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What factors influence Catholic parents' choice of school(s) for their child(ren)?

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**WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE CATHOLIC FAMILIES' CHOICE OF SCHOOL(S)
FOR THEIR CHILD(REN)?**

By

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Master of Business Administration, York University, 1991

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Education
Educational Leadership**

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Dedication

Firstly,

Ad majorem Dei gloriam

Secondly, for my four favorite men:

Ron Howald, Ross Aiello, Peter Aiello and Fr. Rick Zerwas

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ABSTRACT

In 1965, the American Catholic school system had 5.66 million students, 13,296 schools and educated nearly 13% of all school-aged children. Fifty years later, Catholic school enrollments had fallen to approximately 1.93 million and a total of 6,250 schools, while more than 17% of the students enrolled in Catholic schools identified as non-Catholic. Although there appear to be several positive points of difference for selecting Catholic schools, nevertheless families are making other choices. In this exploratory study, I endeavored to understand the demographic characteristics, attitudes toward education as well as more general motivations of American Catholic parents, with a special focus on Hispanic Catholic parents. Keeping in mind the mission of these schools, I analyze how a Catholic school could be repositioned to better appeal to the desires of the most suitable market segments, while maintaining fidelity to the overarching purpose of the school. Illuminating gaps in parental understanding of the advantages of Catholic schools could generate an informative campaign to educate Catholic parents about the ideal qualities of a school. Better understanding of parental demand could allow Catholic school leaders to market their

schools to a target market more congruent with their unique educational approach. Knowing more about the characteristics of demand has important implications for financial viability and the future of Catholic education in America.

Keywords: Catholic schools, United States, Consumer Behavior, Marketing, Strategic Management, Hispanic/Latino families, Classical education

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Chapter I

The Research Problem

Catholic schools have, for over 150 years, provided generations of American families a relatively inexpensive private, values-based, high quality education. The community atmosphere of these schools, focused on the spirit of Christian service and the person of Jesus Christ, have frequently resulted in increased access to college for children of immigrant families, thereby setting up an opportunity for millions of poor or working-class Catholics to move into the middle class, irrespective of ethnic background. Largely attached to individual parishes, these neighborhood incubators gently brought students from their varied old-world languages, customs and loyalties into the fullness of American democracy. The local parish school was to accomplish the common school ideal, but in a more insular, familiar, faith-centered setting. Although historically, Catholic schools were more prevalent in the cities of the Northeast and Midwest, there are Catholic schools in almost every area of the country. In the West and Southwest, Catholic schools were sometimes parish schools, as in the East, but were quite often instead mission schools, established by religious orders to educate populations without many options, such as African-Americans, Hispanics or Native Americans. Patrick Moya, a Native American from the Jémez Pueblo attended one of these mission schools in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the late 1940s. St. Catherine's Indian School in Santa Fe was established and financed by heiress-turned-professed-religious Katharine Drexel in 1887. Patrick Moya's father went to St. Catherine's in its earlier years—around 1900. When his son was of age, Patrick recounts, his father sent him to St. Catherine's:

I went to school at St. Catherine's about 1947-48. Jémez Pueblo had a parochial school that only went up to eighth grade. When I finished there my

father brought me up to St. Catherine's...I came alone. I was very reluctant to make any kind of move, but when I got there to St. Catherine's, the boys were very friendly. They knew I was new there...I appreciated going to school in St. Catherine's, the only Jémez. It was very helpful and fruitful. I had no choice [but] to speak English. When I went into the Navy, I got a good job. I was in communications. That all came from St. Catherine's.

St. Catherine's has helped me very much in a lot of ways, getting myself lifted up in this world and to see a better life. When we went to school there, academics was number one. Anything else was secondary. By the same token, discipline was there. They stressed it. They rubbed it into us: discipline will count in your life. It did me good when I went into the military. It is doing me good now.

When I went to school at St. Catherine's, the nuns never, that I know of, ever mentioned the Indian religion. They stressed their Catholic religion and evangelized us in the Catholic way. There was no conflict at all because nobody made any issue of it. The nuns didn't want to. They respected us and our religion and we respected their religion. That way we were in harmony in school. (Sze, 2003, pp. 26-27)

Mission schools like St. Catherine's were a more common form of Catholic school in less-populated areas of the country, especially in the South and West. Enrollment in Catholic schools in America rose from 410,000 in 1880 to 3.0 million students in 1950, then shot up dramatically in 1960 to 5.25 million (Cooper & D'Agustino, 2014). In 1964-65, Catholic school attendance in America peaked at 5.66 million. At its height, the American Catholic

school system had 13,296 schools and accounted for 87.5% of all private school students in the country. That year, nearly 13% of all school-aged children were educated in Catholic schools (Cooper & D'Agustino, 2014).

Fifty years later, Catholic school enrollments in America were approximately 1.93 million with a total of 6,250 schools (NCEA, 2015). Today, more than 17% of the students enrolled in Catholic schools identify as non-Catholic (NCEA, 2015). Although approximately 40 percent of all Catholic adults in the U.S. have been educated at a Catholic school at some point, young people today are much less likely than their parents or grandparents to share in the potential benefits of a Catholic education. These numbers become more concerning for the Church because studies show that teens who have never attended Catholic school are much less likely to go to weekly Mass, and are significantly less likely to consider a religious vocation (Gray, 2014).

The sharp decline in enrollments in Catholic schools in America has been attributed to a variety of factors—structural, cultural, sociological and economic. I proposed to examine the present state of the American Catholic school system as a Strategic Management and Marketing analysis. Framing the issue in this way, it is clear that multiple factors impact one critical bottom line: parents are simply not choosing Catholic schools for their children at the rate they once did. This is especially true of Hispanic Catholics in America (with the exception of a few isolated areas like Florida), who do not have the same tradition of Catholic school attendance as American Catholics of European descent (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). Fifty percent or more of the school age Catholic population at all levels during the 2013-14 school year were Hispanic (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). During this

school year, Catholic educational institutions enrolled less than 15 percent of the school age population of Hispanic children (Gray, 2014).

“The days when a steady stream of Catholic parents automatically sent their children to Catholic schools has long since passed. For most families, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, the decision to enroll a child is a deliberate act” (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993, p. 165), and today parents are making other choices. By understanding the factors that influence Catholic parents’ choice of schools for their child(ren), as well as what they think is most important in choosing a school, we can then determine if Catholic schools should be repositioned to deliver the type of educational experiences most preferred by Catholic families, with particular attention to Hispanic families.

Parental Attitudes about Schools

Common reasons given for choosing Catholic schools include:

Quality academics, college prep. What is the most important outcome of K-12 education to Catholic parents? Does this vary culturally or by socioeconomic class? From a small, qualitative study I conducted at a local Catholic high school, academic success is definitely the most important reason families enrolled their children (Aiello, 2015). The results of the school’s most recent Parent Survey indicate that "Quality of Academic Program" and "College Preparation" are offered as numbers 1 and 2 respectively for the reasons parents gave for choosing St. Michael’s High School (SMHS) for their children. Evidently many parents perceive their choice was successful: approximately 80% of parents agree or strongly-agree with the statement, "The quality of instruction meets or exceeds my expectations" (St. Michael's High School, 2015).

Good marketing material should speak directly to the needs and wants of the target market. In the view book for SMHS (the promotional pamphlet given to parents of prospective students), the inside cover indicates the following: Graduation rate: 100%; College acceptance rate: 100%; student to faculty ratio 16:1; Average ACT Score: 22. The first page emphasizes "Excellence in Education." The second page emphasizes "College Preparatory Curriculum," and 90 course offerings, including many AP offerings. The third page lists several prestigious colleges where St. Mike's grads have been accepted.

If Patrick Moya is typical of St. Catherine's mission school students, then Sofía Sánchez is equally representative of many contemporary Catholic high school students. "Sofie's" older sister and two cousins previously attended St. Mike's. Her parents, both physicians, let Sofie have a lot of input into where she wanted to go to high school. She did not seriously consider going to one of the two public high schools in town because of their reputations for questionable academic standards, and also (in her words) because they were "just too big" (Aiello, 2015, p. 75). She honestly considered attending a public charter specializing in the arts, but ultimately decided against it for two reasons: first, because she thought that maybe "the academics just weren't up to par," (p. 75) and secondly, because they did not have girls' soccer team, and Sofie really likes to play soccer. Sofie and her family are active members at the local Presbyterian church, along with one of her favorite teachers from St. Mike's—Mrs. Charleston. She is glad that most of St. Mike's retreats emphasized developing a friendship with God in whatever way works for you. She says that in her freshman year religion class, Catholic doctrine was "kinda forced at me—it was like, 'No—this is what you have to believe.'" But her sophomore religion class wasn't like that. "My teacher was like 'I don't care what faith you are...this isn't going to be a book and study

class; it's going to be more of a you can take this information or if you don't want to take this information, how are you going to change yourself so that you can impact others?' And that's how my junior year was, too" (p. 76).

Sofie is now a senior and is in the process of choosing a college. She has specifically applied to Jesuit colleges because of their social justice emphasis. She is not sure if she wants to go into medicine (like her parents) or into teaching, but she says, "Going here has definitely shaped who I am and who I want to be and has helped me decide what I want to do with my life. And what I want is to give back" (Aiello, 2015, p. 78).

Religious education. According to a recent study by the Center for Applied Research Apostolate (CARA), parents cite "quality of religious education" as their primary motivation for choosing Catholic schools (Gray, 2014). All Catholic school students are expected to take some sort of religion class each semester. However, religious education classes are offered free of charge at all Catholic parishes for school-aged children who do not attend Catholic schools. This then begs the question of what parents mean by "quality of religious education." Is it the desire that their children receive religious or moral education in the school setting for quality, integration or convenience, or do parents perceive that religious education in a Catholic school setting is better than parish religious education?

Catholic tradition and philosophy. In most cities, there are excellent non-sectarian private schools or strong public schools that perform well academically. Delivering a superior academic experience, a college-prep curriculum, such that many students gain acceptance to highly-rated colleges is hardly unique to Catholic schools. Hence, there must be other reasons why families choose a Catholic school over one of these other—equally strong—schools.

A small study (Huber, 2004, p. 111) found that parents who sent their children to a Catholic high school said their top three reasons for doing so were, in order, “Catholic tradition and philosophy,” “strong academics,” and “discipline.” The study did not provide to participants an explanation of “Catholic tradition and philosophy,” yet this construct struck a chord with respondents.

Traditionally, Catholic schools in the U.S. were attended by Catholics of European descent in the Northeast and Midwest. With the marked demographic changes in the composition of the American Church, specifically with more visible minorities, as well as the fact that fewer parents of today’s K-12 students themselves attended Catholic schools, the pull of family tradition is waning.

A welcoming community. Perhaps in large part because of lower historic Catholic school attendance among those who self-identify as Hispanic, there are fewer Spanish-speaking school leaders, fewer Hispanic teachers, and fewer school board members of Hispanic descent in American Catholic schools (Ospino & Weitzel-O’Neill, 2016). Less than one quarter of school leaders report that they have received training about Hispanic culture, and even fewer have received training specifically about Hispanic ministry and theology (Ospino & Weitzel-O’Neill, 2016). Hispanic parents may feel more at home in a school where signage is bilingual and more teachers and school leaders speak Spanish. This potentially welcoming gesture is too rare in today’s Catholic schools; families of Hispanic descent might be more likely to choose a Catholic school if they felt like they really belonged.

The Contemporary Purpose for Catholic Schools

The Catholic Church considers its schools to be one of its most important vehicles to encourage the proper and full development of the whole person—to be fully alive in accordance with Church teaching (Chatlain & Brock, 2014). The Church indicates that part of the mission of the school is “to develop intellectual faculties, assist the students in forming the ability to judge rightly, hand on a cultural legacy, foster a sense of values, prepare students for a professional life and encourage a spirit of mutual understanding” (Vatican Council II, 1965, ¶8). Notably, these stated goals are not substantially different from those of many other types of schools. As such, it is reasonable to pose the following questions:

Do we need Catholic schools, when there is no lack of a supply of schools and universities? Does it still make sense to invest in personnel and material resources, when religious congregations or dioceses lack the means, and there are so many other problems, many other urgent needs to which to direct our attention? Why maintain institutions that perhaps have great tradition but that were created to meet challenges that today no longer exist, since illiteracy has been defeated, poverty is not as rampant as in past centuries, and the public sector fully covers the demand for education? (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2015, p. 9)

To its schools, the sacred synod adds the responsibilities of creating a school atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit “so that the knowledge students acquire of the world, life and [the human person] is illumined by faith. The Catholic school in particular is to prepare its students for service in the spread of the Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become...a saving leaven in the human community” (Vatican

Council II, 1965, ¶8). This ideal must be an integral part of the mission and character of an authentic Catholic school. Therefore, it is important to ascertain why some parents might specifically decide to send their children to a Catholic school, while others do not.

Understanding parents' attitudes toward Catholic school enrollment could allow dioceses and religious orders to clarify benefits of Catholic school attendance, which they may erroneously assume are clear to parents.

In keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, the Church left implementation of its principles concerning the renewal of Catholic education to national bishops' conferences. Accordingly, in 1972, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) released its directive, *To Teach As Jesus Did*, which "articulated a threefold educational ministry: to teach the message of hope contained in the gospel; to build community 'not simply as a concept to be taught but a reality to be lived'; and 'service to all mankind which flows from a sense of Christian community'" (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1972, p. 106). The renewed post-conciliar mission of Catholic schools in America was to embody social justice (Bryk et al., 1993).

Practical Challenges

Ironically, the high cost of Catholic School tuition (especially for Catholic high schools) has resulted in many families of limited means being priced out of attendance (Huber, 2007). Students like Patrick Moya from Jémez Pueblo would likely not have the means to attend a Catholic high school today. After leaving the Navy, Mr. Moya became a barber, earning a modest income which, if St. Catherine's had charged tuition comparable to St. Pius X in Albuquerque or St. Michael's in Santa Fe, would probably not have been sufficient for him to send his two sons to Catholic high school. The Church is explicit in its

documents: Catholic schools are to be of service to students of all economic classes, especially the poor. “Vatican documents have recognized various challenges that threaten the realization of such a mission: the lack of governmental funding and the need to pay lay people a just wage...[but] rather than simply acknowledge that such a mission is not realistic, the American Church has continued to challenge the Catholic community to live up to the mission” (Huber, 2004, p.14). The U.S. Bishops officially recognized the role of the American Catholic school in the pursuit of social justice as follows:

We urgently recommend the continuation and expansion of Catholic schools in the inner cities and other disadvantaged areas. No other form of Christian ministry has been more widely acclaimed or desperately sought by leaders of various racial communities...No sacrifice can be so great, no price can be so high, no short-range goals can be so important as to warrant the lessening of our commitment to Catholic education in minority neighborhoods. More affluent parishes should be made aware of this need and of their opportunity to share resources with the poor and needy in a way that recognizes the dignity of both giver and receiver. (U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1979, ¶52)

Some researchers (Elmore & Fuhrman, 2004; Green, 2014; Polite, 1992) have found that African-Americans have more positive educational experiences in Catholic schools. African-American students in Catholic high schools reported feeling more confident and having less trouble thinking of things to say in a group than did students of all other racial groups in the study (Benson, Yeager, Wood, Guerra & Manno, 1986). African American Catholics were more likely than most Americans to complete high school and college (Lachman & Kosmin, 1991). Poor, minority

children do particularly well in Catholic schools compared with their public school peers. This advantage is attributed to high expectations, more academic coursework, personal attention from teachers who see their work as a mission, being relatively free of central bureaucracy (Chira, 1991). In religion class, the teacher might tell them, “Like Moses, [you] were born for a purpose in life” (Chira, 1991, p.8). The effects of this intimate educational approach on poor, minority, otherwise marginalized students are difficult to grasp.

Implications of Findings on Resource Allocation

The model for Catholic education in America in the past was far different than what it is today. Prior to the 1960s, its purpose was to educate Catholic children in a community-oriented environment, protected from anti-Catholic bigotry and counter-Catholic doctrine (DeFiore, 2014; Herron, 2014). This was financially possible because teachers were mostly from religious congregations who worked for modest stipends, keeping operating costs low. The parish provided subsidies which, while a significant percentage of the operating budget, were still a manageable amount. Annual tuition paid by parents was usually quite nominal (DeFiore, 2014).

The secular atmosphere in public schools today no longer projects an overtly anti-Catholic bias. Therefore, if Catholic schools are to continue to exist, they need to have a mission that is distinct from public schools. Parishes all offer free religious education classes for those who do not attend a Catholic school, thus religious education itself is not a sufficient reason to keep open Catholic schools. The parish is no longer the center of social life for a neighborhood—in fact, newer, suburban parishes are generally so large geographically that parishioners may drive miles to attend religious services or participate in

parish activities (Gray, Gautier, & Cidade, 2011). As such, attending the parish school does not have the same social implications it once did.

As of 2014, less than three percent of teachers in Catholic schools were members of a religious congregation (NCEA, 2015). Wages for lay teachers, while much higher than those paid to vowed religious, nevertheless are estimated to be 30 to 40 percent lower than what is earned by public school counterparts (DeFiore, 2014). Those who teach in Catholic schools clearly do not do so for competitive wages, but rather because of the more structured and/or disciplined school environment or because they see teaching as a vocation or ministry for which they are willing to sacrifice financially (Robioneck, 2012).

Finally, a game-changing difference between Catholic schools today and those of the early 20th century is the amount of tuition paid by families. Catholic elementary school tuition (substantially more affordable than secondary school) increased from less than \$100 in the mid-1960s to \$1,152 for the 1992-93 school year and to \$3,673 by the 2010-11 school year (DeFiore, 2014, p. 282). These increases far outpace the rates of inflation and growth in median family income. Tuition as a percentage of average per pupil cost has increased from 54% to 65% during the same period. Parish subsidies as a percentage of average per pupil cost have decreased from 35% to 14%, however the total amount of the subsidies nationally was \$1.1 billion for the 2010-11 school year (DeFiore, 2014). Between the parish/diocesan subsidies, the below-market teachers' salaries and the substantial sacrifices on the part of many families to pay tuition, an in-depth analysis of the unique benefits of Catholic education (if any) is necessary to determining the efficacy of the often Sisyphean effort to keep a Catholic school open.

The Common School Ideal

Common schools, the predecessors of today's public schools, were established so that all students would have a common education, intended to serve not only the student, but also the common good of society as a whole (Graham, 2005). There has been a gradual but pronounced shift in philosophy concerning public education: from the common school to the public school, from educating the person to educating the individual (Bryk et al., 1993; Maritain, 1943). The properly conceived contemporary Catholic school more closely resembles the ideals of the common school of the 19th century than do today's public schools.

Features often distinctive to Catholic schools, such as a constrained academic culture, a communal school organization and an inspirational ideology, offer a diverse cross section of students a distinctive vision of active participation in a humane society (Bryk et al., 1993):

This vision of the Catholic school contrasts sharply with the contemporary rhetoric of public schooling that is increasingly dominated by market metaphors, radical individualism, and a sense of purpose organized around competition and the pursuit of individual economic rewards. Although the common school ideal inspired the formation of American public education for over one hundred years, it is now the Catholic school that focuses our attention on fostering human cooperation in the pursuit of the common good.

(p.11)

Application of the Strategic Management/Marketing Analysis

Developing a full understanding of the characteristics of a primary target market, American Catholic parents with special focus on Hispanic Catholic parents, allowed me to construct a profile for various market segments within that larger target market and to

estimate which of these sub-segments is likely to choose a Catholic school for their child(ren). Can the schools be repositioned to better appeal to the desires of the market segment(s) while still maintaining fidelity to the overarching purpose of the school?

Illuminating gaps in parental understanding of the vision of the Church for Catholic schools could generate an informative campaign to educate Catholic parents in the ideal qualities of a school and how their local Catholic school fits that ideal. In estimating an approximate size and purchasing power of these market segments, it may be possible to assess the likelihood of financial viability for a local Catholic school. Knowing more about the characteristics of demand has important implications for the future of Catholic education in America.

Research Questions

1. What demographic factors influence Catholic parents', especially Hispanic parents', choice of schools for their child(ren)?
2. How do psychological factors such as parental values, beliefs, and attitudes impact the decision?
3. What role does tuition assistance play in the decision to enroll or not enroll in the local Catholic school?

Delimitations

Many non-Catholic and/or religiously unaffiliated families send their children to Catholic schools. Although I collected data from non-Catholic attendees via questionnaires I distributed to parents of children who attend Catholic schools, I did not specifically seek out non-Catholic families to participate in this research, even though it is these non-Catholic families of financial means that are often actively targeted by struggling Catholic schools in an effort to increase enrollments, in order to make the schools financially viable.

Characteristics of Catholic school demand seem to vary considerably based on the region of the country. For example, although enrollment of Hispanic students in Catholic schools is extremely low in almost all areas, there is a documented stronger tradition of Catholic school attendance by Latino/as and higher enrollment numbers in the state of Florida (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). Given the fact that I am most interested in the future of Catholic schools in New Mexico and in the unique attitudes of New Mexicans, I sought out participants from central New Mexico and in central Arizona. The population of New Mexico, with its unique culture, history and racial makeup is likely to have its distinct and independent attitudes toward the issues captured in the research questions. Additionally, the tradition of Catholic school attendance in the Southwest is more infrequent than in other regions of the country.

Limitations

I have attended both public and Catholic schools and preferred the experience of the latter, which may result in some bias. However, I had overall positive experiences in public school, and I acknowledge some real advantages of a public school education. Finally, I worked for the State of New Mexico Public Education Department and, as such, have been exposed to the less positive aspects of day-to-day decision-making at both state and district levels, leading to a heightened awareness of the shortcomings of the current system of public education in New Mexico.

Choosing a school, other than the traditional public school to which the family is assigned, is something that only a minority of parents do. Therefore, many respondents may never have reflected on their beliefs surrounding this issue. The possible lack of self-awareness, combined with the potential for social desirability bias related to questions

regarding religious practice, may produce skewed results. This was a study with a low response rate from a purposeful sample of parishes. As such, findings should not be generalized to the population of Catholic families with school-aged children as a whole.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the proposed research was a marketing orientation, tailored toward a not-for-profit, faith-based organization. For a not-for-profit entity, this should include clearly defining the dual nature of its customers (donors and beneficiaries), its employees/volunteers as well as its mission (Chad, 2013). A marketing orientation in a not-for-profit, faith-based organization will revolve around the express goal of satisfying the needs of the customers, within the guiding philosophy and purpose of the activity, without incurring an operating deficit.

A marketing orientation encompasses four conceptual ideals: emphasis on customer, importance of information, interdepartmental coordination, and taking action (Chad, 2013). The first step toward implementation of a market orientation is for the organization to understand its markets and its customers. Failure to do so can result in a misapplication of resources and overlooking threats in the competitive environment. As such, perhaps the most important aspect of adopting a market-oriented philosophy is market research or intelligence gathering because “market intelligence is a broader concept going beyond the verbalized needs and preferences of customers” (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990, p. 4).

I believe it is critical to assist Catholic schools in the United States, and specifically in New Mexico, to not only survive but also to renew themselves so as to provide the type of educational experience that is unique to their mission. This can be accomplished by gathering information about the attitudes of their customers—parents or decision-makers. Finally, this

information is useless if the organization is not able to respond to market intelligence and market needs (Lafferty & Hult, 2001). The organization in question, Catholic schools, may be unable to develop the sort of school experience the majority of parents would desire if that runs counter to its religious mandate. However, if there is a substantial group of parents who would choose authentic Catholic education for their children, Catholic education leaders could then better deliver a desired and viable service to a population in need. I treated this research as an exploratory study to better understand the potential for Catholic schools in New Mexico in the future, especially for Hispanic families.

According to the Catholic Church in documents issued by the [Sacred] Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE) and the National Council of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), one of the purposes of Catholic education was to be a service of the Church to promote dialogue between Catholics of all economic backgrounds and the modern age and culture.

Definition of Terms

Catholic Church—the Roman Catholic Church, headed by the Bishop of Rome, based in Vatican City (Rome, Italy).

Catholic identity (Catholicity)—These terms refer to that which makes the school Catholic.

It includes all aspects of the school culture influenced by the Catholic belief system such as religion classes, campus ministry services, liturgical functions, retreats, and prayer.

Christian or Catholic anthropology—“By *anthropology* I mean simply a *logos* about *anthropos*, a theory or philosophy about mankind or human nature. I don’t mean the empirical science of anthropology” (Kreeft, 2010, p. 1). A Christian anthropology sees human persons as originating as God’s creation in God’s image, and this origin

as determinate of our nature and destiny. Catholic anthropology goes further to teach that the Church is the mystical Body of Christ, that is “the Church is Christ, as you are your body” (Kreeft, 2010, p. 11). Ultimately, this can be summed up in two quotes from Vatican II: “Jesus Christ is the meaning of man”, and “Jesus Christ alone reveals man to himself” (Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, ¶22). This Christian and Catholic anthropology is to underpin Catholic school philosophy and set the tone for Catholic school operations.

Diocese—A diocese, under authority of a bishop, is a local entity of the Roman Catholic Church. It is the territory over which the bishop exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Marketing orientation—A marketing orientation, as opposed to a production orientation, for a for-profit business states that all resources of the organization should be focused toward satisfying the needs of the customer, at a profit. The alternative is when a business utilizes a production orientation, developing what they believe to be a superior product—then they try to convince prospective customers of this fact. A production-oriented organization is so enamored with its product that it seldom spends time or effort conducting or reviewing market research to ascertain the desires of its target market. On the other hand, an organization utilizing a marketing orientation begins with a mission and purpose, but does extensive research into what its proposed target customers want and then it attempts to deliver this product or service in a manner better than its competition.

Marketing mix—important ingredients or elements that should be considered in formulating a marketing program; also referred to as the 4Ps: 1) product or service, 2) price, 3) promotion or communication and 4) place or distribution.

Parochial School—a primary or secondary private school supervised by a religious organization, in this context a Roman Catholic day school affiliated with a parish or a holy order.

Principle of Subsidiarity—The tenet holds that nothing should be done by a larger and more complex organization that can be done as well by a smaller and simpler organization.

Religious Order—A religious order is a community of vowed members, sometimes referred to as a congregation. The Catholic Church understands religious order to encompass a plan of life and discipline, approved by the Holy See, which religious live in order to grow in Christian perfection and perform the works of the apostolate proper to their institute (Huber, 2004).

Top-of-mind awareness—a marketing term that denotes the brand that comes to mind first when an unprompted question about a category is asked to a customer. It is the percentage of customers who think of that particular brand first. It is a measure to see how well brands rank in the minds of customers.

Vatican II—Vatican II refers to the Second Vatican Council convened by Pope John XXIII in Rome in 1962. When I use the terms “conciliar”, “pre-conciliar” and “post-conciliar,” I am referring to Vatican II, unless otherwise stated.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Background

Upon a call from American Catholic bishops after the 1884 Baltimore Council for each parish to have its own school, Catholic elementary schools began to be built in number. The original purpose of the Catholic school system in the U.S. was to provide an alternative to the hegemony of the overtly Protestant public schools, an alternative which would protect the faith, morals, and in some cases culture, of Catholic immigrant communities (Bauch, 2014). The academic curriculum was aimed at being “at least the equal of” the one provided in the public school system (Denig, 2014, p. 114). Within a generation, close to two-thirds of American parishes had established schools. These small, neighborhood schools lifted many Catholic families out of poverty within a generation (Greeley & Rossi, 1966). Catholic parish schools were supported by parishioners as a mission of their parish. “With [the school] being a mission of the entire parish, it was understood to be a work of the entire parish, funded by the parish. If you had heard God’s call to conversion, you would, among other things, regularly attend Sunday Mass and tithe sacrificially” (Redeker, 2017, n.p.). The sacrificial giving of parishioners supported the teaching religious communities, which in turn, taught and ministered through the schools. The religious communities and the parishioners were mutually reinforcing.

However, by the 1960s, a number of changes took place, which strongly influenced the purpose and structure of American Catholic schools. Desegregation of the public school system resulted in a migration from largely Catholic, inner city neighborhoods to the suburbs, scattering and changing the structure of the Catholic communities (Brinig &

Garnett, 2014). Catholics as a group attained a socioeconomic status comparable to mainstream Americans (Greeley, 1977). The first Catholic president, elected in 1960, was symbolic of the conventional acceptance of American Catholics (Chaput, 2012; Herron, 2014). In the same decade, Vatican II was convened, releasing explosive forces—both good and bad, throwing traditional American Catholics into a black hole of uncertainty about the form renewal of doctrine and practice of their faith would take. “Laypeople grappled with new doubts—because if some things could change, maybe everything could. And if everything could change, maybe the church wasn’t who she claimed to be” (Chaput, 2012, p. 98). As a direct result of this ambiguity, the numbers of vowed religious shrank (DiFiore, 2014; O’Keefe & Goldschmidt, 2014). Those who remained dramatically altered the mission of their orders (Bryk et al., 1993; DiFiore, 2014). For teaching religious orders and the schools that relied on their services this meant less staff for Catholic schools (Greeley, McCready, & McCourt, 1975).

Life for the typical American Catholic was changing in other ways, too. Regular attendance at religious services among Americans as a whole declined, and Catholics led this trend (CARA, 2018; Greeley, 2004). The neighborhood parish (to which the schools were connected) ceased to be the center of Catholic social life (DeFiore, 2014; Greeley, 1976). The schools suffered, then the neighborhoods themselves (Brinig & Garnett, 2014). Finally, in keeping with the trends of broader society, the size of Catholic families shrank (CARA, 2015). Catholic schools began to rely heavily on tuition rather than parish support to cover costs. While schools still offered second, third and fourth child tuition discounts, they were far less often utilized. All these factors combined to decrease the pool of potential students for Catholic schools (DeFiore, 2014).

Basic economics then took over. There were fewer students across a wider geographic area to attend Catholic schools (DeFiore, 2014). Economies of scale became much less favorable. As a result, in order to pay the bills, tuition rates increased, paradoxically pricing many would-be students and their families out of range (DeFiore, 2014). With substantial tuition rates, Catholic parish schools, which had once been seen as a ministry supported by the sacrificial giving of parishioners, were being viewed more simply as private, religious-themed schools.

[Charging tuition] seems to have fostered multiple misunderstandings: that Catholic schools are private schools, that it's only for those who can pay tuition, and increasingly, that it's education for the wealthy...Tuition also seems to have situated education more and more within the framework of consumerism: a family pays, they get a product, which unfortunately can make it appear as though Catholic education — or even being Catholic — isn't dependent upon an ongoing conversion of life, and isn't dependent on parish support. (Redeker, 2017, n.p.)

At least for these families who could no longer afford Catholic education, there was less demand for the insular environment of the local parish. Middle- to upper-class Catholics discarded their vestiges as second-class citizens along with their identities as Catholics and all that that entailed (Chaput, 2012). The Supreme Court cases (1962/1963) that eliminated prayer in public schools meant that Catholic students would not risk being subject to Protestant bible readings in the public school system, if that remained an issue more than a century after the initial case that got American bishops to consider starting their own schools (Bauch, 2014). Although public perception of the quality of education in the local public school varied considerably depending on the neighborhood, as a whole these changes made it

more palatable for Catholic parents to send their children to public schools. It did not bode well for enrollment in Catholic schools.

The two decades following Vatican II saw a repurposing of Catholic schools from a mission of nurturing faith to one of promoting social justice (Bryk et al., 1993; Denig, 2014; U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1972). There are a variety of configurations on the continuum of social justice. On one end of the spectrum is the strict spirit of the Church doctrine of social justice, which embodies respect for the human person, an understanding of both the equality and differences among peoples, human solidarity, and respect for the “transcendent dignity of man” (Catholic Church, 2012, ¶1929). On the other end is a mid-twentieth century liberation theology—a Marxist interpretation of class struggle superimposed on a historical interpretation of the Gospels, with a stress on using political means to advance the Kingdom of God. The Catholic school of 1955 bore little resemblance to the Catholic school of 1975 (Bryk et al., 1993). The era of the 1970s and 1980s saw a sharp decline in Catholic school enrollment and the merging or closing of several Catholic schools (Cooper & D’Agustino, 2014). Absent the visible signs of Catholic identity—most notably professed religious in habit or clerical garb—the Catholic School brand changed, became diluted, less recognizable and therefore less valuable. In speaking for the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Robioneck (2012) said, “The educational mission needs the communities of the Brothers as a point of reference, for these Brothers share their spirituality and their mission” (p. 105).

Many Catholic schools closed, some merged and many others that remained open have extensive excess capacity (Schoenig, 2013). Recent research indicates that parents who send their children to Catholic secondary schools in particular are less likely to be Catholic;

if they are Catholic they are less religious, and their socioeconomic class is considerably higher than Catholic school students were in past decades (Caro, 2015; Huber, 2007).

The Most Serious Responsibility of Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*)

Gravissimum Educationis (GE) charges the (Catholic) school with a special responsibility of creating an atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit. The Catholic school is to prepare its students for service in the Kingdom of God (Vatican Council II, 1965):

It is ...the special function of the Catholic school to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel...it so orients the whole human culture to the message of salvation that the knowledge which the pupils acquire of the world, of life and of men is illumined by faith. (¶8)

On the Threshold of the Third Millennium

There is still a purpose for Catholic education in the twenty-first century. “[T]he Catholic school is a place of integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation... Its ecclesial and cultural identity, its mission of education as a work of love; its service to society—[these are] the traits which should characterize the educating community” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, ¶4). A Catholic school is especially supposed to serve these types of children and families:

It is a school for all, with special attention to those who are weakest. For example, those who have lost all sense of meaning in life and lack any type of inspiring ideal, those to whom no values are proposed and who do not know the beauty of faith, who come from families, which are broken and incapable of love, often living in situations of material and spiritual poverty, slaves to the new idols of a society, which, not infrequently, promises them only a future of unemployment and marginalization. To

these new poor, the Catholic school turns in a spirit of love. The Catholic school is to provide a service to society. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, ¶15)

In an era where it would seem that segments of humanity are devalued routinely and nonchalantly, a space has been created for Catholic schools and their faith-centeredness, “not in the sense that they promote a specific creed that all must believe to be saved, but in the sense that they promote the God-given worth of each individual and seek to change the world one child at a time” (Bauch, 2014, p. xx). This is the distinction between the contemporary American Catholic school and the Catholic schools of the pre-Vatican II era.

In the tradition of teaching orders of the saints—for example Elizabeth Ann Seton (Sisters of Charity), Jean Baptiste de la Salle (Christian Brothers), Ignatius of Loyola (Jesuits) and John Bosco (Salesians), Catholic schools today are charged with serving the poor—not only those suffering from the effects of financial poverty, but as is so often the case in this modern era—those who are emotionally and spiritually impoverished. In contrast, the American public school, no longer grounded in any faith tradition and increasingly burdened with bureaucratic oversight by both federal and state agencies, may be less able to provide this sort of support to needy students (Esolen, Guernsey, Robbins & Ryan, 2016; Topping, 2015). Additionally, “the functional communities from which Catholic school students benefit have been eroding, because both the church and the family have lost strength and cohesion. This trend can be expected to harm kids of all socioeconomic groups, but especially the disadvantaged” (Putnam, 2000, p. 309). There is a pressing need in contemporary American society that is served well by the ethos of Catholic schools (Clark & Smrekar, 2014; Flynn, 1985).

Characteristics of Catholic Education: Points of Difference

Excerpts from a recent study I conducted are offered to illustrate the points of difference or uniqueness of the Catholic secondary school, as compared with its public school or public charter counterparts.

Focus on academic excellence. The focus on academic excellence at many Catholic schools has paid off—students have higher than average graduation rates and college acceptance rates (NCEA, 2017). There is some evidence that the achievement gap between Hispanics and Whites or African-Americans and Whites, is narrowed in Catholic schools, especially as students progress through elementary grades (Denig, 2014). Different researchers (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2006; Willms, 1985) have contested these findings, but regardless of the contradictory studies, there is often a perception that students from Catholic schools do better academically than their public school counterparts. Academic achievement should not be the primary goal of the Catholic school (Denig, 2014; Miller, 2006). Rather, a high quality academic program should be merely an indirect benefit of other aspects of Catholic education.

As *Gravissimum Educationis* stated in 1965, “As men and women become more aware of their dignity and position, more and more they want to take an active part in social and especially economic and political life” (Vatican Council II, 1965, ¶2). However, the Church must be concerned about the whole of a person’s life, and true education aims at the formation of the human person. If parents are choosing a Catholic school for their children solely for the purposes of making sure they have a better chance at getting into an Ivy League college, then the Catholic school has failed. Miller (2006) explained, “If a Catholic school is simply an instrument for the acquisition of information that will improve the chances of

worldly success and a more comfortable standard of living, its impoverished vision of education is not Catholic” (p. 32). He continued, “A Catholic school cannot be a factory for the learning of various skills and competencies designed to fill the echelons of business and industry” (p. 35). A Catholic School “must be imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum, not merely in its religious education classes” (p. 28).

The founder of the LaSallian teaching order, Jean Baptiste de la Salle, did not endeavor to offer the highest caliber education in his schools. His belief was that poor children (in his time this meant children of the poor and working class) were unlikely to get any formal education because their parents were unable to provide it for them (Costa & Scaglione, 1997). LaSalle thought it important that these children who would otherwise go without an education be afforded a tuition-free education in a group setting, in their own vernacular, so that they would be catechized and also so that they would have an avenue to upward mobility. It was not LaSalle’s intention that the schools of the Christian Brothers be academically superior to other schools, only that they provide a tuition-free, solid basic education to those who needed it most.

It is ironic, then, that many parents from a higher socioeconomic class have opted to have their children go to Catholic schools primarily as an academically superior alternative to public schools (Huber, 2004; Miller, 2006). The public school students who tend to perform more poorly on standardized tests are overwhelmingly children of the poor or minorities. In the documentary, *People Like Us*, Queenan opines, “A generation ago when you sent your kids to private school [it] was because you didn’t like black people. And now when you send your kids to private school it’s because you don’t like poor people...It’s all about, ‘I want my kid to go to school with the right kinds of people so that he can get in to Harvard...’”

(Alvarez & Kolker, 2001, 7:15:00). The Church would say that this should never be the primary reason for choosing a Catholic school, yet the number one reason parents of students enrolled in St. Michael's High School (SMHS) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for example, chose the school was for its academic excellence (St. Michael's High School, 2015). Paradoxically, academics as "The Most Important Thing" may be one Catholic school difference the Church would rather see downplayed.

Denig (2014) observed that originally Catholic schools in America were charged with being only "the equal of the public school in the academic achievement of students" (p. 123). "At this point, to argue about whether Catholic schools are academically better than public schools is to miss the difference, which is at the heart of Catholic schools" (p. 123).

Sense of community. Perhaps because of the unique size of the high school in which I conducted the qualitative study, which was approximately 600 students with 100 in each class from seventh through twelfth grade, there seemed to be a genuine sense of community and being part of a larger "family" at St. Mike's. The public charter high schools in Santa Fe are significantly smaller than SMHS (NM School for the Arts profile, 2017; Monte del Sol profile, 2017), while the two public high schools, Santa Fe High and Capital High, have approximately 1600 and 1350 total students respectively, in only four grades. A charter school with fewer than 250 students could feel limiting to a high school student, whereas it would be extremely difficult to know all the people in one's class in a public high school with 300 to 400 students per grade. However, SMHS has a class size of 100-125, which is an optimal size for a meaningful community (Gladwell, 2002). The analysis of observations, interviews, and artifacts all clearly pointed to an ongoing and intentional edification of community (Aiello, 2015), a common feature of Catholic schools (Bryk et al., 1993).

According to *Gravissimum Educationis*, schools should promote friendly relations and a spirit of mutual understanding. The proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity (Vatican Council II, 1965). “The emphasis should be on the school not as an institution, but rather the school as a community, a community of faith. This is a sharp alternative to the emphasis of an individualistic society” (Miller, 2006, p. 39). In nurturing the theological concept of community, SMHS is able to sustain this notable point of difference between a Catholic school and a non-faith based institution (Aiello, 2015). “All constituencies associated with the school are part of a community—this is more of a theological concept than a sociological one. A Catholic school is to create a climate of faith” (Cardinal Newman Society, 2015, n.p.).

More important than ever in today’s society, community is central to educational ministry, and there are distinct benefits to directing educational efforts to forming persons-in-community (Bryk et al., 1993; Mauritian, 1943). To young people, their schools become those learning communities. The structure of a Catholic school, with defined boundaries, shared beliefs, reinforcing social activities and formal organizational roles, is more communal than the structure of public schools (Denig, 2014). In *To Teach as Jesus Did* (1972), the American Catholic Bishops explained:

Building and living in community must be prime, explicit goals of the contemporary Catholic School. Community is an especially critical need today largely because natural communities of the past have been weakened by many influences. Pressures on the family, the basic unit of society...Urbanization and suburbanization have radically changed the concept of neighborhood community. (§108)

In the past 40 years, the support to children by family and neighbors has continued to erode (Putnam, 2000), rendering community provided by Catholic schools even more critical today than when *To Teach as Jesus Did* was first written.

Catholic schools tend to confer positive aspects of social capital on their students (Bryk et al., 1993). Putnam (2000) defined social capital as “the connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 16). Social networks have value, both individually and collectively—they are both a private good and a public good. Faith communities in which people worship together have been an important source of social capital for generations. According to Putnam (2000), “Child development is powerfully shaped by social capital...trust, networks, and norms of reciprocity within a child’s family, school, peer group, and larger community have wide-ranging effects on the child’s opportunities and choices and hence, on his behavior and development” (p. 302). The intertwining relationship of parents, school, and parish communities results in high levels of social capital for students of Catholic schools (Brinig & Garnett, 2014; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). The sense of community, which pervades many Catholic schools, is a notable and extremely positive point of difference.

Concern for the poor and social justice. The school itself should enroll students who are poor and/or disadvantaged and directly contribute to the betterment of building a more humane society. Miller (2006) says that “Catholic schools are meant to serve the needs of the socially and economically disadvantaged” (p. 8). *Gravissimum Educationis* proclaims, “a goal of Catholic education should be the attainment of the ‘good of every society and the building of a world that is more human’. The Church urges pastors and all the faithful to

spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools, especially in caring for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world” (Vatican Council II, 1965, §9).

Catholic schools today, as in LaSalle’s time, were meant to serve especially, but not exclusively, the needs of the poor. At St. Mike’s, there are students from a range of socioeconomic classes, but likely most fall at the high end of average family income. In a nod toward “Concern for the Poor and Social Justice,” the point of difference is the emphasis the school puts on “service to others.” During the school year, students are offered varied opportunities for community service. In thinking in a Catholic way about the concepts of “Concern for the Poor” and “Social Justice,” it is not clear that these community service projects are on-point. Community service is not synonymous with social justice. From a Christian perspective, it may be that the school misses the mark, albeit in a well-meaning way (Aiello, 2015). Based on an analysis of both student interviews as well as artifacts pertaining to the school’s version of LaSallianism and the themes of retreat days, it seemed to me that the school might be using the terms “Christian” or “Catholic” interchangeably with “Social Justice.” This erodes, in my opinion, the Catholic school brand.

An “inspirational ideology.” Successful school systems share common characteristics, and the most significant of these is core processes that have the most direct effect on the quality of teaching and learning, including “creating a widely shared system direction (mission, vision, goals for students)” (Leithwood, 2008, p. 2). The findings from the study I conducted indicate that The Five Core (LaSallian) Principles often used at SMHS as a focal point for setting policy, vision and mission, are also cited by administration and students as a key point of difference about SMHS (Aiello, 2015).

In researching *LaSallian Themes* for the origin of these Five Core Principles, I was unable to locate these in any of the writings, either of LaSalle or of the Christian Brothers. Upon further inquiry, I found that the Five Core Principles were developed between 1986 and 1993 in conjunction with a group of students attending a LaSallian school conference of the Region of San Francisco/New Orleans (J. Strum, personal communication, July 6, 2018). Therefore, it is unclear if these recent Five Core Principles are congruent with the Founder's original vision. LaSalle wrote about many topics, especially about how students should be instructed, the correct disposition of the teacher and the central importance of the Faith. It is clear LaSalle believed that the portion of the school day devoted to religious instruction and community witness to faith was every bit as important as the hours spent learning more general subjects (Lauraire, 1997). One of The Five Core Principles is "Faith in the Presence of God" and prayer begins each day and each class at SMHS. LaSalle wrote extensively about his vision of the teacher's job not merely as a vocation, but more importantly as a "ministry" of the Church. This was of revolutionary significance at the time, because ministries were reserved to those who had been ordained, and his Brothers were not ordained priests or deacons (Robionek, 2012). He also devoted numerous writings to the importance of the teacher setting a good Christian example for the students (Alcalde, 1997).

Another of The Five (LaSallian) Principles is Inclusive Community. LaSalle's inclusive vision was reflected in his plan to open, especially to the children of the poor, access to the knowledge of God and to a dignified life through instruction and education. The means he chose to achieve this objective was the Christian school. An essential element of this school was its "gratuity", meaning it was tuition-free, which was to assure that access to it was possible for all, but in particular for the children of the poor. In his vision of

inclusivity, the Founder aimed primarily at *making the school open* to this underserved class of children but not *closing it off* to the children of the rich (Bassett, 1997, p. 144).

Upon reading the multiple volumes of LaSallian Themes, I encountered a substantially dissimilar depiction of the Founder's original vision from its 21st century rendering. The Five Core Principles, with posters displayed in each room and an enlarged version in the main common area, are a modern interpretation of LaSalle's ideas pertaining to a Catholic education that has been newly repackaged—pithy, glib and utterly inoffensive in this age of cultural sensitivity and ecumenical diplomacy. In fact, one could debate whether SMHS was in fact a Catholic school or just a LaSallian school. LaSallian but not overtly Catholic would definitely appeal to a larger market segment of significant size and purchasing power, and the reality is that schools need to be able financially to make ends meet. Even though LaSalle completed his writings over 300 years ago, one gets the impression that he would be dismayed at the current spiritual-but-not-religious focus of the schools of his order. Jean Baptiste de la Salle was first and foremost a Catholic who lived after the Reformation and during the Enlightenment. His Catholic identity was hardly insignificant, nor did he endeavor to downplay its Catholicity to be more palatable to the wider population in the areas he and his order served.

According to the Cardinal Newman Society, in order for a school to be truly Catholic, it must be institutionally committed to the Catholic Faith. It should hire mission-oriented individuals who are committed to enhancing the faithful Catholic identity of the school (Miller, 2006). Finally, the truly Catholic school develops policy to preserve and enhance the school's Catholic identity (Cardinal Newman Society, 2015). In The Five Principles, the words "Jesus," "Gospel" or "Catholic" are never used. God is mentioned only once.

“We cannot forget that a school is first Catholic before it can be molded according to the specific charism of a religious order” (Miller, 2006, p. 18). The findings and themes of my earlier study seem to indicate that SMHS is relying on The Five Core Principles to demonstrate its Catholicity (Aiello, 2015), but The Five Core Principles are indistinctly Catholic—a diluted version of the original Gospel principles governing LaSallian schools in past eras.

Codes, norms and policies pertaining to conduct. Throughout the analysis of observations, artifacts and interviews, it was obvious that there is an expected code of behavior at SMHS (Aiello, 2015). Perhaps the most noticeable manifestation of this during the short span of the limited study was in the modeling of desired behavior on the part of administration and faculty. The consistent courtesy on the part of the students to escort me whenever I asked for directions was very impressive. This was explained by both a school leader and in the Parent/Student Handbook as a manifestation of the LaSallian Core Principle of “Respect for All Persons,” and did indeed seem to flow from the concepts of community and responsibility to one another as members of a learning community (Aiello, 2015).

According to Lauraire (1997), LaSalle evidently recognized the importance behavioral expectations would have on the success of his schools. He wrote extensively on the theme of “Conduct of the Christian Schools.” LaSalle advocated for “Preventive Measures”: establishing a calm atmosphere, relying on the vigilance of the teacher that he said should consist, among other things, “in enforcing very strict silence in school” (p. 68). He advocated for “Constructive Measures” or establishing peaceful relations, which he defined as propriety and politeness, and respect regarding one’s neighbor” (Lauraire, 1997, p. 64). To those in a position of authority over the students, including parents, LaSalle

recommended, "if [you] teach them and make them practice propriety that is shown to one's neighbor, [you] will induce them to give these signs of benevolence, honor and respect as if they were giving them to members of Jesus Christ and to living temples animated by the Holy Spirit" (Lauraire, 1997, p. 65). Such words reveal a Christian view of humanity that invites mutual respect inspired by a Gospel-based point of view. Denig (2014) supported this idea of modeling desired behavior, writing, "Living the Catholic faith in their daily lives by public witness and proper formation, Catholic school leaders and administrators carry out the task of providing for the intellectual, corporal and spiritual needs of the school community" (p. 121).

An environment of courtesy and mutual respect is expected, modeled and reinforced throughout the community of SMHS. This creates an atmosphere that is potentially more conducive to quality academics, respect for all persons, and inclusive community (three of the core principles) and is a notable point of difference for this Catholic school. In several studies (Bulman, 2004; Delaney, 2008; Huber, 2007; Maddaus, 1990; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012), parents cited "discipline" as a highly desirable consideration when choosing a school for their children. Gottfried and Kirksey (2018) found that students in Catholic schools exhibit more self-control than those in other private schools or public schools.

Catholic educational philosophy. The Church in the past 50 years has addressed the principles of education through several teaching documents—*Gravissimum Educationis* (1965), *To Teach as Jesus Did* (1972), *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990), *On the Threshold of a New Millennium* (1998) and *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion, instrumentum laboris* (2014). These documents confront, first and foremost, the goals of

Catholic education. They also recognize the multitude of challenges facing Catholic Schools including colleges and universities. The Church, as a worldwide institution, is cautious not to be too prescriptive in the details, but offers rather the macro view of mission, purpose and guiding principles. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, it leaves the details of implementation up to local bishops and the school administrators themselves.

According to Archbishop Miller (2006), a Catholic education should be:

- Inspired by a Supernatural Vision
- Founded on a Christian Anthropology
- Animated by Communion and Community
- Imbued with a Catholic Worldview
- Sustained by the Witness of Teaching

Until recently, the curriculum of most Catholic schools in the U.S. has been similar in many ways to that of the local public school, with the addition of a religious education class in each grade (Bryk et al., 1993; Walch, 2014). However, with the ubiquitous adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in a majority of states, there has been a pronounced divergence of educational philosophy between the stated goal for the design of CCSS “to ensure students are prepared for today’s entry-level careers, freshman-level college courses, and workforce training programs” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2018) and the utmost end of Catholic education “the formation of the human person in the pursuit of the ultimate end and [the good] of the societies of which he is a member...” (Vatican Council II, 1965).

Prior to CCSS, Catholic educators in each state interacted with government officials locally regarding individual state standards. Some dioceses followed their state educational

standards closely, while others less so. Because CCSS represented a nationalization of state standards, the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) initially encouraged its members to adopt the standards. As rationale, the NCEA cited the expectation that textbooks, educational materials, state testing, college-entrance exams, teacher training and teacher resources would become Common Core-based and that Catholic schools should “adapt accordingly” (Esolen et al., 2016, p.12). As such, many dioceses and Catholic schools began to prepare for CCSS. Although the subsequent backlash from both Catholic and non-Catholic critics alike has argued that the aims of CCSS are “brutally utilitarian” (Topping, 2015, p.18), there are dioceses and Catholic schools that have elected to follow CCSS.

Prior to the issue of CCSS, Catholic schools differed academically from their public school counterparts in that they required more academic courses for graduation, had a greater percentage of students on an academic track instead of a general or vocational track, included more academic course requirements for students on one of the non-academic tracks and steered all students, regardless of background or ability to take academic courses (Bryk et al., 1993). Instead of the “shopping mall” approach of many public high schools, “where market forces and free choice dominate” (p. 124), the variation between students in a Catholic high school was modest in comparison with students enrolled in public high schools. The high school I studied in an earlier project, St. Michael’s, although less than half the size of its local public school counterparts, has a substantially similar curricular approach, but fewer elective courses. Other than a few business and computer courses, there are no vocational classes. Students have very few elective choices—they are expected to take a full load each semester (which results in more credits than necessary to graduate) and they will take two or three elective courses during their high school years. According to Bryk et al. (1993), “The

common goal for students [in Catholic high schools]—regardless of ability, interests, or aspirations—was to move them as far as possible through a traditional academic program. We deduce that Catholic high schools take a direct, active role in deciding what their students should learn and deliberately create an academic structure to advance this aim” (p. 124).

Some Catholic educators who are deeply versed in Catholic anthropology suggest that a classical education or classical liberal arts curriculum is the best method of achieving the goals of Catholic education (Esolen et al., 2016; Miller, 2006; Rowland, 2016; Topping, 2015). Although there are over 100 Catholic schools currently using a classical curriculum (Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, 2018), the majority do not. A prominent argument in favor of adopting a classical or liberal curriculum includes better alignment with the goals and objectives of Catholic education—maximizing the intellectual and spiritual potential of every child. With its focus on the transcendentals of the good, the true and the beautiful, liberal education provides the tools of learning through the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* (Esolen et al., 2016; Sayers, 1947, 1979).

In what could be termed as a return to the original “common core” which served many students for centuries, the potential benefits of a classical or liberal curriculum for Catholic schools includes providing the tools of learning (Sayers, 1947, 1979), including critical thinking skills, and the structure of language via study of grammar. The study of liberal arts “prepares the soil [of the mind] for learning” (Topping, 2015, p. 62). It develops creativity and the imagination, instilling a sense of wonder (Esolen et al., 2016; Topping, 2015) where the trivium and quadrivium are the oxygen of the intellect” (Topping, 2015, p. 63). The liberal arts curriculum emphasizes the interconnectedness of the various academic disciplines (Newman, 1851; Sayers, 1947, 1979), thus leading to a well-rounded, balanced

education. Study of the Classics involves an exploration of the history of Western civilization, and aims at something higher than one's self. Study of the classical Western texts show students that 21st century America is not the center of the universe, but instead instills a sense of history and points to the Transcendentals (Esolen et al., 2016; Rowland, 2016). A Classical or Liberal Arts curriculum closely corresponds with a Christian and Catholic understanding of anthropology (Maritain, 1943; Newman, 1851; Rowland, 2016; Topping, 2015).

“While a *servile* education focuses only on the means of life, *liberal* education considers also the ends of life” [*Emphasis in the original*] (Topping, 2015, p. 20). At this point, the decision to stay with the recently adopted Common Core, or to choose a curriculum that would be more representative of the goals of Catholic education, requires that bishops, superintendents and administrators deconflict their loyalties (Topping, 2015). Will they draft on the neoliberal push to convert high schools into factories of vocational training while chasing the perverse prize for the highest standardized test scores in town? Or, mindful of the dignity of the human person and the souls in their care, will they take a stand against this dehumanizing trend? The former focuses the student's gaze on the ground, the latter on the glory of God in His creation.

Although the Church in the Sacred Congregation for Education recognizes the necessity of being able to take up a profession, it does not see preparedness for working life as the sole or even primary goal of education.

Current enrollment trends. Although there appear to be a number of positive points of difference for selecting Catholic schools over public schools in America, nevertheless there continues to be a steady decline in enrollments. I now turn to the disciplines of

Strategic Management and Marketing to analyze how the interplay of economic and structural factors (Strategic Management) as well as cultural and societal factors (Marketing) have affected demand for Catholic schools.

Practical Considerations: The Strategic Management/Marketing Analysis

Five Forces. The Five Forces model developed by Michael Porter (1979) determines the competitive intensity and, therefore, the attractiveness of a sector in terms of its viability or profitability. Much of the reason for decreasing enrollments is that the education sector at every level—Pre-K through college is marked by an intense competitive rivalry. In facing the financial challenges of running a privately funded school, it becomes perilously tempting to go off-mission if it is perceived that this might bring in more revenue. However, no business plan can be acceptable for a Catholic educational organization if it is undertaken solely for reasons of nostalgia or prestige, or if it compromises Church teaching. Utilizing the strategic management framework developed by Porter (1979) allowed me to conduct a sector analysis while simultaneously maintaining focus on the mission of the schools. According to the Five Forces Model (Porter, 1979), an industry or sector is unattractive if it fares poorly on the following points.

Bargaining power of suppliers. Teachers are the suppliers of education. To determine how Catholic schools fare with respect to their competition, we need to consider how difficult it is to get recruit and retain good teachers in Catholic schools. Usually, the pay is higher in traditional public schools or at a charter school (DeFiore, 2014; Esolen et al., 2016). On the other hand, some teachers may be willing to work for a lower salary because they believe in the mission of the school, or to be free of state and federal mandates aimed at public education. For example, teachers in Catholic classical schools are passionate about

what they do—“We won’t go back” (A. Seeley, personal communication, October 7, 2018).

The relative bargaining power of teachers vis-à-vis Catholic schools varies by location.

Barriers to entry. Every year there are new public charter schools opening in many areas (NCES, 2015). These charters have the flexibility to focus on specific niche curricula, such as special supports for underserved communities or around a specialized curriculum such as International Baccalaureate or dual language/bilingual. Although a few new Catholic schools open each year, the consolidations and closures of Catholic schools outpace new starts (NCEA, 2015). Therefore, it seems that there are very few parents, parishes or entrepreneurs who want to enter the sphere of K-12 education without the benefit of public funding. As a way of circumventing the dearth of funding for private Catholic schools, some stakeholders have taken to starting public charters as a substitute for the traditional Catholic school. Examples are the Great Hearts Schools in Arizona and Texas, and former Catholic schools in several (arch) dioceses.

Industry (sector) rivalry. The public school system in America has a near-monopoly on funding, geographic reach, and public policy protectionism. Charter schools, while also publicly funded, are increasing in popularity as an alternative to the traditional public school (TPS) (NCES, 2012). In several cities, charter school enrollment approaches 50 percent of public school enrollments (Smarick, 2012). Charter school enrollments in Washington, D.C. were 47.4% of total public school numbers during the 2017-2018 school year (Stein, 2018). In Kansas City, charter schools educated 45.1% of all public school students during the 2016-2017 school year (The Kansas City Star Editorial Board, 2017), and Detroit’s charter school enrollments were 53% of public school students in the same school year (McVicar, 2017). New Orleans’ public system is entirely made up of charter schools. Criticized by

professional educators as cream-skimmers, profit-oriented, and no more effective than the local traditional public school (Ravich, 2013), charters are alternatively praised by supporters for their ability to respond to market conditions, such as “community need, parental demand and educator interest” (Smarick, 2012, p. 83). Private schools are able to be more selective in admissions and may also enjoy elevated parental perception for exemplary academics and prestige. Finally, there is an ever-increasing group of parents choosing to homeschool, which is becoming a niche market in itself (Ice & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011; M2 Presswire, 2017). Catholic schools, on the other hand, have a serious disadvantage, as they receive no public funding in most states. They frequently walk a doctrinal line between being too orthodox for families of means who are non-Catholic or nominally Catholic, and not sufficiently orthodox for families whose go-to substitute is homeschooling (Topping, 2015). This situation for Catholic schools within the K-12 education sector is what Porter (1979) refers to as an unsustainable “stuck-in-the-middle” position.

Bargaining power of buyers. Families have many more options to choose from than they did 20 or 50 years ago. Today, parents have the option of choosing which schools to support. In some circumstances, parents actively select a school for their children, whereas some simply take the fallback position of not making any choice at all (Bulman, 2004; Hamlin, 2018). The power of individual families (“Buyers”) in this sector varies widely depending upon household income, potential special educational needs of the child, location, parental experience, availability of transportation and other parental resources, among other factors (Buckley & Schneider, 2003; Bulman, 2004, Hamlin, 2018; Sander, 2005).

Threat of substitutes. There are many options for Catholic parents who, until the mid-1960’s, endeavored, if at all possible, to send their children to the local parish school

(Greeley & Rossi, 1966). The traditional public school is convenient and least expensive. Many parents who had been concerned about a public school system that they perceived to be impersonal and uncaring have been pleasantly surprised by the teachers and overall educational experience for their child(ren). The traditional public school also has many “extras” to offer—tutoring, special education services, social services, athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Local charter schools, a relatively new arrival to the education sector, can be more appealing (Delaney, 2008; Gray & Gautier, 2006) in their smaller size, focused programmatic elements, perceived safer environment and lack of tuition. These schools seem to mimic many of the positive elements of private schools (individualized attention, closer relationships) without the added expense to families.

Finally, often for reasons of orthodoxy and cost to larger families, homeschooling has become an increasingly attractive option to many (Caro, 2015; Topping, 2015).

SWOT analysis. The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis is a strategic management tool to analyze an organization’s competitive position within an industry or sector. In this context, I will analyze the competitive position of Catholic schools in America within the K-12 arena. Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the organization whereas Opportunities and Threats refer to factors in the environment external to the Catholic school.

Opportunities. In 2015 in the United States, it was estimated that there were slightly fewer than 50 million school-age children (Ospino & Weitzel-O’Neill, 2016). In 2014, it was estimated that there were 14.6 million school-age Catholics in America (Ospino & Weitzel-O’Neill, 2016). Fewer than 2 million are being educated in Catholic schools

(NCEA, 2015). If there were to be the same percentage of Catholic school children being educated in Catholic schools today as were enrolled at the time of *Gravissimum Educationis* (*GE*), there would be over 8 million Catholic students in Catholic schools, or more than four times the number of today.

There are 31 U.S. dioceses where the number of parish-connected Catholics (i.e., registered or attending Mass) per elementary school exceeds 20,000, most in the South or West. A general guideline is that if there are more than 20,000 practicing Catholics per elementary school, there is a shortage of Catholic schools, whereas if there are fewer than 5,000 practicing Catholics per elementary school, the schools may well be having financial and/or enrollment challenges (Gray & Gautier, 2006). The Diocese of Las Cruces, NM has 44,215 Catholics per elementary school. The Archdiocese of Santa Fe has 22,992 Catholics per elementary school, and the Diocese of Phoenix has 20,992 Catholics per elementary school (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2014). Additionally, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2016) although the national median age is 37.8 years, the median age in these areas is lower than that of the country as a whole. For example, in Doña Ana County, New Mexico (Las Cruces) the median age is 32.8 years. In Bernalillo County, New Mexico (Albuquerque), the median age is 37.0 years, and in Maricopa County, Arizona, the median age is 36.1 years. A younger population indicates that there is potential in the raw demographics of these two southwestern sunbelt states.

The 2012 National Household Education Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) indicated that only 65% of children live in a two-parent home, 59% with two biological parents. Twenty-three percent of K-12 students live in a home with a female head of household only; and 8% live in a home with a male head of household only. The remaining 4% lived with a non-

parent guardian. Butler, Carr, Toma, and Zimmerman (2013) found that children living in a home with no father present were significantly more likely to attend the assigned TPS than any other school type. Homeschooling families overwhelmingly have two parents in the household. For 35% of K-12 children in the U.S., homeschooling and or any school type other than the TPS is unlikely for reasons of family structure (Butler et al, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). What obligation do local bishops have to these children who through no fault of their own are sorted into their local public school, good or bad, because of family structure? This is a niche that Catholics have a moral responsibility to fill (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997).

Another significant opportunity for Catholic schools comes from parents' general dissatisfaction with and suspicion of public schools. Although public school spending per pupil in the U.S. is one of the highest in the world (Tucker, 2012), the results by various measures are not commensurate. Many parents, though still not the majority, do, in fact, look for an alternative for their children (Butler et al., 2013). For Catholic parents, if a Catholic school is available, it should enjoy top-of-mind awareness, or at least be in the set of schools to be considered (Greeley & Rossi, 1966). Political backlash with Common Core curriculum has resulted in an additional caveat for those who would have their children attend either a TPS or a public charter, which are required to follow Common Core requirements (Esolen et al., 2016). Because Catholics believe children should be educated for more than merely economic utility, it stands to reason that the Church should desire more than a Common Core curriculum (Esolen et al., 2016; Miller, 2006; Topping, 2015). As I discussed in the section on Catholic educational philosophy, the Catholic intellectual tradition fits well with a Classical or Liberal Arts curriculum. That is, the Catholic school is uniquely positioned to

adopt a Classical Catholic curriculum as a natural extension of the principles of GE. There might never be a better time for Catholic schools to consider returning to their intellectual and academic roots.

Threats. I have discussed threats in the external environment at length throughout this paper: the overly-generous funding of public schools, which also enjoy the protection of public policy and an increasingly-fierce secularism; the small-community and specialized nature of the public charter school, which mimics the community feeling associated with many Catholic schools; the prestige associated with the academic selectivity of the non-sectarian private school; and the control and identity that comes with homeschooling.

Threats also come from the rapidly diminishing base of parents who have been educated in Catholic schools, which means they are less likely to consider that option for their own children (Bulman, 2004). Other similarly detrimental social and cultural trends (for example a decrease in the number of Catholics who attend Mass on a weekly basis) as well as the increased number of single family (largely female-led) households mean that children are more likely to attend the TPS. Stagnant and declining wages of the American middle-class means less discretionary income available for “extras” such as Catholic school tuition (Semega, Fontenot, & Kollar, 2017). Communities where social networks are far less dense than they have been in previous generations means the same social pressures to send one’s children to the local parish school are not present (Brinig & Garnett, 2014).

Another threat beyond the control of the typical Catholic school is the most recent clergy abuse crisis. It is reasonable to ask whether some parents who might have seriously considered sending their child to a Catholic school have been dissuaded because of their disgust for abusive clergy and Church leadership that provided cover for abusers. Certainly,

many people have recently written that the bishops have lost their moral authority, even among faithful Catholics (Goldstein, 2018; Guidos, 2018; Pope, 2018).

When credible accusations of clergy abuse became widely known in 2002, dioceses noticed a significant decline in giving. Catholic school enrollment, which had already been in decline, continued during the early 2000s. In 2005, a study was commissioned to research the possible negative effect of clergy abuse on Catholic school enrollment. The Gray and Gautier study (2006) found that self-identified Catholic parents indicated that the 2002 revelations of clergy abuse had some impact on their decision regarding Catholic school. However, the degree to which their decision was impacted differed substantially by their ultimate choice. The parents asked specifically about the impact on their decision were divided into four groups: those with school-aged children a) enrolled in Catholic school, or; b) in some other type of school; and those with preschool-aged children who c) thought that they would be enrolling them in Catholic school, and those d) who had decided against Catholic school.

Among parents who either had children already enrolled in Catholic schools or with preschool-aged children intending to enroll them in Catholic schools, they indicated that news of sexual abuse allegations regarding Catholic clergy either had no impact on their decision (75.6 and 34.1% respectively), or “a little” impact (18.9 and 50.0%). A small minority indicated that it was “somewhat” (3.1 and 11.4%) or “very much” (2.4 and 4.5%) a consideration in their decision. On the other hand, parents whose children were enrolled in a public school or another non-Catholic school option and parents of preschool-aged children who had decided against Catholic school were more likely to say that clergy abuse “very much” (15.5 and 21.9%) or “somewhat” (20.9 and 26.3%) impacted their decision. It is

important to note that among the two groups of parents who had decided against Catholic school, the cost of tuition (57.8%) and insufficient tuition assistance (49.2%) was rated much higher as a somewhat or very important consideration. As such, it is difficult to determine the actual degree to which the 2002 clergy abuse scandal genuinely impacted the decision-making process. In the end, affordability of tuition was rated as having a greater influence on the ultimate decision not to enroll in a Catholic school. It may be that the clergy abuse issue was either the final blow to a leaning-toward-no decision, or the reasons for not choosing a Catholic school were complex and the parent is assigning some of the blame to clergy abuse out of (an understandable) righteous indignation and the desire to send a message to dioceses. There is a case to be made that confounding factors are real and prevalent making it difficult, if not impossible, to unravel the true impact of the scandal on Catholic school enrollments.

CARA researcher Harris (2003) realized this in analyzing the decline in donations to dioceses from 2001 to 2002. He concluded that the impact of the economic downturn had at least as much effect on declining donations as did clergy abuse. According to CARA (2017), weekly Mass attendance in 2000 was 22% and in 2005 it was at 23%. If the clergy abuse scandal had no measurable impact on Mass attendance, it is also conceivable that it had a negligible impact on the parental decision for or against enrolling children in Catholic school. For the genuinely faithful, true believers, the practice of faith does not ultimately depend upon the conduct of men—their faith is in Christ and His Church; as angry as they might be, they will not leave the Catholic Church for a more pleasant faith community without sacraments. They may, however, reduce financial support to a diocese they believe has squandered monies on clandestine legal settlements.

It remains to be seen if the McCarrick scandal and the Pennsylvania grand jury report of the summer of 2018 will have a negative impact on Catholic school enrollments.

Although there is not yet any concrete evidence as to the response of the laity at large, there has been a call from many prominent lay Catholics for a full investigation led by faithful Catholic lay people, to the exclusion of bishops and clergy. This approach has also been endorsed by some bishops, including the President of the USCCB, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Bishop Robert Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin, and Bishop Robert Barron, founder of Word on Fire global Catholic ministry. Initially therefore, it appears that the response of the average Mass-attending Catholic will be to demand and take charge of upcoming investigations, and hold their bishops accountable, publicly enlisting Vatican support.

Weaknesses. Much has been written about the weaknesses of the Catholic school concept in the current economic climate (Bauch, 2014; Brinig & Garnett, 2014; Bryk et al., 1993; Caro, 2015; DeFiore, 2014; Gray, 2014; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016; Topping, 2015). Rapidly rising costs followed by the inevitable tuition increases, chronic financial shortfalls, and increased competition from other types of education are among the most immediate issues. (DeFiore, 2014).

All these factors are very real, but they may not be the biggest weakness for Catholic education in America. The most formidable weakness faced by Catholic schools is the infidelity to the true mission as expressed in GE (Cardinal Newman Society, 2015; Miller, 2006), leaving the typical Catholic school without a distinctive identity or competitive advantage.

The somewhat superficial reason given for the decline of Catholic schools in America is the lack of professed religious who worked for modest stipends, once allowing Catholic

school tuition to be very affordable to many working-class families. This void is indeed a weakness, but not so much in the financial context that it is usually considered. True, there are fewer professed religious today than there were in 1966 (CARA, 2018), but the bigger issue was that these vowed religious abandoned the traditional teaching missions of their orders in order to do more “socially relevant” work (Bryk et al., 1993, p. 8). Well-intentioned though it might have been, as social workers or community advocates these vowed religious no longer influence the many young, impressionable students they once did, either through their overt teaching or through their witness to a life lived fully for the sake of the Kingdom. Absent the sign value of religious sisters or brothers in habit, the identity of the Catholic school is undeniably diminished, and along with it the visible reminder of a transcendent way of life.

Strengths. What should make Catholic education and Catholic schools unique? A Catholic School should be a learning environment where there is no bifurcation of faith and reason. By law and now custom, this is not true of either public schools or public charters in the United States. Catholic schools do their best for Christians when they teach guided by Catholic anthropology, which is specifically Trinitarian and Christocentric (Rowland, 2016). There is a highly important Trinitarian relationship between the faculties of the human soul (intellect, memory, will), the theological virtues (Faith, Hope and Love) and the transcendental properties of being, especially Truth, Goodness and Beauty (Rowland, 2016). *Getting the anthropological foundations right was the secret of the success of the great religious education orders [emphasis added].* Many benefited from the education they received [from these orders] (Rowland, 2016). It would be a strong point of difference from

other schooling options if all American Catholic schools demonstrated these anthropological foundations in their mission, teaching and communities.

This Trinitarian and Christocentric anthropology cannot underpin public education. In an effort to infuse a Catholic worldview in the education of their children (Miller, 2006), parents may plan to emphasize religious and moral teaching through their involvement with homework or through other “teachable moments.” This integration of Catholicity might be conveyed well, or inexpertly, depending on the self-efficacy of the parents (Ice & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011). Still, the opportunities to integrate Catholic anthropology with curriculum in the arts or humanities when a child attends a public school would be asynchronous at best—it cannot be done in the context of a classroom discussion in a literature or art appreciation class in real time. A great strength of the Catholic school is its ability to be truly Catholic, to teach according to the Catholic intellectual tradition, to be able to discuss openly the possibilities of goodness, truth and beauty in light of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love, and to do it well, in a community striking in its diversity of many ethnicities but under a common philosophy and faith. This is an important strength available to Catholic schools in America, which is not available to any of the tuition-free options.

In that the recent clergy abuse scandals may well result in a smaller “remnant” Church, Catholic schools are uniquely positioned to teach students about their rights and responsibilities, gifts and mission, as Christians baptized into Christ’s triune offices of priest, prophet and king. Unfortunately, their parents may be less able to do this, as they themselves were not well-catechized if they experienced religious education after the late 1960s. Prior to the Council, young American Catholics were catechized via the Baltimore Catechism; afterwards, formal religious education programs emphasized God’s love and promotion of

social justice absent a doctrinal basis. The result is that many Catholics do not understand and cannot explain the reason of Catholic teaching. Without the support of reason, faith falters. The Catholic school has the opportunity to educate young people in both *Fides et Ratio*. It could also have the resources to teach the importance of right worship and offering sacrifice (priestly office), to speak the truth with courage (the role of the prophet) and servant leadership (a share in the kingly office of Christ). These skills will be invaluable in a smaller future Church.

The buyer decision process. With so many options, how do parents (or decision-makers) think about and shop for a school for their child(ren)? It is critical to understand this process so that a Catholic school can develop a marketing mix that satisfies the needs of specific families better than its close substitutes (Perreault, Cannon, & McCarthy, 2011). The first step in the buyer decision process is need awareness (Figure 1). This is likely to be a universal experience for parents when the time for their first child to enter kindergarten (or pre-kindergarten) approaches. Many parents will not perceive that there is a decision to be made. Their child will attend the local public school. However, certain parents are more likely to engage in an information search. Only 30.5 % of parents report that they considered other schools for their children (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Notable demographic differences exist: 26% of White parents considered another school and slightly over 80% report that they got their first choice. Forty percent of Black parents considered another school but only 69.4% got their first choice. Families in the non-poor category were 5.6 percentage points more likely than those living below the poverty line to consider other schools (32.4 and 26.8% respectively). Finally, parents who report having earned at least a bachelor's degree are more likely to have considered another school at a 30% higher rate

(35.1 v. 30.1 percent) and 40.1% of parents with a graduate degree say that they have considered another school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

Still, the majority of parents apparently did not consider shopping for another school for their child. This could be because they struggle with making sense of the school choice process. They may not have adequate access to information or other socioeconomic resources; hence, they do not activate their available means (Allen & West, 2011; Bulman, 2004; Hamlin, 2018). Instead, the (in)action of these parents would seem to indicate that the process was a routinized response. Bulman (2004) refers to these parents as “non-choosers”. Schools cannot influence the buyer behavior process when this routinized response is exercised. Parents who do not engage in any sort of problem-solving process do not search for information about alternatives to their presumed choice. Therefore, there is no opening for different schools to interject persuasive information, which might influence the parent to choose them.

Routinized response behavior (Figures 1 and 2) means that there is little involvement on the part of the decision-maker, that there is a minimum of information desired, there is little risk, and the product is inexpensive (Perrault et al., 2011). This would seem to represent uninvolved parents choosing the local public school, a school for a subsequent child, or a private school that is inexpensive relative to their income. Uninvolved parents using this process to choose a school believe that the risk of making a poor decision is minimal.

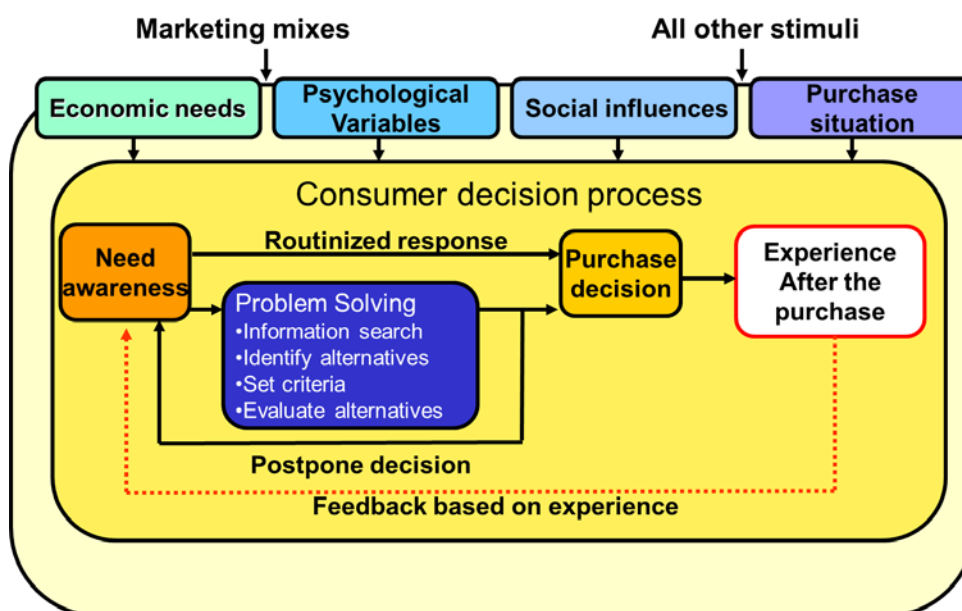


Figure 1. Expanded Model of Consumer Behavior (Perreault, Cannon & McCarthy, 2011, p. 162).

On the opposite end of the spectrum (Figure 2), a high involvement purchase reflects a process that reveals the importance of choosing the right school for the child. A high-involvement purchase decision is considered to be high-risk, costly and infrequently made. For this reason, much information is desired (Perreault et al., 2011). This coincides with the grave significance some parents attach to the school their children attend. Marginal consumers of education are parents who report that they have actively chosen a school different from the default neighborhood school that their child would normally attend. Parents engaging in this type of school-search process were studied as involved consumers (Buckley & Schneider, 2003) by applying a quantitative measurement of active shopping in their research on the information search process of “market mavens” for D.C. area charters. “In their overall orientation toward choice, school choosers viewed themselves much more like consumers, seeking out a product of considerable value” (Hamlin, 2018, p. 67). Active

choosers of education use “smart” shortcuts to reduce their decision problem to a more manageable size and therefore search more thoroughly. They appear to do a better job of weighing the pros and cons of the education options available (Buckley & Schneider, 2003).

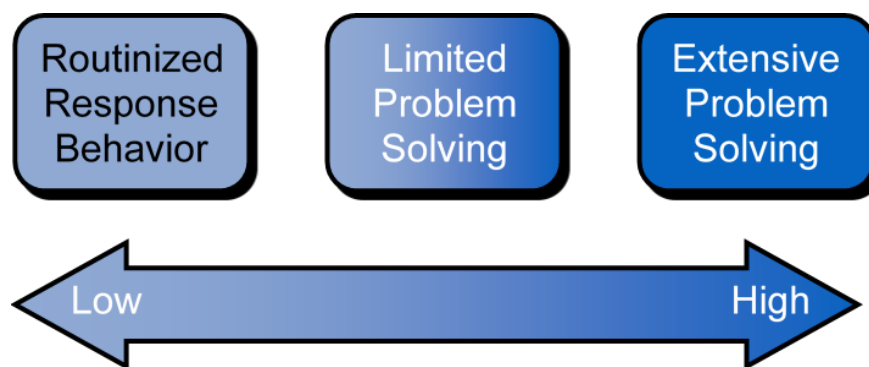


Figure 2. Problem-solving continuum (Perreault, Cannon & McCarthy, 2011, p. 163).

In between these two extremes is a limited problem-solving process (Figure 2). These parents expend some effort, but significantly less than those utilizing the extensive problem-solving process. The limited problem-solving process is common in a situation when the purchaser already has some experience with the product (Perrault et al., 2011), for example in a case where he or she might be getting ready to enroll a second or third child. Is the school that the first child attended the best choice for another child, or has the parent become aware of other choices since he or she enrolled the first child (Hamlin, 2018)? If so, the parent may do a search for basic information on other possibilities to decide whether or not to research further or to reassure him- or herself that the original choice is still the best option.

In the past fifteen years, parents have been choosing charter schools, private non-Catholic and even homeschooling at higher rates than TPSs or private Catholic schools (Figure 3). Why are parents choosing these schools? For stakeholders in the continued

viability of Catholic schooling in America, it is critical to gain greater insight into parental attitudes toward Catholic education as a possible option for their children, with the goal being the proliferation of a model Christian education to be attainable by as many families as would desire this option.

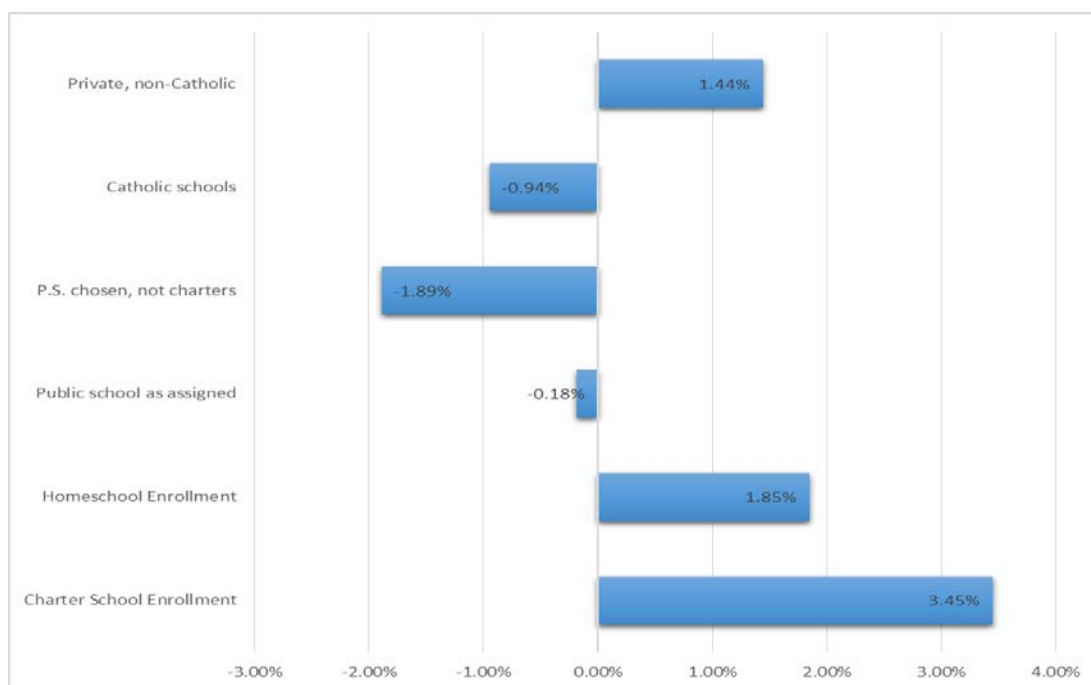


Figure 3. Percentage change in type of school chosen, 2000-2012 (NCES, 2014).

Demographic predictors of school choice. Researchers have known for quite some time that family income, parental level of education, location of housing, race and ethnicity all impact parental choice (or non-choice) of school. A quantitative study done in 2013 (Butler, Carr, Toma, & Zimmer, 2013) compiled data from several National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) sources that describe a range of demographic characteristics of a household along with a measure of religiosity, the distance of the school from the home and the school chosen. The possible school types chosen were the traditional public school (TPS), magnet public schools, a public charter, a private Catholic school, private religious

(non-Catholic) school, or a private non-sectarian school. The only major category not included as an educational option in this study was homeschool. The original purpose of the study was to understand on a very granular level the characteristics of families that chose public charter schools for their children.

There were relevant findings in the study (Butler et al., 2013) that were quite illuminating for Catholic schools. First, the data indicated that there were more similarities between parents who chose public charters and parents who chose private schools than between parents who chose public charters and any other public school option (TPS or magnet school). This indicates something that Catholic school administrators already know: public charters are considered to be a viable substitute for the Catholic school (Gray & Gautier, 2006). Race (or ethnicity) of either the household or the school did not seem to have any effect on the choice of charter school, but socioeconomic factors (household income, parental education, family structure) did. The absence of a father in the household decreased the chances of the child attending either a charter or a Catholic school; notably, the absence of a mother in the house did not produce the same effect. If the mother held a college degree, the child was more likely to attend either a public charter or a Catholic school, but if the father was less educated (a high school diploma or less), the child was less likely to attend a charter or Catholic school. If there were no father present in the home, the parental choice was overwhelmingly the TPS, even after controlling for distance to the school, educational level of the parent and the poverty status of the household (Butler et al., 2013).

The distance from the school finding is significant especially for Catholic schools. For approximately every one mile the Catholic school is from the home, there is a one percent decrease in the chance that the household will choose the Catholic school (Butler et

al., 2013). This might not sound like much, but to put it into perspective, if the Catholic school is ten miles away from home, the chances that the school will be chosen drops by ten percentage points. For regional Catholic schools, greater distance from family neighborhoods could be a significant obstacle to increasing enrollments.

Perhaps the most interesting difference between families that chose Catholic schools over families that chose public charters is in the area of religiosity. In this regard, the results for charters, the traditional public school, and non-sectarian private schools were all similar—the frequency with which families reporting discussing religion or arguing about religion were low. On the other hand, the same measure for families electing to send their children to Catholic schools was much higher (Butler et al., 2013).

Note that the Butler study (2013) did not factor in the role of tuition in choosing a school. Earlier studies (Bryk et al., 1993; Huber, 2007; Maddaus, 1990) found that there is a substantial change in enrollment status between Catholic elementary school and secondary school, with higher tuition for secondary schools being presumed as the primary reason. The general migration pattern is that Catholic students are more likely to move from a Catholic elementary to a public high school, and non-Catholics are likely to move from a public elementary or middle school to a Catholic high school (Bryk et al., 1993). Reasons reported beyond the tuition differential for Catholics migrating to a public high school are that the academic requirements of a Catholic high school are perceived to be too difficult, and/or the public school provides a wider range of activities and services. On the other side, non-Catholics report moving from a public school to a Catholic secondary school primarily for more rigorous academics and/or to get into a good college (Huber, 2007).

National origin and generation of immigrant. Sattin-Bajaj (2012) found that there were more obstacles to selecting high-quality educational opportunities for students of Mexican and Latin American descent as compared to other racial and ethnic groups with similar socioeconomic and immigration statuses. The study measured search behavior and success of matching 8th graders to high schools of choice in New York City. “On average, this group relied on fewer information sources, attended fewer open houses and fairs, was less likely to consider academic factors and consulted with fewer people to help them make decisions” (p. 354).

Students of immigrant parents may be at an increased disadvantage due to the customs and social-distance in their countries of origin. “Many come from traditions that revere school authorities and expect parents to keep a distance... moreover, some parents may lack knowledge about what is expected of them or what they can do as parents to assist their children academically. As a result, the field is ripe for conflicts, misunderstandings, and lost opportunities for collaboration between schools and immigrant families” (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Sattin-Bajaj, 2010, p. 545).

Additionally, second generation students of Mexican-born mothers were equally as likely as their first-generation counterparts not to engage in good search behavior with respect to high-quality schools. One of the comparison groups was children of mothers of Asian-origin, including second-generation students who scored very high on search behavior. “It can therefore be inferred that second-generation children born to Latin-American immigrant mothers may be in the most vulnerable position in terms of accessing high quality [high] schools” (Sattin-Bajaj , 2012, p. 355).

Because second-generation children of Latin-American mothers are less likely to engage actively in an information search regarding their own schools, it follows then that they might also be less likely to search for information regarding high-quality alternatives for their children's schooling. This would make it more difficult for Catholic school leaders to influence the decision-making process of first- or second-generation Hispanic parents of Latin-American descent, thereby prolonging the uninformed non-choosing behavior by an extra generation.

Psychographic (behavioral) aspects of school choice. Parents' inclination to become actively involved in their child's education can be influenced by their sense of efficacy in helping their child learn, beliefs surrounding how active they think they should be in supporting their children's education, and the parents' positive or negative experiences with schools and how that influences the parents' emotional orientation toward future engagement (Ice & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011). These factors as well as other attitudes and values are a product of culture.

Culture. The term "culture" can mean many things. In the context of consumer behavior and school choice, culture is "the lens through which people make sense of the social world" (Bulman, 2004, p. 492). While much research has been done on the effects of socioeconomic status and/or race/ethnicity on parents' attitudes toward schooling, this approach to understanding the issue of how parents think about and shop for a school for their children paints only a partial picture. Researchers have attempted to figure out why some parents possess the financial and informational resources to choose a school other than the TPS to which their family is assigned, yet do not choose to activate these resources. Other families of more modest means and social connections endeavor to maximize the little

they have to choose what they perceive to be a better school for their children. The decision to activate available resources is mediated by culture. If we can understand where these cultural meanings originate, we could then possibly influence the process, thereby bringing to more children the opportunity for a Catholic school education.

In the Bulman study (2004), most of the families in the sample from the working-class suburb were non-choosers—parents seemed to take it for granted that, of course, their children would attend the local public school. On the other hand, close to 75% of the families in the sample from the nearby upper-middle-class suburb actively chose the local public school. It has been hypothesized that, in many cases of apparent non-choice for the local public school, the parents de facto “chose” the school(s) when they chose the location of their housing (Maddaus, 1990). Overall, irrespective of the socioeconomic class of the subjects, most parents expressed that they placed value on the educational experiences of their children. Differences arose in what the parents understood to be the best educational environment for their kids. They had developed different cultural meanings through their background and experience—especially through their past educational experiences (Bulman, 2004).

It is significant to note that “choosers” in both samples obtained their information in a relatively superficial manner—mostly through reputation and gossip—or what is sometimes referred to as “cognitive shortcuts” (Buckley & Schneider, 2003). The choosers also did not have much concrete information regarding test scores, graduation rates, or other similar statistics. Although demographic data (for example, household income and educational attainment of parents) were collected, these data alone were not adequate to inform the

researchers how families decided to activate their resources or how they were inclined to choose one school over another.

To answer those questions, the researchers conducted qualitative interviews with an equal number of parents in each of two suburbs of different socioeconomic classes in the Bay area of California. In the upper-middle-class socioeconomic suburb, the public high schools were rated from “very good” to “excellent.” The other suburb was more blue-collar “working class,” and its public schools were rated “average” to very slightly below average. The two areas were approximately 30 miles apart. All the parents interviewed were parents to a ninth-grader, so the decision (or non-decision) as to which high school their child would attend had been made recently. In addition to the local traditional public high schools in each area, there were local Catholic secondary schools, local fundamentalist Christian high schools and a local non-sectarian private school with a strong reputation located equidistant from both areas. Interviews were conducted with multiple parents from each suburb who had chosen either the local public school, the local Catholic school, the local Christian non-Catholic high school or the same non-sectarian private school for their children.

Excepting the fundamentalist Christian high schools in both areas, the finding was that the impact of parental educational experiences was the most significant factor in choice of school. That is, parents who had a positive experience attending a public high school were comfortable sending their children to the local public high school. Parents who had attended selective private schools in their youth were quite likely (irrespective of income) to send their children to the non-sectarian private school. Parents who had attended Catholic schools in their youth preferred a Catholic high school for their children, regardless of their own

religious practice. It is worth noting that the qualitative interviews highlighted that none of the Catholic parents described themselves as attending church regularly.

As stated, the cultural experience that seemed to trump all demographics was the prior educational experience of the parents, except for the parents who sent their children to either of the two fundamentalist Christian high schools. In these cases, overwhelmingly the most salient factor was the religious beliefs of the parents. Even for relatively low-income families, their belief in the evils and pervasiveness of secular humanism and the “public school agenda” led them to either homeschool or make a considerable financial sacrifice to send their children to the fundamentalist Christian high school. When asked for their rationale, they used phrases like, “Public schools aren’t like they were 30 years ago. Now they play Russian Roulette with our children,” or referred to public schools as “the public school monster” (Bulman, 2004, p. 509).

Note that this study was conducted prior to the proliferation of public charter schools, but recall also that the Butler study showed that parents choosing public charters behave in a manner quite similar to those that choose private schools. The Butler (demographic) study (2004) did not include homeschool as an option, and neither did Bulman (2004), but he found peripherally that fundamentalist Christian school-choosing parents behaved very similarly to homeschoolers. In fact, many of the parents in his interview sample who had children in the fundamentalist Christian high school had also homeschooled at some point. It is worth considering, I believe, the similarities between fundamentalist Christian parents from Bulman’s study and Catholic homeschool parents. It would seem unlikely these families would be satisfied by a strictly secular public charter option.

Market position. Positioning refers to how customers think about brands in a market. In a traditional for-profit organization, it is important for the marketing manager to know how he or she wants the target market to think about the overall marketing mix, the combination of controllable variables of product/service features, location, promotion and price (Perrault et al., 2011). It is important to note that a product or service, in this case the local Catholic school, may have different attributes than what is perceived by the target market, in this case, parents. Positioning refers not so much to the actual characteristics of the product or service in relation to its competitors, but rather to how the target market *perceives* the product in relation to other offerings within the marketplace (Perreault et al., 2011).

For stakeholders with a vested interest in the future of Catholic schools in the U.S., especially in the Southwest, it is important to understand perceptions of Catholic parents toward both their local Catholic school, as well as their local Catholic school directly in relation to other schools in their set of choices, as these perceptions influence their choice of schools for their children (Gray & Gauthier, 2006).

Hispanic cultural factors influencing Catholic school choice. “Culture” is the tool kit by which families make sense of education and their options (Bulman, 2004). It is significant to note that K-12 Catholic school leaders consider a major obstacle to enrollment of more Latino/as to be "a cultural perspective with Hispanic communities that suggests Catholic schools are exclusive. One principal noted her need [among the Hispanic target market] for a ‘clear understanding the Catholic schools are not for the rich. In Latin America...Catholic schools are sponsored by religious communities and have historically served the rich’” (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016, p. 30). This may be one of the factors

contributing to the very low numbers of Hispanic children enrolled in Catholic schools in the United States. In the ten years between 2005 and 2015, despite efforts specifically targeted toward increasing the number of enrollments of Hispanic children, the percentage increase was held to only 3.3%. “We need to clarify the role of Catholic education for the next generation of U.S. Catholic children and youth—who are mostly Hispanic...” (Ospino & Weitzel-O’Neill, 2016, p. 47). Getting a population that has not traditionally been educated in Catholic schools to consider seriously this option will require significant investment and endorsement by local community and Church leadership. There is evidence that indicates that Catholic school attendance confers benefits to Hispanic students: Latino children are 42% more likely to graduate from high school and two and a half times more likely to graduate college if they attend at Catholic K-12 school (Schoenig, 2013).

Recommendations to increase enrollment of Hispanic children in Catholic schools in the U.S. have included encouraging individual school leaders to have enrollment plans that address specifically the differing needs of a range of demographic groups, increasing the number of teachers and principals at Catholic schools who self-identify as Hispanic, and increasing the number of principals who are fluent in Spanish, especially offering training to principals explicitly with respect to Hispanic culture, ministry and theology (Ospino & Weitzel-O’Neill, 2016). Further recommendations include offering support to faculty and administration to acquire second-language skills, engaging in “welcoming” practices, such as Spanish-language signage, and dual-language prayers and liturgies. Finally, increasing diversity specifically to include more self-identifying Hispanic/Latino members on school governing bodies is suggested as a method to indicate commitment to cultivating the Hispanic population of children in Catholic schools going forward (Ospino & Weitzel-

O'Neill, 2016). While encouraging these practices may present a more obviously Hispanic presence at Catholic schools, there is no research substantiating the effectiveness of adopting these policies. In fact, contradictory evidence is presented that “after controlling for income, age, frequency of Mass attendance, education, region, and availability of financial assistance (public or private), Hispanic Catholic parents are no more or less likely to enroll children in Catholic schools than Catholic parents of other races and ethnicities” (Gray, 2014, p. 14). If that finding is accurate for the Hispanic populations in New Mexico and Arizona, it would seem to indicate that preexisting stereotypes about the type of students who go to Catholic schools are not factors influencing parents against choosing local Catholic schools.

Among families recently arrived from Latin America there seems to be a difference in beliefs about the active role a parent could play in choosing a school. Sattin-Bajaj (2014) found that these parents had limited involvement in their child’s New York City public high school choices. Latin-American parents tend to support their children’s education by encouragement, home-based activities and cultivating moral development. Moral education within families includes emphasis on respectful behavior, and compliance with customs and traditions. Academic matters are left to “professionals” who are better trained to resolve school-related issues, whereas parents were mostly concerned with a school’s safety and distance from home. These attitudes were found to be substantially different from parents of other ethnic groups in similar socioeconomic classes and with similarly limited experiences with American public schools (Sattin-Bajaj, 2014).

There may be more serious psychological factors at work among first- and second-generation families of Latin-American origin. Suárez-Orozco & Todorova (2009) found that second-generation immigrants (and to a lesser extent first-generation immigrants who had

been in the United States for more than five years) project greater isolation, inadequacy and disengagement compared with recently arrived immigrants. There was a notable shift to doubts about their own abilities. It is possible that these attitudes mature and settle into a lack of self-efficacy among first- and second-generation parents of Latin-American background which manifests as a lack of engagement in choosing a school for their children.

Cultural imprinting and the significance of the code. As stated earlier, “culture” attaches meaning. In America, what is the meaning attached to Catholic schools?

Because of social desirability bias, the limitation with any type of research is that it is very difficult to pose the question in such a way so as to get the most genuine answer, but also because quite often “Even the most self-examining of us are rarely in close contact with our subconscious...[our answers] don’t reveal the unconscious forces that precondition our feelings” (Rapaille, 2006, p. 17). This is significant because research subjects may not know the true reason for their choice. The study by Butler et al. (2013, p. 789) used quantitative data to examine factors associated with parental choice of a charter school, determining that, “What parents reported as important in their decision did not always coincide with their actual decision. While 60 percent of parents ranked test scores as a primary factor in choosing a school, the majority of these parents picked a charter school with lower average test scores than the TPS their child exited.”

We tend to make associations between certain products and beliefs, attitudes and feelings, and we may or may not be consciously aware of those connections. We attach meaning to foods, specific scents, certain holidays, or memorable incidents. Some of our feelings are so strong about these things because in some way an intense emotional response was associated with this item or event. Rapaille (2006) believes that emotion is necessary to

learning. As we saw with Bulman's (2004) research, parents often chose a Catholic high school for their children because of their own positive memories/experiences, even if they no longer attend Mass regularly. It appears that Catholic school attendance, as long as the experience was emotionally positive, begets Catholic school attendance for the next generation.

No emotional connection is a state, too. In the recently published Boston College report regarding Hispanics and Catholic schools in America (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016), the most recent data indicate that the percentage of young Latino/as attending Catholic schools is very low (2.3%), a fact that the authors attribute in part to the low percentage of Latino/a teachers and administrators. However, the low percentage of Latino/a personnel in Catholic schools may well be a natural result of the low Hispanic attendance rate at Catholic schools 20-40 years ago. It takes a considerable investment of time and other resources to overcome a lack of emotional connection within a social/cultural population (Rapaille, 2006).

Many of these associations are made when we are quite young. Generally, there is a limited window of time to make an imprint. If we want to access those associations in order to create a product offering that exploits all the right emotional connections with our target market, we need to determine "the Code" (Rapaille, 2006, p. 9). For example, Nestlé corporation engaged Rapaille to discover the cultural code for coffee in Japan in the 1970s, as it was not having success in selling its instant coffee in that market. What Rapaille discovered was that, although the Japanese had significant imprints for tea, they had no cultural imprint for coffee—there was absolutely no emotional connection at all. To succeed in this market in the long run, Rapaille suggested marketing coffee-flavored desserts to

young Japanese children, who would then carry a positive association for that flavor into adulthood. The code or imprint for coffee in Japan therefore had to be created from scratch.

This limited window for imprinting combined with research indicating that high school is the most fruitful time for influencing adult religious commitment (Perl & Gray, 2007) makes a strong case for ensuring that all levels of Catholic schooling (P-12) are accessible for the maximum number of Catholic young people. A deeper emotional impact toward imprinting is more likely to occur if the child attends during the early elementary years, perhaps even as early as preschool. But Catholic high schools, with significantly higher tuition than elementary schools, may do a better job of fostering adult religious commitment. One study (Perl & Gray, 2007) found that Catholic high school [attendance] depresses [Catholic] disaffiliation. The same study found no significant difference in adult religious commitment produced by Catholic elementary school enrollment. The researchers suspect that “adolescence is simply a more important time in the religious formation of young people than the pre-adolescent years,” and that “the teen years are the time when many people begin seriously examining their faith and start down a path toward either accepting or rejecting it” (Perl & Gray, 2007, p. 275).

Rapaille (2006) has found in listening to hundreds of stories surrounding people’s experiences with various products that it is the structure of the relationship, not the specific content, which makes the association or imprint. For example, *Romeo and Juliet* shares very few specifics with *West Side Story*, but the structure of the stories is parallel due to the relationships between the characters. Therefore, for those who attended a Catholic school at a young age and experienced an insular, protective community imbued with love, the code might be “home,” “family,” “cocoon” or “acceptance.”

The code is like a key to unlock the imprint. A product that is “off-code” will struggle to be successful (Rapaille, 2006). For example, a very low-priced Mercedes is off-code. Iced tea in the United Kingdom is off-code. A Catholic school in America that enrolls a very high percentage of non-Catholics or non-Christians, has very few Catholic signs/symbols displayed on campus, has school Mass only a few times per year, employs a large number of non-Catholic teachers, demonstrates poor sportsmanship at athletic events, and caters only to those of substantial means, is off-code. Since there are Catholic schools like this (Cardinal Newman Society, 2015), we should not be surprised that enrollments have dropped off.

Organizations primarily use the code for marketing purposes. If the marketing director knew the code for Catholic schools was “home” or “family” he or she could use photos on the school website that mimic family photos. For a community open house, the school could put on a night of musical entertainment themed on the *Sound of Music*. Knowing the code allows a Catholic school or Catholic school system to use its marketing resources in a smarter way by appealing to the emotional connections to Catholic schools that already exist in families.

Pope Francis, in addressing a Catholic school community in Harlem, New York in 2015 was decidedly on-code when he said,

How nice it is to feel that our school, or the places where we gather, is a second **home**. This is not only important for you, but also for your **families**. School then ends up being one big **family**. A **family** where...we learn to help one another, to share our good qualities, to give the best of ourselves, to work as a team, for that is very important, and to pursue our dreams...Wherever there are dreams, wherever

there is joy, Jesus is always present. Always. **[Emphasis added.]** (Pope Francis, 2015)

Values, attitudes and lifestyle and buyer behavior. Good marketing is inspired by good insights. Good insights about customers come from more than just demographics. Every nation includes people who are more or less impulsive or more or less deliberate, preferring the familiar to the novel; the same is true for other characteristics such as adherence to traditional values, me-first, and reliance on self (Strategic Business Insights, 2016). These attitudes connect to a broad range of behaviors such as brand preferences, the adoption of new products, and how much to spend on “extras”—and to attitudes that impact the set of choices for K-12 education. By gaining greater insight into the values and attitudes of the target market—predominantly Catholic parents—we can better understand how to reach and appeal to a wider base of decision-makers.

The VALS survey of attitudes and lifestyles, pioneered by Strategic Business Insights (2016), has been widely tested in the United States and finely segments markets by determining how people are most likely to spend discretionary income on those purchases they most value:

These [consumers’] attitudes connect to a broad range of behaviors such as brand preferences, the adoption of new products, and leadership qualities. VALS is a proprietary psychometric method that measures these and other predictive attitudes—in conjunction with behaviors and demographics—for developing countrywide typologies such as US VALS. The types within a country persist through decades, as work since the 1970s has verified. (About VALS, Strategic Business Insights, 2016)

Strategic Business Insights has studied VALS by different demographic group, such as Hispanics—both “Acculturated Hispanics” and “Bicultural Hispanics”, as well as VALS by state or state grouping. For a description of the various VALS types, as well as the percentage of VALS types by demographic group mentioned above, refer to Appendix C.

However, the VALS survey was designed, and its validity and reliability are limited to people born and raised in the U.S. Because there are sharp cultural differences among assimilated Americans and people from other cultures, the VALS survey questions may not produce reliable insights among all English Language Learners in the Southwest.

Mexican American cultural values. The Mexican American Cultural Values Scale (MACVS) was developed to measure attitudes and values among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the American Southwest (Knight et al., 2010). Researchers identified six themes associated with Mexican or Mexican-American beliefs, behaviors and traditions, and an additional three themes associated with contemporary American mainstream values as perceived by the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans sampled in the study. The six traditional beliefs/behaviors were familism support, familism obligations, familism referents, respect, religion, and traditional gender roles. The three contemporary American values identified by this group were 1) material success, 2) independence and self-reliance, and 3) competition and personal achievement. The resulting quantitative survey instrument used to measure attitudes contains 50 questions and has been tested on both adults and adolescents.

The researchers (Knight et al., 2010) were interested in finding out about potential challenges and pressures arising from dual cultural adaptation. Catholic schools have historically enjoyed praise for their ability to integrate recent immigrants or children of recent immigrants into the American mainstream (Baruch, 2014). Given that research has

indicated that “dual cultural adaption represents a substantial risk for Mexican American (and other) youths and may lead to negative mental health outcomes, low self-esteem, conduct problems, school failure, drug and alcohol abuse and financial instability” (Knight et al, 2010, p. 445), the traditional approach of local Catholic schools may present a protective alternative for today’s recent immigrants in the American Southwest.

Identifying Hispanic parents’ beliefs, behaviors and values using the MACVS may provide greater insight into the psychographic reasons for choosing or not choosing a local Catholic school for their children.

Homeschooling. Since homeschooling is a substitute for Catholic schools among a segment of Catholic families, I believe we should consider attitudes that lead to choosing to homeschool, as well as the imprint it is likely to create.

According to the National Households Education Study of 2012 conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (not limited only to Catholics), multiple reasons were given for homeschooling, but the single most compelling reason most commonly cited was “Concern about the [public] school environment (drugs, safety, peer pressure)” at 25.6% of respondents. The second most frequent response (21.5%) was “Dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools.” The next most frequent response (14.6%) was the desire to include religious education in the curriculum. Other significant findings from these data were that in 76.8% of cases, homeschooling was done by the mother, and when asked if anyone in the home had taken courses in the past year to better prepare them for teaching, 78.5% responded negatively (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

Homeschool parents tended to have strong beliefs in a parent-focused role for education, as opposed to education being a partnership between parents and schools (Green

& Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). Additionally, they recorded relatively strong disagreement with the public schools' performance in the area of value beliefs—the schools' ability to teach character development, and the schools' abilities to meet their children's individual learning needs. Homeschool parents were skeptical about the public school's use of sound teaching practices, but were less critical of the public schools' curricula (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007).

An informal study of articles and blog posts on orthodox Catholic websites, along with posted comments, reveals a handful of themes. Among some homeschooling parents, there was a basic distrust of public schools, their environment, and a potentially nefarious agenda (Allen, 2016; Berchermann, 2014; Fahey, 2012; Fisher, 2016; Scharfenberger, 2014; Walbert, 2012). There were many comments about the potential blessings that come from homeschooling. Some parents specifically mentioned a desire to strengthen family connections/closeness, and others very much seemed to have adopted homeschooling as part of their core identity, using phrases like “We wanted to be an amazing homeschool family” (Fisher, 2016, n.p.).

Sustainable operational strategies. Porter (1998) maintains that there are three sustainable business strategies and one that is not sustainable. The three sustainable strategies are 1) overall cost leader, 2) differentiation, and 3) niche or focus. The overall cost leader strategy supposes that lower operating costs can be passed on to consumers by means of lowest prices. This does not fit well with any educational option in the current marketplace. The differentiation strategy assumes that the organization can charge a premium price for a premium product that is desired by a large enough segment with adequate purchasing power. Exclusive, prestigious private schools may be an example of an

effective differentiation strategy. Finally, the focus or niche strategy involves serving a very select market segment exceptionally well. Until the 1960s, Catholic schools in America were unintentionally niche players—they served the families of their parishioners extremely well.

In today's environment, Catholic schools are more likely to stray from their Catholic missions and identity in an attempt to be everything to everybody, "casting a wide net," which quite often leaves them in a position of being not-quite-enough yet too expensive for any one segment. This typifies Porter's (1998) unsustainable "stuck-in-the-middle" market position.

Summary

The sector in which Catholic education operates is marked by aggressive competition, as evidenced by the fight over students between public school districts and public charters, extensive advertising by schools of choice and the nationwide decline in number of children enrolled in Catholic schools. However, there are still good reasons to ensure the availability of a Catholic school education for families who want it for their children. The widely-accepted societal norm is that the purpose of education is to turn out productive workers for the U.S. economy. In this environment, the Catholic school is uniquely positioned to offer an alternatively-oriented education—one that integrates the teaching of the transcendent dignity of the human person, the joy of the Gospel, the beauty of Western culture and what the faithful believe to be the timeless truths of the triune God. In order to ensure the future availability of these schools, their value proposition must be clearly conveyed to parents, and systemic resources must be spent in a strategically prudent manner. Understanding consumer behavior patterns involving the school enrollment decision is critical to producing improved master plans for these unique schools.

Chapter III

Research Design

Restatement of Problem

Studies indicate that Catholic school attendance has a protective effect on students—that they are more likely to feel as though they are members of a close-knit community (Bryk et al., 1993; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). This protective community has helped generations of immigrant families to escape poverty and move into middle-class America in a single generation (Greeley, 1976). The psychologically safe, family atmosphere of these schools contributes to positive learning experiences for children who often live with negative aspects of poverty, especially lower academic achievement (Denig, 2014).

Enrollments in Catholic schools have been decreasing steadily for the past several decades, although trends differ widely from one region of America to another (DeFiore, 2014; Gray & Gautier, 2006). All studies which directly examine the question of falling enrollments aggregate findings into only four regions in the entire country (CARA, 2006; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). In questioning what factors impact Catholic school enrollment trends in New Mexico, one must refer to the few recent studies conducted and the National Catholic Education Association's (NCEA) "West" region—comprised of the states of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. I hypothesize that characteristics of Catholic families in general, and Hispanic Catholic families in particular, differ widely across this enormous geographic region. In order to better understand factors motivating Catholic school attendance in the State of New Mexico, a more focused study is needed.

There are very few studies which have explored factors affecting parents' choice of schools for their children, and even fewer prioritize Hispanic families. One study (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016) purported to address low Catholic school enrollment for this large, diverse and fast-growing ethnic group. However, the researchers aggregated the results to one of four large quadrants of the country in order to match up school data with previously collected data on Hispanic ministry. This convenience approach masks the finer cultural variations within those sweeping regions. As such, the little research available as to factors which influence Hispanic families' choice of a Catholic school for their children is so vague as to be practically useless. Suggestions include "be more welcoming", "have signage and some elements of school liturgy in Spanish", and "attract more Hispanic principals" (p. 21).

Oftentimes, observers assume that high tuition is the primary reason that Catholic parents do not enroll their children in local Catholic schools (Caro, 2015; Gray, 2014; Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). Therefore, it would be helpful to compare parental attitudes in New Mexico with Catholic family school choices in a demographically similar area where substantial tuition relief is available. The forms this tuition relief may take include privately-funded scholarships or state tuition tax credits.

Overall, political climate may have some impact on school selection for Catholic families in New Mexico. Neighboring Arizona has different policies relating to school choice that are unavailable in New Mexico. For instance, scholarship tuition organizations in Arizona can make available nearly \$2,000 per student per year for a student to attend a private school (NCEA, 2015). On the other hand, Arizona has approximately six times the number of charter schools (Arizona Charter Schools Association, 2018), which increases competition for Catholic and other private schools in that state.

Hispanics are the fastest growing racial demographic population segment in both the United States and in the American Catholic Church (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2016; USCCB, 2018), yet only 2.3% of Hispanic school-aged children are educated in Catholic schools (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016). The explanations given for this low rate of enrollment have been unsatisfactory, and have not been supported by research conducted with primary decision-makers—parents. The future of Catholic schools in America, particularly in the Southwest, as well as the future of the American Catholic Church and an entire generation stand to be impacted greatly by enrollment trends in Catholic schools in the near future. To date, the few on-point studies have largely focused on surveying only Catholic school principals or superintendents. The perceptions of this group provide only a small window into the factors affecting parents' choice of schools for their children. In fact, one study (Gray & Gautier, 2006) found that when principals were asked about what factors were most important to the parents, and also asked parents the same questions, the principals' guesses were often inaccurate. As such, collecting data directly from decision-makers (parents and guardians) would provide a more direct view into the school selection process for Catholic parents, especially Hispanic Catholic parents.

Research Design and Methodology

Philosophical assumptions. The philosophical view of a researcher is shaped, in part, by his or her discipline area. The worldview of the researcher influences the practice of research and needs to be identified (Creswell, 2008). The three beliefs that shaped my approach to this study were a) the desire to investigate if there was still a place for Catholic schools in the landscape of K-12 education; b) that some Catholic parents who I would think could afford a Catholic school do not choose a Catholic school, whereas families of limited

means sacrifice greatly to send their children to the Catholic school; and c) that good marketing principles might be applied effectively to the research problem.

Is there a viable role for Catholic schools in K-12 education? It seemed to me that public school education had become the prize in a contentious political game with life-altering consequences for the persons and communities where were the supposed beneficiaries. There are entrenched negative structural factors that are unlikely to change which lead to less-than-excellent education for many children. Even with the many positives that can come from public school education, some parents are very concerned that this is not the best environment for their children (Bulman, 2004; Fisher, 2016). As the child is primarily the responsibility of the parents, not the state, I believe that parents should have a say in their child's education. For some children, the best type of education may be found at a Catholic school. The Catholic school has traditionally approached the educational project as educating persons-in-community, whereas public schools seem to have adopted an attitude of training individuals-for-economy.

I wanted to know what Catholic parents think about education in general and Catholic schools in particular. Since there has been a sharp decline in Catholic school enrollments in the U.S. as well as a change in the character of these schools, I wanted to know what today's Catholic parents think about Catholic schools near them.

How could the application of sound marketing theory inform the situation of enrollment decline in Catholic schools? My past educational experience in business administration, specifically in the discipline of marketing, means that I look at the health or decline of any sector through the lens of marketing principles. "The marketing concept is a customers' needs and wants orientation backed by integrated marketing effort aimed at

generating customer satisfaction as the key to satisfying organizational goals” (Capella, Arnold, & Mitchell, 1993/1994, p. 18). I wanted to analyze the research problem by using this framework.

Pragmatic worldview. Pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences. I believe the situation of Catholic school enrollment decline coupled with dissatisfaction with the CCSS and high-stakes testing associated with public schools is a research problem that requires a pragmatic approach (Creswell, 2008). I conducted this research at the intersection of twenty-first century American educational politics and the societal backdrop of American Catholicism, 50 years post-Council. The pragmatic approach also allows for incorporation of goals related to social justice, an important consideration in this study. Taking this philosophical approach, it became clear to me that adopting a mixed methods approach would be the best way to address the research problem.

Methodology. I began this study using a quantitative approach to allow for a number of questions pertaining to attitudes and values which may impact Catholic parents in choosing a school for their children. Because factors such as frequency of Mass attendance (Gray, 2014), prior Catholic school attendance of one or both parents (Mok & Flynn, 2004), single-parent family status (Butler et al., 2013) and distance of school from the home (Butler et al., 2013) have been shown to impact choice of school, a quantitative baseline of data about family demographics, religious practice and general attitudes about education provided the foundation for this exploratory study. I had additionally planned to conduct random qualitative follow-up interviews with volunteers who had already completed the quantitative questionnaire.

Survey design. I decided that the best approach to answering the research questions would be to study parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools as well as engaged Catholic parents of children enrolled in some other kind of school. I especially wanted to focus on parishes in the Southwest from a variety of socioeconomic areas. The survey instrument would need to be available in both English and Spanish, and be available online. I also wanted to solicit at random volunteers for a follow-up interview to fill in more personal information as to why they did or did not choose a Catholic school for their children.

Population and sample. There was one questionnaire, available in both English and Spanish, which was distributed through two primary channels: Catholic elementary schools and the religious education classes at affiliated parishes. I chose the parishes for their affiliated schools and their socioeconomic characteristics. I surveyed comparison parishes in the Phoenix, Denver, and Las Cruces areas to examine potential differences in attitudes between samples with many demographic similarities, yet differences in terms of political and cultural climates. Through a paragraph at the conclusion of the questionnaire, I attempted to solicit volunteers to participate in a phone interview to delve deeper into parent/guardian rationale for choosing or not choosing a Catholic school, but not enough respondents volunteered to allow for a random sample, so I omitted the follow-up interviews. Through the questionnaire, I aimed first to acquire a basic measure of parental attitudes toward Catholic schools and education more generally, and then a more in-depth understanding of the attitudes, beliefs and the overall decision-making process for Catholic families, especially Hispanic Catholic parents in the Southwest.

My aim was to survey parents or guardians of school-aged children who could reasonably be in the target market for a Catholic school from parishes in different

socioeconomic classes. I proposed to distribute the questionnaire at parishes that have well-attended parochial schools in the Albuquerque, Phoenix, and Denver metropolitan areas. I had intended to distribute the survey instrument to both parents of children who attended the parish schools as well as parents of children who attended religious education classes at the same parish. Children who attend a Catholic school do not attend religious education at the parish, as it is part of the school curriculum. However, parents who are sufficiently engaged with their faith that they send their children to parish religious education arguably could be in the target market for Catholic education.

The parishes I originally proposed in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe were unwilling to participate, as was the Archdiocese itself, leading me to directly distribute the questionnaires to the Church of the Incarnation, Rio Rancho and Our Lady of Fatima parish, Albuquerque. The link to the questionnaire was distributed via email sent by the Directors of Religious Education (DRE) in each parish. In Phoenix, I surveyed families in the St. Vincent de Paul, St. Agnes, and St. Thomas the Apostle parishes. In St. Vincent de Paul, the principal sent the survey link to parents of children enrolled in the school, and the DRE of the parish gave the link to parents of children enrolled in parish religious education. For St. Agnes, the DRE sent out the link to parents and the pastor of the parish put the QR code in the parish bulletin.

I received support from the Archdiocese of Denver, and four parishes participated in the study by sending out the solicitation via email. The Diocese of Las Cruces was supportive, and Our Lady of the Assumption parish in Roswell, NM attempted to disseminate the link to the questionnaire via email, although the response rate was low due to technical difficulties with the link. In all the above cases, the links and questionnaires were made available in both English and Spanish. In all cases, I requested to have the same solicitation

placed in the parish bulletin. Finally, homeschooling has become increasingly popular among specific pockets of families. Catholic homeschooled children are not required to attend religious education classes at their local parishes. As such, I asked the Directors of Religious Education (DREs) at the parishes to send the link to the questionnaire to homeschool families. Unfortunately, very few homeschool parents responded. Demographic characteristics of the parish neighborhoods and basic information about the affiliated schools are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Selected demographic characteristics of parish neighborhoods and associated Catholic schools

Parish	Incarnation	Our Lady of Fatima	Assumption (All Saints)	Good Shepherd	Our Lady of Fatima	St. Bernadette	St. Joseph	St. Vincent de Paul	St. Agnes	St. Thos., Apostle
City, State	Rio Rancho, NM	Albuquerque, NM	Roswell, NM	Denver, CO	Lakewood, CO	Lakewood, CO	Ft. Collins, CO	Phoenix, AZ	Phoenix, AZ	Phoenix, AZ
Zip code	87144	87110	88201	80206	80215	80214	80521	85031	85008	85016
2016 pop. Estimate	40,985	38,092	26,379	23,515	19,263	25,252	37,170	31,005	59,490	35,660
Median age (years)	33.9	44.1	39.0	37.0	40.0	35.3	22.9	27.0	28.8	38.3
H.S. diploma or higher	92.6	94.3	86.2	97.9	93.3	82.1	95.9	56.7	68.0	88.1
Median household income (\$)	65,807	50,566	48,003	64,519	61,753	37,629	40,051	23,832	34,677	51,245
Foreign born (%)	6.0	6.7%	7.7%	6.1%	7.0%	13.6%	5.3%	30.4%	29.4%	13.8%
Below poverty (%)	11.5	12.9	17.7	10.5	11.1	20.8	34.3	48.7	32.4	19.4
Race: Hispanic or Latino, any race	17,086	13,642	10,554	2,029	3,238	9,301	3,760	24,508	33,581	10,471
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	19,934	20,112	14,812	19,597	14,677	14,590	30,050	4,037	15,118	19,962
% Hispanic or Latino	41.7	35.8%	40.0%	8.6%	16.8%	36.8%	10.1%	79.0%	56.4%	29.4%
Enrollment (18-19)	N/A	96	103	450	260	16	231	560	225	525
Grades	N/A	PK-8	PK-8	PK-8	PK-8	PK	PK-8	K-8	PK-8	PK-8

Because I had to rely on principals and DREs to send out the link to the survey, and encourage participation (or at least remind parents), I cannot be sure of the total possible numbers of respondents. However, based on information requested from the parishes and schools, along with my idea that some parents might receive the link to the questionnaire via a friend or relative, I estimated total potential participation as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Estimated Possible Families That Could Receive the Invitation to Participate in This Study

School or parish name	School sample size	CCD/Religious Ed sample size	Other parishioners with children K-12	Total by parish
St. Vincent de Paul, Phoenix	390	350	50	790
St. Thomas the Apostle, Phoenix	320	90	50	460
St. Agnes, Phoenix	290	50	25	365
Our Lady of Fatima, Lakewood, CO	175	60	25	260
St. Bernadette, Lakewood, CO	52	20	45	157
Good Shepherd, CO	150	65	20	235
St. Joseph, Ft. Collins, CO	150	85	20	260
St. Francis, Gallup, NM*	0	0	0	0
Sacred Heart, Gallup, NM	55	135	20	210
Our Lady of the Assumption, Roswell	120	250	50	420
Church of the Incarnation, Rio Rancho	0	200	50	250
Our Lady of Fatima, Albuquerque	50	40	20	110
Totals	1797	1345	375	3517

*St. Francis School, Gallup, converted to a preschool between the time when I received the letter of support from the Superintendent of the Diocese to the time when the questionnaires were distributed.

I received a total of 136 returned questionnaires, but not all of them were usable. In using an average of 110 responses per question, the response rate was approximately 3.13 percent.

Instrumentation. The survey instrument (see Appendix A) began with an introduction indicating who the questionnaire was targeting—Catholic parents of school-aged children or parents of students attending Catholic schools. Immediately following a brief description of the purpose of the questionnaire was the request for consent, informing participants that their cooperation was voluntary and that they might withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was also explained in this part. The survey instrument was available in both English and Spanish, and the option of a paper survey that could be returned by the USPS or dropped off at the school or parish offices was offered but not utilized. The questionnaires were answered in both English and Spanish via Survey Monkey, as both principals and pastors assured me that all correspondence with parents was done via email, therefore distributing the questionnaire via electronic format only would not limit the sample.

The survey questions were presented in four major sections (see Appendix B for the codebook). The first section of questions asked about the type of school in which their child was enrolled, for which grade, and the reason the parent did or did not choose to send their child(ren) to a Catholic school. For the latter, a list of common reasons was included (Huber, 2004), as well as an option to write in a reason not provided. This section asked for the parents' attitudes and opinions about the Catholic school (including tuition rates) that their child could or does attend. The questions were posed in a format very close to the one used by Huber (2004), which was tested for reliability and shown to be valid.

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of demographic-type questions, such as religion, whether or not the respondent regularly practices his or her faith, family income, family size, race/ethnicity, postal code and whether one or both parents attended a Catholic school at any point in their educational career. The questions in the first two sections were adopted from Huber's (2004) questionnaire.

The third section consisted of questions designed to measure the responding parents' values, attitudes, and general perceptions regarding what they wanted for their children's education. I developed these questions using concepts and phrasing from documents on Catholic education from both the Vatican (1965) and Miller (2006). Additionally, members of my dissertation committee suggested questions, which I added. I examined the validity of these questions during the cognitive interview process.

I included the fourth section to determine an overall buyer behavior profile. There were two possible sets of questions: the first, an English language VALS Survey, for use with people whose first language was American English. According to Strategic Business Insights (2018), in order to achieve reliable results, the respondent should either be a citizen of the United States or Canada, or have been a resident for enough time to know the culture and its idioms. Responses were recorded on a Likert-type scale of "Mostly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree and mostly disagree." For those who self-identify as Mexican or Mexican-American, I used the MACVS (Knight, et al., 2010) questionnaire instead. The type of questions and Likert-type responses closely approximated the results from the VALS survey, but in a more culturally-relevant manner. These questions addressed issues identified in related literature substantially discussed in Chapter 2 as possibly influencing parental attitudes toward choice of school.

There was a question asking if a \$2,000 scholarship (from a Tuition Scholarship Organization, as available in Arizona) for a Catholic or other private school might make this Catholic school attendance more likely.

Validity. In order to test the survey instrument for validity, I conducted cognitive interviews (Vogt, 2007) with three people representative of the groups to be surveyed: parents with children enrolled in Catholic schools and Catholic parents whose children attend a different type of school. I then adjusted the survey instrument for clarification based on the results of those interviews.

Since the questionnaire needed to be available in Spanish (as well as English), it was translated into Spanish by one person then translated back to English by a different person and compared to the original English-language version and compared for accuracy. I made the necessary modifications and then tested it for validity with a small group representative of Spanish-speaking parents (Behling & Law, 2000).

Reliability. I used many of the survey questions from Huber's research study (2004), which had been tested for reliability and validity. I conducted a small pilot study with three parents, representative of both groups, those who have children that attend Catholic schools, and Catholic families who have children attending a different type of school. The pilot study group completed the instrument twice: the second time, 10-14 days after the first response. I compared the results of the two surveys to see if the answers given each time were essentially the same. No adjustments to the survey instrument were necessary.

Data analyses. Much of the data in this purposive sample were categorical. I began by conducting descriptive multivariate analyses, for frequencies, and percentages to become familiar with the data (Vogt, 2007). I conducted cross tabulations between two categorical

variables such as school type chosen (dependent variable) and whether or not one or both parents attended a Catholic school during their educational career. I also performed an analysis of school type chosen and income level (Vogt, 2007). I did a frequency analysis on all attitudinal questions. I conducted a number of analyses cross-tabulating the answers on the attitudinal questions and whether or not the respondent had a child in a Catholic school. Finally, using the answers to both the questions about general attitudes toward education coupled with the answers to the VALS questions, I compiled indices that I believed closely mimicked the values and attitudes of different VALS types (see Appendix C).

Summary

There is very little literature on why parents potentially in the target market for Catholic schools choose a Catholic school or one of its educational substitutes. The results of this exploratory study could allow school leaders to develop a strategic plan that focuses on what is truly important to Catholic parents while remaining faithful to the Catholic mission of their school.

Chapter IV

Results

Research Question 1: What demographic factors influence Catholic parents', especially Hispanic parents', choice of school(s) for their child(ren)?

The Sample

There were 110 usable responses, representing a total of 235 children. A majority of the children represented (59.6 %) were identified by their parent as children of color. Nearly 45% of the children were identified as Hispanic, with another 12.8% reported to be of multiple ethnicities. Approximately 2% of the children were Black. There were no children in this study who were reported to be of Asian or American Indian/Alaskan Native origin. Forty percent were reported as White/Caucasian.

Religiosity. The sample was unintentionally homogeneous in several respects—most notably that 72.2% of families reported that they attend religious services “at least weekly”, and a further 19.4% attend “at least monthly.” Only 8.3% of the sample report that they attend religious services “occasionally”, “seldom” or “never.” Because of this homogeneity, the attitudes of less-religious families toward choosing a school is underrepresented. On the other hand, theoretically this sample is more representative of the religious attitudes desired on the part of Church leadership. In this era of declining church attendance, “engaged Catholic families” are both the target and the goal of church ministries.

Marital status. Another notable characteristic of this sample is that more than 85% of parents reported being married. Approximately 10% indicated that they were single (never married), single (cohabiting with a romantic partner) or living in a civil union/domestic partnership. This is not representative of the typical family structure for

school-aged children, where nationally, only 61% of children live in a married-parent household (Pew Research, 2015). It is, however, more conducive to parents choosing a school type other than the traditional public school (Butler et al., 2013).

Catholic school attendance of parents. Approximately 41% of respondents reported that they had attended Catholic school at some point during their childhood. These respondents were asked for how many years they had attended. The average number of years was 8.34, the median was 9.00 years and the mode was 13 years. Respondents reported that 36.4% of their spouses/partners attended Catholic schools, with the average number of years attended of 8.67, the median was 8.5 and the mode was 13 years. This is significant because Catholic school attendance (and positive experience) by a parent is a predictive factor in choice of school for their own children (Bulman, 2004). In this sample, if the respondent indicated that he or she had ever attended a Catholic school, they had enrolled their child in a Catholic school at a slightly higher than expected rate. If the spouse of the respondent had ever attended a Catholic school, it was even more likely (and higher than expected) that the child was enrolled in a Catholic school.

Parental education levels. This sample seemed to be highly educated in comparison to national education levels. Nearly 70% of respondents reported that their highest level of education was either a bachelor or graduate degree (40.4% and 29.4% respectively). The spouse or partner of the respondents were similarly well-educated with 30.6% having earned at least a bachelor degree and 27.8% a graduate degree. Twenty-two percent of respondents said they had at least “some college”, along with 17.6% of their spouses or partners. Only 4.6% of respondents had a high school diploma/GED or less and 18.5% of their spouses or partners had attained the same level of education. In the U.S. population, as a whole, 21.3%

have a bachelor degree and 12.8% have earned a graduate degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

Gender and household income. Approximately 78% of respondents were female, 20% male, with the balance indicating that they preferred not to say. The average and median age of respondents was between 41 and 42, with an average of 2.1 school-aged children (K-12). The annual household income reported was evenly distributed, with a mean in the range of \$75,000-\$99,999. The standard deviation was 2.6 income brackets, and each income bracket around the mean has a range of \$25,000. Therefore, there was a broad range of incomes represented in this sample, although it skewed to higher incomes. In fact, the mode was in the \$200,000+ income bracket. This was higher than what I initially expected, as the study by Gray and Gautier (2006) reported that one in five Catholic schools had between 25 and 50% of the students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch. However, the Gray and Gautier study did not provide information about household income, so it is not possible to make a direct comparison. In this study, the difference in income distribution among parents whose children attended public schools as compared with parents whose children were enrolled in Catholic schools is displayed in Figure 4.

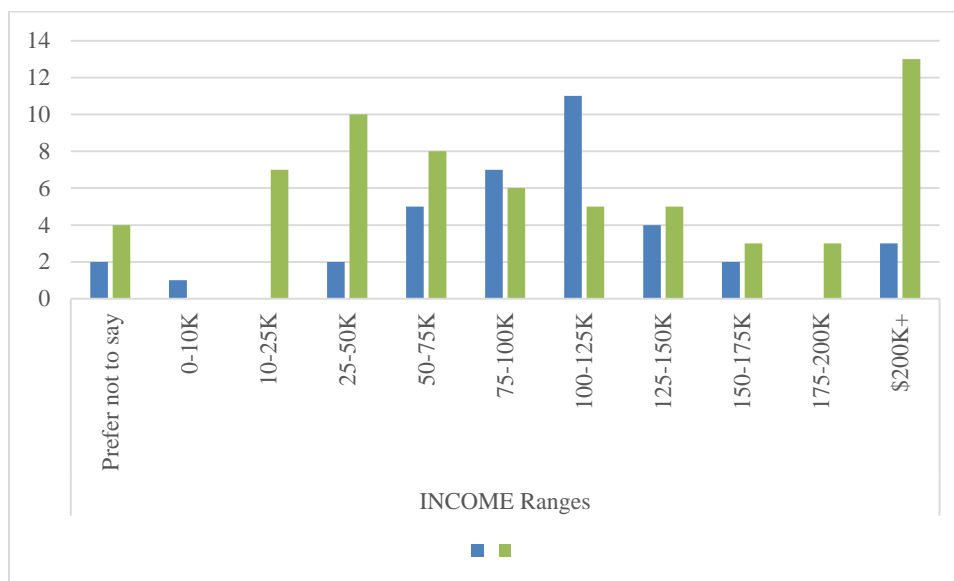


Figure 4. School type by income range.

Location. Most of the responses were from my own parish in Rio Rancho, NM (30). Another parish in the Albuquerque metro area, Our Lady of Fatima, also participated with 12 responses. I received 25 responses from the Diocese of Phoenix-area schools, and another 15 from the Archdiocese of Denver schools. The balance of responses was from likely pass-along of the questionnaire link—some were from the Manassas, VA area (6), and also a few from southeastern NM.

Reasons For and Against Selecting a Catholic School

RQ2: What psychographic (buyer behavior) factors impact choice of school?

Questions specific to Catholic school attendance or non-attendance: Respondents were asked to rank their top three reasons for choosing a Catholic school for their child(ren) based on the rankings used by Huber in his 2004 study. Each choice was given a points value based on the ranking; the respondent's top reason for choosing a Catholic school was weighted three points, their second most important reason was given two points and their third consideration was given only one point. I then tallied the points under each category.

The category with the most points is the one most important to parents in this study. Results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Motivation for Choosing a Catholic School (n = 72)

Answer	Points
Catholic/Christian values and tradition	144
Strong Academics	102
Safe environment	57
Catechism in school	30
Community aspect	25
Curriculum	20
Discipline	18
Quality teachers	17
Location	15
Sibling attends/attended	11
Reputation	8
Athletics/sports programs	7
Best way to get college acceptance	5
Extracurricular activities (non-athletic)	2

According to these data, the most important reason a parent chose to send their child to a Catholic school is because of Catholic/Christian values and tradition, followed closely by

a perception of strong academics. More distant, but perhaps unsurprising in the current age of school shootings, is safe environment.

I analyzed the responses from those who chose not to send their child(ren) to a Catholic school and who also ranked the reason for this choice. The rankings were requested in the same manner as the question above and were assigned points in the same way (most important reason assigned three points, second most important reason two points, and third reason one point). The results are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Motivation for Choosing a School Other than a Catholic School (n = 26)

Answer	Points
The Catholic school tuition was too high for our family budget.	32
The public school had/has more to offer	17
Transportation to the Catholic school was/is too difficult and/or inconvenient.	16
The Catholic school could not offer the specialized curriculum or services for my child.	6
The quality of education at our Catholic school was inferior.	4
I did not think my child would fit in at the Catholic school.	4
The non-Catholic private school had/has more to offer	3
My child's friends do not attend the Catholic school.	0

Although a small sample (n = 98 families), the perception that the Catholic school tuition would be unaffordable for the family budget was the foremost reason given for not choosing a Catholic school. The second and third reasons given (that the public school had

more to offer and that transportation to the Catholic school would be too difficult, respectively) were very close in the rankings.

RQ3: What impact does tuition assistance (or tuition price) have on the decision to enroll/not enroll in a Catholic school?

Even though the top reason given for not choosing a Catholic school was that the tuition was unaffordable, of the 23 people who responded to the question “Have you asked for financial aid or a scholarship for your child for a Catholic school?”, 18 replied “no” and one could not recall. It may be that parents are unaware that there might be financial aid available to them, or they are reluctant to inquire.

Parental opinions specific to education. Of the 118 families that went on to respond to the opinion questions, 50 had at least one child enrolled in a traditional public school (TPS). Sixty-eight had children enrolled only in Catholic schools, whereas nine families had at least one child enrolled in a public school or public charter and another in a Catholic school. Three of these nine families reported that they had a child in a TPS, a child enrolled in a public charter and another child enrolled in a Catholic school. In order to answer Research Question 2, I explored differences in values and attitudes (if any) between families who had children enrolled only in Catholic schools and those who had at least one child enrolled in an other-than-Catholic school.

I analyzed the questions designed to ascertain the opinions of parents about general issues pertaining to education, separating those who had children in Catholic schools versus those who did not. All questions were phrased as a statement to which parents were asked to indicate on a Likert-type scale if they “mostly disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “somewhat agree” or “mostly agree”.

Education Statement 1 (ED1): “I am comfortable relying on the local school district to decide the best curriculum for my child(ren).” Of the parents of children attending Catholic schools, 46.2% mostly disagree with the statement, whereas 40.9% of parents of children attending public schools somewhat agree and 27.3% mostly agree. Therefore, a total of 68.2% of parents whose children attend a public school tend to agree with the statement whereas 63.1% of parents whose children attend a Catholic school tend to disagree.

Education Statement 2 (ED2): “I want my child to learn at least the same things as everyone in the public school system.” Unsurprisingly, of parents whose children attend a public school, 31.8% said they somewhat agree and 45.5% said they mostly agree. For parents whose children attend a Catholic school, 28.1% said they somewhat agree and 26.6% say they mostly agree. When you add together the percentages for those who tend to agree with the statement for the parents of public school students, it comes to 77.3% whereas the same calculation for Catholic school parents is only 54.7% for a difference of 22.6 percentage points. This finding also seems to support a certain wariness of the public school curriculum on the part of Catholic school parents in this sample.

Education Statement 3 (ED3): “I think the most important purpose of education is that my child gets a good job when he/she is done with school.” Responses are displayed in Figure 5.

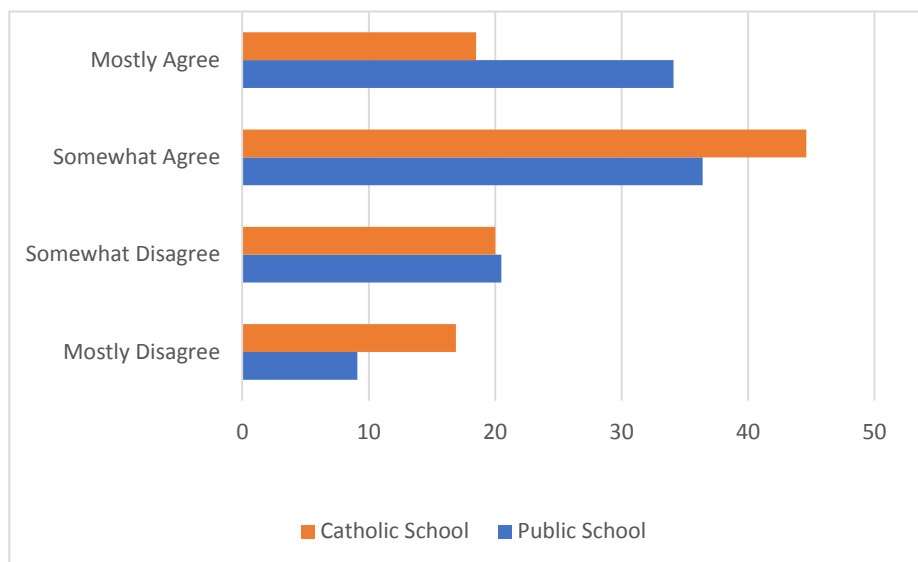


Figure 5. Agreement with the statement, “The purpose of education is to get a good job” by school type chosen.

Both groups tend to agree more than disagree, but 70.5% of parents of children enrolled in public school agree with the statement, whereas 63.1% of parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools agree. Of this group, the majority only somewhat agree whereas the agreement among public school parents was split almost evenly between “somewhat” and “mostly” agree (36.4 and 34.1% respectively).

Education Statement 4 (ED4): “It is very important to me that my child get into a good college.” The response to this statement was very similar for both groups of parents: 63.1% of Catholic school parents mostly agree versus 59.1% of public school parents. Those parents who indicated that they somewhat agree was close as well: 29.2% of Catholic school parents versus 31.8% of public school parents. Overall, 92.3% of Catholic school parents and 90.9% of public school parents were in agreement with this statement, indicating that college acceptance is of significance to them.

Education Statement 5 (ED5): “As long as a person earns enough money, he or she will live a good life.” Responses are displayed in Figure 6. Overall, both groups disagree at

almost the same rate (63.7% for public school parents and 64.7% for Catholic school parents but the vehemence of disagreement is stronger among Catholic school parents (a difference of 9.2 percentage points).

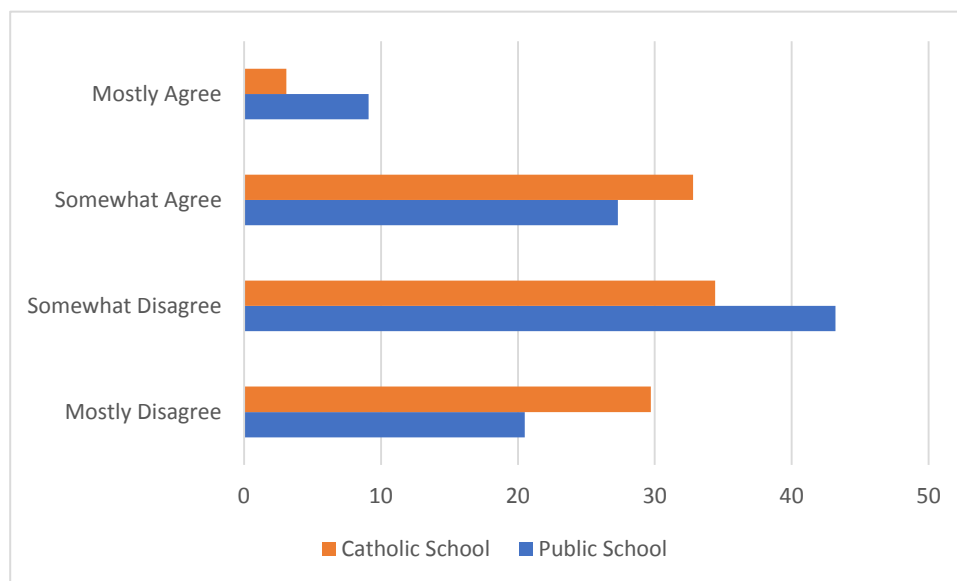


Figure 6. Agreement with the statement, “A person who earns enough money will live a good life” by school type chosen.

Education Statement 6 (ED6): “In school, students should be taught to be adaptable, creative and independent thinkers.” Responses to this question were almost identical for both groups. Parents overwhelmingly “mostly agree” at a rate of 73.4%, with another 23.9% indicating that they “somewhat agree.” Additionally, the strength of conviction and agreement with this statement on behalf of this sample of engaged Catholic families bodes well for advocates of Catholic classical schools.

Education Statement 7 (ED7): “I do not want my child taught things that contradict my values.” Although it is to be expected that parents would be uncomfortable with their child(ren) being taught things that contract their own values, both groups of parents agree more than disagree with this statement, but with differing fervor. The degree by which they

somewhat disagree, somewhat agree or mostly agree differs between public school parents and Catholic school parents (see Figure 7).

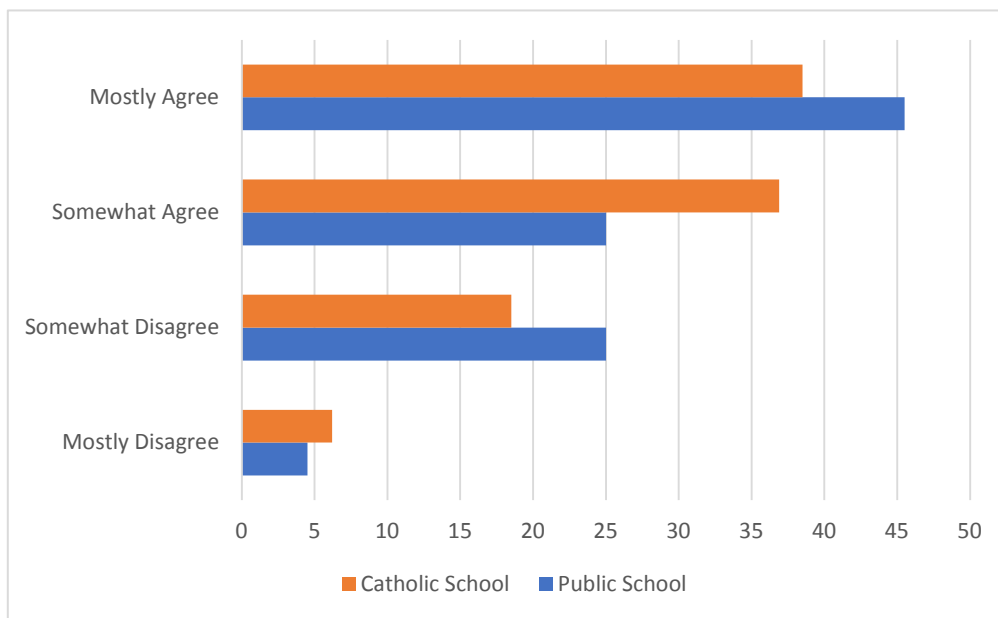


Figure 7. Agreement with the statement, “I do not want my child taught things that contradict my values” by school type chosen.

Education Statement 8 (ED8): “I believe it is important that all children be taught about Western civilization, arts, literature and music in school.” Although both groups of parents are in some degree of agreement with this statement at almost the same rate (95.5% of public school parents and 95.3% of Catholic school parents either somewhat agree or mostly agree), 59.1% of public school parents indicated that they mostly agree whereas 67.2% of Catholic school parents mostly agree. It appears then, that the parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools are more enthusiastic about their children learning elements of Western civilization. Once again, the strength of agreement with this statement among engaged Catholic families would seem to be good news to advocates of Catholic classical schools, assuming they can make the connection between learning Western civilization, arts, literature and music with the Classical curriculum.

Education Statement 9 (ED9): “I believe the most important purpose of any school should be to form responsible individuals who are capable of making free and correct choices.” The responses to this statement are interesting in that 7.5% of all parents disagreed in some fashion with this statement. A further 35.2% only “somewhat agreed.” It is not clear why parents would not be comfortable with their children’s school forming them in this way. Perhaps it is because of the way the statement was phrased: “I believe the *most important purpose...*”, and referring back to Statement 3 that opined, “The most important purpose of education is that my child get a good job when he/she is done with school” where between 63 and 70% of parents agreed with that statement. Alternatively, parents may believe that they should be the sole formers of their children. Still, the vast majority of parents (92.5%) agreed with the statement. For a breakdown of the difference in response by group, see Figure 8.

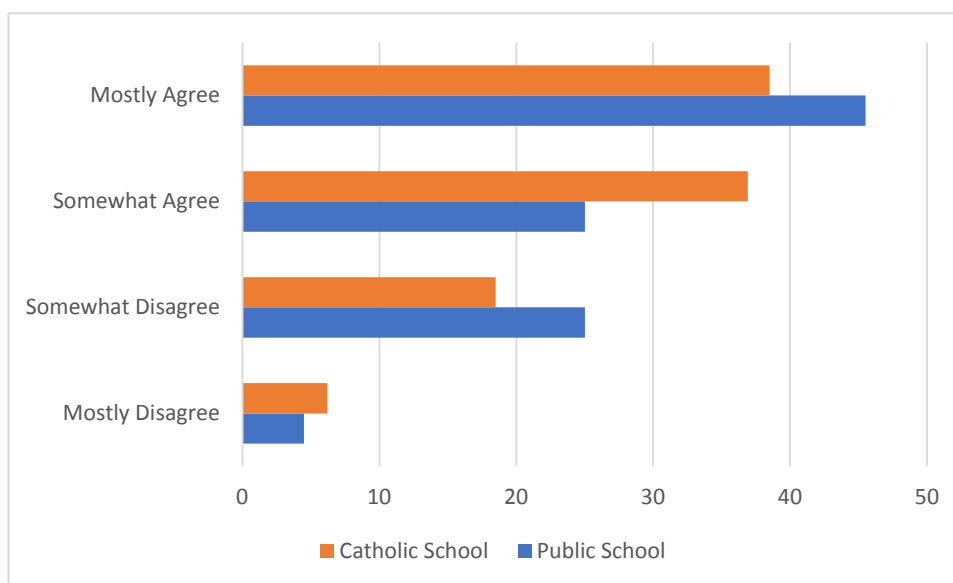


Figure 8. Agreement with the statement, “The most important purpose of education is to form responsible individuals capable of making free and correct choices” by school type chosen.

Education Statement 10 (ED10): “Whether or not my child attends a Catholic school, I think, as much as possible, teachers and administrators at Catholic school should be committed Catholics.” The difference between the parental groups on the “Mostly agree” response was interesting. Whereas 53.1% of Catholic school parents indicated that they “Mostly agree” with this statement, 65.9% of public school parents indicated that they “mostly agree” that they want to see teachers and administrators at Catholic schools be committed Catholics, for a difference of 12.8 percentage points. The “somewhat agree” response rate was exactly the same for both groups of parents (25.0%), but 17.2% of Catholic school parents said they “somewhat disagree” and 4.7% mostly disagree, whereas only 9.2% of public school parents indicated that they “somewhat disagreed” and none “mostly disagreed”. Perhaps these parents have had less experience with teachers and administrators for Catholic schools, but expect “truth in advertising” from Catholic schools—that is, if they promote themselves as Catholic schools, there is an expectation from the public that the schools be genuinely Catholic.

VALS (Values, Attitudes & Lifestyle) Questions

The following questions are intended to measure general attitudes and beliefs and were answered on the same Likert-type scale as the statements specific to education, above.

VALS1: “I often ask people’s advice about clothes, vacations and other spending decisions.” This question was designed to ascertain confidence. Seventy-two people responded to this question. Only one indicated that he/she “Mostly agreed.” Over half (38) said they “Mostly Disagree.” This would seem to indicate that the majority of respondents feel confident enough to make their own (somewhat) significant decisions.

VALS2: “A good negotiator doesn’t just get the food in the bowl, but the bowl itself.” Sixty-eight people responded to this question. Of these, only 14 felt strongly about their responses: 6 indicated that they “Mostly agree” and eight indicated that they “Mostly disagree.” Designed to measure the desire for achievement, it would seem that the majority of respondents were ambivalent (or perhaps uncomfortable) with the idea of intensely covetous negotiation.

VALS3: “I love to make things I can use everyday.” Once again, 68 people responded to this question. Of these, eight indicated that they “Mostly disagree.” Interestingly, seven of these were parents who do not send their children to Catholic schools. Of the 12 respondents who indicated that they “Mostly agree,” they were much more evenly split between families who send their children to Catholic schools versus those who do not (seven and five respectively). Almost the same percentages (46.7 and 47.4) and almost half of the respondents indicated that they “Somewhat agree.” People who love to make things they can use every day indicate that they are motivated by self-expression.

VALS4: “I follow the latest trends and fashions.” (Agreement with this statement could indicate that the respondent is a) an Experiencer, if he or she is younger with high resources; or b) a Striver, if older with lesser resources.) Seventy-three people responded to this question. Overall, 68.5% of respondents either “Somewhat disagreed” or “Mostly disagreed” with this statement, with parents of children not enrolled in Catholic school more frequently in disagreement (73.3% in one of the two disagreement categories). Those who are consciously trendy tend to be either a) high-resource young people, motivated by self-expression (Experiencers); or b) low-resource achievement-oriented people (Strivers). Only

5.5% of parents in this sample “Mostly agreed” with this statement and could be in one of these two categories.

VALS5: “I like being in charge of a group.” This question was designed to measure desire for achievement and/or confidence. Of the 73 parents who responded to this question, 14 indicated that they “Mostly agree,” while only four said they “Mostly disagree.”

VALS6: “I like to learn about art, culture and history.” Eighty-eight people responded to this question, with 57 indicating strong agreement (Mostly agree). Nearly 65% of respondents indicated that they “Mostly agree” and another 29.5% said they “Somewhat agree.” Fully 71% of parents whose children attend other-than-Catholic schools “Mostly agreed.” Does this mean that they also want their children to learn about art, culture and history? Referring to Education Statement 8, we see that 59.1% of public school parents want their children to learn about Western civilization, arts, literature and music in school. Perhaps these parents supplement their children’s formal education with arts-oriented family outings, and expect to take an active role in their children’s education in this manner.

VALS7: “I often crave excitement.” A large majority of respondents to this question were in one of the two “somewhat” categories, with a slight skewness toward “somewhat agree.” In fact, only 12% of respondents indicated that they “Mostly agreed,” whereas only 5% indicated that they “Mostly disagreed.” Responses were relatively even between the Catholic school parents and non-Catholic school parents, except that, of the 12 people who indicated that they “Mostly agree,” 10 of them had children enrolled in Catholic schools.

VALS8: “I am really interested in only a few things” (refers to VALS type Makers, see Appendix A). Of the 94 people who responded to this question, more than one-third indicated that they “Mostly disagree,” and only five respondents say they “Mostly agree.”

VALS9: “I would rather make something than buy it” (Maker if male, Believer if female). Of the 94 people who responded to this question, 19 “Mostly disagreed.” Forty-two percent of respondents indicated that they “Somewhat disagreed,” which was the highest among the four possible responses. However, a higher percentage of parents whose children are not enrolled in Catholic schools (65.8%) said they either “Somewhat disagreed” or “mostly disagreed” that they would rather make something than buy it, versus 59.0% of parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools. This may indicate that people who like to do things at home are more likely to send their children to Catholic schools, or that people who send their children to public schools are too busy to make items that they could easily purchase.

VALS10: “I dress more fashionably than most people.” Of all respondents (N=95) only 2 people “Mostly agree” with this statement. Nearly 30% “Mostly disagree” and another 41.1% “somewhat disagree.” Self-expression through fashion seems to be not very important to these parents. However, a greater percentage of Catholic school parents (31.6 v. 21.1%) indicated that they “somewhat agree.” Just because their children go to Catholic school does not mean that these parents want to think they dress like Dana Carvey’s “Church Lady.”

VALS11: “The federal government should encourage prayers in public school.” A total of 93 parents responded to this question, and the responses were among the most evenly split of any of the opinion statements on this questionnaire. Overall, there were close to 25% of responses in each of the four possible response categories. There was a difference in the “Mostly agree” and “Mostly disagree” categories between parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools and parents of children enrolled in non-Catholic schools—Catholic school

parents were significantly more likely to indicate that the “mostly disagree” that the federal government should encourage prayer in public school, whereas parents of children enrolled in non-Catholic schools were significantly more likely to indicate that they “Mostly agree” with this statement. Because the respondents tend to be Mass-going Catholics, it could be that the parents of the children enrolled in public (or other types of non-Catholic) schools would like to have prayer in their children’s schools, whereas parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools have enrolled their children in Catholic schools because they too, want prayer in their children’s school, but don’t expect it to be required in a public school.

VALS12: “I have more ability than most people.” Of the 94 parents who responded to this statement, 46.8% said that they “Somewhat agreed.” Responses for parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools and those of children enrolled in public schools were similar in all categories except that 23.2% of parents with children enrolled in Catholic school said that they “Mostly agree” whereas only 10.5% of parents of children in public school indicated that they “Mostly agree.” This would seem to indicate more self-confidence among parents of children who decided to enroll their children in Catholic schools.

VALS13: “Only a fool gives more than they get.” This statement was designed to measure Achievement orientation among respondents. Of the 93 parents who responded, only one indicated that he or she “Mostly agreed” with this statement. In fact, 55.9% of all respondents said that they “Mostly disagree” and another 36.6% said they “somewhat disagree.” Among parents of children enrolled in different school types, the percentage giving one of the two “disagreement” responses was about evenly split. However, among the parents who indicated that they “Somewhat agree,” 10.8% of parents whose children are enrolled in public schools “somewhat agreed” whereas 3.6% of parents whose children were

enrolled in Catholic schools “somewhat agreed.” Although the sample is small, parents of children enrolled in public schools were somewhat more achievement oriented than parents who chose to enroll their children in Catholic schools.

VALS14: “I like trying new things.” Ninety-four people responded, and only one “Mostly disagreed.” Thirty-nine indicated that they “Mostly agree.” There was not a noticeable difference in response between parents of children in Catholic schools and those whose children were enrolled in public schools. However, 91.5% of respondents indicated that they mostly or somewhat agreed with this statement.

VALS15: “I am very interested in how mechanical things, such as engines, work.” Designed to measure both general inquisitiveness as well as to be combined with gender to identify men who might be Makers, 40% of male respondents mostly agreed, and another 35% somewhat agreed. Among female respondents, only 8.5% mostly agreed, but nearly 40% somewhat agreed.

VALS16: “There is too much sex on television today.” Of the 94 parents who responded to this question, 61.7% indicated that they “Mostly agreed,” and a further 34.0% said that they “Somewhat agreed.” Perhaps this is unsurprising considering that respondents are parents of school-aged children. Although there was not a large difference between parents of students enrolled in public schools and those whose children are enrolled in Catholic schools, it is interesting to note that 65.8% of parents of children enrolled in public schools “Mostly agreed,” whereas only 58.9% of the remainder of the sample “mostly agreed.”

VALS17: “People who think too much annoy me.” This was the only statement in this questionnaire where no one indicated “Mostly agree.” In fact, 56.4% said they “Mostly

disagree,” with another 33.0% saying that they “Somewhat disagree.” Agreement with this statement would be indicative of a group of people who are mostly motivated by self-expression, have limited interests and who may appear to others to be “anti-intellectual.” This sample seemed to include very few people with these characteristics.

VALS18: “I like a lot of excitement in my life.” In the sample, 76.3% indicated that they either “somewhat agree” or “somewhat disagree,” almost exactly evenly split between those two “somewhat” categories. Among those who said they “Mostly disagree,” there were more parents of children enrolled in public schools than those whose children are enrolled in Catholic schools (26.3% v. 9.1% respectively). On the other hand, 45.5% of Catholic school parents said that they “Somewhat agree” versus only 28.9% of parents whose children are enrolled in public schools.

VALS19: “Religion is the most important way to know what is morally correct.” The majority of respondents (66.0%) said they either “Mostly” or “Somewhat” agree with this statement. The amount of agreement varied between the two groups of parents—36.8% of parents of children enrolled in public schools said they “Mostly agreed” whereas only 26.8% of parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools had the same strong response. For the “somewhat agree” category, the percentages were almost exactly the reverse. In the “disagreement” categories, both groups of parents responded similarly, with 26.6% “somewhat disagreeing” and 7.4% “mostly disagreeing.” This suggests that approximately one-third of all parents surveyed do not necessarily rely on the teaching authority of the Church and/or (if not Catholic) their religious leaders in moral matters.

VALS20: “I like the challenge of doing something I have never done before.” Another measure of confidence, overall 31.9% of all respondents indicated that they “Mostly

agree” with this statement. However, there is a large disparity between the two groups of parents. Forty-one percent of parents of children enrolled in Catholic school indicated that they “Mostly agree” compared with only 18.4% of parents whose children are enrolled in public schools. On the other hand, 21.1% of parents whose children are enrolled in public school said that they “Somewhat disagreed” with this statement as compared to only 7.1% of Catholic school parents. The difference in response to this question may be indicative of the difference between being an Innovator or a Thinker.

VALS21: “No matter how much evil I see in the world, my faith in God is strong.” Of the 93 respondents to this question, fully 80.6% indicated that they “Mostly agree,” with a further 16.1% saying that they “somewhat agree.” There was a subtle difference between the two groups of parents, with 83.8% of parents of children enrolled in public schools saying that they “Mostly agree” as compared with only 78.6% of parents whose children are enrolled in Catholic schools.

VALS22: “I like to look through automotive stores.” This question was included in order to differentiate between those who might be “Makers”—that is, motivated by self-expression, and those who would be less likely to be in this category. The majority of Makers are male—as such, the responses to this question were analyzed by gender. Of the 19 men who responded to this question, 11 mostly- or somewhat-agreed with this statement, for a rate of approximately 58%. In contrast, only 32% of women were in any sort of agreement with this statement.

Indices

In order to create a more functional profile of the buyer behavior patterns exhibited in this sample, I formulated index variables based on the VALS profiles. I analyzed the VALS

segment profiles and selected questions from the VALS portion of the questionnaire and the Education Statement portion of the questionnaire, which would tend to measure values and attitudes which would be indicative of a given VALS segment. For example, there is a difference in consumer behavior—and therefore decision-making as it applies to choosing a school—between Innovators, Thinkers and Achievers. Innovators could be described as progressive, self-confident and future-oriented, whereas Thinkers are conservative, follow traditional intellectual pursuits and enjoy an historical perspective. Achievers are moderate, believe that money is the source of authority and are aspirational. Parents who espouse these differing attitudes are likely to respond to choosing a school in markedly different manners. Note that if the respondent did not answer one of the questions used in the index, this was considered to be missing data and therefore that data record was automatically excluded from the index.

Experiencers and strivers. Experiencers are those motivated by self-expression. They are spontaneous, trendy, fashionable and are first-in, first-out of trend development. They share some of the values and attitudes of Strivers, who are motivated, not so much by self-expression, but rather by achievement. Strivers are impulsive, are the center of street culture and desire to better their lives (although they have difficulty in doing so). Experiencers have more financial resources than Strivers.

To compile an index for Experiencers, I chose to include the responses to the following questions: ED1 (I am comfortable relying on the local school district to decide the best curriculum for my children), ED6, VALS7, VALS10 and VALS18.

Table 5

Composition of the Experiencer Index

Question identifier	Question	Rationale
ED1	“I am comfortable relying on the local school district to decide the best curriculum for my children.”	Experiencers are less interested in educational issues.
ED6	“In school, students should be taught to be adaptable, creative and independent thinkers.”	Goes along with valuing self-expression.
VALS7	“I often crave excitement.”	Measure of spontaneity.
VALS10	“I dress more fashionably than most people.”	Early adopters of trends, especially fashion-related.
VALS18	“I like a lot of excitement in my life.”	Measure of spontaneity.

As measured by the Likert-type scale, the highest possible score for the Experiencers index would be 20 (5 variables multiplied by a high score of 4 on each variable). If the score on these five questions were to average at least 3 (“Somewhat agree”) or 15, I believe that could be described as moderate-to-high in this category. Therefore, if a respondent had income of \$50,000 or higher and a score of between 15 and 20 on this index, the respondent could be described as an Experiencer. In this sample, 25 of 131 or 19.1% were Experiencers. Of these 25, 11 (or 44%) send their children to Catholic schools, whereas the remaining 14 (or 56%) send their children to a different type of school. This is a higher than expected amount, since only 42% of the total sample send their children to an “other-than-Catholic” school. We could tentatively conclude then, in this sample at least, that parents who are motivated by self-expression are less likely to send their children to a Catholic school.

The index for Strivers was compiled from the following questions:

Table 6

Compilation of the Strivers Index

Question identifier	Question	Rationale
ED3	“I think the most important purpose of education is that my child gets a good job when he/she is done with school.”	Achievement-oriented.
ED5	“As long as a person earns enough money, he or she will live a good life.”	Money is important.
VALS2	“A good negotiator doesn’t just get the food in the bowl, but the bowl itself.”	Achievement.
VALS7	“I often crave excitement.”	Impulsive.
VALS10	“I dress more fashionably than most people.”	Wear one’s wealth.
VALS13	“Only a fool gives more than they get.”	Achievement.
VALS18	“I like a lot of excitement in my life.”	Looking for a fun time.

Because Strivers have fewer resources, in compiling this index, I limited income to less than or equal to \$75,000 per year. There were seven variables, meaning that the highest possible score would be 7 times 4 or 28, and a score of 21 (7 x 3) could be considered to be moderate-to-high. There were only 3 respondents who scored 21 or higher on this index, making those with the values and attitudes attributed to Strivers a very small percentage of this sample.

Achievers. Achievers are higher-resourced people who are primarily motivated by achievement. They could be described as having a “me-first, my-family-first” attitude and

believe that money is the source of authority. They are hardworking, aspirational and tend to have moderate political views. Achievers are the anchors of the status quo.

To compile an index for Achievers, the responses to the following questions were included:

Table 7

Composition of the Achievers Index

Question Identifier	Question	Rationale
ED2	“I want my child to learn at least the same things as everyone in the public school system.”	Wants their children to have at least as much as everyone else.
ED4	“It is very important to me that my child get into a good college.”	Getting into a good college is a sign of achievement and future achievement.
ED5	“As long as a person earns enough money, he or she will live a good life.”	Money is seen as the source of authority.
VALS2	“A good negotiator doesn’t just get the food in the bowl but the bowl itself.”	Indication of achievement.
VALS13	“Only a fool gives more than they get.”	Me first.

The highest possible score on the Achiever’s index would be 5 times 4 or 20. A moderate-to-high score would be 15 (5 x 3). Because Achievers have higher resources, this index was limited to respondents whose annual household income was \$75,000 per year or higher.

Only five respondents scored 15 or higher on this index, but if we include a score of 13 or higher, 22 respondents could be described as Achievers. A score of 13 would indicate substantial agreement on the questions listed in Table 7. The mean score on this index was 12.16 with a standard deviation of 2.134. Twenty-two of 131 indicates 16.8% of respondents

are Achievers. The Achievers are equally distributed between those who send their children to Catholic schools and those who do not.

Ideals-oriented. Thinkers and Believers are two categories of people motivated by Ideals. Thinkers are those with higher financial resources who tend to enjoy a historical perspective on issues, plan consider and research before making a purchase decision, and follow traditional intellectual pursuits. Thinkers tend to be politically conservative and have “ought” and “should” benchmarks for social conduct.

Believers are Thinkers’ lower-income counterpart. They believe there are rights and wrongs in life, have no tolerance for ambiguity, and trust traditional sources of information. They are economical, and neighborly, and are 80% female.

The questions used to create the index for Ideals are indicated in Table 8.

Table 8

Composition of the Ideals Index

Question identifier	Question	Rationale
ED7	“I do not want my child taught things in school which contradict my values.”	Strong sense of “oughts” and “should.”
ED10	“Whether or not my child attends a Catholic school, I think, as much as possible, teachers and administrators at Catholic schools should be committed Catholics.”	Strong opinion on a “should.”
VALS6	“I like to learn about art, culture and history.”	Traditional intellectual pursuits.
VALS11	“The federal government should encourage prayers in public school.”	A strong “should” and a conservative position.
VALS16	“There is too much sex on television today.”	Rights and wrongs.
VALS19	“Religion is the most important way to know what’s morally correct.”	Belief that there is a morally correct answer.
VALS21	“No matter how much evil I see in the world, my faith in God is strong.”	No tolerance for ambiguity; tendency toward strong faith.

As there are seven variables used in calculating the index for Ideals, the highest possible score would be 28 (7x4). A moderate-to-high score would be 21 (7x3). In this sample, 63 respondents scored 21 or higher—that is 48.1% of the sample. Of the parents who have a child enrolled in a school other than a Catholic school, 22 of a possible 50 parents (or 44%) score as motivated by ideals. Of the 68 parents who do send their students to a Catholic school, 41 (or 60.3%) scored 21 or higher on the Ideals index.

Innovators. Innovators have the highest financial resources of any of the VALS categories. They are confident, are willing to experiment, enjoy problem-solving challenges, are future oriented and are self-directed consumers. Politically, they tend to be progressive and are receptive to new ideas. The questions in Table 9 were included in the index for Innovators.

Table 9

Composition of the Innovators Index

Question indicator	Question	Rationale
ED6	“In school, students should be taught to be adaptable, creative and independent thinkers.”	Like the idea of being adaptable and creative.
ED9	“I believe that the most important purpose of any school should be to form responsible individuals who are capable of making free and correct choices.”	Like the idea of forming free individuals
VALS6	“I like to learn about art, culture and history.”	Have many interests.
VALS12	“I have more ability than most people.”	Confidence.
VALS14	“I like trying new things.”	Confident enough to experiment.
VALS20	“I like the challenge of doing something I have never done before.”	Likes challenge and problem-solving.

Because Innovators have higher incomes, this index measure was limited to those with household incomes of \$125,000 or higher. There were six variables, so the highest possible score would be 24 (6 x 4). A score of 18 (6 x 3) would be considered moderate-to-high. A total of 29 respondents had incomes higher than \$125,000 and scored between 18

and 24 on the Innovators index. This means that 22.1% (29/131) of this sample could be described as Innovators.

Of these 29 Innovators, 20 (or 69%) send their children to Catholic schools. The remaining 31% send their children to a different type of school.

Mexican American Cultural Values Scale

For respondents who indicated that they were not born in the United States and for whom Spanish was the first language they learned, they were directed to the Mexican American Cultural Values (MACVS) questionnaire instead of the VALS. There were only nine respondents, thus limiting the utility of this information. For five of the twelve questions the responses were so widely dispersed as to lack meaning. However, for the remaining seven questions, the responses were accumulated in a specific answer range. As such, it is worthwhile examining the attitudes revealed from these responses. The statements required an answer on a Likert-type scale with the following range of agreement: 1=Not at all, 2= a little, 3=somewhat, 4=very much and 5=completely.

MACVS 5: “Mothers are the main people responsible for raising children.” Six respondents said, “not at all” and two more answered, “somewhat.”

MACVS 12: “Families need to watch over and protect teenaged girls more than teenaged boys.” Four respondents said, “not at all,” whereas a further four indicated “somewhat.”

Both of these questions were designed to measure attitudes toward traditional gender roles (Knight et al., 2010). For this sample, everyone answered either “not at all” or “somewhat,” suggesting these respondents largely reject traditional gender roles, with perhaps 25% of the sample being on the fence.

MACVS 8: “Older kids should take care of and be role models for their younger brothers and sisters.” One respondent agreed “a little,” three agreed “somewhat,” a further three agreed “very much” and one agreed “completely.”

MACVS 11: “Parents should be willing to make sacrifices to make sure their children have a better life.” Two respondents agreed “somewhat,” three agreed “very much,” and four agreed “completely.”

MACVS questions 8 and 11 were designed to measure the degree of family obligation, a traditional Mexican-American value (Knight et al., 2010). These parents’ agreement were at the middle of the scale—“somewhat” to “completely,” which indicates that they tend to believe that family members have a responsibility to one another.

MACVS 6: “Parents should teach their children how to pray.” Two respondents indicated that they “somewhat” agree with this statement, one indicated that he/she “very much” agreed with the statement, and six said that they “completely” agree. This question was designed to measure the importance of religion as a more traditional Mexican-American value (Knight et al., 2010), and the responses strongly indicate that this is an important consideration for the parents who participated in this section of questions.

MACVS 9: “When it comes to important decisions, the family should ask for advice from their close relatives. Two people agreed “not at all,” another two agreed only “a little,” and four “somewhat” agreed. This question was designed to measure the traditional value of family reference (Knight et al., 2010). These respondents tended to reject the absolute need to consult with family prior to making an important decision.

MACVS 7: “Owning lots of nice things makes one very happy.” Six respondents agreed “not at all,” one agreed “a little,” and one more agreed “somewhat”. This was the one

mainstream American value for which there was a definitive response—and it was a resounding rejection of material success.

We might expect that immigrants from Mexico should express agreement with traditional Mexican-American values, but Knight et al. (2010) also found that they scored high on mainstream American values, such as material success. Knight et al. (2010) hypothesized that this is because these mainstream American values related to economic gains are intimately tied to their reasons for immigrating. The next generation, born in the United States, are more likely to reject these mainstream American values, as with this small sample. Regarding the more traditional Mexican-American values, in some respects the parents in this sample upheld them (as in the case of family obligation and religion) whereas in other areas the values were mitigated or rejected (as in the case of deference to extended family in the case of an important decision or traditional gender roles). Although there was only a small group of respondents, they had an intriguing mix of opinions.

Summary

The data collected through this study allows us to know about the demographic and psychological factors that impact Catholic parents' choice of schools for their children, including Hispanic Catholic parents. Especially salient are the responses to questions about education in general as well as responses indicating their values and attitudes with respect to one of life's more important parental decisions—how to educate one's children.

The demographic factors that influence Catholic parents', especially Hispanic parents', choice of schools for their children are: frequency of Mass attendance, household income, educational attainment of both respondent and spouse, and whether the respondent

or spouse (especially the latter) had ever attended a Catholic school. Race/ethnicity did not seem to be a factor in the decision whether or not to enroll a child in a Catholic school.

The psychological factors, such as parental values, beliefs and attitudes that impact the decision include realizing that there is more to education than simply getting a good job, and they tended to disagree with the idea that earning enough money guarantees a good life. However, it was quite important to them that their child get into a good college.

Over 77% of parents whose children were enrolled in public schools mostly or somewhat agreed that they wanted their children to learn the same things as everyone in the public school system versus only 54.7% of parents whose children are enrolled in Catholic schools. Over 68% of parents whose children are in public schools agree that they are comfortable with the local school district's ability to decide the best curriculum for their children, but 63.1% of Catholic school parents disagree with the same statement.

While 42% of parents in this sample said that they mostly agreed that they did not want their child taught things that contradicted their values, nearly 26% either somewhat or mostly disagreed with the statement. Acquiescing that their child may be taught things that contradicted their values was approximately 5 percentage points higher for parents whose children were enrolled in public schools. Over 92% of all parents in this sample mostly or somewhat agreed that the most important purpose of any school should be to form responsible individuals who are capable of making free and correct choices. According to Miller (2006), this objective should be a hallmark of a truly Catholic school.

Whether or not their children were enrolled in a public or Catholic school, parents in this sample overwhelmingly agreed (over 95%) that they thought it was important that all children be taught about Western civilization, arts, literature and music in school. A

similarly high percentage (97.3%) agreed that students should be taught to be adaptable, creative and independent thinkers in school. The overwhelmingly high level of agreement with these two statements would seem to forecast support for Classical curriculum, if advocates are able to inform Catholic parents that these ideals are best fulfilled through this time-tested approach to education.

Finally, parents in this sample felt strongly that whether or not their child was enrolled in a Catholic school, as much as possible, it is important that teachers and administrators at Catholic schools should be committed Catholics. Interestingly, 12.8% more parents whose children were enrolled in public schools said that they mostly agree with this statement as compared with parents of children enrolled in Catholic schools.

Within this sample, there appeared to be a variety of primary motivations on behalf of parents—some were motivated by self-expression, some by achievement, some by ideals and still others exhibited high levels of confidence and willingness to try new things. A large percentage of parents in this study (48.1%) seemed to be motivated by ideals and principles, such as not wanting their children taught things that contradict their values, wanting teachers and administrators in Catholic schools to be committed Catholics, desiring to learn about art, culture and history, believing that the federal government should encourage prayer in public schools, religion is the most important way to know what's morally correct, and no matter how much evil in the world, their faith in God remains strong. Somewhat or mostly agreeing with all of these statements would tend to indicate a good ideological match for Catholic schools adhering to the traditional model of a Catholic school.

Parents in this study whose child did not attend a Catholic school viewed tuition as the most significant obstacle to Catholic school enrollment. However, the majority (18 out of

23) had not inquired about the availability of financial aid. Thirty-two percent of parents whose children were enrolled in a Catholic school indicated that it was a sacrifice to pay the tuition, but another 26.7% said it was “a significant sacrifice” and a further 21.3% said it was “a great sacrifice”. Approximately 20% said Catholic school tuition was only somewhat or no sacrifice. Nine out of 20 eligible parents indicated that if they were offered a \$2000 scholarship (the approximate amount of the Arizona state tuition tax credit), they would likely consider enrolling their children in a Catholic school. While Catholic school tuition is a factor against Catholic school enrollment for some families, it would seem not be the only factor in the decision.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Review of Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of this purposive sample were largely representative of the target market for Catholic schools. A summary of these characteristics, along with a comparison figure from the study conducted by Gray and Gautier (2006), are provided in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary of Salient Characteristics

Attribute	This sample	CARA study (2006)	U.S. ¹	NM	AZ	CO
Mass attendance “at least weekly”	72%	17.1%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Married	85%	75%	65%	58%	62%	73%
Household income	\$75K-100K	N/A	\$68K	\$47.7K	\$58.1K	\$78K
Number of Children, K-12	2.10	2.10	1.86	1.90	1.97	1.85
Parent attended Catholic Schools	41%	44%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Highest level of education:						
Bachelor’s Degree	36.4%	N/A	20%	13%	18%	24%
Master’s Degree	29.4%	N/A	13%	10%	10%	16%

¹ Country and state-level comparison data from Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018)

Comparison

Within the sample, differing socioeconomic factors were influential on the parental choice of school type for their child(ren). Table 11 contrasts demographic statistics sorted by school type chosen.

Table 11

Comparison of Sample Characteristics by School Type Chosen

Attribute	Children enrolled in Catholic school	Children enrolled in other-than-Catholic school
Median household income range	\$25-\$50K \$75-\$100K (Binomial distribution)	\$100-\$125K
“I am comfortable relying on the local public school curriculum”	36.9% agree	68.2% agree
“I want my child to learn at least the same things as everyone in the public school system.”	54.7% somewhat or mostly agree	77.3% somewhat or mostly agree
“I think the most important purpose of education is that my child gets a good job when he/she is done with school.”	63.1% agree	70.5% agree
“It is important that my child get into a good college.”	92.3% agree	90.9% agree
“A person who earns enough money will be happy.”	64.7% disagree	63.7% disagree
“It is important for children to be taught to be adaptable, creative and independent thinkers in school.”	73.4% mostly agree	73.4% mostly agree
“I believe it is important that all children be taught about Western civilization, arts, literature and music in school.”	67.2% mostly agree	59.1% mostly agree

Within the sample, differing values and attitudes seemed to influence the parental choice of school type for their child(ren). Table 12 contrasts psychographic variables within this sample, sorted by school type chosen.

Table 12

Comparison of Values and Attitudes Indexes by School Type Chosen

Index	Percent of all respondents with these characteristics	Percent of this index grouping, children enrolled in Catholic school	Percent of this index grouping, children enrolled in other-than-Catholic school
Experiencer	19.1	44	56
Achiever	16.8	50	50
Ideals	48.1	60	40
Innovator	22.1	69	31

In analyzing the values and attitudes indexes, I observed that there are differences in composition by buyer behavior preferences and school type chosen, as illustrated in Table 13. It is difficult to assess the apparent attraction of Catholic schools to Innovators. The social justice aspect of the Catholic school mission may be a draw, or perhaps the Catholic school ethos represents some sort of cache among their peers. More research into this phenomenon would be helpful.

Table 13

Percent Displaying Agreement with Indices by School Type Chosen

	Children enrolled in Catholic school, respondent has these attitudes	Children enrolled in other-than-Catholic school, respondent has these attitudes
Experiencer	16%	32%
Achiever	16%	25%
Ideals	60%	50%
Innovator	29%	20%

Discussion

Implications. The participants in this study were faithful, engaged, Catholic parents of school-aged children, primarily in the Southwest. The attitudes and values of these parents indicate that they want the elements of education that a genuine Catholic school can readily provide, such as quality religious education, safe environment, quality academic instruction, discipline and order, and a sense of community (Gray & Gautier, 2006).

In this sample were parents whose attitudes and values matched the profiles for Innovators, Thinkers, Achievers and Believers. The archetypal Catholic school would be authentically Catholic, with a focus on education for the purpose of developing each child to his or her full potential and benefiting society as a whole. The type of Catholic parent whose values are most in alignment with this mission are the ideals-oriented Thinkers and Believers. Marketing and promotion efforts should be geared toward targeting parents motivated by ideals. Achievers are not a good ideological match with the Catholic school ethos, hence resources should not be allocated specifically to recruit these types of families. Additionally,

I would suggest caution in attracting Innovators whose motivation in choosing a school may be too rooted in self-expression (and self-involved) to be a good ideological match for the Catholic school ethos. Individual schools would need to make the decision about whether or not to admit students whose parents' personal philosophies are at obvious odds with the Catholic school mission.

There were no notable difference between White/Caucasians, Hispanics and/or multi-racial parents in their responses to the questions in this survey. While their ethnic backgrounds differed, their commitment to their Faith was a common thread.

In formulating a rough calculation of the population base for Catholic school enrollment, I used the information provided in the "VALS by state" table, from the "VALS particular to Hispanic Americans" (refer to Appendix C), and other demographic and psychographic dimensions addressed earlier. I determined that there should be enough parents in the target market segment to support a specific type of Catholic school. The type of Catholic school that would enjoy sufficient support to be financially viable would adhere to Catholic anthropology in mission, and to a traditional Catholic liberal arts curriculum or else Classical curriculum in pedagogy. Adoption of CCSS would likely not appeal to the ideals-oriented target market, and might be seen as too similar to a public school to justify the sacrifices necessary to pay tuition. According to Weisz (1988), "If parochial schools were not demonstrably American, they could not survive pressure from their enemies, and if they were not different, then they had no reason to exist" (p. 163). A Catholic school offering a classical curriculum would enjoy a two-fold point of distinction (benefits of a Catholic school along with distinction of classical curriculum) —a distinction that could be valuable enough in the eyes of Catholic parents to warrant the cost of tuition.

Limitations of the Study

The small body of research on the factors affecting Catholic parents' choice or rejection of Catholic schools has been focused mostly on the cost of tuition as the insurmountable obstacle for many of the families who would otherwise desire to send their children to a Catholic school. However, I suspected that there were other underlying reasons that kept families from trying to find the funds or financial aid enabling them to enroll their children in a Catholic school. In the past, American Catholics sent their children to Catholic schools because their bishops mandated that they should, "unless the bishop should judge the reason for sending them elsewhere to be sufficient" (Cooper & D'Agustino, 2014, p. 253). Today, the Church and Catholic schools need to give parents a compelling reason to enroll their children. Because of the many possible benefits of Catholic school and the variety of possible reasons for and against this choice, I decided not to conduct a confirmatory (hypothesis-testing) study, but rather to utilize an exploratory approach. According to Spokojny (2015):

A good research[er] has a lot in common with an overly inquisitive child...They can sound like a broken record asking "Why? But Why? Why?" Although we don't often think of kids' motivations behind asking "why," just like researchers they have a goal to understand and to learn about people and the world around them...The goal of exploration is to understand consumers' motivations, expectations, perceptions, or actions around a specific topic. This kind of knowledge sets a strong foundation for ideation, concept development, and creative executions to come (n.p.).

This exploratory study thus aimed to uncover meaningful information about the possible breadth of those reasons.

There was no research on the “whys” of school choice among Catholic parents, especially linked to values, attitudes and lifestyles of these, the first educators of their children. While the Church in the United States has acknowledged the sharp increase in the proportion of Hispanic Catholics in the American Church, she still struggles with effective methods to minister to this population. The Ospino and Weitzel-O’Neill study (2016) articulated this conundrum facing school and ministry leaders, but fell short of investigating the reasons for the attitudes and choices of the many subcultures within the Hispanic demographic in the American Church. The unique and unusual culture of Hispanics in New Mexico and Arizona in particular require deeper study. We do not know enough about the “whys” with respect to religious practice and its many supporting behaviors.

The scope of this study was severely limited in that I was required to rely on an intermediary to disseminate information about and access to the questionnaire. I had initially proposed that I would visit the participating parish and make a short announcement following all weekend Masses, appealing to parents of children in the K-12 grade ranges for their participation. I was not permitted to do this at any parish. I also wanted the QR code to be published in the parish bulletin over the course of two or three consecutive weekends. Only one parish, St. Agnes in Phoenix, facilitated this. I was hoping that, in my absence, the pastor or principal of the parish or school might make an appeal on my behalf, but I do not believe this occurred at any site. In two cases where the parish pastor requested that the DREs send out the survey link to parents of children enrolled in religious education, frustrating and odd technical difficulties ensued. In the first case, Our Lady of the Assumption in Roswell, the pastor and DRE were very cooperative, but there was a technical problem with Survey Monkey in that only one response was permitted per IP address. I was

unaware that the Survey Monkey platform defaults to this setting. The DRE, in testing the survey link a second time, got an error message. She had a friend test it (twice) and the same thing happened. After lengthy troubleshooting, I turned off the setting allowing only one response per IP address so that similar confusion would not result. When the DRE was reassured finally that all the bugs had been worked out, she forwarded the advertisement to all of the parents in the parish—missing the “.com” in the link. After all the back and forth, she was reluctant to resend the message. I received only six responses from this parish.

A different problem occurred with Church of the Incarnation. Although the pastor asked the DRE to send out the survey link to all parents in the parish, the DRE wanted to see the questionnaire beforehand. Accordingly, I sent him the full instrument as a PDF document along with the IRB-approved solicitation. Upon reviewing the survey instrument and finding it acceptable, he accidentally sent the pdf to all parents. Some of these parents viewed only the PDF document and complained to the pastor that they thought the questions were “too personal” and the survey was too long. Although I received 30 responses from Church of the Incarnation, I believe I would have received many more had the PDF not been erroneously forwarded to the parents.

On its own, I believe the survey instrument performed well. Because missed responses seemed to occur at similar places in the questionnaire, if I were to conduct the survey again, I would strongly consider requiring responses to all questions. Since it appears that some parents may equate Catholicity with social justice, I would add in a separate line for “social justice” in the “reasons for choosing a Catholic school” section. Additionally, the answers to question ED1, “I am comfortable relying on the local school district to decide on curriculum for my child” may have been confusing to some parents who are completely

unaware of the process by which curriculum decisions are made, either in a Catholic, public, private or public charter school. Finally, one of the VALS questions, designed to measure desire for achievement, may need to be updated in light of the current political environment. “I believe a good negotiator doesn’t just get the food in the bowl, but the bowl itself” may have such negative connotations to deal-making that it is too prejudicial to be an accurate measure of the achievement drive among parents. Perhaps a statement such as, “I believe that I need to negotiate the best financial arrangement for my family, while other people need to look out for the needs of their own” would have been a better question.

Ultimately, I did not get enough responses to the questionnaire to make a definitive claim about its validity, but it performed well within the scope of an exploratory study.

Recommendations

As much as possible, Catholic schools should shun all that is dehumanizing to students and teachers within the public school system, and actively avoid importing anything that is negative about public school culture. This would include CCSS, or requiring teachers or administrators to spend time working in public schools prior to teaching at a Catholic school. This would necessarily involve pushing back on accrediting agencies that look for and/or reward public school standards in a Catholic school. Quality teaching and learning in an atmosphere animated by the Gospel is important to a Catholic school; meeting questionable and problematic secular standards is therefore contraindicated.

Recent immigrants. For the many recently arrived immigrants and their children, Catholic schools could be the proven social justice support mechanism—key to a kinder, gentler, introduction to a new country—learning in a more nurturing environment while providing a social-capital boost (Bryk et al., 1993; Greeley & Rossi, 1966; Putnam, 2000;

Walch, 2014). As part of the bishops' outreach to immigrants, the value of Catholic schools should not be overlooked. There is a very real opportunity for Catholic schools to play an active role in providing support services to recent immigrants—both parents and children. Catholic Charities could offer some existing programs to assist immigrant families through Catholic school connections—for example English as a Second Language and parenting classes for parents who are immigrants. Similar programs connected to children's schools have been run in cities in Europe, with positive results (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Offering these programs at the Catholic schools attended by their children gives parents and schools increased opportunity for interaction.

Catholic schools should investigate programs offered in various public school settings that ease the transition for children who are recent immigrants in learning English as a second language (ESL). Rather than marginalize second-language learners, treating their language development as an unwanted burden or pedagogical hindrance, schools could provide systematic language support, thereby avoiding potential low-level academic placement and/or vocational tracking due solely to ESL issues (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Another support for children who are recent immigrants, with a historic precedent in American Catholic schools, would be to offer heritage language classes in Catholic schools, in a similar way that New York City public schools has offered the *French Language Heritage Program*. The goals of this type of program are to help the participant succeed academically in English by equipping them with skills (language, literature and culture) in their native language (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Heritage language programs have the added benefit of positive ethnic identity formation, which could help combat some of the

negative emotional and behavioral issues identified with bicultural assimilation (Knight et al., 2010; Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2006).

In looking at the challenges involved with reaching the Hispanic community about educational options for their children, the consumer behavior model should be leveraged. For example, the research shows that many parents do not engage in shopping behavior with respect to choosing a school for their children—they assume that their child will attend the TPS as assigned. Additionally, we observed that there may be a lack of information especially among recently arrived immigrants as to whom Catholic schools are designed to serve. Depending upon their area of origin, Catholic schools may have educated only the children of the very wealthy or the very poor. If parents do not perceive their family to be in the socioeconomic group served by Catholic schools, they are unlikely to consider enrolling their child in Catholic schools upon their arrival in the United States. Information regarding the American model of Catholic schools could be provided to parents during baptism preparation classes, hopefully by a Spanish-speaking parent of similar socioeconomic class, so that parents could imagine their children fitting in in the parish school. The Catholic school as a viable choice could then be reinforced at intervals throughout the year after Masses, etc., as a reminder of the value of this option.

Catholic school teachers. Whether or not their children attend Catholic schools, Catholic parents say they expect Catholic school teachers to be Catholic. Archbishop Miller (2006) says that Catholic education must be sustained by the witness of teaching through the careful hiring of men and women who enthusiastically endorse a Catholic ethos. He sees this as a primary way to foster a school's Catholicity and uses humor to express his rationale: "The reason for such concern about teachers is straightforward: Catholic education is

strengthened by its ‘martyrs’” (p. 49). Therefore, hiring for mission at Catholic schools should be emphasized.

Educating parents on the significance of schools and curriculum. Classical curriculum advocates need to make parents aware of the benefits and “match” between Catholic trinitarian anthropology and classical curriculum. In this sample of engaged Catholic parents, more than 95% indicated that they mostly or somewhat agreed that they wanted their children to learn about Western civilization, arts, literature and music in school. Similarly, 73% indicated that they mostly agreed that they wanted their children to learn to be creative and independent thinkers.

In conducting future research, it would be interesting to see if parents think that their children are being taught to be “adaptable, creative and independent thinkers” in the school in which they are currently enrolled. Additionally, since many Catholic parents seem to value academic rigor, it would be beneficial to know what parents mean by the terms “academic rigor” or “strong academics.” The next step for advocates of a Classical curriculum is to educate parents and other Catholic school decision-makers that a Classical curriculum best fulfills the range of parental goals.

Because we know that many parents use routinized behavior in not actively choosing a school for their children, there is an opportunity for pastors of parishes with schools to inform parents as to why actively choosing a school is actually an important decision that should require information-seeking and discussion.

Educating Bishops on the value of Catholic schools in fulfilling the responsibilities of their Episcopal office. In an era when bishops are concerned with many issues which require their immediate attention, it could be tempting to jettison the

responsibilities associated with struggling diocesan Catholic schools. It would be a grave and short-sighted error to view these schools solely from a financial viewpoint. As the three offices of the bishop are to teach, sanctify and govern, the Catholic school could be an instrument of facilitation for these goals, both in the present and for the future. As Greeley and Rossi (1966) found, devout Catholic parents, in conjunction with faithful Catholic schools exponentially increases the future faithfulness of Catholic young people. Bishops should consider that it is these young people who will assist the bishop or his successor in teaching, sanctifying and governing the remnant Church of the future.

However, in the short run, it can be tempting to see a struggling Catholic school merely as a cash drain, and not as an instrument of evangelization. Adopting this view, a bishop may not want to invest effort in overhauling a quasi-secular Catholic school into a genuinely faithful, evangelizing educational community. Upgrading a Catholic school to a format that reprises its Catholicity is risky—it requires faith and effort.

In working on this project, I visited with several principals and pastors. One told me that he had been pastor of a parish in the Southwest when the parish had trouble for the first time meeting the budget for the school. He requested and received assistance from the diocese in the amount of \$80,000. At the end of the school year, his bishop called him for a meeting, during which he instructed the pastor to close the school over the summer. The pastor told the bishop of the plans he had to revitalize the school and increase enrollments. The bishop told him that he needed to close the parish school. If the pastor was unwilling, the bishop would replace him with a pastor who would obey his wishes. The school was closed that summer.

Future Research

In the course of conducting this research and in visiting with pastors, parents and educators, there arose a number of questions related to this project that would merit further study. These include:

1. A similar study among Catholic homeschoolers to determine interest in joining the local Catholic school for selected classes during the week, for which they would pay a user fee.
2. A case study at St. Vincent de Paul parish and school in Phoenix, AZ. Both the school and the parish have a high percentage of Hispanic families, and many students in the school receive a sizable financial aid package to attend. Since the Daughters of Charity endeavor to meet the financial need of any family who wants to send their children to the school, why do many more families not enroll?
3. A study to investigate the “Catholicity” of different schools, and the relationship between Catholicity of a school, its financial health, and the values and attitudes of families that choose to enroll their children at the school.
4. A study of how dioceses deal with Catholic schools that are struggling. Does the diocesan schools office support a more rigorous Catholic identity? Does the diocese encourage the parish and school administrator to adopt Catholic standards for curriculum and faith practices? How much financial support is the diocese willing to provide? What evidence is there that the bishop would rather close the school(s) to curb the financial drain than make the changes necessary to make the school viable?
5. A study of teachers’ satisfaction among educators who are practicing Catholic teaching in Catholic schools as well as other types of schools. To what extent do they

- see their career as a vocation or ministry in the Catholic sense? What difference does this make to their practice as educators?
6. A study among parishes with schools to examine the amount of communication, cooperation and collaboration between the parish and the associated school. Be sure to include parents and teachers (not just pastors and administrators) as research subjects.
 7. A study for engaged Catholic parents of children with disabilities. Would they like to send their children to a Catholic school that has indicated they cannot accommodate the student? A second part of this study would interview principals of Catholic schools to ascertain what sort of accommodations would be possible for children with disabilities and how this might be augmented.

Concluding Thoughts

Bishops and diocesan superintendents should strongly support genuine Catholic schools, and not desire to compete with more prestigious secular schools, public or private. A Catholic school should be different from public schools in all the right ways. Catholic school attendance coupled with fervent Catholic parents produces very faithful future Catholics (Greeley & Rossi, 1966). For a bishop, this means that supporting, encouraging and making available authentically Catholic schools today is akin to tending a vineyard that will produce much fruit for future faithful leaders in the family, the community, the diocese and the universal Church.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Factors affecting Catholic parents' choice of school(s) for their child(ren)

April 20, 2017

Andrea Aiello, a student in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at the University of New Mexico, is conducting a research study under the supervision of her advisor, Dr. Allison M. Borden. This is an exploratory study about parental attitudes toward schools, especially Catholic parents toward Catholic schools. Andrea is particularly interested in the views of Hispanic parents toward the purpose and aim of education in general, and the differences between the attitudes of recent immigrants v. Americanized families of Hispanic descent. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are either a Catholic parent of a Pre-K to Grade 12 student or a non-Catholic parent of a Pre-K to Grade 12 student enrolled in a Catholic school.

Your participation will involve providing comments about the grades in which your children are enrolled, answering multiple choice questions about the type of schools they attend, what you think is important about education and your general attitudes and values. The survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with your responses. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort when answering questions. Data will be securely kept without identifiable information and may be shared with members of the dissertation committee. At the conclusion of the write-up, all individual data records will be destroyed.

To thank you for your participation in this study, you may choose to participate in a drawing for one of four \$25 gift cards. The drawing will be held at the conclusion of all data collection, randomly drawing from the information you may choose to provide. To enter, you may 1) use the link at the end of the survey to provide contact information separate from your anonymous responses in this survey or 2) you may email your contact information to Andrea Aiello at aaiello@unm.edu with "Survey Drawing" in the subject line. Winners will be notified using the email address they provide. Odds of winning depend on total number of participants who want to enter the drawing.

The findings from this study may benefit parents and schools (especially Catholic schools) if the schools elect to make positive changes based upon the feedback of all respondents to the study. Findings may also improve awareness of the benefits of Catholic schools to children and families. Finally, traditional public schools and public charters may be able to use findings to improve service delivery to minority populations. If published, results will be presented in summary form only.

This research study includes follow-up interviews to this survey. If you would be interested in taking part in a 15-20 minute interview about the content and results of this survey, you may 1) use the link at the end of the survey to provide contact information separate from your anonymous responses in this survey or 2) you may email your contact information to Andrea Aiello at aaiello@unm.edu with "Interview" in the subject line.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Andrea Aiello at aaiello@unm.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, you may contact the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

* 1. By clicking "I Agree" below you will be agreeing to participate in the above described research study. I have read the informed consent letter and wish to participate in the survey.

I agree

I do not wish to participate

Protocol:

Version:

Approved:

Expires:

Welcome to My Survey

2. How many school-aged children do you have (K-12)?

3. What type of school(s) do your children attend?

	Male	Female	Local public school	Magnet or other non-local public school	Charter school	private Catholic school	private religious school, non-Catholic	private school, non-religious	home school
Child #1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child #2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child #3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child #4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

4. What school(s) does your child/children attend? (Indicate name of school(s) if desired.)

1.

2.

3.

Prefer not to say (leave blank)

5. Do any of your children currently attend a Catholic school?

- Yes (Go to Question #6)
- No (Skip to Question #12)
- Used to attend, but do not now (Skip to Question #12)

Child(ren) enrolled in Catholic school.

6. Thinking of your oldest child currently enrolled in Catholic school, for how many years has this child attended Catholic schools?

7. Do you plan to send this child to a Catholic school next year?

- Yes (skip to question 9)
- No (go to question 8)
- Not sure (go to question 8)

8. If no, what is the reason?

- My student is graduating
- Location of the Catholic school is inconvenient
- The local public school has more to offer
- The Catholic school tuition is too high
- We prefer a public charter school
- We prefer a non-Catholic private school
- Catholic school academics is too hard for my child
- Other (please specify)

9. To what extent is paying Catholic school tuition a real financial sacrifice for your family? Indicate your response on a scale of 1-5, 1 indicating that it is not at all a sacrifice, 5 indicating that it is a great financial sacrifice.

It is not at all a sacrifice	It is somewhat of a sacrifice	It requires sacrifice	It requires significant sacrifice	It is a great sacrifice
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Our parish school seems like a close community more so than other schools in our area.

Mostly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Mostly agree	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Identify the top three reasons for choosing to send your child(ren) to Catholic school. Rank them in order of importance. (1=the most important reason, 2=the second most important reason, 3=the third most important reason.)

<input type="text"/>	location
<input type="text"/>	strong academics
<input type="text"/>	athletic/sports programs
<input type="text"/>	extracurricular activities (non-athletic)
<input type="text"/>	Catholic/Christian values and tradition
<input type="text"/>	safe environment
<input type="text"/>	sibling attends/attended
<input type="text"/>	quality teachers
<input type="text"/>	discipline
<input type="text"/>	best way to get college acceptance
<input type="text"/>	community aspect
<input type="text"/>	reputation
<input type="text"/>	curriculum
<input type="text"/>	catechism in school
<input type="text"/>	other (specify)

Children do not attend a Catholic school

****Questions 12 through 15 are intended for parents/guardians whose children have never attended Catholic schools OR who do not currently have a student in Catholic schools.****

12. If your son or daughter has never attended Catholic schools please indicate the reason. If there is more than one reason, rank the options 1=the most important, 2=the second most important, etc.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The public school had/has more to offer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The non-Catholic private school had/has more to offer.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Catholic school tuition was/is too high for our family budget.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The quality of education at our Catholic school was/is inferior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	My child's friends did/do not attend the Catholic school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation to the Catholic school was/is too difficult and/or inconvenient.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Catholic school could not offer specialized curriculum or services for my child.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not think my child would fit in at the Catholic school.

13. If your son or daughter used to attend but left to go to a different type of school, please indicate the reason. If there is more than one reason, rank the options 1=the most important, 2=the second most important, etc.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	The public school had/has more to offer.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	The non-Catholic private school had/has more to offer.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	The Catholic school tuition was/is too high for our family budget.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	The quality of education at our Catholic school was/is inferior.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	My child's friends did/do not attend the Catholic school.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Transportation to the Catholic school was/is too difficult and/or inconvenient.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	The Catholic school could not offer specialized curriculum or services for my child.
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	My child did not fit in at the Catholic school.

14. Might you consider a Catholic school for your child(ren) in the future?

15. If each of your children received a scholarship of approximately \$2,000, how likely would you be to send them to a Catholic school?

- not at all likely
- not sure
- quite likely
- definitely likely

16. Have you asked for financial aid or a scholarship for your child in Catholic school?

General Information and Attitudes about Education

The following questions are intended for ALL PARTICIPANTS

Please continue.

17. Do you identify with any of the following religions? (Please select all that apply.)

- A Mainstream Protestant faith tradition (Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, etc.)
- Latter-Day Saints
- Catholicism
- Non-denominational Christian
- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Native American
- Inter/Non-denominational
- No religion
- Other (please specify)

18. How often do you attend religious services?

- At least weekly
- At least once per month
- A few times per year
- Seldom
- Never

19. Were either you and/or your spouse/partner (if applicable) educated in a Catholic school?

	Educated in a Catholic School?	If so, how many years?
Respondent	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Spouse	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

20. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

21. What is the highest level of education your spouse (or partner) has attained?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree
- Not applicable

22. What was your total combined household income last year?

- \$0 to \$9,999
- \$10,000 to \$24,999
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$124,999
- \$125,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$174,999
- \$175,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 and up
- Prefer not to answer

23. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

24. In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

25. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- In a domestic partnership or civil union
- Single, but cohabiting with a romantic partner
- Single, but living with extended family
- Single, never married

26. In what ZIP code is your home located? (enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

27. Which race/ethnicity best describes your child?

	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black or African- American	Hispanic	White/ Caucasian	Multiple ethnicity
Child #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child #3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child #4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This section of questions is designed to measure your views about education.

28. I am comfortable relying on the local school district to decide the best curriculum for my child(ren).

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

29. I want my child to learn at least the same things as everyone in the public school system.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

30. I think the most important purpose of education is that my child gets a good job when he/she is done with school.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

31. It is very important to me that my child get into a good college.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

32. As long as a person earns enough money, he or she will live a good life.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

33. In school, students should be taught to be adaptable, creative and independent thinkers.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

34. I do not want my child taught things in school which contradict my values.

- Mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

35. I believe it is important that all children be taught about Western civilization arts, literature and music in school.

- Mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

36. I believe that the most important purpose of any school should be to form responsible individuals who are capable of making free and correct choices.

- Mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

37. Whether or not my child attends a Catholic school, I think, as much as possible, teachers and administrators at Catholic schools should be committed Catholics.

- Mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

Your answer to the next one or two questions will direct you to the most appropriate set of questions to ask about your general attitudes.

38. Which language did you learn first?

- English (Go to Question #39)
- Spanish (Go to Question #39)

Have you always lived in America?

39. Have you always lived in the United States?

Yes (Go to question #35)

No (Go to question #51)

Values and Attitudes Questions A

The following questions are intended to measure your general attitudes and beliefs. There are no right answers. Just answer what you believe.

40. I often ask people's advice about clothes, vacations and other spending decisions.

- Mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

41. A good negotiator doesn't just get the food in the bowl, but the bowl itself.

- Mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

42. I love to make things I can use every day.

- mostly disagree
- somewhat disagree
- somewhat agree
- mostly agree

43. I follow the latest trends and fashions.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

44. I like being in charge of a group.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

45. I like to learn about art, culture, and history.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

46. I often crave excitement.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

47. I am really interested in only a few things.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

48. I would rather make something than buy it.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

49. I dress more fashionably than most people.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

50. The federal government should encourage prayers in public schools.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

51. I have more ability than most people.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

52. Only a fool gives more than they get.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

53. I like trying new things.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

54. I am very interested in how mechanical things, such as engines, work.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

55. There is too much sex on television today.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

56. People who think too much annoy me.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

57. I like a lot of excitement in my life.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

58. Religion is the most important way to know what's morally correct.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

59. I like the challenge of doing something I have never done before.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

60. No matter how much evil I see in the world, my faith in God is strong.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

61. I like to look through hardware or automotive stores.

- Mostly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Mostly agree

Values and Attitudes Questions B

These questions will ask your opinion about how you think people should behave. There are no right or wrong answers. Just say what you believe.

62. One's belief in God gives inner strength and meaning to life.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

63. Children should be taught to always be good because they represent the family.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

64. Children should be taught that it is important to have a lot of money.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

65. One must be ready to compete with others to get ahead.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

66. Mothers are the main people responsible for raising children.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

67. Parents should teach their children to pray.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

68. Owning a lot of nice things makes one very happy.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

69. Older kids should take care of and be role models for their younger brothers and sisters.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

70. When it comes to important decisions, the family should ask for advice from their close relatives.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

71. Personal achievements are the most important things in life.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

72. Parents should be willing to make great sacrifices to make sure their children have a better life.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

73. Families need to watch over and protect teenage girls more than teenage boys.

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- Completely

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your responses will help decision-makers know what is important to Catholic parents and parents of Catholic school students.

A drawing will be held for one of four \$25 Amazon gift cards. If you would like to participate in the drawing, please click on the [Link to a New Survey](#). You will then be taken to another survey to enter contact information. This is to ensure the anonymity of you and the responses you've provided in this questionnaire.

I will be conducting follow up interviews with a random selection of parent volunteers. These interviews will be conducted via phone and will last approximately 15-20 minutes. If you are interested in participating in an interview, please click on the [Link to a New Survey](#). You will then be taken to another survey to enter contact information. This is to ensure the anonymity of you and the responses you've provided in this questionnaire.

If you would like to contact the student researcher, I can be reached at salello@unm.edu.

If you do not wish to participate, you may close your window now by clicking "Submit", below.

Appendix B: Code Book

Dataset	Aiello Dataset
Overview	This dataset contains the responses to a questionnaire with 73 items; the questionnaires were completed by Catholic parents of K-12 aged children, or parents of K-12 aged children who attend Catholic schools; the parents recorded their views toward schools they had chosen for their children, Catholic schools, general attitudes toward education, and opinions about what they value more generally.
Sample size	107
Updated	041318

Structure of the Dataset		
Variable Name	Variable Description	Variable Metric/Labels
NUM	Number of school-aged children	Number
ID	Respondent ID# as assigned by SM	
SCHOOL1 SCHOOL2 SCHOOL3 SCHOOL4	Type of school attended by this child	0=local public school 1=magnet or other non-local public school 2=charter school 3=private Catholic school 4=private religious school, non-Catholic 5 =private school, non-religious 6 =home school 7=other
SEX1, SEX2 etc.	Sex/gender of child	0=male, 1=female
CATHSCH	Do any children attend a Catholic school?	0=No 1=Yes 2=Used to attend, but not now
YEARS	Number of years oldest child has attended Catholic school	Number
PLAN	The parent plans to send this child to Catholic school next year.	0=No 1=Yes 2=Not sure
NOWHY	Reason not sending child to Catholic school next year	0=student is graduating 1=location inconvenient

		2=local public school has more to offer 3=Catholic school tuition too high 4=prefer a charter school 5=prefer a non-Catholic private school 6=Catholic academics too hard 7=other
SACRIFICE	The extent to which paying Catholic school tuition is a sacrifice for the family	1=not at all a sacrifice 2=somewhat of a sacrifice 3=requires sacrifice 4=requires significant sacrifice 5=great sacrifice
COMMUNITY	Parish school seems like more of a community that other schools in the area	1=don't know 2=mostly disagree 3=somewhat disagree 4=somewhat agree 5=mostly agree
REASONYES	Rank top three reasons for choosing to send child(ren) to Catholic school	Categories most often given as top three reasons for sending children to Catholic school
NEVERWHY	Reason your child has never attended Catholic school	Ranking of categories of reasons from most to least often cited
NOREASON	Reason your child used to attend a Catholic school but does not now	Ranking of categories from most often cited to least often
FUTURE	Might you consider Catholic school for your children in the future?	0=no 1=yes
SCLSHIP	Likelihood to consider a Catholic school in the future if given a \$2,000 scholarship	0=not at all likely 1=not sure 2=quite likely 3=definitely likely
ASKEDFA	Have you asked for FA or scholarship for your child?	0=no 1=yes
REL	What religion(s) do you identify with?	0=mainstream Protestant 1=LDS 2=Catholicism 3=non-denominational Christian 4=Judaism 5=Islam 6=Buddhism

		7=Hinduism 8=Native American 9=inter/non-denominational 10=no religion 11=other
OFTENREL	How often attend religious services	0=never 1=seldom 2=a few times per year 3=at least once per month 4=at least weekly
CATHSCHR	Were you educated in a Cath school	0=no Number=number of years (YEARSR)
CATHSCHP	Was your spouse/partner educated in a Cath school	0=no or not applicable Number=number of years (YEARSP)
EDURES	Highest level of education respondent	1=less than high school 2=high school or equivalent (GED) 3=some college, no degree 4=associate degree 5=bachelor degree 6=graduate degree
EDUSPP	Highest level of education spouse/partner	0=not applicable 1=less than high school 2=high school or equivalent (GED) 3=some college, no degree 4=associate degree 5=bachelor degree 6=graduate degree
INCOME	Household income last year	0=prefer not to answer 1=0-\$9999 2=\$10K-24,999 3=\$25K-\$49,999 4=\$50K-\$74,999 5=\$75K-\$99,999 6=\$100K-\$124,999 7=\$125-\$149,999 8=\$150K-\$174,999 9=\$175K-\$199,999 10=\$200K+
GENDER	Gender of respondent	0=male, 1=female
AGE	Birth year of respondent	Year
STATUS	Relationship/marital status	1=married

		2=widowed 3=divorced 4=separated 5=domestic partnership/civil union 6=single, cohabiting with romantic partner 7=single, living with extended family 8=single, never married
ZIP	Zip code of home	Zipcode
RACE1 RACE2 RACE3 RACE4	Race/ethnicity of child	1=American Indian/Alaskan native 2=Asian/Pacific Islander 3=Black/African-American 4=Hispanic 5=White/Caucasian 6=Multiple ethnicity
ED1-ED10	Questions regarding general attitudes toward education	1=mostly disagree 2=somewhat disagree 3=somewhat agree 4=mostly agree
VALS1-VALS22	Questions for respondents raised in America to measure values, attitudes and lifestyle opinions	1=mostly disagree 2=somewhat disagree 3=somewhat agree 4=mostly agree
MAVCS1-MAVCS12	Questions for respondents whose first language is Spanish and who have not lived in the U.S. the majority of their lives	0=not at all 1=a little 2=somewhat 3=very much 4=completely
IDEALS	Index comprised of VALS6+VALS11+VALS16+VALS19+VALS21+ED7+ED10	Highest possible=28 Moderately high=21
ANTIGOVT	Score to be used for MAKER index: IF VALS11=1, ANTIGOVT=4	
MAKER	Index comprised of GENDER=0, and VALS 15+VALS8+VALS17+VALS22+ED9+ANTIGOVT	Highest possible=24 Moderately high=18
BELIEVER	Index comprised of GENDER=1, and ED8+VALS3+VALS4+VALS9+VALS19+VALS21	Highest possible=24 Moderately high=18
STRIVE2	Index comprised of IF INCOME	Highest possible=28

	≤ 5 , ED3+ED5+VALS2+VALS7 +VALS10+VALS13+VALS18	Moderately high=21
INNO2	Index comprised of IF INCOME ≥ 7 , ED6+ED9+VALS6+VALS12 +VALS14+VALS20	Highest possible=24 Moderately high=18
EXPRNCR2	Index comprised of IF INCOME ≥ 4 , ED1+ED6+VALS7+VALS10 +VALS18	Highest possible=20 Moderately high=15
ACHVR2	Index comprised of IF INCOME ≥ 5 , ED2+ED4+ED5+VALS2 +VALS13	Highest possible=20 Moderately high=15
THINKER	Index comprised of IF INCOME ≥ 4 , ED7+ED10+VALS6+VALS11 +VALS16+VALS19+VALS21	Highest possible=28 Moderately high=21

Appendix C: VALS and Buyer Behavior

I became fascinated with the concept of buyer behavior several years ago when I specialized in Marketing in business school. Buyer behavior is a discipline located at the intersection of psychology and marketing, with its purpose to allow an organization to better understand its target markets. The premise is that the more an organization knows about what motivates its prospective customers, the better the organization can tailor the 4 Ps of the marketing mix to satisfy those customers.

I first learned about VALS when I was teaching a Principles of Marketing course several years ago. Anyone can take the VALS questionnaire online and learn their primary and secondary VALS profile (<http://www.strategicbusinessinsights.com/vals/presurvey.shtml>). The survey instrument has been refined by the researchers at Strategic Business Insights over several decades. The VALS profiles are simply groupings of consumers with comparable primary motivations and resource levels who could be expected to respond to a marketing mix in a similar fashion. In the case of the marketing of education, not everyone in a grouping would have children, or have children of the right age to be considering schools, so not all people who tend toward a given VALS profile should be considered to be in the target market for a specific product or service, in this case K-12 education. Further demographic segmentation is necessary in order to narrow down the behavioral profile into a fertile market segment. However, the VALS profile can assist marketers in knowing something about how people think about and shop for their product. The marketing mix can then be adjusted to have greater appeal for and better reach the desired market segment(s). When a buyer behavior profile is combined with demographic factors, a psychometric outline is formed.

The VALS profile identifies three main categories of motivation: Ideals, Achievement and Self-Expression. According to Strategic Business Insights (2018),

The concept of primary motivation explains consumer attitudes and anticipates behavior... Consumers who are primarily motivated by ideals are guided by knowledge and principles. Consumers who are primarily motivated by achievement look for products and services that demonstrate success to their peers. Consumers who are primarily motivated by self-expression desire social or physical activity, variety, and risk. These motivations provide the necessary basis for communication with the VALS types and for a variety of strategic applications (Strategic Business Insights, 2018, n.p.).

Resources are a determining factor in the VALS profile. Resources does not just refer to household income, but also “energy, self-confidence, intellectualism, novelty seeking, innovativeness, impulsiveness, leadership and vanity play a critical role” (Strategic Business Insights, 2018, n.p.). These characteristics or resources can either “enhance or constrain a person's expression of his or her primary motivation” (n.p.). Refer to Figure A.1 for a depiction of the relationship between resources, primary motivations and the eight VALS profiles.

VALS Profiles and Characteristics

The main categories of motivation for the U.S. market, as identified by Strategic Business Insights are Ideals, Achievement and Self-Expression. Those who are primarily motivated by ideals (Thinkers or Believers) are steered by knowledge and principles. They are thoughtful, cautious, deliberate consumers. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and keep in mind a historical perspective. Consumers who are motivated by achievement

(Achievers and Strivers) look for products and services that demonstrate their success to peers. Money is very important to Achievers and Strivers, and they tend to be the early adopters of new technology or fashion brands. These people are self-focused and image-conscious. Achievers are committed to family and job; Strivers have trouble maintaining consistent employment but desire to better their lives. People motivated by self-expression like variety, social or physical activity and thrills. Experiencers tend to be younger with higher resources, spending their considerable discretionary income on food, clothing and extreme vacations, whereas Makers (motivated by self-expression but with fewer resources) are more thrifty with their money, but express themselves by making themselves and their families better (Bhasin, 2017). Innovators have the highest amount of resources, and are motivated to some degree by ideals, achievement and self-expression. They are very confident in their abilities and are willing to experiment. They enjoy the finer things in life. Finally, Survivors have the fewest resources, are older, very cautious and risk adverse, and may live on a fixed income. Survivors are brand loyal and hang onto dated technology. They take comfort in routine (Strategic Business Insights, 2018). For a brief description of values and consumer behavior for each of these VALS types, refer to Figure A.2. For more behavior characteristics as well as a demographic profile, refer to Figure A.3.

Hispanic Americans and VALS

As of the end of 2016, there were an estimated 58 million people in the United States who are of Spanish or Hispanic origin (Flores, 2017). Due to the size of the group, the range of places of origin and degree of assimilation, there is a wide range of values and attitudes within the Hispanic American market. According to Strategic Business Insights (2016), there is a noticeable difference of consumer behavior and resources between acculturated Hispanics

(those who speak mostly English but some Spanish at home) and bicultural Hispanics (those who speak mostly Spanish but some English at home). Approximately 70% of bicultural Hispanics are in one of the lower resource VALS categories, whereas acculturated Hispanics are twice as likely to be in one of the higher-resource categories. Bicultural Hispanics are more likely to have positive attitudes toward advertising and like learning about new products and services from this source, whereas acculturated Hispanics are heavy users of smartphones to gain information, or to listen to music or download or stream a TV program. A comparison of the VALS types between acculturated Hispanics, bicultural Hispanics and the U.S. Population as a whole are displayed in Figure A.4.

VALS in the Southwest

Strategic Business Insights (SBI) calculates the VALS profile distribution for by state, except where the population of a given state is too small to produce statistically valid results. If this is the case, SBI creates state groupings which allows them to estimate the representation of VALS types for a region. Table A.1 shows the percentage of population for each VALS type for the state grouping encompassing the Southwest—New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada. The composition of this state grouping is compared against the percentages for the whole U.S. population.

Table C1

Comparison of VALS by Southwest State Grouping and VALS for U.S. Population as a Whole

<u>VALS Profile Type</u>	<u>Grouping for NM, AZ, UT, NV</u>	<u>All U.S.</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Innovators	9.42	8.67	0.75
Thinkers	18.91	15.09	3.82
Believers	11.45	11.95	-0.50
Achievers	14.49	12.92	1.57
Strivers	9.76	12.79	-3.03
Experiencers	12.05	12.91	-0.86
Makers	12.42	10.59	1.83
Survivors	11.51	15.08	-3.57

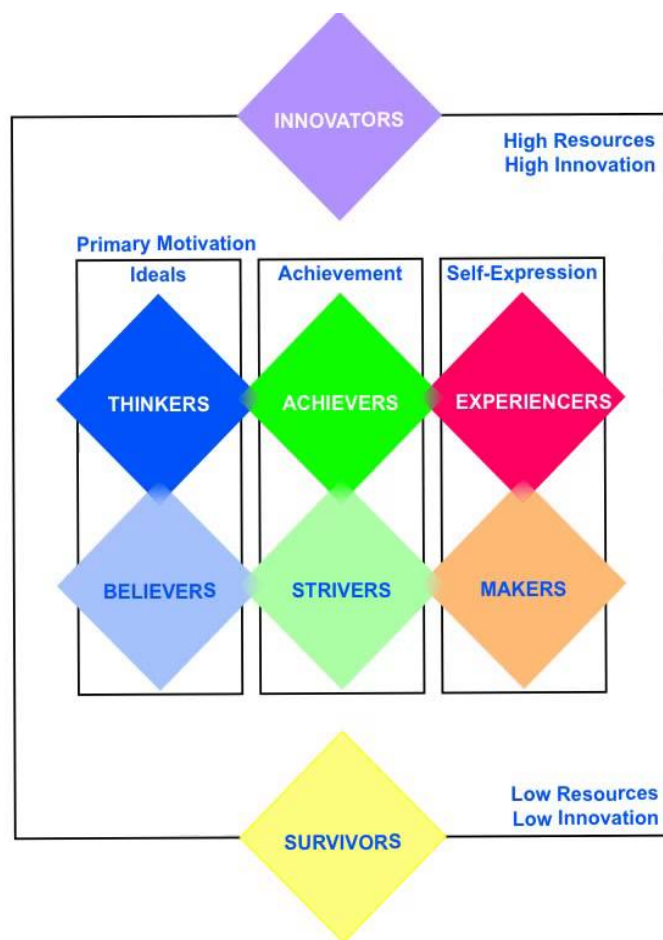


Figure C.1. VALS types by Resources and Primary Motivation (Strategic Business Insights, 2018).

Characteristic Snapshots Emphasize Important Differences by VALS™



	Ideals		Achievement		Self-Expression			
	Innovators	Thinkers	Believers	Achievers	Strivers	Experiencers	Makers	Survivors
Are confident enough to experiment	Plan, research, consider before acting	Believe in right/wrong for a good life	Have a me-first, my-family-first attitude	Are the center of street culture	Want to stand out	Are distrustful of government	Are the quiet rank and file	
Are information ready	Are the old guard	Want friendly communities	Are fully scheduled	Live in the moment	Want everything	Believe in sharp gender roles	Are cautious and risk averse	
Are future oriented	Enjoy historical perspective	Not looking to change society	Are peer conscious	Wear their wealth	Are spontaneous	Protect what they think they own	Use television as a window to the world	
Are receptive to new ideas and technologies	Have "ought" and "should" benchmarks for social conduct	Have no tolerance for ambiguity	Are anchors of the status quo	Desire to better their lives; have difficulty in doing so	Have a heightened sense of visual stimulation	Want to "work" on their world	Take comfort in routine and the familiar	
Enjoy problem-solving challenges	Use technology in functional ways	Have strong me-too fashion attitudes	Believe money is the source of authority	Experience revolving employment	Introduce new sayings	Have strong outdoor interests; don't want to be walled in	Are loyal to products and brands	
Are self-directed consumers	Are not influenced by what's hot	Want to belong	Are committed to family and job	Are looking for a fun time	See themselves as very sociable	Are not concerned with being fashionable	Are analog not digital	
Are keenly aware of others' self-interests	Follow traditional intellectual pursuits	Trust traditional sources; don't question authority	Value tech that provides a productivity boost	Are impulsive	Are first in, first out of trend adoption	May appear to be anti-intellectual	Place emphasis on preservation	

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Figure C.2. Selected Descriptive Characteristics of VALS types (Strategic Business Insights, 2017).

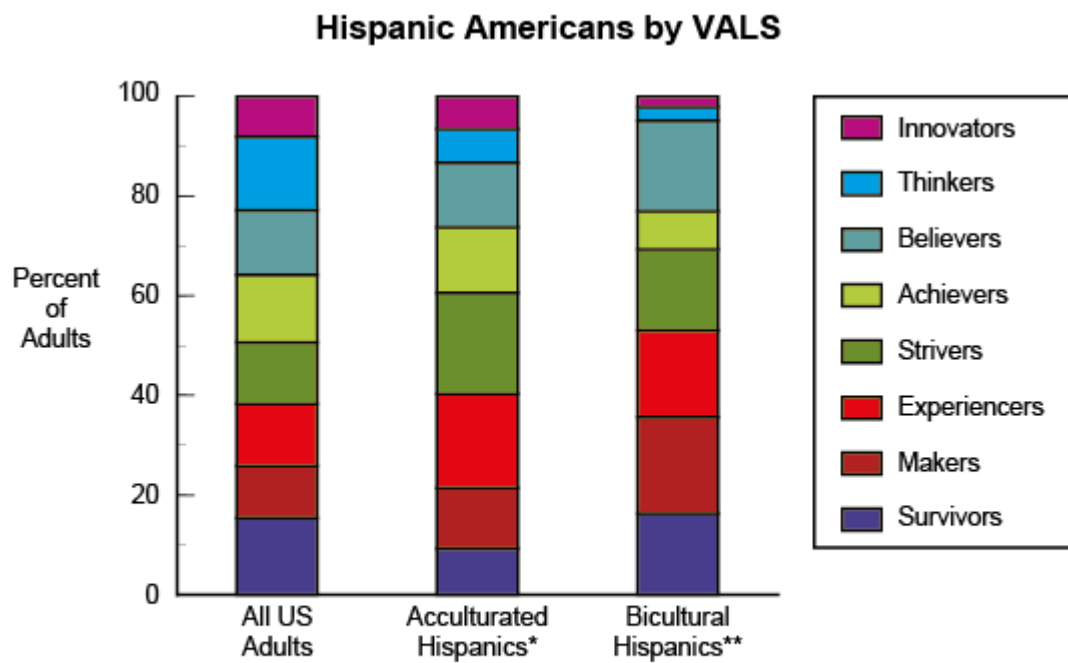
Demographic and Behavior Snapshots Highlight the Vibrancy of Using VALS™



Primary Motivation	Ideals			Achievement		Self-Expression		
	Innovators	Thinkers	Believers	Achievers	Strivers	Experiencers	Makers	Survivors
Psychological Descriptors	Lifestyle Changers Information Ready Future Oriented	Conservative Mature Reflective	Economical Neighborhoodly Me-Too Followers	Aspirational Hardworking Moderate	Fun Loving Up to Date Overwhelmed	Assertive Energetic Optimistic	Hands-On Practical Self-Reliant	Cautious Loyal Traditional
Median age	40	60	51	38	30	24	47	68
Median HHI	\$118K	\$107K	\$55K	\$104K	\$33K	\$70K	\$55K	\$24K
	Percent of Innovators	Percent of Thinkers	Percent of Believers	Percent of Achievers	Percent of Strivers	Percent of Experiencers	Percent of Makers	Percent of Survivors
Women	44	51	80	52	44	45	27	60
Married	48	77	59	85	27	21	72	37
Employed full-time	64	47	48	74	40	48	60	12
Live with a parent	14	2	7	7	25	48	7	3
Took a foreign trip in the past 3 years	51	40	17	30	14	23	17	10
Own a smartphone and a tablet	47	41	32	51	26	38	25	7
Own an internet-video device for TV	32	19	10	23	9	18	11	4
Buy "green" paper products	22	19	19	12	20	2-	19	23
Prayer is a part of my daily life	15	40	49	34	27	35	36	51

Source: VALS™/GfK MRI, Spring 2015

Figure C.3. Demographic and Behavior Characteristics by VALS Type (Strategic Business Insights, 2015).



* Acculturated = Respondent speaks mostly English but speaks some Spanish at home.

** Bicultural = Respondent speaks mostly Spanish but speaks some English at home.

Source: VALS/GfK MRI Fall 2016

Figure C.4. Hispanic American VALS compared with All-U.S. VALS (Strategic Business Insights, 2016).