THE PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL OKLAHOMA

SUPERINTENDENTS ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL

GROWTH: CAREER PHASES, ORGANIZATIONAL

FRAMES, AND FOCUS OF ACTIVITIES

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
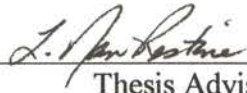the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
May, 1998

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere thanks to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Nan Restine, for her support and guidance throughout this project and for her friendship over the last few years. My appreciation extends to all members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Martin Burlingame, Dr. Diane Montgomery, and Dr. Edward Harris, for their support and suggestions.

In addition, I express my gratitude to the superintendents who warmly welcomed me into their schools and thoughtfully entertained my questions. New friendships developed during this process.

I would also like to thank my previous and current administrators, Mr. Bob Smith, Mr. Thomas Jones, and Mr. Jim Sisney, for their encouragement and support during my educational process. They provided support by allowing flexibility in my work schedule.

Special appreciation is extended to my wife, Tammy, for her support and encouragement throughout my educational process and for bringing our first child, Clay, into the world during the course of this dissertation. Completing this study would not have been possible without her additional efforts to manage our house and care for Clay.

Finally, I want to thank my parents for their life-long support, devotion, and friendship.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study explored the professional growth of superintendents in selected rural Oklahoma school districts. For the purpose of this study, professional growth refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform the role effectively. The qualitative long interview was used to collect data from nine superintendents employed in selected rural school districts. The long interview was selected because it can take us into the mental world of the superintendents (McCracken, 1988). According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), "Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds" (p. 1).

Other studies have used socialization frameworks to examine the professional growth of teachers and principals (Garberina, 1980; Gibson, 1972; Hoy & Rees, 1977; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Begley, 1992), but research on the professional growth of superintendents in rural school districts is rare and needs to be conducted. This study adds to the current literature by expanding the existing knowledge about the professional growth of superintendents in rural school districts. Improving the professional growth of superintendents should assume a high level of importance if superintendents, as leaders, can make a difference in the quality of public schools.

Background of the Study

How do individuals in educational organizations acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform their roles effectively? This question may be explored

by examining how the values and norms that govern educational organizations are communicated and learned. Researchers have explored the notion of professional growth by examining the socialization experiences of individuals at various levels within the education hierarchy (Crow, 1995; Day, 1959; Garberina, 1980; Hoy & Rees, 1977; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Begley, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Parkay, Curie, & Rhodes, 1992). Socialization experiences can be viewed more precisely by analyzing them through the concepts of anticipatory, professional, and organizational socialization. This line of research explores the influence of previous experiences, formal and informal training, and contextual factors on an individual's performance. Pertinent findings and major conclusions in the areas of anticipatory, professional, and organizational socialization that relate to professional growth of teachers and administrators are presented below.

Anticipatory socialization begins before an individual enters an organization and encompasses all the learning that occurs prior to entering the organization (Merton, 1957; Van Maanen, 1975). The concept of anticipatory socialization has been used to examine the professional growth of teachers (Gibson, 1972; Lortie, 1975). Anticipatory socialization occurs through the internalization of teaching models during the many years students spend in close contact with teachers (Leslie, Swiren, & Flexner, 1977; Lortie, 1975). Lortie (1975) was the first to point out the importance of these early experiences in the formation of teacher's attitudes and values. As a student, an individual has many years of contact with teachers and this exposure shapes conceptions about teaching. Leslie, et al. (1977) examined the influence of role models on the teaching practices of individuals and concluded that the influence of previous role models was so great that it

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impeded instructional progress. In a study on anticipatory professional socialization, Gibson (1972) examined attitude changes of college students concerning teacher-role expectations and found that major role learning occurred within the first year and that students' attitudes toward children became more liberal during the course of teacher training.

The professional growth that occurs prior to an appointment as an administrator is anticipatory socialization (Miklos, 1988). Researchers have utilized the concept of anticipatory socialization to examine the professional growth of administrators (Crow, 1995; Garberina, 1980; Greenfield, 1985;). Garberina (1980) examined factors leading to the socialization of new principals and concluded that teachers and other role aspirants become socialized into the principalship prior to being selected as principals. In a recent study, Crow (1995) investigated the socialization process of developing a conception of the principal's role. He identified the following sources of role conception when students entered the principal preparation program: (a) pre-socialization experiences in which they witnessed principals performing jobs; (b) previous experiences as teachers and experiences outside education where certain skills were perceived as beneficial; and (c) perceptions of principals with whom they worked. The influence of anticipatory socialization experiences was evident in Bogotch and Reidlinger's (1993) comparative study of new and experienced principals. They surveyed 28 new and experienced principals to identify socialization variables that impacted their attitudes and performance. The findings indicated new principals were either socialized into the role of the principalship prior to

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assuming the job or the district may have attracted individuals who were more likely to conform to past practices than to change.

Professional socialization refers to the processes through which one becomes a member of a profession and develops an identity with that profession (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992). The concept of professional socialization has been used to examine the professional growth of teachers (Tabachnick, Popkewitz, & Zeichner, 1980). Much of the professional socialization research has focused on the university training of teachers (Grossman & Richert, 1988; Ross, 1987; Tabachnick et al., 1980). Grossman and Richert (1988) examined the knowledge acquisition of novice teachers to explore the impact of professional socialization experiences. The findings suggested that university coursework and fieldwork offered different but complementary opportunities for learning to teach. Ross (1987) investigated factors that influence the formation and development of teacher perspectives. The conclusion was that teacher perspectives were a result of coursework and field experiences, the individual's apprenticeship of observation, and the individual's background. Tabachnick et al. (1980) found teacher conferences and seminars contributed to the formation of conservative attitudes by placing emphasis on established practices and techniques.

Researchers have examined the professional growth of administrators through the concept of professional socialization (Duke, Isaacson, Sagor, & Schmuck, 1984; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Begley, 1992; Parkay et al., 1992). Leithwood et al. (1992) identified socialization experiences that influenced the development of instructional leadership among aspiring principals and practicing principals in Canada. The results

indicated practicing and aspiring principals, who experienced socialization patterns

thought to be associated with a tendency to adopt an instructional leadership role,

awarded greater importance to interpersonal, managerial, and legal tasks than they did to

instructional leadership tasks. Duke et al. (1984) studied the first years of successful

veteran principals. Principals reported that they learned about the norms and expectations

of the principalship from previous principals, other administrators, teachers, students, and

secretaries. Using multiple case studies, Parkay et al. (1992) documented and described

the professional socialization of 12 high school principals. The researchers developed a

professional socialization hierarchy and contend that principals experience identifiable

stages of professional socialization.

Organizational socialization refers to "the process by which one is taught and

learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p.

211). The concept of organizational socialization has been used to examine to the

professional growth of teachers (Day, 1959; Hoy, 1968; Hoy & Rees, 1977). Day (1959)

explained the attitude changes, from humanistic to custodial, of beginning teachers by

concluding that first-year teachers found their initial expectations unrealistic and adopted

more traditional attitudes towards teaching. In a similar study on the effects of

organizational socialization, Hoy (1968) measured changes in the attitudes of beginning

teachers. The results indicated that students became more custodial after eight weeks of

student teaching and that the level of custodialism increased with each successive period

of teaching. In another study, Hoy and Rees (1977) examined the effects student teaching

had on the bureaucratic orientation of individuals. They found student teachers became

more bureaucratic in orientation and more custodial in their pupil control orientation and concluded the school bureaucracy quickly impressed upon the teachers the need to conform to traditional values and practices.

Several researchers have explored the impact that organizational socialization has on the professional growth of administrators (Heck, 1995; Hurley, 1992; Mascaro, 1976; Norton, 1994). Hurley (1992) examined how 10 rural high school principals were organizationally socialized into instructional leadership roles. Principals reported teachers sent strong, clear messages concerning the role of the principal in the area of discipline, but few messages in the areas of personnel and curriculum development. Mascaro (1976) examined changes in the perspectives of first-year principals to discover conflicts between their conceptions of the role and the demand of the role. Data indicated that teachers' expectations, concerning the role of the principal, contributed to changes in principals' perspectives of role conception. Norton (1994) examined personal and school characteristics related to the organizational socialization of principals. The results indicated a statistically significant relationship between the type of community and the socialization levels of principals. He stated, "Principals experience socialization in different ways, but the differences are primarily attributed to the personal characteristics of the individual and the organizational characteristics of the school" (Norton, 1994, p. 22). In a recent study, Heck (1995) surveyed 150 principals to test the strength of a socialization model in explaining administrative performance. The data indicated organizational socialization had the strongest direct and total effect on administrator performance.

Research on beginning teachers and principals suggests anticipatory socialization has considerable effects on their professional growth. The professional socialization of teachers and principals begins during training before they enter the organization and continues for varying periods of time. The professional socialization research indicates that much of what is communicated through formal training leads to the development of false role expectations and is outweighed by the specific context demands of the job. Research exploring organizational socialization indicates teachers and principals tend to conform to the existing values and practices of the school or district. Beginning teachers are not only rewarded for conforming to established rules and methods, but must do so if they wish to be accepted as professionals by their peers. Time and work demands and teacher expectations are forces effecting the organizational socialization of principals.

Theoretical Framework

Three works were influential in developing the theoretical framework for this study. The framework provided a method to analyze the professional growth of superintendents by examining their (a) career phase, (b) use of organizational frames, and (c) focus of activities. The following section presents the stages of the framework separately. After each stage of the framework is presented, they are combined to form the complete framework.

Phases of Career Socialization

Three phases that identify periods of learning, gradual adjustment, and stabilization of careers can be identified in the socialization research (Buchanan, 1974; Feldman, 1976;

Nicholson & West, 1988; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Wanous, 1980). The

encounter phase requires much learning on the part of the new administrator. The amount

of learning appears to depend on the following factors: the amount of change, or

differences in the status, role requirements, and work environment between the new and

old positions; contrast, or the carry over involving people; and surprise, or the unmet

positive and negative expectations. The level of success in the first phase depends on the

extent to which the expectations of the new member and the organization are realistic and

the degree to which the newcomer is well matched to the role.

The adjustment phase involves the task of fitting in the organization. The

adjustment phase of organizational socialization and can involve two contrasting

processes. First, the adjustment phase involves a reactive change in the individual and,

secondly, may involve molding the new role to suit the requirements of the newcomer

(Nicholson & West, 1988). According to Nicholson and West (1988), "The two major

predicted outcomes of transitions are: personal change and role innovation" (p. 106).

The third phase, stabilization, is a time of consolidation and the establishment of

settled routines. Nicholson and West (1988) view the phases of stabilization and

preparation (for the next change) together, because some individuals never reach

stabilization due to new careers and organizational change. Nicholson and West (1988)

state, "Managers have little opportunity to control the pace and continuity of movement

though the cycle" (p. 114).

The first stage of the framework consists of three phases of career socialization.

The career phases of encounter, adjustment, and stabilization were used to categorize the

superintendents, based on their experience as superintendents, so anomalies and

idiosyncrasies that emerged could be analyzed and compared.

<u>Use of Organizational Frames</u>

Bolman and Deal (1984, 1991) distilled theories of organizations into four

categories, which they labeled frames. The frames are structural, human resource,

political, and symbolic. These frames provide superintendents with multiple lenses to use

in organizational analysis. Superintendents can increase their understanding of

organizational problems and develop more comprehensive leadership strategies by

employing these frames. According to Bolman (1992):

> The structural frame emphasizes rationality, efficiency, structure, and policies.
>
> Structural leaders value analysis and data, keep their eye on the bottom line, set
>
> clear directions, hold people accountable for results, and try to solve
>
> organizational problems with new policies and rules-or through restructuring. The
>
> human resource frame focuses on the interaction between individual and
>
> organizational needs. Human resource leaders value relationships and feelings and
>
> seek to lead though facilitation and empowerment. The political frame emphasizes
>
> conflict among different groups and interests for scarce resources. Political leaders
>
> are advocates and negotiators who spend much of their time networking, creating
>
> coalitions, building a power base, and negotiating compromises. The symbolic
>
> frame sees a chaotic world in which meaning and predictability are socially
>
> constructed and facts are interpretative rather than objective. Symbolic leaders

pay attention to myths, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and other symbolic forms. (p. 314)

According to Bolman and Deal (1992), "The capacity to reframe is a critical issue in success as both manager and leader" (p. 315). They contend the ability to use more than one frame increases an individual's ability to make clear judgments and to act effectively. In addition, they hypothesized "Leadership is contextual: Different situations require different patterns of thinking" (Bolman & Deal, 1992, p. 315).

Bolman and Deal (1992) explored the use of organizational frames by administrators in the United States and Singapore. The results indicated the structural frame was the best predictor of managerial effectiveness and the worst predictor of effectiveness as a leader for administrators in the United States. The symbolic frame was the best predictor of effectiveness as a leader and the second best predictor of managerial effectiveness for administrators in the United States. The human resource frame was the second best predictor of effectiveness as a leader and the third best predictor for managerial effectiveness. The political frame was the third best predictor of leader effectiveness and the worst predictor of managerial effectiveness. The researchers found that effective leaders in the United States were oriented towards symbols, people, and politics. Bolman and Deal (1992) contend the overlap in the qualities of effective managers and effective leaders suggests that leadership and management are harder to distinguish for the school administrator than for other administrative jobs.

The second stage of the analysis framework consists of Bolman and Deals' (1984, 1991) organizational frames and provided a method to analyze superintendents according

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to the extent they use multiple organizational frames at various career phases. The subtleties of how superintendents think were analyzed to determine if and to what extent they employed organizational frames to resolve critical organizational events. The assumption, drawn from Bolman and Deals' (1992) research, underlying this stage of the framework is that the capacity to use multiple organizational frames is associated with levels of professional growth.

Focus of Activities

Skills required of superintendents vary from district to district, however, similarities can be identified. For example, Blumberg (1985) reported superintendent's skills required by two New York districts. One district identified financial management, community relations, organizational development, executive leadership, and communication capabilities as important skills for the superintendent. The second district listed financial planning and management, educational program development, personnel administration, community relations, communications, school board leadership, and comprehensive planning as important skills for the superintendent.

Griffiths (1966) suggested the responsibilities of superintendents could be divided into the following areas: improving educational opportunity; obtaining and developing personnel; maintaining effective relations with the community; and providing and maintaining funds and facilities. He further contends that sets of conceptual, human, and technical skills are attached to each job responsibility.

Konnert and Augenstein (1995) contend superintendents need to possess skills in several task areas to function successfully. They contend superintendents need skills in the

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following tasks areas: finance; budgeting; personnel administration; curriculum; instruction; community relations; policy development; and site management.

For the purpose of this study, focus of activities refers to the task areas perceived by superintendents as being the more important tasks of their role. The task areas were condensed into four main areas to operationalize the third stage of the framework. This stage of the framework provided a method for analyzing the superintendents focus of activities. This stage of the framework consists of the following task areas:

- Instructional Leadership - Includes all aspects of the instructional program such as defining a mission, managing the curriculum, and selecting instructional methods.

- Personnel Relations - Includes all matters of personnel administration including professional and non-professional personnel. Relevant issues are recruitment, selection, placement, and promotion of personnel.

- Community Relations - Includes all aspects of public relations and interpreting the school to the public.

- Funds and Facilities Management - Includes issues related budget planning, plant maintenance, and construction and renovation of buildings.

In summary, this study explored the professional growth of superintendents in selected rural school districts. Procedurally, superintendents were first classified into one of three career phases based on their experience in the role. The career phases of encounter, adjustment, and stabilization were used to categorize superintendents. This allowed anomalies and idiosyncrasies that emerged among superintendents within the same career phase to be compared and analyzed. The second stage of the framework provided

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a method for analyzing superintendents according to the extent they employ multiple organizational frames at various career phases. The organizational frames included in this initial stage of the framework are structural, symbolic, human resource, and political. The final stage of the framework provided a method to analyze superintendents focus of activities in light of their career phase and use of organizational frames. The task areas of instructional leadership, personnel relations, community relations, and funds and facilities management are included in this stage of the framework.

Levels of professional growth were determined by analyzing the superintendents career phases, use of organizational frames, and focus of activities. Underlying this view of professional growth is the assumption that the use of multiple organizational frames is associated with levels of professional growth. The following schematic illustrates the conceptual stages of the framework used for the study.

Superintendents Professional Growth
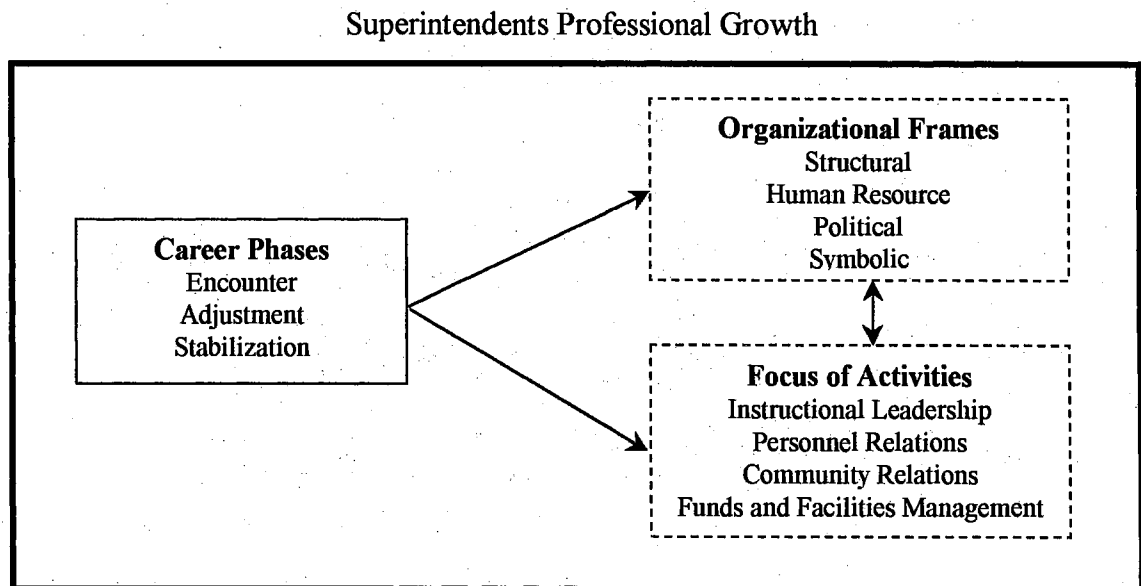
Figure 1. A framework to analyze the professional growth of superintendents.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma school districts. The following research questions are proposed: (a) What similarities and differences in professional growth can be identified among superintendents within the same career phase? (b) In what ways do career phases influence superintendents use of organizational frames? and (c) In what ways do career phases influence superintendents focus of activities?

Methodology

Considering the nature of the problem, qualitative research methodology was selected for this study. According to Merriam (1988), "Qualitative research assumes there are multiple realities that are a function of personal interaction and perception" (p. 17). The long interview was the qualitative method that was employed to gather information from respondents. McCracken (1988) states, "This method can take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world" (p. 9). "Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which you did not participate" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 1).

Data were collected from nine superintendents employed in rural Oklahoma districts. Selection of respondents was not be governed by traditional quantitative sampling rules. Criterion for the selection of respondents included their willingness to participate in the study, their experience as superintendents, and the location and size of the district where they were employed. Initially, superintendents were contacted by

telephone to briefly explain the study and to ascertain their interest about participating in the study. Superintendents interested in the study were mailed an informative letter requesting their participation and a consent form.

Respondents were categorized into one of three career phases, encounter, adjustment, or stabilization, based on their experience as superintendents. Superintendents in their first year in the role were considered to be in the encounter phase of their careers. Superintendents with two to four years of experience in the role were considered to be in the adjustment phase of their careers. Superintendents with five or more years of experience in the role were considered to be in the stabilization phase of their careers. Three superintendents were selected and interviewed for each career phase.

Data collection and analysis followed the four-step method of inquiry recommended by McCracken (1988). The steps recommended by McCracken (1988) are: (a) review of analytic categories; (b) review of cultural categories; (c) discovery of cultural categories; and (d) discovery of analytic categories. "The first step of the long interview begins with an exhaustive review of the literature" (McCracken, 1988, p. 29). The purposes of the review are to provide the researcher with the necessary background to define problems and assess data, and to aid in the construction of the interview questionnaire (McCracken, 1988). McCracken (1988) contends there are three purposes for the cultural review. First, is to prepare for questionnaire construction. Second, is to prepare the "rummaging" that will occur during data analysis. The final purpose of the cultural review is for the investigator to establish distance. The third step of McCracken's (1988) method consists of constructing the questionnaire. An important consideration in

constructing the questionnaire is to recognize "that the first objective of the qualitative interview is to allow respondents to tell their own story in their own terms" (McCracken, 1988, p. 34).

The questionnaire for this study consisted of several main questions. Main questions break the overall topic into several related questions and should be open enough to encourage interviewees to express their own opinions and experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Probes were used when responses lacked sufficient detail or clarity. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), "Probes encourage the interviewee to expand on the matter at hand, complete an example of narrative, or explain a statement that the interviewer did not understand" (p. 208). Follow-up questions were asked as necessary, but were based on the interviewee's responses to the main questions. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest, "the basic purposes of follow-up questions are to get richer, more in-depth answers; to explore newly discovered avenues; and to test and modify themes" (p. 212).

The main interview questions were:

- What do you do as superintendent?

- What consumes the majority of your time?

- What do you consider to be the most important part of your role?

- Can you recall a critical event, related to your job, that you were involved in this year? Would you explain how you handled the situation?

- Can you recall a critical event, related to your job, that your were involved in during the first year following your appointment as superintendent? Would you explain how you handled the situation?

- Can you recall a critical event, related to your job, that you were involved in during the second to fourth year following your appointment as superintendent? Would you explain how you handled the situation?

The interviews began in April of 1997, so superintendents in the encounter career phase were near the completion of their first year in the role. Interviews were recorded on audio tape and transcribed verbatim. Only the researcher had access to the interview tapes. Every effort was made to ensure confidentiality of the respondents during data collection and reporting. Confidentiality safeguards included the use of pseudonyms for sites, settings, and respondents. Information was reported in such a manner that subjects could not be identified.

Data were analyzed using the fourth step of McCracken's (1988) framework. This step contains five stages of data analysis. The first stage of analysis examines the details of the interview transcript. Each succeeding stage of analysis moves from specific details to general observations. Aggregate data were used to develop the themes reported, however, the themes are supported by individual narrative. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest the voices of the interviewees should come through at appropriate moments. According the Rubin and Rubin, "Excerpts from your interviewees help make the report fresh and convincing while drawing the reader along to your conclusions" (1995, p. 257). This process of analysis transforms the data into general properties of thought and action within the group under study (McCracken, 1988).

The objectives of data analysis were to identify patterns of relationships, categories, and themes that: (a) identify similarities and differences regarding the

professional growth of superintendents within the same career phase; (b) identify in what ways career phases influence superintendents use of organizational frames; and (c) identify in what ways career phases influence superintendents focus of activities.

Limitations of the Study

Variance among subjects as to when they entered the superintendency is a limitation of this study. Controlling for differences in background and prior experiences is not practical in qualitative research. Another limitation of qualitative research is that conclusions must be drawn tentatively. Because data are gathered from a small number of respondents, findings are too limited to warrant conclusive generalizations. Qualitative research enriches our knowledge of particulars rather than giving us large generalizations. How widely what is discovered exists in the rest of the world cannot be determined by qualitative methods. A third limitation stems from the participants involved in the study. The participating superintendents provided all of the qualitative data that were used to explore their professional growth. The perceptions of individuals who routinely interact with the participating superintendents, such as parents, teachers, and principals, were not included in data collection and analysis.

Significance of the Study

This study expands the existing knowledge about rural superintendents by identifying how or if their professional growth is influenced by career phases, use of organizational frames, and focus of activities. Research on the professional growth of superintendents is important because of the changing social contexts and expectations

encountered by public education institutions. The world of school administration is becoming increasingly complex as schools are confronted with contemporary issues such as gender and race equity, special education, competition from private schools, collaborative decision making, due process, and a distrusting constituency.

A review of the anticipatory, professional, and organizational socialization literature identified noteworthy contributions in the area of professional growth for teachers and principals. Research exploring the professional growth of superintendents in rural school districts is rare. Issues such as professional growth and how career phases influence superintendents use of organizational frames and focus of activities should assume a high level of importance if superintendents, as leaders, can make a difference in the quality of public schools. Expanding the existing knowledge pertaining to the professional growth of superintendents has the potential to meet the contemporary challenges of today and simultaneously improve the quality of leadership in public education institutions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

How do individuals in educational organizations acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform their roles effectively? Why do certain individuals attain higher levels of professional growth than others do? Researchers have explored these questions by examining how the values and norms that govern educational organizations are communicated and learned though the process of socialization. This chapter reviews socialization research focused on identifying how various forces impact the professional growth of teachers and administrators. The first section of this chapter outlines some generic models of socialization. These models provide a conceptual understanding of the essential socialization processes experienced by organizational newcomers. The second section is more specific and examines the anticipatory socialization experiences of public school teachers and administrators. The third section reviews research focused on the professional socialization of public school teachers and administrators. The final section presents research on the effects organizational socialization has on public school teachers and administrators.

Phases of Career Socialization

Socialization refers to the processes though which an individual acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to perform a social role effectively (Merton, 1968). According to Parkay et al. (1992), "professional socialization refers to the processes through which one becomes a member of a profession and, over time, develops

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an identity with that profession" (p. 45). Organizational socialization refers to "the process by which one is taught and learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211).

The socialization process has been described as involving a number of phases or stages. The beginning of the socialization process has been labeled as the "pre-arrival" (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975), "preparation/anticipation" (Nicholson & West, 1988), and the "anticipatory socialization" (Van Maanen, 1975) phase. This phase of the socialization process encompasses all the learning that occurs before the individual enters the organization (Van Maanen, 1975; Clausen, 1968). Feldman (1976) contends "the main activities individuals engage in at this phase are forming expectations about jobs-transmitting, receiving, and evaluating information with prospective employers-and making decisions about employment" (p. 434). Prior to entry, newcomers anticipate their experiences as organizational members (Louis, 1980) and develop expectations of organizational life. These expectations are often unrealistic and inflated and make assimilation a difficult process, even inhibiting successful integration (Jablin, 1982, 1984; Wanous, 1977, 1980).

Feldman (1976, 1981) argues that individuals who gain and evaluate information during the phase of anticipatory socialization will have a more accurate and realistic picture of both the job and the organization. These individuals will be more able to match their skills, abilities, needs, and values to the requirements and resources of the organization.

When an individual enters an organization, he or she begins the "encounter" (Nicholson & West, 1988; Porter et al. 1975; Van Maanen, 1975) or "accommodation" (Feldman, 1976) phase of socialization. This phase "involves a pattern of day-to-day experiences in which the individual is subjected to the reinforcement policies and practices of the organization and its members" (Porter et al., 1975, p. 164). According to Feldman, "there are four main activities that new employees engage in at the accommodation phase: learning new tasks, establishing new interpersonal relationships with coworkers, clarifying their roles in the organization, and evaluating their progress in the organization" (1976, p. 435). If the individual's expectations conform to the reality of organizational life, the encounter phase is one of reaffirmation, reinforcement, and confirmation. However, if the individual has not accurately anticipated his or her role in the organization, the encounter can be intense and involve a "destructive phase which serves to detach the individual from his former expectations" (Van Maanen, 1975, p. 84).

The third phase of the socialization process has been referred to as the " role management" (Feldman, 1976), "adjustment" (Nicholson & West, 1988), "change and acquisition" (Porter et al., 1975) and "metamorphosis" (Van Maanen, 1975) phase. This phase represents the adaptation phase, where the newcomer continues to engage in new learning, shows mastery of required skills, and adjusts to the new environment as needed to remain in the profession (Van Maanen, 1976). Feldman (1981) lists activities such as general satisfaction, internal work motivation, and job involvement, which are associated with successful progress through the phase.

According to Nicholson and West (1988), the adjustment phase can involve two contrasting processes, which include change in the individual and change in the organization as a result of the newcomer's efforts to modify the role. There is a process of "individualization" (Porter et al., 1975) occurring from the employee's perspective. As Porter et al. (1975) noted, "at the same time that an organization is attempting to put its distinctive stamp on an individual, he in turn is striving to influence the organization so that it can better satisfy his own needs and his own ideas about how it can best be operated" (p. 170).

Jones (1983) contends that individual differences must be considered to sufficiently explain socialization. Jones (1983) argues that individuals have different life experiences, different degrees of self esteem, and different responses to the same situations. These individual differences influence how newcomers respond to socialization strategies and how they interpret and react to the cues in the new environment.

In summary of the research on the socialization process, the process has been described as involving a number of stages or phases (Feldman, 1976; Nicholson & West, 1988; Van Maanen, 1975). Socialization is a continuous process throughout one's career, because both individuals and organizations experience change. Models of socialization are useful in describing the essential phases of socialization, but must be viewed lightly because they can not account for individual differences that result from life experiences.

According to the most general models of socialization, the process consists of three or four phases. The first phase, anticipatory socialization, occurs prior to formally entering an organization and encompasses the learning and expectations that develop

through the apprenticeship of observation. Prior to entry, newcomers anticipate their

experiences as organizational members and develop expectations about organizational life.

The second phase, encounter, occurs when an individual enters an organization and

confronts the reality shock of positive and negative expectations. During this phase,

newcomers are involved in learning new tasks, developing new relationships, and resolving

role ambiguity. The third phase, stabilization, involves the establishment of settled

routines and patterns. The final phase of socialization represents the adaptation phase,

where the newcomer continues to engage in new learning and adjusts to the new

environment.

Anticipatory Socialization

The concept of anticipatory socialization has been used to explore how individuals

in educational organizations acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to

perform their roles effectively. This section provides an overview of research conducted

to better understand the impact anticipatory socialization experiences have on individuals

in educational organizations. The research is presented in two sections. The first section

presents research focused on the anticipatory socialization of public school teachers. The

second section reviews research concentrated on the anticipatory socialization experiences

of school administrators.

<u>Teachers</u>

Lortie (1975) provided an explain of the influences on teacher socialization prior

to their formal teacher education by exploring the nature and content of their orientations

and sentiments. Respondents in Lortie's (1975) study included 94 teachers from the Boston Metropolitan Area. Respondents were selected from 13 schools serving upper, middle, and lower income households. The respondents were employed in six elementary, five junior high, and two senior high schools. Data collection consisted of historical reviews, national and local surveys, findings from observational studies by other researchers, and intensive interviews. All interviews were taped recorded and subjected to content analysis.

Lortie (1975) found that students' predispositions exerted a more powerful socializing influence than either preservice training or later socialization in the work place. Lortie (1975) referred to the thousands of hours spent by teachers as pupils as the apprenticeship of observation. Only the teaching career itself presents a longer phase of socialization than the apprenticeship of observation. According to this view, teacher socialization occurs through the internalization of teaching models during the time spent as pupils in close contact with teachers. During this phase, prospective teachers interact with the structure of the school and begin to determine how they wish to act as future teachers. According to Lortie (1975), the activation of this latent culture during formal training and later school experiences is a major influence in shaping teachers' conceptions of the teaching role. Lortie (1975) suggested teachers imitate internalized models in the classroom and many are unaware of how these past models influence their conception of teaching.

In a study of anticipatory professional socialization, Gibson (1972) examined attitude changes of college students concerning teacher-role expectations. Data were

gathered by administering a role definition instrument (RDI) containing 34 items relating to the roles of primary and secondary teachers. The RDI contained equal numbers of questions relating to the instrumental and expressive orders of school. The instrumental order is concerned with matters of curriculum, teaching, and methods. The expressive order relates to the transmission of belief and moral systems.

The sample consisted of 345 women enrolled in higher education at a college of education in London. The RDI was administered to 126 first-year students on the first day of class, to 101 second-year students, and to 120 third-year students near the end of their program. In addition, 68 women between the age of 18 and 23 not enrolled in higher education, but matched for educational attainment, completed the instrument.

The findings indicated that students developed a more open conception of the roles of primary and secondary teachers during the three-year program. In terms of the instrumental order, the third-year students, when compared to first-year students, favored greater flexibility in the organization of the school, a wider range of alternatives in curriculum and methods, and more active involvement of students (Gibson, 1972). Gibson (1972) noted the majority of these changes took place in the early part of the program. The data revealed many attitude changes between first and second-year students, but few changes between second and third-year students. In addition, the data identified large differences between the view of the role held by non-students and students enrolled in the program.

In reference to the expressive order items, the data revealed a hardening of teachers' attitudes in two areas. As Gibson (1972) stated, "There is a marked trend to

move towards stronger disagreement with the suggestion that a teacher's out-of-school activities should be largely connected with youth work, sports, etc" (p. 216). The second area where a hardening of teachers' attitudes was identified is in the area of corporal punishment. First-year students tended to disagree with the practice of corporal punishment, while second and third-year students tended to favor or be uncertain about the practice (Gibson, 1972). Gibson (1972) suggested the 'reality shock' experienced by students during practice teaching may account for these changes in attitude. When compared to the non-student group, all students in the program held less favorable views towards corporal punishment. In reference to the effects of different levels of training, the data indicated that students trained to teach primary students held a more open view of their roles than did students trained to teach secondary students (Gibson, 1972).

Based on the findings, Gibson (1972) concluded, "that during the course of teacher training student attitudes towards children and educational practices change in the direction of increased liberality" (p. 218). Gibson (1972) warned that one should not assume a steady progression in liberalization of teacher attitudes and contends his research "confirms that major role learning takes place within the first year of the training course" (p. 218).

Administrators

Greenfield (1977) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the social processes and conditions influencing movement from teaching to administration. The research problem was two-fold: (a) to obtain a more complete understanding of the GASing (Getting the Attention of Superiors) phenomena; and (b) to develop a theoretical framework which

would integrate these discoveries with existing theories of individual and organizational socialization.

Data analyzed in Part One was ordered using the GASing construct and the related concepts of anticipatory socialization and interpersonal orientation influencing movement from teaching to administration. Data analyzed in Part Two were ordered using the concepts of situational adjustment and organizational space. Anticipatory socialization and the GASing construct include the processes occurring between the time a teacher first becomes oriented toward administration and when he or she gains membership in an administrative group. Interpersonal orientation focused on behavioral predispositions among candidates relative to their stance toward the situation of candidacy.

The study was conducted in a large, southwestern metropolitan school district. Eighteen participants with different educational backgrounds were selected for the study. The participants held positions as elementary and high school teachers, counselors, and coordinators. None of the participants held administrative positions at the time of the study. Data were primarily collected through loosely structured interviews. Interviews were audio taped and lasted from one and one-half to two hours. Secondary sources of data were collected from the candidates' biographies and the candidates' scores on the Mach V Scale. The Mach V Scale is an interpersonal orientation instrument.

The findings indicated that candidates with an analytic interpersonal orientation achieved the fullest administrative perspectives by making conscious and deliberate efforts to go out of their way to get the attention of superiors. Candidates with an affective interpersonal orientation appeared to GAS less actively than other candidates, and,

therefore, their administrative perspective was less developed than it was in the more active GASers. Greenfield (1977) concluded the degree of administrative perspective achieved by the candidates was determined by their differences in prior learning and by the contextual properties of the situation within which they interacted.

In a similar study, Greenfield (1985) analyzed the process of moving from teaching to administration and the socialization outcomes and variables mediating that process. The purpose of this study was to describe: (a) the socialization processes characterizing the transition from teaching to administration; (b) the perspectives toward the situation of candidacy; (c) factors influencing the development of an administrative perspective; and (d) the reflections of novice administrators upon their transition to the administrative work world. Greenfield (1985) utilized Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) socialization framework to analyze and interpret data. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) hypothesized that variations in the dimensions of their framework were related to different socialization responses.

Data were collected from 14 teachers employed by a large, metropolitan school district. Demographic data pertaining to professional histories and personal background characteristics were collected though questionnaires. The majority of data were collected though a depth interview technique. Interviews were recorded and transcribed with each interview lasting one and one-half to two hours. Five interviews were conducted at two year intervals with each teacher. Data were analyzed using the constant-comparative method of analysis.

Greenfield (1985) determined the socialization process characterizing the transition from teaching to administration were individual, informal, random, variable, serial, and involved both divestiture and investiture processes. Greenfield (1985) found that: (a) the perspectives toward candidacy were a function of the candidates interpersonal orientations and motivations interacting with the pattern of socialization process; (b) the candidacy perspectives which emerged were a necessary prelude to the development of an administrative perspective; and (c) the fullness of the administrative perspective mediated the ease or difficulty of adjustment to the administrative role.

Analysis of behavior patterns, candidates' levels of motivation to become an administrator, and consideration of the Mach V scores yielded four types of candidates. The types of candidates identified were analytic-high motivation; analytic-low motivation; affective-high motivation; and affective-low motivation. Further analysis identified an assertive candidate perspective and a complacent candidate perspective. All of the analytic-high motivation candidates reflected an assertive perspective and all other candidates reflected the complacent perspective. Candidates with an assertive perspective went out of their way to gain access to and visibility of administrators.

Based on the data, Greenfield (1985) concluded that context was an important determinant of role learning during candidacy and role enactment after appointment as a principal. Socialization processes of the candidacy situation interacted with individual dispositions to shape the perspectives that evolved during candidacy and the development of an administrative perspective. Greenfield (1985) contends the degree of correspondence between the context of candidacy and the context of role enactment as an

administrator is instrumental in determining the smoothness of transition into the administrative role.

Garberina (1980) examined factors leading to the socialization of new principals by analyzing the process by which principals were inducted, initiated, and accepted through the rites of passage into their principalship in a large northeastern city. This study was conducted over a two and one-half year period in a large, northeastern school district. Although the field portion of this study involved over 60 principals, only 20 principals were included in the statistical portion of the study. Principals with up to five years of experience in the role were considered novice principals. Only the novice principals were included in the statistical portion of the study. All of the novice principals had over ten years of work experience in educational institutions.

Data were collected through field observations as a complete participant and through the use of a statistical questionnaire. Garberina occupied two positions in the district during the two years she gathered field notes. Working in the district allowed Garberina to gain entry and access to informal administrative data. Garberina constructed a questionnaire designed to collect statistical information on the emerging themes and major categories identified during the field study. The field data was discarded after the questionnaire was constructed. Garberina was not employed by the district when she administered the questionnaire.

The results indicated that despite inservice training provided by the school district and the administrative bargaining unit, newly appointed principals perceived they had to train on the job. Although inservice programs prepared principals on various bureaucratic

tasks, like scheduling and payroll, the informal aspects of the role were never stressed. Inservice programs largely ignored some concerns of newly appointed principals, such as how to handle stressful situations, how to proportion their time, and identifying which forms were important.

Garberina (1980) concluded that newly appointed principals gained their knowledge of the job from: (a) observations of principals while in another role in the system; (b) conversations about the role of the principal with specific principals while in another role in the system; and (c) informal transmittal of experiences from other principals. Garberina (1980) contends teachers and other role aspirants in the school district become socialized into the principalship prior to their selection as principals. According to Garberina (1980), as one begins to aspire to the role of principal, a specific principal is chosen who serves as a role model. Initial decisions on career movement are determined during this period.

In a more recent study, Crow and Glascock (1995) studied candidates in a non-traditional principal preparation program to examine the socialization process of developing a conception of the principal's role. The goal of the preparation program was to develop leaders for schools of tomorrow, characterized by site-based management and shared decision making. Because the preparation program was designed to train principals to lead restructured schools, the socialization process focused on developing innovative rather than custodial conceptions of the role. Candidates progressed through the program in a cohort group to reinforce the shared quality of the program.

Candidates were recruited and selected for the program in such a way as to find the most able, but possibly overlooked teachers. The program was designed to recruit women and minorities into the principalship and to prepare these individuals for site-based managed schools. The sample consisted of the first cohort group of candidates in a non-traditional principal preparation program at an urban university in eastern United States. The cohort group consisted of four men and 13 women who entered the program in the fall of 1989 and completed the program in 1991.

Data were collected in two phases. First, candidates completed questionnaires at the beginning of the program. The questionnaire inquired about career history and circumstances relating to the decision to teach and to enter the field of administration. Secondly, candidates were interviewed after they completed the program. These semi-structured interviews focused on the candidates' perspectives of the preparation program and the principalship.

Data pertaining to the candidates sources of role conception, definitions of role conception, and about the socialization process of developing a role conception were analyzed and reported. The findings indicated there were three major sources of role conception when the students entered the program. The major sources of role conception were: (a) pre-socialization experiences where they witnessed principals performing jobs; (b) previous experiences as teachers and experiences outside education where certain skills were perceived as beneficial; and (c) their perception of principals with whom they worked (Crow & Glascock, 1995). After completing the program, candidates identified the following factors as sources of role conception: (a) the college faculty and program;

(b) the internship experience; (c) the cohort group; (d) the board of education; and (e) themselves (Crow & Glascock, 1995).

Data were collected in the areas of school vision, task priorities of the principalship, and the nature of authority and leadership to determine how candidates defined their conceptions of the role. Candidates reported that their visions for the school were constrained by external factors (Crow & Glascock, 1995). The views of candidates regarding the tasks of principals were enlarged during the program. In addition to supporting student learning, candidates began to view managerial tasks and working with parents as crucial task areas (Crow & Glascock, 1995). The candidates views of authority and leadership at the end of the program "were more directive in focus than what they depicted on entry when they stressed facilitative leadership" (Crow & Glascock, 1995, p. 37).

Crow and Glascock (1995) identified three socialization mechanisms that candidates' perceived to develop their conceptions of the principal's role. The socialization mechanisms include the elite selection process, the focus within the program, and the continuity of the cohort's influence (Crow & Glascock, 1995). Candidates reported the cohort group as being the most consistent socialization mechanism throughout the program.

Bogotch and Riedlinger (1993) measured differences in levels of stress and socialization in their comparative study of new and experienced principals. This study was conducted for a large, urban school district that wanted information to develop an on-the-job support system for both new and experienced principals.

All but one of the 13 first and second-year principals in the first group of

respondents were employed by the same district located in the southern part of the United

States. A second group of respondents, with more than four years of experience as

principals, was matched with the first group on personal, professional, and school

demographic variables. Additional experienced principals had to be included, without

adhering to the above criteria, because a sufficient number of surveys could not be

obtained from the experienced principals. Surveys for 14 experienced principals were

obtained. The total group of respondents included 14 females and 13 males, and 15

African Americans and 12 Caucasians.

A survey instrument, using six construct variables, was used to measure

differences between the perceptions of new and experienced principals' levels of stress and

socialization. The researchers used closed and open-ended questions to measure

instructional versus administrative emphasis, the impact of external policy factors, and

system constraints. Job satisfaction, role conflict, and role ambiguity were measured on

Likert-type scales.

The findings indicated that time allocation between the groups were similar. No

differences in time were reported for school-community relations, student services, and

program and personnel evaluation. Experienced principals believed they needed to spend

more time on building management tasks than did new principals. Both groups reported

having insufficient time to carry out their responsibilities in the other task areas. Bogotch

and Riedlinger (1993) stated, "When the similarities on time allocation are combined with

how closely both groups perceived their authority, responsibility, and role expectations,

the issue of professional role socialization within this district is moot. Beginning principals appear to come to their role already socialized into the system" (p. 490). Only two of the principals had educational experience outside of their current district. The researchers noted "the best explanation for this phenomena regarding new principals comes from Greenfield's notion of 'anticipatory socialization' and from the conservative effects of career immobility" (Bogotch & Riedlinger, 1993, p. 493).

In reference to the impact of external policies, "new principals reported that the school's community and parent group had a negative impact on their ability to lead. In contrast, community and parent issues were viewed as positive or neutral by experienced principals" (Bogotch & Riedlinger, 1993, p. 490). Experienced principals perceived district policies as being the strongest system constraint. New principals viewed the budget as a negative obstacle.

The findings indicated that both groups were generally satisfied with their jobs in terms of authority and expectations. The major differences reported for the variable of role conflict were between the perceptions of new and experienced principals in regard to conflict with the central office. New principals did not perceive the central office as being a source of conflict. The findings for role ambiguity were similar for the two groups regarding certainty of authority, known responsibilities, and known expectations. New principals expressed some ambiguity about the proper use of time allocation.

The data indicated "either new principals were socialized into the role of the principalship prior to assuming the job, or the district may have attracted individuals who were more likely to conform to past practices than to change" (Bogotch & Riedlinger,

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1993, p. 493). The new principals appeared to be socialized into the role of principal, but they lacked an understanding of the conflicts existing between central office and school sites. Based on the findings, Bogotch and Riedlinger (1993) concluded, "The relationship between high levels of stress and the new principal cannot be supported here" (p. 494).

In summary of the research reviewed to this point, the concept of anticipatory socialization has been used to explain the professional growth of educators (Gibson, 1972; Greenfield, 1985; Lortie, 1975). The professional growth of teachers begins long before they enter teacher education programs. It begins with anticipatory socialization experiences that occur during the many years students spend in close contact with teachers. The professional growth that occurs just prior to becoming an administrator is also referred to as anticipatory socialization. The anticipatory socialization of administrators influences their perspectives of role conception.

Anticipatory socialization occurs in formal and informal settings. Research suggests that formal training, experience in schools, and role models have considerable effects on the professional growth of educators. Based on their experiences, teachers and administrators develop role expectations prior to entering the role. These pre-conceived role expectations may have positive or negative influences on their professional growth as teachers and administrators enter new organizations. The type of influence depends on the degree of correspondence between the role expectations and the actual role requirements.

Professional Socialization

The concept of professional socialization has been used to explore how individuals in educational organizations acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform their roles effectively. This section provides an overview of research conducted to better understand the impact professional socialization experiences have on individuals in educational organizations. The research is presented in two sections. The first section presents research focused on the professional socialization of public school teachers. The second section reviews research concentrated on the professional socialization experiences of school administrators.

<u>Teachers</u>

Tabachnick, Popkewitz, & Zeichner (1980) examined the student teaching experiences of elementary teachers to explore their developing beliefs about teaching and about themselves as teachers. The participants were enrolled in a teacher education program at a large Midwestern university. The final semester of the program consisted of student teaching and a campus seminar. A representative sample of 12 students enrolled in student teaching for the spring term of 1977 was selected. Six researchers collected data using the following methods: interviews with and observations of the student teachers; observations of weekly campus seminars; observations of conferences between the student teachers, college supervisors, and cooperating teachers; observations of student teaching orientation sessions and program workshops; and a group interview with four of the student teachers at the end of the semester. The interviews and observations were transcribed to facilitate content analysis using the constant comparative method.

The data indicated that student teachers were involved in a limited range of classroom activities. As stated by Tabachnick et al. (1980), "When the student teachers were observed, they were most often engaged in the rather routine and mechanical teaching of precise and short-terms skills, in testing and grading children, or in 'management procedures'" (p. 14). Much of the time student teachers spent with students consisted of brief, impersonal, and routine interactions. The cooperating teachers usually assigned student teachers topics to teach. Student teachers typically assumed passive roles to avoid conflicts when interacting with their cooperating teachers.

In exploring the influence of the university on the student teaching process, Tabachnick et al. (1980) found the university program promoted conformity to existing school routines. The primary emphasis of the university seminars, workshops, and supervisory conferences was on things like classroom management. Tabachnick et al. (1980) stated, "Students were subtly encouraged to model themselves on cooperating teachers and to carry out institutional requirements that had little to do with their professional development" (p. 22). Based on the findings, Tabachnick el al. (1980) concluded, "There is no justification in our results for the naive notion that practical school experience must be useful in introducing students to a wide range of teaching abilities" (p. 27). In closing, the researchers called for the development of alternatives to the present form of student teaching.

Grossman and Richert (1988) examined the knowledge acquisition of novice teachers to explore the potential impact of professional socialization experiences. More

specifically, the researchers were interested in identifying how coursework and fieldwork experiences contributed to knowledge acquisition and growth in novice teachers.

This study took place in the context of a larger study on the "Knowledge Growth in a Profession" (Shulman, Sykes, & Phillips, 1983). Grossman and Richert (1988) utilized the framework from this study to view components of the knowledge base for teaching. Grossman and Richert (1988) contend teachers require professional knowledge that includes general pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of the subject matter.

The method for this study consisted of secondary analysis of interview and observational data collected for the Knowledge Growth in a Profession study. Six informants were selected from the larger sample to study in depth. Two informants from each subject area of English, mathematics, and science were selected. Three informants were selected from a small private university and three were selected from a large state university. Both universities were located in California. The private university focused on theory and subject matter, while the state university focused more on matters of practice.

The initial interviews focused on subject matter preparation of the informants and their perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses. Informants were then interviewed about their plans for a lesson prior to and after teaching the lesson. These interviews sought to identify the informants' sources of ideas and knowledge. At the end of the year, informants were again interviewed about their professional preparation and the knowledge they attributed gaining through fieldwork and coursework.

The findings indicated that teacher education coursework had its biggest impact on the prospective teachers' conceptions of their subject matter for teaching (Grossman &

Richert, 1988). Perspective teachers perceived the combination of teacher education

coursework and field experiences contributed to their acquisition of general pedagogical

knowledge (Grossman & Richert, 1988). The teachers reported they learned practical

survival skills from fieldwork and more theoretical principles from coursework. Fieldwork

was reported as the strongest influence on the teachers' knowledge of student

understanding. In reference to content knowledge, the teachers reported most of their

growth occurred as a result of preparing to teach lessons (Grossman & Richert, 1988).

Based on the findings, Grossman and Richert (1988) contend fieldwork and

coursework offer different but complementary opportunities for learning to teach.

Grossman and Richert (1988) suggested "researchers need to investigate the claim that

there is little or no impact of the coursework component of the teacher education

curriculum" (p. 60). They further stated that, "Teacher education coursework does

influence prospective teachers and that the potential for that influence will grow as we

develop our understanding of the broad and complex knowledge base for teaching"

(Grossman & Richert, 1988, p. 60). In conclusion, the researchers recommend further

study to determine what knowledge is best acquired in coursework and fieldwork.

A more recent study explored how individual and institutional differences

contributed to the development of teacher perspectives. Ross (1987) investigated the

formation and development of teacher perspectives among preservice social studies

teachers. This study sought to answer the following questions: (a) What linkages exist

between the development of teacher perspectives and the experiences provided by

university teacher education? and (b) What role does the individual play in the

construction of his or her teacher perspective? Ross (1987) defined teacher perspective as "a theory of action that has developed as a result of the individual's experiences and is applied in particular situations" (p. 228).

Twenty-one students majoring in social studies at a large Midwestern university volunteered to participate in the study. The sample included students from four phases, ranging from freshman to student teachers, of the teacher education program. Data were collected during the 1984-85 school year using interviews and participant observation techniques. Interviews ranged from one to two hours and provided the main source of data. In follow-up interviews, respondents were given the opportunity to confirm, modify, or challenge the study's preliminary findings.

The results indicated teacher perspectives were a result of teacher education coursework and field experiences, the individual's apprenticeship of observation as a pupil, and the individual's personal background (Ross, 1987). Ross (1987) identified four ways individuals responded to university and school socialization forces. Students used the mechanisms of role-playing, selective modeling, impression management, and self-legitimization to shape the experiences provided by the university and the school.

According to Ross (1987), "The opportunity for role-playing in early field experiences, as well as student teaching, appeared to be the most important process in the development of teacher perspectives" (p. 231). The findings indicated students developed theories of action as a result of role-playing in field experiences. The respondents in this study tended to rely on selective role modeling instead of global modeling after one teacher. Ross (1987) determined the respondents "selected from the various attributes

they observed as pupils and synthesized them into a model of what they would like to become" (p. 234). Respondents reported conforming to behavioral expectations of cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Ross (1987) referred to this as impression management and contends it is a strategy the students used to manipulate the situation while being constrained by it. The final way students influenced their development of a teacher perspective is through self-legitimization. Ross (1987) found that preservice teachers "placed great emphasis (but not all) on their self-evaluation" (p. 236). These perspectives lead the preservice teachers to believe they were qualified judges of their teaching performance.

Ross (1987) concluded, "The influence of social structural forces, such as teacher education coursework and field experiences, appeared to be marginal and apparently did not produce deep internal changes in the belief systems of the respondents" (p. 237). Ross (1987) contends these findings demonstrate that teachers are actively engaged in the construction of meaning and are not just passive recipients of knowledge during their preservice education.

Administrators

In a study of successful veteran principals' first years, Duke and his colleagues (1984) applied four features of professional socialization. The features are: (a) duration of the socialization period; (b) mechanisms of socialization; (c) relationships between expectations and the realities of the job; and (d) formal and informal preparation for school administration. Principals in this study identified formal and informal socialization mechanisms. Only four of the 46 principals described receiving any formal orientation to

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the principalship from their employing districts. This practice was referred to as "sink or swim" socialization. Principals reported they learned about the norms and expectations of the principalship from people such as the previous principal, other administrators, teachers, students, and secretaries. The building faculty was reported as being the most important influence on new principals.

Duke et al. (1984) found that principals generally marked the end of their professional socialization period around the end of their first year as principals, but concluded that the induction period could be of varying length. The principals in this study viewed all professional experiences, including teaching experiences, as part of the socialization process. Additional factors identified as being influential for second-year principals included other principals in the district, central office personnel, and the principal who one had worked with as a teacher.

Using multiple case studies, Parkay, Currie, and Rhodes (1992) documented and described the professional socialization of 12 high school principals during the three year period following their appointment to the principalship. The researchers used their findings to develop a model for the professional socialization of principals. The study was guided by the following questions: (a) What are the perceptions, experiences, and concerns of high school principals during the three year period following their appointment as a new principal? and (b) Do these perceptions, experiences, and concerns change over time, and if so, is there an identifiable pattern to these changes?

The sample consisted of 12 first-time high school principals from five states across four geographical regions (Midwest, East, West, and Southeast). The respondents

included six males and six females. Ten of the respondents were Caucasian and two were African Americans. The researchers attempted to include one rural, one suburban, and one urban school in each of the five states; however, the criteria were not met in some states. Seven members of the research team were assigned to one or two of the 12 principals during the 1987-88 school year to document their first year.

Data were gathered during on-site visits, at least three, two-day visits were made during the year, and telephone interviews were conducted every two to three weeks. Follow-up interviews were conducted at least every semester during the 1988-89 and 1989-90 school years. Interviews were conducted with selected staff, teachers, district personnel, and community members for the purpose of triangulation and confirming the self-reports of the principals. In addition to interviews, related artifacts such as school newspapers, memos, and planning documents were collected.

Data analysis occurred in two phases. First, the interviews, documents, and field notes were analyzed using the qualitative methodology known as grounded theory research. This phase involved identifying common and unique patterns of experience and perceptions. Secondly, data was analyzed based on Yin's (1984) multiple-case study design. The researchers used grounded theory to identify themes, then used Yin's pattern matching techniques to determine what patterns of concerns appeared across the 12 case studies. The patterns of concerns were then used to develop a model for the career development concerns of principals.

The findings are reported in four sections. The first section describes the professional socialization of principals using a five-stage model. The second stage outlines

some assumptions regarding the professional socialization of principals. The third stage identifies two patterns that emerged from data analysis. The final section illustrates the placement of respondents on the professional socialization hierarchy.

Parkay et al. (1992) contend principals experience identifiable stages of professional socialization. Their findings indicated the concerns of newly appointed principals typically evolved according to a five-stage pattern. Each stage was characterized by a dominant theme. According to Parkay et al. (1992) the stages of professional socialization are characterized as follows:

- At Stage 1, survival, the principal enters the school environment in the new role of leader and experiences what might be aptly termed the "shock" of beginning leadership. Personal concerns and professional insecurities are high and the principal may feel overwhelmed.

- At Stage 2, control, the principal's survival concerns have become less intense. The primary aim is on setting priorities and seeking ways to manage the overwhelming flow of new demands. The Stage 2 principal is in constant fear of losing control and being ineffective. Behaviors are "legitimated" by positional power.

- At Stage 3, stability, previous frustrations become routinized and management-related tasks are handled effectively and efficiently. Difficulties related to facilitating change are accepted.

- Stage 4, educational leadership, is the first stage at which a strong vision becomes important. Confirmation comes from external sources and behaviors are legitimated by personal power.

- At stage 5, professional actualization, confirmation comes from within. The stage 5 leader energizes, coordinates, and brings out the best in subordinates.

Parkay et al. (1992) identified four assumptions that were useful in viewing the professional socialization of principals. First, Parkay et al. (1992) contend principals begin new principalships at different stages of professional development; secondly, they contend principals move through the stages of professional socialization at different rates; thirdly, they suggest that no single factor determines a principal's stage of development; and lastly, they contend that principals may operate at more than one stage simultaneously.

Only a few of the principals moved along the framework to the fifth stage in the three years after their appointment to their first high school principalship. The data indicated five of the principals reached stage four and two reached stage five. Principals in stages four and five tended to be inner-directed, while principals in the other stages tended to be guided by an external locus of control. The principals in this study "made little 'movement' beyond the level of development that had begun to emerge after the first year" (Parkay et al., 1992, p. 61). Based on further analysis of data patterns, Parkay et al. (1992) hypothesized a principal's eventual level of professional socialization is strongly indicated by the end of their first year. In conclusion, Parkay et al. (1992) noted that principals in stages four and five displayed behaviors similar to those in effective leaders. These principals had a range of styles and were able to match the style to the situation.

Leithwood, Steinbach, and Begley (1992) conducted research to understand how socialization experiences influenced the development of instructional leadership among Canadian educators. The researchers devoted some attention to formal training, but less formal sources of socialization were their primary focus. A three-stage socialization framework was used to classify the experiences of principals. The stages in the socialization framework are Initiation, Transition, and Incorporation. Aspiring principals were considered to be Initiation and Transition stages of their socialization. Practicing principals were considered to be in the Incorporation stage of their socialization.

Leithwood et al. (1992) developed questions to explore how certain socialization experiences would promote qualities associated with instructional leadership. The questions explored are: (a) Do school administrators experience different patterns of socialization? (b) What are the effects of different patterns of socialization experience? (c) Which socialization activities do school administrators perceive to be most useful? and (d) Are different paths associated with different socialization experiences? Issues of gender and socialization stages were explored in relation to the last three questions.

Questionnaires were distributed to 50 educators enrolled in a principal certification program at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education's Center for Principal Development (CPD). The 32-item questionnaire asked about the respondents' backgrounds, career paths, relationships, school system practices, and the outcomes of socialization. The respondents in this group held positions as teachers, department heads, consultants, and lead teachers in more than a dozen school systems. These respondents

were considered to be in the Initiation and Transition stages of their socialization into the principalship. The questionnaires were completed by 49 of the respondents.

The questionnaire was administered to a second group of 38 vice-principals and principals from a large Ontario school system who were enrolled in an inservice program offered by CDP. Respondents in the second group had experience ranging from less than one to more than 20 years of experience as administrators. These respondents were considered to be in the Incorporation stage of their socialization into the principalship. Responses were proved by 26 of the experienced principals. In all, 47 females and 28 males provided responses. Data analysis was largely limited to the calculation of descriptive statistics.

The findings indicated participants experienced different socialization patterns. Most principals experienced moderately helpful patterns of socialization and few principals experienced negative patterns of socialization (Leithwood et al., 1992). Women perceived their socialization experiences as being more helpful than did men. Principals in the Incorporation stage of their socialization generally experienced more helpful patterns of socialization than did those in the earlier stages of socialization.

The researchers identified a predictable relationship between aspiring and practicing principals' images of their role and the patterns of socialization they experienced. Helpful patterns of socialization were associated with a tendency to adopt an instructional leadership image of the role (Leithwood et al., 1992). However, the socialization experiences aspiring and practicing principals valued most were directly related to their work. According to Leithwood et al. (1992), "Independent of the

socialization pattern experienced and image of the role adopted, aspiring and practicing principals awarded greater importance to interpersonal, managerial, and legal tasks than they did to instructional leadership tasks" (p. 296).

The respondents' perceptions of the value of formal preparation programs varied widely. Formal preparation programs were perceived as being extremely helpful to not very helpful, depending on their quality. According to Leithwood et al. (1992), "Those forms of socialization valued most appear to be embedded in the context of school life, available both regularly and often and focused on the role of administration and leadership" (p. 301).

Leithwood et al. (1992) examined how different career paths were associated with differences in socialization experiences, gender, and socialization stages. The findings indicated that once principals began their careers, they rarely left education for careers in other fields. The most common career path to the principalship included only in-school roles. However, career experiences outside of education were related to socialization experiences helpful in preparing administrators for instructional leadership roles (Leithwood et al., 1992).

In conclusion, Leithwood et al. (1992) suggested the quality of socialization experiences provided for principals needs to be improved. Their suggestion for improving the quality of formal socialization experiences includes "devoting more time to programs that deliver substantially meaningful content in a form consistent with good principals of adult education" (Leithwood et al., 1992, p. 303). In reference to improving on-the-job socialization experiences, Leithwood et al. (1992) suggested principals be formally

evaluated on their responsibility to develop the instructional leadership skills of their vice-principals.

In summary of the research reviewed in this section, researchers have used the concept of professional socialization to explore the professional growth of educators (Grossman & Richert, 1988; Parkay et al., 1992; Ross, 1987; Tabachnick et al., 1980). Professional socialization begins with formal training, before entering the role, and continues for varying periods of time. Research on beginning teachers suggests university coursework and field experiences contribute to different but complementary aspects of professional growth. Other research has indicated that university training and field experiences may be conservative and tend to reinforce the status quo. The impact university coursework and field experiences has on the professional growth of teachers tends to vary depending on the characteristics of the individual.

Research on beginning principals indicates they experience identifiable stages of professional socialization. In addition, research suggests that a principal's eventual level of professional growth may be indicated by the end of his or her first year in the principalship. Principals report experiencing different patterns of professional socialization, some is perceived to be more valuable than others. Principals perceive professional socialization experiences relating directly to their work as the most valuable.

Organizational Socialization

The concept of organizational socialization has been used to explore how individuals in educational organizations acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions

necessary to perform their roles effectively. This section provides an overview of research

conducted to better understand the impact organizational socialization has on individuals

in educational organizations. The research is presented in two sections. The first section

presents research focused on the organizational socialization of public school teachers.

The second section reviews research concentrated on the organizational socialization

experiences of school administrators.

<u>Teachers</u>

In an early study on the effects of teaching, Day (1959) explored attitude changes

of beginning teachers. Day (1959) surveyed two groups of teachers before and after their

initial teaching experience. Data were collected by administering the Minnesota Teacher

Attitude Inventory (MTAI), an attitude inventory designed to predict the type of social

climate the teacher will maintain in the classroom. The teachers were asked to indicate on

a Likert scale whether they agreed or disagreed with 150 statements about children and

school work.

The MTAI was first administered to 196 seniors at Florida State University after

their completion of internships in public schools. This group consisted of 87 elementary

and 109 secondary interns. One year later, the MTAI was mailed to 135 of the teachers in

the original group who were employed as full-time teachers. Of the 135 surveys mailed,

109 were returned. The same survey was mailed to 61 of the teachers in the original

group who were not employed as teachers. Of the 61 surveys mailed, 37 were returned.

The MTAI was then administered to a second group of 154 students prior to and

following their eight-week training period in public schools. The second group of

respondents consisted of 87 elementary and 67 secondary interns who were college seniors.

The results of the MTAI administered to the first group of respondents revealed a mean loss of 20 for the teaching group and a mean loss of 1.5 for the non-teaching group (Day, 1959). According to this data, the attitudes of college graduates who prepared for but did not enter teaching remained humanistic, while the attitudes of experienced teachers became custodial. A mean loss of 4.2 was found for the second group of intern teachers after completing their internships (Day, 1959). Day (1959) suggested the students' attitude changes during the internship were contributed to their unrealistic attitudes toward children and school work. Day (1959) noted that students held unrealistic attitudes upon completion of the internship as evidenced by the drastic shift in the direction of less desirable attitudes that occurred with the teaching graduates. In conclusion, Day (1959) stated, "It would seem more appropriate to introduce some kind of initial contact with a teaching situation early in the program before the student has advanced very far with an unrealistic picture of what lies ahead in the classroom" (p. 328).

Hoy (1968) conducted a longitudinal study to explore the relationship between teaching experience and the pupil control ideology of beginning teachers. Hoy (1968) predicted the pupil control orientations of beginning teachers would become custodial by making the following hypotheses: (a) The pupil control ideology of beginning public school teachers will be significantly more custodial after one year of teaching; and (b) The pupil control ideology of prospective teachers who do not teach the year after graduation will not be significantly more custodial after one year.

Hoy (1968) developed a classification system to conceptualize the pupil control ideology in public schools. Two models of pupil control orientations were identified. First were traditional schools having a custodial orientation. These schools had rigid and highly controlled settings and were concerned with maintenance and order. Teachers with custodial orientations view schools as autocratic organizations with students being at the bottom of the hierarchy. Second were schools with a humanistic orientation. These schools desired a democratic atmosphere where self-discipline was substituted for teacher control. Two-way communication was encouraged between teachers and students in humanistic schools.

Hoy (1968) measured the pupil control ideology of beginning teachers with the Pupil Control Ideology Form (PCI Form). The PCI Form uses a five-point Likert-type scale to obtain responses to 20 items. The higher the score on the instrument, the more custodial the ideology of the respondent. Data obtained from the PCI Form were supported by the judgments of principals and by comparisons made with the results of the PCI Form previously administered to another group of teachers.

The PCI Form was administered three times to a group of students from Oklahoma State University. The original sample consisted of 82 elementary and 93 secondary teachers. All respondents completed the questionnaire in group meetings on campus just prior to beginning their practice teaching in spring semester of 1966. The questionnaire was administered a second time when the respondents completed eight weeks of student teaching. The same 175 respondents were contacted by mail approximately one year later and asked to complete the questionnaire again and to respond to several statements

concerning their preparation. One hundred sixty-two of the surveys were returned. Of the 162 respondents, 58 were teaching at the elementary level, 58 were teaching at the secondary level, 39 were not teaching, and 7 were employed as graduate assistants.

The findings confirmed both of Hoy's (1968) hypotheses. Hoy (1968) found teachers became more custodial in their pupil control ideology during practice teaching and that the custodial level increased with each successive period of teaching experience. As for the second hypothesis, the results did not reveal significant custodial changes in the pupil control ideology of the individuals who did not teach the year following their graduation (Hoy, 1968). The findings for the seven students who returned to graduate school were different from the previous two groups. Although the pupil control ideology of these students became substantially more custodial during student teaching, it nearly returned to the prior level when they returned to graduate college the year following their graduation (Hoy, 1968).

The findings from this study suggest teaching experience effects the pupil control ideology of beginning teachers. Hoy (1968) stated, "The student-teaching experience appears to be functional for prospective teachers in terms of mitigating the potential role strain with respect to control of students that tends to be created as they become official members of a school faculty" (p. 320). In conclusion, Hoy (1968) noted that adopting the norms and values of the teacher subcultures should facilitate the acceptance of the practice teachers by experienced teachers.

In a similar study, Hoy and Rees (1977) explored how the perspectives of teachers changed during student teaching. More specifically, this research explored the influence

the student teaching experience had on the dogmatism, pupil control orientation, and bureaucratic orientation of student teachers. The researchers developed three hypotheses pertaining to the influences of student teaching. The hypotheses developed by Hoy and Rees (1977) are: (a) That student teachers would become significantly more bureaucratic in their orientations as they completed student teaching; (b) That student teachers would become significantly more custodial in their pupil control as they completed student teaching; and (c) That there would be no significant change in the dogmatism of student teachers as they acquired teaching experience.

Data were collected from 112 secondary college seniors enrolled in a New Jersey State College. Data were collected prior to the student teaching experience and again immediately after the student teaching experience. The researchers administered three questionnaires to collect initial data. The same questionnaires were mailed to the respondents after they completed their student teaching. Of the 112 questionnaires mailed, 79 useable questionnaires were returned.

Bureaucratic orientation, which refers to a person's commitment to attitudes, values, and behaviors that are encouraged and rewarded by bureaucracies, was measured using the Work Environment Preference Schedule (WEPS). The pupil control ideology of student teachers was measured along a custodial to humanistic orientation using the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) Form. The extent to which the belief systems of student teachers were open or closed was measured using a modified version of Rokeach's Dogmatism Scale. Each instrument contained fewer than 25 items that were measured on Likert-type scales.

The findings supported Hoy's (1966) findings and confirmed Hoy and Rees' (1977) hypotheses. The findings indicated student teachers were more bureaucratic in orientation and more custodial in their pupil control orientation after student teaching (Hoy and Rees, 1977). There were virtually no changes reported in the belief systems of student teachers during the student teaching experience (Hoy & Rees, 1977). Hoy and Rees (1977) concluded, "The school bureaucracy quickly begins to impress upon student teachers the value of conformity, impersonality, tradition, subordination, and bureaucratic loyalty" (p. 25). The researchers contend the problem of educating teachers is more complex than restructuring student teaching programs or changing the curriculum, because much of what teachers learn about teaching is learned in the context of the school organization.

Administrators

The effects school organizations have on beginning principals were explored by Norton (1994). Norton (1994) examined relationships between the independent variables of community type, age, ethnicity, gender, school size, school type, location, and previous experience and the dependent variables of socialization level, school vision, and dependence of staff.

Beginning principals were defined as individuals in the first semester of their principalship. This definition excluded individuals with previous experience as principals. The Principal Socialization Inventory was used to collect data from 161 first-year principals in Louisiana. One component of this survey is a Likert-type scale designed to assess a principal's level of socialization as defined by the Professional Socialization

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Hierarchy (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes (1992). In addition to the Likert-type scale, the survey instrument requested demographic information that represented the independent variables. Information on the dependent variables was gathered from the Likert scale items. The survey was mailed to the beginning principals approximately two months after the beginning of the 1994-95 school year.

For the dependent variable of socialization level, the findings indicated that only the independent variable community type had a statistically significant relationship with the principals' socialization level (Norton, 1994). Principals in urban fringe communities were found to have higher socialization levels than principals in other types of communities.

The results showed a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable of school vision and the independent variables of community and school type, and ethnicity (Norton, 1994). School vision was thought to represent higher levels of the socialization process. Further analysis indicated the school vision mean scores of principals in smaller communities were generally lower than the scores of principals in larger communities and that principals of elementary and middle schools had higher levels of school vision than other principals (Norton, 1994). African American principals were found to have higher school vision scores than Caucasian principals.

The findings for the third dependent variable indicated a statistically significant relationship between dependence on staff and prior location (Norton, 1994). Principals who worked in different schools the previous year reported a greater dependence on staff members to assist in the socialization process. Norton (1994) concluded, "These results lend support to the notion that the principals experience socialization in different ways, but

the differences are primarily factors of the personal characteristics of the individual and the organizational characteristics of the school" (1994, p. 21).

In a more recent study, Heck (1995) tested the strength of a socialization model in explaining administrative performance. The model grouped socialization factors into the following three sets: (a) the context of the school and the community in which the new administrator works (organizational socialization); (b) the type of formal preparation the assistant principal received (professional socialization); and (c) the demographic characteristics of the individual (gender, ethnicity, and experience). The goals of analysis were to estimate the strength of the model's variables in explaining administrative performance and to assess how much variance in performance could be accounted for by the model.

Multiple indicators were used to measure the constructs in the model. The construct of organizational socialization included the new administrators relationships with principals, parent/community support, support networks, job satisfaction, and school climate. The level of professional socialization experienced by the new administrators was defined by the type of administrative program and fieldwork experiences completed. Demographic variables considered included gender, school level during internship, and the experience of the training principal. Variables measuring the job performance of the assistant principals included governance, developing and maintaining school culture, and monitoring instruction.

Heck (1995) surveyed 150 beginning administrators from a western state in the United States. The respondents were ethnically mixed consisting of Asian, Caucasian, and

Pacific Island individuals. The respondents ranged from first-year to third-year principals. The School Leadership Skills Inventory was sent to each assistant principal's immediate supervisor asking him or her to assess the performance of the assistant principal. The assistant principals completed a questionnaire designed to gather information about their professional and organizational socialization, perceptions about university work, and contextual conditions in the school where they completed their probationary assignment.

The findings indicated organizational socialization had the strongest effect on administrator performance (Heck, 1995). Professional socialization was only weakly directly related to administrator performance. Heck (1995) identified a significant relationship between gender and administrative performance, with females being rated more effective than males. According to Heck (1995), this finding may be explained by the fact that women in this study had spent more time in the classroom than the men. Less experienced principals were perceived as providing interns more extensive opportunities to engage in daily operations and to learn leadership skills. The effect of the school level, where the administrator trained, on performance was not found to be statistically significant.

Heck (1995) concluded the model of socialization accounted for one-fourth of the variance in administrative performance, with 75% due to outside factors such as individual abilities and skills. Heck (1995) predicted "a good portion of the variance unaccounted for by the model could be explained by individual differences in the three latent administrative leadership variables in the performance domain" (1995, p. 45). The

findings from this study suggest organizational socialization may be more important in influencing the professional growth of new administrators than formal training.

Hurley (1990) analyzed the influence of teachers and superintendents to explore how rural high school principals were socialized into instructional leadership roles. Organizational socialization theory provided the framework for studying how teachers influenced the behavior of principals. Hurley (1990) defined instructional leadership as "change and initiation of new structures in the performance of the principal's staff personnel functions, curriculum development functions, and student personnel functions" (1990, p. 4).

In the summer of 1988, the researcher determined from the state department of education that 27 high school principals had just completed their first year as principals. Eleven of the 27 principals agreed to participate in the study. The respondents were males in the second year of their first principalship. Data from 10 principals employed in rural districts are reported in this study. Three of the respondents had experience as assistant principals, while seven of the respondents had no administrative experience. All respondents were from the same Midwestern state. Data were collected between November 1988, and April 1989. Eight of the principals worked in schools with fewer than 400 students in grades 9 through 12 with no assistant principals. The other two principals worked in schools with approximately 500 students in grades 9 through 12 with one assistant principal. Nine of the schools were exclusively white, while one school enrolled some Native American students.

Hurley (1990) conducted three semi-structured interviews with the principals. The interviews were designed to explore the instructional leadership messages from teachers and how these messages influenced principals' instructional leadership behavior. Data were triangulated with interviews of key teachers and superintendents. Respondents were asked to identify instructional leadership messages they received from teachers, how they received these messages, and how these messages had influenced their instructional leadership behavior?

Principals reported teachers had instructional leadership expectations for them in the following areas: (a) enforcing student discipline policies; (b) recognizing student achievement; (c) solving problems; and (d) supervising classroom instruction (Hurley, 1990). The data indicated that disciplining students was the major faculty expectation of the principals. This expectation was apparent in principals' perceptions of teacher expectations, in teachers' reports of their concerns, and in the data depicting how principals were expected to spend their time (Hurley, 1990). The expectations of teachers concerning the principal's role in recognizing student achievement and solving problems were consistent among the faculties. However, teachers sent mixed messages concerning the principal's role supervising classroom instruction. Principals perceived norms that suggested classroom observations were a formality and that they should be little involved in instruction.

Hurley (1990) determined teachers sent instructional leadership messages to principals in formal and informal ways. Principals reported receiving formal instructional leadership messages from teachers during post-observation conferences. Informal

conversations with teachers were reported as occasions when principals received informal instructional leadership messages. The principals most frequently reported three effects of these messages. Five principals reported working hard on discipline and attendance, five claimed they tried to change the attitudes of teachers, and five said they became more accessible to teachers (Hurley, 1990). The findings from this study indicate that principals in small, rural districts are expected to fill a variety of service functions that are performed by central office personnel in larger districts.

Because the informal influences of teachers may be counterproductive to school improvement, Hurley (1990) suggested teachers be formally involved in the socialization process. In conclusion, Hurley (1990) presents ways to involve teachers in the socialization process and contends the socialization process experienced by principals can be improved by involving teachers.

Mascaro (1976) examined changes in the perspectives of first-year principals to discover conflicts between their conceptions of the principal's role and the demand of the role as they relate to organizational socialization in the principalship. The purpose of this study was to develop a model for on-the-job socialization for first-year elementary school principals.

Twenty-three newly appointed elementary principals in two Southern California counties were located at the beginning of the 1972-73 school year. Six first-year principals, from five districts, were selected from the 23 principals identified. Availability was the major basis for selection of respondents. Two of the six principals were female. The female respondents were elementary teachers prior to becoming principals. Three of

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the male respondents were assistant principals and one had been the director of federal programs prior to becoming principals.

Data were gathered data using unstructured, open-ended interviews that allowed hypotheses to be generated as the study proceeded. Four interviews, lasting from one-half to two hours, were held with each principal. The first interviews were conducted approximately six weeks after the beginning of the 1972-73 school year. Subsequent interviews were held at six to eight week intervals throughout the school year. The interviews had limited structure with no predetermined sets of questions. The interviews were taped with the total interview time being 30 and one-half hours.

Four principals identified problems relating to not enough time to get involved in the classrooms (Mascaro, 1976). These principals entered the principalship expecting to effect change by getting personally involved in classroom activities. The findings indicated that principals had little control over the time demands of attending meetings, taking care of paper work, handling discipline problems, and holding parent conferences. The only time demand these principals could compromise was the time they spent in classrooms. In addition, spending time in classrooms was an activity that did not arise from external demands. For these principals, this activity developed from their initial perspectives of the role of the principal. By changing their perspectives, which emphasized getting into classrooms, the principals were able to cope with the problematic situation of not having enough time to get into classrooms.

Two respondents entered the principalship without the initial perspective of getting involved in the classrooms, so not having time for this activity was not perceived as a

problem by them. These principals held different perspectives of the principalship because they had been socialized to the role during their experience as vice principals (Mascaro, 1976).

In conclusion, Mascaro (1976) hypothesized that first-year elementary principals, expecting to effect change through personal involvement in the classrooms, would not have enough time to get into the classrooms. And would therefore, move toward a new perspective whose major components include reliance on going in classrooms for brief visits, reliance on effecting change indirectly through teachers and other groups, and reliance on secondary sources for information about what is going on in the classrooms.

In summary of the research presented in this section, researchers have used the concept of organizational socialization to explore the professional growth of educators (Day, 1959; Heck, 1995; Hoy, 1968; Norton, 1994). Organizational socialization begins when a newcomer enters an organization and continues as the individual shapes the organization to fit his or her needs and interacts with contextual variables of the organization. Research on beginning teachers suggests they become more custodial and less idealistic as they are confronted with the unexpected realities of life in public schools. Other research indicates that much of what teachers learn about teaching is learned in the context of specific school organizations and that school organizations impress conformity on teachers. The impact of organizational socialization on the professional growth of teachers tends to vary depending on the specific context of the organization.

Research on beginning principals suggests they experience socialization in different ways, but differences are primarily contributed to the contextual variables of the specific

school organization. Principals in urban schools tend to have higher levels of socialization than principals in other types of communities. The research suggests rural principals are expected to fill a variety of service roles that are performed by members of central office in larger districts. Teachers were reported as a major influence in the organizational socialization of new principals.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the professional growth of

superintendents in selected rural Oklahoma districts. Chapter Two reviewed socialization

literature relevant to the professional growth of teachers and principals. This chapter

expands upon the research methodology to be employed in this study. It begins with a

brief discussion about a paradigm that has dominated research in the field of educational

administration and then discusses an alternative paradigm. The second section discusses

two research methodologies and presents a rationale for the method selected. The criteria

used for the selection of respondents and the methods used for data collection and analysis

are also addressed in this section. The final section discusses techniques that will be used

to establish the trustworthiness of the study.

Rationale for the Method

A paradigm, according to Kuhn (1970), provides a way of looking at the world. It

exerts influence on a field of study by providing the assumptions, rules, directions, and the

criteria by which "normal science" is carried out. According to Foster (1988), "Most of

the research in educational administration and organizational theory can be labeled

functionalist in character" (p. 56). Burrell and Morgan (1979) contend the functionalist

paradigm is located within the framework of logical positivism and "assumes that the

social world is composed of relatively concrete empirical artifacts and relationships which

can be identified, studied, and measured through approaches derived from the natural

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sciences" (p. 26). In contrast to the functionalist paradigm, Burrell and Morgan (1979) contend the interpretive paradigm is located in an anti-positivist paradigm and is concerned with understanding the world as it is. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the anti-positivist paradigm "challenges the validity of the ontological assumptions which underwrite functionalist approaches to sociology" (p. 32). The interpretive paradigm "seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 28). The functionalist paradigm demonstrates a greater concern for explanation than the interpretive paradigm, which aims for understanding.

There have many debates over the value of research methods (Borman, Lecompte, & Goetz, 1986; Bryman, 1984). The following contrasting statements identify some important differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods. McCracken (1988) contends:

- The quantitative goal is to isolate and define categories as precisely as possible before the study is undertaken, and then to determine, again with great precision, the relationship between them. The qualitative goal, on the other hand, is often to isolate and define categories during the process of research. The qualitative investigator expects the nature and definition of analytic categories to change in the course of a project.

- The qualitative researcher normally looks for patterns of interrelationship between many categories rather than the sharply delineated relationship between a limited set of them.

- The quantitative project requires investigators to construct a "sample" of the necessary size and type to generalize to the larger population. In the qualitative case, however, the issue is not one of generalizability. It is that of access. (p. 16)

The selection of a research methodology is based upon the phenomenon under study. Yin (1989, p. 56) suggests researchers should ask the following questions when selecting a research strategy: (a) the type of research question posed; (b) the extent of control an investigator has over the actual behavioral events; and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

Guba and Lincoln (1988) contend the positivist paradigm is appropriate in controlled experiments such as in the fields of chemistry or physics. However, the choice of paradigm should be made on the basis of fit between the "assumptions and postures of a paradigm and the phenomenon being studied or evaluated" (p. 56). While both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in the social sciences, qualitative methods are generally preferred because they allow for thick data to be collected that demonstrate their interrelationship with their context (Guba, 1981).

According to Merriam (1988), "Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities-that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception" (p. 17). The following points are important characteristics of qualitative research:

- Qualitative researchers are primarily concerned with the process, meaning, and understanding rather than outcomes or products. How do certain things happen? What happens with the passage of time?

- Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning-how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, how they structure their social worlds.

- The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.

- Qualitative research is largely inductive. This type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories, rather than testing existing theory. (Merriam, 1988, p. 19)

This study focused on the professional growth of superintendents in rural districts. Based upon the exploratory nature and the lack of control over the problem being studied, a qualitative method was employed to collect and analyze data. The long interview was the specific qualitative methodology employed in this study. The long interview methodology was employed to unearth the cognitive patterns and mindscapes of superintendents. The long interview "can take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world" (McCracken, 1988, p. 9). Analyzing the superintendents' cognitive patterns and mindscapes to determine how they employed multiple organizational frames assisted in identifying levels of professional growth. The long interview revealed similarities and differences in superintendents levels of professional growth and how career phases influenced superintendents use of organizational frames and focus of activities.

Selection of Participants

The purpose of this study was to explore the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma school districts; therefore, specific research participants and sites were selected. Selection of respondents was not governed by quantitative sampling rules. According to McCracken (1988):

> Respondents should be perfect strangers (i.e., unknown to the interviewer and other respondents) and few in number (i.e., no more than eight). They should not have special knowledge (or ignorance) of the topic under study. Most important, the selection of respondents in an opportunity to manufacture distance. This is done by deliberately creating a contrast in the respondent pool. These contrast can be of age, gender, status, education, or occupation" (p. 37).

Merriam (1988) states a good respondent is "one who understands the culture but is also able to reflect on it and articulate for the researcher what is going on" (p. 75).

Nachtigal's (1982) discussion of the nature of rural schools was considered when selecting the research sites. The following size/scale and cultural characteristics were considered when selecting the research sites. Size/scale characteristics include: (a) school personnel have multiple roles; (b) curriculum is stretched to provide for student needs; and (c) few bureaucratic layers within the school. Additional size/scale criteria included a maximum student enrollment of 250 students in grades K through twelve. Cultural characteristics include: (a) a homogeneous student population, (b) isolated housing patterns; and (c) school activities serve as the focal point of the community.

The recommendations of Rubin and Rubin (1995) were considered when selecting

the research participants. According to Rubin and Rubin, "All the people that you

interview should satisfy three requirements. They should be knowledgeable about the

cultural arena or the situation or experience being studied; they should be willing to talk;

and should represent the range of points of view" (p. 66). Additional criteria for the

selection of research participants included their willingness to participate in the study and

their experience as superintendents.

Superintendents were placed into one of three groups depending on where they

were in their careers (encounter, adjustment, or stabilization) rather than by their age,

gender, or life circumstances. Superintendents in their first year in the role were

considered to be in the encounter phase of their careers. Superintendents with one to four

years of experience in the role were considered to be in the adjustment phase of their

careers. Superintendents with five or more years of experience in the role were

considered to be in the stabilization phase of their careers.

The 1996-97 Educational Directory, the 1995-96 Annual Statistical Report, and a

list of first-year superintendents, published by the State Department of Education (SDE),

were used to develop an initial list of potential research participants and sites. The

Educational Directory lists all districts in the state, identifies grade levels served, and

identifies the number of administrators and certified staff employed by the district. The

Statistical Report identifies the average daily membership (ADM) and various financial

data for all districts in the state.

The next step involved determining the geographical locations of the potential

research sites by plotting them on a map. Potential sites located near metropolitan areas

were eliminated. The superintendents of the remaining districts were then contacted by

telephone to ascertain their interest in participating in the study. The information obtained

from these initial contacts was used to further reduce the list of potential research

participants and sites.

Letters more fully explaining the study and requesting their participation were

mailed to 15 superintendents. To ensure a wide range of perspectives, superintendents of

districts located in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state were again

contacted by telephone to request their participation. Using this procedure, the researcher

identified nine superintendents, three for each career phase, to participate in the study. At

the time of the interviews, three superintendents were employed by districts located in the

northern part of the state, three were employed by districts located in the central part of

the state, and three were employed by districts located in the southern part of the state.

The researcher visited all research sites on two occasions to take field notes,

collect demographic data, and interview the research participants. The dates and times of

all site visits were arranged to accommodate schedules of the participants. Demographic

information was collected from each participant during the first visit, prior to beginning

the interview. Demographic information collected included: (a) superintendents' personal

data and employment histories; (b) district course offerings; (c) teachers' tenure in the

districts; (d) teachers' educational levels; (e) teachers' salary; and (f) the number of seniors

graduated in the Spring of 1996. A standard ethics form was used to inform respondents

of several issues prior to being interviewed. Issues covered with respondents included informing them of their protections through the use of pseudonyms and confidentiality procedures, the right to refuse to answer questions, and the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. In addition, the data obtained from the Annual Statistical Report was reviewed with the superintendents for accuracy. The first site visits averaged two and one-half hours with the average interview time being 45 minutes. A second site visit was arranged with the participants to conduct follow-up interviews based on the categories and themes unearthed in the first interviews. The second site visits averaged one hour and 15 minutes with the average interview time being 30 minutes.

Data Collection

The researcher was the primary instrument in the collection of data. Interviews were the specific method employed to collect data. McCracken (1988) established a framework to serve as a guide in the collection of data. According to McCracken (1988), "The first step of the long qualitative interview begins with an exhaustive review of the literature" (p. 29). The literature review provides the researcher with the necessary background to define problems and assess data. The literature review aids in the construction of the interview questionnaire by specifying categories and relationships that may organize the data and by determining what the researcher should ask about and listen for (McCracken, 1988). According to McCracken (1988), "The second step of the qualitative circle consists of the review of cultural categories" (p. 32). The purpose of this step is to give the researcher a more detailed and systematic appreciation of his or her

personal experience with the topic of interest. "The investigator must inventory and examine the associations, incidents, and assumptions that surround the topic in his or her mind" (McCracken, 1988, p. 32).

The third step of the long interview process consists of constructing the questionnaire. An important consideration in constructing the questionnaire is to recognize that the first objective of the qualitative interview is to allow respondents to tell their story in their own terms (McCracken, 1988). It is important that questions be phrased in a general and nondirective manner. The objective is to move the respondents to talk without overspecifying the substance or the perspective of the talk. "These opening, nondirective questions have been aptly named 'grand-tour' questions " (McCracken, 1988, p. 35). McCracken (1988) advocates the use of "floating prompts" as a relatively easy way to sustain forthcoming testimony. The researcher should listen for key terms to emerge from the testimony and use floating prompts to encourage the respondent to talk more about the key terms. McCracken (1988) recommends the use of "planned prompts" to give the respondents an opportunity to consider and discuss phenomena that does not readily come to mind. McCracken (1988) discusses several types of planned prompting strategies including the "contrast prompt," the "category prompt," the "recall prompt," and the "auto-driving prompt."

The research questions provided direction in the construction of the interview questionnaires. The interview questionnaires did not specify exactly what would happen, but guided the direction of the interviews. The questionnaire for this study consisted of biographical questions followed by a series of category questions. Each of the question

areas had a set of grand-tour questions, floating prompts, and planned prompts. Data

collection pertaining to the superintendents focus of activities were guided by the

following interview questions: (a) What do you do as superintendent? (b) What consumes

the majority of your time? and (c) What do you consider to be the most important part of

your role? Data collection pertaining to superintendents use of organizational frames were

collected by asking superintendents to recall a critical organizational event and to describe

how the dealt with the situation. Superintendents were asked to recall critical events from

each career phase they had experienced. Follow-up interviews were guided by the

following interview questions: (a) Has your perception of the superintendent's role

changed since you first become a superintendent? (b) How did you learn which task areas

were important? (c) Has your perception of important task areas changed since you first

became a superintendent? and (d) Has your approach in dealing with challenging

leadership situations changed since you first became a superintendent? The initial

interviews began in April of 1997, near the completion of the first year for new

superintendents.

Trustworthiness Criteria

Respondents were provided opportunities to review data from their interviews and

member checks were conducted to ensure the credibility of the study. According to

Lincoln and Guba (1985) member checks are the most important step for establishing

credibility. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that member checks serve the following

functions:

- allows the evaluator to assess the intent of a given action

- allows the respondent to correct errors of fact or errors of interpretation

- allows a chance to offer additional information

- puts the respondent on record as having said certain things

- allows a chance for the inquirer to summarize

- gives the respondent a chance to judge the overall adequacy of the interview itself.

    (p. 239)

In addition to member checks, peer debriefing was utilized as another step to establish the

credibility of the study.

According to McCracken (1988), "The purpose of the qualitative interview is not

to discover how many, and what kinds of people share a certain characteristic" (p. 17).

The issue is not one of transferability because the data are defined by the specific contexts

where they occur. However, one should not assume that knowledge gained from one

context has no relevance for other contexts. According to Erlandson and his colleagues

(1993), "The 'thick description' that has been generated, however, enables observers of

other contexts to make tentative judgments about applicability of certain observations for

their contexts" (p. 33). Shared characteristics may contribute to the transferability of

knowledge across contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend "the description must

specify everything that a reader may need to know in order to understand the findings" (p.

125). The issue of transferability was addressed by providing thick, detailed descriptions

of data and purposive sampling of respondents. This will assist readers in making

judgments about transferability by determining similarities and differences between

contexts. According to Guba (1981) reliability is conceived in terms of "dependability," "a concept that embraces both the stability implied by the reliability and the trackability required by explainable changes" (p. 81). Objectivity will be addressed through confirmability of data. Guba and Lincoln (1989) state, "This means that data (constructions, assertions, facts, and so on) can be tracked to their sources, and that the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit" (p. 243). A dependability and confirmability "audit trail" was maintained to allow external examiners to analyze the procedures used in the study.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the framework McCracken (1988) developed for use with the long interview. "The first stage treats each utterance in the interview transcript in its own terms, ignoring its relationships to other aspects of the text" (McCracken, 1988, p. 42). The purpose of this stage is to use the utterances to identify assumptions and beliefs. The treatment of each utterance creates an observation. The second stage develops the observations by themselves, according to evidence in the transcript, and according to the literature review and cultural review (McCracken, 1988, p. 45). The intent is to extend the observations beyond their original form until their implications and possibilities are played out. Patterns and themes should begin to emerge from the data in this stage. The objective of the next stage is to identify patterns of consistency and contradiction within the themes (McCracken, 1988). Redundant themes should be eliminated so they may be

formulated and organized hierarchically. The final stage synthesizes the themes from all of

the interviews and brings them together into a thesis. McCracken (1988) states, "It is time

to take the themes from each interview and see how these can be brought together into

theses" (p. 46). When completed, this stage presents the general properties of thought

and action within the respondents in the study.

The interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were

analyzed to identify emerging categories and themes related to the research questions.

The objectives of data analysis were to identify similarities and differences in the

professional growth of superintendents and to identify in what ways career phases

influenced superintendents use of organizational frames and focus of activities. In

addition, the transcripts were analyzed and coded for the presence of organizational

frames using the criteria developed by Bolman and Deal (1991). Indicators for coding the

transcripts are summarized in Table 1 [no table made yet-where do they go]. Although

the coding system is not statistically refined, it does assist one in making consistent

judgments pertaining to the superintendents use of organizational frames.

Summary

This chapter presented a rationale for the method chosen. The first section

outlined differences in two theoretical paradigms. The discussion was brought to a more

specific level by presenting differences in two research methods founded in the two

theoretical paradigms. After discussing differences in quantitative and qualitative research

methods, the rationale was presented for selecting the qualitative methodology. The

criterion used in the selection of respondents and sites was expanded in this chapter. The

long interview was identified as the specific method to be used for data collection.

Procedures for data collection and analysis were outlined using the framework developed

by McCracken (1988). The final section identified techniques such as member checking,

peer debriefing, and audit trails that will be employed to establish the trustworthiness of

the study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The previous chapters explained the purpose of the study, reviewed socialization literature relevant to the professional growth of teachers and principals, and explained the research methodology used in this study. This chapter presents the data and then provides an analysis of the data. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the themes and categories that emerged from the interviews. The data from individual interviews were synthesized according to phases of career socialization. The following paragraphs present themes and categories for the encounter, adjustment, and stabilization phases of career socialization. The analysis of data with respect to the literature review and stages of the conceptual framework concludes the chapter.

For the purpose of this study, focus of activity refers to the task areas perceived by superintendents as being the more important tasks of their role. To identify the superintendents focus of activities, common themes that emerged from the transcripts were synthesized to create the areas of finance, facility management, community relations, personnel relations, and instructional leadership. For example, all superintendents discussed the importance of and their involvement in the area of finance. Several superintendents identified facility management as being an important part of their role. Facility management included: (a) performing routine maintenance; (b) renovating and improving existing facilities; and (c) constructing new facilities. Common themes in the area of community relations included: (a) working to develop credibility in the community,

(b) identifying the expectations of community members; (c) and communicating openly with community members. Common themes in the area of personnel included: (a) recruiting competent employees; (b) delegating authority; (c) restructuring the staff; and (d) working on issues related to under performance and inappropriate staff behavior. Only three superintendents identified the area of instructional leadership, which included activities such as providing a vision and participating in curriculum decisions, as being an important aspect of their roles.

In addition, the transcripts were analyzed and coded for the presence of organizational frames using the criteria developed by Bolman and Deal (1991). Elements of the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames were embedded within the transcripts. The structural frame was present in all transcripts. Superintendents employed the structural frame when confronted with challenging issues related to finance, personnel problems, and staff reorganization. The human resource frame was the second most commonly used frame by superintendents. Superintendents described instances where they involved stakeholders in decision making, empowered employees, delegated tasks, and recruited new employees to improve the organization. The political frame was the third most frequently used frame by superintendents. Superintendents used the political frame to influence the outcomes of school board elections and bond issues, to negotiate agreements with teachers and parents, and to develop networks with key people. Superintendents used the symbolic frame least often of all frames. Superintendents most commonly described instances where they used themselves as symbols to influence the culture of the school or to influence how others would interpret a specific event.

Superintendents in the Encounter Phase

Superintendents in their first year in the superintendent's role were considered to be in the encounter phase of their careers. According to the socialization literature, much learning is required of individuals in the encounter phase. The amount of learning required appears to be influenced by the following factors: (a) the amount of change, or differences in the status, role requirements, and work environment between the new and old positions; (b) contrast, or the carry over involving people; and (c) surprise, or the unmet positive and negative expectations. The level of success individuals achieve in this phase is influenced by the degree to which their expectations and the organization's expectations are realistic and by the degree to which the they are well matched to the role. The following paragraphs introduce the three superintendents who were in the encounter phase of their careers. In addition, brief descriptions of their school districts and communities are provided.

<u>The Participants</u>

<u>Bob.</u> At age 36, Bob, a Native American, was the youngest superintendent in the study. Bob was dressed in a jacket and tie on both occasions I made site visits. Prior to becoming a superintendent, Bob had one year experience as high school principal, eight years experience as a counselor, and one year experience as a teacher. Bob has worked in three school districts, including one located just across the state line. All of Bob's experience in public education has been in districts with fewer than 500 students enrolled

in grades kindergarten through 12. This is Bob's eleventh consecutive year in public education.

Bob is the superintendent and high school principal of Oiltown Public School, located in southern Oklahoma. Oiltown Public School enrolled 153 students in grades kindergarten through 12 and employed 16 certified teachers and two administrators for the 1996-97 school year. The curricular offerings available to the students at Oiltown Public School are identified in Appendix A. Many of Oiltown's residents are financially dependent on the oil, gas, and ranching industries. According to Bob, the county where Oiltown is located typically has the highest unemployment rate in the state. The school district is the largest employer in town. The majority of students attending Oiltown Public School are Caucasian, with about 25% of the student body being Native American. In addition to the school, Oiltown consists of a post office and a combination grocery store/gas station.

Ben. Ben, a 45-year-old Caucasian male, was dressed in a jacket and tie on both site visits. Prior to entering the superintendency, Ben was a high school principal for six years and a teacher with coaching duties for 16 years. Ben's experience was gained in six small districts, with the largest district enrolling less than 1000 students in grades kindergarten through 12. At the time of the interview, Ben was in his twenty-third consecutive year in public education.

Ben is the superintendent of Naniwaya Public School, which is centrally located in the state. Naniwaya Public School enrolled 177 students in grades kindergarten through 12 and employed 16 certified teachers and two administrators for the 1996-97 school year.

The curricular offerings available at Naniwaya are presented in Appendix A. Since the only principal is also the high school coach, Ben often performs duties typically associated with a principal's role. According to Ben, 94.6% of the entire student body participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Native Americans represent over 50% of the student body. The majority of employment opportunities in Naniwaya are related to oil and farming industries. The town of Naniwaya consists of one general store, a post office, and the school district.

Dan. The presence of self-confidence was apparent as Dan calmly welcomed me into his office. The perception of self-confidence was magnified by Dan's silver hair and business suit. Dan, a 50-year-old Hispanic male, had the most unique career pattern of all the first-year superintendents. Dan's experience, prior to becoming a superintendent, included 22 years of service in a junior college, two years as a high school principal, and two years as a teacher with coaching duties. Dan's first superintendency came after being out of public education for 22 years. This was Dan's twenty-seventh consecutive year in the education field.

Dan is the superintendent of Shell Public School, centrally located in the state. Shell Public school enrolled 244 students in grades kindergarten through 12 and employed 22 certified teachers and three administrators for the 1996-97 school year. The curricular offerings available at Shell are identified in Appendix A. Dan shared with me that 58% of the students enrolled at Shell participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Many of Shell's residents commute 22 miles for employment. The majority of employment opportunities available in Shell are related to the peanut and cattle industries. The town of

Shell consists of one convenience store, one grocery store, a post office, and the school district.

Focus of Activities

Based on the themes and categories that emerged from the transcripts, superintendents in the encounter phase of socialization concentrated their efforts on the area of finance. Finance was the single area identified as being important by all three superintendents. Ben and Bob identified community relations as an important area. Dan identified personnel relations and facilities as important areas. The following paragraphs provide narrative accounts from the superintendents to support the development of the categories.

Finance

When discussing the area of finance, Ben commented, "I'm the caretaker of the funds for this district, so it's very important that I be critical and make wise decisions..." (5/8/97, p. 8). Bob explained, "My first role as a superintendent is the financial officer for the District. I take care of all the District's finances. That consumes quite a bit of my time" (5/2/97, p. 1). Dan stated, "On a daily basis, I guess the two things that I deal with everyday is something, primarily the finances or with the facilities" (5/9/97, p. 2).

All superintendents reported being directly involved in finance. For example, Ben reported, "Between my secretary and I, we pretty much have to deal with every aspect of the financial situation by ourselves" (5/8/97, p. 1). Bob commented:

As superintendent here, I do a lot of the...purchasing and that kind of thing. I take

care of that myself. Basically we don't have personnel that are assigned those

duties. You know, whatever textbooks, supplies...whatever, I pretty well take

care of all that. (5/2/97, p. 1)

Dan pointed out that a lot of his time was dedicated to completing state reports and

dealing with federal programs.

Searching for methods to generate new or increased revenue was another activity,

related to finance, discussed by the superintendents. Ben pointed out:

We do a lot of work on trying to get our...Impact Aide reports. We have a large

Native American population, so we do a lot of work on that. A lot of work on

Federal programs from the stand point of trying to get as much money out of each

one of them as we possibly can. (5/8/97, p. 6)

Along a similar line, Dan stated, "I'll tell you something that we have done here, on the

financial side, we've taken out a lot of grants this year" (5/9/97, p. 3).

The superintendents continued to explain their roles in the area of finance as being

mediators that balanced the needs and abilities of their districts. Ben expressed, "When

you're in a school like this, the object is just to keep the doors open. You're trying to

provide the best education you can, but at the same time you're trying to keep yourself

financially solvent" (5/8/97, p. 6). Bob shared a similar concern by stating, "I have to

make sure that we...stay within our means, that we don't overspend, and are able to

provide a good quality education with the money that we have" (5/2/97, p. 7). Dan

discussed his efforts to locate sources of funding other than the general fund for purchasing items to use in the classrooms.

Community Relations

Ben and Bob identified the area of community relations as being important. Both superintendents emphasized the connection between the school and community and the importance of keeping the community informed to resolve and prevent problems. According to Ben, "The school and the community are tied very closely. The school and community basically are the same thing" (5/8/97, p. 3). Bob noted, "I also have to worry about community relations....Kind of keeping the peace, I guess is a good way to put it" (5/2/97, p. 1).

While both superintendents were actively involved with community relations, their motives were different. Ben's involvement in community relations was focused on repairing damaged relations that existed prior to his arrival. Ben informed me, "There was just a general apathy toward the school in general and people began to pull their kids out and didn't think they were getting a quality education" (5/8/97, p. 5). The district suffered a substantial loss in revenue due to the disgruntled community members. Ben explained, "That was another problem they had here....If that section of the population, the Native American population, is upset with you and won't sign those forms, obviously your money in that regards [sic] is going to go down" (5/8/97, p. 6). Ben explained his efforts to rebuild a positive relationship with the community:

They had to be educated pretty much what that money is going for....We put quite

a bit initiative in...getting those people...back in the program. Letting them

understand what it was about, that it was for the good of the school. (5/8/97, p. 6)

Bob's involvement in community relations was more for preventative reasons and

involved attending extra-curricular events. He elaborated:

I attend all the functions in the district. I think it is real important, as

superintendent, to do PR work and make sure people are aware of the school and

what's going on at school...to elicit support for the District. I spend a lot of time

doing that kind of thing. (5/2/97, p. 2)

He also said he "tried to keep the board informed, so that they could answer those

questions in the community" (5/2/97, p. 10). According to Bob, keeping the board

informed resolves many issues before they reach him.

Personnel Relations

Dan identified the area of personnel relations as being important. Dan had two

reasons for becoming involved in area of personnel. First, the faculty members at Dan's

school were divided and he wanted to bring them together. According to Dan, "When I

came here, you had two schools. You had an elementary and a high school and they

wouldn't...talk to each other" (5/9/97, p. 6). Dan described how he scheduled joint

inservice for elementary and high school teachers and how he encouraged them to work as

a team as opposed to individuals. He recalled:

I'd say that was one of my top priorities was to say, 'Hey, you are going to come

together on this thing.' If I probably said anything in a way that I demand this,

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that was probably I said that. I demand that, I didn't say demand, but I want your

togetherness....(5/9/97, p. 6)

Secondly, Dan worked in the area of personnel to recruit and promote selected

individuals. He considered himself fortunate because the board allowed him to make

personnel changes instead of inheriting an entire staff. He was able to bring in two outside

people, one as the high school principal and the other as a high school coach. In addition,

Dan provided release time for two people, already in the district, to be administrative

assistants. He explained:

I was fortunate. I have some special people in special positions and that helped

me, because that group pulled everybody in....We've hired some people, gave them

the responsibility along with the authority to do their job and they've done it. Like

I said, I think we've got a great team here, as far as teamwork. (5/9/97, p. 9)

Facility Management

Dan's involvement in the task area of facility management was directed at

improving the existing facilities. Dan explained, "I've inherited a school here that was

built in the...mid-fifties and a lot of it is, as you can see...it's kind of crumbling at the

corners" (5/9/97, p. 2). Dan continued to explain how the facilities had been improved

and were now in compliance with electrical and fire safety codes.

Use of Organizational Frames

The narratives of the superintendents were analyzed and coded for organizational

frames. Based on the frames embedded within the transcripts, the first-year

superintendents confronted the ambiguity of their roles by experimenting with multiple frames. Elements of the symbolic, human resource, structural, and political frames were present in the transcripts of these superintendents. The following paragraphs provide narrative accounts from the superintendents that support the presence of the identified frames.

<u>Symbolic Frame</u>

Elements of the symbolic frame were present in all transcripts. Leading by example, projecting a desired image, and developing or maintaining the school's mission were concerns shared by the first-year superintendents. For instance, Dan described how he attempted to influence the school's culture through his actions:

> I try to arrive early. You might, after school, see me out here I my old blue jeans and overalls working...but I dress appropriately everyday. I come up here and you're not going to know whether I've had a good day or a bad day before. I think being a role model....I try to daily...pick a different segment of the school and go show that I have an interest. Lots of times, I'll go down and have breakfast with the little kids or I'll have lunch with them or I'll go in a classroom. So if I think something is important, it's people skills. Keeping everybody up, if they're down, keeping this school's mission in the direction that it should be, and keeping it the center of the community's attention....(5/9/97, p. 11)

Ben informed me of his approach to reviving the deteriorating culture of his school and reinstating the community's respect for the school. He explained:

In general, showing them [the community] that there is a new renewed emphasis at

the school, showing some interest and trying to improve the school....I think just

consistency and being here, and being interested, and trying to conduct this school

in a proper manner, probably is the most important thing in my individual district.

(5/8/97, p. 8)

Ben elaborated on his efforts to improve the culture of the school through leading by

example:

I think as a superintendent of schools, much like any other occupation, if they

[school faculty] see that you 're going to set the example. In other words, if

you're going to be here, you're going to be dependable, and you really care about

what is going on....That is important, especially in a small school. (5/8/97, p. 13)

Bob shared an experience with me where he was involved in a reduction in force.

Soon after accepting the position, Bob realized the district was experiencing financial

shortages. As a result, Bob eliminated one teaching and one administrative position and

reduced one teaching position and the hours of the support staff. Bob explained, "We

didn't want to take anything away from anyone we didn't have to. So, what we finally

came up with...that's one of the reasons I am superintendent and principal, we eliminated

that [the high school principal] position" (5/2/97, p. 8). According to Bob, the reduction

in staff was well accepted because he shared in the hardship and was open and honest

about the situation. He commented:

Everybody pretty well accepted that and worked with us. Instead of becoming a

situation where we were competing with each other or drawing some lines

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between us, we kind of sat down here at the table and hashed it all out. Everybody

understands, understood why those cuts were made....(5/2/97, p. 10)

Bob indicated performing the role of superintendent and principal was "difficult at times,

but there were significant savings to the district in terms of dollars and that's one of those

balancing things trying to get the most education we can for the dollars" (5/2/97, p. 11).

According to Bob, these changes enabled the district to continue providing a good basic

education.

Human Resource Frame

Elements of the human resource frame were present in all of the transcripts.

Communicating openly with the staff, encouraging their involvement, and empowering the

staff were common issues among the first-year superintendents. For example, Ben

discussed his approach to communicating and working with the staff:

We try to let our teachers know what's going on. I don't have anything to hide,

whether it's our books, financially, all the way down to anything. It is their school

as well and I like for them to know what's going on. I think it is more of a feeling

of working with somebody more than for somebody. (5/8/97, p. 13)

Ben pointed out that he had formed several committees to increase the level of staff and

community participation in decision making. He commented, "They [the committees] give

me ideas, these things that should take place and....I try to get it done" (5/8/97, p. 13).

Bob's use of the human resource frame became apparent as he described how he

openly informed the staff of their financial problems and involved them in identifying

solutions to alleviate the problem.

We called them [all employees] in immediately and explained to them the situation

and made them a part of the decision....Like our bus drivers for example, I said

how much time can we trim off your routes, where are the places that we can

shorten it. They worked with us on that. (Bob, 5/2/97, p. 9)

Dan indicated the faculty members in his district were not accustomed to the

superintendent being open with them. "I don't think support personnel ever knew a

superintendent could or would speak to them" (Dan, 5/9/97, p. 11). He considers

communicating openly with the staff to be important. "I'll tell you another thing. We kind

of have an open door policy here...if you had a problem, you can come to this office"

(Dan, 5/9/97, p. 4). Dan continued, "One of the most open things that I've done with

them here is talk about finances with them...and they just can't hardly believe it" (5/9/97,

p. 10). In addition to sharing financial information with the staff, he allocated

departmental budgets and empowered the staff to control their budgets. The previous

superintendent required the staff to request permission before making any purchase. He

asserted, "Why should your teachers not know and share in the responsibility of spending

the money or taking care of the money" (5/9/97, p. 10).

Dan explained how he operated with the staff, saying:

I'll tell you one of the things I did...I believe in empowering people. You give

people the responsibility for something, but they should also have the authority to

take care of things. That's one of the first things that I went through, that I talked

to them about. (5/9/97, p. 4)

Expressing a similar philosophy, Bob discussed the importance of having a reliable staff that could be empowered. He explained:

> As long as I have those kind of people it [scheduling athletic events] is not
> something that I have to get really concerned with, but I have good people taking
> care of it...In fact, I think you have to have those people. You've got to have
> some people that you can assign a job and know it will get taken care of. (5/2/97,
> p. 5)

Structural Frame

Elements of the structural frame were present in all of the transcripts. The first-year superintendents used the structural frame when creating and implementing policies as control mechanisms. The financial records in Dan's district had been manually maintained and the procedures for requisitioning, encumbering, and expending funds did not meet his expectations. Dan stated, "Finances, not that it was in bad shape, some of the things that were carried on. I guess policies...procedures, the process wasn't quite what it should have been" (5/9/97, p. 3). For budgeting purposes, Dan wanted to know the financial status of the district on a daily basis. As a result, he developed and implemented new procedures that more closely met his expectations.

Bob explained that many policies in his district were outdated. For example, he discussed updating the high school policy book because it had not been distributed to students for several years. He commented:

> I have to spend a lot of time looking at policies. Making sure that those are good
> policies and, if not, working with the Board and community to try to change those

policies so that they better reflect what we need here. It takes some time. (5/2/97, p. 1)

In addition to updating and developing policies, Bob used the structural frame to alleviate a financial shortage. He recalled:

As soon as I took the job, we knew we had a tight financial situation. So we just immediately had to look at making cuts in the budget and the only way you can do significant cuts in the budget, you have to look at the salaries. So that meant dealing with peoples' jobs. (5/2/97, p. 8)

Bob was able to gain control of the financial crises by reorganizing the staff and implementing the existing reduction in force policy as a control mechanism.

Ben used the structural frame to coordinate and control issues that arose from a school-related accident. He explained, "People were on the scene and a lot of panic going around, that was very much an incident that had to be handled....We had to stop that panic type situation" (5/8/97, p. 9). Ben implemented the district's policy that identified the superintendent as the spokesperson for the media. He stated, "I think one of the key things, is not to cause a panic. Let your school have one or two people that does the talking for them...instead of 15 different people telling their account" (5/8/97, p. 10). Ben exaggerated the limits of the district's policy in an effort minimize the spreading panic. He explained:

The TV stations in Carson were all wanting to land helicopters and things like that to see about it and we told them they could not do that because we did not have an area for that and it was against our policy. (Ben, 5/8/97, p. 9)

Political Frame

The political frame was present in one transcript. In this case, the superintendent

used the political frame to negotiate an end to a conflict that was producing tension

between a patron and some faculty members, which resulted in a division in the staff. Dan

described the situation:

> This thing went on and festered...and went all the way to the state department.
>
> The state department even come down here telling my principal, 'I don't think
>
> you're doing what you should be doing,' and so forth and so on. Finally, the
>
> parents, I asked the mother to come up here, spoke with her, and she's threatening
>
> to sue everybody in due process. (5/9/97, p. 13)

Dan explained how the issue split the faculty into three competing groups. The

teachers divided into two opposing groups, with a third group being formed by the

principals. Initially, Dan tried to stay removed from the situation because his technical

skills in the area were deficient. He attempted to compensate for his inexperience by

networking with more experienced people. He commented, "I called some of my

superintendent buddies that had been through some of this....I learned a lot in a hurry

because I got me a manual and had one of the teachers give me...sitting here visiting with

her about getting up to speed a little bit" (5/9/97, p. 13). The situation continued to

deteriorate until Dan had to become directly involved. He said, "It was really to a

point...finally, I had to go down and get involved in it" (5/9/97, p. 13).

Dan's solution to resolve the conflict called for a compromise from the

stakeholders involved. He shared with me some concerns that influenced his decision to

negotiate a compromise. "It didn't make any difference how the thing came out. You weren't going to satisfy...those parents or the people involved. You weren't. The teachers weren't going to be real happy" (5/9/97, p. 13). Dan indicated the solution used was not in the best interest of anyone involved. He stated, "The final result is okay in our mind. I don't like it...some of the things we had to do....But like I said, we finally got to a point that everybody could live with it. Whether it is best...probably not" (5/9/97, p. 14).

The Participants Revisited

Follow-up interviews were conducted to further explore the superintendents focus of activities and use of organizational frames. Based on the themes and categories embedded within the transcripts, role expectations, role learning, competency development, role modification, and lack of experience may have contributed to the superintendents narrow focus of activities. The superintendents use of multiple organizational frames may have been influenced by their lack of experience in the role.

Role Expectations

The first-year superintendents entered their roles with pre-conceived dispositions about important task areas. The superintendents' initial dispositions were influenced by their observations of superintendents prior to entering the superintendency, experiences outside of educational organizations, and their professional training. For example, Dan described how he learned the important aspects of his role:

> I had dealt directly with so many superintendents, especially within about a three
>
> county area. You know, worked with them through the college and different

programs. Like I said, out in their schools recruiting and talking to students,

counselors, and principals. So I had kind of a working knowledge to what was

going on out there....I knew those were important before I got there, because, like

I said, having dealt with them. (7/21/97, p. 2)

In a similar manner, Bob indicated that observing other superintendents influenced

his perception of the important areas. When explaining how he learned what areas were

most important he stated, "I think that's just from my perception and my experience in

school systems and seeing other people in the superintendents role" (7/17/97, p. 4).

Dan discussed how experiences outside of educational organizations had

influenced his initial perceptions of important areas. He commented:

I think what helped me, and this has nothing to do with public schools, is my

background....I have been in the Oklahoma National Guard for 28 years and so

I've also had to work with people and army staffs and that sort of thing. That's

how I approach my job, is putting a staff together and everything kind of trickles

down from there. (7/21/97, p. 5)

Two superintendents discussed the influence formal training had their perceptions

of important task areas. For example, Bob spoke about preparing for the superintendency

through college courses.

They kind of lead you in these areas and you're taught, trained in these areas. So,

you know they're coming, you know you're going to be dealing with finance and

community relations and you get a lot of training as far as dealing with personnel.

So you realize, as you're training for the job, that those are going to be important

issues. (Bob, 7/17/97, p. 4)

Ben discussed participating in a training program for first-year superintendents

required and conducted by the state department of education. He indicated that this

training program helped him tremendously.

<u>Role Learning</u>

The superintendents' initial perceptions of their roles were expanded as they

experienced the reality of organizational demands. All of the first-year superintendents

reported some degree of role learning during their first year in the role. For instance, Dan

commented:

I think my basic perception hasn't changed, but I think its become a more realistic

acceptance of what the role of superintendent is. In the sense that...through the

year you learn about things that you hadn't even thought about prior to getting

into the field, that just go with the job. I think my perception of that role has

grown somewhat. (7/21/97, p.1)

Bob discussed how experiencing the multiple demands confronting superintendents

expanded his perception of the role. He explained, "You wind up doing just about

anything that you can imagine doing during the day and I think now, I realize that the

superintendent's role is to do whatever it takes to keep this school going" (7/17/97, p. 1).

Bob continued by sharing some unanticipated realities of the superintendent's role.

I was like most people. I just saw the little general points that you know the

superintendent deals with. We know he deals with finance, we know he deals with

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the personnel and those things and so many of these other issues that you don't

know are there, things you don't realize until you're there. (7/17/97, p. 4)

Ben discussed the importance of determining what areas should be included in the

superintendent's role and what areas should be delegated. He commented:

You change with experience. I think I started out trying to be all things to all

people and you quickly find out that you can't do that....I quickly learned that I'm

going to have to delegate a few more things than what I had planned

and...concentrate on a few areas...rather than trying to do all the things in the

school system. (7/8/97, p. 1)

Competency Development

The superintendents were inconvenienced by having to learn technical skills and by

having to learn key people, both in and out of the district, associated with the school. For

example, Bob devoted extensive time to learning procedures associated with the budget.

He stated:

Last year, I basically didn't know anything, so I had to learn it all real quick....I

was constantly trying to learn how processes, budgeting and how all that worked

and I spent lots of hours trying to understand those things and put them together.

(7/17/97, p. 5)

Acquiring this knowledge allowed Bob to focus more attention on other areas. He

explained:

The footsteps that it takes to get through a process are a lot shorter this year than

they were last year. So that's going to create, I think, a better time management

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type thing, so that I can spend time, my time in other areas. Finance is still going to be a big area, but I don't think it will take as much time as it did the first year and I think as the years go along, it will be even better. I'll have a better understanding of the process. (7/17/97, p. 6)

Ben shared a similar experience and indicated he devoted a lot of time to financial management. "I think the major things, finance, things like this, you have to concentrate on them more and you have to set aside time and make sure you do a lot of concentrating on that one particular field" (7/8/97, p. 1). He continued by elaborating on the importance of becoming competent in the area of financial management stating, "I think the situation dictates that to a degree. Finance in our school system, where every dollar counts, you quickly learn that you need to learn the ins and outs of finance" (7/8/97, p. 3).

The learning required of the first-year superintendents was not limited to the area of finance. For instance, Ben conveyed his perceptions regarding the learning he experienced:

> You just eat knowledge totally...everyday for the whole school year. Coming to meetings and...just board meetings in general, just everything. It's just knowledge flooding in and I feel much more prepared after one year....In fact, I feel a little proud of myself when I see new superintendents, that I at least have one year on them. (7/8/97, p. 7)

In addition to learning new skills, the first-year superintendents had to establish relationships with key people such as board, community, and staff members. For instance, Bob explained that he had a pretty good understanding of the teachers and is now getting

to know the community better and indicated this knowledge helped him make better decisions. He explained:

> I think any superintendent has to get a feel for those people and how things are going to function. What's expected and okay in one community, may not be in the next community. I think the better you know those people in your school and community, the better decisions you're going to make. (7/17/97, p. 9)

Bob continued to provide examples of how his decision making was influenced by the community's expectations. "I kind of learned that, in all my decisions, the community is not a real risk taking community. They're pretty conservative and...that's good information for me to have when I make a decision" (7/17/97, p. 10). In addition, Ben reported that learning the community's expectations was beneficial. He stated, "I think it has helped a lot to know your community. To get to know your school board and your community and what exactly their needs are and what you're trying to do" (7/8/97, p. 7).

Learning characteristics of the staff members was a common interest shared by the first-year superintendents. Concerns such as the following were common.

> I've learned my personnel quite a bit better and I know where my weak links are and I know where my strong links are. Like I said, we're going to be working on some of those weak links to make them better. (Dan, 7/21/97, p. 9)

Bob indicated his "contact base" had expanded to include school board, community, and faculty members, and other superintendents. He explained:

> I've got a better contact base in the sense of I know who to call to get information and that kind of thing. Last year, I spent a lot of time tracking down information,

so I've kind of expanded my contact base a lot this year....I know who to call to

get an answer about a particular question and I've also met other superintendents

that I can call on for help. (7/17/97, p. 5)

In addition, Ben discussed the process of developing relationships with key people and

stated, "I think one of the biggest advantages is having a school secretary that knows

what's going on" (7/8/97, p. 7).

Role Modification

All of the first-year superintendents perceived they were more "in control" of areas

associated with their roles. As a result, two of the superintendents discussed modifying

their roles for the future school year, which meant expanding their focus of activities to

include additional areas. For instance, Bob described his feelings about entering the new

school year:

A year ago, I had very little grasp on what the current situation was and almost no

understanding of the future, of the outlook of where we would be a year later.

Now I feel much better about that. I have a pretty good grasp of where we're at,

pretty realistic about where we stand, and what our outlook for the future is. I am

a lot more relaxed than I was a year ago. (7/17/97, p. 7)

Ben became more comfortable with his role as a result of his increased

understanding of the community. He stated, "I feel a lot more comfortable because I've

been able to figure out what will work for our particular community. What will work, that

I can actually do" (7/8/97, p. 6). Dan reported his expectations for the staff's cooperation

had increased, possibly resulting from his comfort in the role. He explained:

I'm not very diplomatic when it comes to things that we have been over, where we have a policy and procedure in place....Whether it's more comfortable or whether we subscribe to this policy...I'm a little more demanding today that I was 12 months ago. (7/21/97, p. 12)

Two superintendents discussed expanding the boundaries their roles to address problems. The role changes discussed by the superintendents included expanding their focus to the area of instruction. For example, one superintendent shared his intentions to improve students services by becoming involved in instruction. Bob commented, "What we're really doing for the students, I really want to spend more time working on that. I want to spend time with the principals and teachers and look at our curriculum" (7/17/97, p. 7). As Bob elaborated about his future role in the area of instruction, he explained:

This past year, I really didn't have time for that kind of thing. It's something that you always give a little thought to, but as far as really getting involved in the action on it, I haven't been able to so far. I think my next big move is curriculum. This year, I was real concerned about finances and getting that squared away. (7/17/97, p. 7)

Dan's intent to expand his focus was based on a need to improve scores on achievement tests. According to Dan:

We haven't scored as well over the last couple of years in our elementary achievement tests as I would like to see us score....So...if there's anything I've probably added to our priorities, it's to begin to look at our curriculum and are we

meeting the standards....I didn't get involved in that at all last year, but I am going to. (7/21/97, p. 7)

Organizational Frames

Data suggest that the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames was influenced by their lack of experience in the role. With increased experience, two superintendents reported a change in their leadership styles that restricted their use of multiple organizational frames.

The following examples illustrate how the superintendents use of multiple frames were influenced by their lack of experience in the role. For instance, when explaining his approach to challenging leadership situations, Ben commented, "Superintendent is like a lot of other positions. You can get a feel for it and you decide what will work for you, exactly what you're comfortable with, and you try to work in those strategies" (7/8/97, p. 5). Ben experimented with a trial and error process, where unsuccessful strategies were excluded and successful strategies were reinforced. He explained, "I think a lot of things that I've tried, after a year, I can see what works and what doesn't. You begin to develop the things that do best for you" (7/8/97, p. 8). As Ben continued, he explained his preference to reuse successful strategies:

> I think you sort of lock in to what you're doing the longer you've been in the job and you continue to try to use those strategies until they fail....The more that you've used things that have worked, the more you continue to do that....I think you continue to use that until it proves it's not doing you and good any more. (7/8/97, p. 8)

Bob used a trial and error approach, which is illustrated in his follow statement:

> Instead of reinventing the wheel, you know, you build the wheel the first time and
> then you've got a pattern for the second one. Last year, I really didn't have a
> pattern. I was just kind of feeling my way through it and this year I've got an idea
> as to how it works. (7/17/97, p. 6)

Two superintendents reported an increase in their use of strategies associated with
the structural frame as they gained experience in the role. Dan commented:

> I'm probably not as diplomatic as I was 12 months ago....If a similar situation
> came up a year ago, I would probably try to talk through and work through it.
> Now days, I'd probably say, 'This is exactly what you're going to do, or what I
> want done, or something like this.' Because I've already been through this and I
> know what works and what doesn't. (7/21/97, p. 11)

Bob demonstrated a similar pattern in his decision making process. Bob explained:

> I'm more willing to make a decision today than I was a year ago. In terms of a
> year ago, I tended to delay decisions...to try to get all the information and make
> sure everything was perfect. I'm more willing to make a decision today than I was
> a year ago. (7/17/97, p. 8)

Superintendents in the Adjustment Phase

Superintendents with one to four years of experience in the superintendent's role
were considered to be in the adjustment phase of their careers. According to the
socialization literature, the adjustment phase involves the task of fitting into the

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organization. This phase can involve two contrasting processes. First, it involves a reactive change in the individual. Secondly, individuals in the adjustment phase may attempt to mold the role to better suit their expectations. The two major outcomes predicted for this phase are personal change and role innovation. The following paragraphs introduce the three superintendents who were in the adjustment phase of their careers. In addition, brief descriptions of their school districts and communities are provided.

The Participants

Brent. Brent, a 42 year-old Caucasian male, was professionally dressed during both site visits. Brent's energetic personality was complemented by his physically fit appearance. Brent was in the second year of his first superintendency, with over 20 consecutive years of experience in public education. Prior to becoming a superintendent, Brent had been an elementary principal for three years and a teacher with coaching duties for 15 years. Brent's work experience in public education was obtained in two small districts, located less than 50 miles apart, that enrolled less than 500 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

Brent is the superintendent of Pine Public School, located in southeastern Oklahoma. Pine Public School enrolled 192 students and employed 13 certified teachers and two administrators for the 1996-97 school year. The curricular offerings available at Pine are identified in Appendix A. Brent informed me that 83% of the student body participated in the free and reduced lunch program. Seventy-five percent of the student

body is Caucasian, with the remaining 25% being Native American. The majority of Pine's residents are self-employed in the logging or cattle industry. The community of Pine in not incorporated as a town, but it does have a general store, a post office, a school, and a new government subsidized housing complex.

Jim. Jim, a 44 year-old Caucasian male, is the superintendent and elementary principal of Midway Public School. Jim was dressed in slacks and a pullover shirt during both site visits. Jim was in the second year of his second superintendency during the first interview. Prior to this position, Jim had been a superintendent for one year, an elementary principal for six years, and a teacher with coaching duties for 12 years. Jim's experience in public education was obtained in five small districts located in the southern region of the state. Jim has 19 consecutive years of experience in public education.

Midway Public School is located in central Oklahoma. Midway enrolled 230 students and employed 16 certified teachers and two administrators for the 1996-97 school year. The course offerings at Midway are identified in Appendix A. Jim informed me that 75% of the student body participated in the free and reduced lunch program. Many of Midway's residents commute 30-miles, one way, for employment or are self-employed in the farming and cattle industries. The business section of Midway consists of a convenience store and a post office.

Kent. At 61 years of age, Kent was the most senior superintendent involved in the study. Kent was in the third year of his first superintendency when the initial interview was conducted. When compared to the other superintendents in the study, Kent had a unique career pattern. For instance, Kent had been out of education for 12 years before

entering the superintendency. Prior to entering the superintendency, Kent was employed

by a major oil company for 12 years, served as a high school principal for three years, and

taught in a vocational school for 17 years. In addition, Kent was the only superintendent

involved the study with a Doctorate degree. During both site visits, Kent wore western

style clothes and boots. In all, Kent had 23 years of experience in the education field.

Kent is the superintendent of Prairieview Public School, located in the northern

region of the state. Prairieview enrolled 237 students and employed 21 certified teachers

and three administrators for the 1996-97 school year. Prairieview's course offerings are

identified in Appendix A. Kent informed me that 56% of the student body participated in

the free and reduced lunch program. The majority of students attending Prairieview are

Caucasian, with the exception being a few Native Americans. Many of Prairieview's

residents are employed in the oil and cattle industries. Prairieview consists of a grocery

store, a convenience store, a service station, a restaurant, and the school, which is the

largest employer in town.

Focus of Activities

Based on the themes and categories that emerged from the transcripts,

superintendents in the adjustment phase of socialization concentrated their efforts on the

areas of finance, facilities, and community relations. Two superintendents included the

task area of personnel relations in their focus of activities. One superintendent's focus of

activity included the four areas previously identified, plus the area of instructional

leadership. The following paragraphs provide narrative accounts from the superintendents that support the above findings.

<u>Finance</u>

Managing resources, completing routine tasks, and searching for revenue were common concerns for superintendents related to the area of finance. All superintendents emphasized the importance of their roles in the area of finance. For example, Kent stated, "I think finance is the most important. We've got to use our finances here as wisely as possible" (4/21/97, p. 3). Jim explained, "My role is to make sure that we don't go in the red. We try to spend wisely of what our needs are as the school system and make sure that we do have the funds available for those goals and purchases that we make" (5/9/97, p. 5).

Brent indicated the area of finance was directly related to all other aspects of the school. He explained, "When I started here...they had closed the books and the school had a $168.00 in carry over. That was the most important issue that the school faced" (5/2/97, p. 14). After three years in the superintendent's role, the task area of finance remained a priority for Brent. According to him, "Being the chief financial officer has probably been the most important thing I've done. Trying to get them back on sound financial footing. That probably has been...the most important thing since I've been here" (5/2/97, p. 8). As Brent continued, he explained how the area of finance relates to other areas. "When you establish your financial soundness, you establish some credibility not only with the community but with the local businesses, the merchants. And in doing that, that has carried over in the different aspects of the school" (5/2/97, p. 8).

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The superintendents reported being personally involved in completing routine management tasks related to finance. For example, Kent commented:

> We're always fighting for every dollar we can get. It takes a lot of planning and preparing of the budgets, working with our auditor and getting our estimate of needs, and getting the...budget prepared. (4/21/97, p. 2)

Jim pointed out, "We do all the forms for the state department, title programs, federal grant moneys, drug moneys, all those things...most of it is done by the superintendent" (5/9/97, p. 1). Preparing the payroll, budget, and federal programs were routine tasks identified by Brent. Brent commented, "Most of my financial stuff, as far as preparing budges and stuff, I find that I get most of that done if I stay after school and everybody else is gone and out of here" (5/2/97, p. 7).

Searching for financial resources was a common activity for all superintendents. All three superintendents financed improvement projects without taking money from existing programs. Two superintendents financed projects with bond issues, while the other superintendent financed a project with a grant. Kent stated, "We asked our patrons to pass a $600,000 bond issue to repair our roofs. I considered it to be a very strong vote of confidence, because they were passed 78% in favor of the issue" (4/21/97, p. 5). Brent shared a situation where he was forced to either finance a new sewer system or close the school. He explained:

> This was an issue that we had to take care of and because of...money problems, we didn't have the money in either the building fund or general fund to go out and spend anywhere from 75,000 to 100,000 dollars on the sewer system, so we were

fined....By getting that grant...we were able to...solve that problem. (5/2/97, p.

10)

Facility Management

As a group, the superintendents played an active role in the area of facilities. The

major tasks related to facilities were constructing or renovating buildings, but the

superintendents were involved in minor activities as well. Jim recently constructed a new

elementary building and shared his experience with me. He stated:

It was really a learning experience for me. Not only how, trying to get bids on, on

the bathrooms, painting, the wallboards, the whole aspect of putting a building

together...doors, windows, things like that. Making numerous trips...to pick up

supplies and things like that. (5/9/97, p. 12)

Kent explained his rationale for initiating a bond issue. "We're at the point...that

we should have put roofs on all the buildings, probably, ten years ago. We have a high

school building that is leaking in almost every room" (4/21/97, p. 4). The superintendents

involvement in the area of facilities were directed at resolving immediate problems. For

example, Brent was in the process of building a new high school, but his emphasis

changed as problems with the sewer system manifested. Brent stated, "This year...the

biggest thing has been the problems we've had with the sewer system and being under the

compliance order with the Department of Environmental Quality Control" (5/2/97, p. 10).

Becoming involved in the routine tasks related to facility management emerged as

a common practice for the superintendents. For instance, Brent stated:

I wore my old work clothes and the board members and I, because the financial

problems we were having, we took care of the yard. We would come in on the

afternoons and mow the yard, weed eat, and do all those kind of things (5/2/97, p.

19).

Jim informed me that he did everything from bus driving to maintenance because

there were not enough people to share the responsibilities. He stated, "This being a small

school system...you do a lot it yourself" (5/9/97, p. 1). After concluding the interview,

Jim reemphasized the comprehensiveness of his role by proudly displaying the new

entrance doors he had personally installed the previous weekend.

Community Relations

Community relations emerged as an important area for superintendents in this

career phase. Informing community members, through a variety of approaches, was a

common practice of the superintendents. In addition, the superintendents pointed out how

closely other areas were related to community relations. For example, Kent commented:

Public relations is an area that I like to be pretty heavy in, because those are the

people out there that these children belong to and I think they have some right in

the say so in what goes on around here. (4/21/97, p. 1)

Brent demonstrated a similar emphasis on community relations:

One of the first things that I talked to the staff and to the board members...is that

we have to welcome the parents in...we have to have a line of communication. We

put out a weekly bulletin that goes out to every kid. (5/2/97, p. 5)

Newsletters, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, special programs, and extra-curricular activities were methods superintendents used to keep community members informed. Jim's efforts to inform community members included sending out weekly calendars, having parent-teacher conferences, and attending after school events. Jim commented:

> There is not very many events that I haven't been to...I'd say that out of a 100 percent of the events, I've probably been to 90 percent of them....The more you're seen, the more public that people see you, the better your known, and the people aren't going to be afraid to walk up to you and visit with you about their problems. (5/9/97, p. 3)

Kent described regular efforts to keep the community informed:

> I go downtown for coffee. I go down by the senior citizens, occasionally, just to see if anyone has any questions. At our ballgames, I am available to them at the lobby area in basketball. I walk through the crowds and all and visit with people and talk to people at ballgames. It is not a thing with a set pattern, it's just...whatever is comfortable at the time. (4/21/97, p. 2)

Brent implemented numerous strategies to improve community relations. For instance, he commented, "We just invite the parents to come in. We have a public dinner at Thanksgiving and one at Christmas that we invite the parents to come in and eat lunch with their students" (5/2/97, p. 5). In addition, Brent held a public forum and conducted a needs survey to obtain input from the community.

According to the superintendents, the area of community relations is related to many other areas. For example, the financial status of a district may improve or deteriorate relations within a community. Brent explained:

> And that [achieving financial soundness] probably has been the most important thing in being able to...help with the public relations, because we are on sound footing. The people have decided that, 'Yes! The school can operate.' and so that carries over into other aspects. (5/2/97, p. 8)

In addition, Brent indicated his efforts to save money, such as mowing the schoolyard, improved public relations in the community. Kent indicated that he improved community relations by using board members to keep the community informed. Jim noted that constructing a new elementary building improved community relations. Jim stated, "I think by me being involved, at least getting the building built...being in on a lot of it, kind of built a lot of trust in a lot of community members" (5/9/97, p. 14).

Personnel Relations

The task area of personnel emerged as an important concern for three superintendents. Jim discussed the importance of preventing conflicts between staff members so teachers could focus their efforts on educating students in the proper environment. He stated, "The most important activity is to make sure that there are not any major conflicts between the teachers and school that disrupt the environment, because our number one priority should be to educate our students" (5/9/97, p. 7). Jim considered working with the staff and getting their cooperation as being important processes to prevent problems.

Negotiations, cooperative problem solving, and staff development were issues related to personnel identified by Brent. According to him, "They [the teachers] just really didn't have anyone saying this is where we're going to go, this is how we're going to get there, let's go do it, and they had really just been adrift" (5/2/97, p. 3). Brent made efforts to inform the teachers, obtain their input, and provide direction. He explained:

I talk to the teachers on everything....I can sit down in kind of an informal staff meeting and we can kick ideas around and get their input. I think that as long as they know they have some input into things, they have a better camaraderie, they have a better feeling for the school, and they have an ownership in the school. That's kind of what we try to do. (5/2/97, p. 5)

Instructional Leadership

Brent was the only superintendent who identified instructional leadership as an important task area. In fact, Jim stated, "What I try to do is let the principal handle the curriculum aspect of it" (5/9/97, p. 4). Brent consciously worked to improve the instructional aspect of his district. He examined achievement test scores and facilitated focus groups aimed at improving areas with low scores. Prior to Brent's involvement in curriculum, there were no formal curriculum leaders. According to him:

They [the teachers] had been without someone who was looking at the curriculum and where they needed to be as far as the state mandates. I took it as they needed someone to give them direction as far as their classes, what they needed to, and put a plan together as far as what standard we needed to meet, how we were going to go about meeting those plans. (5/2/97, p. 2)

Brent facilitated focus groups that selected new curriculum materials for the

reading and math programs. He stated that he, "sat down with those teachers and just

tried to help them, kind of steer them in the direction of trying to find the best program

that they could use...and helping them put together a plan" (5/2/97, p. 3). According to

him, "A lot if it was simply some guidance, some motivation that they could do it, that the

situation they had been in was not necessarily their fault, and that they had the

capabilities...to help the students" (5/2/97, p. 3).

Use of Organizational Frames

Similarities in the use of organizational frames were identified based on the

presence or absence of frames embedded in the transcripts. Superintendents in the

adjustment phase were more restricted in their use of multiple organizational frames when

compared to the first-year superintendents.

Structural Frame

Elements of the structural frame were present in all of the transcripts.

Superintendents used the structural frame as a control mechanism when dealing with

financial issues and incidents involving conflict. For example, Brent explained how he

improved the district's financial status by re-organizing the staff. He stated:

> We changed from an independent treasurer that was costing us approximately
>
> $10,000 a year, to going and using the county treasurer. One teacher
>
> resigned...and we were able to re-structure some classes and do some things and
>
> we didn't have to hire that teacher back. (5/2/97, p. 15)

Kent explained that financial planning and budgeting were time consuming tasks

necessary to control the district's financial situation. According to him, "It takes a lot of

planning and preparing of the budgets, working with our auditor, getting our estimate of

needs and getting the budget prepared with something we can live with" (4/21/97, p. 2).

In addition, Jim discussed the importance of financial planning and budgeting to control

the district's financial status.

As a final resort, superintendents often resolved incidents involving conflict with

parents and students using the structural frame. For instance, Jim recalled an incident

where he exercised his authority to order a parent to leave school property. He explained:

> The parent got the wrong information and she just kept on and kept on and I
>
> couldn't get her calmed down....Finally, she just got so far out of hand that I told
>
> her to leave the office. That I wanted her to leave the office and that she could
>
> come back...when we could talk rationally about the situation. She questioned the
>
> fact that I could even ask her to leave my office. I said, Yes ma'am! I can until
>
> you can kind of control yourself. (5/9/97, p. 9)

Kent relied on the structural frame in a similar situation to control a conflict

involving a student and the student's parents. The parents protested a suspension Kent

imposed on their child. According to him, the protest went to a "full-blown" hearing with

a state mediator and attorneys. Kent referred to the district's existing policies when

making the decision to suspend the student. Following the existing policies provided

support for Kent and the suspension decision was upheld. He explained:

We came out, you might say, the winner on the thing, if there can be a winner in

such an instance. I think everyone came out the loser....We lost a child, the child

lost an education. So, I really think everyone comes up a loser on a deal like that.

As far as legally, we came up the winner on it. (4/21/97, p. 8)

<u>Human Resource Frame</u>

Elements of the human resource frame were present in two transcripts. Open

communications and shared decision making were common themes embedded in the

transcripts of two superintendents. For example, Brent stated, "I just try to be very open

with the public and with the teachers and I think that has been very good, because that

was one of the things, I had been told when I came, that was not done." As Brent

continued, he explained how he gained the support of some disgruntled community

members. He commented:

I think it was just being open and telling the people what you were trying to

do....Just open and communicating. I think that was the main issue, that a lot of

them had felt like they were being left out in the dark, wouldn't anybody talk to

them. (5/2/97, p. 18)

Kent described using open communications to facilitate the first successful bond

issue in over 20 years. He pointed out:

I did nothing out of the ordinary to pass this issue. I just informed people and I

met with people. Informed them of what are needs were and told them how their

money would be spent. Made the fact well known, what our needs were, and they

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responded.... I did go back and make a public announcement...and thanked them

for their support. (4/21/97, p. 5)

The communication techniques used by Kent included keeping board members informed,

making himself available, and sharing financial information with interested parties. For

example, he stated:

If someone should come in here this morning and ask to see our books...I would

be glad to do that. Our books are open to the public and the reports I make to the

board every month are open. I think it has to be this way...and I am perfectly

willing to do it for any one member or any group of members of patrons out there.

(4/21/97, p. 4)

Brent's use of the human resource frame become clear as he described efforts to

ameliorate the problem of unsatisfactory achievement test scores. Brent formed and

facilitated two groups of teachers charged with selecting and implementing new programs

in the areas of reading and math. Throughout the process, he involved the stakeholders,

listened to their concerns, and encouraged collaborative decision making. He shared his

reasons for involving the teachers:

I believe for the teachers to utilize the program, they have to buy into it and if they

don't like the program, and you're going to force them to use it, it's not going to

succeed. If they [the teachers] have some buy into the program and like the

program, then they are going to use it. (5/2/97, p. 4)

In addition to involving faculty members, Brent attempted to involve community members

in the decision making process. He "had a public meeting, invited the parents to come in,

did a needs survey, compiled their thoughts, and their ideas of what our needs of the community and the school were and tried to incorporate that into our plan too" (5/2/97, p. 6).

Political Frame

Elements of the political frame were present in two transcripts. Negotiating salary, competing for resources, and building alliances were themes embedded in the transcripts of two superintendents. For example, Jim informed me of a situation where he negotiated with teachers over a salary increase. The state increased revenue provided to districts with the intent of funding a pay increase for experienced teachers. However, the allocation of this additional revenue was left to the discretion of individual districts. According to Jim, the conflict began when some of his teachers found out that teachers in other districts were receiving a pay raise and they were not. He stated, "Once one teacher finds out exactly what we're doing, it doesn't take long before the rest of the teachers know about it" (5/9/97, p. 12). Jim resolved the issue by negotiating a compromise with the teachers. He explained:

> We kind of divided that up and gave them 80 percent and that other 20 percent
>
> was absorbed by the school to pay for...social security and federal, and things like
>
> that, that the school absorbs. So, actually they got a 100 percent of their money,
>
> but they are only seeing about 80 percent of it. (5/9/97, p. 10)

Kent discussed meeting with the legislators to convey the financial needs of his district. He stated:

During the proper times of the year, actually going to Oklahoma City and meeting

with the legislators and conveying to them what our needs are, as opposed to what

the smaller or larger schools' are, is important or we are going to get left out. So,

I think working with our legislators becomes pretty important to us. (4/21/97, p.

1)

Kent used the political frame when he placed telephone calls to key people in the

community, which resulted in the first successful bond issue in over 20 years. He said,

"We had somewhat of a registering campaign here to get people to register to vote"

(4/21/97, p. 6).

The Participants Revisited

Follow-up interviews were conducted to further explore the superintendents focus

of activities and use of organizational frames. Superintendents in the adjustment phase

were comfortable in their roles, competent in multiple task areas, and able to adjust to

changing contextual demands. The traits listed above enabled the superintendents to focus

on multiple task areas. The superintendents use of organizational frames became

restricted as they gained experience in their roles.

Comfort Level

The superintendents in the adjustment phase had become comfortable with their

roles. For example, Kent explained, "There is a big difference as I become more

comfortable, I've been able to function in other areas. You might say, broaden my

horizons" (7/10/97, p. 1). As Kent discussed his ability to function in other areas, he stated:

> I think that is just part of growing within the job, finding your own comfort, getting to know people and working with them, and being able to branch out. It is difficult to branch out into anything new if you're not comfortable with what you're doing. (7/10/97, p. 7)

Developing an understanding of the community and school board assisted the superintendents in becoming comfortable in their roles. For example, Brent increased his understanding of the community before attempting to repair a damaged school-community relationship. He reported his efforts to improve community relations were successful and explained, "The input that I was getting from people in the community was that they thought we were doing a good job, everything had settle down, they were supporting the school more than they had been in the past" (7/18/97, p. 9). Increasing his understanding of the community assisted Brent in developing positive relationships with community members, which enabled him to become more comfortable with his role.

Kent reported becoming comfortable in his role as he got to know the people in the community. He described how his relationships with community members had grown with increased experience. "When you first begin within a school system, you know no one within the community. You've got a very, very small base of reference out there. After you have been around for a while, that base of reference becomes broader" (Kent, 7/10/97, p. 3). Kent pointed out that developing relations with the board members had also increased his level of comfort, stating:

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I think that there is a feeling out period, if you will, getting to know that board of

education that you're working with. Now I have a better idea of what those

people are thinking and how they would like the school system to operate. I guess

you could call that growth within the job. (7/10/97, p. 8)

Competency Development

The superintendents' competencies in various areas increased as they

gained experience. Increased mastery of technical skills promoted the superintendents'

abilities to expand their initial roles to include additional task areas. For example, Kent

spoke of being able to complete tasks in less time:

I think the importance has not changed, maybe the time it has taken to do some of

these things or the time I'd allocate to do some of them is probably less that it was

two years ago or even a year ago. (7/10/97, p. 7)

He perceived his increased level of competency development to be a natural progression,

explaining:

I think it is something that everyone goes through. Now some may make it

through quicker than others, become more comfortable with some of the things

they're doing a lot quicker that other people might, but we're all made up

differently too. (7/10/97, p. 7)

In similar manner, Brent's competency level increased as he gained experience in

the role. He trained some personnel to take over specific areas, which facilitated his

involvement in additional areas. He explained, "As we've progressed, they've seen how

we need to handle things, they've learned, and so I've just gradually given them that

responsibility" (7/18/97, p. 4). According to Brent, this approach allowed him to oversee more things, while keeping the checks and balances in place to make sure things are done.

During his third year as superintendent, Brent's focus of activity expanded, after stabilizing two other areas, to include instruction. He explained, "The academics, probably this past year, rates real high on that list. Where the first two years, probably finance and community relations were the top two priorities" (7/18/97, p. 9). Following a similar pattern, Jim discussed expanding his focus of activity to include the area of instruction. According to Jim, he had always let the principal handle issues related to instruction, but instruction is an area he plans to focus on during the next year. The reason for Jim's involvement in instruction is clear in his following statement: "One thing that I think we'll try to prioritize is we'll try to increase our achievement test scores" (7/22/97, p. 5).

Ability to Adjust

The superintendents' abilities to identify and shift their focus of attention to changing contextual demands, while maintaining other areas, is another characteristic that enabled them to oscillate between multiple task areas. Brent felt that all of the areas he worked in were important, but reported that the priorities changed. He explained, "I think it's a changing process and I think you've got to be able to change. Those things are still important, but the rank or priority of those things, that probably changes" (7/18/97, p. 10).

Jim emphasized the importance of changing priorities to accommodate situational demands by stating, "I want to say that you can set goals, you can set priorities, and things like that, but they change day to day depending on certain things that happen" (7/22/97, p.

2). As Jim continued, he explained that facilities were again a top priority because the student enrollment had increased. Changing priorities, according to him, "is just a never ending thing" (7/22/97, p. 5).

Both Jim and Brent discussed the importance of conducting needs assessments to determine priority areas. Brent explained how he began to determine the areas of priority. "I knew some of the community members and I talked with them, so I knew some of the problems they faced before I even went in" (7/18/97, p. 5). He explained a process for determining current areas of priority: "You shift your priorities and I think that goes back to the deal of knowing where your community is at....So you have to do a new needs assessment and kind of re-evaluate where you come from and where you're headed" (7/18/97, p. 9). Jim explained a similar process for determining priority areas:

> You can kind of do your homework before you become superintendent...but basically once you get here, you kind of look and take notes, take inventory to see exactly what you've got, what you would like to have, and kind of set certain reachable goals. (7/22/97, p. 4).

Use of Organizational Frames

Categories developed by themes in the transcripts suggest the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames became restricted as they gained experience in their roles. In addition, two superintendents reported experiencing a change in their leadership styles, since entering the superintendency, that restricted their use of multiple organizational frames. The following examples illustrate how the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames became restricted with increased experience.

For two years, Brent used approaches associated with the human resource frame to successfully resolve a community relations problem. As a result of his success using approaches associated with the human resource frame, Brent implied he would continue to use approaches associated with this frame in the future. He explained, "I've had good success. The public relations part has worked out and the community has come back together....That approach has worked and I think it is going to continue to work" (7/18/97, p. 13).

Following a similar pattern, Kent reported a tendency to reuse successful strategies. He shared with me that he often relied on the same strategies when dealing with the school board, because he now knew what they wanted, stating, "I can present something now the way that is acceptable to them, because I know the type of information that they are looking for" (7/10/97, p. 8).

Brent's inclination to use approaches associated with the human relations frame increased as he gained experience. For instance, during his third year as superintendent, Brent increased his efforts to involve and empower people within the district. He explained:

> What I've tried to do in the last year is to rely more on people. Putting people in positions to...let them take over some of the responsibility and I guess delegate more than I had done in the past....I guess you could say empower some people to do some things, more than I did my first two years. (7/18/97, p. 1)

Kent reported experiencing a change in his style of leadership, but the opposite of the change experienced by Brent. Kent's tendency to rely on strategies associated with the structural frame increased as he gained experience. He explained:

> I guess my leadership style has changed somewhat now. I will take a more direct, active role in pushing something through now than I did. I think that's part of the comfort level with any job....I'm more forceful and pushy than I was three years ago. (7/10/97, p. 8)

Superintendents in the Stabilization Phase

Superintendents with five or more years of experience in the superintendent's role were considered to be in the stabilization phase of their careers. According to the literature reviewed, stable patterns and settled routines begin to emerge during this career phase. Individual's locate themselves within the organization by learning the expected behaviors. New relationships and new behaviors commonly emerge during this career phase. The following paragraphs introduce the three superintendents who were in the stabilization phase of their careers. In addition, brief descriptions of their school districts and communities are provided.

The Participants

Bill. Bill, a 54 year-old Caucasian male, was casually dressed in slacks and a button-up shirt during both site visits. Bill was in his tenth year as superintendent in the same district. In his third superintendency, with 15 years of experience as superintendent and two years of experience as assistant superintendent, Bill was the most experienced

superintendent in the study. Bill described himself as a "seasoned superintendent" who

was a traveling gunfighter. All of Bill's experience in the superintendent's role was gained

in small districts. When compared to the other superintendents in the study, Bill's career

pattern was unique. Prior to becoming a superintendent, Bill taught English for 12 years,

but was never a principal.

Bill is the superintendent of Mountain Public School, located in eastern Oklahoma.

Mountain Public School enrolled 229 students in grades kindergarten through 12 and

employed 25 certified teachers and three administrators for the 1996-97 school year. Bill

was the only superintendent interviewed that did not have a secretary or receptionist

employed to help perform routine administrative duties. The courses offered at Mountain

Public School are identified in Appendix A. Bill shared with me that 90% of the student

population participated in the free and reduced lunch program and that 85% of the

students were Native Americans. The majority of students attending Mountain Public

School reside in surrounding communities that do not have high schools. The community

of Mountain is not incorporated as a town. The community of Mountain consists of

several houses and a school scattered along a straight stretch in the winding highway.

Many of Mountain's residents commute more than 30 miles, one-way, for employment. In

addition, the cattle industry provides a source of income for many residents in the

Mountain area.

Dale. Dale, a 45 year-old Native American, is the superintendent, high school

principal, and high school basketball coach of Rolling Hills Public School. Dale was

dressed in slacks and a pullover shirt for both interviews. This was Dale's fifth year in his

first superintendency. Prior to becoming a superintendent, Dale had been a high school principal for two years, an assistant superintendent for two years, and a teacher with coaching duties for eleven years. Dale's 20 consecutive years of work experience in public education was obtained six small districts, located in the northern part of the state.

Rolling Hills Public School, located in northern Oklahoma, enrolled 237 students in grades kindergarten through 12 and employed 19 certified teachers and two administrators for the 1996-97 school year. The courses offered at Rolling Hills are identified in Appendix A. According to Dale, around 90% of the students attending Rolling Hills were Caucasian and 53% of the students participated in the free and reduced lunch program. Many residents of Rolling Hills work in the cattle and oil industries; others commute 25 miles, one-way, for employment. The business section of Rolling Hills consists of a convenience store and several old vacant buildings along the highway that runs through town.

Tom. Tom is the superintendent of Red Public School, located near the Red River in southern Oklahoma. Tom, a 47 year-old Caucasian male, was casually dressed in jeans and boots on my first site visit. To my surprise, Tom was wearing a suit and tie when I returned for the second visit. Tom explained his dress by informing me that he was leaving town to attend a meeting. This was Tom's fifth year in his first superintendency. Prior to becoming a superintendent, Tom had been a high school principal for two years and a math teacher for 13 years. All of Tom's 20 consecutive years of work experience in public education was obtained in three small districts, located in the southern part of the state.

Red Public School enrolled 245 students in grades kindergarten through 12 and employed 18 certified teachers and three administrators for the 1996-97 school year. The courses offered at Red Public School are identified in Appendix A. Tom informed me that 78% of the student body participated in the free and reduced lunch program. According to Tom, about 65% of the students were Caucasian with the remaining students being Native Americans and African Americans. The peanut industry provides the predominate source of employment in the town of Red. A nearby factory and a state facility provide additional employment opportunities to people in the area. The town of Red has one convenience store and a post office.

Focus of Activities

Based on the themes and categories that emerged from the interviews, superintendents in the stabilization phase have focus of activities that are inclusive of many areas. All superintendents in this career phase identified the areas of finance, facilities, personnel relations, community relations, and instructional leadership as being important components of their roles.

Finance

Finance emerged as an important area for all superintendents in this career phase. For example, Dale said, "I think the critical aspect, the most critical is financial" (4/18/97, p. 3). Bill stated, "The majority of my quality time is spent on finance and trying to improve the offerings we've got" (4/24/97, p. 3). Bill continued to elaborate:

The whole school is more important than any part of the school, no matter how

important that part is, but the life-blood of America is capitol and I sweat my

hardest bullets over finance and I probably spend more time at it. That is why we

have a $2,000,000 budget here instead of a $1,000,000 budget. I am a pretty good

finance man. (4/24/97, p. 4)

Tom stated, "Another thing that takes up a good amount of time is working with things

that relate to finances, school finance" (5/2/97, p. 5). Tom shared with me that he

personally done all of the purchasing and federal programs for the district.

These superintendents were concerned about acquiring and planning adequate

financial resources. Dale explained:

There is a set number of dollars you're going to get and I think the most important

thing is [to] make good decisions in planning and be patient and not try to do it all

at once, but have a goal out there. (4/18/97, p. 3)

Tom shared a similar concern related to financial planning. He stated, "I have to keep

myself aware of where we are financially, match the state aide up with what we are paying

out, making sure that we have the claims for our reimbursements on our federal programs,

so that we stay in the black" (5/2/97, p. 5).

Acquiring revenue through alternative avenues was a common agenda of the

superintendents. Bill commented:

A lot of our money is Federal programs. We don't have a local taxbase. I have a

$150,000 Title 7 Federal grant. I get $211,000 a year off the Indian land and that

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is a lot of paperwork and a lot of parent interviews and I do most of that myself. I

write the grant and program applications. (4/24/97, p. 2)

Bill's understanding of the community influenced his efforts to locate additional funding

sources outside of the community. He explained, "You don't pass bonds, that will just

cause another riot and revolution. You go get yourself another grant" (4/24/97, p. 9).

Dale recalled how he increased the revenue received from one program. He explained:

We made a very intense drive to get all those kids that are, that can be signed up

for free and reduced lunch, that are and so we've increased our Title 1 money from

$18,000 to...over $30,000 so we will be able to fund a full-time teacher. (4/18/97,

p. 5)

Facility Management

All of the superintendents reported being directly involved in the area of facility

management. Their involvement ranged from overseeing the daily upkeep of facilities to

overseeing major improvement projects. For example, Dale explained a situation that

influenced his decision to become closely involved in the daily maintenance of facilities.

"My first walk through the buildings here in 1992, there was a 166 florescent light bulbs

out, a 166. That tells you what kind of management we had going on here. We had...just

total chaos" (4/18/97, p. 7). In a later interview, he explained his rationale for focussing

on the area of facilities.

I've learned now that...you want your school to look like a business. When

people walk up, you want the grounds well kept, the facilities well kept, and that

shows that someone around is concerned about the perception that the public has.

So, I think that is very important. (7/10/97, p. 1)

Bill commented, "Maintenance consumes a lot of your time. Obviously, I don't do any maintenance, but I have to coordinate it" (4/24/97, p. 3). Bill's involvement in this area included managing minor maintenance projects, such as replacing a heater, to major projects such as replacing the entire lateral system. The priority Bill placed on facilities fluctuated, depending on the immediacy other issues. He informed me that some needs in the area of facilities had been postponed:

I made some promises…to some people, who are here and who aren't here, to do

the things I'm doing…and the net result of that is there are some things that have

been deferred, but we're getting ready to re-roof the buildings…we're in the

process of renovating, we're going to clean up the grounds. (4/24/97, p. 9)

Similarly, Tom reported being directly involved with detailed issues related to facility management. For instance, Tom oversees refinishing of the gym floor each year. Tom informed me he would like to delegate some of these tasks, but indicated there was no one in the district who would properly oversee them. As Tom continued, he shared several incidents that reinforced his opinion of not having anyone in the district qualified to oversee facilities.

Personnel Relations

All superintendents identified the task area of personnel relations as being important. Recruiting, supporting, and restructuring the staff were common agendas

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shared by the superintendents. When discussing his perspective on recruiting personnel, Dale commented:

I have a coaching background and you learn that...the better your help, the better

you are. I think that is important as far as a leader goes. The better the people

you surround yourself with, the farther up the ladder you are going to go.

(4/18/97, p. 2)

Dale informed me he was able to recruit some strong teachers to improve the quality of his staff after some teachers decided to leave because they didn't get their way.

Tom said the more important aspect of personnel relations was seeing that the principals and teachers had the support they needed. Tom stated, "We support each other real strongly and that's, that's been developed over the years where the teachers know that I support the principals and I support them. And they feel, I think, comfortable in their positions" (5/2/97, p. 6). Dale described his approach to supporting the staff:

I don't have an ego problem. I think the people who do a good job need to be

acknowledged and...let them get the kudos. You know, they should be the ones

that get the pats on the back and get the prestige of...whether it is winning football

games or whatever. (4/18/97, p. 3)

Restructuring the staff, for various reasons, was a common activity for the superintendents. Bill informed me of a situation where he learned that seven teachers were teaching outside of their certified areas. According to him:

The teacher problem took three years and a little patience on the part of the State

Department of Education. We got it all cleaned up....I kept all of them but two,

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we got them qualified and restructured who taught what, where, and when.

(4/24/97, p. 11)

In addition, Bill discussed a personnel problem he encountered with a teacher this year and informed me that her due process hearing would be next month.

Dale described a personnel problem he realized during his third year as superintendent. He explained, "We had a teaching staff that really wasn't student oriented, kid oriented, and dedicated to the direction I thought they should be" (4/18/97, p. 12). Dale referred to these teachers as "prostitutes" and suggested they were in teaching for the money, not because they loved kids. As a result, Dale fired one teacher and rifted another. He explained:

After both sides presented their cases, we fired the teacher and nothing straightens a staff up any quicker that a good firing and we rifted a teacher. That is where we stand today, you know, we've had very few problems since. We've had some leave, but...its not been a problem. (4/18/97, p. 13)

Tom informed me that financial shortages forced him to restructure the staff. An open position, created from a retirement, was eliminated and one teacher was rifted to ensure adequate funds would be carried over for the following year.

Community Relations

All of the superintendents perceived community relations as being an important area. For instance, maintaining a positive relationship with the community was directly tied to the level of funding Bill received. He explained:

"I have to get them [parents] to sign off that the child actually lives on Indian land and then, I have to go to the county assessor's office to see if the house is paid off...because the Feds are a little finicky whey they send you that much money. (4/24/97, p. 1)

According to Bill, he devotes a lot of time "fighting fires" and preventing dissention in the community.

Dale shared an experience with me that caused him to focus on developing positive relations with the community. He explained, "Well, to make a long story short, their [State Department of Education] intentions were to close us because we had grave turmoil in the community" (4/18/97, p. 6). Over time, Dale was able to end efforts to close the school by gaining community support. After experiencing this situation, community relations remain a priority for Dale. Tom discussed bringing parent volunteers into the school to increase community support.

Instructional Leadership

All of the superintendents identified the area of instructional leadership as being important. Managing the curriculum and selecting instructional methods were approaches used by the superintendents to influence the instructional components of their schools. For example, Dale described how he reinforced the school's mission to develop technological students. He proclaimed, "My elementary principal and I are into the technology realm of education" (4/17/97, p. 2). As a result, every classroom in Dale's district has at least one computer connected to the Internet and some classrooms have large computer monitors mounted on the wall for instructional purposes. In addition, he

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installed a modern computer lab with software designed for academic tutoring in all core areas. Dale encourages the teachers, through evaluations, to integrate technology into their teaching methods. He planned to expand the curricular offerings through interactive satellite courses.

Tom reported being actively involved in the area of instructional leadership. Tom indicated he talked to people, traveled places, and read publications in search for successful programs and methods. He discussed two specific programs, one in English and one in math, that were recently adopted due to his efforts. According to Tom, he presented these new programs to a few teachers who tried them on a trail basis before broad implementation occurred. Bill, a former English teacher, was also involved in managing the curriculum and improving the course offerings. For instance, he actively participated with the teachers in the selection of new textbooks.

Use of Organizational Frames

Based on the presence or absence of frames embedded in the transcripts, similarities in the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames were identified. The results indicated that the more experienced superintendents employed fewer organizational frames than did their less experienced peers. All of the superintendents in the stabilization phase employed the structural frame. In addition, two superintendents oscillated between the structural and the human resource frame, while one superintendent oscillated between the structural and political frames.

Structural Frame

Clarifying roles and expectations, developing new policies and procedures, and implementing policies as control mechanisms were common activities associated with superintendents use of the structural frame. For example, Tom shared with me a recent personnel problem and explained that he addressed the problem by clarifying roles and expectations. The situation involved two teachers who were involved in an intimate relationship with each other. The spouse of a school employee informed Tom that he had walked in on the two teachers while they were in an embrace. Tom indicated this was the key that forced him to address the problem. He explained how he handled the situation:

> I wrote a letter and typed it up and conveniently got both of them to met me…and sit them down and gave each one of them the letter….[I] told them that this was a written warning that would go in their file and…that any further evidence of conduct that would not be suitable for a student to see, then their employment would be in question. (5/2/97, p. 10)

In addition, Dale reported clarifying roles and expectations for his staff. As previously discussed, Dale was dissatisfied with the performance of several teachers. Although this is a personnel problem, Dale addressed it through the structural frame. For example, Dale clarified the seriousness of his intent to make the school more student oriented by firing one teacher, rifting a second teacher, and invalidating the existing negotiated agreement, all of which were perceived by Dale as being negative influences on the school's climate. He stated:

We had some people causing problems here, so I researched it [the negotiated

agreement] and found out there has been not an agreement. To make a long story

short, we end up in court with the OEA and the judge ruled in our favor…and to

this day we don't negotiate. (4/18/97, p. 11)

Dale clarified his expectations of the staff by stating, "We are not here to create

jobs, we're here to educate kids" (4/18/97, p. 13). As a result of communicating and

enforcing his expectations, he stated, "We got their attention. I think education has

improved in light years since then. We were fortunate to be open, but now I'd put us up

against, against anybody" (4/18/97, p. 14).

The superintendents developed new policies and procedures to control existing or

emerging problems. For instance, Dale gained control of activity accounts by developing

new financial management policies. He explained, "There were no regulations or…strings,

or accountability on activity funds….I just went to the board saying this is the way it is

going to be done" (4/18/97, p. 10). Dale informed me the activity accounts went from

$5,000 in the red to $30,000 in the good after developing and enforcing these new control

procedures.

Bill shared a similar experience, related to control procedures developed to

improve the financial status of the district. Bill summarized his new control policy: "I

learned two answers, quickly, involving spending money, 'No. And hell no.' and that

solved the finance problem" (4/24/97, p. 11). His policy is no longer in effect, but this

example demonstrates how the superintendents developed new policies and procedures to

meet changing contextual demands.

In addition, Tom restructured his staff to control the financial status of the district. He explained:

> I got to looking at the finances toward the end of the year and could see if we
> went into 1997-98 with the same staff, that we would cut our fund balance
> by...about half. So, I didn't want to do that and the board didn't want to do that.
> (5/2/97, p. 7)

As a result, Tom eliminated one position, open due to a retirement, by restructuring the teachers' assignments and eliminated a second position by implementing the existing reduction in force policy. He controlled the amount of carry-over through planning and implementing structural policies as control mechanisms.

Human Resource Frame

Elements of the human resource frame were present in the narratives of two superintendents. Dale described how the previous superintendent's attempts to keep the district's financial information from the public resulted in members of the community developing a sense of distrust in the school. Dale explained the strategy he used to rebuild a sense of trust within the community. "So what I did, I didn't take the school board's side, I didn't take the parents' side...I kind of took the middle, this is where I stand. Now we're in a glass house...whatever you want to see, you can see" (Dale, 4/18/97, p. 7). According to him, communicating openly with the community enabled him to gain and maintain the confidence of the community. He elaborated on the importance of communications:

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You almost have to be a therapist to be a superintendent, because you have irate

parents come in...and you have to find a working relationship. I think that...one

of my key points of success is, I'm a people person and I am able to communicate

with people. (4/18/97, p. 1)

Tom described how developing supportive relations with the staff increased their

morale and improved the quality of instruction. He commented:

If the teachers know that they are supported, they are more than likely to stay in

there and do what they are supposed to do. They can go in their classrooms and

do their jobs without the fear of something coming back on them. (5/2/97, p. 7)

Tom indicated that developing a supportive relationship with his staff was one of the more

important aspects of his job.

Political Frame

Elements of the political frame were present throughout the narrative of one

superintendent. Bill's use of the political frame became apparent early in the interview as

he described the community being a democracy in action and in a state of constant

upheaval. Bill removed a document from his desk, saying, "Here is the voting list in the

district, in case...a democracy breaks out. When you start as a superintendent of a small

school, you learn that real quick. Probably in your second school" (4/24/97, p. 2).

Bill explained how he recently worked to influence the outcome of a school board

election. He explained that he got involved in school board races to win and make them

turn out. Bill described his involvement in two recent board elections, "There was in

intense sleaze factor involved in the process. You get out and do stuff...you go out in the

community and make promises and the whole bit. That's pretty sleazy" (4/24/97, p. 8). Bill explained his relationship with the board, commenting, "I have a working relationship with the board, which is subject to disintegrate in a nana-second. You know, it's delicate out here in the real world" (4/24/97, p. 7). Bill discussed the outcome of the elections and stated, "Won one, lost one. But then when you lose one, you do what's next. You convert your enemy, so right now I've got a five-zero board" (4/24/97, p. 8).

The Participants Revisited

Follow-up interviews were conducted to further explore the superintendents focus of activities and use of organizational frames. Based on the themes and categories that emerged from the follow-up interviews, the superintendents had become comfortable and competent in their roles enabling them to develop comprehensive focus of activities. The superintendents use of organizational frames became restricted as they gained experience.

Comfort Level

Years of experience and large networks of contacts contributed to the comfort level displayed by these superintendents. As an example, Dale commented, "I've had numerous opportunities to leave, but…the situation is fairly stable at the time being. I've got a real good school board and a good community. So, why look for the same problem somewhere else" (7/10/97, p. 3). Dale indicated he was comfortable with the progress he had made in the last five years.

All of the superintendents discussed having networks of contacts. For instance, Bill commented:

"I don't realize it myself sometimes, but the sheer amount of people that I know

and have learned from or learned with...some of the old superintendents, many of

whom are dead now. I've watched them, I've gone through their lawsuits,

investigations, grand hearings...and answered their phone calls in the middle of the

night. (7/8/97, p. 3)

When discussing his network of contacts, Bill stated, " It's kind of like a cadre. More

than that, it's almost a pool. A pool of like-minded people, with like-minded talents, with

like-minded experience" (7/8/97, p. 4). Dale explained that developing a network of

contacts was helpful in solving problems. He commented, "Of course your circle of

people increases, your network of people. I know so many people and I think that helps

too, because you all talk the same problems, you talk the same language" (7/10/97, p. 2).

Tom reported that he talked to other superintendents to find out what works in particular

situations.

The superintendents' perceptions and actions were influenced by their experiences

in the role of superintendent. Dale explained:

I think the circle is bigger...because the older you get the more you have in your

circle to draw from....I could draw a pretty big circle about the experiences I've

had and where to go back and pull past incidents from to help me make more

specific informational decisions. (7/10/97, p. 2)

In addition, Dale reported becoming more purposive in his actions as he gained

experience, explaining:

Where now, it's...analyze the situation deeper, further, longer, and get more input

from your circle or network of the people you know in the business and then try to

make a more educated, longevity decision where you're not going to have to re-fix

it. (7/10/97, p. 11)

Pointing out how experience had changed his perception, Bill informed me that

some of his optimism had been tempered by reality over the years. He explained, "I think

everybody carries around their own...perception of reality. I don't think it ever gets the

way things are, but I think mine is probably closer than is was in 1979" (7/8/97, p. 2).

Competency Development

The superintendents' focus on multiple task areas, including instruction, evolved in

common patterns. The focus on multiple task areas developed gradually as the

superintendents' skills improved. For example, Bill described the expertise he possessed

upon entering the superintendency, "Hell, I didn't have any understanding when I first

became superintendent. You're never ready to be a superintendent. You've either got the

guts to jump in there or you don't" (7/8/97, p. 7). Explaining the learning curve he

experienced, Bill commented, "After about three years, I was cranking pretty good. I

think it's different levels of ability" (7/8/97, p. 8). When discussing his focus on multiple

task areas, Tom stated, "Things that...took a long time to do before, just don't take as

much time now" (7/8/97, p. 2). Dale stated, "Experience has been an awfully good

teacher for me" (7/10/97, p. 1).

In addition, the superintendents' focus on multiple task areas, including instruction, developed as they improved other problematic areas. For instance, Tom explained how instruction came to be included in his focus of activity:

When I first became superintendent, I had to...I worried about the finances and the way the facilities looked....You go from the specifics at first until you learn what's actually going on and in my mind, I finally figured out what's really going on." (7/8/97, p. 9)

Bill reported that sheer terror was a great motivator when he first became superintendent. According to Bill, experiencing problematic issues provided learning opportunities. He explained:

Some of the stuff that you learn the best, is stuff that you dealt with under distress. It's like Mark Twain said about the cat sitting on a hot stove, 'That cat will never again sit on a hot stove, he'll also not sit on a cold one.' (7/8/97, p. 6)

Dale's comprehensive focus of activity evolved in a similar manner. Dale initially focussed his attention on immediate needs. He explained how his focus of activity was expanded, "We tried to solve problems...all the ones that were left to us, which were numerous. And once we got those solved, then we starting trying to, you know, revamp the curriculum and the technology" (7/10/97, p. 7). Dale summarized the process by stating, "You get in here and you establish a stability and then, you go from there" (7/10/97, p. 7).

<u>Use of Organizational Frames</u>

Categories developed by themes that emerged from the follow-up interviews suggest the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames became confined as they gained experience. Two superintendents reported experiencing changes in their leadership styles since entering the superintendency that restricted their use of multiple organizational frames.

Several times Dale discussed the tendency to use results of past experiences to determine his current actions. For example, He stated, "I could draw a pretty big circle about the experiences I've had and where to go back and pull past incidents from to help me make more specific and informational decisions" (7/10/97, p. 2). For Dale, this reflective approach to resolving current issues had been productive, as he reported, "I've had a lot of luck so far" (7/10/97, p. 3). Making a similar point concerning the effects of experience, Bill explained:

> I think everybody carries around their own private reference, their own base of
>
> logic, their own perception of reality. I don't think it ever gets the way things are,
>
> but I think mine is probably closer than it was in 1979. (7/8/97, p. 2)

Tom's use of multiple organizational frames became restricted as he developed a preference for certain approaches With experience, Tom developed a preference for approaches associated with the human resource frame. He explained:

> I found this more so as each year goes by, that people need to know that they're
>
> doing a good job....They respond to it more...when you're dealing with them, if
>
> you deal with them more as a colleague than as a boss. (7/8/97, p. 2)

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Tom continued to share with me some circumstances where he had involved and empowered various people associated with the school. Referring to the staff members, he commented, "I now...put a greater weight on their perspective than maybe I used to" (7/8/97, p. 10). Tom explained the rationale for changing his style of leadership by stating, "I think that comes from the realization that is a social system that we're involved in and those are the people that are effected by the decisions...and the changes that affect them are important to them" (7/8/97, p. 10).

Bill reported an increased tendency to use strategies associated with the structural frame. He said, "I can afford to retire and I am probably a little bit bigger horses ass than I was a couple of years ago" (7/8/97, p. 9). Bill described his approach to resolve an ongoing personnel problem. "I spent an entire year changing job descriptions and their contracts....We started with a whole new ballgame and I'm going to document their absences and their lack of work and fire their ass" (7/8/97, p. 10). This statement is representative of several situations Bill described.

Summary of Findings

This section begins by presenting a summary the findings and concludes by presenting an analysis of the findings. The findings are summarized in three sections. First, the findings pertaining to superintendents focus of activities are summarized; secondly, the findings pertaining to the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames are summarized. The third section presents a summary of the findings from the follow-up interviews. The analysis begins by analyzing the findings pertaining to the

superintendents focus of activities and concludes by analyzing the findings pertaining to the superintendents use of organizational frames.

Focus of Activity

Common patterns related to the superintendents focus of activities emerged from the data. The superintendents tended to expand their focus of activities as they gained experience in their roles. For instance, superintendents in the encounter phase demonstrated the narrowest focus of activity by limiting their involvement to two or three areas that demanded attention. Financial management was identified by all first-year superintendents as being an important area related to their roles.

Superintendents in the adjustment phase demonstrated more comprehensive focus of activities when compared to the superintendents in the encounter phase. Superintendents in the adjustment phase alternated their attention among a wide range of areas. All superintendents in the adjustment phase identified the areas of finance, facilities, and community relations as being important areas related to their roles.

Superintendents in the stabilization demonstrated the most comprehensive focus of activities, with one exception, when compared to all other superintendents. Superintendents in the stabilization phase focussed their attention on the widest range of areas. All superintendents in this phase identified the areas of finance, facilities, community relations, personnel relations, and instructional leadership as being important areas related to their roles. Table 1 illustrates how the superintendents focus of activities expanded with increased experience. Table 2 identifies the task areas included in the superintendents focus of activities.

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Table 1

Career Phases and Number of Activity Areas
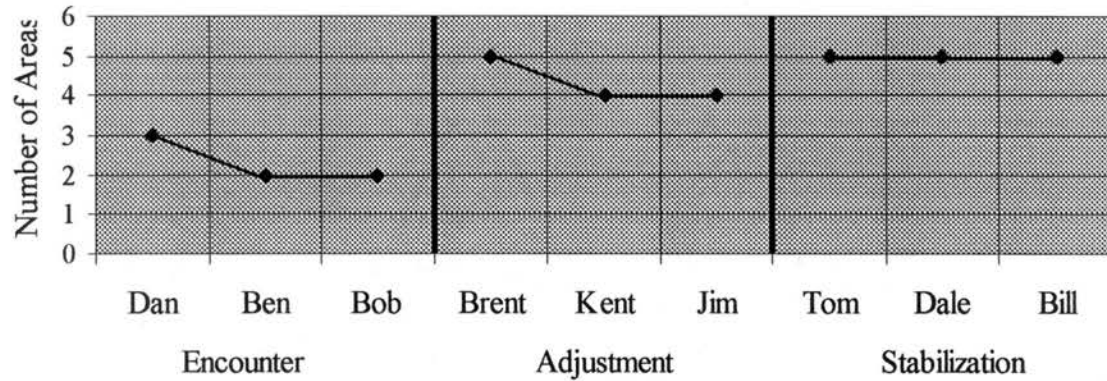
Table 2

Areas in Superintendents Focus of Activities

	Dan	Ben	Bob	Brent	Kent	Jim	Tom	Dale	Bill
Instructional Leadership				●			●	●	●
Community Relations		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Personnel Relations	●			●	●	●	●	●	●
Facilities	●			●	●	●	●	●	●
Finance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Total	3	2	2	5	4	4	5	5	5
	Dan	Ben	Bob	Brent	Kent	Jim	Tom	Dale	Bill

Use of Organizational Frames

The following section summarizes the findings pertaining to the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. The tendency to use multiple organizational frames decreased as the superintendents gained experience. For example, superintendents in the

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encounter phase demonstrated the most comprehensive use of multiple organizational frames. Elements of the structural, human resource, and symbolic frames were used by all superintendents in the encounter phase.

Superintendents in the adjustment phase used fewer organizational frames than did superintendents in the encounter phase. Superintendents in the adjustment phase only used two or three organizational frames. Elements of the structural frame were used by all superintendents in the adjustment phase.

Superintendents in the stabilization phase demonstrated the most restricted use of multiple frames. All of the superintendents in the stabilization phase limited their use of organizational frames to two frames, with the structural frame being common in all cases. Table 3 illustrates how the superintendents use of multiple organization frames declined with experience. Table 4 identifies the specific frames used by each superintendent. Table 5 presents a summary of how many frames were used by the superintendents and Table 6 presents a summary of which frames were used by the superintendents.

Table 3

A Decline in The Use of Organizational Frames
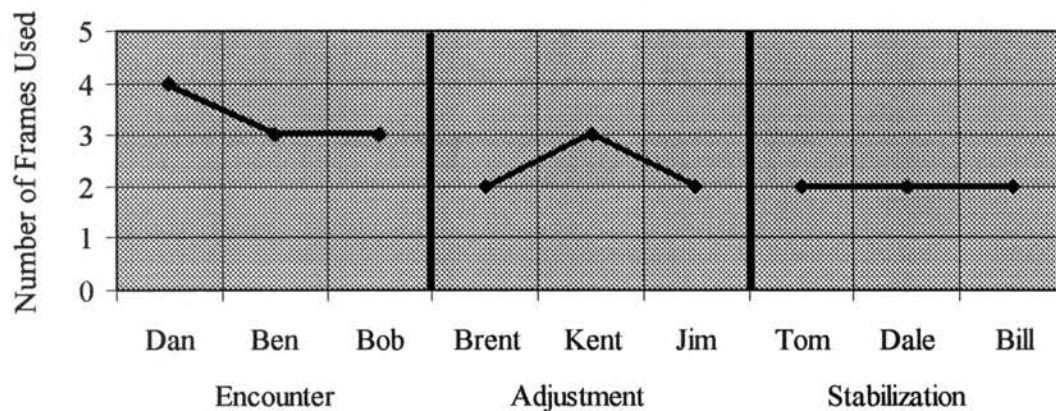
Table 4

Superintendents Use of Organizational Frames

	Dan	Ben	Bob	Brent	Kent	Jim	Tom	Dale	Bill
Symbolic	•	•	•						
Human Relations	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
Political	•				•	•			•
Structural	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Total	4	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2

Table 5

How Many Frames Superintendents Used

Number of Frames	Percentage of Superintendents That Used Identified Number of Frames
1	0
2	55
3	33
4	11

Table 6

Kinds of Frames Superintendents Used

Frames	Percentage of Superintendents That Used Frame
Structural	100
Human Resource	77
Political	44
Symbolic	33

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<u>Follow-up Interviews</u>

Common themes relating to the superintendents focus of activities emerged from the follow-up interviews. For instance, first-year superintendents were burdened by the initial demands of role learning, competency development, and role modification. In addition, first-year superintendents attempted to establish a sense of stability within their districts by concentrating their efforts on a few problematic areas. Mastering these initial demands and working to establish stability were issues that effected the superintendents focus of activities. On the other hand, superintendents in the adjustment and stabilization phases had learned from hands-on experiences, mastered the initial demands competency development, and created support networks. As the superintendents accomplished these milestones, their focus of activities were expanded to other areas.

Also identified were common themes related to the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. Having no prior experience in the role to draw information from, first-year superintendents used a trial and error approach and experimented with different organizational frames. Successful approaches were repeated while unsuccessful approaches were modified or eliminated.

The same trend appeared in the transcripts of superintendents in the adjustment and stabilization phases; their use of multiple organizational frames became restricted as they habitually relied on past experiences that had been successful. This pattern manifested in the stabilization phase, where superintendents had developed strong preferences for selected frames.

In addition, six superintendents reported experiencing changes, since entering the superintendency, in their leadership styles that restricted their use of multiple organizational frames. Four of the superintendents had become more inclined to use approaches associated with the structural frame, while two of the superintendents had become more inclined to use approaches associated with the human resource frame.

Focus of Activity

The following section discusses, with respect to the socialization literature, the findings pertaining to the superintendents consistent focus of activities, the development of their comprehensive focus of activities, and the differences in their focus of activities within and across career phases. The first section explains their consistent focus of activities and the developmental process associated with the superintendents focus of activities. The final section uses the socialization literature and demographic data to explain differences in the superintendents focus of activities within career phases. Although the socialization literature cannot fully account for these findings, the influence of socialization experiences is well documented throughout the literature.

Consistent Focus of Activity

Based on the data, there was a relative consistency maintained in the superintendents focus of activities. For example, the first-year superintendents focussed their attention on problem areas such as finance and community relations, as opposed to instructional issues. With experience, the superintendents focus of activities tended to encompass additional areas such as facilities and personnel and, lastly, issues directly

related to instruction. Superintendents in the encounter phase demonstrated the narrowest focus of activities, while superintendents in the stabilization phase demonstrated the most comprehensive focus of activities.

The Encounter Phase. The findings, pertaining to the superintendents consistent focus of activities within career phases and the pattern of developing comprehensive focus of activities with experience, are generally consistent with the literature. For instance, when an individual enters an organization, he or she begins the "encounter" (Nicholson & West, 1988; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Van Maanen, 1975) or "accommodation" (Feldman, 1976) phase of socialization. Research has revealed that individuals in the encounter stage experience a considerable amount of ambiguity, stress, and anxiety (Parkey, Curie, & Rhodes, 1992; Gomersall & Myers, 1966). In addition to the initial shock, Parkey et al. (1992) found that the concerns of newly appointed principals typically evolved according to a five-stage pattern.

Themes embedded within the transcripts indicated that the first-year superintendents experienced stress and that their focus of activities developed in similar patterns. Examples of this stress are presented in the following comments. Bob commented, "You get in there real quick and find out that it's not a cake walk" (7/17/97, p. 2). Ben stated, "I quickly learned that I'm going to have to delegate a few more things than what I had planned...rather than trying to do all things in the school system" (7/8/97, p. 1). Dan stated, "I came here and one of the first things that hit me...was special education and I knew nothing about special education" (5/9/97, p. 12).

Other research has concluded that individuals in the encounter phase may experience a "reality shock" (Hughes, 1958). Themes embedded within the transcripts suggest that the first-year superintendents experienced the reality shock associated with the encounter phase of socialization. For example, Bob explained, "You wind up doing just about anything that you can imagine doing during the day and I think now that I realize that the superintendent's role is to do whatever it takes to keep this school going" (7/17/97, p. 1). Ben commented, "It's a lot more intense in certain areas like finance than I originally thought it might be and there's a lot more things to do" (7/8/97, p. 1). Dan stated, "In the sense that through the year you learn about things that you hadn't even though about prior to getting in the field that just go with the job" (7/21/97, p. 1).

According to Van Maanen & Schein (1979, p. 214) individuals in the encounter phase, "are more or less motivated to reduce this anxiety by learning the functional and social requirements of their newly assumed role as quickly as possible." Themes embedded within the transcripts support this notion as well. Bob's attempt to reduce his anxiety was obvious and is reflected in his statement, "Last year, I was constantly trying to learn how processes, budgeting and how all that worked and spent lots of hours trying to understand those things and put them together" (7/17/97, p. 5). Ben discussed similar attempts to control anxiety through role learning. Ben explained, "Finance in our school system, where every dollar counts, you quickly learn that you need to learn the ins and outs of finance" (7/8/97, p. 3). Dan expressed a similar sense of urgency pertaining to role learning. He commented, "I called some of my superintendent buddies that had been through some of this....I learned a lot in a hurry because I got me a manual and had one of

the teachers me…sitting here visiting with her about getting up to speed a little bit"
(5/9/97, p. 13).

According to Feldman, "there are four main activities that new employees engage
in at the accommodation phase: learning new tasks, establishing new interpersonal
relationships with coworkers, clarifying their roles in the organization, and evaluating their
progress in the organization" (1976, p. 435). Narrative from the first-year superintendents
indicated they were engaged in the socialization activities outlined by Feldman. For
example, Ben discussed learning financial processes associated with his role, "I think it's
something you learn and I think it will continue to get more that way as time goes on and I
continue to learn more and more about the job" (7/8/97, p. 6). Bob indicated that learning
new tasks resulted in him being more comfortable with his role. He explained:

> So this year, I'm much more comfortable with those areas. I still don't know it all,
>
> but at least I got some idea, some direction and kind of feel like I've at least got
>
> my feet on the ground. (7/17/97, p. 5)

In addition to learning new tasks, the superintendents were engaged in developing
relationships and clarifying their roles. For instance, Bob explained that he had a pretty
good understanding of the teachers and is now getting to know the community better and
indicated this knowledge helped him make better decisions. He commented:

> I think any superintendent has to get a feel for those people and how things are
>
> going to function. What's expected and okay in one community, may not be in the
>
> next community. I think the better you know those people in your school and
>
> community, the better decisions you're going to make. (7/17/97, p. 9)

Ben reported that learning the community's expectations was beneficial. Ben stated, "I think it has helped a lot to know your community...get to know your school board and your community and what exactly their needs are and what you're trying to do" (7/8/97, p. 7).

Bob indicated his contact base had expanded to include the school board, community, faculty members, and other superintendents. He explained:

> I've got a better contact base in the sense of I know who to call to get information and that kind of thing. Last year, I spent a lot of time tracking down information, so I've kind of expanded my contact base a lot this year....I know who to call to get an answer about a particular question and I've also met other superintendents that I can call on for help. (7/17/97, p. 5)

Ben discussed developing relationships with key people and stated, "I think one of the biggest advantages is having a school secretary that knows what's going on" (7/8/97, p. 7).

According to Weiss (1978), "Much of the socialization process can be characterized as an active 'role search' by new workers" (p. 712). During role search, employees are seeking information about the norms appropriate their position. The first-year superintendents were involved in role search, which included clarifying their roles and expanding their focus of activities. The issues discussed by the superintendents included delegating tasks and expanding their focus of activities to the area of instruction. For example, Ben discussed clarifying his role through delegation:

You change with experience. I think I started out trying to be all things to all

people and you quickly find out that you can't do that....I quickly learned that I'm

going to have to delegate a few more things than what I had planned

and...concentrate on the areas...rather than trying to do all the things in the school

system. (7/8/97, p. 1)

Bob discussed expanding his focus of activity to include the area of instruction,

commenting:

This past year, I really didn't have time for that kind of thing. It's something that

you always give a little thought to, but as far as really getting involved in the action

on it, I haven't been able to so far. I think my next big move is curriculum. This

year, I was real concerned about finances and getting that squared away. (7/17/97,

p. 7)

Likewise, Dan indicated that he planned to expand his focus of activities to include the

area of instruction. He explained:

So...if there's anything I've probably added to our priorities, it's to begin to look

at our curriculum and are we meeting the standards....I didn't get involved in that

at all last year, but I am going to. (7/21/97, p. 7)

The reality shock experienced by the first-year superintendents and their need to

develop survival skills, which included learning new tasks, developing relationships, and

clarify their roles, limited their focus of activities to problematic and managerial areas.

Being limited to problematic and managerial areas restricted the superintendents from

developing comprehensive focus of activities. These findings are supported by the general

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socialization literature and by common themes found in the literature pertaining to the socialization of teachers and administrators. For instance, research has shown that beginning teachers learn practical survival skills from fieldwork experiences (Grossman & Richert, 1988). Other research has shown that student teachers engage in a limited range of classroom activities that can be described as mechanical and related to management routines (Tabachnick, Popkewitz, & Zeichner, 1980).

The tendency to focus on managerial tasks is not confined to beginning teachers and superintendents. Research conducted to understand the development of instructional leadership among beginning principals suggests that beginning principals award greater importance to interpersonal, managerial, and legal tasks than they do to instructional leadership tasks (Leithwood, Steinbach, & Begley, 1992). Other researchers have examined why beginning principals have limited involvement in the area of instructional leadership. Mascaro (1976) found that beginning principals had little control over external time demands such as attending meetings, taking care of paper work, handling discipline problems, and holding parent conferences. The only time demand these principals could compromise was the time spent on instructional leadership activities, which arose from internal demands. Hurley (1990) found that disciplining students was the major faculty expectation for principals. Teachers sent mixed messages to principals suggesting that classroom observations were a formality and that they should be little involved in instruction. Hurley concluded that principals in small, rural districts were expected to fill a variety of service functions.

The first-year superintendents in this study demonstrated behaviors similar to those of beginning teachers and principals. For instance, the superintendents concentrated their attention on obvious problems and managerial tasks while learning survival skills. None of the superintendents were involved in with instructional leadership, though they aspired to be. External demands such as financial management, community relations, and a variety of service functions consumed an inordinate amount of their time, restricting their involvement to a few task areas.

The Adjustment and Stabilization Phases. The findings pertaining to the superintendents consistent focus of activities within career phases and the expansion of their focus of activities with experience are also consistent with common themes found in the socialization literature. The third phase of the socialization process has been referred to as the " role management" (Feldman, 1976), "adjustment" (Nicholson & West, 1988), "change and acquisition" (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975) and "metamorphosis" (Van Maanen, 1975) phase. This represents the adaptation phase, where the individual continues to engage in new learning, shows mastery of required skills, and adjusts to the new environment as needed to remain in the profession (Van Maanen, 1976). Stable patterns and routines begin to emerge in this stage (Hart, 1991).

Themes embedded within the transcripts indicated that superintendents in both the adjustment and stabilization phases of socialization were engaged in new learning. For instance, Dale indicated he learned from experience, networks of people, and from attending meetings. He explained, "Because there's going to be someone walk in the door, you always learn something. You can go to meetings…people walk in the door

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who have experience in this business....Of course your circle of people increases, your

network of people" (7/10/97, p. 2). Kent described how continued learning applied to the

area of community relations. "When you first begin within a school system, you know no

one within the community. You've got a very, very small base of reference out there.

After you have been around for a while, that base of reference becomes broader"

(7/10/97, p. 3).

In addition, themes embedded within the transcripts indicated that superintendents

in both the adjustment and stabilization phases had increased their mastery of skill and

ability to identify and adjust to changing contextual demands. For instance, Kent spoke of

being able to complete tasks in less time:

> I think the importance has not changed, maybe the time it has taken to do some of
>
> these things or the time I'd allocate to do some of them is probably less that it was
>
> two years ago, or even a year ago. (7/10/97, p. 7)

Tom reported a similar change in skill level. He stated, "Things that...took a long time to

do before, just don't take a much time now....You go along and you find out from year to

year that your finances are basically the same as they were the year before" (7/8/97, p. 2).

Superintendents in both the adjustment and stabilization phases adjusted their

focus of activities to changing contextual demands. For example, Brent indicated that all

the areas he worked in were important, but felt the priorities changed. Brent explained, "I

think it's a changing process and I think you've got to be able to change. Those things are

still important, but the rank or priority of those things, that probably changes" (7/18/97, p.

10). Jim emphasized the importance of changing priorities to accommodate contextual

demands: "I want to say that you can set goals, you can set priorities, and things like that, but they change day to day depending on certain things that happen" (7/22/97, p. 2). Dale described how he addressed a variety of contextual demands:

> We tried to solve problems...all the ones that were left to us, which were
>
> numerous. And once we got those solved, then we starting trying to, you know,
>
> revamp the curriculum and the technology....You get in here and you establish a
>
> stability and then, you go from there. (7/10/97, p. 7)

According to Weiss (1978), individuals in the adjustment and stabilization phases will engage in fewer role search activities, than individual in the encounter phase, due to previous learning. Themes embedded within the transcripts support this notion as well. For example, none of the superintendents in the stabilization phase expressed intentions to expand their focus of activities. The superintendents did, however, indicate their current actions were impacted by their past experiences. Dale explained:

> I think the circle is bigger...because the older you get the more you have in your
>
> circle to draw from....I could draw a pretty big circle about the experiences I've
>
> had and where to go back and pull past incidents from to help me make more
>
> specific informational decisions. (7/10/97, p. 2)

Pointing out the effects of socialization, Bill informed me that some of his optimism had been tempered by reality over the years. He explained, "I think everybody carries around their own...perception of reality. I don't think it ever gets the way thing are, but I think mine is probably closer than it was in 1979" (7/8/97, 2).

On the other hand, superintendents in the adjustment phase were still engaged in role search activities. One of the superintendents had recently expanded his focus of activity to the area of instruction, while a second superintendent discussed intentions to expand his focus of activity. For example, Brent recently expanded his focus of activity to include the area of instruction. He explained, "The academics, probably this past year, rates real high on that list. Where the first two years, probably finance and community relations were the top two priorities" (7/18/97, p. 9). Jim discussed his intent to expand his focus of activity to include instructional leadership activities for the next year. He explained, "One thing that I think we'll try to prioritize is we'll try to increase our achievement test scores" (7/22/97, p. 5).

With experience, the superintendents gained technical skills and competency, developed networks of relationships, and increased their abilities to adjust to changing contextual demands. The socializing effects of experience assisted the superintendents in establishing stability within areas such as finance, facilities, and community relations. Establishing stability served as a foundation enabling the superintendents to expand their focus of activities in a hierarchical manner to additional areas, with less clearly identified problems, such as areas of personnel and instruction. The findings from this study pertaining to the similarities in the superintendents focus of activities are supported by Bridges (1965). According to Bridges, the more experience an individual gains in an organization, the more his or her behavior is shaped by role rather than by personality.

<u>Different Focus of Activities</u>

Based on the findings, there were individual differences in the superintendents

focus of activities within career phases. For example, only one first-superintendent

identified the areas of facilities and personnel as being included in his focus of activity.

The same superintendent was the only first-year superintendent who failed to identify

community relations as being included in his focus of activity. Only one superintendent in

the adjustment phase identified the area of instructional leadership as being in his focus of

activity. The following section provides an analysis of literature and relevant data to

explain differences in the superintendents focus of activities. Data pertaining to

anticipatory socialization, individual differences, contextual differences, organizational

demands, and role differences will be analyzed respectively.

<u>Anticipatory Socialization.</u> The findings identifying individual differences in the

superintendents focus of activities within career phases are generally consistent with

themes found in the literature on socialization (Feldman, 1976; Louis, 1980; Nicholson &

West, 1988; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975; Van Maanen, 1975) and with themes

found in literature examining the personal and contextual aspects (Bogotch & Riedlinger,

1993; Crow & Glascock, 1995; Duke, Isaacson, Sagor, & Schmuck, 1984; Greenfield,

1977, 1985; Heck, 1995; Jablin, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Norton, 1994) of anticipatory and

organizational socialization. For instance, the beginning of the socialization process has

been labeled as the "pre-arrival" (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975),

"preparation/anticipation" (Nicholson & West, 1988), and the "anticipatory socialization"

(Van Maanen, 1975) phase. This phase of the socialization encompasses all the learning

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that occurs before the individual enters the organization (Clausen, 1968; Van Maanen, 1975). Feldman (1976) contends "the main activities individuals engage in at this phase are forming expectations about jobs and making decisions about employment" (p. 434). Prior to entry, newcomers anticipate their experiences as organizational members (Louis, 1980) and develop expectations of organizational life.

Data indicate the superintendents entered their roles with different perceptions of the superintendent's role as a result of their anticipatory socialization experiences. The superintendents' perceptions of their roles were influenced by observations of superintendents prior to entering the superintendency, work experiences both within and outside of educational organizations, and professional training. For example, Dan explained he formed expectations about the superintendent's role while working in higher education:

> I had dealt directly with so many superintendents, especially within about a three county area, you know, worked with them through the college and different programs. Like I said, out in their schools recruiting and talking to students, counselors, and principals. So I had kind of a working knowledge to what was going on out there....I knew those were important before I got there, because, like I said, having dealt with them. (7/21/97, p. 2)

Three superintendents, Dan, Kent, and Bill, identified experiences outside of the education arena that influenced their perceptions of the superintendent's role. Dan commented:

> I think what helped me, and this has nothing to do with public schools, is my background....I have been in the Oklahoma National Guard for 28 years and so

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I've also had to work with people and army staffs and that sort of thing. That's

how I approach my job, is putting a staff together and everything kind of trickles

down from there. (7/21/97, p. 5)

Kent indicated his experience in the oil refinery industry influenced his perception

of the superintendent's role. He explained:

I think these are the same areas that are important in any business or industry.

You've got to have the finances...the staff, and...the support of the

community...if any one of those things are missing, you're going to have a real

hard time. I don't see how I can separate prior experiences with other business

from this. That was a thing that was learned. (7/10/97, p. 4)

Bill reported his work experience outside of education had "definitely" changed his

perception of the superintendent's role. He stated, "I've been a federal programs

director...I worked with job training for a multi-county area, on the road a lot, out of state

a lot, on an airplane a lot. You can always look back to where you have been and see

things better" (7/8/97, p. 2).

In a similar manner, Bob indicated perception of the superintendent's role had been

influenced by observing other superintendents, while employed in various positions, and

by university training. Bob stated, "I think that's just from my perception and my

experience in school systems and seeing other people in the superintendents role"

(7/17/97, p. 4). As Bob continued, he discussed the influence of university training:

They kind of lead you in these areas and you're taught, trained in these areas. So,

you know they're coming, you know you're going to be dealing with finance and

community relations and you get a lot of training as far as dealing with personnel. So you realize, as you're training for the job, that those are going to be important issues. (7/17/97, p. 4)

Individual Differences. Analysis of demographic data revealed individual differences that contributed to differences in the superintendents focus of activities. This assumption, concerning the effects of individual differences, is generally consistent with and supported by the socialization literature. For example, Jones (1983) contends that individual differences are mediating factors that must be considered to sufficiently explain socialization. Jones argues that individuals have different life experiences that influence how they interpret and react to cues in the environment. Several researchers have examined the impact that individual differences have on socialization. In a well known study, Lortie (1975) found that students' predispositions exerted a more powerful socializing influence than either preservice training or later socialization in the work place. In a study of aspiring principals, Greenfield (1977) illustrated the importance of individual differences by concluding the degree of administrative perspective achieved by the candidates was determined by their differences in prior learning and by the contextual properties of the situation within which they interacted. Leithwood et al. (1992) examined how different career paths were associated with differences in socialization experiences and stages. The findings indicated that career experiences outside of education were related to socialization experiences helpful in preparing administrators for instructional leadership roles.

Individual differences in the superintendents that contributed to their different focus of activities are outlined in the following paragraphs. Individual differences will first be outlined for superintendents in the encounter phase, followed by a discussion of individual differences for superintendents in the adjustment phase.

Dan had 26 years of work experience in educational organizations prior to entering the superintendency. He taught business and was a high school principal in public education prior to his 22-year tenure in higher education. Dan taught business, performed community relations, and worked in administration while employed in higher education. In addition, Dan had many years of military experience and was currently the commander in charge of training facilities at a military post. Dan was the only first-year superintendent who easily mastered the area of financial management and included the areas of facilities and personnel in his focus of activities. Dan's previously learned skills in the areas of finance, facilities, and personnel enabled him to develop the most comprehensive focus of activity when compared to the other first-year superintendents.

Bob entered the superintendency having only one year of administrative experience as a high school principal. Before entering the principalship, Bob had been a counselor for eight years. Ben entered the superintendency with six years of administrative experience as a high school principal. Prior to becoming a principal, Ben taught social studies and coached high school basketball for 16 years. Considering these individual differences, one can understand why the area of financial management may have presented greater learning requirements for Bob and Ben than it did for Dan. Bob's experience in counseling and Ben's experience in coaching may have contributed to their emphasis on community

relations, as both counselors and coaches are accustomed to resolving conflicts through communication and teamwork.

Similar differences were identified among the superintendents within in the adjustment phase. For instance, instructional leadership was included in Brent's focus of activity, while Jim discussed an intent to expand his focus of activity to the area of instructional leadership. Kent was the only superintendent in this career phase that failed to demonstrate an intent to become directly involved in the area of instructional leadership. Coincidentally, Kent was the only superintendent who did not have any teaching experience in a traditional public school. Jim had twelve years of teaching experience before entering administration, while Brent had 15 years of teaching experience before enter administration. Prior to entering the superintendency, Kent worked in the oil industry for 12 years, worked as a principal for one year, and taught in a vocational school for 17 years. Cultural and environmental differences among the organizations where Kent had worked may explain his non-involvement in the area of instructional leadership.

Contextual Differences. The findings pertaining to differences in the superintendents focus of activities may be explained by themes found in the socialization literature. For instance, Norton (1994) explored the effects school organizations have on beginning principals. The findings indicated that the variable community type had a statistically significant relationship with the principals' socialization levels.

Norton's (1994) findings lend support to the current findings that suggest the superintendents focus of activities were effected by their communities. For example, Ben worked diligently to gain community support. He explained, "The school and the

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community are tied very closely....If that section of the population, the Native American population, is upset with you and won't sign those forms, obviously your money in that regards is going to go down" (5/8/97, p. 3).

Bob, another first-year superintendent, indicated his actions were effected by community expectations. He commented, "I kind of learned that, in all my decisions, the community is not a real risk taking community. They're pretty conservative and...that's good information for me to have when I make a decision" (7/17/97, p. 10).

The effects of community influence were not limited to first-year superintendents. For instance, both Kent and Bill's focus of activities were effected by their communities. Kent explained why he devoted a lot of time to community relations:

Public relations is an area that I like to be pretty heavy in, because those are the people out there that these children belong to and I think they have some right in the say so in what goes on around here. (4/21/97, p. 1)

Bill concentrated a lot of his energy on community relations to ensure the district would continue to receive federal funding associated with Indian land.

The first-year superintendents focus of activities were influenced their faculty members. For example, a division between the elementary and secondary faculty members caused Dan to include personnel in his focus of activities. He explained, "When I came here, you had two schools. You had an elementary and a high school and they wouldn't hardly talk to each other....I'd say that was one of my top priorities..." (5/9/97, p. 6). This finding is consistent with common themes found in the literature (Duke et al., 1984; Hurley, 1990). For instance, Duke and his colleagues (1984) applied features of

professional socialization to study the first years of successful veteran principals and concluded that the building faculty was the most important influence on new principals. Hurley (1990) found that disciplining students was the major faculty expectation of principals. As a result of this expectation, principals reported working hard on discipline and attendance.

The findings from this study indicated that the influence of faculty members was not limited to first-year superintendents. Superintendents in all career phases indicated the faculty members influenced their focus of activities. For example, past conflicts between teachers and the desire to prevent future conflicts between teachers resulted in personnel being included in Jim's focus of activity. He explained, "The most important activity is to make sure that there are not any major conflicts between the teachers that disrupt the school environment..." (5/9/97, p. 7). Resulting from the faculty's tendency to create internal unrest, Jim devoted a lot of time to active measures aimed at minimizing internal conflicts.

Tom, in the stabilization phase, indicated his focus on personnel relations was influenced by the performance of faculty members. According to Tom, supporting and admonishing teachers were necessary elements of personnel relations. As he elaborated, he described situations where he both supported and admonished teachers for their performance.

Organizational Demands. Analysis of data revealed organizational demands unique to the individual districts that contributed to differences in the superintendents focus of activities. This finding is generally consistent with and supported by themes

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found in the socialization literature. For instance, Heck (1995) found that organizational socialization had the strongest effect on administrator performance and suggested that organizational socialization had more influence on the professional growth of new administrators than formal training. In an earlier study on organizational socialization, Hoy and Rees (1977) concluded that school bureaucracies quickly impressed upon student teachers the values of conformity, impersonality, tradition, subordination, and bureaucratic loyalty.

Organizational demands that contributed to differences in the superintendents focus of activities include issues related to financial management, facility management, and role differences. For instance, Tom and Bob's focus of activities were impacted by their efforts to cope with organizational demands created by financial shortages. In addition to their increased efforts in the area of finance, Bob indicated he worked in the area of community relations to minimize problems developing from the budget shortage. Tom reported an increased emphasis in the area of personnel relations due to the staff restructuring required by the budget shortage. Resolving organizational demands arising from financial shortages required extended time from the superintendents and may have prevented Bob from expanding his focus of activity. This assumption is supported by Bob's following comment:

This past year, I really didn't have time for that kind of thing. It's something that you always give a little thought to, but as far as really getting involved in the action on it, I haven't been able to so far. I think my next big move is curriculum. This

year, I was real concerned about finances and getting that squared away. (7/17/97, p. 7)

Analysis of the data identified organizational demands that influenced several superintendents to include the area of facilities in their focus of activities. For example, Dan, a first-year superintendent, was required by law to get the district's buildings in compliance with electrical and fire safety codes. In a similar manner, Brent was required by law to replace on old sewer system. Brent explained, "This year...the biggest thing has been the problems we've had with the sewer system and being under the compliance order with the Department of Environmental Quality Control" (5/2/97, p. 10).

Following the same pattern, Jim's previous focus on the area of facilities was initiated by safety codes. The elementary building in Jim's district was quarantined due to asbestos hazards. This organizational demand caused Jim to include to the area of facilities in his focus of activities. Although not required by law, Kent's focus on the area of facilities originated from an organizational demand. Kent explained, "We have a high school building that is leaking in almost every room" (4/21/97, p. 4).

Based on the findings, demands arising from specific organizational demands clearly influenced the actions of some superintendents. Addressing organizational demands caused some superintendents to expand their focus of activities, while it prevented others from expanding their focus of activities. Identifying the effects of such organizational demands is beneficial in explaining differences in the superintendents focus of activities.

Role Differences. Analysis of data pertaining to the superintendents' roles revealed dissimilarities that contributed to differences in their focus of activities. The number of administrators employed by the districts is a factor contributing to role differences of superintendents in the encounter phase. For instance, Dan has two principals, two teachers, who have administrative release time, and one secretary to help perform administrative tasks. Ben, on the other hand, has one principal, for grades kindergarten through 12 that coaches athletics, and one secretary to help perform administrative tasks. Ben is often required to perform the superintendent's and principal's duties during basketball season. Even more time consuming, Bob is both the superintendent and high school principal. Bob has an elementary principal and a secretary to help perform administrative tasks. The majority of Bob's time, during school hours, is devoted to principal duties, including routine tasks such as student discipline and supervision. According to Bob, he performs the superintendent's duties before or after school. Serving as both the superintendent and principal often prevents Bob from attending professional conferences, as he is hesitant to leave the school without an administrator present.

The number of administrators employed by the districts was also identified as a factor contributing to role differences for superintendents in the adjustment phase. For example, Brent has one principal and one secretary who help perform administrative tasks. During Brent's first two years in the district, he served as both superintendent and high school principal. Occasionally, Brent still performs duties associated with the principal's role, but he now has more time for the superintendent's duties. In a similar pattern, Jim

has one principal, who coaches high school basketball, and a secretary to help perform administrative tasks. Jim, however, serves as the elementary principal and the superintendent. Like Bob, Jim indicated that most of his superintendent's duties were performed before or after school. During the day, much of Jim's time is devoted to traditional principal's duties. On one site visit, I accompanied Jim during playground duty, where he mediated a conflict between two young boys. Kent has two principals and two secretaries to help perform administrative tasks, however, one of the secretaries is in another district. Of all the superintendents, Kent's role was the most unique as he was the superintendent of one district and held a second administrative position in another district. Kent accepted the second position to help a nearby district that was experiencing financial shortages. As a result, Kent is away from his superintendent's duties for two hours a day to attend a second job.

Analysis of data revealed many dissimilarities in the superintendent's roles that contributed to differences in their focus of activities. Administrative staffing was a common factor identified that influenced differences in the superintendents' roles. Identifying and recognizing the impact such issues have superintendents is helpful in explaining differences in the superintendents focus of activities.

Organizational Frames

This section provides an analysis, with respect to the literature, of the findings pertaining to the superintendents use of organizational frames and their tendency to use fewer organizational frames with increased experience. The superintendents tendency to

use fewer organizational frames as they gained experience will be analyzed by examining

the effects of experience on superintendents in the encounter, adjustment, and stabilization

phases.

Use of Organizational Frames

The findings pertaining to the superintendents use of multiple organizational

frames are consistent with findings in the literature. For example, the findings from this

study indicated that 55% of the superintendents used two organizational frames, 33% of

the superintendents used three organizational frames, and 11% of the superintendents used

four organizational frames. Bolman and Deal (1992) found that 58% of the principals

interviewed used two frames, 19% used three frames, 16% used one frame, and 6% used

four frames. The findings from both studies suggest the majority of school administrators

employ two organizational frames and that very few school administrators employ four

organizational frames.

The findings from this study pertaining to the most frequently used organizational

frames are also consistent with the findings reported by Bolman and Deal (1991). For

instance, the present study indicated the structural frame was the most dominantly used

frame, appearing in 100% of the cases. The human resource frame was the second most

commonly used frame, appearing in 77% of the cases. The political frame was the third

most commonly used frame, appearing in 44% of the cases. The symbolic frame was the

least commonly used frame, appearing in 33% of the cases. Bolman and Deal (1991)

found that 86% of the principals interviewed used the human resource frame, 60% used

the structural frame, 50% used the political frame, and 11% used the symbolic frame.

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Even though differences in these findings exist, they do correspond. For instance, findings from both studies indicated the majority of school administrators use the structural and human resource frames and that few administrators use the political and symbolic frames.

The Effects of Experience

Based on the findings, the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames decreased as they gained experience in the superintendent's role. For example, the first-year superintendents employed three or four organizational frames. Only one superintendent in the adjustment and stabilization phases employed three organizational frames. The five superintendents with the most administrative experience employed only two organizational frames. The following paragraphs use the socialization literature to explain why the first-year superintendents employed more organizational frames than did the more experienced superintendents.

The Encounter Phase. The findings pertaining to the first-year superintendents use of multiple organizational frames are generally consistent with and may be explained by the socialization literature previously reviewed. For example, research has established that individuals in the encounter stage experience considerable ambiguity, stress, and anxiety (Gomersall & Myers, 1966; Parkey et al., 1992). According to Weiss (1978), new workers search for information about the norms appropriate their position, referred to as role search, during the encounter phase of socialization. Van Maanen & Schein (1979, p. 214) suggest that individuals in the encounter phase, "are more or less motivated to reduce this anxiety by learning the functional and social requirements of their newly assumed role as quickly as possible."

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Themes embedded within the transcripts suggest the first-year superintendents experienced the anxiety and performed the role search activities associated with the encounter phase of socialization. The findings from this study expand Weiss' (1978) notion of role search to include a search for appropriate organizational frames. Due to their lack of experience, the first-year superintendents searched for appropriate organizational frames, which resulted in their use of multiple organizational frames.

The following paragraphs present narrative examples to illustrate how the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames were influenced by their lack of experience in the role and by their search for appropriate frames. For instance, Ben explained how he approached challenging leadership situations, "Superintendent is like a lot of other positions. You can get a feel for it and you decide what will work for you, exactly what you're comfortable with, and you try to work in those strategies" (7/8/97, p. 5). Ben used a trial and error process, where unsuccessful approaches were eliminated and successful approaches were reinforced, to identify appropriate organizational frames. He explained, "I think a lot of things that I've tried, after a year, I can see what works and what doesn't. You begin to develop the things that do best for you" (7/8/97, p. 8). As Ben continued, he explained his preference to rely on proven approaches:

> I think you sort of lock in to what you're doing the longer you've been in the job
> and you continue to try to use those strategies until they fail....The more that
> you've used things that have worked, the more you continue to do that....I think
> you continue to use that until it proves it's not doing you any good any more.
> (7/8/97, p. 8)

Bob employed a similar trial and error approach to identify appropriate

organizational frames. He explained:

Instead of reinventing the wheel, you know, you build the wheel the first time and

then you've got a pattern for the second one. Last year, I really didn't have a

pattern. I was just kind of feeling my way through it and this year I've got an idea

as to how it works. (7/17/97, p. 6)

Even the first-year superintendents demonstrated a beginning tendency to use

fewer organizational frames as they gained experience. Two superintendents reported

experiencing changes in their leadership styles since entering the superintendency that

restricted their use of multiple organizational frames. Both Dan and Bob reported an

increase in their use of strategies associated with the structural frame as they gained

experience in the role. Dan explained:

I'm probably not as diplomatic as I was 12 months ago....If a similar situation

came up a year ago, I would probably try to talk through and work through it.

Now days, I'd probably say, 'This is exactly what you're going to do, or what I

want done, or something like this.' Because I've already been through this and I

know what works and what doesn't. (7/21/97, p. 11)

Bob experienced a similar change in his leadership approach. He explained:

I'm more willing to make a decision today than I was a year ago. In terms of a

year ago, I tended to delay decisions...to try to get all the information and make

sure everything was perfect. I'm more willing to make a decision today than I was

a year ago. (7/17/97, p. 8)

A lack of experience in the superintendent's role and the need to reduce the shock, stress, and anxiety associated with the encounter phase of socialization, are factors that influenced the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. The superintendents search for appropriate organizational frames was demonstrated in a trial and error process, where strategies associated with various organizational frames were reinforced. The trend to use fewer organizational frames with increased experience was identified in the transcripts of two first-year superintendents.

The findings above are supported by the general socialization literature and by common themes found in the literature pertaining to the effects of socialization on teachers. For instance, Gibson (1972) found that college students training to become teachers developed more open conceptions of their roles as teachers during the program. The data revealed many attitude changes between first and second year students, but few changes in attitude between second and third year students. In an early study on the effects of teaching, Day (1959) found that the attitudes of beginning teachers became more custodial with experience and concluded this was a result of their unrealistic attitudes initially held. Other research has shown that beginning teachers learn survival skills from fieldwork experiences (Grossman & Richert, 1988).

The findings from this study support the above findings pertaining to teachers. The first-year superintendents demonstrated more liberal attitudes toward using multiple organizational frames when compared to the more experienced superintendents. In addition, the data revealed attitude changes pertaining to the use of multiple organizational frames among superintendents in the encounter and adjustment phases and few attitude

changes, pertaining to the use of multiple organizational frames, between superintendents in the adjustment and stabilization phases. This shift in the superintendents' attitudes toward organizational frames may be partially contributed to unrealistic expectations held by the first-year superintendents. The findings suggest that first-year superintendents, like beginning teachers, learn survival skills from field experiences.

The Adjustment and Stabilization Phases. The decline in the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames may also be explained by the socialization literature previously reviewed. The third phase of the socialization process has been referred to as the " role management" (Feldman, 1976), "adjustment" (Nicholson & West, 1988), "change and acquisition" (Porter et al., 1975) and "metamorphosis" (Van Maanen, 1975) phase. This represents the adaptation phase, where the individual shows mastery of required skills and adjusts to the environment as needed to remain in the profession (Van Maanen, 1976). According to Weiss (1978), individuals in the adjustment and stabilization phases are likely to engage in fewer role search activities, than individual in the encounter phase, because of previous learning. Hart (1991) contends that stable patterns begin to emerge during this stage.

Themes embedded within the transcripts support the above assumptions by revealing that superintendents in both the adjustment and stabilization phases had increased their technical skills and knowledge, adjusted to their environments, and performed few role search activities. The findings from this study expand Hart's (1991) findings to include developing stable patterns of using organizational frames. The data indicated that experience in the superintendent's role influenced the superintendents

decreased use of multiple organizational frames. The following paragraphs present narrative examples to illustrate how the superintendents use of organizational frames decreased with experience.

As a case in point, Brent indicated he would continue to use the human resource frame, as a result of his success using the frame to resolve a community relations problem. He explained, "I've had good success. The public relations part has worked out and the community has come back together....That approach has worked and I think it is going to continue to work" (7/18/97, p. 13). Dale indicated that past experiences were useful in making more effective decisions. Dale explained, "I could draw a pretty big circle about the experiences I've had and where to go back and pull past incidents from to help me make more specific and informational decisions" (7/10/97, p. 2). For Dale, this reflective approach has been effective, as he reported, "I've had a lot of luck so far" (7/10/97, p. 3). Kent reported he often relied on the same strategies when dealing with the school board, because he had learned from experience what they wanted.

As a result of their learning experiences, four superintendents experienced changes their leadership styles, which decreased their use of multiple organizational frames. For example, Tom's use of multiple frames decreased as he developed a preference for approaches associated with the human resource frame. He explained:

I found this more so as each year goes by, that people need to know that they're doing a good job....They respond to it more...when you're dealing with them, if you deal with them more as a colleague than as a boss. (7/8/97, p. 2)

With experience, Brent developed a preference to use leadership approaches associated with the human relations frame. For instance, Brent increased his efforts to involve and empower people in the district during his third year as superintendent. He commented, "What I've tried to do in the last year is to rely more on people....I guess you could say empower some people to do some things, more than I did my first two years" (7/18/97, p. 1).

Kent and Bill reported a tendency to use more approaches associated with the structural frame as they gained experience. Kent explained, "I guess my leadership style has changed somewhat now. I will take a more direct, active role in pushing something through now than I did....I'm more forceful and pushy than I was three years ago" (7/10/97, p. 8). Bill commented, "I can afford to retire and I am probably a little bit bigger horses ass than I was a couple of years ago" (7/8/97, p. 9).

Increased experience in the superintendent's role was related to the superintendents decreased use of multiple organizational frames. The findings pertaining these effects of experience are consistent with findings from other research exploring the effects of experience on beginning teachers. For example, Tabachnick el al. (1980) concluded, "There is no justification in our results for the naive notion that practical school experience must be useful in introducing students to a wide range of teaching abilities" (p. 27). In an earlier study, Hoy (1968) found that teachers became more custodial in their pupil control ideology during practice teaching and that the custodial level increased with each successive period of teaching experience.

Summary

This chapter presented the data and then provided an analysis of the data. The chapter began with a brief overview of the themes and categories that emerged from the interviews. The data from individual interviews were synthesized into common categories and presented for the career phases of encounter, adjustment, and stabilization. In addition, data were analyzed and presented in light of the literature review and the conceptual framework. It was found that the professional growth of superintendents within the same career phase evolved in similar patterns, with differences existing in the superintendents use of organizational frames and focus of activities. An inverse relationship was found between career phases and the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. As the superintendents progressed through career stages, their use of multiple organizational frames decreased. In addition, a relationship between career phases and the superintendents focus of activities was identified. As the superintendents progressed through career stages, their focus of activities became increasingly comprehensive.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to explore the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts. For the purpose of this study, professional growth was defined as the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform the role effectively. More specifically, this study examined the professional growth of superintendents by analyzing their career phase, focus of activities, and use of organizational frames. Chapter I introduced the study and presented several works that were influential in developing the three-stage framework used in this study.

Chapter II provided an in-depth review of the literature focused on socialization experiences that impact the professional growth of teachers and administrators. Anticipatory, professional, and organizational socialization research was reviewed. The review revealed that anticipatory socialization experiences have considerable effects on the professional growth of teachers and administrators because they develop role expectations prior to entering the role. It was revealed that professional socialization begins with formal training and continues for varying lengths of time. University courses, inservice programs, and field experiences contribute to different but complementary aspects of professional growth. Organizational socialization begins when a newcomer enters an organization and continues as he or she interacts within that specific context. The impact of organizational socialization on the professional growth of teachers and administrators tends to vary depending on the organizational context.

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Chapter III presented the methodology that guided the study and explained the rationale for the methodology. Based on the exploratory nature and the lack of control over the phenomenon being explored, a qualitative method was used. In addition, Chapter III explained the selection of participants, data collection, trustworthiness criteria, and the method used for data analysis. Long interview methodology was selected for its ability to reveal the mental worlds of the participants.

Chapter IV presented and analyzed the data. Data were synthesized into common categories and presented for the career phases of encounter, adjustment, and stabilization. In addition, data were analyzed and presented in light of the literature review and the conceptual framework. It was found that the professional growth of superintendents within the same career phase evolved in similar patterns, with differences existing in their use of organizational frames and focus of activities. An inverse relationship was found between career phases and the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. In addition, a relationship between career phases and the superintendents focus of activities was identified.

This chapter reviews and responds to the research questions, describes the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts, presents six conclusions derived from the findings, discusses implications for the professional growth of superintendents in rural districts, and makes recommendations for further research.

Conclusions

This section begins by reviewing and responding to the research questions. The findings are then used to describe the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts. The final part of this section presents six conclusions derived from the research findings.

Research Questions

This section responds to the research questions in light of the findings presented. The research questions are: (a) What similarities and differences in professional growth can be identified among superintendents within the same career phase? (b) In what ways do career phases influence superintendents use of organizational frames? and (c) In what ways do career phases influence superintendents focus of activities?

Similarities and Differences in Professional Growth. The following paragraphs discuss similarities and differences identified in the professional growth of superintendents within the same career phase. Similarities and differences in the professional growth of superintendents in the encounter, adjustment, and stabilization phases will be discussed respectively.

The findings from this study indicated that the professional growth of superintendents in the encounter phase evolved in similar patterns. For example, with varying degrees, the first-year superintendents entered their leadership roles with limited knowledge of the role, limited technical expertise, and open dispositions toward the use of organizational frames. The superintendents' limited knowledge of tasks associated with their roles and their limited technical expertise in the areas of financial management,

personnel relations, and facilities management contributed to their initial feelings of shock. Similarities in professional growth experienced by superintendents in the encounter phase included developing technical skills and relationships with key people, increasing their knowledge of role requirements, and experimenting with leadership approaches associated with multiple organizational frames. The majority of professional growth experienced by superintendents in the encounter phase was motivated by their concerns for survival.

The major differences identified in the professional growth of first-year superintendents pertained to the levels and types of technical skills developed. For instance, as a result of anticipatory socialization experiences, one superintendent entered the role with more advanced technical skills than did the other two first-year superintendents. Possessing these skills facilitated the superintendent's development of knowledge and skill in other areas. Contextual factors were shown to influence the superintendents initial involvement in certain areas, such as facility management and community relations.

Data indicated that the professional growth of superintendents in the adjustment phase evolved in a similar pattern as well. The superintendents in this phase experienced considerable professional growth in their technical expertise and knowledge of their roles causing their survival concerns to become less intense. In addition, the superintendents' preferences for organizational frames became reinforced in this phase. Increased professional growth resulted in management tasks being performed effectively and efficiently, which allowed the superintendents to develop organizational stability, identify new priorities, and assume new responsibilities. Common factors identified in this stage

that supported the superintendents professional growth included their increased knowledge of the community and developing peer support networks.

The major differences identified in the professional growth of superintendents in the adjustment phase pertained to the new responsibilities they assumed and to the dispositions they developed toward the use of selected organizational frames. Although all of the superintendents assumed new responsibilities, only one superintendent assumed responsibility in the area of instructional leadership. With increased experience, the superintendents demonstrated clear preferences for leadership approaches associated with selected organizational frames.

Similarities in the professional growth experienced by superintendents in the stabilization phase were also identified. Based on the findings, superintendents in this phase possessed extensive knowledge of their communities and role requirements and in-depth technical expertise, which allowed management tasks to be routinely completed. Superintendents in this phase expanded their professional growth by setting new priorities and assuming new responsibilities in the area of instructional leadership. Superintendents in this phase developed strong dispositions toward the use of selected organizational frames.

The major differences identified in the professional growth of superintendents in the stabilization phase pertained to the dispositions they held toward the use of selected organizational frames. Two superintendents developed preferences for approaches associated with the human resource and structural frames while one superintendent developed a preference for approaches associated with the political and structural frames.

The superintendents' dispositions toward certain organizational frames were so powerful that less preferred frames were disregarded.

Career Phases and Organizational Frames. Based on the findings, there was an inverse relationship between career phases and the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. As the superintendents gained experience, their use of multiple organizational frames decreased. The encounter phase emerged as the window of opportunity for superintendents to develop their capacities to use multiple organizational frames. The adjustment phase provided superintendents with maintenance opportunities to refine their use of multiple organizational frames. Experiences in the adjustment phase reinforced the firm dispositions toward certain organizational frames that appeared in the stabilization phase. The following paragraphs discuss ways that the career phases of encounter, adjustment, and stabilization influenced the superintendents use of organizational frames.

Superintendents in the encounter phase were the most inclined to use multiple organizational frames. Several factors, including the superintendents lack of experience, knowledge, and skills contributed to their willingness to reframe. For example, superintendents in the encounter phase did not have any first-hand experiences to use as effectiveness indicators for the different frames. In addition, the first-year superintendents functioned with limited knowledge of their communities and roles and inadequate technical skills. Combined, these factors increased the shock experienced by the first-year superintendents and created a willingness for them experiment with multiple organizational frames.

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According to the data, superintendents in the adjustment phase were less inclined than superintendents in the encounter phase to use multiple organizational frames, but more inclined than superintendents in the stabilization phase to use multiple organizational frames. In general, the same issues, including their increased knowledge, skills, and support networks, were identified as influencing the superintendents' dispositions toward selected organizational frames. For example, as the superintendents gained experience, they developed preferences, based on their successes, for approaches associated with selected frames. The superintendents reused the frames that were proven successful in their individual context. On the other hand, the superintendents discontinued using frames that were perceived unsuccessful. This experiential learning resulted in the superintendents refining their skill in and dependence on selected organizational frames.

Superintendents in the stabilization phase were the least inclined to use multiple organizational frames. Factors discussed in the preceding paragraphs contributed to the superintendents becoming increasingly dependant on selected frames. In addition, the superintendents success, as evident by their tenure, resulted in selected frames becoming more deeply embedded within their cognitive frameworks. While the superintendents dependence on selected frames may have produced the desired results, it created myopic views of organizational frames that may hinder their success in different contexts.

Career Phases and Focus of Activity. Based on the findings, there was a consistent relationship between career phases and the superintendents developing a comprehensive focus of activity. As the superintendents gained experience, their focus of activities became increasingly comprehensive. For example, the first-year superintendents focus of

activities were limited to areas presenting immediate problems. With experience, the superintendents expanded their focus of activities to areas, such as instructional leadership, with less urgent problems. The following paragraphs discuss ways the career phases of encounter, adjustment, and stabilization influenced the superintendents focus of activities.

Superintendents in the encounter phase demonstrated the narrowest focus of activity when compared to other superintendents in the study. Developing survival skills, which included learning new tasks, developing relationships, and clarify their roles, was identified as a socialization process that prevented the first-year superintendents from developing a comprehensive focus of activity by limiting their involvement to areas presenting immediate problems.

When compared to the first-year superintendents, superintendents in the adjustment phase demonstrated more comprehensive focus of activities. The data indicated that superintendents in the adjustment phase had experienced considerable professional growth in their technical expertise, ability to adjust to contextual demands, and knowledge of their roles. The professional growth manifesting during the adjustment phase facilitated the superintendents effective and efficient performance of management tasks. Superintendents in the adjustment phase expanded their focus of activities by performing activities such as identifying new priorities and assuming new responsibilities.

When compared to other superintendents in the study, superintendents in the stabilization phase demonstrated the most comprehensive focus of activities. Data indicated that superintendents in the stabilization phase had established large support networks, developed technical skills and knowledge of their roles, and gained self-

confidence. The socializing effects of experience, manifesting in the stabilization phase, assisted the superintendents in establishing stability within the areas of finance, facilities, personnel, and community relations. Increased professional growth combined with district stability facilitated the superintendents efforts to include the area of instructional leadership in their focus of activities.

Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma school districts. Based on the research findings, this section describes the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts and then discusses the following conclusions: (a) the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is influenced by the service functions they perform; (b) the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is influenced by multiple factors out of their control; (c) the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts develops at different rates; (d) the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is influenced by the path of least resistance; (e) the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts develops in a hierarchical manner; and (f) superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts enter their roles with different levels of professional growth.

Based on the findings, the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts typically evolves in similar patterns, which are characterized by two predominant themes. First, the professional growth of superintendents is characterized by the superintendents developing increasingly comprehensive focus of activities. Secondly,

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the professional growth of superintendents is characterized by the superintendents

developing myopic dispositions toward the use of multiple organizational frames. Stated

differently, the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is

characterized by increased technical skills and cultural knowledge and increasingly closed

dispositions toward the use of multiple organizational frames.

Conclusions

The following conclusions pertain primarily to the superintendents and districts

represented in this study. Transferability of conclusions depends on the likeness of

receiving contexts. The first conclusion derived from the data is that the professional

growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is influenced by service functions.

Analysis of the superintendents diverse role requirements support this conclusion. In

addition to performing a wide range of service functions, such as printing payroll and

performing facility maintenance, five of the nine superintendents interviewed held or had

held two or more full-time positions. For instance, Bob was the superintendent and the

high school principal. Jim was the superintendent and the elementary principal. Dale was

the superintendent, high school principal, and the high school coach. Kent held

administrative positions in two districts. A sixth superintendent, Ben, regularly performed

duties associated with the principal's role because the high school principal was also the

high school coach. Performing service functions had both positive and negative effects on

the professional growth of superintendents. On the positive side, performing such a wide

range of activities facilitated the superintendents in developing in-depth technical skills and

knowledge pertaining to many different aspects of the organization. On the negative side,

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the extensive time superintendents devoted to performing service functions hindered their professional growth in the area of instructional leadership.

A second conclusion is that the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is influenced by contextual demands out of their control. Seven of the nine superintendents interviewed reported they entered the superintendent's role and immediately experienced problems created by specific contextual demands in the areas of finance or facility management. For example, immediately after accepting their positions, both Bob and Brent had to reduce expenditures to prevent bankruptcy. With less than $200.00 remaining in the general fund, Brent was forced to restructure the staff. Facilities presented immediate problems for Dan, Kent, and Jim. Dan was required to get buildings in compliance with state fire and electrical codes. Kent was forced to deal with a high school that leaked in every room. Jim had his only elementary building quarantined due to asbestos hazards. Solving problems created by contextual demands out of their control restricted the superintendents professional growth to certain areas.

A third conclusion of this study is that the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts develops at different rates. Brent, for example, was in his second year in the superintendent's role, but had developed a more comprehensive focus of activity than had Kent, who was in his third year in the superintendent's role.

A fourth conclusion is that the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts is influenced by the path of least resistance. This conclusion concerns the superintendents developing increasingly closed dispositions toward the use of multiple organizational frames. For instance, the superintendents experimented with multiple

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organizational frames and learned what worked and what did not work by evaluating the

results achieved. If an organizational frame produced the desired results, they continued

its use in other situations. On the other hand, if the frame did not produce the desired

results, they tended to discontinue its use. All of the frame-related experiences, the ones

that worked and the ones that did not work, influenced the superintendents professional

growth. The successful experiences increased the superintendents professional growth by

advancing their skills in using selected frames. The experiments that did not work

minimized the superintendents professional growth in selected frames, because they took

the path of least resistance and avoided continued use of unsuccessful frames.

A fifth conclusion derived from the data is that the professional growth of

superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts develops in a hierarchical manner. The data

revealed that the professional growth of superintendents were initially confined to

contextual demands out of their control. As the superintendents established organizational

stability within the areas of financial management, facility maintenance, and community

relations, they experienced continued professional growth by expanding their focus of

activities to areas more closely related to instruction. None of the superintendents first

experienced professional growth in the area of instructional leadership, then experienced

professional growth in the area of financial management. After the superintendents

established stability within selected areas, they demonstrated the ability to oscillate

between areas as necessary.

The final conclusion is that superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts enter their

roles with different levels of professional growth. This conclusion was clearly

demonstrated by the first-year superintendents. Dan, the most atypical first-year

superintendent, entered the superintendent's role with a high level of professional growth.

Transferring knowledge and skills from previous experiences enabled Dan to develop the

most comprehensive focus of activity and the broadest use of multiple organizational

frames when compared to the other first-year superintendents. On the other hand, Bob

entered the superintendency at a lower level of professional growth and, with only one

year of administrative experience as a principal, limited knowledge of the role. This

resulted in Bob having to learn multiple tasks already mastered by Dan.

Implications

If it is assumed that superintendents, as educational leaders, can make a difference

in the quality of public schools these conclusions suggest several implications. The

following paragraphs discuss implications for preparing aspiring superintendents,

conducting on-going training for experienced superintendents, and implications for school

board members.

University programs preparing aspiring superintendents should incorporate

residency requirements into existing programs. Residency requirements would expose

aspiring superintendents to the complex realities of organizational demands confronted by

superintendents. Completing residency programs in districts with selected contextual

variables would facilitate the transitions of first-year superintendents by reducing the

shock and surprise they experience. In addition, superintendents would become aware

that experiencing ups and downs in their professional growth are normal and necessary to

meet changing contextual demands created by factors out of their control. This knowledge may help first-year superintendents reduce their frustrations by realizing that this process eventually leads to higher levels of professional growth.

The findings from this study suggest that linear theories of career development do not accurately reflect the professional growth needs of superintendents in rural districts. This study provides support for the need to development more comprehensive theories of career development that incorporate individual and contextual variables. Such theories of career development would be useful in restructuring existing inservice programs. For example, the State Department of Education currently requires and conducts an inservice program for all first-year superintendents. The program is currently structured to provide all first-year superintendents the same training activities at the same time. The findings from this study suggest the program could be more effective by allowing first-year superintendents more freedom in deciding on the content and timing of the training.

For instance, two of the first-year superintendents could have benefited from additional training in financial management. On the other hand, Dan did not need additional training in financial management, but could have benefited from training in instructional leadership. Restructuring the inservice program, based on a more comprehensive theory of career development, would allow superintendents to identify needs particular to their situation and access training activities appropriate for their level of professional growth. In addition, networking opportunities would be enhanced because superintendents with similar needs would participate in training together.

The conclusions from this study indicate that experienced superintendents need on-going inservice programs to increase their abilities to use multiple organizational frames. Professional organizations could provide inservice sessions where experienced superintendents were provided with opportunities to observe their peers model the use of multiple organizational frames in different contextual situations. Currently, there are no known programs that offer opportunities for experienced superintendents to increase their abilities to use multiple organizational frames.

The final implication derived from this study suggests that local school board members should examine their expectations of superintendents and restructure the superintendent's role, if necessary, to assist superintendents in fulfilling the identified expectations. If board members identify expectations for superintendents in the area of instructional leadership, existing constraints created by performing multiple service functions need to be alleviated. Alleviating these constraints could be accomplished by hiring additional support employees or by providing release time for selected teachers to help perform routine management tasks. School board members need to become more aware of the influence they have on the rate and direction of superintendents professional growth.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, five recommendations for further research regarding the professional growth of superintendents are included in the following paragraphs.

The next study in this area should explore the notion that leadership is contextual by examining the relationship between the context of community and the superintendent's use of organizational frames. The findings from this study may identify community variables that support or inhibit the superintendent's use of certain organizational frames. Understanding the implications of such community variables should increase the effectiveness of superintendents by helping them to select appropriate frames.

A second study could examine the relationship between the context of the school and the superintendent's professional growth. Specifically, this study would attempt to identify how certain contextual variables influenced the superintendent's focus of activity. Identifying the effects of such variables may improve the quality of schools by helping superintendents become more actively involved in the area of instructional leadership. In addition, understanding the likely effects of contextual variables may also influence superintendents' employment decisions.

A third study could examine the professional growth of superintendents in urban districts to determine if they experience patterns of professional growth similar to superintendents in rural districts. This study would identify the extent that similar patterns of professional growth are common to larger numbers of superintendents and to superintendents in larger districts. Inservice activities for superintendents could be modified, based on the extent this pattern is confirmed or disconfirmed, to better meet the needs of superintendents in both urban and rural districts.

A fourth study could further explore the relationship between the length of tenure and the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames. Findings from the current

study indicated that the superintendents use of multiple organizational frames decreased as their length of tenure increased. An additional study exploring this relationship would determine if this pattern was common to larger numbers of superintendents. Based on the findings, the data may indicate a need for superintendents to continue on-going professional development activities throughout their careers. In addition, simply increasing their awareness pertaining to the cause and effects of this pattern may encourage some superintendents to continue using additional frames.

Finally, a study could be conducted to explore the relationship between previous experiences and the professional growth of superintendents. The findings from this study may have several implications. First, preparation programs for aspiring superintendents could incorporate additional experiences shown to improve the professional growth of superintendents into existing programs. Completing a mentorship experience, for example, in a district selected for its specific contextual variables may improve the professional growth of superintendents. Secondly, the findings from this study may have implications for school board members. An increased understanding of the relationship between past experiences and professional growth may help school board members when interviewing prospective superintendents. Finally, the findings from this study may assist aspiring superintendents in selecting anticipatory socialization experiences that better prepare them for the complex role they seek to enter.

Summary

This chapter reviewed and responded to the research questions, described the professional growth of superintendents in rural Oklahoma districts, and presented conclusions, implications, and recommendations derived from the study. The analysis of data led to findings that identified: (a) similarities and differences in the professional growth of superintendents; (b) ways that career phases influenced the superintendents use of organizational frames; and (c) ways that career phases influenced the superintendents focus of activities. These findings led to six conclusions enumerated in this chapter. Implications drawn from these conclusions have added to the body of knowledge pertaining to the professional growth of rural superintendents.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Course Offerings

Course Offerings

School Districts / Courses Offered	S	O	N	P1	M1	P2	R1	R2	M2
English I	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
English II	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
English III	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
English IV	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
General Math	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pre-Algebra		●	●	●			●		
Algebra I	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Algebra II	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Geometry	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Trigonometry	●		●	●	●	●			
Physical Science	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Biology I	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Biology II	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Botany									●
Zoology		●	●				●	●	●
Chemistry I	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Physics							●		
Oklahoma History	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
American History	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
World History	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Geography				●	●	●	●	●	●
Civics				●	●				
Democracy			●						
Sociology				●	●				
Government		●	●			●		●	
Psychology	●		●			●			
Humanities	●	●	●			●		●	
Spanish I		●	●			●	●	●	
Spanish II							●		
French I				●					
French II				●					
Speech						●			
Journalism								●	●
Yearbook	●	●			●				●
General Business			●		●			●	●
Accounting I			●			●			
Keyboarding		●	●		●	●	●	●	

School Districts	S	O	N	P1	M1	P2	R1	R2	M2
Courses Offered									
Typing			●		●		●		●
Word Processing								●	
Computer Applications	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Home Economics	●	●	●				●		●
Agriculture	●	●					●	●	●
Auto Mechanics	●	●					●	●	●
Animal Science	●	●							
Horticulture		●							
Forestry		●						●	●
Industrial Arts									●
Art			●	●					
Band					●		●	●	●
Driver Education						●		●	●
Health			●			●	●		●
Physical Education	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Football				●			●		●
Baseball	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Softball	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Basketball	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Track	●			●			●		●

Note. Bulleted cells indicate courses offered. S = Shell Public School; O = Oiltown

Public school; N = Naniwaya Public School; P1 = Prairieview Public School; M1 =

Midway Public School; P2 = Pine Public School; R1 = Rolling Hills Public School; R2 =

Red Public School; M2 = Mountain Public School.

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I hereby authorize Brian D. Beagles to conduct an interview(s) with me. I understand that participation in the interview(s) is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director/dissertation advisor.

I understand that the interview(s) will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures and that information taken from the interview(s) will be recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or though identifiers linked to the subjects. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviewer is the only person who will have access to the interview tapes. Aggregate data will be used to develop the themes reported, however, the themes will be supported by individual narrative. Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of respondents. Confidentiality safeguards include the use of pseudonyms for sites, settings, and respondents. All data collected, including the interview tapes, will be stored under lock and key. The interview tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study and the data will destroyed two years after the study is completed.

I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the professional growth of superintendents in small-town, rural districts, which may improve the quality of leadership in public schools. I understand the interview will not cover topics that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability, or deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior such a illegal conduct, drub use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

I may contact the dissertation adviser, L. Nan Restine, Ph.D., Department of EAHED, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Telephone: (405) 744-7244 should I desire further information about the research. I may also contact Gay Clarkson, Executive Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date:_____   Time:_____   (a.m./p.m.)

Signed:_____

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject to sign it.

Signed:_____
      Project Director

APPENDIX C

Initial Letter

Dear...:

This letter more fully explains the study we recently discussed on the telephone. The purpose of my dissertation is to explore the professional growth of superintendents in small-town, rural districts. Professional growth refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform the role effectively. Data will be collected by interviewing nine superintendents who work in small-town, rural districts. Criteria for the participating in the study includes the size of the district where the superintendents are employed and the number of years they have served as superintendents.

Superintendents will be asked to participate in one or more interviews to be conducted at their convenience. The initial interview consists of several main questions relating to the superintendent's role. The interview procedures will begin in April or May of this year. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts will be analyzed to determine if there are any major themes emerging from the data. Aggregate data will be used to develop the themes reported, however, the themes will be supported by individual narrative.

Data will be reported in such a manner that the actual people and places involved in this study cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of respondents. All transcripts and interview tapes will be stored under lock and key. The interviewer is the only person who will have access to the interview tapes. The interview tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study and the data will be destroyed two years after the study is completed. Confidentiality safeguards include the use of pseudonyms for sites, settings, and respondents.

Similar research has been conducted on the professional growth of teachers and principals. Research on the professional growth of superintendents in small-town, rural districts is rare and needs to be conducted. This study will help fill the current void existing in the literature pertaining to the professional growth of superintendents.

Please consider my request to participate in this study. I will contact you in the near future to discuss your interest in the study, questions and concerns, and to more fully explain the consent form enclosed.

Thank you for your time and consideration in the matter.

Respectfully,

Brian D. Beagles

Enclosure: Consent Form

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APPENDIX D

Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Review

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 03-27-97   **IRB#:** ED-97-094

Proposal Title: THE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF SUPERINTENDENTS IN SMALL-TOWN RURAL OKLAHOMA DISTRICTS.

Principal Investigator(s): L. Nan Restine, Brian D. Beagles

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

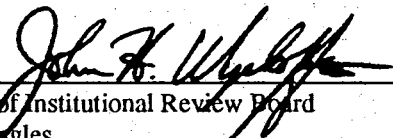**Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):** Approved

ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature: _____   Date: April 9, 1997

Chair of Institutional Review Board
cc: Brian D. Beagles

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VITA

Brian D. Beagles

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Dissertation: THE PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL OKLAHOMA SUPERINTENDENTS
ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: CAREER PHASES,
ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMES, AND FOCUS OF ACTIVITIES

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Manteca, California, on September 2, 1966, the son of
Bill and Pat Beagles.

Education: Graduated from Clayton High School, Clayton, Oklahoma in May
1984; received Bachelor of Science in Education and Master of Education
degrees from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in May 1988 and
July 1991, respectively. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of
Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May 1998.

Experience: Raised in Clayton, Oklahoma; employed as a construction worker
during the summers; employed by Caney Valley Public School as a
technology education instructor from 1989 to 1993; employed by Caney
Valley Public School as middle school principal from 1993 to 1996;
employed by Bartlesville Public School as assistant high school principal
from 1996 to present.

Professional Memberships: American Educational Research Association, National
Association of Secondary School Principals, Oklahoma Association of
Secondary Principals, Association for Supervision and Curriculum
Development, Oklahoma Directors of Special Services