

# Ethical decision-making in academic administration: A qualitative study of college deans' ethical frameworks

Maria Rosario G. Catacutan<sup>1</sup> · Allan B. de Guzman<sup>1</sup>

Received: 19 September 2014 / Accepted: 22 May 2015 / Published online: 22 July 2015  
© The Australian Association for Research in Education, Inc. 2015

**Abstract** Ethical decision-making in school administration has received considerable attention in educational leadership literature. However, most research has focused on principals working in secondary school settings while studies that explore ethical reasoning processes of academic deans have been significantly few. This qualitative study aims to describe the ethical decision-making processes employed by a select group of Filipino college deans in solving ethical dilemmas using the ethical paradigms proposed in the works of Starratt (*Educ Adm Q* 27:185–202, 1991) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (*Ethical leadership and decision-making in education: applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas*, 2005) as frameworks for the analysis. Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and field text was analyzed using deductive thematic analysis. Findings of this study show that majority of the deans chose to share ethical dilemmas involving students and teachers. The findings also show the ethical frameworks of care, justice, and profession as the dominant paradigms utilized by Filipino deans and their preference for adopting multiple ethical frameworks when making their decisions. Most of the ethical dilemmas which the deans narrated relate to their tasks of academic administration such as monitoring student performance, faculty evaluation and maintaining school discipline. Interestingly, only a few dilemmas involving university administrators were expressed, and dilemmas that refer to broader societal issues usually associated with school administrators' utilization of the ethic of critique were also significantly left out in the narratives of this study. This paper intends to contribute to current literature by expanding research to administrators working in the context of higher education in the Philippine setting. The findings of this study could serve as knowledge base in designing ethics courses to enhance educational leaders' ethical decision-making skills. The study also provides useful

---

✉ Allan B. de Guzman  
doc\_allan@yahoo.com

<sup>1</sup> The Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

insights of ethical decisions and reasoning processes employed by academic administrators in resolving real life ethical dilemmas that could be useful at the practical level for aspiring and practicing deans.

**Keywords** Ethical framework · Decision making · Academic administration · Deans

## Introduction

Ethical decision-making in school administration has received increased attention in the educational leadership literature recently (Begley 2010; Dempster and Berry 2003; Shapiro and Stefkovich 2005; Hatier 2014). This interest is partly due to prior studies on the values and the valuation processes of administrators which found decision-making processes in school administration to be increasingly driven by managerial and strategic concerns rather than ethical considerations (Strike et al. 1998; Kirby et al. 1992; Campbell 1997). Recent studies also highlight the emergence of new challenges in contemporary society that impact school environment giving rise to more complex ethical issues that face school leaders (Richmon 2003; Ryan 2003; Dempster and Berry 2003). Mentioned in these studies are issues such as increasing religious and racial tensions in schools; rising cases of bullying, sexual harassment and other forms of aggression or violence; increased consumption of drugs; growing number of students whose parents are separated or divorced; increased incidence of depression and suicide among the youth; and the impact of new information and technologies on student behavior. Further, school decentralization in Western countries has generated greater public demand for school accountability. This, in turn, has made decision-making processes more difficult as school leaders are increasingly faced with the need to balance competing interests of various stakeholders when making decisions (Cranston et al. 2006). Notably, these studies highlight the difficulties that school principals experience in solving ethical dilemmas and the consequent need to equip them with formal training in ethics to be effective in their decision-making (Dempster and Berry 2003). To address these challenges, the U.S.-based Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has included ethics among the standards crafted as a basis for reshaping the profession of school administration of various member states (Murphy 2005). Concretely, ISLLC Standard 5 states: “An educational leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.” To meet this standard, school leaders are expected to possess knowledge of various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics, show commitment in integrating ethical principles in their decision-making process, and develop a caring school community (ISLLC 1996).

To date, considerable research has been done on ethical decision-making processes of school administrators. While most of these studies focus on principals working in secondary schools in countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia (Cranston et al. 2006; Kirby et al. 1992; Roche 1999; Dempster and Berry 2003; Begley 2005; Marshall 1992) the fact still remains that there is paucity of

research with respect to administrators working in the context of higher education and less in the Asian setting.

The Philippine higher education system is considered as one of the largest in the world (de Guzman 2003). Of the total 1923 higher education institutions (HEIs) in the country, 1699 are private HEIs. Higher education institutions both public and private are supervised and regulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). In 2014, student enrolment in higher education was recorded at approximately 3.56 million (CHED 2014). Of this, approximately 1.8 million students are studying in private colleges and universities representing 59 % of the entire student population enrolled in higher education institutions. This makes the Philippines unique in the world as a country where a high percentage of students are enrolled in private institutions (Arcelo 2003). This is partly attributed to the importance that Filipinos generally give to education as a means to poverty alleviation and social mobility. In general, parents make substantial efforts to send their children to school up to the collegiate level. However, admission criteria of state universities and colleges and quality private HEIs are skewed to financially privileged and academically adept students (Chao 2012). Thus, the great majority of secondary school graduates are absorbed by private HEIs that specifically cater to students from the lower- income groups (Arcelo 2003).

As mandated by law, overall governance of HEIs is entrusted to a board of regents or trustees, and the university president as chief executive officer of the institution. In the next tier or middle management level are the academic deans who act as heads of the faculties of their colleges or schools. As deans, they are expected to provide academic leadership in their college, provide administrative supervision over all activities in their college or unit and assist the president in all matters that relate to the general policies of the institution. Specifically, their duties include the supervision of curriculum and instruction; appointment, promotion, or separation of faculty members; allocation of teaching load to faculty members; and formulation of educational policies (CHED 2008).

Over the past two decades, the Philippine society—just like many countries in the world—has shown greater sensitivity toward contemporary ethical issues and specifically on their impact in the school environment. Some of these issues include gender and discrimination, rights of women and children, violence, substance abuse, corruption, and unfair labor practices, among others. This sensitivity is shown through legislation and increased government regulation of schools. A number of laws, for instance, have been passed mandating schools to adopt policies to prevent and address acts of bullying in their institutions; protect women from sexual harassment in educational institutions; and promote a safe and drug-free school environment (Dedace and See 2009; Malipot 2014a, b; Diola 2008).

Apart from increased government regulation and monitoring, sensitivity for ethical issues affecting schools is also shown in increased public demand for school accountability. Recent media reports indicate how schools administrators' practices that relate to day-to-day tasks such as student discipline, teacher supervision, and student evaluation are increasingly placed under public scrutiny. Most of these reports center on morally salient issues such as increased rates of suicide among university students dismissed due to failing grades or inability to pay school tuition

(Punay 2013; Flores 2015; Ozaeta 2013); casualties from campus-related violence (Andrade 2014); non compliance with CHED-mandated policies on student safety (Malipot 2014a, b); sexual harassment in schools (Esmaquel 2011); and illegal dismissal of faculty (Jimenez 2014). Other reports focus on issues of corruption in public universities and colleges such as interference in the internal operations of schools by local politicians and high-ranking university officials. Interestingly, most of these operations relate to administrative functions pertaining to academic deans such as the hiring of teachers or administrative staff, student admission, and sourcing of funds (de Guzman 2013; Durban and Catalan 2012; Aning 2008; Esplanada 2009).

As a whole, the foregoing sources provide considerable anecdotal evidence about the ethical issues and challenges that confront Filipino college deans in their work as academic administrators. However, attempts to document the ethical dilemmas experienced, the decision making processes employed, and the quality of decisions taken by Filipino deans are rare. Hence, this study aims to explore the ethical reasoning processes used by Filipino college deans in resolving the ethical dilemmas in their tasks of academic administration. Findings of this study aim to contribute to existing literature and provide useful insights for cross-country educational research. It is also hoped that findings of this study may raise awareness of the importance of school leaders' having competency in ethical decision making skills for the effective management of Philippine schools and the value that should be given to this competency in professional training programs offered to Filipino school administrators.

### **Ethical dilemmas in school administration**

A considerable part of research on ethical decision-making processes are studies that focus on the identification of ethical dilemmas and the recognition of the moral issues embedded in them (Jones 1991). In the field of educational administration, recent literature provides a number of empirical studies that attempt to identify the actual moral dilemmas experienced by school administrators (Cranston et al. 2006; Begley 2010; Dempster and Berry 2003; Kirby et al. 1992; Marshall 1992; Minnis 2011; Sprouse 2009). In general, these studies aimed to describe the ethical challenges faced by school administrators and probe into the decision-making processes used in resolving them.

Research has shown that school leaders are confronted with ethical dilemmas that are more frequent and complex in nature. In a study of 552 principals in the state of Queensland, Australia, Dempster and Berry (2003) report that over four-fifths or 81 % of the respondents suggested that the frequency of situations which require making complex ethical decisions has significantly increased. Similarly, in a study involving a small cohort of principals of independent schools in Australia (Cranston et al. 2006), participants described ethical dilemmas as the *bread and butter of their lives*, reporting them as frequently occurring phenomena encountered on a daily basis. Similar findings are found in a number of preceding studies (Roche 1999; Campbell 1997).

With respect to the nature or types of dilemmas, research has identified five categories of dilemmas frequently encountered by school administrators: issues

related to student, staff, school authorities, finances, and external relations. In relation to students, dilemmas identified include dealing with cases of student misbehavior, issues of harassment and intimidation, and dealing with students exposed to violence at home. With respect to teachers, typical dilemmas include dealing with abusive teachers, management of underperforming teachers, and issues related to teacher load allocation (Dempster and Berry 2003). Dilemmas involving underperforming staff in senior positions or those in close personal relationship with the Head were often considered to be more difficult (Cranston et al. 2006). Concerning school authorities, dilemmas identified by principals include disagreement with school policies perceived to be unduly punitive (Begley 2010); acceptance of school policies that run counter to their personal beliefs (Campbell 1997); and disregarding school rules to accommodate psychologically disturbed students (Cranston et al. 2006). Finally, with respect to external relations, most dilemmas relate to disagreement with directives from central governing authorities (Minnis 2011) and issues typical of multi-cultural environments such as racial discrimination and the exercise of the right to religious freedom (Marshall 1992; Sprouse 2009; Dempster and Berry 2003).

Interestingly, majority of this empirical research on ethical dilemmas focus on school principals working in secondary school settings; in contrast, research in the context of higher education are mostly conceptual studies dealing with themes that relate to academic ethics such as faculty misconduct, academic freedom, interface between the university and industry, and the commercialization of higher education (Barrow 2006). Included also among these conceptual studies are case studies prepared with the purpose of exposing students of education management to the ethical issues prevalent in school practice (Strike et al. 1998; Wagner and Simpson 2009; Shapiro and Stefkovich 2005; Englehardt et al. 2010). Accompanying these cases are discussion questions, analysis and teaching notes to assist users in applying the normative ethical principles to the cases discussed. Peer-reviewed cases published in academic journals are also available covering a wide range of issues that are of interest for use in educational leadership programs.

### **Moral judgment and ethical decision-making**

Studies on ethical decision-making processes can be traced to early research on moral judgment pioneered by cognitive developmental psychologists Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) and James Rest (1980). Most of these studies had been carried out to determine individual stage or level of moral development by analyzing the type of moral reasoning people employ as theorized by Kohlberg, namely: obedience to authority or fear of punishment and exchange in relationships at the lowest or the pre-conventional level; conformity to expectations of significant others and maintenance of social order at the intermediate or conventional level; and adherence to universal principles such as promotion of justice and respect for individual rights at the highest or post-conventional level. Despite its popularity, critics of Kohlberg point out his theory's striking similarities to that of Rawls' neo-Kantian philosophy (Wren cited in Rest et al. (2000), and its strong bias for men as against women whose mode of reasoning is characteristically oriented toward caring

and relationships rather than justice (Gilligan, cited in Rest et al. (2000)). Building upon Kohlberg's work, Rest (1980) added three other processes besides moral judgment to account for individuals' moral development, namely: moral sensitivity, motivation, and courage. Rest is also credited for having constructed the Defining Issues Test (DIT), widely-used in research to measure individual levels of moral reasoning (Treviño et al. 2006). Using hypothetical stories patterned after Kohlberg's dilemmas, subjects on the DIT are engaged in moral problem solving. Overall research has found most adults are at the conventional level, that is, their moral reasoning is largely influenced by significant others and by rules and laws.

Apart from using the DIT in measuring moral judgment, other researchers have also focused on identifying individuals' ethical frameworks to assess and conceptualize individuals' moral reasoning processes (Reynolds and Ceranic 2007). Concretely, research on ethical frameworks has attempted to assess the role of specific philosophical moral theories as guides to individuals' ethical decisions and behavior (Treviño et al. 2006). In the field of marketing for instance, Reidenbach and Robin (1988) developed a multi-dimensional ethics scale to measure the ethical evaluative criteria used by individuals in making their moral judgments. In developing the scale, the authors made use of five normative ethical theories: justice theory, relativism, deontology, utilitarianism, and ethical egoism.

## Ethical frameworks

Research on moral judgment or moral reasoning in the context of school administration, however, have focused on a different set of ethical frameworks—the ethic of justice, care, critique, and profession—that school administrators use in resolving dilemmas (Eyal et al. 2011). Unlike prior research that made use of ethical theories from the field of philosophy, these frameworks were derived from works of contemporary authors representative of more diverse fields such as psychology, sociology, and education. For instance, extant research on ethical frameworks in educational administration typically draw from the work of John Rawls for conceptualizing the ethic of justice; from the works of Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings for the ethic of care; from the representatives of critical pedagogy such as Michael Apple and Henry Giroux for the ethic of critique; and from the works of Joan Shapiro and Jacqueline Stefkovich for the ethic of profession (Starratt 1991; Shapiro and Stefkovich 2005). While some studies highlight individual preferences in the choice of one framework over another, others propose the need to combine any of the four mentioned ethical paradigms when making decisions (Begley 2010). Proponents of the multiple perspective or integrated approach maintain that school leaders should simultaneously utilize different ethical perspectives to better handle the complexities inherent in ethical dilemmas. Starratt (1991) espoused a model that combines the ethic of justice, care, and critique on the grounds that the three frameworks complement and enrich each other. Following this lead, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) added a fourth paradigm—the ethic of profession—to these three previous frameworks.

For Starratt (1991), the ethic of justice focuses on the question “how shall we govern ourselves?” It is a fundamental ethic because the practice of school

administration is inseparable from governance; justice demands that the claims of the institution serve both the common good and the rights of the individual in school. The ethic of care, in contrast, emphasizes the demands of relationships and focuses on the question “What do our relationships ask of us?” The ethic of care stresses sensitivity to the dignity and uniqueness of each person and requires administrators to actively pursue and develop relationships of caring in the school. A third framework is the ethic of critique which centers on uncovering various forms of injustice latent in social relationships, customs, laws and institutions. From this perspective, school administrators are enjoined to ask the following questions: “Who benefits by these arrangements?” “Which group controls these social arrangements?” “Who defines the way things are structured here?” The fourth paradigm is the ethic of profession. Proposed by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), it calls for school leaders to consider moral aspects unique to the profession, and integrate personal ethical principles and codes as well as standards of the profession in decision-making. It also stresses the need to place the “best interests of the student” at the heart of the decision-making process, which includes three elements: protection of the fundamental rights of students, recognition of student responsibilities as moral agents, and recognition of the respect due to every student as a human being.

Although widely discussed in conceptual literature, there are few empirical studies that explore the dominant ethical perspectives adopted by school administrators in the decision-making process. Among the paradigms, studies found the ethic of justice care and profession were utilized most frequently by school principals in decision-making (Sprouse 2009; Dockery 2009; Troy 2009; Dempster et al. 2004; Minnis 2011). Further, studies also focused on the consistency in the way school administrators use a specific ethical framework to inform their decisions. One such study found that principals frequently held confusing and conflicting beliefs regarding the moral rules they espouse (Dempster et al. 2004). Recently, Eyal et al. (2011) designed the Ethical Perspectives Instrument (EPI) to measure aspiring principals’ preferred ethical perspective across a range of dilemmas, and explored possible contradictions that could arise from using the multiple ethical paradigms approach in decision-making.

As a whole, ethical decision-making in the context of educational administration has been extensively studied. However, most of these studies involve principals working in secondary school settings while there are hardly any studies that focus on ethical decision-making of administrators in higher education setting. To date, most research on academic deans center on their profile, tasks, roles, and challenges (Wolverton et al. 2001; De Boer and Goedegebuure 2009; Bray 2008) but research on the moral dimensions of their work as administrators have not been explored except in a few conceptual studies (Weingartner 2000; Englehardt et al. 2010). Further, extant research on ethical decision-making involved school administrators working in North America (Begley 2005; Kirby et al. 1992; Campbell 1997; Roche 1999), Europe (Norberg and Johansson 2007; Langlois 2004), and Australia (Cranston et al. 2006; Dempster and Berry 2003) while there is paucity of research with respect to school administrators based in Asia. For instance, in the Philippine context, research on academic deanship remains largely unexplored except in a few studies that focus on deans’ managerial and leadership styles (Undung and de



Guzman 2009; de Guzman and Hapan 2013, 2014). However, no research has been done in the Philippine setting on the moral dimension of academic administration, and concretely on the ethical decision-making processes of college administrators.

This paper is the second of a four-part qualitative study on the ethical decision-making process of Filipino college administrators. The primary intent of this second segment is to analyze the deans' ethical reasoning and describe the ethical frameworks which this group use when solving the ethical dilemmas in their work of academic administration. For this purpose, each dean was asked to identify one concrete ethical dilemma they have experienced and provide a detailed account of their decision. The findings of this current paper are complemented by previous work undertaken by the authors representing the first part of the study which described Filipino college deans' experiences of ethical dilemmas in broad and general terms, that is, the nature and type of ethical dilemmas encountered, the critical incidents which trigger their onset, and the value conflicts embedded in these dilemmas (Catacutan and de Guzman 2015). This current paper aims to contribute to existing literature on ethical decision-making in educational management by providing insights into the moral landscape of school administration in the context of higher education in an Asian setting. At a practical level, the study aims to raise awareness among practicing and aspiring deans of the ethical and moral dimension inherent in school administration practice. It further suggests the need for school administrators' formal training in ethics as foundational knowledge and skills for effective decision-making and school administration practice.

## Method

### Design

The primary intent of this qualitative study is to describe the ethical decision-making processes employed by a select group of Filipino college deans in solving ethical dilemmas, using the ethical paradigms proposed in the works of Starratt (1991) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) as frameworks for the analysis.

Theoretical thematic analysis was used as it purports to be a method for combining the use of qualitative analysis—with the richness of data and interpretation that this involved—with specifically targeted research questions (Hayes 1997). Its purpose is to enable researchers to use pre-determined or a priori themes (Ryan and Bernard 2003) from existing research to structure the analysis of data and then describe patterns of experience within a qualitative data set (Ayres 2008).

### Selection and study site

The participants for this study were selected through snowball purposive sampling. They met the inclusion criteria which required participation to be voluntary and open to deans currently serving in office for at least 2 years. A total of 18 college deans participated in this study. As indicated in Table 1, majority of the respondents



**Table 1** Demographic profile of the respondents ( $n = 18$ )

Profile	Number of respondents	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	5	27.8
Female	3	72.2
Age		
30–39	1	5.56
40–49	6	33.33
50–59	7	38.89
60 and above	4	22.22
Type of college/university		
Private	9	69.2
Public	4	30.8
Field of specialization		
Hard sciences	4	22.22
Soft sciences	14	77.78
No. of terms working as dean		
First term (1–3 years)	10	55.6
Second term (4–6 years)	5	27.8
Third term (7–9 years)	3	16.7
No. of years working in the academe		
Less than 25 years	4	22.2
25 years and above	9	50.0
35 years and above	5	27.8
Formal training in ethics		
With formal training	8	44.45
Without formal training	10	55.55

were female deans (72.2 %) with specialization in the field of the soft sciences (77.78 %) and working in private colleges and universities (69.2 %). Almost half were serving their first term of office (55.6 %) and have no formal training in ethics (55.55 %). All but one are above 40 years old (94.44 %). Their ages range from 40–49 (33.33 %), 50–59 (38.89 %), and 60 and above (22.22 %). Six of the participating deans in this study represent four institutions consistently ranked among the top universities in Asia (QS World University Rankings 2013).

### Instrumentation and data collection

Individual face-to-face interviews were held as data gathering procedure for purposes of in-depth exploration and probing of the participants' experiences. A semi-structured interview guide was used to keep the interactions focused on the topic of research while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge (Patton 2002). Each person interviewed was provided with an *aide-memoire* to facilitate recall of questions throughout the interview which lasted for at least an

hour each. For this particular study, the participants were asked the following questions: Could you please identify a salient ethical dilemma that you experienced as a dean? What solution did you adopt to resolve it, and why? What reasons did you have for choosing the decision you made? To capture as fully as possible the verbatim responses of the participants, interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by the researcher immediately after each session.

### **Ethical considerations**

Qualitative inquiry presents ethical challenges to the researcher as its methods are generally more intrusive requiring participants to open up and reveal often sensitive and highly confidential information (Patton 2002). To enhance quality of responses in this study, the researcher met with each participant prior to the interview to establish rapport and give preliminary details about the study, such as: (1) the purpose of the research; (2) protocols to guarantee confidentiality of data obtained from the interviews; (3) the use of pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of participants and their respective schools; and (4) the protocols to be observed with respect to ownership, access, and dissemination of data. On the day of the actual interview, a brief summary of the protocols related to confidentiality issues were reiterated at the beginning of each session and participants were asked to sign a copy of the letter of informed consent as evidence of their willingness to participate in the study.

### **Mode of analysis**

Recorded interviews were personally transcribed and spot-checking procedures were conducted to ensure quality control of transcripts. Initial reading and rereading of field text was done to acquire a general feeling of the experience and to make sense of the whole. Field text was reduced by marking key phrases to segment data; a repertory grid was employed as analytical tool. Significant statements were then extracted from respondents' verbalizations and coded for recurring concepts that make reference to the *a priori* themes (Ryan and Bernard 2003) of the ethical dilemmas and ethical frameworks suggested in literature. Statements were subsequently compared and clustered into sub-themes, and further reduced into either one or more of the theoretically derived themes. Peer debriefing (Northway 2000; Creswell and Miller 2000) was employed to enhance validity and trustworthiness of findings.

### **Findings**

The primary intent of this qualitative study is to describe the ethical frameworks Filipino academic deans use when confronted by ethical dilemmas in their task of academic administration. For this reason, each dean was asked to narrate a specific ethical dilemma they had experienced, and provide a detailed account of the decision they had made.

As a whole, findings of this study show majority of the deans opted to share ethical dilemmas involving people directly under them such as their students and

teachers. The findings also show that the deans predominantly used three ethical frameworks when making decisions: the ethic of justice, the ethic of care, and the ethic of profession. Most of the ethical dilemmas the deans narrated relate to tasks of academic administration such as monitoring student performance, faculty evaluation and maintaining school discipline. Interestingly, dilemmas involving university administrators and officials were seldom mentioned. Dilemmas that relate to broader societal issues, commonly identified with perspectives based on an ethic of critique, were also significantly left out in the narratives of this study.

## **Ethical dilemmas**

All 18 deans had no difficulty in identifying one or two ethical dilemmas to focus on during the interview. Overall, majority of the deans chose to share ethical dilemmas of people under their care such as students and faculty members. A few, however, opted to share dilemmas involving university administrators.

Most of the dilemmas narrated by the respondents relate to faculty evaluation, conduct of faculty and students, school discipline, and academic performance of students. In particular, deans experienced being in a dilemma when dealing with instances of teacher misconduct and incompetence because of the harm these will cause on their students. For instance, faculty members found guilty of sexual harassment involving several students, or abusive teachers who fail their students without a sufficient reason.

Similarly, deans also describe being in a dilemma when they had to apply sanctions they foresee will have serious consequences on individuals. The deans expressed concern over the welfare of students and teachers whom they had to suspend or dismiss for academic or disciplinary reasons. Applying grave sanctions on and initiating investigation that would unduly expose the private lives of fellow faculty members were also considered particularly problematic.

Furthermore, applying sanctions on students or teachers with serious family, personal or financial problems were considered even more challenging. Among the dilemmas mentioned are suspending students suffering from depression; dismissing delinquent students forced by the parents to study a particular course; and evaluating cases of underperforming teachers who are undergoing personal life crises.

Finally, deans report experiencing being in a dilemma when they are confronted by situations that require them to resolve conflicts involving teachers, parents and university administrators. In these instances, deans had to deal with difficult individuals causing tension and factions in the department. Cases which involve administrators who are more senior or who occupy high-ranking positions were considered challenging as well. Other dilemmas mentioned by the respondents include: upholding teachers' decisions regarding students' grades despite parents' threats to report university officials to government regulatory agencies; disagreement with group decisions which they consider to be unjust; and resisting pressure from university officials' attempts to influence their own decisions.

Table 2 provides a summary of the ethical dilemmas identified by respondent deans, the parties involved, and the nature of the dilemmas experienced. A detailed description of each dilemma is also provided in the Appendix.

**Table 2** Ethical dilemmas shared by deans

Dean	Parties involved	Category of dilemma	Sub-category of dilemma
1	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Faculty misconduct, immoral behavior
2a	Academic administrators	Academic performance of students	Disagreement with joint decisions perceived to be unfair
2b	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Faculty misconduct, observance of due process
3	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Faculty misconduct, workplace conflict, professional jealousy
4	Faculty	Faculty evaluation	Teacher incompetence
5	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Workplace conflict, mistreatment
6	Faculty	Faculty evaluation	Teacher incompetence, professional negligence
7a	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Faculty misconduct, sexual harassment
7b	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Faculty misconduct, insubordination
8	Faculty	Faculty conduct and discipline	Faculty misconduct, conflict of interest
10	Student	Academic performance of students	Academic delinquency, student with personal/family problems
11	Student	Student conduct and discipline	Student misconduct, cheating
12a	Student	Student conduct and discipline	Student misconduct, plagiarism
12b	Student	Academic performance of students	Academic delinquency, student with depression
13	Student and parents	Academic performance of students	Academic delinquency, parents who threaten to lodge a case with state governing body against the school
14	Academic administrators	Conduct and discipline of academic administrators	Faculty misconduct, workplace conflict, factions
15	Student	Academic performance of students	Absenteeism, students with financial problems
16	Student	Academic performance of students	Academic delinquency, students with financial problems
17	Academic administrators	Conduct and discipline of academic administrators	Academic patronage, university officials' interference in decision-making
18	Faculty	Faculty evaluation	Faculty underperformance, faculty with personal/family problems

## Ethical frameworks

Using the studies of Starratt (1991) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) as framework for deductive thematic analysis, three ethical frameworks of care,

justice, and profession were identified as the dominant ethical paradigms used by Filipino academic deans in their ethical decision-making process. Significantly, the ethic of critique was not utilized by these deans in decision-making. Findings of this study also describe Filipino college deans' utilization of integrated ethical frameworks.

### **Ethic of justice**

In many cases, deans' narratives of their experiences in resolving ethical dilemmas reflect moral decisions that ensue from the perspective of justice. Concerns for the exercise of fairness and protection of individual rights take primary considerations in these decisions. When confronting dilemmas, the deans in this study recount exercising fairness by applying rules equitably and observing due process.

One dean mentioned how she disagreed with some university administrators who took a joint decision and admitted a certain student who did not meet the requirements for the program. In this particular case, she felt that fairness was not observed in the admission process. She explains: "I did not approve of that decision because I thought that if I cannot allow this [decision] to others who are similarly situated, then I will not do it because this decision is not just... Whenever one allows certain privileges or takes exceptions in a situation in favor of somebody I always have this question at the back of my mind: "is it fair?" "is it just?"

Another dean related how she had to enforce rules and apply sanctions to two faculty members found guilty of violating a school policy. However, she also described her efforts to mitigate the impact of those sanctions and the sense of guilt she felt in sanctioning those colleagues. As she recalls: "A complaint was raised against two faculty members for violating one of our school policies. According to the faculty manual when one is penalized or suspended for such offense, one cannot be eligible for merit increase nor for any promotion. I went on with the case but at the same time I was hoping that I could do something for my colleagues so they could at least get their yearly merit increase, but I realized that one can never win against policy. So for 2 years, that particular item would haunt me..."

In some instances, however, the deans' decisions to abide by rules were made out of personal convenience or compliance with directives from senior officials. A dean, for instance, explained how decisions to retain or dismiss underperforming faculty in her college are made in strict compliance with the directives of the university president. Candidly, she admitted that keeping faculty on a part-time contract is an advantage as it is a convenient way of complying with this directive. She explains: "Last year we received a directive from our President that he wanted retained only those faculty who obtain a score of 'outstanding' and 'very good' in their evaluation. In my case, I am able to comply. If a faculty member gets 'Fair' in his evaluation, he is surely out in the next semester. I am able to do this, I can change them and it is easy to change them because many are on part-time contract and that is my advantage."

However, there were also a few cases where the deans remained firm, maintained fairness, and openly disobeyed instructions from high ranking or senior officials who tried to apply pressure and influence their decisions in their favor. A dean shared a

dilemma relating to two faculty members whose promotion was being blocked by the Department Chair due to group factions in the department. The dean described how he assisted these faculty members despite instructions from the Chair not to intervene. He relates: “There is a case of two faculty members who are due for promotion but are not getting promoted because of factions in the Department involving the Chair who cited several provisions in the manual as basis for his decision. When these faculty members asked me to intervene, I explained that I could not take sides but what I did was to give them my copy of the Faculty Manual and asked them to carefully read the specific provisions which I had marked that could assist them in this matter. I did this even if the Chair—who is much senior than I am—had previously told me, ‘don’t inform them about the faculty manual’ (...)”.

Finally, typifying the deans’ decisions framed from the perspective of justice are concerns to protect individual rights. Deans in this study enforced discipline and applied sanctions to underperforming and problematic teachers in order to protect the interest of their students. For instance, one of the deans narrated a dilemma related to a teacher who failed half of the students in a particular class. The dean related how she decided not to renew the contract of this teacher on the grounds of incompetency. She explains: “I decided not to renew this teacher’s contract because I think that she could have done something to help her students pass (...) As far as I am concerned if somebody is not able to do her job as a teacher, she does not have a place in my department.”

The deans’ adoption of the ethic of justice was more marked where dilemmas involved individuals who can cause serious harm. This explains the deans’ resoluteness in dismissing teachers due to students’ complaints of sexual harassment. One dean related the case of a female student who complained against a part-time faculty member who had asked her to meet him outside the university premises after office hours as a requirement to pass the course. Upon investigation the dean found that three other students had a similar experience, and so decided not to renew this teacher’s contract for the next term. The dean recounts her decision: “Immediately I called for this professor and explained to him it is not really proper for him to meet his female students at night time. I also said that it is against our school policies and we do not allow our teachers to take students out because the school will be liable to their parents if something were to happen to them. Well, he expressed that he was really sorry about it and I told him that I do not wish this to happen again. However when he left I made the decision not to rehire him...”

### **Ethic of care**

Apart from the ethic of justice, deans’ sharing of their experiences as they deliberated and solved moral dilemmas disclose decisions framed from the perspective of care. Responsiveness to individual needs and concerns to avoid harm are typical considerations embedded in these decisions. The deans in this study relate confronting ethical dilemmas by taking action and responding to individual needs. Concretely, deans resolved ethical dilemmas by giving financial assistance to needy students, providing encouragement to distressed teachers or students, and nurturing problematic or difficult individuals.

For instance, a dean described her dealings with students who are unable to pay their tuition fee. As she explains: "At times I have students who cannot pay their tuition but I realize that they are good [students] so I speak with their parents and lend them my personal money or I borrow from my friends to help them pay; other times I make them work as student assistants so they could get some stipend to pay for their studies. I feel that it is pity that students with potential cannot attend classes simply because of lack of money... I really feel sorry for them."

Another dean shared his decision to assist a student who was distraught for failing a subject in her final year. He describes: "There was a student who was expecting to finish but she flunked another subject... so she was crying because she was scared that the parents will not allow her to enroll again. What I did was to offer to talk to her parents and make her see that she can still graduate. I also told her that we shall help her look for a course and for a schedule that will be compatible with her timetable. Well with these words she calmed down..."

Besides responsiveness to individual needs, moral judgments framed under the ethic of care are also characterized by concerns to avoid harm. The deans avoided decisions that could cause psychological harm on teachers or students more likely to be vulnerable due to personal problems. Typical moral decisions include being understanding with individual circumstances, being sensitive to people's sentiments, and being respectful of people.

For instance, a dean related the decision she had made with regard to the case of an underperforming faculty member who was experiencing difficulties in his marriage. She recounts: "A full-time faculty member has been performing poorly over the last 12 months. Absenteeism, tardiness, failing to meet the official expectations, and poor performance ratings in instruction, research and extension were documented for the last 12 months. Later I realized that he was undergoing a major personal crisis in his marriage and decided, with the college academic personnel committee, to give him another chance till next year when his appointment is due either for termination or extension of another term."

A dean also shared a thorny incident involving a faculty member who had frequent conflicts with her immediate supervisor. However, he was put in a bad light as the said teacher wrote directly to the university President about the conflict without reporting the matter to him. Upon investigation, the dean concluded that the conflict was caused by professional jealousy. He explains how he handled and resolved the case as follows: "I realized that part of the teacher's attitude was that she had not finished her Masters' degree, so while most of her colleagues had already been promoted to the rank of associate professor, this teacher remained at the rank of an instructor. With this I got to understand her attitude and handled the conversation in a very humane manner. In the end, I decided not to focus on the content of the letter she wrote to the President because it would have created more destruction on her part and I would not want that to happen. (...) For me it is very important to respect the individual because I am always guided by the paradigm that education is all about human development. I don't think you are developing the person if you only point out to him what he did wrong because we are supposed to develop human beings and not to destroy them."



Finally, in many instances the deans adopted and solved ethical dilemmas using not only the ethic of care but also the ethic of justice. Concretely these are situations where deans enforced rules and applied sanctions, but simultaneously extended help and provided emotional support to the student or teacher concerned.

A dean related a dilemma involving a student who was dismissed because his grade point average did not meet the university's standards. The student made an appeal to be reconsidered as his average was affected by a failing mark given to him by a teacher for having submitted plagiarized work. The appeal was denied and the dean recounts what transpired in the subsequent meeting with the student and his parents: "(...) the parents came to see me in case I could do something (...). But I said to the boy: 'I understand your predicament that you would want to stay in this university. I understand that (...) it is very noble, but you have to know that this is not just for your class in English but this is for your person, it is about yourself and the learning from here is not about getting a good grade... the learning from here is honesty.' Well he left (...) I could see he was at peace about it and he said 'thank you Ma'am for explaining it to me.' After that he never came back and I don't really know what happened to him. The parents eventually went to report us to CHED (referring to the Commission for Higher Education) but I never heard from them anymore."

### **Ethic of profession**

Finally, the deans' accounts about their ethical decision-making processes reflect perspectives that typify the ethic of profession. From this perspective, decisions taken are influenced by deans' views on the meaning of education, the teaching profession, and student learning. In this study, the deans' moral reasoning processes that reflect the ethic of profession are often integrated in decisions framed from the perspectives of justice and care. Interestingly, the deans' views on the moral dimensions of the ethical dilemmas they face are shaped by their experiences as educators. Concretely, the deans made decisions based on their own understanding of certain ethical principles like fairness, respect, and freedom.

For instance, one dean shared her views about fairness in relation to how she treats underperforming faculty members. She explains: "There are faculty members whom I know are undergoing some personal crises and are not able to contribute much in committee assignments or attend faculty meetings. In these cases, I take them aside and speak with them, but most of the time I don't accuse them of not having done their duties but simply ask, 'Are you okay'? So I don't normally handle people in the same way because there are faculty members—just like kids—who will take longer to pick themselves up (...) I don't think that treating people the same is necessarily fair. I don't agree with the definition of fairness that one has to treat people equally or that I have to be the same to all. I think to be fair is to treat them the way they need to be treated. One has to treat people differently because people are different, which is what the premise of individual differences is all about."

Another dean recalled an incident relating to student dismissal which involved a student who was forced by his parents to take up an Engineering degree. The dean explains the reason behind her decision: "There was a student whom I dismissed

and I told him ‘you do not belong here. I think you should do a different course... a course that you really like.’ And in fact he did and when he shifted, he blossomed. He came back and told me, ‘Ma’am thank you for dismissing me. I was able to do what I have always wanted to do... I found where I belonged...’ My view is that a person will naturally excel if they love what they are doing. If they are not forced to do what they are doing, they become excited to do it, they become excited to learn. And this has primarily become a guiding principle for my decisions.”

In some instances, the deans’ narratives of how they confront and resolve ethical dilemmas are embedded with considerations about academic leadership and the moral responsibilities that the deanship position brings with it.

A dean related handling cases relating to complaints about faculty members. The dean expressed her reasons for dealing with these complaints and describes her role as an academic leader in contributing to the professional growth of the faculty. She explains: “I normally receive complaints about my faculty. There are times when I would ignore these as some are really irrelevant, but in other cases I would not and would call the attention of the faculty for instance when it comes to advising of students, the teaching of classes, the conduct of research or their behavior in committee meetings towards colleagues. I believe that people have to be happy and fulfilled in what they do; satisfaction and happiness allow people to stay and I cannot allow people to keep staying with wrong notions; for example a faculty member might think he is a good teacher but in reality he is not; or he might think he is respectful, but in reality he is not. In these cases, who else will tell them except their academic leader, right? I don’t look at this as anything personal but I think it is part of the growth of any faculty member. As the dean, I am interested in letting them know how things are. As the dean my perspective is unique, and as my perspective is unique, it is my duty to share it and it is expected of my position to do it. It is not my job to cover up things but rather it is my job to tell my faculty that these things are important.”

## Discussion

### Ethical dilemmas

Consistent with similar studies (Kirby et al. 1992; Cranston et al. 2006), most of the deans chose to share their experiences with respect to ethical dilemmas that relate to the behavior of their students and teachers. In contrast, only a few deans focused their discussion on ethical dilemmas about their relationship with university administrators.

The prevalence of reported ethical dilemmas involving students and teachers could perhaps be attributed to the research approach adopted in the study and the respondents’ sensitivity to confidentiality issues related to the research. For one, the study was conducted using a qualitative research approach requiring participants to give personal detailed accounts of ethical dilemmas and the resolutions to these dilemmas. This could explain why certain ethical dilemmas such as those about the deans’ personal involvement in conflicts with top university administrators were

rarely mentioned. It is plausible that the dean respondents would rather avoid reporting incidents that would require them to disclose matters that might compromise their position as representatives of top management. Further, the study mainly focused on the deans' decisions on morally problematic situations typically dealing with highly sensitive and often confidential issues. It is thus possible that the dean respondents are more willing to share problematic moral incidents that commonly occur in schools, and involve specific individuals who cannot be readily identified by the persons working in their respective institutions. Underlying their choices could be ethical concerns to protect the anonymity of the people involved in the dilemmas they chose to share and discuss in detail. However, despite these inherent limitations of qualitative research, studies suggest the analysis of respondents' decisions based on real life ethical dilemmas affords a more interesting set of responses than those provided by studies which attempt to empirically measure responses through carefully designed hypothetical scenarios (Myrsky 2003).

As a whole, most of the dilemmas which the deans identified in this study are also mentioned in previous studies: the deans' dealing with cases of sexual harassment involving teachers and students; supervising underperforming teachers undergoing life crises; handling of disciplinary cases involving psychologically disturbed students; evaluating academic performance of delinquent students with personal or family problems; undue interference by senior administrators in decision-making process; departmental conflicts involving Department Chairs and faculty members (Cranston et al. 2006; Dempster and Berry 2003; Sprouse 2009; Spratlen 1995).

However, some of the ethical dilemmas mentioned in this study are rarely mentioned in research conducted in other countries. An example would be cases where students seek their deans' assistance regarding deeply personal matters that affect their lives. This could be explained by the fact that school administrators in the Philippines are expected to assume a parental role toward their students even at the college level, as students tend to enter college at a much younger age than in other countries. Interestingly, this parental role the Filipino deans exhibit is also highlighted in similar studies showing Filipino teachers' tendency to view supportive school relationships as an extension of their own family (Viernes and de Guzman 2005).

Other ethical dilemmas not commonly found in research literature are situations where the Filipino deans are confronted by appeals from students to be allowed to attend classes despite not being able to pay their tuition fee. Perhaps these situations are more common in the Philippine context, where many students who are pursuing higher education both in public and private institutions come from poor family backgrounds. The Philippine media, in fact, has recently reported the fate that befell a female college student from such a background whose demise was allegedly triggered by the school authorities' decision to bar her from attending classes due to the family's failure to raise a significantly small amount for her tuition in a public university (Punay 2013).

Some dilemmas expressed in research studies in the West were not apparent in the descriptions provided by deans from the Philippines. For example, dilemmas that relate to issues of social justice such as discriminatory practices against teachers or students representing minority ethnic groups or different religious denominations. Perhaps this could be explained by the fact that outright tensions arising from

multicultural environments are less pronounced in Philippine schools as there is less racial diversity found among the Filipino people in general. The significant silence of these deans with respect to rights of minority groups, however, does not necessarily mean the absence of subtler forms of discrimination—typically present in all societies—in Philippine schools. Hence, it is also plausible that the Filipino deans need to acquire greater sensitivity with respect to themes of social justice in order to identify and recognize the moral issues embedded in broader societal problems that affect their schools.

Other types of ethical dilemmas typically reported in Western studies but not mentioned in this research are those which relate to issues of student safety and the use of zero tolerance rules to curb violence and drug abuse in schools. In most cases, administrators' concerns center on the punitive character of such rules and the potential intrusion law enforcers may have on students' rights to privacy. Interestingly, however, none of the deans in this study alluded to these issues despite similar state-mandated safety measures implemented in tertiary educational institutions. This could be attributed to the fact that ethical dilemmas related to student safety are less salient issues in Philippine schools due to the relatively safer school environments that exist in Asian settings as compared to the Western world. Further, it is also plausible that the Filipino deans are more accepting of government intervention in ensuring the safety of their schools and consider these practices as an extension of school discipline which they are supposed to uphold as a concrete exercise of their parental role toward students.

### **Ethic of justice**

In many instances, the deans' decisions were primarily influenced by considerations about fairness, individual rights, and rule-compliance. In most studies, these issues appear as defining features of moral reasoning from a justice perspective (Enomoto 1997; Sherblom et al. 1993; Frick 2008). Guided by concerns for equity and fairness, the deans ensured school rules and policies were consistently and equally applied in dealing with cases such as student admission, retention, and faculty promotion. Furthermore, the deans made decisions upholding student rights, specifically by making underperforming teachers accountable for their actions, sanctioning those who are negligent and incompetent, and dismissing those who pose a threat to the safety of students. They also upheld students' and teachers' interest by duly informing them of the rights and privileges afforded to them by the laws and regulations of the school, and by observing due process when they had to impose administrative penalties and sanctions on these individuals. As a whole, this prevalence of the ethic of justice framework in Filipino college deans' decision-making is in line with previous studies conducted among secondary school principals and school superintendents (Marshall 1992; Frick 2008; Norberg and Johansson 2007; Sprouse 2009).

To some extent, the marked sensitivity toward issues of justice and fairness shown by these college deans could be due to the existence of a highly regulated environment in which Filipino colleges and universities operate. Aside from statutory laws, the Philippine higher education system is regulated by the Commission of Higher Education (CHED), with broad powers to monitor the

internal operations of colleges and universities in the country. Given this highly regulated environment, it is plausible that the college deans were exercising caution in observing established rules and regulations to avoid incurring sanctions from CHED or minimize possible lawsuits from parents or teacher unions for decisions arbitrarily taken against students or teachers. Ironically though, despite the presence of these laws, media reports have shown that some institutions manage to circumvent the law using the same legal system and defy CHED's efforts to curb certain unethical practices in schools (Pazzibugan 2014). Evidently, this shows the inherent limits of the law and of law enforcing agencies to promote justice in an environment where corruption is endemic and where individuals do not have the personal resolve to abide by a code of ethics. Recent studies on corruption in the country's education sector highlight the widespread practice of patronage, nepotism, and bribery among school officials such that teaching positions or textbooks contracts are awarded on the basis of applicants' political and family ties rather than individual merit (Poocharoen and Brillantes 2013; Reyes 2009; Hallak and Poisson 2007). Although most studies report these cases within the context of the basic education sector, it is highly probable that such practices are also extended to higher education institutions operating in the same cultural context, and perhaps could possibly explain academic administrators' heightened concern for the principles of justice and fairness in their decision-making processes.

At a micro level, the ethic of justice compels school administrators to ensure policies and rules protect and promote the legitimate rights of individuals working in the school community. However, as Begley (2010) critically notes, a school administrator's use of ethical postures may at times be unethical and could trump basic human rights. Such would be the case when an administrator focuses on applying the letter of the law for motives of efficiency, convenience, or gain maximization, and in the process fails to protect the rights of the people these laws are meant to serve. Typical examples would be administrators' approval of school policies allowing faculty members to be on continuous part-time contract employment despite having passed teaching qualifications during a set probationary period. This is often done under the pretext of acquiring wide discretionary powers to dismiss potentially troublesome teachers within the boundaries of the law. Another example would be administrators who opt for rigid interpretation of school laws as a form of providing quick-fix solutions to complex problems or as a strategy to avoid confrontation. Other solutions that can better serve students' and teachers' interests are available but are deliberately ignored because of the additional time and effort required on the part of administrators. In this sense, a seemingly rule-conscious and legally minded administrator may in fact have far-from-desirable motives from an ethical point of view.

### **Ethic of care**

Apart from the ethic of justice, the deans in this study also adopted the ethic of care in most of their decision-making processes. In several instances, the deans' moral decisions were influenced by considerations associated as integral elements of an ethic of care, namely: avoiding harm, showing sympathy and compassion, giving

emotional support, and providing assistance to specific individuals (Sherblom et al. 1993; Undung and de Guzman 2009; de Guzman et al. 2008). Concretely, the deans in this study applied tact and sensitivity in instances when they had to reprimand students and teachers on disciplinary grounds. They showed respect toward teachers who were difficult and gave due recognition to these teachers' professional achievement despite their untoward behavior. They also provided assistance to students with financial problems by raising funds or giving their personal money, and helped those who are in moral distress by setting aside time needed despite their busy schedule in order to talk, listen, and give the emotional support needed. In general, this caring orientation Filipino school leaders have adopted in their decision-making process finds support in related studies involving school administrators who anchored their decision-making processes primarily from the perspective of care (Dempster et al. 2004; Cranston et al. 2006; Troy 2009).

In part, the ethic of care that the deans in this study used in framing their moral decisions could also be attributed to dominant Filipino cultural values. For instance, research has shown Filipinos to be a collectivistic people who place great value on social acceptance, group identity, and smooth interpersonal relations (Kirkman and Shapiro 2001; Church and Katigbak 2000; Jocano 2000). Related studies also indicate Filipinos are culturally primed to maintain cordial relationships (Ordonez and Gandeza 2004) and avoid negative emotions that could threaten their friendships (Carson and Banuazzi 2008). Finally from a cultural perspective, the influence of the ethic of care on the college deans' decisions could also be attributed to the strong family orientation of the Filipino people (Lacar 1995). This makes it possible for caring attitudes characterizing family relationships to be easily replicated in the school environment as evidenced by several studies (Undung and de Guzman 2009; Viernes and de Guzman 2005).

At the individual level of the decision-maker, the use of the ethic of care appears as a complementary framework to the ethic of justice, and highlights the inherent limitations of moral reasoning processes based strictly on legal grounds. On the one hand, laws fulfill an important function in any community because of their immense educative capacity. If well made and fairly enforced, laws can meaningfully instruct, direct, guide, and encourage people on how to behave in good and just ways (Keys 2001). Take for instance laws that establish waste segregation practices in schools to help instill in young people the need to be responsible for their environment. Another example would be laws that sanction hazing activities or possession of dangerous weapons on campus to create awareness of the value of human life and public safety.

On the other hand, laws will always be limited with respect to the actions they can regulate, as it would not be feasible to foresee and legislate for all possible forms or types of human conduct. For instance, it is to be expected for schools to issue rules requiring students to pay fees on established dates, but it would be rare to find policies that would mandate school administrators to personally assist students or teachers who are financially in need. Also it might be common to have school regulations that would penalize individuals for use of abusive language at school, but it would be unusual to find rules that would require people to be kind or compassionate toward colleagues who are in need of help. In these circumstances,

school administrators are bound to experience the inherent limits of the law and the ethic of justice as a framework for decision-making. This in turn points to the need for an ethic of care which leads school administrators to act beyond rule compliance and instead make decisions based on their sense of moral duty.

To some extent, school administrators' recourse to an ethic of care as a response to the limits of the justice framework in decision-making underscores the influence a person's character exerts in one's moral reasoning process, a position that is typically identified with virtue ethics (Pieper 1990; Mele 2005). The role of character is perhaps best appreciated in cases where the ethic of care in itself could be misused and employed for motives that otherwise intend to serve one's personal interest or to obtain a personal benefit. A case in point would be a school administrator who may manifest caring actions toward a particular group of faculty to the detriment of other members of the department. These circumstances may in fact lead to unfair treatment and favoritism at the workplace. Another example would be situations where school administrators may adopt caring behavior toward certain colleagues to gain support in a department where factions among faculty and administrators are common. In both instances, caring attitudes and behavior by school administrators cease to reflect the authentic meaning of an ethic of care characterized by the willingness to help others out of friendship and by acts of courtesy and kindness born of a sincere appreciation and respect for every person.

### **Ethic of profession**

The third perspectives that define the ethical reasoning processes of Filipino college deans in this study is the ethic of profession. From this perspective, the deans' ethical decisions focused on the moral aspects or dimensions of school leadership and the teaching profession. In many cases, the deans' rationale for decisions adopted from the perspective of justice or care is further enhanced by their views and experience as educators. Concretely, the deans argued for the need to recast the traditional notions of justice and fairness when handling cases of individual students and teachers and the need to apply the principle of individual differences as a teaching principle. The latter provides legitimacy to the disparity in the treatment teachers are expected to give each individual learner. Further, the deans articulated their views on the goals of education as the achievement of individuals' self realization, and considered their role as educators in contributing to the development of their students' human potential as the rationale behind administrative decisions framed from an ethic of care perspective. On exercising their duty of care, these deans, however, were mindful not to impose their own decisions but to respect the autonomy of individuals, often encouraging students to take an active role in the process of their growth and development. For instance, when handling cases of teachers or students undergoing personal crises, deans assumed a non-direct approach to problem solving—reminiscent of models from humanistic psychology (Ornstein and Hunkins 2009)—giving ample room for people to explore and discover for themselves the source of their personal conflicts, develop self awareness, accept responsibility, and nurture the desire for change.



The integration of the ethic of profession with the perspectives of justice and care by Filipino college deans in their decision-making processes finds support in several studies which propose school administrators' use of multiple ethical frameworks (Starratt 1991; Shapiro and Stefkovich 2005; Begley 2010; Eyal et al. 2011). Interestingly, these studies also relate the adoption of integrated ethical frameworks with decision-makers who reflect better and more complex levels of moral reasoning. The Filipino deans' level of expertise and skill in ethical decision-making can therefore be gleaned from the study. This could be attributed to their age, years of work experience, and level of education as suggested by prior research which established that moral judgments tend to develop in proportion to increasing age and education (Rest 1980).

In addition, the deans' decision-making processes could also have been influenced by their knowledge of ethics acquired through courses in philosophy in their postgraduate studies or through similar subjects given as part of professional development courses. It was likely these ethics courses which enhanced the deans' potential for complex moral reasoning processes. They gave the deans opportunities to acquire a deeper understanding of moral concepts and principles. This is in line with prior research suggesting people's moral judgments are influenced by the level of their moral comprehension or the cognitive capacity to understand moral concepts, and that people who comprehend higher stage concepts are better able to use these concepts when making their moral judgments (Rest 1980).

Further studies on the effect of college experience upon moral judgment indicate that college students who enjoyed academic life, the world of ideas, and the activities of reading and discussing tend to be more capable in resolving moral problems (Deember cited in Rest and Narvaez 1991). This therefore suggests the importance of the college environment. It is the context that provides continued intellectual stimulation for people to develop their capacity to reflect about moral issues through experiences brought about by numerous interactions in the campus environment and educational interventions designed to target development in moral judgment (Rest and Narvaez 1991). As majority of the Filipino deans in this study have worked for a considerable number of years in the university setting, both as faculty and academic administrators, they are therefore more likely to manifest more complex and advanced levels of moral reasoning in their decision-making processes as compared to other administrators working in non-educational institutions.

### **Ethic of critique**

Finally, this study found that the use of the ethic of critique was generally uncommon among this group of Filipino deans. In part, this could be attributed to the age and length of work experience of the participants in this study. This finds support in an earlier study which correlates the prevalent use of an ethic of critique with individuals who exhibit higher levels of idealism with respect to their ability to promote social change typical of younger educational practitioners (Eyal et al. 2011). In contrast, most of the participants in this study are older and are already in the late stage of their careers. Hence it is likely that deans in this study would tend to be more pragmatic, focus on issues that affect their immediate school context, and

overlook broader societal issues typically associated with the utilization of an ethic of critique.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the ethical decision-making processes of a group of Filipino college deans in solving ethical dilemmas using the ethical paradigms proposed in the works of Starratt (1991) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) as frameworks for the analysis. Overall, findings of this study show that majority of the deans opted to share ethical dilemmas involving people under their care such as students and teachers. Interestingly, only a few dilemmas involving university administrators and officials were shared. The study has established the deans' recourse to ethical frameworks when resolving ethical dilemmas that emerge in their tasks of academic administration such as monitoring student performance, evaluating faculty members, and maintaining school discipline. This finding gives credence to views advanced by moral leadership theorists regarding the practice of school administration as an essentially ethical undertaking, and school administrators as reflective practitioners expected to ground their administrative decisions on moral considerations (Greenfield 2004).

Among the various frameworks, this study ascertained the ethics of justice, care, and profession as the dominant ethical paradigms used by these deans. However, references to the utilization of the ethic of critique were significantly not expressed in their narratives. This study also highlighted Filipino deans' preference for adopting an integrated approach in problem-solving by using multiple ethical perspectives in framing their decisions, which in most research are correlated with people characterized by more complex levels of moral reasoning. Both findings therefore suggest the need for school administrators to be knowledgeable of ethical frameworks and normative ethical theories as foundational knowledge to have expertise in ethical decision-making skills.

This study further expands current research on ethical decision-making to administrators working in the context of higher education in the Philippine setting. Its findings therefore serve to provide insights into decisions made and reasoning processes employed by administrators to resolve ethical dilemmas that could be useful for aspiring and practicing deans. Moreover, the real life ethical dilemmas documented in this study could serve as resource base to develop live cases (McWilliams and Nahavandi 2006). These live cases can be used in formal ethics courses as validated by studies that found case studies to be an effective teaching strategy that engage students in more reflective decision-making (Bebeau et al. 1999; Shapiro and Hassinger 2007).

In addition, this study also highlighted the inherent limits of ethical reasoning processes that are exclusively based on theoretical and procedural knowledge of ethical constructs and principles, and underscored the important role played by the character of the decision-maker to ensure administrators' upright use of these ethical frameworks. As Mele (2005) contends, knowledge of ethical principles and its application to various situations are not enough for ethical behavior. Given the complexity of human behavior, virtues or good habits are equally necessary for a person to act correctly. This study

therefore advances current educational literature in proposing virtue ethics theory as a complementary ethical decision-making paradigm to the ethical frameworks commonly mentioned in existing research. It also suggests the need to craft suitable educational interventions that can foster character development. These interventions should also be integrated into ethics courses offered in educational management or professional training programs for school administrators.

Finally, this research is understandably limited in its findings due to restrictions imposed by a relatively small sample size characteristic of studies employing qualitative designs.

It is therefore suggested that the findings be further tested and enhanced by expanding research to a greater and more diverse group of participants using exploratory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell 2008).

## Appendix

See Table 3.

**Table 3** Ethical dilemmas and ethical frameworks reported by deans

Dean	Ethical dilemma	Ethical framework
1	Concerned senior faculty members ask the Dean to uphold institutional values and take action against a fellow faculty on the grounds of immoral conduct. In accordance with the university rules, the Dean needs to submit the case to the University Tribunal for investigation. However, the Dean decides to present the teacher with the option of resigning from the university to save face rather than go to the Tribunal and have her case brought out in public	Ethic of justice Ethic of care
2a	A student seeks reconsideration to remain in the program despite having failed to meet the minimum academic requirements. In accordance with the institution's shared decision-making structure, the Dean submits the case to other members of the academic council. The Dean thinks that the student should not be allowed to remain in the program but members of the panel overruled her and decided that the student be retained. Despite the decision, the Dean strongly feels exceptions should not have been granted on the grounds of fairness	Ethic of justice
2b	A teacher is about to be promoted and granted tenure. However, several faculty and administrators objects because of an issue in her past. On studying her case, the Dean discovers the issue occurred 2 years ago and that there was no evidence to support the claim against her. The Dean decides to go ahead and give her the promotion and tenure	Ethic of justice
3	A faculty member writes a letter directly to the President about a conflict with her supervisor. The President informs the Dean about the letter, and the Dean is put in a bad light as he was totally unaware of the ongoing conflict in his own College. On further investigation, the Dean finds out the teacher causing trouble was left out in the last promotion because she was not able to finish her masters degree. He also discovers she has a serious family problem. The Dean is considering confronting the teacher regarding the letter she wrote to the President. However, upon learning about her situation, he decides to speak lengthily with her and not mention anything about the letter. The Dean explains that his decision rests on his view of what it means to educate persons	Ethic of care Ethic of profession

**Table 3** continued

Dean	Ethical dilemma	Ethical framework
4	A Dean working in an institution applying for accreditation is informed by the President that part-time faculty who get below average evaluation scores should not have their contract renewed the following semester. By doing this, the school will obtain a good rating from the accreditors. The Dean thinks following this rule is a good strategy to weed out incompetent teachers and carries out the President's directive to the letter	Ethic of justice
5	The unit head and several members of the department are pressuring the Dean to dismiss a staff member on the grounds of incompetency, absenteeism and tardiness. The Dean, however, thinks the accusations are partly untrue and suspects the whole unit is 'ganging' up on the person. The Dean orders an investigation but decides that members of the panel should not come from his own department	Ethic of justice
6	A part-time teacher handling a class of senior graduating students fails majority of her students. Upon investigation, the Dean finds out the teacher has been habitually absent and late for class for no good reason. The Dean decides not to renew her contract for the next semester as she thinks the teacher could have designed interventions to help her students not to fail	Ethic of justice
7a	A female student files a complaint against a part-time teacher who had been asking her to meet him outside the university premises after office hours and even late at night as a requirement to pass the course. Upon investigation, the Dean discovers more students in the same situation and decides not to renew the teacher's contract the following semester	Ethic of justice
7b	A teacher selling tickets to students and requiring them to watch plays off-campus is given several warnings to stop as this is a violation of school policy. The teacher continues with his practice so the Dean tells him to reconsider his actions or transfer to another school	Ethic of justice
8	The dean suspends two faculty members found guilty of a serious violation of school policy. According to the faculty manual, teachers who are suspended become ineligible for promotion and merit increase. The dean, however, tried to find a way for them to at least get their yearly merit increase, but failed to do so	Ethic of justice Ethic of care
9	The Dean has to deal with several cases of underperforming faculty with regard to advising students, teaching classes, conduct of research, and attendance in meetings. The Dean believes it is her duty as academic leader to speak with these faculty members and bring to their attention the seriousness of the issues. However, the Dean finds out one of them is undergoing a personal crisis. Aware of his personal circumstances, the Dean decides to handle his case differently and be more supportive of this teacher. The Dean considers this a fair decision because she thinks each individual should be treated according to his or her circumstances	Ethic of care Ethic of profession
10	A graduating senior student is distraught because she flunked a subject and is afraid to inform her parents. The Dean decides to speak with the parents and facilitates for the student to repeat the course the next semester	Ethic of care
11	Five senior students cheat in the final exams. In compliance with school policy, the Dean dismisses them. However, she decides to help them find another college where they could reenrol and finish their degree as she was convinced these students have a good academic background	Ethic of justice Ethic of care

**Table 3** continued

Dean	Ethical dilemma	Ethical framework
12a	The parents of a student threatens to file a case with the Commission for Higher Education against the university because of an English teacher who gave their son a failing grade. The student has been placed under probation and the parents are worried their son would be dismissed from the university. On investigation the Dean, learns from the teacher that the student had submitted a plagiarized essay. Being an English teacher herself, the Dean checked the student's work and verified the claim of the teacher. The Dean decides to uphold the decision of the teacher to the disappointment of the parents. However, the Dean remains firm in her decision because she feels the student should learn a lesson about honesty from the experience	Ethic of justice Ethic of care
12b	A student who belongs to the merit class asks the Dean to make an appeal on his behalf not to be dismissed because of failing grades. In the course of the conversation, the student admits feeling dejected about his situation. The Dean decides to speak lengthily with him about his responsibility as a merit student and achieves a positive response. The student was discontinued for a year but was given the chance to enroll in another school; he later came back and continued with his studies. The Dean thinks problems are solved best when the individual concerned is helped to assume responsibility for his own actions	Ethic of care
13	The parents of an engineering student who has failed most of his subjects make an appeal for the Dean to consider retaining their son in the program. However, under university rules, this student should be dismissed. On investigation the Dean realizes the student only took an engineering course on the insistence of his parents. The Dean decides the student should be discontinued from the program and advises him to shift to another course he really likes. However, the Dean allows the student to re-enroll in the program for another semester to facilitate his transfer to another college. The Dean believes students will perform at their best when allowed to choose a course they really like to pursue	Ethic of care Ethic of profession
14	Two faculty members due for promotion are afraid their promotions will be blocked by the Chair due to factions in the Department. When asked to intervene, the Dean refuses to take sides but clearly informs the faculty on the provisions in the faculty manual regarding promotions despite instructions from the Chair not to intervene	Ethic of justice
15	A student asks the Dean for reconsideration not to be discontinued from her studies because she cannot pay her tuition. Drawing from her personal experience, the Dean feels that good students from poor families should be given support. She decides to speak with the parents and takes the initiative to find ways to pay for the tuition fee by raising funds from her own resources and from her friends	Ethic of care
16	The Dean has to deal with several cases of senior students who ask for reconsideration not to be dismissed despite having overstayed in the College beyond the years set for maximum residency. The Dean is aware most of them are from poor backgrounds. They have to work at night to cover their school expenses. In many cases, the Dean had to comply with the university rules and dismissed overstaying students. However, he makes it a point to let them know he actually considers them graduates of the university where they got most of their training	Ethic of justice Ethic of care

**Table 3** continued

Dean	Ethical dilemma	Ethical framework
17	Appointed a member of an ad hoc committee investigating a high profile case involving a university administrator, the Dean faces pressure from top ranking administrators to decide in favor of the accused. The Dean refuses to yield to pressure and insists on observing due process until the case was successfully resolved through an out of court settlement	Ethic of justice
18	A full-time faculty member is performing poorly and the Dean finds out he is undergoing a personal crisis in his marriage. With the agreement of the college academic personnel committee, the Dean decides to give him another chance. He will be retained until the next time his appointment is due for evaluation	Ethic of care

## References

- Andrade, J. (2014, July 3). CHED orders colleges, universities to tighten regulation of frats. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net>.
- Aning, J. (2008, May 24). SC upholds suspension of state university head. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net>.
- Arceo, A. (2003). *In pursuit of quality in higher education through accreditation: The Philippine experience*. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org>.
- Ayres, L. (2008). Thematic coding and analysis. In L. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 867–868). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Barrow, R. (2006). Academic ethics: Towards a coherent concept. In R. Barrow & P. Keeny (Eds.), *Academic ethics* (pp. 611–624). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Bebeau, M., Rest, J. R., & Narvaez, D. (1999). Beyond the promise: A perspective on research in moral education. *Educational Researcher*, 28(4), 18–26.
- Begley, P. T. (2005). *The dilemmas of leadership: Perspectives on the moral literacy of principals from Ontario and Pennsylvania*. Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec, 11–15 April.
- Begley, P. (2010). Leading with moral purpose: The place of ethics. In T. Bush, L. Bell, & D. Middlewood (Eds.), *The principles of educational leadership and management* (pp. 31–54). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bray, N. (2008). Proscriptive norms for academic deans: Comparing faculty expectations across institutional and disciplinary boundaries. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(6), 692–721.
- Campbell, E. (1997). Administrators' decisions and teachers' ethical dilemmas: Implications for moral agency. *Leading & Managing*, 3(4), 245–257.
- Carson, A., & Banuaziz, A. (2008). "That's not fair": Similarities and differences in distributive justice reasoning between American and Filipino children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 39(4), 493–514.
- Catacutan, R., & de Guzman, A. (2015). Bridge over troubled water: Phenomenologizing Filipino college deans' ethical dilemmas in academic administration. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*. doi:10.1177/1741143214558579.
- Chao, R. (2012). Democracy, decentralization and higher education: The Philippine case. *Asia Pacific Social Science Review*, 12(1), 31–44.
- Church, T., & Katigbak, M. (2000). Trait psychology in the Philippines. *American Behavior Scientist*, 44(1), 73–94.
- Commission on Higher Education. (2008). *Manual of regulations for private higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.ched.gov.ph>.
- Commission on Higher Education. (2014). *Higher education in numbers*. Retrieved from <http://www.ched.gov.ph>.
- Cranston, N., Ehrich, L., & Kimber, M. (2006). Ethical dilemmas: The "bread and butter" of educational leaders' lives. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(2), 106–121.

- Creswell, J. (2008). Mixed methods research. In L. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 526–529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130.
- De Boer, H., & Goedegebuure, L. (2009). The changing nature of academic deanship. *Leadership*, 5(3), 347–363.
- de Guzman, A. (2003). The dynamics of educational reforms in the Philippine basic and higher education sectors. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 4(1), 39–50.
- de Guzman, A. (2013). Quality and political reality: Complementary or contradictory? In J. Sim (Ed.), *QS Showcase-AMEA* (pp. 124–125). Singapore: QS Asia Quacquarelli Symonds.
- de Guzman, A., & Hapan, M. (2013). It takes two to tango: Phenomenologizing collaborative mindset of Filipino academic deans. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 22(3), 315–326.
- de Guzman, A., & Hapan, M. (2014). Understanding the twists and turns of academic deanship: A phenomenology of Filipino medical technology deans' struggles as organizational managers. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 23(2), 261–272.
- de Guzman, A., Uy, M., Siy, E., Torres, R., Tancioco, J., & Hernandez, J. (2008). From teaching from the heart to teaching with a heart: Segmenting Filipino college students' views of their teachers' caring behavior and their orientations as cared-for individuals. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 9(4), 487–502.
- Dedace, S. & See, A. (2009, February 2). Random drug test: A necessary lesser evil in narcotics-plagued RP. *The GMA News*. Retrieved from <http://www.gmanetwork.com>.
- Dempster, N., & Berry, V. (2003). Blindfolded in a minefield: Principals' ethical decision-making. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 457–477.
- Dempster, N., Carter, L., Freakley, M., & Parry, L. (2004). Conflicts, confusions and contradictions in principals' ethical decision-making. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42(4), 450–461.
- Diola, C. (2008, April 14). Amendments to anti-sexual harassment law pushed. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net>.
- Dockery, C. (2009). Ethical decision-making and the elementary principal: A mixed methods study (Doctoral dissertation, Texas Tech University). Retrieved December 26, 2011 from <http://dspace.lib.ttu.edu>.
- Durban, J., & Catalan, R. (2012). Issues and concerns of Philippine education through the years. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(2), 161–169.
- Englehardt, E. E., Pritchard, M. S., Romesburg, K. D., & Schrag, B. E. (Eds.). (2010). *The ethical challenges of academic administration*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Enomoto, E. (1997). Negotiating the ethics of care and justice. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 33(3), 351–370.
- Esmaque, P. (2011, March 6). Females still discriminated against in PHL schools-CHED chair. *GMA News Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.gmanetwork.com>.
- Esplanada, J. (2009, May 25). State-run college president axed for nepotism. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <http://www.inquirer.net>.
- Eyal, O., Berkovich, I., & Schwartz, T. (2011). Making the right choices: Ethical judgments among educational leaders. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(4), 396–413.
- Flores, H. (2015, March 5). CHED orders probe on suicide of Cagayan coed over unpaid fees. *The Philippine Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.philstar.com>.
- Frick, W. (2008). Principals' value informed decision-making, intrapersonal moral discord, and pathways to resolution: The complexities of moral leadership praxis. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(1), 50–74.
- Greenfield, W. D. (2004). Moral leadership in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42(2), 174–196.
- Hallak, J., & Poisson, M. (2007). *Corrupt schools, corrupt universities: What can be done?*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Hatier, C. (2014). The morality of university decision-makers. *Studies in Higher Education*, 39(6), 1085–1096.
- Hayes, N. (1997). Theory-led thematic analysis: Social identification in small companies. In N. Hayes (Ed.), *Doing qualitative analysis in psychology* (pp. 93–114). Hove: Psychology Press.
- Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. (1996). *Standards for school leaders*. Washington DC: ISLLC.
- Jimenez, J. (2014, October 13) Supreme court rulings on managing HR in universities. *The Freeman*. Retrieved from <http://www.philstar.com>.



- Jocano, F. (2000). *Work values of successful Filipinos*. Quezon City: Punlad Research House.
- Jones, T. M. (1991). Ethical decision-making by individuals in organizations: An issue-contingent model. *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), 366–395.
- Keys, M. (2001). Aquinas' two pedagogies: A reconsideration of the relation between law and moral virtue. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(3), 519–531.
- Kirby, P., Paradise, L., & Protti, R. (1992). Ethical reasoning of educational administrators: Structuring inquiry around the problems of practice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 30(4), 25–32.
- Kirkman, B., & Shapiro, D. (2001). The impact of team members' cultural values on productivity, cooperation, and empowerment in self-managing work teams. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32(5), 597–617.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). Stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to socialization. In *Essays on moral development: The psychology of moral development* (Vol. 2). San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Lacar, L. (1995). Familism among Muslims and Christians in the Philippines. *Philippine Studies*, 43(1), 42–65.
- Langlois, L. (2004). Responding ethically: Complex decision-making by school district superintendents. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 32(2), 78–93.
- Malipot, I. (2014, July 7). DepEd: School officials are liable for violation of anti-bullying law. *The Manila Bulletin*. Retrieved from <http://www.mb.com.ph>.
- Malipot, I. (2014, August 21). Task force to probe Bulacan schools' liability on death of students. *The Manila Bulletin*. Retrieved from <http://www.mb.com.ph>.
- Marshall, C. (1992). School administrators' values: A focus on atypicals. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 28(3), 368–386.
- McWilliams, V., & Nahavandi, A. (2006). Using live cases to teach ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 67(4), 421–433.
- Mele, D. (2005). Ethical education in accounting: Integrating rules, values and virtues. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 57(1), 97–109.
- Minnis, J. (2011). Ethical and moral decision-making: Praxis and hermeneutics for school leaders (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida). Retrieved December 26, 2011 from <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu>.
- Murphy, J. (2005). Unpacking the foundations of ISLLC standards and addressing concerns in the academic community. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(1), 154–191.
- Myry, L. (2003). Components of morality: A professional ethics perspective on moral motivation, moral sensitivity, moral reasoning and related constructs among university students (Academic dissertation, University of Helsinki). Retrieved February 28, 2012 from <http://ethesis.helsinki.fi>.
- Norberg, K., & Johansson, O. (2007). Ethical dilemmas of Swedish school leaders: Contrasts and common themes. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 35(2), 277–294.
- Northway, R. (2000). Disability, nursing research and the importance of reflexivity. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 32(2), 391–397.
- Ordonez, R., & Gandeza, N. (2004). Integrating traditional beliefs and modern medicine: Filipino nurses' health beliefs, behaviors, and practices. *Home Health Care Management and Practice*, 17(1), 22–27.
- Ornstein, A., & Hunkins, F. (2009). *Curriculum: Foundations, principles, and issues*. Boston: Pearson.
- Ozaeta, A. (2013, April 8). 2 students commit suicide over failing grades. *The Philippine Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.philstar.com>.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pazzibugan, D. (2014, July 12). CHED: Tertiary schools with substandard courses resorting to courts to avoid closure. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net>.
- Pieper, J. (1990). *The four cardinal virtues*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Poocharoen, O., & Brillantes, A. (2013). Meritocracy in Asia Pacific: Status, issues and challenges. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 33(2), 140–163.
- Punay, E. (2013, March 16). UP student kills self over tuition. *The Philippine Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.philstar.com>.
- QS World University Rankings (2013). *Top Universities*. Retrieved March 1, 2014 from <http://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings>.
- Reidenbach, R., & Robin, D. (1988). Some initial steps toward improving the measurement of ethical evaluations of marketing activities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 7(11), 871–879.
- Rest, J. R. (1980). Moral judgment research and the cognitive-developmental approach to moral education. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 58(9), 602–605.

- Rest, J., & Narvaez, D. (1991). The college experience and moral development. In W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Handbook of moral behavior and development* (pp. 229–245). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rest, J. R., Narvaez, D., Thoma, S. J., & Bebeau, M. J. (2000). A neo-Kohlbergian approach: The DIT and schema theory. *Educational Psychology Review*, 11(4), 291–324.
- Reyes, V. (2009). Systemic corruption and the programme on basic education in the Philippine Department of Education. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 25(4), 481–510.
- Reynolds, S., & Ceranic, T. (2007). The effects of moral judgment and moral identity on moral behavior: An empirical examination of the moral individual. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(6), 1610–1624.
- Richmon, M. J. (2003). Persistent difficulties with values in educational administration: Mapping the terrain. In P. T. Begley & O. Johansson (Eds.), *The ethical dimensions of school leadership* (pp. 33–47). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Roche, K. (1999). Moral and ethical dilemmas in Catholic school settings. In P. T. Begley (Ed.), *Values and educational leadership* (pp. 255–272). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Ryan, J. (2003). Beyond the veil: Moral educational administration and inquiry in a postmodern world. In P. T. Begley & O. Johansson (Eds.), *The ethical dimensions of school leadership* (pp. 73–95). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Ryan, G., & Bernard, H. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods*, 15(1), 85–109.
- Shapiro, J., & Hassinger, R. (2007). Using case studies of ethical dilemmas for the development of moral literacy: Towards educating for social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45(4), 451–470.
- Shapiro, J., & Stefkovich, J. (2005). *Ethical leadership and decision-making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Sherblom, S., Shipps, T., & Shreblom, J. (1993). Justice, care, and integrated concerns in the ethical decision-making of nurses. *Qualitative Health Research*, 3(4), 442–464.
- Spratlen, L. (1995). Interpersonal conflict which includes mistreatment in a university workplace. *Violence and Victims*, 10(4), 285–297.
- Sprouse, F. S. (2009). School district superintendents' response to ethical dilemmas: A grounded theory (Doctoral dissertation, Clemson University). Retrieved April 30, 2012, from <http://tigerprints.clemson.edu>.
- Starratt, R. J. (1991). Building an ethical school: A theory for practice in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 27(2), 185–202.
- Strike, K. A., Haller, E. J., & Soltis, J. F. (1998). *The ethics of school administration*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Treviño, L. K., Weaver, G. R., & Reynolds, S. J. (2006). Behavioral ethics in organizations: A review. *Journal of Management*, 32(6), 951–990.
- Troy, B. (2009). Elementary school assistant principals' decision-making analyzed through four ethical frameworks of justice, critique, care, and the profession (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida). Retrieved December 26, 2011 from <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu>.
- Undung, Y., & de Guzman, A. (2009). Understanding the elements of empathy as a component of care-driven leadership. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 3(1), 19–28.
- Viernes, R. M., & de Guzman, A. B. (2005). Filipino teachers' experiences of supportive relationships with colleagues: A narrative biographical inquiry. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 6(2), 137–142.
- Wagner, P. A., & Simpson, D. J. (2009). *Ethical decision-making in school administration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Weingartner, R. H. (2000). The moral dimensions of academic administration. In R. Barrow & P. Keeny (Eds.), *Academic ethics* (pp. 314–318). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Wolverton, M., Gmelch, W., Montez, J. & Nies, C. (2001). The changing nature of academic deanship. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report* 28 (1). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Maria Rosario G. Catacutan** handles courses on ethics at the University of Asia and the Pacific, Manila, Philippines. At present, she is finishing her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management at the University of Santo Tomas. She is also an adjunct lecturer at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Strathmore University, Kenya where she has taught for more than ten years.

**Allan B. de Guzman** handles pedagogy, management and research courses at both graduate and undergraduate levels in the University of Santo Tomas. As a prolific writer in educational policy studies, adult learning and teacher education, he has extensively published a total of 115 articles in various ISI-listed journals and at the same time serves as editor, board member and reviewer in international journals. He has received various prestigious awards which included the 2007 SEAMEO-JASPER Research Award given by the Government of Canada and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the 2006 National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP)-Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Achievement Award and the 2011 Metrobank Foundation Search Most Outstanding Teacher Award in Higher Education, among others. He was the recipient of the 2104 Australian Awards Fellowship on Curriculum Leadership at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. He is the Vice-President of the Comparative Society of the Philippines and President of the Network of Outstanding Teachers and Educators of the Metrobank Foundation (MBFI-NOTED).