

PERCEIVED, DESIRED AUTONOMY, AND  
LOCUS OF CONTROL OF PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

by

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Perceived, Desired Autonomy, And Locus Of Control of Public And

Independent School Principals: A Comparative Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare two groups, public and independent school principals, on measures of perceived and desired autonomy, and locus of control. The rationale for the study is that the principal is viewed as critical to school effectiveness; much of the literature reviewed espouses principals as instructional leaders, some of it recommends a more administrative leadership role, but virtually all recent literature accords a high degree of influence to the principal. In the review of literature I point out that public and independent schools have been compared on a variety of measures with some researchers suggesting greater success in the independent schools, and that independent school principals and public school principals work in different environments with different governance structures and different external controls or influence. Autonomy is described by many researchers as a factor in leadership theory.

Central questions in this thesis relate to the degree of autonomy perceived to be held by public and independent school principals, the degree of autonomy desired by both groups, the congruence between perceived and desired autonomy, and the locus of control of each group. Demographic variables of sex, enrolment of school, and age, perceived and desired autonomy scores, and locus of control scores on the three subscales, "internal", "others", and "chance", were entered into a multiple regression to determine if there were any correlations.

Thirty-eight public school principals and 37 independent school principals randomly sampled, were asked to complete two

questionnaires, "Autonomy in Decision-making" developed by the researcher, and the "I,P, & C Scales" developed by Levenson. Statistical analysis revealed significant differences in the perceived autonomy of the two groups, but no significant difference in desired autonomy. Both groups scored highest on the internal locus of control scale. Demographic variables were not significant in their effect on perceived, desired autonomy, or locus of control.

The results of this study indicate clear differences between perceptions of public and independent school administrators. Principals of independent schools perceive themselves to be much more autonomous than public school principals. The possibility that perception of autonomy might influence the nature of leadership by school principals is a factor that should be considered when developing policy at both the local and provincial level. The literature review supports the recommendation that policies should provide more autonomy to principals, especially those in the public school system.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                   |  |     |
|-------------------|--|-----|
| Approval Page     |  | ii  |
| Abstract          |  | iii |
| Acknowledgment    |  | v   |
| Table of Contents |  | vi  |
| List of Tables    |  | ix  |
| Chapter I.        | Introduction                                       | 1   |
|                   | The Problem  | 2   |
|                   | Rationale  | 2   |
|                   | Objectives   | 3   |
|                   | Significance of the Study                          | 4   |
|                   | Definition of terms                                | 4   |
|                   | Delimitations                                      | 5   |
|                   | Organization of the Thesis                         | 5   |
| Chapter II        | Review of the Literature                           | 7   |
|                   | Historical Perspective                             | 7   |
|                   | Coleman Report                                     | 8   |
|                   | Principal as Instructional<br>Leader               | 9   |
|                   | What Principals Do                                 | 10  |
|                   | Principal as Administrative<br>Leader              | 12  |
|                   | Principals Do Make A Difference                    | 13  |
|                   | Vision of the Principal                            | 15  |
|                   | Principal as Leader: The Importance<br>of Autonomy | 15  |
|                   | Public School Principals:<br>Autonomous or Not?    | 22  |

|             |   |    |
|-------------|---|----|
|             | Public Schools versus Independent Schools                 | 24 |
|             | Autonomy of Independent Schools and Principals            | 25 |
|             | Public versus Private Sector Administration               | 28 |
|             | Locus of Control and Leadership                           | 29 |
|             | Rationale for the Study                                   | 32 |
|             | Major Hypotheses  | 32 |
| Chapter III | Method and Procedure                                      | 35 |
|             | Population and Sample                                     | 35 |
|             | Design of the Study                                       | 37 |
|             | Limitations   | 37 |
|             | Variables   | 38 |
|             | Research Hypotheses                                       | 38 |
|             | Instrumentation   | 39 |
|             | Validity and Reliability-<br>Autonomy and Decision-making | 40 |
|             | Reliability: I, P, & C Scales                             | 41 |
|             | Procedure   | 42 |
|             | Data Analysis   | 44 |
|             | Respondents   | 45 |
|             | Demographic Data  | 45 |
| Chapter IV  | Findings (Analysis and Evaluation)                        | 51 |
|             | Perceived Autonomy  | 52 |
|             | Desired Autonomy  | 55 |
|             | Degree of Congruence                                      | 55 |
|             | Locus of Control  | 55 |



|             |  |    |
|-------------|--|----|
|             | Funding and Perceived Autonomy   | 60 |
|             | Demographic Variables  | 60 |
|             | Interviews   | 60 |
| Chapter V   | Summary, Conclusions, and<br>Recommendations   | 64 |
|             | Summary  | 64 |
|             | Rationale  | 64 |
|             | Methodology  | 65 |
|             | Conclusions  | 65 |
|             | Interpretations and Limitations  | 67 |
|             | Recommendations  | 68 |
| Appendix A. | I, P, & C Scales   | 72 |
| Appendix B  | Autonomy in Decision-making  | 76 |
| Appendix C  | Permission to use I, P & C Scales  | 81 |
| Appendix D  | Demographic Questions  | 83 |
| Appendix E  | Covering letters to respondents and<br>request to Superintendents for<br>permission to distribute. | 85 |
| Appendix F  | Second follow-up letter  | 90 |
| Appendix G  | Timeline   | 92 |
| Appendix H  | Focussed Interview Questions   | 94 |
| References  |  | 96 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|          |  |    |
|----------|--|----|
| Table 1  | Responses by Group: Independent (Group 1) and Public School Principals (Group 2) who completed questionnaires.                       | 47 |
| Table 2  | Age of Respondents: Independent and Public School Principals.  | 47 |
| Table 3  | Size of Schools (Pupils enrolled): Independent Schools (Group 1) and Public Schools (Group 2).                                       | 48 |
| Table 4  | Organization of Schools: Independent Schools (Group 1) and Public Schools (Group 2).   | 48 |
| Table 5  | Years of experience as principals: Independent Schools (Group 1) and Public Schools (Group 2).                                       | 49 |
| Table 6  | Level of formal education of Independent School Principals (Group 1) and of Public School Principals (Group 2)                       | 49 |
| Table 7  | Instructional assignment: hours spent teaching by Independent School Principals (Group 1) and by Public School Principals (Group 2). | 50 |
| Table 8  | Gender of Independent School Principals (Group 1) and of Public School Principals (Group 2).   | 50 |
| Table 9  | Comparison of the mean responses of independent and public school principals to questions of perceived autonomy.                     | 53 |
| Table 10 | Individual Scores: Perceived Autonomy<br>Desired Autonomy  | 56 |
| Table 11 | Comparison of the congruence between perceived and desired autonomy in the two groups.   | 57 |

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of schools, public and independent, and the contributions that school based administrators can and do make towards their effectiveness are areas that have received extensive study and discussion during the past two decades. As well during this time research has occurred in the behavioural science field concerning the importance of locus of control. Leadership theorists have begun to consider the importance of locus of control to leadership and in addition have examined the importance of autonomy to decision-makers. There is very strong support for the notion that principals are of paramount importance in an effective school; there is evidence of a relationship between autonomy, leadership potency, and school renewal; and there is some support for the notion that locus of control is an important psychological construct related to leadership.

Principals, particularly of public schools, are currently working within a complex bureaucratic structure of educational governance that appears to limit autonomy in many decisional areas and therefore might reduce leadership potency. There is evidence that principals are frustrated in their attempt to be the curricular and instructional leaders that much of the literature encourages them to be and that their frustration comes

primarily from having too many maintenance demands placed upon them, and too many "system constraints" (Bredeson, 1985).

### The Problem

The central problems addressed in this research are: what degree of autonomy is thought by public and independent school administrators to be desirable; what degree of autonomy do administrators in each sector perceive that they have; how congruent or divergent are the two (desired autonomy and perceived autonomy) in each sector; how do the two sectors (public and independent) compare? The study also measures the locus of control of two groups, principals of independent schools and principals of public schools. This measure might be of significant interest on its own but as well it will put into context some of the data related to perceived and desired autonomy. It is a variable which could be closely correlated with perceived or desired autonomy.

### Rationale

The rationale for asking these questions develops out of a review of several strands of literature related to education, public and private, and leadership, educational and otherwise. Firstly, there is an extensive body of literature addressing the principal's significant role in effective schools/schooling, secondly there are some research studies which suggest that private or independent schools are more effective than public schools on a wide range of measures, and thirdly there is a body of literature which examines the construct of locus of

control. Finally there is in the literature support for the proposition that autonomy and the perception of autonomy allow and possibly promote effective leadership.

The underlying motive which has driven this research project can be expressed this way: if the literature indicates that autonomy and the perception of autonomy affects leadership potency, then in light of the effective schools research and the importance it places on the principal, policy decisions should attempt to protect, or perhaps even increase the autonomy of the principal. Given the fact that some researchers claim that independent schools are more effective than public schools, if it could be shown that there is a significant difference in the autonomy perceived by public and independent school administrators, policymakers should consider the appropriateness of policies which constrain the autonomy of principals.

#### Objectives

This research project should reveal whether school administrators in either the public or independent sectors have an internal or external locus of control. It should reveal whether there are differences between the public and independent school principals perceived and desired degrees of autonomy. By looking at administrators' perceptions of and desires for autonomy this research project should raise questions about policies developed in either the public or independent schools arenas, and in doing so perhaps guide policymakers toward eupsychian management models (Maslow, 1965) and more effective

school systems.

### Significance of the Study

As implied earlier the bureaucratic structures of the public school system are complex, the structures in which independent schools operate a little less so but catching up. In fact many public school administrators wish to have regulations imposed on independent schools and pressure for such regulations is also being exerted by a large majority of the U.S. public (Blaunstein, 1986). Closer to home it was the wish of the majority of respondents in Erickson's study, C.O.F.I.S.- A Study of the Consequences of Funding Independent Schools in British Columbia, (1979). Indeed, along with public funding of independent schools in British Columbia, came increased regulations for those independent schools applying for funds (School Support [Independent] Act, Queen's Printer, 1981). It is important to question the pressure to regulate independent schools. Perhaps the pressure should be to deregulate public schools. A major question addressed in this research is whether or not independent school principals perceive themselves as having more autonomy than their public school counterparts.

### Definition of Terms

"Autonomy" is defined as freedom from direct external control (Gordon, 1984, p.169).

"Locus of control" refers to "the extent to which persons perceive 'contingency relationships between their actions and their outcomes'" (Rotter, 1966, cited in Rothberg, 1981, p.10).

Levenson describes the locus of control construct as a "generalized expectancy to perceive reinforcement either as contingent upon one's own behaviours (internal control) or as the result of forces beyond one's control and due to chance, fate, or powerful others (external control) (Levenson, 1981, p.15).

The terms independent school and private school should be thought of as synonymous for the purposes of this study.

### Delimitations

This study was not designed to determine either a causal or correlational relationship between the autonomy of a principal and the effectiveness of their school. Neither will it determine any relationship between locus of control and effective leadership or effective schools. The literature review will support the possibility of such relationships, however no other claims can be made on the basis of this study. There is no attempt to compare the effectiveness of public and independent schools, or to identify schools which are more or less effective than others. There is no claim to the actual degree of autonomy possessed by administrators in either sector. The conclusions in this study could be applied with confidence in British Columbia, but differences in governance in other provinces or in other countries might alter them considerably.

### Organization of the Thesis

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter 1 describes the problem and provides a rationale for its examination. Chapter 2 includes literature reviews of the several strands mentioned

earlier in this chapter: literature relating to the principal's role in effective schools/schooling; literature comparing independent schools with public schools; literature relating to locus of control, autonomy, and leadership potency. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology. Chapter 4 presents the statistical analysis of the research findings. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the findings and their implications for policy development and for future research.



## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature will provide a historical perspective of the principal's role in school effectiveness, and will examine in more depth recent work in this area. Principals' roles and constraints on those roles will be examined. Comparisons between public and independent schools and between administrative roles in each sector will be described. A rationale for the study and an introduction to the research hypotheses will conclude the chapter.

#### Historical Perspective

Viewing the principal of a school as essential to the success of that school is nothing new. Recognition of the importance of the principal's leadership was a major impetus in the formation of the National Association of Elementary Principals in 1921 (Gross & Herriot, 1965), and has been visited and revisited in the literature over the years. Reavis and Judd(1942) viewed the principal as an important instructional leader as did Reavis (1953), and Spain, Drummond and Goodlad, (1956). Gross & Herriot (1965) noted the potential the principal has "for directly influencing the type and quality of education young people are to receive"(p.1). In a major study initially involving 508 principals in 41 U.S. cities and later reduced to 175 principals in 40 cities Gross & Herriot examined "Executive Professional Leadership" in elementary principals. Data was gathered from 1303 teacher-observers and the 175 building

principals. Findings showed a positive relationship between the executive professional leadership (E.P.L.) of a principal and: staff morale; professional performance of teachers; and pupil learning. The study was, however, methodologically flawed as the measures used to determine these positive relationships consisted exclusively of questionnaires completed by teaching staff and principals. There is some question, as Gross and Herriot admit, as to the objectivity of the subjects when completing the questionnaires, especially subordinates (teachers) rating superordinates (principals). Measures of pupil performance were subjective, and the original sample was a cluster sample, not a random sample. Nevertheless Gross and Herriot's study stands as a significant effort to research the impact of the elementary school principal on instruction and learning.

#### Coleman Report

The year following publication of Gross and Herriot's study Equality of Educational Opportunity (Coleman et al, 1966) was published and six years later Inequality (Jencks, 1972) followed. Both Coleman and Jencks hypothesized that schools make little or no difference, that the major determinants of pupil achievement and success in schools are race, family educational background, and socio-economic status. Coleman's work in particular was presented as empirical evidence of the failure of schools to affect achievement. A major result of these two publications has been an inspired effort on the part of educators to counter the

arguments of Coleman and Jencks, to argue that schools do make a difference and to demonstrate through research that schools and features of schools do account for portions of student achievement (Goodlad, 1984; Rutter et al, 1979; Weber, 1971). In arguing that schools make a difference educators have logically postulated that teachers and principals do make a difference (Edmonds, 1982; Gretchko & Demont, 1980).

### Principal as Instructional Leader

Much research and debate has taken place on the question of school effectiveness, the principal's role in program improvement, and why some schools are more effective than others. Indeed the principal is characterized by some studies as the key to effective instruction and effective schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Shoemaker & Fraser, 1981).

The concept of principal as instructional leader has been a popular one in the last two decades. Principals do express a desire to play this role and to give it high priority. In a study conducted in Texas public schools 81% of administrators placed instructional leadership as their top priority though 67 % expressed the need to give more time to this role (Siefert & Beck, 1981). Eastabrook and Fullan found that 44 per cent of Ontario principals sampled said that "they actually spend a great deal of time on curricular tasks, while 76 per cent indicated that they would ideally like to spend a great deal of time on such tasks. The percentages were reversed for administrative tasks" (Fullan, 1982, p.133). Walls (1981) found that teachers

ranked principals third as instructional leaders behind other teaching colleagues and assistant principals. Reasons for this placement included a lack of availability, relatively less knowledge and expertise, and less understanding than colleagues and assistant principal.

In many cases principals' self-perceptions of role are different from the perceptions of others and while instructional leadership seems to be a priority, the reality is that little time is spent directly on instructional matters. Meyer and Rowan (1983) describe a 1972 study by Cohen et al (1976) in which 188 elementary school principals in 34 school districts in the San Francisco Bay area were surveyed. Eighty-five percent of the principals reported that they do not work together with their teachers on a daily basis and only 12 percent said they had any real decision power over methods teachers used (Meyer & Rowan, 1983, pp74-75).

#### What Principals Do

The anomaly of principals placing instructional leadership as a high priority and yet not actively or formally providing instructional leadership is explained to some extent in recent ethnographic studies (Miller & Lieberman, 1982; Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, Jr. & Porter-Gehrie, 1982; Peterson, 1978; Wolcott, 1973). These studies had a common purpose: to discover what a principal does during a working day. They all found that numerous trivial administrative tasks took considerable time; that organizational maintenance and pupil control took considerable

time; and that frequent interruptions caused the principal's workday to be filled with activities of short duration, and fragmented. In Bredeson's study principals "expressed frustration at the discrepancy between what the professional literature espoused and what (they) confronted on a daily basis" (Bredeson, 1985, p.45). "Curricular leadership was recognized as one of the important responsibilities of their jobs but [none was] able to spend the time or devote the necessary resources to fulfill even conservative expectations for curricular leadership." (Bredeson, 1985, p.45) Bredeson calls the principalship

...the dumping ground for all of the maintenance responsibilities of the school. More and more complexity has been added to schools and consequently their administration. Increased responsibility for the totality of school operations, for meeting state curriculum standards, and for meeting the special educational needs of all children have added to this role complexity. In addition, the increasingly litigious nature of schools, the assumption of responsibilities and activities previously assumed by other agencies and institutions in society, the expansion of extracurricular programs, the professionalization and credentialism of school staffs, and proliferation of mandates that cause schools to try and ameliorate many social and cultural problems which the larger society has not been able to resolve, have all added to the burden of the constellation of role expectations for the school principal (p.46).

Peterson (1978) found that principals spent on average, less than 25 minutes per day on tasks associated with instruction. Morris and his colleagues studied 24 elementary and secondary principals over a three year period, spending as many as 12

working days in each school, and recording what the principals did minute by minute. They found that instructional leadership is not the central role of the principalship. They did, however, conclude that working principals "engage in instructional leadership more through indirection, by creating an atmosphere in which thinking and learning can thrive"(p. 692).

#### Principal as Administrative Leader

Recently educational researchers have been clarifying and diminishing the role of principal as instructional leader. Shoemaker and Fraser (1981) state that "the idea that principals should be instructional leaders has been used and abused so often that it has become meaningless...the distinguishing features of assertive, achievement oriented leadership ...include both what the principal does and what the principal allows to happen". Joyce, Hersh, & McKibbin (1983), and Gersten, Carnine before him (1981) argue that effective schools have administrative leaders who actively allow and promote attributes of effective instruction. "Such leadership does not mean that the principal does the curriculum revision, or is the master teacher, or conducts the teachers' evaluations. Rather it means the principal makes sure all these tasks are carried out appropriately" (Joyce et al, 1983, p.27).

Goodlad also rejects the idea that the principal should necessarily be the instructional leader in the school. He suggests that anyone assuming the dual roles of administrative leader and instructional leader is likely to be unsuccessful as

each is a full time job, and further that the principal will be evaluated on his or her success as administrative leader, not for his or her instructional leadership. Meyer (Meyer & Scott, 1983, p.183) agrees but expresses it more explicitly: "School and district administrators must be on good terms with their political and institutional constituencies; output issues are much less critical". Goodlad goes on to question whether the principal can acquire or maintain a higher degree of pedagogical skill than the full time teachers on his staff (Goodlad, 1984).

#### Principals Do Make a Difference

Though there is inconclusive evidence and conflicting direction as to the principal's role as instructional leader this is not to say the principal does not make a difference. In a synthesis of research on effective school leadership James Sweeney (1982) concludes that "the evidence clearly indicated that principals do make a difference, for leadership behaviour was positively associated with school outcomes in each of the eight studies... results strongly suggest that principals who emphasize instruction, are assertive, results-oriented, and able to develop and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning make a difference" (p.352). Deal and Celoti (1978) studied 103 elementary schools in 34 California school districts. They found that the principal had little direct impact on instruction but recommended that through democratic leadership and informal strategies the principal could affect the spirit and tone of the school, thus influencing instruction. Sarason(1971) claims never

to have seen any proposal for system change that did not assume the presence of a principal in the school.

The most effective principals, according to Leithwood & Montgomery (1982) have a task orientation, and an academic orientation. They stress clearly articulated goals, leading to program priorities, and communication of these goals within and without the school. They work together with staff, playing a key role in professional development. They facilitate communication between the school and the community. They ensure that resource allocation and human relations initiatives are directly related to goal pursuit. MacKenzie (1983) says much the same thing: "active and committed educational leaders can ...foster and sustain a more positive climate for academic achievement by hammering out long-range goals, by working patiently and supportively to help teachers implement sound principles of classroom management, and by setting a consistent example of commitment to excellence at all levels" (p. 7). Dwyer (1984) found "no single image or simple formula for successful instructional leadership" (p.33). Principals' success "hinged on their capacity to connect...routine activities to their overarching perspectives of the contexts of their schools and their aspirations for their students". Principals "saw themselves as pivotal points around which these elements turned (and) believed in their abilities to influence each of those parts" (p.33). Dwyer (1984) recognized a diversity of approaches to successful instructional management however he consistently



found two avenues of principal effort: climate and instructional organization.

### Vision of the Principal

Effective principals are pro-active, driven by a vision of what their schools should be like (Manasse, 1984). Indeed effective principals may require two types of vision: "a vision of their schools and their own role in those schools; and a vision of the change process itself" (p.44-45).

Principals whose orientation, vision, and set of beliefs about themselves match those described above (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; MacKenzie, 1983; Manasse, 1984) are likely to be effective principals, meaning they are likely to exert enough personal influence on the school culture to enhance student learning. Principals are, if they are so oriented, in the best position to exert such influence. Other factors which would enhance the probability of principal and school effectiveness would be more autonomy for the building principal (Manasse, 1984); more collegial interaction between teachers (Little, 1982); training in staff development for administrators (because they are in the best position to exert influence); resources for staff development, including time; and perhaps most important, clearly stated goals at the local district, province, or state level (Goodlad, 1984).

### Principal as Leader: the Importance of Autonomy

How does the autonomy of the principal relate to the principal's leadership role? The difficulty in defining

leadership must be acknowledged (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Hoy & Miskel, 1978; McPherson et al, 1986)). Most definitions include some or all of the concepts of initiating, decision-making, influencing, change, and the exercise of authority. The literature abounds with definitions and also with research into leadership traits, leader behaviours, situational elements which support or diminish leadership, and descriptions of leadership types (Hoy & Miskel, 1978). Staw (1984) suggests that one direction of leadership research that has not been explored sufficiently is "to examine constraints on leader behaviour" (p.73). He points out that "observers of an action tend to assign responsibility to personal characteristics or controllable actions whereas actors place greater causal weight on external circumstances or constraints" (p.72).

Autonomy is also difficult to define precisely. It is not exactly synonymous with independence though the concepts are closely related. Hurst (1984) distinguishes the two by stating that "autonomy cannot be granted once and for all". Hanson speaks of "degrees of autonomy", and "relative autonomy" (Hanson, 1981, p.66) and cautions against confusing it with power. "It can be rooted in ...the isolation of the classroom, or in delegation" (P.257). Autonomy can be granted in certain decisional areas and/or within certain parameters, and it can be increased or decreased by policy and legislation.

Gordon describes four conditions for true autonomy:

First the person or group must be relatively free from direct external control. Second the person or group

must have the ability or talent to make intelligent decisions and implement them. Third the person or group must want to be free from direct external control. Fourth, the person or group must believe themselves to be free from direct external control (Gordon, 1984, p.169).

The absence of any of these four conditions limits autonomy and the opportunity for self-renewal according to Gordon. Looking at the possibilities of school staff autonomy Gordon holds that there are "no serious structural constraints (condition number one) on such self-renewal (p.171) but he questions whether teaching staffs have the collective intellectual ability (condition number two); the desire for autonomy (condition number three); or a belief in freedom from external control (condition number four). The last precondition, he submits, is seldom dealt with though it is "probably the most important structural limitation on school self-renewal (p.174). Introducing the concept of "implicit power talk" Gordon describes it as discourse "initiated by sources outside the school that have some direct control over school affairs" (p.174) "What is important is that such power talk suggests to the school that the external source has the power to control certain school activities whereas in fact it does not... and that this suggestion is not made explicitly" (p.175).

Goode (1969, p.291) defines autonomy as "having one's behaviour judged by colleague peers not by outsiders". He also emphasizes the importance of trust and describes the lack of trust in an occupation as being the reason society withholds autonomy. As well Goode suggests that unless society perceives

autonomy as necessary in order for a profession to operate effectively it will withhold it. He uses librarians as an example of a group who in the public perception can do their jobs quite adequately without it. His description of the controversy-avoidance behaviours of librarians is of particular interest. Librarians he suggests, avoid the purchase of books which might be controversial. Members in the American Library Association, a professional organization, are more likely to do so than non-members. Goode implies that these behaviours compromise the best professional decisions and ideals of the librarians to the detriment of the society (p.295).

Friesen, Holdaway and Rice (1984, p.169) define "responsibility and autonomy" of principals as "having the authority and responsibility to effect changes in the educational process which are beneficial to both students and teachers". In their study of 410 principals in Alberta they find this factor to be the most significant contributor to job satisfaction. Also, through a review of literature they support the assumption that "increased satisfaction leads to better performance on the job"(p.157). Autonomy is considered by Lyman Porter to be a higher order need, with great motivational potency (Sergiovanni, & Starrat, 1983, p.126), and Newell claims that "autonomous functioning ...leads directly to organizational responsibility and constructive citizenship... to responsible action on the part of individuals in enabling an organization or group to define and achieve its purposes (1978, p.251). In their study (cited

above), administration and policies are the greatest dissatisfier (Friesen, Holdaway, & Rice, 1983, p.50).

It is useful to think of autonomy as limited independence, granted on the basis of trust that the autonomous agent is working on behalf of the organization and towards its best interests. There is strong support for the notion that autonomy is essential to leadership (Gordon, 1984; Manasse, 1985; Peters & Waterman, 1982), and that in both the private and public sectors policymakers should attempt to enhance, not curtail, autonomy. Manasse, reporting a study by Huff, Lake, and Schaalman (1982), suggests that high-performing principals (student achievement as the primary criterion) "are distinguished from average performers by their strong sense of themselves as leaders"(p.444). She argues that principals need autonomy:

...leadership implies change. Research shows that effective principals move a school towards a vision of what could be rather than maintaining what is... yet there are multiple pressures on principals to emphasize organizational activities rather than to risk change...we cannot have principals with strong personal objectives for their schools without also accepting a fair measure of building-level autonomy (p.446)

...school improvement efforts are most likely to succeed if they are designed and implemented at the building level. It is also important to allow principals some discretion in the distribution of resources (both monetary and those with symbolic value) in their own schools (p.458).

Reviewing some of the recent research on leadership and organizational theory both within and without education Manasse (1984) concludes that "if school districts are serious about supporting effective principals, they must be prepared for

principals who are "boat-rockers", not satisfied to keep a low profile and maintain the status quo. Furthermore to be effective these principals require a fair measure of building level autonomy" (Manasse, 1984, p.45). Scott describes professionals as "individuals... subjected to a prolonged period of socialization and training in which they are expected to internalize standards, acquire a repertory of skills, and master a general set of theoretical principles that will enable them to make decisions and act autonomously in a responsible and expert fashion" (1981, p.154) Gordon claims that the absence of belief in a person or group's autonomy is "probably the most important structural limitation on school self-renewal"(p.174). Doyle and Hartle asks "are we willing to give educators the freedom and authority they must have if they are to lead" and point out that with increasing centralization of funding by the states "flexibility and autonomy of local school districts gradually diminished"(1985,p.22). Kirst (1984) and Killian (1984) outline the trend toward state controls, and Frymier states that "centralization inhibits the committment of teachers and principals and blunts their motivation to improve the schools"(1986, p.648). He cites William Bennett and Chester Finn:

One of the strongest findings of recent research is that the most effective schools- those whose students learn the most and the fastest- tend to be schools with a clear sense of purpose, an institutional ethos, team spirit, and a measure of autonomy. Yet the current reform movement is tending to remove from the schools many of the judgements and powers that comprise this autonomy. It is, to be sure, doing this in order to upgrade the performance of unsatisfactory schools.

But in the process it may be endangering the capacity of all schools to create those internal working arrangements that foster educational excellence. (1985, p.11)

Goodlad (1984) recommends "greater decentralization of authority and responsibility to the local school site" (p. 318) and he points out that "principals of schools that teachers found "more satisfying" felt themselves to be significantly more in control of their jobs and use of time and to have more influence over decisions regarding their own schools than did principals of schools perceived by teachers as "less satisfying". Without exception the principals of the "more satisfying" schools saw the amount of influence they had as congruent with the amount of influence they thought principals should have" (p.179).

The principal at least in the public school system is seen by many researchers to be a buffer, protecting the teaching staff from the "arbitrary regulations of the central authority" (Lightfoot, 1981, p.114, p.319). With respect to observations in one high school Lightfoot "was often struck by the tension between the particularistic goals, style, and decision-making of the Kennedy (High School) inhabitants; and the universal edicts of the state and city educational bureaucracies." (p.111) She found that most people "viewed the bureaucratic layers encompassing Kennedy as potentially deadening to the creativity and productivity of their school" (p.111). One assistant principal "spends a fair amount of energy figuring out ways to circumvent policies and directives that he believes distort the educational

experiences of teachers and students"(p.111) In a cryptic conclusion Lightfoot states that "the people most responsible for curricular and pedagogical standards experience constraints on their initiative and autonomy" (p.115).

Principals "protect the school from ill-conceived or unrealistic change projects" (Fullan, 1982, p.134). Principals, with their staffs, establish priority goals for their school. "Effective principals" relationships with district staff may be very close to quite distant, depending largely on the perceived value of district staff in helping to achieve priority school goals. Typical principals, in contrast, appear to be much more responsive to the demands of district administrators, placing expressed district priorities ahead of school priorities (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982, p.325). Teachers expect to be protected by principals from parent and community intrusions (Becker, 1961, cited in Lightfoot,1981).

#### Public School Principals: Autonomous or Not?

The principal is characterized as being in the middle (Fullan, 1982; McAndrew, 1981), against the system (Watson, 1978), constrained by directives (Wolcott, 1973) and frustrated by role ambiguity (Fullan, 1982). The principal's formal powers are restricted (Lortie, 1969; 1975). Coleman refers to "reductions in school authority" which "narrow the range of discretion of the principal and teacher"(1982, p.189). This, in his opinion is a factor in the decline of quality of public education. "Indeed some scholars suggest that the constraints



imposed upon educational organizations by outside forces are greater today than ever before-- that administrators are not just surrounded by external pressures, they are , what is quite worse, hamstrung by the many demands, interests and ideologies in conflict" (McPherson et al, 1986, p.175).

Principals work in an educational system that is bureaucratized, focused, and has been characterized by implicit power talk for many years. The system has convinced school personnel of their lack of autonomy and lack of ability to be autonomous, and has taught them not to seek autonomy. (Gordon, 1984, p.195)

Gordon is referring here to a specific group of principals in his study but the remarks are appropriate in a wider context.

At the same time however, principals are able to work around many of the directives and use their discretion in much decisionmaking. Boyd and Crowson (1981) cite a report on principals' discretionary behaviours (Morris et al, 1982)

which shows that building principals will 'bend' school system rules in order to: a) maintain the school site in an acceptable equilibrium with the organizational environment; b) protect the school from the uncertainties of an unpredictable clientele; and c) adapt school district policies to the special needs and interests of their immediate community" (Boyd & Crowson, 1981, p.350).

Crowson and Porter-Gehrie reported that:

Caught between the rules and procedures of the central office and the pressures of their own school environments, the principals were seen to engage in special interpretations of school policy, redefinition of roles, and the flexible application of organizational rules and procedures (Boyd & Crowson, 1981, p.350).

Cusack (1979) found that Superintendents and School Trustees

preferred a high level of influence for principals in school related decisional areas (p.119)

Meyer and Rowan (1978) suggest that the loose coupling which allows discretionary behaviour as described above is a necessary feature of the public school system, that without it the system could not cope with the shifting demands of a pluralistic society. Sergiovanni (1984) claims that effective schools should not be characterized as loosely coupled or tightly coupled but as both tightly and loosely coupled.

There exists in excellent schools a strong culture and clear sense of purpose, which defines the general thrust and nature of life for their inhabitants. At the same time, a great deal of freedom is given to teachers and others as to how these essential core values are to be honored and realized. This combination of tight structure around clear and explicit themes, which represent the core of the school's culture, and of autonomy for people to pursue these themes in ways that make sense to them, may well be a key reason for their success. ( p.13)

### Summary

The principal's importance in effective schools is well documented. Equally well documented is the frustration that principals feel as a result of being encouraged to be leaders by educational researchers and constrained by external forces. Principals must be allowed to and even encouraged to act more autonomously if they are to offer effective leadership.

### Public Schools versus Independent Schools

To this point the literature review has focussed on the principal, especially the principal of the public school. Now the attention will shift to the independent school administrator. In

this thesis the words "private" and "independent" should be read as synonymous wherever they refer to a school or administrator. First it is necessary to look at some of the literature which reports higher outcomes on a variety of measures in independent schools than in public schools.

Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore(1981) created a furore with their report comparing Public, Catholic, and Private Schools in 1981 (later in book form, High School Achievement, 1982). In this report claims were made that Catholic and Private schools were more effective than public schools in terms of student achievement in mathematics, vocabulary and reading; classroom and school discipline; student attendance; and interest in higher education. Since the publication of the report Coleman's data have been reworked many times, and the evidence for greater academic achievement has been seriously undermined (Lomax 1985; Murnane, 1981; Page and Keith, 1981; Sassenrath, Croce, & Penaloza, 1984). There has been no challenge to the conclusion that private schools provide a safer, more disciplined, and more ordered environment than do public schools. In a study that focussed on climate characteristics Erickson (1979) found independent schools were "distinguished from the public schools in the sample by an awareness that the future of these schools is in jeopardy; by the perceived effectiveness of instructional and disciplinary procedures; by commitment on the part of students, teachers, and parents; by a sense of some special, agreed upon mission; by unusually low student prejudice; by the perception on

the part of students that they are treated justly; by the attractiveness of teachers and classes to students; and by the intensity of rewards teachers obtain from their work" (Erickson, 1979, p.19). Rowan suggests a further distinction when he asks: "Are the effects of instructional technologies stronger in private schools that face market conditions? (Rowan, 1981, p.70). Earlier Rowan stated that "organizations in institutional environments often face an existence far less precarious than their counterparts in competitive output markets (Meyer & Scott, 1983) but in return for this privilege they must sacrifice some autonomy. Their goals are set externally, as are the means of achieving these goals" (p.55). Independent schools are to a much greater extent working towards internally set goals and have much more flexibility as to the means of achieving their goals. McPherson et al speak of the congruence between the "predilections of its participants" and "the prevailing mode of institutional control"(p.149). They credit the success of private schooling in part to this congruence.

#### Summary

Though there is no strong evidence of greater pupil achievement in private or independent schools, there is evidence of greater success in other areas, i.e., attitude. The lack of external influences is a factor in this success.

#### Autonomy of Independent Schools and Principals

Independent schools and principals of independent schools appear to have greater autonomy than public schools and their

principals. Private schools have more control over "definitions and standards of goodness, (and)...are more encompassing than public schools because they vigorously resist the intrusions of the outer world" (Lightfoot, 1981, p.322). "Institutional control is a great deal easier for schools with abundant resources, non-public funding, and historical stability. It is not only that private schools tend to be more protected from societal trends, divergent community demands, and broader educational imperatives; they are also more likely to have the advantage of material and psychological resources of certainty" (Lightfoot, 1984, p.319).

Private schools, rarely faced with a diverse range of students or the often conflicting demands of parent and community groups are better able to focus on academic and curricular matters...the private school's mandate from parents is vividly clear (p.360)

Lack of regulation of independent schools is noted by Barman in her history of independent schools in British Columbia (1984) and by Bergen in his study of the growth of independent schools in Alberta. Bergen, (1982) notes the "advantages of private schools ...a greater measure of institutional self-determination, academic discipline and greater instructor-student interaction"(p.317).

Erickson in the Consequences of Funding Independent Schools study (1979) speculated that the commitment of teachers, students, and parents might diminish if government aid and regulation were applied to independent schools, implying at least that the degree of regulation was greater in the public school system. Ravitch (1985) also speculated that increased government

funding would likely increase government regulation (p.168). "Once they are subject to the same regulations as public schools, will they lose the qualities that make them special?" (p.168-69). Increased regulation of "student admissions, teacher certification, curriculum standards, and disciplinary practises" are predicted (p.169). Describing the relationship between states, private schools, and the courts in the United States Cronin and Kenyon (1982) characterize 1965 -1980 as "an era of partial cooperation...except in the way of regulation. Courts have defined substantial autonomy for these (private) schools and exempted them from many rules and regulations that state officials tried to enforce on them"(p. 16).

#### Summary

Independent schools operate with a great deal less in the way of government regulation, and enjoy much more institutional autonomy as a result.

#### Public versus Private Sector Administration

In a review of literature related to public administration Rainey et al claim that "public administrators have less autonomy and flexibility in making their own decisions than their private-sector counterparts'(1976, p.240), and they describe "multiple legal, statutory, and procedural controls" that limit the flexibility of public administrators "in hiring, firing, and controlling of incentives of subordinates...[place] constraints on methods and spheres of operation...[create] inability to specify clear objectives and performance measures

...and [lead to] a proliferation of regulations" (p.240). These, argue the authors, limit the tendency of the public administrators to attempt innovations, and reduce organizational commitment. Aiken and Bacharach (1985) also find that private sector organizations have "more latitude to determine their task environments" and that there is less penetration from forces outside the organization (p.373).

### Summary

Public sector organizations (ie. schools) constrain innovative leadership and reduce organizational commitment through excessive regulation.

### Locus of Control and Leadership

Locus of Control is a relatively recently developed construct which describes an individual or groups' perception of "relationships between their actions and outcomes"(Rotter, 1966). "People who believe that they have some control over their destinies are called internals while externals believe their fate is attributable to extrinsic forces, such as luck, chance, or some other unknown" (Rothberg, 1981, p.10). The concept of locus of control is relevant to this study as it does have a potential link to leadership. "For most organizational leaders the perception of exogenous control lessens their self confidence and interferes with their ability to impact on the environment" (p. 57). Rothberg finds support from Argyris who stated that successful executives' most salient personality factors seemed to be "self-control", "powermindedness", and "self-motivation"(p.9),

and from McGregor who selected self-control as the most important of several important personality factors (p.9).

There has been no research into the relationship between locus of control and educational leadership but there is an interesting discussion of the concept as it relates to school principals in Seymour Sarason's The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change (1971):

To understand diversity in role conception and performance requires that we look at factors ordinarily relegated to secondary status when we think in terms of the school system or the culture of the school. One such factor, which has emerged rather clearly from our work and observations of principals, concerns the degree to which the principal feels that he is what he is as a person because of forces external to him in contrast to those he perceives as internal. That is to say, there are principals who act as if they are primarily in control of their destiny, and there are those who act as if what they have been, are, and will be are largely a function of external conditions and forces over which they have had or will have little control.(p.143)

Sarason suggests that a principal has a "marked tendency to view the system as primary determinant of his role performance", and has a faulty view of what the system will permit or tolerate. "An important factor shaping the principal's view of his role and the system is, in part at least, determined by the degree to which he feels he rather than external factors will govern his course of action" (p.145). Sarason points out that he is not advocating that principals should be internal or external in their locus of control, just pointing out another of the complexities of educational leadership and change in schools. Bennis, in his study of effective chief executive officers did



find that "they viewed themselves as leaders not managers" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p.66). They were concerned with purpose and "paradigms of action" not with the "how to..." the proverbial nuts and bolts"(p.66).

Rothberg is ambivalent about the importance of locus of control to leadership. He argues that when

belief in the capacity to master the environment exists, one becomes confident that success will be attained. When an individual believes decisive events in his life are influenced or determined by extrinsic forces, success is not expected... (p.65)

but then he goes on to say that "an internal locus of control does not necessarily lead to strengthened feelings of security (p.88) and that while "locus of control literature would predict that externally oriented people are not seekers of challenges...the data indicate they may be if the (external) perception of control is accompanied by strong self-confidence(p.70). Internals are highly active and goal directed while externals are emotional and incapable of focussing on specific goals. Nevertheless both types of leaders can attain high organizational status according to Rothberg (p.11).

#### Summary

Locus of control has not been researched enough to reach any conclusions about its relationship to leadership, but Sarason's point should be emphasized: the principal's role within the system is shaped by his or her perceptions of autonomy.

### Rationale for the Study

The literature review indicates strongly that the principal's leadership is a critical factor in the effectiveness of schools. It shows that there are many constraints on the leadership behaviour of principals including policy, legislation, culture, and the principals' own perceptions of their autonomy. It describes the relationships of autonomy and locus of control to leadership. It indicates differences in the degree of autonomy of public school principals and private or independent school principals. All of these strands and the possibility that private/independent schools are more effective than public schools (Coleman, 1982; Erickson, 1979) provide the basis for this study which compares two groups, public and private school principals, on perceptions of and desire for autonomy, as well as locus of control.

### Major Hypotheses

The literature review and the objectives of the study led to the following research hypotheses:

1. Independent and public school principals locus of control: that there is a significant difference between the locus of control of independent and public school principals, with independent school principals having a more internal locus of control.

Though there is little in the literature review that would predict this hypothesis, there is a need to address the question

of locus of control. Should there be a significant difference in the locus of control of the two groups that difference might account for any other differences observed, particularly in perceived autonomy.

2. Independent and public school principals' desire for autonomy: that there is no significant difference in the desire for autonomy of independent and public school principals.

The observations of Lightfoot (1984), Erickson (1979), and Bergen (1982) suggest that autonomy and "institutional self-determination" (Bergen, 1982) are features of independent schools that are cherished by administrators and staff. Manasse (1984), Bredeson (1985), and McPherson (1986) all speak of the frustration principals of public schools feel because they do not have autonomy.

3. Independent and public school principals' perceptions of autonomy: that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of autonomy of independent and public school principals, with independent school principals perceiving themselves as having greater autonomy in most decisional areas, than public school principals perceive themselves as having.

Gordon (1984) emphasizes the importance of perceptions of autonomy, and his discussion of "implicit power talk" suggests that there might be considerably more power talk and less perceived autonomy in the public schools. This would be due at

least in part to public schools being in a larger bureaucratic system.

4. There is more congruence between the perceived and desired autonomy of independent school principals than there is between the perceived and desired autonomy of public school principals.

If hypotheses two and three are supported by the data then it follows logically that hypothesis number four will be supported.

These hypotheses are examined in Chapter IV with data collected from a sample of independent and public school principals using the method and procedures described in Chapter III.

## Chapter III

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This chapter includes a discussion of the sample, the research procedure, the instruments used for data collection, and the statistical procedures used in the analysis.

#### Population and Sample

The populations for this study consisted of public school principals in Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, and independent school principals in the same geographic regions. Thirteen public school districts were included in the population, including Districts #33(Chilliwack), #34(Abbotsford), #35(Langley), #36(Surrey), #37(Delta), #38(Richmond), #39(Vancouver), #40(New Westminster), #41(Burnaby), #42(Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows), #43(Coquitlam), #44(North Vancouver), #45(West Vancouver). The independent schools do not operate within the same school district structure but exist within the same municipalities. Population sizes were approximately 575 (public school principals) and 115 (independent school principals). These figures are approximate because they do not take into account the cases (relatively few) where principals were assigned to two schools. Two documents were used as sources in establishing the populations and drawing the random samples: Public Schools in British Columbia 1985/86: A Complete Listing of Schools and Principals as of September 1985 (Ministry of Education, 1986), and the 1985-1986 Independent Schools Directory (Federation of Independent Schools Association, 1985). It should be noted that seven independent schools were not included in the population, those that do not resemble public schools

in their organization. Examples would be schools which only offered pre-school and kindergarten, or post-secondary education.

This population was selected for the study for two major reasons: 1. Geographically it was close enough to allow telephone contact where necessary and to facilitate personal interviews with some respondents; 2. Many of the independent schools in British Columbia are in the Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley regions.

Random samples were drawn from each population, consisting initially of 40 public school principals and 40 independent school principals. This was done by numbering the principals or schools in each population using the lists described above, and then using a table of random numbers to select 40 (Borg & Gall, 1979). Three school districts included in the population were not represented in the random sample of public school principals, and two municipalities were not represented in the random sample of independent school principals.

Permission to distribute questionnaires was sought and obtained from ten school districts. Unfortunately one district was slow to respond and as a result two respondents were never mailed the questionnaires. Effectively this reduced the sample size to 38 public school principals from nine districts. The independent school principal sample was also affected by the fact that two independent schools in the sample were satellites of other schools, and one had ceased operation. This effectively reduced the sample of independent school principals to 37.

### Design of the Study

This study is descriptive and correlational. It describes and compares the perceived and desired autonomy of two groups, public and independent school principals, as well as their locus of control. The study looks for correlations between locus of control and autonomy and between perceived autonomy, desired autonomy, locus of control and the type of organization. The possibility of correlations with several demographic variables is also examined.

Two questionnaires are used in the study, the "I, P, and C Scales" developed by Levenson (1981) (See Appendix A), and "Autonomy in Decision-making" (see Appendix B) developed by the researcher. (See Appendix C for Permission to use the I, P, & C Scales). Both questionnaires use Likert scales and both rely on self-reports. Borg and Gall point out that self reports are "only accurate to the degree that the self-perceptions are accurate and to the degree that the person is willing to express them honestly" (1979, p.269).

### Limitations

The limitations with such a research design include: the impossibility of establishing that there are causal relationships; the possibility of describing spurious correlations which have little reliability or validity. For example, a correlation between two variables might be observed but it might be the presence of another unconsidered variable that causes the correlation. In most educational studies there are so many variables that this is difficult to guard against. The complex nature of human subjects makes it impossible to really isolate the variables being studied. The strengths of such a

design include: the ability to establish significant relationships between variables where an experimental study might be either impossible or very expensive; the opportunity to test several hypotheses at once, some of which might then be further researched if supported by the correlational method. "It's principal advantage is that it permits one to measure a great number of variables and their interrelationships simultaneously' (Borg & Gall, 1979, p.477)

### Variables

The variables used in this study are defined as follows:

1. The dependent variables are "perceived autonomy", "desired autonomy", and "locus of control".
2. The independent variable is the group, "public school principals" or "independent school principals".
3. A moderator variable is present. Within the independent school principals group there are some principals whose schools receive more government funding than others.
4. Demographic variables include school organization, enrolment, principal's age, experience, level of formal education, instructional assignment, and gender.

Research hypotheses addressed in this research project are:

1. Independent School principals have a more internal locus of control than principals of public schools.
2. Principals of independent schools and principals of public schools desire the same degree of autonomy.
3. Principals of independent schools and principals of public schools perceive themselves to have a greater degree of



autonomy than principals of public schools perceive themselves to have.

4. There is more congruence between the perceived and desired autonomy of independent school principals than there is between the perceived and desired autonomy of public school principals.

### Instrumentation

Data was sought from each respondent using two questionnaires: "Autonomy in Decision-making" and "I, P, and C Scales". The former is a questionnaire developed by the researcher, the latter a locus of control scale developed by Levenson (1981).

"Autonomy in Decision-making" was developed by the researcher because there were no instruments already developed that would address the central questions of this thesis. It consists of 30 items, each describing an area of decision-making for principals. The items were drawn from the researcher's own experiences as a public school principal for the past five years, and by reviewing the Administrative Handbook (Province of British Columbia, 1982) provided to public schools in British Columbia by the Ministry of Education. Once the items were initially selected the questionnaire was reviewed by three principals representing elementary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools, and by an Assistant Superintendent of Schools. These individuals were asked to scrutinize the questionnaire for errors of omission or commission, to point out any lack of clarity, and to complete the questionnaire. Clarity of directions and length of time to complete the questionnaire were issues on which their advice

was also requested. Minor changes in wording were suggested and incorporated.

The "I, P, and C Scales" questionnaire was selected as a measure of locus of control, because of the fact that it recognizes "powerful others"(P) and "chance"(C) as different external sources of control, rather than just presenting a dichotomous internal/external choice, as for example Rotter's I.E. Scale (Rotter, 1966). It consists of 24 items which are grouped into three subsets. In Levenson's own words "the I scale measures the extent to which people believe that they have control over their own lives; the P scale deals with powerful others; and the C scale is concerned with perceptions of chance control ...their three dimensions are more statistically independent of one another than are the two dimensions of Rotter's scale" (Levenson, 1981, p.18). It was also chosen because populations tested more closely resemble (at least in age) the population for this study than does Rotter's I-E Scale. Rotter's scale has been used mainly with children, whereas Levenson's scale has been used mainly with adults and undergraduates (Levenson, 1981, pp. 19-21).

#### Validity and Reliability

The content validity of the "Autonomy in Decision-making" questionnaire was established in part by having it reviewed by several practising educators, and partly by comparing it to the descriptions of principals decisions in the Administrative Handbook. Though it is a subjective assessment I believe the instrument also has "face validity", that is it appears to measure what it claims to measure (Isaac & Michael, 1984, p.119). There are always potential problems of

different interpretation of terms, and misunderstanding of directions, nevertheless I believe that confidence can be placed in this instrument because of the clarity of directions and the concreteness of most of the "decisions" described. The questionnaire was identical for both groups, and the fact that both groups were random samples increases the internal validity. The randomness of the groups and the number of school districts represented, as well as the number of municipalities represented, make the results of this study generalizable to British Columbia. Changes in the structure of either or both the public and independent school systems in other jurisdictions, and of governance in either system in other jurisdictions make generalization beyond British Columbia questionable.

Levenson reports that "the validity of the "I,P,and C Scales" has been demonstrated chiefly through convergent and discriminant methods [Campbell & Fiske, 1959] that are designed to show low-order correlations with other measures of the general construct as well as a pattern of theoretically expected positive and negative relationships with other variables"[p.23].

#### Reliability

Levenson reports Kuder-Richardson reliabilities of .64 for the I Scale, .77 for the P Scale, and .78 for the C Scale. Split-half reliabilities(Spearman-Brown) are .62, .66, and .64 for the I, P and C Scales.(1981, p.22-23).

### Procedure

A copy of the "Autonomy -in Decision-making" questionnaire, a copy of the "I, P, & C Scales", one page of demographic questions (Appendix D) and a covering letter ( Appendix E) were sent to respondents along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to facilitate return. These documents were mailed during the last week of May, 1986 to the random samples of administrators in the two groups. Documents were colour coded to identify whether they were returned by a respondent from the public school group (buff) or by a respondent from the independent school group(white). They were also numbered in order that follow-up requests could be made to non-respondents, and so that follow-up interviews could be arranged with specific respondents selected on the basis of their scores on the perceived autonomy scale. The covering letter assured respondents of confidentiality in the reporting of data. A second mailing of the questionnaire took place in mid-June along with an additional covering letter (See Appendix E), again with a stamped self-addressed envelope to facilitate easy return. In spite of the fact that it was the end of the school year and thus a busy time for principals, this procedure resulted in a very good response rate from public school principals (89%).

The response rate from independent school principals was not as good (54%) and as a consequence a third mailing of the questionnaire was made to non-respondents in this group in September 1986. An additional covering letter (see Appendix F) asked respondents to complete the questionnaire and or to indicate their reason for being unable or unwilling to do so earlier. This resulted in the return of

four more completed questionnaires, raising the response rate of independent school principals to 65%. As well, reasons for a non-response were provided by eight respondents. Three respondents indicated that they felt the questionnaire was inappropriate for them, one did not have the time, two administrators were new in their assignments this September and did not feel able to complete the questionnaire, and two responses indicated that the schools do not exist any longer. A response was received from 86% of the sample of independent school principals with 65% providing usable questionnaires.

One difficulty that was not foreseen was the difference in the time it took for questionnaires to be delivered. All questionnaires were mailed from Coquitlam and while some were received within forty-eight hours others were received as long as eleven days later. Since there was a twelve day timeframe from mailing date to suggested return date some respondents had too little time to complete the questionnaire (see timeline-Appendix G).

Following the receipt and statistical analysis of the questionnaires selected respondents were interviewed. Six respondents were interviewed: three from independent schools and three from public schools. Selection was based on perceived autonomy scores, taking the highest, lowest, and median scores within each group.

A focussed interview guide (see Appendix H) was developed, questions focussing on the degree to which the principal felt they have influenced and/or are influencing the schools they are in; external groups or individuals who facilitate or hinder change;

policies which facilitate or hinder change; principal's desire for autonomy; changes in governance which might affect autonomy.

Interviews were conducted during the second and third weeks of October and were audiotaped with the permission of the interviewee. Questions focussed on the perceptions of autonomy of the administrators, the influence of external agencies or individuals on the operations of the school, their (the principal's) influence in the school. Independent school principals were also asked about the prospect of greater funding and perhaps greater government regulation along with it. Results of the interviews are reported anecdotally in Chapter Four.

#### Data Analysis

The "Autonomy in Decision-making" questionnaire and the "I, P, & C Scales" permitted data to be entered into computer files directly from the protocols. Demographic information required pre-coding. Identity numbers assigned to each respondent distinguished between independent school principals and public school principals. Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences-X Release 2.1. Frequency distributions were obtained for perceived autonomy scores, desired autonomy scores, as well as locus of control scores on the three scales, I (internal), P (powerful others), and C (chance). Means and standard deviations were also calculated for each of the scales. Mean responses to the three subscales by the two groups of principals were analyzed by means of the Hotellings T2 test and univariate analysis. The "Autonomy in Decision-making" questionnaire was analyzed by calculation of the

mean, standard deviation, and by analysis of variance. The level for significance was set at 0.05. Analysis of variance tests (Hotelling's  $T^2$ , and others) were also used to determine whether there were any significant differences between the two groups of independent school principals.

### Respondents

The response rate for public school principals was 89% and for independent school principals it was 65% (see Table 1). The independent school principals in the sample included principals of schools affiliated with the Federation of Independent School Associations (F.I.S.A.) and principals of independent schools not affiliated with. Of those schools who are affiliated some are members of the Catholic Public Schools Inter-Society Committee, some are members of the Independent Schools Association of B.C., some are members of the Society of Christian Schools in B.C., and some are members of the Associate Member Group. Non-respondents were fairly evenly representative of the first three subgroups, and of schools not associated with F.I.S.A. Since the initial response rate was below 75% another attempt was made to increase it (see Procedure earlier in this chapter). Considering the number of changes in the administration or operation of the schools in the independent sample 65% is considered by the researcher to be a satisfactory representation of the population.

Age of Respondents. Table 2 shows the distribution of the age of respondents from the two groups. Public school principals are slightly older than the principals of independent schools.

Size of Schools. Public schools are larger than independent schools. See Table 3.

School Organization. Most schools in the public school sample are elementary (K-7) schools. The majority of schools in the independent group are organized differently than the public schools. Many of them are K-12, some are K-10, 1-10, 6-10, 11-12 & post-secondary. These are reported in Table 4 as other.

Experience. Public school principals are slightly more experienced than independent school principals. See Table 5.

Education. Public school principals have slightly more formal education than independent school principals. See Table 6.

Instructional Assignment. Independent school principals spend more time teaching than public school principals. See Table 7.

Gender of Respondents. Public school principals are predominantly male (91%). The majority of principals in the independent schools are also male but the percentage is not as high (65%). See Table 8.



Table 1

Responses by group: Independent (group 1) and Public School Principals (group 2) who completed the questionnaires.

|         | N  | # returned | %  |
|---------|----|------------|----|
| Group 1 | 37 | 24         | 65 |
| Group 2 | 38 | 34         | 89 |

Table 2

Age of respondents: Independent School Principals (Group 1) and Public School Principals (Group 2).

| Group 1      | N  | %  |
|--------------|----|----|
| Less than 30 | 1  | 4  |
| 30 - 39      | 6  | 25 |
| 40 - 49      | 10 | 42 |
| 50 - 59      | 3  | 13 |
| 60 or over   | 3  | 13 |
| missing      | 1  | 4  |

| Group 2      | N  | %  |
|--------------|----|----|
| Less than 30 | 0  | 0  |
| 30 - 39      | 4  | 12 |
| 40 - 49      | 16 | 47 |
| 50 - 59      | 12 | 35 |
| 60 or over   | 2  | 6  |

Table 3

Size of Schools (pupils enrolled): Independent Schools  
(Group 1) and Public Schools (Group 2)

| Group 1    | # | %  |
|------------|---|----|
| Under 100  | 5 | 21 |
| 101 - 250  | 8 | 33 |
| 251 - 400  | 4 | 17 |
| 400 - 1200 | 6 | 25 |
| Over 1200  | 0 | 0  |
| missing    | 1 | 4  |

| Group 2    | N  | %  |
|------------|----|----|
| Under 100  | 0  | 0  |
| 101 - 250  | 9  | 27 |
| 251 - 400  | 13 | 38 |
| 401 - 1200 | 9  | 27 |
| over 1200  | 3  | 9  |

Table 4

Organization of schools: Independent Schools (Group 1)  
and Public Schools (Group 2).

| Group 1 | N  | %  |
|---------|----|----|
| K - 7   | 7  | 29 |
| 8 - 10  | 0  | 0  |
| 8 - 12  | 5  | 21 |
| other   | 11 | 46 |
| missing | 1  | 4  |

| Group 2 | N  | %  |
|---------|----|----|
| K - 7   | 26 | 77 |
| 8 - 10  | 1  | 3  |
| 8 - 12  | 3  | 9  |
| other   | 4  | 12 |

Table 5  
Years of experience as Principals: Independent  
Schools (Group 1) and Public Schools (Group 2).

| Group 1          | N  | %    |
|------------------|----|------|
| Less than 1 year | 0  | 0    |
| 1 - 5 years      | 11 | 45.8 |
| 6 - 10 years     | 6  | 25   |
| 11 - 15 years    | 2  | 8.3  |
| 15 - 20 years    | 0  | 0    |
| 20 - 25 years    | 4  | 16.7 |
| missing          | 1  | 4.2  |

  

| Group 2       | N | %    |
|---------------|---|------|
| Under 1 year  | 0 | 0    |
| 1 - 5 years   | 9 | 26.5 |
| 6 - 10 years  | 9 | 26.5 |
| 11 - 15 years | 9 | 26.5 |
| 16 - 20 years | 4 | 11.8 |
| 20 - 25 years | 3 | 8.8  |

Table 6  
Level of formal education of Independent School (Group 1)  
Principals and of Public School (Group 2) Principals.

| Group 1                          | N  | %    |
|----------------------------------|----|------|
| Secondary school Graduation      | 0  | 0    |
| Some Post- secondary             | 2  | 8.3  |
| Post-secondary degree or diploma | 9  | 37.5 |
| Masters Degree                   | 11 | 45.8 |
| Doctoral Degree                  | 1  | 4.2  |
| Missing                          | 1  | 4.2  |

  

| Group 2                          | N  | %    |
|----------------------------------|----|------|
| Secondary school graduation      | 0  | 0    |
| Some Post-secondary              | 0  | 0    |
| Post-secondary degree or diploma | 12 | 35.3 |
| Masters Degree                   | 22 | 64.7 |
| Doctoral Degree                  | 0  | 0    |

Table 7

Instructional Assignment: hours spent teaching by Independent School Principals (Group 1) and by Public School Principals (Group 2).

| Group 1 | N | %    |
|---------|---|------|
| None    | 4 | 16.7 |
| 0 - 5   | 8 | 33.3 |
| 6 - 10  | 4 | 16.7 |
| 11 - 15 | 3 | 12.5 |
| 16 - 20 | 2 | 8.3  |
| 21 - 25 | 2 | 8.3  |
| missing | 1 | 4.2  |

  

| Group 2 | N  | %    |
|---------|----|------|
| None    | 7  | 20.6 |
| 0 - 5   | 13 | 38.2 |
| 6 - 10  | 10 | 29.4 |
| 11 - 15 | 3  | 8.8  |
| 16 - 20 | 1  | 2.9  |

Table 8

Gender of Independent School Principals (Group 1) and Public School Principals (Group 2).

| Group 1 | N  | %    |
|---------|----|------|
| Male    | 15 | 62.5 |
| Female  | 8  | 33.3 |
| Missing | 1  | 4.2  |

  

| Group 2 | N  | %    |
|---------|----|------|
| Male    | 31 | 91.2 |
| Female  | 3  | 8.8  |

## Chapter IV

FINDINGS (ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION)

This chapter reports the findings of the study related to the major questions addressed. The hypotheses posed are:

1. Independent school principals have a more internal locus of control than principals of public schools.
2. Principals of independent schools and principals of public schools desire the same degree of autonomy.
3. Principals of independent schools perceive themselves to have a greater degree of autonomy than principals of public schools perceive themselves to have.
4. There is more congruence between the perceived and desired autonomy of independent school principals than there is between the perceived and desired autonomy of public school principals.

In the course of data analysis another hypothesis was developed. This fifth hypothesis is that:

5. Greater funding of the independent school is correlated with less perceived autonomy by the principals of independent schools that receive the greater funding.

The rationale for this hypothesis is that some independent schools in the sample receive more funding than others. Erickson (1979) and Ravitch (1985) imply that greater regulation and a decrease in local autonomy accompanies greater funding. It is of interest to see if this

is indicated in the results of this study.

### Perceived Autonomy

Significant differences were found in the perceptions of autonomy by the two groups of principals, on most of the individual items and on the research instrument as a whole. Mean responses were analyzed by means of the Hotellings  $T^2$  test,  $F(1,45)=9.04$ ,  $p < .05$ . Univariate analysis demonstrates a significant difference on 21 of the 30 items ( $p < .05$ ). See Table 9.

Items which demonstrate the largest differences include item #1, establishing hours of instruction; #2, prescribing courses of studies; #3, selecting curriculum materials; #6, prescribing the method and frequency of reporting to parents; #7, registering pupils; #11, hiring and assignment of non-teaching staff; #15 use of corporal punishment; #22, assignment of teachers to sponsor extra-curricular events; #24, job descriptions for non-teaching staff; #25, time allotments for courses; #28, closure of schools for inclement weather; #29, school calendar, ie. opening day, holidays etc. In every case the principals of independent schools perceive themselves to be significantly more autonomous.

In analyzing the individual respondents' scores on perceived autonomy it is noted that the majority of scores in the upper range (above 2.0) are from independent school principals, while the majority of scores in the lower range (below 2.0) are from public school principals. See Table 10.

The differences are significant on so many of the items that the null hypothesis, that there is no difference in the perceived autonomy of independent and public school principals is rejected. Observed

Table 9

Comparison of the mean responses of independent  
and public school principals to questions of  
perceived autonomy:

| Decision  | Mean Responses*               |                          | Difference of Mean | Significance of F |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|   | Independent<br>$\bar{Y}$ (SD) | Public<br>$\bar{Y}$ (SD) |                    |                   |
| #1 Hours of Instruction                         | 2.19 (1.04)                   | .77 (.80)                | 1.42               | .00               |
| #2 Prescribing Courses of Studies               | 2.13 (1.02)                   | .71 (.69)                | 1.42               | .00               |
| #3 Selecting curriculum materials               | 2.56 (.96)                    | 1.41 (.92)               | 1.15               | .00               |
| #4 Establishing assessment policies             | 2.69 (.87)                    | 2.10 (.98)               | .59                | .05               |
| #5 Selecting assessment tools (ie tests)        | 2.75 (.93)                    | 2.00 (1.03)              | .75                | .02               |
| #6 Reporting to Parents                         | 2.94 (.85)                    | 1.32 (1.07)              | 1.62               | .00               |
| #7 Registering pupils                           | 3.06 (.93)                    | 1.70 (1.24)              | 1.36               | .00               |
| #10 Hiring and assignment of teachers           | 2.63 (.89)                    | 1.97 (.80)               | .66                | .01               |
| #11 Hiring and assignment of non-teaching staff | 2.75 (1.06)                   | 1.10 (1.14)              | 1.65               | .00               |
| #12 Control of budget level set for the school  | 2.25 (.93)                    | 1.06 (1.14)              | 1.19               | .00               |
| #15 Use of corporal punishment.                 | 2.63 (1.41)                   | .00 (.00)                | 2.63               | .00               |

Table 9 (continued)

|     |   |             |             |      |     |
|-----|---|-------------|-------------|------|-----|
| #17 | Establishing a policy on smoking                          | 3.13 (1.20) | 1.94 (1.50) | 1.19 | .00 |
| #20 | Provision of locally-developed courses                    | 2.69 (.95)  | 1.65 (1.23) | 1.04 | .01 |
| #21 | Salary levels of teachers                                 | 1.56 (1.26) | .19 (.54)   | 1.37 | .00 |
| #22 | Assignment of teachers to sponsor extra-curricular events | 3.06 (1.00) | 2.29 (1.24) | .77  | .04 |
| #23 | Work schedule - non-teaching staff                        | 2.88 (1.36) | 1.90 (1.33) | .98  | .02 |
| #24 | Job descriptions- non-teaching staff                      | 2.94 (1.12) | .84 (.90)   | 2.10 | .00 |
| #25 | Time allotments for courses                               | 2.38 (1.26) | .81 (.81)   | 1.57 | .00 |
| #26 | Charges to pupils, parents, ie supplies field trips       | 2.81 (.66)  | 1.97 (.98)  | .84  | .00 |
| #28 | Closure of school- inclement weather                      | 3.25 (1.06) | .87 (.88)   | 1.38 | .00 |
| #29 | School calendar, ie opening day, holidays etc.            | 2.25 (1.39) | .40 (.93)   | 1.77 | .00 |

N= 16 (independent), 31 (public)

Degrees of Freedom (1, 55)

P=.05

\* Responses were on a five point scale

0 = not at all autonomous

1 = slightly autonomous

3 = moderately autonomous

4 = very autonomous

5 = completely autonomous



differences are too great to be due to chance.

### Desired Autonomy

The significant differences noted on perceived autonomy are not found in desired autonomy scores. Mean responses were analyzed by means of the Hotellings  $T^2$  and results show no significant difference between the two groups,  $F(1,44) = .058$ ,  $p > .05$ . The null hypothesis, that there is no difference between groups in desired autonomy is accepted. The dichotomous pattern noted on perceived autonomy scores of individual respondents is not noted on desired autonomy scores. It is noted that most scores are above 2.0 and as would be expected there is no pattern of the higher scores from one group or the other. See Table 10.

### Degree of Congruence

This section analyzes the degree of congruence between perceived and desired autonomy. Goodlad points out that "principals of the more satisfying schools saw the amount of influence they had as congruent with the amount of influence they thought they should have" (Goodlad, 1984, p.179) Table 11 shows clearly that Independent School Principals' perceived autonomy is more congruent with their desired autonomy than is the case with Public School Principals. A T-test for differences confirms this finding ( $t = 7.51$ ,  $df 29$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### Locus of Control

The I, P, and C Scales developed by Levenson is an instrument consisting of three subscales "Internal", "Powerful Others", and "Chance". Mean responses to the three subscales by the two groups of principals were analyzed by means of the Hotellings  $T^2$  test and results show a significant difference,  $F(3,50) = 3.003$ ,  $p = 0.39$ .

TABLE 10  
Individual Scores - Perceived Autonomy\* - Desired Autonomy\*

| Group | ID | PA   | DA   |
|-------|----|------|------|
| 1     | 1  | 2.50 | 3.03 |
| 1     | 2  | 2.97 | 3.33 |
| 1     | 3  | 2.47 | 2.77 |
| 1     | 4  | 2.07 | 2.40 |
| 1     | 6  | 1.37 | 3.03 |
| 1     | 7  | 2.67 | 2.80 |
| 1     | 8  | 3.60 | 3.70 |
| 1     | 9  | 2.30 | 2.30 |
| 1     | 10 | 3.27 | 3.37 |
| 1     | 12 | 3.73 | 3.87 |
| 1     | 13 | 3.17 | 3.17 |
| 1     | 14 | 2.37 | 2.47 |
| 1     | 16 | 2.63 | 2.73 |
| 1     | 18 | 2.30 | 2.30 |
| 1     | 19 | 3.07 | 3.20 |
| 1     | 20 | 2.13 | 3.07 |
| 1     | 21 | 1.53 | 1.70 |
| 1     | 22 | 2.90 | 2.83 |
| 1     | 23 | 3.27 | 3.33 |
| 1     | 24 | 3.17 | 3.17 |
| 2     | 1  | 1.63 |      |
| 2     | 2  | 1.53 | 2.50 |
| 2     | 3  | 1.37 | 1.70 |
| 2     | 4  | 1.10 | 2.40 |
| 2     | 5  | 1.43 | 2.83 |
| 2     | 6  | 1.80 | 2.80 |
| 2     | 7  | 1.57 | 2.67 |
| 2     | 8  | 1.83 | 2.77 |
| 2     | 10 | 1.70 | 1.97 |
| 2     | 11 | 2.30 | 3.10 |
| 2     | 12 | 2.03 | 2.27 |
| 2     | 13 | 1.13 | 3.17 |
| 2     | 14 | 1.67 | 2.70 |
| 2     | 16 | 1.43 | 2.67 |
| 2     | 17 | 1.60 | 2.30 |
| 2     | 18 | 1.90 | 3.10 |
| 2     | 19 | 1.87 | 3.37 |
| 2     | 20 | 1.73 | 2.27 |
| 2     | 21 | 1.60 | 1.97 |
| 2     | 22 | 1.03 | 3.03 |
| 2     | 23 | 1.47 | 2.03 |
| 2     | 24 | 2.10 | 2.33 |
| 2     | 25 | 1.87 | 2.53 |
| 2     | 26 | 1.53 | 2.27 |
| 2     | 27 | 2.23 | 3.00 |
| 2     | 29 | 1.40 | 2.97 |
| 2     | 30 | 1.10 | 2.73 |
| 2     | 31 | 2.07 | 3.00 |
| 2     | 32 | 1.97 | 2.53 |
| 2     | 33 | 1.83 | 2.43 |
| 2     | 34 | 1.67 | 2.90 |

\*Note: 0 = not at all autonomous  
 1 = slightly autonomous  
 3 = moderately autonomous  
 4 = very autonomous  
 5 = completely autonomous

Table 11

Comparison of the congruence between perceived and desired autonomy in the two groups.

| Decision # | Difference between mean scores on perceived autonomy (PA) and on desired autonomy (DA) for: |      |                          |      |
|------------|---|------|--------------------------|------|
|            | Independent School Principals   |      | Public School Principals |      |
|            | (PA)  | (DA) | (PA)                     | (DA) |
| #1         | 2.19  | 2.31 | .77                      | 1.73 |
|            | = -.12  |      | = -.96                   |      |
| #2         | 2.13  | 2.63 | .71                      | 1.83 |
|            | = -.50  |      | = -1.12                  |      |
| #3         | 2.56  | 2.75 | 1.42                     | 2.43 |
|            | = -.21  |      | = -1.01                  |      |
| #4         | 2.68  | 2.88 | 2.10                     | 2.70 |
|            | = -.20  |      | = -.60                   |      |
| #5         | 2.75  | 3.00 | 2.00                     | 2.90 |
|            | = -.25  |      | = -.90                   |      |
| #6         | 2.94  | 3.00 | 1.32                     | 2.23 |
|            | = -.06  |      | = -.91                   |      |
| #7         | 3.06  | 3.31 | 1.71                     | 2.47 |
|            | = -.25  |      | = -.76                   |      |
| #8         | 3.44  | 3.56 | 2.84                     | 3.27 |
|            | = -.12  |      | = -.43                   |      |
| #9         | 3.31  | 3.44 | 3.42                     | 3.60 |
|            | = -.13  |      | = -.18                   |      |
| #10        | 2.63  | 3.13 | 1.97                     | 3.27 |
|            | = -.50  |      | = -1.30                  |      |
| #11        | 2.75  | 3.25 | 1.10                     | 3.10 |
|            | = -.50  |      | = -2.00                  |      |
| #12        | 2.25  | 2.63 | 1.06                     | 2.83 |
|            | = -.38  |      | = -2.77                  |      |
| #13        | 2.69  | 2.88 | 2.58                     | 3.27 |
|            | = -.19  |      | = -.69                   |      |
| #14        | 2.94  | 3.06 | 2.74                     | 3.30 |
|            | = -.12  |      | = -.56                   |      |
| #15        | 2.63  | 2.63 | .00                      | .97  |
|            | = 0   |      | = -.97                   |      |
| #16        | 3.31  | 3.44 | 3.35                     | 3.57 |
|            | = -.13  |      | = -.22                   |      |
| #17        | 3.13  | 3.38 | 1.94                     | 3.10 |
|            | = -.25  |      | = -1.16                  |      |
| #18        | 2.19  | 2.94 | 2.00                     | 2.87 |
|            | = -.75  |      | = -.87                   |      |
| #19        | 2.38  | 2.88 | 1.90                     | 3.10 |
|            | = -.50  |      | = -.20                   |      |

|     |                      |                       |
|-----|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 120 | $2.69 - 3.00 = -.31$ | $1.65 - 2.90 = -1.25$ |
| 121 | $1.56 - 2.06 = -.50$ | $.19 - .70 = -.51$    |
| 122 | $3.06 - 3.19 = -.13$ | $2.29 - 2.90 = -.61$  |
| 123 | $2.88 - 3.25 = -.37$ | $1.90 - 2.93 = -1.03$ |
| 124 | $2.94 - 3.38 = -.42$ | $.84 - 2.57 = -1.73$  |
| 125 | $2.38 - 2.88 = -.50$ | $.81 - 2.20 = -1.39$  |
| 126 | $2.81 - 3.00 = -.19$ | $1.96 - 2.57 = -.61$  |
| 127 | $2.69 - 2.69 = 0$    | $2.42 - 2.97 = -.55$  |
| 128 | $3.25 - 3.44 = -.19$ | $.87 - 2.00 = -1.13$  |
| 129 | $2.25 - 2.88 = -.63$ | $.48 - 1.30 = -.82$   |
| 130 | $1.44 - 2.31 = -.87$ | $1.48 - 2.73 = -1.25$ |

---

$$\bar{X} = -.31$$

$$\bar{X} = -.91$$

---

Univariate tests however, show no significant difference on any of the subscales.

Both independent and public school principals scored highest on the Internal Scale. Levenson reports that for most samples scores on the internal scale are higher than Powerful Others or Chance Scales.

Such a finding is as expected, for two reasons: (a) For most Western societies belief in personal control is a given cultural perception, and (b) a certain degree of personal means-end connection is basic to survival and coping in the world. (Levenson, 1981, p.21-22)

It should also be noted that a high score on the Internal Scale does not mean that the subject does not believe in Powerful Others or Chance. Nor does a low score on any scale indicate a strong belief in one of the others. As was noted earlier these three scales are statistically independent and indicate only the strength of belief in the particular locus of control measured.

It was important to determine whether there is any difference in the locus of control between the two groups. A difference might have contributed to differences in perceived autonomy. That there is no difference eliminates this possibility.

Two principals from independent schools reported that they had difficulty with the locus of control scale because "there is no mention of God", and the "role of providence does not appear in the questionnaire". One respondent indicated that their response on question #2 was -3, but that if the phrase "accidental happenings" were changed to "divine providence" their answer would have been +3. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider the effect of religious belief on the locus of control scale but worth reporting as a possibility for future investigation.

### Funding and Perceived Autonomy

This section compares results for two subsamples, both from the independent schools group. Within the independent schools in British Columbia there are some schools which are not eligible for any government funding. Schools which are eligible for government funding are in two categories, Group 1 and Group 2. Group 1 schools receive nine percent of the average cost per student in the local public school district while Group 2 schools receive 30 percent of the average cost per student in the local public school district. The differences in funding levels are also reflected in different requirements, described earlier in the literature review. The question addressed here is whether or not increased government funding and increased government regulation affects perceived autonomy. The research hypothesis is that increased funding and lower perceived autonomy are correlated. No correlation is found. Results of an analysis of variance indicate no difference in perceived autonomy between the two subsamples of independent schools. It should be noted that there are only 3 Group 1 schools in the subsample limiting the confidence that one could place in these results.

### Demographic Variables

The demographic variables of size of school, sex of respondent, age of respondent, as well as scores on the three locus of control subscales, and perceived and desired autonomy scores were all entered into a multiple regression. No correlations were found.

### Interviews

Focussed interviews were developed and used to confirm the results of the questionnaire on autonomy in decision-making.

Respondents from both independent and public school sectors were interviewed. They were selected on the basis of their perceived autonomy scores, the highest , lowest, and median scores in each sector being the criteria. Questions focussed on the principals perceptions of themselves as agents of change; the external agencies or individuals which they viewed as either facilitating or hindering with respect to change; their role in instructional supervision; their wishes with respect to the "proposed " new School Act, ie. should it be more directive , should it be more specific as to areas of autonomy for principals?; the possibility of increased funding and with it perhaps increased regulation of independent schools.

The interviews supported the hypothesis that principals of independent schools perceive themselves to be more autonomous than principals of public schools. Principals of independent schools expressed complete autonomy in areas of staffing, and school program, and perceived no influence by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, the Ministry of Education, or parent groups. Public school principals on the other hand expressed frustration at the constraints they operate under, particularly with respect to staffing. All three public school principals interviewed expressed concern about the degree to which seniority agreements control staffing decisions. With respect to changes in the School Act which might prescribe more or less autonomy for principals there was no consensus. Two of the three principals expressed the feeling that they could work within its current guidelines. The third felt that more control at the school level would be desirable. The local school board's willingness to allow professional educators to operate autonomously was of greater

concern, and one principal noted that this appeared to be dependent in part on the strength of the superintendent and the board's perception of that individual.

Independent school principals felt quite independent of the School Act. To be entitled to government funding they follow the curriculum generally.

The role of parents in the independent school and of the independent school board was discussed. Parents were not perceived as an influential group with respect to the school's operation because the fact that they were there indicated that they subscribed to the philosophy of the school. The board of governors, though they hold the power to dismiss the principal, similarly share the same philosophy. The special agreed upon mission of which Erickson spoke is a factor which appears to increase the perceived autonomy of the principal. Though the independent school principals have no tenure and could be dismissed easily they act autonomously because they believe that is what they were hired to do.

One independent school principal was in a different position however. Operating his school as a small business he was not accountable to any education committee, board of governors, trustee group, etc. He was totally in charge.

Parents were not perceived to have much influence on the operation of the public school except insofar as they elect to attend or not attend. Reference was made to a "shopping around" trend. One principal believed that parents elected to have their children attend that particular school because the school staff were conscientious about working within district and provincial policies.



Public school principals interviewed knew little about the degree to which independent schools are financed or governed in British Columbia but expressed the feeling that if they are receiving public funding they should be regulated in much the same way as public schools. Principals of public schools expressed the feeling that independent schools receiving government funding should have a more open pupil admissions policy, especially for students with special needs.

Chapter V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research project developed out of an interest in the role of the principal in effective schools, and an awareness of some research which suggested that independent schools were more effective than public schools. While this premise is not supported very strongly by the literature it inspired an interest in the comparative roles of principals in independent and public schools. The literature review strongly supports the notion that principals are important factors in effective schools. It describes the conflicting demands and the lack of congruence between what principals should do according to research, what they express they would like to do, and what they actually do.

The nature of leadership is reviewed briefly and the importance of autonomy is detailed. Comparisons are made between the roles of principals in public school systems which are bureaucratic and in independent schools which are comparatively non-bureaucratic. Comparisons between private sector and public sector administration are also made. Brief discussion of the different cultural contexts of independent and public schools further distinguishes the two sectors.

The relationship between locus of control and leadership is reviewed but the results are inconclusive.

Rationale

Given the high priority placed upon the principal's leadership, and the apparent differences in the contexts of independent and public schools, and accepting even the possibility that the

independent schools are more effective on certain measures it seemed appropriate to compare the two groups, independent school principals and public school principals. In view of the questions raised by organizational and leadership theorists about autonomy, bureaucracy, and leadership, it also seemed appropriate to question the two groups about their perceptions of autonomy. Locus of control scores were also obtained.

#### Methodology

As outlined in chapter three a random sample of administrators in independent and public schools were asked to complete two questionnaires, and a few participated in follow up interviews. Data collected was analyzed by use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences-X Release 2.1. Follow up interviews were reported anecdotally in chapter four.

#### Conclusions

It was hypothesized that independent school principals have a more internal locus of control than principals of public schools. This hypothesis is rejected. Analysis of data indicates no difference in locus of control between the two groups.

It was also hypothesized that principals of independent schools and principals of public schools desire the same degree of autonomy. This hypothesis is supported by the results of data analysis.

A third hypothesis was that principals of independent schools perceive themselves to have a greater degree of autonomy than principals of public schools perceive themselves to have. This hypothesis is supported by the results of data analysis.

The fourth hypothesis was that there is more congruence between

the perceived and desired autonomy of independent school principals than there is between the perceived and desired autonomy of public school principals. This hypothesis is also supported by the data analysis.

A fifth hypothesis was tested: that greater funding (by government) of the independent school is correlated with less perceived autonomy by the principals of independent schools that receive the greater funding. This hypothesis is rejected. There is no difference between the perceived autonomy scores of principals in the two groups of independent schools. It should be noted however, that the sample of schools with the smaller percentage of funding from the government included only three schools.

Demographic data as outlined in chapter three was not correlated with perceived autonomy, desired autonomy, or locus of control.

In summary then, principals of independent and public schools desire the same degree of autonomy, but there is a significant difference in their perceptions of the degree of autonomy they have, independent school principals perceiving themselves to be very autonomous, public school principals perceiving themselves to be slightly to moderately autonomous. The independent school principals thus operate with congruent desire for and perception of autonomy, the public school principals operate with a perceived degree of autonomy that is substantially lower than they desire. No difference in locus of control was found, both groups of principals having an internal locus of control, in essence a belief that they can control their environment.

The difference found between public school principals' desire for

autonomy and perceived autonomy indicates the frustration that Bredeson (1985), McPherson (1986), McAndrew (1981) and others describe. The scores for independent school principals support the observations made by Lightfoot (1984), that private schools enjoy more institutional control, and the claim by McPherson et al (1986) that there is a congruence between "the prevailing mode of institutional control" and the predilections of the participants in private schools (p.149). The importance of perception of autonomy (Gordon, 1984) is supported. He argued that the absence of such belief is "probably the most important structural limitation on school self-renewal" (p.174). Principals cannot be autonomous if they do not perceive themselves to be autonomous. Though it has not been an objective of this study, it would be interesting to analyze policy statements and circulars from the Ministry of Education, school boards, superintendents and teacher associations for examples of "implicit power talk" (Gordon, 1984). The desire for autonomy scores indicate agreement by public school principals with Goodlad (1984) and Joyce et al (1983) who argue for more autonomy at the local school level.

Interviews with selected respondents confirmed the differences in perception of autonomy between the two groups. Even the independent school principal who perceived themselves to be least autonomous felt more in control of her school than any of the public school principals interviewed.

#### Interpretation and Limitations

It is prudent to be cautious in interpreting these results and worth remembering the limitations of the study outlined in the introduction. No conclusions can be reached as to the effectiveness or

lack of it of any principal or school in the sample, or of independent versus public schools. No causal or correlational relationship can be claimed between the perceived autonomy of a principal, or locus of control, and the effectiveness of their school. While perceptions of autonomy clearly differ it is not possible to claim that the actual degree of autonomy granted to principals in either sector is different. Finally, it should be remembered that the results are only statistically generalizable within British Columbia, and that differences in governance in other provinces or countries could generate quite different results.

Within these limitations it is still possible to emphasize the differing perceptions of autonomy and the lack of congruence between public school principals desire for and perception of their autonomy. With no significant difference in locus of control of principals these differences can be attributed to the differing structures of governance and the different cultures of the independent and public schools.

### Recommendations

1. The overwhelming complexity of educational leadership requires that the first recommendation be continued research. I would submit that the opportunity to consider educational leadership within and without the public school bureaucracy should be used to advantage. Further research recommendations include:

2. The identification of exemplary school principals in both sectors (by reputation perhaps) and comparisons of their perceptions of autonomy. It would be interesting to compare results for such a group with a random sample such as this study used.

3. Ethnographic studies of such principals would be extremely useful if they focussed on a comparison of the perceptions and the practises of principals. It is possible that principals who do not perceive themselves to be very autonomous do not take advantage of the latitude they have within existing policies.

Policymakers should consider the perceptions of autonomy by principals as critical to how they view their role in the organization. By ensuring that principals have a strong sense of efficacy in many of the decisional areas that affect the daily operation of their schools policymakers can increase the commitment of principals to the organization's goals and increase the likelihood that the principal will proactively lead toward them. Leadership at the school level, the unit of improvement according to John Goodlad (1984, p.31) will be more likely to occur if principals feel empowered. John Prash recommends that

Policymakers determined to protect the freedom and autonomy of building administrators must start with a mindset that states policy in brief, general terms. Leadership is stunted and bureaucrats are made by policy and procedures manuals that grow too big.

A good starting point is the building principal. To make clear that the principal is in charge, a policy can state: School buildings are operationally under the control of building principals. Principals have control and responsibility for the buildings and grounds, for all supplies and equipment housed at the building, for all school related activities carried on there, and for all pupils, teachers and other employees assigned to the building. (Prash, 1984, p.27)

Prash goes on to recommend other empowering policy statements and cites staffing decisions as among the most critical at the school level(p.28).

Recommendation #4. That the Ministry of Education clearly

indicate more autonomy for public school principals in the areas of staffing, curriculum, and budget.

The Ministry of Education should be decentralizing the control of many educational decisions and practises rather than increasing the centralization through funding formulas, increases in prescribed curriculum etc. Teachers' associations such as the British Columbia Teachers' Federation should also attempt to empower principals and thus create a climate of leadership at the school level. Currently initiatives related to economic welfare , ie., seniority agreements, are having the opposite effect, and are seen by principals as being constraining, and not in the best interests of the schools.

Recommendation #6: that the British Columbia Teachers' Federation recognize the importance of the principal in school effectiveness and school renewal; that they accept the importance of leadership at the school level; that they develop policies which will enhance such leadership. In doing so the federation would be making school effectiveness as high a priority as economic welfare and working conditions.

Finally, recommendation #7: principals must be prepared to take the risk of acting autonomously on occasion, perhaps even frequently. Decisions which affect the operation of their school should to a great extent reflect the particular needs of that school. This is not to suggest that decision-making should be exclusively in the hands of the principal. As Goodlad (1984, p.303) pointed out principals need to rely on the instructional expertise of teachers. Collegial decision-making by staffs which



feel autonomous and empowered to influence the operations of their schools is recommended but it is unlikely to occur unless principals lead the way.

Effective schools will remain effective and others have a better chance of becoming effective with broad, enabling policies at the provincial and district level; support for school-based decisions by teachers' associations; and active, autonomous, and collegial leadership by principals, whether of independent or public schools.

#### Appendix A

I P & C Scales, developed by Hannah Levenson  
in Herbert M. Lefcourt (ed) Research with the locus  
of control construct: Volume 1 - assessment methods.  
New York, Academic Press, 1981.

L, P, and C Scales**Directions**

On the next page is a series of attitude statements. Each represents a commonly held opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. You will probably agree with some items and disagree with others. We are interested in the extent to which you agree or disagree with such matters of opinion.

Read each statement carefully. Then indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by circling the number following each statement. The numbers and their meanings are indicated below:

If you agree strongly: circle +3  
If you agree somewhat: circle +2  
If you agree slightly: circle +1

If you disagree slightly: circle -1  
If you disagree somewhat: circle -2  
If you disagree strongly: circle -3

First impressions are usually best. Read each statement, decide if you agree or disagree and the strength of your opinion, and then circle the appropriate number.

**GIVE YOUR OPINION ON EVERY STATEMENT**

If you find that the numbers to be used in answering do not adequately reflect your own opinion, use the one that is closest to the way you feel. Thank you.

|  |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends mostly on my ability.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 2. To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 3. I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 4. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on how good a driver I am.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 5. When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 6. Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interests from bad luck happenings.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 7. When I get what I want it's usually because I'm lucky.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 8. Although I might have good ability, I will not be given leadership responsibility without appealing to those in positions of power.       | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 9. How many friends I have depends on how nice a person I am.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 10. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 11. My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 12. Whether or not I get into a car accident is mostly a matter of luck.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 13. People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups. | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 14. It's not always wise for me to plan too far ahead because many good things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune.               | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 15. Getting what I want requires pleasing those people above me.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |

|   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 16. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends on whether I'm lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 17. If important people were to decide they didn't like me, I probably wouldn't make many friends.                      | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 18. I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 19. I am usually able to protect my personal interests.   | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 20. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on the other driver.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 21. When I get what I want, it's usually because I worked hard for it.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 22. In order to have my plans work, I make sure that they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me.     | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 23. My life is determined by my own actions.  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| 24. It's chiefly a matter of fate whether or not I have a few friends or many friends.                                  | -3 | -2 | -1 | +1 | +2 | +3 |

## Appendix B

### Autonomy in Decision-making

Dear Colleague,

This study is being conducted to determine the perceived degree of autonomy in making educational/administrative decisions as well as the desired degree of autonomy for such decisions. This research project is part of the author's Master's Thesis and as you can appreciate your prompt response will be of great assistance.

Sincere thanks,

Ron Grender

### Autonomy in Decision-Making

The items listed below represent many of the areas in which educational decisions are made. The decisions are, to differing degrees, controlled by external forces, such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resources, Attorney General's Office, Charter of Rights, Young Offenders Act, local Boards of School Trustees, Independent School Boards, British Columbia Teachers' Federation, Canadian Union of Public Employees, parent groups, staff committees, Superintendents of Schools, and other Senior Administrative Staff. Thus, as an educational leader you have differing degrees of autonomy in making decisions, from complete autonomy to little or none at all.

The intent of this survey questionnaire is to measure the degree of autonomy you believe you have and also to measure the degree of autonomy you think you should have. Please respond to each item quickly and please complete all items.

To complete this survey please complete both parts of each item. For part (a) indicate the degree of autonomy you think you have in each area. For part (b) indicate the degree of autonomy you think you should have. Use the following scale:

- 0)not autonomous at all
- 1)slightly autonomous
- 2)moderately autonomous
- 3)very autonomous
- 4)completely autonomous

For example: establishing the time and duration of the lunch hour.

- |      |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---|---|
| a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (degree of autonomy<br>you have)                          |
| b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (degree of autonomy you<br>think you <u>should have</u> ) |

You should have circled one number for both parts. The numbers circled will in some cases be different and in some cases they will be the same.

Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated and of course the results of the research study will be shared with you on request.

To request a copy of the results send the last page to the author separately. Be sure to include your name, and mailing address including postal code.

\* \* \* \* \*

|  |      |   |   |   |   |               |
|--|------|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 1) Establishing hours of instruction.                            | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (have)        |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (should have) |
| 2) Prescribing courses of studies.                               | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 3) Selecting curriculum materials.                               | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 4) Establishing assessment policies.                             | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 5) Selecting assessment tools (ie., tests).                      | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 6) Prescribing the method and frequency of reporting to parents. | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 7) Registering pupils.   | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 8) Suspending pupils.  | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 9) Organization of classes.                                      | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 10) Hiring and assignment of teachers.                           | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 11) Hiring and assignment of non-teaching staff.                 | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
| 12) Control of budget level set for the operation of the school. | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |               |



|  |      |   |   |   |                 |
|--|------|---|---|---|-----------------|
| 13) Allocation of budget to specific areas of school operation.              | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (have)        |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (should have) |
| 14) Establishment of instructional priorities.                               | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 15) Use of corporal punishment.  | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 16) Use of volunteers in the school.   | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 17) Establishing a policy on smoking.  | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 18) Community use of the school.   | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 19) Provision of special programs, ie. gifted, learning assistance.          | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 20) Provision of locally developed courses, ie. French as a second Language. | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 21) Salary levels of teachers.   | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 22) Assignment of teachers to sponsor extracurricular events.                | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 23) Work schedule for non-teaching staff.                                    | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 24) Job descriptions for non-teaching staff.                                 | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 25) Time allotments for courses  | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 26) Charges(\$) to pupils and parents, ie. for supplies, field trips, etc.   | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 27) Establishment of parent-advisory groups.                                 | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|  | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |

|   |      |   |   |   |                 |
|---|------|---|---|---|-----------------|
| 28) Closure of school for inclement weather.            | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (have)        |
|   | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (should have) |
| 29) School calendar ie. opening day, holidays, etc.     | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|   | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
| 30) Transfer of teachers to other schools/ assignments. | a) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |
|   | b) 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4               |

Appendix C

Permission to use I P & C Scales

Mr. R. Grender  
Simon Fraser University  
c/o 1005 Saddle St.  
Coquitlam, B.C.  
V3C 3M9

April 20, 1986

Academic Press  
111 Fifth Ave,  
New York, New York,  
1003

Dear Sirs :

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. I am working towards completion of my thesis, which is a comparison of the leadership potency of public school administrators and independent school administrators. My Senior Supervisor for this research is Dr. Michael Manley-Casimir.

I would like to use as a measure of locus of control the I, P, and C Scales developed by Hanna Levenson, and published in Research With the Locus of Control Construct Volume 1, (Lefcourt, 1981, pp. 56-59).

If you are able to grant permission to use this scale I would be most appreciative of your doing so. If not it would be helpful to have a mailing address for Hanna Levenson.

Thank you for your assistance

May 19, 1986

Sincerely,

R. Grender  
Graduate Student

PERMISSION GRANTED to reproduce the above Scale for use in your research, provided that complete credit is given to the source, including the Academic Press copyright line. This permission does not cover publication of the Scale in book, journal or other commercial publication.

Martha Strassberger  
Contracts, Rights and Permissions  
ACADEMIC PRESS, INC.  
Orlando, Florida 32887

Appendix D  
Demographic Questions

Please complete the following questions by placing a check mark in the appropriate space.

1. Does your school enrol pupils from
  - a) K-7 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) 8-10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 8-12 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) other \_\_\_\_\_?  
(please describe)
  
2. What is the current enrolment in your school?
  - a) Under 100 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) 101-250 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 251-400 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) 401-1200 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) over 1200 \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. How old are you?
  - a) Less than 30 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) 30 - 39 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 40 - 49 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) 50 - 59 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) 60 or over \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. How long have you been a school principal/headmaster?
  - a) Less than one year
  - b) 1 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 6 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) 11 - 15 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) 15 - 20 \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) 20 or more \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What is the highest level of formal education you have reached?
  - a) Secondary school graduation. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Some post-secondary \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Post-secondary degree or diploma \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Masters Degree \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Doctoral degree \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. How many hours per week do you spend instructing?
  - a) None \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) 0-5 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) 11-15 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) 16-20 \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) 21 or more \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Female \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix E

Covering letters to respondents  
and request to Superintendents  
for permission to distribute.

I would appreciate receiving a summary of the results of your research.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Be sure to include postal code)



1986 04 21

Dear

I am a practising school administrator and a graduate student. As a practising administrator I am very conscious of the demands on your time, but as a graduate student I am going to request your assistance in completing the questionnaires attached.

I am completing a Master's Degree in Educational Administration at Simon Fraser University, under the direction of Dr. Michael Manley-Casimir. My research has developed out of a review of literature on the principal's role in effective schools; comparisons of public and independent schools particularly with respect to governance and the principal's role as an educational leader; and locus of control theory as it relates to leadership potency. I believe the results of my research might have significant policy implications, and request your cooperation.

The questionnaires I would like you to complete are the I, P, and C Scales and a questionnaire on autonomy in decision-making. They will take very little time to complete, directions are straightforward and they do not require you to do any data gathering or number-crunching. Results and statistical analysis of the questionnaires will be reported anonymously and in a way which makes individual or individual school identification impossible. No other researcher or research agency will have access to the questionnaires. In short confidentiality is guaranteed.

Again, as a practising administrator I am aware of the demands on your time. I would greatly appreciate your filling out these questionnaires as soon as possible, and return them to me in the self-addressed envelope.

Some respondents will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview, expected to be thirty minutes or less. This participation will be voluntary of course, though your cooperation will again be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions please call me at 936-4296 (work) or 464-3886 (home). Be sure to indicate if you wish to receive an abstract of the Thesis after it is completed. I would be very happy to oblige.

I am on a timeline which is fairly tight and therefore I would appreciate a quick return. Also, a one hundred percent return would provide the most reliable results. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Ron Grender

1986 06 17

Dear

Earlier this month I sent you a package like the one attached, containing two questionnaires and a page for demographic information. To date I have not received it from you. Perhaps it was not received, or it has been misplaced. Perhaps, due to slower mail delivery than I expected you received them too late to complete within my suggested deadline.

I would sincerely appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaires and mail them back to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. Your immediate responses to the questions are important, and it is not intended that you should spend a long time on the questionnaires. Fifteen minutes or less should be adequate.

Your opinion is very important. Thanks in advance for providing data important to this research project. Suggested deadline for return: June 28th.

Yours very truly,

R. Grender

Mr. R. Grender,  
Graduate Student, S.F.U.  
1005 Saddle St.  
Coquitlam, B.C.  
V3C 3M9

May 22, 1986

Dr. A. Clinton  
School District #43  
550 Poirier St  
Coquitlam B.C.  
V3J 6A7

Dear Dr. Clinton:

Attached are two questionnaires I wish to use in my research thesis, as well as a letter to respondents, and one page for demographic information. For my research I have drawn a random sample of public school administrators from Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, some from your School District. May I have your permission to request that they complete the questionnaires?

My thesis proposal has been approved by Simon Fraser University's Ethics Committee, and my Senior Supervisor is Dr. Michael Manley-Casimir. If you have any questions or require further information please contact me at Porter Elementary School (936-4296) or at home (464-3886).

Thanks for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

R. Grender

Appendix F

Second follow-up letter with a  
request for explanation of non-return.

1986 09 15

Dear Colleague,

Last May I sent you a questionnaire which I asked you to complete so that I might complete my thesis. Subsequently I sent you a follow-up questionnaire (in June). For one reason or another I did not receive either questionnaire from you.

I must ask you now to take the time to complete the questionnaire and return it to me and/or to indicate why you were unable to complete it earlier.

Should you be unwilling or unable to complete the questionnaire now at least please send this letter back to me indicating that you have not completed the questionnaire because:

- a) The directions are too difficult to understand. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) You did not have the time. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Return deadlines were past by the time you received the questionnaires. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) The questionnaire seemed inappropriate for you. \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Other. \_\_\_\_\_

Check one or more above if you are not returning the questionnaire.

Thank You.

R. Grender

## Appendix G

### Timeline

TIMELINE

May 20 - 22      Requests to Superintendents for permission to distribute questionnaires.

May 25 - 30      Questionnaires distributed to respondents.

June 12            Deadline for returns.

June 17            Follow-up letter to non-respondents.

June 28            Second deadline for returns.

September 15      Non-respondents in Group 1 (Independent Schools) - third request for completed questionnaires, and a request for explanation of non-return.

October 8           Data collection concluded.

October 8 - 24     Selected respondents interviewed.

Appendix H  
Focussed Interview Questions



How long have you been principal/headmaster at this school?

Does the school bear your stamp by now? Have you influenced the operation of the school very much?

Have you, over the years (?) made changes in the operation of the school?

What were some of the changes? Staff? Programs? School policies?

Have you found it easy to make the sorts of changes you felt it was necessary to make?

Which factors facilitated change? Ie, ministry policies; school board policies; teachers federation policies; lack of policies?

Which factors hindered change?

Who are the individuals or groups which influence decisions you make with respect to the operation of the school?

How do you feel about the influence of \_\_\_\_\_?

Do you spend much of your time in classrooms supervising instruction?

Would you like more autonomy in certain decisional areas?

How would more autonomy affect your decision-making?

Keeping in mind that the results of this interview will be reported anonymously, do you ever ignore policies or directives from any individual or group? Can you give an example? Why?

There is likely to be a new School Act in the near future. Would you like it to be more or less prescriptive than the current Act?

Would you like to be made more clearly autonomous in your role as principal?

There is hope for more funding for independent schools. Would you welcome an increase?

More regulation of independent schools might accompany increased funding. How would you react to an increase in regulation?

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