Principal Meetings and the

Creation, Retention, and Transfer of Professional Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

School principals spend significant time in meetings. These meetings of the principal or principal meetings are instrumental in accomplishing leadership tasks and shaping professional knowledge in schools. Even though research literature frequently mentions principal meetings, few studies have investigated the principal meeting as a topic of research. Drawing upon the emerging meeting science literature and Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking, this study conceptualizes principal meetings as interconnected sensemaking episodes that create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge. This study employs a qualitative, multiple-case research design to examine how principal meetings develop and share professional knowledge in two municipal (public) schools in Mumbai, India. The findings suggest an initial typology of principal meetings into planned and unplanned principal meetings. Findings show that planned principal meetings are crucial to define and clarify professional responsibilities. The unplanned principal meetings help accomplish the professional responsibilities of school principals and teachers. The findings both are aligned with and elaborate literature on educational leadership, sensemaking, and meeting science and suggest future research especially focusing on the unplanned meetings of the principal.

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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation, "Principal Meetings and the Creation, Retention, and Transfer of Professional Knowledge", has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the Curry School of Education and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family who has been instrumental in helping me

embrace and complete this personal and professional endeavor.

To my dad, who had a deep wish to see me reach this milestone. His support meant the

world to me and if he were physically alive, I am sure he would be cheering me today.

To my friends, Deepti and Om in Mumbai, who were my anchors throughout this

meaningful journey.

To my friends, Boomie, Carol, Jay, and so many others in the Hamner theater with whom

I learnt to say yes and "improvise" every week.

And to life, who takes on the role of a mentor and encourages me to continue especially

during tough times. I am forever grateful.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO: Administrative Officer (a senior officer in the MCGM hierarchy to whom all the school principals from a Ward report)

BO: Beat Officer (a senior MCGM official who is usually in charge of schools in a Ward with a specific language of instruction)

DMC: Deputy Municipal Commissioner (a high-ranking MCGM official in charge of both administrative and instructional issues and approves any outside intervention or research with MCGM schools)

EO: Education Officer (a senior MCGM official who reports directly to the DMC and has frequent interaction with AOs, BOs, and school principals)

HR App: Human Resource application which runs on the mobile phone and is used by principals and teachers to enter and approve leave applications

KEF: Kaivalya Education Foundation (a non-government organization supporting school leadership in MCGM schools)

MCGM: Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai which runs free schools for poor students

PSM: *Pragat Shaikshnik Maharashtra* (Progressive Education Maharashtra), an educational improvement program run by MCGM

TFI: Teach for India

GLOSSARY

25 nikash: The 25 indicators which are assessed frequently to assess student progress as part of the educational improvement program at MCGM

Audit note: A note given to MCGM employees when they are found in violation of a bureaucratic guideline

Balwadi: Kindergarten grade

Biometric system: A system that captures the sign-in and sign-out details using MCGM staff thumbprint and then is used to calculate salaries; usually installed through a desktop in the principal office

Saral: a web-based program to capture student enrolment information at school-level

Service book: a manual record of attendance for an MCGM employee

Shala Siddhi: a school ranking program which assesses MCGM school quality

WhatsApp®: a mobile text application which allows multimedia messages to be shared across groups of participants. Referred to as WhatsApp in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Figure 1.1. Meeting hall at the Sajiv Nagar Ward office.

The image above is from a meeting hall wherein all elementary school principals

from municipal (public) schools in a Ward[1] in Mumbai are about to participate in their

monthly Ward Meeting. During my fieldwork, I noticed that during Ward Meetings like

these, the principals of schools under the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai

(MCGM) made sense of what professional responsibilities they need to focus upon.

During a typical two-hour Ward Meeting, the senior MCGM officials would take a seat

on the raised platform and speak about key professional tasks that needed to be

accomplished while the school principals occupied the plastic chairs and noted down

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[1] Mumbai city is subdivided into 24 Wards for municipal management.

what they needed to focus upon in the coming month. Occasionally, the principals would interject and ask for clarifications. At the end of the Ward Meeting, the principals would head back to their schools with their Ward Meeting notes. A few days later, these notes from the Ward Meeting would be used by the school principals to formulate the agenda and talk of the Staff Meetings in their schools. In the Staff Meeting, the principal would speak about professional tasks and teachers would ask for clarifications. Even though many points mentioned in these Staff Meetings were repeated every month, principals and school teachers consistently told me that these Staff Meetings were necessary for them to make sense of their professional responsibilities.

Although the clarification of professional responsibilities as a key purpose of meetings might seem trivial, I would argue, from the evidence in this dissertation, that this was in fact crucial in terms of finding focus. MCGM school principals, for instance, received almost 500 messages every month through texts and emails related to multiple and shifting professional responsibilities.[2] It was the meetings of the principal (both planned and unplanned) which helped the MCGM principals and teachers focus on and even accomplish key professional responsibilities. These findings have broader consequences for the domain of educational leadership, sensemaking (Weick, 1979), meeting science, and organizational learning. These findings also challenge the assumption that technology could replace the everyday social interactions of the principal: the principal meeting.

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[2] All MCGM school principals referred to in this dissertation are elementary (K-8) school principals. Fieldwork showed that each MCGM principal in the Sajiv Nagar Ward received around 20 messages a day which translates to about 500 messages in a month.

In the rest of this Chapter, I outline the theoretical background behind the study of principal meetings and lay out the methodology and research questions which guide this dissertation. First, I start with an overview of the various ways that educational scholars have frequently mentioned the meetings of the principal but have tended to focus on other substantive aspects of educational administration and leadership. I describe how the emerging literature on "meeting science" provides explanatory frameworks to examine how meeting-level components and processes (e.g., participant composition, meeting artefacts, meeting location) are connected to school principal practice and to the larger contexts of educational institutions. Second, I present the definition of principal meetings as used in this dissertation. Third, I describe the problem statement guiding this dissertation by focusing on how principal meetings connect with professional knowledge. Here, I draw again upon the meeting science literature to illustrate connections between meetings and professional knowledge. Fourth, I set out my research question that guide this dissertation. Fifth, I present the research methodology which was undertaken to answer the research questions. I then describe the delimitations of this dissertation and conclude this Chapter with a preview of the remaining Chapters of this dissertation.

Principal Meetings in Literature

Principal meetings comprise a substantial time in the work life of a school principal, at least 50% of their day (Crisp, 2017; Johnson, 2009; Mintzberg, 1973; Wolcott, 1973).[3] Nonetheless, we have little understanding of the forms and functions of

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[3] I supplement the slightly older Wolcott and Mintzberg's references by more recent accounts as examples of a day in the life of the principal. The account by principal Scott Crisp gains reliability because it is presented as an exemplar on the U.S. Dept of Education website. I had expected to find more scholarly accounts of principal time spent in meetings. Unfortunately, although bodies of education literature (e.g.

the formal and informal work encounters of the school principal (Wolcott, 1973) and whether and in what ways these principal meetings compare across schools and school principals. A research study of principal meetings in relation to tasks of school leadership has yet to be undertaken even though principal meetings are frequently noted in bodies of scholarly literature within and beyond education.

In education literature, principal meetings have been prominent in a diverse range of scholarly literature dating back almost a century when planning was suggested as the key to conduct effective principal meetings (Smith, 1919). In the more recent past, bodies of scholarly literature that mention principal meetings include principal time-use (Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, 2010; Grissom et al., 2015), principalship (Hedges, 1991; Weldy, 1974; Wolcott, 1973), school improvement (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008; Duke, 2006; Schildkamp, Handelzalts, & Poortman, 2017), policy implementation (Coburn, 2005; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002), and professional learning communities (DuFour, 2002; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999).

Although not as prominent in educational literature, principal meetings appear in other bodies of scholarly work like management (Mintzberg, 1973; Pondy, 1989), organizational decision-making (March & Olsen, 1976), and professional psychology (Alpert, 1979).

For the most part, however, principal meetings have been used by educational researchers to investigate other topics (e.g., Datnow, Lockton, & Weddle, 2019; Scribner et al., 1999). The mention of principal meeting in such literature serves only to illuminate

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principal time-use studies) mention meetings, they do not indicate the percentage of a principal's workday comprising meeting (e.g., Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010).

the processes of school improvement (Scribner et al., 1999) or the intricacies of enforcing accountability (Datnow et al., 2019).

The emerging research on meetings provides educational leadership scholars an opportunity to study the meetings of the principal. The scholars of "meeting science" or researchers who study "the psychological, sociological and anthropological consequences of meetings at work" (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015; p. 4) have drawn attention to the meeting itself as a powerful form of social interaction. In her seminal work, *The Meeting: Gatherings in Organizations and Communities*, Schwartzman (1989) argued that the significance of meetings had been severely underappreciated in the study of groups and organizations. By defamiliarizing the all too familiar form of the meeting, she provided researchers an opportunity to examine how meeting-level components and processes (e.g., participant composition, meeting norms of interaction, meeting location) were connected to professional practice and to larger contexts of organizations and institutions. Almost three decades after Schwartzman's (1989) classic, the literature on meetings has evolved to provide empirical evidence and explanatory frameworks on meetings. The recent publication of the *Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science* (Allen et al., 2015) could help educational leadership scholars draw upon explanatory frameworks on meetings to consider meetings themselves as a topic worthy of investigation.

Defining Principal Meetings

Although meetings have been defined in myriad ways, there is no formal widely accepted definition of *principal meetings* (Peters, 2017). Hence, this dissertation adapts

the definitions of meetings given by other eminent meeting scholars to the work of the school principal.

Schwartzman (1989) defines meetings as, "communicative events involving three or more people who agree to assemble for a purpose ostensibly related to the functioning of an organization or group" (p. 7). Allen et al. (2015) define meetings as, "purposeful work-related interactions occurring between at least two individuals that have more structure than a simple chat, but less than a lecture" (p. 4).

Applying the above two definitions to the work of a school principal, this proposal defines principal meetings as *deliberate, work-related interactions of the school principal and at least one more person linked to school functioning*.[4]

Principal Meetings and Professional Knowledge

Research on school principalship and educational reform suggests that the meetings of the principal or principal meetings play a significant role in shaping the professional knowledge of teachers and principals (Coburn, 2005; Honig, 2014; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Mangin, 2007). Strengthening professional knowledge of principals and teachers in schools has been associated with school improvement, achieving instructional coherence, and building school capacity (King & Bouchard, 2011; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). However, the research around shaping professional knowledge in schools tends to focus on the role of the school

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[4] Both Schwartzman (1989) and Allen et. al (2015) highlight that organizational meetings are an essentially local phenomenon and make most sense when studied in their situational context. However, this does not mean that meetings must always happen within the geographical confines of their organizational setting. (Yarrow, 2017). In the same way, principal meetings, though being closely linked to a professional role within the school, frequently occur beyond school boundaries (e.g., the Ward Meeting) and are included in this definition.

principal and not on the principal meeting itself as a topic of research which shapes

professional knowledge: a gap that this dissertation addresses. In other words, this

dissertation considers principal meetings as active agents of shaping professional

knowledge. What I am suggesting here is a reversal of the conventional framing of

meetings which retains the focus on the school leader and considers meetings as

something that principals do (e.g., Grissom et al., 2015; Gronn, 1983; Horng, Klasik, &

Loeb, 2010; Wolcott, 1973). In this dissertation, I urge the reader to consider the

principal meeting more than acts which serve the goals of the principal and see the

principal meeting as an educational leadership phenomenon with its own elements (e.g.,

meeting participants, norms of interaction, meeting location) with the principal as an

inseparable and important participant. Therefore, it is the principal meeting which plays a

role in shaping professional knowledge.

Argote and Miron-Spektor (2009) who study professional knowledge in

organizations parse the concept of organizational learning into the creation, retention, and

transfer of professional knowledge.[5] However, since the term "professional knowledge"

has been defined in multiple ways and is often underpinned by competing ideologies

(Dickson, 2007), it would be useful to define professional knowledge here. This

dissertation builds on King's (2009) definition of professional knowledge as "justified

personal belief" (King, 2009, p. 3) operating within an organizational context.

Professional knowledge, as defined herein, includes both tacit and explicit dimensions of

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[5] As I will describe in Chapter 2 and discuss in Chapter 5, these processes are intermingled.

professional knowledge and has a more flow-like nature which courses through the organization (Patriotta, 2003).

The focus on professional knowledge in relation to principal meetings is supported by three factors: (a) significance of teacher and principal professional knowledge to schools (Clandinin & Connelly, 2016; Mangin, 2007; Scribner et al., 1999); (b) importance of principal meetings in influencing professional knowledge in schools (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Coburn, 2005; Honig, 2014); and (c) potential of principal meetings in illuminating the dynamics around the creation, retention and transfer of professional knowledge in schools (Scott, Dunn, Williams, & Allen, 2015; Yarrow, 2017).

The development and shaping of professional knowledge in schools has occupied a prominent place of attention for educational scholars studying teacher professional growth and learning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2016; Cosner & Jones, 2016; Philpott & Oates, 2016; Scribner et al., 1999). The professional growth of school principals themselves is underpinned by efforts to improve their professional knowledge as indicated by scholars of educational leadership, school improvement, and policy implementation (Hallinger, 2003; Honig, 2014; Mangin, 2007).

The various references to principal meetings in scholarly literature suggest that these routine and commonplace forms of social interaction play a significant mediating role in shaping not only the professional knowledge of teachers (Coburn, 2005; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982) but also in influencing the professional knowledge of the school principals themselves (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Honig, 2014; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1993). Wolcott's (1973) description of the various principal meetings

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highlights them as settings that bring together multiple actors from different epistemic concentrations (e.g., school subjects in grade-level meetings), functional communities (e.g., school staff, teachers, experts in cross-school faculty meetings), and communities of practice (e.g., meetings of the principal association meetings) to provide an avenue to develop and refine professional knowledge. The meetings of the school principal provide an avenue which not only reduces the dispersion of knowledge (Cohendet & Llerena, 2003; Hodgson, 2008) but also helps to define what counts as professional knowledge by structuring the unknown in the environment through enactment (Weick, 1995).

Principal meetings may provide a unique and powerful lens in illuminating the dynamics of shaping professional knowledge, as evidenced through the emerging scholarly work on organizational meetings (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015; Yarrow, 2017). For instance, Yarrow's (2017) ethnographic study compares meeting across two contexts (a site meeting at a heritage building and a workplace meeting in the offices of a heritage preservation agency) as empirical cases to describe and explain how heritage knowledge and expertise is created and reproduced. Her analysis demonstrates the importance of meetings as organizational devices that illuminate not merely the shaping but the very redefinition of knowledge. Duffy and O'Rourke (2015) present an uncommon conceptualization of workplace meetings not as isolated, single episodes of interaction; but meetings as a collective, shaping organizational sensemaking and knowledge processes. The interconnections between meetings suggested by Duffy and O'Rourke provide theoretical and analytic constructs to study the knowledge discourses flowing through organizations and institutions.

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To summarize the discussion so far, the paucity of research on principal meetings as a research topic has prevented scholars from offering rich theoretical and/or empirical accounts of the exact nature or role that principal meetings play in shaping professional knowledge in schools. We do not know the relationship between different kinds of principal meetings and the shaping of professional knowledge within a school or across schools. Since meetings gain meaning within a particular context (Sprain & Boromisza-Habashi, 2012), research has yet to explore the ways principal meetings shape professional knowledge differently across contexts (schools). On a more micro-level, research has yet to provide insights into the nature of relationship between components of principal meetings (e.g., member composition, talk, location) and professional knowledge.

Conceptual Framework

This study provides an approach to study how principal meetings create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge by adapting elements from frameworks suggested by researchers on meetings (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015) and scholars of professional knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, 2016; King, 2009). Sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995) and a systemic view of meetings (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015) provide key conceptual frames to study how principal meetings are connected to school principal and teacher professional knowledge. For the purposes of this study, principal meetings are conceptualized as *interconnected sensemaking episodes*.

Sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995) provides terms and processes to explore the meaning-making of participants during meeting interaction. Weick's work has had an

enormous influence on organizational studies (Maitlis, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015) and has been used in education literature to deconstruct and explain the social nature of teacher meaning-making (Allen & Penuel, 2014; Coburn, 2001; Spillane et al., 2002). Sensemaking (Weick, 1995) has also been used in research to signify the role of the school principal in shaping ideas that influence teacher interpretation and knowledge (Coburn, 2005; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). This proposal emphasizes the role of the sensemaking processes of enactment, selection and retention (Weick, 1995) through which participants filter information to enact an environment, thereby co-constructing their reality.

A close analysis of the content of and interconnections among principal meetings is the second important feature of this study. For this analysis, this dissertation uses frameworks and analytical constructs suggested by meeting scholars (e.g., Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015). The study draws upon components of meeting episodes proposed by Schwartzman (1989) which include meeting talk, meeting participant composition, norms of interaction, and meeting location. These meeting components are augmented by borrowing analytical constructs from Duffy and O'Rourke's (2015) conceptualization of meetings as a collective or as interconnected episodes. Schwartzman's work remains a key reference in the study of meetings and her scheme, according to Sprain and Boromisza-Habashi (2012) "provides scholars studying meetings with a way to see meetings and beyond them that is, to see the communication processes enacted in and sustained by meetings" (p. 182).

The framework and analytical constructs borrowed from meeting scholars fit well with the conceptual frame of meetings as sensemaking episodes. Both Schwartzman

(1989) and Duffy and O'Rourke (2015) explicitly assume that meetings are sensemaking forms (Weick, 1995) that can illuminate the organizational systems in which they are located and could become mechanisms of knowledge processes within an organization (Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015).

Context

The context for this study is two municipal (free, public) schools in Mumbai, India under the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). The study began with an intention to study principal meetings around an educational improvement program in MCGM called *Pragat Shaikshnik Program* (PSM) and later included other important initiatives at MCGM as I will describe in Chapter 3. PSM centers on improving educational quality in schools by strengthening teacher professional knowledge. In addition, some of the municipal schools implementing PSM are also in the midst of participating in a principal support program that encourages a deliberate structure to conduct principal meetings in service of PSM.

Principal meetings, research suggests, shape knowledge about educational programs which is rarely constructed and made sense of by teachers and school principals in the way envisioned by policy makers and/or educational leaders (Cohen & Ball, 1990). The PSM program has significant areas of ambiguity which become crucial in considering principal meetings as sensemaking mechanisms (Weick, 1995). Scholars like Coburn (2001) emphasize that teacher sensemaking (Weick, 1995) of educational programs is complex, prone to multiple interpretations, and necessarily involves meetings in helping teachers come to a shared understanding of the "implied pre-suppositions, values, and assumptions" (Werner, 1980, p. 62) which underlie program efforts. Further,

the episodic nature of meetings does not easily permit us to see the deep interconnections between how sensemaking interactions within one meeting influence other meetings and shape the overall flow of school knowledge discourse (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015). Therefore, programs like PSM, provide a rich avenue to explore how principal meetings might shape sensemaking efforts in schools.

Modified Research Questions

It is with the above-mentioned context in mind, that the dissertation proposal suggested an initial set of research questions (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed account). Preliminary fieldwork indicated that principal meeting topics of the MCGM school principals varied month from month and included talk on other events like the implementation of the biometric system and service books besides PSM. Hence, the initial research questions were modified to exclude the specific reference to the quality improvement program (PSM) and included other initiatives that were frequent topics of principal meetings. The modified research question and the sub-questions for this study are as follows:

How do principal meetings create, transfer, and retain professional knowledge?

1. How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

2. How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

3. How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

Research Methods

To answer the above research questions, a five-month qualitative multiple-case study of principal meetings was conducted. This study was conducted across two research sites: municipal schools in Mumbai. The study followed an emergent research design and progressively focused (Parlett & Hamilton, 1975) towards specific planned and unplanned principal meetings. The study used participant observation, interviews, and document reviews to collect data. Data analysis was done through multiple methods including coding, memoing, vignettes, and context charts.

Delimitations

This study is delimited by the following elements:

1. The study focuses only on planned and unplanned principal meetings at two MCGM schools with different languages or mediums of instruction: Sajiv Nagar Hindi (SNH) and Sajiv Nagar Marathi (SNM) in Mumbai.

2. The principal meetings considered for analysis are the ones which occur with teachers, other principals, and senior MCGM officials. Principal meetings with other school related participants (parents, students, school staff) were not analyzed.

3. Two types of planned principal meetings were considered: the Staff Meeting and the Ward Meeting.

4. The study was conducted in the period between October 2018 and March 2019 and not a whole academic year.

Outline of Chapters

The rest of the Chapters in this dissertation proceed accordingly. In Chapter 2, I set up the theoretical perspective of this dissertation. I begin with an overview the educational literature which mentions principal meetings to establish the prevalence and relevance of principal meetings to school principalship. In Chapter 2, I also define and detail out the conceptual framework for this study to highlight principal meetings as interconnected sensemaking episodes which create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge. I also briefly lay out the national context of this study by describing school principalship in India.

In Chapter 3, I illustrate the design of the research for answering the research questions proposed under this study. I describe the two research sites which were chosen to study different cases of principal meetings. I also detail the MCGM research context and the preliminary findings which led to the modified research questions. In Chapter 3, I also describe the processes of data collection that I used, including participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, and document review. I also present, with worked out examples, the tools of data analysis I used, including codes, memos, vignettes, and contact summary sheets. I also explain my efforts to establish trustworthiness. I end Chapter 3 with a description of the limitations of this study.

In Chapter 4, I present the findings of this study with respect to both planned and unplanned meetings of the MCGM principals who participated in this study. I segregate the findings with respect to each research question. I provide various excerpts from meetings, participant interviews, and documents collected to substantiate the findings.

In Chapter 5, I discuss findings pertaining to each research question primarily in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. I also draw upon other bodies of literature (e.g., embodied interaction) to situate the findings. Chapter 5 shows how the findings agree with and elaborate the theoretical articulations around principal meetings and professional knowledge. I subsequently focus on the unplanned principal meeting and discuss its potential for future research efforts. I end Chapter 5 with a summary of the key findings, discussion points, and implications of this dissertation for both academic scholars as well as practitioners.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

"I sure had tired butt this morning—we met at 8.15 for that committee on

data processing and then we stayed for an elementary principals' meeting that lasted till

12.15 p.m."

- Ed, Elementary School Principal (Wolcott, 1973, p. 95).

The quote above points to the long and the many meetings that pervade a school

principal's life. Wolcott (1973) often remarked of the endurance and patience that the

principal meetings demanded of Ed, the elementary school principal he shadowed for

over two years in his ethnography, *The Man in the Principal's Office.* Ed is not alone in

not being particularly fond of meetings; other school principals too have expressed

frustration at their long and inefficient meetings (e.g., Hedges, 1991; Weldy, 1974).

Hence, it is not surprising that improving meetings is the focus of several trade

publications aimed at school principals (Boudett & City, 2014; Delehant & von Frank,

2006; Eller & Eller, 2006; Wilsen, 2010).[6]

Despite the presence of literature targeted at school principals which provides

various strategies to control meetings and make them predictable, meetings, "push back

in ways that are often difficult to understand" (Schwartzman, 2015, p. 737), a sentiment

that Ed would readily acknowledge. When describing one of his meetings, the principal

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[6] I use the term trade publications to include all magazines, journals, and books aimed at practitioners.

Ed leans over and whispers to Wolcott, "It always seems to take us an hour for the first item on the agenda, no matter what it is." (Wolcott, 1973, p. 95).

In the more recent past, bodies of scholarly literature that mention principal meetings include principal time-use (Camburn et al., 2010; Grissom et al., 2015), the principalship (Hedges, 1991; Weldy, 1974; Wolcott, 1973), school improvement (Chrispeels et al., 2008; Duke, 2006; Schildkamp, Handelzalts, et al., 2017), policy implementation (Coburn, 2005; Spillane et al., 2002) and professional learning communities (DuFour, 2002; Scribner et al., 1999). Based on these notations of principal meetings, I would suggest that the meetings of the principal have been largely noted by scholars as settings to explore other substantive phenomena like decision-making, group dynamics or principal time-use.

To summarize the discussion so far, I would suggest that the practical importance of principal meetings and the articulated frustrations of being a part of them have received more attention in trade publications and scholarly literature than theoretical frameworks that highlight the underlying assumptions around what counts as principal meetings and/or conceptual linkages connecting principal meetings to notions of school leadership practice or organizational knowledge. In contrast, the principal meeting as a scholarly topic has largely escaped research attention: a gap that this study highlights and addresses.[7]

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[7] One of the rare examples of scholarly research focused on meetings in schools can be observed in Riehl's (1998) study of faculty meetings. Riehl (1998) argues to place "school meetings" as a topic of study important for educational leadership because these meetings are occasions important for accomplishing work, dialogue and organizing structuration of social order in schools. However, this work too, does not focus exclusively on meetings of the principal.

This study draws upon the emerging scholarly literature on meetings as a research topic. The scientific study of workplace meetings commenced a few decades ago with the publishing of *The Meeting: Gatherings in Organizations and Communities* by Schwartzman (1989). In her book, Schwartzman (1989) describes her ethnographic journey observing and explicating meetings within an American mental health organization and makes a compelling case to view the meeting itself as a topic for study. Since her study, scholars have responded to her call by developing theories and documenting empirical evidence which place meetings as an active and emergent phenomenon in organizations (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Kocsis, de Vreede, & Briggs, 2015; Romano & Nunamaker, 2001; Scott, Shanock, & Rogelberg, 2012) culminating in the recent publication of a handbook on "meeting science" or the study of what happens before, during, and after a workplace meeting (Allen et al., 2015).

The study of workplace meetings spans across multiple literatures (see Table 2.1). In their various representations in literature, meetings capture knowledge (Riles, 2017), define expertise (Yarrow, 2017), create capacity (Brown & Green, 2017), structure time (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015), and are endowed with the potential to shape the enactment and outcomes of leadership (Allen & Rogelberg, 2013; Kocsis et al., 2015; Odermatt et al., 2017). This ubiquity, diversity, and potential of meetings to, "order relations, understanding, and knowledge" (Brown et al., 2017, p. 10) makes them valuable mechanisms to offer insights into the role of educational leadership in the development and spread of professional knowledge.

Table 2.1

Research on Meetings Across Different Bodies of Literature

Research literature	Reference
Anthropology	Alexander, 2017; H. Brown & Green, 2017; H. Brown et al., 2017
Communication Studies	Van Praet, 2009; Volkema & Niederman, 1996
Management	Fox, Pozen, & Ganger, 2010; Odermatt et al., 2017
Organization Behavior	Haug, 2013; Rogelberg, Scott, & Kello, 2007
Sociology	Boden, 1994; Schwartzman, 1989

This Chapter builds on the scientific study of workplace meetings, drawing upon theoretical and empirical analyses of meetings across multiple research domains to situate principal meetings at the center of school leadership practice. For the purpose of this study, principal meetings are defined as deliberate, work-related, interactions of the principal and at least one more person linked to school functioning. Using this definition, this study conceptualizes principal meetings as *interconnected sensemaking episodes* that structure and shape professional knowledge as I will describe later. The study explores meetings in the context of municipal schools in Mumbai, India.

The Chapter is organized into three sections. Following this introduction, section one reviews the ways principal meetings are noted in educational literature to arrive at four conceptualizations of meetings involving the principal. This section ends with providing empirical evidence which highlights the significance of principal meetings to principal practice. Section two proposes the conceptual framework for this study. This section begins by defining professional knowledge in the context of schools and shows how principal meetings bring together talk and text to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge. The section subsequently presents key theoretical constructs

which might be used to frame how principal meetings develop and share professional knowledge and provides a rationale for selecting sensemaking (Weick, 1995) as the most relevant and useful theoretical perspective for this study. Section three argues for studying principal meetings in the context of *Pragat Shaikshanik Maharashtra* (PSM) educational program being implemented in government schools across Mumbai. This section also provides a brief historical narrative of the role of the Indian school principal which is likely to be helpful to the reader from other contexts.

Principal Meetings in Educational Literature: A Review

Principal meetings as a unit of analysis in research, either as single, isolated episodes or collectively, is largely absent. A web search using keywords like "principal meetings" or "administration meetings" with search engines like Google Scholar, EBSCOHOST, Science Direct, and ERIC shows fewer than five research articles on meetings involving the principal as the primary topic. Textbooks on principalship do not list meetings as part of their index (e.g., Drake & Roe, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1995) or provide a formal typology of principal meetings. Hence, this review of principal meetings in educational literature was arrived at through the following three methods (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005): (a) protocol driven search, (b) snowballing, and (c) academic network suggestions as described below.

The protocol driven search used the keyword "meeting" in combination with the terms "principal", "administration", "leadership", and "faculty" on Google Scholar, EBSCOHOST, and ERIC. The search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles published in major journals since 1970. The results of the search displayed articles which mentioned meetings but provided no indication about whether these meetings included

the school principal or used the term "meeting" to mean fulfillment (e.g., meeting student needs). Hence, a closer reading of the articles was done to confirm whether the usage of the term meeting fit the definition of a principal meeting as described earlier. This protocol driven search led to an initial collection of 25 research articles and trade literature mentioning principal meetings.

The initial collection of relevant research literature on principal meetings was complemented through "snowballing". The initial research literature collected was scanned for references to books and articles on meetings of the principal which, in turn, were read to verify that they fit the definition of principal meetings and added to the collection.[8] The results from this method was found extremely rich in identifying principal meeting literature, especially books and articles which did not have "meetings" in their indexes or titles.

Finally, suggestions were taken from my academic network, comprising known research colleagues, asking them about research literature mentioning meetings involving the principal, which were added to the collection after similar verification.[9]

The academic and trade publications literature collected from the three methods mentioned above comprised 71 research articles and books and was classified according to the explicit or implicit references to the goals and expected outcomes of the principal

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[8] This literature did not emerge in the initial research because the titles of such articles did not include the keyword "meeting". For instance, Gronn's (1983) scholarly work describes three principal meetings but is titled as "Talk as the work: The accomplishment of school administration".

[9] This review does not claim to be an exhaustive analysis of all references to principal meetings across all streams of educational literature. As stated earlier, the term "meeting" is often not indexed and hence does not always come up in search results.

meeting in relation to school leadership.[10] Sometimes, the meeting goals and outcomes had to be inferred by a close reading of the text , an exercise made difficult because authors rarely mention these goals explicitly (e.g., Scribner et al., 1999) or other elements of meeting (e.g., participant talk, norms of interaction, participant composition, meeting location) which Schwartzman (1989) suggests are helpful in deconstructing a meeting.

This section on the review of principal meetings in educational literature has been divided into two parts. The first part of this section teases out references to principal meetings in different bodies of knowledge across educational literature (e.g., school improvement, school management, policy implementation) and suggests four ways in which education scholars have characterized principal meetings. As stated earlier, principal meetings have not been considered a research topic, hence each of these characterizations is based upon the inferences of goals and outcomes of principal meetings mentioned in educational research literature and trade publications. Each characterization presents a particular, but partial view of the principal meeting as a unique leadership phenomenon, highlighting specific aspects, and minimizing others, an approach similar to that followed by other scholars of work-place meetings (Scott, Allen, Rogelberg, & Kello, 2015). I illustrate the various characterizations in a table in Appendix A. The second part of the section draws upon educational literature to focus into the relationship between principal meetings and their essential participant, the school principal. The purpose of this second section is to establish the significance of principal meetings to school leadership practice.

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[10] I used Schwartzman's (1989) distinction between goals and outcomes here. Goals refer to what the principal wants to accomplish through their meeting (e.g., following a specific reading policy) while the outcomes are organizational (e.g., school improvement).

Principal Meetings in Educational Literature: Four Characterizations

Principal meetings have a wide presence in educational and trade publications literature with a variety of meeting labels, meeting descriptions, meeting outcomes, and principal meeting goals (see Appendix A). As I illustrate in Appendix A, these references to principal meetings in educational literature may be seen as underpinned by four characterizations. The first characterization of principal meetings as "waste of time" is largely drawn from the practitioner-oriented literature briefly mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter which considers principal meetings as tedious and inefficient, therefore in need of control. The second characterization of principal meetings as "intervention tools" is largely drawn from the literature on school improvement which considers principal meetings as strategic and tactical tools of designing, supporting, and sustaining improved school performance. The third characterization of principal meetings as "a collaboration technology" is drawn from the literature on the functioning of professional communities in schools and the processes around the use of evidence in improving student performance. The characterization of principal meeting as a technology considers meetings as mechanisms to organize people, knowledge, attention, and tools. Finally, characterization of principal meetings as "routine events" in school leadership is informed largely by the literature on principalship and educational administration and considers principal meetings as an everyday, unchanging phenomenon which fades into the background while the principal and research attention is focused on leadership tasks and the nature of leadership practice. Each characterization begins with a description of the key aspects of principal meetings. Subsequently, specific examples of how education

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scholars have addressed principal meetings are provided for a more nuanced understanding of the characterization.

Principal meetings as wasteful. Principal meetings as a waste of time and effort is perhaps the most popular conceptualization of these meetings across both academic literature (e.g., Duke, 2006; Hedges, 1991; Weldy, 1974) and trade publications (e.g., Boudett & City, 2014; Kaye, 2011) conjuring up images of long, aimless, and tedious interactions, invoking indifference and even sleep (Wolcott, 1973).

In academic literature, the principal meeting as wasteful underpins both scholar interpretation of principal meetings (e.g., Duke, 2006; Hedges, 1991) and principals' own references to their meetings (Weldy, 1974; Wolcott, 1973). Scholars like Hedges (1991) caution principals against being involved in too many meetings. More recently, Duke (2006) labels some meetings of the principal on school improvement as a complete waste of time. Principals, too, share this characterization of their meetings (Weldy, 1974). Twenty-nine of the 40 administrators in a study of time-use considered meetings as the top wasters of time describing their meetings as unnecessary, too long, aimless, and poorly-planned (Weldy, 1974). Ed, the principal from Wolcott's (1973) book, "endured meetings he was expected to attend and consciously attempted to be patient when meetings held no interest" (p. 95).

The practitioner-oriented publications literature also regards principal meetings as wasteful, unless they are controlled (Boudett & City, 2014). This literature offers tips and techniques to control meeting talk and processes to make the meetings productive and purposeful. A key search on Amazon for "principal meetings" displays over 100 books for administrators indicating what the administrators could do to make their meetings

more efficient and productive (e.g., Boudett & City, 2014) by controlling time and action

through planning an agenda (Delehant & von Frank, 2006), abolishing tedium through

energizers (Eller & Eller, 2006), and using perfect phrases in meetings that would

enhance their reputation and that of their schools (Wilsen, 2010).

Principal meetings as intervention tools. Principal meetings as intervention

tools (Schwartzman, 1989; Scott, Allen, et al., 2015) to improve school performance is

another key characterization of these meetings in educational literature (e.g., Chrispeels

& Martin, 2002; Duke, 1987; Duke, Carr, & Sterrett, 2013; Fullan, 2002; Scribner,

Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999) and also occurs in trade publications (City,

Elmore, Fierman, & Teitel, 2009). Principal meetings are instantiated through labels like

leadership team meeting (Chrispeels & Martin, 2002), School Improvement Planning

conference (Scribner et al., 1999), school review meeting (Duke & Landahl, 2011),

principal conferences (Fullan, 2002), instructional rounds (City et al., 2009) or the faculty

meeting (King & Bouchard, 2011), and roundtables (Duke, 2006). As intervention tools,

principal meetings appear in the literature either as a strategic apparatus of shaking up

status-quo in times of urgent action and/or as tactical instruments of problem-solving,

professional knowledge sharing, and developing action plans for sustained improvement

in school performance.

When interpreted as strategic intervention tools, an example of principal meetings

could comprise a school-wide review meeting, orchestrated by the school principal,

where long term goals are set and reviewed and each grade-level team presents data to

assess their progress towards improvement goals (e.g., Duke & Landahl, 2011). As a

strategic device, such school-wide meetings may be considered as symbolic enactments

of the systematic change in culture (Scott et al., 2015) towards transparency and accountability. Principal meetings with district officials (Chrispeels et al., 2008) may also be considered as strategic measures to align mental models of school improvement. Principals may meet in strategic inter-school professional networks to shape teaching and learning in their schools (City et al., 2009).

 An inference of principal meetings as tactical intervention tools may be drawn from examples of faculty meetings that focus on short-term planning, discuss specific instructional practices (Burch & Spillane, 2003; DuFour, 2002; Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009), and develop norms and expectations related to disciplinary issues (Graham, 2007).

Principal meetings to plan and assess parental involvement (Duke et al., 2013) and meetings amongst principals themselves to share professional knowledge and experience of implementing school improvement (Fullan, 2002; Honig, 2014) could be seen as both strategic tools to shape school culture and as tactical tools to share good practices.

Principal meeting as a collaboration technology. Principal meetings as a collaboration technology (Scott et al., 2015) or as a tool for co-ordination of school work draws heavily from the emerging scholarly and trade publications literature on teacher collaborations and the use of evidence-based decision making in schools to improve school performance (Boudett & City, 2014; Feldman & Tung, 2001; Poortman & Schildkamp, 2016; Schildkamp et al., 2017; Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). The technology metaphor builds on the notion of meetings as human technological systems that organize people (knowledge, practices, skills, perspectives), text-tools

(process-charts, data-use frameworks, assessment instruments) and attention towards common purposes like knowledge sharing, problem-solving or decision-making (Scott et al., 2015). This conceptualization of principal meetings emphasizes what happens within principal meetings: the talk, tools, and processes (Boudett & City, 2014; Poortman & Schildkamp, 2016).

As collaboration technologies, principal meetings often exemplify as well as support use of tools like data-frameworks (Poortman, Schildkamp, & Lai, 2016), with participants engaging in cyclical, iterative procedures (Schildkamp et al., 2017) during which school leaders demonstrate how, among other aspects, hypotheses may be formulated, data collected, and subsequently interpreted (Schildkamp, Poortman, et al., 2017). Schildkamp and Poortman (2015) analyze the talk within data-team meetings involving the principal to show how school leaders use collaboration as an underlying motif to nudge teachers towards possible solutions, "Our attitude in that is very important . . . We should agree about this together. . .We should address each other about it too" (p. 12).

Principal meetings as routine events. Principal meetings as routine tasks of the principal to maintain present school operations draws heavily from the literature on educational management, administration, and time-use (Duignan, 1980; Grissom et al., 2015; Gronn, 1983; Martin & Willower, 1981; Mintzberg, 1973; Spillane, Parise, & Sherer, 2011; Wolcott, 1973). This portrayal of principal meetings marks them as repetitive and usually unremarkable events which are part of a principal's daily work-life (Duignan, 1980; Horng et al., 2010; Martin & Willower, 1981; Mintzberg, 1973). At times, scholars have capitalized upon the routine nature of principal meetings to make

claims about the nature of school leadership itself (Gronn, 1983; Spillane, Camburn, & Stitziel Pareja, 2007; Wolcott, 1973).

The routine aspect of principal meetings can be observed in the principal-time use literature which studies how school leaders spend time (Camburn et al., 2010; Grissom et al., 2015; Horng et al., 2010). Horng et al. (2010) had researchers shadow principals for an entire school day and record at five-minute intervals, among other things, the nature of activity in which the principal was engaged (e.g., staff meeting, phone call). In their analysis, they focus only on the task (e.g., networking with other principals, communicating with parents) and consign the meeting to a general background context as if this form of interaction had little bearing on the leadership task being performed. Critical readers might argue that the purpose of time-use studies is only to focus on what principals do and therefore they are not supposed to highlight the forms of principal interactions. This seems fair but I would insist that principal meetings are not simply a form or generic container of principal work; rather principal meetings are inseparable from what principals do and I make this claim based on other scholarly literature on principalship. For instance, Wolcott (1973) also conducted a time and motion study of a principal's workday but as compared to the more recent time and motion studies (e.g., Horng et al., 2010), he placed the principal meetings at the center of such analysis. It is important to note that Wolcott places his descriptions and analysis of principal meetings in his Chapter titled "What a principal does: Formal encounters".

Since principal meetings are routine events, scholars have also studied the nature of interaction within principal meeting to make claims about the nature of leadership (Gronn, 1983; Spillane, 2005; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). Gronn (1984)

analyzes talk within a school council meeting to show principalship as politically clever acts, wherein school leaders use their "talkface" (p. 27) to achieve administrative control. Spillane (2001) uses examples of principal meetings to make the case that leadership practice, instead of being ascribed to one principal, is stretched over the principal, the teacher, and the school counselor.

The discussion so far on the four characterizations of principal meetings is consistent in how the literature foregrounds other phenomena (e.g., decision-making, time-use, productivity) situated within or around the principal meeting. For instance, when principal meetings have been characterized as collaboration technologies as described earlier in this section, scholarly focus has been on achieving "collaboration" rather than towards delineating meeting components like meeting talk, meeting composition, meeting location (e.g., Schildkamp et al., 2017). Although this section has been delimited by educational literature, even in non-educational literature, principal meetings have been mentioned with a lens towards studying other phenomena.[11]

This is in no way a critique of the substantive issues that educational and non-educational researchers have focused on through principal meetings (e.g., collaboration, decision making, time-use), rather I intend it to the first part of a two-part argument to give principal meetings their due as an equally relevant research topic worthy of investigation. The first part of the argument establishes that principal meetings are widely mentioned in educational and trade publications literature and suggests four partial, but

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[11] Not just in educational literature, but even in other bodies of knowledge (e.g., policy implementation, organization behavior, decision making), the principal meeting has been used as a testing ground to develop and refine theory about other topics (e.g., Ball, 1987; March & Olsen, 1976; Salo, 2008).

specific characterizations of principal meetings. Hence, this first part establishes the theoretical gap in educational administration and leadership literature. The second part, builds on the first part, to foreground principal meetings and investigates the direct connection between principal meetings and principal practice.

Principal Meetings in Relation to Principal Practice

The significance of principal meetings to principal practice has been analyzed by exploring the connections between principal meetings and principal time and the utility of principal meetings in accomplishing school leadership tasks. Principal time has been considered a scarce resource (Grissom et al., 2015; Horng et al., 2010) and accomplishing school leadership tasks effectively has been considered essential to successful school functioning (Duke et al., 2013; Gronn, 1983; Louis et al., 2010).

Principal meetings and principal time. The evidence around how much time principals spend in meetings dates back to the 1970s, and has been remarkably consistent in suggesting that these meetings comprise at least 75% of principal time.[12] Mintzberg (1973) was one of the first to study the school superintendent's role using a structured observation schedule and found that scheduled meetings comprised three-fourth of the superintendent's time. In a later work, Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie and Hurwitz (1984) used a similar structured approach to study elementary and secondary school

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[12] I do agree that these studies are a bit dated. More recent online accounts of principal time-use (Appendix D) also indicate that school principals spend at least 50% of their time in meetings (Crisp, 2017; Johnson, 2009). The account by principal Scott Crisp I would suggest, is more reliable as it is presented as an example of a day in the life of the principal on the US Dept. of Education website. These online accounts, I would suggest, are the next best alternative to gauge principal time-use in recent times because there are no systematic studies of principal time-use which clearly demarcate time spent by principals in meetings (e.g., Horng et al., 2010).

principals and found that principals spend between 74% and 82% of their time in face-to-face and telephonic meetings related to school functioning.

The richest description and longitudinal analysis of how an elementary school principal's daily existence is interwoven with meetings comes from Wolcott's (1973) ethnography of Ed Bell. If on the one hand, Wolcott's (1973) time and motion study re-indicates that almost 75% of the principal's time in spent in scheduled or unscheduled meeting encounters in a workday, what is remarkable is that Ed's meetings extended well into the night beyond the school hours, a fact that principal time-use studies are unlikely to discover because they only capture school hours data (e.g., Camburn, Spillane, & Sebastian, 2010; Horng et al., 2010). Remarks Wolcott about Ed, "Had the observations been extended to hours spent on school business in the evening, the portion of his day spent in meetings would have been greater" (p. 89).

What makes the 75% estimate of meetings comprising principal time conservative is that principals spend time towards preparing for such meetings and then reflecting on these meetings after the meetings have occurred (e.g., Cohen, Rogelberg, Allen, & Luong, 2011; Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990). Hence, what seems to be the time that principals spend "working alone" (Wolcott, 1973, p. 70) is also partly consumed by their meetings.

What are these meetings that comprise such a significant proportion of a principal's day? Appendix B presents a table indicating the several meetings of a principal during a Tuesday in January 1967 (Wolcott, 1973). An analysis of the table reveals that not only is the principal day interspersed with meetings of different durations, these meetings are held across varying physical locations (e.g., corridors, classrooms,

other schools).[13] This counteracts the dominant image of school meetings as adult interactions happening largely within the confines of the principal office or the faculty room (e.g., Boudett & City, 2014) making principal meetings akin to a flowing river of leadership discourse (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015) that courses through the school infrastructure (and beyond). Another reason which makes principal meetings significant to principal practice is underscored by how these meetings are lived examples of engagements with all stakeholders with whom principals work (e.g., students, teachers, counselors, supervisors, parents, principals of other schools).

What the table in Appendix B does not immediately reveal is how principal meetings structure principal time and movement. Take the guidance committee meeting for example. Wolcott (1973) describes that this meeting happened every Tuesday in the faculty room starting around 8 am and ran for almost 90 minutes prompting Wolcott to remark that if he were provided the hour and day, he could predict the nature and composition of the meeting the principal was engaged in. This is a bold conjecture which Wolcott backs up with a time and place distribution of principal meetings (see Appendix C) demonstrating how meetings, as a form, temporally anchor the professional life of the principal. This inseparability also begs the question: Whether and in what ways do principals accomplish their leadership functions through their meetings? Accordingly, this question is being explored in the following sub-section.

Principal meetings in performance of school leadership. This sub-section focuses on ways principal meetings relate to the accomplishment of the core practices of

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[13] The description of principal meetings in more recent online accounts of school principals also provide evidence for the claim that principal meetings have different meeting participants, duration, and locations (e.g., Crisp, 2017; Johnson, 2009).

school leadership. The Ontario Leadership Framework as presented in Louis et. al.

(2010) was chosen to anchor this section because the framework identifies, clarifies, and

classifies specific leadership practices that both directly and indirectly shape school

outcomes. Therefore, these practices are crucial to any discussion of school leadership.

Secondly, the framework's focus on leadership practices (instead of competencies for

example) aligns well with the situated and social nature of meetings. Finally, the

framework becomes appropriate to the principal's work because it gains its strength from

drawing upon a decade of research synthesizing empirical evidence most relevant to

leadership in schools (Leithwood, 2012). The references to principal meetings, gathered

through a review of the literature as described earlier in this Chapter, were analyzed to

assess their relevance and relationship to school leadership keeping in mind the core

practices suggested by Louis et al. (2010). These core practices, in turn, are further

subsumed under four categories of setting direction, developing people, redesigning the

organization, and managing the instructional program (Leithwood, 2012).

Setting direction. In their leadership role oriented towards setting directions,

successful school principals build a shared vision, make it meaningful and compelling to

their colleagues and ensure the progress of the school towards the vision (Louis et al.,

2010). The meetings of the principal form, "cycles of negotiated social construction

activities" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 434) through which leaders and stakeholders

develop the organization's vision. This social construction of vision can take place in

larger whole school principal meetings or smaller intimate conversations with specific

school member-groups. The school-wide meetings of the school principal are well

established mechanisms through which school vision is articulated and shared with the

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whole school (Fielding, 2013). In times of strategic change, whole-school meetings become "signaling devices" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 439) showing the serious intent of the leader towards change and may even be used deliberately to shake status quo to pave the way for change.

Developing people. School leaders build the capacity of their people by offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, and modeling appropriate values (Louis et al., 2010). School principals often use face-to-face meetings with their individual teachers to build professional capacity by directing attention to and restructuring the underlying norms and assumptions that guide teaching-learning behavior also called as double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978). In another study (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008), principal meetings fostered capacity of the senior leadership team in developing team norms and team roles which enhanced their ability to lead their grade levels and use these skills subsequently to facilitate grade-level meetings. Finally, principals also use their meetings to model specific strengths (e.g., data-based decision making) steering teachers to build their own professional capacity (Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015).

Redesigning the organization. Successful school principals develop and sustain a culture of collaboration and building productive relationships with families and communities (Louis et al., 2010). School principals often use their own meetings as enactments of collaboration to share information, take decisions, and plan and co-ordinate action. Duke (2006) provides examples of principal meetings during which teachers, specialists, and administrators worked together to identify struggling students and develop plans for instructional adjustments. This function draws heavily on the

notion that the various meetings of the principal are not discrete, isolated units of communication; rather they are connected to one another (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015) and what occurs in one meeting informs another creating what Tropman (2003) describes as a "decision stream" (p. 164) that shapes school success or failure.

Managing the instructional program. Successful principal develop and sustain practices that focus on teaching and learning by providing instructional support, monitoring school activity and aligning instructional resources (Louis et al., 2010). Principals often meet with their teachers before observing instruction in the classroom to support teachers in preparing their lesson plans and then conduct post-observation conferences to support teacher and student learning (DuFour, 2002). Principal meetings with school leadership teams implementing instructional innovations (Chrispeels, 2004) serve as after-action reviews which help participants discuss, interpret, monitor, and integrate new knowledge (Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015).

To conclude, this section on the review of principal meetings in educational literatures has established that principal meetings are: (a) widely prevalent in educational literature, (b) ubiquitous in a principal's daily life, and (c) essential to accomplishing key leadership tasks. Since principal meetings, as argued in this dissertation, should be considered a research topic of investigation, the natural question is: What is an important area of principal practice within which principal meetings may be situated as a research topic?

This dissertation suggests that a study of principal meetings in relation to organizational learning or the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2009) is a topic of crucial importance to educational

leadership scholars.[14] Principal meetings are likely to provide a unique and powerful lens to study the dynamics of school leadership in relation to other significant bodies of educational research like school improvement (Chrispeels & Martin, 2002), professional learning (Scribner et al., 1999), and policy enactment (Coburn, 2005). Accordingly, the next section introduces a conceptual framework that serves to underpin this dissertation which connects principal meetings and professional knowledge.

Conceptual Framework: Principal Meetings and Professional Knowledge

In the current era marked by educational reform and increased school accountability, educational leadership research literature increasingly points to the importance of the work-related interactions of the school principal in influencing organizational learning or *creating, retaining, and transferring professional knowledge* within schools (e.g., Datnow & Hubbard, 2016; Marks & Printy, 2003; Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004). Quality improvement efforts to address school performance also frequent mention principal meetings and it may be inferred that these meetings play a role in the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge (Glazer & Peurach, 2015; Peurach, Glazer, & Lenhoff, 2016; Poortman et al., 2016; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

I would also like to clarify here the use of the terms of creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge in terms of the conceptual framework which guides this dissertation. The terms creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge, as used in this dissertation, are entwined and always occur in conjunction to comprise

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[14] For a more detailed theoretical explanation of how organizational learning translates to the creation, retention and transfer of professional knowledge, see Argote and Miron-Spektor (2009)

organizational or school learning. This entwinement is further supported by work of scholars like Wilkesmann and Wilkesmann (2011) who indicate that "knowledge transfer signifies the creation of new knowledge" (p. 97). Hence, throughout this dissertation, I use the terms construction, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge to be inseparable aspects of the school learning process.[15]

The meetings of school principals play a significant mediating role not just in shaping the professional knowledge of teachers (Coburn, 2005; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982), but also in influencing the professional knowledge landscapes of the principals themselves (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Honig, 2014; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1993) thereby impacting school capacity (King & Bouchard, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Mangin, 2007; Wayman, Midgley, & Stringfield, 2006).

Although I have mentioned this before, I would like to reiterate in light of the conceptual framework that it is the principal meeting which is the center of focus and research attention in this study in contrast to the professional role of the school principal. This is not to say that school principals and their meetings are separate, rather my focus here is on the deliberate, work-related interactions of the school principal. I emphasize this because the current educational literature is more role-centric and puts the focus on the school principal (e.g., Duke & Landahl, 2011; Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Horng et al., 2010), whereas this dissertation is more episode-centric and tries to shift the scholarly focus to principal meetings.

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[15] In other words, the deconstruction of these sub-processes of organizational learning separately in relation to principal meetings is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I would discuss this further in Chapter 5 in a section focused on principal meetings and their relationship to professional knowledge.

Now that I have highlighted research literature which strongly suggests that principal meetings play a significant role in shaping professional knowledge, I will demonstrate how principal meetings are intertwined with professional knowledge by drawing upon an account of principal meeting from educational literature. In the next subsection, I first define professional knowledge and then apply this definition to the guidance committee meeting (Wolcott, 1973).

Defining Professional Knowledge

Professional knowledge is a term widely used in educational literature (Clandinin & Connelly, 2016; Hill, Ball, & Schilling, 2008; Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Sergiovanni, 1995; Shulman, 1987). Also, the interpretation of the term professional knowledge is often driven by competing ideologies and lacks a common taxonomy (Dickson, 2007).[16] This dissertation uses King's (2009) definition because it includes the tacit/explicit dimensions of professional knowledge which are salient to most definitions of knowledge (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2009; Nonaka, 1994; Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001) and provides an analytically useful three-level structure of professional knowledge of know-what, know-how, and know-why which I will describe shortly.

Professional knowledge may be defined as a "justified personal belief" (King, 2009, p. 3) operating within an organizational context and comprising both tacit and explicit knowledge.[17] Tacit knowledge, as King (2009) summarizes using Polanyi's (1966) work, is developed over long periods, is almost impossible to articulate, and lies

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[16] In addition to challenging that the term professional knowledge is not transparent in usage, Dickson (2007) provides a rich thematic organization of the definitions and interpretations of professional knowledge.

[17] I elaborate the usage of "justified personal beliefs" using examples from fieldwork in Chapter 5.

both within minds of people and within organizational processes (e.g., meetings). Explicit knowledge is articulated through text and talk. One of the key challenges for leadership is to make tacit professional knowledge explicit so that the whole organization may benefit by its distribution (Fullan, 2002; Nonaka, 1994; Vera & Crossan, 2004).

A useful distinction in professional knowledge, offered by King (2009), is between *know-what, know-how, and know-why* levels of knowledge. Let us take the example of the guidance committee meeting conducted by the principal Ed (Wolcott, 1973) to see how these three levels of knowledge might be differentiated. The guidance committee meeting (see Excerpt 2.1) was held every Tuesday morning and helped the principal and school staff to come together, discuss pupil problems, and find ways to address them using the guidance program of the school. The extended excerpt is helpful in providing context to the subsequent discussion on differentiating professional knowledge. Further, the same excerpt has been used later in this Chapter to show the application of the conceptual framework to principal meetings.

Excerpt 2.1

Guidance Committee Meeting (Wolcott, 1973, pp. 21-22)

On this morning one of the third-grade teachers, Mrs. Troutner, was going to talk about a "problem boy" in her class…Ed raised his voice slightly and turned the conversation to the business at hand requesting Ms. Troutner to provide "background information" about the problem boy who was the subject of the morning discussion.

At the outset of such discussions of specific pupils, Ed often disappeared into his office and returned with complimentary set of photographs of all the children provided by a commercial school photographer but this boy and his family seemed to be known by name to all the teachers. To others present who might not know him -- on that morning the school district social worker and two university students newly assigned signed to the school (one a student teacher, the other an intern counsellor) -- the picture would make little difference.

Mrs. Troutner's description centered around physical features of her problem boy that distressed her: "He often wears T-shirts that have holes in them.

Once he wore an old pair of shoes and they literally fell off him. 1 had to call his mother and she took him out and bought him some shoes."

Ed's disappearing into his office to collect photographs of the boy (paragraph 2 in Except 2.1) to ensure that everyone is talking about the same boy represents a *know-what* level of professional knowledge which specifies what action to take when presented with a set of stimuli (King, 2009). Mrs. Troutner's description of the problem child (paragraph 3 in Excerpt 2.1) not only represents a know-what but also a higher level of knowledge or the *know-how* as in knowing how to respond appropriately to Ed's request to describe the problem boy.

Later, during the same meeting (not shown in the quotation presented), Ed suggests that the school might try sending the boy home as a disciplinary measure. Ed's suggestion of the particular disciplinary measure is possibly underpinned by the *know-why* formed by Ed's years of principal experience constituting effective disciplinary strategies undertaken to reform student behavior.

Ms. Toutner's description of the problem child and the suggestion by Ed also suggests that the know-what, know-how, and know-why are connected to each other. Overall, this principal meeting example suggests a more flow-like conceptualization of professional knowledge where work practice and knowledge discourses are merged in a flux (Patriotta, 2003).

The discussion so far demonstrates that principal meetings are occasions where different levels of professional knowledge of know-what, know-how, and know-why (King, 2009) are articulated through text and talk. Hence, this section provides key analytical constructs (know-what, know-how, and know-why) which are helpful to

deconstruct the organizational learning in schools or ways to parse the professional

knowledge created, retained, and transferred in principal meetings.

Now that we have defined both principal meetings and professional knowledge,

the next subsection draws upon scholarly literature to identify theoretical constructs

which would be used to frame and study the relationship between principal meetings and

professional knowledge.

Principal Meetings as Interconnected Sensemaking Episodes

This study adopts the conceptualization of principal meetings as *interconnected*

sensemaking episodes to develop and share professional knowledge which I will describe

now.

Weick (1979) suggests that organizations talk to themselves to figure things out.

People within an organization enact, "equivocal raw talk, the talk is viewed

retrospectively, sense is made of it, and this sense is then stored as knowledge in the

retention process" (pp.133-134). Sensemaking unfolds as an ongoing process in which

people extract cues from an ongoing environment, make plausible sense retrospectively,

and enact order into those ongoing circumstances while preserving their identity. In other

words, sensemaking is an emergent process of transforming knowledge production and

sharing into ongoing acts of social interpretation and discovery.[18]

The first reason for using this framework comes from the meeting science

literature which vouches for the robustness of using sensemaking (Weick, 1979) as a

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[18] Because sensemaking is more of a perspective and framework, rather than an actual theory (Weick, 1995), it has lent itself to multiple interpretations giving rise to both cognitive as well social constructivist versions (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). This study takes the social and discursive version of sensemaking as conceptualized in other studies (Daft & Weick, 1984; Maitlis, 2005; Weick, 1979, 1995).

conceptual frame when meetings in organizations are placed at the center of analysis

(e.g., Allen et al., 2015; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989; Scott, Dunn, et

al., 2015). In the recently published *Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science*, Allen et

al. (2015) indicate that although sensemaking is relevant to multiple forms of interactions

in organizations, meetings might be the most common work activity to which

sensemaking is most relevant. Further, Schwartzman's (1989) book which presented a

comprehensive analysis of all workplace meetings in an organization also drew upon

Weick's (1996) framework to conceptualize meetings as sensemaking mechanisms. The

second reason for using this framework lies in the robustness of the cyclical processes

comprising sensemaking (Weick, 1979, 1996) and the empirical nature of the narratives

which such processes generate to encapsulate professional knowledge.

Weick (1995) highlights three interdependent cyclical processes through which

sensemaking occurs.

Enactment, selection, and retention in principal meetings. Sensemaking is

marked by three interdependent cyclical processes: *enactment, selection, and retention*

(Weick, 1995) which occur regularly in meetings (Allen et al., 2015; Duffy & O'Rourke,

2015; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015). In the earlier section, the guidance committee meeting

(Excerpt 2.1) was used as an example to show how professional knowledge may be

observed in a principal meeting. The same meeting example, during which the behavior

of a problem boy is discussed to make sense of it, may be used to illustrate the continuous

flow of sensemaking processes comprising enactment, selection, and retention (see Figure

2.1).

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Enactment. Since there is more potential information that Ed and the other meeting participants could process about the problem boy in the given time, the group brackets off certain elements of the environment to "make real" what are the important parts of the guidance problem, a process called *enactment* (Weick, 1995). Put simply, enactment answers, "What should we pay attention to here?" (Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015, p. 638). Importantly, this enactment is not an objective and rational process of group decision making based on all relevant parameters of the guidance problem, rather the participants filter the information available based on a pre-existing schema (e.g., tacit and explicit knowledge retained from past guidance committee meetings, professional training as teachers) and thereby create the environment that corresponds to their actions.[19] Mrs. Troutner's articulation of the physical description of the boy is an important step in the active perception of the problem and marks a beginning in loops of perception-action (Weick, 1995) held by the group. Mrs. Troutner's articulation (T-shirts that have holes!) may also be seen as making explicit the tacit knowledge held by her about what counts as a problem worthy of attention and therefore opens further exploration and meaning-making within the group.[20]

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[19] The environment, through bracketing, turns from an enactable environment to an enacted environment in the reciprocal determinism of perception and action.

[20] Imagine if Ed, on hearing this statement, confronts Mrs. Troutner by saying that the holes in the boy's t-shirt might not be an important enough reason to consider the child as a problematic case.
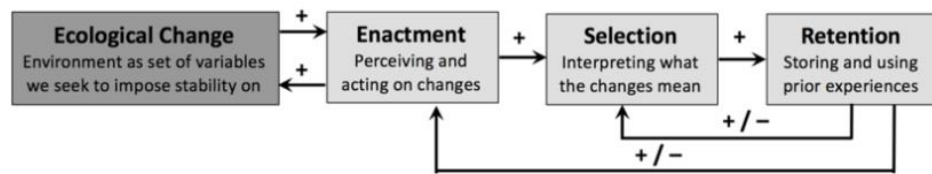
Figure 2.1. Weick's (1996) processes of sensemaking as cited in Kudesia (2017). Adapted from R. S. Kudesia, 2017, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Retrieved from http://psychology.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/ 9780190236557.001.0001/

Selection. In the next step, the group assembles the enacted information to produce interpretations of the event, its meaning, and possible action strategies through a process called *selection* (Weick, 1995). Put simply, selection answers, "What does it mean?" (Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015, p. 638). In the principal meeting, Ed, the school counselor, and other teachers ask questions, provide information about the boy and propose multiple theories to arrive at an interpretation (a distressed home-life) which seems plausible to explain the boy's behavior (Wolcott, 1973, p. 22).

Retention. In this process, participants produce and store preferred causal maps for future similarly ambiguous events through a process called *retention* (Weick, 1995). Put simply, retention answers, "What have we learned here and how can we use it in the future?" (Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015). It is quite likely that participants in subsequent guidance committee meetings will remember and retain this knowledge as a way to reduce ambiguity about similar student behavior in the future.

Weick (1979; 1995) highlights both helpful and detrimental aspects of the processes of enactment, selection, and retention in principal meetings. If on one hand, these processes makes these meetings valuable as episodes of reducing uncertainty and ambiguity (Weick, 1995), then on the other hand they might also distort the professional

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knowledge that is created, retained, and transferred (Weick, 1979). Meetings involving the principal can serve as sensemaking mechanisms to *reduce uncertainty* by providing more information and are instrumental in *managing ambiguity* through developing a collective shared understanding (Scott, Allen, et al., 2015). Although uncertainty might be reduced through sharing information through other channels (e.g., emails, memos), Weick (1995) emphasizes the importance and necessity of meetings to reduce ambiguity. This may be observed in educational leadership literature which uses sensemaking as a conceptual framework (e.g., Coburn, 2001; 2005). In her research on teacher sensemaking, Coburn (2001) argues that the meaning of mandated improvement initiatives draws upon multiple interpretations and she cites instances of principal meetings which help teachers and principals to co-construct the professional knowledge about what needs to be done, how, and why.

The processes of enactment, selection, and retention do not necessarily enable the constructive development and sharing of professional knowledge, they also might systematically lead to professional knowledge which is mis-aligned with the environment (Allen et al., 2015; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015; Weick, 1979; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). In their efforts to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty, participants in a meeting might reverse the commonplace maxim that the map is not the territory. Enactment may lead the meeting participants into a false sense of the environment when they treat their maps and knowledge of the environment as the environment itself (Weick, 1979), which results in a distortion of what knowledge gets developed and shared.[21] Further,

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[21] To take an example, teachers in a principal meeting dealing with ambiguity around implementing a new reading program might develop a shared understanding that the program is a replacement for other reading instructional activities. This shared understanding, though, might not be aligned with the central office

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sensemaking may comprise deviation-amplifying cause loops (Weick, 1979) which result in crises. For example, if participants in a principal meeting have multiple interpretations of an educational program and little shared meaning because of poor structure, this could become a deviation amplification loop: loss of shared meaning leads to poorer structure which leads to further losses in shared meaning and so on.

Sensemaking in principal meetings also highlights the possibility of distortion in professional knowledge when meeting participants align with the dominant value system (Deetz, 1992). Allen et al. (2015) highlight that when participants in the meeting engage in selection processes to propose, discuss, and reject alternative interpretations, they might prioritize one kind of professional knowledge over another. For example, the participants in a guidance committee meeting similar to the one described earlier, might prioritize the interpretation of an experienced, influential teacher whose knowledge about the problem boy is presumed objective.[22] This knowledge influences the kind of causal maps which are retained by participants and which they would subsequently draw upon or share as professional knowledge.

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implementation of the reading program which instituted the program to support rather than replace current reading instructional activities.

[22] Deetz (1992) in a more detailed description of this group phenomena describes how the knowledge claims rarely make explicit the value-driven criteria behind the choice of certain observations over others. In the example above, the experienced teacher's value-driven judgements might be disguised as objective descriptions with which the meeting participants should align.
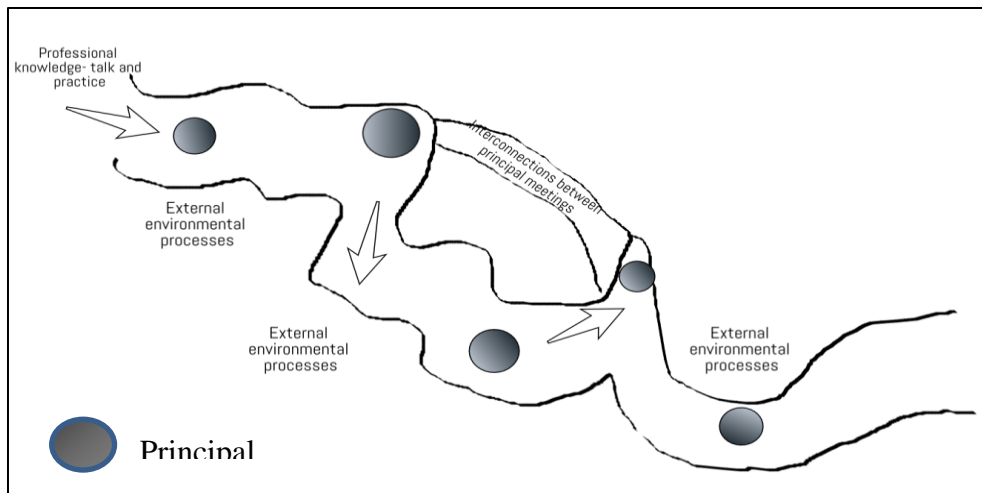
Figure 2.2. Principal meetings and the flow of professional knowledge. Adapted from "A systemic view on meetings: Windows on organization collective minding", by M. F. Duffy and B. K. O'Rourke, 2015. In J. A. Allen, N. Lehmann-Willenbrock, and S. G. Rogelberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of meeting science.* (pp. 223–246). New York: Cambridge University Press.

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While the discussion so far represents sensemaking within a single principal

meeting, the processes of sensemaking never cease (Weick, 1995). Earlier in the Chapter,

principal meetings were presented as key episodes of leadership practice. Further, the

nature of professional knowledge as defined under this study was presented as a flow

with the intermingled processes of creation, retention, and transfer. Therefore, a

conceptual frame of meetings as interconnected sensemaking episodes may be considered

as the influence of leadership practices on the flow of professional knowledge within the

organization (see Figure 2.2).

An input-output process-driven view of principal meeting shaping professional

knowledge has been shown in Figure 2.3. Professional knowledge (both tacit and

explicit), often encapsulated in stories serve as inputs to the principal meeting. The

principal meeting as interconnected sensemaking episodes transform these inputs to more

refined and formalized version of professional knowledge, which in turn become inputs

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into subsequent meeting interactions. Figure 2.3 introduces new terms which become the focus of the discussion subsequently.
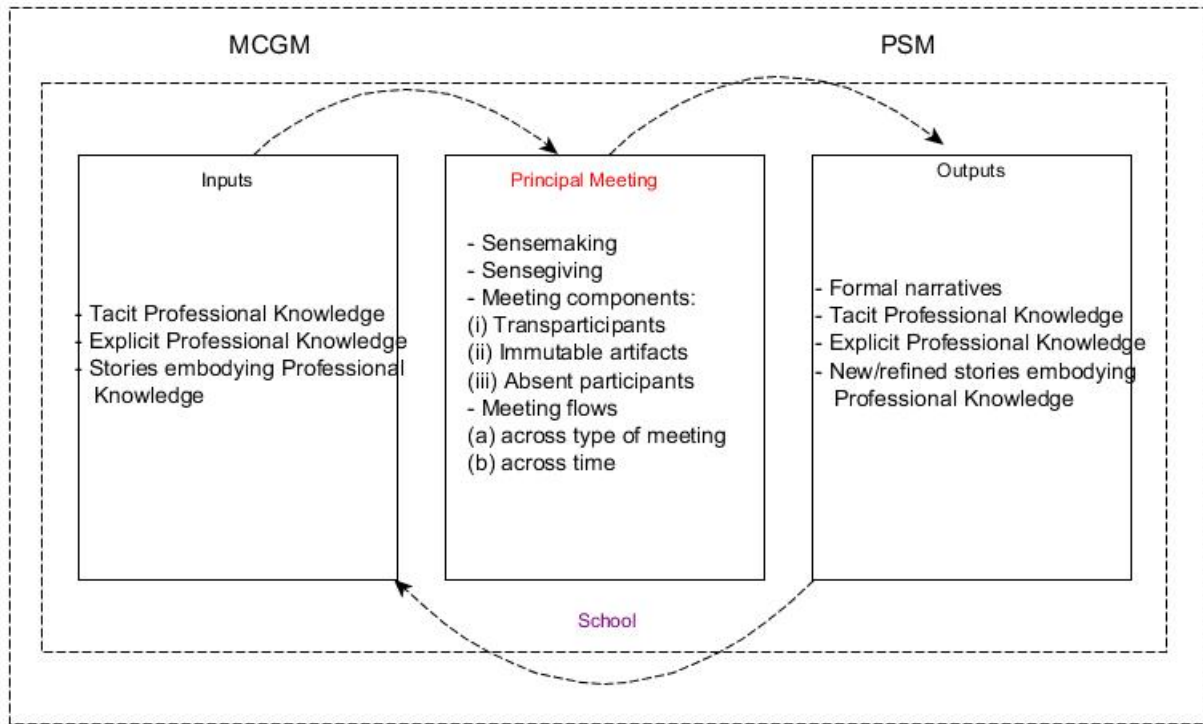
Figure 2.3. An input-output process view of principal meetings. Adapted from "Implementing after-action review systems in organizations: Key principles and practical considerations", by C. W. Scott, A. M. Dunn, E. B. Williams, and J. A. Allen, 2015. In J. A. Allen, N. Lehmann-Willenbrock, and S. G. Rogelberg (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of meeting science*. (pp. 634–659). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stories embodying professional knowledge. Principal meetings as sensemaking episodes build stories which create, share, and encode professional knowledge over time (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Patriotta, 2003; Tsoukas, 2000). First, stories provide the means through which participants in a principal meeting interpret cues and meaning and generate knowledge for action (Weick, 1995). Wolcott (1967) describes a school faculty meeting to discuss the philosophy of the school's instructional program. This principal meeting is interspersed with stories about the history of the program and current and past staff experiences with children which help clear ambiguity about how much casualness is

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permitted in classroom and when to "clamp down" (p. 108). The re-telling of sections of the principal meetings held in the past which shaped the instructional program shows how principal meetings can themselves become part of the organizational stories which get shared, told, and re-told become embedded into school memory and knowledge to become a guide to action. Secondly, stories represent and legitimize ways of talking about organizations and thereby reflect shared perceptions of the widespread and everyday character of organizational knowledge (Patriotta, 2003). Thirdly, teacher professional knowledge often consists of stories of professional practice told and re-told during social interactions like principal meetings (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

   Sensegiving in principal meetings. Principal meetings also act as social episodes through which principals communicate the sense they have made to those who might find it useful, a process called *sensegiving* (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). As a variant of sensemaking (Weick, 2005), sensegiving has the potential to shape professional knowledge by framing ambiguous challenges and problems into opportunities (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Educational literature, too, has highlighted the relevance of sensegiving to school leadership. For instance, Coburn (2005) draws upon interviews and observation of 150 hours of meetings between the principal and teachers in two elementary schools in California to find that a principal's understanding of what constitutes good reading instruction translates into sensegiving influencing the micro-processes of teacher knowledge, interpretation, and adaptation. Importantly, scholars like Maitlis (2015) argue against sensegiving as the prerogative of a leader, which therefore provides other principal meeting participants (e.g., teachers) with the potential to shape professional knowledge through sensegiving.

The 'interconnectedness' of principal meetings as sensemaking episodes.

Meetings as sensemaking episodes are not isolated, rather researchers have argued for a systemic model of interconnected meetings within an organization (e.g., Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015). This systemic model fits well with the "ongoing" nature of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) and the flow of leadership discourse as described in an earlier section of this Chapter. Using Weick's (1996) sensemaking at the center of their systemic model, Duffy and O'Rourke (2015) describe three elements that connect time, space, relationships within and across meetings: (a) trans-participants, (b) immutable-artifacts, and (c) absent participants.

Adapting these elements proposed by Duffy and O'Rourke (2015) to principal meetings provides key analytical constructs to investigate how principal meetings influence professional knowledge. First, the principals as *trans-participants,* attend meetings of more than one group, and combined with their relatively high status within the school, it may be suggested that principals cross-pollinate sensemaking and influence what professional knowledge is developed and shared. Secondly, principal meetings often involve the use of *immutable-artifacts* or things which can be transported without being distorted and which often preserve meaning and knowledge across time (e.g., presentation slides, meeting minutes, memos). Finally, in referring to *absent participants*, principals are likely to use the words of participants from other meetings as a kind of ventriloquism (Cooren, 2012), to legitimize knowledge, actions, and decisions (Datnow et al., 2019; Schwartzman, 1989).

To conclude, this section argues that the conceptualization of principal meetings as interconnected sensemaking episodes provides a rich set of theoretical constructs (e.g.,

selection, enactment, retention, sensegiving) which help conceptually frame the complexity of the relationship between principal meetings and professional knowledge and provide initial analytical tools (e.g., stories, immutable artifacts) which would support data collection and analysis.

The next section briefly describes the nature of school principalship in India and the educational improvement program which were initially proposed for this study. As I will describe in Chapter 3, I found that research questions needed to be modified to include topics of principal meeting talk in addition to the quality improvement program. However, the intent behind placing this section describing the context for the study here is supported by five reasons. First, a description of the context immediately following the presentation of the conceptual framework for the study is helpful in assessing coherence between the two. Secondly, how fieldwork shifts the evolution of the dissertation questions necessitates a brief description of the original research questions proposed under this dissertation. Thirdly, the minor revision of the research question as part of the dissertation does not, in any way, reduce the importance of highlighting the changing role of the Indian school principal as described in the next section. Fourthly, specific elements of the context also contribute towards the significance of the study. Finally, the original research questions also provide continuity for those who had read or listened to my dissertation proposal.

Situating Principal Meetings and Professional Knowledge in India

This dissertation was initially proposed as the study of principal meetings of municipal schools in Mumbai in the creation, retention, and transfer of professional

knowledge relating to a quality improvement program.[23] This section focuses on two

aspects of the Indian education context: the Indian school principal and *Pragat*

Shaikshnik Maharashtra (PSM), the state mandated quality improvement program. The

role of the Indian school principal is at a crucial crossroads (Saravanabhavan,

Pushpanadham, & Saravanabhavan, 2016) and providing a brief historical narrative is

likely to be helpful to the reader in gaining familiarity with the essential participant of the

principal meetings. A description of the PSM program helps establish the ambiguity

embedded in elements of this program which fit well with the sensemaking conceptual

frame for this study. Taken together, a description of the changing role of the Indian

school principal and potentially ambiguous aspects of PSM program highlight the

significance of this study.

The Changing Role of the Indian School Principal

With over 1.5 million elementary schools (National University of Educational

Planning and Administration, 2011), India arguably has one of the largest population of

school principals (also called head-teachers or head-masters[24]) in the world. Historically,

the school principals in India have been considered extremely important as evidenced in

government policy literature (Mudaliar Commission, 1953; Kothari Commission, 1964;

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[23] Preliminary findings suggested that PSM was an important, but brief topic of principal meeting talk and therefore the research questions were modified to include other topics of principal meeting talk (See Chapter 3). The brief description of PSM here, however, still is important to situate certain aspects of the PSM program (e.g., 25 indicators) which was discussed in principal meetings (see Chapters 4 and 5).
[24] Usually, the term headteacher is used for primary schools (grade 1 to 4) and the term headmaster or principal for schools with higher grades. However, the scant educational leadership research in India uses these terms interchangeably (Diwan, 2011). Further, states in India are given autonomy in establishing norms for the necessity, role and qualifications needed for a school head and which is usually based on total enrolment and number of teachers (Govinda, 2002). The term "him" in the quote above is more a reflection of the English usage prevalent at that time than an indication of the gender profile of head teachers in India.

National Policy on Education, 1986). Expounding the importance of principals, the

Kothari Commission (1964) stated:

> …on him the proper working of the school ultimately depends. The reputation of the school and the position it holds in the society depends in a large measure on the influence that he exercises over his colleagues, his pupils, and the general public. He is always responsible for carrying out the policies and programs of the Department of Education… (p. 134).

The above quote also illuminates the top-down transmission role of the

government school principal, which remained unchanged until the early 2000s and was

highlighted as a problem in educational reform documents like the National Curriculum

Framework (NCF, 2005). The government school principals, mentions NCF, "are

equipped with neither the capacity nor the authority to exercise choice and judgement

relating to the school curriculum" (p. 104).

The last decade or so, however, has brought Indian school leadership to a crucial

juncture (Saravanabhavan et al., 2016) with concerted efforts by both the state and

private organizations to support the government school principal. These efforts are

underpinned by the argument that quality improvement initiatives in India, as suggested

by the recently implemented RTE Act,[25] can succeed only when school heads become

prime-movers in designing and implementing school development plans (Diwan, 2011).

Accordingly, the central government emphasized its focus on building the capacity of the

Indian school principal by establishing the National Center for School Leadership

(NCSL)[26] in 2012 which now conducts in-service training programs for school heads.

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[25] The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act) was implemented in 2009 and is considered a landmark act within the education domain legitimizing the right of each child to have access to good quality education. RTE emphasizes school development plans as a key lever to providing quality education.
[26] NCSL is set up under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, India (comparable to the U.S. Department of Education).

Private organizations have also recognized the need to strengthen school leadership. Prominent among these private organizations is the Indian School Leadership Institute (ISLI) and Kaivalya Education Foundation (KEF) which conduct workshops for principals and frequently visit the schools under their program.[27]

Despite attention to what the Indian school principal should do (Batra, 2003; Diwan, 2011; Tyagi, 2010), there has been little scholarly attention to what Indian school principals actually do (Saravanabhavan et al., 2016). As compared to a significant body of literature in the United States (Camburn et al., 2010; Grissom et al., 2013; Horng et al., 2010; Wolcott, 1973), there are no studies, to date, which describe the daily work-life and practices of Indian school principals and how principal practices shape professional knowledge in schools.

The rigorous efforts to transform the role of the Indian school principal, therefore, present a pivotal point during which the conflict between traditional principal practice (e.g., transmitting program information in principal meetings) and new principal practices (e.g., collaborative sensemaking of educational programs) is likely to become visible. The next section describes the educational program currently being implemented in the state of Maharashtra, India.

PSM, Professional Knowledge and Principal Meetings

Pragat Shaikshnik Maharashtra (Educationally Progressive Maharashtra) is a state-mandated educational quality improvement program currently being implemented across the Maharashtra government school system which includes schools under the

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[27] ISLI and KEF are arguably the largest private school leadership support institutions in India. ISLI claims to currently work with 448 schools while KEF claims a presence in over one thousand schools. Both these institutions operate in at least three different states in India.

Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). MCGM is the largest urban

primary education system in Asia and PSM is being implemented in over 1,400 MCGM

schools impacting around 14000 teachers and over 0.5 million students. A downward

trend in student reading and math scores in Maharashtra from 2010 to 2015 (ASER,

2015) and regional disparities in student performance[28] prompted the state government to

implement PSM in June 2015 (Government of Maharashtra, 2015). As an educational

program, PSM is an uncommon state initiative in India because it presents a metric-

driven definition of school progress. PSM focuses on continuous assessment of student

performance through 25 specific indicators also called as *25 nikash* (see Appendix E) to

indicate which schools are progressive or *pragat* and articulates a long-term, milestone

driven, school-based strategy to make each school *pragat* (Shah, 2015).

The meetings of the principal are likely to be crucial agents in making schools

pragat and in shaping the understanding of PSM in municipal schools. MCGM principals

regularly meet with teachers, parents, and students and organizations like KEF indicate

that they use these principal meetings as key levers to improve educational quality as

envisioned in PSM.[29]

The 25-page government resolution describing PSM places the teacher at the

center of intervention and proposes a combination of teacher monitoring, teacher training,

and teacher appraisal to channel efforts towards improved instruction. The progress of the

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[28] In a state level assessment test conducted by the government, districts varied by as much as 33% in language performance.

[29] I had initially identified three specific meetings of the principal which form these levers of PSM implementation: the staff meeting, the School Management Committee meeting, and the school assembly meeting. Based on constructive feedback from my committee, I chose a more emergent meeting selection design as I described in my memo dated July 31, 2018.

teacher would be assessed through regular summative testing of the students of grades 1-8 for age/grade appropriate competencies. Despite these details, the PSM program is also underpinned by several elements of ambiguity.

Ambiguity in PSM. An analysis of the PSM program components and strategy highlights ambiguity in how the state conceptualizes and aims to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge in schools. Ambiguity in the PSM program is centered around PSM description of key professional knowledge domains, in principal enactment of PSM, and in assessment of 25 indicators.

First, although PSM government resolution (PSM GR) prioritizes pedagogy, child psychology, and subject knowledge as three domains of professional knowledge over other domains (e.g., classroom management or pedagogical content knowledge), the program does not explicitly define these domains. Ambiguity around these domains is further increased because the government resolution provides a set of ideas which mix description and prescription (see Table 2.2). In addition to an ambiguous articulation of knowledge domains, the success stories around effective instructional practices indicate value-driven terms open to multiple interpretations (e.g., teaching with "due love and respect").[30]

Secondly, the role of the school principal in the service of program enactment remains ambiguous under PSM. The government resolution does not provide specific

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[30] The PSM government resolution provides multiple such examples of ambiguous terms. For instance, the section on designing an action plan in the context of multi-lingual instruction states: "Many teachers have found ways to help them (students). Some learn words from the children's language and use them in the class, giving children due love and respect. Some prepare bi-lingual dictionaries, etc. In one way or the other, they create a connection with the children, and the children begin to learn." (Government of Maharashtra, 2015, p. 11).

details about the tasks and duties of the principals in supporting their teachers and students towards quality improvement. However, professional development materials issued under PSM present stories of how principals, as heroes, regularly interact with the community, teachers, and students to transform educational efforts and PSM implementation (Comet Media Foundation, 2016). Also, in daily work practice, principals are often asked to attend meetings with senior government officials to present the progress of the school under PSM.

Finally, there is likely to be ambiguity around the 25 *nikash* or indicators (Appendix E) which must be continually assessed by school teachers. At present, there are no written guidelines that determine the assessment of these indicators. Hence, given the importance of this assessment to measuring the *pragat* or progress it is quite possible that principal meetings include talk and action which create the meaning and assessment practices around specific indicators (e.g., cleanliness, confidence).

Table 2.2

PSM Recommendations to Build Teacher Professional Knowledge

Knowledge Domain	Descriptions in PSM Resolution
Child Psychology	Child psychology tells us that each child learns at her own pace. There are as many levels of learning as there are children in a class, and so teachers will need to revisit their multi-grade and multi-level teaching skills (p. 11)
Pedagogy	Using children's language in teaching. Some (teachers) learn words from the children's language and use them in the class, giving children due love and respect. Some prepare bi-lingual dictionaries, etc. In one way or the other, they create a connection with the children, and the children begin to learn (p.11)
	Some (children) have a different mother-tongue, and they would need special pedagogy that would gradually develop their skills in the school language through use of first language initially. (p.20)
	There are many fine examples of constructivist pedagogy in a multi-grade multi-level setting in our state (p.12)
	A teacher who understands pedagogy well enough to teach at each child's pace will manage to get all children to grade level eventually, and even if s/he has some below grade level children in the class, this teacher should be trusted and allowed to work at her own pace. (p.20)
Subject Knowledge	If more than 40% children in a teacher's class score less than 40% marks in any subject, the teacher should plan a course of self-learning in the subject (p.11)

Note. Adapted from "Pragat Shaikshnik Maharashtra Government Resolution", by Government of Maharashtra, 2015, Retrieved from https://dochub.com/rajeshwarmulkalwar/ylYv7b/22-june-gr?pg=8.

To conclude this section, the elements of ambiguity in PSM are likely to lead to principal meetings during which the participants "act into" their daily situations creating a shared meaning of knowledge domains and practices (which might be flawed). In addition, the use of stories in describing professional knowledge in PSM and the conflicting role expectations for the MCGM school principal suggests rich elements of meaning-making during principal meetings and support the appropriateness of the conceptual framework chosen for this study.

Summary

This Chapter began with a review of principal meetings in academic literature and practitioner-oriented publications and demonstrated that principal meetings are: (a) widely prevalent in educational literature and trade publications, (b) a ubiquitous phenomenon in a principal's daily life, and (c) essential to accomplish key leadership tasks. Drawing upon educational literature, I also presented four characterizations of principal meetings: as a waste of time; as an intervention tool; as a collaboration technology; and as routine events.

Then, I presented the conceptual framework of this dissertation drawing primarily upon Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking and Duffy and O'Rourke's (2015) notion of interconnection between meetings to conceptualize principal meetings as interconnected sensemaking episodes which create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge. I also drew upon King's (2009) definition of professional knowledge to describe three levels of professional knowledge (know-what, know-how, and know-why) in relation to principal meetings. I also suggested that the conceptualization of principal meetings as interconnected sensemaking episodes provides a rich set of theoretical constructs (e.g., selection, enactment, retention, sensegiving) which help conceptually frame the complexity of the relationship between principal meetings and professional knowledge and provide initial analytical tools (e.g., absent participants, immutable artifacts) which would support data collection and analysis.

Finally, in order to highlight the appropriateness of the conceptual framework to the dissertation, I provided a brief historical narrative to show the changing role of the Indian school principal from a top-down transmission agent of the Department of

Education to a prime-mover in implementing school programs. I also focused on the

elements of ambiguity and uncertainty which seem to underpin the PSM program and

therefore make it a rich topic of sensemaking and sensegiving in principal meetings.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Chapter has three overarching aims. First, this Chapter provides

philosophical and methodological arguments which support the research design, research

tools, and the methods chosen for this dissertation. Secondly, the Chapter describes the

methods and tools used to collect and analyze data and provides examples of data

collection and analysis. Thirdly, the Chapter describes the process of selecting the two

municipal schools as the research sites to conduct fieldwork and the initial findings which

led to a minor revision of the research questions proposed initially under the study.

The three aims described in the paragraph above have been accomplished by

dividing this Chapter into six sections. Section one presents the rationale behind the

choice of a qualitative research approach by drawing attention to the interpretive nature

of the research questions and the distinctive aspects of principal meetings as a research

topic. Section two describes the MCGM administrative and operational framework to

provide an understanding of the context to readers familiar with the US schooling system.

Section three explains the process which led to the final selection of two municipal

schools as research sites and describes preliminary findings which led to the minor

revision to the research questions. Section four describes the methods and tools of data

collection: participant-observation, interviews, and document review. Section five details

and illustrates the data analysis procedures using examples from data collected. Section

six presents the steps that were undertaken to build trustworthiness in this study. Section

seven considers the limitations of this study and discusses aspects of researcher

positionality, potential sources of power, bias, and resource constraints.

A Qualitative Approach to Study Principal Meetings

The discussion in previous Chapters establishes that principal meetings, although

significant to principal practice, have rarely been considered as a research topic.

Subsequently, the meetings of the principal are conceptualized as *interconnected*

sensemaking episodes to explore how principal meetings, in municipal schools in India,

shape the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge. The professional

knowledge aspect of principal meetings, as part of the dissertation proposal, was

delimited to an educational quality improvement program. The educational quality

improvement program called PSM[31] is being implemented across 1,400 municipal

schools in Mumbai and is underpinned by several elements of ambiguity and uncertainty

as described in Chapter 2.

Specifically, the dissertation proposal indicated the following main research

questions:

How do principal meetings create, transfer, and retain professional knowledge

within the context of implementing a quality improvement program?

The main research question was further subdivided into the following questions:

1. How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create,
    retain, and transfer professional knowledge related to a quality
    improvement program?

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[31] *Pragat Shaikshnik Maharashtra* (PSM) translates to Educationally Progressive Maharashtra.

2. How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and

   transfer professional knowledge connected to a quality improvement

   program?

3. How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different

   schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional

   knowledge in relation to a quality improvement program?

In the first 3 months of fieldwork I found that principal meeting topics included several other important items of talk besides the quality improvement program (PSM) mentioned in the questions above. Further, PSM was not as frequently talked about in principal meetings as I had imagined at the dissertation proposal stage. Therefore, in order to generate richer data and analysis, the above questions for the purposes of this dissertation were modified to remove the specific association with the quality improvement program. I will elaborate these findings and the rationale for modifying the research questions in a subsequent section in this Chapter. The modified research questions for this dissertation are as follows:

How do principal meetings create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The main research question above is further subdivided into the following questions:

1. How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create,

   retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

2. How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and

   transfer professional knowledge?

3. How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The interpretive nature of the questions, the use of sensemaking as a conceptual frame to manage ambiguity, the embeddedness of this study in a specific Indian context, and the predominant methodological approach to study meetings indicated a qualitative research approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as:

> a situated activity that.… consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible…. into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self…. qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3).

Therefore, a qualitative approach to study principal meetings, was undertaken to make visible the taken-for-granted ways through which principal meetings themselves and the interconnections among principal meetings develop and shape participant professional knowledge related to PSM. The use of sensemaking as a conceptual lens for this study also aligned well with the qualitative approach that emphasizes interpretation of a phenomena through a social negotiation of meaning-making amidst communication in natural settings.

Finally, despite the brief history of scholars considering meetings as a research topic, a qualitative approach to study workplace meetings has already established itself as a prominent methodological choice (Brown et al., 2017; Riles, 2017; Sandler & Thedvall, 2017; Schwartzman, 1989). The first exposition of meetings as a topic of research was based on a qualitative case study of a mental health organization (Schwartzman, 1989). More recently, in 2017, the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (JRAI)*

published an entire issue of scholarly work on gathering and analyzing qualitative data to study meetings (Brown et al., 2017).

The dissertation study was conducted through a qualitative multiple-case study of principal meetings across two research sites. It is important to note that principal meeting is the case for this dissertation. The two schools chosen for this dissertation serve as the natural surrounding for studying principal meeting cases. The rationale for conducting a case study for answering the research questions came from Yin (2009) who argues that case studies are the preferred method when: (a) research questions explore "how" or "why", (b) the researcher has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a current phenomenon within a real-life context. These criteria fit well to the study: the research questions explored the how of connections between principal meetings and professional knowledge, the researcher had little control over how each case of principal meeting will evolve, and the research focus was on specific types of principal meetings being currently enacted in Mumbai, India.

Significantly, the rationale of a case study also aligns well with the choice of Weick's (1996) sensemaking as a key conceptual frame for this study. The situated and continuous dynamics of sensemaking processes within meetings where local meanings are intertwined with local knowledge and understanding fit well with an embedded approach suggested by a qualitative case study (e.g., Coburn, 2001; Riehl, 1998; Schwartzman, 1989).

The next section describes the research context in terms of MCGM administrative and physical infrastructure and the considerations that guided the choice of the two municipal schools under this study. Because meetings gain meaning within a particular

context (Sprain & Boromisza-Habashi, 2012), the description of the MCGM

administrative and infrastructural framework is provided to help the reader make sense of

the institutional context within which principal meetings were embedded.

Research Context: MCGM as an Institution

In this section, I describe three aspects of MCGM: (a) the elements of schooling

system and the administrative/academic infrastructure provided by MCGM, (b) the

current problems of dropping student enrolment and poor academic performance, and (c)

the efforts to improve student learning, sustain student enrolment, and improve school

leadership at MCGM schools.

Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) is the wealthiest local

government in the country with a budget of USD 4.6 billion for 2019-20 (Praja

Foundation, 2019). MCGM provides free schooling and free materials (e.g., school bags,

uniforms) for children from low-income households who attend its 1,192 primary-

secondary schools in Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra.[32] In addition, unlike other state

governments in India which insist on their dominant vernacular language being the

medium of instruction, MCGM offers schooling options in English as well as Marathi,

Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu (Joshi, 2019).

However, despite such amenities, MCGM has faced a 10% drop in enrolment of

students from 3.23 million in 2016-17 to 2.97 million in 2017-18 while the private school

enrolments have experienced an increase (Praja Foundation, 2019). Further, the academic

performance of MCGM students is lower as compared to private schools as can be seen

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[32] Greater Mumbai refers to a large part of the Mumbai city comprising the island city and its suburbs.
More details at http://dm.mcgm.gov.in/sites/default/files/documents/city_profile.pdf

in Table 3.1. A closer reading of Table 3.1 reveals that private school students outperform MCGM students by attaining an almost 20% higher pass rate in the tenth-grade exams (SSC) and achieving five times as many scholarships in fifth grade and almost 20 times as many scholarships in eighth grade.

Table 3.1

MCGM and Private School Student Academic Performance (Pass Rates)

Indicator: Outcomes		MCGM	Private
SSC	Number	8,934	119,980
	%	73.81%	92.46%
Middle School Scholarship (5th)	Number	179	1,798
	%	2.6%	12%
High School Scholarship (8th)	Number	30	1,587
	%	0.6%	11.5%

Note: Adapted from "State of municipal education in Mumbai", by Praja Foundation, 2019, Retrieved from https://www.praja.org/praja_docs/praja_downloads/State of Municipal Education in Mumbai.pdf.

In discussions of dropping student enrolment and poor academic performance in MCGM schools, a debatable issue has been who is to blame or determining what needs to be changed. On the one hand, organizations like Praja Foundation argue that teacher indifference to class performance is the key factor behind poor student achievement (Joshi, 2019). On the other hand, leadership development organizations like Kaivalya Education Foundation contend that it is the Headmasters or school principals who need support (KEF, n.d.). Other organizations, like Teach for India focus on providing both teacher training as well as leadership development for principals (TFI, n.d.). Overall, there have been calls to increase transparency and accountability. According to Milind Mahske, Director, Praja Foundation, "There has to be political and administrative accountability for the declining popularity of government schools. Throwing money won't make their problems go away" (Joshi, 2019).

The above description might suggest that MCGM has been sluggish in efforts to improve enrolment and student outcomes. On the contrary, MCGM continues to make sincere efforts to improve enrolment and learning outcomes as evidenced through their multiple educational improvement programs (e.g., PSM, Shala Siddhi), increased accountability in classroom teaching (e.g., linking teacher evaluation to student performance, digitization of sign-in/sign-out using biometrics), policies that link teacher salaries to the learning outcomes of their students (e.g., circular 237, 27th Oct, 2017), and implementing school leadership initiatives (e.g., school leadership trainings with KEF, British Council, TFI). In addition, MCGM has partnered with multiple non-government organizations (e.g., Aseema, Muktangan, Akanksha) to improve teaching-learning and leadership.[33]

Administrative and Academic Infrastructure

A brief description of MCGM administrative and academic infrastructure is helpful to understand the institutional context for this study, especially for readers more familiar with the Western context. The infrastructure is helpful to notice the significance and complexity of MCGM official roles which were frequently mentioned in principal meetings.

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[33] MCGM officials told me that 36 NGOs work with MCGM to improve education. KEF officials, however, indicated that many schools have unofficial collaborations with NGOs and therefore the total number of NGOs supporting MCGM schools is over 200.
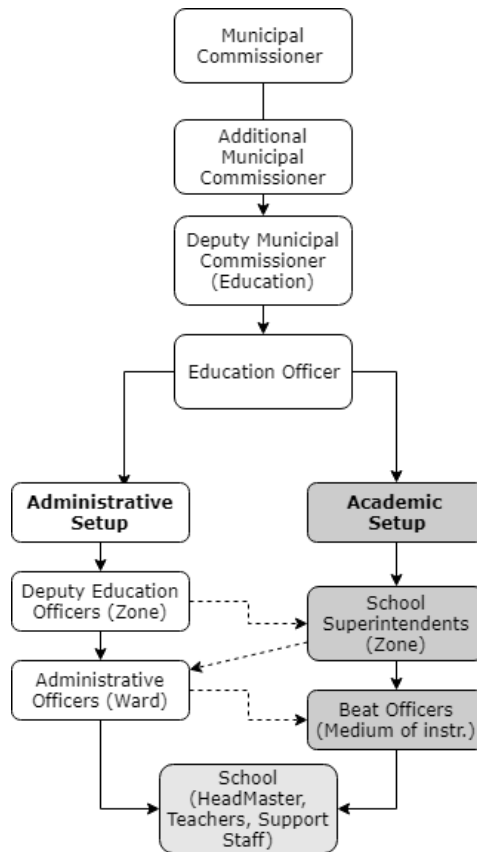
Figure 3.1. Key personnel in the MCGM administrative and academic infrastructure. Adapted from information available at www.mcgm.gov.in.

As may be seen in Figure 3.1, MCGM is headed by the Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai and supported by the Additional Municipal Commissioners (AMCs). AMCs are responsible for multiple departments like health and education, which are in turn headed by the Deputy Municipal Commissioners (DMCs). The DMC (Education) heads the education department. The DMC (Education) is the approving authority for any work to be carried out in MCGM schools and therefore the approval for this dissertation also came from the DMC Education office. The Education Officer has more direct day-to-day interaction with the MCGM academic and administrative infrastructure.

The infrastructure at MCGM is a bit more complicated than the neat impression given by Figure 3.1. First, there are dotted line relationships between the academic and

the administrative set-ups. For instance, the School Superintendent also reports to the

Deputy Education officer and the Beat Officers (BOs) also report to the Administrative

Officer (AO).[34]. Secondly, the different positions are at different levels. For instance, the

top infrastructural positions (up to the level of Education Officer or EO) are at the level

of the city; the city is further subdivided into six zones headed by Deputy EOs and

Superintendents; and the six zones are further subdivided into Wards headed by the

Administrative Officers (AOs). Professional roles like the Beat Officers are responsible

for schools with the same medium or language of instruction, so they usually head

schools across different Wards and report to more than one AO.[35]

Finally, another factor which complicates the professional hierarchy is the parallel

operation of governmental and non-governmental organizations which work with MCGM

schools (see Figure 3.2). For instance, MCGM hires external support staff to handle its

security needs and forms partnership with non-government organizations to support its

academic and infrastructural needs (e.g., Teach for India, KEF)

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[34] More details at https://portal.mcgm.gov.in/irj/portal/anonymous?NavigationTarget
=navurl://6f29601fef5d15a0da11eceff7177ce5

[35] MCGM uses the term Headmaster or HM for its school principals although during fieldwork, I noticed that the term school principal is also being frequently used by MCGM senior officials, principals, and teachers.

Figure 3.2. Various people working at MCGM schools. Adapted from presentation slide titled *Introduction to Public Education system in Mumbai by Citizen Association for Child Rights.* Retrieved from https://www.slideshare.net/dentobizz/introduction-to-public-municipal-bmc-education-system.

To summarize, MCGM presents a complex and challenging institutional

environment which impacts the meetings of the principals who are at the bottom rung of

the institutional ladder (see Figure 3.1). The complexity of the MCGM hierarchy results

in multiple (and shifting) work-related messages being received from all the levels above

(e.g., AO, BOs, EO) and shapes the purpose and talk of the principal meetings which I

will elaborate shortly. In addition, the AO, BOs, teachers, and the school principals

continuously face the challenge and pressure of increased accountability to improve

student scores and sustain student enrolment which also gets enacted through principal

meetings. Finally, the various non-MCGM related personnel working in the school (e.g.,

the NGOs) also require supervision through principal meetings. Summarizing these

various professional responsibilities, one principal said to me, "A principal has to do everything….be an all-rounder".

Now that this section has described significant aspects of the MCGM institutional infrastructure which shapes the meetings of the "all-rounder" principal, I turn attention to the selection process and the final choice of the two research sites/schools wherein data about cases of principal meetings was collected and analyzed.

Recruited Sample: Considerations and Choice of Two MCGM schools

The multiple-case study of principal meetings was conducted in two municipal schools in Sajiv Nagar area of Mumbai, India. The selection of schools as research sites to study cases of principal meetings was guided by Stake's (2008) criteria for selecting sites for case study analysis: learning potential (the potential of the school in providing rich meeting data to answer the research questions), access, and resources. The timeline which shows the selection of the sites and the time spent in collecting observations for this study has been attached in Table 3.2 and I describe the details below.

To maximize learning potential or generate rich principal meeting data, I held three meetings with the KEF staff members and the MCGM school superintendent to identify schools which were similar in demographic profile and school parameters (e.g., student population, student-teacher ratio, physical infrastructure, instructional and administrative challenges) but were likely to differ in the crucial aspect of conducting principal meetings. Research indicates that this kind of purposive sample builds in variety and offers opportunities for intensive study that can provide rich data for generation of theory (Patton, 1990). Based on the suggestions I received from KEF and MCGM, I

shortlisted and visited eight MCGM schools to gauge my potential reception as a researcher.

The visit to the eight schools helped me towards a preliminary selection of four schools to improve learning potential and feasibility of the study without compromising on access.[36] In October 2018, I received an MCGM approval from the DMC (Education) to proceed with the study. All the four schools were accessible: they were located within a 5-mile distance to my home and the principals seemed eager to share their work-life. Research suggests that schools where the principals are more forthcoming to explain their reasoning or are not wary or reticent are likely to provide richer data (Stake, 2008; Wolcott, 1973). Also, the school Superintendent indicated that school principal transfers were likely to happen in November 2019- hence choosing four instead of two schools increased the chances of completing the study with two schools in case the principal of a shortlisted school was transferred.

Finally, in early January 2019, I realized that intensive data collection at four schools was prohibitive in terms of resources of cost and time. I found it difficult to co-ordinate and plan my days at the schools. Further, two of the school principals had been asked to attend multiple trainings in December 2018. These trainings often lasted a week and made it difficult for me to collect rich data about their principal meetings. Hence, I decided to focus on two MCGM schools where I was likely to find and observe the school principals in their schools for extended periods of time and collect data regarding their meetings. Two of the four schools were in the same MCGM building hence I found

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[36] To gauge committee feedback, I also described the rationale for an initial selection of four instead of two schools in the memo I shared with the dissertation committee on October 21, 2018.

that my time was more efficiently spent. I could quickly climb up or down the stairs to another principal's office in case one principal was teaching or leaving the school early to finish some work at the Ward office. Therefore, the choice of two schools in the same building helped me immerse myself at my research sites and collect richer data while saving time on travel.

Table 3.2

Preliminary fieldwork and shortlisting of two MCGM schools

Month	Actions	Outcome
August-September 2018	Preliminary request meeting with MCGM senior officials and KEF personnel to shortlist MCGM schools Visits to 8 MCGM schools	Initial criteria to select schools Suggestion to increase sample size to 4 to get richer data and improve chances of completion
October-December 2018	Preliminary observations of principal meeting, hanging out at 4 MCGM schools	Preliminary findings about the nature of principal meeting topics
January-March 2019	Observation of Ward meeting, Staff meeting, UPMs, and hanging out at 2 MCGM schools	Focus on two MCGM schools in the same MCGM building at Sajiv Nagar

I briefly describe the physical infrastructure, school population, and operational details of the two schools in the next section (see Appendix F for a thick description of the school sites and the school neighborhood). The two schools were similar in terms of infrastructural and operational challenges, which I will show, helped provide a similar context to their respective principal meetings.

SNH and SNMs: Similarities and Differences

My preliminary discussions with the MCGM school Superintendent and the KEF

staff members and my initial visits to eight MCGM schools in August and September

2018 suggested initial criteria which could influence the number and kind of principal

meetings. I present these criteria with respect to the two MCGM schools in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Potential Factors suggested by KEF/MCGM in Influencing Principal Meetings

Factors	Sajiv Nagar Hindi medium school (SNH)	Sajiv Nagar Marathi medium school (SNM)
School-related		
Medium of instruction (Grades)	Hindi (K-8)	Marathi (K-7)
Student population	700	300
Teachers	18	8
Student-teacher ratio	39	38
Physical infrastructure	Poor	Poor
Reporting relationship	Beat Officer: Rajni B Admin Officer: Laxmi A	Beat Officer: Rajni B Admin Officer: Laxmi A
Timing of teachers	Morning shift - 7.10 am to 1.10 pm Afternoon shift: 12.10 pm to 6.10 pm	Morning shift - 7.10 am to 1.10 pm Afternoon shift: 12.10 pm to 6.10 pm
Principal-related		
Gender of principal	Female	Female
Years of experience at current school (total experience as principal)	5 (5)	4 (8)

As might be observed from Table 3.3, the two selected MCGM schools were

similar in terms of physical infrastructure, MCGM reporting relationships, shift-timing,

student-teacher ratio, gender of the principal and the number of years under current

principalship. However, the SNH is much larger in school population and number of

teachers. An important point to note is that although the school runs across two shifts,

each school has only one formally appointed HM or school principal. In case the school

principal was not in school and there was an emergency, a senior teacher officiated as the

principal.

What Table 3.3 does not show is that there was flexibility provided to the school

principals to choose their time of operation and both the principals preferred to come

during the afternoon shift. This is not trivial because the timing of the principals' work-

day influences the timing of their principal meetings. As I will show in Chapter 4, the

time between 12.10 to 1.10 pm was considered the best time to conduct Staff Meetings.

Before proceeding to the methods and tools used for this study, I would like to

highlight two findings during the first three months of fieldwork in the two schools which

led to a slight revision of the research questions. I describe these findings here, as

compared to their more conventional placement in Chapter 4, because it helps situate the

subsequent discussion of data collection and analysis methods. The two findings were (a)

multiple professional responsibilities and (b) shifting focus of principal meetings

Multiple professional responsibilities.[37] Preliminary findings from the first three

months of fieldwork showed consistently that both MCGM principals, like the Beat

Officer, were given new professional responsibilities from the various officials in the

MCGM hierarchy (see Figure 3.1) and led a hectic schedule. A perplexing aspect of Table

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[37] These professional responsibilities were work-related tasks which the MCGM staff (school principals, teachers, BOs) were expected or asked to perform as part of their professional roles. Specific examples include conducting classroom observations, assessing students as per 25 PSM indicators, providing compliance data related to various institutional directives, ensuring scrap-removal at schools and so on. As I will describe, there was no pre-defined list of professional responsibilities for school principals.

3.3 is that both the schools have the same Beat Officer (BO) even though the two schools conduct classes in different language/mediums of instruction and therefore, as per the administrative and academic setup, each school should come under the jurisdiction of a different BOs (see Figure 3.1). BO (Laxmi A) who supervised schools in the Hindi medium of instruction was given the additional responsibility of supervising the Marathi medium of instruction schools in the Ward. New responsibilities, she told me, were often given to her from higher-up officials in addition to her existing responsibilities leading to a hectic schedule.[38] Fieldwork showed that principals, too, were given additional professional responsibilities (e.g., opening bank accounts for all students) without consultation.

Talks with the principals and my observations and fieldnotes indicated three factors which contributed to the multiple professional responsibilities: the increasing use of mobile technologies like WhatsApp chat, the lack of clearly defined professional responsibilities, and the open-door policy.

The impact of technology on principal practice was apparent in the first two weeks of fieldwork showed that principals were given urgent professional responsibilities to be accomplished the same day usually through the mobile chat application called WhatsApp.[39] Both MCGM school principals showed me their continually buzzing phones due to multiple messages received on WhatsApp. The principals were participants of at

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[38] The Beat Officer told me that apparently it was difficult for one BO to manage the many Marathi medium schools in the Ward and therefore she was handed the charge for some of the Marathi medium schools with the other Beat Officer. She often showed me her visit diary. "Run here, run there. I came here in the morning, then to Sunrise colony, now to Kandivli…tomorrow is scholarship exam too."

[39] Data from the shadowing of principals (Appendix I) shows that both principals frequently received professional tasks on WhatsApp and often spent their spare time in checking the messages.

least three WhatsApp professional cluster/group chats: Administrative Officer (Ward-level); Beat Office (Medium of instruction level) and Teachers (School-level). The principals told me that they received on an average 20 WhatsApp messages everyday about completion of new or existing professional responsibilities (e.g., sending compliance data on vaccinations- see Appendix V). In addition, the principals also received physical copies of memos and circulars relevant to their schools (e.g., new sign-in process using biometrics). However, as compared to receiving the physical memos and circulars, the use of a 24/7 technology like WhatsApp made principal time open to quick top-down demands.[40]

The lack of a clearly defined professional responsibility chart or duty/task list for the principals also made it convenient to add new tasks to principal professional responsibilities because there was no precedent or a measure of what exactly are the principals responsible for. The school principals told me that they had not received a duty list with their appointment letter. My search on the MCGM website (www.mcgm.gov.in) and asking MCGM senior officials, like the DMC (Education) and the school Superintendent, also did not provide a list of professional responsibilities of a school principal. On the other hand, I could find some evidence of teacher professional responsibilities through wall displays in the school and in the principal office. An old poster on the SNH wall (Appendix G) indicates the pledge made by every MCGM teacher which, I would suggest, are broad enough to include every aspect linked to instruction. In addition to instruction, there were other teacher professional

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[40] Said one principal to me, "WhatsApp increases work. We have become paper horses. There is so much work. We get messages in the evening like… send attendance data from 2012 to 2018."

responsibilities were often found in charts put up in the principal office (see Appendix H). Overall, my search and queries indicated no formal document describing, and therefore, limiting the professional responsibilities of teachers or principals. The principals and teachers had no means to defend any new professional responsibility given to them (see Excerpt 4.11 which describes how the SNH principal allocated and framed new professional responsibilities).

Finally, the MCGM principals always kept their office door open. This meant that any person with a work-related issue (e.g., teacher, student, parent, NGO employee, school staff) could walk in to talk with the principal. My shadowing of the principals illustrates how unannounced visitors took a significant portion of principal time (see Appendix I which describes 8 such visitors in the first two hours of the SNM principal's workday).

To summarize, both principals and teachers were often found working to meet the multiple professional responsibilities allocated to them.

Shifting focus of principal meetings. The second important preliminary finding was that the nature of principal professional responsibilities shifted every few weeks (see Table 3.4). This, in turn, changed the focus of their meetings. For instance, in October 2018, I observed that both MCGM schools were being continually reminded through WhatsApp to make sure that scrap material from their schools was cleared up. In November 2018, once scrap material was cleared from schools, the messages from the Ward office shifted to focus on the updating of teacher service books. From December 2019, the biometric system to mark the sign-in and sign-out times for teachers and principals went live and therefore became a common topic in WhatsApp. The different

(and new) professional responsibilities became topics of meeting talk as I will illustrate in

Chapter 4.

Table 3.4

A Month-wise Depiction of Topics of Principal Meeting Talk

No.	Month	Professional responsibility	Topics of meeting talk
1	October 2018	Ensure that scrap- material from school is picked up	What needs to be counted as scrap? How does scrap need to be classified into iron, wood, others? By when does scrap need to be lifted? What to do with the leftover scrap?
2	November 2018	Up-dating of Service Book/records	What needs to be updated? By when? Which teachers have still not updated their records? When will the teachers go to the Ward office to update their records?
3	December 2018- March 2019	Smooth functioning of biometric system	What to ensure when signing in and out of the system? How to report discrepancies? What backup records to keep? How to enter leave requests?

The two factors of the multiple professional responsibilities and the shifting focus of

principal meeting talk required a minor revision of the research question as I describe

below.

Impact on the Research Questions

The two findings described above suggest a related and significant conclusion: the

quality improvement program (PSM) was not a frequently discussed topic in principal

meetings. In the first few days of meeting observations, I noticed that PSM was still

being implemented in MCGM schools but mentioned only in reference to timely and

accurate filling the data forms related to *25 nikash* or indicators (see Appendix E). The

agenda of and talk within principal meetings usually comprised reminders to keep the

assessment forms ready (see Appendix R), prepare the assessment questions (see Excerpt 4.8) or emphasize the the importance of 25 indicators (see Appendix J). PSM became one of the many items of talk in the monthly Staff meeting agenda and was sometimes completely excluded as an agenda item (see Excerpt 4.2).

Hence, in order to capture these shifts in focus of meeting as well as to generate rich meeting data, I found it useful to include other important events/programs besides PSM that were frequent topics of principal meeting talk (e.g., biometrics in Table 3.4). The only change to the research questions, therefore, required excluding the specific reference to the quality improvement program. Hence, the revised research questions included PSM and other frequent principal meeting topics. The revised research question answered in this dissertation now reads as:

How do principal meetings create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The main research question is further subdivided into the following questions:

1. How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

2. How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

3. How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

Data Collection: Methods and Tools

Multiple cases of principal meetings across two different research sites (i.e. schools) were observed and analyzed. The study of multiple meeting cases across two

different schools led to more robust findings as compared to focusing on a single case (Ragin & Becker, 1992; Yin, 2009). The findings are more robust because they are based on a richer set of meeting cases. First, multiple cases of different principal meetings (e.g., Staff meeting, Ward meeting, compliance meeting) provided a richer diversity than if multiple cases of one type of principal meeting (e.g., Staff Meeting) were studied. Secondly, principal meetings in one school, as the subsequent data analysis would show, were different from those in another school highlighting their embeddedness in the local context (Sprain & Boromisza-Habashi, 2012).

Data collection occurred during October 2018 to March 2019. All data from informants[41] were obtained only after due permission from the informants and in full compliance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines.

During the course of this study, my early impressions and background information got refined through cycles of observation, renewed inquiry, and explanation, which has been termed by interpretive scholars as *progressive focusing* (Parlett & Hamilton, 1975; Stake, 1995). This progressive focusing underpins both data collection and data analysis. In addition, I spoke almost every fortnight with my advisor, professor David Eddy-Spicer to share how data collection was proceeding and what were my findings. I also had phone and email conversations with professor Helen Schwartzman and professor Gretchen Rossman on issues of recording principal meetings in India and making sense of my findings.

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[41] For this proposal, a participant refers to a principal meeting participant while an informant refers to a person who has agreed to provide either oral or written data related to this study. Although some participants (e.g., teachers) may choose to be informants, it is quite possible that an informant may not be a participant (e.g., a KEF program manager).

This study gathered data through: (a) participant observation in principal meetings, (b) interviews with participants of principal meetings, and (c) review of documents created by or used within the principal meetings (see Table 3.5). Participant observations and interviews, as tools to provide an insider or emic perspective, are frequently recommended for data collection in qualitative case study research (Stake, 2008; Wolcott, 2009; Yin, 2009). The use of documents provide the qualitative case study researchers with artifacts of knowledge (Evans, 2017), help in triangulation[42] (Denzin, 1978), and serve as records of activities in lieu of direct observation (Stake, 2008).

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[42] The term triangulation here comprises: (a) data source triangulation, (b) methodological triangulation and (c) perspective triangulation (Denzin, 1978). These terms have been explained in more detail later in this Chapter.

Table 3.5

Data Collection Methods and Time Spent

Method	Description	Total No.	Time spent
Participant observation	Observation of planned meetings (Staff meeting and Ward meeting)	Staff meetings (1)[43]	1.5 hours
	Observations of multiple unplanned meetings with teachers, MCGM officials, NGOs, and parents.	Ward meetings (2)	3 hours
		Unplanned meetings	85 hours
	Informal observations of and conversations with principals, teachers, and MCGM officials (AO, BO, School Superintendent, Deputy Municipal Commissioner)		35 hours
Interviews	Semi-structured interviews with principals and teachers	Principal interviews (4)	2.5 hours
		Teacher interviews (2)	1 hour
Document review	Review and analysis of documents used within and related to principal meetings: • Meeting agenda and minutes • Other documents (school registers, memos, circulars)		

I describe the above table in more detail below with respect to the data collection method and time spent.

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[43] I observed and recorded one Staff meeting at the Hindi Medium school (SNH) school and one Staff meeting at the Urdu medium school. Unfortunately, the Urdu medium school could not be part of the final data analysis, hence the meeting is not included here. I could not record a Staff meeting at the Marathi medium SNM due to various factors- and this is a significant limitation of the study as I will describe later in this Chapter.

Participant Observations

From October 2018 to March 2019, I spent over 110 hours of *deep hanging out* (Geertz, 1998) and observation across the two MCGM schools.[44] Within the schools and outside, I observed everyday meetings of the principal and talked with the principals,[45] teachers and five senior MCGM officials (Deputy Municipal Commissioner, School Superintendent, one Administrative Officer, and two Beat Officers) to get a sense of what they expected the principal meetings to accomplish.

My aim was to record data about meetings which offered a balance of both typicality and variety (Miles & Huberman, 1994), therefore maximizing learning potential in developing "working theories" (Stake, 2008, p. 131) of the relationship between principal meetings and professional knowledge. This led to the selection of the Staff Meeting and the Ward Meeting as examples of planned principal meetings. Since other principal meetings were unplanned, it was not possible to select or choose them in advance, so I recorded all the unplanned principal work interactions I observed in my fieldnotes.

In my exploratory discussions with KEF combined with my own experience of visiting eight MCGM schools, the Staff meeting and the Ward Meeting, were typical because they are held regularly every month and are considered normal in every MCGM school setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Further, these two principal meetings vary

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[44] I also spent another 50 hours observing principals in their work meetings with teachers and school staff in other MCGM schools in the preliminary fieldwork phase. Although I have excluded these observations from data analysis, I spent significant time in recording and reflecting upon these first impressions.
[45] Besides the two school principals chosen for the study, I also talked with six other principals to get their perspectives on their principalship challenges and the purpose, structure, and importance of principal meetings.

among themselves in composition of participants, meeting talk, and meeting location which influences how knowledge is created and reproduced in work meetings (Yarrow, 2017).

I used progressive focusing (Parlett & Hamilton, 1975; Stake, 1995) to guide my observation of planned and unplanned principal meetings. Progressive focusing was helpful in identifying and narrowing down the shifting topics of talk relevant to principal meetings (see Table 3.4). I selected the Staff Meeting and the Ward Meeting as important instances to focus my inquiry because: (a) these topics of talk were regularly featured in these principal meetings (b) these two meetings were regularly mentioned by participants in their interviews and during the everyday conversations with the principals and teachers and (c) these meetings were also recorded through other documents which offered the opportunity to triangulate data as I will describe later.

Progressive focusing was also helpful in paying more attention to the unplanned meeting interactions of the principal. As I wrote up my observations, I noticed that a significant percentage of principal work-related interactions or meetings were unplanned. I read through the theoretical literature to organize these unplanned meetings into a framework. My initial reading of the literature did not reveal detailed analyses or descriptions of unplanned meetings. This revealed a potential gap and therefore I focused on the unplanned principal meetings: a topic I describe in detail and discuss in Chapter 4 and 5 respectively.

As I described in the previous section, the principals had multiple, new, and shifting responsibilities and these responsibilities often came in unannounced as issues brought in by official visitors or institutional requests on WhatsApp. Hence, I followed a

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more chronological note-taking method and captured the time, the names of meeting participants, and the exact meeting talk as much as possible (see Appendix K). Appendix K also highlights my emergent and continual sensemaking of the principal meeting interaction and reflections on the life of the principal which can be seen in the various notes I make to myself in my fieldnotes using square brackets (e.g., "people prefer to talk to resolve uncertainty"; "a principal's life is about reaction to whatever comes up").

The immersion in the MCGM context comprised spending time in the principals' offices, shadowing the principals over a workday, and meeting other MCGM officials who interact with the school principals. These interactions called as *deep hanging out* (Geertz, 1998) helped me develop a closer, in *situ* understanding of how principal meetings are perceived.

In addition to the over 80 hours of observations of the unplanned meetings, I also spent over 30 hours in schools interacting with informants. These informants included the two MCGM principals, six teachers, and senior MCGM officials (the Administrative Office, the Beat Officers of Hindi medium, English medium, and Urdu medium schools, the School Superintendent, and the Deputy Municipal Commissioner. I did not find a teacher staff room in either of the MCGM schools. Both the principals encouraged teachers to spend their free time with the students instead of talking with other teachers. Hence, I could hang out with the teachers only during lunch time or during the walk back from school to the local train station.[46]

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[46] I sometimes walked back with a few teachers when they left school at the end of their shift to go to the train station. During these 20-minute walks, I did not notice any debrief or analysis of principal meeting talk.

All planned meetings I observed were audio or video-recorded. I video-recorded one Staff Meeting and audio-recorded one Ward Meeting. One unplanned meeting was audio-recorded and another unplanned meeting was video-recorded through the mobile phone. Video recording provided three advantages in exploring connections of principal meetings with professional knowledge. First, it allowed me to capture in detail the actions which I could not observe during the meeting (e.g., side conversations) which would encourage subsequent dialogue to gather the participant interpretation of what was happening. Secondly, the repeated viewing of a recording is a reliable way of defamiliarizing a familiar practice (Laurier, Paasi, & Sage, 2013) and often helped me notice underlying patterns (e.g., framing of professional responsibilities). Finally, a video recording also provided a more holistic and concurrent record of action capturing body, gesture and talk. In Chapter 5, I describe how the physical artifacts and gestures or physicality of the principal meeting helps to provide focus and pressure.

Collecting video can have drawbacks. It is quite possible that MCGM participants could have limited their gossip or talk because of the camera. Alternatively, some participants could have increased their talk to "perform". Corsaro (1982) indicates that these drawbacks can be minimized when there is extensive fieldwork before the recording to build rapport. I had been visiting the MCGM schools for almost five months before I introduced the camera. The camera was small and quiet and put on the desk so that it did not obstruct view of the participants at any time. I had observed other meetings without the camera and did not notice dramatic differences.

I recorded almost 80% of my observations of principal meetings directly into my laptop using Microsoft Word (MS Word). When I was not able to do so, I either spoke

into a voice memo mobile application on my phone (Otter.ai®) or wrote my notes in a physical notebook to record my observations. Every week, I converted my handwritten notes into an electronic version by typing into the MS Word document on my laptop.

Interviews

I conducted four semi-structured interviews with principals and two semi-structured interviews with teachers to understand how principals and teachers viewed the principal meeting and how their and others' professional knowledge was shaped through these principal meetings. It took me almost three months of hanging out to establish a comfort level for principals and teachers to allow me to formally interview them.[47] By the end of the first month of observation, MCGM principals and teachers were more comfortable in having unstructured informal conversations about their meetings. The interview questions for the principals are attached in Appendix L. The interview questions for the teachers are attached in Appendix M.

Given that stories are a key component of the professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 2016), the interviews tried to generate stories which defined and described different principal meetings (Mishler, 1993). In addition to eliciting stories, I used the interviews to seek clarifications and feedback about specific talk and actions based on my meeting observations, my field notes, and analytic memos (e.g., *25 nikash,* the scrap material removal). Therefore, interviews were progressively focused towards specific episodes, descriptions, and explanations of principal meetings (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976; Stake, 1995).

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[47] This was probably due to an institutional culture in which people are hesitant to be recorded in case the evidence is used against them. One of the school principals requested me to first conduct an informal interview with the same set of questions a week before we conducted the formal interview.

The interview protocol and questions encouraged highlighting the connection between events, thoughts, and actions which influence sensemaking processes (Weick, 1995). Drawing upon my coursework in qualitative research, I also used four kinds of interviewer utterances: how and why questions, restatements, evaluative statements, and bringing up charged words[48] that generate rich flow of talk during interviews and balance "sensitivity and skepticism" (Stake, 1995, p. 50).

I chose the one MCGM teacher at each school for the formal interview based upon: (a) suggestions from their school principals based on the teachers' good reflection and communication skills and (b) my observations of frequency of the participation of these teachers in the planned and unplanned meetings of the principal.

All the formal interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the principals and the teachers. The copies of the interview were also shared with the principals at their request.

Throughout the next two Chapters, I have used texts transcribed from different types of principal meetings, teacher and principal interviews, and conversations with staff officials from MCGM. The key participants in this study and their professional roles are as follows:

Hema P   Principal, Sajiv Nagar Hindi medium school (SNH)[49]

Mina P   Principal, Sajiv Nagar Marathi medium school (SNM)

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[48] A more detailed description may be seen at https://swww.linkedin.com/pulse/talking-others-four-types-questions-help-you-get-amazing-gopal-midha/

[49] The given names of the principals and the teachers may also be used to remember their school and profession. As discussed, the two school are differentiated by the medium of instruction. The first alphabet of the name was chosen to align with the school medium of instruction (e.g., Hema and Habib work at the Hindi medium school). The last name of the participants (P or T) indicates if they are the principal or the teacher.

Habib T   Grade 4 teacher, SNH

Maggie T   Grade 6 teacher, SNM

Drawing upon Gronn's (1983) framework, the following symbols have been used in the transcribed texts from principal meetings and interviews:

//   Overlapping talk from the first to the last slash. Utterances begin with an upper-case letter and end with a full stop.

. . .   A pause within an utterance.

****   A deletion.

[]   An explanatory insertion.

Italics   A word or part of a word emphasized by speaker.

Document Review

Two kinds of documents were collected for review: (a) those that were visible before, during, or after the principal meeting and served as physical records to substantiate or clarify meeting talk (e.g., agenda, minutes, compliance data reports), and (b) those that, though not visible or explicitly referenced, were connected to professional knowledge around key meeting topics and served to situate meeting talk and action (e.g., circulars on biometrics, posters/displays of teacher duties).

A list of documents collected for this dissertation is as follows:

- Staff and Ward Meeting agenda and minutes

- Documents used within the principal meetings (e.g., data reports)

- Documents referred to during principal meetings (e.g., attendance register)

- Government resolution on meeting topics like PSM, biometric, and 27 items

- Photographs of wall mounted displays and school infrastructure

Data Analysis

Data analysis under this study began at the same time as data collection by giving

meaning to first impressions and continuing towards final compilations (Stake, 1995).

Analysis of collected data was ongoing as can be observed in the meta-commentary while

writing the fieldnotes. For instance, Appendix K provides an example from my fieldnotes

of recording a UPM on student admission which also shows how I try to make sense of

the type of ambiguity being resolved. I also repeatedly listened to and watched video

recordings of the principal meetings and audio recording of interviews. In addition, I

transcribed the recordings of the Ward meeting, the Staff Meeting, two unplanned

principal meetings and the initial interviews with the principals and teachers. I converted

my field notes into intelligible write-ups to convert them into analysis data[50] and then

used the following data analysis and display methods suggested by Miles and Huberman

(1994).

Contact Summary Sheet

This was a one sheet summary produced monthly during the school contact period

and was based on my fieldnotes and reflections (see Appendix N for an example). I used

the sheet to help me plan for the next month, keep an audit trail, and describe my data

collection and analysis with my monthly call with my dissertation advisor.[51]

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[50] It might be useful to distinguish between raw data (e.g., observation notes, interview notes) and the analysis data which is a coherent, ready to share, written version of raw data and also includes transcriptions.
[51] I regularly scheduled skype calls with my dissertation advisor to share my research journey and seek feedback during fieldwork in India. I also held one call each with Prof. Gretchen Rossman and Prof. Helen Schwartzman to make sense of the meeting data and observations.

Descriptive, Inferential and Pattern Coding

An initial list of codes was drawn based on the literature on the elements of meetings relating to professional knowledge, the conceptual framework proposed herein and my exploratory discussions with KEF and then the list was redefined and supplemented with emic codes that were closer to participants' categories, especially using "in vivo" codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

My fieldnotes and transcriptions from the recordings of the principal meetings and the interviews were in an MS Word document and were ready as analysis data for coding.

I used ATLAS.ti (Version 8.0) to highlight and code the fieldnotes and the interviews. The coding went through two cycles. In the first cycle, I first applied descriptive labels to segments of text (e.g., School site, Ward meeting). Then, I exported the codes and the quotations from Atlas.ti into an excel file to figure out potential collection of codes which could also be concepts. This was also a time for frequent memoing as I will describe shortly. There was frequent back and forth between coding and memoing and led to the development of interpretive codes which included a more complex or underlying meaning (e.g., taking stock, seriousness of intent, reminder). In the second cycle, the revised quotations and their applied codes were again exported into a spreadsheet to arrive at a smaller number of themes based on possible patterns within the codes (e.g., bureaucratic order, professional roles).

I give an example of the list of codes and the coding of the fieldnotes in Appendix O and Appendix P respectively. In this example where two principals are in an unplanned meeting at SNM to discuss the removal of scrap, the text has the descriptive codes (e.g.,

#SNM), interpretive codes (e.g., unannounced demand) and the pattern code (professional responsibility).

I also strived to subject these emerging patterns and themes to check for disconfirming evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For instance, the pattern of "vyavastha" or organizing through planned meetings was discarded because there was not enough evidence to illustrate that principals held frequent planned meetings to organize their and other people's work.

Memoing

Substantive, methodological and personal memos were written throughout fieldwork and I provide an example of each in the Appendix Q. I used memos to think continually about key emergent issues. The most common type of memos that I used were substantive. I used substantive memos to tie together fieldnotes and reflections that emerged during fieldwork (see Appendix Q (i) for a memo connecting meeting location and principal practice), generate new ideas and questions (e.g., see Appendix Q (ii) for example of a memo on possible knowledge aspects in principal meetings), and analyze findings through the lens of literature (see Appendix Q (iii) for an example of a memo on negotiation of principal meetings). The methodological memos focused around structuring the data collection (e.g., see Appendix Q (iv) for an example of a memo on the epistemic assumptions during the shortlisting of schools). Personal memos were more reflective and oriented towards my own status in the school (see Appendix Q (v) for a memo on my own positionality as a researcher during an event).

Vignettes

These comprise narrative descriptions of one type of principal meetings (e.g., the planned Staff Meeting or an unplanned principal meeting on biometric). For each vignette, I identified a typical case of principal meeting (e.g., planned, unplanned) and wrote a chronological account of what happened before, during, and after that principal meeting. I aimed to capture the sights and sounds of what was being said and done to present a "vivid portrayal" (Erickson, 1986, p. 149). I attach an excerpt from the vignettes at the beginning of Chapter 4 and 5.

In addition to coding, memoing, and vignettes, I would also suggest that at times, the writing of the Chapters also triggered an understanding of what I was trying to say, an illustration of my own sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Put simply, my sensemaking is aptly illustrated in a minor modification of Weick's quote: "I did not know what I was thinking till I read what I wrote". As described earlier, the acts of coding and writing the memos and vignettes were extremely helpful in analyzing the data to notice patterns. These patterns became more nuanced through the act of (re)writing of dissertation Chapters. For instance, data analysis did not stop after coding and memoing, it continued to occur even during the act of writing Chapter 4 when I created the table which differentiates planned and unplanned principal meetings (see Table 4.1). The act of writing out the differences between the two principal meetings in a tabular format triggered an understanding of the importance and utility of universal composition and its role in sensegiving in planned principal meetings which I discuss later in Chapter 5.

To summarize, although I have described how I used four different data analytic methods (contact summary sheets, coding, memoing, and vignettes) in this section, the

progression from one to the other was non-linear. In addition, data analysis continued

even during the ending act of writing the final few Chapters of this dissertation: what

researchers of dissertation writing like Meloy (2002) would call as understanding by

ending.

In the next section, I describe the efforts I made to establish trustworthiness in this

study.

Trustworthiness

Throughout fieldwork, I made efforts to adhere to Guba and Lincoln's (1982)

concept of establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative case study.[52] Guba and Lincoln's

(1982) methodological framework proposes four criteria as important in designing and

monitoring a trustworthy qualitative inquiry:- credibility, transferability, dependability,

and confirmability- and suggests procedures that would support researchers in meeting

these criteria.

Credibility

The criterion of credibility relates to the believability of the researchers' analysis,

formulation, and interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). I have attempted to improve the

credibility of this study through the strategies of prolonged engagement, member checks,

and triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Rossman & Marshall, 2016) as

described below.

I spent around 120 hours in total at the two shortlisted schools which I believe

allowed me sufficient time to reflect upon and test for my own bias and the biases of my

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[52] Scholars (e.g., Erickson, 1984; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Rossman & Marshall, 2016) argue that qualitative
research methods belong to a different paradigm as compared to quantitative research methods and
therefore require different criteria to establish validity and reliability.

research participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1982).[53] Spending significant time in each of the two case study schools as a participant-observer, I think helped to establish my presence as ordinary and routine and help to minimize the distortions (e.g., censoring of topics) in principal meetings. For instance, by the end of three months of fieldwork (i.e. January 2019), I was often privy to conversations about "creating" of compliance data which I will elaborate in Chapter 4 and discuss in Chapter 5. Both MCGM principals felt comfortable in sharing their gossip about work-dilemmas (e.g., dealing with difficult teachers) and personal issues (e.g., career options for son) with me.[54]

I continually engaged with the MCGM principals and teachers to check my data and understanding (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Often, I would check my understanding with the principals when they were not busy in their work. I also established a routine of sharing lunch with the SNH or SNM principal which allowed me to seek clarifications if needed, either during or soon after my observation of principal meeting. At the end of February 2019, I conducted one semi-structured interview to test my emerging hypotheses from data. Unfortunately, I could not offer a presentation of my final report with participants and informants because of their work schedules.

I addressed triangulation in three ways: data sources, methods, and perspectives (Denzin, 1978) as described below:

Triangulation through data sources was achieved through observation of different types of principal meetings (Staff Meeting, Ward Meeting, unplanned meetings). I

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[53] I also spent 50 hours in observations of principal meetings in other schools which was also helpful in discovering my own bias, especially around what the principals must do.
[54] I continue to be in touch with both the MCGM principals through WhatsApp. In February 2019, I was one of the first person to receive the wedding card of one of the SNH teacher's daughter.

observed the principal meetings at different locations (e.g., principal office, corridors, classrooms, Ward office) across the two different schools to continually check if principal meetings carry the same meaning across time, place, and participants. In addition, I informally talked with teachers and principals at different times and locations (e.g., staff room or outside school) to check for consistency in the informant responses.

Triangulation through method was achieved through use of multiple methods of data collection (participant observation, interviews, and document review). After observing a planned principal meeting, I asked for a copy of the meeting agenda, meeting minutes and other documents which were circulated or created during the meeting. In unplanned meetings, I would often write down my questions in the field notes and talk with the principal later, when she was free, to check for other interpretations of what was happening. In addition, cycles of interaction between data analysis methods (e.g., coding and memos) helped me build contextualized and robust findings.

Finally, for triangulation through perspectives, I considered two other conceptual frameworks for principal meetings: principal meetings as inquiry mechanisms (Argyris & Schön, 1978)[55] and principal meetings as authentic activities (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1988)[56] which suggest connections between principal meetings and professional knowledge. For professional knowledge, I considered the perspective of knowledge-in-action or *knowing* (Cook & Brown, 1999) embedded within principal meetings.[57] Even

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[55] The relative absence of know-whys in the principal meeting showed that principal meetings were rarely considered as inquiry mechanisms.

[56] This conceptual frame helped me notice that principal meetings, especially the unplanned ones, were authentic to the MCGM principal work. I describe the importance of the unplanned meeting in Chapter 4.

[57] In Chapter 5, I discuss how principal meetings were also embedded in knowing and the act of the principal meeting was knowledge-in-action (Cook & Brown, 1999).

though I chose to use sensemaking at the center of my conceptual framework, I

continually checked participant's and my principal meeting experience with other

conceptual frames to notice alternative interpretations during my data collection.

Further, I discuss my emerging interpretations every month with my advisor

which brought other theoretical perspectives like audit and accountability to illuminate

the role of principal meetings (e.g., Harper, 2008).[58] Finally, member checks and

interviews likely invoked other interpretations of what happens during principal

meetings.

Transferability

The criterion of transferability pertains to potential of transferring the findings

from this study across other settings (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). I tried to support

transferability through purposive sampling and thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973; Guba &

Lincoln, 1982). As described earlier, the purposive sample of two schools presents

potential for capturing a range of information about principal meetings and providing

criteria for theory building. In my fieldnotes, I wrote detailed descriptions about

participant behavior in the context of principal meetings with the aim to render visible the

complex structure of inferences and implications (Geertz, 1973) operating within and

across the principal meetings in the two schools.

Dependability

The criterion of dependability relates to stability and consistency in the design and

conduct of the study such that other researchers would arrive at similar findings based on

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[58] Although not included in the final dissertation, I had also described in detail how principal meetings were episodes of sustaining bureaucratic order building on the description of number-driven IMF meetings (Harper, 2008) in the volume of audit cultures (Strathern, 2000).

the data collected by the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). I tried to strengthen dependability for this study by creating an audit trail which described the key decisions I make, the protocols I followed, the changes in inquiry processes and links to anonymized raw data. On average, at the end of every two weeks, I spent a few minutes to reflect upon the actions I had engaged in and a short paragraph about how the study was going. In addition, I filled in the contact summary sheet (which I wrote every month) to document the alignment between my research questions and target questions for the contact period.

Confirmability

The criterion of confirmability refers to the quality of the findings produced by this study in terms of how well these findings are supported by informants and participants involved in the study and by events that are independent of the researcher. I have tried to strengthen confirmability of the findings through triangulation, practicing researcher reflexivity, and conducting confirmability audit (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). Of these, triangulation has already been addressed earlier. For practicing researcher reflexivity, I wrote regularly in my fieldnotes to check for my epistemic and methodological assumptions and biases. I used Becker's (1998) book on how to think about research when doing it to check for my preconceived notions about principals and their meetings. In addition, I used my analytic memos to reflect upon my research journey. These analytic memos also created a confirmability audit connecting the raw data sources to my audit trail (see "Dependability" above) so that the link from data to interpretation and analysis can be traced.

I used the criteria outlined above as both a daily-guide and a supervising mechanism (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). As a daily guide, the criteria shaped my note-taking during principal meetings (e.g., thick descriptions) and as a supervising mechanism, it helped me continually judge the transparency in my assumptions and analysis (e.g., confirmability trail) and how well I upheld standards of quality and rigor.

However, following the criteria above was logistically infeasible at times. I often faced personal and professional dilemmas during fieldwork. I was unwell at times which made it difficult to write memos. Professionally, I was often faced with the choice between spending more time shadowing the principals and writing a reflexive journal. Further, some of the criteria outlined (e.g., member-checks) required an investment of time from participants and informants. Given the already hectic professional life of teachers and principals, I found it difficult to press my demand for providing feedback on written drafts shared for member-checks. Hence, member checks were oral which I am not sure would have provided enough time to the principals to reflect deeply on my preliminary interpretations. Despite these challenges, I tried to follow the criteria in the spirit of Guba and Lincoln's (1985) argument—not to offer them as unassailable defense against claims of non-rigor, but rather to convince my reader of the sincerity of my efforts in having conducted a trustworthy study.

Limitations

The final section of this Chapter describes the limitations of this study. A key thread that connects the criteria for conducting a trustworthy study, as described in the earlier section, is the acknowledgement of the researcher positionality in relation to the study. Qualitative case studies are limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the

investigator since the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis (Stake, 1995). Throughout this research, I was left to rely primarily upon my own instincts, abilities, and key assumptions to conduct this research. Secondly, I would also suggest that the relatively short time period of five months of observing principal meetings in the two MCGM schools led to less richer data than compared to longer qualitative studies of principal practice in education (e.g., Wolcott, 1973; Coburn, 2005).

The first section below describe possible aspects of my personal and professional experience, relationships, and social status which shape my epistemic assumptions and my interactions with participants and informants. This section concludes with possible strategies that I tried to employ to minimize or at least sensitize me to the power and bias created by these aspects. The second section describes how the limitation of time and cost could have adversely affected data collection.

Researcher Positionality: Acknowledging Power and Bias

Experience and relationships as a source of power. I approached this study with prior experience of working within and with the Maharashtra education system for around seven years. I began my teaching experience in a private school in Maharashtra where I learnt first-hand about the challenges of school leadership. Subsequently, as faculty member of a university in Maharashtra, I worked with the state government on multiple initiatives like co-organizing a teacher education conference, being part of two committees set up to improve school support mechanisms and conducting theater-based workshops for teachers, teacher-educators, and principals. As a program evaluator, I observed several training workshops of school principals and interviewed school principals in Maharashtra.

In August and September 2019, I spent time building relationships with the

MCGM school superintendent and the Deputy Municipal Commissioner to get a formal

approval to study the principal meetings in MCGM schools.[59]

However, these experiences quite likely created an initial asymmetry of

professional power between the participants and me. First, my prior work-association

with senior MCGM officials, some of whom knew me by first name, did shape my

perceived identity as a person of "influence" with the power to pass on a good word to

the higher officials. Secondly, I was also quite likely perceived as an informal "inspector"

of MCGM principal practice and therefore became an audience to be shown that

principals were working hard towards implementing various institutional directives.

Experience and relationships as bias. The personal and professional experience

has also shaped my epistemic assumptions (and bias) about what I consider as leadership

or knowledge construction. In particular, the last three years at a US based university has

influenced my thinking by constant engagement with local academic professionals (with

some of whom I have developed a close relationship) and the larger body of academic

work which is embedded in a US or European context of education. To take an example,

I tend to think of leadership practice as "distributed" (Spillane et al., 2007) or that this

study is conceptually framed by sensemaking (Weick, 1995) both of which are theoretical

perspectives which emerged from a non-Indian context and do not, for instance,

foreground dynamics of interplay between social status and professional role.

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[59] I also tried to get access to the MCGM schools by leveraging my relationship with KEF. However, the MCGM principals said that they needed a "formal" approval from the Deputy Municipal Commissioner (Education).

Social status as power. I belong to a higher social class as compared to my research participants and informants. I belong to an upper-middle class family from north India, formally educated in private schools, am currently based in a U.S. university and am fluent in English. This might have contributed to the asymmetry of power created by my experience and relationships. Perhaps, that is why two of the teachers regularly asked me for advice on which careers their sons and daughters should pursue.

Social status as bias. The factors which illustrate a higher social status as outlined above also shape my perceptions of schooling. For instance, my social status did not allow me experience of teaching or studying in a school which follows a less competitive state-board curriculum.

My efforts to promote the trustworthiness of this study as described earlier might be helpful in reducing this bias and power. Specifically, my prolonged engagement at the schools I would suggest shifted my positionality to that of a professional peer. In addition, I also participated in daily activities at the school- e.g., playing badminton with the teachers, having lunch with the principals or teachers, and walking back home with the teachers whenever possible. This, I hope, also reinforced my social status as a peer. Although the proposed study was conducted in Hindi and Marathi medium schools, the teachers, and principals in these schools were also fluent in Marathi, a language in which I am not equally fluent. I would sometimes request the principals to clarify any Marathi phrases with which I was unfamiliar and were likely to help in reducing the power that of my social status.

Access and Permissions: Acknowledging Burden

The access to MCGM schools towards shortlisting for this study was initially

arranged through KEF and the MCGM school superintendent. Although, I received a

formal letter of permission from the government before the study began, these

permissions were sought through the close connections that KEF has built with the mid-

level officials (e.g., administrative officer) from the Maharashtra state government. The

choice of requesting access to schools through KEF relationships instead of directly

seeking a permission letter from the Maharashtra state government was deliberate. First,

in my previous experience of working with the state government, researchers conducting

a long-term study require evidence of trust that the researcher will not use the research

towards a political agenda. KEF has already established this trust with some of its schools

and mid-level government officials and hence the participants were likely to be more

welcoming as compared to a formal grant of access, say a direct directive issued by the

Education Officer office. By leveraging the professional relationships, school principals

have an option to buy into the study instead of being forced as part of the case study.

Two of the MCGM principals who dropped out in December 2019 as part of the study

often indicated that they would be away on trainings when I reached out to them to plan a

school visit. Perhaps, it was a polite way of suggesting that they were not interested.

However pleasant my presence might be construed, I acknowledge that as a

researcher I was a burden operating on someone else' home ground (Stake, 1995) and

likely caused disruptions or shifts in their daily work and schedule. In addition, my

presence was likely to be the source of at least some invasion of professional privacy.

Therefore, I tried to keep a low profile by focusing on typing my notes in the laptop and not participating in the discussions unless I was invited.

KEF and the MCGM school superintendent played a crucial role in providing access to the MCGM schools. I was requested by both to support the development of their staff and therefore, I conducted two theater workshops for their personnel.

Resources: Limitations of time and cost

This study provides rich descriptions and analysis of the principal meetings of two MCGM school principals in Mumbai, India. A key limitation of this study is the relative short time of five months of observation devoted to data collection. Qualitative studies of principal practice are usually longer (Coburn, 2001; Wolcott, 1973). Wolcott's study, for instance, consisted of two years of sustained observation. A longer undertaking was not feasible because it would have been prohibitively costly to conduct a two-year study in an expensive city like Mumbai.[60]

The shortage of time also led to two limitations in collection of data. First, the initial two to three months were spent in establishing trust for observing the authentic interactions of the principal. This is the reason why most of the excerpts from meetings presented in Chapter 4 related to the latter period of fieldwork (January to March 2019) when my presence in school premises was not considered abnormal. Secondly, the brief time made the observations of planned meetings a hit or a miss affair. For instance, I could not observe a single formally planned Staff Meeting at SNM. These monthly meetings were often planned a day or two in advance but were also subject to the

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[60] For instance, the cost of a furnished accommodation with utilities in a non-expensive neighbourhood in Mumbai amounts to USD 700 (https://www.expatistan.com/cost-of-living/mumbai?currency=USD). My actual cost of living was close to USD 900 per month.

availability of the principal and teachers in school. Hence, on two occasions when I reached the SNM to observe the planned Staff Meeting, the principal had been urgently called to the Ward office for updating school records. On two other occasions, it was my poor health on that day which prevented me from observing the SNM meeting. Although I did reconstruct the SNM Staff meeting based on the meeting minutes and talks with the SNM principal and teachers, I still think that a video-record of the Staff Meeting would have been extremely helpful in comparing and contrasting the planned meetings of the two MCGM principals.

Summary

To summarize, this Chapter began with the rationale behind the choice of the qualitative research approach by drawing attention to the interpretive nature of the research questions and the distinctive aspects of principal meetings as a research topic. In section two, I described the complex MCGM administrative and operational framework highlighting the various dotted relationships in the hierarchy and the intense discussions around improving enrollment, student performance, and school leadership in MCGM schools. In section three, I explained how learning potential, access, and resources finally led to the selection of SNH and SNM as research sites. I also described that principals and teachers held multiple responsibilities and there were other major topics besides PSM which led to the minor revision to the research questions to exclude specific references to the PSM. In section four, I described the methods and tools of data collection: participant-observation of around 120 hours, six interviews, and the review of documents used and referred to in principal meetings. In section five, I detailed and illustrated the data analysis procedures of contact summary sheets, coding, memoing, and vignettes

using examples. I also shared how the writing of the dissertation Chapters continued the act of data analysis. In section six, I presented the steps that were undertaken to build trustworthiness in this study suggesting that I tried to do my best by spending reasonable time spent in the field, triangulation, and member checks. Finally, in section seven, I described the limitations to the study highlighting how my own positionality as a researcher and resource constraints.

To summarize, this Chapter began with the rationale behind the choice of a qualitative research approach by drawing attention to the interpretive nature of the research questions and the extant qualitative research approaches to study meetings. Subsequently, I described the complexity of the MCGM administrative and operational framework and the choice of SNH and SNM as the two research sites to collect data about multiple cases of principal meetings. I then described how preliminary fieldwork showed that principal meetings are related to multiple and shifting professional responsibilities of principals and teachers which led to a minor revision of the research questions. Then, I explained the methods and tools of data collection: participant-observation, interviews, and document review and also illustrated the various data analysis procedures using examples from data collected. I also presented the steps that were undertaken to build trustworthiness in this study. Finally, I considered the limitations of this study and discussed aspects of researcher positionality, potential sources of power, bias, and resource constraints.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Box 4.1 The Ward Meeting Setting

Location: Ward office, (Fieldnotes, January 5, 2019, 10.55 am)

Today is the day of the monthly Ward Meeting. This meeting is conducted every month in a large meeting hall in the Ward office building. The hall is large- about 500 square meters, a seating capacity of about 300 people and has a stage. Right now, only about 60 red plastic molded chairs have been laid out on floor facing the stage (see Figure 1.1). It is about 10.55 am and the meeting is supposed to begin at 11 am.

Principals start filing into the hall around 11.05am and by 11.15am, about 40 principals are seated on the plastic chairs. Two Beat Officers (BOs) have also arrived and are walking around to make sure that the basic infrastructure, like the microphone, is working. The Administrative Officer (AO) walks into the hall at 11.18 am. She and the Beat Officers take the chairs on the stage. The principals get their long notebooks out and pens. I notice the title on one of these notebooks, which says "AO/BO Register" in colored stylistic handwriting.

The AO looks over the principals, pulls the microphone close to her, and says, "Good morning". Everyone else in the Hall replies in a chorus, "Good morning".

The Ward Meeting has begun.

The brief description of the Ward Meeting sets the stage for this Chapter on findings from the study. Ward Meetings were held every month and attended by almost 85% to 90% of the principals from the Ward. As this Chapter would describe in detail, principal meetings, like Ward Meetings, were important episodes in influencing the professional knowledge of both teachers and principals.

The purpose of this study was to examine how principal meetings shaped professional knowledge in two municipal schools in Mumbai. Specifically, the study explored how principal meetings managed ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge. In addition, this study looked at how principal meetings were interconnected across time and how principal meetings were similar to and different from each other across the two schools chosen for the study. Chapter 3 described the research site context, the research design, and the methodology of the study. Preliminary findings highlighted the need to slightly revise the research questions. This Chapter addresses the revised research questions to describe the findings of the study and the meaning of the findings for each research question.

This Chapter is divided into four sections. Section one describes how principals, teachers, and MCGM officials define principal meetings and explains why principal meetings are necessary in the context of MCGM schools. Sections two to four describe the findings pertaining to the three revised research questions. Section two answers the first research question and details how principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to shape professional knowledge. Section three answers the second research question and details how principal meetings connect across time to shape professional knowledge. Section four compares and contrast principal meetings between the two

MCGM schools to answer the final research question.

<div align="center">**Principal Meetings: Definition and Necessity**</div>

Defining Principal Meetings: Surprise in the Field

A surprising finding during fieldwork was that MCGM teachers, principals, and senior officials did not use the term "principal meeting" in the way I had defined in the dissertation proposal.

In contrast to the more encompassing definition I had initially adopted of principal meetings as all deliberate, work-related interactions of the school principal and at least one more person linked to school functioning; principals, teachers, and senior officials at MCGM used the term principal meetings to refer to specific work-related social interactions of the principal. During the interviews and informal conversations, the participants told me that a work-related interaction of the principal qualified as a principal meeting only if there were elements like planning (say, an agenda circulated beforehand), written record about items talked about in the meeting (say, minutes), and universal composition of a professional group (say, all teachers).

Therefore, to resolve the difference in the more encompassing definition, derived from my review of the literature, and the more specific definition used by the participants, I consider it helpful to divide the work-related interactions of the principal into two broad types. I label the first type the Planned Principal Meeting (PPM) and the second type the Unplanned Principal Meeting (UPM). The different characteristics of PPMs and UPMs is illustrated in the Table 4.1. The different characteristics of PPMs and UPMs have been further subdivided into the characteristics articulated by the participants and the characteristics inferred from my observations and fieldnotes. In early March

2019, I conducted a member check of PPM and UPM characteristics by informally talking with both the MCGM principals of the schools chosen for this study. Overall, both principals agreed with my interpretations of their planned and unplanned meetings. The necessity of PPMs and UPMs emerged both out of the interview conversations as well as my observations and therefore has been listed separately.

After the table, I describe the different PPM and UPM characteristics in detail. Some of the characteristics described here (e.g., universal composition) help in answering the research questions (e.g., type of ambiguity being managed) proposed under this study.

Table 4.1

Planned and Unplanned Meetings of the Principal

Characteristics	Planned Principal Meeting	Unplanned Principal Meeting
Articulated by Participants		
Planning	Pre-planned; often indicated by a written agenda	Spontaneous, No written agenda
Recording	Minuted and recorded through written documents	No minutes kept
Composition	Universal (e.g., all teachers or all principals), therefore large	Selective (typically 1-5 people), therefore small
Inferred through fieldwork		
Duration	Long (30 minutes- 2 hours)	Short (1 minute- 30 minutes)
Topics	Multiple (>5)	Few (1-3)
Meeting Place	Designated locations: Principal office, meeting hall, Virtual Classroom	Any location: Principal office, corridors, school grounds
Examples	Staff Meeting, Ward Meeting, EO Meeting, SMC Meeting	Scheduling meeting, compliance task meeting
Necessity	Focus and pressure; provide coherence	Respond and fulfill urgent demands

Planned Principal Meetings (PPMs)

In this section, I first describe how MCGM participants described the

characteristics of PPMs when they were asked about what constituted a principal

meeting.[61] Subsequently, I describe the inferences from my observations and fieldnotes

which describe other implicit characteristics of PPMs.

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[61] The term PPM was coined during data analysis to refer to what participants refer to as a principal meeting. Hence, in the following quotes, when participants mention principal meeting, they are usually describing what is defined herein as a PPM. In this dissertation, I capitalize the first letters of the meeting descriptor to denote it as a PPM (e.g., Staff Meeting, Ward Meeting).

Participant descriptions. MCGM participants articulated four distinct aspects of a PPM. PPMs comprised some kind of planning; they were recorded; had universal composition; and provided focus, pressure, and coherence to accomplish work.**[62]** These articulated elements of PPMs were captured during interviews and informal conversations with the principals, teachers, and senior MCGM officials as I will describe shortly.

Planning was emphasized as a key characteristic of principal meetings by both the MCGM principals. SNM principal, Mina P emphasized planning as the defining characteristic of principal meetings:

> …if we have a meeting, then we do planning (sic) and the meeting happens later, but because there was no planning…therefore it is not meeting.

> SNH principal, Hema P emphasized the need for preparation for conducting a

principal meeting.

> …In a meeting, more work, preparation beforehand, points prepared, and study them beforehand.

> In the quote above, Hema P indicates that planning for a meeting is done through

preparing and studying the points beforehand. In Chapters 4 and 5, I will discuss that the preparation beforehand sometimes transforms professional knowledge.

Presence of written records. MCGM principals and teachers indicated that a PPM must include the written records, like minutes or signatures. I illustrate this with one quote from SNH principal Hema P and one quote from SNH teacher Habib T. SNH principal Hema P said the following when describing a meeting:

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[62] The elements of focus, pressure, and coherence in PPMs relate to the necessity of PPMs, therefore I describe these elements in a separate subsection.

Hema P: (for a) meeting properly, properly minutes are there and on those we have to work and pass to others and get work done from them.

In the quote above, Hema P emphasizes that a meeting can be called a PPM when "properly minutes are there". SNH teacher, Habib T highlights that PPMs are recorded in writing not just through minutes, but also through signatures.

Habib T: Mostly, whatever meetings are there, full minutes are written, signatures also happen there …comes in *Soochna Vahi* [Information Book].

Universal composition. In their interviews, both MCGM teachers and principals indicated that a PPM must involve all MCGM personnel belonging to a professional role (e.g., teachers, principals) which I refer to as universal composition. SNH teacher Habib T indicates that all teachers must be present at a PPM.

Excerpt 4.1[63]

"Taking" meetings: SNH teacher Habib T (Interview, February 28, 2019)

Habib T: Taking a meeting… everyone is asked to sit, if there is special instruction that can be given to teachers, [principal] can't go to all teachers in their class ..so for that everyone assembles for thirty minutes after school is released when the morning session is over and the afternoon session begins, there is a half an hour time, so a meeting is taken.

In Excerpt 4.1 above, Habib T's emphasis that PPMs require all teachers also suggests that PPMs at MCGM are likely to occur only at a specific time when all teachers are likely to be present ("thirty minutes after school is released when the morning session is over"). Further, his phrase that "principal can't go to all teachers" suggests that a key reason for having all teachers together for a meeting is because it is efficient in saving

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[63] I have used the label "Excerpt" to easily identify those interview and principal excerpts from fieldwork which are referred to again in subsequent sections or Chapters.

time for the principal. This efficiency of PPMs due to universal composition that Habib T alludes to will be discussed in Chapter 5.

SNM teacher Maggie T, in her the interview, also confirms that all teachers must be present in a PPM. When compared with Habib T's claim that PPMs are efficient especially for principals, Maggie T suggests that PPMs are valuable for teachers too.

> Maggie T: All people should be present. Otherwise, some people have queries and they remain like that only - if they [teachers] don't say, don't ask and they [principals] don't tell… If everyone is together then whether what I heard is what the other person has heard - all that can be cleared.

In the quote above, Maggie T suggests that the presence of all teachers in a PPM creates a common space to ask all the queries that teachers might have and listen to principal's responses to the queries. Maggie T's comment is significant in two ways. First, her comment describes how the PPMs create a shared professional knowledge ("what I heard is what the other person has heard") creating a common experience of the event for later recall; what Agar (1996) might call as shared indexicality. Secondly, her comment suggests that the ambiguity being cleared (i.e., the queries) pertains to a specific cluster of professionals (i.e., the teachers of a school). Were this query individual teacher specific, then Maggie T would not have insisted on universal composition ("all people should be present"). The cluster-level ambiguity will be discussed in response to RQ1 and subsequently in Chapter 5.

The quotes above from Habib T and Maggie T indicate the necessary presence of all teachers for a PPM but does the idea of universal composition apply to the professional cluster of principals too? In her interview, SNM principal Mina P continually referred to her meetings as episodes where "all" are present. When asked about the purpose of her meetings with the senior MCGM officials, she said:

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Mina P: "…it has to be shared with everyone. everyone should know it's meeting...that's why at the ward level, it is a meeting…all schools [are called]"

In Mina P's comment above, the words everyone and all refer to the school principals of her Ward. Therefore, the universal composition element in a PPM indicates meeting composition to include all professionals who are subordinate in hierarchy to the person directing or what Habib T in Excerpt 4.1 describes as "taking" the PPM.[64] In the above examples mentioned by the teachers, it is the principal taking a meeting, and therefore all teachers from the school must be present. In a similar way, when a PPM is directed by the Administrative Officer in a Ward, then subordinate rank professionals (all Beat Officers and school principals from the Ward) are required to be present. Often this mandatory presence is emphasized in the agenda itself as seen in the last line of Excerpt 4.2. ("If anyone is absent for meeting, please give writing explanation").

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[64] I often heard the verb "taking" in reference to MCGM meetings and when I probed the participants to understand what they wanted to convey, I realized that "taking" denotes more than simply leading or conducting. Taking is used in the same way as the phrase "taking stock". I would explain the use of the verb "taking" in more detail later in the section on the necessity of PPMs.

Excerpt 4.2

January Ward Meeting: Agenda sent on WhatsApp (Fieldnotes, March 12, 2019)

Tomorrow sharp 11.00 am all HM meeting in Sunrise colony. Attendance is compulsory about following points:
1. DBT account about 27 items.
2. Girls attendance
3.MM module sap.
4. MTNL new plans.
5. Science lab update.
6.computer lab update.
7.lokandi and lakdi [iron and wood] broken furniture pending school reason
8.digital classroom update
9.Tab penalty report.
10. Picnic planning and date fixation.
11. CCE exam file for 2nd semester.
12.smc member meeting detail.
13. Bag weight update
14.very serious subject audit note update.
Come for meeting with all details. If anyone is absent for meeting, please give writing explanation.

So far, we have discussed three defining elements of a PPM which were articulated by the participants: planning, recording, and universal composition. In addition, my observations reflected other defining aspects of PPMs.

Inferences through fieldwork. When I analyzed my fieldnotes, I noticed that PPMs had three other common characteristics: multiple talk points, long duration, and flexible meeting locations.

Multiple talk points. PPMs involved planning and the preparation of multiple talk points. For instance, the agenda for the Ward Meeting (Excerpt 4.2) lists 14 points and the *Soochna Vahi* circulated to capture the points of Staff Meeting talk at SNH also lists 14 points (see Appendix R). In my observations of the PPMs, six to seven additional

points were talked about in these meetings. The Ward Meeting in January 2019 also discussed seven additional points besides the agenda items.[65]

Restricted meeting locations. The universal composition needed for PPMs determined not just the time when such PPMs could happen,[66] but also restricted the PPM to specific meeting locations. PPMs could occur only where there was enough seating (e.g., principal offices, meeting halls). The Ward Meeting, for instance, was always held in a separate hall meant for holding special events as described in the prelude to this Chapter. As described in Chapter 2, meeting scholars like Yarrow (2017) suggest that meeting location is one of the factors which shape the kind of professional knowledge being created. I elaborate upon the element of meeting location in Chapter 5 when I discuss how the location of the SNH principal office is likely to have developed and shared richer professional knowledge through principal meetings.

Long duration. The multiple talk points also typically made PPMs long affairs. For instance, the Staff Meetings observed were around 30-45 minutes each while the Ward Meetings typically lasted for about two hours. For me, as a researcher of meetings, the longer hours provided richer data but I often wondered about whether the participants found these long meetings necessary. Habib T, in his interview, had commented that "Fifty percent points are same in every meeting". And yet, in none of the participant interviews did the theme of principal meetings as wasteful or unnecessary emerge despite

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[65] These seven additional meeting talk points were: new kindergarten classes, handwash compliance report, cleanliness campaign results, new sports teacher, scholarship exam dates, "Save the girl child" event, and caste validity certificates.
[66] Habib T's comment in Excerpt 4.1 indicates that PPMs can only be held in the half hour between "when the morning session is over and the afternoon session begins".

my direct and indirect suggestions that other media could also communicate the same topics that were talked about in PPMs (See interview question number 6 in Appendix L). Therefore, in the next subsection, I draw upon the interviews to highlight what makes PPMs necessary.

Necessity of PPMs. The participants shared in their interviews that PPMs were necessary to deliver focus, pressure, and coherence. The description of PPMs as episodes of providing focus and pressure was a surprising finding because this purpose of PPMs was missing in my review of educational literature in Chapter 2. Principal meetings, the literature suggested, were considered crucial to fulfill purposes like building a shared vision, developing the capacity of school staff, managing instruction, or redesigning the school as an organization (Louis et al., 2010). In this subsection, I will first describe the MCGM participants considered the PPMs as necessary to provide focus and pressure.[67] Subsequently, I will highlight the coherence purpose fulfilled by PPMs.

Focus and pressure. Hema P, in her interview, pronounced her meetings as focus and pressure episodes to motivate completion of work:

Excerpt 4.3

Pressure in meetings: SNH principal Hema P (Interview, February 6, 2019)

> Hema P: Meetings are necessary for progress. If there are no meetings, then only teaching, this-that and there can't be more focus that I have to reach this goal, I have to do … Pressure, pressure is a big thing, give pressure from above and then only work get done….Today, my pressure on teachers is that I need records then the teacher .. under pressure only, will they do quickly. If we don't say... no meetings, then no impact, no impact, no impact!

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[67] I use the terms focus and pressure together because the participants usually referred to these terms together.

The comment above is noteworthy when we highlight SNH principal Hema P's assumption that, without PPMs, the teachers are not going to focus on goals. Her repetition of the word "pressure" four times in the quote underscores that PPMs bring an urgency towards goal completion. It remains to be seen from Hema P's comment though how the pressure is enacted through meetings in reality. This is where SNM principal Mina P's perspective on PPMs, from her interview, helps build the link.

Excerpt 4.4

Reminders in meetings: SNM principal Mina P (Interview, February 2, 2019)

> Mina P: Meetings are necessary…to do motivation. Because some points are repeated again- till they are completed, that's why.

The quote above from Mina P suggests that PPMs provide pressure through continual reminders. Sure enough, the pressure in PPMs through reminders is a recurrent theme in interviews with other participants.[68]

SNH teacher Habib T, in his interview, concurred with Mina P's point about the reminders in meetings which make principal meetings as necessary to remember professional responsibilities/tasks:

> Habib T: Because here some people forget and it is important to revise [remind] them if there is no meeting taken on that point. If a meeting is taken and then not talked about it [the point] for 6 months then people also don't take it seriously.… If meeting is taken every month, then it remains fit in the mind.

Habib T's comment above about PPMs indicates that PPMs are crucial to provide pressure and focus. First, in addition to mentioning reminders, Habib uses the verb "taken" repeatedly when referencing PPMs and his elaboration suggests a similar meaning for the verb take as used in the phrase "to take stock of things". This was further

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[68] The theme of same points being re-emphasized in PPMs came up at least four times in my fieldnotes.

confirmed during my conversations with other MCGM participants like SNH principal

Hema P and the SNM principal Mina P that meetings are "taken" to get information.[69]

Therefore, the continual reminders in the PPMs and their emphasis on taking stock of

things, I would suggest, sustain the pressure to get professional work accomplished.

Secondly, Habib T's point about things remaining fit in the mind[70] gains relevance when

it is remembered that there are multiple and shifting professional responsibilities that

MCGM principals and teachers are expected to perform leading to ambiguity around

which professional responsibilities to focus upon (see Chapter 3).

Another related finding articulated by the participants was that physicality makes

principal meetings distinct and important affairs. In her interview, Hema P emphasized

that rapport and pressure can only be developed through a face-to-face meeting. In

addition to talks with principals and teachers, my conversations with senior MCGM

officials like the DMC and the school superintendent confirmed that "there is something

about the physical body" which marks physical meetings as distinct events of

significance. A senior MCGM official at the central office described how Administrative

Officers would bring principals from their Ward office to the central MCGM office for

meetings to simply hear about specific mandates. Although the same mandate could be

shared through an email or through an official circular, the physicality of the meeting was

important to provide pressure.

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[69] I specifically probed for the use of the phrase "taking meetings" as compared to "conducting meetings" in my member check interviews in March (see Appendix L).

[70] PPMs being episodes to enact pressure and aid memory was also suggested by my observations. For instance, in the Ward Meeting, I also noticed that sometimes the AO would mention a point and then ask the school principals to say it aloud (repeat) as if to emphasize the point and help them remember it.

Coherence. In addition to focus and pressure, the participants emphasized that PPMs were necessary to ensure coherence in accomplishing mandated school goals. As reported by the participants in their interviews, principal meetings ensure coherence by: (a) gathering information about the performance of each MCGM teacher or principal with reference to mandated directives and goals and (b) building shared knowledge about new directives and goals with speed and detail.

SNM principal Mina P explains below how universal composition (presence of all school principals) in the Ward Meeting helps the school principals in gathering current information on mandated directives and goal performance.

Excerpt 4.5

Assessing Performance: SNM principal Mina P (Interview, February 2, 2019)

> Mina P: All schools, all remaining schools which have *Saral* work [*Saral* is a web-based student enrolment system], has to be done online. We fill online. some schools don't know [that], then they don't fill, it remains [incomplete] there – that's why all are called [to Ward Meeting]- that's when we know that it is complete for some and incomplete for others.

Mina P's comment above is also important because it suggest coherence through building a shared knowledge about professional responsibilities. Taking her example of updating student enrolments in *Saral*, it is possible to suggest that it is during the PPMs that all the principals sustain focus on the same set of professional responsibilities or to put simply, are "pulling in the same direction". Although updating data on student enrolments through *Saral* might seem a trivial coherence exercise to some readers, based on my discussions with senior MCGM officials, I would stress that such data is essential to institutional coherence at MCGM. In Chapter 3, I described that dropping student enrolments is a big challenge for MCGM and there has been pressure for increased accountability. Hence, capturing current data on *Saral* is important because it informs

policies about implementing new programs to improve enrolment (e.g., visit to parent homes), principal/teacher transfers in case of dropping enrolment, and even school closures if enrolment drops below a specific level.[71] A top MCGM official told me that incorrect student admissions data makes it difficult to not only decide which programs to implement in each Ward but also to appraise or reward school principal and teacher performance.[72]

For the SNH principal Hema P, PPMs were also necessary to help her share and gather information about directives and goals with speed and in detail with all teachers at the same time.

Excerpt 4.6

Coherence through Meetings: SNM principal Mina P (Interview, February 2, 2019)

> Hema P: Can't go and talk personally to everyone...[information] reaches faster …. can describe points in more detail when talking …can give history… (as compared to) notices (which) are usually one or two points. *** How are teachers doing… are not going on a different track, right?

The quote above from the interview with Hema P is significant in two ways. First, it corroborates Habib T's view that PPMs are efficient (see Excerpt 4.1). The element of efficiency in PPMs will be discussed in Chapter 5. Secondly, Hema P's last line about how PPMs ensure that "teachers are not going on a different track" illustrates that PPMs enable coherence.

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[71] A report by Praja Foundation indicates that in the last decade (2008-09 to 2017-18), 229 MCGM schools have closed due to no enrolment or students getting transferred to another school (Praja, 2019).
[72] Student enrolment is considered critical information as can be seen by the presence of a blackboard in each MCGM principal office which shows the overall student enrolment and the day's attendance (see Figure 2, Appendix AA). Hema P, the SNH principal, told me at least four times during my fieldwork that hers was one of the few Hindi medium schools where student enrolment had not dropped in the last five years.

I also suggest that the elements of focus and pressure are necessary for ensuring coherence. Only when the principals and teachers are focusing on the same professional responsibility with the same sense of urgency is there likely to be coherence in performance of organizational and institutional goals. This may be seen in the Figure 4.1.
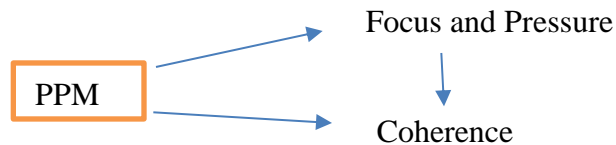
Figure 4.1. Necessity of PPMs

The discussion so far marks PPMs as crucial, but why are PPMs necessary? For instance, why cannot the use of technology channels like emails or texts or physical documents like circulars and notices in the MCGM context provide focus, pressure, and coherence? A consistent theme in my interactions with MCGM principals and teachers was that other channels (e.g., emails, WhatsApp texts, circulars/notices) were never considered as impactful as PPMs. What made PPMs necessary is described well by principal Mina P and teacher Habib T's replies below to my interview question if other channels like WhatsApp or circulars could accomplish what PPMs do:

Excerpt 4.7

Technology cannot replace meetings: Excerpts (Interview with Mina P, February 2, 2019; Interview with Habib T, February 28, 2019)

> Mina P': If they put on WhatsApp - not everybody reads WhatsApp...some of them don't even see it because of time...they might have their own issue...so that's why ...it has to be shared with everyone. everyone should know…that's why meeting!
> Habib T: Not everyone reads. It is boring. Important messages get missed. No surety if it is a group message- and not individual. Mobile internet not working, switched off. [There are] issues. So, can't rely. If the notice was taken out…but did it occur or not like that according to notice- then for everyone a meeting is taken...meeting must be taken according to that.

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The comments above are noteworthy in two ways. First, they re-emphasize that PPMs are necessary for making sure that there is no ambiguity about the performance of goals even if the same professional responsibility was described through a notice ("did it occur or not like that according to notice"). Secondly, other virtual channels like emails or texts are not reliable due to either technology issues ("mobile switched off") or the hectic work-life ("because of time") or simply the tedium associated with reading ("It is boring").

To summarize, based on the interview excerpts and my own observations, PPMs are considered necessary by MCGM principals and teachers. In particular, I draw attention to the element of focus and pressure through PPMs which addresses the larger matter of the conceptualizations of principal meetings or meetings in general. I discuss this finding in Chapter 5.

In this section on PPMs, I described the defining aspects of PPMs as articulated by the participants and as inferred through fieldwork. The participants described that PPMs had to be planned, were always recorded, and had universal composition of a professional cluster. Fieldwork indicated that PPMs were long, had multiple topics, and could be "taken" only in designated locations. Overall, PPMs were found not just useful but necessary to provide focus, pressure, and coherence.

In contrast to PPMs which were taken no more than a few times in a month, I found that daily work-life of the MCGM principals involved a number of meetings which were brief, unrecorded, and unplanned which I call as the Unplanned Principal Meeting.

The Unplanned Principal Meeting (UPM)

When I immersed myself in observing the daily work-life of the two MCGM

principals, I found that UPMs are one of the most recurring meetings in the life of the

MCGM principal. Almost every day of the week, the school principals would begin their

work-day at school through brief UPMs during their school-rounds. Even though each

UPM was usually brief (less than five minutes), the overall time spent on UPMs would

comprise more than half the principal's six hours of workday and which may be surmised

from the detailed data which I recorded when I shadowed the MCGM principals for a day

each (see Appendix I).

The UPMs also have certain features which distinguishes them from the PPMs

(see Table 4.1). To illustrate these distinguishing features, I provide below accounts of

UPMs drawn from my fieldnotes, one each from both SNM and SNHs. The slightly

extended examples are necessary because I refer to these accounts repeatedly to draw out

aspects of UPMs (e.g., urgency, taking action) when answering the three research

questions proposed under this study.

Excerpt 4.8

Unplanned Principal Meeting cases (Fieldnotes, October 20, 2018 for SNM meeting case

and October 26, 2018 for SNH meeting case)

> <u>A case of UPM at SNM</u>
> SNM principal Mina P is seated on the principal's chair in her office and totaling
> up the rubella vaccinations in a register. SNM teacher Reshma T walks in and tells
> Mina P that she is having difficulty in understanding certain terms in the new
> classroom observation booklet. Mina P, still sitting on her chair, takes the
> observation booklet from her. Reshma T stands to Mina's left and for the next
> three minutes, points to certain Marathi terms in the observation booklet, and asks
> how they are translated to fill the observations. After each query, Mina P softly
> responds to Reshma T, often giving examples. Reshma T nods vigorously at each
> clarification. Another SNM teacher, Ram T, enters the office and says he needs

questions to assess *25 nikash*. Mina P gets up from her chair and she and Ram T walk to the desktop computer. Reshma T, who is now sitting and skimming the booklet (maybe to make sure that all her doubts are cleared), tells both of them to use the website eshala.org. Mina P stands next to the desktop as she asks Ram T to open the eshala.org website. Together, they look at the website and discuss the appropriateness of questions for assessing 25 *nikash*. Ram T continues to browse the website for 10 minutes, prints some questions, and leaves. Mina P tells me that the *25 nikash* assessment is due tomorrow.

A case of UPM at SNH
In the SNH principal office, a teacher Rajan T is holding a memo which he received today from the Education Officer (EO). He is not smiling. The memo reprimands Rajan T because an inspection revealed that he had wrongly marked some absent students in his class as present. Rajan T, words coming out fast, asks SNH principal Hema P how to respond to the memo. Another teacher, Habib T, who is standing nearby joins the conversation. Rajan T explains to Habib T that marking the students as absent would have forced him to take their names off the school register and he was expecting the students to come to school. Habib T tells Rajan T to set up a meeting with the Education Officer (EO) and explain honestly that he [Rajan T] did not mark the students as absent for moral reasons and if he [Rajan T] is at fault, then he is willing to bear the consequences. Rajan T, a bit of tremor in his voice now, says that perhaps he could first send a response to the memo in a letter and then set up a meeting with the EO. Hema P tells Rajan T that the EO office must receive a written response in 5 days and a copy sent to the Ward office. Rajan T, usually a chirpy person, is quiet. Noticing his silence, Hema P and Habib T tell Rajan T not to worry as these things happen.

MCGM participants are not likely to call the work interactions described above as meetings because there was no planning, or an agenda or even minutes taken. However, when compared with the definition of principal meetings in this proposal, the SNH and SNM principal interactions described above are principal meetings because these fulfill all key aspects of a principal meeting definition: (a) involve the principals Mina P and Hema P, (b) are work-related interactions,[73] (c) are ostensibly connected to the

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[73] Although the above interactions were not pre-arranged, they were as deliberate as the formal principal meetings because they were thoughtful and unhurried. Wolcott (1973) also refers to similar unplanned principal meetings of the principal he shadowed, as deliberate (pp. 90).

functioning of the school. Therefore, in contrast to the PPMs which are planned affairs, I refer to the above interactions as the Unplanned Principal Meetings (UPMs).

Based on my observations, I found that UPMs were spontaneous, rarely recorded, and had limited composition (select teachers or principals). In addition, these UPMs were short, had few topics, and were held in any location ranging from principal office to school corridors. These characteristics of UPMs contrasted them with PPMs as I summarized in Table 4.1. Now, I describe the UPM characteristics in a bit more detail within the MCGM context and highlight why UPMs, too, are significant and necessary.

- **Not planned**. During my fieldwork, almost every day, teachers, parents, other principals, NGO officials, and Ward office officials would walk unannounced into the offices of MCGM principals and talk about work-related matters. I noticed that there was rarely a telephone call to set up an appointment. In addition, as I described in Chapter 3, the MCGM principals followed an open door policy.[74] The MCGM principals had little intimation of such visits and could not plan or to quote from the SNH principal Hema P, "prepare beforehand".

- **Not recorded**. UPMs did not document or note what was talked and agreed upon. There was no document, similar to an AO/BO register or an Information Book, which records the points discussed in the UPMs. This is not to say that UPMs do not leave a documentary trace. For instance, in the SNM excerpt described earlier, there is a document printed of the *25 nikash* assessment created by the UPM.

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[74] Fieldnotes show that MCGM principal office door was closed only was when the principal office was empty.

However, the UPM itself is not documented by a record of the points discussed, time, date, or signatures.

- **Limited composition.** UPMs do not require universal composition of all principals or teachers. They are often limited to 1-2 teachers who meet and talk about specific issues relevant to their work.

- **Brief.** UPMs are also short in duration, often lasting a few minutes. Both the SNH and SNM excerpts above lasted less than ten minutes. The average duration of a UPM, as analyzed from the data from shadowing the two MCGM principals is about 5 minutes (see Appendix I).

- **Limited topics.** The talk within UPMs is limited to 1-2 specific points. For instance, in the SNM excerpt described above, the talk with Reshma T is related to the observation checklist and the talk with Ram T is related to assessment for *25 nikash*.

- **Flexible locations.** UPMs may be held anywhere- in the corridor, on the playground, in the classroom, in the principal office, and so on. They do not require elaborate seating arrangements and can be held when people are standing. In the SNH excerpt for instance, Rajan T and Habib T, stood next to the principal Hema P during the UPM.

- **Urgent.** Finally, UPMs respond to urgent demands. During fieldwork, I observed multiple UPMs which happened due to an urgency- which also provides one reason why planning is not possible for UPMs. In the UPM cases at SNM in Excerpt 4.8, the task of preparing the assessment quiz has to be completed today because the students must be assessed tomorrow.

To summarize, UPMs differed in their characteristics from PPMs and were rarely recognized as "proper" meetings. While the necessity of PPMs was clearly articulated by MCGM principals and teachers, the necessity of UPMs can be established based on my observations and fieldnotes.

Necessity of UPMs. The observations showed that UPMs were necessary to: (a) resolve problems and manage ambiguities which prevented professional responsibilities from being fulfilled and (b) take action to fulfill the professional responsibilities. To illustrate these two points, I draw upon the UPM excerpts described earlier from SNM and SNHs (see Excerpt 4.8).

UPMs resolve problems in fulfilling professional responsibilities. In the SNM excerpt, the UPM between principal Mina P and Reshma T helps in clarifying of key terms in observation checklists and then a UPM between principal Mina P, Reshma T, and Ram T results in preparing an assessment paper for *25 nikash*. Filling in the observation checklist is a key professional responsibility for Reshma T as part of the commitment expected to be fulfilled by every teacher ("I will keep an eye on student qualities, abilities, and habits": item 6 in the poster shown in Appendix G). On the other hand, preparing the assessment paper for *25 nikash* in time is another key professional responsibility for all teachers ("prepare and assess question papers without delay": item 5 in the Appendix G). In the case of Reshma T, the UPM helped her resolve the ambiguity around the meaning of key terms in the observation checklist. For Ram T, the UPM helped him find appropriate questions for preparing a question paper assessing *25 nikash*.

In the SNH excerpt, the UPM between Rajan T, Habib T, and principal Hema P helps in forming a response to the reprimand handed to Rajan T through a memo. There

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is considerable ambiguity in what would be an appropriate response to the Education Officer to explain why Rajan T marked absent students in his class as present. The UPM helps Rajan T discover through talk that he would first send a written response to the memo and then meet the EO to tell him the moral reasons behind his actions.

UPMs involve action to fulfill professional responsibilities. When the fulfillment of professional responsibility is extremely urgent i.e., the professional task needs to be completed now or in the immediate future, then fieldwork suggests that UPMs become a necessary episode to take actions to accomplish the responsibility. In the SNM Excerpt 4.8, Ram T printed out questions and prepared the question paper for *25 nikash* in time to prepare copies for administering the assessment the next day. Another instance of UPM, this time at the SNH, has been described in detail in Figure 4.12. In this UPM which occurred on the evening of the 13th of February, actions were taken to enter leave applications for at least 5 teachers through the new mobile Human Resources Application (HR App). The action was urgent because the last date for submitting leave applications and getting them approved was the 13th of the month.

And such UPMs are not rare events, rather it was observed during fieldwork the principal's workday has multiple such UPMs during which either problems were resolved or professional responsibilities were accomplished. For instance, in the course of a work-day, the MCGM principals had anywhere between 25 to 50 UPMs as may be surmised from the first two hours of MCGM principal's workday (see Appendix I). Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the UPMs are not just helpful but necessary events to accomplish professional responsibilities.

The necessity of the UPMs, similar to that of PPMs, perhaps lies in the perceived inability of other channels like emails and WhatsApp to accomplish professional responsibilities. For instance, what is important to note in the UPM cases described in Excerpt 4.8 or in Appendix I, similar to what happened in the PPMs, the MCGM teachers and principals did not email, call or interact through a text. They preferred to engage in a UPM which either resolved the problem holding the accomplishment of the professional responsibility or acted to accomplish the professional responsibility during the UPM.

The necessity of UPMs has been illustrated in Figure 4.2 below:
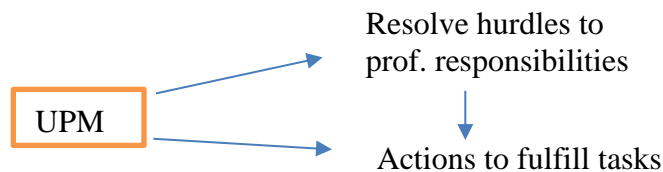
Figure 4.2. Necessity of UPMs

This is not to say that all the professional responsibilities were accomplished in the UPMs. For instance, not all SNM teachers engaged in a UPM with the SNH principal to manage ambiguity around classroom observation checklists. Or for that matter, some teachers individually entered their leave applications through the HR App before the 13th of the month. The point being made is that whenever the teachers or the principals needed a dynamic resolution to management of ambiguity or resolving problems holding back the fulfillment of a professional responsibility, they found it necessary to engage in a UPM.

To conclude, based on my own observations, although not explicitly articulated UPMs are deemed necessary by both principals and teachers. In particular, I would draw attention to the element of absence of planning in UPMs which addresses the larger

matter of the characterizations of principal meetings or meetings in general in academic literature. In Chapter 5, I discuss academic literature in a section focusing on the Unplanned Principal Meeting.

To summarize, this subsection on UPMs described the defining aspects of UPMs which contrasted the articulated definitions of PPMs as articulated by the participants and as inferred through fieldwork. The UPMs were unplanned, rarely recorded, and had limited composition of a professional cluster. In addition, fieldwork indicated that UPMs were usually brief, had few topics, and could be conducted in any location. Overall, UPMs were found not just useful but necessary to help resolve the problems that occurred in fulfilling professional responsibilities and in taking action to accomplish professional responsibilities.

Overall, this section on the definition and necessity of principal meetings began with the surprising finding that, in contrast to my literature-suggested definition of principal meetings, MCGM participants defined principal meetings only as the planned work interactions of the school principal. This surprising finding suggested an initial typology of principal meetings of Planned Principal Meetings (PPMs) and Unplanned Principal Meetings (UPMs). I further drew upon my interviews with the MCGM participants and my observation notes to illustrate with evidence how PPMs were necessary episodes to provide focus, pressure, and coherence and how UPMs were necessary to either resolve problems or take action required to accomplish professional responsibilities.

Findings by Research Question

Now that I have defined and illustrated both PPMs and UPMs, I turn my attention to the research questions guiding this study. I answer the research questions by drawing upon the typology of principal meetings into PPMs and UPMs.

As described in Chapter three, this dissertation answers the following main research question and sub-questions.

How do principal meetings create, retain, and, transfer professional knowledge?

1. How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

2. How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

3. How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The following three sections answer one research question each. For each research question, I first summarize the findings and then describe each aspect of the finding in detail using evidence from meeting excerpts, interview comments, and fieldnote observations.

Research Question 1

How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The findings show that principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty primarily through *sensegiving* (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) that creates, retains, and

transfers professional knowledge to: (a) define and clarify ambiguity around professional responsibilities/tasks and (b) reduce uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. I would like to emphasize here that literature indicates other types of ambiguity and uncertainty that principal meetings most likely manage. For instance, Schwartzman (1981) highlights that meetings often manage ambiguity around professional status. Coburn (2005) found that principal meetings were useful to manage ambiguity around specific institutional directives like reading policies. Based on the findings, however, I focus on what I found to be the most important sensemaking and sensegiving aspects of principal meetings at MCGM: the management of ambiguity of professional responsibilities and resolving uncertainty in bureaucratic processes. I address these aspects of ambiguity and uncertainty separately in the subsequent discussions.

Ambiguity of Professional Responsibilities

Weick (1995) highlights that ambiguity is natural when people do not have a "clearly defined set of activities that they are expected to perform" (p. 93). Principal meetings, as the findings show, define and clarify professional responsibilities.[75]

As I described in Chapter 3, each MCGM principal receives more than 500 messages every month relating to professional responsibilities through WhatsApp texts, notices and circulars. The messages translate into multiple and shifting professional responsibilities for both school principals and teachers. Hence, in the face of the ambiguity around which professional responsibilities need to accomplished, PPMs and

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[75] As I described in Chapter 3, these professional responsibilities were work-related tasks which the MCGM staff (school principals, teachers, BOs) were expected or asked to perform as part of their professional roles, for instance conducting classroom observations, assessing students as per 25 PSM indicators, providing compliance data related to various institutional directives, ensuring scrap-removal at schools and so on. There was no pre-defined list of professional responsibilities for school principals.

UPMs become episodes to define and clarify both principal and teacher professional responsibilities.

The findings show that principal meetings (PPMs and UPMs) manage ambiguity around: (a) **what** professional tasks/responsibilities principals and teachers are expected to perform and by when and (b) **how** these professional responsibilities need to be accomplished.

As I will illustrate shortly, PPMs primarily manage the ambiguity around what and when of professional tasks/responsibilities principals and teachers are expected to perform. To describe this in terms of professional knowledge using King's (2009) framework described in Chapter 2, PPMs create, retain, and transfer the *know-whats* of professional responsibilities i.e., what is new, what is still important, and what is priority.

UPMs, on the other hand, lean towards managing ambiguity around **how** the professional responsibilities need to be accomplished. To describe this in terms of professional knowledge using King's (2009) framework described in Chapter 2, UPMs create, retain, and transfer the *know-hows* of professional responsibilities, resolving questions such as, "How do I complete my professional responsibility or task and/or how do I resolve the problems/challenges that are inhibiting task completion?".

PPMs and managing ambiguity. To illustrate how PPMs manage ambiguity about the know-whats, I draw upon two different PPMs each focusing on professional responsibilities of a professional cluster (e.g., all principals from a Ward or all teachers from one school). First, I draw upon the agenda and a brief excerpt from the talk in the Ward Meeting to show how PPMs develop and share the knowledge of principals' professional responsibilities from the Ward. Subsequently, I use an excerpt from another

PPM (the Staff Meeting) to show how PPMs develop and share the knowledge of teachers' professional responsibilities.

PPMs and principal professional responsibilities. The monthly Ward Meeting of the professional cluster of all school principals from the Ward, briefly described in the prelude to this Chapter and which will be detailed with excerpts, illustrates how PPMs shape the know-whats on principal's professional responsibilities. Findings indicate that the agenda sent beforehand for the Ward Meeting and the subsequent enactment of the Ward Meeting combine to clarify what is important and by when in terms of professional responsibilities of principals.

One of the defining characteristics of PPMs is that they are preceded by planning (see Table 4.1). We can infer the presence of planning by the existence of an agenda. The agenda for the monthly Ward Meetings, I found, always provided a topic-wise preview into the professional responsibilities of the MCGM principals for the next month. For instance, the agenda sent for the January 2019 Ward Meeting (see Excerpt 4.2) lists an initial list of topics relating to MCGM principals' professional responsibilities (e.g., Science lab update, Girls attendance).

However, the list serves only a preview. For instance, item number 2 (Girls attendance) does not specifically mention what aspect of the attendance will be discussed and how does it translate into professional responsibilities. The listing of these topics, however, is still helpful because it provides a list of 14 focus areas pertaining to professional responsibilities of the principals from the Ward. It is useful to remember that as mentioned in Chapter three, MCGM principals, on an average, receive more than 500

work-related text messages every month on WhatsApp professional clusters and therefore a list of 14 topics considerably narrows down the focus areas.

Fieldnotes show that it was the enactment of the actual Ward Meeting which elaborated the 14 topics from the agenda into the know-whats of professional responsibilities. To illustrate, I will take two items from the agenda and elaborate how they translate into the professional knowledge of principal responsibilities.

Girls attendance (item 2), as it was enacted during the Ward Meeting, described an MCGM directive to prevent girl dropouts and improve the attendance of girls in higher grades of 7th and 8th.[76] During the Ward Meeting, first the Administrative Officer first collected information on how many principals had opened fixed deposits for all the girl students in grades 7 and 8 by asking, through show of hands, how many principals had achieved 100% success for this initiative.[77] When the AO noticed that only a few school principals had raised their hands i.e., many schools had still not opened fixed deposits for "all" their girl students, the AO urged the principals to focus upon the know-what of opening fixed deposits for all the girls in their schools during the month of January ("Hurry up").

Audit note update (item 14) is described as a "serious subject" in the agenda but does not indicate how this translates to professional responsibilities. The service books (record of attendance) pertaining to all school staff, as was explained during the Ward

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[76] In a conversation with me later, SNM principal Mina P explained that an MCGM initiative encourages continued attendance of girls in MCGM schools by opening fixed deposits in banks for all girl students in grades 7 and 8. These fixed deposits mature when the girls pass grade 10. This MCGM initiative represents an effort to sustain student enrolment: a key challenge that MCGM schools struggle with (see Chapter 3).
[77] The quick gathering of information through show of hands may be considered another example of efficiency of PPMs.

Meeting, were not updated at the Ward Office and which was necessary as part of a current MCGM digitization initiative.[78] The AO, during the Ward Meeting, first engaged in sensegiving (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) around the initiative to say that the digitization of attendance records was an important initiative for the senior officials at MCGM and therefore, if the service books pertaining to the MCGM schools were not updated soon, the school principals would be reprimanded severely. Each school principal was then handed out a document (i.e., audit note) which detailed how many service books pertaining to their schools were still not updated. The principals were finally told the deadline for completion of this tasks i.e. end of January. During the Ward Meeting, the AO further put the professional responsibility for updating the Service book on the principals by saying "It is your work….it is principal's duty", thereby reducing ambiguity about what needs to be done, by when, and also who would be considered responsible.

The ascribing of professional responsibilities of principals and the sensegiving by senior MCGM officials, the findings showed, was consistent in other Ward Meetings. Take for instance Excerpt 4.9 from the Ward Meeting held in March 2019 in which the Administrative Officer handles a query about whether the newly installed biometric system for digitally signing in and out of school staff can handle non-routine attendance.

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[78] This initiative is part of a larger strategy to digitize the attendance system and also make it transparent. This transparency is aimed to improve teacher commitment: a factor behind poor student performance (see Chapter 3). Currently, , the day-wise teachers and principal's attendance records are kept manually at their respective schools through the Attendance and Leave Sanction registers. In the past, at the beginning of each month, the overall attendance (say, 22 days out of 26 days) for the previous month was communicated to the Ward office to calculate salaries and enter into each individual's service book. However, it was alleged that these records at the Ward office were incomplete and out of sync with the actual attendance of the teachers and principals. Hence, the need to update each teacher and principal service book so that the attendance records at the school matched those at the Ward office.

Excerpt 4.9

Clarifying the Biometric system: Ward Meeting (Fieldnotes, March 5, 2019)

1. AO: So, someone had asked me if I come early at 10 instead of 12 and go early at 4:30 instead of 6:30...will it capture full day? SAP [the system capturing biometric data] is not human, computer is not a person that will say...okay man, you had come early, so go early. SAP system doesn't understand this.
2. BO: The timing in SAP is fixed. It will remain. So, if I come before at 8, then I still have to do biometric at 6.30 only. Then my payment will be complete.**
3. AO:...you have to swipe in & out on proper time only....everyone please understand this…Everyone please understand this.
4. AO: We are resolving the machine problems which are different.
5. AO: So, because of this reason if your period hours are cut...then who is responsible? Yourself and no one else. If there are genuine reasons, then HM should decide...whether to cut or not. But....action will not be taken unless and until you inform this to Ward. So, if it gets missed then HM (Head Master) is responsible and not Ward.

In Excerpt 4.9, the AO manages the ambiguity around what happens when a teacher works a full day (6 hours) but signs in and signs out early through the biometric device (see line 1). The AO explains that it is the principal's responsibility to inform the Ward about when teachers work their allocated 6 hours but sign in and sign out at different times (see line 5).

In this excerpt, the sensegiving (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) is provided by both the senior MCGM officials (the AO and the BO). In line 1, the AO presents the story of being asked a query about early signing in and signing out. She then emphasizes that the system is not a human who can adjust to this early signing in and out ("okay man, you had come early, so go early"). The comment by BO in line 2 serves to both clarify and emphasize AO's explanation in line 1 by exaggerating that even if the signing in happens at 8 am, the signing out will happen only at the fixed time of 6.30 pm. The statements by the AO and the BO, therefore help create the meaning for the change to a biometric

system for the principals and provide a clear know-what ("swipe in & out on proper time only").

Now that I have shown that PPMs like the Ward Meeting manage ambiguity about the know-whats of principal responsibilities, I would like to highlight that the ambiguity that is managed relates to a future professional responsibility of the principal. In the first PPM excerpt using the agenda of the Ward meeting, the professional responsibility of getting the service books updated or opening fixed deposits for the girls is given a future deadline of January 31, 2019. In the second PPM excerpt (line 5), the AO indicates that principals will be held responsible for informing the Ward. In addition, the story used by the AO (line 1) to indicate the early sign-in and sign-out times is also set in the future ("…will it capture full day?"). The PPM emphasis on the future professional responsibility is in contrast to the more immediate professional responsibility that is clarified in the UPMs as will be described later.

Finally, I would also like to draw attention to how in all the instances described above, it is/are the MCGM official(s) in the senior professional role/hierarchical position who perform this sensegiving.

To summarize, I have used the two excerpts from the PPMs described above to illustrate that these meetings (a) manage ambiguity around the future professional responsibilities of the professional cluster of principals from the Ward (b) provide focus in terms of know-whats i.e. what tasks needs to be completed and by when, and (c) involve sensegiving usually by those higher in institutional authority as compared to the principals (e.g., the AOs/BOs).

PPMs and teacher professional responsibilities. The findings show that PPMs also manage ambiguity around the professional responsibilities of teachers. The PPMs create, retain, and transfer the know-whats of teacher professional responsibilities i.e., what is new, what is still important, and what is priority. Similar to the talk in the Ward Meeting, the Staff Meeting talk manages ambiguity around the future responsibilities of all teachers from the same school. Occasionally though, the Staff Meeting might also manage ambiguity on the professional responsibilities of specific teachers. To illustrate, I draw upon two excerpts from the Staff Meeting at SNH conducted in February 2019. The first excerpt (Excerpt 4.10) describes how the principal Hema P manages ambiguity around the issue of attendance through the biometric system and engages in sensegiving relevant to all teachers from the school. In the second excerpt (Excerpt 4.11), I demonstrate that the principal Hema P ascribes the future responsibility of preparing a report to specific teachers and engages in sensegiving to influence one of the resistant teachers towards accomplishing his new professional responsibility.

Excerpt 4.10

Signing through biometric: SNH Staff Meeting (Fieldnotes, February 27, 2019)

> Hema P: if biometric, if not done in location, money will get deducted- for which the administration is not responsible. You are responsible. You have to do it in your location. You have to solve your own problems. Other location, no biometric to be done. If money is deducted, there will be no discussion...if other location and money is cut, you will be yourself responsible. And thumb has to be done.

The ambiguity in the above excerpt becomes evident when one takes into account that the biometric system is installed at each of the 1400 MCGM schools and therefore it is possible for teachers to sign-in or sign-out using their thumbprint, from another school. In the excerpt above, SNH principal Hema P, therefore influences all the SNH teachers to

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sign in their attendance through the biometric system only at the SNH ("Other location, no biometric to be done"). Her sensegiving involves ascribing the professional responsibility of correct biometric signing to all the teachers and she uses the term "you" to include the professional cluster of all the SNH teachers ("You are responsible"). Again, similar to the AO's sensegiving in the Ward Meeting excerpt, Hema P creates the story of future probable scenario ("if other location and money is cut") during her talk to re-emphasize the professional responsibility of all SNH teachers ("you will be yourself responsible").

In Appendix S, I include two other excerpts from this Staff Meeting to illustrate that the same Staff Meeting involved other instances of sensegiving during which the SNH principal managed ambiguity around other future professional responsibilities of all SNH teachers. The first excerpt in Appendix S clarifies what it means to be prepared for *25 nikash* and the second excerpt reframes the attendance of all trainings.

Infrequently, the Staff Meetings, would also involve sensegiving pertaining to the future professional responsibilities of specific teachers. In the following excerpt, I show how the SNH principal influences a teacher to take up a new professional responsibility.

Excerpt 4.11

Preparing Masik Patra: SNH Staff Meeting (Fieldnotes, February 27, 2019)

1. Hema P- From tomorrow Masik Patra (monthly, grade-wise student attendance report) to be made. Usha teacher has said that she will make one. From next month, Manoj sir has to make it.
2. Manoj T (MT) - No.
3. Hema P: What is there in making Masik Patra? You will get all the records. Only, it has to be made. /If you make it on the computer …
4. Senior Teacher (ST): It doesn't have to be made, just written/
5. Hema P: Take someone's help. What we don't know how to do- we start and we get it. We have been directly made Head Masters, did not get training but we have to tolerate everyone/everything. We have to take...work from learning, from doing (work) is learnt. Masik Patra, I

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will make one, you make one this time. Usha teacher says she will make one.

In the first line of the excerpt above, Hema P gives Manoj T (MT) the professional responsibility of preparing the *Masik Patra* or the monthly grade-wise student attendance report ("From next month, Manoj sir has to make it"). The ambiguity arises in line 2 when MT refuses to follow this new professional responsibility of preparing the *Masik Patra*. His refusal, I would suggest, invokes ambiguity because it raises questions about who will fulfill the professional responsibility in future. Secondly, the ambiguity also pertains to the know-what of preparing the *Masik Patra* itself which becomes evident in line 4 ("It doesn't have to be made, just written"). MT's refusal to do what the principal is asking also increases ambiguity because, I suggest, it challenges the shared professional know-what of the hierarchical relationship between the SNH principal and the teachers.

The refusal by Manoj T immediately prompts sensegiving by the principal by reframing teacher professional responsibility of preparing *Masik Patra* (lines 3,5). The principal presents her own story of lack of professional orientation to indicate how MCGM teachers need to be ready to "tolerate" the unfamiliar professional work. In particular, the principal's description to master the know-how of a professional task ("we start and we get it") almost sounds like Weick's (1995) process of sensemaking itself wherein action is necessary to clarify knowledge. Still noticing resistance, she persuades MT to take the professional responsibility of preparing the *Masik Patra* by sharing some of the professional responsibility ("I will make one").

The principal's description of learning from doing and her offer of sharing of task responsibility conjures an image of apprenticeship in professional learning (Lave &

Wenger, 1990) suggesting that PPMs not only shape professional knowledge during the meeting interaction but also influence the creation, retention, and transfer professional knowledge (e.g., the preparation of *Masik Patra)* beyond the meeting episode.

To summarize, the two excerpts from the Staff Meeting above, show that PPMs (a) manage ambiguity around the future professional responsibilities of all teachers from the school (b) provide focus in terms of know-whats i.e. what tasks needs to be completed and by when, and (c) involve sensegiving usually by those higher in institutional authority as compared to the teachers (e.g., the principal).

In Figure 4.3, I incorporate the aspect of ambiguity management into the earlier representation of PPMs. The elements of sensegiving, know-whats of professional responsibility and cluster-level also shape the focus, pressure, and coherence of PPMs that MCGM participants described in their interviews. The sensegiving efforts in PPMs to influence what needs to be done and by when, I would claim indicate both focus and pressure. Since the topics of sensegiving pertain to the professional cluster at an organizational (school) or institutional level (Ward) suggests the underlying aim to bringing coherence to accomplishment of professional responsibilities.
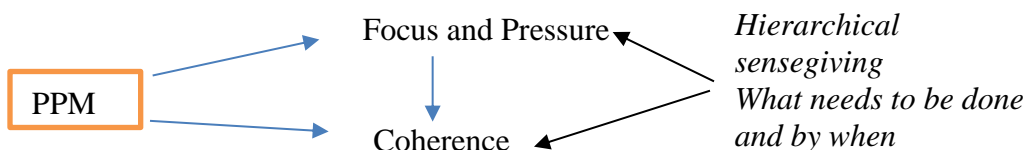
Figure 4.3. PPMs and ambiguity management

Unplanned Principal Meetings and management of ambiguity. So far, the excerpts that have been drawn pertain to PPMs. In this section, I show that the UPMs manage ambiguity by focusing on the know-how of fulfilling professional

responsibilities. In contrast to the PPM's focus on future professional responsibilities, I will show that UPMs focus on the relatively immediate professional responsibilities that need to be fulfilled urgently.

To illustrate how UPMs manage ambiguity around the know-hows, I draw upon a UPM from SNH during which talk and action enable entry and approval of employee leave applications in the new biometric system. The particular UPM has been chosen because it comprises teachers and principals from three MCGM schools in the Sajiv Nagar MCGM building and would help demonstrate the development and sharing of professional knowledge within and across organizational (school) boundaries. In addition, this UPM contains talk about the biometric system, a topic that has been discussed in the PPMs and would be useful to show interconnections between PPMs and UPMs in Research Question 2.

The UPM occurred on the evening of 13th February at the SNH principal office and comprised the following meeting participants: Hema P (SNH principal), Mina P (SNM principal), Trilok P (SN2 principal), Ram T (SNH teacher), Rama T (SN2 teacher), and Habib T (SNH teacher). In the first half of the excerpt from the UPM (Excerpt 4.12a), the SN2 principal Trilok P engages in sensegiving to SNH teacher Ram T on the know-how of entering a leave application through the Human Resource mobile application (HR App). In the latter half (Excerpt 4.12b), the talk shows SNH teacher Habib T engaging in sensegiving on the know-how of approving leave applications to SNM principal Mina P. It is also important to note that this UPM had moments of overlapping talk when two concurrent meeting threads were active (see Figure 4.4).

Excerpt 4.12a

Leave applications in the Biometric system:UPM (Fieldnotes, February 13, 2019)

1. Trilok P:(to Ram T) - First you have to enter. Please apply from HR App, then put. Only then will it get approved.
2. Ram T- No he [Ward office clerk] said yesterday, it is done.
3. Trilok P takes mobile phone from Ram T, clicks the HR App, then returns the phone to Ram T who now holds it in a way that Trilok P can see what HR App options he is entering
4. Trilok P:…Put for one day. Here is Select leave type. Casual leave and now put for whichever date. (Looking at me) - for giving a leave, it takes 3-4 people. Do this, do that, Ramdev type. (looking back at Ram T) January 10? Only for one day right? January, January (scrolling in the app). Do Ok. What was the day? Thursday. Do ok. Now it [leave request] will be seen. When they [Ward office] check, it will show 14 days instead of 15 [days of no sign-in entry in biometric system].
5. Ram T- Is it done from here?
6. Trilok P: Yes.
7. Me- Do you get a confirmation? How do you know that the application is submitted?
8. Trilok P: That's how it is.

I will illustrate that the ambiguity in the UPM excerpt above pertains initially to whether the SNH teacher Ram T's professional responsibility of entering leave requests in the biometric system has been accomplished (lines 1-2) and subsequently the UPM manages ambiguity on the know-how of entering a leave request through the HR App (line 4).

Trilok P begins the conversation (seen in line 1) by sharing the knowledge that Ram T must first enter his leave request in the HR application for it to be approved. Ram T does not agree that he needs to submit a leave request ("No he [Ward office clerk] said yesterday, it is done"). These two different interpretations create ambiguity. The potential ambiguity is resolved by Trilok P by physically cross-checking whether the leave application has been entered in the HR App on Ram T's phone (line 3).

After establishing that the leave application has not yet been entered, the UPM shifts to clarifying the know-how of entering the leave application. Subsequently in line 4, Trilok P engages in detailed sensegiving by sharing the step-by-step know-how of using the HR App to enter a leave request. Once the leave request has been submitted through the HR App, Trilok P confirms the successful completion of the Ram's professional responsibility by creating the story of what is visible to the Ward office "(it will show 14 days instead of 15"). Trilok P continues to engage in sensegiving when he clarifies the ambiguity raised by me about whether the leave request has been submitted successfully (line 7) by indicating that there is no such response (e.g., pop-up/text) visible in the app (line 8: "that's how it is").

An important point to be noted here is that there is physical action (i.e., taking the phone, selecting options) which accompanies meeting talk to resolve the ambiguity.
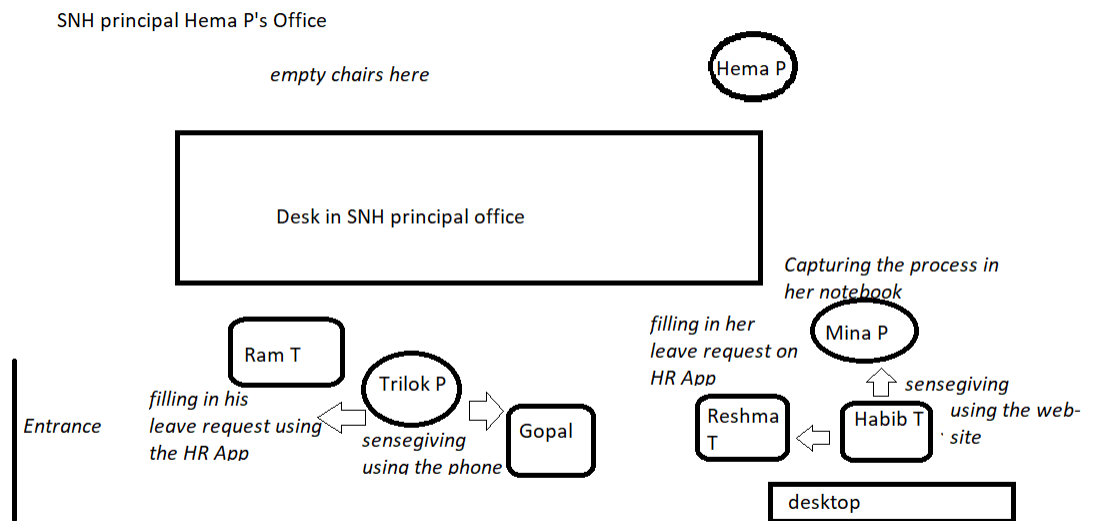
Figure 4.4. Physical seating and action during the UPM on biometrics

At the same time when Trilok P is sharing the know-how of entering leave request, there is another UPM talk and acttion between the SNM Principal Mina P, Rama T (SNM teacher) and Habib T (SNH teacher) who are two feet away in the same meeting location. As shown in the Figure 4.4, Habib T is seated opposite a desktop and entering a leave request for Reshma T on the MCGM HR website.

Unfortunately, since the audio-recorder could capture only snippets of this overlapping meeting talk during hence it could not be reproduced line-by-line. However, fieldnotes and Excerpt 4.12b confirm that Habib T engaged in sensegiving on the know-how of entering leave requests through the biometric website and the HR App on Rama T's phone. SNM Principal Mina P, who is standing behind Habib T, took detailed notes in her notebook on each step of entering the leave request and then undertook the physical action of using the HR App on her phone to approve Rama T's leave request.[79] It was this meeting talk between Mina P and Habib T and the actions being taken which Trilok P interrupts in the following excerpt.

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[79] I had earlier observed principal Mina P going through the biometric website on her own to figure out the entering and approval of leave application. Hence, I would suggest that she knew that the approval of leave requests involved the biometric website and this was not a completely "unknown" process. This previous knowledge makes the current issue a problem of ambiguity, rather than uncertainty as I would explain in Chapter 5 in theoretical discussions of ambiguity versus uncertainty.

Excerpt 4.12b

Leave applications in the Biometric system:UPM (Fieldnotes, February 13, 2019)

9. Trilok P (disrupting the talk between Mina P and Habib T)-
   Habib..Habib..no tuition today
10. Habib T- Madam is an HM..sitting here..HM!
11. Trilok P: that is right.
12. Habib T (pointing to screen): here is a code.
13. Trilok P: (speaking to Ram T and showing on the phone)- this is
    showing as red, when it is approved it will be green.
14. Habib T: (pointing to the screen) Madam for this zonal HR, use this
    code - ZHRPAPT4535

The role of Habib T as a sense-giver is confirmed by the above excerpt through

Trilok P's comment in line 9 about "no tuition today". Habib T's pointing to the screen in

line 14 represents another effort to explain specific codes to Mina P on how to approve

teacher leave requests (line 14).

The date for the above meeting excerpt (i.e., February 13) is important to

highlight that the focus of fulfilling the professional responsibilities is immediate. As

described in a subsequent excerpt from the Ward Meeting (Excerpt 4.13), principals need

to inform the Ward office of any discrepancies between the actual attendance of their

school staff and the ones reported by the biometric system by the 13th of the month ("You

should tell us before 13th"). Hence, the occurrence of a UPM on the 13th evening to

resolve ambiguity around biometric attendance issues links it to fulfillment of

professional responsibility by the 13th.

Other instances of UPMs provide more evidence to illustrate that UPMs manage

ambiguity on know-hows around professional responsibilities to be fulfilled in the near

future. For instance, let us take the UPM described earlier in Excerpt 4.8 in which SNM

teacher Reshma T meets SNM principal Mina P to talk about observation checklists. The

unplanned meeting with the principal manages Reshma T's ambiguity on the professional

know-how of filling in the observation checklist. The principal Mina P performs sensegiving to influence Reshma T's understanding of the key terms used in the observation checklist. The focus on immediate future in sharing this know-how is evidenced by how the principal leaves her current professional task ("filling entries in a register") to focus on the observation checklist. In the same excerpt, Ram T walks in to meet the SNM principal about preparing the assessment quiz. The ambiguity managed by the UPM centers around the professional know-how of finding the right questions for assessment of *25 nikash.* The sensegiving in this UPM is distributed between Mina P and Reshma T who guide Ram T towards the website resource of eshala.org and finding suitable questions for the assessment. The focus on immediate future in sharing the know-how of preparing the assessment is not only evidenced by how the principal quickly leaves her conversation with Reshma T to help Ram T but also because the assessment is due the next day. In both the UPMs, there is physical action (using the physical copy of the observation booklet and the searching on the website) which I will suggest helps in resolution of the ambiguity.

Based on the above excerpts, I would like to highlight two aspects of ambiguity management in UPMs. First, the role of sensegiving is distributed in a UPM. In the UPM excerpts, instead of the principal, sensegiving is also performed by the person lower in institutional hierarchy i.e., teacher Habib T who is explaining the step-by-step leave request process to Rama T and the right approval code in the leave approval process to the principal Mina P respectively (lines 12, 14 in Excerpt 4.12b). Secondly, the ambiguity is specific to the present meeting participants. In the biometric UPM excerpt, only the teachers who were not sure about how to enter their leave requests were present.

Figure 4.5 incorporates the ambiguity management by UPMs into the earlier representation of UPMs. As may be observed, the elements of distributed sensegiving and the know-hows of professional responsibility resolves the hurdles to the fulfillment of professional responsibilities and even taking action to fulfill the responsibility.
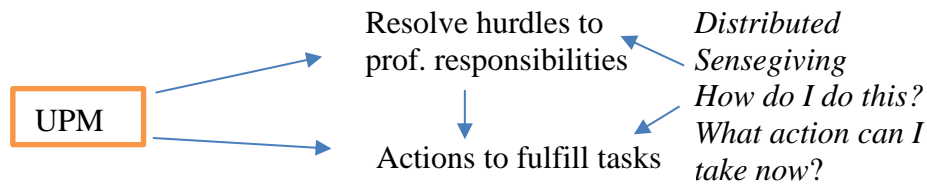
Figure 4.5. UPMs and management of ambiguity

Uncertainty around Bureaucratic Processes

The previous section illustrated how PPMs and UPMs managed ambiguity through sensegiving. Findings also show that PPMs and UPMs provided information to reduce uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. Before I proceed, it might be helpful to revisit the difference between ambiguity and uncertainty as noted by Weick (1995). Ambiguity, as described by Weick (1995), occurs when multiple perspectives and interpretations of the same event(s) exist. For instance, if each principal receives 20 texts in a day about professional responsibilities, it is quite likely that different principals will interpret differently what is an important professional responsibility to focus upon. Uncertainty, on the other hand, is when people do not know about an event i.e., there is no information (Weick, 1995). For instance, uncertainty will arise when principals do not know what they should do in case there is a mismatch in their actual attendance and the one captured by the biometric system.

In the earlier section on context in Chapter 3, I described that MCGM had multiple existing initiatives in action at the same time with new initiatives being

introduced. Some of these new initiatives have already been described in earlier sections in this Chapter (e.g., biometric system, PSM, digitization of service books, *Saral*). Information about these new MCGM initiatives was provided through multiple channels like emails, notices, and WhatsApp texts. The findings show that PPMs often became episodes to distribute knowledge to reduce the uncertainty in bureaucratic processes surrounding new initiatives (e.g., biometric sign-on processes). UPMs, as the following discussion will show, also reduced uncertainty around bureaucratic processes but less frequently.

PPMs and uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. To illustrate how PPMs reduce the uncertainty around bureaucratic processes, I draw upon meeting excerpts from the March 2019 Ward Meeting and the February 2019 Staff Meeting at SNH. Both PPMs had multiple instances of reduction of uncertainty around bureaucratic processes and I draw one excerpt from each meeting to illustrate how this uncertainty is managed. In both the meeting excerpts, the bureaucratic processes around the new introduced biometric system highlighted the importance of the 13th day of each month even though the process had been clarified earlier through an MCGM circular.[80]

In the Ward Meeting excerpt (Excerpt 4.13), I illustrate how the Administrative Officer (AO) reduces uncertainty around the bureaucratic process of signing through biometric system by indicating: (a) that the system demands accuracy to prevent salary cuts and (b) the fail-back bureaucratic process in case of unfair salary deductions.

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[80] An MCGM circular dated January 11, 2019 had been issued specifically relating to processes around biometric attendance which clearly mentioned the importance of the 13th of the month.

Excerpt 4.13

Emphasis on the 13th: Ward Meeting (Fieldnotes, March 5, 2019)

1. AO: For all reduced duty hours, salary will be reduced. Money deduction happens for every second. Money deduction happens for every second. This has happened in the past. Some people got less pay due to just seconds mismatch. So should keep track of which teacher is coming at what time, going at what time.
2. AO: On every 13th, I (she is referring to a paper in her hand) get a list. List will have the information of salary cut/reduction for every teacher. Should salary get reduced or not...we decide. But you have to tell us about it.
3. AO: You should tell us before 13th that, this teacher has taken leave and it is allowed leave. or there was a technical error. Whatever it is, you have to tell us.

What is important to note in line 1 is the emphasis by the AO that in the biometric process the time of signing in/out in the biometric system needs to be accurate to the second. The sensegiving around making sensitivity of time is done by emphasizing of consequences ("Some people got less pay due to just seconds mismatch."). The next two lines describe a failback process- instead of directly deducting salary based on the sign-in and sign-out, a list is generated by the system about salary deductions and the principals have to follow the process of notifying the Ward office by the 13th of the month if the salary deduction is not appropriate (e.g., teacher leave or technical error).

The same Ward Meeting provides more information to reduce uncertainty about the biometric process as may be seen in the two other excerpts attached in Appendix T. The first excerpt in Appendix T indicates the presence of a portal through which the principals may check the attendance records from the biometric system and the second excerpt describes talk about an inbuilt hierarchy in the system for sanctioning leaves.

The Staff Meeting held in February 2019 at SNM also reduced the uncertainty in the processes around the biometric system. Reducing the uncertainty was necessitated

because, as compared to the Ward Meeting attended by the principals, the Staff Meeting comprised a different audience i.e., the school teachers. Excerpt 4.14 from the Staff Meeting at SNH highlights that in addition to sharing the professional knowledge around biometric processes from the Ward Meeting, the Staff Meeting also develops and shares new professional knowledge which is school-specific.

Excerpt 4.14

Clarifying Biometrics process: Staff Meeting at SNH (Fieldnotes, February 27, 2019)

1. SNH Teacher (ST)- if someone's biometric doesn't happen, either we must be told how to report…
2. HM- No, No, listen if the biometric is not happening, if no one's getting it done in the building
3. ST- Does /that happen?
4. HM- Yes, it happens/… it happens and we have a solution for that. It happens. If no one's biometric gets done in the building, then write [sign] in register.***
5. HM- Listen. Listen/ listen whichever day's money has been deducted -is also visible … [looks at teacher Habib T] Habib sir, isn't it?
6. ST- …that I have…month...the day my open timing…I mean...closing timing was not told
7. HM- then it will get deducted for that day no... that is the information we have to give before the 13th.
8. ST- Before the 13th! so if we have to know that the biometric has /not been…
9. HM- They you...listen listen/ so on that day- write in the muster..
10. ST-wrote in /the muster.
11. HM--in the book/. write in the book
12. HM- that at that time it wasn't done and this is the time we went and what is the reason
13. HM- Before 13th, then we will do. Once remind sir. Report will go on the 13th and no money will ever be cut.

The uncertainty here is raised by ST in line 1 above is about what needs to be done if the biometric system does not record the attendance of the teacher in the school. This uncertainty is reduced by the principal by describing the school-specific knowledge of marking attendance in the register (line 3) and of intimating the principal and the Habib T by the 13th of the month (lines 7, 13).

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The sensegiving by the principal (lines 2,4) invokes a specific type of scenario to shape teacher professional knowledge related to the administrative task of marking attendance. In line 2, the principal responds to the teacher's query by bracketing off for further attention (Weick, 1995) a plausible scenario when the biometric system in the whole building is not working and no one can enter their attendance in the system. The surprise of the teacher (line 3) provides an opportunity for immediate sensegiving by the principal (line 4) where her talk ("Yes, it happens") overlaps with that of the teacher. The repetition of "it happens" enhances the plausibility of the scenario. Finally, the solution ("write(sign) in register") removes possible ambiguity and retains professional knowledge of what needs to be done (know-what) if the biometric system is not working in the future.

It is important to note here that the know-what is quite likely school-specific. Another school might not have a teacher who has been trained in biometric system and therefore be forced to create a different know-what of what to do when the actual attendance is different from the one marked through the biometric. For example, that school might delegate the professional responsibility to each teacher to inform the principal directly about the discrepancies by the 10th of the month instead of the 13th.

UPMs and uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. UPMs also provided sensegiving to resolve the uncertainty in bureaucratic processes. However, since UPMs focus on the know-how of resolving immediate accomplishment of professional responsibilities, I found fewer instance of reducing uncertainty around the overall bureaucratic process in UPMs.

Take for instance Excerpt 4.12a described earlier wherein the UPM participant Trilok P clarifies the ambiguity around the know-how of entering a leave request in the mobile app by making Ram T enter the request using the HR App. Once the leave request is entered, he indicates that the process is over and briefly provides information about the bureaucratic process by indicating that the request will be visible to the approvers ("now it will be seen"). However, the talk within the UPM does not provide more information on managing uncertainty around the bureaucratic processes of leave request and approval (e.g., the presence of a portal, the hierarchy of approval, the number of days that the approver has and/or what happens if the approver does not do anything).

In another UPM instance, during the SNH example in Excerpt 4.8 the UPM participants are resolving the ambiguity of finding the appropriate response to the reprimand memo received by Rajan T. During the end of the conversation, the SNH principal provides information that Rajan T must respond in 5 days to the Education Officer and also send a copy to the Ward office. This again is an instance of the reduction of uncertainty by the UPM. Overall, though such instances of providing information of bureaucratic processes in UPMs were few.

To summarize the response to Research Question 1, principal meetings (PPMs and UPMs) manage ambiguity by providing sensegiving around the professional responsibilities of principals and teachers. This sensegiving is crucial because the daily work-life of both principals and teachers revolves around multiple and often shifting professional responsibilities as was described in Chapter 3. The PPMs lean towards provide sensegiving on the know-what aspect of professional responsibilities related to the future and in contrast, the UPMs center towards providing sensegiving on the know-

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why aspect of professional responsibilities related to the near future or now. Also, both PPMs and UPMs reduce uncertainty by providing information around bureaucratic processes.

Research Question 2

How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The earlier sections in this Chapter showed, using excerpts from principal meetings (PPMs and UPMs), that meetings of the principal were necessary and provided sensegiving to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge around professional responsibilities and bureaucratic processes. Although the excerpts that were shared were from separate principal meetings, this section shows that principal meetings are far from being self-contained episodes. The findings show that PPMs and UPMs interconnect across time to: (a) sustain top-down flows of sensegiving, (b) create the bottom-up flow of compliance data and school demands, and (c) enable lateral flows of professional knowledge to build shared knowledge about the school as an organization. I will describe the meaning of top-down, bottom-up, and lateral as it relates to knowledge flows in each subsection.

Top-down Flows of Sensegiving

I will illustrate the top-down flows of sensegiving by showing the interconnections across time between (a) PPMs and PPMs and (b) PPMs and UPMs. I use the term top-down in the sense of an institutional professional hierarchy (e.g., from AO to BO; from BO to principal; from principal to teachers: see Figure 3.1).

PPMs-PPMs. In this subsection I will show that PPMs connect across time to transmit as well as transform professional knowledge from one meeting to another.

In a conversation with me during this study, the SNH principal Hema P once described her professional responsibility as a school principal when "taking" her Staff Meetings,

> "what we are told (by senior MCGM officials), we tell the teachers…in an organized way…proper follow-up".

This comment by Hema P might make it seem that principal meetings are occasions where the words of the higher institutional authorities (say, from a Ward Meeting) are repeated verbatim in a PPM at schools (say, a Staff Meeting); a phenomenon known as ventriloquism (Cooren, 2012). However, as I will show in the following discussion, PPMs are not simple conduits of professional knowledge: rather principal meetings also shape that professional knowledge through differentiated sensegiving across time. Sensegiving is akin to an emergent process in meetings across time, instead of it being only a fixed, top-down, talk as Hema P's comment suggests.

Fieldnotes show that PPMs like the Ward Meetings were frequent occasions to put pressure on principals to focus on ensuring the successful completion of certain directives e.g, *25 nikash.* In each Ward Meeting for instance, the AO and the BO emphasized that the know-what that it is the professional responsibility of the school principal that the school progresses on achieving success on *25 nikash* (see Appendix J). The principals often noted this down in their AO/BO register (see item no. 3 in January Ward Meeting notes: Appendix U) and also forms a part of their Staff Meeting agenda (see item no. 3 in the Staff Meeting Information Book- Appendix R). This, I would suggest, indicates a

transmission of professional knowledge or know-what about the professional responsibilities that need to be focused upon.

A subtle shift in this know-what, however, occurred in the subsequent PPMs (Staff Meetings) held at the school during which the professional responsibility of reaching *25 nikash* was "completely" shifted to the school teachers. During the Staff Meeting in March, for instance the SNH principal remarked "Please take care of your class…*25 nikash* must be complete". The agenda notes from the SNM principal Staff Meeting too also indicate that professional responsibilities of filling the *25 nikash* online and keeping copies were re-allocated to the teachers ("…teachers must fill").

This subtle-but-significant shift in sensegiving and the top-down flow of professional know-whats was also seen in a few other instances between the Ward Meeting and the subsequently held Staff Meeting. For instance, the January Ward Meeting items of DBT account update regarding 27 items (see first item of agenda: Figure 1) or the preparing the Tab-Lab report was made the teacher's professional responsibility in the SNH Staff Meeting ("I need everyone's numbers").

The shift in allocation of professional responsibilities contradicts Hema P's comment earlier about how principals, in their meetings, simply pass on the professional knowledge about responsibilities from the higher authorities. The professional knowledge gets modified in small, but significant ways by shifting the complete responsibility to the teachers.

This is not to say that both the MCGM principals, during their PPMs, shifted all their obligations to the teachers' professional responsibilities list. For instance, the sending of report on the iron and wood scrap material (item 7 of the Ward Meeting

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agenda in January) was not mentioned in the Staff Meetings. Rather, this professional

responsibility, I observed, was fulfilled by the principals themselves. Secondly, both the

SNM and SNH principal often completed some of the SNM teachers' professional

responsibilities either through UPMs and/or through their own investment of time. For

instance, as was indicated in the Staff Meeting excerpt 4.8, the SNH principal offered to

complete one *Masik Patra* on behalf of the teacher, MT. The SNM principal too, as I will

elaborate in response to Research Question 3, often spent her own time in fulfilling

professional responsibilities allocated to teachers (see Appendix H for a list of the various

professional tasks allocated to SNM teachers).

PPMs-UPMs. The findings show that the PPMs and UPMs interconnect across

time usually to transform the know-whats to the know-hows of professional

responsibilities. I often observed that the PPMs provided the impetus to conduct UPMs.

To illustrate this, I draw upon multiple examples of Ward Meetings and Staff Meetings

and subsequently held UPMs.

Take for instance the Ward Meeting held in October 2018 and the UPM held one

day later at the SNH principal office. An important point discussed in the Ward Meeting

held on 25th October 2018 was the know-what of the urgent updating of service books of

teachers.[81] Soon after, Hema P held a UPM and transformed the know-what into a know-

how by indicating how the teachers will go about updating their service books. The UPM

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[81] The updating of service books was a recurring theme in PPMs and UPMs in November 2018 (see Table 3.4). I have also described how the updating of service books gains significance in the context of digitization of attendance records initiative in an earlier section in this Chapter on PPMs and principal professional responsibilities.

occurred one day after the Ward Meeting (i.e., 26th October) when five school teachers were present in her office to sign-in their attendance.

> Hema P: In the Ward Meeting yesterday, the issue of incomplete service books was taken to heart…. Two teachers will go every day to the Ward office to update their service books and then the principal will go on the last day. Afternoon [shift] teachers will go around 3 pm and the morning [shift] teachers can go earlier.

The quote above highlights the creation of the process of updating the Service books. The principal does not simply indicate that service books need to be updated (a know-what), she emphasizes the how (a know-how).

Another example from a Ward Meeting in January 2019 and subsequent UPMs provides further evidence for the claim that know-whats during PPMs are converted into a know-hows during UPMs. At the end of the Ward Meeting in January, 2019, fieldnotes indicate that the AO asked the principals and teachers to learn the new system of digital attendance by downloading the HR mobile application or HR App (final point in the AO/BO register: Appendix U). Fieldnotes also indicate that the know-how of using the HR application took center stage in several UPMs in January-March 2019. For instance, the UPM held in February (Excerpt 4.12a and 4.12b), I described how Trilok P and Habib T share the know-how of using the HR App.

Based upon my observations, I would suggest that the level of detailing in the professional know-how differed across the UPMs depending upon where the professional responsibility must be completed and the novelty of the responsibility. For instance, in the first instance described above of updating the service books, the detailed know-how of entering details in the service books (e.g., filling in the columns) is not discussed because the responsibility is to be completed at the Ward office. My fieldnotes show that the teachers have visited the Ward office in the past to update their service books, so they

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are already familiar or have the know-how to fill their service books. Compared to this, the professional know-how of using the HR App is a professional responsibility to be accomplished within the school and it is a relatively novel process. Therefore, step-by-step detailed sensegiving and even note-taking is visible.

The arguments described above also suggests an inference about the interconnection between PPMs and UPMs and their overall relationship to pressure. It has been established in the foregoing discussions that the UPMs often occur after PPMs to accomplish the know-what emphasized in the PPM. Hence, building on the earlier finding that PPMs create pressure to get responsibilities accomplished; it can now be inferred that the reverse is true too: the pressure to accomplish responsibilities creates UPMs.

Figure 4.6 captures the top-down flows of professional knowledge when PPMs and UPMs interconnect across time.
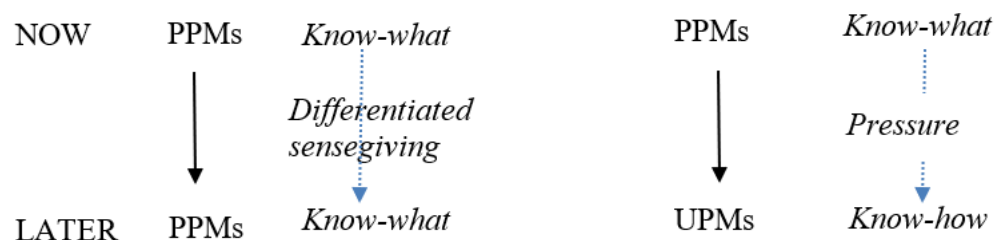
Figure 4.6: Top down flows in principal meetings.

Bottom-up Flows of Compliance Data (UPMs-PPMs)

Principal meetings, the findings show, interconnect across time to create the bottom-up flows of compliance information to the higher institutional authorities. I use the term bottom-up in the sense of an institutional professional hierarchy (e.g., from principals to BO; from BO to AO: see Figure 3.1). Hence, the bottom-up flows of data go from each school to a higher institutional level.

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This kind of interconnection is visible in how the UPMs, which are held after

PPMs, often create, develop and share data related to compliance (e.g., school

performance on *25 nikash*). Importantly, the UPMs, as the following discussion will

show, are not always simple conduits to provide information asked for in PPMs. Rather,

the UPMs are episodes wherein sometimes, the compliance facts are created before they

flow up as information in the institutional hierarchy. This creation of compliance facts, I

suggest, is not a deliberate misinformation tactic but a response to the unreasonable

expectations (e.g., all students to be proficient in *25 nikash*) and constant pressure put on

the schools. To illustrate the above points, I will use examples from the UPMs connected

to the Ward Meetings in January and March 2019.

In the Ward Meeting held on January 5, 2019, the AO in her comment below puts

pressure on the principals by emphasizing their responsibility to get all the school

students vaccinated for preventing rubella.

> AO: Only 29% (students) have been inoculated. After so much effort and
> training why so low? So, calculate your percentage and give to Beat
> Officer (BO). Also indicate on WhatsApp that the vaccinations are
> happening so that the BO can visit. How many percent, etc – just update.

The comment above describes the know-what that the professional responsibility

of the principal includes not just getting the students vaccinated but also reporting the

compliance information on vaccinations to their immediate higher authority ("give to

BO…indicate on WhatsApp --just update").

About three weeks later on January 23, I observed a UPM between the SNH

principal Hema P and two SNH teachers which involved the sending of compliance

information on the number of vaccinations done at the school. In the next paragraph, I

will show how during the UPM, the teachers and the principal "negotiate" the compliance

information pertaining to the vaccination. Since the excerpt is quite long (see Appendix V), I quote specific lines here to illustrate the finding.

During the UPM, the teachers (Ram T and Ravi T) had a sheet of paper on which they were adding up the vaccination data pertaining to each classroom provided by individual class teachers. The number of students vaccinated dynamically changes during the principal meeting because, at first, the principal decides to exclude the kindergarten student data ("Exclude *balwadi* (kindergarten): line 1). Then, as the UPM progresses, she and the teachers reflect on the vaccination data and they decide to include 34 students from kindergarten ("Please write the kindergarten numbers too": Line 20). Finally, the principal asks the teachers to get the remaining 30 students vaccinated or provide an explanation ("…will have to write and submit why": line 21).

What is important to note in the above UPM is that the compliance information of indicating the number of students vaccinated against rubella is not a fixed fact, rather the number is "created" during the UPM. The decision to include or exclude the kindergarten students is not a simple case of management of ambiguity around an administrative process. Rather, as evidenced by the excerpt, the addition of 34 kindergarten students as vaccinated is 6 more than the number indicated by the kindergarten substitute teacher ("28": line 7) and a "fact" made plausible by mutual agreement between the teachers and the principal.

Another excerpt from a UPM after the Ward Meeting in March 2019 provides more evidence of the dynamic creation of compliance facts. The fieldnotes indicate that the Ward Meeting held in March 2019 reiterated the importance of achieving success on

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25 nikash. The Beat Officer spoke for almost 10 minutes on the importance of achieving

25 nikash by the end of March 2019 (see the longer excerpt in Appendix J).

> BO: Please achieve your all *25 nikash.* And with honesty. Not bogus. Understand the concept. We must reach it by end March.

The reference to honesty in the comment above is important because it suggests

that the bogus compliance information being sent to higher institutional authorities is a

known issue.[82]

At the end of the PPM at the Ward, a UPM was held. The Beat Officers asked

principals to form groups as per their school's medium of instruction. Then a sheet was

circulated on which the school performance on 25 indicators had to be filled. However, as

the sheet circulated, I noticed that one of the MCGM principals under this study filled in

her school's performance on the 25 indicators higher than what was mentioned by the

teachers in their report out in the Staff Meeting held a few days earlier (see Appendix W).

Was reporting a higher compliance data towards achieving *25 nikash* a

misrepresentation of "facts"? I would suggest otherwise. Based on my observations, the

over-reporting of performance was a response to the continuous pressure on extremely

difficult targets set for MCGM schools. In his interview, Habib T described that achieving

100% success was "impossible" on *25 nikash* because the MCGM students came from

academically disadvantaged families and teachers like him were not able to devote their

full time towards teaching: challenges confirmed during fieldwork.

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[82] During the time I approached the senior MCGM officials to get access to the schools for this study, I was often asked if I could also, during my time at the school, check if the compliance information being sent by the schools is indeed accurate.

Habib T: However much we can try we do and then you are anyways seeing the kids (smile) and how much (we) can do that also you can see… not everyone can reach the top!

Habib's comment is different from teachers providing an excuse for poor performance because in his interview he indicated that an 80% success on *25 nikash* is reasonable and his students have already achieved the same. His argument was that expecting 100% of students to achieve success on all the 25 indicators was unrealistic. Therefore, I suggest that school reporting/creation of compliance information about performance on institutional programs like *25 nikash* or rubella vaccinations is a result of unreasonable expectations and pressure. I elaborate this point in Chapter 5.

Lateral Flows of School Knowledge (UPMs-PPMs)

Fieldwork indicates that principal meetings (UPMs and PPMs) connect across time to help school principals and teachers build a coherent knowledge of the school as an organization. I use the term lateral flows, therefore, to represent knowledge flows at the same unit level of the institution (e.g., the school). Hence, the stress here is on the organizational unit (e.g., the school) rather than the formal institutional hierarchy as was in the usage of top-down and bottom-up flows (e.g., BO-Principal). This connection between principal meetings was visible, as I will describe, when the meeting talk in UPMs at a school subsequently shaped the professional knowledge in the PPMs held at the same school. To illustrate this finding, I draw upon the evidence of a UPM conducted with an NGO at SNH and then an excerpt from a subsequent Staff Meeting at SNH.

As I described in Chapter 3, various Non-Government organizations or NGOs (e.g., KEF) work at MCGM schools to improve the quality of education (see Figure 3.2). Principals often conduct meetings with volunteers from such organization and in this case, there was a UPM between the NGO organization which runs a support program for

girls. In a Staff Meeting observed at SNH, the principal narrated the story of a UPM with

the NGO.

> Hema P: Those people [from the NGO] had come in with their cameras...such big cameras (shows the size by holding her hands 3 feet apart). I did not allow them to click photographs [of girls].

The UPM occurred when the principal noticed that volunteers from the NGO

were taking photographs of some of the school girls.

The narration of the story in the Staff Meeting led to a concurrent thread of

meeting talks between teachers, one of the very few instances where multiple teachers

spoke at the same time in a Staff Meeting. During the next few minutes, teachers Suresh

T, Vikas T, and Ravi T described their own stories of challenging scenarios when working

with NGO volunteers as shown in Excerpt 4.15.

Excerpt 4.15

Engaging with NGOs: Staff Meeting at SNH (Fieldnotes, February 27, 2019)

> Hema P: We have big risk. Don't release the girls unless there is permission.
> Suresh T: When the girls go to the NGO program, there is no control. They keep their bags in the classroom and run out.
> Ravi T: Yes, we must tell them that they (NGO) should come only if they are organized.
> Vikas T: All teachers must be told to release the students only if it is the right time.
> Suresh T: Yes, if some accident happens then the teacher will be told. How come the bag is here? What was the teacher doing?
> Ravi T: Yes, all the NGOs here…they must be made to report.

The meeting talk shown in Excerpt 4.15 built a shared professional knowledge

that working with NGOs at SNH was challenging ("there is no control"). Subsequently,

in the Staff Meeting, the teachers insisted on a meeting to talk about rules of engagement

with the NGOs working in the SNH. What is important is that such rules of engagement

with NGOs do exist: for instance, there is a rule prohibiting any outsider to take

photographs of MCGM schools without permission. However, the UPM with the NGO interconnected with the PPM to form and/or reconstruct a shared professional knowledge of the various school-specific issues (e.g., working with NGOs) and manage uncertainty around bureaucratic processes ("they must be made to report").

This interconnection between UPMs and PPMs across time to develop shared professional knowledge about each school suggests a non-hierarchical lateral flow of professional knowledge as compared to a top-down or a bottom-flow.

To summarize the findings for Research Question 2, PPMs and UPMs interconnect across time to: (a) sustain top-down flows of sensegiving, (b) create the bottom-up flow of compliance data and school demands, and (c) enable lateral flows of professional knowledge to build shared knowledge about the school as an organization. Further, the top-down flows not only transmit but also transform the professional knowledge that is created, transferred, and retained by shifting the professional responsibilities. The bottom-up compliance flows also "create" facts when they are being reported to higher institutional authorities. Importantly, neither the transformation of knowledge nor the creation of facts is a deliberate misrepresentation: these acts are valid responses to a continuous pressure on extremely difficult targets set for MCGM schools.

Research Question 3

How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

The findings show that principal meetings in both SNH and SNMs were similar in that they comprised sensegiving to manage ambiguity around professional responsibilities. To support this claim, I will draw upon the multiple excerpts of PPMs

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and UPMs in both the schools described in the earlier sections of this Chapter. However, what the earlier sections do not illustrate is that the UPMs at the schools were different in their number and their diversity in terms of participant composition and topics of meeting talk. I will end this section with a short description of the various factors that could have led to these differences and then discuss them in Chapter 5.

Similarity in PPMs: Sensegiving to Manage Ambiguity

The findings show that PPMs at both the SNH and SNMs were similar in that they comprised sensegiving to define and clarify professional responsibilities. In addition, I found that PPMs in both the schools comprised roughly the same amount of principal time, were held during similar periods, and underpinned by similar planning processes.

To illustrate the similarity in the PPMs at SNH and SNM, I draw upon two sets of PPMs: (a) PPMs attended by both SNH and SNM principals and (b) PPMs "taken" by both the SNH and SNM principals (see Table 4.2).

There existed a common set of PPMs (e.g., the Ward Meeting) at which both the SNH and SNM principals were meeting participants. This finding is not surprising because both the schools were part of the same Ward and therefore were invited to a common set of PPMs taken by the senior MCGM officials.[83] As described in response to Research Question 1 and Research Question 2, these PPMs were largely aimed towards sensegiving and shaped professional knowledge to clarify future professional responsibilities of the principals (see Table 4.1).

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[83] Here, I delimit my illustrations of PPMs to the principal meetings described and discussed in this dissertation. There were other PPMs (e.g., the Education Officer meeting) which were also attended by both the principals and provided sensegiving around principal professional responsibilities.

Both MCGM schools conducted their own PPMs (e.g., the Staff Meeting) which were similar in that they aimed to share professional knowledge around responsibilities. Since I could not observe the Staff Meeting at SNM, I will use the Staff Meeting records to illustrate that the espoused purpose of the Staff Meetings at both the schools was to transfer the professional knowledge about professional responsibilities from Ward Meetings to their monthly Staff Meetings so as to provide focus and pressure to the work of the teachers. A comparison of the agendas for SNH and SNM for their Staff Meetings in January 2019 show that six items of assigning teacher professional responsibility were the same (See Appendix R).

My talks with the principals also showed that their Staff Meetings roughly comprised the same amount of time (30-45 minutes) and were held in the afternoon time period (between 12.10 pm and 1.10 pm) when morning shift teachers and afternoon shift teachers were in school. What is noteworthy is that both Staff Meetings were underpinned by similar planning processes and the professional knowledge (know-how) around planning for the PPMs with the staff was similar. Both the SNM and SNH principals kept a notebook called the AO/BO register in which they recorded down the main points that were discussed in the Ward Meetings (see Appendix U). Based on their notes from the AO/BO register, the principals would then create a record (*Soochna Vahi)* which was shared with the teachers prior to the Staff Meetings (see Appendix R). The teachers, at the end of the Staff Meeting, would affix their signatures to the *Soochna Vahi* to record their presence at the Staff Meeting.

Similarity in UPMs: Sensegiving to Accomplish Responsibilities

The findings show that UPMs at both the SNH and SNMs were similar in that they comprised sensegiving to accomplish professional responsibilities. In addition, I found that across both SNM and SNHs UPMs were similar in comprising a significant portion of principal work-day and in UPM time.

The purpose of UPMs at both the schools was also fairly similar in that they leaned towards the know-how of teacher professional responsibilities. In Excerpt 4.8, I provided illustrative examples of UPMs at both SNH and SNMs to demonstrate that these UPMs were helpful in accomplishing professional responsibilities which was often achieved through distributed sensegiving by the meeting participants.

The second similarity, as seen during fieldwork, is that the principals engaged in no less than 15 UPMs during their regular workday which often comprised at least 50% of their workday. Evidence for this is supported by Appendix I, wherein the SNM and SNH principals had at least 8 UPMs comprising more than 60 minutes in their first two hours at school.

Table 4.2

Similar Principal Meetings of the two MCGM Principals

Principal meetings	Meeting description	Professional knowledge focus
Attended by both principals		
Ward Meeting (PPM)	Share principal responsibilities; clarify bureaucratic processes	Know-what about future
Education Officer Meeting (PPM)	Share principal responsibilities	Know-what about future
Event planning meetings (UPM)	Planning for an upcoming event (e.g., children festival in the building)	Know-how about event (how to conduct, where, who will do what)
Mutual assistance meetings (UPM)	Challenges in or completion of principal responsibilities	Know-how about accomplishing responsibilities
Taken separately by principals		
Staff Meeting (PPM)	Share teacher responsibilities	Know-what about future
Task completion with teachers (UPM)	Multiple topics (e.g., *25 nikash*, biometric, class observations, trainings)	Know-how about current tasks; action to complete responsibilities

Besides the high number of UPMs, some UPMs were conducted at the same time in both SNM and SNH. For instance, both the SNM and SNH principals often engaged in UPMs while conducting their daily school rounds (see Appendix I). As described to me by the SNH principal Hema P, during these meetings she spent at least a few minutes in each class to check if the teacher is aware of any specific professional responsibilities for the day (e.g., giving deworming tablets to students: see Appendix I) and if the classroom documentation is complete (e.g., *25 nikash* hard copies). The SNM principal's school round meetings were similar to that of SNH above in that they often contained quick reminders about fulfillment of professional responsibilities for that particular day (e.g., rubella vaccinations: Appendix I). Fieldwork also shows that because the two schools were in the same building, there were 4-5 UPMs every week with both the principals as

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meeting participants. For instance, the UPM on 13th February wherein both SNH and SNM principal engaged as participants in the entering and approval of leave requests through the HR App (see Except 4.12a and 4.12b).

I also found that both the SNH and SNM principals also met one to one in a UPM at least once a week to discuss and take action to resolve the hurdles in accomplishing their professional responsibilities. One such UPM occurred in February 2019 and I attach the excerpt of this UPM from my fieldnotes in Appendix X. This UPM instance is slightly different from the earlier excerpts of UPMs illustrated in response to Research Questions 1 and 2 which leaned more towards clarifying teacher professional responsibilities. In this UPM instance, the meeting talk and action is focused on defining and clarifying professional responsibilities of the MCGM principal instead. As may be seen in Appendix X, the UPM topic first focuses on how to fill logbooks, then shifts to strategies to procure a telephone/internet connection for the school, and finally on obtaining a school uniform for a girl who was recently admitted. Such UPMs also ensure that no important directive is overlooked. For instance, the MCGM circular regarding the telephone/internet connection had been sent online to both the principals and it was only during the principal meeting that a gap in professional knowledge about the existence of the circular was realized.

Differences: Higher Frequency and Diversity of UPMs at SNH

The difference in principal meetings across SNH and SNMs related primarily to the UPMs. The findings show that the UPMs at SNH were significantly more in number and higher in diversity in terms of participant composition and topics as compared to those at the SNM. I will first describe the findings which provide evidence to these

claims and then briefly describe the possible reasons for the higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH.

During fieldwork, I found that the principal office at SNH always had either teacher or visitors in consultation with the principal in sharp contrast to the SNM principal office where I usually found her working alone. The UPMs at the SNH were at least 20% more, on an average, than those at SNM.

Secondly, the fieldwork indicated that the UPMs at SNH were more diverse as compared to that of SNM in member composition. To illustrate this, based on fieldwork, I compare the list of meeting participants at the SNH and SNMs in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Meeting Participants at SNH and SNMs

Principal meeting participants (SNH)	Principal meeting participants (SNM)
15 teachers	9 teachers
5 NGOs	5 NGOs
2 peons	1 peon
Students and parents	Students and parents
Beat Officer- Hindi/Marathi; English	Beat Officer- Hindi/Marathi
School Superintendent	School Superintendent
Administrative Officer	Administrative Officer
Service providers (Mid-day meal, internet, photocopies provider)	Service providers (Mid-day meal, internet, photocopies provider)
School Inspector	School Inspector
Vaccination doctor	Vaccination doctor
Cleanliness campaign officials	-
Corporate donors	-
Principals from other schools	-
Teachers from other schools	-
-	Building Maintenance Contractor
-	Election Office

Note: The meeting participants in bold also engaged in more UPMs at SNH

Table 4.3 shows that both SNH and SNM principals met a wide variety of people on school-related work. However, some of the participants in the UPMs at SNH rarely

met the SNM principal too (e.g., corporate donors, the principals from other schools). This led to a wider diversity of UPMs at SNH in terms of meeting participants which also led to more topics of UPM talk. For instance, I observed a one-hour UPM at SNH on January 28, 2019 with cleanliness campaign officials about multiple topics linked to the MCGM cleanliness campaign being conducted across 1200 schools. The officials left the MCGM building after this UPM, therefore the professional knowledge linked to the MCGM cleanliness campaign did not get shared in SNM.

Based on my analysis, four factors contributed to the higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH (school size, location of principal office, seating arrangement and principal perspective on meetings) and I will discuss these in Chapter 5.

Summary

This Chapter began with the surprising finding that MCGM participants defined principal meetings as meetings only if they were planned, recorded and comprised the professional cluster of all the teachers from a school or principals from a Ward. However, the MCGM principals spent more than 50% time in unplanned and unrecorded meetings. This led me to create a typology of principal meetings into the Planned Principal Meeting (PPM) and the Unplanned Principal Meeting (UPM). Subsequently, I showed using excerpts from participant interviews that PPMs were necessary to provide focus, pressure and coherence while UPMs accomplished professional responsibilities. In later sections, I described the findings pertaining to the three revised research questions. I answered the first research question using findings to show that both PPMs and UPMs used sensegiving to manage ambiguity around professional responsibilities and resolve uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. Then, I answered the second research question

to describe that PPMs and UPM interconnect across time to create top-down flows of sensegiving, bottom flows of compliance information, and lateral flows of school knowledge. In the last section, I answered the third research question that PPMs and UPMs across the two MCGM schools were similar in their purpose of managing ambiguity and uncertainty but the frequency and diversity of UPMs at the SNH exceeded those at SNM.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Box 5.1 The Staff Meeting Setting

Location: SNH, (Fieldnotes, February 27, 2019, 12.35 pm)

Today is the day of the SNH Staff Meeting. This meeting is conducted once a month usually between 12.15 pm and 1.15 pm when all the school teachers from the morning shift and the teachers from the afternoon shift are present.

I enter the SNH principal office and hear Hema P tell the teachers, "Let's go to the virtual room". Everyone proceeds to what seems like a typical classroom, except that there is also a big TV in the room to the left of the blackboard for learning through virtual teaching sessions. There are four adult-sized chairs with their backs to the blackboard and there are student-sized desks and chairs facing the blackboard. The 15 SNH teachers and I go and sit on these student chairs. They are small and uncomfortable to sit. Hema P and the senior teacher (who takes over the principal's work in the morning shift) sit on the adult sized chairs.

Hema P asks everyone, "Is everyone here?" There are a few seconds of silence. Hema P informs everyone that Jagmohan teacher is not going to be present. She remains quiet for a few seconds and then says, "So, the first point is……..".

The Staff Meeting has begun.

The brief vignette of the Staff Meeting as a preface to this Chapter is the time when the teachers from the morning shift are ending their day and the teachers from the afternoon shift and the principal begin theirs: a universal composition of all SNH teachers which indicates a good time to hold a school-wide Staff Meeting. Such Staff Meetings were held once a month and, as I described in Chapter 4, instrumental in sensegiving to shape the professional knowledge of their participants.

This dissertation examines how principal meetings shape professional knowledge in two municipal schools in Mumbai. Specifically, the study explores how principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge. In addition, this study describes how principal meetings are interconnected across time and how the principal meetings are similar to and different from each other across the two schools chosen for the study. To answer the above questions, data was collected through observation fieldnotes, interviews, and document analyses of planned and unplanned principal meetings from two municipal schools in Mumbai.

This Chapter has two key purposes: (a) summarize the findings of the study and then unpack themes from the literature mentioned in Chapter 2 to situate the findings in relation to the literature, and (b) discuss the significance of the findings for educational administration researchers, meeting science scholars, and policymakers.

To achieve the above purposes, this Chapter is divided into eight sections. Sections one to three summarize the findings pertaining to the first, second, and third research questions and analyze the findings in relation to the literature on principal meetings. Section four draws upon the framing of professional knowledge to discuss principal meetings overall in relation to the creation, retention, and transfer of

professional knowledge. Section five discusses how UPMs have been characterized in the educational and meeting science literature. Section six highlights the significance of the study. Section seven discusses the conclusions from this study with a brief summary of the findings, limitations, and implications for researchers and practitioners. This Chapter ends with two brief reflections on my research journey.

Research Question 1

How do principal meetings manage ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

Findings show that planned and unplanned principal meetings (PPMs, UPMs) involved sensegiving to manage ambiguity around professional responsibilities and reduced uncertainty by providing more information on bureaucratic processes. The findings from this study, as I will describe, were largely consistent with previous research on how meetings are crucial sensemaking and sensegiving processes. However, the findings also suggest additional areas of theoretical elaboration in the fields of sensemaking, sensegiving and the role of principal meetings in managing ambiguity and uncertainty around the know-how and know-what of professional knowledge.

I divide the discussions related to findings pertaining to Research Question 1 into two subsections. In the first subsection, I discuss findings in relation to Weick's (1995) conceptualization of meetings as episodes of sensemaking to manage ambiguity and uncertainty. I discuss the findings in relation to Weick's characterizations of ambiguity and uncertainty to show that principal meetings are: (a) necessary to manage ambiguity and (b) efficient in reducing uncertainty. In the second subsection, I take a broader view of my findings in relation to theoretical literature on sensemaking and sensegiving to

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consider the leadership aspects of principal meetings. This enables me to distinguish

between PPMs and UPMs in light of the theoretical articulations of sensemaking and

sensegiving in leadership meetings.

Principal Meetings, Ambiguity and Uncertainty

In this section, I summarize the findings and then draw upon literature,

specifically Weick (1995), to: (a) establish the importance of meetings as non-trivial

episodes and (b) discuss ambiguity and uncertainty: two key terms from sensemaking that

are used in framing the first research question.[84] The conceptual framework for this

dissertation is taken primarily from Weick (1995), accordingly I choose this particular

work from Weick to discuss findings in relation to the first research question.

PPMs and ambiguity: Agreement with Weick (1995). Findings are aligned with

Weick's (1995) claim that principal meetings are non-trivial organizing episodes and are

necessary to manage ambiguity around issues like unclear professional responsibilities.

Principal meeting are non-trivial episodes. The findings show that PPMs,

especially Ward Meetings and Staff Meetings, help enact school order by aligning

institutional and school efforts i.e., enabling coherence towards what needs to be

accomplished in the near future. In the findings, I quote Principal Hema P's rationale that

she finds meetings necessary for coherence by ensuring that "…teachers are not going on

a different track". Therefore, the coherence offered by PPMs indicates their role as non-

trivial organizing episodes (Weick, 1995). The presence of the professional cluster of all

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[84] To recapitulate the discussion of sensemaking in Chapter 2, a problem of ambiguity is the presence of multiple interpretations of the same event(s) or action(s) while a problem of uncertainty is the absence of knowledge of an event or action (Weick, 1995).

school teachers or all principals from a Ward in a PPM (a universal composition) also contributes to their role as significant sensemaking episodes.

In his book, *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Weick (1995) refers to meetings as non-trivial organizing infrastructure. To illustrate his point, Weick endorses Schwartzman (1989) and Huff's (1988) claims that meetings are not just settings for arguments and decisions. Rather, meetings are the form that generates and maintains an organization. Therefore, the finding that PPMs enable coherence is in agreement with Weick's argument that meetings should not be labeled as trivial settings for sensemaking, rather meetings are the infrastructure that "creates sense" (p. 144). Although Weick's point is about all organizational meetings, I would suggest that PPMs are especially non-trivial infrastructure because of universal composition. Since PPMs are attended by all participants (e.g., all school teachers), they create a common whole-school experience of making sense. Further, as I described on page 117, each PPM influences sensemaking talk and action beyond the specific meeting because the PPMs create a shared indexicality (Agar, 1996) which all participants can draw upon to organize future work-interactions (e.g., classroom teaching, teacher meetings).

Principal meetings manage ambiguity. In Chapter 4, I show that both PPMs and UPMs are necessary to manage ambiguity as suggested by Weick (1995). Briefly, the findings show that PPMs manage ambiguity around teacher and principal professional responsibilities by clarifying what needs to be accomplished and by when and the UPMs manage ambiguity around the how of accomplishing professional responsibilities. In the midst of multiple and shifting professional responsibilities being put on their task-list (see Chapter 3), the MCGM principals and teachers are likely to be confused about: (a) what

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each professional responsibility really means, (b) how to prioritize these responsibilities, and (c) what actions would help accomplish them: apt situations to engage in sensemaking. As Weick himself puts it that ambiguous situations occur when "responsibilities are unclear" (p. 93).

The findings suggest that in the MCGM context, PPMs manage ambiguity because the multiple messages about professional responsibilities mean different things to different principals and teachers. UPMs manage ambiguity because the fulfillment of the same professional responsibility might mean different things to principals and teachers (e.g., a term in an observation checklist as shown in Excerpt 4.8). Weick emphasizes that meetings are necessary to manage problems of ambiguity because "the same event [multiple messages/observation checklist item] means different things to different people" (p. 186).

The findings show that PPMs are necessary to provide focus because when MCGM staff come together, they create clarity on what each professional responsibility means, which professional responsibility needs to take precedence and move to the top of the list. The findings show that this clarity is difficult to establish through other channels like emails or texts. Rather, it is probable the emails and texts that create the ambiguity in the first place with more than 500 messages being received by each MCGM school principal in a month. Also, the findings indicate that sharing the agenda or minutes of a PPM is not enough to clarify the know-what of professional responsibilities. I describe in the findings that not only are the brief agenda points ambiguous, the actual number of meeting talk points usually differs from the agenda (see Except 4.2). PPMs, therefore, become necessary to prioritize professional responsibilities.

UPMs, on the other hand, through action, clarify how professional responsibilities need to be accomplished. For instance, the circulars on biometrics (e.g., the MCGM circular dated January 11, 2019), describe the process of entering and approving leave applications and yet principals and teachers meet and enter the leave applications through the HR App (see Excerpt 4.12).

The findings, therefore, align with Weick's (1995) argument about the role of meetings in managing ambiguity. Translating the above-mentioned findings into Weick's framework, it is only when people [principals and teachers and Ward Officials] come together that they discover and enact the [professional responsibilities] they must address (Weick, 1995).

The participants in their interviews and my observations highlighted the necessity of PPMs and UPMs: a finding reinforced by Weick (1995) who urges people to meet to engage in sensemaking because meetings are the episodes and the infrastructure where problems of ambiguity and equivocality are discovered, enacted, and addressed. As he himself states at the end of his book that the "implication of the preceding Chapters is the suggestion that people need to meet more often" (p. 185).

The findings, discussed so far, align with Weick's arguments on meetings and sensemaking, but up to a point. Although principal meetings are definitely episodes of ambiguity management, the findings also suggest that they can be efficient in managing uncertainty and that principal meetings are not a uniform type of episode. Put another way, different types of principal meetings manage different kinds of ambiguity as I describe in the next subsection.

Principal meetings and uncertainty: Difference with Weick (1995). The

findings show that principal meetings, especially PPMs, are both important and efficient

in managing the uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. This conflicts with Weick's

(1995) claim that reduction of uncertainty by providing more information is a task best

suited to other communication channels and not meetings. Secondly, the findings show

that principal meetings are not a uniform type of episode in managing ambiguity and

uncertainty which is different from the portrayal of meetings by Weick.

Principal meetings are efficient in reducing uncertainty. Findings show that

both PPMs and UPMs reduce uncertainty. Based on the findings, I also suggest that the

physicality of principal meetings also sometimes makes them efficient episodes of

reducing uncertainty. This seems to contradict Weick's (1995) claim about meetings as

unsuitable to reduce uncertainty. Weick describes the problem of uncertainty as a

problem of ignorance or not-knowing. Uncertainty reduction, as Weick describes, is

about figuring out a solution to a mutually agreed question. Weick suggests that meetings

are ill-suited to solve the problem of uncertainty which can be more efficiently addressed

by other media (e.g., emails). Weick claims that many meetings feel unproductive[85]

because instead of using meetings to resolve a problem of multiple, conflicting

interpretations (ambiguity), people tend to use their meetings to solve problems of not-

knowing (uncertainty).[86] Hence, meeting become vehicles of simply providing more

information. This is partly because the recent technology tools, indicates Weick, are

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[85] This argument by Weick suggests a sensemaking rationale to the popular conceptualization of principal meetings as a waste of time in both scholarly literature and trade publications (see Chapter 2).
[86] Weick suggests that meetings might fail even when addressing problems of ambiguity but he ascribes the reason to poor organizational culture (e.g., norms encouraging obedience) rather than to the basic setting and infrastructure of a meeting.

quick in digging up more information and therefore every problem of ambiguity is made

into a problem of uncertainty or less information. Or, as Abraham Maslow's puts it

neatly, "if the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail".

The findings which show that PPMs and UPMs are helpful in reducing

uncertainty about institutional processes (e.g., biometrics sign-on) suggest that Weick's

claims might be underestimating the importance of physical presence of participants and

overestimating the seriousness and reliability of other channels (emails or texts) in

providing information at least in the context of MCGM. Take, for instance, the biometric

process of updating the Ward office by the 13th of the month described in both the Ward

Meeting and the Staff Meeting. I would argue that the repeated emphasis by the AO in

highlighting the date three times during her Ward Meeting and by the SNH principal in

her Staff Meeting provides more than simply give information. Although an email or a

circular might also inform the principals/teachers about the deadline of the 13th (e.g.,

MCGM circular dated January 11, 2019), the physicality of the PPMs, I suggest, adds a

seriousness to the directive.

I suggest that physicality of the meeting complements what is talked about in the

PPM (e.g., the 13th of the month deadline) to provide pressure and shape sensemaking.

For instance, the physical presence of the AO and her repeated mentions of "Please

understand this" while using her gestures might also play a role in sensemaking while

providing pressure (see Excerpt 3.9). Scholars who have reviewed the sensemaking

literature often suggest that physicality is an overlooked aspect of sensemaking (e.g.,

Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). Scholars of embodied interaction also show that the body

provides pressure and meaning-making in addition to meeting talk and both the embodied

resources and talk seem to build upon each other (Asmuß, 2015; Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011).[87]

In the case of UPMs, the physical presence of participants continues to be useful in providing more information to resolve the problem of uncertainty. For instance, in the case of the UPM at SNM described in Excerpt 4.8, Ram T does not know the existence of the eshala.org website and he is informed of the same by Reshma T during the UPM. If Ram T had emailed the principal, it is possible that he would have missed the remark from Reshma T about the presence of the website.

Finally, in the context of PPMs at MCGM, the participants also emphasized that other media (e.g., WhatsApp, emails) are less reliable in distributing information than face-to-face meetings (see Excerpt 4.7 where both Mina P and Habib T describe technology as unreliable).

I would also suggest that PPMs provide a different kind of efficiency in collecting information and reducing uncertainty as compared to other media like emails. The efficiency of PPMs was driven by the universal composition. To substantiate this claim, I draw upon the instances of how information is collected efficiently in Ward Meetings. For instance, the AO, in the January Ward Meeting, asked principals to raise hands to collect information about the performance on professional responsibilities (e.g., girl attendance, rubella vaccinations). For instance, the AO asked those principals to raise hands whose schools had more than 80% of their students vaccinated for rubella and

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[87] Although the role of physicality in providing sensemaking and pressure in principal meetings can be further elaborated using the literature on embodied interaction, I have deliberately limited my discussions here to the literature previewed in Chapter 2 to provide a more coherent account.

collected information about school performance on rubella vaccinations in her Ward. The whole exercise was done within 2 minutes. My view is that collecting the same information by email is not only likely to consume more time but also to be more cumbersome to collate. However, this kind of efficiency presumes that participants have the current and accurate information of their school performance on institutional programs (e.g., rubella vaccinations).

Another example of the efficiency of Ward Meetings can be inferred from Mina P's comment in Excerpt 4.5 in the section of necessity of principal meetings wherein SNM principal Mina P provided the example of reporting school performance on *Saral* directive thereby removing ignorance about such a responsibility ("some schools don't know"). Even though the same information can be collected and provided through emails, I argue that it is more efficient for the AO to simply ask the people to raise their hands and for the principals to know that they have a professional responsibility they are not aware of.

The efficiency of the UPM in resolving the uncertainty is similar to that of the PPMs. To take the example of the UPM described in Excerpt 4.8, Ram T is informed of the presence of the eshala.org website within a few seconds of entering the principal office.

But do all resolutions of uncertainty require a PPM or a UPM? Do we need to reduce all problems of ignorance by asking people to meet face to face and provide information? Based on fieldwork, I suggest that the answer depends on factors like the current professional knowledge of the participants, the need for most current data, and the reliability of other channels like emails. Continuing the example of rubella vaccinations,

the meeting, reduces uncertainty if (a) some of the participants are not aware of their professional responsibility to get 80% of student vaccinated by a deadline, or (b) if the most current percentage of vaccinations needs to be taken into account for a public relations exercise, or (c) if other channels of communication are not perceived as reliable. Further analysis and research are needed to make conclusive arguments about which factors make UPMs and PPMs critical to the reduction of uncertainty.

   Meetings are not uniform in managing ambiguity. Findings suggest that the implicit categorization of all organizational meetings into a uniform type of episode for managing ambiguity needs elaboration. In other words, different types of principal meetings are helpful in managing different types and levels of ambiguity. The foregoing discussion has already indicated that PPMs and UPMs lean towards managing different types of ambiguity around professional responsibilities (know-what vs know-why). In addition, there are other factors which distinguish PPMs and UPMs as they relate to overall sensemaking and sensegiving literature, a point I will elaborate in the next section (see Table 5.1).

   Therefore, the above finding which suggests that principal meetings are not uniform episodes of managing ambiguity elaborates Weick's framework. Although Weick does not differentiate between planned and unplanned meetings, the findings show that different types of principal meetings (PPMs and UPMs) manage different kinds of ambiguity.

   Most readers might challenge the foregoing discussions by asserting that I must include views of other scholars of sensemaking besides Weick (1995). In addition, the foregoing discussion does not draw upon the literature on educational leadership or

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sensegiving. Indeed, this critique would be correct. Therefore, the purpose of the next section is to take a macro view and turn to the broader literature on sensemaking and sensegiving and also draw upon educational leadership literature to situate the findings on principal meetings.

Principal Meetings, Sensegiving, and Sensemaking

Findings showed that principal meetings were essential to sensegiving and sensemaking processes and were broadly in agreement with the literature on sensemaking and sensegiving in leadership meetings, but also suggested areas of theoretical elaboration by highlighting how the sensemaking and sensegiving processes differed across PPMs and UPMs.

Principal meetings, sensegiving, and sensemaking: Agreement. Findings align with scholarly literature on educational leadership, sensemaking, and sensegiving to show that: (a) principal meetings are common forms of managing ambiguity and uncertainty, (b) sensegiving is usually performed by those with positional leadership roles, and (c) disruptive and non-disruptive events are rich occasions for sensegiving and sensemaking.

Principal meetings as common forms of sensegiving and sensemaking. Finding indicate that principal meetings are one of the most common forms of social interaction during which the principal and other school-related members confronted events (e.g., digital attendance through biometric processes), issues (e.g., how to handle biometric discrepancies), and actions (e.g., enter leave requests through HR App) and engaged in sensemaking and sensegiving. Educational literature also suggests that principal meetings are a common form of social interaction during which school members confront events, issues, and actions that are surprising or ambiguous (Coburn, 2005; Riehl, 1998;

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Wolcott, 1973). Scholars of sensemaking also agree that when faced with ambiguity and uncertainty, organizational members meet face to face with leaders to construct meaning and restore order through sensemaking (Maitlis, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Smerek, 2009).

Sensegiving performed by those with positional leadership. Findings also indicate that the sensegiving role in PPMs was performed by the people with positional leadership roles which is aligned with sensegiving and educational leadership literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). The findings from the current study as described in Chapter 4 show that, especially during the PPMs they take, the principals shaped how teachers made sense of newly instituted biometric system (Excerpt 4.14). Further, in the Ward Meeting excerpts described in Chapter 4 (see Excerpts 4.9 and 4.13), it was the positional leader like the Administrative Officer and the Beat Officers who consistently tried to influence how the principals made sense of institutional initiatives like the new biometric system. Scholars also agree that the sensegiving behavior is more visible among those in positional leadership roles (Maitlis, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Smerek, 2011). In discussions of sensegiving in an educational context, (Coburn, 2005) demonstrates that school principals significantly shape how teachers interpret a reading policy in their meetings. Describing grade-level meetings with teacher, Coburn states, "Principals' interpretations were often influential in shaping how teachers came to understand and enact messages" (p. 491).

Disruptive and non-disruptive events rich for sensemaking and sensegiving. Finally, the findings also show that both big and disruptive institutional events (e.g., biometric system implementation to digitize attendance) and routine events (e.g.,

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clarifying terms in observation checklists) trigger sensemaking and sensegiving efforts in principal meetings.

Disruptive events. The findings reflect that ambiguity around disruptive events (e.g., the installation of biometric system to replace the manual sign-in) led to continual sensemaking and sensegiving efforts (see Excerpts 4.10, 4.12a, and 4.12b). A review of sensemaking and sensegiving literature also indicates big, disruptive organizational events, organizational disasters or crises become occasions for sensemaking and sensegiving (Maitlis, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). Educational scholars too, suggest that big organizational events like implementation of a new reading policy or increased accountability trigger sensemaking and sensegiving efforts (e.g., Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008; Coburn, 2001, 2005; Cosner & Jones, 2016).

Non-disruptive events. The findings showed that sensemaking and sensegiving was triggered in case of non-disruptive events (e.g., updating of service books, clarification of observation checklist items) as suggested by literature (Maitlis, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015). In Chapter 4, I detail the sensegiving given by the AO in the PPM instance of the Ward Meeting around an important, but non-disruptive initiative to update the service books of principals and teachers (see page 140). The UPM wherein the SNM principal performed sensegiving by clarifying observation checklist items is also not a big event or an organizational crisis. (Excerpt 4.8). Even when the event was not disruptive, the sensemaking and sensegiving efforts remained consistent with the PPMs focusing on the know-whats and the UPMs focusing on the know-whys of professional responsibilities. This finding therefore presents evidence to support what Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) label as "immanent sensemaking" (p. S25). To frame the finding in light

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of Sandberg and Tsoukas argument, people [school principals and teachers] go on doing the things they routinely do without consciously thinking about how they do them and just because people are absorbed in their ongoing activities does not mean that they are sense-less, indicating a kind of immanent sensemaking. Findings indicate that sensemaking and sensegiving does not change whether the event is disruptive (e.g., biometric implementation) or not (e.g., update of service-books), thereby filling a gap in the sensemaking and sensegiving literature as shown by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015).

In their synthesis of sensemaking and sensegiving from 147 articles, Sandberg and Tsoukas (2015) found that as compared to 49% of studies which analyzed sensemaking in disruptive events, only 17 percent of the articles studied sensemaking triggered by non-disruptive events. They found the difference "surprising" because they argued that the daily kind of minor events are much more common triggers for sensemaking and sensegiving.

Although the finding that sensemaking and sensegiving continue to occur even during non-disruptive events is only from two elementary schools embedded in a different international context, the finding provides additional evidence to strengthen the primarily US based empirical scholarly literature which studies sensemaking and sensegiving from leadership meetings in a Western context (Maitlis, 2005; Smerek, 2009, 2011).

Principal meetings, sensegiving, and sensemaking: Elaboration. The findings from this dissertation, I suggest, elaborate both educational leadership and sensemaking/sensegiving literature by highlighting the nuances of sensemaking and sensegiving across two different types of meetings i.e., PPMs and UPMs. Secondly, the

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findings also suggest triggers for sensemaking and sensegiving, especially when it pertains to daily, non-disruptive organizational events (e.g., clarifying observation terms in a checklist).

Sensegiving and sensemaking differs across principal meetings. My findings show that PPMs and UPMs: (a) manage ambiguity distinguished by the type of professional knowledge, by time, and by professional level and (b) perform sensegiving distinguished by participant role and type of triggers (see Table 5.1). This claim challenges the assumption of a singular or uniform representation of (principal) meetings as may be observed in scholarly literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Weick, 1995).

In the previous sections, I showed that findings corroborate the claim that meetings manage ambiguity as put forth by scholars of sensemaking (e.g., Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2015; Weick, 1995), sensegiving (e.g., Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), and educational leadership (e.g., Coburn, 2005). However, the insightful perspective presented by these scholars which entwines meetings, sensemaking, and sensegiving forming the conceptual frame (and inspiration) behind this dissertation, is underpinned by an assumption that all meetings are alike in how they manage ambiguity. A surprising finding of my fieldwork was discovering that principal meetings differ in how they manage ambiguity. Principal meetings differed in the type of ambiguity they managed, in who performs the sensegiving role, and what triggers such sensegiving as I will discuss now.

Table 5.1

Sensemaking and Sensegiving across Different types of Principal Meetings

	PPM	UPM
Type of Ambiguity	Cluster-level, know-what, future	Individual-level, know-how, near future or now
Sensegiving role	Usually the higher authority	Distributed across participants
Trigger for sensegiving	Multiple sources of information; poor performance	Urgency of completion

Principal meetings and type of ambiguity. In Chapter 4, I showed that PPMs lean towards managing ambiguity around the professional know-what and the UPMs focus on managing ambiguity around the professional know-how of professional responsibility.[88] In a later section on the overall relationship between principal meetings and professional knowledge, I define and introduce other aspects of professional knowledge like know-who, know-when, and know-where which are absent from King's (2009) definition of professional knowledge but are likely to be important in defining and clarifying professional knowledge about responsibilities.

The second aspect of the difference is how PPMs manage cluster-level ambiguity i.e., ambiguity which pertains to a professional cluster (e.g., school principals from a Ward). The Ward Meeting talk on biometric issues, for instance, manages ambiguity around a topic that pertains to all school principals from the Ward. In contrast, the UPMs

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[88] This is not to say that a UPM did not manage any ambiguity around know-what or a PPM around know-how. My point is that the *focus* of these meetings was towards a particular aspect of professional knowledge.

manage more individual-level ambiguity which is pertinent to specific participants (e.g.,

when one teacher has to respond to a reprimand memo as seen in Excerpt 4.8).

Finally, as described in Chapter 4, the ambiguity in PPMs relates to the future,

while the UPMs manage ambiguity about the present.

Principal meetings and sensegiving role. For PPMs, findings show that the

sensegiving role is usually performed by the person who occupies a position of higher

authority. In contrast, the sensegiving role in UPMs is more distributed and participants

who are not endowed with positional leadership roles regularly take on the sensegiving

role. For instance, it was common in UPMs for teachers like Habib T and Reshma T to

provide know-how to other meeting participations, including the principal (see Excerpts

4.8 and 4.12b).

Based on the more distributed nature of sensegiving in UPMs, findings suggest a

possible inference i.e., is the role of the activity (meeting type) in distributing leadership.

In discussions of distributed leadership about the work of the school principal, Spillane,

Camburn, & Stitziel Pareja (2007) argue that leadership is distributed in principal

interactions. The authors suggest that in work interactions, principals are more likely to

perform leadership roles in the area of administration and leadership while teachers are

more likely to engage in leadership in areas like curriculum and instruction. Since

literature suggests that sensegiving is a leadership practice (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991),

then the difference in who performs sensegiving also suggests that the type of principal

meeting (PPM Vs UPM) could be another factor which contributes to a distributed nature

of leadership. More research would be necessary to confirm whether this inference is

indeed true.

Principal meetings and sensegiving triggers. Findings show that in PPMs, sensegiving is usually triggered in two cases: (a) when there are multiple professional responsibilities being received through multiple channels and (b) when there is lower than expected performance of a professional responsibility. For UPMs, the trigger was the urgency of completing a professional responsibility.

The trigger of multiple channels for sensegiving through PPMs can be observed in how both principals and teachers received around 20 WhatsApp messages in a day related to both new and existing professional responsibilities in addition to emails and circulars. This made it difficult to decide which professional responsibility to focus upon and hence PPMs became episodes of sensegiving to provide focus and pressure (Figure 4.1).

When performance of a professional responsibility related to an important institutional directive is less than expected, it also becomes a trigger for sensegiving in PPMs. The repeated sensegiving around *25 nikash* by the AO, BO, and the principals to their meeting participants in PPMs to achieve success illustrates this trigger. The lower than expected performance of *25 nikash* and the deadline for achieving success by March 2019 became a common topic of PPM talk. The talk by the Beat Officer where she reframed the achievement of *25 nikash* is an illustration (see Appendix J). The repeated efforts at sensegiving in the Ward Meeting were supported with the seriousness of the success for *25 nikash* to senior MCGM officials.[89] Therefore, it is quite likely that lower

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[89] In February 2019, the Education Officer held a special virtual meeting with all schools to repeatedly mention the importance of achieving *25 nikash*.

than expected achievement of *25 nikash* became a key trigger for principals and teachers to push harder.

For UPMs, the findings show that daily events like responding to a reprimand memo (Excerpt 4.8) or entering leave data through the HR App (Excerpt 4.12) convert principal meetings into episodes of sensemaking and sensegiving. Based on the findings, it is the urgency of accomplishing the professional responsibility that makes events like the UPMs appropriate for sensemaking and sensegiving. In other words, the findings suggest that sensegiving is not always necessitated by a big strategic change, rather sensegiving can also happen when the participants perceive an urgency or a time-pressure to restore order. Though I concede that the urgency of completing a professional responsibility (e.g., responding to a reprimand memo) might sound similar to a mini-crisis, I still maintain that it does not have the same intense pressure as that felt by fire crews or people in a hospital emergency room described in other studies of sensemaking (e.g., Battles, Dixon, Borotkanics, Rabin-Fastmen, & Kaplan, 2006; Weick et al., 2005)

To summarize, the foregoing discussions pertaining to Research Question 1 show that fieldwork was aligned with the literature on sensemaking and sensegiving by showing that (a) principal meetings are non-trivial episodes of sensemaking and sensegiving in both disruptive and non-disruptive events. However, findings also elaborate sensemaking and educational literature by suggesting that: (a) principal meetings also provide efficiency in reducing uncertainty and (b) that sensegiving and the management of ambiguity differs across principal meeting type.

Research Question 2

How do principal meetings connect across time to create, retain, and transfer

professional knowledge?

In Chapter 4, the findings show that planned and unplanned principal meetings

(PPMs, UPMs) interconnect across time to: (a) sustain top-down flows of sensegiving to

clarify professional responsibilities, (b) create bottom-up flows of compliance

information, and (c) enable lateral flows of school knowledge. These findings agree with

scholarly literature that principal meetings do shape knowledge flows. However, the

discussion of findings also suggests new areas of theoretical elaboration by suggesting

hierarchical (top-down and bottom-up) flows. Findings also are aligned with literature by

showing that principal meetings interconnect through elements like the principal as trans-

participant, talk references to other principal meetings, but they also differ with scholarly

literature which suggests that meetings interconnect through purpose (preparation or

debrief) and that immutable artifacts are present in principal meetings.

Principal Meeting and Knowledge Flows

Findings show that sensegiving flows top-down from PPMs like the Ward

Meeting which has hierarchically higher participant composition (e.g., AO, BOs,

principals) to PPMs comprising lower in hierarchy participants like the school-level Staff

Meeting (e.g., school principal and teachers). Similarly, compliance data/information

flows bottom-up from the school-level Staff Meetings and UPMs to comply with data

demands from hierarchically higher participant composition PPMs like the Ward

Meeting. PPMs and UPMs at the school level suggest a lateral flow of knowledge being developed and shared across the same organization (school).[90]

The finding suggesting various knowledge flows, especially the lateral flows of school knowledge, further strengthens the empirical evidence of knowledge flows across (principal) meetings as noticed in literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Gronn, 1983; Schwartzman, 1989). The findings also elaborate the scholarly work by suggesting a hierarchy (top-down and bottom-up) of knowledge flows.

The top-down, bottom-up, and lateral knowledge flows described above may be represented using a time scale of past-present-future (Table 5.2). I draw upon the findings to explain each row of the Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Knowledge Flows across Time in Principal Meetings

Knowledge flows	Past	Present	Future	Purpose
Top-down: sensegiving	Ward Meeting	Staff Meeting, UPMs	Ward Meeting/Staff Meeting	Pressure for institutional mandates
Bottom Up: compliance	Ward Meeting	UPMs	Ward Meeting	Pressure for institutional mandates
Lateral: school challenges/issues/ processes	UPMs like NGO meeting, parent meeting, teacher meeting	Staff Meeting	Staff Meeting	Shared knowledge of school

Top-down sensegiving is often seen in the PPMs like the Staff Meeting whose key purpose, as I show in the findings, is to share the knowledge (know-whats) received

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[90] As I described5.2 in Chapter 4, I use the term lateral flows to represent knowledge flows at the same unit level of the institution (e.g., the school). Hence, the stress here is on the organizational unit (e.g., the school) rather than the formal institutional hierarchy as was in the usage of top-down and bottom-up flows.

in the past Ward Meeting (e.g., rubella vaccinations) and to provide the pressure to complete professional responsibilities, often through UPMs (see Appendix V). In addition, the UPMs being conducted in the present to accomplish professional responsibilities (e.g., *25 nikash* assessments) also connect to taking stock of performance in future Staff Meetings (see Appendix W). Finally, the accomplishment of responsibilities during the UPMs also encourages subsequent Ward Meeting talk in continue the focus and pressure (say, on *25 nikash*) in light of multiple responsibilities (see Appendix J).

The bottom-up compliance flows, as seen through the lens of the UPMs being held in the present show that they are connected to the pressure of the past and future Ward Meetings. These flows are noticed when the pressure to accomplish professional responsibilities translates the know-whats of professional responsibilities into a know-how in the UPMs (see Appendix V for a UPM on sending rubella vaccination compliance information requested in a Ward Meeting). The compliance data sent during the UPM also encourages future Ward Meeting pressure talk in case the updates show performance is below expectations.

Finally, the findings show that the lateral knowledge flows comprise development and sharing of professional knowledge at the same school level. To take an example, the SNH Staff Meeting held in February 2019 contained talk about a past principal meeting at SNH (e.g., a confrontational UPM with an NGO). This talk developed and shared professional knowledge about the professional responsibility around engagement with NGOs. In addition, the reference to the past UPM also influenced future professional

knowledge because developing guidelines of engagement with NGOs was suggested as

an agenda item for a future Staff Meeting as can be seen in Excerpt 4.18.

Principal meetings and knowledge flows: Agreement. The presence of

knowledge flows, especially lateral flows of knowledge in schools, supports the

conceptual framing of interconnections across meetings and empirical evidence from

education and meeting science literature (e..g, Coburn, 2005; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015).

The conceptual framing to study possible interconnections between principal

meetings is suggested by meeting scholars Duffy and O'Rourke (2015). In their work,

Duffy and O'Rourke consider organizational meetings as a collective unit of analysis and

not as single, discrete units which is what most scholarly work tends to do (e.g., Datnow,

Lockton, & Weddle, 2019; Wolcott, 1973). Reading the authors' description of

interconnection between meeting based on actual data recorded from an organization's

planned interactions suggests a series of meetings that shape the organizational river of

discourse as was shown earlier in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.2).

The shaping of lateral knowledge flows through principal meetings is also seen in

educational literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Gronn, 1983; Wolcott, 1973).[91] Applying

Figure 2.2 to the findings, it is possible to notice that developing guidelines to accomplish

the responsibility of working with NGOs (lateral knowledge flow) is shaped by the

principal's unplanned meeting with the NGO and the subsequent talk in the Staff Meeting

(representing the circles in Figure 2.2). Therefore, Figure 2.2 captures the lateral-flow of

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[91] Coburn's (2005) study provides evidence that principal meetings were highly influential in shaping the
knowledge of teachers about a reading policy. In her study, Coburn also observed teacher-only meetings to
claim that the principal meetings shaped the sensemaking of teachers.

school knowledge providing evidence that principal meetings do shape the school river of discourse.

Principal meetings and knowledge flows: Elaboration. However, the findings also elaborate the knowledge flows by suggesting the presence of top-down and bottom-up flows as shaped by principal meetings across time. For instance, when Coburn (2005) describes how principal meetings shape teacher sensemaking about reading policy, she ascribes the sensegiving to pre-existing beliefs of the principal and does not mention talk at principal meetings at higher levels (e.g., district) which might suggest a top-down flow of sensegiving. Similarly, Wolcott's (1973) s description of principal meetings at the district and the school also does not suggest or analyze a bottom-up or top-down flow of knowledge across meetings.

The meeting science literature also does not make references to flows of discourse across meetings at institutional or organizational levels of hierarchy (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989). For instance, although Duffy and O'Rourke do not say so directly, their framework assumes no top-down or bottom-up flows in the organizational river of discourse, say leader-sensegiving which flows *down* the river of organizational discourse (see Figure 2.2). Though I concede that since their analysis pertains to one company, they are correct in not showing any institutional meeting flows, I am not sure if meetings with external stakeholders, customers, and other organizations do not shape the organizational river of discourse.

To summarize, the findings of lateral flows of knowledge discourse seem to agree with the conceptual and empirical literature on (principal) meetings while the presence of

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top-down and bottom-up flows suggest an elaboration of theoretical and empirical evidence on principal meetings and organizational meetings overall.

Principal Meetings and References to other Meetings

The findings support the education and meeting science literature (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Gronn, 1983) in providing further evidence that principal meetings also interconnect by making references to each other but the findings did not show that principal meetings interconnect by either serving to plan or analyze other meetings as is suggested by literature (Miller, 1994; Schwartzman, 1989; Wolcott, 1973).

Principal meetings and reference to other meetings: Agreement. Findings show that one way in which MCGM principal meetings interconnect is by making talk references to past and future meetings. For instance, the Staff Meeting at NWH contains a talk reference to a *past* UPM with an NGO which was clicking photographs of girl students (Excerpt 4.15). This reference to the UPM anecdote helps participants make sense of the issue of school guidelines for student privacy. In the same Staff Meeting, the participants discuss the potential of a future meeting with the agenda of developing and sharing guidelines for NGOs working at the school.

The findings support what is suggested by both meeting science and educational literature (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Gronn, 1983). Duffy and O'Rourke (2015) also argue that meeting talk interconnects meetings by references to past and future meetings. In their empirical study of sixty-three meetings of a company, the authors found that meeting participants would often relay an anecdote from a past meeting to make better sense of their current situation. The authors also found that participants indicated possible topics in a present meeting to inform future meeting agenda.

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The references to past and future meetings is also suggested in empirical

descriptions of principal meeting from educational literature (e.g., Gronn, 1983; Riehl,

1998). For instance, Gronn (1983) describes a principal meeting a teacher to discuss the

staffing item in the agenda of a future staff meeting ("have a little very small talk…on the

agenda for today" (p. 7). The reference to the future meeting agenda suggests the

principal's intent to influence a future principal meeting outcome. In the same meeting,

the principal also makes a reference to the past meeting with the Assistant Principal

("Steven [Assistant Principal] thinks we should have a united front"). This reference

helps the principal and the teacher make more sense of their current meeting context and

create a shared meaning by trivializing (laugh off) Steven's urge to have a "united front".

Principal meetings and reference to other meetings: Difference. However, the

study did not find that principal meetings interconnect across time through purpose i.e.,

principal meetings being held with the purpose to plan or analyze other principal

meetings. Meeting and educational literature, on the other hand, suggests the presence of

such planning and analysis meetings (Gronn, 1983; Schwartzman, 1989; Wolcott, 1973).

Findings show that neither the planned nor the unplanned meetings contained

much talk on preparation or analysis of other principal meetings. As compared to Gronn's

(1983) example of the principal meeting with a teacher to prepare for the future Staff

Meeting (described two paragraphs earlier), my observations of principal meetings do not

reflect a single UPM or PPM wherein either of the MCGM principals engaged in

planning talk for a subsequent meeting.[92] Any such planning for a meeting was usually

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[92] Scholars like Miller (1994) who studied American and Japanese meetings also found evidence of pre-planning meetings. In her research, Miller found that employees in Japanese companies would often

done by the principal in her alone time. For instance, the agenda for the Staff Meeting in the *Soochna Vah*i was hand-written by the principals when they were working alone.

Similarly, analyzing a PPM or UPM immediately after the meeting was rare. I found only one brief interaction between the MCGM principals wherein they analyzed a Ward Meeting they had just attended. This analysis happened during a ten-minute autorickshaw ride back to the school from a Ward Meeting, I happened to be with the principals wherein they talked for a few minutes about the extra work given in the Ward Meeting and compared the status of completion of professional responsibilities. Then, as is usual in UPMs, their talk shifted on how to accomplish their tasks.

Literature, on the other hand suggests that meetings might also be held with the sole purpose to analyze a past meeting (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015; Wolcott, 1973).

Planned meetings often create what Schwartzman calls a "ripple effect" (p. 75) of unplanned post-meetings wherein the talk within the planned meeting is reviewed. Schwartzman (1973) found in her ethnography that soon after a planned meeting has ended, meeting members sometimes engaged in another unplanned meeting to discuss and occasionally gossip about the planned meeting talk. This ripple effect perspective of

consider the planned meeting as a final ritual to confirm what has culminated through a series of agreements in the *nemawashis*. These *nemawashis*, explains Miller, are work-related discussions or meetings, say around the water cooler, during which individuals can "gather information, argue privately, get ideas percolating, do some informal probing, and get reactions before establishing a plan or agenda" (p. 225).

planned meetings creating unplanned work-related interactions is also suggested by

others (e.g., Mintzberg, 1973; Wolcott, 1973).

Based on my fieldwork, I suggest that the key reason why post-mortem or

spadework for PPMs is not a common purpose of principal meetings is because the

MCGM meetings are accepted by participants as top-down and directive episodes

wherein the participants expect and are provided sensegiving on the know-how and

know-what of their professional responsibilities. This expectation is clearly visible in the

interviews with the participants in Chapter 4 wherein they mention that principal

meetings are about being given special instructions and doubts need to be clarified during

the meetings (e.g., see Habib T's comment in Excerpt 4.2). The use of the word "taken"

with regard to principal meetings also suggests the top-down and directive flow.[93] Since

the PPMs fulfill the directive role, subsequent meeting to analyze an earlier meeting may

not fulfill a professional purpose.

The second reason for why findings might not show principal meetings to analyze

other meetings is suggested by literature. During his ethnography, Wolcott (1973)

discovered that he was systematically excluded from certain principal meetings and that

he was "not privy to any discussions…regarding individual evaluations" (p. 216). As I

described in Chapter 3, I was not in the school every day and even when I was, I would

sometimes notice the principal step out of the office for a telephone call with another

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[93] In an informal conversation at the end of the school day and walking towards the train station, one of the SNH teachers clarified to me that meetings can only be "taken" by superiors. As a teacher, he cannot "take" a meeting with the principal and a principal cannot "take" a meeting with the Beat Officer. The principals, during a member check of the preliminary findings in March 2019, confirmed this view.

principal. It is very likely that such telephone calls were related to sensitive issues or gossip: meeting talks which the principal might prefer to keep to herself.

Principal Meetings and the Principal as a Trans-participant

The findings showed that the principal was a trans-participant or a meeting participant across different meeting groups and while playing that role the principals often modified the professional knowledge that they were meant to relay or transmit across their meetings. This finding both supports and extends educational and meeting science literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015).

Principal as a trans-participant: Agreement. The findings show that the MCGM principal takes part in meetings of more than one group as a trans-participant (e.g., Ward Meeting, Staff Meeting). The principals, in their role transmitted (relayed as is) and also modified professional knowledge. For instance, the principals relayed knowledge about professional responsibilities (e.g., importance of *25 nikash*) which they noted down in the Ward Meetings to teachers in their subsequent Staff Meetings and UPMs. These findings provide evidence to support scholarly literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Gronn, 1983).

The mentions of principal meetings in educational and meeting science literature broadly confirms the presence of the principal as trans-participants relaying knowledge across meetings (Coburn, 2005; Datnow et al., 2019; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Gronn, 1983; Wolcott, 1973). Gronn (1983) describes three principal meetings showing the principal as a trans-participant to transmit professional knowledge. In the first planning meeting, the principal talks with the Assistant Principal to plan for a Staff Meeting and he transmits the professional knowledge from that meeting ("presenting a united front") in a

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subsequent meeting with a teacher. Wolcott's (1973) depiction of principal meetings, similarly suggests a knowledge-transmitting role.

Principal as a trans-participant: Elaboration. However, the findings also show that principals engaged in differentiated sensegiving to modify the professional knowledge they received and sometimes "created" compliance facts for bottom-up knowledge flows, thereby suggesting an elaboration of the scholarly work on principal practice (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Datnow et al., 2019; Scribner et al., 1999).

None of these scholarly works mentioned in the previous subsection directly or indirectly mention if the principals also modified the professional knowledge they received (e.g., assigning their professional responsibilities to teachers). Datnow et al. (2019) provide several excerpts wherein principals shared knowledge about school performance from other meetings ("Our SBAC scores went up, which [school administration] is really happy about", p. 11) and about professional responsibilities ("They [district] want to know how you're covering it and how you're measuring the progress of your students. I will send you 3-4 questions to think about", p. 13) but the authors depict the principals as transmitting facts, rather than modifying them. Even Duffy and O'Rourke's conceptualization and definition of the term trans-participant suggests an unchanged transmission of knowledge.

The discussion above indicates that the differentiated sensegiving or creation of compliance facts, in addition to transmitting knowledge, might suggest a richer depiction

of the principal role as also a transformation or modification trans-participant while

developing and sharing professional knowledge across principal meetings.[94]

I will conclude this subsection by suggesting three possible factors, based on

fieldwork, which might influence the transformation of knowledge across principal

meetings: feasibility, pressure, and plausibility.

While it is true that, as I describe in the findings, top-down sensegiving flows

involved passing the onus of some of the responsibilities to the teachers, it does not

necessarily follow that this is a deliberate practice to turn away from accomplishing

professional responsibilities. Rather, I will argue, that this is the only feasible way that

MCGM principals can accomplish their professional responsibilities. MCGM principals,

as Chapter 3 describes, are given multiple professional responsibilities every day through

WhatsApp texts, emails, and notices. Hence, unless they allocate some of their

professional responsibilities to the teachers, they would be hard pressed to function

effectively. This claim is aptly summarized by Hema P in her address to the teachers

when she takes the SNH Staff Meeting:

> Hema P: Work has to be distributed. We have lots of work. There are more
> children [than other schools] and we have other work too!

Of course, the multiple professional responsibilities of the principal and teachers

might not be sufficient to explain the finding that compliance information sought for in

PPMs is also sometimes not just transmitted but also "created" during UPMs. Two other

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[94] Yet some readers will challenge this view of transmission and point out to research like that done by Coburn (2005) which demonstrates that principals selectively shape access to policy ideas. I completely endorse Coburn's view that the sensegiving role of the principal does involve creating an "interpretative frame that teachers adopt" (p. 494). However, a closer reading of scholars like Coburn reveals that sensegiving by the principal is based on pre-existing beliefs of the principal and not as a trans-participant who is relaying the sensegiving from other meetings.

factors that might contribute to creating compliance information: (a) the continuous

pressure to achieve high, possibly unreasonable expectations and (b) the plausibility of

the compliance facts.

Unreasonable expectations were illustrated in Chapter 4 through Habib T's words

when he mentions that an 80% success on *25 nikash* is reasonable, but 100% is

impossible. I often heard the same rationale from principals about achieving other

institutional directives (e.g., Item 2 in Figure 4.3 on opening fixed deposits for all girl

students).[95]

I would argue that another key factor in shaping the compliance information is the

official discourse which creates a plausible story that actual performance is better than

what is being reported as compliance data. The creation of such stories also reflects how

sensemaking and the professional knowledge around achieving success on *25 nikash*

might get distorted because of the strong plausibility of the story being created as

suggested in literature (Deetz, 1992; Weick, 1979). I provide evidence for the claim that

actual performance on *25 nikash* is better than what was reported in the past by quoting

the comments of a Beat officer (BO) during the Ward Meeting in March 2019. In a six-

minute meeting talk by the BO at the Ward Meeting, the BO emphasized that non-

achievement on the success of *25 nikash* is due to the incorrect assessment of the *25

nikash* parameters, rather than poor performance of teachers or students (see Appendix J

for the full excerpt):

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[95] Hema P and Trilok P explained to me that achieving 100% success is almost impossible on this directive
because the parents of the girl students are usually migrant labourers and do not have the correct
government issued documents necessary to open bank accounts.

BO: As per their age in the first and second grade, give a student 25 pencils and ask him to distribute the pencils to 5 kids equally. 100%, he will do it. That means, he knows division... This is a big purse, that is a small purse, then his concept of area, capacity, volume is clear. So, please give marks. So please put this in your teachers minds that your child has reached all *25 nikash*.

What is noteworthy in the talk by the BO is the repeated emphasis that the schools have already achieved success on the *25 nikash* and therefore the current assessments, though well-intentioned, are incorrect. Such kind of meeting talk, I would argue, supports the plausible story that higher school achievement on *25 nikash* as compared to what teachers indicate. Meeting literature also suggests that the story being offered by a senior and experienced MCGM official (BO) is likely to prioritize the acceptance of one kind of professional knowledge from higher ranking officials like BOs over that of the lower-ranking principals and teachers (Allen et al., 2015).

Principal Meetings, Absent Participants and Immutable Artifacts

The findings also show that principal meeting talk created absent participants (e.g., the Education Officer, Ward officials) which aligns with literature (e.g., Datnow et al., 2019; Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Wolcott, 1973). However, the findings did not indicate the presence of immutable artifacts in PPMs and UPMs which is different from what literature suggests (e.g., Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015, Datnow et al., 2019).

Principal meetings and absent participants: Agreement. The creation of absent participant, say the Ward Meeting officials in a principal meeting at school, is also suggested by the findings to shape professional knowledge and guide subsequent action. For instance, in the excerpt on the interconnection between PPMs and UPMs, Hema P asks her teachers to go to the Ward office to update their service books by describing the views of the absent Ward officials "In the Ward Meeting yesterday, the incomplete

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updating of service books was taken to heart". In the SNH Staff Meeting, the teachers were asked to keep hard copies of their online assessment of *25 nikash* by creating the absent participant of Ward officials (e.g., AO, BO) coming to the school as inspectors (see Appendix R).

Educational literature, too, mentions the creation of absent participants during principal meetings whose views are articulated to build and share professional knowledge and guide subsequent actions. For instance, in the guidance committee meeting described in Excerpt 2.1, the principals and teachers create the student as the absent participant ("He told me he makes his own lunch…doesn't get a chance to play") to guide their action of treating the boy's case as a guidance problem. In instance, the principal in Datnow's (2019) study tells the teachers, "They [district] want to know how you're covering it and how you're measuring the progress of your students. I will send you 3-4 questions to think about" (p. 13). This quote from the principal shows how the district is created as an absent participant and guides teacher action to reflect on questions.

Principal meetings and immutable artifacts: Difference. The findings did not indicate use of any objects or immutable artifacts that were transferred across meetings. I did not find presentation slides used during the Ward Meeting or the Staff Meetings. There were no meeting guidelines, vision statements or protocols that I found used and transported from one meeting to another. This is not to say that material artefacts were not present during principal meetings. Documents were often created either for principal meetings (e.g., agenda in *Soochna Vahi*) or during the principal meetings (e.g., information records on performance of *25 nikash* as in Appendix W) but these artefacts were not used in other principal meetings.

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This finding contradicts educational literature, particularly around use of data based decision making, which describes the use of immutable artifacts in principal meetings (e.g., Datnow et al., 2019; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015). For instance, both Schildkamp and Poortman (2015) and Datnow et al (2019) indicate that they noticed the presence of student data printouts and data-discussion protocols across meetings involving the teachers and principal. However, their scholarly work suggests that such immutable artifacts are used rather mechanically as tools to report progress. Datnow et al. describe how teachers would performatively use the immutable artifacts like data use protocols during meetings ("Completing these protocols became the goal of teachers", p. 13).

To summarize, the foregoing discussions show that fieldwork broadly aligned with the literature on interconnections by showing that (a) principal meetings contain references to past and future principal meetings (b) the principal is a trans-participant across several meeting groups, and (c) principal meetings create absent participants. The discussion also suggests that (a) the knowledge flows across principal meetings could also be top-down and bottom up and (b) principal meetings also transform the information and "create" facts and this creation is a response to the often-unreasonable expectations and plausible stories in the MCGM context.

Research Question 3

How do principal meetings compare and contrast across two different schools in the ways they serve to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge?

Findings show that both the principals were active participants in their meetings and their pre-existing beliefs about meetings shaped their work interactions with teachers

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and senior MCGM officials. These findings support claims from academic literature

which compares principal meetings in the same time frame across similar contexts (e.g.,

Coburn, 2005; Schildkamp, Poortman, et al., 2015).[96] However, the principal meetings,

especially UPMs, in SNH were more frequent and more diverse than those in SNM:

variables which are rarely mentioned in educational and meeting science literature.

Findings suggest that factors like school size, meeting location, and pre-existing beliefs

of the principals influenced the frequency and diversity of principal meetings. Overall, a

comparison and contrast of principal meetings across two schools led to more robust

findings for Research Question 1 and Research Question 2 as suggested by literature

(Sprain & Boromisza-Habashi, 2012; Yin, 2009).

Principal Participation and Pre-existing Beliefs about Meeting Goals

The findings show that: (a) both the MCGM principals were active participants in

their PPMs and UPMs, and while (b) there was similarity in the pre-existing beliefs of the

principals about the goals of PPMs and, (c) there was a difference in the pre-existing

beliefs of the principals about the goals of UPMs.[97] The mentions of principal meetings

in educational literature also supports the finding that there are differences in the levels of

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[96] The issue of similar contexts and the same time frame is especially relevant here because research suggests that participation in meetings is influenced by context (Sprain & Boromisza-Habashi, 2012). Coburn's (2005) research of how two principals engaged in sensegiving across two elementary schools, in particular, applies well to the comparison and contrast of principal meetings because it is one of the few studies which provides principal meeting excerpts from two schools from a similar context in the same time frame. Most other educational literature which describes principal meetings in at least some level of descriptive detail draws upon the meetings of only a single principal (Duke & Landahl, 2011; Gronn, 1983, 1984; Kelly, White, & Rouncefield, 2006; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Riehl, 1998; Wolcott, 1973). Hence, in such scholarly work, aspects like active participation of principals could be a feature of the context than principal practice.

[97] I use the term meeting goal here in line with what Schwartzman (1973) indicates as what specific participants expect from a meeting. In the instance of the Staff Meeting (Excerpt 4.11), the meeting goals for the principal is to provide pressure to the teachers so that they accept the know-whats of their professional responsibilities (e.g., preparation of monthly records/*Masik Patra*)

principal participation and the kind of beliefs principals have about their meeting goals

and these two factors influence professional knowledge (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Schildkamp,

Poortman, et al., 2015).

Principal participation and pre-existing beliefs: Agreement. The findings

show that both the MCGM principals were active participants in PPMs and UPMs and

that their beliefs about the goals of their meetings were important in shaping professional

knowledge. Overall, these findings are similar to those indicated by the relatively few

studies which mention comparative principal meetings (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Schildkamp,

Poortman, et al., 2015).

Principal participation. In the PPM of the SNH staff meeting, principal Hema P

spoke for almost 30 of the 35 minutes which demonstrates her active participation.[98]

When active participation through talk was not possible (e.g., Ward Meetings), both the

MCGM principals actively participated by writing down notes in their AO/BO register

(see Appendix U). The examples of UPMs from both SNH and SNM described in

Chapter 4 (e.g., Excerpt 4.8) also provide evidence that the principals provided

sensegiving through their talk which, in turn, indicates their active participation. The

active participation of principals in their meetings suggests that both principals

considered their meetings as crucial episodes which is also suggested by educational

literature (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Schildkamp, Poortman, et al., 2015).

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[98] As described in Chapter 3, I could not observe the SNM Staff Meeting despite planning to do so multiple times because of factors beyond the SNM principal and my control. Even though I was able to reconstruct the Staff Meeting from the accounts of the SNM principal, the teacher Reshma T, and by collecting the agenda of the meeting, I think the absence of a recording of the SNM Staff Meeting is a key limitation of this study.

In her study of teacher sensemaking of a reading policy across two schools, Coburn (2005) also found that both principals were active participants in the sensegiving process during formal and informal meetings. The principals took their meetings as important occasions for sensegiving and "repeatedly framed the meaning of the new reading policy" (p. 491). Coburn also found that this repeated framing in principal meetings shaped teacher sensemaking and knowledge of the reading policy. Other scholarly work mentioning principal meetings (King & Bouchard, 2011; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015) suggests the active participation of principals in meetings.[99]

Pre-existing beliefs about meetings. Findings show that both the MCGM principals had similar beliefs about the goals of PPMs like the Ward meeting which they described as focus and pressure mechanisms. Both the principals, in their interviews, described that the PPMs (e.g., Staff Meetings) they took at their schools provide "more focus that I have to reach this goal", "give pressure from above" and repeat points about professional responsibilities so that they are completed.

The difference in the pre-existing beliefs about principal meetings, especially UPMs, emerged both from the conversations with the principals and the observations of their UPMs. The SNH principal, Hema P had the belief that PPMs and UPMs with teachers, were necessary and if need be, should be initiated to get professional responsibilities accomplished through teachers. Hence, it was common for Hema P to initiate a UPM and pull out teachers from their classrooms if completion of professional

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[99] Schildkamp and Poortman (2015), in their comparison of data team meetings, emphasize that only when principals actively participate in meetings and steer teachers to take responsibility for student learning, then the teachers are able to reach "reach high(er) depths of inquiry" (p. 24).

responsibilities was urgent in her opinion. In contrast to Hema P, the SNM principal

Mina P had the belief that UPMs with teachers were necessary but need not be initiated to

accomplish the professional responsibilities of teachers. Mina P was comfortable with

accomplishing the urgent professional responsibilities given to teachers herself if she had

the time. This was an important difference in pre-existing beliefs because it contributed to

a richer and more equitable distribution of professional knowledge in SNH as I will

demonstrate in the next subsection. Now, I illustrate Hema P's and Mina P's beliefs

about UPMs from conversations and observations gathered during fieldwork.

I describe an excerpt from my conversation with the SNH principal during which

she mentioned her perspective on getting work done:

> Hema P: Have to get it [work] done from them [teachers]…have to stay with
> them. I have to take work…talk with them [teachers] and get work done… And
> from conversation, it comes that this has to be done. and I have to give it…
> teacher thinks more, I have a fear of this so I must do- and this can only happen
> through discussion.

In the excerpt above, what is noteworthy is that meeting talk with teachers is

considered necessary to accomplish work ("talk with them…and from conversation…can

only happen through discussion"). Hema P's emphasis on getting work done through talk

would often lead to teachers being pulled out of the classroom whenever there were

urgent professional responsibilities that needed to be accomplished. The UPM described

in Appendix V provides evidence that when she had to send vaccination information

urgently ("I have to click a picture and send it to the ma'am [AO]"), principal Hema P

not only pulled the kindergarten teacher into the principal office to get data about how

many students were vaccinated but also made two SNH teachers stay in the office to

collate and write the report ("Ma'am, we need to return to class").

In contrast to the SNH principal's belief that it was all right to initiate UPMs to get teachers to accomplish urgent professional responsibilities; for the SNM principal, teachers' primary professional responsibility was classroom instruction and fulfilling other professional responsibilities were secondary. Hence, she would often hesitate to pull out a teacher from a classroom. This is not to say that she never called a teacher from a classroom to initiate a UPM, rather my point here is that such instances, in my observation, were at least 30% fewer in the case of the SNM principal.

I also observed SNM principal Mina P accomplishing teacher professional responsibilities by herself which I did not observe the SNH principal Hema P do. An illustration of this can be seen from the description of the SNM principal's day when she updates the *Shala Siddhi* register (item 22). The updating of the *Shala Siddhi* register is an SNM teacher professional responsibility (see Appendix H) but I often noticed the SNM principal accomplishing this task.

The SNM principal's pre-existing beliefs about the goals of UPMs became clear during an informal conversation, when I asked her about the choice to update the *Shala Siddhi* register which added to her professional responsibilities. Her response was, "I have time today. I like to let teachers focus on class". Throughout fieldwork, I would notice 30-60 minute periods when the SNH principal would sit quietly in her office and update multiple registers or convert official circulars into the *Soochna Vahi*. In contrast at SNH, I noticed that the professional responsibility of writing the translation of formal school circulars into the *Soochna Vahi*- a task to be completed by the principal- was sometimes accomplished by teachers.

The difference in the pre-existing beliefs of the principals towards the goals of their UPMs, I suggest in the next subsection, also led to a richer and more diversely distributed knowledge about professional responsibilities at SNH as compared to at SNM.

I could not find any study in educational literature which clearly distinguishes between the pre-existing beliefs of principals in a similar context about the goals of PPMs and UPMs. However, I make inferences from a few studies to at least support the finding that principals can differ in their pre-existing beliefs about the goals of their meetings with teachers which in turn influences professional knowledge of teachers (Coburn, 2005; Duke & Landahl, 2011; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015). For instance, Coburn (2005) quotes excerpts from principal meetings across two schools to demonstrate how the principal's pre-existing beliefs about reading policy implementation influences what gets talked in principal meetings and shape both the know-what and the know-hows of teachers implementing a new reading instruction policy. I reproduce these excerpts in full in Appendix Y but highlight portions of the excerpts below to accentuate Coburn's findings in relation to professional knowledge

> Principal 1: There are other options…You're supposed to teach to the standards. The adoption is one way to support it, but not the only way.
>
> Principal 2: We did all this work with [guided reading], but I'm still seeing round robin reading. ...We've spent nearly $100,000 in this school on staff development on reading, and we need to be using it.
>
> In the quotes shown above, Principal 1 emphasizes a flexible approach to meeting

the standards in contrast to Principal 2 whose goal in principal meetings seems to encourage teachers to focus only on guided reading as a method.[100] The difference in

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[100] Principal 1's flexible approach to reading instruction was shaped by her earlier beliefs from engagement with mathematics reform which emphasized multiple strategies and meta-cognition instead of one

principal's meeting goals, in turn, steered teachers' emerging know-whats and know-hows about reading instruction (Coburn, 2005).

To summarize, the findings show that principals actively participated in their meetings, had similar goals about their PPMs but differed slightly in their goals about initiating UPMs. Educational literature, too, suggests the active participation of principals in their meetings. Educational literature, however, does not provide explicit accounts of the goal principals have for their PPMs and UPMs. But inferences made from accounts of principal meetings in similar contexts provided in educational literature at least support that principals differ in their meeting goals which in turn shapes professional knowledge of teachers.

Principal Meeting Frequency and Diversity

A key finding from the comparative study of principal meetings at SNH and SNM was that SNH had more frequent and diverse UPMs. Therefore, in this subsection, I draw upon the findings to discuss possible factors which contribute to the higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH. I also suggest how the higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH is likely to enrich the professional knowledge of SNH teachers and assist them to become school principals. The finding of higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH and a discussion of their implications for professional knowledge is difficult to situate in either educational or meeting science literature. As I described earlier, most educational literature which describes principal meetings in at least some

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approach. Principal 2, suggest Coburn, emphasized guided reading because the approach echoed her pre-existing beliefs about the importance of grouping and activity structures which were part of the guided reading training.

level of descriptive detail draws upon the meetings of only a single principal (e.g., Duke & Landahl, 2011; Gronn, 1983, 1984; Kelly, White, & Rouncefield, 2006; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Riehl, 1998; Wolcott, 1973). The relatively few studies which do describe comparative principal meetings (e.g., Coburn, 2005; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015) also do not mention the frequency of principal meetings and tend to use only one type of principal meeting (e.g., data-use meeting) to inform their analysis which does not help understand the diversity of principal meetings. I also did not find scholarly elaborations of frequency and diversity of organizational meetings in the meeting science literature (e.g., Allen et al., 2015; Schwartzman, 1989).

Based on my findings, I suggest four factors that are likely to have contributed to the higher frequency and greater diversity of UPMs at SNH: the size of the SNH, the location of the SNH principal office, the seating arrangement of the SNH principal office, and principal Hema P's pre-existing beliefs about the goals of her UPMs. I also suggest that the higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH also enriched and equitably distributed the professional knowledge of its teachers.

- School Size. The first factor behind the higher frequency of UPMs at SNH was its larger student and teacher population (size) as compared to SNM. During fieldwork, I always found that the principal office at SNH always had either teacher or visitors in UPMs with the principal in sharp contrast to the SNM principal office where I often found her working alone. Part of the reason for the higher number of UPMs at SNH was because SNH had 400 more students and six more school teachers as compared to SNM. More teachers meant higher one-one UPMs to fulfill professional tasks and/or provide sensegiving on clarifying

professional tasks. Higher number of students also translated into more principal

meetings with parents.

- Location of the SNH principal office. The principal Hema P's office was located

  on the ground-floor, about 10 feet diagonally across from the entrance of the

  MCGM school building and in close proximity of about 30 feet to the building

  hall where most of the school events (e.g., Cleanliness Day, school plays)

  occurred. This meant that any visitor to the MCGM school (say, a donor agency

  or an NGO volunteer) was more likely to pass the SNH principal office than the

  office of any other principal on the higher floors. The proximity to the hall also

  meant that all MCGM higher officials who were invited to preside school events

  also found it more convenient to spend time at the SNH principal office before or

  after the school event. The presence of people in the principal office often

  translated into talk about know-hows of professional responsibilities or UPMs

  (see Appendix Z for an example).
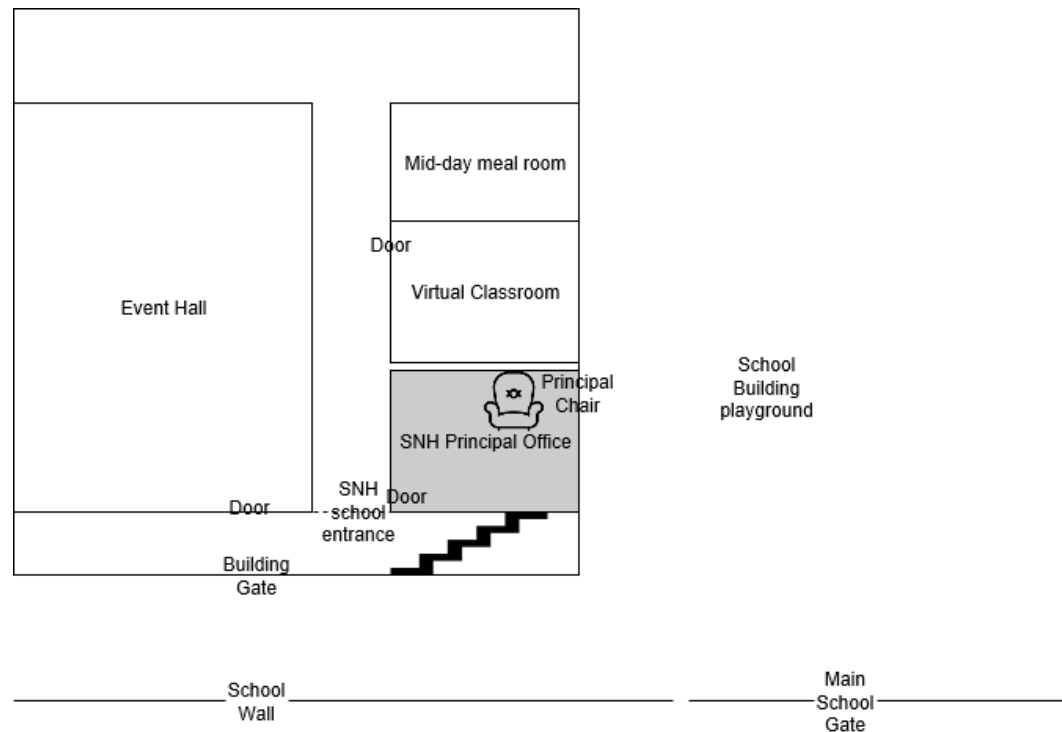
Figure 5.1 - Floor plan of the level 1 of the MCGM building with SNH principal office

- Seating arrangement. As may be seen in Figure 5.1 above and the photograph of the principal office (Image 1 in Appendix AA), the principal's chair in the SNH principal office faced the door next to the SNH entrance as compared to the SNM's principal's chair which faced away from the school entrance, and into the school corridor (image 2 in Appendix AA). This meant that the SNH principal was also more likely to notice people coming into the MCGM school building as compared to the SNM principal. The seating arrangement set up the SNH principal for more visitors and principal meetings. At times, official visitors to the SNM (say, a principal of a neighboring MCGM school), but who were also familiar to SNH principal would notice or be noticed by the SNH principal and would come and meet her.

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- Pre-existing beliefs of the principal. The final element of pre-existing beliefs of the principal towards their UPM goals also increased the frequency of principal meetings. As was described in the previous subsection, the SNH principal was more regular in asking teachers to come into the office to accomplish professional responsibilities. This also translated to more frequent UPMs.

Impact on professional knowledge. Higher frequency and diversity of principal meetings also shaped professional knowledge more equitably and in greater depth at the SNH (see Table 5.2). Although scholarly literature on meetings which connects meetings and professional knowledge (e.g., Yarrow, 2017) suggests that meeting location plays an important role in defining what counts as professional knowledge, it does not consider factors like the frequency and diversity of meetings.

Equitable distribution. The insistence on making sure that professional responsibilities were accomplished through the teachers made professional knowledge around professional responsibilities more equitably distributed across SNH teachers. As described before, it was common for the SNH principal to pull out a teacher from the classroom, as per the official responsibility chart, to sit with her in the principal office and respond to urgent requests for data from the Ward office (e.g., rubella vaccinations). Since the SNM principal would often respond to some of these urgent data requests on her own, the professional knowledge of how to accomplish professional responsibilities (e.g., preparing a *Masik Patra*) was concentrated at her (principal) level.

Richer professional knowledge. The higher diversity of the principal meetings at SNH also, I suggest, generated a richer professional knowledge about the school environment (institutional and non-institutional). Different MCGM visitors spent time at

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the SNH office and this led to frequent and longer talk exchange of latest developments

at the MCGM central office. The SNM principal, too, often visited the SNH principal

office (e.g. Appendix X) to ensure that she did not miss out any critical update and/or was

kept aware of any new developments in the MCGM school context.

Table 5.2

Comparing Principal Meetings across SNH and SNMs

Criteria	SNH	SNM	Professional Knowledge Outcome
Goal- PPM	Focus and Pressure	Focus and Pressure	Teachers get know-what of professional responsibilities
Goal - UPM	Initiate to get responsibilities accomplished by teachers	Optional to get responsibilities accomplished by teachers	Higher know-how about professional responsibilities at SNH
Principal participation	Active	Active	Teachers find principal meetings as useful to focus their work
Frequency of UPMs	High	Medium	Equitable distribution at SNH
Diversity of UPMs	High	Medium	Richer professional knowledge at SNH

Overall, the above two outcomes of richer and deeper professional knowledge

distribution at SNH also suggests that that the professional knowledge of being a

principal was more accessible to SNH teachers. By frequently participating in UPMs, the

chances of developing professional knowledge of the institutional directives was higher

at SNH. This becomes important when we remember Hema P's comment in Excerpt 4.11

that MCGM school principals are not given a formal training which I reproduce here.

"We have been directly made Head Masters, did not get training...We work from

learning, from doing (work) is learnt". Hema P's comment about learning from doing therefore makes her frequent UPMs a kind of orientation to SNH teachers of what it means to be (and act) like a school principal. Therefore, I suggest that SNH teachers are more conversant with the professional knowledge of administering an MCGM school as compared to the SNM teachers.

Supporting Credibility of Overall Findings

If on one hand, the comparison and contrast of principal meetings indicated unique findings (e.g., frequency and diversity) which are rarely mentioned in educational literature, the findings pertaining to this research question also supported the overall claims being made under this dissertation- which is also suggested by literature.

Findings indicate that the two MCGM schools differed in school parameters like student population, number of teachers, medium of instruction or in more principal-related variables like years of experience. Nonetheless, there was remarkable consistency in how their principal meetings related to professional knowledge. This lends credence to overall claims like: (a) PPMs and UPMs involve sensegiving on know-what and know-how to manage ambiguity and uncertainty pertaining to professional responsibilities (b) PPMs and UPMs are inter-connected, and (c) UPMs, though comprising more than 50% of principal time and critical for accomplishing professional responsibilities are not labeled as meetings.

Praet (2009) who studied team meetings at the British embassy emphasizes the importance of contrasting perspectives side by side and how easy it is in research to get accustomed to one perspective. She herself say, "When walking barefoot along a long stretch of gravel, we eventually stop feeling the stones at all" (p.95). I endorse her

perspective and use the same metaphor to describe my fieldwork. Spending time with different principals and observing their meetings in their principal office, school corridors, and teacher classrooms often provoked me out of my familiarity with principal meetings from one school (gravel) and notice the different feel of the principal meetings (stones).

To summarize, the discussions under Research Question 3 show that fieldwork broadly aligned with the literature on the importance of comparing and contrasting principal meetings across two different schools by showing that: (a) the findings about PPMs and UPMs were more robust (b) the principals were active participants as evidenced through meeting talk and note-taking (c) the PPMs and UPMs had similar focus across the two schools. The discussion also suggests that: (a) the goals for the UPMs was slightly different when compared across the two schools (b) the size, location, seating arrangement, and pre-existing beliefs of the principal about the goals of their UPMs contributed to a higher frequency and diversity of UPMs at SNH, and (c) the SNH teachers are likely to have a richer and more equitable knowledge of professional responsibilities of being an MCGM teacher/principal.

Principal Meetings and Professional Knowledge

The Chapter so far has focused on discussing the findings pertaining to the three research questions that were put forth in this dissertation on principal meetings and the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge. To situate the findings, the discussions so far have drawn primarily upon the theoretical work mentioned in Chapter 2 on sensemaking/sensegiving (e.g., Weick, 1995), educational literature which mentions principal meetings(e.g., Coburn, 2005; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015), and the emerging

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body of knowledge on meetings (e.g., Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015). Since all the three research questions explore the connection between principal meetings and professional knowledge, in this section I situate the overall findings within the literature of professional knowledge cited in Chapter 2 (e.g., King, 2009) and also draw upon additional literature (e.g., Brown et al., 1988; Cook & Brown, 1999) to show that findings both support and elaborate the conceptual framing of professional knowledge which guided this dissertation.

In this section, I first show how findings fit the definition of professional knowledge chosen for this dissertation. I also discuss how findings illustrate the processes of creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge in their empirical relationship to MCGM principal meetings. Professional knowledge (know-how and know-what) has been a recurrent theme in answering the three research questions that guide this dissertation. I will show that principal meetings are entwined with professional knowledge as envisaged theoretically and illustrated in the various academic references in Chapter 2 and empirically as described by the findings in Chapter 4. Findings also show that the processes of creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge during principal meetings were intermingled as I had anticipated at the beginning of the study.

I will also show that findings elaborate the conceptual framework chosen for this dissertation. The findings indicate that the fit between the conceptual framework of defining professional knowledge in this dissertation by drawing upon King's (2009) classification of know-how, know-what, and know-why, although extremely helpful, may not highlight or capture the richness of the overall findings in two ways. First, I draw

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upon findings to suggest aspects like know-where, know-when, and know-who which are not included in the definition of professional knowledge. Secondly, fieldwork suggests the element of knowledge-in-action or *knowing* within principal meetings (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1988; Cook & Brown, 1999).

Definitions of Professional Knowledge.

Overall, the findings to the three research questions in Chapter 4 and the subsequent discussion in this Chapter show that PPMs primarily provided professional knowledge about know-whats of professional responsibilities and that UPMs focused on developing and shaping the know-hows of professional responsibilities. The findings seem to fit the definition of professional knowledge as a "justified true belief" (King, 2009, p. 3) in terms of professional knowledge pertaining to professional responsibilities, which can be parsed as:

- Justified- Collecting and presenting adequate evidence through interview excerpts and meeting observations; showing coherence with other data (e.g., other principal meetings, interview excerpts)

- True- Making sure that the knowledge claims about responsibilities are based on the real world (e.g., entering biometric data, assessing *25 nikash* in actual schools)

- Belief- Conviction about the knowledge claims; checking for inconsistencies through probing in interviews, informal conversations, and deep hanging out

The findings show that meeting talk and text (e.g., about biometric deadlines) and the physical action taken during the principal meeting (e.g., entering a leave application

through the HR App) captured the explicit and tacit knowledge components respectively of professional knowledge as defined in Chapter 2.

The reference to the know-whats and know-hows also represent two of the three levels of professional knowledge as suggested by King (2009). Later in this section, I will discuss the absence of know-whys and propose other possible aspects of professional knowledge as suggested by findings.

Processes of Creation, Retention, and Transfer.

The findings and discussion of the three research questions in Chapter 4 and in this Chapter show that principal meetings were related to the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge. In particular, findings show that the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge was intertwined and very difficult to tease apart in practice.

The findings indicate that principal meetings were related to the distinct aspects of knowledge creation, retention, and transfer. However, as was described in Chapter 2, these elements are often concurrent and difficult to separate in practice. The three verbs of creation, retention, and transfer were taken from the theoretical framework proposed by Argote and Miron-Spektor (2009). The authors' work is on organizational learning and they use the terms knowledge creation, retention, and transfer together to capture the organizational learning process. Hence, it is in the vein of inter-related processes that I used these terms in the research questions.

In practice, the creation, retention, and transfer of knowledge during principal meetings were often intermingled. To illustrate, consider the example of a PPM like the Ward Meeting during which the principals often recorded the meeting talk in the AO/BO

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register (see Appendix U). The question that was very difficult to answer in analysis is which verb (creation, retention, or transfer) best captures the knowledge during this record taking in the Ward Meeting? A closer analysis suggests that all three verbs might apply to the same act of recording the notes of the Ward Meeting. The writing of the notes is clearly an act of knowledge creation and different principals took different notes. The writing also retains the know-what that gets talked during the Ward Meeting. Both the principals referred to their AO/BO register to prepare the agenda for the *Soochna Vahi* of their Staff Meetings. Finally, the talk by the AO during the Ward Meeting is also a transfer of professional knowledge of what principals in the Ward need to focus upon in the next month. Hence, the record-taking is also an act of knowledge-transfer.

The intermingling of knowledge creation, retention, and transfer was also observed in UPMs. Take for instance the UPM described in Excerpt 4.12a during which Trilok P and Ram T engage in talk and action to enter a leave application through the HR App on the Ram T's mobile phone. Going through and "discovering the meaning" of the various options offered by the HR App is an act of knowledge creation. The choice selected when provided an option by the HR App also retains the know-how that is being talked during the UPM. Finally, the talk between Trilok P and Ram T ("for giving a leave, it takes 3-4 people") is also a transfer of professional knowledge.

Aspects of Professional Knowledge.

The findings indicate the presence of know-what and know-hows and a relative absence of the articulation of the third aspect of professional knowledge- know-why. Findings indicate that PPMs focused on the professional knowledge of know-whats or what professional responsibilities needed to be focused upon in the midst of multiple and

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shifting professional tasks- a specification of what action to take when presented with multiple stimuli (King, 2009). The UPMs focused on the professional knowledge of know-how or knowing how to decide on an appropriate response to a stimulus (e.g., sending a response to the reprimand memo) (King, 2009). However, the findings show that principal meetings and interviews, rarely articulated a know-why about how professional responsibilities were causally connected or were more important or urgent than others- a deep understanding of causal relationships, effects, and the uncertainty associated with stimuli (King, 2009).

In the previous Chapters, I described that PPMs described the know-what of focusing on the *25 nikash* (e.g, SNH Staff Meeting). The UPM at SNM described how the principal and a teacher developed and shared the know-how of finding questions to prepare an assessment paper for *25 nikash* (Excerpt 4.8). However, findings do not indicate a principal meeting talk on why there were only 25 indicators and why was the success rate of 100% so crucial. To take the example of biometrics attendance, findings did not suggest a know-why explanations for having the manual system of capturing the attendance of the teachers and principal in a register being continued concurrently with the digital sign-in process. My interviews and meeting notes reflect that there were no official reasons provided or asked in principal meetings as to why two attendance systems were necessary.[101]

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[101] When I asked about the why physical records were still being kept for a digital system, an MCGM school principal Trilok P told me that MCGM lives in two eras. He called the first the British era that was made for lower-status Indians and MCGM follows the same rules till today (e.g., manual records). And the second is the American era- everything computerized and high tech (e.g., digital attendance). Said he, "So, we are confused: this one to be done or that one to be done. So, let's do one thing, do both. So, we are doing both. Doing both."

During the interviews and informal conversations, the most common answer I received when asking about know-whys could be paraphrased as "that is how things are here". Based on the fieldwork, possible interpretations include conjectures as: (a) the multiple task list of the teachers and the principals kept them busy and did not allow time for talk about the know-why behind responsibilities and (b) the know-whys were never part of the principal meetings and therefore principal and teachers did not expect to be told the why behind their professional responsibilities.

Although it was difficult to find an instance of articulating the know-why behind certain responsibilities during principal meetings, this study suggested two other aspects of professional knowledge: (a) elements like know-where or know-who are not included in the definition of professional knowledge and (b) the element of knowledge-in-action or *knowing* as part of principal meetings.

Other aspects of professional knowledge. Kings' (2009) definition of professional knowledge suggests three levels: know-what, know-how, and know-why. During data analysis of principal meetings at MCGM, I identified three aspects of professional knowledge, know-when, know-who and know-where, that I found difficult to fit into any of King's three knowledge levels. I briefly describe these aspects of professional knowledge drawing upon the excerpts already mentioned in Chapter 4. Finally, I discuss the aspect of knowing contained within the actions of the principal meeting and suggests the idea that principal meetings are not just on professional practice, but are professional practice.

Know-when. This aspect of professional knowledge relates to managing uncertainty around the time of accomplishing professional responsibilities. A good

example is the date of the 13th for entering leave requests or submitting any pending discrepancies about the biometric system to the Ward office. Know-whens are articulated frequently in PPMs like Ward Meetings (e.g., the March deadline for accomplishing *25 nikash*). The know-when is important because it brings focus, pressure, and coherence to action. For instance, it is no surprise that the UPM to enter leave requests happen on the 13th of the month because of the deadline of the 13th. This suggests that simply mentioning know-whats (e.g., *25 nikash* need to be accomplished) rarely gets the same kind of pressure and action.

Know-who. This aspect of professional knowledge clarifies who will be held responsible for accomplishing a certain professional responsibility. In light of multiple professional responsibilities and the absence of a defined professional-duty list, the aspect of know-who becomes extremely crucial to accomplishment of work in the MCGM context. For instance, in discussions around the second research question, I describe that the top-down flow of sensegiving also transforms the professional knowledge which connected PPMs across time. This transformation of professional knowledge relates to the know-who. This know-who aspect of professional knowledge addresses the larger question of distribution of professional knowledge and impacts the smooth operation of the school. In discussions of the third research question, I describe how the SNH principal insisted on clarifying the know-whos for each professional responsibility which led to a more equitable and richer distribution of professional knowledge (see Table 5.2).

Know-where. This aspect of professional knowledge relates to where the professional responsibility needs to be accomplished. Although not articulated as frequently as know-when or know-who, this aspect of professional knowledge was

mentioned when the accomplishment of responsibilities was to be done outside school premises. Take for instance, the UPM of the SNM principal wherein she discusses the scholarship exam details with a teacher and indicates where the teacher has to spend her day as part of fulfilling her professional responsibility of conducting the scholarship exam (item 6 in Appendix I).

The knowing within principal meetings. The line below borrowed from an excerpt from a staff meeting (Excerpt 4.11) suggests a deep reflection into the relationship between professional knowledge and *knowing*

> Hema P: "We did not get training. We have to take...work from learning, from doing (work) is learnt."

This knowing component, the following description will show, is what is revealed when we consider principal meetings as professional practice.

Fieldwork shows that the MCGM principals spend significant time in both planned and unplanned meetings, evidence which provides grounds for labeling them as authentic activities (Lave & Wenger, 1990) bringing alive the professional knowledge of being a principal. As authentic activities, meetings involving the principal are ordinary, yet valuable activities of principal practice during which principals perform key organizational tasks (see Chapter 2) and manage ambiguity (see Chapter 4). A closer reflection of the work-day of the MCGM principal (Appendix I) and the espoused necessity of principal meetings argued earlier in this section helps augment the claim that principal meetings are not something separate from organizational or leadership work, rather meetings are integral to the work the principal does and the professional knowledge of principalship lies within the act of principal meetings. Therefore, principal meetings comprise professional knowledge in action.

The concept of professional knowledge in action can be understood with an example of riding a bike borrowed from Cook and Brown (1999). The authors describe that the tacit and explicit knowledge of riding a bike is not enough to ride the bike. The knowledge that is missing is the actual act of riding: an epistemic activity in itself. The epistemological dimension of the action itself is what they call "knowing" (p. 387). For instance, the act of writing this dissertation Chapter does epistemic work wherein I draw upon my tacit and explicit knowledge in interacting with the laptop, draft printouts, and the occasional side conversations explaining my dissertation to other scholars who sit next to me. Translated to the case of principal meeting, knowing is not something that is used in the meeting or essential to the meeting, but comprises the epistemic work as part of principal meeting act itself.

However, this notion of professional knowledge in action or knowing is missing in the conceptualization of professional knowledge based on King (2009) in Chapter 2 which treats knowledge only as something that individual people or groups own and use. Take for instance the illustrated excerpt from Wolcott's guidance committee meeting from Chapter 2 which describes how the know-how, know-why, know-what is possessed and used by the principal Ed and the teacher. Adding knowing to the mix suggests that the principal meeting itself (e.g., the photograph of the boy, the university students as participants, the Staff room) might do epistemic work in shaping the individual and group professional knowledge of principal Ed and the teachers.

Scholars (Brown & Duguid, 1998; Cook & Brown, 1999) also claim that this kind of *knowing* is difficult to teach outside the context (e.g. in a principal certification program), since it is a part of authentic activity in a real context. It is this kind of knowing

that Hema P refers to in when she attempts to influence M to do the work of making the

Masik Patra in the line borrowed from the staff meeting at the beginning of this

subsection ("We did not get training...work from learning, from doing (work) is learnt").

In addition, what Hema P also highlights are the virtuous cycles between

professional knowledge and knowing or what Cook and Brown (1999) describe as a

"generative dance" (p. 381). In other words, professional knowledge of accomplishing a

professional responsibility (say, preparing a *Masik Patra)* and knowing feed into each

other.

To summarize, this section discussed the definition of professional knowledge

and the processes of creation, retention, and transfer in light of the findings. Overall, the

discussion suggests that King's (2009) framework serves well to discuss the creation,

retention, and transfer of professional knowledge. However, findings also suggested other

aspects of professional knowledge like know-when, know-who, know-where, and the

knowledge-in-action or knowing.

So far, this Chapter has drawn upon academic literature to discuss: (a) findings

pertaining to each research question and (b) the relationship between principal meetings

and the processes of creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge. A

significant finding of this dissertation was the ubiquity and prevalence of the Unplanned

Principal Meeting or UPM in the life of the MCGM principal. Therefore, in the next

section, I discuss the UPM in relation to the academic literature from Chapter 2.

The Unplanned Principal Meeting

A significant contribution of this study is the UPM. I examine UPMs in light of

the academic literature on principal meetings which fueled my research journey and

suggest unique aspects of UPMs based on the findings. A key insight from fieldwork was the frequency, diversity, and necessity of the UPM as I described in Chapter 4. Hence, in this section, I focus on the UPM and indicate that the current academic and trade literature which mentions principal meetings focuses on PPMs.

This section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection focuses on how academic literature and trade publications[102] which I described in Chapter 2, have focused on what I label as UPMs. I show that most scholars and trade publications, in their labeling, articulation, and descriptions of principal meetings, have leaned towards only the planned meeting interactions or PPMs. The second subsection discusses the UPMs and highlights the unique feature of fluid participation in UPMs which encourages a candid and concurrent development and sharing of professional knowledge.

UPMs in MCGM and Literature

UPMs are significant, but rarely acknowledged by principals. Fieldwork indicated that while each unplanned meeting might comprise only a few minutes, sometimes even less than one minute, overall the UPMs comprise at least 50% of the principal workday in MCGM context (see Appendix I). What Appendix I does not illustrate is that these two days of shadowing represented more like the minimum time the principals spent on UPMs. On majority of the days, the principals spent almost their whole day in interacting with unannounced meeting participations in one UPM after another. Although the reverse i.e., working alone without a single UPM throughout the day was never the case.

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[102] I use the term trade publications to include all magazines, journals, and books aimed at practitioners.

Despite the pervasiveness of UPMs in the daily work-lives of the MCGM school principals and teachers, the MCGM principals and teachers regularly mentioned the importance of PPMs in their interviews and conversations. As I described in Chapter 4, the principals and teachers articulated the usefulness of PPMs in terms of providing focus and pressure, and enabling coherence (See Figure 4.4).

Emphasis of literature on PPMs. This explicit focus on the PPMs, in contrast to the preponderance of the UPMs in the work-life of the MCGM principals I observed, is suggested by educational and trade publications literature cited in the review of literature in Chapter 2 (e.g., Duke & Landahl, 2011; Pena, 2000; Schildkamp & Poortman, 2015; Scribner et al., 1999). Meeting science literature, too, seems to have leaned towards highlighting descriptions and analysis of planned meetings (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Rogelberg, 2015; Schwartzman, 1989).

The references cited in Chapter 2 indicated a variety of principal meetings mentioned in academic literature and trade publications as I illustrate in Appendix A. Closer analysis of the various principal meetings mentioned Appendix A reveals that majority of these meetings were PPMs (e.g., SIP conference, Faculty meeting, School Board meeting). Of the 25 principal meetings listed and described in Appendix A, I would suggest that at least 20 were planned.[103]

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[103] I consider a meeting as planned based on (a) whether the principal meetings were indicated as formally planned events (e.g., SIP conference) and/or (b) if they required a specific member group to participate, thereby indicating a negotiation of time and planning in advance (e.g., School Board Meeting, Guidance Committee Meeting). Based on the two factors, the only meetings that are likely to be conducted without detailed planning are: Student meeting, Administrative planning meeting, Event planning meeting, and Custodial meeting. The literature does not mention if these meetings required pre-planning or a specific member participation requiring negotiation of time or minutes. Therefore, I consider them as unplanned.

The trade publications listed in Chapter 2 also aim at improving the planned meeting interactions of the principal (e.g., Boudett & City, 2014; Delehant & von Frank, 2006). Basically, the primary contention of these publications is to plan meetings well in advance, send an agenda, and establish roles; and by definition, these guidelines will apply only to planned meetings. For instance, both Boudett and City (2014) and Delehant and von Frank (2006) insist that planning for purpose and process is necessary before principal meetings.

UPMs in literature. Some educational leadership scholars have indeed mentioned UPMs, but usually in ways that would not ascribe them the status of a meeting (e.g., Gronn, 1983; Wolcott, 1973). When scholars have described the unplanned work-related interactions of the principals, they have tended to label such interactions not as meetings but as "administrative talk" (Gronn, 1983, 1984) or as "informal encounters and daily routines" (Wolcott, 1973).[104]

The term "informal encounters and daily routines" is used by Wolcott (1973) in his ethnography of the school principal to denote those unplanned meeting interactions which are spent in handling requests, managing problems, and greeting and orienting visitors to the school. The terms informal encounter or daily routine, in my view, do not capture their significance as efficient episodes of problem-resolution although Wolcott

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[104] In his Chapter on formal encounters of a principal, Wolcott (1973) first ascribes two labels to the unplanned principal meetings: (a) deliberate, but not pre-arranged encounters and (b) chance encounters. His labeling of unplanned principal meetings becomes clear in his next Chapter wherein he describes the UPMs as "informal encounters and daily routines" (p. 123). A closer reading of this Chapter shows that all the interactions, though unplanned, are related to school-work, involve the principal, and are deliberate i.e., they fit all the definitional criteria of principal meetings.

himself says that the encounters, "were a flurry of activity, in which he [the principal] caught up with problems and the problems caught up with him" (p. 124).[105]

Wolcott (1973) also distinguishes the informal encounters/daily routines from the formal encounters of the principal. The formal encounters are clearly labeled as meetings and discussed in detail with rich descriptions and line-by-line dialogues of four meetings: the summer school faculty meeting, the PTA Executive Board meeting, the parent meeting, and the in-district meeting of principals. At times though, Wolcott only provides a brief snapshot of the UPMs. For instance, Wolcott describes five UPMs in 2 pages (pp. 123-125) as compared to the detailed 26 pages (pp. 96-122) he devotes to four PPMs.

In contrast, scholars of educational administration like Gronn (1983, 1984) detail the unplanned work-related interactions line-by-line. Gronn (1983) provides line-by-line descriptions of utterances across three instances of work-related interaction between the principal and the teachers which occur in the corridor, principal office and the staff room respectively. However, Gronn qualifies only the last instance of the interaction in the staff room as a meeting, labeling the other interactions as examples of administrative talk.

The meeting science literature also focuses on planned meetings (e.g., Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012; Scott, Dunn, Williams, & Allen, 2015, Schwartzman, 1989). For instance, when Schwartzman's (1989) discusses the types of meetings she observed during her ethnography, similar to Wolcott (1973),

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[105] Wolcott provides a vignette of such an unplanned interaction when the principal Ed, a teacher, and a school counselor chance to meet in the hall and discuss what to do about a boy who had bitten another child. The unplanned interaction which lasts a few minutes efficiently ends in an agreement to discuss the issue with the case-worker.

she devotes a lengthy example and excerpt from the council meeting (pp. 141-143) and a separate table about the timing, place, participant composition and purpose for scheduled meetings, but unscheduled meetings are defined and described in three paragraphs. Schwartzman also does not provide detailed descriptions or tables to classify unscheduled meetings.[106] Similarly, the recently published *Cambridge Handbook of Meeting Science* devotes Chapters to analysis to planned meetings (e.g., Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Kocsis et al., 2015; Scott, Dunn, et al., 2015) but there are no references to unplanned meetings.[107]

Indeed, some readers may argue the relatively fewer pages devoted to descriptions and analyses of unplanned meetings in academic and trade publications literature could also indicate: (a) that US school principals might have very few unplanned meetings and/or (b) unplanned interactions are not meetings at all. The academic literature quoted in Chapter 2 presents some evidence that principals do spend a significant amount of time in UPMs. For instance, in Wolcott's (1973) representation of principal time, UPMs comprise 40% of the time as compared to the 26% time taken by PPMs (see Appendix AB). More recent online records of principal self-reported time-use also suggest that UPMs comprise at least 50% of their workday (e.g., Crisp, 2017; Johnson, 2009). However, more systematic research is needed because the US literature which systematically documents a US principal's workday does not clearly distinguish planned

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[106] Schwartzman primarily considers unplanned meetings as a post-meeting to discuss or gossip about a recent planned meeting interaction. I have described this conceptualization in the discussion of the second research question.

[107] The index does not include terms like informal meeting, unplanned meeting or unannounced meetings.

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and unplanned work-related meeting interactions (e.g., Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2010).

The second argument by skeptical readers to the relative absence of UPMs in educational leadership literature is that the unplanned work-related interactions should not be considered meetings at all. After all, even the principals and teachers at MCGM were hesitant to label such unscheduled interactions as meetings. While it is true that principals and teachers are hesitant to label their unplanned interactions as meetings, it does not necessarily follow that such work-related interactions be discounted. Excerpts from UPMs presented in Chapter 4 show that unplanned meetings have the same principals and teachers as meeting participants, are as purposeful and work-related as the planned meetings of the principal, and were necessary in managing ambiguity to accomplish professional responsibilities through talk and action.

Based on the findings, perhaps the biggest reason unplanned meetings do not get as much attention as the planned meetings, I suggest, could be to do with methodological challenges of studying UPMs. Unplanned meetings, as the findings from shadowing the MCGM principals (Appendix I) show and as scholarly literature from Wolcott (1973) and Gronn (1983) indicate are: (a) rarely announced, (b) shorter in duration (1- 20 minutes), and (c) undocumented as compared to planned meetings. These characteristics of UPMs present methodological challenges such as: (a) difficulty in planning in advance to capture data, (b) few opportunities for prolonged observation, and (c) lack of triangulation through meeting minutes or agenda respectively.

In the following subsection, I would like to highlight an element of UPMs which I found both unique and important to the findings: the element of a flexible entry and exit

of meeting participants in a UPM or what I call as fluid participation. Fluid participation is unique because it allows for concurrent principal meetings. The importance of fluid participation is drawn from its contribution to the urgent and distributed nature of sensegiving and candid knowledge flows.

Fluid Participation in UPMs.[108]

Fluid participation refers to the shifting meeting composition because participants join and leave an ongoing meeting(s). For instance, in the UPM Excerpt 4.12 when participants like Trilok P and Ram T join and leave a UPM about leave applications and biometric system which is already in progress.

Fluid participation is important in the context of UPMs because (a) it supports the distributed nature and the urgency of sensegiving, (b) provides seamless concurrent principal meetings, and (c) suggests a shifting meeting frame (Schwartzman, 1989). Fluid participation in UPMs is significant to professional knowledge because it creates efficiency and encourages candid knowledge transfer. I describe these elements below with evidence but given its basis on a study of only two MCGM schools, I also indicate that further research would be necessary to confirm, contest, and elaborate the concept of fluid participation.

Distributed and urgent nature of sensegiving. The fluid entry and exit of meeting participants also contributes to the distributed and urgent nature of sensegiving

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[108] It is helpful to differentiate that March and Olsen (1972) use the term fluid participation in the larger organizational sense describing how members of an organization devote varying amount of time and effort to different domains. The term fluid participation here refers specifically to participant time and attention in a principal meeting or across simultaneously occurring principal meetings.

in UPMs. For instance, in the biometric UPM Excerpt 4.8, the sensegiving role is distributed between both Trilok P and Habib T. The unannounced entry of Trilok P into a UPM does not disrupt the sensemaking that is already happening as Mina P, Hema P, and Rama T. Rather, Trilok P contributes to the sensegiving. Even when teachers like Ram T enter and exit the UPM, the principal meeting does not come to an end. Such kind of fluid participation is likely to disrupt the sensegiving in a PPM like the Staff Meeting.

Further, the flexible entry and exit of meeting participants responds to the urgency of sensemaking within the UPM. The findings showed that UPMs were usually conducted to manage ambiguity around urgent issues. The UPM described in the paragraph above occurred to resolve the urgent issue of entering and approving leave applications. In another UPM instance described in Chapter 4, the fluid participation element of UPMs allowed Reshma T to resolve Ram T's ambiguity around how to find questions for the upcoming *25 nikash* assessment.

Supporting concurrency in principal meetings. The smooth entry and exit of participants in a UPM also lead to concurrency or multiple meeting threads at the same time. For instance, in the UPM account (Excerpt 4.12a and 4.12b) there are two UPMs occurring at the same time. In one UPM, Trilok P is providing the sensegiving around how to enter a leave request using the HR App and in the other UPM, Habib T is explaining the know-how about entering and approving a leave request using the biometric website and the HR App. Trilok P enters the other concurrent UPM when he asks Habib T to stop training the MCGM principal on approving a leave request. Other UPM instances (Figure 4.3) provide evidence how teachers like Reshma T and Habib T participate fluidly to enter a UPM quickly and share their know-how.

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This fluid participation supports two or more principal meetings with different purposes to occur concurrently. The notion of concurrency here is similar to that seen in the working of operating systems (Essays, 2018; Schneider, 1997). Separate meeting processes are running at the same time and often meeting talks get interwoven for a brief time before the talks continue on their separate journeys. Using an analogy from railway networks, this is similar to how the start and end destination of each railway journey (principal meeting) is different but the journeys might share the same railway track (evidenced through fluid participation) for a brief duration (Essays, 2018).

Concurrency in principal meetings is a novel idea and breaks away from the more single purpose conceptualizations and descriptions of principal meetings in literature (e.g., Duke & Landahl, 2011; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999, Wolcott, 1973). This is to be expected since the academic literature, as argued earlier, usually restricts mentions of principal meetings to the PPMs which rarely permit fluid participation.

Shaping the meeting frame. Schwartzman (1989) describes a meeting frame as a boundary which defines when a meeting begins or ends (e.g., banging the gavel to begin or end meetings). Taking an instance from the Ward Meeting observed during fieldwork, this is the moment when the Ward Officer shifts into the first item on the agenda immediately after greeting the participants Good Morning (see excerpt at the introduction of Chapter 4). In the case of fluid participation, this ceremonial ritual is usually discarded altogether and the teachers might enter as participants or exit an ongoing principal meeting as soon as they start speaking. The meeting frame, therefore, begins with the first words being spoken.

Again, the shifting meeting frame might contest the idea of a single meeting frame for each meeting (e.g., Schwartzman, 1989; Yarrow, 2017). The importance of a shifting meeting frame becomes clearer when we imagine how breaking the frame could disrupt could signal a shift in professional roles and could even disqualify the principal meeting itself (Schwartzman, 1989). For example, if a teacher came late to a Staff Meeting or left the meeting before it had been formally brought to an end, then this indicates a stepping out of line in terms of the professional roles and responsibilities of the teacher. The teacher's stepping out is likely seen as an attempt to challenge the significance of the principal meeting (and the knowledge it constitutes) itself. However, in a UPM, the smooth entry and exit of participants in an ongoing meeting allows the meeting frame to continue as long as deemed necessary. Shifting meeting frames make it difficult to signal shifts in professional roles or disqualifying the principal meeting.

The distributed nature of sensegiving, concurrency, and flexible meeting frame aspects of fluid participation described above might improve the utility of UPMs in terms of efficiency, knowledge forthrightness, and dynamism.

- Improving efficiency. The efficiency of fluid participation is reflected in how meeting frame begins as soon as the first words are spoken, without wasting time. Compare this with the time usually spent waiting for the quorum of participants to be ready or the chair to arrive before a planned meeting begins (see Ward Meeting description at the beginning of Chapter 4). Put another way, the UPM gets its efficiency partly because participants get into sensemaking about the ambiguity without squandering time waiting for a meeting to begin and/or staying on for the principal meeting to end even after they have made sense of the ambiguity. On the

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other hand, it is possible that fluid participation might make the knowledge processes less efficient by bringing in items of talk that do not pertain to the management of ambiguity (e.g., when a teacher enters a UPM on biometric and suggest how it leads to extra work which might lead to a lengthy discussion and prevent a quick resolution of the ambiguity around how to enter a leave application).

- Candid knowledge transfer. The increase in spontaneity that fluid participation brings to UPM also encourages that participants are less inhibited in making explicit their tacit professional knowledge as they make sense of the ambiguity to preserve bureaucratic order. In one particular case of a UPM, a parent had requested a change of student name in school records and Teacher A and Hema P were discussing how to go about it in the principal office. Habib T was working at the same time in the principal office to upload some data.

> Teacher A: Ma'm, this seems like a simple thing. We can just make the change directly in the register.
> Hema P: Ok, here, take the pen.
> At this moment, Habib T entered this meeting
> Habib T: Wait.
> Teacher A: What happened?
> Habib T: Make sure that the change in name is done in the same pen and handwriting.

In the above excerpt, the fluid participation by Habib T who entered an ongoing principal meeting between teacher A and Hema P provided a very useful know-what and know-how about the way the details in the admissions register must be maintained. The probable reason for making the change in the same handwriting is to cause no issues to be raised when inspection happens. From his experience,

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Habib T knows that schools might get an audit memo in case there are changes to name of students in admissions records and his candid suggestion shares this professional knowledge.

The point here is not that PPMs are not candid or prevent forthrightness. Rather, the smooth entry and exit of participants supports a more free-flowing professional knowledge dissemination, considered essential by scholars of knowledge management to promote organizational learning (Vera, Crossan, & Apaydin, 2011).

- Dynamism. The remark at the beginning of Chapter 2 by Wolcott's principal Ed about having "tired butts" in his meetings is challenged in UPMs. The ever-shifting meeting frame and the concurrency afforded by the fluid participation makes UPMs anything but tedious affairs as some scholars referred to in Chapter 2 indicate (e.g., Sandler & Thedvall, 2017). In addition, scholars like (Cohen et al., 2011) report results drawn from a survey of 367 participants of different meetings to show that participants perceive meetings as better if time is spent only on issues relevant to their presence. UPMs, as argued earlier are efficient in terms of time usage and are therefore are likely to score higher on participant perceptions of meeting quality.

To summarize, the discussion on the Unplanned Principal Meeting emphasizes that UPMs are an important but understudied type of principal meetings. The MCGM school principals spend a significant amount of their time in UPMs and these UPMs are as instrumental as the planned meetings in managing ambiguity and uncertainty to create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge in the context of the MCGM school

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principals. In addition, UPMs are likely to be prevalent in the life of the US school

principal as observed in the relatively dated accounts of UPMs in US based literature

(e.g., Gronn, 1983; Wolcott, 1973) and the more recent online accounts of principal's

workday (e.g. Crisp, 2017; Johnson, 2009). Hence, conducting further studies on the

prevalence and role of UPM is an important implication for research under this

dissertation.

Significance of the Study

This dissertation has highlighted theoretical and empirical evidence that principal

meetings (PPMs and UPMs) are essential to principal practice. The most serious gap in

the research base pertaining to principal meetings, as I summarized when drawing upon

scholarly mentions of principal meetings in Chapter 2, has been an absence of

formulation of the principal meeting as a unit of analysis in research, either by itself or as

interconnected episodes of work-related interactions of the school principal. Even studies

on principal time-use, where principal meetings would have most likely earned

acknowledgement and had their importance highlighted, have not defined principal

meetings or demarcated them as crucial episodes that comprise a significant portion of a

principal's time. This is not surprising because meetings, as Schwartzman (1989) argues,

are so basic and universal that their importance has not been recognized. Educational

researchers have usually considered principal meetings as generic tools to achieve school

leadership goals and as uniform episodes of sensemaking and sensegiving that shape

professional knowledge. Therefore, the significance of this study overall lies in takes an

initial step towards acknowledging the role of principal meetings to principalship and to

professional knowledge.

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The findings add another topic to the type of professional knowledge of principals and teachers that principal meetings might influence i.e., defining and clarifying professional responsibilities. The extant educational literature has focused on the how principal meetings could shape the professional knowledge about specific topics like instructional reforms or increased accountability and the findings from this study suggest that principal meetings develop and shape professional knowledge about overall professional responsibilities of teachers and principals. This gains significance because during times of school reform, it is quite likely that school principals and teachers are inundated with multiple and shifting professional responsibilities and therefore professional knowledge of what professional tasks needs to be focused upon and how to accomplish these tasks is likely to be crucial for enabling coherence across programmatic efforts.

The findings of this study are in agreement with the overall US based educational literature which mentions principal meetings and their role in sensemaking and sensegiving. Findings indicate that not only did principal meetings comprise at least 50% of the daily work-lives of two MCGM principals in India, but that these meetings were key sense-giving episodes. These findings matter because the study was done in a different international context (India) as compared to the predominant Western literature which discusses sensemaking and sensegiving in principal meetings.

The study is relevant to the scholars of educational leadership in international contexts and comparative leadership scholars. The findings, which indicate multiple and shifting responsibilities in the daily work-lives of two school principals of the municipal (public) schools in India are likely to be found helpful by educational scholars who

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research school leadership in international contexts and to scholars who compare school leadership challenges across countries.

The study fills a key gap in the literature on practices of Indian school principals. The dissertation represents one of the few qualitative research efforts which describes the daily life of the school principal in India. India, as Chapter 2 suggests, has one of the highest numbers of school principals in the world and a key gap in the literature on Indian school principalship is a relative lack of both research-driven or self-reported empirical accounts of a principal's daily work-life. The empirical accounts of what school principals do is significant because both the government and non-government organizations in India are planning and implementing initiatives to support the Indian school principal, especially in government-run schools like those under MCGM. Although I grant that this study provides accounts from principal meeting practices of only two schools, the study contributes to the scant literature on educational administration and leadership in India and is likely to provide data to inform government and non-government school principalship support initiatives.

The study also supports the meeting science Western literature by presenting supporting empirical evidence from an international context. The findings highlight the significance of planned meeting interactions to organizational life and also show that meetings connect to each other across time. The evidence from the study is of significance specially to meeting science scholars who study cross-cultural models of organizational meetings.

Overall, the dissertation also serves as an example of the relative few studies of sensemaking and sensegiving in everyday, non-disruptive events (Sandberg & Tsoukas,

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2015). The discussions address the larger matter of the necessity and importance of sensemaking and sensegiving even in relatively stable times.

Conclusion and Implications

In this penultimate section, I present a summary of the key findings and discussions of this dissertation, reiterate the key limitations that constrain the findings, and end with a discussion of the implications of the findings of this dissertation for both scholars and practitioners.

To summarize the key findings, principal meetings are not a uniform episode in creating, retaining, and transferring professional knowledge; rather they influence professional knowledge based on whether they are planned (PPMs) or unplanned (UPMs). PPMs involve sensegiving to shape the know-whats of professional responsibilities and UPMs involve sensegiving to shape the know-hows of professional knowledge in the MCGM schools which were studied. The two types of principal meetings (PPMs and UPMs) also interconnect across time to shape top-down flows of sensegiving, bottom-up flows of compliance information, and lateral flows of school knowledge. The findings also highlight the role of the school principal as a trans-participant across several meeting groups (e.g. Ward, school teachers, NGOs) who not only relayed the professional knowledge about responsibilities from one principal meeting to another, but also modified that knowledge. Finally, findings show that although principal meetings across the two schools were similar in their goals and outcomes, the frequency and diversity of UPMs was higher in one school as compared to the other.

The discussions of the findings with respect to the three research questions broadly support and suggest elaborations for the educational leadership, sensemaking, sensegiving, and meeting science literature cited in Chapter 2. With respect to the first research question, findings support the literature that principal meetings are non-trivial episodes of sensemaking and sensegiving in both disruptive and non-disruptive events. The discussions also elaborate sensemaking literature by suggesting that meetings can be efficient episodes of uncertainty reduction and that the management of ambiguity and sensegiving differed across PPMs and UPMs. With respect to the second research question, the discussions support literature that principal meetings shaped school knowledge flows and that the meetings interconnected across time through references to each other and the role of the principal as a trans-participant. The discussions also suggest new area of theoretical elaboration in suggesting hierarchical (top-down and bottom-up) knowledge flows and suggesting that principals not only transmit professional knowledge but also transform it. Finally, with respect to the third research question, the findings support educational literature on the importance of active participation and pre-existing beliefs of the school principal towards their meetings. In addition, the discussion suggests that the higher frequency and diversity of principal meetings at one of the schools might lead to a richer and more equitable distribution in the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge.

Overall, interpretation of the findings in light of the literature indicate that principal meetings were tied closely to the intermingled processes of the creation, retention, and transfer of professional knowledge as defined in the conceptual framework of this study. The study also highlighted the novel aspects of know-when, know-who,

know-where of professional knowledge which were not present in the current articulations of professional knowledge. In addition, the discussions highlight the aspect of knowledge in action or knowing as important to professional knowledge. Finally, the discussions highlight the prevalence and importance of UPMs: a meeting topic which seems to have been understudied in both educational and meeting science literature.

To summarize the key novel contributions from this study, the study elaborates educational literature and scholarly work on meetings to demonstrate that: (a) principal meetings are important to manage both ambiguity and uncertainty; b) principal meetings includes know-when, know-who, know where knowing as key contributors to professional knowledge; c) UPMs are a significant, but overlooked type of principal meetings and hence need to be included in discussions of shaping professional knowledge in schools.

The findings and discussions mentioned above need to be reviewed in light of the key limitations of this study. First, this study is based only on a sample of two municipal schools in a specific institutional system in India. Secondly, in the five months of data collection, I could observe only two Ward Meetings and one Staff Meeting in the selected schools. The study could have benefitted from more recordings of PPMs. My own positionality as a US based researcher from a higher social class and with connections to the senior MCGM officials is likely to have impacted informant behavior towards the temptation to offer desirable behavior. Finally, the findings are bound by my own emerging understanding of the qualitative data collection and analysis processes.

Implications for Researchers

The findings and discussions from this study suggest a variety of implications. I divide these implications into those that pertain to academia (educational leadership, sensemaking, and meeting science) and those that are relevant for practitioners like school principals, school teachers, and policy makers.

For educational scholars. The study was designed to address the theoretical gap in educational leadership literature around descriptive frameworks on meetings of the school principal and how the principal meetings shape professional knowledge.

Principal meetings present a novel theoretical and methodological lens to study educational leadership. Findings highlighted that principal meetings comprised at least 50% of an MCGM school principal's work-life and were considered necessary by both principals and teachers. Therefore, scholars of educational leadership might find it helpful to use this the theoretical and methodological lens offered by principal meetings to further elaborate areas like leadership for school improvement, collaborative data-use, and principal time-use. To give an example, scholars of principal time-use could use principal meetings as a lens to systematically establish how much time do current US principals spend in their meetings and the connection between meeting elements like meeting location and seating arrangement in the performance of specific leadership tasks (e.g., school administration, relationship building, instructional leadership).

The typology of planned and unplanned meetings of the principal (PPMs and UPMs) provides educational leadership scholars an initial framework to study and gauge the effectiveness of different principal meetings. Scholars could assess how effective do school principals and teachers find their PPMs (e.g., Staff Meetings). Also, as I discussed

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earlier in this Chapter, the existing educational literature has tended to focus on the planned meetings of the principal. Hence, the finding of the prevalence of UPMs in the daily work-life of the MCGM school principal encourages educational scholars to pay more attention to the unplanned episodes of work-interaction or UPMs. For instance, scholars could also study use UPMs to elaborate how leadership influences school improvement efforts, collaborative data-use, or enactments of distributed leadership. To give an example, scholars of collaborative data-use could study how unplanned corridor conversations with the principals or the fluid participations in UPMs about data-use shape teacher enactments of using data to improve student outcomes.

The conceptualization of the planned meetings or PPMs as focus and pressure mechanisms suggests a new conceptualization of principal meetings besides the four conceptualizations described in Chapter 2. The findings suggest that MCGM participants preferred PPMs because they found technology-driven channels like emails and texts unreliable and creating multiple responsibilities. Therefore, the role of face-face meetings in an era which predominantly uses technology-driven communication channels could be helpful to study for scholars in areas like school improvement, policy implementation, and school accountability. To give an example, scholars of policy implementation could explore how policies communicated through face to face principal meetings as compared to emails and texts shape the ambiguity and uncertainty about classroom enactment of such policies.

The findings have important implications for scholars studying international school leadership. The findings provide recent data to substantiate the top-down transmission role of the Indian school principal as described in the Kothari Commission

(1964) i.e., "He is always responsible for carrying out the policies and programs of the Department of Education" (p. 134). However, the subtle ways in which the MCGM school principal also modifies the knowledge being transmitted also provides further avenues of research for scholars interested in studying school principalship in India. For instance, in what circumstances do school principals create compliance facts and how are these circumstances influenced by stories of plausibility could be an area of further research.

The element of focus and pressure also suggests future research on the notion of physicality which makes principal meetings crucial episodes to school leadership. The existing literature on embodied interaction provides rich frameworks to study the importance of physicality in meaning-making in meetings (e.g., Asmuß, 2015; Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2011).

The findings indicated that principal meetings create, retain, and transfer professional knowledge (know-what and know-how) of both teachers and principals towards clarifying their professional responsibilities in the MCGM context. Future research could explore the relationship between principal meetings and other aspects of professional knowledge (e.g., know-when, know-who, know-where).

For scholars of sensemaking and sensegiving. There are two key implications for scholars of sensemaking and sensegiving suggested by this dissertation.

The findings and the subsequent discussions highlight that not all principal meetings are alike in how they are perceived by the participants and in how they provide sensegiving. The differences in PPMs and UPMs in their focus on managing different types of ambiguity suggest an elaboration of sensemaking theories as they pertain to

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meetings. Scholars of sensemaking might find it worthy to confirm in US settings if the sensemaking and sensegiving roles differ between PPMs and UPMs or in general between planned and unplanned meetings in an organization.

The findings also suggest the role of PPMs and UPMs as efficient mechanisms to reduce uncertainty around bureaucratic processes. Therefore, they challenge Weick's (1979) depiction of meetings as ill-suited to the task of reducing uncertainty. Future US based research could study to what extent are principal meetings or organizational meetings overall efficient in reducing uncertainty even when the same information could be provided through emails or texts.

For meeting science scholars. The dissertation both supports and elaborates Duffy and O'Rourke's (2015) framework for a study of meetings over time. The findings indicate that (principal) meetings interconnect to influence the organizational flows of professional knowledge over time. However, the suggestions of the top-down and bottom-up flows suggest that these knowledge flows could also be hierarchical. In addition, the "creation" of compliance information as part of the bottom-up flows and slight changes in professional knowledge being relayed across meetings elaborates the role of the trans-participant as not just a transmission agent, but also as a potential modifier and creator of knowledge. Scholars who plan to conceptualize meetings as interconnected episodes might find it helpful to collect evidence that confirms or elaborates on the both top-down and bottom-up discourse flows and also as trans-participants as active agents of knowledge construction.

The dissertation suggests the unplanned meeting as a potential area of future research. The two topics of the role of physicality and the importance of fluid

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participation in unplanned meetings as suggested by this dissertation could provide meeting scholars topics to further explore the richness of meeting events.

Implications for Practitioners

For principals and educational leaders. Principals and educational leaders might find this dissertation useful to re-assess their own practice and the importance of the numerous meetings they engage in. The findings and discussions from this dissertation challenge the popular conceptualization of principal meetings as waste of time prominent in both academic and trade publications as described in Chapter 2. Principals and educational leaders (e.g., central office staff) might find it helpful to assess how sensemaking and sensegiving is shaped across their meeting interactions. Or, how their meetings are helpful to provide focus, pressure, and coherence to their work.

Principals and educational leaders might also benefit by paying closer attention to their unplanned meetings and the role these meetings might play in managing ambiguity and uncertainty. They could also begin to heedfully inter-relate (Duffy & O'Rourke, 2015; Weick & Roberts, 1993) their planned and unplanned meeting interactions as episodes that guide the knowledge discourse flowing through their schools.

For policy-makers. People who design and implement educational policy might find the discussions helpful in situating the importance of meetings in defining and clarifying the professional responsibilities of school principals and teachers and in assessing whether multiple policy initiatives to improve teaching or urgent accountability directives to send compliance information might lead to unplanned principal meetings which pull out the teacher from their classrooms.

Policy makers could also find it helpful to understand that their demand to get data to assess educational improvement might also lead to the creation of "compliance data" which is more plausible than accurate. The finding that UPMs are often active episodes of creating and sending important compliance data could be helpful to policy-makers in understanding that data reporting may be underpinned by an urgent process of social construction and therefore a plausible representation of reality.

Policy makers could also find the discussions on planned and unplanned principal meetings helpful in the design and dissemination of professional knowledge around potentially disruptive events (e.g., new technology for capturing attendance).

Final Reflections

I end this dissertation with two brief reflections. The first reflection pertains to the non-linear nature of the dissertation process and the continual sensemaking that made me create more plausible (re)interpretations of my findings. The second reflection pertains to my continued struggle to bind rich ethnographic material into neat theoretical categories.

After experimenting with other formats, I settled for the traditional five-Chapter format primarily to guide the readers and put them at ease about how I moved from the literature review to the methodology, which led to findings and then subsequently discussing those findings in light of the theoretical literature I had reviewed. But my research journey during the two and a half years it took for me to write this dissertation is anything but a linear progression as the Chapters might suggest. In addition, my own sensemaking of what occurs before, during, and after principal meetings continues to evolve: a kind of understanding by doing (Meloy, 2002).

Similar to what Lave (2011) mentions in the evolution of her ethnographic fieldwork on apprenticeship among tailors in Liberia, I found the sustained fieldwork too rich to reduce complex everyday principal practice to basic categories. Lave herself says that learning tailoring "could not be reduced to the skills and knowledge necessary for making clothes" (p. 59). I would apply the same reflection to principal meetings and suggest that the talk and physical action in meetings lose empirical richness when reduced to basic theoretical categories of planned and unplanned principal meetings. For instance, my articulations and analysis of the principal meetings suggests a neat classification into PPMs and UPMs. These neat classifications provide definitional clarity and make way for analytical insights which I found extremely useful to hold the dissertation claims together. Although the principal meetings I observed fit the claims I have made in this dissertation, principal meetings are also emergent events even if they are planned and therefore the classification of principal meetings is richer than it appears in my current writing. These classifications, as I now see, are more a reflection of my research maturity and the time I have had to immerse myself in sustained fieldwork rather than an "objective" depiction of how principal meetings are.[109]

Meloy (2012) mentions that each ending of a dissertation is also a beginning. On a professional level, my doctoral experience has been a time of evolution towards becoming more connected with the insightful scholarly work in the fields of education, sensemaking, and meeting science. I am becoming more mindful of the over-reaching

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[109] For instance, an Event Meeting held during the Save the girl-child festival which was semi-planned, was attended by 50% principals from the Ward, and was not recorded or documented through agenda or minutes suggests a principal meeting which overlaps both PPM and UPM definitions and therefore a more nuanced principal meeting classification.

claims I tend to make. On the topic of research, this dissertation is a milestone in what I hope to be a continuation of my research on the daily, routine, yet what I found as immensely significant episodes in the work-life of the school principal: the principal meeting.

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APPENDIX A: CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF PRINCIPAL MEETINGS

Reference and Conceptualization	Principal meeting label	Principal meeting: topic and description	Principal meeting: expected organizational/institutional outcome	Principal meeting: Principal's goal
<u>Waste of Time</u>				
Duke (2006)	Roundtables	Meeting with teachers and specialists to focus on academically struggling students	Teachers make instructional adjustments to improve student outcomes	Assigning individual responsibility for improvement outcomes
Weldy (1974)	Various: (School government meeting; athletic director's meeting; football coach meeting)	Not described beyond the meeting label	Take binding decisions	Conduct their necessary work without turning into "marathon endurance sessions"
Pena (2000)	Parent Teacher Organization meeting	Meeting with parents and teachers on academic and administrative issues	Increased involvement of parents in their child's education	Collaborative relationships between teachers and parents
Wolcott (1973)	Principal Association meeting	Exploring and discuss leadership issues with other principals		
Abu-Shread and Al-sharif (2017); Smith (1919)	Collectively called as School meetings	Meeting with teachers to discuss school issues	Smooth information flow within school participants	Provide information, communicate with teachers, align goals
Boudett and City (2014)	Collectively called as educator meetings	Meetings on different school-related issues	Multiple: improvement in school culture, student score improvement	Reach decisions, provide information, model collaboration

(Continued)

Reference and Conceptualization	Principal meeting label	Principal meeting: topic and description	Principal meeting: expected organizational/institutional outcome	Principal meeting: Principal's goal
Blumberg and Amidon (1963) **Intervention tools**	School faculty meeting	Meeting with teachers for planning and other issues	Professional development of teachers; High staff morale	Influence and persuade school stakeholders
Chrispeels and Martin (2002)	School Leadership team meeting	Discussion and planning of school improvement with teacher-leaders	Alignment of school personnel mental models with those of policy makers	Delegate decision-making to teachers; influence non-SLT teachers
Glazer and Peurach (2012); Scribner et al., (1999)	SIP conference; Faculty meetings; School Improvement Network meeting	Discussing research- based findings with other school leadership teams supported by university faculty/hub experts	Percolation of research informed school change processes	Improve professional learning within schools
Duke and Landahl (2011)	School Review meeting; Goal-setting meeting	School-wide grade level meeting to present data on student progress; set professional learning goals	Increased accountability and reporting; professional development	Improve constructive knowledge sharing and agency amongst teachers
Honig,(2014)	Principal PLC meeting	Central office staff meeting with school principals on instructional issues	Improvement in principal instructional leadership; building principal community	Grow as instructional leaders
Duke (2006)	Roundtable	Meeting with teachers and specialists to focus on academically struggling students	Teachers make instructional adjustments to improve student outcomes	Assigning individual responsibility for improvement outcomes
DuFour (2002)	Pre-observation and Post-observation conference	Meeting with teachers on lesson planning and lesson implementation	Better instruction for students; organizational learning	Teachers become better at instruction

Reference and Conceptualization	Principal meeting label	Principal meeting: topic and description	Principal meeting: expected organizational/institutional outcome	Principal meeting: Principal's goal
Weingartner (2001)	Extra support meeting	Induction meetings between newly hired and experienced principals	Reduce principal attrition	Receive and provide emotional and professional support
As Collaboration technologies				
Schildkamp & Poortman (2015)	Data team meeting	Discussion of data on school and student performance with school teachers	Improvement in student performance	Improve collaboration amongst teachers using data tools
Feldman and Tung (2001)	DBDM meeting	Same as above	Promotion of culture of inquiry and reflection	Strengthen teacher leadership
Spillane (2012)	Grade-level meeting	Discussion between principal and teachers around student data	Within-grade data exchange among teachers	Make meaning of instructional issues
As Routine events				
Maxwell, Huggins, and Scheurich (2010)	Student meeting	Discussing disciplinary issues and deciding on a course of action during turnaround	Reduce disciplinary issues	Encouraging accountability
Gronn (1983)	Administrative Planning meeting	A pre-meeting with the assistant principal to plan the staff meeting	Allocation of staff to grade levels	Strategize ways of achieving administrative control
Horng et al. (2010)	Staff meeting	A meeting with teachers to discuss standardized testing	Preparation and implementation of standardized testing	Utilize staff meeting
Wolcott (1973)	Guidance Committee meeting;	Discussing pupil issues with school counselors and teachers	Better counseling support to students	Joint decision-making of counseling decisions
Fullan (2002)	Principal conference	Discussing administrative and instructional issues with other principals	Resolution of administrative issues and improving instruction	Principals learn from good practices from each other

Reference and Conceptualization	Principal meeting label	Principal meeting: topic and description	Principal meeting: expected organizational/institutional outcome	Principal meeting: Principal's goal
Kimbrough and Burkett (1990)	Event Planning meeting	Meeting with teachers to organize school events (e.g., science fair)	Smooth implementation of school events	Delegation of responsibility
James et al. (2013)	School Governance meeting	Discuss staffing, curriculum and finance for schools	School gets strategic direction to school; principal appointment; increased accountability; financial probity	Not mentioned

APPENDIX B: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Time of day	Location	Meeting type	Brief description
8 am	Teacher Room	Guidance committee meeting	Sharing information and deciding on students who might need counseling; introduction of new counselor
9:30 am	Outside Principal Office	Meeting Custodian	Taking decision about pet dog found loose on school premises
10 am	School corridor	Meeting with students	Decision and sharing information on violation of dress-code
Afternoon	Principal Office	University Supervisor meeting	Requesting and planning student teachers for the next term
Around 11.30	Teacher Room	Parent and counselor meeting	Feedback about a child who has been going for counseling
Just before 1 pm	Classrooms	Meeting with students	Finding more information and deciding on disciplinary issues (eating someone else's lunch; smoking)
3.30 pm	Nearby High School	Advisory Committee	Know current concerns of parent community
Late afternoon	Another nearby School	Executive committee	Local teacher organization
7.30 pm	Jefferson Elementary School	School Principal Association	Presentation and discussion on administrative issues linked to discipline and police intervention in schools; sharing information on professional issues (e.g., salary); re-connecting with other school principals

Note. A day in the life of an elementary principal. Adapted from *The Man in the Principal's Office* (p. 19-34), by Harry. F. Wolcott, 1973, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

APPENDIX C: TIME AND PLACE DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL

MEETINGS

Time	School Days Place	Personnel and/or Business
Before school begins (8:00 A.M. –8:45 A.M.)	At school	Faculty (e.g., guidance meeting)
Morning during school hours (8:45 A.M.– lunchtime)	At school	Pupils, mothers, visitors and observers, personal (rare)
	Central office or other schools	Principals and central office staff
Lunch hour	At school	Brief meetings with teachers
	Other schools	Luncheon meetings with other principals
	Downtown restaurant	Committee or association meetings with other principals; Kiwanis
Early afternoon (lunchtime until primary dismissal)	At school	Pupils (discipline), all-school assemblies and programs
Immediately after school (following dismissal of upper grades)	At school	Teachers (individually and small groups), faculty meetings, in-service program, inter-school sports (rare)
Late afternoon (4:00 P.M. or after)	At school	Parents (mother and father together)
	Central office or other schools	Teacher association meetings, curriculum or other special committees
	Community	Personal and family business
Dinner (5:00 P.M.– 7:00 P.M.)	At other schools, church	Monthly meetings of county principals, school "banquets," church dinners
Evening (7:00 P.M.– 10:00 P.M.)	At school	PTA, Open House, School Fair, Room Desserts (September)
	Central office or other schools	Board meetings, budget hearings, meetings of local and county principal associations
	Church	Church activities (business meetings, evening worship)

Note. Meetings structuring life of an elementary school principal. Reprinted from *The Man in the Principal's Office* (p. 94), by Harry. F. Wolcott, 1973, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

APPENDIX D: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF TWO US SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Self-reported Account of a Workday by Principal Scott Crisp

Time	Principal task description	PPM/UPM duration (minutes)
7:30 – 8:00 am	Read, review, and respond to approximately 33 emails sent between 6:00pm yesterday and 7:30 am today.	
8:00 – 8:30 am	Assist school district information coordinator in creating communication for all parents and students in our school about a guest speaker who will be visiting.	30
8:30 – 8:50 am	Walk the halls and visit teachers before the first class.	20
8:50 – 9:15 am	Work with the school counsellor around a student who needs additional support.	25
9:15 – 9:30 am	Conduct a targeted walkthrough classroom observation around how to engage ELL students in accessing core content.	
9:30 – 9:50 am	Begin to plan our next teacher professional development day. Review best practices around the benefits of family engagement. Finalize plans for "learning walks" with community members who would like to tour our classrooms.	
9:50 – 10:10 am	Work with the athletic director to discuss academic eligibility policy and activities handbook.	20
10:10 – 10:30 am	Discussion call with a consultant group that will be visiting our school in order to get our feedback on the state funding formula.	20
10:30 – 11:00 am	Develop a team of teachers who will meet with a school funding consultant group to provide their perspective of our school, curriculum, vision, master schedule, and students.	
11:00 – 11:30 am	Walkthrough observations in English, social studies, and science classrooms.	

(Continued)

(Continued)

Time	Activity	Minutes
11:30 – 12:00 pm	Respond and review 28 emails that have come in since 8:00 am.	
12:00 – 12:20 pm	Walk through halls and classrooms, connect with students in library, and discuss what classes students are having the most success in and why.	20
12:20 – 1:00 pm	Meet with teaching team to discuss hosting a Veterans Day lunch for veterans in our community.	40
1:00 – 1:45 pm	Supervise the lunchroom area while speaking with students, simultaneously checking and responding to emails.	20*
1:45 – 1:55 pm	Email examples of "unit overviews", a school wide goal for all classes to allow students to see written summaries of units and assessment criteria.	
1:55 – 2:15 pm	Communicate with principal peers in the school district to set up our "Principal Professional Learning Community."	20
2:15 – 3:25 pm	Work with our school resource officer to update emergency evacuation maps. Conduct an evacuation drill with the whole school.	70
3:25 – 3:50 pm	Review Gates Foundation K-12 priorities around school reform.	
3:50 – 6:00 pm	Supervise volleyball game while connecting with parents.	65*

*Meeting time is assumed as half of the total duration of the activity.

Note: Total time spent in meetings PPMs and UPMs is 350 minutes (55% of workday). Adapted from "A Day in the Life of the Principal" by S Crisp, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.ed.gov/content/day-life-principal.

Self-reported Account of a Workday by Principal Jessica Johnson

Time	Principal task description	UPM	PPM
6.30 – 7.00	Planning alone		
7.00-7.05	Phone call to arrange for subs	5	
7.05-7.10	Teacher comes in to talk about bus incident	5	
7.10-7.20	Two phone calls to repair the online student system	20	
7.20-7.35	Call from teacher stuck in traffic	10	
7.35-8.00	IEP meeting		25
8.00-8.30	Teaching		
8.35-9.20	Listen to voicemails; disciplinary action with student		
9.20-10.00	Class observations and searching for a lost student		
10.00-10.30	3 meetings with teachers on grades, student issues, and technology	30	
10.30-11.15	Classroom observations		
11.15-11.45	Student meetings	45	
11.45-12.00	Classroom to handle issue		
12.00-1.00	Lunch room chat with students	60	
1.00-1.05	Student behavior talk with teachers	5	
1.05-1.30	Parent telephone call	25	
1.30-2.20	Classroom observation		
2.20-2.30	Check messages with secretary	10	
2.30-2.50	Parent meeting		20
2.50-3.00	Grade level meeting		10
3.00-3.05	Walk the halls- talk to students	5	
3.05-5.05	IEP meeting		120
5.05-5.45	Planning for next day		

Note: Total time spent in UPMs 200 minutes (30% of workday) and in PPMs 175 minutes (26% of workday). Adapted from descriptions in "A Day in the Life of the Principal" by Jessica Johnson, 2009. Retrieved from https://principalj.blogspot.com/2009/

APPENDIX E: 25 NIKASH/INDICATOR FORM

प्रगत शैक्षणिक महाराष्ट्र

CLASS WISE SUMMARY OF 25 POINTS (निकष)

NAME OF THE SCHOOL:

STD: DIV: 20___ -20___

SR	NAME	average attendance (5)	shalabahya (5)	cleanliness (5)	gnanrachanavaad tg aids (5)	reading/writing of numbers (5)	addition (5)	subtraction (5)	multiplication (5)	division (5)	word problems (5)	5 sentence reading (5)	dictation (5)	5 question answers (5)	5 words making (5)	poem recitation (5)	picture reading (5)	5 sentence from 3 words (5)	confidence (5)	story making (5)	dramatisation (5)	clock reading (5)	poem making (5)	question answers (5)	drawing (5)	opinion presentation (5)	Total (125)
1																											
2																											
3																											
4																											
5																											
6																											
7																											
8																											
9																											

Retrieved from https://srinivasgollapelli.com/tag/pragat-shaikshanik-maharashtra-25-nikash-in-english/

The progress or *pragat* of each classroom is quantified in PSM through *25 nikash* (indicators). The teachers need to assess each student in their classroom and fill the student performance both online and in this form at least once every month. This form is usually checked during school inspections. There are 25 indicators in the form with each indicator to be filled with a rating from 1 to 5. The aim is to achieve a score of 125 for each student.

APPENDIX F: THE SCHOOL SITES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

The MCGM Schools

The Sajiv Nagar municipal school building lies almost at the end of the paved road, which itself is an arterial road from the heavily trafficked main road of Sajiv Nagar. This suburb of Mumbai is close to the in-city airport and is predominantly middle-class with most people living in less than 500 square feet apartments often in small two-story buildings. Residents here usually travel by a two-wheeler or take the local bus or train for their work. There are only two pockets of affluent bungalows and row-houses around 2 miles from here at the other end of Sajiv Nagar.

However, my first visit to the Sajiv Nagar school building offered little comfort in terms of affluence. Rather, it brought up fear and apprehensions because of the state of the infrastructure. As I entered the building, I saw that, at each floor, there were iron beams at ten feet intervals supporting the building from the inside. The paint was coming off the roof and the walls on which were hand painted pictures of school children, maps, and scientific diagrams from textbooks- half visible now because they had worn out with the passage of time. The paint had peeled off the roof too and I could sometimes see the concrete and the iron rods that held the roof together. There were clear cracks in the cement at a few places. I was assured that the building was not in any danger and that these beams were a temporary measure which would be removed when the building would be repaired during the upcoming summer vacation. But, in the fourth month of my ethnography, a three-foot wide chunk of the paint and cement from the roof of a school principal's office fell during a Sunday. It created a bit of alarm which soon died down and I found myself becoming comfortable with the presence of the beams and roamed around the school corridors without alarm.

The infrastructure in Sajiv Nagar schools was poorer than that in most other municipal schools which I had visited earlier but was not uncommon. In another municipal school that I had visited, a non-government organization had taken on the task of re-painting the school walls and in yet another school, volunteers were collecting funds to repair and paint the walls. However, it is not a matter of lack of money that prevents repairs. On the contrary, MCGM or the municipal authority which runs these schools is the richest municipal corporation in India. When I asked senior MCGM officials about why the buildings continued to be in poor condition, bureaucratic inefficiency was given as the cause of delay in repairs. It simply took too long for the process and paperwork to move through requisition, inspection, bidding, selection and the final repairs. Two months later at Sajiv Nagar, we were still awaiting the repairs to the fallen piece of roof.

A unique infrastructural and operational aspect of MCGM schools is the presence of multiple schools in the same building. The different municipal schools offer different mediums of instruction to cater to the rich diversity of languages spoken by the students. My research site building had four schools: one school offering instruction in Marathi, one school in Tamil and the remaining two schools in Hindi. The two schools offering the same medium of instruction i.e. Hindi occurred because each school had almost 700 students which was considered too large for administering an MCGM school. All the schools operated in a morning shift and an evening shift and the principals could choose their 6 hours of work time, usually 12.10 pm to 6.10 pm. Each school principal office was

on a separate floor, but because of their larger student population, the Hindi medium schools had classrooms on other floors too. This provided me an opportunity to interact with other school principals who were not part of the formal sample but who shared their perspectives on school administration. In addition, I also observed unscheduled meetings between principals when the principals discussed their administrative challenges.

When I first came to the Sajiv Nagar schools, I was stuck by the constant honking of the scooters, autorickshaws, cargo-carrying mini four-wheelers (called tempos) and the stream of people which walked on the paved road leading to the school. The streams of pedestrians and traffic kicked up the dust from the leftover of a nearby building which had been recently demolished. Partly because of this demolition, there was no footpath for pedestrians and if there was one, now it had been usurped by street vendors selling seasonal fruits or daily-use items like kitchen utensils, tee shirts, jeans and snacks. There was a coconut vendor directly opposite the school building who became a regular part of my school visits on hot days as I bought fresh coconut water from him before entering the school building. There was also an Indian snack vendor just outside the school gate who brewed chai and sold fried *samosas* and *vadas*. Often, during school lunch time, another vendor would appear with a large jute bag containing different types of tamarind candy and crunchy Indian wafers, usually wrapped in transparent plastic. He would stand just outside the school gate and a few school children would buy these treats- the money and snacks being exchanged through the bars of the school gate. It was quite likely that these street vendors had a closer connection with the Sajiv Nagar school as parents.

Parents, mostly mothers, often came to the school to pick up their children. They would stand in the school courtyard or sit on the dusty pavement in the small playground next to the school building but inside the school gates. At around 12.15 pm, the school building became noisier and more alive as almost 2,000 students poured out into the courtyard. Some of the teachers would stand in the corridors and near the stairs to make sure that students were not pushing each other (often by ensuring that students had their hands behind their back) and walked in relatively straight single lines (by shouting instructions). And the system worked quite well though they could not control the noise as students talked to each other constantly while they walked through corridors. The teachers had to shout above the din to make sure discipline was not broken. Noise was a constant companion in my ethnographic observation. Almost all my recordings have a background noise of student and teacher voices in the corridor and the honking of traffic just outside the school building.

The MCGM School Neighborhood

Two months into my ethnography, I visited the neighborhood of SNH and SNMs to have a glimpse of the area where most students lived. The area, called Ganeshnagar, began almost immediately beyond the school building. The school became a kind of marker between the more pucca apartments, paved road and wider lanes and the relatively narrow gullies and the broken road of Ganeshnagar – which also resulted in a dustier neighborhood. On my day of visit, I saw a big garbage truck doing its daily rounds. I turned towards one of the lanes and saw a chemist shop. People were sitting on makeshift charpoys just outside the shop and one of them yelled out a greeting to the teacher who was accompanying me. The greeting was above the noise of honking and shouting that seemed to be a perennial part of the neighborhood landscape.

We entered a lane which narrowed quickly and we passed through a row of relatively small two-story houses. It was difficult to tell the exact size of these houses, but it is unlikely that any floor would be more than 200 square feet. There was only enough space for two motorbikes to pass each other in the narrow lane. Although it was a bright afternoon outside, there was little sunlight here and the lane felt darker, cooler and quieter than the road outside. I also noticed a toy store and a fabric shop. These shops were small and no more than 100 square feet in area.

When we came out of the lane and returned to the main road, there was a queue of empty auto-rickshaws with drivers sitting inside waiting for passengers. These three-wheeled rickshaws operated on a shared basis and would charge each passenger INR 10 (about 14 cents) to travel to the local train station which was about 2 miles away. I asked the teacher who was with me about the people who lived here. He said that most of the population came from outside the state. The population here was about 80% Hindus with about 15% Muslims. Since both these religious groups speak Hindi, it was no surprise that the Sajiv Nagar school building had two municipal schools offering Hindi as a medium of instruction.

APPENDIX G: TEACHER PLEDGE POSTER

This poster is pasted on the SNH school wall opposite the principal office.

Teacher Pledge

I am a teacher. I am proud of my work place. I am attached to my work place. I am aware that I contribute to improve the future of my students and build the future of my nation. In the progress of my students, lies my progress. To achieve these goals:

1. I will have a constructive attitude
2. I will have an attitude of pride for my students and my subject
3. I will minutely study the curriculum
4. I will observe time
5. I will be present in school and in classroom, prepare and assess question papers without delay
6. I will prepare and change teaching as per subject, topic, and session
7. I will keep an eye on student qualities, abilities, and habits
8. I will primarily discuss about issues like students, teaching, subject, curriculum after I enter the school

9. I will understand all teaching-learning techniques and follow them on a daily basis
10. I will prepare my students not just for the preparation of school exams but also life exams.

<div align="center">

We are earthen lamps
Who burn themselves to provide light to the world
We tolerate each hardship
To fill knowledge in students
The Ideal Teacher

</div>

This chart was pasted on the almirah of the SNM principal office.

The title of the chart is School- Work Division

The column on the left lists names of teachers and the principal which have been blurred to prevent identification.

The column on the right lists various professional responsibilities. For instance, the first two rows indicate:

Mina P (Principal) – School report, Saral Online forms, Logbook

Reshma T – Student attendance, Mid-day Meal Scheme official records register, School Management Committee

APPENDIX I: MEETINGS IN A PRINCIPAL WORKDAY (FIRST TWO HOURS)

SNM Principal – Two-hour Excerpt from a Workday

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
1	12- 12.20	Quick reminders to teachers during a school round about the due date for PSM and rubella vaccination; Stops to check if teachers are present in classrooms and notice what are the children doing.	School round meetings	Unplanned	Various classrooms and kindergarten	1-2 minute each
2	12.25-12.32	Makes a Call to biometric division- Follow up on repairing the finger scanning hardware which was not working	Maintenance meeting	Unplanned (telephonic)	Principal Office	7
3	12.32- 12.33	Told peon to ask Grade 6 teacher to come to Principal office - To confirm if the teacher understands the WhatsApp message about the scholarship exam	NA			1
4	12.34-12.36	Checks messages on different WhatsApp group to see if any important tasks from Ward office need to be completed today	NA			2
5	12.37-12.38	Gives approval to Peon to ring bell for the afternoon session	NA			1

(Continued)

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
6	12.38-12.42	Talks with the grade 6 teacher who has come to principal office. Tells her that the scholarship exam is on 21st and two other dates and shows her the message on WhatsApp. Briefly discuss the planning for the 21st (when to go to exam location, how many students, seating, etc)	Teacher scheduling meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	4
7	12.42-12.47	Reads letter from a walk-in from the election office. The letter briefly states that schools must Inform parents about the election day through children. She confirms with the person if a copy of the letter was provided to each school in the building or is that her responsibility as the in-charge. She also clarifies how much time is the election supposed to take, to which he replies one day.	School scheduling meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	5

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
8	12.47-12.48	She tells the sports teacher sitting in front of the computer in the principal office that he can't use the printer because the toner is low.	Administrative update meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	1
9	12.48-12.50	Speaks and greets another teacher who has walked in. They talk about a letter which is expected today.	Administrative update meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	2
10	12.50-12.52	3 girls walk in for the assembly announcements which are conducted through the mic in the principal office	NA		Principal office	2
11	12.52-1.04	Hm takes out her notebook and begins to write. She is converting the election letter received a few minutes ago into a notice which will be circulated in the schools	NA		Principal office	12
12	1.05 pm-1.07 pm	Students from grade 7 who had gone out for a mock scholarship exam come to the principal office to know where they can find their teacher. She tells them to check in the classroom.	Student communication meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	2
13	1.07-1.10	She checks the incoming messages on WhatsApp	NA		Principal office	3

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
14	1.10	She talks with a parent and her student daughter who she noticed were walking outside the office and she called them in. The student says teacher threatened (light-hearted way) with physical punishment if she did not learn her lessons properly.	Parent relationship meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	1
15	1.11	She talks with a teacher who interrupts the meeting with the parent. The teacher needs AA battery for powering the projector remote. The principal says that she will check and asks the teacher to return in a bit. The parent leaves.	School organization meeting	Unplanned	Principal office	3
16	1.14	Two teachers walk in from the scholarship exam duty. They update the principal quickly about their visit and sign off on the register. Principal tells me that one of them had taken a leave and still came to teach.	Professional update meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	1

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
17	1.15-1.19	A parent walks in with an application for opening her child's bank account. The school has to verify the application and submit to the bank. The Principal attaches the student's photo and signs off. Another teacher walks in and joins in on the conversation and tells the parent what other documents to get (e.g. govt. issued ID card). the Principal confirms.	Parent-teacher meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	5
18	1.19-1.24	The school peon walks in and is told about the non-functioning biometric. The teacher, who is still here, asks whether the biometric is not functioning because of a computer virus. The principal tells her that different people have been informing her of different deficiencies in the system- which have no relation to biometric. The teacher and the peon move into the corridor with the principal playing a listening role while sitting in her office.	Biometric update meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	5

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
19	1.24-1.30	The principal finally completes the *Soochna Vahi* (with the election details) and gives it to the peon to go to each class and each teacher and get it signed.	NA		Principal Office	6
20	1.30-1.38	The principal starts filling her diary which she uses to capture what she did. This is for herself so that she can keep a record. The diary can't be shared with me because it has confidential data (passwords, teacher phone numbers etc)	NA		Principal Office	8
21	1.39-1.50	The principal then shows me the register which contains the building information-building plan-and information about each school. This register is kept by the Building in charge. Again, this is for her records which she draws upon to answer any quick call for information by the Ward office	NA		Principal Office	11

No.	Time of Day	Description of work	Meeting label	Meeting type	Location	Duration (minutes)
22	1.51-1.55	The principal asks the peon to give the shala siddhi register. The peon goes to the almirah and fetches it. The principal updates it.	NA		Principal Office	4
23	1.55-1.56	The principal shows me some pictures of students on a recently celebrated school event- *vachan prerma din*- Inspirational talk day.	NA		Principal Office	1
24	1.56-1.57	The teacher who needed the AA battery returns to see if the principal was able to find the battery. She waits here till she gets the battery.	School organization meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	1
25	1.57-2.04	The about to retire, school caretaker and gardener, walks in to talk with the principal about his pension and provident fund. The principal tells him that he needs four passport size photographs. In addition, they need two other documents and then the school will provide them a pension claim form. The gardener is a bit confused, so the principal takes out the forms and fills it for him.	Employee support meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	7

SNH Principal – Two-hour Excerpt from a Workday

No.	Time	Work	Meeting label	Meeting Type	Location	Duration (minutes)
1	11.50-12.10	Filling form- School attendance format (new) – clarifying queries on how to fill it with Trilok P	Compliance Meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	20
2	12.10-12.40	School round- classroom, balvadi, library. This happens to be the deworming day when tablets are given to students. Short check-in and reminders	School round meetings	Unplanned	Classrooms	30
3	12.40-12.47	Checking her phone	NA		Principal Office	7
4	12.48-12.52	Confirming the Beti padao, beti bachao event plan with a senior teacher. They discuss how it will happen.	Event planning meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	4
5	12.52-12.53	Talking with teacher about timing of closing the school gate for students	School scheduling meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	1
6	12.53-12.59	School Assembly	NA		Principal Office	6
7	1.00 -1.02	Signing off the bank account forms for the girl students	NA		Principal Office	2
8	1.03-1.05	Checking documents for one girl student and then signing off since they were in order	Document approval meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	2

(Continued)

No.	Time	Work	Meeting label	Meeting Type	Location	Duration (minutes)
9	1.05-1.08	Sending teachers off for training for scholarship exams	Teacher scheduling meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	3
10	1.08-1.15	Filling daily student attendance in register; 7 teachers walk in for their biometric and talk with the principal and each other about who has applied for and got transferred. She suggests checking with a Habib T. They describe how each teacher has to give 20 preferences. Principal reminds teachers that the deworming tablets need to be chewed and not swallowed by students	Multi-topic: teacher transfer, school processes	Unplanned	Principal Office	7
11	1.15-1.16	Getting update on teacher transfer by calling Ward office	NA		Principal Office	1
12	1.16-1.17	Asking teacher to help her with sending scholarship details to Ward office	School scheduling meeting	Unplanned	Principal Office	1
13	1.20-2.00	Teaching a class because their teacher is absent today	NA		Grade 4 classroom	40

Note. Key observations for the SNM and SNH Principal meetings are:

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- SNM: 63 minutes out of 124 minutes observed were spent in 14 unplanned meetings. Average duration of an unplanned meeting is 4.5 minutes.
- SNH: 69 minutes of the 130 minutes observed were spent in 8 UPMs. Average duration of the UPM is 8.6 minutes.
- All meetings were unplanned and were held in the principal offices

APPENDIX J: BO TALK ON *25 NIKASH* AT WARD MEETING

Fieldnotes, March 5, 2019

Location: Ward office meeting hall

BO- *25 nikash* please fill online everyone.

AO - This is final. You know, right?

BO- *25 nikash* please fill with care. You are completing it anyway, why are you not filling it.

BO- I have people from Urdu medium coming - Madam. our first and second grade kids do not know division. Why not? As per their age in the first and second grade, give a student 25 pencils and ask him to distribute the pencils to 5 kids equally. 100%, he will do it. That means, he knows division. Please fill this in teachers' minds. OK. Secondly, this bowl is small and this will have contain less water. That bowl is bigger, so it will have more water. So, does he not understand area or volume. But our teachers dont give him marks. Please give him full marks. Our first, second and third grade kids - at their level - know their stuff. Drama/acting. Madam, our kids dont know acting. Please tell them that the guests who had come home last Sunday with mom or dad, how were they talking? Show me. If he is able to act that, that he can do acting. He knows drama. Give him the marks. in these small things, you are stuck till now. I completely understand that Mumbaikars are filling it with full honesty that is why we are lagging behind everyone in the state.

BO- I agree. that is why the state is falling behind.

BO - The purpose of my talk is that you have to ...as madam said - be careful. that means not do anything bogus. Put some mind and what does my child know besides reading and writing. do my kids get the concept. Please think.

Mam our kids dont know poem, so didn't give marks. Give him rhyming words- cham cham, tam tam - so he will create something and his poetry is done. Our kids poetry will not be like other kids. Will it be like Ghalib (a famous poet). Our kids poetry will be at the level of our kids. So that is why he knows poetry. Please complete your all *25 nikash*. And with honesty. Not bogus. Understand the concept.

If anyone else comes, how did you clear? But if the student has a clarity of big and small. If this one (bowl) contains less water and in the other there is more water. This is a big purse, that is a small purse. then his concept of area..capacity..volume is clear. So, please give marks. So please put this in your teachers minds that your child has reached all *25 nikash*. Only you think that unless he write poetry like Ghalib only then he will be a poet. Only when he can divide like a tenth grade kid, then only he knows division. No, at his level he can say orally - his concept is clear and give him marks and by end March complete *25 nikash*. This is my guideline to you.

APPENDIX K: ACTUAL FIELD NOTES EXCERPT

The translation of actual meeting phrases from Hindi to English was done in September 2019.

SNM – Oct 22, 2018

11.50: A parent comes and she wants her son to be admitted here. "Iska kucch adjust karo *(Please adjust him)*". Come after Diwali," says the HM. There is a teacher here too. Two others walk in and they also ask why the new student is coming here. "Sab bachche yahi aa rahe hai.*(Every child is coming here (to this school))*"Everyone seems to be involved. The parent continues to stay and everyone is standing. There is humor here. The sign in time is making sure that people are here? "Isko padao *(Teach him)*". The parent shares a sad story about her passport. [what do I call this meeting- parent, teacher, student, principal.- topic is admission- different goals, different agenda. NEGOTIATION underlies this meeting too. What is the ambiguity. Is it about future (when, why, if the student will get admission. How is that decision made]. Now, I wonder whether her point of all are ok to be admitted (our business is admittance) is how true. The admission is based on age. Plus the boy's cousin is in the same school. Kind of case building like what happened in the NGO case on Saturday.

12.10. "time rakhegey to acchi baat hai par I cant gtee I will be there.*(If they keep time, then better, but I cant guarantee….)*" The guard has to be called to pick up the scrap. "Sab karna padta hai- all rounder.*(Have to do everything-all rounder)*" She steps out again.

12.20 Mala/ the teacher from below asks me – what am I doing. Why am I doing it? Security guard is in…he has just checked the scrap and says about when to pick it up- eve or morning. He is standing as she sits and they negotiate when. She gets up and makes a call. [There is far more uncertainty than ambiguity here. People prefer to talk to resolve uncertainty].

She again talks with lady peon and they look at a document. She is still sitting. [A principal's life is about reaction to whatever comes up?]

12.30 – we talk about technology- now, all student information (acad and non academic) is online but admin things are completely offline. The register is used for CL and complete data. The biometric is more for salary and promoting teacher presence.

12.40 – she checks in on students – admissions. Calls students in as they walk. [Students are super confident. The principal office is the FIRST room as you enter the school..so they all look in. the door is never closed really]. "May I come in teacher??"

12.50 – the teacher walks in and updates about the assessment. The teacher has to make the copies…and spend from their pocket till they are reimbursed. This is the cce assessment going on.

12.53 students walk in with teacher for the assembly announcements.

APPENDIX L PRINCIPAL SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS TEMPLATE

The interviews were done in Hindi because the participants have a much better command over Hindi as compared to English.

Principal Semi-structured Initial Interview Template

Pre-meeting talk
How are you?
Thank you for agreeing to meet me for this interview
Introduction
As you might remember during my formal introduction, my research is about the connection between your meetings and what do people understand or know or get from those meetings. Anything specific that you would like to know about me or this research? (wait for questions)
Purpose
It is in this regard to the research that I am observing your meetings and conducting this interview. This is the first of the two interviews I will do with you over the next few months. In this interview, I want to ask you about your experience of your meetings.
Other aspects: recording, note taking, confidentiality:
I would like to record this meeting if it is ok with you (place recorder in the center). If at any time, you would like to stop recording, you can stop it by pressing the stop button (show on recorder) or ask me to do so and I will stop the recording. I'd also like to take notes during the interview, if that's all right with you. These help me keep track of what I am thinking and what you are saying as we go along the interview. I won't be sharing my notes with anyone besides my academic advisor at University of Virginia. Is that all right? Also, if at any time, you want to stop the interview, for whatever reason, you are free to do so.
I also wanted to share that nothing you say will ever be identified with you personally. I'll use a pseudonym in all my records and reporting. Some people enjoy picking their own pseudonym. Would you like to? (write pseudonym…..)
OK, let's begin then.
Warm-up questions
1. So, tell me about your day yesterday? How did you spend the day?
2. If you had to tell someone, how many meetings did you have yesterday?
   Definition of meetings
3. What do you think is the difference between *batcheet* (work-conversations) and meetings?
4. Can you give me some examples?
   Purpose and process of meetings?
5. What do meetings accomplish? Why could a WhatsApp or an email or a circular do the same?
6. Can you give me some examples/stories of what a meeting can do but maybe technology tool like WhatsApp cannot?

7. During the meeting, do you wonder why is it happening? (Use your own remark of "I sometimes feel meetings are a waste")
8. When you take a meeting, what do you pay attention to? What do you want the others to understand or get? (Professional knowledge)
9. Is there any process or planning that you follow for your meetings or conversations?
10. Have you been part of other principals' meetings? How are they different?
    Professional knowledge
11. What do you notice is the difference in thinking due to your meetings? Any change in knowledge? (If answer is vague, use the example of 25 *nikash*/biometrics:. what is your objective? what do teachers understand? what do they learn?)
12. After a meeting, how do you remember what work was given to whom and when to follow up?
13. In your experience what are the most important principal meetings? Why? (probe for links to professional knowledge)?
14. In your experience which conversations are most important for a principal? Why?
    Wrap up
15. I wanted to know if there are there any other thoughts about your meetings that you would like to talk about.
16. Are there any questions that you have about this research?

Thank you so much for your time.

Pre-meeting talk
How are you?
Thank you for agreeing to meet me for this interview
Introduction
In the past few months, I have been trying to understand the connection between your meetings and what do people understand or know or get from those meetings. Anything specific that you would like to know about me or this study based on the past few months? (wait for questions)
Purpose
This is the last interview I will do with you over the next few months. Similar to the previous interview, we will do this like a conversation. Now, I have some findings based on my observations and I would like check with you whether your experience of your meetings fits with what I seem to find.
Other aspects: recording, note taking, confidentiality:
I would like to record this meeting if it is ok with you (place recorder in the center). If at any time, you would like to stop recording, you can stop it by pressing the stop button (show on recorder) or ask me to do so and I will stop the recording. I'd also like to take notes, if that's all right with you. These help me keep track of what I am thinking and what you are saying as we go along. I won't be sharing my notes with anyone besides my academic advisor at University of Virginia. Is that all right? Also, if at any time, you want to stop the conversation, for whatever reason, you are free to do so.
OK, let's begin then.
Typology of meetings
Based on my observations, I think that there are different kind of principal meetings: based on formality and the number of people (Show diagram and describe each in detail)

High Formality	Sammelan/goshthi (formal get-together, gathering)	Baithak/sabha/adhiveshan (formal sit-down meetings)
Low Formality	Baat-cheet (conversation)	Charcha (discussion)
	Open Group/Fluid membership	*Close Group/Fixed membership*

1. What do you think? (check in after every detailed description (e.g., charcha)). Does this description fit with your experience? How?
2. What is the difference, according to you, between Baat-cheet and Charcha?
3. Another thing I noticed was that we use the verb "take" when we refer to meetings. Like, AO takes Ward Meeting, Principal take teacher meeting. I have usually heard the word participate or conduct- but here we use the word take. Does that resonate?

4. Why do we use the word take for meetings? (Probe for purpose and hierarchy: can teacher take principal meeting?)
5. The AO/BO sit on the stage during the Ward meetings. Why do you think they are sitting on a higher level? (Probe for power)
6. Do you think that their sitting on a different level changes what you understand?
7. Does knowledge flow from one level to another? (Give example of BO who said that knowledge flows from top to bottom)
8. I have often noticed that many of your meetings happen concurrently. Is that true? How often or when does that happen? Does this count as a meeting? (Explore planned meeting vs unplanned meeting)
9. Provide example of an unplanned meeting which happened today and explore reasoning. So, today there was <this teacher> who came in. What was the purpose?
10. Give example of planned meeting and explore purpose. I have heard often that meetings are for guidance. Are they necessary? What do you think?
11. Let us know divide knowledge into three aspects. For example, for 25 nikash-know what is knowing what the 25 indicators are, know-how is how to achieve them and know-why is why are we doing? I have often noticed that meetings are more about know-what and know-how. (Pause and explore for confirmation, disagreement). Let's talk about know-why.
12. Also, documents and meetings go together. Like your AO/BO book, then the *soochna vahi*…are linked. Does that hold true for other meetings?
    Wrap up
13. I wanted to know if there are there any other thoughts about your meetings that you would like to talk about.
14. Are there any questions that you have about this research?

Thank you so much for your time.

APPENDIX M: TEACHER INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

The interviews were done in Hindi because the participants have a much better command over Hindi as compared to English.

Pre-meeting talk

How are you?

Thank you for agreeing to meet me for this interview

Introduction

As you might remember during my formal introduction, my research is about the connection between your meetings and what do people understand or know or get from those meetings. Anything specific that you would like to know about me or this research? (wait for questions)

Purpose

It is in this regard to the research that I am observing your meetings and conducting this interview. In this interview, I want to ask you about your experience of your meetings.

Other aspects: recording, note taking, confidentiality:

I would like to record this meeting if it is ok with you (place recorder in the center). If at any time, you would like to stop recording, you can stop it by pressing the stop button (show on recorder) or ask me to do so and I will stop the recording. I'd also like to take notes during the interview, if that's all right with you. These help me keep track of what I am thinking and what you are saying as we go along the interview. I won't be sharing my notes with anyone besides my academic advisor at University of Virginia. Is that all right? Also, if at any time, you want to stop the interview, for whatever reason, you are free to do so.

I also wanted to share that nothing you say will ever be identified with you personally. I'll use a pseudonym in all my records and reporting. Some people enjoy picking their own pseudonym. Would you like to? (write pseudonym…..)

OK, let's begin then.

Warm-up questions

1. How long have you been teaching at the school?
2. So, how often do you meet the principal? (Probe for details)

Definition of meetings

3. What happens in a meeting? In your words, what is a meeting?
4. What is not a meeting? (give examples of unplanned conversations, events to check/confirm)

Purpose and process of meetings?

5. What do meetings accomplish? Why could a WhatsApp or an email or a circular do the same?
6. Can you give me some examples/stories of what a meeting can do but maybe technology tool like WhatsApp cannot?
7. When a meeting with principal is happening, what do you pay most attention to? (Professional knowledge)
8. During the meeting, do you wonder why is it happening? (Use your own remark of "I sometimes feel meetings are a waste")
9. Have you been part of other principals' meetings? How are they different?

Professional knowledge

10. What do you notice is the difference in thinking due to your meetings? Any change in knowledge? (If answer is vague, use the example of 25 *nikash*/biometrics: what is your objective? what do you understand? what do you learn?)
11. After a meeting, how do you remember what work was given to whom and when to follow up?
12. In your experience what are the most important principal meetings? Why? (probe for links to professional knowledge)?
13. In your experience which conversations are most important for a principal? Why?

Wrap up

14. I wanted to know if there are there any other thoughts about your meetings that you would like to talk about.
15. Are there any questions that you have about this research?

Thank you so much for your time.

APPENDIX N: CONTACT SUMMARY SHEET

Today's Date 29/10	School Name NWH/M
From 20/11	25/11

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck me during this contact period?
   Principal meetings happen. Principals talk to each other to do a lot of sensemaking on issues around administration (e.g. scrap clearing). These take their time and attention more than I had imagined. Totally worth asking interview questions.
   My own positionality as a researcher also came up. In the introduction, here was a sense of pride- how does that influence data?

2. Summarize the information that I got pertinent to each of the target questions from previous contact summary sheet. (For the first Contact Summary Sheet, use Research Questions)

3.

Questions	Information (include names of people, events and key words or phrases that I heard)
Which were the regular meetings?	Scrap cleaning -
Connect across time Which meetings were connected? How?	These meetings on what do the principals need to do when it comes to scrap removal – what is the proper process were common. Connection was through topic, absent participant (admin office), trans-participant (the SNM principal).
Compare Duration, location, sensemaking What is professional knowledge	Duration varies but is rarely beyond 20 minutes. Location is primarily the principal's office (80%) of time and sensemaking is very much about administration Administrative operational knowledge- highly prescriptive and procedural. Know what- what form has to be filled, scrap has to be differentiated written process (explicit) Know why- consequences? Causal, interaction between the scrap process and school functioning, Know how- tacit – how to fill the form, when to send it, which scrap to load first when the truck comes what to do., (laboriously developed, org. doesn't know it knows- PROCESS, ACTIVITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS)

4. What new (or remaining) target questions would guide the next contact period for this school?
   What are the regular meetings? How do they compare across schools?
   Nuances of PK- get into know what, know how and know why.

Code	Description
SNM, SNM	School identifiers
MT	**Meeting elements**
MT-Principals	Principal conducting the meeting
MT:Connect	Interconnections
MT: Undiscussed	Items undiscussed in the meeting
MT: Sammelan	An event meeting
MT: Necessity	Necessity of meetings
MT: Charcha	A discussion meeting (frequent back and forth talk of work- with roughly equal talk time)
MT: Batcheet	A conversational meeting (informal, unplanned, includes non-work related topics)
MT- WardMeet	Ward meeting
MT- Baithak	Formal sit-down meeting
MT- Artifact	Artifacts used in the meeting
MT- administrative	Meeting talk on administration issues (not linked to direct teaching)
MT- 25 nikash	Meeting talk on 25 nikash
SM	**Sensemaking**
SM: Ambiguity	Ambiguity (possible multiple interpretations)
SM: Uncertainty	Uncertainty (ignorance, not knowing)
SM: Sensegiving	Sensegiving (influencing participant views/knowledge)
PK	**Professional Knowledge**
PK-HOW	Know how
PK-WHY	Know why
PK-WHAT	Know what
@ vyavastha	Organizing in meeting
@ unannounced demand	Unplanned requests
@ take stock	Asking for data, progress on a particular directive,
@ sync	Coherence between talk and artifact
@ seriousness_intent	severe consequences for non completion
@ reminder_people	Meeting reminder
@ refer authority	Mentioning senior officials names to put pressure
@ myreflections	My reflections in fieldnotes
@ interpretation	Possible interpretation of a phenomenon
@ corridor	Corridor conversations
@ caring	Issues which show that the school principal cared about a topic enough to tweak norms
@ biometric	Pertaining to the biometric system

The excerpt above relates to SNM and shows the coding for a UPM where a principal has come to discuss the disposal of scrap material (unannounced demand) at 2.11 pm. The various codes were applied over a period of time. The coding indicates that this UPM is between principals (MT-Principals) and relates to sensegiving about how to proceed (SM:Sensegiving) in fulfilling the principal professional responsibilities relating to scrap removal.

APPENDIX Q: MEMO EXAMPLES

i.   Connecting principal office location and meetings

It is interesting how the principal's office could shape the way the leadership happens. In all the schools at SNH, the office is next to the entrance. So is the one at Kandivli. The one at Andheri is way inside.

Now, let's look at meetings. Does the location of principal office decide which meetings? Possibly yes, since the office is almost at the entry/exit. Also, the register entry and biometric requires teachers to SEE the principal. Hence, I am very likely to find meeting interactions during the end of day and beginning of day.

The seating in the principal office is principal's choice. SNH principal faces the door and the SNM principal faces away from the door. Meeting literature like Yarrow does not indicate the importance of this kind of meeting dynamics – although it talks of meeting location influencing the knowledge.

ii.   Possible knowledge aspects of meetings

The knowledge aspects: First physical knowledge assets – the registers, the circulars, WhatsApp agenda are always present in meetings. The daily life of the principal work interactions is surrounded by registers. Over 200 of them.

The TACIT knowledge underlying the meetings seems that data demands are more important than instructional changes. It might be helpful to find stories or memos on why do HMs and teachers feel quick compliance is important- since the reported data doesn't always mirror real data – the system allows the myth of performance to continue. The meetings support that "myth" that we are functioning well as a system. It might be reinforcing the validity of the principal role – as the glue that this indeed is important.

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Meetings are definitely pressure prods. They also seem to be the only time when teachers come together for sustained interaction on work. Know-what, know-how and know-when, know-consequences are clearly indicated.

iii.   Negotiation of principal meetings in meeting science literature

It seems like negotiation of a meeting doesn't happen regularly in the HM office. People walk in and the meeting is initiated. However, the HM enforces status through (a) diverting the agenda (b) delaying through a task (c) asking someone else to join. Henry and Seidl (2003) talk of 3 stages of meeting- initiation, conduct and termination. In my case it seems that meetings flow seamlessly into initiation as soon as the meeting participant begins talk. The conduct is influenced by entering and termination happens when the participant leaves the space.

Therefore, the question is what kind of meeting talk initiates the meeting. Or is being made sense of. The talk after the meeting is something I would like to observe. But how? There is no staff room- Where do teachers sit. Is it that individualized meeting talk is irrelevant here. After all, the classic march and Olsen seems to corroborate the perspective that individual actions are more a result of rules that have been imposed on the school rather than a result of individual intent and action.

iv.   Epistemic assumptions in my shortlisting of schools

What is it that I seem to be observing during my school visits - After visiting 3 schools for a day each, it seems that what the fellows say about principal interactions and what I observe during the day of the visit is different. Hence, it is unlikely in one day to get a true sense of the principal interactions. What is possible though is to check about principal receptiveness and what I feel towards it. This is me as an instrument. How I feel about the interaction based on:

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a.   What the principal asks

b.   How she asks (does she want to know more out of fear or out of knowledge)

c.   How I see the principal

I also notice the school. But it doesn't seem to play a big role in selection. I am sure I will find one which is similar for comparison. i.e. similar principal, similar challenges. I look for whether principals talk to teachers and if so, on what. I also look for the level of acceptance

The other assumptions relate to what extent school details (size, medium, SEC) make the school typical. I wonder if I could move away from TYPICAL schools. Rather, I could look at schools which maximize the chances of me seeing different meetings on PK construction and retainment. Indeed, I need to move away from studying the "best" schools with the principals who are effective at getting things done. I think the MCGM authority wants me to visit only those schools whose principals are good at getting things done. The intention is that once we learn from good principals we can spread the good practice. But is it true?

First, we don't know whether changing the criteria of good principal would change the good principals we find. Secondly, if good principals are so rare, then maybe it makes more sense to study the "normal" principal.

I want to look at the "unremarkable" in the meetings – the so-so which everyone glosses over. Because nothing is unremarkable, there is always lots going on and that is the fun part. (Becker, p. 94)

v.   Reflecting on my positionality

Nov 27. I took a cab and went to the school. There was a balakotsav (Children festival) of the different schools (this one and SV nagar). Topics were to remove plastic and let go of waste etc. the principals were seated in the front row and I was pulled into it too. I felt uncomfortable seated right in the front like a very important person. This is my position in the school. People regard me as important. I was introduced to the BO and AO. Other headmasters who I had visited for shortlisting the schools also remember me. My own positionality is being constructed here.

APPENDIX R: SOOCHNA VAHI (INFORMATION BOOKS)

Date: 1/8/2019	Date 1/15/2019
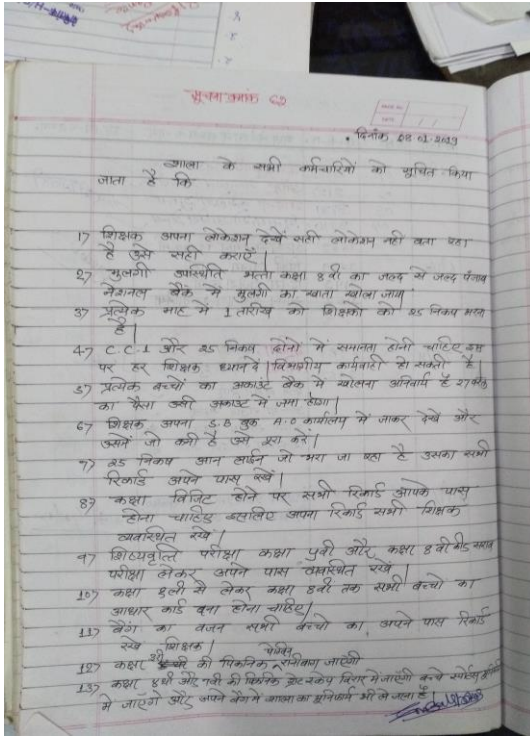
Date: 1/8/2019

SNH Teachers of this school are hereby notified:

1. Teachers must check location[biometric]. If location is not correct, have it corrected.
2. Girls attendance money for grade 8 girls. Accounts must be opened as quickly as possible in a specific bank.
3. Every 1st of the month teachers must complete 25 nikash online.
4. There should be a similarity between *25 nikash* and CCE. There might be departmental action.
5. Bank accounts to be opened for all students. Money related to the 27 items will get deposited there.
6. Teachers must go to AO/Ward office to complete their service book
7. For the *25 nikash* being filled
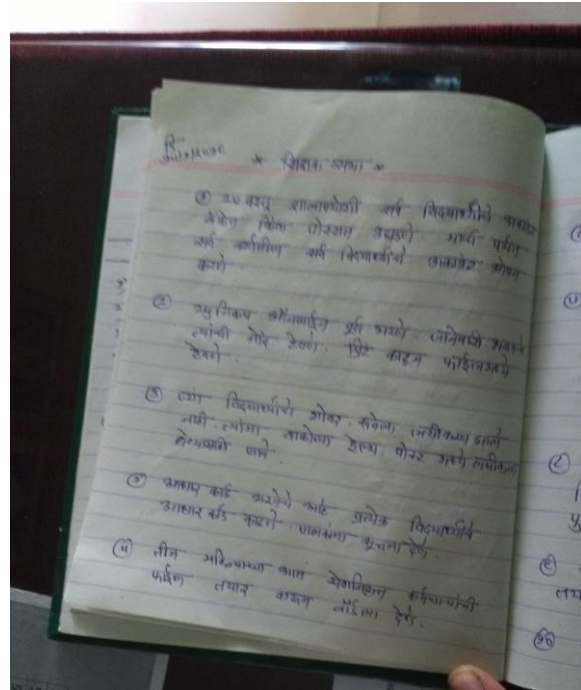
Date 1/15/2019

Staff Meeting [SNM]

1. Bank accounts to be opened for all students related to the 27 items. From March onwards, the money will get directly transferred to the bank account.
2. 25 nikash to be completed online by the first of the month. Take a print and keep with yourself.
3. Students to be vaccinated for rubella.
4. Make sure that each student is given an Aadhar card. Inform the parents.
5. Teachers have to go to Ward office to complete their SB book
6. Picnic is fixed. 3rd grade will go to watch ducks. 5th grade will go to Blue waterpark. The students have to take their uniforms in their school bags.

online, take a print and keep with yourself.

8. When there is a class inspection visit, all records must be kept with you. So, please keep records organized.
9. Scholarship exams for the 5th and 8th grade to be held. Keep records.
10. Make sure that each student is given an Aadhar card- from grade 1 to grade 8.
11. Keep record of the weight of each student's bag.
12. Students to be vaccinated for rubella.
13. Picnic is fixed. 3rd grade will go to watch ducks.
14. 5th grade will go to Blue waterpark. The students have to take their uniforms in their school bags.

Note. For SNM, I have translated into English only the six meeting talk items which were in the Soochna Vahi for SNM and SNH.

APPENDIX S: TWO EXCERPTS FROM THE SNH STAFF MEETING

Fieldnotes, January 28, 2019
Location: Virtual Classroom at SNH

Excerpt 1
Hema P: We have to fill *25 nikash*. It is the first of the month. After 15 days, the oral…the oral will start. Isn't it? Everyone will prepare their class papers and keep with me…I mean with themselves. The moment I get information, I will tell you the procedure. But it should not be rushed. Like when I ask, only then….so, make the papers as per your planning.

In Excerpt 1 above, the sensegiving focuses on the managing the possible ambiguity around the upcoming *25 nikash* assessment since it happens in the first couple of weeks during the month. Principal Hema P provides "everyone" the know-what to be ready with their class papers ("prepare class papers…as per your planning") and she will communicate the next steps when she gets notified ("I will tell you the procedure").

Excerpt 2
Hema P: Jagmohan teacher is not going to come…he had two days of training, was given the message, and he took casual leave. If I take out notice, reason is have to do our job, we have to attend all training. Whoever name comes up for training, has to go for training. Like the way we spend six-seven hours in schools, sit in the training too.

In Excerpt 2 above, the sensegiving focuses on managing the know-what around the compulsory attendance of future trainings. Hema P tells everyone that they have to attend all trainings assigned to them by reframing the trainings as equivalent to spending time in schools ("Like the way we spend six-seven hours in schools, sit in the training too").

APPENDIX T: TWO EXCERPTS FROM THE WARD MEETING

Fieldnotes, March 5, 2019
Location: Ward office meeting hall
<u>Excerpt 1</u>

1. AO: One minute. Now listen carefully. Understand it properly. Then ask questions if you have. So, what is the schedule for the morning teachers?
2. HMs (chorus): 7:10 to 1:10 PM
3. AO: 7.10 to 1.10. Ok, what about afternoon teachers?
4. HMs (chorus): 12:10 to 6:10
5. AO: Same timing has been entered in these devices. If there are few wrong entries made by your teachers, then we have given you portal. You can go and check there...timing of all teachers. Learn...how to use this portal...take help from technical/computer teacher. But learn it.

In the excerpt above, the AO manages the uncertainty by indicating the presence of a portal ("we have given you portal"). Besides sharing the know-what of the presence of the portal, the AO also suggests the know-what of checking the timing of teachers in the portal ("You can go and check there"). Later in the Ward Meeting, the AO describes another important feature of the portal.

<u>Excerpt 2</u>
AO: The system has a hierarchy. Please check if your hierarchy is set in system or not. Teachers to Head Master. Headmaster to BO and BO to AO. If there is a technical issue then it gets handled separately.

In the excerpt above, the uncertainty around the bureaucratic process of approving the leave requests is reduced. The clarification pertains to how the biometric system works on a hierarchy.
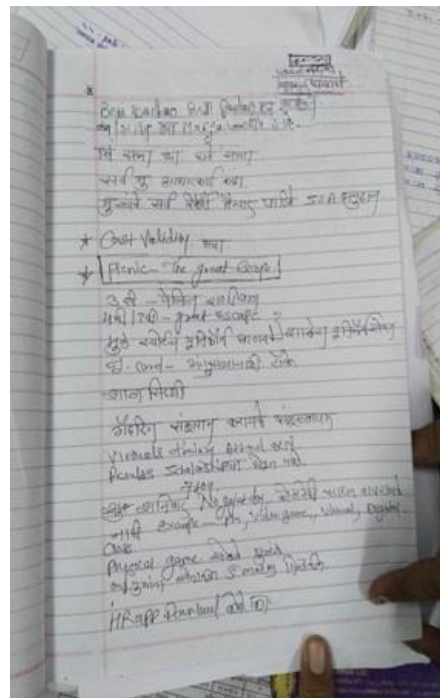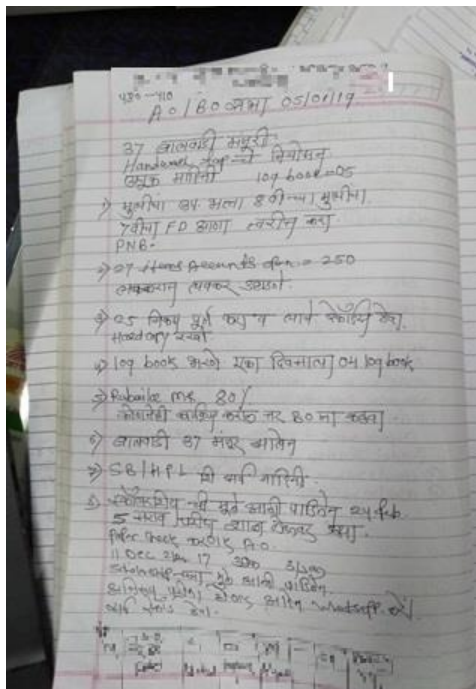
Date: 1/5/2019

AO/BO Meeting

37 kindergarten approved. Handwash to be organized. Fill 5 logbooks

1. Girls attendance money for grade 8 and grade 7 girls. Accounts must be opened as quickly as possible in a specific bank.
2. Open 27 items account- 250. Do it fast
3. Complete *25 nikash* and keep records with you. Hard copies. complete nikash online.
4. Fill Logbook. In one day, fill at least 4 logbooks
5. Reach 80% in rubella. If you do any program/event, keep BO informed
6. 37 *balwadis* have been approved.
7. Service Book information for all
8. Scholarship information – send students, keep records, inform on WhatsApp with table indicating

Conduct Save the Girl child program
Keep record of Staff Meeting
Make sure all students have Aadhar Card
Get Caste Validity certificates
Shala Siddhi
Attend Virtual Training
Saturday is a no-gadget day. No digital medium to be used: virtual class, video game, Play physical games
Download HR App

performance indicators.

APPENDIX V: UPM ABOUT RUBELLA VACCINATIONS

Fieldnotes, January 23, 2019
Location: SNH principal office
      The principal is seated on her chair and two teachers are adding up the student vaccination details on a blank sheet. The principal has asked the peon to get the kindergarten teacher into the principal office. However, the kindergarten teachers' substitute (Seema T) is present on that day and she enters the principal office to join the ongoing UPM.

1. Hema P (to the teachers): Please do quickly. We have to give information to ward. Exclude *balwadi* (kindergarten). Whichever kid is absent, take them out too.
2. Hema P: In your kindergarten, has everyone been injected?
3. Seema T: Yes, Everyone.
4. Hema P: Have you given this information?
5. Seema T: But I am not the class teacher.
6. Hema P: It is ok. You become the teacher. How many children?
7. Seema T: 28
8. Hema P: But the enrollment is 36, right?
9. Seema T: Some of them have gone to their village? Only 25-28 regularly come.
10. Hema P (to the teachers filling the form): Please fill the numbers.
11. Ramesh T starts to give the paper to Seema T who is standing to his left.
12. Hema P (to Ramesh T): You will fill (smiles)
13. Seema T: So, I can leave.
14. Hema P (to Seema T): Yes, you can go.
15. Hema P: (to Ramesh T): Fill a separate form for the kindergarten. Write at the top in red ink. Oh! Write the address too. Teachers must complete work.
16. Akhil T (an SNH teacher) walks in.
17. Hema P (to Akhil T): This month you did not inform me about the leave- there would be leave-without-pay deduction in salary. You were absent for 10 days. We have to call. Even if you get signature from the AO or BO, I will deduct salary. You don't inform. Keep record of your half-pay leave too.
18. Akhil T: Yes mam. I did fill the form.
19. Ramesh T and Ravi T: Mam, we need to return to class.
20. Hema P: OK, write this and go. This is yours, right. Please write the kindergarten numbers too. (I notice that the numbers of vaccinated children is now higher by 34).
21. Hema P (looks over the complete form and says to the teachers in the room): 30 children are still not inoculated. By tomorrow, all should be inoculated. Or teachers will have to write and submit why.

22. Rama T (another SNH teacher) who had gone for a training walks in to sign out for the day using the biometric system. Ravi T clicks a picture of the vaccination form filled up for rubella.
23. Hema P: No sir. Please write nicely. I have to click a picture and send it to the mam. Hmmm (looking at the filled form)…lets write the kindergarten numbers on the next page.
24. Ravi T fills in a new form using the data entered.
25. The principal clicks a picture of it and uploads it WhatsApp. The form is put into a register with the title MR vaccinations.

कक्षा	आधार	DBT account	पट	निष्प
9वी अ	12	01	28	21
ब	25	03	35	21
२वी अ	19	01	24	23
ब	20		26	21
३वी अ	20	6		
ब			24	21
४वी अ	20	03	28	22
ब	25		26	23.
५वी अ	39	6	39	23
ब	33	07	34	21
६वी अ	38	25	38	23
ब	36	30	38	23
७वी अ	29	21	31	23
ब	28	14	28	23
८वी /अ.	A-1	24	A 2	23

Note. A paper with the row and column heads was circulated during the SNH Staff Meeting to collected grade-wise performance. The rows represent the difference grades (1-8) and the columns represent the number of students with (a) Aadhar card, (b) Bank accounts (c) class strength, and (d) performance on 25 *nikash*.

APPENDIX X: UPM BETWEEN SNH AND SNM PRINCIPALS

Fieldnotes, February 4, 2019
Location: SNH principal office

Hema P says, "I might go and observe a classroom observation to fill my logbook.[110] Did you meet met Mina P (the SNM principal) today?"
At this moment, Mina P walks into the SNH principal office. We look at her and Hema P says to me, "Talk of thirst and the well appears". Both of us laugh.

Mina P tells Hema P that she has come to check about the new logbook. Hema P pulls out a printout of the new logbook template which was recently released online. Under a new directive, principals are expected to fill in their logbooks online using the new template. The principals compare the physical logbook with the online template and do not find any ambiguity in what needs to be filled.

Now, Hema P talks of getting a telephone connection for the SNH for their internet. In a recently released circular, MCGM has asked each school to secure their own contract with a telephone/internet provider and agreed to reimburse the school instead of providing the same for all schools. The SNM principal is not aware of the circular and asked to have a look. SNH prints out a new copy of the circular and hands it to Mina P. As the copy of the circular is being printed, both the principals discuss how the suggested bandwidth of 6 Mbps might not be enough for the school, especially the biometric connection.

Now, the SNH principal introduced another topic linked to the school uniform. She says that she needs to check if the SNM has an extra school uniform for a girl who was recently admitted at SNH and must be provided a free uniform. Says Hema P, "Let us go and check where Ravi T is." SNH teacher Ravi T is the teacher-in-charge for keeping uniform records. So, both the principals go out of the principal office to check if the teacher was around and the meeting continues in the corridor.

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[110] A logbook is a record of classroom observations. It is filled by the principal wherein she describes details like date and time of observation, lesson name, teacher name, an account of what she noticed being taught, and her suggestions to improve classroom teaching. The record is then signed off by both the principal and the teacher. School principals are expected to record at least 12 entries every month in their logbooks.

APPENDIX Y – PRINCIPAL MEETING EXCERPTS (COBURN, 2005)

Ms. Tanaka: There is the core curriculum and the standards, and then there is the adoption [reading series]. With the adoption, [the district] picks the materials that are closest to the standard, but no publisher can be the be-all or end-all. . . . There are other options. . . You're supposed to teach to the standards. The adoption is one way to support it, but not the only way. (p. 491)

Ms. Moore: One of the things I'm worried about is that I go into people's classes all the time . . . and I see people using round robin reading. We need to see something different. ...We did all this work with [guided reading], but I'm still seeing round robin reading. ...We've spent nearly $100,000 in this school on staff development on reading, and we need to be using it. (p. 493)

APPENDIX Z: UPM AS A RESULT OF SNH MEETING LOCATION

Fieldnotes, January 12, 2019
Location: SNH principal office, Event hall

All the MCGM schools in the SN building hosted a Beti-Bachao, Beti Padao (Save the girl child- Educate the girl-child) program at the event hall on the ground floor. I attend 30 minutes of the program and then there was a rest/break during which I follow the SNH principal and the AO and BO to the SNH principal office. The AO and BO know me by now and they smile as we say Namaste to each other.

The BO looks at me and explains the program, "There should be something happening everyday [at the school]" The AO picks up the thread and asks, "Did you like the program? Do you think children will learn?" I take a few seconds before saying, "This is good for parents I feel". AO replies, "Of course, if children learn, then the parents will know about it too". I nod my head.

The AO then immediately begins to talk to everyone about the forthcoming drawing competition to be held at the SNH next week. She describes that the students will sit in the school hall grade-wise batches and they should be seated 30 minutes before the competition. No one else speaks. She then turns to the drawing teacher and tells him to make sure that everything is in order.

Then the BO describes how food will be distributed since the competition will be around lunch time. She also tells that each BO will be there with a supply of drawing materials (paper, colors, etc) and will be in charge of a group of students. She finally says that students will not be given water because it created a mess the previous year.

A teacher comes in to inform that the next part of the program is going to begin. We all walk back to the event hall.

APPENDIX AA: PHOTOGRAPHS OF SNH AND SNM PRINCIPAL OFFICE
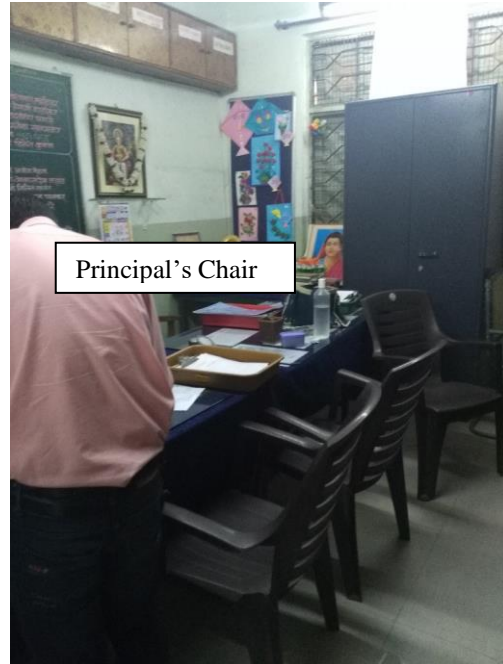
Figure 1: SNH principal office with the principal chair facing towards the entry door (photo clicked from the entry door)

Figure 2: SNM principal office with the principal chair facing away from the entry door

APPENDIX AB: PRINCIPAL TIME IN PPMS AND UPMS (WOLCOTT, 1973)

TABLE 5–1   DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRINCIPAL'S TIME DURING AN "AVERAGE" SCHOOL DAY, 8:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M. (BASED ON A SAMPLE OF 12 2-HOUR PERIODS OF OBSERVATION DURING A TWO-WEEK PERIOD)

Activity of Principal	Observed Day-to-Day Range (in Percentages)	Percent of Time in an "Average" Day
Prearranged meeting or conference	13–35	26
Deliberate but not prearranged encounter	24–29	25
Casual or chance encounter	10–28	15
Telephoning	7–10	9
Talking on intercom	.6–1.5	1
Alone and stationary (e.g., working in his office)	13–24	15
Alone and enroute (e.g., going to a meeting, walking down the hall)	7–14	9
	TOTAL	100

Note. UPM time is defined as the total of the rows "Deliberate but not prearranged encounter" (25%) and "Casual or chance encounter" (15%) totaling 40% of a principal's workday. Reprinted from *The Man in the Principal's Office*, by Harry. F. Wolcott, 1973, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.