



VALUES AND ETHICS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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LEADING WITH HEARTS AND MINDS: ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL STUDENTS

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Introduction

Leaders make decisions every day that impact the lives of others, making the act of leadership a moral issue. Foster (1986) explained that, "Each administrative decision carries with it a restructuring of human life: that is why administration at its heart is a resolution of moral dilemmas" (p.33). Leadership implies intentional decision-making to enact change, rather than merely to continue and support current systemic processes, and such decisions are rooted in a leader's definition of what are positive changes, as well as the ultimate effects of such changes. Views of what needs to be changed, the outcomes and methods of change, as well as who will benefit from such changes, and how, are based on one's values. A leader's system of values, or deeply held beliefs, is the ethical framework from which a leader develops a vision, defines and shapes the change process, and takes actions to make his or her vision a reality.

Leadership is not a solitary activity by definition. One is not a leader without followers, and so the ethical framework that guides a leader's decisions and actions always impacts those whom are being led. The influence of leaders on groups of people magnifies the impact and importance of leaders' ethics, particularly in a democratic society where leaders are expected to represent and express the shared values of followers. By stepping into educational leadership roles, school and district administrators accept responsibility for the "broader community welfare" of the students, teachers, and parents that

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schools serve (Marion 2005, p. 272). The values and resulting ethical frameworks that guide these leaders then become critical to the immediate community that they serve and, as students achieve or fail, the larger society.

As Zubay and Soltis (2005) point out, education, itself, is essentially a moral undertaking because, “it is concerned with the development of human beings and human interactions” (p. 3). Teachers and school administrators impact how young people make sense of themselves and their world, respond to others, and how to carry out their roles as citizens, employees, family members, and friends.

Educational leadership is becoming increasingly complex as American society becomes more diverse and schools are held responsible for multiple social tasks at the local, state, and federal levels. The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) focused school reform efforts on narrowing the achievement gap between students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds and diverse ethnic groups, as well as other student subgroup categories. The accountability systems, which developed in response to the NCLB legislation, have created ethical dilemmas for educational leaders, as well (Meier & Wood, 2004; Marshall & Oliva, 2010). Educational leaders must make decisions on which children are taught what (curriculum) and how (instruction), strategies for garnering input from parents and community members, methods for communicating current and desired educational results to all stakeholders (which is everyone—from students and parents to taxpayers and employers), and how to develop and implement change to ensure that all children gain functional use of what has been identified as essential skills and knowledge in order to increase equity of opportunity in adulthood. Complicating this already formidable load of responsibilities are the many competing views of what the process of schooling and the results of education, should be. With so many demands and so many influencing factors, educational leaders must have a clear understanding of what Kouzes and Posner (2007) call one’s own “voice” (p. 47-59), or personal guiding values, if they are to successfully navigate contradictions and conflicts to provide stable and positive leadership to improve schools and the educational experiences of all children.

This study examined the personal guiding values which shaped the ethical framework of 20

educational leaders who pursued their doctoral degrees in educational leadership at a Rocky Mountain university over a ten year period. By qualitatively analyzing the ethical platforms that these educators developed, the researchers hoped to shed light on which values and ethical frameworks school and district leaders have and are using to navigate the many and often competing demands they face in their daily lives. Such knowledge can advance the discussion of ethical leadership in the current complex educational arena, as well as perhaps point the way to a new lens through which to view the ethical behavior of educational leaders.

Ethical Frameworks

In the Western tradition, the discussion of ethics dates back to Plato (427-347 B. C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). The root of the word *ethics* is the Greek word *ethos*, “which translates to customs, conduct, or character” (Northouse 2010, p. 378). Values are more individualistic and personal, expressing individual choices or preferences (Strike et al., 2005). Moral principles, however, express a sense of duty and obligation to others and are shared by a group of people. Beliefs and values of what is right and what is wrong therefore provide the basis of discussion and agreement within a group as to what is considered moral by that group. These agreements on moral principles then provide a foundation for an ethical framework, which “provides a system of rules or principles that guide us in making decisions in a particular situation,” (Northouse, p. 378). For individuals and societies, ethical frameworks are group norms that define what is considered good or bad, moral or immoral, and thus guide our individual and collective actions.

From a teleological perspective, the outcome of an action determines how ethical the action is. The terms for how outcomes can be assessed vary. Ethical egoism places the most concern on one’s own well-being and self-interest and is viewed as the least desirable compass for a leader’s actions. Utilitarianism and altruism both focus on the well-being of others, rather than self-interest, and are considered more desirable ethical approaches for leaders.

A utilitarian perspective holds decisions and actions that result in the greatest good for the greatest number of people as the best or most moral decisions and actions. Utilitarianism can also be called the principle of benefit maximization (Strike et al., 2005)

where the overall results of a decision or action are the determining crucible, even if all do not receive equal benefits.

An altruistic perspective views actions that promote the best interest or welfare of others as the most moral. Strike et al. (2005) articulated a corollary of altruism, the Principle of Equal Respect, that requires people be treated as means rather than ends, are viewed as “free and rational moral agents,” and are viewed as having equal value (p. 17-18). Ethical actions based on the Principle of Equal Respect would be characterized by respect for the equal, intrinsic worth of each being and respect for each being’s freedom of choice.

Strike et al. (2005) also articulated two other, sometimes opposing, corollaries, which focus on the benefit to others as outcomes of actions. The Principle of Equal Treatment holds that “in any given circumstances, people who are the same in those respects relevant to how they are treated in those circumstances should receive equal treatment” (p. 55). Justifying efforts at addressing inequities is the Maximin Principle. Under this principle, inequalities are permissible when everyone benefits as a result of maximizing the welfare of those who typically receive a minimum share of the benefits - a perspective, which characterizes social justice efforts.

While a teleological criterion of behavior could be seen as justifying the infamous Machivellian approach of the ends justifying the means, a deontological criterion also weighs the morality of an action aside from the consequences it may generate. Doing the “right thing” would be determined by whether the action fulfilled a duty to others, did not infringe upon the rights of others, benefitted others, and was virtuous in itself (Northouse 2010). Examples of virtuous actions include “telling the truth, keeping promises, being fair, and respecting others” (p. 381).

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) present multiple paradigms for the analysis of ethical behavior. These include the ethic of justice, the ethic of critique, the ethic of care, and the ethic of the profession.

Based on a liberal, democratic tradition, the ethic of justice is defined as a “commitment to human freedom” and “procedures for making decisions that respect the equal sovereignty of people” (Strike, 1991, p. 415). The emphasis on the role of the individual in relation to the larger society can vary,

however. The work of scholars such as Hobbes, Kant, Rawls, and Kohlberg places “the individual as central and social relationships as a type of social contract where the individual, using human reason, gives up some rights for the good of the whole or for social justice” (Shapiro & Stefkovich 2005, p. 11). The thoughts of Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Dewey see “society, rather than the individual, as central and seeks to teach individuals how to behave throughout their life within communities” (p.11). The ethic of justice frequently serves as the basis for legal principles and formal policies because of its analytic and rational approach to judging human behavior and interactions.

The ethic of critique is rooted in critical theory and emphasizes ethical behavior as that which addresses inequities among individuals and groups, related to social class and other factors which impact one’s power and voice, as well as the ensuing treatment, resources, and other benefits. The ethic of critique “asks educators to go beyond questioning and critical analysis to examine and grapple with those possibilities that could enable all children, whatever their social class, race, or gender, to have opportunities to grow, learn, and achieve. Such a process should lead to the development of options related to important concepts such as oppression, power, privilege, authority, voice, language, and empowerment,” according to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005, p. 16).

The ethic of care is rooted in the work of feminist scholars, such as Gilligan and Noddings. The ethic of care urges educators to nurture the emotional and moral development of children rather than stress academic achievement as the main or sole purpose of schooling. This ethic places students at the center of ethical decision-making and focuses on relational values such as trust, loyalty, belonging, self-worth, and self-efficacy and the needs and desires of young people in schools.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) add a fourth ethic of profession which integrates the other three ethics, based on an educational leader’s examination of his or her own values and the ethical codes set forth by various professional organizations. Shapiro and Stefkovich recognize that there may be conflicts among the three previously discussed ethical frameworks, so the best interest of the students should be foremost in determining the actions taken by educational leaders.

The Evolution of Educational Leadership as an Ethical Endeavor

Scholars of educational leadership since the mid-1990's have increasingly emphasized the moral or ethical aspect of leadership notes Northouse (2005). In the early 1970s, Greenleaf advanced the concept of servant leadership, which focused on how leaders take care of the needs of followers and thus become leaders. Sergiovanni (1992) also advocated for servant leadership in his book, *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*. Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999), Russell and Stone (2002), Sandjaya and Sarros (2002), and Blanchard (2003) have all explored the various dimensions and manifestations of the concept of servant leadership. Various instruments have also been constructed to attempt to define or measure servant leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

The influence of values and the related issue of moral actions of leaders are also discussed by a number of educational scholars with only a sampling noted here. Marion (2002) discusses morality within the context of the control exercised by leaders over followers in an organization. Northouse (2005) prefaces his chapter on leadership ethics with the observation that, unlike previous chapters that focused on "one unified leadership theory or approach," the topic of ethical behavior is multifaceted and divided among many viewpoints. Northouse also identifies five principles identified in the research that define the behavior of ethical leaders, those being respect for others, serving others, showing justice, manifesting honesty, and building community. Lashway (2006) presents general moral principles and a series of questions to guide ethical decision-making. Matthews and Crow (2010) draw upon servant and moral leadership to support the development of professional learning communities by school leaders. Fullan (2003, 2010) stresses the need for moral leadership at all levels of the educational system for school reform to succeed. Many texts also correlate the topics covered by authors with the five Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, one of which is ethical behavior on the part of school and district leaders (see for example Hoy and Miskel, 2005).

In 1997, several major educational organizations including the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National Association of Elementary School

Principals (NAESP), and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) worked under the auspices of ISLLC, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), to develop educational leadership standards. The fifth standard deals with ethics, stating that "a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner" (Green 2005, p. 6). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration adopted the ISLLC standards as accreditation standards, effectively holding educational administration preparation programs responsible for not only developing pre-service educational leaders' awareness of ethical concepts and frameworks but also for developing their ability to apply such concepts and frameworks to make ethical decisions that would positively impact the experiences of students.

Based upon the imperative of educational leadership preparation and development of ethical awareness and decision-making, this study was conducted to identify the various values and frameworks that practicing educational leaders espouse as the basis for making ethical decisions. The statement of ethics developed by students in a educational leadership doctoral program at a Rocky Mountain university over a decade reflect a melding of the ethics of justice, critique and care, as described by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), and an orientation toward altruism in their responses.

Methods

This qualitative study examined the ethical platforms created by 20 doctoral students in a Rocky Mountain educational leadership preparation program over a ten-year period. All students enrolled in the program over the ten years were invited to submit their education platforms, created as an assignment in a doctoral seminar course in the program, to the researchers for analysis, with disclosure of the researchers' intents and methodology as well as an opt out option.

In their first doctoral seminar course, each student was asked to create and share a personal code of ethics that guides his/her behavior and to discuss the importance of this code to him/her as an educational leader. The codes or platforms of ethics were to be a list of personally held beliefs and values that could be drawn from readings, professional association norms, and personal experiences. The students were also

asked to reflect on how their beliefs and values guided their behaviors as educational leaders and the importance of defining one's ethical framework.

Of the 47 students who completed the assignment over the research time period, twenty students returned their educational platforms via email to the researchers thereby resulting in a 43% participation rate of possible subjects in this study. These participants included seven males and 13 females, who each held various education positions, including 11 principals, five district-level administrators, one counselor, and three teachers.

Each researcher using open coding system and NVIVO7 software analyzed the documents separately. The data were also coded using Shapiro and Stafkovich's (2005) definitions of justice, critique, and care. The researchers compared coding to increase the reliability of interpretation of the data. Themes in the open coded data were then identified, as well as frequency of themes in and among responses. Trends in ethical orientation were examined regarding gender, level of school leadership, and the date of the platform creation in relationship to major educational policy events, particularly the 2001 No Child Left Behind reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act.

Results

Teleological (Utilitarianism and Altruism) and Deontological Views

The responses of the educational leaders in the study were overwhelmingly focused on the teleological aspect of ethical behavior. Respondents concentrated on what their decisions and actions would result in, particularly for those to whom they were responsible (students and teachers). Of the 90 open codes identified, 68 (or 76%) were focused on the outcomes of their behaviors. Such codes as "passion" referred to the desire to generate passion in students for learning. Twenty-two of the identified open codes referred to deontological views of behaviors as inherently good and desirable, such as acting calmly or with humility, integrity, objectivity, or kindness. These responses tended to focus on the individual's behavior, but often in relation to how that behavior would impact others. One respondent explained, "I am not any good to myself or others if I fail to maintain balance in my life." None of the responses reflected an ego-centric perspective.

Altruism was reflected more strongly in the data than utilitarianism, as can be seen in Table 1, with the desire to improve the situation of others and establish a caring environment identified in 73% of the 90 open coded categories. As one respondent discussed the value that she places on people, she explained that her guiding principles are to, "strive to be conscious of and vigilant about our larger humanity and global world. In every situation, seek not to promote any act of thought, word, or deed by any individual or group that will perpetuate, long term or short term, the destruction of human dignity...Human welfare must pervade individual values, preferences, and freedoms." One male principal identified "love" as, "the attitude that, in a healthy manner, places the needs and wants of others above my own." Care for oneself, as noted in the quote above, was only viewed as legitimate if it enabled the individual to do good for others so even the responses that involved self-care were essentially altruistic. (See Table 1)

The respondents when discussing legal obligations and accountability requirements expressed utilitarian views more frequently. One public school principal responded that, "We have laws, policies, and procedures to guide us through our work and, because we are a public business, I have a responsibility to follow those guidelines." Regarding accountability requirements, another public school principal explained, "Schools belong to the communities they serve...Educators are accountable to the communities and need to share achievement results with them, whether these results are favorable or not." Another respondent vowed to, "professionally and legally manage the public assets", which reflects a feeling of stewardship of community resources, too.

Three doctoral students specifically named stewardship as one of their guiding ethical principles. One district-level administrator explained the following:

Stewardship is key to my vision of what a leader should be and model. My hope is that I have practiced and facilitated stewardship, viewing leadership not as an authoritative role using coercive power, but as a willingness to lead without using rewards, punishment, or direct command to get things done....It is necessary to understand that stewardship relies on the empowerment of staff, helping them to take responsibility for themselves, the success of their learners, and ultimately the success of the school.

Critique	Justice	Care	
Accessibility	Accountability	Appreciation	Life-long Learning
Advocacy	Attention to Detail	Balance	Listening
Awareness	Benefit Maximization	Calmness	Love
Change	Citizenship	Care	Loyalty
Courage	Consequences	Character	Moral Obligation
Cultural Proficiency	Consistency	Collaboration	Motivation
Diversity	Data-based Decision Making	Communication	Optimism
Empowerment	Democracy	Compassion	Passion
Equity	Excellence	Confidentiality	Patience
High Expectations	Fairness	Dignity	Persistence
Non-exploitation	Formative Use of Data	Do No Harm	Protect
Opportunities	Fundamental Rights	Empathy	Real Life (experiences for students)
Parental Involvement	Golden Rule	Enthusiasm	Reflection
Risk Taking	Instructional Leader	Faith	Relationships
School Improvement	Judgment	Family	Respect
Social Justice	Legal Obligation	Forgiveness	Responsibility
	Logical Positivism	Grace	Self-Belief
	Objectivity	Gratefulness	Student Interest
	Protection of Rights	Hermeneutics	Support
	Public Servant	Honesty	Support of Student Learning
	Stewardship	Honor	Teacher Support
	Transparency	Hope Humility	Trust
	Truth	Integrity	Understanding
	Workforce Development	Kindness	Value People
			Vision

Table 1. Open coding classification according to the Ethics of Critique, Justice, and Care.

Twelve participants also identified their role as a public servant as guiding their actions and decisions. When these respondents identified their decisions as based on the desired outcomes of their actions, those outcomes consistently reflected a desire to fulfill obligations to others.

Ethics of Critique, Justice, and Care

Each of the twenty educational leaders in the study expressed values and beliefs that were consistent with the aforementioned three ethics in the delineation of their codes of ethics. Each respondent explicitly discussed the principles of the ethics of care and justice, and the ethic of critique was directly discussed by all but one female participant in the study. The following Chart depicts the frequency with which the participants expressed values consistent with each of these ethical approaches.

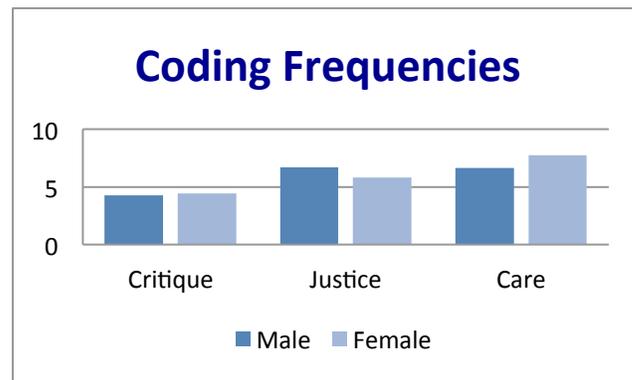


Chart 1. Average coding frequencies for the ethics of critique, justice, and care by gender.

More specifically, sixteen open coding categories reflected a desire to change societal inequities, including references to cultural proficiency, removal of barriers to learning, and advocacy for all children, and were classified as reflecting the ethic of critique. Examples of coded responses classified as reflecting the ethic of critique are provided in Table 2.

Coding Examples for the Ethic of Critique	
	Sample Respondent Coded Comments
Accessibility	"Alleviate physical and/or emotional challenges."
Advocacy	"Help those who cannot help themselves and seek to increase the resourcefulness of others who are able."
Awareness	"We must always be aware of opportunities that present themselves."
Change	"If, as a system, we are providing education that is not meeting the individual needs of our students, as leaders we must shepherd change." "Correct those policies, regulations, and laws that work in opposition to sound education practice."
Courage	"Never limit our thinking based on fear or failure."
Cultural Proficiency	"Become Culturally Proficient citizens."
Diversity	"Focused on supporting the needs of a diverse staff." "Students possess diverse learning styles that require building principals and teachers to engage them appropriately at their academic and social level, in a culturally responsive manner."
Empowerment	"Empowerment of others--giving my colleagues, and even students, a sense of freedom to choose their behavior or course of action"
Equity	"Educational inequity seems to be one of my passions." "Assure equity."
High Expectations	"Maintain high expectations in order to develop the capacity of others."
Non-exploitation	"I will not exploit my position or others for personal or professional gain."
Opportunities	"Educational leaders have both the moral and legal obligations to assure that each student is provided appropriate opportunities to reach his/her potential for academic success."
Parental Involvement	"Parents must be involved in the learning and growth of the whole child."
Risk Taking	"Excellence is the result of a courageous pursuit." "We must empower others to take risks and grow in order to reach their potential."
School Improvement	"Become better than ever, no matter how good we ever were."
Social Justice	"Strive always to be a strong, intentional, and reflective voice for human morality, for what is right and just, and for those who are silences in a world wherein the rights of a privileged few too often mute the weak and moderate the human whole."

Table 2. Ethic of Critique coding examples.

Responses in this category also included a focus on change, such as the respondent who felt that, “universal education is not about the status quo; it allows us to responsibly call for change by inviting all parties to the discussion. If, as a system, we are providing education that is not meeting the need of our students, as leaders we must shepherd change.” Addressing inequities, empowering students and parents, and embracing diversity were also dominant responses that reflected the ethic of critique. All but one female and all of the males in the study espoused values consistent with the ethic of critique with each gender mentioning such values an average of four times in their platforms.

All of the respondents espoused ethical positions consistent with the ethic of justice. Examples of coded responses classified as reflecting the ethic of justice are provided in Table 3 (see over). The males mentioned values related to the ethic of justice an average of nearly seven times in their codes of ethics compared to 5.8 times that such values were discussed by females in their codes of ethics. Comments included a large number of statements vowing to uphold the law, student rights, and public mandates to “ensure that all people are treated fairly.” One respondent bridged the ethic of justice and critique by declaring that, “Educational leaders must uphold the principles of democracy and social justice to create an educated workforce”.

Coding Examples for the Ethic of Justice	
	Sample Respondent Coded Comments
Accountability	"Educators are accountable to the communities they serve."
Attention to Detail	"Leaders must also pay attention to details so that everyone is treated justly."
Benefit Maximization	"They must carefully balance the need to maximize the benefits for the whole group with the needs of an individual and/or minority group."
Citizenship	"Our educational system must create strong and productive citizens."
Consequences	"Students must learn from the consequences of their actions."
Consistency	"I must be able to evaluate what should or should not change; I must have a 'changeless core' as my compass."
Data-based Decision Making	"My decisions must be based on data, not personal opinion."
Democracy	"Educational leaders must uphold the principals of democracy and social justice to create an educated workforce."
Excellence	"Have high expectations in order to develop the capacity of others."
Fairness	"Policies and systems help ensure that all people are treated fairly."
Formative Use of Data	"Individual student data should be used not to label students, but to provide insight in how to help each student grow and learn."
Fundamental Rights	"A commitment to universal education is a commitment to every individual, to the social and economic health of both the local and national communities in which we live." "Education is a fundamental right."
Golden Rule	"Practice the Golden Rule at all times."
Instructional Leader	"My primary goal is to be an instructional leader and see that the district's curriculum is successfully followed."
Judgment	"Educational leaders must make judgments base on their knowledge of laws and policies, as well as their experience." "Educational leaders are decision makers."
Legal Obligation	"As an educator, I have an obligation to know the applicable laws, regulations, and policies that govern my work. I must be familiar with and uphold the board of education policies for my district." "Honor and uphold all written policies, contracts, and procedures."
Logical Positivism	"Support decisions based on logic derived from research."
Objectivity	"It requires that I give myself time to distance myself from my emotions."
Protection of Rights	"Protect the fundamental, civil, and constitutional rights of all individuals."
Public Servant	"Being a public servant also means not taking advantage of my position for personal gains, favors, or profit."
Stewardship	"Stewardship is key to my vision of what leaders should be and model."
Transparency	"Be transparent. It allows people to see and understand your thought process when making a decision. It also sends the message that you have nothing to hide."
Truth	"I will strive always to discover and to uphold the universal truth that binds all humanity and the world we inhabit."
Workforce Development	"Schools must prepare an educated workforce to ensure our nation's stability."

Table 3. Ethic of Justice coding examples.

Four of the respondents expressed a decidedly logical positivistic view of their obligation to make decisions based on data and by doing so, ensuring that the decisions are fair and appropriate. A male principal said that it was his duty to “support decisions based on logic, derived from research” while another female district-level administrator stated her commitment to “assess learning using multiple

relevant and fair assessment tools.” Data was considered to be almost a form of “truth” to guide decisions for these leaders.

Five of the educational leaders in the study also stressed truth as a fundamental component of their code of ethics. One respondent described her “personally compelling mission” to “strive always to

discover and to uphold the universal truth that binds all humanity and the world we inhabit.” The other four respondents linked the idea of truth with either honesty or fairness.

Over half of the statements coded in this study reflected an aspect of the ethic of care, describing the physical and emotional climate, conditions, and opportunities that the respondents wanted to create in their schools. Examples of coded responses classified as reflecting the ethic of care are provided in Table 4.

While a majority of the statements focus on students, the well-being and growth of teachers and parents were also included as goals or responsibilities of the educational leaders in the study. All participants in the study discussed holding values consistent with the ethic of care. The frequency of the discussion of values related to the ethic of care was an average of 7.72 times for each female respondent compared to a frequency of 6.64 times for male respondents.

Coding Examples of the Ethic of Care	
	Sample Respondent Coded Comments
Appreciation	"Let us try to recognize the precious nature of each day' (The 14th Dalai Lama). A reminder to myself that even the most difficult days are worth celebrating."
Balance	"I am not any good to myself or others if I fail to maintain balance in my life."
Calmness	"No matter how crazy things get, I always need to project a sense of calm and control."
Care	"We must care passionately about what we do and the students in our care."
Character	"We must consistently do those things that are right, not because we are judged by others, but because at the end of the day we are judged by ourselves."
Collaboration	"As a school staff, everyone has value and plays an equal part in our success or failure." "As an educator, I know I cannot do the work alone."
Communication	"Communication is a key component for any successful endeavor."
Compassion	"I will be compassionate because all children can learn." "Application of policy should be tempered by humanity."
Confidentiality	"Recognize the need for confidentiality."
Dignity	"Treat everyone with dignity."
Do No Harm	"'Above all, do no harm' (Hippocratic Oath)." "In every situation, seek not to promote or to protect any action of thought, word, or deed by any individual or group that will perpetuate, long or short term, the destruction of human dignity and welfare."
Empathy	"The ability to feel what others feel;" "Empathy leads to cautious judgment."
Enthusiasm	"You have to love what you do, every day."
Faith	"Faith in our beliefs and judgments helps us to follow moral codes of ethics while serving others."
Family	"Cherish and nurture family relationships."
Forgiveness	"Be forgiving of yourself and others. Mistakes are universal. Find a way to forgive those who have hurt you."
Grace	"I acknowledge the grace through which I lead and serve others."
Gratefulness	"I am a strong believer in finding the best in others and in any situation, so it is easy for me to thank and be thankful."
Hermeneutics	"Seek input from every possible perspective and strive for consensus-based decision making whenever feasible."
Honesty	"I carefully consider and choose my words in order to make sure that what I express is as close to the truth as possible." "Promise to be honest and truthful."
Honor	"Honor is an essential quality in a leader." "Honor others."
Hope	"Have an attitude of hope and positive outcomes." "Approach each day as a new day, full of hope and potential."
Humility	"A true leader must be humble enough to ask others' opinions and to share the credit for accomplishments." "Humility implies being able to accept criticism as well as compliments with grace."
Integrity	"Educational leaders are public servants; they are held to a higher standard and must behave with utmost integrity."
Kindness	"We must show kindness to all."
Life-long Learning	"I have an obligation to continue my own professional learning and growth."

Listening	"Listening--not only with my ears but with my heart as well."
Love	"Love--the attitude that, in a healthy manner, places the needs and wants of others above my own. This love is not a feeling, often equated with infatuation, but an attitude that places great value on others as persons, not objects."
Loyalty	"Loyalty to policy and practices that promote student achievement and well being." "Demonstrate and earn loyalty."
Moral Obligation	"Educational leaders have both the moral and legal obligations to assure that each and every student is provided appropriate opportunities to reach his/her potential for academic success."
Motivation	"It is up to me to be the motivator within the total school community." "Inspire students and staff to reach their highest potential."
Optimism	"I view the world with positivism and expect good things will happen."
Passion	"Enthusiasm and passion for educating ALL children." "If you cannot be passionate about what you do, find something else to do."
Patience	"The ability to wait...Patience implies the willingness to wait until the goal is achieved, remembering that change happens slowly."
Persistence	"Never give up on a single student."
Protect	"It is my responsibility to protect the hearts and minds of those within my care, children and adults."
Real Life	It is important to remember that events in the classroom must mirror real life experiences if we truly want students to be prepared for life after academia."
Reflection	"Fulfill any and all duties and responsibilities with positivism and energy along with careful forethought and continuous reflection."
Relationships	"The foundation of all educational work is the relationships we build and sustain."
Respect	"Operate from the stand whereby each member of the community brings something of value to the whole." "Respect for my own and others unique gifts."
Responsibility	"Educational leaders assume the incredible responsibility of ensuring that every child learns and has the knowledge and skills to become a productive member of society."
Self-Belief	"You have to first believe in yourself to be a leader."
Student Interest	"I need to be student-centered and make all decisions in the best interests of students."
Support	"Educational leaders must dedicate themselves to supporting others, students, teachers, and parents."
Support of Student Learning	"Regardless of the students' past history, successes, or characteristics, we must serve them and serve their needs. All students can and should be expected to learn."
Teacher Support	"I believe we should give teachers the support, training, and funding to achieve success in the classroom."
Trust	"Honesty is necessary to build trust with others."
Understanding	"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."
Value People	"It lets people know the value in which they are held, not only by my words but my actions as well."
Vision	"The challenge of an exemplary leader is to create, guide, and communicate a vision of what a school should be."

Table 4. Ethic of Care coding examples.

Most of the fifty codes identified by the researchers that reflect an ethic of care involved virtues that the educational leaders in the study wanted to teach or provide for students, such as dignity, empathy, enthusiasm, forgiveness, hope, kindness, and trust. One public school principal explained that, to him, empathy enabled him “to use that understanding in dealing with [students and teachers] professionally.” “Appreciation” was viewed as a sentiment that was necessary for educational leaders to convey to both students and teachers so that they felt “motivated” and “respected.” “Honesty” and “integrity” were identified as essential for building “trust” among all in the educational community.

Many of these same values were viewed by the respondents as essential for them to possess in order to treat others that they came in contact with, or were responsible for, appropriately. Being a role model in demonstrating a “passion” and “enthusiasm” for learning and growth was identified as an important obligation of the educators in the study. The ability to be a reflective practitioner also was identified as necessary to promote a caring school environment, ensuring that decisions are made with “careful forethought.” One school administrator explained that she wanted to, “be compassionate and patient because all children can learn.” Another respondent pointed out the reciprocal relationship of acting on and promoting values by striving to, “demonstrate and earn loyalty.” Forgiveness included owning one’s

mistakes, as well as recognizing that everyone does and will make mistakes.

Responses that related to the ethic of care also included the nurturing of family relationships, listening to others, seeking diverse input on decisions, collaboration, and building strong relationships with all participants in the educational process. While only seven respondents used the term “student-centered,” each respondent articulated the belief that “every child deserves to reach their full potential in life.” As one female school administrator explained, “As a principal, I have been able to touch the lives of other human beings by caring about them and helping them see themselves grow—helping them to see how they are special and helping them to grow into their human potential.”

Themes also emerged that expressed an orientation toward being action-orientated and focused on fulfilling one’s own responsibilities. The responsibility for taking purposeful action was discussed by 15 of the participants and discussed more frequently by males in the study (an average of 5.75 times per response for 4 male respondents) than the females in the study (an average of 2.73 times per response for 11 female respondents). Concern and responsibility toward others were identified by all but two female participants in the study as a guiding principle, with a frequency of 3.5 times per platform for the 18 participants articulating this value. These values flowed throughout the three ethics, with a slightly greater (more frequent) emphasis on taking action in order to enact social change in the coding categories related to the ethic of critique.

Conclusion

Although educational leaders are required by current accountability systems to focus on student academic achievement, the responses of the educational leaders in this study show that they are quite cognizant of the need for students to be motivated, feel respected and valued, and have a learning atmosphere where communication among all involved in the educational process is open, honest, frequent, and in good faith. While the sample of educational leaders in this study is admittedly small, it provides a window into how educational leaders are striving to balance the purpose of schooling between academic achievement and the growth of the whole child, socially and emotionally, as well as intellectually. While the fairness of testing, the ethical use of data, and adherence to local, state, and federal laws and

policies were increasingly discussed by respondents as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the associated accountability systems were implemented, the emphasis on providing a caring environment and the modeling of virtuous behavior did not decrease. From the responses in this study, it appears that today’s educational leaders do not take an “either/or” approach to the purpose of schooling, but rather try to integrate demands for academic achievement with a caring focus on the needs of students.

The responses of the educational leaders in this study also reflect an acute awareness of the inequities that exist in society that may be perpetuated by elements of the current process of schooling. The desire to bring about change was frequently linked to the addressing of inequities and the need for all children to learn, achieve, and succeed for the betterment of society, as well as those students who may be viewed as disadvantaged by socioeconomic status, race, language, or gender. All educational leaders in the study noted the awareness and commitment to take action to address inequities, even before NCLB was adopted or fully implemented.

The integration of the three ethics of critique, justice, and care demonstrate the desire and commitment of educational leaders to lead not just with their mind, but also with their heart. Values are nebulous concepts that vary in meaning with each individual, however the reoccurring identification of core values such as integrity, fairness, service, stewardship, respect, and relationship building appear to form the basis of what may be a professional ethical framework. Additional research is needed with a larger sample of educational leaders to identify a core set of values that, taken together, can form a practical ethical framework that assists educational leaders in responding to the often competing purposes of schooling to better serve both the larger society and those who have special needs.

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