
of the school. On one side, the sign welcomes you to school. On the other side, it reminds you to
check in at the front office and escort your child into the building. One side would then be seen
by parents who are on time for school; the other for those that arrive late.

Under a covered walkway, the doors of the school are locked, and visitors must ring a
buzzer/doorbell and state name/purpose for visit/person being visited before the door is
electronically released by office personnel, at which time the visitor must present identification.
Lower school students file by on a “zero” -- no noise, as the students pass through the halls past
the office, which is literally right at the front door. At the 75-acre campus, a sign on the front
lawn of the building that says, “Home of the Future Lower school.” In total between the two
campuses, there are over 800 students enrolled in this school at present. Historically, the student
population had crested at over 1,300 and had once had five campus locations, although there was
great intentionality in using the singular, “school,” in the name of the organization to convey
oneness rather than separation. Signage for the coming lower school is posted visibly in several
places on campus. Beyond the football field is a baseball field and for as far as the eye can see,
there are trees. The upper school campus is equally secure as the lower school in check-in procedures and an iPad application is the methodology for signing in visitors.

A tour of the Upper School begins in an office that resembles a great deal the design of the front office space, but it is a second space that is managed by the admissions coordinator. Her business card is in the front sleeve of the robust tour packet that she has prepared and of which there are several at the ready. The waiting room area for this office also shows a great number of student-produced artwork of a variety of media. There are photographs of sculptures that are now housed in a museum, having been donated some years back commemorating 9/11.

As we walk through the corridors, middle school students appear to be in a more restricted dress code of the traditional khaki pants and polo shirts, while the dress code of the high school students is much more individualized with a variety of clothing on males and females that could be described as typical streetwear. The school’s dress code still calls for guidelines of modesty/professional standard, but that it is relaxed intentionally at the high school level as a privilege. The tour begins and ends at the front entrance. The corridors mirror one another and have large multi-purpose rooms in the middle for student lunch. One particularly large room, the new gym, has a stage and sound system for chapel services and school gatherings. The gym itself has a loft-like area above it for a full weight room. Full-sized lockers line the hallways. There is a designated outside picnic area in a courtyard for seniors to eat lunch as a senior privilege, and seniors also have the privilege of eating lunch in a designated classroom of a teacher who happens to be the class sponsor and football coach. Another privilege they have is that they can paint a single wall of his room along a unique theme they select each year. One wing of the building has expansive music rooms, both for choir and instrumental bands, and this same wing houses an extraordinary art room that was designed to optimize the
light coming from the extensive windows. Intentionally, the location of the new lower school addition was selected so as not to occlude the light into this space. The space was dedicated, as noted on a plaque outside of the art room, to the superintendent’s wife, who was a vibrant member of the school community and art advocate/teacher at the school.

The tour/promotional documents were housed in a tour folder with a total of 12 documents in either full color or on the school letterhead in color. There is a colorful logo on the high-gloss half-sheet that is the first document on the page; it reads, “i EXCEL,” which stands for engage, expand, create, equip, learn. On the back, each part of the acronym is expressed in the first person, “I” as a student voice expresses the student profile of a learner at this school. Each of these statements is written in positive and affirming tone - for example, “I engage with those around me,” is followed by statements like, “I collaborate with my peers, teachers, and mentors to accomplish something that none of us could do alone.” There are 12 different affirmations expressed explaining the intended student experience in first person that express intended outcomes for the individual educational experience at the school.

In this tour packet, there is also first a letter from the Superintendent (CEO/Head of School) to prospective families in which he addresses in two succinct paragraphs the culture of the school as it relates to the broader culture and how this connects to the mission and vision of the school:

We at (Orange Grove Christian Academy) are keenly aware of a significant dynamic work in our culture today…and it comes clearly into focus when we view our world and culture through a truly Biblical perspective. That dynamic is the dire need we have for strong leaders with great skill, intelligence, integrity, and sensitivity. I can tell you today that for over three decades at (OGCA) we have been producing those skilled, intelligent, honest, sensitive leaders. God has placed in our hands the tools of excellent college-preparatory academics; instructors and mentors who are both capable and dedicated; an environment from which to unashamedly and powerfully proclaim the Truth; facilities
that enable us to offer outstanding educational, fine arts, and athletic opportunities; and a strong commitment to growing world-class, culture-changing leaders.

The second document is a statement of tuition and fees, ranging from about $2,500 for part time preschool to just under $11,000 for total annual cost for grades 9-12. Extended care is available for before and after school care, giving the facility an opening of 6:30AM and closing of 6:00PM. Discounts for tuition include those for multiple children, alumni, and advance payment discounts. The third document contains the transportation fees for buses. The school offers bus service to and from three different parts of the geographical area as well as shuttle service to and from lower school and upper school. The school offers options for occasional bus usage. The fourth document shows thirteen different bus routes and schedules. The fifth document provides information about the variable tuition program; this document communicates the purpose of variable tuition, which is to make Christian education accessible to more families and that 64% of existing families to receive some form of discount or aid. All financial documents are reviewed through a third party, FACTS, which is an industry standard. There is a finance director on site who is a resource for questions at the school, however. There is a financial aid committee at the school that reviews each request for aid and makes awards by specified dates, three times a year. All aid provided is need-based financial aid.

On the right side of the tour packet is a full-color 8-page glossy promotional brochure (8½ by 11 inches) called “Middle School Highlights.” This document speaks exclusively of the details for the middle education program at the school -- attendance, lunch, wardrobe, exams, report cards. The centerfold is of students actively engaged in a music class with trophies in the background and a large image is that of middle school students talking with the Superintendent. Notably, when it comes to communication, all upper school students are issued an iPad and there
are required training sessions for parents and students. Words that thread through the document in large font express the following attributes as experiential outcomes for students at the school: imagine, discover, grow, attain, explore, play and dream.

From the document review process, there is a full-color 23-page magazine, Issue 3, that is the alumni magazine/annual report. This report offers a letter from the superintendent, a memorial, a feature on music and mathematics, an article on understanding variable tuition, a capital campaign update, an article about a former student who now designs wedding dresses, a feature article on the founder of the school, a feature article by a former parent explaining why he still gives to the school, a feature article on an alumnus who now is part of a leading Christian music band based on an interview of him, sports recap and arts updates, and a feature article written by a teacher at the school on love of teaching. There is one full-page ad on the page facing a page of alumni updates. The back page is a thank-you and an acknowledgement of the tagline for the capital campaign about students as leaders.

Behind the magazine is another letterhead document that outlines the process for admissions -- campus visit, apply online, preliminary review, interviews and testing, final decision and acceptable letter. The intent in bold-faced type is to make sure that the child has the right fit. A non-discrimination statement is on the bottom of the document which includes race, color, national or ethnic origin. The next document is “Snapshot of a Graduate” and features a young woman in cap and gown and details such as: participates in fine arts, school mission trips (local and international), has 75 hours of community service, is active in 1 or more of 12 clubs, has an SAT score above the national average, plays on 1 or more of 25 athletic teams, and attends and volunteers at a local church. This document also features a student testimonial that focuses on academic and spiritual excellence for the future.
The next document on letterhead is simply, “Educational Technology.” It explains in seven details why the school has gone to 1:1 - power of information, accelerate cross-curricular creativity, eTextbooks, real world collaborative learning, useful technology integration, technology discipleship, and university modelling. The last document in the promotional materials is a Parent and School Partnership Commitment, which expresses the philosophy that the school is a partner with the parent and parents have the primary responsibility for education their children. This document explains the purpose of Bible integration and what to expect with its usage in class. There are ten items that parents are asked to agree with the school about including standards of behavior and how to address conflict in a biblical way and work toward resolution. This document also includes notification that attendance at the school is a privilege that can be withdrawn. In reviewing accreditation documents, the commendations and recommendations were intimately tied to one another and revolved around the themes of professional development, technology integration for instruction, and communication of change and expected goals to stakeholders. While commended for the professional development of technology integration, recommendations included the articulation of responsible technology use, and specific objective measures of student growth. Both the commendations and recommendations centered on facilitating academic growth.

In addition to centralizing into one large campus location from two at present and as many as five in the past, the school is in the process of updating its website, for which the researcher gained access to both for research purposes around organizational processes and particularly change. This access allowed for two website reviews and the ability to see what was changing in structure and expression between the two sites, uniquely. Features of the older website included the following:
• The Head of School authors a first-person article that talks about partnership, leadership, and family.
• The detailed timeline over a 40-year history is present as is a connection to the founders, which notably is written in first person and refers in familiar first-person naming conventions of the founders.
• The word “leadership” emerges from this website, particularly in reference to the upper school and in the term, “servant leadership.”
• Two campus locations, though “one school” as a phrase is predominantly communicated.
• Additionally, there are several communication channels for all stakeholders, including through social media.
• One communication channel is blog posts that are first-person perspective from both the leadership and other stakeholders in the school – parents, students, and teachers.

Comparatively, the predominant image of the old website, featuring the HOS and the first person message about partnering with parents, has been replaced on the new site by a large image of a male educator in a tie between boy and girl elementary age learners with iPads in hand and the theme/tagline/vision statement, “Educating Leaders for Life.” Other significant changes include:

• Each level of the school has its own landing page: Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, Upper School.
• An “About the School” section focuses on outcomes, not history.
• 2017 Annual Report - Infographics communicating student profile and outcome information as well as financial status reporting. Infographics communicate financial status, capital campaign needs, testing data, percentage of college attendance, percentage of teachers with advanced degrees...colleges are listed, number of students who received scholarships and the total amount (heavily academic data reporting).
• Landing pages for each age level, reflecting academic standards and experiences; reviews from parents posted. Reviews tilt heavily towards, “teachers care.”
• Each page is slightly different but follows a structure -- why this school, what we teach/do, parent reviews.
• Main theme for parent reviews: teachers care, academics excellent, spiritual growth.
• Reviews are heavy on student experiences (academic and spiritual) and are usually from the parent experience; frequently the experience communicated is about the experience the family has had.
• Focus is still on partnering with parents for experiences that affect future state (college, career, family and beyond) The entire website focuses on student experiences and family reflections on these experiences.
• The only time leadership is visible is in the annual report which the Head of School addresses as “a report card.”

Lakeview Christian Academy

Lakeview Christian Academy began as a vision between friends in 2010 to develop a Christ-centered environment with high academic standards in Central Virginia. A local church offered to partner with the original founders and board of directors to the school as the church had just built an educational wing to their building and were open to partnership in the use of it.

In 2013, enrollment opened for grade levels 6-10 and the first day of school opened with 38 students that same year. The present state for the fully-accredited school is that of 122 students and 15 faculty members. The principal also serves as the academic advisor, and she is the founding administrator. She was later joined by someone on the original board who took the role of Head of School/Administrator, and the principal works in partnership with the Head of School.

There are several identity-related artifacts accessible online and in promotional documents for the school which include the mission statement, vision statement, philosophy, core values and supporting scriptures, and a statement of faith. All of these work to firmly establish the values of the school. The mission statement of Lakeview Christian Academy defined the school as, “A Christ-centered school of academic excellence in which each student is educated and trained in biblical principles and a Christian worldview” (website, promotional/tour documents). An additional vision statement stated that the school “will demonstrate high standards of learning, biblical discipleship, and embrace challenging opportunities that promote Christian values and service at home, in the community, and in the world” (website, promotional/tour documents). Adding to this further, the school has a philosophy statement:
(Lakeview Christian Academy’s) philosophy of education is inspired by the intentional pursuit of the fundamentals set forth in our Mission Statement. Understanding the Biblical call for parents to educate and train up their child in the fear and love of the Lord, Jesus Christ, Lakeview seeks to partner with parents to achieve the mutual goals of both. With each student's intellectual, emotional, physical, social and spiritual development in mind, Lakeview places a high value on holistic student development utilizing the best resources available. By creating a Gospel centered teaching environment, through the discipleship of Christ centered educators, and through the instruction in the educational disciplines of Philosophy, Science, Language, and the Arts, Lakeview provides each student the opportunity to discover the Creator within His creation.

Another artifact that communicates organizational context to add to this philosophy statement is the statement of core values, which is an expression of what is expected of Lakeview Christian students. These students will be Christians who:

- **Understand that God is real and realize that all truth is God’s truth.**
- **Believe that the Bible is God’s Word and know, understand, and possess apologetic skills that enable them to articulate and defend their Biblical worldview.**
- **Are empowered by the Holy Spirit to pursue a life of faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love.**
- **Understand the worth of every human being as created in the image of God by respecting and relating appropriately with integrity to people.**
- **Embrace and practice justice, mercy, and peacemaking in family and society.**
- **Understand that work has dignity as an expression of the nature of God by personally carrying out Jesus’ Great Commission locally and around the world.**
- **Are actively involved in a church community, serving God and others.**

While Lakeview Christian Academy is a non-denominational school, they expressed a belief in common core beliefs, a statement of faith, which is as follows:

- We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen, eternally existent in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity).
- We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God the Father, true God from true God, not made, of one being with the Father and through Him all things were made. We believe in Jesus Christ’s virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His substitutionary and atoning death, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His ultimate personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that God, in the form of the Son Jesus Christ, for our sake and our salvation:
Came down from heaven, became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man, 
Was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered death and was buried, 
rose again to life from death on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ascended 
into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father will come again in glory to judge 
the living and the dead, saved and lost, the saved unto the resurrection of life, the lost 
unto the resurrection of Damnation, and His kingdom will have no end.

• We believe in the Holy Spirit, of God, from God, promised to man by Jesus Christ who, 
with the Father and Son, is worshipped and glorified. We also 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. We likewise believe in the present and active ministry of the Holy Spirit, by 
whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life, the fruits of which are the 
evidences of the spiritual unity of believers.

• We believe the Bible to be the inspired, only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of 
God, teaching us what is true and right, helping us to recognize and identify what is false 
and wrong, and useful for the correction of ourselves and all believers. (website)

In addition to publishing multiple corresponding documents about the identity of the school 
as a Christian school, as a part of the admissions process each student signs a covenant as a part 
of the application process to which as student commits to the following:

• I, __________________________________________, pledge to conduct myself in a 
manner that demonstrates the Godly attributes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, 
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
• I will speak kindly to those in my path (Colossians 4:6).
• I will encourage others (1Thessalonians 5:11).
• I will accept opportunities to serve (Galatians 5:13).
• I will extend forgiveness when treated wrongly by others (Matthew 5:12) and seek 
forgiveness when I have done something wrong (Matthew 5:24).
• I will pray for the students, faculty, and staff of (Lakeview Christian) (1Timothy 2:2-1).
• I will be obedient and respectful to those in authority (Hebrews 13:17).

Every stakeholder must sign this covenant in addition to the new applicants to the school – 
parents, teachers, board members and volunteers. Students can attend Lakeview Christian 
Academy on a full-time or part-time basis; part-time students are made up of students who are 
homeschooled and want to take some coursework at the school or seniors who have completed
most graduation requirements and seek internship/work experiences outside of school. Financial assistance is provided to qualifying students based on financial need. The school promotes through the website two diploma options (standard and advanced), middle school and high school electives, physical education, foreign language, technology integration in the classroom, after-school supervision and the use of an online platform for student learning and communication. Additionally, the school posts the logos of all the colleges and universities to which students have been accepted since 2010 on the website – which were 23 in 2019.

Copies of the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 Annual Reports were readily available online. These reports featured enrollment data, financial data, student life experiences, athletic and academic accomplishments, engagement in community service and leadership, testing and academic data, and donor lists for funding of the school. Notably, partnerships were featured predominantly in each issue of the annual reports; these included partnerships with colleges and universities, internships with local businesses, partnerships with local service organizations, and a profile of the partnership that exists between the church and the school (each with their respective boards).

In terms of explaining curriculum and instruction, the school details what one can expect from Lakeview Christian Academy and how this institution distinguishes itself from others:

- An academic program that promotes student excellence.
- We recognize the need for individualized attention; therefore, classes are intentionally small and focused.
- We embrace our role as educators. Administrators and teachers know each student and are aware of individual learning styles.
- Separating the school from other private schools is our Christian foundation and faith. We are proud to integrate a Christian world view into each of our classes. Each morning begins in God’s Word and with prayer. Student-led chapel is held weekly.
- We believe it is essential for high school language arts students to read and study classical literature.
• Laboratory experiences in high school science courses are essential and required by colleges and universities. To meet the laboratory requirements of the high school biology, chemistry, and physics coursework, we have partnered with the Landry Academy to provide this interactive experience and to satisfy all laboratory science requirements for our high school students.
• Specialized learning opportunities are also available at in many subject areas: Bible, technology, personal finance, physical education, Spanish, art, music, and drama.
• Lastly, we do not adhere to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or purchase recommended CCSS resources. Text selections and resources are given significant thought and consideration. Selections are made based on curricular quality and enrichment.

The wealth of documentation and website resources were extensive collectively and communicated a vast amount of data about the organizational culture and processes of Lakeview Christian Academy.

Leadership

Direct interview data, supported by document analysis, was used to determine the leadership influences at the three schools. The documents analyzed, mainly accreditation documents, tour and promotional documents, and websites, supported the leadership influences described by those interviewed.

Blue River Christian School

As the school is a ministry of the church, the Head of School is considered the Associate Pastor of the School. While the Head of School duties comprise 95% of the job role, there is an element of direct service to the church in the role of Associate Pastor, and this role exists to maintain an effective relationship between the church and the school. The Head of School is considered both the instructional and the spiritual leader of the school and is held accountable by the School Committee for day-to-day management of the school academically and spiritually, the
growth and development of the school academically and spiritually, and the financial stability and stewardship of the resources of the school.

The current Head of School is only the second to occupy this position, and the current Head of School has been in this role for almost 30 years of the school’s history. The School Committee has been in continuous existence since the beginning of the school and is made up predominantly of parents from the school appointed by the church. While the Head of School is under the authority of the church through the School Committee, as administrator he has day-to-day autonomy in operations. A comprehensive policy manual was developed in order to support a strong church/school relationship, which has resulted in a record 42 years of budget surplus.

In a recent accreditation visit, the leadership capacity commendations included acknowledgment of the strength of the comprehensive policy manual but also the autonomy of the administrator. Additionally, Blue River Christian School was commended for having a mission statement that was pursued passionately by faculty, staff and administration. The current Head of School came to Blue River Christian School almost 30 years ago after a career in public school education. He came first as a teacher, transitioned into the role of Assistant Principal, and was mentored by the founding Head of School until he assumed the role himself when the founding Head of School became a national consultant on School Board Policy Governance for Christian Schools. The current Head of School did not come alone into the culture of Blue River Christian School. Not only did his now-adult children attend school at Blue River Christian School, but his wife also works in an administrative capacity in the school and has for many years. The Director of Admissions, who reports to the Head of School directly, has served him in that capacity for over 20 years and has grown children who are among the alumni for Blue River Christian School.
Three main themes emerged during data analysis describing the organizational culture and processes of Blue River Christian School: 1) relationship focus, 2) intimate connection between the spiritual and the academic, and 3) value of authority figures and authority of the Bible. The following will discuss the organizational culture of Blue River Christian School through the three themes.

**Relationship Focus.** Blue Ridge Christian School is built on relationships. At the heart of the school’s mission and vision is building a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is stated explicitly in the mission statement on the website and on the *Family-Guide* as well as in the two leadership interviews. The primary relationship foster is to “make disciples of Christ.” However, both leaders describe their culture as one of family, one with another. Reggie, the Head of School, said:
“…this may sound like a canned answer, but I think of us as a family. Part of that is because I’ve been here for 28 years. Relationships have been developed over those 28 years, not only with the staff but with the overall school community with families who have been actively a part of the school for almost 20 years. And so, I would think of it that way, but also, I think about the relationships we have on a day-to-day basis. It’s really family-oriented and this has worked with the staff that God has brought here.”

When asked the same question, the Director of Admissions, Sharon, said, “They do become a family…They can come in and they can make friends and really fit in as a family or they can stand back and not, and just be an observer.” The parent-student handbook was named, “Family Guide.” In the guide and on the website, the language focused on the partnership between the home and school and the need for relationships to be mutually supportive, clearly defined, and based on biblical principles. Both leaders spoke as both school professionals but also about their own personal family connection to the school. Sharon shared, “I have three daughters. They all went here. My husband passed away, but he was in the first graduating class here…he wanted his daughters to go to school here and that’s because it is kind of like a family.” As the interview with Reggie commenced, his cell phone rang three different times with faculty or family members who were reaching out directly to him to solve different issues, one of which was a parent who was willing to substitute for a teacher that was sick that morning but she’d have to go home and change out of her pajamas first since she’d driven to school for drop off in them and hadn’t gotten dressed yet.

**Intimate Connection Between Spiritual and Academic.** It was evident that spiritual outcomes and academic outcomes were two parts of the same whole. Rarely was one mentioned without the other, but sometimes spiritual outcomes got the greater focus and stood alone in commentary. “They are not only going to be academically challenged here but spiritually challenged as well. And that’s what I like to hear when people talk about the school,” Sharon commented. Sharon
acknowledges that the culture has changed, that the school is more open to outreach and to working with families who don’t perhaps have a Christian background but are seeking Christian education for their children. She even shared that they hired a Director of Development for the purpose raising funds for the purpose of helping students who can’t afford private Christian education but want it. She also shared that the outreach included international students for whom academic language barriers posed a problem as well as spiritual barriers. As Reggie put it, “There is a balance between the spiritual and academics. The one would not outweigh the other. I’d like others to see that we have good strong academics but that’s not true if we don’t have strong spiritual foundations and a biblical worldview.”

**Value of Authority.** Blue River Christian School places a lot of value on the authority of the Bible, of the authority of parents over their children, of the authority of the school over the children and partnering with parents in that authority. They also have an extensive policy manual and procedures that support the governing authority of the School Committee and the Head of School as well as the authority that the Head of School carries as an Associate Pastor by virtue of being Head of School. Signed family agreements are submission to all aspects of the authority structure that is in place. Ultimately, the source of all authority as defined by Blue Ridge Christian School is God. Reggie commented, “We can’t do everything. We’ve got to make sure that what we take on is God-right. God-empowered. Because something’s got to fail if it’s not coming from His leadership.”

When asked about leadership models and characteristics, three main themes emerged during data analysis describing leadership models and characteristics; questions about the strategies and changes as well underscored the emerging themes connected to leadership of Blue River Christian School: 1) leadership as evolving commitment; 2) growth as experience; and 3)
intended outcomes. The following will discuss the leadership models and characteristics of Blue River Christian School through the three themes.

**Leadership as Evolving Commitment.** Both leaders who were interviewed expressed a long-term commitment to the school that stretched into decades. However, in the short-term, the day-to-day execution of the job of Head of School and the job of Director of Admissions demanded a commitment to priorities that might not fall neatly into a job description but were relational in nature and made the job roles dynamic. This dynamism was part of the appeal of the job to each of the leaders. They could actively change the scope of their work in meaningful ways to respond to the relational needs of the families at the school, and that gave them job satisfaction, a high level of engagement and resilience to face difficult situations over long periods of time. “Having a pulse of the staff and making sure they are where they are personally as well as professionally--this is a challenge because with a staff of 40 I can’t be personal with everything, but I want to share that responsibility with my personnel,” said Reggie, who values a high level of engagement with his staff and going beyond the job description when supporting them as individuals. Sharon talks about how her role evolved over time as she was able to connect more and more relationally with people and how that continues to develop:

Well, I started out in the pre-school department and then I came up to start working in that church office as the admissions director…I am probably just good at rapport with parents. You know, they confide in me. I have students that text me when they need something. I’m not always the one that can help them, but I can usually guide them to the place that they need to go.

**Growth as Experience.** While the number of students enrolled at Blue River Christian School has increased over the last five years and more students have been able to benefit from increased financial aid options, the school leaders are grateful for that growth and hope it continues.
However, when they talk about growth, both share the perspective in their individual interviews about growth as experiencing change spiritually. Historically, the school may have been considered more legalistic than it is now, shared Reggie. The school had required a more stringent adherence to a much more detailed statement of faith and was less open to families who were not deeply involved in their individual churches. He no longer believes that is true and he wants to grow more as culture into a culture of grace. As a matter of fact, he is leading staff development using a book about Christian school culture and the concept of grace. Every faculty member is reading this book and engaging in regular planned discussions about how to grow the experience of grace within the culture. Reggie commented on how he felt about the growth experience that he wants at his school:

So that’s what’s changing because we want so much to be Ambassadors of Grace. God leads us because you know there is that battle between law and grace when you accept a student. I am excited to see how there may need to be some changes…maybe we should rewrite our handbooks like David suggested last week at a district meeting. I can see what we are doing this year would have that kind of impact.

Sharon kept the focus about growth on a more individual student level, and her priority was that each student be impacted: “I would like to see all the students go away with at least a spiritual knowledge, not necessarily go away as a Christian but have a spiritual background where they know the truth. Our job is to just bring it forth for them.” Neither leader expressed growth in terms of growth in enrollment; rather, each addressed growth in experience of grace as the higher priority. “Recently we’ve had a good amount of growth in enrollment. This is a blessing…But when I think about growth, I think about so much more than numbers. And I think some of it has to do with the culture,” commented Reggie.
Intended Outcomes. The intended outcomes that occurred as a result of being a part of Blue River Christian School for Reggie were heavily relational and spiritual in focus, indicating that relationships and spiritual development were priorities and focus points for leadership strategies. “I want to be realistic in this answer. Being with the school for as long as I have it’s easy to say we’re doing everything well. Let me give some of what I do believe – that we are impacting individual students in a very good way with meaningful staff student relationships.” When he listed where quality time was invested, this was the list: discipling through instruction, devotionals, small group ministry, and a servant leadership institute. “So, I would say we are doing well with the spiritual while that is not to say we’re not doing well with the academic.” Reggie also points out that the new addition of special education program has resulted in new intended outcomes, particularly for the 10% of students within the student body who are a part of this program. The training for the staff and the four staff members who lead the special education program have been the result of intentional outcomes for special education students who want Christian education as well. All staff are impacted by the children who are mainstreamed and that is intentional. There is also intentionality in reaching out to adoptive families because there are several families at the school who are foster parents seeking adoption status as well as other adoptees who have already become permanently a part of a new family. The school leaders are aware that that the outcome of the family experience should be a good one.

Orange Grove Christian Academy

Ronald is the current Head of School. During the interview, he described the school as administratively run with an advisory policy board and a culture that could be best described as a “family,” as it was based on relationships. What he wanted people to experience at the school
that he recognizes as a mature one is that teachers care. He notes that the school is just now entering a stage of established long-term identity and that teachers are empowered to care at this school and that the school does particularly well with teacher relationships. A unique challenge is that, as a suburb of Washington, D.C., they are affected by volatile cycles in government that can move families in and out. He seeks to stay both fiscally healthy but also culturally and spiritually relevant as well as intellectually relevant. In terms of organizational processes, he feels that while the school is academically excellent, they can always grow instructionally.

The next level for the school is the new building, and one of the areas he focused on was building one campus but also on genuinely caring for the staff. He keeps an eye toward improving staff benefits because he feels he is called to “care for the shepherds.” He is most hungry to see students embrace their faith. In terms of leadership, he sees himself as collaborative and team-minded; he feels that he controls most for engagement in that he facilitates opportunities for engagement between staff and students and between the staff because he values it so highly. He feels that he celebrates most student successes. One perspective he had on work life balance, which he shares that it took him a while to learn, is to own your own leadership; he said, “Trust God for what you must do.”

In the interview with Lorie, the Curriculum Specialist, she shared about the organizational context that this school was non-denominational and one which was still seeking identity in some ways. She would like to see the culture described as more unified through the new building, which in her role can be challenging to work between campus locations as she works directly with teachers. She feels the school is distinguished by being non-denominational and that it is more settled into itself than when she first came. She thinks the school cares for the whole child well and not one area surpasses another (art, sports).
Organizational process reflections included feeling as if growth was needed in reaching students with diverse needs, being hungry to see the school become one, and she keeps in mind that parents and students are coming from all over the place, geographically and experientially. The biggest change she has facilitated was moving from multiple campuses to two, and now one. One closure was particularly painful; it was a great school but not set up well from a fiscal sustainability standpoint. Not all faculty could be reabsorbed into the school with that closure. The new building featured largely in the discussion, but when discussing her role in the school as a leader, the interview began to focus equally on instruction and assessment. While she keeps her attention on instruction, she feels she needs to control regularly how much teachers are given to do with an eye toward helping them balance priorities and not be overwhelmed. She thinks they celebrate most student spiritual growth and feels she is a coach more than anything else in her role. She admits that she doesn’t achieve work life balance well and even laughs at the question. She also shares that her spouse works at the school and without local family to compete for time, the school time is their family time as well as the time to and from work when the commute together. There is an integration of family life into work life.
When asked about leadership models and characteristics three main themes emerged during data analysis describing leadership models and characteristics; questions about the strategies and changes as well underscored the emerging themes connected to leadership of Orange Grove Christian Academy: 1) excellence expressed academically and spiritually; 2) impactful relationships; and 3) growth through unity. The following will discuss the leadership models and characteristics of Orange Grove Christian Academy through the three themes.

**Excellence Expressed Academically and Spiritually.** Academic and spiritual excellence were often expressed in tandem, or as two parts of the same whole. The school communicated in the promotional materials that its purpose is to educate with excellence. The four core values articulated by the school’s promotional materials are: 1) Pursuing excellence in all things; 2) Model and teach servant leadership; 3) Uphold integrity and transparency; 4) Maintain
exemplary standards of professionalism. Ronald writes in letter to families in the Annual Report: “So while we celebrate the fact that an (OGCA) student is a National Merit Scholar Semifinalist, we rejoice even more that he is a fine young man who puts Christ and others first in his life.” He cited another student, a West Point alum, who is at the top of his class and who is a “humble and Godly leader.” He cited another student, a leading cancer researcher at Virginia Tech, who is also, “one of the finest, most Christ-centered young women you will ever meet.” With every academic point to underscore, Ronald underscored a spiritual point with it in parallel structure. Lori described this as a balance. “I’d say this school seems to work more on the whole child, like there’s not one area that super-exels and exceeds over the others.” The snapshot of a student, characterized by a recent graduate reflects this balance: the student participates in fine arts, participates in school mission trips, completes community service, plays on athletic teams, is active in clubs, earned an SAT score above the national average, and attends and volunteers at a local church.

**Impactful Relationships.** In characterizing the relationships at the school, as Head of School, Ronald characterized the culture as that of family. “We’re a family. You know our families and the family and relationships pretty much define how we operate and why we operate.” As Head of School, Ronald debriefs with every senior approaching graduation and gets feedback from each student for continued improvement of the school. At this point, he has interviewed hundreds of students just prior to graduation:

But with one exception, hundreds of students said the best and biggest benefit to the was that their teachers cared about them. So, I think that says something about teachers feeling empowered and teachers feeling free to do that kind of thing. But, you know, it’s more about who God has called to be part of this family.

110
Ronald asserted that in the last 15 years intentionality about impactful relationships have become “the most solid pieces of the bedrock of our culture.” Ronald characterized his role as Head of School as that of chief shepherd to the shepherds, the teachers and faculty. “My role is to really care for the shepherds…it is such a gratifying experience to mentor somebody.”

In characterizing relationships at Orange Grove Christian Academy, Lorie shared that what she would like people to experience at OGCA is:

the love that teachers have for the students or how hard they are willing to work for them…I work with the teachers and you just see, you know, the hours they put in and I don’t think people have any idea how many hours they work and how little they get paid. And year to year they show up and, you know, love their children.

When it comes to her own job role, Lorie feels that in her position she needs to listen to different views of a lot of people. “I just feel like in my position I have to make sure I’m hearing and listening to the views of all the different people…what students say, what parents say. It affects the curriculum and instruction, all of their different views.” Like Ronald, Lorie feels called to invest in teachers as a coach and not in any evaluative capacity. “I’m there as like their coach and work beside them to help them with things and because I do all of the professional development trainings, they see me as one of them. Not like, you know, here’s your boss telling you want to do.” She also feels relationally that it is her responsibility to advocate for teachers and monitor how much we are giving and taking away for teachers to do, advocating for what they can handle meaningfully.

**Growth through Unity.** For the first time since 1988, the school is able to anticipate being in one campus location through the results of a current capital campaign starting with the 2019-20 school year. Twenty years ago, the long-term plan had been for a single-campus location as
envisioned by the board. To that end, the current campaign focuses on the past, future, and purpose of the school: Timeless Values. Tomorrow’s Leaders. The school expressed growth in terms of shrinking the school footprint over time. The goal was to concentrate experiences at one location and share the ability to function as one school. This resulting growth would be in effectiveness as a school through unification. “I feel like we have settled into the place where this is about our numbers, although we might still grow more when the building is right here and people see a little differently,” shared Lorie in reference to the pending move. She also shared that the school is at its best when it feels like one school. “I feel like we celebrate when we actually feel like one school. Like when we have the homecoming event or something where everyone comes together like the art festival. They bring all the stuff here so that it’s a one place. Everybody enjoys that so much.” Ronald feels that it takes strength for his staff to navigate this change, but he feels he has a strong staff and that translates into every action item at the school. “Quite frankly, we are building a new building. Can we survive the build? Our staff is really strong. The next level for our school is knowing we are all in one building together.”

**Lakeview Christian Academy**

Jessica is the founding administrator for the school and considers that the school is “still a baby” at this stage of development. However, she describes the school as, “Christ-centered school for academic excellence but it is not an evangelical school. The school is to be a partner with families and home churches and defer to parents when it comes to beliefs.” There was a strong desire that Jessica communicated about wanted to be “cutting edge” academically and “with an emphasis on academic excellence.” She came to the school from public school and had both a middle school and elementary school student of her own when she began the school:
I’d had kind of heard rumblings that private school wasn’t academically focused. And so I didn’t want that to happen here. I want to be able to teach the whole child. But I want them to be challenged so that when they go off to college they are not coming back to me saying, ‘We were not prepared.’

She described the school culture as heavily relational and how that is important to teaching the whole child. “If we haven’t built relationships with students then they are not going to feel like they can share and then we are not reaching the whole child.” Above all, she wants others to know the school is relational and has caring teachers, but that it is also distinguished by being comparable to public schools and being able to offer seamless transitions to and from public schools. Parent involvement is a unique relational challenge related to the newness of the school and the parents who helped to start it. While Jessica considers technology is the avenue for becoming “cutting edge,” she also recognizes that the school also needs growth – more families and more space. Organizational changes at present are focused to that end, although there are day-to-day operational changes that occur frequently; for example, dual enrollment is offered in house, new laptops are available to students, the PSAT is now offered in house, student leadership has developed as well as an honor society.

What Jessica pays the most attention to is school management and academic performance; this is what she measures most and what she celebrates most. When characterizing her leadership style, she shared that she leads by example. She does what needs to be done to manage and grow the school. She not only described the school culture as a family, but she also noted the intersection of her personal family with the school. Her children have been students and her husband volunteers to support her work; he even expressed a desire to work for the school if finances allowed.
Kayley is a founder and now Head of School, so she has also been with the school since the very beginning. While she is also quick to echo Jessica’s description of Lakeview Christian Academy as that of a, “Christ-centered school of excellence,” she was also quick to describe the culture as relationship-based. She also characterized the culture as a family and went on to express that in five years she wanted the school to be bigger but would still like it to be described as a family to prove that the relational model still worked well in a larger setting. “The relationship between administration and parents and teachers and students…frankly, they are just all interconnected. That’s important to me and I feel like when those relationships are nurtured and are strong that what you’re able to accomplish is so much more.” Like Jessica, there is an intersection of school family and personal family, as Kayley’s family is engaged at school. Her children attend school at Lakeview and her spouse offers direct support to her and to the school. “We can sit side by side on vacation and still have our computer open at night and not bother with the person who is working. I love the creative part. So, he does that, too, so he’s on balance. I can never turn my mind off because I love what I’m doing, and I love the potential.”

Kaley thinks the mission and vision of the school distinguish it as both spiritually and academically and likes when people observe or experience that the school is organized and producing the best they can produce.

I think at the very beginning we read everything and knew that as a private school you don’t have to lay by the same rules…We are not a public school and I don’t want to be a public school but I have the same task at the end of the day and that’s to get my kids to compete in a 21st century world and be able to get them into the college of their choice.

Although she recognizes that the stage the school is in puts it at, “building our plane now,” she still considers that the school does well at preparing students with academic offerings that equip
them for a 21st century world. Like Jessica, she echoes that the challenges unique to the school come with the original “owners,” or founders, still engaged in operations to some degree. Also, like Jessica, she agreed that the biggest area of growth was in increasing enrollment; the need to increase enrollment was directly tied to moving to the next level – literally. The school wants to continue to partner with the church to build another floor and expand the school by building a second floor.

The big change of growth is based upon her hunger to see more families engage in Christian education. “The biggest areas of growth have been just student growth. That’s been very affirming to us that we are following the path and God has planted the forest…It’s right to practice patience and now that the Lord’s timing is much better than mine.” Operational changes present most of the change in Kayley’s focus; changing staff and firing people who do not fit into the small Christian school culture and hiring people to support instructional technology needs and guidance needs which she facilitates directly herself at present.

As a leader, she felt she paid the most attention to the school culture and “reading the audiences” related to both academics and athletics. She considers herself to be a leader who connects at all levels and she likes to hire people who connect at all levels with people. A relationship-based model helped her grow as a leader when she had to fire teachers in the recent past and let parents know how serious the school was about quality instruction. She communicated that she even stepped in and taught classes during the crisis and that the relationship-based model she had in the culture helped with the crisis and change. What she celebrates most is student success.
When asked about leadership models and characteristics three main themes emerged during data analysis describing leadership models and characteristics; questions about the strategies and changes as well underscored the emerging themes connected to leadership Lakeview Christian School: 1) a focus on academic excellence; 2) the value of relationships in an organization; and 3) the need for growth in size. The following will discuss the leadership models and characteristics of Lakeview Christian Academy through the three themes.

**A Focus on Academic Excellence.** While the promotional documents and the website review communicated in detail the spiritual aspect and expectations of engaging with Lakeview Christian Academy, the focus on academic excellence was much more prevalent in the interviews by the leadership. The founders who are also current administrators in the school both described the school consistently as, “a Christ-centered school of academic excellence.”

---

**Figure 4.3**

*Data Structure: Lakeview Christian Academy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Order Categories</th>
<th>Second Order Categories</th>
<th>Major Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Role (LR)</td>
<td>LR Commitment</td>
<td>Relationship Focus (Leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Strategy (LS)</td>
<td>LR Job Crafting</td>
<td>Growth Expansion (Leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture (SC)</td>
<td>LR Relational</td>
<td>Academic Outcomes (Leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS Comparative Identity</td>
<td>Family Identity (Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS Growth</td>
<td>Spiritual Expectations (Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS Outcomes</td>
<td>Partnership (Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Family</td>
<td>Technology Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC History and Authority        (Strategy/Change)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Relationships</td>
<td>Growth in Size (Strategy/Change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Academics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This was consistent in the branding on the website and the promotional documents, but the focus on academic excellence took more of a centerstage in the interviews. The spiritual perspective was part of the focus on academic excellence, but not the primary focus. Jessica shared directly, very early in the interview, “We want to make disciples for Christ. But we are also not an evangelistic school…we are more of partners and facilitators for discipleship.”

Kayley, also very early on in the interview, shared that when she characterizes the school for others and shares that this is a “Christ-centered school of academic excellence,” then the conversation goes two ways. “People want to know more about us being a Christian school and exactly what that means; or, it goes the other way in the sense that people want to understand how we have defined ourselves as a school of academic excellence.” Additionally, Kayley felt she did not have a second chance to make a first impression and that the website was kept up to date, as was social media, because often people will make up their minds to some degree about a school before they even make a call or step onto the campus. “I want them to feel that real and tender-hearted people are behind this center of academic excellence.” Confirmation in academic excellence was confirmation in reason for being as a school, according to Kayley:

The biggest areas of growth have been just student growth and that’s been very affirming to us that we are following the path that God has planned in the forest. We are meeting the need for why we believe that the school needed to be established and are on goal for being a Christ-centered school of academic excellence. This need is being met because people are trusting us academically with their children.

The accreditation documentation underscores this focus on academic excellence and cites as a summary commendation that Lakeview Christian Academy is, “a loving community of learning based on faith and academic excellence.” The accreditation document also underscores the need for the spiritual aspect to take a greater focus in that Lakeview Christian Academy should,
“develop/acquire Bible curriculum and spiritual formation assessment and biblical integration should be incorporated into each class.” However, the school is still commended for the implementation of a virtual apologetics course and a collaborative staff who are prepared to develop the best academic courses through a biblical worldview.

**The Value of Relationships in an Organization.** Formally, the school was commended in the accreditation visit for “relationships among all stakeholders.” Both leaders shared the same story in their separate interviews about a chapel in which staff members gave their personal testimonies to the students and how that was intentional to build relationships between all staff and students. “We wanted to make sure the kids knew these other people are certainly Christians too and they can be advisers; they can be people you can go to in times of biblical connections. You don’t have to just rely on core staff,” said Jessica. Kayley felt the relationships among stakeholders has a direct impact on outcomes:

> The relationships between administration and parents and the relationship between teachers and students…frankly, but they are all interconnected. That’s important to me and I feel like when those relationships are nurtured and are strong then what you are able to accomplish is so much more.

Relationships were so valued that Kayley saw this as a continuing focus and goal. “I would like to grow and prove that even with a staff of 30 we can maintain relationships and culture and connections. That will be my challenge to prove to someone who knew nothing about our school and what I would want them to experience.” Jessica compares the experience of Lakeview Christian Academy with that of a public-school experience she had with her own children:

> We left public school and we told the principal goodbye at the end of the year. She called my son the wrong name. I don’t blame her; she’s got 2,000 students. But I didn’t want that for my kid and I don’t want it for these kids. I want us to be bigger because I want us to be able to accommodate more kids. But I never want us to get to the point where these kids were just a number to us.
Jessica sees her job as two-fold: develop those relationships and academically challenge the kids. She added, “And I want the kids to be as happy as they can be going to school.”

**The Need for Growth in Size.** Both leaders expressed a strategic focus on growing the school and working with the partnership of the boards, the church and the school, to do so as a priority for the next year while still caring for relationships. Jessica shared that, “They want to be able to put a second floor on for us. Our next challenge is about the funds and how to do that and not put that pressure on our parents. You know, hopefully we can find outside of us some ways to fund that so that they don’t feel like we’ve passed that on to them.” Growth for Kayley in five years was about becoming larger, but she also said that, “By larger, I would love to provide that there is that school of thought that the relationship model works.” The need for growth in size was also connected for Kayley to a need for satisfaction as a result of growth. “I definitely feel like we’re established but we hate to say we are not satisfied because we are incredibly blessed with all of the progress. We still see the opportunity for so much growth.” Kayley’s perspective on growth was that it wasn’t, “daunting, depressing, or overwhelming.” Rather, she acknowledged that it was the exact opposite, a “motivating and exciting new opportunity to create.” Growth in numbers over the past six years existed for Jessica and Kayley as confirmation that they are as Kayley put it, “following the path.”

**Findings**

This section includes findings that answer the research questions: 1) How does a leader influence an organizational culture? 2) How does an organizational culture influence a leader? 3) What does a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture? Data were analyzed as described in chapter three, and themes emerged relating to each research question for each of the three
organizations. The findings will be discussed, and evidence presented as it relates to each question.

**R1: How does a leader influence an organizational culture?**

**Influence of Leadership on Organizational Culture – Summary**

Each school leader not only valued the relational focus of their school cultures, but also characterized their school culture as “family.” Each school leader interviewed shared how their own personal family was engaged to varying degrees in commitment to the school culture as well. So, family was used to describe the relational focus of the school but also described as focus of the leader’s individual family units – some had children who attended school there, had once attended in the past, or had spouses who worked or volunteered extensively at the school. All six leaders without exception described both their culture as being relationally focused as well as their own leadership emphases.

Each school leader communicated that the change upon which they were focusing was that of growth, but growth perspective was expressed in very different ways. The leadership of Blue River Christian School was focused on the personal growth of individuals within the culture around the concept of becoming, “Ambassadors of Grace,” and growing the school culture into a greater capacity as a culture that could be described as, “a culture of grace.” The focus on growth was an internal focus in the culture. The Head of School was leading professional development sessions to that end and engaging staff members in open discussion and self-assessment of the culture in order to influence growth as a culture in the aspect of grace. Orange Grove Christian Academy also sought internal growth in that they were seeking to grow in unity as a school culture, to truly be one school, as a result of closing the last of the once five campus locations.
and becoming one centralized campus with one culture. They hoped that this internal change in culture would have an external influence on others in the community who would then begin to see the school as one school for all Pre-K to 12th grade students, unified for a purpose but centralized to impact the region. Lakeview Christian Academy was focused on external growth; having experienced rapid enrollment growth over the last six years and seeing that as confirmation of the achievement of Christ-centered academic excellence, Lakeview wanted to expand the footprint of the campus, actual physical growth, so that the building capacity for students might be expanded and there would be more students who could take advantage of a middle school and high school education that emphasized Christ-centered academic excellence.

While each of the school leaders expressed the connectedness between spiritual and academic excellence, the outcomes expressed by Blue River Christian School predominantly focused on spiritual outcomes. That is not to say they did not have expectations of academic excellence; they offered dual enrollment, special education, and a college preparatory environment. However, when asked about what the leaders valued most, the spiritual outcomes took the primary focus.

For Orange Grove Christian Academy, whose website and promotional materials promoted a great deal of detail about the academic excellence that students experienced in terms of college acceptances, SAT scores, post-collegiate work experiences, and academic awards, the expression of academic excellence was always connected to a spiritual outcome as well. For instance, the leader shared in the annual report that “while we celebrate the fact that a (OGCA) student is a National Merit Semifinalist, we rejoice even more that he is a fine young man who puts Christ and others first in his life.” Also, Ronald shared in another of many examples, “Though a particular (OGCA) graduate is currently a leading cancer researcher at Virginia Tech,
she is also one of the finest, most Christ-centered young women you will ever meet.” The academic focus, though strong, was always not only connected in language to a spiritual focus, but the spiritual outcome took the greater emphasis which indicates a greater value on the part of the leadership on spiritual outcomes. Lakeview Christian Academy was distinctive, however, in this regard. The website placed a great deal of emphasis on spiritual outcomes and focus as a context for the organizational culture of the school. The leaders spoke of the importance of the school being Christ-centered, but greater emphasis was placed on academic outcomes, specifically the concept of academic excellence. Predominantly, that academic excellence outcome was expressed in terms of college acceptance and success at the post-secondary level.

**Blue River Christian School:**

Three themes emerged from the data regarding leadership influencing organizational culture:

1) Belief that effective leadership focuses on relationships

2) Willingness to change culture for growth in grace experience

3) Outcomes for education should be spiritual as well as academic in nature

Table 4.1 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

**Table 4.1 Leadership Influences on Organizational Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Grace</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orange Grove Christian Academy:

Three themes emerged from the data regarding leadership influencing organizational culture:

1) Belief that effective leadership focuses on relationships

2) Willingness to change structure for growth in organizational unity

3) Outcomes for education should be spiritual as well as academic in nature

Table 4.2 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

Table 4.2 Leadership Influences on Organizational Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Unity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Outcomes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lakeview Christian Academy:

Three themes emerged from the data regarding leadership influencing organizational culture:

1) Belief that effective leadership focuses on relationships

2) Belief that growth in increased numbers and increased space would benefit the school

3) Outcomes for education should be academic first as well as spiritual in nature and should meet and exceed that which one might expect in public schools

Table 4.3 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

Table 4.3 Leadership Influences on Organizational Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Expansion</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Outcomes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R2: How does an organizational culture influence a leader?

Influence of Organizational Culture on Leadership – Summary
The leadership interviews gave evidence of the value of relational culture to the degree that the school culture was best described as “family” by the leaders themselves – all six of them. That was discussed in the previous research question. However, in each of the schools studied, other artifacts underscored the concept of family identity. Not only was the family unit valued, as in the decision for private school was a family decision, but the family also entered into agreements and partnership with the school. Additionally, the family unit who entered the school culture was considered part of the school family. In the artifacts, not only did the leaders have family units that engaged in the school culture as an extension of their individual families, but individual families identified the school culture as an extension of their own family.

While each school in the study had evangelical focus, the organizational culture at Blue River Christian school was one that focused on evangelism as reason for being. At Orange Grove Christian Academy, evangelism expressed as the cultivating of Christian leadership had
the highest focus. Academic excellence and spiritual leadership were two parts of the same whole at Orange Grove Christian Academy, but Christian leadership (spiritual leadership) was the larger of the two parts and expressed as the most important part in the website and the promotional documents as well as by the leaders within the publications. Neither evangelism nor leadership took the focus at Lakeview Christian Academy, but rather the expression of culture was closer to that of establishing spiritual expectations for students and families, although it was unclear if those were established prior to becoming a part of the school, as a result of being part of the school, or a blend of both.

While every school culture expressed a value relating to how relationships are managed by Christians within a Christian culture, the focus for Blue River Christian School was on establishing clear expressions of authority (the signed covenant) and upon what authority was based (God, Truth, the Bible). While the authority of the Bible was also underscored at Orange Grove Christian Academy, greater emphasis was put on the independence of the school from any one church and the non-denominational association that the school had with many churches – although presumably through the statement of faith these were Christian Protestant churches predominantly. The authority of the Bible was not minimized as well at Lakeview Christian Academy, but the larger focus of the school was on the partnerships between various entities related to the school – parent and school, church and school, board and church, board and administration.

**Blue River Christian School:**

Three themes emerged from the data regarding organizational culture influencing the leader:
1) Positive value of identity as a family

2) Belief in the purpose of evangelism to support the school’s mission

3) Belief in the positive effects of establishing authority

Table 4.4 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

*Table 4.4 Organizational Culture Influences on Leaders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
<td>Document Website Review</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>Direct Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Identity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Orange Grove Christian Academy:

Three themes emerged from the data regarding organizational culture influencing the leader:

1) Positive value in the identity of school as family

2) Belief in the purpose of cultivating Christian Leadership as supporting the mission of the school

3) Belief in the effectiveness of an interdenominational spirit in Christian education

Table 4.5 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.
Table 4.5 Organizational Culture Influences on Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Identity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Denominational</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lakeview Christian Academy:

Three themes emerged from the data regarding organizational culture influencing leadership.

1) Positive value in the identity of school as family

2) Belief that spiritual expectations are a significant part of Christian education

3) Belief in the effectiveness of partnerships between organizations and individuals

Table 4.6 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

Table 4.6 Organizational Culture Influences on Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Identity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Expectations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
R3: What does a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture?

Relationship between Leadership and Organizational Culture: Strategic Decisions and Change – Summary

Figure 4.5

*Strategic Decisions and Change: Comparison of Themes by School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blue River Christian School</th>
<th>Orange Grove Christian Academy</th>
<th>Lakeview Christian Academy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Special Education</td>
<td>• Christian Leadership</td>
<td>• Technology Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dress Standards</td>
<td>• Single Site</td>
<td>• Growth in Size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the schools shared any strategic decisions related to change, although many of the changes may strategically be related to growth. Blue River Christian School developed and was growing a special education department and increasing the training for classroom teachers around special education needs which would open the school up to a population that may not
have been able to be served in the past. The change from uniform expectations to dress code guidelines and the accompanying rationale indicated that the strategic decision related to growing student ownership relating to decisions of dress, although within the standard as articulated by the organizational culture.

Orange Grove Christian Academy transitioned the branding significantly to that of placing stated value on Christian leadership as an outcome of the educational experiences a student might achieve. This indicates a growth in the perspective of the purpose of Christian education and may appeal broadly to families who seek leadership development in their children, particularly Christian leadership, in addition to academic excellence or as the purpose for academic excellence. The strategic development of unifying to become one campus was tied, through reporting on the outcome of the capital campaign, to the mission of the school; one campus would make the school better equipped to produce Christian leaders for life.

At Lakeview Christian Academy, technology integration was an expression of growth in the pursuit of academic excellence. The meaningful integration of technology in the academic courses already in place allowed 21st century learning to occur and prepare students for a 21st century world. Growth in size was a consistent theme among three consecutive annual reports that communicated that a growth seemed to directly correlate with a growth in effectiveness academically, athletically, and fiscally. The number of offerings for both academics and sports grew; the number of partnerships grew; the assets grew. Each showed growth in each consecutive year as the leaders expressed anticipation about growing the physical space to accommodate more growth.
Blue River Christian School:

Two themes emerged from the data regarding strategic decisions and organizational change.

1) Special education services are an important part of the school’s development

2) Flexible dress standards can complement the educational process

Table 4.7 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

Table 4.7 Strategic Decisions and Organizational Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Standards</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Orange Grove Christian Academy:

Two themes emerged from the data regarding strategic decisions and organizational change:

1) Belief that Christian leadership is the over-arching goal in Christian education

2) Belief that a single site will make for a more effective school experience for all

Table 4.8 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

Table 4.8 Strategic Decisions and Organizational Change
Two themes emerged from the data regarding strategic decisions and organizational change:

1) Meaningful integration of technology is necessary for effective learning to occur.

2) Growth in size of the organization will make the organization more effective.

Table 4.9 below shows the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Strategic Decisions and Organizational Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Integration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Size</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case Study Comparison Summary of Data by School

Table 4.10 below shows a comparison between schools of the findings and data collection methods used to determine the findings.

Table 4.10 Comparison of Findings and Data Collection Methods to Determine Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Influence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRCS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Grace</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Outcomes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OGCA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Unity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Outcomes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LCA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Focus</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Expansion</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Outcomes</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Influence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRCS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OGCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Identity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OGCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Identity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Denominational</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Identity</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Expectations</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRCS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Standards</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OGCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Site</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Integration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Size</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 repeated below show the first order categories, second order categories, and major themes by school.

Figure 4.1

Data Structure: Blue River Christian School

First Order Categories
- Leadership Role (LR)
- Leadership Strategy (LS)
- School Culture (SC)

Second Order Categories
- LR Commitment
- LR Job Crafting
- LR Relational
- LS Comparative Identity
- LS Growth
- LS Outcomes
- SC Family
- SC History and Authority
- SC Relationships
- SC Academics
- SC Spiritual

Major Themes
- Relationship Focus (Leadership)
- Growth in Grace (Leadership)
- Spiritual Outcomes (Leadership)
- Family Identity (Culture)
- Evangelical (Culture)
- Authority (Culture)
- Special Education (Strategy/Change)
- Dress Standards (Strategy/Change)
Figure 4.2

*Data Structure: Orange Grove Christian Academy*

**First Order Categories**
- Leadership Role (LR)
- Leadership Strategy (LS)
- School Culture (SC)

**Second Order Categories**
- LR Commitment
- LR Job Crafting
- LR Relational
- LS Comparative Identity
- LS Growth
- LS Outcomes
- SC Family
- SC History and Authority
- SC Relationships
- SC Academics
- SC Spiritual

**Major Themes**
- Relationship Focus (Leadership)
- Growth Unity (Leadership)
- Spiritual Outcomes (Leadership)
- Family Identity (Culture)
- Christian Leadership (Culture)
- Non-Denominational (Culture)
- Christian Leadership (Strategy/Change)
- Single Site (Strategy/Change)
Figure 4.3

Data Structure: Lakeview Christian Academy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Order Categories</th>
<th>Second Order Categories</th>
<th>Major Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Role (LR)</td>
<td>LR Commitment</td>
<td>Relationship Focus (Leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Strategy (LS)</td>
<td>LR Job Crafting</td>
<td>Growth Expansion (Leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture (SC)</td>
<td>LR Relational</td>
<td>Academic Outcomes (Leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS Comparative Identity</td>
<td>Family Identity (Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS Growth</td>
<td>Spiritual Expectations (Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LS Outcomes</td>
<td>Partnership (Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Family</td>
<td>Technology Integration (Strategy/Change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC History and Authority</td>
<td>Growth in Size (Strategy/Change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Academics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first order categories were consistent among the three schools as they related directly to the research questions and the interview tool: Leadership Role (LR), Leadership Strategy (LS), and School Culture (SC). The second-order categories showed distinctions by schools in the major themes by school. The groundedness of each theme among schools as reflected from ATLAS.ti is reflected in the parentheses for each theme listed below:

- **Leadership Role**: Commitment, (7) Job Crafting (27), *Relational (40)*
- **Leadership Strategy**: Comparative Identity (12), *Growth (84), Outcomes (71)*
- **School Culture**: *Family (42)*, History and Authority (28), *Relationship (86), Academics (91), Spiritual (100)*
The secondary categories marked in red italics are the categories that showed consistent groundedness among the three schools. The major themes, comparatively discussed in detail above, were specific to each school as a case study. There were two major themes that all the schools shared: relationship focus and family. Each school had a spiritual focus as a theme, but two schools (Blue River Christian School and Orange Grove Christian Academy) expressed this as intended spiritual outcomes and one school (Lakeview Christian Academy) expressed this as spiritual expectations. While each school demonstrated an intentional area of growth for the school, no school expressed growth in the same way. Lakeview Christian School was the only school for whom growth was expressed as physical growth and increased enrollment.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This multi-case comparative study examined three research questions: 1) How does a leader influence an organizational culture?, 2) How does an organizational culture influence a leader?, and 3) What does a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture? This study identified major findings relating to how the leadership influenced the culture at three different Christian schools in Virginia, how the organizational culture influenced the leadership at the three schools, and what the strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture. Each of these influences is discussed in this chapter in the context of the related literature. Conclusions are made regarding the findings, limitations of the study. Implications for future research and practices are discussed.

Discussion of the Findings

In Chapter Four, the findings were discussed by school as well as comparatively among the schools in the study. First order categories, second order categories, and major themes were discussed by school. Then, a comparison of themes and an articulation of measures of groundedness among the three schools demonstrated the themes that emerged as related to the following research questions with the ones in red italics showing groundedness among schools:

- **(RQ1) Leadership Role**: Commitment, (7) Job Crafting (27), *Relational* (40)
- **(RQ2) School Culture**: *Family* (42), History and Authority (28), *Relationship* (86), *Academics* (91), *Spiritual* (100)
- **(RQ 3) Leadership Strategy**: Comparative Identity (12), *Growth* (84), *Outcomes* (71)
This section will discuss the findings in Chapter Four in relation to the literature from organizational context, organizational processes, and leadership models and characteristics. The findings related to the influence of leadership on organizational culture are as follows:

1) The focus on relationships in the school culture was a key priority to the private Christian school leaders.

2) A willingness to target a specific growth for the school to succeed in its goals was necessary to the private Christian school leaders.

3) An articulation of student outcomes both spiritually and academically was important to success in student experiences to the leaders at private Christian schools.

The study also identified findings related to the organizational context (culture, identity, and stage). Findings related to the influence or organizational culture on leadership are as follows:

4) Strong identification with the school culture as that of a family had positive value to stakeholders.

5) Spiritual focus is key for the school to express as operational distinction as a private Christian school.

6) Spiritual identity is expressed as the relationship that a private Christian school culture has to church.

The study also identified findings related to organizational processes (strategic decisions and change). Findings related to what strategic decisions and change indicate about the relationship between organizational culture and leadership are as follows:
7) Evidence of change should be visible and explicit within the organization.

8) Organizational change relates directly to focus for growth from the leader.

Each of the findings is supported by themes that emerged from the data, as shown in Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding</th>
<th>Theme Distinctions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Relationship focus among all stakeholders is a key priority</td>
<td>BRCS - growth in application of grace as a concept; OGCA – growth through physical unification; LCA – growth through increase size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Specific growth targets necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Outcomes are important to express</td>
<td>BRCS &amp; OGCA – spiritual outcomes in conjunction with academic outcomes are important; LCA – academic outcomes are important and spiritual expectations are a part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Positive value on identity as family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Strong identification with spiritual focus</td>
<td>BRCS – focus on evangelism; OGCA – focus on Christian leadership; LCA – focus on spiritual expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Spiritual identity in relationship to church</td>
<td>BRCS – authority and ministry of a church; OGCA – independent and non-denominational; LCA – partnership and non-denominational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Evidence of change is visible and explicit
   BRCS – dress code; OGCA – website;
   LCA - technology integration

8. Change relates directly to leader’s growth focus
   BRCS (grace) – special education; OGCA (unity) single site; LCA (size) partnership site plan

**Leadership Influences**

*Finding 1: The focus on relationships in the school culture was a key priority to the private Christian school leaders.*

A major finding in this study was that the focus on relationships between stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, community members, alumni, founders) was a top priority of the leaders of each of the participating schools. As Reggie explained this from Blue Ridge Christian School, “Relationships have been developed over those 28 years, not only with staff but with the overall school community, with families who have been actively a part of the school for almost 20 years…but I also think about the relationships that we have on a day-by-day basis.” Ronald from Orange Grove Christian Academy said, “Relationships pretty much define how we operate and why we operate.” Kayley from Lakeview Christian Academy said, “The relationship between administration and parents, the relationship between teacher and students, and between students and students – frankly, just they are all interconnected.” For a person to become a part of these schools, particularly as a faculty member, that person must place a high value on relationships and relationship-building.

This consciousness on the part of the leader, what the leader pays attention to, has been determined to affect the organization (Schein, 2010; Yegenah, 2016). As a matter of fact, Schein
(2010) considers the embedding mechanisms on the part of the leader to be primary embedding mechanisms to culture. In other words, if relationships are important to the leaders, then others will prioritize them and pay attention to relationships as well. What leaders measure, control, allocate resources to, role model, allocate rewards to, recruit for, select, or eliminate embed into the culture the value of the leader. In this case, the value of the leader is placed on relationships.

Each of the leaders interviewed was able to comment easily on the relational aspect of their culture. In fact, each of the six leaders, all of whom were interviewed individually, independently described the relational nature of their culture as that of a family. This distinguishes the subjects in this interview as leaders because of the need these leaders must focus on organizational culture (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012). This relational aspect is critical in private schools because the common culture depends on the presence and cohesiveness of group of people who interact with one another (Turan & Bektas, 2013). It was also Turan and Bektas (2013) who found a positive and significant relationship between school culture and leadership practices. Additionally, all the school leaders demonstrated the two of the seven responsibilities that Cetin and Kinik (2014) consider necessary to form a purposeful community: the relational aspect of personal awareness of teacher and staff and the fostering of shared beliefs and sense of community and cooperation.

**Finding 2: A willingness to target a specific growth for the school to succeed in its goals was necessary to the private Christian school leaders.**

Another major finding in this study was that while the age and the stage of the organization (Grenier, 1997; Schein, 2010) may have influenced what the leader might target for growth within the organization, each leader was able to identify an area of growth for their
individual school that reflected the identity of the school (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Blue River Christian School identified that, while historically the school may have been considered legalistic, of late the staff had been engaging in professional development that asked for reflection on applications of grace within the Christian school culture. This internal focus, to Reggie, as the Head of School, was a way to refine the school mission rather than change it entirely. For Orange Grove Christian Academy, which had once operated at as many as five sites across a broad region, they continued to move toward a single site campus for all students in the pursuit of greater unity. This pursuit, according to the school leader, Ronald, was a way to fulfill the commitment to “timeless values and tomorrow’s leadership.” This sentiment was also expressed in the school’s Engage magazine/annual report. Kayley, Head of School for Lakeview Christian Academy not only felt that growth of the physical space of the building would increase the numbers of students who might take advantage of an excellent academic education, but that the growth that already had occurred was confirmation that the school was “on the right path.” Each leader had a growth target in mind that they articulated quickly and with detail as a continued expression of the organizational identity of the school which, to them, had not changed (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and was deemed necessary for the school to succeed in its goals.

**Finding 3: Articulating student outcomes both spiritually and academically important to success in student experiences to the leaders at private Christian schools.**

A third major finding in this study was that the outcomes as a result of Christian education are important to express for the success of the organization. The outcomes expressed by the schools were spiritual as well as academic for students. Reggie, from Blue River Christian School, said, “There is a balance between the spiritual and the academic, that one would not outweigh the other.” Ronald, from Orange Grove Christian Academy, wrote that
while he values competency in academics, he also values that “character exceeds their competency.” For Lakeview Christian Academy, Jessica feels that the school focuses on academics more and that in terms of spiritual outcomes, while there are expectations, “we partner with families, we partner with churches, and our home churches. We don’t usurp that role.” While each school is different in the amount of weight/focus that spiritual outcomes have in relationship to academic outcomes (balance, heavier weight of spiritual, heavier weight of academics), each school agreed that there are spiritual and academic outcomes that are the result of Christian education for a student.

This finding confirms that these leaders are responsible for organizational effectiveness and viability and put forth strategy that offers formal logic for goals shared by people within the organization (Groysberg, Lee, Price & Cheng, 2018). There is formal logic applied in each of the schools as to the relative value of spiritual outcomes and academic outcomes expressed by the leaders. The articulation of these outcomes demonstrated the leadership responsibility (Cetin & Kinik, 2014) for establishing a purposeful community, that of communicating and operating from strong ideals about schooling. In this case, the strong belief is the positive value associated with Christian education towards a measure of spiritual outcome for the student, whether that be balanced between spiritual and academic, more heavily spiritual or more heavily academic depended on the further articulation of that value by school.

Organizational Culture Influences

Finding 4: Strong identification with the school culture as that of a family had positive value to stakeholders.
Each school associated a positive value to the school culture identity as being defined as a family. Both Kayley and Jessica at Lakeview Christian Academy reported the same incident, after a recent chapel, when a new coach had just given a testimony along with six other faculty members. He was one of the last people to speak and received applause when he commented, “I was not prepared for this. This is like a family.” When reviewing the website online for Orange Grove Christian Academy, several comments spoke relationally about the nature of the family unit being part of the larger OGCA family; for example, “(This school) has been a gift from the Lord! We recently moved from out of state ad it has been a home for our entire family.” Sharon spoke to the process she has observed in those that become part of the Blue River Christian School family:

They can come in and make friends and really fit in as family or they can stand bac and not, and just be an observer. We’ve had really good success, I think, with students coming in new.

While organizational identity can be both complex and dynamic because it is a result of complex and reciprocal relationships among stakeholders (Scott & Lane, 2000), both the leaders and the stakeholders expressed a positive value with the relational identity of the school culture being family, which is an intimate and personal expression to the relationship of the culture. All six of the leaders interviewed described the culture as that of family almost at the very beginning of each of the interviews, which was echoed in the other data explored by the researcher. So, despite the complexity and dynamics or organizational identity, this metaphor of “family” that was expressed makes organizational life possible because power as an applied construct is externally shared, a negotiated product, and an internalized aspect of the collective of the organization (Haslamm & Ellemers, 2003). The focus on the part of the leaders to be intentionally relational and the expression of culture as family shows the relationship between
organizational culture and leadership as well as the dynamic relationship between organizational culture and organizational identity which can cause one to evaluate the other (Ravasi & Schultz, 2007). Defining the school identity as that of family defines the external image that is projected as well as the internal definition formed within the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). This metaphor in operation, that the school culture is a family, was an example of integration (Martin, 1992) and that culture is what people shared, what binds people in an organization together. In this case, it is close relationships that at least successively approximate that of family.

Finding 5: Spiritual focus is key for the school to express as operational distinction as a private Christian school.

The study also found that organizational culture identified as with a spiritual focus and that this was an important part of the school organizational culture. In other words, the spiritual focus that each school articulated became the reason for engaging in that Christian school. At Blue River Christian School, one would attend school to become a disciple of Christ and one who made other disciples of Christ (evangelism). “(BRCS) makes disciples of Christ in obeying the command of God to train students in truth.” At Orange Grove Christian Academy, one would attend school to become a Christian leader in life. “Educating Christian Leaders for Life.” At Lakeview Christian Academy, one would attend school to achieve academic excellence within a Christ-led environment. “(LCA) is a Christ-centered school of academic excellence in which each student is educated fully and trained in biblical principles and worldviews.” Again, this is integration (Martin, 1992) of what people share; in this case, the value of a spiritual focus in education. Chatman and Jehn (1994) show that indicators of organizational culture are determined in part by the specific industry of which they are part. In this case, the specific industry was institutions for Christian education, and it can be argued by the research in this
study that institutions of Christian education are a specific industry. Organizational culture may be determined by an occupation or a job role (Barley, 1983) and in the case of the study of these particular schools, the job roles are shaped by the presence and cohesiveness of a group of people who interact with one another (Turan & Bektas, 2013); most notably, they are interacting with one another as an educational organization, a ministry organization, and a business simultaneously – a unique hybrid (Pue, 2016).

**Finding 6: Spiritual identity is expressed as the relationship that a private Christian school culture has to church.**

A third finding in relation to organizational culture is that the organizations express spiritual identity in terms of the relationship the organization has with the organizational concept of the church/biblical relationships. The spiritual relationship to the church/biblical relationships at Blue River Christian school is that of authority. The school was established under the authority of one specific church. The school was a ministry of the church and the Head of School functioned as the Associate Pastor for Education on the church board. Although one did not have to belong to the church to be accepted as a student at the school--which meant the school was open to other denominations--the school submitted to the authority of the church of which it was a part. Similarly, upon applying to the school for admissions, the family signed a covenant that defined relationships of authority that the parent and the school held and asked the student and the parent to sign in submission to that authority as articulated in the agreement.

The school representative would sign in agreement to uphold the authority of this documents and the agreement as signed. The school articulated the Biblical Morality Policy, policies within the *Family-Guide*, educational policy, standards of conduct and cheating policy
with biblical principles and many citations of specific scriptures, establishing relational boundaries for the organizational culture on biblical principles. This establishment of authority seemed important to the organization because as an organization grows and becomes more complex through growth it needs to have an internalized cognitive structure of what the organization stands for and where it intends to go (Ashforth et al., 2000). In this case, the organization did not want to lose the perspective of authority from the church or the authority of biblically-defined relationship governance along established boundaries.

The spiritual identity of Orange Grove Christian Academy, however, was that of independence, expressed as non-denominational. The school had never been under the authority of a single church, but rather the student body reflected more than 150 different church affiliations. Both leaders in describing what they would like for people to know about the school used the term, “non-denominational” in their first description. The founder of the school, who along with his wife established the school after having been a part of public school, established the Christian school independently in 1988 and expressed a vision in a recent profile in the school magazine, Engage, that they had a vision “to serve the region in an inter-denominational spirit.” This statement establishes firmly that culture comes from the founders and culture is taught to new members of the organization as part of identity (Schein, 2010). There is also a change in expression – that of nondenominational for interdenominational between leaders. This reflects that the most important element of the culture is embedded (independence from a church or a denomination) but that culture may be difficult to understand because it is imbedded and the change in terminology is more reflective of the culture (Schein, 2010). In other words, “nondenominational” may be more accurate for the current culture rather than intentional interaction between denominations.
For Lakeview Christian Academy, the spiritual identity as that of a partnership was paramount. The school began as a partnership with parents discussing the feasibility of Christian school which lead to a partnership with a church in establishing a relationship between two boards, one for the school and the existing one with the church, to support the operations and growth of the two organizations that shared space – the church and the school. The Head of School, Kayley, described the partnerships that were forged with local colleges in relationship to dual enrollment and other academic opportunities for students at the school. The relationship with the parents, in terms of spiritual education was expressed as a partnership, one in which the school would most likely defer to the parent; roles were defined as partnerships. According to Jessica, “we partner with families, we partner with churches, we partner with our home churches and we don’t usurp the role (of parent and church). I feel like we are partners and facilitators in discipleship.” Jessica did not want to become victim to the forces that are the result of organizational cultures by not operating conscious of the partnerships forged within her organization and as a result of her organization’s formation (Schein, 2010). “Partnership” describes the behaviors expected of members of Lakeview Christian Academy and as a reference point for meanings and values shared by members of an organization (Pettigrew, 1979).

Turan and Bektas (2013) place emphasis on the importance of context in schools because they see schools as products of the cultural paradigm of the society in which the school exists. From an organizational culture perspective, these schools represented a positive value associated with spiritual identity, but they also represented collectively that that spiritual identity can be strongly associated with the authority of church/biblical relationships, strongly associated with an integrationist perspective (Martin, 1992) within a non-denominational association.
independent of a church or denomination, or strongly associated with the identity of a partnership between organizations and individuals that share goals.

**Strategic Leadership and Organizational Change**

*Finding 7: Evidence of change must be visible and explicit.*

A major finding in this study in terms of what strategic leadership and organizational change might show about the relationship between organizational culture and leadership was that evidence of change should be visible. For Blue River Christian School, the inclusion of over 30 students with special needs represented a change to the entire organization as students were mainstreamed into regular classes in addition to receiving specialized support from four designated special education teachers. The rest of the teaching faculty had not received special education training formally and the school leadership took responsibility for making sure that this training occurred on the job and within the context of the school setting.

On the topic of leadership and change, Harris (1975) cited five phases of change with instructional institutions that can overlap. Based on the perceptions of Reggie, the Head of School who initiated this change in accepting students and integrating with special education needs into the school population, the organization had moved past the organizational stage of planning and initiation, where purpose and goals are established, and individuals develop interest. The school had crossed into the phase of momentum, where activities were underway and leadership and organizing were heavily employed. The school had experienced the phase where problems had emerged, like the problem of increased training, and leadership investment becomes critical. Reggie affirmed the continued emphasis toward being a school that was able to accept students with special education needs and being able to meet those within a Christian setting.
The change in dress at Blue River Christian School, from a formal school uniform to
dress code guidelines, was visible evidence of change throughout the building. The School
Committee at Blue River Christian School offered a statement explaining the desire for students
to, “dress in a manner that enhances the reputation of the Gospel.” Organizational culture is that
which we can observe: building structure and décor, interactions between individuals, common
stories, manners of dress (Hatch, 1993; Martin, 2002; Schein, 2010). Organizational change in
culture, like that of dress, can also be observed. The change in dress code coincided with the
leadership focus on evaluating culture at the school in terms of applications of grace and student
dress code standards seemed to be an area for which more grace and less legality were being
applied. This finding suggests that Blue River Christian School is questioning core assumptions
and offering revised solutions, even giving students more room for exploration or mistakes,
which is indicative of transformational leadership (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016).

The visible change that occurred for Orange Grove Christian School was that of a change
in branding, particularly on the website, to that of a focus on Christian leadership from a focus
on the history of the school and the value of Christian education. Elements supporting Christian
leadership as a focus were evident in the promotional documents, the website, and in the
language that was used by the Head of School to describe students who were successful. They
were not only academic leaders, but they were leaders with leadership in relation to spiritual
character, according to the Head of School, Reggie. “Though a particular (OGCA) is a leading
cancer researcher at Virginia Tech, she is also one of the finest, most Christ-centered young
women you will ever meet.” As such, Reggie seems to question assumptions about academic
excellence alone or about the value of academic excellence without characteristics of Christian
leadership, which may indicate leadership of a transformational nature (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016).

The visible change that occurred for Lakeview Christian Academy was the integration of technology with a new laptop availability and a technology resource room located right at the entrance of the school. The presence of one school laptop for each student at school as well as personal laptops demonstrated a visual to change to a focus on academic excellence with integrated technology that prepared students for 21st century learning. The leadership had a focus on making sure students were prepared for the world after they left high school, particularly for college. As Jessica remarked, they did not want the students to come back and say, “We weren’t prepared.”

The anticipated visual change was in the renderings of the current footprint of the school against the potential placement of “learning cottages” or trailers adjacent to the building preceding the anticipated second floor addition to the current structure. The school is in the process of helping stakeholders see through visual renderings what the school will look like in the future in order to stimulate interest and potential revenue generation for the project, which the school does not want to put exclusively as the responsibility of the parents. This approach to change offers appealing strategic vision and relies on effective timing and strong convictions, which is what Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2016) discuss as the approach that charismatic leaders often take.

Finding 8: Change relates directly to focus for growth from the leader.

The final major finding in this study was that change in the organization relates directly to the focus for growth from the leader. As the leader at Blue River Christian School for 28 years, Reggie understood that his organization needed to consider the concept of grace together
and consider whether as a Christian school the organization exhibited grace consistently. To that end, Reggie bought a book for everyone about understanding a culture of grace in Christian schools by Paul Tripp (date) and he led discussion with his staff about the topic as he moved the organization towards an identity goal. “We are trying to evaluate what does that mean and what does it look like on a day-to-day basis…because we want so much to be Ambassadors of Grace.” The relationship among assumptions, values, artifacts and symbols has shifted to include grace (Hatch, 1993) and Reggie has become a change agent (Grenier, 1997). Reggie has developed a vision and a strategy for grace that is manifest in changes in student dress and changes in acceptance rates for special education students that are becoming anchored in the culture (Kotter, 1996). Each member of the organization is learning the vision of what it will become in terms of each becoming an Ambassador of Grace (Fuller, 2011).

At Orange Grove Christian Academy, change in the form of consolidation has moved the school from many campuses toward a near future state of being a single campus location. This change has been a journey, with friction and barriers to be overcome, capital resources to support the change, and a clear vision articulated by the leadership with specific-action items (Fuller, 2011). Both Lorie and Ronald spoke to this, but it was Lorie who said, “I think with that new building here, we will be more unified. I think that is part of our difficulty as having a campus over there and a campus over here.” With a goal such as unity, Ronald was able in the annual report and promotional documents to support this goal and reframe organizational structure categories in order to construct a definition of the situation that needs change (single campus) and then proceed to build a compelling vision and concrete plan for strategic change (lower school building located here on the multi-acre site) and that leadership competency in vision and concrete planning together allows for change (Gilchrist, et al., 2014).
For Lakeview Christian Academy, change represented growth through addition of the integration of technology with laptop resources but also with the development of a new building structure that expanded the architecture of the school visibly and dramatically. The leaders were focused on growth in numbers of students at the school, and they documented the rapid-growth in numbers in the last three annual reports thoroughly. Growth and expansion of the building represented successful achievement as a school.

You know when we think what it’s going to look like, what the timeline is going to be and what determines our learning cottages and mobile learning cottages that we would maybe have to bring in and how that would look and if I could start to double out grades and which ones…it’s very overwhelming. So, I just tell myself, ‘Look, the whole concept of starting a school was overwhelming…day by day the Lord will provide.

Organizational growth leads to the need for additional development of the site in the organization and creative expansion; the focus is characterized as entrepreneurial and the focus is on keeping the organization active as growth is pursued (Grenier, 1997). The decisions for the leaders at Lakeview Christian Academy are a process of actions that being with a specific stimulus (need for growth) and end with a commitment to action (building plan) (Mintzberg, et al., 1976) and this action is a result of understanding the needs of the stakeholders (Gans, et al., 2018).

**Interpretations and Conclusions**

The findings of this multi-case comparative study provide an expanded understanding of how leadership influences the organizational culture, how culture influences the leadership, and how strategic decisions and change manifest the relationship between organizational culture and strategic leadership. This section makes three conclusions that provide meaning for the findings and begin to fill the void in the literature regarding the relationship between organizational
culture and leadership in private Christian schools. This section provides conclusions and interpretations based on the findings.

**Conclusion 1**

*Christian School Leaders have a Direct Influence on the Values and Direction of the School’s Organizational Culture*

The findings in this study confirm the assertions of other scholars that leaders have direct influence on the values and direction of organizational culture (Groysberg, et al., 2018; Kotter, 1996; Fuller, 2011; Schein, 2010; Yegenah, 2016). This influence is expressed clearly in the value by leaders placed on both the intended spiritual outcomes and the intended academic outcomes for students as a result of education at the Christian school. Each of the three schools’ leaders spoke to individual student outcomes for education that are both spiritual and academics, and their documents and websites supported that dual level of prioritization for outcomes, which emphasizes that what a leader focuses on affects the organization (Schein, 2010; Yegenah, 2016). This finding supports the research by Cetin and Kinik (2014) that there is a positive relationship between leadership and student outcomes.

For a purposeful community, the leaders foster shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation as well as ideals and beliefs that are strong about schooling (Cetin & Kinik, 2014). Blue River Christian Academy leaders focused on the spiritual and academic outcomes as being parts of the same whole. For example, Reggie said, “There is a balance between the spiritual and the academic. The one should not outweigh the other.” Orange Grove focused as well on the spiritual outcome giving purpose to the academic outcome and being the more relevant of the two parts. Ronald writes that Engage Magazine profiles students who have high-
level academic performance who have lined up with Christ’s model of servant leadership. “Both are critical elements to how we define success at (OGCA).” Kayley shares that she wants people to understand most that, “We are a Christ-centered school of academic excellence.” As Christian schools are a hybrid of education, ministry and business, the student outcomes for education are also a hybrid and leaders identify best with as being a culture of education and ministry through their expression of student outcomes that are both spiritual and academic (Pue, 2016).

An illustrative example of how Christian school leaders in this study had a direct influence on the values and direction of the school’s organizational culture centered on that hybrid focus of the leader on the outcomes for student education (spiritual and academic). The leaders in all three school spoke student outcomes/expectations pertaining to excellence that were, at once, both academic and spiritual in nature in almost equal measure. As provided in Chapter Four, the measure of groundedness for academic was 91 and for spiritual 100, the highest measures among the themes, followed by growth at a groundedness measure of 84. The artifacts (websites, promotional documents, and accreditation documents) confirmed the focus of the organizational culture on both spiritual and academic focus for students that reflected the focus of the leaders.

All of the leaders at all of the school articulated a desire to move people towards shared goals and meaningful work utilizing a visionary leadership style; in the desire to foster a sense of community with these outcomes, the leaders demonstrated affiliative leadership style which demonstrated at least two of the six leadership styles that suggest a flexible and effective leader (Goleman, et al, 2002). Each of the leaders not only demonstrated an awareness of organizational culture and identity that was heightened (Tohidi & Jabari, 2012), but they also were able to speak to a variety of primary embedding mechanisms for culture that leaders use
including what they paid attention to or control, what they celebrated, how they allocated resources, and how they reacted to crises and manage change (Schein, 2010).

**Conclusion 2**

_The Christian School’s Organizational Identity has a Direct Influence on the Focus of the Leader_

The second conclusion from this study is that organizational identity has a direct influence on the focus of the leader (Grenier, 1997; Haslam & Ellemers, 2003; Scott & Lane, 2000; Schein, 2010). The focus on the leader of the identity of the school culture as that of “family” prevailed in every interview at every school as a positive value and this was a shared value within the organizational culture (Hatch, 1993; Schein, 2010). Perhaps this characteristic of identity as a family unit is determined by the specific industry, occupation or job role (private Christian schools/Christian private school educators), which these cultures are a part (Barley, 1983; Chatman & Jehn, 1994). The three schools strategically focus on relationships and preservation of relationships to drive positive organizational outcomes, which demonstrates an alignment between strategy, leadership, and culture (Groysberg et al., 2018). The leaders pay very close attention to the relationships within the school cultures and characterize their leadership styles as relational (Schein, 2010); this finding was consistent in all three schools in the study. Each leader had family members directly associated with the school who had a role at the school formally or informally though volunteer support which demonstrated role modeling by the leader (Schein, 2010), perhaps unintentionally, that underscored the connection to relationships within the culture that related to that of family.
Three sources have been identified that demonstrate organizational identity influences a leader: 1) culture styles affect leadership styles (Groysberg et al., 2018); 2) leaders are found to be more effective strategically when their behaviors match culture expectations (House et al., 2013); and 3) there are secondary embedding mechanisms in cultures that include stories about important events and people, organizational design and structure and organizational systems and procedures (Schein) that a leader must pay attention to in order to affect change effectively (Fuller, 2011; Kotter, 1997).

Organizational identity’s influence on leadership was demonstrated through the consistent value placed on the organizational culture as best described by the metaphor of “family,” by the leaders of each school. Organizational identity’s influence on leaders was demonstrated by the focus on relationships by the leaders in each school and by self-descriptions as “relational leaders.” The influence of organizational identity on leadership was also confirmed by the changes that the leaders implemented at the schools; each school leader had a clear vision for specific action-items and the ability to communicate change as a part of continuing the organizational culture/identity (Fuller, 2011). For Blue River Christian School, becoming Ambassadors of Grace is expressed as a refining of the mission and vision of the school by the Head of School, Reggie. For Orange Grove Christian Academy, becoming a single campus is expressed as being part of a goal of increasing unity so that the school can more effectively continue to develop leaders, as expressed by the Head of School, Ronald. For Lakeview Christian Academy, change is expressed in terms of continued growth and expansion that is a continuation of the entrepreneurial nature of the school since the founding of the school, as expressed by the Head of School, Kayley.
An illustrative example of the influence of the organizational culture in the leader, specifically through the aspect of organizational identity, is the first description that every leader used (without exception) about the organizational culture. All six leaders used one word to describe their organizational cultures: family. Relationships emerged as a strong theme, as reported in Chapter Four with a groundedness measure of 86 among the three schools and leaders specifically characterized their leadership style as relational among the three schools with a groundedness measure of 40. Without exception, again, all six leaders described their role as being intentionally relational because of the high value that strong relationships held within the culture. LCA sought partnerships with families, partnerships between church and school board, and partnerships among faculty members. The leaders expressed a desire for growth but wanted to demonstrate that the relational model worked in larger settings as the school grew and felt the ability to build effective relationships between people distinguished the school. OGCA leaders felt that the school distinguished itself through a teaching faculty that genuinely cared and that the role of the leaders at the school in administration was to shepherd the teachers or advocate for them. At BRCS relationships were expressed as the purpose for being with the leadership in that building relationships with members of the community connected with relationship-building for the sake of the ministry, or relationships for spiritual kingdom-building purposes.

While two of the organizations were in midlife, BRCS and OGCA, the third organization was still in the founding and early stage of growth (Schein, 2010). Each leader could express goals for growth that related directly to the stage of the organization. One factor that contributed to the stability of the organizational identity for every school was that every school identified itself as that of a Christian school, or more specifically a Protestant Christian school, with values and beliefs that allow the psychology of the members or an organization to be socially structured
around identity-based facts directly related to identity in the Christian faith (Ellemers & Haslam, 2003). Not only did each of the schools demonstrate organizational consensus and cultural manifestations that reinforced the same cultural themes (Martin, 2002), but they had shared assumptions as individual schools and among the schools because of a basic shared Christian worldview (Schein, 2010). The leaders at the schools who were responsible for organizational strategy, effectiveness, and viability could put forth formal logic for goals shared by people within the organization because the people within the organization shared values and beliefs in the first place (Groysberg, et al., 2018).

Conclusion 3

*Changes Targeted in Christian Schools Reflect the Focus of the Leader on Growth*

Strategic decisions in this study are defined as decisions that are concerned with the whole environment of an organization, the entire resources, and all the people that form the organization (Boal & Hooijberg, 2001; Fuller, 2011). Changes initiated by leaders in these private Christian schools are strategic decisions that reflect the focus of the leader (Schein, 2010) on specific growth unique to that school. This finding adds to the body of research that urgency needs to be established and communicated to a guiding coalition, vision and strategy need to be present and need to be communicated and that broad-based action needs to be empowered (Kotter, 1997). It also adds to the body of research about organizational change in that leadership must have the power to manage change through clear vision, specific action-items, the ability to build buy-in, and the ability to communicate the effectiveness of change (Fuller, 2011; Gilchrist et al, 2014; Pitilis & Wagner, 2018).
Blue River Christian Academy, led by Reggie, focused on changes in applications of grace, made visible in changes to dress code and with admissions of special education students. Orange Grove Christian Academy, led by Ronald, focused on structural changes by campus consolidation to create unity and support the mission of leadership development. Kayley, as leader for Lakeview Christian Academy, focused on structural changes to the building and dramatic increases in technology integration within the whole school. Each school focused on an area of change related to growth that was unique to the school. This conclusion also supports the need that a leader must consider the age, size, stage of evolution, stage of revolution, and growth rate of the industry. The stage of the organization is connected to a response by members of the organization, including leadership, and is characterized by a relatively calm period of growth followed by a management crisis and then five distinguishable stages of development (Greiner, 1997). According to Grenier (1997), Lakeview is in the phase of entrepreneurialism while both Blue River and Orange Grove are in a cycle related to renewal.

An illustrative example of change reflecting the specific focus of the leader on growth was demonstrated in each overarching goal that each leader had for the school and currently had action items in process to support. Growth had a measure of groundedness of 84 among the three schools as reported in Chapter Four, only surpassed in number by student academic and spiritual outcomes or expectations and relationships as themes. For BRCA, growth was expressed as a change towards internal growth in the concept and application of grace. At OGCA, growth was expressed as a change towards a single campus for the purpose of increasing unity and in impacting developing leaders for Christ. With LCA, growth in numbers of students and size of campus facilities was literal in expression with the purpose of growing the mission and impact of the school on the existing community. Each leader, without exception, could
articulate a focus on growth and discuss current and future action items related to that growth initiative and how that growth related strategically to the distinguishing characteristics of the private Christian school of which he is a part.

The change agents in the schools were the leaders (Grenier, 1997) and these were change agents who engaged in all levels of the organization with action-items related to change in order to grow each school in a specific way for the specific culture of which he or she was a part (Fuller, 2011). The domain that the leaders of the schools seem to focus upon as they focus on growth is understanding the needs of their stakeholders and understanding how this relates to the specific identity, culture and capability of the organization (Gans, et al., 2018). Each leader was able to construct a definition of the situation that needed to change – grace, unity, space/numbers - to build a compelling vision and concrete plan for change (Gilchrist, et al., 2014). It is critical to underscore that the focus on growth by the leader was articulated in terms of what that leader saw that the organizational culture needed. Growth was articulated by all leaders; however, growth was articulated specifically by each organizational leader based on what he or she saw as specific needs within the individual organization. This focus, in turn, underscores the relationship of mutual influence that the leadership has with the organizational culture, and vice-versa (Schein, 2010).

**Summary of Conclusions**

This exploratory multi-case comparative study provides conclusions that begin to fill the gap in understanding the relationship between organizational culture and leadership in private Christian schools. This study confirmed the findings in previous studies that organizational leaders do indeed influence organizational culture and organizational culture does influence
organizational leaders. This mutual influence proved to be prominent in each organization’s leadership and organizational culture. This study also confirmed the findings in previous studies that a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes are indicators about the nature of the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture. The leader’s focus on a specific area of growth for the organization indicated that strategic decisions related to change reflect the age and stage of the organization as well as the identity of the organization. Lastly, this study concluded that private Christian schools seem to share a focus on relational leadership roles, a school culture that is relational to the point of familial in nature and intended outcomes for education are expressed spiritually as well as academically. Leadership strategies in Christian schools keep spiritual and academic outcomes in focus when developing growth objectives for the school. The above conclusions elicit interesting questions that can be addressed through further study.

This study disagrees with current understandings that student outcomes in education can be expressed exclusively as academic in nature. This study supports that spiritual outcomes can operate in conjunction with academic outcomes and that the education of the student is at least partly character education expressed by spiritual expectations. This stretches the current philosophy of 21st Century learning – which include creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and character – in that it expresses character education in terms of spiritual development from a Christian worldview. As a result of this focus on student outcomes as that of an academic and a spiritual nature, this study also disagrees with current understandings that educational leadership is a role focused on instructional leadership primarily. Educational leadership within the private Christian school is reflective of the spiritual and academic
organizational culture of the school and is, at once, a role in both academic and spiritual leadership that also focuses on the specific growth the school needs.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited by the fact that it is based on three private Christian schools in one state in the northeast part of the United States. This study is also limited by the fact that these schools share membership and accreditation through the Association for Christian Schools International; elements of the requirements within the accreditation process that these schools share may influence the focus on spiritual and educational outcomes in education.

The study relied on interview data collected from two leaders from each of the private Christian schools. Interviews from other employees at the schools were not included. It is unknown if the interviews of those individuals would significantly impact the findings or conclusions of this study.

The data were collected from June-September 2017. The CEOs for two of the organizations worked directly with the founders of their schools and have been the CEO’s of the organization for almost three decades; the CEO for school that is less than ten years old works currently with other founders of the school, and she is one of the founders of the school. Each CEO could speak directly to the history of the school and the intention of the founders of the school from direct first-hand experience with the founders.

This study relied on public website data, which for one school changed extensively during the study and required that the researcher to compare the old and the new sites to help draw conclusions about changes one school. The study used accreditation documents provided by the schools in the analysis and the researcher focused on overall major recommendations and
commendations by the visiting committees in these documents as the larger documents varied in format and structure significantly. This study relied on the analysis of tour documents and promotional items which varied by site both in relative number and in scope and detail of information provided.

This study, does however, provide findings for how leaders influences organizational culture in private Christian schools and how organizational culture in private Christian schools influence the leaders. This study provides findings for how strategic decisions for change indicate the relationship between leaders and organizational culture to be that of a focus on growth unique to the organizational culture of the school at the time. The findings of this study provide an explanation for the research questions of 1) How does a leader influence an organizational culture?; (2) How does an organizational culture influence a leader; and (3) What do a leader’s strategic decisions and organizational changes indicate about the relationship between a leader and an organizational culture? As this study is qualitative, the findings cannot be extrapolated or generalized to other schools or other organizations. Readers should consider the applicability of these findings to other situations and organizations, however.

Transferability

The results of this research study can be applied to other situations and individuals. The tools can be utilized by other schools; notably, school leaders that participated in the study wanted to keep the hard copies of the questions from the interview and from analysis of the documents for further study and potential larger and later discussion with the faculty. The interview questions can be used as interview protocols when performing required interviews for accreditation processes within participating ACSI schools. While the knowledge achieved in the context of private Christian schools may be relevant to other private Christian schools, the
knowledge may also be relevant to other parochial schools, private schools, post-secondary schools and public schools. The study may be utilized by a wide variety of school contexts and the study may be modified through tailoring of the interview questions and artifact questions to examine at the context of other macrocultures other than private Christian schools and the relationship between organizational culture and leadership.

**Implications for Research and Practice**

This study resulted in interesting findings that merit further study. There are four areas for further research which may aid in the discussion of the influence between organizational culture and leadership. Four implications also exist for practitioners in Christian schools managing the relationship between organization culture and leadership through strategic decision-making and change-management.

**Areas for Further Research**

**Job-Crafting.** One of the key findings of this study regarding the influence of leaders was that of the role of job-crafting. The finding was exhibited by each leader interviewed. The literature on job-crafting speaks to the perception of the role of work as being that of a calling more than a job. Job-crafting is how employees reframes their work—physically, socially and cognitively—to foster engagement, resilience, job satisfaction, or the sense that the tasks that are performed are meaningful (Berg, Wrzesniewski, & Dutton, 2010). A qualitative study focused on job-crafting in private Christian schools with leaders and with other employees would reveal if this finding is prevalent in private Christian schools in general. If so, follow-up with qualitative studies will greatly add to the literature on organizational culture but also to the literature on job-crafting.
**Servant Leadership.** Findings in this study concluded that leadership influenced organizational culture. The conclusions suggest that the perspective of leadership that the leader employs impacts the organization. Each of the leaders interviewed described their leadership style as relational, but each leader also spoke fluidly to the spiritual outcomes of education within their schools and to their job as being that of a calling. In the literature, there is a body of research that speaks to servant leadership within a Christian framework and outside of a Christian framework. This convergence around this term of, “servant leadership,” for both the secular and Christian cultures suggests that “relational leader” does not sufficiently describe the leadership role that Christian school leaders may employ. A qualitative study specifically on perspectives of the leadership role may provide answers to the philosophy or type of leadership that Christian school leaders employ and how that contributes to leadership development in others within the organization.

**Private School Culture and Leadership.** The pilot study included a school that was not a Christian school but rather a private school for special needs students. The results from the pilot study indicated a relational focus on the part of the leaders and a focus on specific outcomes that were not solely academic as a result of student engagement at that school. A repeat multi-case comparative study of private schools that are not Christian schools may continue to contribute to the literature on the relationship between organizational culture and leaders in private schools and may offer an opportunity to begin to add to the literature that might compare private schools to private Christian schools in terms of student outcomes, organizational culture, and leadership practices. This would not only add to the scholarship in this area but also in the literature and dialogue surrounding school choice.
Post-Secondary Educational Leadership. This study and previously-stated implications focus on the K12 educational settings. This study has implications for the post-secondary educational leadership literature as well. Colleges and universities, whether considered public or private, may benefit from an examination of the influences that the organizational culture and leaders have on one another. School choice is a factor in post-secondary education choices. When graduating students tour colleges and universities, they may very well be trying to understand the organizational culture of the school to determine rightness of fit. College and university leadership want to attract and retain a student body of individuals that become part of the organizational culture and continue to be connected and contribute to the organizational culture as alumni. Colleges and universities compete for the same body of graduating seniors from K12 institutions as well as transfer students from other schools including community colleges and junior colleges. A longitudinal study may provide answers to the following questions and add to the literature on educational leadership: (1) What do leaders express about their institutions and embed in the organizational culture that attracts and retains a student body within the organizational culture of the college or university?; (2) What do strategic changes on the part of the leader indicate about the relationship between the college or university organizational culture and the leaders?; (3) How does the organizational culture influence the strategy for decision-making at the college and university level?

Implications for Practice

Implications also exist for practitioners who are leaders in private Christian school education. The following implications relate to how practitioners may be able to gain knowledge from the conclusions of this study.
**Family-Like School Culture.** The word, “family,” when used to describe the organizational culture, speaks to a level of personal intimacy, connection, and even love in the relationships that are operational within the culture. In this study, the leaders described their organizations as “family,” but also shared the connection that their personal families had to the school either through formal or volunteer roles. Artifacts, including parent reviews and website/promotional document testimonials, echoed this description of organizational culture as being that of family. The expectations of the students and parents toward the level of personal attention to the individual student and individual family are high and communication channels and procedures should be clarified to ensure those expectations for personal attention are met. The expectations for individualized or customized support should be clarified with individual families to make sure that expectations can be realistically met.

Another early-on piece of the admissions process on the part of the leaders is to ascertain the expectations of the family in terms of relationships at the school and determining rightness of fit for the individual student and the family at the school. Open House family opportunities and student shadowing opportunities during the regular school day that allow for in-person connections and formal debriefing with the admissions personnel should be prioritized. Additionally, rich application data beyond academic testing that may include a family interview may prevent expectations from being unmet about the level of attention to the individual as a part of the larger school “family,” and serve to build relationships within the culture prior to admission to the school.

The findings of this study indicate that both the leaders and members of the culture hold in very high esteem the organizational identity of “family.” Students and families who have withdrawn from the schools should be asked to engage in exit interviews to determine how
expectations may not have been met on the part of the organization or leadership and to what
degree those who are leaving the school did not feel relationally connected to the school.
Leaders who employ the use of the word, “family,” to describe the organizational culture of the
school should also be able to articulate in terms of day-to-day operations how that manifests with
concrete examples of “family” behaviors that level-set relational expectations among all
stakeholders, including how conflict is managed and relationships are restored that experience
friction.

**Student Outcomes.** The outcomes for the educational experience at the private Christian
school must be made clear to all stakeholders for the school – students, parents, faculty, and
community members. Doing so will allow everyone to understand the relationship that spiritual
outcomes have to academic outcomes and the spiritual and academic expectations of the private
Christian school. This clarity will be enhanced with a clear expression of the relationship that
the school has with the organizational culture of church; is the school a ministry of a church, is it
a non-denominational independent school and not connected with any one church, or is the
school a non-denominational partnership with one or more churches? Ambiguity about spiritual
and academic outcomes and expectations as well as ambiguity about the relationship of the
school to church will not be comfortable to any of the stakeholders. Stakeholders are engaging
in school choice, a choice for Christian education specifically, and implicit in this is the
understanding that spiritual and academic outcomes and the relationship of the church to the
school needs to be explicit. Christian schools are generally made up of a variety of stakeholders
from various denominations that hold fast to different doctrinal beliefs related to their Christian
faith. Stakeholders, families and faculty, must gauge clearly whether their beliefs are in conflict
with that of the school. This can only be gauged effectively if outcomes and relationships of a
spiritual nature are made explicit. A clear strategy for communicating the outcomes and expectations will allow students, parents, and staff to understand rightness of fit into the school’s organizational culture. This strategy also allows the organization to train employees on expected outcomes and how they are expected to work within the school culture.

**Relational Leadership.** The findings in this study confirmed that leaders at private Christian schools place a high priority on relationships and describe themselves consistently as relational leaders who model this in their organizations. The leaders were able to share with whom they prioritize their time in relationship-building – faculty, family, and board members – and what they value in the relationship-building that teachers have with students across the organization. Consistently, each leader shared that the operational distinction of their school, including that of being a “family,” was that “teachers care.” This study showed that this is what leaders focus on and celebrate within their school cultures. Training and development of employees should then provide opportunities for faculty to articulate and observe best instructional practices that allow faculty to use emotional intelligence in the design of instruction and assessment of student learning and engagement.

Employee evaluation should include observable evidence of relational instruction and relationship-building within the classroom and within the larger framework of the employee’s professional role within the organization. Strategic planning and development should allow for leaders at the school to engage in leadership development of employees with a relational model that the school can articulate and understand. Leaders should allow the entire staff the opportunity to engage in planned and regular team-building activities which will also help build personal relationships with one another and with the leadership of the school which compliments the relationship-building with students and families.
Change as Specific Growth Targets. Organizational change in the schools in this study reflected the specific growth that the leaders identified as critical as related to the age and stage of their organizations. For one mature school, the numbers of students were the highest in many years and the focus on growth was on internal development in applications of grace expressed in dress code and the continued development of special education programming. For another mature school, the footprint of the school was reduced to one site to grow unity in the organization as a whole; again, the focus was an internal application of growth akin to the term development. For the third school, a young and entrepreneurial school, growth was literal – the building and the number of students need to increase. The leader of the school operates as the change agent and should establish a compelling reason for change, including connecting the change to the unchanged mission and vision of the school. The leader of the school has to develop a vision and a strategy and communicate the vision to build buy-in and develop a guiding coalition to empower change and anchor change into the existing culture.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

This study examined the relationship between leaders and organizational culture in private Christian schools and how one influences the other. This study also examined how change initiatives are indicators about the relationship between organizational culture and leaders. Three schools provided the sites for the research – a school of just over 40 years in southern Virginia, a school of just over 40 years in northern Virginia, and a school of under 10 years in central Virginia. The results of the research provide interesting findings that give insight into the relationship between organizational culture and leaders in an educational setting that is a hybrid of ministry, business, and school.
The findings expressed how leaders influence organizational cultures and how the organizational cultures influenced the leaders. The findings expressed how change focused on growth gave evidence for the relationship between the organizational culture and the leader. Findings were determined on how leaders describe organizational context such as age, stage, and identity of the organization. Findings were determined about how organizational context influences what the leader values, pays attention to, and what changes he or she initiates as a result of the need for growth in some fashion. The findings on the influence of organizational culture on leaders and the influence of leaders on organizational culture may provide insights on organizations that are transferred educational institutions in the private K12 sector and in the private and public post-secondary educational institutions.

The conclusions of the study are significant, as they begin to address the void in the literature related to the role of leadership in private Christian schools. This study reaffirms other conclusions by scholars that organizational culture does influence leaders and that leaders influence organizational culture. It also concludes that change that targets growth in an organization is an indicator of the relationship that the leader has with the organizational culture. The final conclusion is that both organizational culture and leaders influence one another. These conclusions are significant because they help identify elements that aid in understanding the dynamic relationship between culture and leaders, along with providing practitioners with focus areas which need to be considered as leaders of schools. This study should add to the literature of organizational culture, leadership, private (and Christian) school leadership, private school culture, and organizational change as well as aid practitioners as they lead educational institutions.
REFERENCES


Ventura, CA: Barna Group.


Green, E. (2017, March 29). Betsy DeVos calls for more school choice, saying money isn’t the


*Personal Psychology, 48, 747-773.*


APPENDIX A: INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM FOR INVITATION FOR INTERVIEW

Date

Dear (Insert Subject’s Name):

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a research study I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in the Department of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University under the supervision of Dr. Robin Hurst. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) cites that in 2012 there were 30,861 private schools in the United States, serving 5.3 million PK-12 students. Private schools account for 24 percent of the nation's schools and enroll 10 percent of all PK-12 students. Most private school students (80 percent) attend religiously-affiliated schools. This study does not focus on the debate or the merits of public versus private school. Specifically, this study examines how leadership and culture are fundamentally intertwined: how does organizational culture influence the strategic decision-making of a leader, and how does the strategic decision-making of the leader influence the organizational culture?

This study will focus on organizational context of private schools and how leaders strategically operate to impact their stakeholders meaningfully within that context. Therefore, I would like to include your organization as one of several organizations to be involved in my study. I believe that because you are actively involved in the management and operation of your organization, you are best suited to speak to the various issues related to the leadership of private schools and contribute to the body of research about leadership in private schools.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately an hour in length to take place at your campus location. I would like to request a regular tour of your campus from the person who regularly provides these tours and I would like to receive any accompanying promotional materials used on these tours with prospective parents and/or students. If you have a copy of your recent accreditation documents and would be open to sharing your recommendations and commendations, I would be interested in learning about those as well. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by
advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name and the name of your school or any identifying information will not appear in my dissertation or any report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained until my dissertation is complete in a secure electronic system at Virginia Commonwealth University that uses encryption and two-step verification with access. Only researchers associated with this project will have access, namely me and Dr. Hurst.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 804-301-9797 or by e-mail at tuckerlloyje@vcu.edu You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Robin Hurst, at rrhurst@vcu.edu.

I will contact you to confirm intent to participate and schedule a mutually agreed upon time for a site visit and interview.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those organizations directly involved in the study, other private schools and private schools leaders not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

(Signature)            (Signature)

Julia E. Tucker-Lloyd, MA.Ed
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education

Dr. Robin Hurst, Ed.D
Assistant Professor – Teaching and Learning
School of Education
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Julia Tucker-Lloyd of the Department of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project had been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Research Ethics Review Board at Virginia Commonwealth University. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in his study, I may contact Dr. Robin Hurst.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

[ ] YES [ ] NO

I agree to have my interview tape recorded.

[ ] YES [ ] NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Subject’s Name (please print) _____________________________

Subject’s Signature _____________________________ Date ____________

Researcher’s Signature _____________________________ Date ____________

Researcher's Title _____________________________ Department _________________________

Faculty Advisor Signature _____________________________ Date ____________

Faculty Advisor Title _____________________________ Department _________________________
APPENDIX C: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Organizational Context

Leadership

Organizational Processes
- Models
- Characteristics
- Strategic Decisions
- Changes

Stage
Identity
Culture

Change

Stage
Culture/Identity
# APPENDIX D: LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Organizational Context:</strong> Stage, Identity, and Culture</th>
<th><strong>Organizational Processes:</strong> Strategic Decisions and Changes</th>
<th><strong>Leadership:</strong> Models and Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your school?</td>
<td>What do you feel are the biggest areas of growth for your school?</td>
<td>What do you feel you pay the most attention to as a leader at your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your school culture?</td>
<td>What goals would you like for your school to achieve?</td>
<td>What do you feel you most frequently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you like to have your school culture described? How would you like to have your school and/or school culture described in five years?</td>
<td>What are you most hungry to see happen in your school?</td>
<td>How would you describe your leadership style?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the mission and vision of your school and how does this distinguish your school?</td>
<td>What would you say is the “next level” for your school?</td>
<td>What do you feel like you need to control most regularly in your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For someone who knew nothing about your school, what would you want them to observe, read or experience about your school?</td>
<td>What do you think it is most critical for you to keep in mind at this time for the well-being of your school?</td>
<td>What do you feel you celebrate most frequently in your school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What stage would you say that your school was in when you joined the organization and what stage would you describe it is now in terms of development?</td>
<td>What changes have you made since you began to lead at this school?</td>
<td>Describe a crisis you have experienced and how you have handled it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think your school does particularly well?</td>
<td>Are there any changes in process at present and how would you describe these?</td>
<td>How do you achieve work/life balance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you consider the unique challenges with your school?</td>
<td>What changes do you anticipate having to make in the future at this school?</td>
<td>What can you share with me about your life outside of school?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX E: WEBSITE REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Context: Stage, Identity, and Culture</th>
<th>Organizational Processes: Strategic Decisions and Changes</th>
<th>Leadership: Models and Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the school described?</td>
<td>From the homepage or any of the main pages linked directly from the home page, is there any description of current change?</td>
<td>Is there a staff directory on the website and, if so, what is the structure of the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long has the school been in existence and what are the first three details about the history of the school that emerge?</td>
<td>From the homepage or any of the main pages linked directly from the home page, is there any description of anticipated change?</td>
<td>Is there a page or pages written by any administrative leaders in the school? If so, what are the key points from that communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the mission and/or vision of the school?</td>
<td>From the homepage or any of the main pages linked directly from the home page, is there any description of past change?</td>
<td>Is there a page or pages written about any administrative leaders in the school? If so, what are the key points from that communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What artifacts of the culture are described (mascot, school colors, school motto or crest) and is there any explanation of the choices?</td>
<td>From the homepage or any of the main pages linked directly from the home page, is there any documentation of a strategic plan or annual report and if so, how is this information organized?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are student profiles described for this institution and if so, how are the students described?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a community profile described and if so how is it described?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the images on the main page of the website?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the major links from the main page?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the communication channels available from the website for existing or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prospecive organizational members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the description of the facility itself?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX F: DOCUMENT REVIEW: TOUR PACKET/PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Context: Stage, Identity, and Culture</th>
<th>Organizational Processes: Strategic Decisions and Changes</th>
<th>Leadership: Models and Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the school described in the promotional materials?</td>
<td>From the promotional materials, is there any description of current change?</td>
<td>Do any of the promotional materials communicate the structure of the school? If so, what is the structure of the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long has the school been in existence and what are the first three details about the history of the school that emerge?</td>
<td>From the promotional materials, is there any description of anticipated change?</td>
<td>Is there a page or pages or any part of the documentation written by any administrative leaders in the school? If so, what are the key points from that communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the mission and/or vision of the school expressed in these materials?</td>
<td>From the promotional materials, is there any description of past change?</td>
<td>Is there a page or pages written or any part of the documentation written about any administrative leaders in the school? If so, what are the key points from that communication?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What artifacts of the culture are described (mascot, school colors, school motto or crest) and is there any explanation of the choices?</td>
<td>From the promotional materials, is there any documentation of a strategic plan or annual report and if so, how is this information organized?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are student profiles described for this institution and if so, how are the students described?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a community profile described and if so how is it described?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the images on the documentation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the pieces of promotional literature provided to current community members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the promotional pieces of literature provided to prospective community members?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do the promotional materials communicate about the facility?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Context: Stage, Identity, and Culture</td>
<td>Organizational Processes: Strategic Decisions and Changes</td>
<td>Leadership: Models and Characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this document share about the stage of the organization?</td>
<td>What is the current accreditation status of this school?</td>
<td>How is the leadership structure described at this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this document share about the identity of the organization?</td>
<td>What commendations has this school been given as a result of the accreditation process?</td>
<td>How is the governance model described at this school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does this document share about the culture of the organization?</td>
<td>What recommendations has this school been given as a result of the accreditation process?</td>
<td>What credentials does the leadership of the school carry? (degrees, certifications, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H: CODING PROCESS MAP AND CODES

First Order Categories
Each response from each subject was coded as it related to one of the research questions - Leadership Role (LR), School Culture (SC), or Strategic Decision/Change (LS).

Second Order Categories
Each response by each subject was coded by the content of the response and then organized into categories. A peer coder reviewed the coding and the second order categories with the researcher for accuracy.

Major Themes
Themes emerged from second-order categories that had the greatest measures of groundedness reflected after the coding process was completed in ATLAS.ti.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(RQ 1) LEADERSHIP ROLE</th>
<th>(RQ 2) SCHOOL CULTURE</th>
<th>(RQ 3) LEADERSHIP STRATEGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LR COMMITMENT</td>
<td>LR JOB CRAFTING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR RELATIONAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS COMPARATIVE IDENTITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS GROWTH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS OUTCOMES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC FAMILY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC HISTORY AND AUTHORITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC ACADEMICS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC SPIRITUAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• LEADERSHIP ROLE THEMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ORGANIZATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CULTURE THEMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• STRATEGIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DECISION/CHANGE THEMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OGCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• LEADERSHIP ROLE THEMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ORGANIZATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CULTURE THEMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• STRATEGIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DECISION/CHANGE THEMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• LEADERSHIP ROLE THEMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ORGANIZATIONAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CULTURE THEMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• STRATEGIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DECISION/CHANGE THEMES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curriculum Vitae
Julia E. Tucker-Lloyd, PhD

Grove Christian School
8701 Ridge Road
Richmond, Virginia 23229

(804) 741-2860 – work
(804) 301-9797 – cell
julialloyd2019@outlook.com

EDUCATION
PhD, Urban Services Leadership, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
(May, 2019)
MA.Ed., Curriculum and Instruction, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA
(August, 1993)
B.A., English, Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA
(May, 1991)

DISSERTATION TOPIC
Leadership Influence and Organizational Culture Influence in Private Schools: A Comparative Multiple Case Study on the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Strategic Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Academic:

Grove Christian School 2015 – present
Head of School
Developed and executed Four-Year Strategic Plan and increased enrollment by 50%. Led re-accreditation efforts and approval for the school through the Virginia Council for Private Education and established school accountability standards. Developed and trained teachers for Backwards Design, 21st Century Learning, and Writing Across the Curriculum. Provided direct leadership to the following departments: Finance, Academics, Athletics, Development, Community Outreach, High School, Middle School, Lower School and Preschool. Developed partnership with other Christian schools in the area for professional development for faculty and leadership development for high school students. Managed a revenue-positive budget and a faculty of 30 employees. Managed website development, annual reporting, capital campaigns, stakeholder surveys, stakeholder forums, social media communication, and professional development.

**Educate VA**

**Director**

Trained and assessed both pre-service Level I students and mentored professional development of Level II first year teachers in a state-wide hybrid instructional model program for post-baccalaureate professionals seeking teaching careers. Managed all operational functions related to program development, staff development, student resource, budgeting, and financial operations, Developed partnerships with community colleges and divisions. Managed a multimillion-dollar budget with consistent revenue-positive targets fully-met. Managed a team of 4 full-time employees and 25 adjunct instructors for a statewide program that spanned 11 different community colleges. Developed effective instructional online and hybrid module courses in Blackboard. Developed effective business applications for streamlining contract development, payments, and budget management. Conducted adjunct new hire training and development as well as mentor training and development.

**Lord Fairfax Community College**

**Adjunct Instructor**

Developed and implemented online courses English for the college in Southern Literature, English Composition and English Literature.

**Fairfax County Public Schools**

**High School English Teacher**

Taught English 9, 10, 11 (Regular & Advanced) and worked with a variety of populations – ESL, ED, Special Education, Hearing Impaired, Gifted. Curriculum Development at the county development office in the following areas: writing across the curriculum, program of studies development, language and learning, grammar in the context of writing, performance assessment, and curriculum design assessment through Backwards Design.
**Business/Industry:**

Capital One Bank 2012 – 2015

**Manager, Instructional Design Team**

Managed a team of instructional designers across the country supporting projects across Capital One Bank. Developed customized training curriculum for Deposit Operations New Hire training as well as special projects for existing compliance and soft-skill needs. Developed assessments for each job role to demonstrate new hire competency with training. Developed effective electronic interactive learning tools to improve training and improve associate proficiency within well-managed agenda. Developed work group team approaches to process improvement/up-training initiatives. (Special Legal Processing, DNE/ACH Reclamations, Abandoned Property). Developed leadership survey and design for customized leadership training for managers in Deposit Operations.

**BOOK CHAPTERS**


**RECENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**


Tucker-Lloyd, J. (2018). *Organizational culture and strategic leadership in private schools*. American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. Myrtle Beach, SC.


**CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS**

eLearning
Evaluation of Learning
Human Resource Development Strategies
Job Crafting
Job Coaching
Organizational Culture, Learning, Identity, and Change
Leadership
Strategic Decision-Making
Strategic Planning
Talent Development
Virtual Learning
Virtual Training
COMMUNITY SERVICE

Richmond Marathon & Half Marathon Training Team, Coach 2002-2016
Clay House/Urban Supportive Housing 2016 - present

ACCREDITATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Post-Graduate Professional License, Virginia Department of Education, English 6-12
All-Levels Principal, Association for Christian Schools International

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

National Writing Project Fellow – Northern Virginia Writing Project, George Mason University
Academy of Human Resource Development
American Association of Adult and Continuing Education
Association for Christian Schools International

200