ABSTRACT

SHOLLENBERGER, TARA KRYSTYNA. Characterizing Ethical Decision-Making and its Influences: Examining Higher Education Leaders in the United States and Poland. (Under the direction of committee chair Timothy Hatcher.)

Research suggests what leaders should do or the qualities or characteristics they should have to be ethical leaders (Brown & Treviño, 2006). The ethical decision-making process that leaders should follow to avoid scandals and unethical behavior are overlooked. Few studies focused on ethical decision-making within higher education. Yet, educational leaders have an ethical responsibility that may be even more complex than those of other leaders due in part to increasingly diverse student populations enrolled in higher education that is having an impact on the growth of educational institutions on a global basis (Shapiro & Stekfovic, 2011). Further, ethical scandals are no longer contained by national borders. The rapid growth of technology coupled with changes in political and societal landscapes has advanced ethical scandals to global prominence. A more collective need to understand ethical values and ethical decision-making practices on a global level has emerged. To be globally effective, leaders must be aware of the similarities and differences across and within cultures that could influence business practices (Resick, Hanges, Dickson, & Mitchelson, 2006). However, cross-cultural research has not yet addressed the topic of ethical decision-making.

In this study, the ethical decision-making process of higher education was not only examined in the United Stated but also in Poland. This exploratory study used the Delphi research technique to identify an ethical decision-making definition that higher administration leaders in both the United States and Poland use to make ethical decisions and identify the environmental factors that influence their decisions. Findings showed that the United States and Polish expert panels were different and showed very little in common in the
identification of a definition and environmental factors. Lastly, both sets of experts identified a new process for ethical decision-making, each constructing a different ethical decision-making process model. This research on ethical decision-making provided evidence that the Polish and United States cultures are not as similar as identified in previous studies in terms of how they identify ethical decision-making and the factors they identify with influencing ethical decision-making. Using this information will create a better understanding of the practices and approaches to ethics that leaders use because of the huge influence they have and exert on people within their own organization and society around them.
Characterizing Ethical Decision-Making and its Influences: Examining Higher Education Leaders in the United States and Poland

by
Tara Krystyna Shollenberger

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APPROVED BY:

Timothy Hatcher
Chair of the Advisory Committee

Kevin Brady

James Bartlett

Michelle Bartlett
BIOGRAPHY

Tara Shollenberger was born in New Haven, Connecticut where she and her younger sister were raised in a Polish household blended with American culture; she is fluent in Polish and frequently travels to visit family abroad. Growing up in Clinton, Connecticut, Tara attended The Morgan High School. In 2000, she was accepted to Franklin Pierce University (College then), where she played field hockey for four years. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Biology. After college, Tara accepted a position at Texas Tech University, and while there, she earned her Master’s in Sport Psychology.

In 2009, she commenced work on her Doctorate of Education from North Carolina State University; her dissertation topic focuses on ethical decision-making. She currently works at High Point University as the Director of Conduct in the Office of Student Life. Along the way Tara has participated and presented at many conferences. Most notably Tara presented at the Association for Career and Technical Research two years in a row winning the Outstanding Symposium Award at the conference both years: most recently in 2013 with Bartlett, Waugh, Rowjeski, Bartlett, and Schmidtke on Evidence Based Research: Development of Research Skills to Discover Best Career and Technical Education Practices and in 2012 with Bartlett, Allen, Bartlett, Santos, Laanan, Nimon, Waugh, and Semanski on Developing Faculty to Improve Research Methods for Career and Technical Education. In addition, Tara presented a poster entitled Characterizing Ethical Decision-Making and its Influences: Examining Higher Education Leaders in Both the United States and Poland based on her dissertation topic at North Carolina State University’s 2013 poster symposium.
and was awarded second place for her research by the College of Education Leadership, Policy, and Adult & Higher Education.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Previous ethics research has primarily focused on qualities or characteristics that predetermined what was defined as ‘good’ leadership. To date limited research has focused on how leaders in higher education make ethical decisions. In addition, there is a dearth of research on cross-cultural understanding of the actual process of ethical decision-making (EDM) within the context of higher education.

The present research study examined ethical decision-making, specifically how it was defined and its process. Then environmental factors were identified by experts as being influential to the process of EDM within higher education in the United States (U.S.) and Poland. The research provided focuses mainly on EDM and cultural aspects as related to Poland and U.S. higher education. A review of literature revealed that cross-cultural research had not addressed the topic of environmental factors that could influence ethical decision-making (Resick, Hanges, Dickson, & Mitchelson, 2006) especially within higher education.

The following introduction lays out a general overview of the significance of and purpose behind the research. In addition, the introduction will provide a brief background of EDM in the business discipline; examples of unethical behaviors in higher education are provided. The introduction includes the purpose, significance, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, assumptions, and limitations of the study.

No single definition of ethical decision-making has been agreed upon in the related literature. Based on recent reviews there were ten different definitions of ethical decision-making located across the disciplines of ethics, philosophy, business, and education (Barnett, 2001; Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ethics Resource Center, 2009; Jones, 1991; Loe, Ferrell &
Mansfield, 2000; Singhapakdi, Vitell, & Kraft, 1996; Tarter & Hoy, 1998; Treviño, 1986; Valentine & Rittenburg, 2007; Velesquez et al., 2009). The most common definition was “a process that begins with individuals’ recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the action’s ethicality, form behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior” (Barnett & Valentine, 2004, p. 338). However, definitions tended to minimize or neglect the complexity of the ethical decision-making (EDM) process because it is complex and multidimensional (Beu, Buckley, & Harvey, 2003). In addition, none of these definitions were specific to any academic discipline. Thus, there emerged an important need to identify an ethical decision-making definition that was specific to the field of education which, in turn, might better guide leaders and administrators by providing a clear and concise definition that relates to them instead of the general public.

Not a day goes by where people aren’t tempted to compromise their personal beliefs and the ethics codes of organizations due to the pressures of hectic schedules and potential and real conflicts of interest (Shapiro & Stekfovic, 2011). News headlines attested to business and higher education leaders who ‘creatively’ filed taxes, posted large profits to hide losses and lied to the local community, or showed a lack of concern and respect for the internal and external organization stakeholders. Enron, Salomon Brothers, WorldCom, and HIH Insurance first appeared in the media as successful companies with soaring profits only to collapse, affecting thousands of innocent people as a result of unethical leadership. But corporations were not alone in making headlines for ethical miss steps. In 2005, University of Colorado President Elizabeth Hoffman resigned amid allegations of unethical conduct in recruiting prospective student-athletes (de Visé, 2011). In 2009, North Carolina State
University faced public scrutiny over ethical decisions that led to the firing of Mary Easley, the wife of then Governor of North Carolina (Mildwurf, 2009). Also in 2009, University of Illinois President B. Joseph White resigned after it was revealed that he gave special considerations for admission to the sons and daughters of the members of the Board of Trustees, politicians, and members of the administration of former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich. In 2011, Penn State President Graham Spanier resigned amid a shocking sexual abuse scandal (de Visé, 2011). The University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill faced allegations in 2012 that led to the dismissal of the Athletic Director, head football coach, and several player suspensions; UNC Chancellor Holden Thorpe resigned as a result of these ethically-charged issues. In addition, a further investigation was launched into UNC’s African and Afro-American Studies department for offering specialized classes to football players and giving grades for no class work or class time completed (Pickeral, 2012). Most recently in 2013, Rutgers University faced an abuse scandal that led to the firing of basketball coach Mike Rice and forced the resignation of Tim Pernetti, the athletic director; the scandal at Rutgers not only cast a negative image for the university but had the potential for significant financial losses amounting to several million dollars (Sherman & Hayboer, 2013). Moody’s Investor Service stated:

like other universities that have chosen not to take quick and decisive action when confronted with inappropriate behavior by university employees, Rutgers’ initial response highlights inward-looking governance and management practices that are prevalent among U.S. universities. Questionable disclosure practices about many aspects of U.S. university operations, including scandals stemming from athletics,
invite increased criticism and government regulation of universities. (Sherman & Hayboer, 2013, p. 1)

What leaders should do or the qualities or characteristics they should have to be ethical (Brown & Treviño, 2006) does little to help a leader make good decisions about ethical dilemmas. Rather, a better understanding of the ethical decision-making process that leaders should follow has potential to help them avoid bad behaviors and negative consequences that can result in scandals and worse. Behaviors such as embezzling, collusion, coercion, stealing, political favors, or lying can destroy an organization’s reputation and cause pain for many innocent people.

While the large majority of leaders depend on others for their success, unethical leaders act primarily alone (Calabrese & Roberts, 2001). Yet, the EDM literature suggested that there are environmental factors such as social consequences (Barnett, 2001), codes of conduct (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000), ethical climate (Singhapakdi, Rao, & Vitell, 1996), and magnitude of consequences (Jones, 1991) that play a critical role in the way leaders make ethical decisions. When leaders were asked about they acted in an unethical manner, Andrew Fastow, Chief Financial Officer for Enron, described external pressure from Enron stakeholders, and Brad Cooper at HIH Insurance talked about pressure from higher management and stakeholders to falsify records and offer bribes (Di Meglio, 2012). Officials at Penn State cited pressure to maintain the reputation of the university as well as not wanting to tarnish the popular and well-known football program as reasons for not reporting sexual abuse (de Visé, 2011). Other sports-related scandals have occurred as a result of internal and
external stakeholder pressures to develop first-rate athletics continue. For example, recruiting
top quality athletes at any cost is a growing ethical concern. The scandal attributed to the
University of Colorado President Elizabeth Hoffman is just one example (de Visé, 2011).

Even though environmental influences on EDM seem obvious, there are few research-based studies in the scholarly literature that used environmental factors as a variable with possible influence on ethical decision-making (Ford & Richardson, 1994; Loe et al., 2000; O’Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). A review of related literature revealed that published EDM research examined and found several variables to be significant (see Appendix M). While these add value to the understanding of what influences EDM, no research was identified that focused specifically on the immediate context in which a leader could be influenced during the EDM process. There were few empirical studies located that included variables that influenced EDM across cultures. Of the cross-cultural research on EDM conducted to date, the most significant variable has been gender (Cohen, Pant, & Sharp, 2001; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004; Valentine & Rittenburg, 2007) which is not a contextual variable. Research is needed to explore contextual variables that may impact EDM. This research is needed to expand and extend the understanding of how EDM works within different contexts. How the EDM of leaders works across cultures becomes critical as organizations including universities and other institutions of higher education continue to become more global.

The large majority of research on the EDM of leaders was carried out within a context of for-profit business. To date, research has not focused on non-profit or governmental organizations such as universities. For example, no studies have been
published on high profile ethical scandals like the recent Penn State University case. This is unfortunate because leaders in higher education have a ‘higher’ and more transparent ethical responsibility than other leaders due in part to the increasingly important role that higher education is taking to positively influence individuals, organizations, and societies, as well as the impact that international growth of educational institutions is having on leadership (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Thus, how leaders from different cultures make ethical decisions provides an opportunity to better understand how important decisions concerning morals and ethics are made. The ethical decision-making process that administrators use not only affects them personally, but it can also impact staff, faculty, students, parents, communities, and the overall ethical climate of the organization (Starrat, 2004) and can even have an impact on communities and societies (Hatcher & Aragon, 2000). Further, ethical scandals are no longer contained within national borders. The rapid growth of technology as well as changes in socio-political landscapes and subsequent growth of globalization have ensured that unethical behaviors and scandals (Resick et al., 2006) are felt “immediately in other parts of the world” (Martin, Resick, Keating, & Dickson, 2009, p. 127).

Ethical decision-making is not simply the procedure used by a leader to make a decision; it is the process by which human values are put into action. There are a myriad of human values that differ from culture to culture (Carrithers, 1992; Ciulla, 1998a). Cultural values are one aspect of leadership that helps the leader to define ethics within their ‘home’ culture (Ciulla, 1998a). However, the rise of globalization has created the need for a more comprehensive perspective for understanding ethical values and ethical decision-making practices. To be globally effective, leaders must be aware of the ethical similarities and
differences across and within cultures that could influence their practice. Previous cross-cultural studies on EDM have focused primarily on gender differences, which indicated that females, regardless of culture, showed a higher intention to act more ethically than their male counterparts (Cohen et al., 2001; Valentine & Rittenburg, 2007). Cohen, Pant, and Sharp (2001) observed a difference from previous research studies conducted in the U.S. in which Canadian professionals seem to approach the ethical decision-making process differently than their U.S. counterparts. Globalization has set the stage so that “the primary venue for ethical debates in the future will more and more be the world stage” (Carroll, 2004, p. 114). Thus, there is a need to have a clear understanding of the demands and challenges of ethical decision-making “across cultural boundaries, which, in turn, necessitates an understanding of beliefs about…[ethical decision-making] in different cultures” (Martin et al., 2009, p. 127). Both Jackson (2001) and Brown and Treviño (2006) observed a lack of empirical study of cross-cultural differences in ethical decision-making in addition to a lack of cultural explanation for different perspectives between various countries.

As previously stated ethical decision-making is a complex and multi-dimensional process. Individuals who engage in this process often face multifaceted and difficult situations with many possible outcomes. Several response process models were constructed to help leaders gain insights into the complexity of EDM (Sen & Vinze, 1997). Of the models developed, the following six models are the most referenced EDM models located in the related literature. All these models were developed within the field of business to examine concepts such management, sales, and marketing. These six models have been established and validated and have been used and cited in other fields of academia beyond the business
field; however, it is important that a model be developed that is specific to higher education and the unique challenges that pertain to that field.

This research used the six most referenced models as a base for creating a new process model, and therefore, the six models are introduced and discussed. The six models are: 1) The Four Component Model (Rest, 1986) (Appendix A), 2) Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985) (Appendix B), 3) Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989) (Appendix C), 4) Model of Ethical Decision Making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986) (Appendix D), 5) Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Jones, 1991) (Appendix E), and 6) Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Treviño, 1986) (Appendix F).

These six models have various components that were used to show the process of EDM. Each of the six models is slightly different in make-up which reflects differences in leaders’ perspectives. After examination of the aforementioned models, the following ten components were identified as important. These ten components are used in the creation of a new process model that pertains specifically to the field of higher education; none of the models reflect cross-cultural consideration or impact. The ten components are: recognition of the ethical issue (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986), stages of moral development (Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986), environmental factors (internal) (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Treviño, 1986), environmental (external) (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Treviño, 1986), individual moderators (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt &
Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Treviño, 1986), moral intensity (Jones, 1991), evaluation of behavior (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986), moral decision-making (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986), engagement in moral behavior (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986), and consequences (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986). In addition, note that all process models used were developed in the United States and are used in cross-cultural studies. Researchers have not developed any EDM models that are specific to cross-cultural studies. It is unclear how the components in the EDM will be perceived and interpreted by other cultures and whether the EDM models are effective in other cultures.

In the present study, ethical decision-making of higher education leaders in both the United States and Poland were examined. The U.S. was chosen as a research site based on higher education scandals like that of North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina, Penn State University, and others for their unethical practices which affected millions of people and highlighted the need for ethical standards. For example, the scandal at Penn State was cited as one of the reasons for the 7% or $7.8 million decline in revenue for the Penn State athletic department in 2012 (Armas, 2013), supporting the need for a closer examination of ethical standards within the U.S. higher education context.

Poland was selected because Poland and the United States have a long history of cross-national partnerships and strategic alliances (Polish-American Chamber of Commerce of the Southeast United States [PACC-South], 2013). Currently, Poland is America’s largest trading partner in Central Europe (Blank, 2012). In fact, U.S. companies like UPS, Credit
Suisse, Hewlett-Packard, Dell, Google, Intel, and Motorola have played key roles in fostering Poland’s market-driven economy by opening offices in Poland employing over 180,000 Polish citizen and investing over $30 billion (Blank, 2012; Foremski, 2007). However, it must be noted that Poland is still a relatively a new democratic country having previously been a Communist nation until 1989.

Similar to U.S. higher education Polish higher education systems are experiencing their own unique struggles; many universities in Poland are overregulated. As of 2008, over 700 legal regulations dictated educational policies. There was a perceived low quality of education, lack of national and global recognition, increasing numbers of graduates who were unable to find employment, and severe budget constraints (Thieme, 2012). In previous years, the government exerted control over academic governance mandating that higher education institutions admit large numbers of students thus crowding classrooms while simultaneously placing restrictions on university faculty salaries that were well below European Union faculty wages (Thieme, 2012). In 2013, after a slow recovery to an economic decline, 38 of the 95 higher education institutions in Poland experienced profit losses totaling 21.3 million Euros. It is estimated that Polish institutions will have 800,000 fewer students over the next seven years, a decline from the 1.9 million that were registered in 2012 representing a 40% drop in student numbers (“Poland’s Universities,” 2013). Higher education administrators in Poland are under tremendous pressures that may impact decisions they make about students, staff, faculty, and the university as a whole (Thieme, 2012). These circumstances create a need to better understand how higher education administrators of Polish universities make value based and ethical decisions before high profile scandals like those in the U.S. affect
their institutions. To date no high profile ethical scandals for Polish higher education institutions have been found within the research.

In addition, Poland is one of Europe’s fastest growing economies and much interest has been created in building stronger ties with the U.S. (Sheets, 2012). As stated by acting Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank in the closing remarks of the U.S.-Poland Business Summit in Warsaw, Poland in June 2012, “Poland – with its educated workforce, strategic location, and other key-assets – is poised to be one of the next great global hubs of innovation” (Blank, 2012, para. 23). Further:

We can and we must continue to build even more bridges among U.S. and Polish entrepreneurs and businesses. But we can’t stop there…we also need more partnerships among our university leaders and researchers. Poland’s economy continues to grow at a rapid rate and as U.S. economic growth deepens building on 4.3 million jobs we have created over the past two years we will continue to have new opportunities to build even deeper ties in trade and investments in the months and years ahead (Blank, 2012, para. 24).

In conclusion, the literature on ethical decision-making revealed several variables that impacts EDM. With the research focused on these individualistic and innate variables a significant gap in the literature has emerged in reference to environmental influences on ethical decision-making practices within higher education. Environmental factors are pliable and can be changed routinely unlike age or gender thus creating a need for organizations to always be aware of these ever-changing variables. The focus of this research was to explore
ethical decision-making of academic leaders in the United States and Poland by first defining EDM. It is important to provide a specific EDM definition as related to the field of education to help guide academic leaders within the field. Previous definitions have been spread across various disciplines which can be vague or not related to the issues or situations that higher education leaders are faced with. Then the environmental factors that influence EDM and the processes that leaders use to make ethical decisions where explored. As stated previously, current models were all developed in the field of business in order to better understand business concepts such as marketing and sales. These models were examined and common components among the six EDM models were identified and used with participants to create a new model. No current model exists that focuses specifically on education and those specific areas faced by higher education administrators. Additionally, these models are created with components developed within the United States and do not account for cross-cultural interpretations or applicability. Recent pressures and constraints placed on leaders offer a timely opportunity to examine how they perceive their ethical decision-making and an opportunity for researchers and practitioners to better understand the practices and processes that leaders use.

Statement of the Problem

Newspapers have headlined and research has provided evidence that organizations have been negatively impacted by leader’s unethical decisions (Martin et al., 2009; Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). Current literature identifies ten different definitions for ethical decision-making within various fields of study such as philosophy, business, and education. The diversity of definitions creates a lack of cohesion and continuity especially within the
growing global work environment. A specific definition is needed to help guide those administrators within higher education.

Treviño and Youngblood (1990) found that something within the organizational environment misleads otherwise good employees to exhibit unethical behaviors supporting the need for experts as defined by the Delphi method to identify important environmental factors that impact ethical decision-making. Previous EDM research found significance in individual variables such as gender, age, personality, and cultural. These variables while important expose a significant gap in the literature in reference to environmental influences on ethical decision-making practices. Environmental influences are variables unlike gender and age which can be manipulated and are constantly changing. This creates a hardship on employers as these are not static variables. This gap is even more apparent within the context of higher education and across cultures. More needs to be understood about environmental influences on the processes used to make ethical decisions. Currently, there are multiple EDM process models identified in the literature. The six most referenced models were developed and used within business and industry. No EDM process model was located that was developed or used in higher education, and no models were located that sought to identify differences in leaders’ perspectives of specific components of EDM process models in order to develop a cross-cultural EDM process model.

If leaders better understand the cause-and-effect specific components are having on their decisions on how to address ethical dilemmas, then those decisions may result in positive results that have the potential to nurture an ethical work environment (Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). In addition, if environmental factors are identified, these variables can
be critical for leaders who work in multi-cultural environments. Therefore, this study examined the various definitions of EDM in order to identify a specific definition that applies to the field of higher education. Additionally, this study identified environmental factors that influence the EDM processes used by university leaders in the U.S. and Poland. Finally, an EDM process model was refined and developed and agreed upon by leaders in the U.S. and Poland. Creating a new process of ethical decision-making which can be used with each specific population rather than relying on a model that was created for a different area and for Polish leaders a different culture.

**Purpose of the Study**

Ethical issues and concerns are ever present where multiple stakeholders, interests, and values may be in conflict and laws and regulations are numerous and subject to multiple interpretations (Strike, 2007). Administrators engage in decision-making behaviors that affect not only themselves but also the well-being of others. Decisions and acts based on the values of leaders have the potential for social, economic, and political consequences within higher education in Poland and the United States.

The purpose of this research was to determine how ethical decision-making was defined by higher education administrators in Poland and the United States and then to compare the definitions to each other. In addition, the environmental factors that influence the ethical decision-making process were examined and agreed upon and leading factors were identified. Finally, both the Polish and U.S. higher education participants were given 10 components that were derived from previous EDM process models and then asked to create a new EDM model which related to their discipline. These models may be useful to leaders in
higher education in Poland and the U.S. The differences in the models show that a single model cannot be applied universally as was previously done.

**Significance of Study**

To date, EDM research has focused on the various qualities, traits, and characteristics that successful ethical leaders *should* exhibit (Brown & Treviño, 2006). The EDM literature identified ten different definitions that were spread across several different disciplines. These various definitions created a nonspecific definition that was too vague for any one specific group (Barnett & Valentine, 2004), thus exposing a need for a more specific definition that could be applied within the context of the discipline of education to which those leaders can relate.

Prior research on ethical decision-making has focused primarily on leaders within a corporate or business setting. No research has been identified on ethical decision-making within higher education. Therefore, further exploration into contexts such as higher education was needed to create identifiable research that is contextually specific for leaders within higher education and contextually specific for different cultures, particularly cultures that had previously been using a model or definition that was created in the United States which did not account for the subtle nuances in their own culture.

Ethical decision-making research lacks a global and/or cultural perspective (Resick et al., 2006). For example, only two articles on ethical decision-making with Polish participants were identified after an intensive search in ERIC, Ebscohost, and Google Scholar, as well as consulting with a reference librarian. Moreover, while the United States is the world’s largest economy, Poland was chosen in this study because Poland is one of Europe’s fastest growing
economies and much interest has been created in building stronger ties between the two countries (Sheets, 2012). Poland has multiple resources such as its educated workforce, strategic location, and other key assets that move it into the next great global hubs of innovation (Blank, 2012). Political ties have encouraged that the U.S. (as a country) must continue to build even more bridges among U.S. and Polish entrepreneurs, businesses, university leaders, and researchers in order to create new opportunities and to build even deeper ties in trade, research, education, and investments (Blank, 2012).

Yet there is limited research on the environmental factors that influence leaders’ decision-making when faced with an ethical dilemma. Previous research on ethical decision-making has identified various variables that influence the individual during the ethical decision-making process within the business context. Those components include: gender, age, personality, cultural differences, cognitive moral development, locus of control, moral philosophy, professional values, organizational climate, education, characteristic of the ethical dilemma, and moral intensity. As Treviño and Youngblood (1990) stated there are influences within an organizational environment that makes good employees exhibit unethical behaviors. The current research exposes a significant gap in the literature on environmental influences on ethical decision-making practices.

Finally, the six most referenced ethical decision-making models were developed and found within the discipline of business. No models were located that addressed the issues and complexities of higher education specifically. Considering the news headlines of late describing situations where university administrators faced ethical decisions and dilemmas, this is significant, and therefore, practices and processes needed to be identified.
Furthermore, all of these models were created in the United States. No model was discovered that was developed for use in other cultures. To date all research examining cross-cultural factors used an existing model. Further research as suggested in the present study on ethical decision-making within higher education supported administrators in identifying and acknowledging key components that affect the ethical decision-making process within their own organizational climate.

**Research Questions**

The study was exploratory in nature using a review of literature and the Delphi method to collect and synthesize expert knowledge through an Internet-based data collection format. In addition, the Delphi method was used to create two new models of EDM, one for participants in the United States and one for Polish participants. Three research questions guided the study. The research questions were used to 1) identify how ethical decision-making was defined by leaders in higher education within U.S. and Polish universities and 2) to identify top environmental factors they felt were important. The third research question asked participants to develop an EDM model using 10 pre-established components from the EDM literature and come to a consensus on a new process model they believed was important in carrying out ethical decision-making for higher education administrators in the U.S. and Poland.

**Research Question 1**

To what extent was there a consensus on a definition of ethical decision-making among a Delphi panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?
Research Question 2

Was there consensus on the top environmental factors that they believed important for ethical decision-making among the Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?

Research Question 3

Was there consensus among the Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland in making choices about identifying and connecting the multiple process components of ethical decision-making models, and if no consensus was reached what differences in choices of model components existed?

Conceptual Framework

The research shows that the Delphi method is typically used when creating a conceptual framework throughout the process of the Delphi rounds. There is little to no evidence wherein a conceptual framework is established prior to the use of the Delphi method. This case is unique in that the conceptual framework was established to guide and support the reasoning behind the research questions, and therefore the Delphi method. Normally the Delphi method helps in establishing the questions and guides participants through the process thus, creating a conceptual framework. In this case, the questions and plan of action were already established, and the Delphi method made connections in the literature where ‘gaps’ had been identified.

Ethical decision-making was examined in definition, for environmental factors, and for its process model within the context of higher education within the U.S. and Poland, and
this conceptual framework sustains the concept of ethical decision-making as a process or moving part. Each of the research questions addresses a specific part of EDM as a whole, and it is important to support that through the literature.

**Process Models**

Ethical decision-making is a complex and multi-dimensional process. There are many factors that an individual must understand in order to navigate the complexity of the EDM process. Of those factors this research study addressed two specific factors that affect the EDM process: the EDM definition and environmental factors. If an individual is unable to define EDM then navigating the process of a complex problem can be almost impossible. Environmental factors, on the other hand, are factors that can directly influence several components of the EDM process. This study identified key environmental factors as well as where in the EDM process they are considered effective.

Individuals who engage in this process often face multifaceted and difficult situations with multiple possible outcomes. In response to this process, models are constructed to help gain insights into these diverse problems (Sen & Vinze, 1997) within a specific context. Previous research demonstrated that no specific EDM model existed within the discipline of higher education. As a result, participants were tasked with creating a new EDM model for higher education using existing EDM components. The EDM model can be defined as “a structure that has been built purposefully to exhibit features and characteristics of certain scenarios” (Sen & Vinze, 1997, p. 443). This is important in this study because the concept of an EDM model at the core is a process that addresses the difficult and multifaceted problems of ethical situations. The formation of the process of a model first requires
identifying a ‘gap’ between the current state of a process and the desired state. In this instance the ‘gaps’ are identified as: a) an EDM definition specific to higher education, b) identifiable environmental factors, and c) a process model for EDM within higher education both within the U.S. and Poland. The identification of the ‘gap’ then leads to the creation of the model with the available knowledge and constraints until the model is formulized. In this study the ‘gap’ is the ‘gap’ in information pertaining to EDM. All three research questions address a ‘gap’ that directly affects EDM. The first ‘gap’ is in the definition of EDM, the second ‘gap’ addresses environmental factors that can influence EDM, and the third ‘gap’ is the actual model itself and the need for this model in higher education as well as a model specific to Poland and the U.S.

As stated earlier, few research studies exist on ethical decision-making and the process which individuals experience in making an ethical decision. Research shows that the investigation and creation of process models helps bridge the ‘gap’ between current information and desired information. In this study it was used to bridge the ‘gap’ of the EDM model in order to identify top environmental factors that can affect the EDM process. Finally, it was also used to create a process model specific to higher education in Poland and the United States. It is for these reasons that a process model was used as a conceptual framework in conjunction with the Delphi technique in this investigation.

**Ethical Decision-Making Models**

The six most referenced models in ethical decision-making are: The Four Component Model (Rest, 1986) (Appendix A); Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985) (Appendix B); Model for Analyzing
Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989) (Appendix C); Model of Ethical Decision Making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986) (Appendix D); Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Jones, 1991) (Appendix E); and Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Treviño, 1986) (Appendix F). These six models were used to identify ten common components used in ethical decision-making models. Using these components from the six models, study participants were asked to develop an ethical decision-making model applicable to the context of higher education. A brief overview of each model follows.

The Four Component Model

Rest (1986) (Appendix A) proposed a four-component model for an individual to use as an ethical decision-making and behavior guide. His ultimate goal was to be able to predict actual moral behavior and decision-making. In his model the person would a) recognize the moral issue (moral sensitivity), b) make a moral judgment, c) resolve to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns (moral intent/motivation), and d) act on the moral concerns (moral courage). Rest (1986) believed that a) each of the four components was not in a fixed order and each component can influence the other; and b) each of these components was separate from each other and success in one component did not imply success in others.

Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization

Ferrell and Gresham (1985) (Appendix B) proposed a multidimensional, process orientated, and contingent model based on individual decision-making. Ferrell and Gresham (1985) identified that an individual decision-making process is based on situations which are
external to the decision-making process. Components that can influence this process include: individual, organizational, or external factors to both the individual and organization. The model demonstrates that multitudes of components affect the outcome of ethical actions such as individual components which interact with organizational components and which influence an individual’s ethical decision-making process (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

**Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing**

Dubinsky and Loken (1989) (Appendix C) proposed a framework for analyzing ethical decision-making in marketing. The model begins with engaging in ethical or unethical behavior and the intention to perform an outcome behavior. Intention is influenced by individual components and societal pressure or components. Attitude is determined by an individual’s beliefs about outcomes in relation to behavior and consequences. In addition, the individual is influenced by subjective norms towards ethical or unethical behavior. Attitude and subjective norms influence an individual’s intention to engage in ethical behavior which, in turn, actualizes into the person engaging in the ethical or unethical behavior (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989). At the time of its proposal Dubinsky and Loken (1989) were amongst the few researchers whom validated their model as well as used developable measures and operations.

**Model of Ethical Decision Making**

Hunt and Vitell’s (1986) (Appendix D) model proposes a theory of marketing ethics that considers several stages of environmental components including cultural, industrial, and organizational influences, and personal experiences which affect a person’s perception of an
ethical dilemma as well as the consequences. These perceptions are then influenced by deontological principles, and consequences lead to deontological and teleological outcomes which then lead to an ethical outcome (Hunt & Vitell, 1986). In addition, judgment and situational constraints affect intentions which affect behavior. This creates a feedback loop from behavior to actual consequences back to personal behaviors (Hunt & Vitell, 1986).

**Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations**

Jones (1991) (Appendix E) developed the Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations which included one component he felt was lacking in the other models which was moral intensity. Jones (1991) argued that the ethical decision-making process is issue specific and that the characteristics of the moral issue (moral intensity) are important determinants on ethical decision-making and behavior and should be accounted for during the entire process. Moral intensity is defined as “multidimensional, and its component parts are characteristics of the moral issue such as magnitude of consequences, social consensus, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, proximity and concentration of effect” (Jones, 1991, p. 372). Moral intensity does not include moral development, locus of control, ego strength, or organizational culture; it strictly focuses on the moral issue.

**Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations**

Treviño’s (1986) (Appendix F) model postulated that both individual and situational components affect the ethical decision-making process. Treviño (1986) knew that the knowledge of ‘right and wrong’ alone were not enough to determine how an individual would process an ethical dilemma. Additional individual and situational components were
introduced to help determine how an individual would process an ethical dilemma. The additional individual components included ego strength, field dependence, and locus of control which serve to strengthen an individual’s cognitive ‘right or wrong’ response. Situational components such as job context (reinforcement and other pressures), organizational culture (normative structure, referent others, and obedience to authority), and characteristics of work (role taking and resolution of moral conflict) were then added due to their impact on moral development of an individual (Treviño, 1986). Situational components also included a feedback loop that can directly influence cognition and the development of an individuals’ ‘right and wrong’ process.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, both middle-range and substantive theories were used to establish the theoretical framework. Creswell (2009) describes a middle-range or meso-level theories that link the micro and macro level theories. A middle-range or meso-level is defined as theories of organization, social movement, or community, and macro level theories are defined as providing explanations for larger institutions like social institutions, cultural systems, or whole societies. Substantive theories, on the other hand, “offer explanations in more restricted settings and are limited in scope, often being expressed as propositions or hypotheses” (Camp, 2001, p. 3) for example, as used in case studies. In addition, Bartlett (2003) states that “the lack of a coherent theoretical framework which is able to embrace the complexities of organizational reality at these multiple levels of analysis constitutes a problem for the field in terms of… ethical research and theorizing” (p. 225).
Therefore, several substantive theories were proposed as theoretical frameworks which were used to guide this study in an attempt to embrace the complexities of the reality of ethical decision-making. However, using a Delphi study limits the generalization of findings, thus offering a more limited scope as in the case of a substantive theory. The first proposed substantive theory was categorized as ‘Socialization and Learning’. Socialization supports the importance of the organizational or business environment (Schein, 1990). Specifically, for this research study socialization explains environmental factors and how those factors interact within a business environment, for example, when business A leaves candy out in the break room. If an employee takes any candy they leave money for it next to the candy. Everyone in business A observes this behavior and follows this accepted culture. Learning as a theoretical framework is synthesized from the theories of social learning and the power of context. Learning supports the importance of how people teach, learn, and model other people and environments (Morris & Maisto, 1998), in this specific instance, work environments. Learning couples with Socialization in explaining environmental factors within a business environment. To continue the example from above, if an employee starts taking candy without paying and no consequences are put in place, any employee that observes this behavior learns that it must be okay and also starts taking the candy without paying. Socialization and Learning explain how environmental factors like leaving the candy out create a situation for employees to learn good or bad behaviors within a work environment. In addition, decision-making theory was used as a theoretical framework. Decision-making supports the purposeful process through which action or thought is strategized, implemented, and evaluated (Tarter & Hoy, 1998). Each theory is discussed.
Socialization and Learning

Socialization

Socialization grew as the need to explain both the variations in patterns of organizational behavior and levels of stability in group and organizational behavior emerged (Schein, 1990). Organizational scholars who have been studying the socialization process started to explore how a person’s self-concept is shaped by membership within organizations (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Van Maanen, 1975). It is only after a group of people have had enough stability and common history that a culture can start to form (Schein, 1990). This can mean that some organizations will never develop a common culture due to high turnover or no common history. In contrast some organizations develop a strong culture with individuals sharing a long shared history or having shared an intense experience, as seen in combat units. Culture or socialization is something that the shared group learns over time as the group continues to share experiences. This type of learning is all inclusive stimulating the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional processes (Schein, 1990). Over time an individual starts to change their status within an organization, starting at first at the organizations’ outer circle and then moving toward the center of that organization. In addition, as time passes an individual is exposed more and more to the symbols that remind them of their status within an organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1981). The more an individual experiences inclusion and interaction with other individuals within an organization, the “attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity increases, strengthening organizational identification.... Rising levels of identification, in turn, motivate [individuals] to increase their levels of contact with the organization” (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 248).
Van Maanen (1975) emphasizes several common factors to most socialized settings. The first factor is the setting of the work environment and whether that environment is segregated or integrated within the work context. A formal work environment is more structured and allows for a better transition for a new individual like an employee, whereas an environment in which the new individual is more separated from the organization creates a void for the new individual and the organization (Van Maanen, 1975). The second factor is how the new individual is trained or integrated. Individuals that are trained in groups create a shared or common understanding of the organizations’ culture and roles within the organization. Van Maanen states that “homogeneous results are promoted in collective settings through peer pressure brought to bear on the individual to conform to group standards” (p. 226). Conformity integrates a new individual into the organizational culture faster and more effectively than training and workshop programs (Van Maanen, 1975).

The third factor is having an important member of the current organization play a part in the transition process of the new individuals. In this situation this important member ‘grooms’ the new member for their new position. This ensures the new individual will assume a familiar role within the organization as well as guarantees stability to organization (Van Maanen, 1975). The fourth factor is the length of time the new individual is classified as a ‘new individual’. The stigma of the ‘new individual’ symbolizes a more temporary status and that all the traditions, culture, and everyday assumptions are not yet fully granted to the new member. During this trial period the new individual is assessed by other members on their abilities, responsibilities, motivation, trustworthiness, and loyalty; any member that survives this trial period then creates an automatic camaraderie and bond with other members.
who have also experienced the same trial period (Van Maanen, 1975). The fifth and final factor is the presence of a ‘coach’ or ‘mentor’ to help the new individual through all the socialization stages. This type of relationship can create a strong bond where the new individual is more concerned with satisfying the expectations of the ‘coach’ or ‘mentor’ nevertheless, the ‘coach’ or ‘mentor’ expectations often align closely with that of the organization (Van Maanen, 1975). These steps outline the importance and impact the socialization process can have on an organization.

**Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory is defined as “a view of learning that emphasizes the ability to learn by observing a model or receiving instructions, without firsthand experience by the learner” (Morris & Maisto, 1998, p. 215). This type of observational learning is done by watching or observing models’ behaviors. This does not mean that individuals become ‘copy-cats’ or imitate everything that the surrounding people do; it is a more complex situation than just seeing and doing. There are three general rules for when social learning applies to a specific situation. First the person must not only see but pay attention to the person modeling the behavior (referred to as ‘model’); in short, the model commands attention like a manager, leader, or expert. Second, the person must remember what the model does. Third, the person must act on what has been observed. This third rule is crucial to social learning theory; it is the difference between just learning and performing the observed action (Morris & Maisto, 1998).

This view of social learning theory facilitates the understanding of how people learn skills; gain abilities, attitudes, and values; and pass ideas from person to person (Morris &
Maisto, 1998). Social learning theory draws upon the importance of modeling and how modeling can teach something to someone both intentionally or unintentionally through actions and behaviors, thus explaining why some individual characteristics of the leader are related to role modeling and previously observed behaviors.

For leaders to be seen as ethical leaders by their followers or employees they must first appear to be “attractive and credible” (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 597) as role models. It also helps explain why ethical leaders have so much influence over their followers. Since social learning theory is grounded in repetition and role modeling, it stands to reason that individuals learn by paying attention and ‘copying’ the leaders with whom they are associated. “Most individuals look outside themselves to other individuals for ethical guidance” (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 597). Therefore, ethical leaders are the most likely source of guidance for followers because of the attractiveness and credibility they have as role models and the visibility they have as leaders.

However, there is more to an ethical leader’s ability to influence others than attractiveness and credibility; ethical leaders also possess characteristics of caring, trustworthiness, and leading by example (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Within corporations, this message can often get lost amid the importance of the ‘bottom line’. In higher education, this message can get lost amid the pressures of external stakeholders. Social learning theory suggests that others learn from leaders’ behaviors both positive and negative. Leaders who demonstrate ethical behaviors are also more likely to create an ethical environment through their actions than leaders who are unethical or who are unaware of the potential of social learning.
The Power of Context

The ‘Power of Context’ is an environmental line of reasoning, which suggests that behavior is a function of social context; what really matters is the little things within the environment (Gladwell, 2000). The ‘Power of Context’ is about how “our inner states are a result of our outer circumstances” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 152). It is an example of how children are powerfully shaped by their external environment, that the features of our immediate social and physical world – the streets we walk down, the people we encounter – play a huge role in shaping who we are and how we act. (Gladwell, 2000, p. 168)

This is observed, for example, in how a criminal is “actually someone acutely sensitive to his environment, who is alert to all kinds of cues, and who is prompted to commit crimes based on his perception of the world around him” (p. 150). It is more than just learning from the observable behaviors of others; it is about taking cues from one’s physical environment and the role that plays into decision-making.

Specific situations can be so powerful that they can “overwhelm our inherent predispositions” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 154). Based on certain situations, not denying our relationships, how we were raised, the schools we attended, the friends we had, and the places we work does not affect us, nor does it change our genetics, and as most psychologists would argue it accounts for half of who we are (Gladwell, 2000). Gladwell uses the term ‘fundamental attribution error’ which describes the phenomena that “when it comes to interpreting other people’s behavior, human beings invariably make the mistake of
overestimating the importance of fundamental character traits and underestimating the importance of the situation and context” (p. 160).

The ‘Power of Context’ is a way to assess the power of a social environment and how much of an impact it can have on a person’s disposition both positively or negatively. In a more skeptical view, Hannah Arendt states that certain institutions are able to instill in their members a willingness to do virtually anything, even to participate in great evil. Arendt adds that “the nature of every bureaucracy is to make functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machinery out of men, and thus dehumanize them” (Arendt as cited in May, 1996, p. 65). If most bureaucratic institutions are able to convince their members that they are completely replaceable and obsolete, they become workable to the institutions needs and wants. It further supports the idea that if that person has a sense of duty to support and provides for their family above all other responsibilities, then that person may feel the insurmountable pressure to act and do anything that the institution may ask of them (May, 1996). In some cases, “institutions are able to socialize their members to be more loyal to the institution than to city, nation or even humanity” (p. 65).

The power of context describes “environmental tipping points” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 167) which are situations that can temporarily or permanently change a person’s character by an environmental context. “The reason that most of us seem to have a consistent character is that most of us are really good at controlling our environment” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 163). For those that are thrown into situations that are not within their control like a power-hungry, money driven or lying financial institution, they can be overcome with their environment and
succumb to the pressures of that context and even become engrossed in the environment, temporarily changing who they are or who they learned to be.

**Decision-Making Theory**

Decision-making has been viewed as a “rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results” (Tarter & Hoy, 1998, p. 212). Decision-Making theory is important to EDM because it is the foundation upon which EDM was based. Prior to EDM all actions that required thought-based outcomes were based on decision-making theory. Decision-making theory (also known as Heuristic) posed that organizations have a wide range of possibilities and outcomes available to them; based on that information the organization can then make a decision that would have the best possible outcome (Allen, 1977). According to Simon (1957):

> Objective rationality would imply that the behavioural subject molds all his behaviour into an integrated pattern by a) viewing the behaviour alternatives prior to decisions in a panoramic fashion, b) considering the whole complex of consequences that would follow on each choice, and c) with the system of values as criterion, singling out one from the whole set of alternatives. (p. 80)

Decision-making theory is decisions based on routine thinking. Routine thinking is quicker than step-by-step processing, but it opens up the risk of inaccuracy. One common and incorrect thought process that results from decision-making theory is called the gambler's fallacy. The gambler's fallacy makes the mistake of believing that a random event is affected
by previous random events. For example, there is a fifty percent chance of a coin landing on heads. Gambler's fallacy suggests that if the coin lands on tails, the next time it flips, it will land on heads, as if it's “the coin's turn” to land on heads (Allen, 1977; Simon, 1957). This is simply not true. Such a fallacy is easily disproved in a step-by-step process of thinking (Allen, 1977).

However, Simon (1959) argued that social factors influence and enter into an individual’s choices of behavior. For example, in the current research study each EDM model includes various components that weigh in at different points of the EDM process before a conclusion is reached. From this viewpoint Simon (1957) proposed that the process by which decisions are made differs because: a) rationality requires complete knowledge of future outcomes and events of each choice, b) as the outcomes exist in the future, the outcomes can never truly be perfectly predicted, and c) rationality is just a choice amongst all the other possible outcome behaviors. In addition, Simon (1957) stated that human choice is often more clearly a stimulus-response pattern than a choice among many options. The rational model is replaced by “one of ‘bound rationally’ where the decision maker tries to choose as rationally as possible given his limited understanding of the problem and the environment, and the limited time and money available” (Allen, 1977, p. 81).

Simon’s (1957) model of decision-making included three steps. The first step was intelligence gathering, where a person would search his environment for a condition that would need a decision. Step two was design in which the possible course of design was thought through intent as well as development, and then analyzed. Finally, step three was
choice wherein the person would select a choice to best meet the condition that warranted a decision.

Decisions can be a complex mixture of facts and values. Information about facts, especially empirically-proven facts or facts derived from specialized experience, are more easily transmitted in the exercise of authority than are the expressions of values. Simon (1957) was primarily interested in seeking identification of the individual employee with the organizational goals and values. Simon (1957) stated that “a person identifies himself with a group when, in making a decision, he evaluates the several alternatives of choice in terms of their consequences for the specified group” (p. 1). A person may identify himself with any number of social, geographic, economic, racial, religious, familial, educational, gender, political, and sports groups. Indeed, the number and variety are unlimited. The fundamental problem for organizations is to recognize that personal and group identifications may either facilitate or obstruct correct decision-making for the organization. A specific organization has to determine deliberately, and specify in appropriate detail and clear language, its own goals, objectives, means, ends, and values (Simon, 1957).

The work of Simon (1957) supports the fact that there are an unlimited number of factors and possibilities in which a person can make a good or bad decision for an organization. Decision-making theory provides the guideline for how a person can move through implementation and appraisal of a situation in order to get results. This theory would provide the groundwork for ethical decision-making theory.
Theoretical Framework Overview

In being able to describe what influences leaders in ethical decision-making, there is literature that points to socialization and learning. Socialization describes the organizational culture whereas social learning theory and the power of context describes how an individual learns from other people or their environment. Given the complex nature of human interactions, emotions, and characteristics, social learning theory helps describe how people learn skills; gain abilities, attitudes, and values; and pass ideas from person to person (Morris & Maisto, 1998). The ‘Power of Context’ adds another dimension to social learning theory to explain how individuals may learn from those in their surrounding like parents, sisters, brothers, teachers, role models, etc., but individuals also learn from the physical environment. The surrounding environment can be just as important to a person’s behavior in any given situation as can be the factors that influenced them. Finally, decision-making theory was also introduced to understand the reasoning and process that people engage in when confronted with a condition that requires a decision. It is for that reason that socialization and learning are key contributors in helping to describe what influences leaders in ethical decision-making and that decision-making theory contributes to the process of ethical decision-making.

Conceptualized and Comprehensive EDM Model

Drawing from the six conceptual models: The Four Component Model (Rest, 1986) (Appendix A), Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985) (Appendix B), Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in
Marketing (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989) (Appendix C), Model of Ethical Decision Making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986) (Appendix D), Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Jones, 1991) (Appendix E), and Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Treviño, 1986) (Appendix F) as well as theoretical frameworks of Socialization, Learning, and Decision-Making theories, a visual conceptual framework is illustrated (Figure 1).

The conceptualized ethical decision-making model (Figure 1) shows that to initiate the ethical decision-making process an individual must first recognize an ethical issue (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986; Treviño, 1986). This then leads to two components—environmental factors and individual moderators—which then lead to moral decision making (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Treviño, 1986). These components are all the while influenced by socialization and learning (Social Learning Theory and the Power of Context) decision-making theory. These theories operate in the background of the process influencing the thought process and ultimately the decision making process of the model.
Assumptions

This research was guided by the following assumptions:

1. Ethical leaders want to be fair and principled decision-makers not just in business or education but also in their personal lives (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

2. Ethical principles are learned and are not values that individuals are born with (Starrat, 2004).

3. Ethical leaders are viewed as public figures and role models within society.

4. Respondents will answer the questions honestly and truthfully.
5. A Delphi study is a complex and time-consuming methods process (Turoff & Hiltz, 1995). Participants who agreed to be part of this study understood the time commitment and length of study.

6. The term consensus in the research question speaks the opinions of the subject matter experts (SME) and not the content of whether one country is more ethically evolved than the other.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The research design and study were based on the following limitations:

1. No current ethical decision-making model existed for use with higher education professionals.

2. The Delphi panel, although consisting of experts in the field of ethics, includes only a fraction of all experts in the field.

3. The research was collected during the Fall of 2013, therefore, providing the opinions and feedback of *current* perspectives from the Delphi experts.

4. Results from this study are not generalizable to larger populations (Loo, 2002).

**Summary**

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to understand three specific components of EDM. The first was to clarify a definition that is specific to higher education leaders. The second was to identify top environmental factors that can impact ethical decision-making both within the U.S. and Poland. Finally, prior to this
study the researcher identified ten commonly used process components used in the six most commonly used EDM models; these process components were then presented to Delphi experts both in Poland and the U.S. who were asked to create an EDM model specific to higher education. These ‘gaps’ were addressed due to a lack of cohesion in the relation to EDM definitions as well as a need to identify environmental factors, and in order to provide higher education administrators with an EDM model created specifically by professionals for the education field in the United States or Poland.

**Definitions**

The following terms are frequently used in this study.

*Decision Making Theory.* A “rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results” (Tarter & Hoy, 1998, p. 212).


*Deontological.* Judges the morality of a person based on the actions obedience to the rule or rules. An individual feels a sense of duty/obligation because the rules ‘bind’ them to the duty (Ethics Resource Center, 2009)

*Environmental Factors.* As both external influences to the institution such as political, financial, and economical as well as internal influences like structure, administrative organization, processes, and procedures (Barnett, 2001).

*Ethical Decision-making.* “A process that begins with individuals’ recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the action’s
ethicality, form behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior” (Barnett & Valentine, 2004, p. 338).

**Ethics.** “Standards of conduct that guide decisions and actions, based on duties derived from core values, fundamental beliefs or principles, defining our actions and outcomes” (Ethics Resource Center, 2009).

**Model.** “A structure that has been built purposefully to exhibit features and characteristics of certain scenarios” (Sen & Vinze, 1997, p. 443).

**Morality.** “Efforts to guide one’s conduct by reason – while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who is affected by one’s conduct” (Rachels, 1999, p. 19).

**Normative Ethics.** Describes the process of ethics as “always involve[ing] a choice for some values to the detriment of others has found various expressions across millennia and traditions” (Glaser, 1994, p. 6).

**Power of Context.** Defined as “our inner states are a result of our outer circumstances” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 152).

**Telelogical.** Judges that final causes exist and those actions are for the final cause of a thing, process, or event (Ethics Resource Center, 2009).
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review of literature provides an examination of ethical decision-making within Poland and the U.S. Related topics include ethics in higher education in the United States and Poland with a focus on ethical decision-making processes. Included is a review of the environmental factors that influence the ethical decision-making process. However, as stated previously, there is a lack of research with ethical decision-making processes in higher education; therefore, the research will draw upon several parallels from the business literature (Ciulla, 1998b).

Ethics

A review of the literature related to ethics quickly revealed that there is no agreed upon definition of ethics. Ethics is a term that is used in a variety of ways for an assortment of purposes, as well as for study of underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles, and values that support a moral way of life (Starrat, 2004). For the purpose of this discussion ethics and morals will be used interchangeably. There is “not the absence of philosophic writings on ethics, but the fact authors expand so little energy on researching ethics from any discipline” (Ciulla, 1998a, p. 5). Rost (1991) further added that there are two areas of difficulty with the word ‘ethics’. The first is that it addresses a process, the process being how a person acts and how they influence other people. The second is in the area of content which includes the decisions, policies, and procedures supported as morally acceptable (Rost, 1991). Kohlberg (1981) defined ethical principles as follows:
Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. These principles are abstract and ethical (the Golden Rule, the categorical imperative); they are not concrete moral rules such as the Ten Commandments. At heart, these are universal principles of justice, of the reciprocity and equality of human rights, and of respect for the dignity of human beings as individuals. (p. 19)

Ethics is a systematic state of what is necessary to live a moral life. Morality is “acting out of ethical beliefs and commitments” (Starrat, 2004, p. 5). Ethics is “concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or society finds desirable or appropriate” (Northouse, 2010, p. 378). “Values are [based on] the ideas and beliefs that influence and direct our choices and actions” (Gini, 1998, p. 36). Furthermore, ethics is concerned with the “virtuousness of individuals and their motives” (Northouse, 2010, p. 378). Ethics can also be defined as the “examination of right, wrong, good, evil, virtue, duty, obligation, rights, justice, fairness, and so on in human relationships with each other and other living things” (Ciulla, 1998b, p. 4). In addition, “ethics is primarily a communal, collective enterprise, not a solitary one” (Gini, 1998, p. 30).

According to John Dewey (1996), a leader in the progressive movement of educational reform in the United States, ethics is the science that deals with conduct insofar as what is considered to be right or wrong, good or bad. Ethics comes from the Greek word ethos which means customs or usages, especially belonging to one group as distinguished from another (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Furthermore, “ethics is a summary ordering
those principles, beliefs and assumptions, and values into a logical dynamic that characterizes a moral life” (Starrat, 2004, p. 5). Later ethics came to include disposition or character, customs, and approved ways of acting (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011); ethics is now how we decide to behave when we decide we belong (Gini, 1998). “Ethics is something we preach and practice at home in our private lives, but not at work. After all [these ideals could] cost us prestige, position, profits and success” (Gini, 1998, p. 31).

While so many variations and philosophical principles exist, for the purpose of this research inquiry the following definition will be used: “ethics is the fundamental moral obligation to do good, to do no harm, to respect others, and to treat all individuals honestly and fairly” (Fisher, 2012, p. 2). Within the definition of ethics, the term ‘morality’ is used as commonly and as often as ethics. Therefore, it is important that the term morality is defined. Rachels (1999) defines morality as the “efforts to guide one’s conduct by reason – while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who is affected by one’s conduct” (p. 19). Taylor (1991) further adds that morality is an intuitive feeling for right and wrong, in essence, a ‘voice within’. In general, these definitions of ethics and morality are sufficient to guide the ethical behavior of person’s devoted to the ideals of his or her profession (Schur as cited in Fisher, 2012). For the purpose of this research, Rachel’s (1999) definition of morality will be used.

Emerging work on the topic of ethics has further broken it into categories, or four paradigms of ethics called the Multiple Ethical Paradigms (Caldwell, Shapiro, & Gross, 2007). Those paradigms are: ethics of justice, ethics of critique, ethics of care, and the ethics profession (Caldwell et al., 2007; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Ethics of justice focuses on
the rights and laws for people; it is part of a liberal democratic tradition. Ethics of critique challenges the status quo and seeks ethics that will deal with inconsistencies, formulate hard questions, and debate challenging issues. Ethics of care focuses on moral decision-making and social responsibility of decisions. Finally, ethics of profession looks at moral aspects unique to the profession and code of ethics (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). One professional went so far as to critique the ethics of profession by stating “[standardized] professional ethical codes are of limited value. I look to myself to determine what decisions I can live with. Outside attempts at control have little impact on me and what I do” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 23). Dewey (1996) further elaborated:

The struggle is not between a good which is clear to him and something else which attracts him but which he knows to be wrong. It is between values, each of which is an undoubted good in its place, but which now get in each other’s way. (p.7)

Finally, the discussion on ethics is not complete without defining and examining the process of normative ethics. Normative ethics is used more to describe the process of ethics and is defined as “always involv[ing] a choice for some values to the detriment of others [which] has found various expressions across millennia and traditions” (Glaser, 1994, p. 6). Further supporting that, a person’s history, tradition, and relationships shape him or her as a moral and ethical individual (Beck & Murphy, 1997). Additionally, ethics remains a theoretical application until an individual is forced to make an ethical decision which thrusts ethics into a practical application. This practical application requires EDM to consider ethics as it relates to EDM.
In summary, there is a call for a new language of “civic virtue to discuss and make moral evaluation” (Rost, 1991, p. 177). This new ethical language must center on an integrated concept of the common good, of our social ecology as a community; only then will leaders and followers begin to make moral sense out of the changes they purpose to transform our organizations and societies. (Rost, 1991, p. 177)

From this new language will evolve a new definition of ethics that can be applied to research in ethics, leadership, and ethical thought (Rost, 1991).

Models

Process Models

Ethical decision-making is a complex and multi-dimensional process. Individuals who engage in this process often face multifaceted and difficult situations with multiple possible outcomes. In response to this process, models are constructed to help gain insights into these diverse problems (Sen & Vinze, 1997). A model can be defined as “a structure that has been built purposefully to exhibit features and characteristics of certain scenarios” (Sen & Vinze, 1997, p. 443). Significant reasons for constructing models include:

a) Enhancement of the understanding of the scenario being modeled is achieved. It is often stated that the actual exercise of constructing a model often reveals relationships that are not apparent to many people.
b) Development of a more complete set of alternatives is accomplished. After building a model, it is usually possible to analyze it to find different courses of action that might not otherwise be apparent.

c) Management of the complexities of a situation is possible. Experimentation can be done with a model, whereas it is often not possible to experiment with a scenario. (Sen & Vinze, 1997, p. 444)

Furthermore, the process of model formation requires a ‘gap’ between the current state of a process and the desired state. This ‘gap’ should be a) difficult to close or bridge and b) important enough to inspire activity around it creating a solution The identification of the ‘gap’ then leads to the creation of the model with the available knowledge and constraints until the model is formulized. The ‘gap’ “between the known data and constraints and the formulated model represents the model formulation process” (Sen & Vinze, 1997, p. 444).

In general, process models are looking for the same ‘gap’ of information. The context may change but researchers continue to develop models that focus on the processes that individuals use when making decisions and the components that influence these processes (Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2002). The most important emphasis is to understand why and how individuals choose certain behaviors. The focus is on why the individual persists in pursuing some chosen behaviors and fails to choose other behaviors (Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2002). Researchers have focused on a) understanding how chosen decisions are made, b) how they are protected from competing alternatives, and c) the eventual enactment of instrumental actions to realize the final behavior (Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2002).
Numerous models already exist that reflect on the various processes of affecting change or decisions, but research lacks further introspection into the critical stages in the process of change or behavior implementation wherein an organization has direct influence (Latta, 2009). Process models “designate the sequence of events necessary to effect organizational change, focusing more on the essential steps of implementation than that of conceptual tasks required” (Latta, 2009, p. 20). All process models are at their foundation a three phase process: unfreeze, change, and refreeze. As more research has built on this basic phase process more elaborate details and sequences have emerged trying to explain sequence events (Latta, 2009).

Process models have been categorized and classified numerous times; currently six classifications exist within the business literature. These classifications are: evolutionary (inevitable), teleological (planned), life cycle (maturational), political (strategic), social cognitive (conceptual), and organizational culture. Organizational culture has emerged as a pivotal variable in determining the success for implementing change and for desired outcomes within that organization (Latta, 2009). During model creation, interaction between organizational cultures can affect or hamper the process of implementing and construction of a model as well as identifying the stages at which change occurs within the model (Latta, 2009).

As stated earlier the depth of literature on ethical decision-making and the process which individuals experience in making an ethical decision is still relatively unexplored compared to more popular or established fields and topics. Process model research has established that the investigation and creation of a process model can help bridge the ‘gap’ in
current information and desired information. It is for this reason that a process model will be created using the Delphi technique in this investigation.

**Ethical Decision-Making Models**

Ethical decision-making is defined as “a process that begins with individuals’ recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the action’s ethicality, form behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior” (Barnett & Valentine, 2004, p. 338). Within the area of ethical decision-making there are six models primarily used: Dubinsky and Loken (1989); Ferrell and Gresham (1985); Hunt and Vitell (1986); Jones (1991); Rest (1986); and Treviño (1986). The models suggested in related publications were developed and used in a business context and published in the business related literature. However, no current ethical decision-making models exist that addresses the process of ethical decision-making within higher education. Each model will be discussed below.

**The Four Component Model.** Rest (1986) (Appendix A) proposed a four-component model for an individual to use as an ethical decision-making and behavior guide easily generalizable to organizational settings. His ultimate goal was to be able to predict actual moral behavior and decision-making. In his model the person would a) recognize the moral issue (moral sensitivity), b) make a moral judgment, c) resolve to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns (moral intent/motivation), and d) act on the moral concerns (moral courage). The basis for all four components was based on Kohlberg’s stages of moral development which had three levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional (Jones, 1991; Rest, 1986).
However, Rest (1986) believed that a) each of the four steps was not in a fixed order where each step can influence the other steps and b) each of these steps was separate from each other, and success in one step did not imply success in other stages. Jones (1991) stated that Rest developed a model that was simple to administer to groups and scored easily. This was the primary reason that Rest’s model became widely used and accounts for much of the research involving empirical studies about the ethical decision-making process.

**Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization.**

Ferrell and Gresham (1985) (Appendix B) proposed a multidimensional, process orientated and contingent model based on individual decision-making. Using a framework based on normative ethical standards which were derived from moral philosophy, Ferrell and Gresham established that individuals develop rules or guidelines based on moral philosophies such as utilitarianism, rights, justice, and teleological and deontological approaches.

Ferrell and Gresham (1985) said that an individual decision-making process is based on situations which are external to the process itself. Components that can influence this process include individual (knowledge, values, attitudes, and intentions) organizational (significant others and opportunity) context which can be external to both the individual and organization. The model demonstrates that a multitude of components are process orientated and contingent in nature. The final outcome of the process can affect the outcome of ethical actions such as individual factors which interact with organizational factors and which influence an individual’s ethical decision-making process (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

**Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing.** Dubinsky and Loken (1989) (Appendix C) proposed a framework for analyzing ethical decision-making in
marketing based on the theory of reasoned action. The theory of reasoned action assumes that the individuals are usually rational, utilize information that is available to them when making a decision, and that their behavior is in accordance with their own free will (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989). The major goal of this theory is to predict and understand an individual’s behavior. This reasoning led to the formation of the Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing by Dubinsky and Loken (1989).

The model begins when an individual engages in ethical or unethical behavior and the intention to perform an outcome behavior. Intention was defined as the influences of individual factors and societal pressure or factors. Attitude is then determined by an individual’s beliefs about outcomes in relation to behavior and consequences. In addition, the individual is influenced by subjective norms towards ethical or unethical behavior. Attitude and subjective norms influence an individual’s intention to engage in ethical behavior which, in turn, actualizes into the person engaging in the ethical or unethical behavior (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989). At the time of its publication Dubinsky and Loken were part of only a few researchers who validated their model and developed measures of decision-making.

Model of Ethical Decision Making. Hunt and Vitell’s (1986) (Appendix D) model proposed a theory of marketing ethics with several stages. Within Hunt and Vitell’s model the moral philosophical theory of teleological principles was included in the evaluation stage to evaluate moral consequences of behavior. The model by Hunt and Vitell includes environmental components such as cultural, industrial, and organizational influences with personal experiences which affect a person’s perception of an ethical dilemma as well as the consequences. These perceptions are then influenced by deontological principles, and
consequences lead to deontological and teleological outcomes which then lead to an ethical outcome (Hunt & Vitell, 1986). In addition, judgment and situational constraints affect intentions which affect behavior. This creates a feedback loop from behavior to actual consequences back to personal behaviors (Hunt & Vitell, 1986).

**Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations.** Jones (1991) synthesized the models by Rest (1986), Treviño (1986), Dubinsky and Loken (1989), Ferrell and Gresham (1985), and Hunt and Vitell (1986) into one model (see Figure 2 Synthesis of Ethical Decision-Making Models). Jones (1991) suggested that while all the models were comprehensive, they lacked characteristics of the moral issue on either the independent variable or the moderating variable.

Jones (1991) then developed the Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Appendix E) which included one component he felt was lacking in the other models namely, moral intensity. Jones (1991) argued that the ethical decision-making process is issue specific and that the characteristics of the moral issue (moral intensity) are important determinants on ethical decision-making and behavior and should be accounted for during the entire process. He also called into question Kohlberg’s theory of cognitive moral development and whether that theory should be revised as it fails to show consideration for the individual’s failure to recognize the moral issue (Jones, 1991).
Moral intensity is defined as “multidimensional, and its component parts are characteristics of the moral issue such as magnitude of consequences, social consensus, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, proximity and concentration of effect” (Jones, 1991, p. 372). Moral intensity does not include moral development, locus of control, ego
strength, or organizational culture; it strictly focuses on the moral issue. Moral intensity as a component in an ethical decision-making model plays an important role in the “recognition of moral issues…in the actual engagement of moral decision-making processes instead of, or in addition to, other decision-making schemata” (Jones, 1991, p. 391). Jones concluded that “the details of moral decision-making and behavior processes become irrelevant if the person does not recognize that he or she is dealing with a moral issue” (p. 391).

Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations. Treviño’s (1986) (Appendix F) model postulates that both individual and situational variables affect the ethical decision-making process because of the influence of multiple stakeholders, interests, and values that can often be in conflict with each other. The model is based on Kohlberg’s cognitive moral development theory and later on Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. The model focuses on how the individual first reacts to the ethical dilemma based on his or her cognitive development and how he or she thinks about a specific ethical dilemma. Treviño (1986) knew that the knowledge of an individual’s sense of ‘right and wrong’ alone were not enough to determine how an individual would process an ethical dilemma.

Additional individual and situational variables are introduced to help determine how an individual would process an ethical dilemma. The additional individual influences include ego strength, field dependence, and locus of control, which further strengthen an individual’s cognitive ‘right or wrong’ response. Treviño (1986) reasons that situational factors such as job context, organizational culture, and characteristics of work are then added due to the impact on moral development of an individual. In addition, the situational factors include a
feedback loop that can directly influence cognition and the development of an individuals’ ‘right and wrong’ process.

**Summary.** To date there were six ethical decision-making models located that are currently being used in the business literature research: Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing, Dubinsky and Loken (1989); Contingency Model of Ethical Decision-Making in a Marketing Organization, Ferrell and Gresham (1985); Model of Ethical Decision-Making, Hunt and Vitell (1986); Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision-Making in Organizations, Jones (1991); Four Component Model, Rest (1986); and Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations, Treviño (1986). Each of these six models has utilized or integrated similar components to explain the process of ethical decision-making. However, all of these models have been used in scholarly research in the context of business and industry. Limited research was located that focused on an ethical decision-making process within higher education.

**Ethical Decision-Making Theories**

For the purpose of this study, both middle-range and substantive theories were being used to establish the theoretical framework. Creswell (2009) describes a middle-range or meso-level theory that links the micro and macro level theories. Substantive theories, on the other hand, “offer explanations in more restricted settings and are limited in scope, often being expressed as propositions or hypotheses” (Camp, 2001, p. 3). The first proposed theory used to guide this study was framed under the umbrella category of ‘Socialization and Learning’. Socialization describes the importance of organizational culture. The second component of this category explores ‘Learning’ and utilized the framework from the theories
of social learning and the power of context. In addition, decision-making theory was used as a theoretical framework. Each theory is discussed.

Socialization

Socialization or organizational culture grew as the need to explain both the variations in patterns of organizational behavior and levels of stability in group and organizational behavior emerged (Schein, 1990). Organizational scholars who have been studying the socialization process started to explore how a person’s self-concept is shaped by membership within organizations (Dutton et al., 1994; Van Maanen, 1975). Organizational culture refers to the values and observable behavior of its individuals and the physical structures of the organization. These factors combine to form organizational culture or ‘the way we do things around here’ (Hadjistavropoulos & Malloy, 2000). “The ideology of an organization represents the philosophical basis (and bias) for its culture (e.g. deontological, teleological). It consists of the implicit or unquestioned rationale for the existence of the organization” (Hadjistavropoulos & Malloy, 2000, p. 109). This may include assumptions on how individuals react or relate to the physical environment, perceived nature of other individual member’s activity, human relationships, perception of time, reality, and truth. These are the essentially the assumptions on which an organization ‘evolves and revolves’ (Schein, 1990).

Organizational culture can only exist after a group of people have had enough stability and common history that a culture can start to form (Schein, 1990). This can mean that some organizations will never develop a common culture due to high turnover or no common history. In contrast, some organizations develop a strong culture with individuals sharing a long shared history or having shared an intense experience, as seen in combat units.
Culture or socialization is something that the shared group learns over time as the group continues to share experiences. This type of learning is all inclusive stimulating the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional processes (Schein, 1990). Over time an individual starts to change their status within an organization, starting at first at the organizations’ outer circle and then moving toward the center of that organization. In addition, as time passes an individual is exposed more and more to the symbols that remind them of their status within an organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1981). The more an individual experiences inclusion and interaction with other individuals within an organization, the “attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity increases, strengthening organizational identification.... Rising levels of identification, in turn, motivate [individuals] to increase their levels of contact with the organization” (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 248).

Van Maanen (1975) emphasizes several common factors to most socialization settings. The first factor is the setting of the work environment and whether that environment is segregated or integrated within the work context. A formal setting is more structured and allows for a better transition for a new individual, whereas an environment in which the new individual is more separated from the organization creates a void for the new individual and the organization (Van Maanen, 1975). The second factor is how the new individuals are trained or integrated. Individuals that are trained in groups create a shared or common understanding of the organization’s culture and roles within the organization. “Homogeneous results are promoted in collective settings through peer pressure brought to bear on the individual to conform to group standards” (Van Maanen, 1975, p. 226).
The third factor is having an important member of the current organization play a part in the transition process of the new individuals. In this situation this important member ‘grooms’ the new member for their new position. This ensures the new individual will assume a familiar role within the organization as well as guarantees stability in the organization (Van Maanen, 1975). The fourth factor is the length of time the new individual is continuously classified as a ‘new individual’. The stigma of the ‘new individual’ symbolizes a more temporary status and that all the traditions, culture, and everyday assumptions are not yet fully granted to the new member. During this trial period the new individual is assessed by other members on their abilities, responsibilities, motivation, trustworthiness, and loyalty (Van Maanen, 1975). A new member that survives this trial period then creates camaraderie and bond with other members who have also experienced the same trial period (Van Maanen, 1975). The final factor is the presence of a ‘coach’ or ‘mentor’ to help the new individual through all the socialization stages. This type of relationship can create a strong bond where the new individual is more concerned with satisfying the expectations of the ‘coach’ or ‘mentor’ however, often times the ‘coach’ or ‘mentor’ expectations align closely with that of the organization (Van Maanen, 1975). These steps outline the importance and impact the socialization process can have on an organization.

**Social Learning Theory**

Social norms are supposed to be what makes us more than animals, provides us solidarity, and is the source of moral constraints (Durkheim as cited in Wilson, 1993, p. 14). Ethical and unethical behavior in organizations is a “relevant social issue that demands”
Treviño & Youngblood, 1990, p. 378) to be examined through a psychological lens. Previous researchers (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Butterfield, Treviño, & Weaver; 2000; Treviño, 1986; Treviño & Youngblood; 1990) relied on social learning theory to explain the actions and learned behaviors of ethical and unethical behaviors and decisions (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). Social learning theory provides the most natural and fluid explanation of the outcomes of ethical decision-making (Brown et al., 2005).

Social learning theory proposes the influence of ethical behavior and decisions on followers via modeling. In this context, modeling describes observational learning, imitation, and identification (Bandura, 1977; Brown et al., 2005). Bandura (1977) states that practically anything that can be learned from direct experiences is also learned through vicarious experiences, like observing the behaviors of others and the outcomes of those behaviors, thus, making social learning theory and the process of modeling exceptionally important when the ideal behavior is ethical conduct within organizations. Employees can learn what behaviors are expected, rewarded, and punished through modeling. Leaders by the nature of their role, power, success, and position within an organization are a likely source of such modeling (Bandura, 1977; Brown et al., 2005). Previous research has shown that models in leadership positions demonstrate pro-social behaviors of followers or employees (Brown et al., 2005).

Social learning theory stems from social psychology, which is broadly defined as “influences that people have upon beliefs or behaviors of others” (Aronson, 1999, p. 6). Social learning theory is further defined as “a view of learning that emphasizes the ability to
learn by observing a model or receiving instructions, without firsthand experience by the learner” (Morris & Maisto, 1998, p. 215). A more formal definition provides the following description:

an approach to the study of social behavior and personality due primarily to the work of Albert Bandura and Richard Walters. The theory is based upon the role of observation and the mimicking or imitating of behaviors observed in others, usually referred to as models. (Reber, Allen, & Reber, 2009, p. 750)

Bandura describes social learning theory as:

Man’s capacity to learn by observation enables him to acquire complex patterns of behavior by watching the performances of exemplary models. Emotional responses toward certain places, persons, or things can also be developed by witnessing the affective reactions of others punished for their actions. And, finally, the expression of previously learned responses can be socially regulated through the actions of influential models. (1973, p. 44)

In 1963, Albert Bandura and Richard Walters believed that learning involved more than classical and operant conditioning as proposed by Ivan Pavlov in the early 1920s. Together, Bandura and Walters furthered the field of psychology by expanding learning-theories from personality development, deviant behavior theory, and psychotherapy to account for social phenomena that will explain human behavior in dyadic and group situations (Bandura & Walters, 1963). It became apparent that:
in order to make progress in understanding human behavior, more stringent requirements would have to be used in evaluating the adequacy of explanatory systems. Theories must demonstrate predictive power. They must accurately identify the determinants of human behavior as well as the intervening mechanisms responsible for the changes. (Bandura, 1977, p. 5)

In a social learning lens, people are not driven by either inner forces or environmental influences. “Psychological functioning is explained in terms of a continuous reciprocal interaction of personal and environmental determinants. Within this approach, symbolic, vicarious, and self-regulatory processes assume a prominent role” (Bandura, 1977, p. 11-12). Previous psychological theories assumed that learning only occurred by performing responses and experiencing the outcomes. Bandura (1977) argues that “the capacity to learn by observation enables people to acquire large, integrated patterns of behavior without having to form them gradually by tedious trial and error” (p. 12). Finally, Bandura (1977) postulates:

A comprehensive theory of behavior must explain how patterns of behavior are acquired and how their expression is continuously regulated by the interplay of self-generated and external sources of influence. From a social learning perspective, human nature is characterized as a vast potentiality that can be fashioned by direct and vicarious experience into a variety of forms within biological limits. The level of psychological and physiological development, of course restricts what can be acquired at any given time. (p. 13)
**Bobo Doll Experiment.** Social learning theory describes a type of observational (or vicarious) learning (Morris, 1990). This learning as described in the Bobo doll experiment explains an observational learning that explains how an individual learns behavior. From this learned behavior an individual uses that information to aid in making an informed decision. Social learning theory with the aid of the Bobo doll experiment forms the foundation for future theories used to support the current research study.

With the understanding that it is not a natural human behavior to imitate every action around us, social learning theory accounts for modeling behavior in several different ways:

First, you must not only see but also pay attention to what the model does; this is more likely if the model...commands attention. Second, you must remember what the model did. Third, you have to convert what you learned into action: It is possible to learn a great deal from watching a model but have no particular reason to convert what you have learned into behavior. This distinction between learning on the one hand and performance on the other is very important to social learning theorists. They stress that learning can occur without any change in outward behavior. (Morris, 1990, p. 210)

Bandura based many of the principles developed for the above described social learning theory on the famous ‘Bobo Doll’ experiment. Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) performed an experiment using 66 nursery-school children (33 boys and 33 girls), divided into three groups of 22; each set of children watched a movie about an adult acting aggressively with an adult-sized plastic doll. In the movie, an adult model approached the
plastic doll and ordered it out of the way; when the doll failed to move, the model would exhibit a series of aggressive acts. The model would punch the doll in the nose and yell “Pow, right in the nose, boom, boom.” The model would also kick the doll around the room and throw rubber balls at it. Each movie had a different ending. The ‘rewards’ group saw the model being praised by another adult and was given candy and soft drinks. The ‘punished’ group saw another adult reprimand the model by scolding and spanking the model for his behavior. The ‘no consequences’ group saw the same film as the other two groups, but did not see any ending showing any consequences good or bad. After the video the children were individually put in a room with the same plastic doll from the movie as well as rubber balls, a rubber mallet, and many other toys for them to play with. During the ten minutes, researchers observed and recorded their behaviors from behind a one-way mirror. The children who observed the aggressive acts as a reward had the greatest tendency to act aggressively; however, all the children learned and exhibited the aggressive behavior towards the model (Bandura et al., 1963). From the ‘Bobo Doll’ experiment Bandura (1969) concluded that people learn what behaviors are valued and, therefore, are able to anticipate consequences by acting in socially acceptable ways.

Social learning theory is based on complex observations displayed by the various relationships between people in society. Bandura (1969) made further comments about social learning theory wherein:

It would be difficult to imagine a socialization process in which the language, moves, vocational and avocational patterns, the familial customs of a culture, and it’s educational, social, and political practices were shaped in each new member by
selective reinforcement without the response guidance of models who exhibit the accumulated cultural repertoires in their own behavior. To the extent that people successfully match the behavior of appropriate societal models, the social-learning process can be greatly accelerated and the development of response patterns by differential reinforcement can be short-circuited. (Bandura, 1969, p. 213)

As unavoidable as social learning appears to be within societal relationships, social learning is not without its faults. Continuous modeling behavior can result in “situations where errors are likely to produce costly or fatal consequences” (Bandura, 1969, p. 213). If social learning theory was based solely on the punishment/reward system most people within society would never survive the socialization process (Bandura, 1969).

For leaders within organizations to be seen as leaders by their followers or employees, they must first appear to be “attractive and credible” (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 597) as role models. It also helps explain why leaders have so much influence over their followers. Since social learning theory is grounded in repetition and role modeling, it is easy to understand how individuals learn by paying attention and ‘copying’ the leaders they have around them. “Most individuals look outside themselves to other individuals for ethical guidance” (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 597). Therefore, leaders are the most likely source of guidance for followers because of the attractiveness and credibility they have as role models and the visibility they have as leaders.

There is more to being an ethical leader than attractiveness and credibility, however; ethical leaders also possess characteristics of being caring, trustworthy, and leading by example (Brown & Treviño, 2006). In corporate America, this message can often get lost
amid the importance of the ‘bottom line’ and the everyday grind, therefore, showing a greater importance for ethical leaders to better communicate their message to their followers. In turn, those followers pick up on the role modeling behaviors and actions demonstrated by ethical leaders.

Social learning theory is important as a theoretical framework because the focus of this research was to gain a better perspective on the way leaders, specifically higher education administrators, make ethical decisions and the factors that influence them within higher education in the United States and Poland. Constant pressures and constraints placed on leaders offer a unique opportunity to examine ethical decision-making and understand the practices and approach leaders have because of the huge influence they have and exert on people within their own organization and society around them.

Social learning theory places importance on “expectations, insight, information, self-satisfaction, and self-criticism [which] enables us to broaden our understanding of how people learn skills and gain abilities as it helps us grasp how attitudes, values and ideas pass from person to person” (Morris & Maisto, 1998, p. 217). Social learning theory draws upon the importance of modeling and how modeling can teach something to someone both intentionally or unintentionally through actions and behaviors, which explains why individual characteristics of the observer are related to role modeling and previously observed behaviors and further supports the understanding that ethical and unethical behaviors in organizations are viewed as a consequence of both individual and organizational influences (Treviño & Youngblood, 1990).
The initial learning of any individual is social learning which is then layered with other theories such as decision-making theory. Without realizing it, an individual builds upon each theory with new observations, learning, and societal understanding. This is why all theories listed are critical to fully understand EDM. Human lives are multi-faceted and complex. No one theory can explain all the nuances and ways in which an individual learns. Therefore, these theories were selected through the literature in order to show how learning from adolescence by watching or observing those around us morphs into observing those in the organizations or businesses and thus, helps inform and shape how an individual responds to an ethical situation through EDM.

**The Power of Context**

The ‘Power of Context’ was developed by author and journalist Malcolm Gladwell in his national bestselling novel, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Based on psychology research studies and statistics, the ‘Power of Context’ is a unique view on how the smallest and subtle factors can affect the way a person acts within an environment. The ‘Power of Context’ is an environmental argument, stating that that behavior is a function of social context, and what really matters is the little things within the environment (Gladwell, 2000). The ‘Power of Context’ is about how “our inner states are a result of our outer circumstances” (Gladwell, 2000, pg. 152). The reasoning explains how children are powerfully shaped by their external environment, that the features of our immediate social and physical world – the streets we walk down, the people we encounter – play a huge role in shaping who we are and how we act. (Gladwell, 2000, pg. 168)
Pinker (2002) supported this statement by adding that “the environment is just as important as the genes. The things children experience while they are growing up are just as important as the things they are born with” (pg. vii). For example, a criminal is “actually someone acutely sensitive to his environment, who is alert to all kinds of cues, and who is prompted to commit crimes based on his perception of the world around him” (Gladwell, 2000, pg. 150).

Specific situations can be so powerful that they can “overwhelm our inherent predispositions” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 154). Based on certain situations, not denying our relationships, how we were raised, the schools we attended, the friends we had, and the places we work does not affect us, nor does it change our genetics and as most psychologists would argue it accounts for half of who we are (Gladwell, 2000). Gladwell describes fundamental attribution error as a phenomenon that “when it comes to interpreting other people’s behavior, human beings invariably make the mistake of overestimating the importance of fundamental character traits and underestimating the importance of the situation and context” (p. 160).

In the early 1970s Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo (1973) worked for Stanford University and conducted a mock prison experiment. In this simulation, 21 ‘normal-average’ males from the Stanford area were chosen; randomly half were assigned the role of prison guard the other half the role of prisoner. Given very little instruction on how to act (minus causing actual physical harm), those who were assigned the role of guard experienced a gain in social power and status. Over a six day period those ‘prison guards’ demonstrated deriving “pleasure from insulting, threatening, humiliating and dehumanizing their peers- those who by chance selection had been assigned the ‘prisoner role’” (Haney et al., 1973, p. 89). The
mock prison experiment was cut short just after six days and after five ‘prisoners’ were released early after experiencing extreme emotional depression, crying, rage, and anxiety. Haney et al. commented:

  most dramatic and distressing to us was the observation of the ease with which sadistic behavior could be elicited in individuals who were not “sadistic types” and the frequency with which acute emotional breakdowns could occur in men selected precisely for their emotional stability. (1973, p. 89)

It was noted that after the experiment ended, and after several follow up sessions, the negative effects of the participation in the mock prison experiment were temporary and all subjects returned to their ‘normal’ selves after time.

  Zimbardo (as cited in Howard & Korver, 2008) studied many other situations similar to this one about the power of environmental factors and the temptations they can lure a person into. Zimbardo explained that situations have a way of disarming the thinking process, suspending “conscience, self-awareness, sense of personal responsibility, obligation, commitment, liability, morality and analyses in terms of costs/benefits of given actions” (as cited in Howard & Korver, 2008, p. 189). He further commented that

  virtually anyone could be recruited to engage in evil deeds that deprive other human beings of their dignity, humanity and life…we live with the illusion of moral superiority…We take false pride in believing that “I am not that kind of person.” (Zimbardo as cited in Howard & Korver, 2008, p. 5)
Hartshorne, May, and Maller of the University of Chicago performed a series of studies on stealing, cheating, and lying (1929). From these numerous studies they came to four conclusions. The first was that there is no relationship between character and actual behavior. Influences on decisions coming from the community in which individuals live as well as culture and economic status only make a slight difference in self-control and decision-making (Hartshorne et al., 1929). The second conclusion was that moral behavior was not the same in every person and varied from one situation to another; the third was that there was no relationship between what people said about morality and the way they acted (Hartshorne et al., 1929). Finally, cheating was normally distrusted, meaning “everyone cheats a little” (Hartshorne et al. as cited in Duska & Whelan, 1975, p. 6). Hartshorne and colleagues concluded after the tests that something like honesty isn’t a fundamental trait. It is considerably influenced by the situation of the participants. Furthermore, the tests by Hartshorne et al. (1929) show that the participants learn specific tendencies based on the situations they have experienced, and not based on their age, intelligence, emotional condition, sex, or upbringing.

Zimbardo (2007) puts forward that people find comfort in thinking there are ‘good’ people and ‘bad’ people. Within this reasoning, evil acts are seen as an entity or a solid quality that people either have or do not have. Most people define evil by referencing Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, and other political leaders who engaged in monstrous acts throughout history. People often overlook the ‘lesser evil’ of drug dealers, rapists, sex-trade traffickers, fraudulent scams, bullies, and liars (Zimbardo, 2007). Categorizing evil this way takes people who view themselves as ‘good people’ off the
‘responsibility hook’ allowing them to explain away any role they may have played in any subsequent acts of ‘lesser evil’ (e.g., teasing, bullying, rape, torture, terror, lying, stealing, and violence).

An alternative view to evil is something of which we are all capable, depending on circumstances. People may at any time possess a particular attribute (say intelligence, pride, honesty, or evil) to a greater or lesser degree. Our nature can be changed, whether toward the good or the bad side of human nature. (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 7)

Further Zimbardo implies an acquisition of qualities through experience or concentrated practice, or by means of an external intervention, such as being offered [during] a special opportunity. In short, we can learn to become good or evil regardless of our genetic inheritance, personality or family legacy. (p. 7)

The ‘Power of Context’ is a way to assess the power of a social environment and how much of an impact it can have on a person’s disposition, both positively and negatively. In a more skeptical view, Hannah Arendt states that certain institutions are able to instill in their members a willingness to do virtually anything, even to participate in great evil. Arendt adds that “the nature of every bureaucracy is to make functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machinery out of men, and thus dehumanize them” (as cited in May, 1996, p. 65). If most bureaucratic institutions are able to convince their members that they are completely replaceable and obsolete, they become workable to the institution’s needs and
wants. It further supports the idea that if a person has a sense of duty to support and provide for his or her family above all other responsibilities, then that person may feel the insurmountable pressure to act and do anything that the institution may ask of him or her (May, 1996). In some cases, “institutions are able to socialize their members to be more loyal to the institution than to city, nation or even humanity” (May, 1996, p. 65).

The greatest and most extreme example of the ‘Power of Context’ as related to bureaucratic institutions is the recruitment of bureaucratic businessmen by the Nazi party during World War II. For example, “It was clear that for the sake of his pension, his life insurance, the security of his wife and children, such a man was ready to sacrifice his beliefs, his honor and his human dignity” (Arendt as cited in May, 1996, p. 67). Arendt described many men who did not consider themselves murderers but as people who acted within the scope of his institution and within a professional capacity; in which case, ‘normal’ respectable men looking to make a living and provide for their families joined the Third Reich under the belief of duty and honor and participated in some of the most evil acts against humanity (as cited in May, 1996). Pinker (2002) observed that tactics of dehumanization within certain contexts can cause a person to mentally ‘flip’ a switch and reclassify another person from a ‘person’ to a ‘nonperson’, making it easier to exert heinous acts of aggression or torment on a person. However, one can just as easily ‘flip the switch’ the other way depending on the context. Albert Bandura stated that “our ability to selectively engage and disengage our moral standards…helps explain how people can be barbarically cruel in one moment and compassionate the next” (Bandura as cited in Zimbardo, 2007, p. 18). For example, George Orwell, who fought in the Spanish War, saw a soldier from the
opposing side running for his life wearing no pants. He said he refrained from shooting because he saw a man without his pants rather than a sworn enemy he must kill (Pinker, 2002). In addition, Alison Des Forges of Human Rights Watch who investigated the rapes and murders in Rwanda in the 1990s said

this behavior lies just under the surface of any us…they [perpetrators of genocide] are so evil we couldn’t ever see ourselves doing the same thing. But if you consider the terrible pressure under which people were operating, then you automatically reassert their humanity – and that becomes alarming. (Zimbardo, 2007, p. 15)

Similarly, in the ‘Power of Context’ from Malcolm Gladwell’s novel, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference, described “environmental tipping points” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 167) which are situations that can temporarily or permanently change a person’s character by an environmental context. While initially seen as an unconventional option for a supporting framework, Gladwell supports his claims based on studies within the field of psychology. In addition, the ‘Power of Context’ is important to understanding how environmental factors influence ethical decision-making. A list of environmental factors was pulled from the literature for subject matter experts to rate. What Gladwell so pointedly observed is that no matter the list of factors, the individual environment in which these factors are occurring influences the individual. The ‘bad behavior’ argument states that without ethical decision-making practices in place, influences (environmental factors) within an organization eventually turn ‘good apples’ into ‘bad apples’ (Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). Gladwell (2000) added that, “the reason that most of
use seem to have a consistent character is that most of us are really good at controlling our environment” (p. 163). For those that are thrown into situations that are not within their control (e.g., power-hungry, money driven, or lying financial institutions), they can be overcome by their environment, succumb to the pressures of that context, and even become engrossed in the environment temporarily changing who they are or who they learned to be (Gladwell, 2000).

Summary of Socialization and Learning Theories

The process of ethical decision-making cannot be explained without examining organizational culture and the components (individual and environmental) that are important to an individual’s learning and which ultimately influence an individual’s ability to process ethical decision-making. Socialization describes the variations in patterns of organizational behavior and levels of stability in group and organizational behavior which emerge (Schein, 1990). Social learning theory describes a type of observational (or vicarious) learning (Morris, 1990). The ‘Power of Context’ describes environmental situations that can temporarily or permanently change a person’s character. Together these three theories help identify key reasons why the process of ethical decision-making can be influenced.

Decision Making Theory

Decision-making has been viewed as a “rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results” (Tarter & Hoy, 1998, p. 212). Decision-making dates back to the work of Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat in 1654 over a ‘gambler’s dispute’. From this
dispute the expected value theory was developed (Gigerenzer, 2012). Expected value theory states that one looks at all the consequences and then one has a value and a probability, one can then multiple the numbers together and then add them up. Later Benjamin Franklin termed this ‘moral algebra’ due to the way a person makes decisions. Benjamin Franklin inferred that a person would first sort through the mental options, then list all the options and consequences on a piece of paper, and finally, based off of that information make a choice (Gigerenzer, 2012). Decision-making theory then evolved and began to influence other areas such as moral behavior, motivational behavior, and health behavior simply based on the rationale of weighing and adding schemas to decision-making. Decision-making then emerged again during and after World War II with the focus on heuristics based on the work of Herbert Simon (Gigerenzer, 2012).

Simon (1957) challenged many of the assumptions of the rational mathematical based theory of decision-making. Simon (1959) stated that if all situations were slow-moving where a person had one goal and no additional influential factors, the decision-making process would be simple. However, “as the complexity of the environment increases, or its speed of change, we need to know more and more about the mechanisms and processes that economic man uses to relate himself to that environment and achieve his goals” (1959, p. 279). Previously, decision-making theory posed that organizations have a wide range of possibilities and outcomes available to them, based on that information the organization can then make a decision that would have the best possible outcome (Allen, 1977; Edwards, 1954). Simon observed:
Objective rationality would imply that the behavioural subject moulds all his behaviour into an integrated pattern by a) viewing the behaviour alternatives prior to decisions in a panoramic fashion, b) considering the whole complex of consequences that would follow on each choice, and c) with the system of values as criterion, singling out one from the whole set of alternatives. (1957, p. 80)

However, Simon (1959) argued that social factors influence and enter into an individual’s choices of behavior. From this view point Simon (1957) proposed that the process by which decisions are made differs because: a) rationality requires complete knowledge of future outcomes and events of each choice, b) as the outcomes exist in the future, the outcomes can never truly be perfectly predicted, and c) rationality is just a choice amongst all the other possible outcome behaviors. In addition, Simon (1957) stated that human choice is often more clearly a stimulus-response pattern than a choice among many options. The rational model is replaced by “one of ‘bound rationally’ where the decision maker tries to choose as rationally as possible given his limited understanding of the problem and the environment, and the limited time and money available” (Allen, 1977, p. 81). Bordley (2001) further supported this fact by stating that “the quality of the decision is not judged by the quality of its actual consequences but by the rationality of the procedure used to make that decision” (p. 353).

Simon’s (1957) model of decision-making included three steps. The first step was intelligence gathering, where a person searches his environment for a condition that needs a decision. Step two was design in which the possible course of design was thought through
intent as well as development, and then analyzed. Finally, step three was choice, wherein the person would select a choice to best meet the condition that warranted a decision.

Ethical decision-making was defined as “a process that begins with individuals’ recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the action’s ethicality, form behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior” (Barnett & Valentine, 2004, p. 338). It is, therefore, fitting that decision-making theory which is defined as a “rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results” (Tarter & Hoy, 1998, p. 212) can support the process and components that influence ethical decision-making.

**Ethical Decision-Making Research**

Ethics are defined as standards of conduct that guide decisions and actions, based on duties derived from core values, fundamental beliefs, or principles that define our actions and outcomes (Ethics Resource Center, 2009). To further expand upon this, ethics is also “viewed as a process of decision-making” (Bowen, 2002, p. 272). In other words, it is a process that can be used to determine how a person views a situation in terms of what is important and how they come to make that decision based upon the information provided. Ethics and ethical practices are often a ‘golden’ standard that most businesses attempt to practice, no matter the size of the company. Many organizations adopt a code of ethics or ethical conduct policy to help guide employees, but not a day goes by when people aren’t tempted to compromise personal beliefs due to busy schedules and conflicts of interest (Bowen, 2002).
News headlines attest to leaders in business and higher education who have creatively filed taxes, posted large profits to hide losses, lied to the local community, or showed a lack of concern for the various stake-holders both inside and external to the organization. Companies such as Enron, Salomon Brothers, WorldCom, and HIH Insurance first appeared in the media as booming companies with soaring profits only to fall from grace a short time later. For profit businesses are not alone in unethical conduct. In 2005, University of Colorado President Elizabeth Hoffman resigned amid allegations of unethical conduct being used to recruit prospective student-athletes (de Visé, 2011). In 2011, Penn State President Graham Spanier resigned amid a sexual abuse scandal (de Visé, 2011). In 2009, North Carolina State University faced scrutiny of ethical standards that lead to the firing of Mary Easley, the wife of the Governor of North Carolina (Mildwurf, 2009). Also in 2009, University of Illinois President B. Joseph White resigned after it was revealed he gave special considerations for admission to political connections. Most research suggests what leaders should do or the qualities or characteristics they should have (Brown & Treviño, 2006) but do not suggest the ethical decision-making process leaders should follow. Unethical behavior by individuals costs the business industry billions of dollars each year and damages the business image within the U.S. (Bass, Barnett, & Brown, 1999). Most people would agree that what occurred at these companies is unethical. But what constitutes proper ethical conduct?

The role of the educational leader has shifted over time. Prior to 1900, leadership was based on value. As educational leadership moved into the 20th century responsibilities changed. Educational leaders were businesspeople in the early 1900s, politicians in the
1940s, and objective, rational leaders who used science and data-driven decision-making in the 1960s (Beck & Murphy, 1997). Educational leaders are now in the midst of another shift in the 21st century, this time, because the inequities in the culture involve moral issues and the moral system is not functioning well, ethical decision-making has been thrust upon educational leaders (Klinker & Hackmann, 2003). Twenty-first century educational leaders have a greater ethical responsibility than other leaders due in part to increasingly diverse student populations and the global growth of educational institutions (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Administrators also have to work with a diversity of faculty, students, and parents, as well as develop professional and personal experiences that enable an ethical climate, all while building a sense of community (Starrat, 2004). This has led to a more collective need to understand ethical values and ethical decision-making processes on a global level. The leaders of today and tomorrow need to be aware of the similarities and differences of cultures that could influence business practices. However, cross-cultural research has not yet addressed the topic of ethical decision-making (Resick et al., 2006).

Therefore, not only were ethical decision-making processes in the United States examined but also within Poland. Polish higher education systems struggle with universities that are overregulated, are perceived as having low quality of education, lack national and global recognition, have increasingly higher numbers of graduates who are unable to find employment, and have severe budget constraints (Thieme, 2012). In addition, the government has exerted control over academic governance mandating that higher education institutions admit large numbers of students while simultaneously placing restrictions on faculty salaries that are well below others in the European Union (Ministry of Science and
Higher education administrators face tremendous pressure in how they make decisions that impact the university and students. These circumstances create a need to better understand how higher education leaders make value based and ethical decisions (Starrat, 2004).

In conclusion, a significant gap in the literature emerged on ethical decision-making processes within both fields of business and higher education. The focus of the present research was to gain a better perspective on ethical decision-making and the components that influence this process within higher education in the United States and Poland. Constant pressures and constraints placed on leaders offered a unique opportunity to examine decision-making and to better understand the practices and approaches leaders made concerning ethical decision-making because of the influence they have on people within their own organization and on the society around them (Strike, 2007). The next section discusses EDM within the U.S. literature.

**EDM in the United States**

For love, money, or other reasons that seemed good at the time, people violate their own personal ethics (Cuilla, 1998b). People lie, steal, cheat, and harm others for both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ reasons; people often even make ethical compromises simply to avoid embarrassment (Howard & Korver, 2008). People make ethical choices reflexively; often in the middle of an ethical dilemma, being short on time, and in high stress or demanding situations, people make snap decisions without thinking it all the way through (Barnett, 2001; Howard & Korver, 2008). In addition to the snap judgments, every decision that compromises a little of our personal ethical values numbs people to the ethical objections
they should be making, until people lose sight of the ethical principles they are violating (Howard & Korver, 2008).

Ethical decision-making is defined as “a process that begins with individuals’ recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the action’s ethicality, form behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior” (Barnett & Valentine, 2004, p. 338). However, ethical decision-making cannot be understood without considering the context in which the decision occurs (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000). Ethical decisions aim at worthy ends, treating people fairly and respecting their rights, respecting evidence and argument, and maintaining a transparency and openness to debate (Strike, 2007). The opposite is true when people stray from these views, making decisions that corrupt moral ends (Starrat, 2004). Yet “none of the ethical systems is particularly valuable in helping leaders and followers make decisions about the ethics of the changes they intend for an organization or society” (Rost, 1991, p. 157).

A number of published articles addressed the topic of ethical decision-making showing the interest and concern on the matter, yet little empirical investigation had been done prior to 1985 (Bass et al., 1999; Treviño, 1986). The lack of research is not unexpected given the sensitive and complex nature of ethical decision-making. Many leaders, managers, and supervisors are not likely to give permission to be directly observed or have their ‘ethics’ measured. In addition, previous views of ‘ethics’ as a branch of philosophy rather than a social science may detract from the credibility of the seriousness of the subject (Treviño, 1986). Further, the area of ethical decision-making lacks a specific agreed upon theory to guide the decision-making process (Bass et al., 1999; Treviño, 1986; Treviño & Youngblood,
1990). However, creating an understanding of ethical decision-making within organizations “is important to the development of organizational science” (Treviño, 1986, p. 601).

Ethical decision-making developed from the decision-making process. Decision-making has been viewed as a “rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results” (Tarter & Hoy, 1998, p. 212). Decision-making dates back to the work of Blaise Pascal and Pierre de Fermat in 1654 over a ‘gambler’s dispute’. Decision-making theory then evolved and began to influence other areas like moral behavior, motivational behavior, and health behavior simply based on the rationale of weighing and adding schemas to decision-making. Decision-making then emerged again during and after World War II with the focus on heuristics based on the work of Herbert Simon (Gigerenzer, 2012). From there ‘ethical’ decision-making first started making appearances in the literature during the 1960s and 1970s.

The ethical decision-making process includes routine decisions which are based on personal beliefs and experiences; legal decisions which are an interpretation of laws, policies, and social customs; and finally rational based decisions that follow inductive or deductive arguments (Newcome & Gentry, 1984). Before any ethical decision-making process can begin the individual must recognize a particular issue as being an ethical dilemma (Bass et al., 1999; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Rest, 1986). Then during the ethical decision-making process there are at least four things that are believed to be operating at once. The first is deliberately choosing from a set of genuine options. The second process is being capable of acting ‘sanely’ and ‘maturely’ during the process. Next is being able to have knowledge of the
situation and the likely outcome of acting on the various options. Finally, looking at how the choice significantly affects the future welfare of others (Burnett, 1984).

The ethical decision-making process tries to define successful outcome behaviors as ‘good’ or ‘ethical’, and many people believe that those outcomes led to behaviors and actions which people strive to achieve (Strike, 2007). However, real ethical thinking begins at the evaluative period in people’s lives when they are free of social constraints to decide freely to accept, embrace, modify, or deny the rules of society. But even if a person knows what is a good decision or bad decision, it is often heavily influenced by the very societal constraint thought to give a person independent freedom. Individuals have a right to choose and make either a good or bad decision. However, people will often realize that within their lives, society becomes a big factor and, therefore, can be potentially oppressive (Strike, 2007).

Beauchamp and Childress (1984) reject that specific situations do not automatically have the right course of action; instead, absolute principles should shape ethical decision-making. John Dewey (as cited in Ciulla, 1998b), on the other hand, “argued that at the practical, pre-rational, pre-autonomous level, morality starts as a set of culturally defined goals and rules that are external to the individual and are imposed or inculcated as habits” (p. 31). Starrat (2004) weighed in on the issue of ethical decision-making and stating “we shape our lives as unique human beings in a family, in neighborhoods, with friends. We re-cognize, come to know again in a new light, ourselves in dialogue that occurs between parent and child, between siblings, between friends” (p. 67). This leads to the foundation of personal ethical leadership.
Ethics research states that a ‘good decision’ is one that has four characteristics. Those characteristics include first, making a decision that is supported by evidence. This evidence supports the claim that acting on this decision is more likely to achieve desired results at an appropriate cost than other courses of action that might be taken. Secondly, the decision is chosen so that results are the results thought best to be achieved. Thirdly, the decision can be implemented morally. Finally, the decision has been legitimately achieved (Strike, 2007).

The self appraises itself in terms of feedback provided through others; this feedback comes in the form of rejection or acceptance of ideas. A person uses the larger culture’s meanings and values to articulate and define ethics until they construct one based on these parameters and decisions (Starrat, 2004).

According to Strike (2007):

Ethical decisions must be made for relevant reasons. A relevant reason is one that serves the legitimate goals of the organization. Schools for example, exist for the benefit of students, particularly to educate them. Hence, making decisions for relevant reasons, in educational contexts, means that decisions are justified primarily in terms of their beneficial effects for students. (p. 124)

Next “ethical decisions must be based on adequate evidence. Reasons for decisions must not only be relevant, they must be justified. Thus, there must be adequate evidence for these decisions” (Strike, 2007, p. 126). Finally, “ethical decision-making, especially about personnel matters, requires public standards and public procedures for collecting relevant and adequate evidence. Decisions and the reason for them should be public and transparent, consistent with the requirements of privacy and anonymity” (p. 127). Educators are
considered to be public servants, and the decisions that they make affect public interests. The public has a right to know what and why those decisions are made. The public is entitled to an opportunity to consider the evidence on which the educator has made a decision and perhaps sometimes have the opportunity to refute it. Those whom the decision most directly affects have a similar right; “secrecy is the enemy of good decisions” (Strike, 2007, p. 127).

Making the assumption that people use ethical decision-making for the right reasons and follow a specific thought process, research has explored different individual variables that influence the ethical decision-making process. Previous research on ethical decision-making has shown the following factors to influence decisions about ethical issues: gender (Barnett, 2001), age (Barnett, 2001), personality traits (Hegarty & Sims, 1978; Singhapakdi & Vitell, 1991; Treviño, 1986; Treviño & Youngblood, 1991), cultural influences (Davis, Johnson, & Ohmer, 1998), cognitive moral development (Treviño, 1986), locus of control (Treviño, 1986), moral philosophy (Fraedrich & Ferrell, 1992), professional values (Singhapakdi, Rao, & Vitell, 1996), ethical ideology (Barnett, 2001), ethical climate or climate of an organization (Barnett & Vaicys, 2000), and characteristics of the issue itself can influence ethical decision-making (Jones, 1991). These variables all examine individual characteristics or traits of the individual making the ethical decision. Some of these variables are pre-dispositions such as gender, age, and culture in which a person is born, and other variables such as professional values, philosophy, and ethical ideology are those that an individual learns over time.

Additionally, multiple models have been developed to assess ethical decision-making. Past models of ethical decision-making include: Experimental Model of Ethical Decision-
Making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing Model (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989), Ethical Decision-Making Model (Treviño, 1986), Issue-Contingent Model (Jones, 1991), Contingency Framework (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985), Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), and Four-Component Model (Rest, 1986). Models generally include individual factors of ethical decision-making as well as organizational factors such as reward systems, norms, codes of conduct, and organizational climate (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Jones, 1991; Treviño, 1986). Of these models several have found support for a relationship between moral intensity dimensions and facets of ethical decision-making as stated in Jones’ model (Barnett, 2001). However, many of these models are too widely focused and attempt to integrate many components at many different levels. These models often fail to give a convincing account of the actual process in which individuals engage in during the decision-making process (Bartlett, 2003). Previous studies have found one or two components of the ethical decision-making process have relied on a single indicator of ethical thought (Barnett, 2001). However, most of these models do not consider issue specific situations within their framework (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Treviño, 1986).

O’Fallon and Butterfield (2005) provided further discussion beyond influential variables on the ethical decision-making process. Regarding theoretical and conceptual issues, O’Fallon and Butterfield examined and found that only 32 studies offered theoretical frameworks for the basis of their studies and 71 lacked clearly stated hypotheses. Those studies that were grounded in theory centered around: Kohlberg’s cognitive moral development, Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior, equity theory, Hunt and Vitell’s (1986)
general theory of marketing ethics, social learning theory (Treviño, 1986), Rest’s moral framework (1986), and theories of ethical climate/culture (O’Fallon & Butterfield, 2005).

In addition to conceptual framework observations, several methodological issues and observations were highlighted. Over forty percent of studies on ethical decision-making draw from student samples. Using student groups as samples has been widely debated because it inhibits the ability for the results to be generalized back to the general population. “Researchers should use appropriate samples and avoid using student samples simply because of their availability” (O’Fallon & Butterfield, 2005, p. 403). Scenarios methodology is the most widely used (55%) type of method in assessing ethical decision-making. Most researchers find this the most appropriate and relevant way to assess ethical decision-making while being able to change the variables and control environmental factors. Finally, measuring ethical and unethical behavior is hard to accurately measure, and the research shows that researchers are getting creative and finding new ways to measure these behaviors. O’Fallon and Butterfield (2005) further suggest that new alternative methods such as lab studies, field experiments, simulation techniques, and experimental techniques enhance the ability for these variables to be applied to organizational contexts.

Ethical decision-making is a complex and multi-layered process. During the last fifty years many studies have examined multiple variables and factors that influence and affect the process and outcomes of ethical decision-making. Prior research on ethical decision-making has focused mainly on business and leaders within the corporate or business setting or business students preparing to enter these fields. While business ethics and leadership are important to most organizations, it deserves a look into other sectors such as higher education
or nonprofit organizations to compare and contrast the difference and the similarities of ethical principles exhibited by those various leaders. In conclusion, while some research has explored cultural perspective, further research on ethical decision-making within a global and cultural perspective is needed.

**EDM in Poland**

Limited research is available with regard to ethical decision-making and higher education. Even less research is available on ethical decision-making within Polish organizations (to date two articles were found). Past research in Poland only explored moral reasoning as related to Kohlberg’s cognitive development and found that the level of education and cognitive ability directly related to the level of moral reasoning (Stewart, Sprinthall, & Siemienska, 1997). The following is a review of the two research studies available on ethical decision-making in Poland.

Stewart and colleagues (1997) examined ethical reasoning (also referred to as moral reasoning) first with survey questionnaires and then with focus groups with Polish officials in the fall of 1990. Results were then compared with similar previous studies conducted on U.S. officials. With the fall of Communism and a new government taking over researchers were interested in the ethical decision-making process of newly elected officials and how they compared to U.S. counterparts. The most surprising finding was that Polish officials “in [a] newly democratic Poland paralleled almost precisely their counterparts in the United States, with their distinct preference for law and duty as the basis for decision-making” (Stewart et al., 1997, p. 449). The focus groups held after the survey indicated that Polish officials, like most people in any political system, felt strongly about accountability. One respondent said:
Because of our [official] positions in the social hierarchy, we are constantly under close public supervision [so] we try not to give the public too many reasons to criticize us. We always try to act according to very transparent and clearly stated rules. (Stewart et al., 1997, p. 451)

However, past views of the Communist regime did affect the view and reasoning of officials: “[We have] bad memories of the Communist regime, when a small group of people had access to government, made decisions, and divided the goods without any social control. Because of that history, we now need to establish transparent and controlled decision-making” (Stewart et al., 1997, p. 451). In a final observations one participant who was surprised by the results said: “we were taught that the law is not realistic and does not bring justice” (Stewart et al., 1997, p. 451). Researchers observed that perhaps the process of political maturation was occurring, and therefore, officials were relying on law and duty. This study conflicted with an earlier study on reasoning in which researchers studied a large student group and found a lack of law and duty (Stewart et al., 1997). Researchers concluded that only continuous monitoring of the ethical decision-making process throughout time will truly be able to lead to conclusive answers.

During a research study in 2006, Valentine, Godkin, Cyrson, and Fleischman looked at small Polish business owners and operators. A total of 295 surveys were completed and collected by researchers. The survey results revealed that many Polish people’s “perceptions of ethical values were negatively related to many of the challenges associated with operating and managing small business” (Valentine et al., 2006, p. 81). This observation suggested that
ethical values are a high priority for business people within Poland. Ethical values were further positively related with ‘getting growth capital’ and ‘absorbing start up losses’ which show how the organization may face financial hardships due to all the corruption known to be present within Polish businesses (p. 81). Researchers concluded that training for local business should be grounded in Polish ethical ideologies and not simply mimic those of Western cultures. On the other hand, some of the research did show a strong parallel to American ideologies, and those could be considered for developing ethical standards in Poland. “Polish officials just like their U.S. counterparts, are pulled to law and duty as opposed to principle[s] as the preferred choice in sorting through ethical dilemmas” (Valentine et al., 2006, p. 82).

Decisions and acts based on values have the potential for social, economic, and political consequences within the higher education context in Poland. Constant pressures and constraints placed on educational leaders offer a unique opportunity to examine decision-making that may positively influence higher education in Poland. Thus, the purpose of a future research investigation would be to first determine the ethical decision-making process and how ethical decision-making is characterized by higher education administrators in Poland, and to examine the environmental factors that influence ethical decision-making.

**Environmental Components of Ethical Decision-Making**

Based on a review of literature, there is a lack of research regarding environmental influences on ethical decision-making, but as the ‘Power of Context’ explains, “our inner states are a result of our outer circumstances” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 152). Meaning that environmental factors influence the decisions we make such as the size of an organization,
risk, opportunity, or peer group (O’Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). People’s actions and behaviors are shaped by their external environments. This is further supported by Treviño and Youngblood (1990) in their research which explained that good employees can be influenced by factors within an organization which will cause them to make a bad decision. These environmental factors can be just as influential as family, religion, and moral development (Gladwell, 2000). Environment is hard to factor into ethical decision-making because environment is not a fixed factor; it imposes itself on individuals within different contexts (Bandura, 1977). Further, behavior can regulate environmental conditions only so far; environments provide an especially large setting for creating possibilities that communally affect behavior (Bandura, 1977). The process of ethical decision-making cannot be explained without considering the impact of environmental influences. For the purpose of this research environmental influences were defined as external influences to the institution such as political, financial, and economic as well as internal influences such as structure, administrative organization, processes, and procedures.

A few studies (Ferrell & Greshman, 1985) show that a person’s perception and an environmental opportunity can influence behavior outcomes. If an individual knows that there is a punishment associated with a behavior, they may not be inclined to act on that behavior, but what if the environmental circumstances changed? For example, most people would agree that stealing is wrong, but the general opinion of stealing changes when different opportunities arise. Embezzling is seen as unethical, and most people do not have the access or opportunity to commit this act. But most people who have access to the
employee supply closet don’t mind taking poster board for a child’s science project (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985).

Harris and Sutton (1995) compared the ethical values of 863 Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students at various Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) schools across the country verses 222 Fortune 1000 executives. Results showed there to be significance between classifications (MBA student or Fortune 1000 executive) when referring to fraud and self-interest, having the Fortune 1000 less tolerant than the MBA students. Scores revealed that neither group tolerated coercive power, influence dealing, and deceit. These differences suggest that each groups’ environmental and experiential influences are different and shape the framework from which ethical decisions were made (Harris & Sutton, 1995).

The power of environment can have a significant impact on a person’s disposition (Gladwell, 2000). Yet to date so little research within ethical decision-making focuses on this specific component in the ethical decision-making process. Environmental influences show that context “consists only in the interactions of groups of people with their material environments in a historical period, and constantly changes as people change their environment and are simultaneously changed by it” (Pinker, 2002, p. 155).

**Influences on Ethical Decision-Making Research in the U.S.**

Twenty-first century educational leadership within the U.S. has a greater ethical responsibility than other leaders due in part to increasingly diverse student populations and the global growth of democratic governments and educational institutions (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). In addition, administrators work with a diversity of faculty, students, and
parents to develop professional and personal experiences that enable an ethical climate, all while building a sense of community. There is a need to grow awareness of the complex issues that face educational leaders (Beck & Murphy, 1997). The task of university administrators must be to balance the current institution’s vision with a moral agenda and at the same time make gains for the future of the institution, all while maintaining their own individual integrity (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011).

The U.S. higher education system is not without its own challenges and struggles. Amidst the greatest economic struggles since the Great Depression of the 1930s, higher education institutions face tough economic, political, and financial situations. Families face growing tuition costs with financial aid cuts while the average family income remains stagnant (Heller, 2009). Students (18 to 25 years old) are not enrolling in higher education as they used to. The U.S. once led the globe in young adults who held a college degree, but in 2008 the U.S. was 9th in the world, and in 2009 it was 16th among young adults with college degrees (Duncan, 2011).

Administrators face educational stagnation, budget cuts, salary freezes and layoffs (Heller, 2009). From 2002-2008, all public higher education institutions experienced a 1% average per student expenditure increase. All public higher education institutions account for faculty and staff salaries as the largest institutions expenditure, but salaries have only risen slightly, if at all, during the 2006-2009 academic years (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2012).

Another challenge facing administrators at higher education institutions is the role of for-profit verses non-profit education. Between 1990 and 2007, enrollment at not-for-profit, private institutions grew 29% and only 24% in public colleges and universities. Enrollment
grew 455% at for-profit institutions (accredited by the accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education) (Heller, 2009). For-profit institutions continue to be highly competitive with the traditional higher education institutions that have seen a decline in overall student enrollment (Heller, 2009).

Dr. Thieme (2012), previous Vice-President for International Development at Lazarski School of Commerce and Law, offers a more optimistic view, as well as a foreigner’s perspective of higher education within the U.S. Dr. Thieme (2012) cites three main reasons for the success of the U.S.’s higher education system. The first reason is the limited role of the government within higher education institutions. The second reason is that U.S. universities have a wide range of patrons or alumni that donate or give funding to institutions like state and federal governments, religious organizations, parents, business organizations and generous philanthropists which include community members (Thieme, 2012). The third reason stated for the success of higher education within the U.S. is the ability to compete. Universities are able to “compete for everything, from students to professors, from highly talented students to basketball stars. Professors compete for federal research grants. Students compete for college bursaries or research fellowships. This means that successful institutions cannot rest on their laurels” (Thieme, 2012, p. 6). A final observation of Thieme (2012) is that U.S. universities are seen as more than just ivory towers; they are practical and useful. “Despite the many flaws of American academia, its merits still outweigh its shortcomings by a large margin” (Thieme, 2012, p. 7). In his final presentation thoughts, Thieme summarized his view by quoting Fareed Zakaria who stated “Higher Education is America’s best industry” (as cited in Thieme, 2012, p. 7).
Ethical issues and concerns are ever present where multiple stakeholders, interests, and values may be in conflict and laws and regulations are numerous and subject to multiple interpretations. U.S. higher education institutions are not immune to the growing problems due to the current state of the economy. Administrators within these institutions face financial and political hardships when dealing with numerous political, financial, economic, and day-to-day issues. Such administrators engage in decision-making behaviors that affect not only themselves but also the well-being of others within these institutions.

**Influences on Ethical Decision-Making Research in Poland**

While this research question does not allow for a complete historical background into Polish history, a brief summary will be included to shed light on the conditions of the Polish people and the environmental factors they have experienced. These factors are not considered common knowledge to most U.S. citizens but do have tremendous impact on the countrymen and countrywomen of Poland. The environmental factors are considerably different than those within the U.S. and help to explain the mindset of the Polish people moving toward a current and modern Poland.

Formerly a communist country, Poland has experienced dramatic transformation since 1989. However, prior to 1989, and after the end of World War II, Stalin and Communism took over as the primary leader and form of government in Poland. Stalinism and Communism affected all aspects of life in Poland. All Poles who had any contact with Westerners were suspected of spying or treason, many ex-military were imprisoned, and priests were arrested and accused of supporting the opposition. In factories, mines, and businesses pay was decreased but higher production was expected. Any attempts in progress
towards better work environments ended abruptly with the government instilling harsher conditions while holiday and entertainment benefits were slashed (Prazmowska, 2011). The educational and military systems were changed to model that of Soviet systems.

The end of the war also allowed the Catholic Church to gain importance and authority as it established itself as the largest faith in Poland (Prazmowska, 2011). However, the power and authority gained by the Catholic Church did not settle well with those in the Communist party. The church and government soon began to clash; the government began interfering with church elections and communication with Rome; it even stripped the church of its right to register births, deaths, and marriages (Prazmowska, 2011).

By 1950, Poland had undergone great economic and educational changes. The government, determined to keep pace with the economic competition, limited trade and economic exchanges with other countries in order to create an independent enterprise. Stressing work in the steel and coal industries, consumer and ‘lighter’ industries were neglected and soon began to fail (Prazmowska, 2011). A stronger educational system allowed children access to free education and secondary educational opportunities to those who sought them. Communism mandated Russian as a language for all children 12 and older. Additionally, the health system that was destroyed during the war was re-instated with vigor, even eradicating tuberculosis among children (Prazmowska, 2011).

With the death of Stalin in 1953, things again changed in Poland. Several corrupt dealings and governmental policies were exposed, fewer arrests were made, and censorship was reduced. With new leadership, Poles felt a sense of hope, but many were soon disappointed. After a brief period of time, censorship was re-imposed and Communism
continued on. Poles learned to deal with the constant censorship and strict limitations imposed on them. Poles illegally translated texts from the U.S., watched banned U.S. movies, and families traveled outside the country, they often traveled separately because the government was afraid they would not return (Prazmowska, 2011).

During the 1960s, life in Poland became bearable; the economy stabilized, employment was up, more consumer products became available because they were imported from other communist countries, and Radio Free Europe informed Poles of events occurring in Poland as well as internationally (Prazmowska, 2011). Limited cultural and educational exchanges were developed allowing some travel to Western European states and the U.S. However, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, relations between church and state continued to struggle and be “characterized by tension” (Prazmowska, 2011, p. 208). The government wanted to reduce the visibility of the church’s influence and removed all symbols of religious observance from buildings and public meeting spaces.

Late in the 1970s two events occurred that made huge strides in moving Poland toward a democratic government. The first was the election of a Polish Pope, John Paul II, in 1978. His election rejuvenated the nation. This action solidified and grew the Catholic Church’s authority in Poland (Prazmowska, 2011). The second action occurred in August 1980 when the shipyard workers in Gdansk went on strike. Unhappy with working conditions and increased price of meat, workers started to form free trade unions. Among those to join was an electrician, Lech Walesa, whose popularity and forthright inspired the workers and started the strike. The government conceded to the workers the right to form a free trade
union, but the “most important consequences for the future development of Poland” (Prazmowska, 2011, p. 212) had already occurred.

During the next nine years, turbulence ensued. But in 1989 talks about governmental reforms, led by Walesa, were able to agree upon terms of establishing a fully democratic political system. The next few years saw Poland model a Social Democratic party after the Western European nations and immediately deconstruct the Communist regime (Prazmowska, 2011). Poles, elated with the concept of freedom, registered 154 parties during the first free elections in 1991. During the next two decades, Poland has struggled politically and economically but never violently. The Catholic Church continues to assert its power and has been “uninhibited in its claim to the monopoly of spiritual leadership of the nation” (Prazmowska, 2011, p. 221).

Joining the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1998 seemed to signify Poland’s inclusion in Europe. Then on April 10, 2010 Poland was struck with tremendous tragedy. President Lech Kaczynski and his full political and military delegation died in a plane crash. While the impact of this tragedy on the political make-up of Poland has yet to be seen, it did create a sense of camaraderie with the Russian government, a government that once ruled and crushed the spirit of the Polish people (Prazmowska, 2011). “Poland is a modern, democratic state. Economically it can be defined...as industrialized. Culturally and politically it is part of Europe, and membership of NATO and the European Union confirms that claim in institutional terms” (Prazmowska, 2011, p. 224).

Defined by its history, Poland has experienced upheaval and transition over the last one hundred years including in the area of higher education. Higher education in Poland
dates back to 1364 with King Casimir and the development of the Cracow Academy which would eventually turn into Jagiellonian University (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2012). From that one university, Poland now has over 450 different higher education institutions. Currently, educational administrators within those higher education institutions are in a unique position globally, dealing with tremendous change in a Post-Communist, Post-Humboldtian era (Thieme, 2012).

During the transition from Communism to the current political system in the 1990s, many people who were formerly deprived of education noticed the correlation between higher earnings and higher education and started going back to school (Polawski, 2010). Poland also started promoting higher education with campaigns “to convince people that school qualifications and other training programs would create personal prosperity now and in the future” (Polawski, 2010, p. 242). It was during this time that the number of institutions also grew, from 112 in 1990 to 441 in 2000. In 1990, only 403,000 students were enrolled in higher education within Poland (Polawski, 2010). By 2006, Poland was in fourth place within Europe behind the United Kingdom, Germany, and France for the number of people enrolled in higher education, with almost two million students enrolled at various institutions (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2012). The percent of those enrolled in higher education now is roughly fifty percent of the those age appropriate to attend higher education (18 to 25 years olds) compared to the almost ten percent enrolled in 1990 (Polawski, 2010).

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education (2012) worked hard at improving higher education. Poland’s higher education system adapted the Bologna Process which introduced a three-stage education model based on the Bachelor/Master/Doctor template.
Poland’s higher education system also adopted the European Credit Transfer System which allows students to transfer credits to other institutions within the European Union (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2012). But enrolling almost two million students during a time when institutions are still transitioning, growing, and adapting was not without a struggle.

The Polish higher education system struggled with universities that were overregulated (as of 2008, 709 legal regulations dictate educational policies), perceived low quality of education, lack of national and global recognition, increasing numbers of graduates who are unable to find employment, and severe budget constraints (Thieme, 2012). In addition, the government exerted control over academic governance mandating that higher education institutions admit large numbers of students as seen by the nearly two million that are currently enrolled. Due to the large enrollment of students, Poland’s higher education system has suffered a perceived dilution in the quality of students enrolled in higher education; in addition, the government has placed restrictions on universities from capping classes and restricting overall enrollment (Thieme, 2012). Research showed that in 2012, faculty salaries of those at Polish institutions were well below others in the European Union (Thieme, 2012). Furthermore, there were also no incentives or no capacity for institutions or higher education administrators and faculty to try and govern and/or manage themselves efficiently and effectively since being decentralized in 1989 (Oleksy & Wasser, 1999), and globalization is not yet seen as a major force that would drive changes in educational policies that would cause higher education institutions to change, grow, or adapt (Thieme, 2012).
Another challenge facing higher education institutions is the rising cost associated with running higher education institutions. Students who are Polish citizens are entitled to a free higher education. Therefore, public institutions make no money on fees or tuition from these students (Thieme, 2012; Oleksy & Wasser, 1999). Foreign students do have to pay tuition and fees for attending any higher education institutions within Poland. For example, in 1999, foreign students paid $3,200 (in U.S. dollars) to enroll in a two-semester training program at the University of Lodz or $6,000 (in U.S. dollars) to enroll in a semester program to study East and Central European Studies at the University of Warsaw, School of Economics (Oleksy & Wasser, 1999). However, the majority of students attending higher education institutions continue to be Polish citizens so no profit is made by the higher education system.

Historically, business and industry has not been solicited for financing or training programs that would grow and support higher education programs (Oleksy & Wasser, 1999). Many business and industries are young in the free market economy of Poland. Most business and industry personnel were “mostly preoccupied with generating revenues and pay little attention to what will be happening in the market a few years from now, who their employees will be, what kind of image they have in society” (Oleksy & Wasser, 1999, p. 101). In addition, there is no legal system set up to govern these types of relationships between the academy and industry that would give each partnership equal advantages. A final observation is that most higher education institutions do not receive many financial donations by charitable organizations, alumni, religious organizations, businessws, or industry even though they are tax deductible. It is just not a common practice because no
tradition of this practice has previously existed, especially not during the Communist era (Oleksy & Wasser, 1999).

Poland has remained as one of the European countries that had traditionally given the smallest percent of its budget to higher education institutions and reform; it has always been viewed as an expense rather than an investment (Oleksy & Wasser, 1999). In 2004, Poland spent on average (in U.S. dollars) $3,893 per student per year at public institutions which was a .30 percent increase on the amount spent ten years earlier; however, the number of students has dramatically increased since then (Polawski, 2010). In comparison, the U.S. spent $8,000 per student per year at public institutions in 2004 (Polawski, 2010). The lack of funds and financial support helps to create a larger gap between higher education institutions in Poland and the rest of Europe. Determined to change its image, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2012 launched a new program called ‘Ready, Study, Go! Poland’ and ‘Research, Go! Poland.’

Old branding campaigns were replaced with these more modern and redesigned slogans. The program goal is to promote a better and more innovative image of Poland’s higher education systems both within Poland and in foreign markets. The two main targeted populations of these campaigns are: first, the younger students who face tough decisions in the face of a struggling economy, and the second, the developing scientist focused on research (Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2012). The Ministry of Science and Higher Education described it as follows:

In accordance with the new rules, the promotion of the Polish higher education is strictly connected with promoting Poland and its attributes. The prestige of the
schools, expressed by the position in international ranks, is not all. An equally important motive is the brand of the country, in which a student candidate or a scientist plans to study or conduct his scientific projects. Poland, a dynamically developing country in the hearth of Europe, gives the men of science excellent opportunities to realize their passion! (as cited in Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Doha, 2012, para. 1)

In addition to recent efforts, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (2012) has committed to revitalize and rebrand higher education, and therefore, Poland has been having some success slowly changing the landscape within higher education (Hicks, 2012). “Among eastern European, former-Communist countries, Poland has been the biggest education success story – following modernising reforms launched at the end of the 1990s” (Hicks, 2012, para. 3). Hicks further reports that “Poland’s schools are succeeding, more than many others, in narrowing the gap between the weak and the strong, the gifted and the challenged” (para. 5).

Reported by the BBC News (Hicks, 2012), Poland is doing more with less. Recent test results from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that reading levels within Poland are ranked 14th internationally, higher than U.S., Sweden, France, United Kingdom and Germany (Hicks, 2012). Dr. Michal Federowicz, Director of Poland’s Education Research Institute in Warsaw, summarized that the spike in those enrolling in higher education can be traced back to Communism and it’s end in 1989, when people during that
time were suppressed and deprived from educational pursuits (as cited in Hicks, 2012, para. 12). The general population in Poland was so suppressed that when Democracy arrived “a massive appetite for change in economic, cultural life was released” (Hicks, 2012, para. 13) which included better education.

Higher education in Poland faces tremendous pressure on how to continue to make decisions that impact the university administrators, faculty, outside stakeholders, and students within Poland. Faced with incredible change and transition economically, politically, and financially, higher education in Poland has many unique influences that will continue to affect its growth during the twenty-first century.

**Delphi Method**

The Delphi method was the method used in the present study. It will be discussed in detail in this section. The term ‘Delphi’ comes from Greek mythology from the oracle Delphi who was consulted to forecast the future so that decisions could be made regarding important courses of action (Loo, 2002). In modern day times, the Delphi method is used as a ‘structured communication’ method among experts to help set future directions for a given topic or field per the opinion of subject-matter experts (Helmer, 1975; Loo, 2002) and is described to “support judgmental or heuristic decision-making, or more colloquially, creative or informed decision-making” (Ziglio, 1996, p. 3).

The Delphi technique was first developed in the 1950s by the RAND Corporation in California as a survey method of research which aimed to structure group opinion and discussion (Ziglio, 1996). The first significant use of the Delphi Method was in 1953 by Dalkey and Helmer (1963) who used the technique to survey experts on the atomic warfare
as part of a defense scheme. First described as a technique that “involves the repeated individual questioning of experts (by interview or questionnaire) and avoids confrontation of experts with one another” (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963, p. 458). The questions for the Delphi process are designed around some central problem and are designed to bring out the respondent’s reasoning that went into his reply to the primary question, the factors he considers relevant to the problem, his own estimate of these factors, and information as to the kind of data that he feels would enable him to arrive at a better appraisal of these factors and thereby at a more confident answer to the primary question. (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963, p. 458)

Dalkey (1967) further referred to the Delphi method as an ‘Advice Community’ made up of a group of ‘in-house’ advisors and external consultants from various fields such as academia, nonprofit corporations, and other areas that would be relevant to the problem. Using this method allows researchers to control for interpersonal interactions within group discussion that often occurred in decision-making. The Delphi technique was first distributed by paper and pencil and mail. Then in the 1970s computer-based Delphi procedures were used on mainframe computers or networks (Turoff & Hiltz, 1995). In contemporary times, the technology has become more available and easier to use given the use of the Internet and accessibility of survey tools that help “conduct an anonymous asynchronous threaded discussion on the web” (Colton & Hatcher, 2004, p. 5).

Before a researcher takes the first steps in conducting a Delphi study, a need must be shown in a complex problem that would benefit from a group consensus which could move that topic in a future direction (Loo, 2002; Ziglio, 1996). The Delphi method was developed
to reduce the effects of undesirable group interactions; the procedure was originally designed with three features that distinguish it from that of other decision-making processes (Dalkey, 1967). Later research articles classify four distinct features (Goodman, 1987). Those features include anonymity, controlled feedback, and statistical group response, and in later research, ‘expert input’ was made its own key feature (Dalkey, 1967; Goodman, 1987; Pill, 1971). Anonymity is a way of reducing the effect of dominant individuals within the discussion. Controlled feedback is conducted throughout the technique as a way to summarize results of previous rounds and share with panelist. Controlled feedback is also viewed as a way of controlling excess information or ‘reducing noise’ (Dalkey, 1967) throughout the process. Statistical group response is “a way of reducing group pressure for conformity” (Pill, 1971, p. 57). The statistical group response is a way to ensure that every panelist’s opinion is represented in the final outcome. Finally, the Delphi technique advocates the use of experts or at least well informed advocates as panelist (Goodman, 1987). An ‘expert’ is defined by the RAND corporation as “a highly educated and experienced specialist” (Pill, 1971, p. 58).

In his paper about the Delphi technique, Dalkey (1967) expressed that there were several aspects of the Delphi method that were not fully understood. Therefore, it was hard to tell at the time how much of the results are due to the three observable factors: social pressure, ‘rethinking’ the problem, and transfer of information during the feedback steps. Several follow up studies were then conducted to try and understand these factors better; results showed the major factor in the group ‘interaction’ was ‘rethinking’. The secondary factor in these experiments was exposed to be social pressure and/or information transfer (Dalkey, 1967). Dalkey concluded that “expert opinion can produce significant
improvements both in accuracy and reliability (using the notion of reliability to refer to the range of estimates)” (p. 8).

Once the problem has been identified it is important that the researcher(s) select the panel of experts. The panel of experts is often selected for their expertise in a perceived subject matter regardless of geographical location. The process of gathering opinions among the nationwide ‘advice community’ (Dalkey, 1967) is a process that government officials have frequently relied on as well. To obtain optimal results, the panel should be selected from stakeholders in the field that the Delphi method is being conducted (Scheele, 1975). Another definition used within the Delphi literature defines an expert as someone who is knowledgeable with the subject in question, but who also has the expertise, special skill, or knowledge in the subject area. That does not mean that the expert needs the standard academic qualifications such as an honorary degree or terminal post doctorate degree (Ph.D. or Ed.D.) (Ziglio, 1996). The composition of the panel and the perceived expertise could relate directly to the validity of the results during the research (Spencer-Cooke, 1989). It is imperative that the panel selected for the Delphi method remains anonymous during the entire process (Loo, 2002). The anonymity allows the panel to be truthful and express themselves without fear of being judged or being fearful of other panel experts that may have a higher rank, credibility, or some previous encounter with each other (Rotondi & Gustafson, 1996). Furthermore, anonymity “has the advantage of eliminating a major bottleneck in most group dynamics by providing opportunities for a clear delineation of differing views in a non-threatening environment” (Ziglio, 1996, p. 7).
Delphi panel sizes can vary from a small handful to fifty or more participants but can also vary due to the type of question or problem being asked. Previous research has recommended the use of groups with eleven participants for forecasting questions because they were more accurate in predictions than larger groups (Brockhoff, 1975). Groups of seven participants, on the other hand, had a higher performance in fact-finding questions (Brockhoff, 1975). Linstone and Turoff (1975) found that errors within the study decrease with a larger Delphi panel and that the accuracy of a Delphi panel grows very slowly in large groups so that the best size is seven. Other studies have also supported the finding that large groups have difficulty coming to agreement and that it is hard to juggle so many members (Colton & Hatcher, 2004).

It is important to explain to the panel of experts about the Delphi process and the commitment involved in participating in a Delphi study. If the panel does not understand they may not answer the questions adequately, lose interest, and drop out or become frustrated (Loo, 2002; Ziglio, 1996). However, if the panel does understand the overall goal of the Delphi process, the results could foster more in-depth conversations, synergistic and deep in-depth insight into the topic, and development of an agreed upon solution (Rotondi & Gustafson, 1996). In addition, panel experts need to understand that a Delphi study involves several rounds of complex questions that could require in-depth responses; the overall process can last for 30 to 45 days or several months due to the response time of the experts and the complexity of the questions being asked (Barnes, 1987; Colton & Hatcher, 2004; Loo, 2002).
Once the panel is selected the next step is developing the questions for round one of the study. The questions for round one should be based on the goals of the study at hand and on an in-depth review of literature around the research topic. Questions should involve both response scales such as the Likert or Rank-order scales and open-ended questions so the experts can speak in their own words and add information that may not be addressed in the questions provided (Loo, 2002). Since the Delphi study involves multiple rounds, it is best if the researcher starts with broad general questions and then narrows the scope of questions as the rounds continue. Prior to round one, it is important to pre-test and refine the questions before giving them to the expert panel (Loo, 2002).

Successive rounds of the Delphi study are based on the feedback from the prior round of questions. Questions for the following rounds might become more specific or precise focusing on areas not yet discussed. While typically a Delphi study goes through multiple rounds, it is important for the researcher to stop the study if the desired results have been achieved or discussions reach an impasse (Loo, 2002). Following the final round of the Delphi study a summary report is generated and distributed to all panel participants. When possible the researcher could hold a Delphi-debriefing panel to evaluate the study or celebrate participant and successful completion of the study (Loo, 2002). The lengthy process allows the panel members time to think through questions and answer thoroughly. Similarly, it allows participants time to respond to other panelist responses. The anonymity of the panelists allows for a safe and trusted environment free of judgment and criticism. Overall, the panelists are working together for a common goal in a field which they are committed to
and interested in thus, furthering the research of (Loo, 2002; Rotondi & Gustafson, 1996; Ziglio, 1996).

The Delphi technique has evolved over the years first as a pencil and paper format and then in the 1970s mainframe computer and networks were used to some extent. In the 1990s and 2000s the Delphi technique further expanded its potential with the World Wide Web (WWW) (Colton & Hatcher, 2004; Hatcher & Colton, 2007). The WWW can provide panelists with a more flexible approach, as well as replace traditional rounds with continuous feedback (Colton & Hatcher, 2004; Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Recent studies using a web-based Delphi process have concluded its viability as a reliable research tool (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Furthermore, the web-based version of the Delphi method allows for options such as consensus voting; a calendar option to keep panelists on target; and archive functions for the researcher and panelist to reference (Hatcher & Colton, 2007). Advantages listed for moving from paper and pencil to a computerized version of the Delphi method making it the preferred method of polling a group of experts include: it is relatively cost-effective (depending on the software in use), time efficient, and can overcome obstacles of panel experts geographical locations that could not otherwise be brought together (Rotondi & Gustafson, 1996). The Delphi method has increased in popularity, use, availability, and accessibility. This increased use has created a more efficient way for a global group of panelists to be included more readily in the Delphi process. These global subject matter experts (SME) represent different cultures and ethnic backgrounds that can lead to more complex and diverse information and discussion through the Delphi method (Colton & Hatcher, 2004; Hatcher & Colton, 2007). Turoff (1991) suggested the additions of a voting
process at the end of each round to better integrate the problem solving process with the
group decision-making process. In addition, Turoff suggested that the move from traditional
pen and paper to computer and web-based techniques is the merger that “offers far more than
the sum of two methods” (p. 11), which implies “the Delphi process was strengthened”
(Colton & Hatcher, 2004, p. 7) with this evolution.

Hatcher and Colton (2007) describe the advantageous characteristics of conducting
the Delphi process via computer (and web-based) over face-to-face or paper and pencil as the
following:

1. When the communication process must be structured.
2. When the problem is so broad that many more individuals are needed than can
easily interact face-to-face.
3. When severe disagreement among participants occurs, the process must be
refereed, and anonymity must be assured.
4. When time is scarce and/or geographic distances are great, limiting group
meetings.
5. When an easier more flexible way to access and exchange human experience
is required.
6. When increases of the size of the information space to infinity is desirable.
7. When raising the probability of developing latent consensus is desirable.
8. When a written record is desirable (Hatcher & Colton, 2007, p. 8-9)
Delphi Method Summarized

The Delphi method is an uncommon method that can move a complex problem in a future direction. Subject-matter experts are able to contribute and provide input in an open and collaborative but completely anonymous environment (Loo, 2002; Ziglio, 1996). The ethical decision-making process within higher education lacks the depth of scholarly research needed to provide a clear understanding of this process for higher educational leaders. The Delphi method provides a technique that allows experts from around the globe to work together for a common goal in the interest of furthering the research on ethical decision-making.

Conclusion

Ethical decision-making is essential in helping higher education leaders succeed in avoiding the ‘bad behavior’ argument. The ‘bad behavior’ argument states that without ethical decision-making practices in place, influences (environmental factors) within an organization eventually turn ‘good apples’ into ‘bad apples’(Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). C. Wright Mills (as cited in Zimbardo, 2007) adds:

The power elite are composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions: their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater significance than the decision they do make. For they are in command of the major hierarchies and organizations of modern society. They rule big corporations.
They run the machinery of state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centered the effective means of power and the wealth and celebrity which they enjoy. (p. 10)

Current research is disjointed and fragmented with regards to ethical decision-making (Cuilla, 1998b). To date no research was located that examined ethical decision-making within higher education administrators within the U.S. and Poland. However, past research infers that ethical decision-making can be influenced by cultural history and current sociopolitical and economic status (Treviño & Youngblood, 1990). This research is significant so that leaders can understand ethical decision-making and learn best practices as well as pitfalls to avoid by being able to identify external environmental factors.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation of the procedures that were used in this study. Included within this chapter is a short description of the Delphi methods and data collection, participants, Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, and research procedures. This study was categorized as descriptive nonexperimental using the Delphi method. The Delphi method was the preferred method over other research methods because of its ability to produce accurate group estimates of issues from subject matter experts compared to face-to-face discussions or other traditional survey methods (Watba & Farmer, 2006).

Delphi Method

The Delphi method is a strongly structured group communication process, on which naturally unsure and incomplete knowledge is available and is judged upon by experts (Cuhls, 2011). A Delphi study aims to achieve an agreed upon consensus of opinion by conducting two or more rounds of intensive surveys using self-identified ‘experts’ in ethical decision-making by using anonymity and controlled feedback (Clayton, 1997). The Delphi method allows the search for consensus to proceed in an orderly, systematic fashion without some of the challenges inherent in bringing a group together. As participants complete each question within each round, they are able to view real time results for each item based off of responses from other participants. Additionally, the Delphi method is designed to ensure that changes in opinions or estimates reflect rational judgment of the participants and not the
influence of certain opinionated leaders. This prevents strong personalities from forcing judgments and controlling the direction of conversation (Watba & Farmer, 2006).

Within this study there is a large international element which in past research had created challenges in language and written research methodologies. However, due to various “translation software [available], the web may actually enhance and expedite the communication and comprehension process within the Delphi process (Hatcher & Colton, 2007, p. 9). Colton and Hatcher (2004) concluded that a web-based technique “demonstrates the power of technology in enhancing a classic and ethical Delphi research process, in facilitating discussion among participants separated by time and place, and providing a venue for voting, all while preserving the anonymity of the participants” (p. 14).

Prior to using subject matter experts (SME) the Delphi study was created. Using the research questions from Chapter 1, three Delphi questions were created for each research question. The type of question was created based on the research question and a review of other Delphi studies for historical reference. The final study was submitted and discussed with the researcher’s dissertation chair, after which a small pilot study was conducted before sending the survey to the SME. The Delphi method used SME to define and characterize ethical decision-making of higher education administrators in both Poland and the United States. SMEs then examined and came to consensus about the top environmental factors that were believed to influence ethical decision-making. Finally, they synthesized ten pre-identified components from six different established ethical decision-making processes and then used them to build a ‘new’ conceptual model.
In addition, a review of literature found that the large majority of research on EDM used quantitative methods such as surveys and scenario methodology. Previous research has shown to use mostly scenario methods which accounted for 55% of EDM studies; surveys or questionnaires which accounted for 37%; and lab studies, field experiments, in-basket exercises, and simulations techniques which accounted for 4% as did interviews and open-ended questions (Loe et al., 2000; Ford & Richardson, 1994). Loe and colleagues (2000) concluded that numerous researchers have thus far contributed to the ethical decision-making field; however, further studies are needed that consider methodological process, longitudinal studies, and how ethics constructs influence performance over time. Therefore, based on the literature review, an alternative methodology was selected for researching EDM.

The Delphi method was selected because it is ‘structured communication’ method among experts which sets future directions for a given topic or field per the opinion of subject-matter experts (Helmer, 1975; Loo, 2002) in order to “support judgmental or heuristic decision-making, or more colloquially, creative or informed decision-making” (Ziglio, 1996, p. 3). This is the first time in which the Delphi method is being used to study ethical decision-making.

**Population and Sample**

Participants for this study were identified using a review of literature of EDM for the U.S. panel (see Table 1). Using the step-by-step criteria, 24 participants which were ranked in the top tier were identified and 16 in the second tier for a total of forty prospective participants. Originally, participants were contacted in the Summer of 2013 to participate in this study. During that time the researcher received a lot of feedback that participants were
unavailable due to travel, research, and established summer plans as only three participants agreed to participate. The study was then postponed until the Fall of 2013. At the beginning of September 2013 the participants were each contacted again via email to participate. It was indicated that the study would begin at the end of September. If a participant was not able to join the study the researcher asked the participant for a recommendation in the field. It was observed that people were more responsive after receiving an email that they were suggested by another person in the field. After one week, an attempt was made by phone to reach U.S. panel individuals who did not respond. As panel members agreed to become a part of the Delphi study, required consent forms were collected (Appendix I). This time around three participants from tier one and four from tier two agreed to participate for a total of seven participants.

The Polish panel was established based on a literature review, review of University departmental faculty pages, and the recommendation of an established tenured ethics professor. A total of 24 participants were identified. Participants were not ranked based on the limited number of available participants. During the Summer of 2013 five participants agreed to participate, but many indicated the timing was not good due to summer plans and other obligations. Participants were then contacted again in September of 2013 via email; it was indicated that the study would begin at the beginning of October (the semester did not resume until October 1, 2013). After one week, Polish panel individuals were sent a second email. As panel members agreed to become a part of the Delphi study, required consent forms were collected (Appendix I). This time nine participants agreed to participate in the study.
After the experts panels were identified, a smaller group of participants were identified for the pilot study. This group was selected based off of education background (needed a completed Master’s), availability, and relation to North Carolina State University. This sample group were emailed and asked to participate. After agreeing to participate they were emailed instructions and asked to participate in the study. Originally, ten people were asked to participate, and six completed the study and were able to provide feedback. Feedback provided was minor and included mostly grammatical errors and minor clarifications for instructions provided. For the Polish study, Dr. Nowak at the University Adam Mickiewicza in Poznan asked four doctoral students to pilot the study. Feedback provided included several words/sentences that needed better distinction as the meaning was vague after translation. It was also noted that after translation, two of the environmental factors were now the same word as there was no way to distinguish between the two in the Polish language (societal values and humanistic values).

Procedure

To answer the research questions for this study, a Delphi method was used. The Delphi method is a multi-step process that uses rounds to come to a consensus on information. In this study, the rounds were used to define EDM, identify top environmental factors, and create an EDM process model for two panels of Delphi experts. Each of the following procedural steps used in the present study is described below.

Step One. The first step was to conduct a thorough literature review on ethical decision-making articles. This step also included selecting panel experts in accordance with procedures documented under the Participants heading in the present study. After conducting
the review of literature, Delphi questions were created and submitted to Calibrum, the software company that would be building the Delphi rounds. Once submitted to Calibrum it was decided the software was unable to handle research question three, where participants would create their own ethical decision-making model. This process is not typical of Delphi methodology, and it was decided that the participants would be given the instructions through the software system but asked to email the models directly to the researcher after creating the model using Microsoft Word. The round for the Polish survey was translated into Polish for all participants as was all correspondence intended for those participants. At the completion of all rounds the results were then translated back into English. While the electronic version of this study was being created, the researcher submitted documentation and received IRB approval.

**Step Two.** The second step was the selection of two expert panels which was accomplished using the specific procedures outlined under Participants (see Table 1).

**Step Three.** The third step was the Pilot Study. This step also included editing the survey once it was created using the software Surveylet (www.calibrum.com). This step included two parts. The first part was to review the readability of the Delphi study created in Surveylet. This group was selected based on educational background (needed a completed Master’s), availability, and relation to North Carolina State University. This sample group was emailed and asked to participate. After agreeing to participate they were emailed instructions and asked to participate in the study. Originally, ten people were asked to participate, and six completed the study and were able to provide feedback. Feedback provided was minor and included mostly grammatical errors and minor clarifications for
instructions provided. For the Polish study, Dr. Nowak at the University Adam Mickiewicza in Pozananiu asked four doctoral students to pilot the study. Feedback provided included several words/sentences that needed better distinction as the meaning was vague after translation. It was also noted that after translation that two of the environmental factors were now the same word as there was no way to distinguish between the two in the Polish language (societal values and humanistic values). The feedback was emailed directly to the researcher, and the edits were sent to the software company. The final version of the process model and questions were uploaded by Calibrum. See Appendix I for the final version of the Delphi study questions. The expert panelists were contacted with the login information at this time.

**Step Four.** The fourth step was the first round of the Delphi. In this step, the SMEs were asked three questions that pertained directly to each research question.

*Research Question 1*

To what extent was there a consensus on a definition of ethical decision-making among a Delphi panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?

*Research Question 2*

Was there consensus on the top environmental factors that they believed important for ethical decision-making among Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?
Research Question 3

Was there consensus among Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland in making choices about identifying and connecting the multiple process components of ethical decision-making models and if no consensus was reached what differences in choices of model components existed?

Round One–Question One used a rating scale of 1-4 (1–Best Describes my Ethical Decision-Making, 2–Moderately Describes my Ethical Decision-Making, 3–Somewhat Describes my Ethical Decision-Making, and 4–Does not Describe my Ethical Decision-Making). Each SME was asked to rate each definition of EDM that was obtained from the review of literature.

Round One–Question Two used a different scale. This scale used 1-4 (1–Strong Influence, 2–Moderate Influence, 3–Little Influence, and 4–No Influence) for SMEs to identify environmental factors that they thought could influence ethical decision-making.

Finally, Round One–Question Three asked experts to develop an ethical decision-making process model using 10 pre-determined model components: recognition of ethical issue, stages of moral development, individual moderators, moral intensity, individual moderators, evaluation of behavior, engagement in moral behavior, consequences, environmental factors (internal), and environmental factors (external) (see Appendix G for Round One of the Delphi Study Instruction Sheet). These 10 items were synthesized from the six established models mentioned in Chapters One and Two. The researcher evaluated the six established EDM models and combined like components and then used unique components
such as moral intensity which was only used by Jones (1991). They were synthesized prior to the study to avoid extra multiple rounds which may have led to participant dropout. Panelists were instructed to use all ten components, but they were not limited in the number of process loops (arrows) in which they could create. Experts were given seven days to respond.

**Step Five.** The fifth step of the process was administering Round Two of the Delphi method. Questions for round two addressed Research Question 1 in which SMEs were asked to rank the top two ethical decision-making definitions after the list was narrowed down from the first round. The Round Two–Question One read: “Below is a list of ethical decision-making definitions first obtained from a review of literature, revised by this expert panel, and analyzed by the researcher. Please rank (1-2) the top two most relevant definitions—one being the definition that you feel best describes ethical decision-making and two being the second best definition of ethical decision making. If the definitions listed below do not adequately describe ethical decision-making in your opinion, please feel free to add your own definition below.” Question two addressed Research Question 2 in which experts were asked to rank (1-5) the top most important environmental factors from the list narrowed down from round one. The Round Two–Question Two asked: “Below is a list of environmental factors which was ranked by this expert panel to have moderate and strong influence on ethical decision-making. Please rank (1-5) the top five most important environmental factors which you feel most strongly influence ethical decision-making.” Finally, in addressing Research Question 3, SMEs were asked to rank (1-3) (“one being the model that best describes ethical decision-making, two being your second choice, and three being your third choice”) each of
the process models that were created from round one. SMEs had seven days to complete this round.

**Step Six.** The sixth and final step in the process was completing Round Three of the Delphi process. In this round, in reference to Research Question 1, SMEs were asked to identify their top ethical decision making definition. In addition, they were asked to provide feedback in how they made these decisions. The question asked was: “Below is a list of ethical decision-making definitions revised by this expert panel and analyzed by the researcher. Please rank the top definition of ethical decision-making in your opinion.” In reference to Research Question 2, the question asked was: “Below is a list of environmental factors which was ranked by this expert panel to influence ethical decision-making. Please rank (1-3) the top three most relevant environmental factors which can influence ethical decision-making.” Finally addressing Research Question 3, SMEs were asked: “Below are the models that were ranked by this expert panel as models that best describe the ethical decision-making process. Please rank the top model which you feel best describes ethical decision-making. Participants were given a week to complete the final round. A visual representation of this procedure is provided in Appendix H.

**Summary**

This chapter covered the methods for the described research study which was broken up into three sections. The first section provided a brief description of the procedural Delphi method process. The second section was on participant information and selection. The final section was the actual procedural step-by-step process of the research study.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The following chapter is a review and discussion of the results based on the data collected during the research process. The chapter describes the participant and demographic information as well as the data outcome from each round of the Delphi study. Finally, a review of the creation and results of the new EDM model for each group is discussed.

Participants

Participants for this study were identified using a review of literature of EDM for the U.S panel (see Table 1). Using the step-by-step criteria 24 participants who were ranked in the top tier were identified and 16 in the second tier for a total of forty prospective participants. A total of three participants from tier one and four from tier two agreed to participate for a total of seven participants. The Polish panel was established based on a literature review, review of university departmental faculty pages, and the recommendation of an established tenured ethics professor. A total of 24 participants were identified. Participants were not ranked based on the limited number of available participants. This time nine participants agreed to participate in the study.

Table 1

*Procedure for Selection of Panel Experts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Review literature to compile a list of potential panel members based on recent book or journal articles.</td>
<td>Compile list of names for ‘expert’ panelists.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Check books or articles (or other articles or books by the same author) for evidence of knowledge of desired topic area.</th>
<th>Mark for evidence of desired topic area.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Evaluate potential experts as to their contributions to the scholarly discussion of desired topic.</td>
<td>Rate potential experts on a suitability-to-the-study scale of 1 to 3 (1 = not useful, 2 = moderately useful, 3 = very useful to the study).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Present evidence of potential panel member’s expertise to Dissertation Chair for U.S. panel and Polish panel.</td>
<td>Develop a final list of potential expert panel members to invite to participate and a list of substitutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4B</td>
<td>Present evidence of potential Polish panel member’s expertise to Dr. Domeracki.</td>
<td>Develop a final list of potential expert panel members to invite to participate and a list of substitutes based of additional recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Panel Only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Telephone or email each potential panel member to explain the purpose and scope of the study, with invitation to participate.</td>
<td>Follow-up with each participant committed to the study with letter and consent forms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from Colton & Hatcher (2004). The web-based Delphi research technique as a method for content validation in HRD and adult education research. Paper presented at the meeting of Academy of Human Resource Development International Research Conference, Austin, TX.

**United States.** There were seven participants for round one, six participants for round two, and five participants for round three of the Delphi method. Table 2 contains the demographic information including participants’ ages and gender for all three rounds. The majority of participants were 36 years or older and female.
Table 2

*U.S. Demographic Characteristics for All Three Rounds*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Round 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Round One N=7, Round Two N= 6, and Round Three N= 5

Poland. There were nine participants for round one, seven participants for round two and six participants for round three of the Delphi method. Table 3 contains the demographic breakdown of the participants’ ages and gender. The majority of participants were 30 years and female.
Table 3

Poland Demographic Characteristics for All Three Rounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Round 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>36+</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Round One N=9, Round Two N = 7, and Round Three N= 6

Results by Research Question

The following are results of the study per each of the research questions. Each research question includes final results and discussion of participant responses. In addition, each research question was divided into U.S. participant responses and Polish participant responses.

Research Question 1

To what extent was there a consensus on a definition of ethical decision-making among a Delphi panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?

United States Responses.

Rounds 1 and 2. The means of the ethical definitions are reported in Table 4 for the U.S. subject matter expert group. The U.S. group acknowledged that Definitions 2 and 3 best
described their definition of ethical decision-making. In addition, one participant from the U.S. group provided an additional definition available in Table 5. After asking the U.S. participants to rank Definitions 2, 3, and the additional definition for a total of three definitions, definition 3 which was added by the subject matter expert was ranked most favorable.

**Final Round.** In the final round however, definition 2, “a process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior” was ranked as the top ethical decision-making definition. In the final round participants were asked to provide additional feedback. Three participants commented specifically on the final definition of EDM. The comments included, “recognizes internal and external factors involved that influence the process,” “it explicitly covers the various components in what I conceptualize as a process,” and “complicating or confounding this individual process is the recognition of individual differences in moral reasoning, locus of control, cognitive moral development, and perceptions of moral intensity. This definition also acknowledges that despite the individual level perspective of moral reasoning, situational influences can alter individual behavior. Good people can do bad things under some situations. Never under estimate the power of the situation (be it peer pressure, rewards/punishments, or leader influences).”

General comments by SMEs included, “I don’t think situational influences change ethics. I think they change decisions, but they don’t change the fundamental ethical standpoint of the individual. A person who perceives that is unethical to steal may be driven by
situational factors to steal, but they will need to provide rationalizations for these actions – they will not suddenly maintain the ethical perspective that it is OK to steal.”

Table 4

**U.S. Leaders’ Definitions of EDM and Descriptive Statistics for Delphi Round One**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A process that must be triggered by the perception that a given action has a moral or ethical component that should be evaluated.</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Not a simple and straightforward process but instead it is complex and multidimensional.</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision-making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An integrative process that is influenced by counselors’ personal character and virtue, cognitive abilities, and decision-making skills which promotes sound solutions to ethical dilemmas</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ethical Decision Making Process is the processes of choosing the best alternative for achieving the best results or outcomes compliance with individual and social values, moral, and regulations.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Absolute standard of judgment to a social standard, based on cultural, organizational, or community standards</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=7
Table 5

**U.S. Definitions Round 2 and Round 3 Percentage Votes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Round Two %</th>
<th>Round Three %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in actual behavior</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not a simple and straightforward process but instead it is complex</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and multi-dimensional.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. EDM at individual level begins with awareness, followed by judgment,</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>then intention, then action or behavior. Complicating this process are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both situational influences and individual differences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Round 2 N=6; Round 3 N=5. Percentages based on total participants ranking of each definition for round 3.

**Polish Responses.**

*Rounds 1 and 2.* For the Polish SMEs acknowledged Definitions 5 and 7 as best describing their definition of EDM. No SME from Poland offered any additional feedback or a new definition. The Polish SMEs were asked to rank the two chosen definitions. In round 2 definition 5 was ranked as the most identifiable. The number 5 EDM definition was:

“Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.”

*Final Round.* In round 3, definition 5 was also ranked as the most identifiable. General comments that were offered by Polish SMEs in the final round were, “one
reservation inserting: I do not share the belief of automatism in making ethical decisions; regardless of the degree of possibility presented within their environment.” A different Polish expert said, “Intuition in making moral decisions is important - it is not only defined as a known habit, but also outside known reference of possible ways of proceedings to those acquired within axiological preferences of life.” Another SME said:

“In addition a person should then take appropriate actions, without a doubt which are tied to relationship that we have with ethics. The mere recognition of ethical issues, which shows that necessity, is interconnected with sensitivity and moral issues of an experience. Decision-making should be remembered, however, that it brings together also dangers, relationship associated with superficial ratings given in any situation.”

Table 6
Polish Definitions Descriptive Statistics per Round One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A process that must be triggered by the perception that a given action has a moral or ethical component that should be evaluated.</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Not a simple and straightforward process but instead it is complex and multidimensional.</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An integrative process that is influenced by counselors' personal character and virtue, cognitive abilities, and decision-making skills which promotes sound solutions to ethical dilemmas.</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Round 2 %</th>
<th>Round 3 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ethical Decision Making Process is the processes of choosing the best alternative for achieving the best results or outcomes compliance with individual and social values, moral, and regulations.</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Absolute standard of judgment to a social standard, based on cultural, organizational, or community standards</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=9

Table 7

Polish Definitions Round 2 and Round 3 Percentage Votes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Round 2 %</th>
<th>Round 3 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ethical Decision Making Process is the processes of choosing the best alternative for achieving the best results or outcomes compliance with individual and social values, moral, and regulations.</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Round 2 N=7; Round 3 N=6. Percentages based on total participants ranking of each definition in round 3.

Research Question 2

Was there consensus on the top environmental factors that they believed important for ethical decision-making among Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?
United States Response.

Rounds 1 and 2. The means for environmental factors that influence ethical decision-making are provided in Table 9 for the U.S. panel experts. Table 8 is the original list of environmental factors pulled from the research and ranked in round 2 by SMEs.

Final Round. Final environmental factors that are ranked as most influential by U.S. experts were rewards (30%) and behavior of superiors (30%) tied for first. Second was peer pressure (17%), and third was norms (10%) and corporate culture (10%). SME reasoning for these factors includes, “these three factors that touch an individual's life most closely, while ethical climate and corporate culture are more vague influences that create an atmosphere in which actions take place.” Other comments by SMEs included: “the one at the top matters nearly as much, and probably sets the ethical climate and corporate culture anyway,” “I don't see these are being necessarily separate factors. I think that norms are communicated to individuals by the behavior or those who are perceived to hold high status, and that these individual in turn create an ethical climate for the unit of organization in which they hold status,” “The social information processing view of the workplace acknowledges the influence of peers. People pay attention to their coworkers and how they will be judged and treated by coworkers. Go along, don't rock the boat is very seductive to most individuals. Second, people pay attention to authority figures, especially when they control rewards and punishments. Hence, rewards followed by superiors' behavior. The history of WorldCom and Enron tells us that folks pay attention to authority. ‘I was simply following orders’ is a common explanation for why otherwise good people are doing time in a U.S. Federal Prisons,” and “The basic motivator in an organization is the reward system which explicitly
sets the rewards and sanctions for behaviors. These expectations are then modulated by the actual behavior of superiors and the pressure to respond to peer.”

Table 8

*Environmental Factors Identification and Descriptive Statistics for U.S. Leaders: Round One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness of consequences</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social consequences</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards Systems</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of Conduct</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Climate</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Climate</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of consequences</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Consensus</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal immediacy</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of effect</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Influence</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Size</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Level</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Type</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Competitiveness</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal values</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic values</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate goals</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated Policy</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate culture</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing requirements</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Meetings</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial System</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxation</th>
<th>2.57</th>
<th>.79</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Needs</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior of Superiors</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=7

Table 9

U.S. Environmental Factors per Round Two and Round Three Percentage Votes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Round Two %</th>
<th>Round Three %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Climate</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior of Superiors</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards Systems</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Culture</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness of consequences</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social consequences</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Climate</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of consequences</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of effect</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal values</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate goals</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Consensus</td>
<td>.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal immediacy</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Influence</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Competitiveness</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Round 2 N=6; Round 3 N=5. Percentages based on total participants ranking of each definition for round 3.
Poland Responses.

*Rounds 1 and 2.* Table 10 illustrates environmental factors that were ranked in round 1 from the Polish experts; a consensus was reached in each round. The list provided is the original list from the research. The only difference in this list and that of the U.S. list is that humanistic values was removed. After translation it was determined that societal values and humanistic values translated to the same word.

*Final Round.* Table 11 illustrates environmental factors that were ranked in rounds 2 and 3. Final environmental factors that were ranked and agreed upon as most influential by Polish experts are: norms (47%), social values (22%), seriousness of consequences (17%), and ethical climate (14%). The Polish panel did not provide any further commentary on the selected choices.

Table 10

*Environmental Factors Descriptive Statistics for Polish Experts per Round One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness of consequences</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social consequences</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards Systems</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of Conduct</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Climate</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Climate</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of consequences</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Consensus</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal immediacy</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of effect</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Influence</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Size</th>
<th>2.78</th>
<th>.83</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Level</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Type</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Competitiveness</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal values</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate goals</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated Policy</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate culture</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing requirements</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Meetings</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial System</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Needs</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior of Superiors</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N=9

Table 11

*Environmental Factors per Round Two and Round Three for Polish SME*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Round 2 %</th>
<th>Round 3 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>.17</td>
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<td>Opportunity</td>
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Table 11 Continued

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<td>Judicial System</td>
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Note: Round 2 N=7; Round 3 N=6. Percentages based on total participants ranking of each definition for round 3.

Research Question 3

Was there consensus among Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland in identifying and connecting the multiple process components of ethical decision-making models and if no consensus was reached what differences in choices of model components existed?

United States Responses.

The final research question asked each SME to create a new EDM process model using components from a review of 10 EDM models. In the first round, using the ten predetermined components provided to the U.S. SMEs, only 3 out of 7 participants submitted models. Therefore in round two, participants were asked to rank all the models. Originally, if all participants had submitted a model the researcher would have synthesized and combined like models. However, since so few participants submitted models, all models were included. SMEs were asked to rank all models, with a rank 1 being the one that best described the process that most closely resembled their personal ethical decision-making and 3 being the one that least described their personal ethical decision-making process. Table 12 shows the
results from rounds 2 and 3 for the U.S. panel. Component 2 (see Appendix K) was the model with the highest percentage (53%) after panel experts ranked the models. One SME justified the choice by saying, “2 is the more complex, and may well represent the process better.” However, some of the comments by panel experts show some apprehension with each model, “While both models include the key components, it seems to me the second model is unnecessarily complex. It may in fact be a better representation, but would be difficult to communicate. I think the simpler model illustrates the process more clearly,” and “Model two lacks parsimony and is unnecessarily complicated. I don't see an individual's ethical perspective being altered by everything under the sun; I regard it as a more steady-state element that can be subtly altered at times, but that the frequent alterations implied by model 2 are unlikely.” One participant who selected component 2 seemed undecided:

“Component 2, which I do not completely agree with, comes closer to capturing the direct, indirect, and moderating influences of factors that influence individual ethical decision-making and behavior. Component 1 assumes that environment only influences awareness. People know sometimes that they are being asked to violate their own ethical principles. Yet, they do just this. This is why we call it a moral or ethical dilemma. Their values clash with those of the organization. So, recognition of the ethics is not the issue. How to resolve the conflict is the issue and environmental factors influence the choice of action to take to resolve the dilemma, as well.”

Finally, one participant conveyed the following message:

“The influences are messy -- having impact on steps in the process of awareness to actual behavior. For example, in the [Boston] Marathon Bombing case, the external
examples of terrorism provoke an awareness of the option to set off a bomb in a public place, and the very size and distraction of the crowd provides the anonymity to accomplish the task. In the case of 9/11, the terrorists on the flight were not able to accomplish their goal because the external influence of the other passengers prevented them.”

Table 12

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Round 2 %</th>
<th>Round 3 %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component 1</td>
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<td>.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component 2</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component 3</td>
<td>.23</td>
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</table>

Note: Round 2 N=6; Round 3 N=5. Percentages based on total participants ranking of each component for round 2 and round 3.

Polish Responses.

The Polish expert panel submitted five models. Therefore in round two, participants were asked to rank all five models that were submitted. They were asked to rank the models based on the following ranking scale: 1 being the one that best described their ethical decision-making process and 3 being the one that least described their ethical decision-making process. Table 13 shows the results from rounds 2 and 3 for the Polish panel. Component 1 (see Appendix L) was the model with the highest percentage (56%) after panel experts ranked the models in round three. Panel experts justified the choice by saying, “model 1 was less chaotic,” or “the component schematic diagram of the first is a better ethical decision-making model because of the multidimensional aspect,” and “It seems to me
that, that model 1 best represents the issues of ethical decision-making. Each part allows to subjectively evaluate the ethical problem, which is subject to considerations in many components of decision-making: In the case of decision-making, part of man that is trying to be the best and he's in consideration of his own beliefs as well as the consequences of the resulting influences.”

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factor</th>
<th>Round Two %</th>
<th>Round Three %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component 1</td>
<td>.23</td>
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<td>Component 2</td>
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<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component 4</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component 5</td>
<td>.17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Round 2 N=7; Round 3 N=6. Percentages based on total participants ranking of each component for round 2 and round 3.

Summary

In summary, the results show that with regard to Research Question 1, U.S. SMEs identified with definition 2 which was defined as “a process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior.” In response to Research Question 2, U.S. SMEs identified behavior and reward systems as environmental factors they believed to most affect EDM. Finally, in addressing Research Question 3, in which they created a new EDM process model after being given 10 predetermined components, experts all agreed on component three.
In response to Research Question 1, Polish SME experts identified with definition 5: “Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.”

In response to Research Question 3, Polish SMEs identified norms as environmental factors they believed to most affect EDM. Finally, in addressing Research Question 3, in which they created a new EDM process model after being given 10 pre-determined components, experts all agreed on component one.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this conclusion chapter, a summary of each research question and related data from the study’s results is documented followed by the study’s conclusions, limitations, implications for research and practice, and recommendations for further research.

The present study was exploratory in nature and was carried out with a group of SMEs in ethics in higher education in the U.S. and Poland in order to: a) define ethical decision-making within higher education in the U.S. and Poland, b) identify environmental factors that were deemed important to ethical decision-making, and c) use the Delphi research method to create an ethical decision-making process model applicable for use in higher education in the U.S. and Poland.

Prior to this research study, there was not a common definition of EMD, and there was limited research on the environmental factors that influenced ethical decision-making. Little research was located that focused on ethical decision-making within higher education. Yet, as this study suggested educational leaders have a greater ethical responsibility than do other leaders (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Thus, how leaders make ethical decisions becomes a critical part of the organization. Further, ethical scandals are no longer confined to within U.S. corporations. Many recent scandals in higher education have demonstrated the impact that ethical scandals have on an institution. The rapid growth of technology as well as the changes in political and societal landscapes have given rise to globalization (Resick et al., 2006). However, with this globalization a more collective need to understand ethical values and ethical decision-making practices on a global level has emerged. To be globally effective, leaders must be aware of the similarities and differences across and within cultures
that could influence business practices. However, cross-cultural research has not yet addressed the topic of environmental factors that could influence ethical decision-making (Resick et al., 2006). Globalization has set the stage so that “the primary venue for ethical debates in the future will more and more be the world stage” (Carroll, 2004, p. 114). Therefore, there is a need to have a clear understanding of the demand and challenges of ethical decision-making “across cultural boundaries, which, in turn, necessitates an understanding of beliefs about…[ethical decision-making] in different cultures” (Martin et al., 2009, p. 127). Researchers Jackson (2001) and Brown and Treviño (2006) observed a lack of empirical studies of cross-cultural differences in ethical decision-making in addition to a lack of cultural explanation of national differences.

Poland was selected because of the long history that the United States and Poland have of cross-national partnerships and strategic alliances among organizations within their communities (PACC-South, 2013). Additionally, previous research had inferred many similarities between the U.S. and Polish cultures (Stewart et al., 1997). The research presented in this study showed that the U.S. and Poland are not as similar as previously described in the literature. Throughout this research there was no overlap in answers selected by the SMEs. This demonstrates a further need to explore the cross-cultural relationship between the U.S. and Poland.

**Research Question 1**

To what extent is ethical decision-making defined/described and is there a consensus by Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?
A thorough literature review revealed a lack of consensus on or an agreed upon definition of ethical decision-making. The review of literature resulted in identifying nine different definitions that were then presented to two Delphi expert panels. The U.S. SMEs and Polish SMEs selected a different definition that they identified with as defining ethical decision-making. Results suggested that experts can, in fact, come to a consensus about how EDM should be defined. The chosen definition of the U.S. experts was: “a process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior.” This definition was originally developed by Dubinsky and Loken and published in the *Journal of Business Research* in 1989. The characteristic of this definition as compared to the other definitions is that this definition discusses the process of EDM and the individual recognition and behavior. In addition, this definition has immediate practical applicability. This definition shows that the U.S. panel thought of ethical decision-making as a process which was a reoccurring theme in the comments provided by the expert panel. In addition, experts felt that environmental factors do not have a strong influence; rather people have a change in decisions not ethical values. Compared to this definition, other definitions found in the literature are an incomplete description of the EDM process because they discuss a process but not the recognition of an ethical situation or outcome behavior. For example, Barnett’s (2001) definition defines EDM as: a process that must be triggered by the perception that a given action has a moral or ethical component that should be evaluated, showing that EDM is a process but not referencing anything about the recognition of the ethical dilemma or outcome. Some definitions discuss the recognition and behavior of EDM
but not the process such as Jones (1991): a decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community.

The definition that the Polish SME most identified with was developed by Velesquez et al. in 2009 and published by the Applied Ethics Department at Santa Clara University:

Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.

This definition is different from the definition identified by the U.S. SME and all the other definitions extracted from the literature if not simply for the fact that it is the longest. This definition reflects a description of EDM but does not describe the specific process to follow. Experts on the Polish panel made similar remarks in that regardless of the situation people should be trained to recognize and understand ethical issues and have a ‘practiced method’ for processing the situation in which to impact the course of action. This definition suggested less about the process of EDM and more about how important EDM is and that it should be practiced regularly in a more broad sense.

The results in the present study were not supported by the literature. It can be concluded that further research is needed to understand the differences in ethical decision-making as related to the two cultures. As stated earlier to be globally effective, leaders must
be aware of the similarities and differences across and within cultures that could influence business practices (Resick et al., 2006). Understanding how EDM is defined within each culture is a key step in communicating and developing cross-cultural relationships.

Previous research had indicated no difference would be found between the two cultures because they were similar (Stewart, Sprinthall, & Siemienska, 1997). Yet results examined here show each group identifying and selecting a different EDM definition. The definitions selected were not similar; the U.S. definition was specific and systematic in its description of EDM. This can be reflected in how employers and employees in the U.S. are often described as a ‘business-first’ mentality whereas the Polish definition was more an overview of EDM rather than a practical application. This can be indicative of the Polish culture which still faces issues of distrust between ‘the people’ and ‘the organization’ stemming from previous experiences as a Communist country in 1989.

**Research Question 2**

Is there consensus within a Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland on the environmental factors that influence ethical decision-making?

In regards to environmental factors, the literature provided a list of factors that is considered important, but the expert panels were able to narrow those lists down to select variables that can be further examined in future research studies. The focus of this research was to explore the ethical decision-making process and the environmental factors that were identified as important. There was a consensus within each group on environmental factors, but each panel identified different environmental factors as influential. The U.S. panel
narrowed down the list to the following six factors that they felt influence ethical decision-making: behavior of supervisors, rewards of systems, peer pressure, norms, corporate culture, and ethical climate. These environmental factors speak to the culture within U.S. organizations and how important organizational culture is. It supports the perceptions that the U.S. culture is work driven and highly influenced by an organizational culture, thus highlighting the importance for an organization to understand how influential work culture can be on an individual and at times more influential than societal norms. This outcome supports the research of Treviño and Youngblood (1990) that states influences within a work environment are important because they can influence individuals to make bad decisions, and leads to the conclusion that employers need to be aware of environmental factors and influences within their organization because these factors can be more influential to their employee than social norms.

The Polish expert group narrowed the list down to four influencers: norms, societal values, ethical climate, and seriousness of consequences. None of these influencers are directly tied to organizational culture but do relate to societal influences. This highlights the transition of a nation that has moved from Communism to a democracy in 1989. The current work force is still within the age range in which the majority have personal memories and experiences during that period of time.

With regards to the Polish panel the responses correspond to the research of Stewart et al. (1997). During the study, focus groups held after the survey indicated that Polish officials felt strongly about accountability. One respondent said “We always try to act according to very transparent and clearly stated rules.” It makes sense that the Polish panel
was more aware of societal values and opinions as past research has shown a strong tie with societal views as opposed to organizational or corporate culture because it was often seen as dishonest based on experiences during and coming out of the Communist era (Stewart et al., 1997).

For this research question it can be concluded that while responses were consistent and aligned with each individual culture they did not align with each other. Previous research has suggested that U.S. and Polish cultures are more similar and that organizations do not need to alter or develop different organization or business approaches (Stewart et al., 1997). The findings support the fact that further research is needed to examine environmental factors between the two countries because in looking at the data each expert group gravitated towards different factors. Future research can provide more insight and possibly highlight that the two cultures are not as similar as previously thought. In addition, further research can explore in more depth the environmental factors and why they are so different for each culture.

**Research Question 3**

Was there consensus among Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland in identifying and connecting the multiple process components of ethical decision-making models and if no consensus was reached what differences in choices of model components existed?

As to be expected the models from each expert panel were not identical in nature. The U.S. panel created a model (see Appendix K) that was very complex and multidimensional in
The model is a continual process of evaluation and re-evaluation as can be seen by the process model arrows that create a continuous process. There is neither a clear defined beginning nor a process of steps or stages that a person goes through, but rather a complex web of choices and influences that the experts indicate to be ongoing. This is observed to be consistent with U.S. culture. Americans are often viewed as ‘multi-taskers’ or always juggling various commitments. Given this dynamic an EDM model that accounts for daily complex, fast-paced, and multi-faceted aspects in decisions is expected.

The Polish expert panel, on the other hand, created a model (see Appendix L) that is very specific with thought out steps and a clear beginning, middle, and end to the process of ethical decision-making. This is observed to be consistent with Polish culture. Polish citizens given their history and experiences are more direct and to the point. They understand ethical values and have a strong sense of ethics as it relates to survival. The model can be interpreted to show a steady, purposeful, and deliberate process to their actions.

Two similarities can be observed within the two models after a closer examination. The first is that both models have environmental factors (internal and external) influencing engagement in moral behavior. The second is that recognition of the ethical issue comes after moral intensity and stages of moral development. Neither model begins with the recognition of an ethical issue but rather uses moral intensity and stages of moral development as a basis for the recognition of an ethical situation.

The model developed by the U.S. participants is not similar to any of the six established EDM models: 1) The Four Component Model (Rest, 1986) (Appendix A), 2) Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization (Ferrell &
Gresham, 1985) (Appendix B), 3) Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing (Dubinsky & Loken, 1989) (Appendix C), 4) Model of Ethical Decision Making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986) (Appendix D), 5) Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Jones, 1991) (Appendix E), and 6) Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Treviño, 1986) (Appendix F). Each of these six models is constructed with a very linear and step-by-step process. The U.S. model has no clear beginning and is very inter-related. The Polish model, however, is similar to the already established models in that it has a clear beginning and process to follow.

It can be concluded that further research is needed before any definite conclusions can be drawn. No previous model existed in the literature that related to the higher education discipline in the U.S. and Poland. Now that models have been created a future study can examine if the model is valid and/or actually reflects the population for which it was meant.

**Comparison of U.S. and Poland**

Even though a specific analysis was not required in the study, it became clear that conclusions of the research should address comparisons between the U.S. and Polish group results. However, it is noted that the comparison does not imply that either the U.S. or Poland is more ethical than the other. These are just observational notes based on the outcomes of the study. The expert panels from both the U.S. and Poland had different responses from each other in all three rounds. The major comparison is that there is no comparison between the two groups. Each selected different definitions with which they identified. The U.S. experts selected a definition that was more process orientated and used vocabulary that included ‘ongoing’ and ‘continuous’. The Polish experts, on the other hand, associated with a
definition that was more about specific steps and carefully ‘weighing’ and ‘considering’ options before making a final decision. These themes while not overlapping with the other expert group hold as a constant theme within each group.

In round two, when identifying environmental factors that can influence ethical decision-making, the U.S. experts’ top identifiers were: behavior of supervisors, reward systems, peer pressure, norms, corporate culture, and ethical climate. Three of the six influencers (behavior of supervisors, reward systems, and corporate culture) are related to the organizational environment and the other three (peer pressure, norms, and ethical climate) are related to social influences that could be manipulated by an organizational environment. The Polish experts, on the other hand, identified with norms, societal values, ethical climate, and seriousness of consequences which are all more social influences rather than organizational influences. Again, it was observed that the Polish experts indicate that having a positive or trusting relationship with an institution is not a current priority in making ethical decisions.

Finally, in round three both expert groups created different ethical decision-making models. The U.S. group created a model that is very multi-dimensional (Appendix K). The model is a continual process of evaluation and re-evaluation. There is neither a clear defined beginning nor a process of steps or stages that a person goes through, but rather a complex set of steps and influences that the experts indicate to be ongoing. The Polish expert panel, on the other hand, created on a model (Appendix L) that is very specific with thought out steps and a clear beginning, middle, and end to the process of ethical decision-making. Two similarities can be observed within the two models after a closer examination. The first is that both models have environmental factors (internal and external) influencing engagement in
moral behavior. The second is that recognition of the ethical issue comes after moral intensity and stages of moral development. Neither model begins with the recognition of an ethical issue but rather uses moral intensity and stages of moral development as a basis for the recognition of an ethical situation.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. The first was the actual ‘pool’ of experts there was to choose from for this study. Ethical decision-making is a small pool with less than thirty professionals that were classified and ranked as the top experts in the ethical decision-making field. Within that field few had the time to participate in the study, and the researcher asked professionals that were still in the field but not as experienced. This was an even greater challenge with the Polish ‘expert’ panel as can be seen by the years of work experience and years working with ethical decision-making is much less on the Polish side. While this does not discredit the opinions of the ‘experts’ used it does not represent the top ‘expert’ opinions in the ethical decision-making field.

Another limitation was the software used for this study. Calibrum uses established software called Surveylet to conduct the Delphi process. This was a service that was given for free to the researcher as a doctoral student. However, the IT support was not always available, and it was very hard to communicate with the staff that was located on the west coast and in a different time zone. In addition, the setup as done by this company allowed for real-time results analysis while the participants were completing each round which was not a typical voting round. This can be seen as a limitation for those ‘experts’ that completed the
survey first and never went back and viewed each round they never saw the opinions and outcomes of other participants.

Finally, another limitation of this study was that it uses a small ‘expert’ group of participants and results cannot be generalized back to any specific population. The results are only specific to those participants who participated in this study during the Fall of 2013. The results are not representative of all higher education professional in the U.S. and Poland. The ideas and outcomes give a specific direction in where future research should be headed but cannot be inclusive of the field.

**Implications for Research and Practice**

This research adds to the conceptual understanding of ethical decision-making on several levels. Prior to the present study very little was available on EDM and higher education. Now, an EDM definition for the field of higher education has been identified. The identification of an EDM definition can lead practitioners in higher education in establishing guidelines for EDM centered around this definition within their institutions.

Research on environmental factors across all fields was scarce. Experts were able to identify top environmental factors that they felt can influence ethical decision-making. From a practical perspective this information can help leaders identify areas or people within an organization that perhaps foster or have these characteristics and can be addressed early before a scandal happens. Additionally, it was identified that different environmental factors were deemed influential by the U.S. and Polish SMEs. This is important because, as cross-cultural relations continue to develop between these two countries, it cannot be assumed that the same factors that affect one organization affect the other. This study focused on the
interactions between the U.S. and Poland, but this opens up the possibility of various influential environmental factors for other cultures as well. Finally, both of these areas further open up research possibilities for EDM in higher education.

It was evident that the Delphi process can be used in many unique ways beyond how it is currently being used as ‘expert’ panelists to give an opinion in a survey or polling method. For example, as with this research study, participants were given the tools to create a model for ethical decision-making. Components were identified through a literature review and then given to participants. Participants were then instructed to construct a model that reflected their opinion of EDM. After the models were constructed participants ranked the models and were given the opportunity to give their opinions on the models. In the end, participants reached a consensus on a singular model. To date no other research study has used the Delphi method in quite this way. Now that the Delphi method has moved online and is supported by various software applications it is easier to survey participants on a global scale. Additionally, not only was a model proposed but the manner in which it was created is unique. To date the Delphi method has never been used to create a process model. This application was successful and opens the door for researchers’ ability to be more creative with not only the Delphi but also other techniques.

Poland is still, relatively speaking, newly removed from Communism. Through this research it was observed that citizens still draw on those experiences and are wary of ‘institutions’ as if they still draw from a ‘communist lens’—which does not mean that they support communism but that the experiences they rely on and use to form new ethical decisions are those from a strict and untrustworthy regime. Only time will tell, as those
citizens who lived through communism start to retire and the citizens born in 1989 and after having no direct experiences with communism start to enter the work force, if the ideology of ‘institutions’ will change thus changing the opinions of how ethical decision-making is defined, what environmental factors are important, and what ethical decision-making models are applicable to future administrators.

Finally, not a lot of research exists on ethical decision-making, even less existed on EDM and Poland. The research presented here on the EDM definition and top environmental factors helps grow the ‘conversation’. It also shows that previous research that drew direct parallels and generalizations between the U.S. and Poland need to be more cautious. Distinct differences in ideologies and thought do exist at least in ethical thought. This observation can be applied immediately in practice where organizations are based in the U.S. and expanding business into Poland. Understanding that subtle differences may exist may go a long way for a leader to establish codes of conduct or ethical policy that have meaning to the employee. It has implications for possible teachers who teach or wish to teach both populations and how they manage classroom situations. The possibilities seem endless as these areas are explored with future research.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Overall recommendations by this researcher for utilizing the data in this study include: help organizations identify/audit for behavior of supervisors, reward systems, and corporate culture in the U.S. that could influence employees in their ethical decision-making. In Poland, help organizations identify specific norms, societal values, and ethical climates that foster positive ethical decision-making. More time is also needed in Poland as the nation
becomes further and further removed from Communism. As time creates a larger gap in memories and experiences of the previous regime, administrators will be able to view institutions through a new lens which may impact their view on ethical decision-making and influential environmental factors. Ethical decision-making factors will also allow administrators to evaluate seriousness of consequences in organizations so that they detract from unwanted behaviors. Lastly, future recommendations include taking both ethical decision-making models from the U.S. and Poland and validating them through more quantitative measures so that they can be used on a more global scale within both countries.

With regards to the unique way in which the Delphi method was used, it begs the question what other types of research the Delphi method can be used for. Previously used primarily as a survey tool, this research demonstrates that the Delphi methodology can be used for other research inquiries. Furthermore, it should challenge other researchers to see what other uncommon methods could be used in similar research. Being able to think in a creative way can open the door to innovative research techniques and allow for more insightful research.

From this discussion, some additional research questions may include the following: 1) How do environmental factors compare within different age groups of ethical ‘experts’?, 2) Can follow up interviews of the ‘expert’ panelists provide additional information not shared throughout this process?, 3) How can further quantititative processes be used to validate the models created by the expert panels?, 4) Will these ethical decision-making factors change as Poland continues to grow and develop within its new democracy?, and 5) the models created in the present research still need to validated.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

The Four Component Model

Component 1: The person must have been able to make some sort of interpretation of the particular situation in terms of what actions were possible, who (including oneself) would be affected by each course of action, and how the interested parties would regard such effect on their welfare.

Component 2: The person must have been able to make a judgment about which course of action was morally right (or fair or just or morally good), thus labeling one possible line of action as what a person ought (morally ought) to do in that situation.

Component 3: The person must give priority to moral values above other personal values such that a decision is made to intend to do what is morally right.

Component 4: The person must have sufficient perseverance, ego strength, and implementation skills to be able to follow through on his/her intention to behave morally, to withstand fatigue and flagging will, and to overcome obstacles.

Note: Adapted from Rest, 1986, p. 3-4.
APPENDIX B

A Contingency Model of Ethical Decision Making in a Marketing Organization

Note: Adapted from Ferrell and Gresham, 1985.
APPENDIX C

Model for Analyzing Ethical Decision-Making in Marketing

Note: Adapted from Dubinsky and Loken, 1989.
APPENDIX D

A Model of Ethical Decision Making

Note: Adapted from Hunt and Vitell, 1986.
APPENDIX E

Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of Consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal Immediacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of Effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Recognize Moral Issue
- Make Moral Judgment
- Establish Moral Intent
- Engage in Moral Behavior

Organizational Factors

- Group Dynamics
- Authority Factors
- Socialization Processes

Note: Adapted from Jones, 1991.
APPENDIX F

Interactionist Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations

Note: Adapted from Treviño, 1986.
APPENDIX G

Round one of Delphi study.
Using the following ten categories which are arranged below, in no particular order create an ethical decision-making model based on your ethical decision-making process. Participants must use all ten categories but the order of the categories is at the discretion of the participant. Participants are not limited in the number of pathways created between categories or the interaction pathways may have with each other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reference details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Ethical Issue</td>
<td>(Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Hunt &amp; Vitell, 1986); (Jones, 1991); (Rest, 1986); (Treviño, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Behavior</td>
<td>(Dubinsky &amp; Loken, 1989); (Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Jones, 1991); (Rest, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stages of Moral Development</td>
<td>(Jones, 1991); (Treviño, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Decision-Making</td>
<td>(Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Jones, 1991); (Rest, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Moderators</td>
<td>(Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Hunt &amp; Vitell, 1986); (Jones, 1991); (Treviño, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement in Moral Behavior</td>
<td>(Dubinsky &amp; Loken, 1989); (Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Hunt &amp; Vitell, 1986); (Jones, 1991); (Rest, 1986); (Treviño, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Intensity</td>
<td>(Jones, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>(Dubinsky &amp; Loken, 1989); (Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Hunt &amp; Vitell, 1986); (Jones, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
<td>(internal) (Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Hunt &amp; Vitell, 1986); (Jones, 1991); (Treviño, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
<td>(external) (Ferrell &amp; Gresham, 1985); (Hunt &amp; Vitell, 1986); (Jones, 1991); (Treviño, 1986)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

Visual Representation of Web-Based Delphi Procedures

APPENDIX I

North Carolina State University - INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Characterizing Ethical Decision-Making and its Influences: Examining Higher Education Leaders in the United States and Poland

Researcher: Tara K. Shollenberger
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Tim Hatcher

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of the proposed research is to determine how ethical decision-making is characterized by higher education administrators in both Poland and the United States and to examine the environmental factors that influence the identified decision making process. Ethical issues and concerns are ever present where multiple stakeholders, interests, and values may be in conflict and laws and regulations are numerous and subject to multiple interpretations (Strike, 2007). Administrators engage in decision-making behaviors that affect not only themselves but the wellbeing of others. Decisions and acts based on the values of leaders have the potential for social, economic and political consequences within higher education in Poland and the United States.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a Delphi Method study which will address ethical decision-making and environmental factors. This study will be conducted online October 2013 and will focus on three topics: defining ethical decision-making, environmental factors that influence ethical decision-making and creating a process model for ethical decision making. The Delphi method requires several rounds of in-depth questions that require in-depth or thoughtful answers. After each round results will be posted to the online forum and participants will be asked to vote; the ultimate goal will be reaching consensus among the group.

Risks
This specific study may be time intensive as it will address three different topics in three separate rounds of the Delphi Study.

Benefits
Participation in this study may not have any direct benefit to the participants but it will benefit the research on ethical decision-making within higher education within two countries.
Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Calibrum's web and database servers operate in a powerful load balanced and dedicated cloud hosting environment. The data is stored on the secured server hosted through ORCSWeb.com, one of the most trusted hosting providers in the world with whom Calibrum has been working for over a decade without a single issue. ORCSWeb takes care of all security aspects of website and data security and backups for Calibrum. In addition, Calibrum employees do not have access to client's accounts therefore their data. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. You will NOT be asked for your name on any study materials so that no one can match your identity to the answers that you provide; code names will be used in lieu of personal names during this study.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Tara K. Shollenberger, at tkshollenberger@yahoo.com or 336.782.2422.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature_______________________________________ Date _________________
Investigator's signature____________________________________ Date _________________
APPENDIX J

Pilot Study:

- Clarify language in the study/formatting
- Validate software
- Send them the website and ask them to comment on anything that is unclear or needs revisions

Demographics

Full Name
Email
Gender
Age
Years of Work Experience
Years of Study/Working with Ethics

Research Question One

How is ethical decision-making defined/described and is there a consensus by Delphi panel of experts representing leadership in higher education in the U.S. and Poland?

Round One:

Below is a list of ethical decision-making definitions obtained from a review of literature. Some definitions are very detailed and others are not, please rate each the following definitions listed below on a Likert scale of 1-4. Choose number 1 if the definition best describes your view of ethical decision-making and choose 4 with a definition that you feel does not fit ethical decision-making.

1 Best describes my Ethical Decision-Making
2 Moderately describes my Ethical Decision-Making
3 Somewhat describes my Ethical Decision-Making
4 Does not describe my Ethical Decision-Making
My Ethical Decision Making is defined as:

3. a process that must be triggered by the perception that a given action has a moral or ethical component that should be evaluated.

4. a process that begins with an individual’s recognition that a given action or situation has ethical content and continues as individuals evaluate the actions ethically, from behavioral intentions and engage in actual behavior.

5. not a simple and straightforward process but instead it is complex and multi-dimensional.

6. a decision that is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community.

7. Making good ethical decisions requires a trained sensitivity to ethical issues and a practiced method for exploring the ethical aspects of a decision and weighing the considerations that should impact our choice of a course of action. Having a method for ethical decision making is absolutely essential. When practiced regularly, the method becomes so familiar that we work through it automatically without consulting the specific steps.

8. an integrative process that is influenced by counselors' personal character and virtue, cognitive abilities, and decision-making skills which promotes sound solutions to ethical dilemmas.

9. Ethical Decision Making Process is the processes of choosing the best alternative for achieving the best results or outcomes compliance with individual and social values, moral, and regulations.

10. absolute standard of judgment to a social standard, based on cultural, organizational, or community standards.

11. rational, deliberate, purposeful action, beginning with the development of a decision strategy and moving through implementation and appraisal of results.

12. None of these best described my definition of Ethical Decision Making. The below definition in my own words better describes...
Round Two:

Below is a list of ethical decision-making definitions first obtained from a review of literature, revised by this expert panel and analyzed by the researcher. Please rank (1-2) the top two most relevant definitions. One being the definition that you feel best describes ethical decision-making and two being the second best definition of ethical decision making. If the definitions listed below do not adequately describe ethical decision-making in your opinion, please feel free to add your own definition below.

Round Three:

Below is a list of ethical decision-making definitions revised by this expert panel and analyzed by the researcher. Please rank the top definition of ethical decision-making in your opinion.

Research Question Two

What are the environmental factors that influence ethical decision-making?

Round One:

Below is a list of environmental factors which can influence ethical decision-making obtained from a review of literature. Please rate (1-4), in your opinion, each environmental factor on the extent of the influence the factor has on ethical decision-making.

For example, I feel that educational background has little influence on the ethical decisions made in regards to the day to day decisions made within higher education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Factors</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness of consequences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social consequences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnitude of consequences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Strong Influence
2 Moderate Influence
3 Little Influence
4 No Influence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Consensus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporal immediacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability of effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior of Superiors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Round Two:
Below is a list of environmental factors which was ranked by this expert panel to have moderate and strong influence on ethical decision-making. Please rank (1-5), the top five most important environmental factors, which you feel most strongly influence ethical decision-making.

Round Three:
Below is a list of environmental factors which was ranked by this expert panel to influence ethical decision-making. Please rank (1-3) the top three most relevant environmental factors which can influence ethical decision-making.
Research Question Three

To what extent do differences exist between leaders in higher education in the U.S. and Poland in identifying and connecting the multiple process components of ethical decision-making models?

Below is a list of ten components that were identified from a review of literature. Using the following ten components which are arranged below, in no particular order create an ethical decision-making model based on the ethical decision-making process and views that you use. Participants must use all ten components but the order and pathways of the components are at the discretion of the participant. Participants are not limited in the number of pathways created between components or the interaction that pathways may have with each other.

For example, if I had to create a model on how sport and education lead to optimal performance.

Components:
- Training
- Education
- Mental Status
- Physiological Status
- Time
- Performance
- Recognition of Ethical Issue
- Stages of Moral Development
- Individual Moderators
- Moral Intensity
- Environmental Factors (internal)
- Evaluation of Behavior
- Moral Decision-Making
- Environmental Factors (external)
- Engagement in Moral Behavior
- Consequences
Round Two:
Below are the models that were created by the expert panel and synthesized by the researcher. Please rank (1-3), one being the model that best describes ethical decision-making, two being your second choice and three being your third choice.

Round Three:

Below are the models that were ranked by this expert panel as models that best describe the ethical decision-making process. Please rank the top model which you feels best describes ethical decision-making.
APPENDIX K

U.S. Delphi Expert Ethical Decision Making Model
APPENDIX L

Polish Delphi Expert Ethical Decision Making Model
### APPENDIX M

**Significant Ethical Decision-Making Variables found to be Significant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Finding*</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>that overall there are no differences between males and females and when differences are detected; females tend to be more ethical than males</td>
<td>Beltranmini, Peterson, Kozmetsky, 1984; Callan, 1992; Dubinsky &amp; Levy, 1985; Ferrell &amp; Skinner, 1988; Hegarty &amp; Sims, 1979, Kidwell, Stevens, &amp; Bethke, 1987; Whipple &amp; Swords, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy/Value orientation</td>
<td>idealism and deontology are positivity related to ethical decision-making and relativism, teleology, and economic orientation are negatively related</td>
<td>Singhapakdi, Rao &amp; Vitell, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, employment, job satisfaction and work experience</td>
<td>more education, employment or work experience relate positively to ethical decision-making but type of education does not influence ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Beltranmini, Peterson, &amp; Kozmetsky, 1984; Dubinsky &amp; Ingram, 1984; McNichols &amp; Zimmerer, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>does appear to influence ethical decision-making but the extent to which it does is still unclear</td>
<td>Abratt, Nel, &amp; Higgs, 1992; Becker &amp; Fritzche, 1987; Hegarty &amp; Sims, 1979; Whipple &amp; Swords, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>previous research indicated age to be positively related to ethical-decision-making however recent studies have produced mixed results and it is no longer clear if age is a factor in ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Callan, 1992; Kidwell et al., 1987; Stevens, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive moral development/ethical judgment</td>
<td>shows a positive relationship between moral development and ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Goolsby &amp; Hunt, 1992; Treviño &amp; Youngblood, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>mixed results show some studies having no significance and others indicating the internal locus of control is positively related and external locus of control is negatively related to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Reiss &amp; Mitra, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machiavellianism</td>
<td>results consistently show that it is negatively related to the ethical decision-making process</td>
<td>Hergarty &amp; Sims, 1979; Singhapkdi &amp; Vitell, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>mixed results show nine studies had a positive relationship with ethical decision-making while five had no significance</td>
<td>Hegarty &amp; Sims, 1979; Kidwell et al., 1987; McNicholas &amp; Zimmerer, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of ethics</td>
<td>overall shown to be positively related to ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Weaver &amp; Treviño, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical climate/culture</td>
<td>Increasing number of studies show that culture and ethical climate do exist within organizations and they generally have a positive effect on ethical decision-making</td>
<td>VanSandt, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry type</td>
<td>No overall conclusion can be drawn due to the various nature of the industries examined</td>
<td>Razzaque &amp; Hwee, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational size</td>
<td>Overall showing mixed results however studies do show that large organizational size can have a negative effect on ethical decision-making</td>
<td>Razzaque &amp; Hwee, 2002; Roozen, De Pelsmacker, &amp; Bostyn, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards/Sanctions</td>
<td>Rewarding unethical behavior will increase the frequency of this behavior and implementation sanctions will decrease this type of behavior</td>
<td>Tenbrunsel &amp; Messick, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral intensity</td>
<td>Newer to the ethical decision-making literature but generally shows a positive impact on the process</td>
<td>Singer, 1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Variables identified in this Table were found to be significant at <.05