Ethical Leadership:

A Study of Educational Leaders at Vancouver Island University

by

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Abstract

Qualitative action research was employed to gain insight into a sample of educational leaders’ beliefs, feelings, and thoughts about their own ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values. Participants were selected from faculty and executive administration at Vancouver Island University (VIU). The participants provided perspectives and reflections through private, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Each educational leader engaged in a 90-minute interview that included questions and case scenarios designed by this researcher to elicit rich and in-depth responses. The participants shared their dilemmas, ideas, thoughts, and some ethical ways of being and leading as educational leaders. The primary goal of the study was to identify varieties of behaviours, characteristics, and values from the participants who shared ethical ways of being and leading for this researcher’s professional development and growth as an educational leader. While aiming to share these findings with those preparing for educational leadership, a secondary goal of the study was to explore ways in which the participants fostered cultures of trust. The results of the study illustrate a variety of ethical leadership behaviours, characteristics, and values that can be learned and practiced. The study also depicts some of the ways in which the participants viewed their ethical leadership as beneficial to the fostering of cultures of trust.

Keywords: Educational leader, ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values, ethics, ethical leadership, leadership dilemma, trust.
Acknowledgements and Dedication

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The following thesis is dedicated to my mate, Pete, whose extraordinary love and support infinitely enriches my life.
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Chapter 1

Background

The interest in ethical leadership and fostering cultures of trust were starting points for writing this thesis. As an educator, healthcare worker, and student of educational leadership, my personal and professional experiences led me to investigate and study the perspectives and reflections provided by six educational leaders at Vancouver Island University (hereafter VIU) regarding their own ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values.

Becoming and being an ethical educational leader is an experiential journey that integrates one’s personal values and beliefs with their professional ways of being. Crucial to educational leadership is ethical behaviour. However, beyond behaving, following, or performing per the guidelines and standards set in educational codes and mandates, ethical leadership involves a constant awareness of the impact that decisions and actions have on people’s lives, and it includes the ability to analyze and estimate that impact. Ethical leadership embraces ways that continuously involve learning and thinking about what is right, and what is holistically best for the students, teachers, schools, and other related communities involved with education.

Narrative interviews were conducted privately with each participant to elicit descriptive and detailed responses to the questions and case scenarios that were designed by this researcher as instruments for the data collection. The primary goals of the study were to identify some ethical ways of being and leading for my own professional development and growth as an educational leader. The secondary goal of the study was to explore ways in which the sample of
educational leaders at VIU saw their behaviours as contributing to the fostering of cultures of trust.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

What are some of the ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values of educational leaders? How, if at all, do these leaders see ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values as beneficial to the fostering of cultures of trust?

By studying and analyzing the data collected from the participants, it was expected that the evidence would show that ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values can be defined, learned, and practiced by those aspiring to be ethical leaders in education. It was also predicted that these behaviours, characteristics, and values as analyzed would be perceived by the participants as important to the fostering of cultures of trust.

**Purpose of the Study**

The research was employed to gain insight into educational leaders’ beliefs, feelings, and thoughts about their own ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values. Through the examination of the collected data in this study, the primary purpose was to identify some ethical ways of being and leading for my own professional development and growth as an educational leader. It was also hoped that the research findings could assist aspiring educational leaders to learn how to prepare for ethical leadership. A secondary purpose was to explore ways in which the participants fostered cultures of trust by gathering and understanding their shared perspectives and reflections regarding their experiences related to trust.
Justification of the Study

A variety of current literature related to educational leadership recognizes an increased focus on the ethical demands and decision-making within the profession of educational leadership. Various authors (Begley & Wong, 2001; Furman, 2003; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2007; Whitton, 2010; Meine & Dunn, 2013) claim that the moral dimensions of educational leadership are complex and multifaceted, and often require crucial ethical considerations and decisions.

Starratt (1991) claimed that schools serve a high moral purpose and that administrators have a responsibility to promote ethical environments in their schools. Describing that a need exists to apply ethical considerations such as fairness, integrity, trust, and “truthfulness when solving educational and ethical dilemmas” (p. 185-195), Starratt (1991) acknowledged that the shift in education has moved “toward an inclusion of human factors, expressly moral in nature” (p. 186).

Strike (2007) explained that a moral compass is needed for guidance through complex and conflicting demands (p. 15). He claimed that honesty, compassion, and loyalty are necessary characteristics of ethical leaders and ethical leadership (p. 15-17). Additionally, Strike (2007) discussed that ethical educational leadership is the foundation on which to build, maintain, and sustain trust in schools (p. 15-17). Likewise, Northouse (2013) described the importance of trust as foundational to the nature of ethical leadership.

Furthering the reasoning for ethical leadership in education, Bowen, Bessette and Cham (2006) explained that educational administrators are forced to confront moral problems that involve issues such as discrimination, equality, fairness, and justice. Bush (2009) claimed that
high quality leadership is vital for school improvement and student outcomes, and that schools require effective leaders to provide the best possible education for their learners (p. 375).

**Definition of Terms**

Our *behaviours, characteristics, and values* make up an individual’s way of being. Emphasis in this research is on the ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values in the sample of educational leaders at VIU. The following are broad descriptions of key terminology used for the purposes of this study.

Starratt (2004) described *ethics* as “a study of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles, and values that support a moral way of life” (p. 5). Ethics is the investigation of norms that are constructed and chosen by members within a society for the overall betterment of that society (Starratt, 2004, p. 5). Another conception of ethics is the systematic study of morality and the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles that govern an individual’s or a group’s behaviour.

Behaviours often describe the way one acts, behaves, or reacts. *Ethical behaviours* include behaving in a manner which allows others to perceive or know that the actions or behaviours portrayed by a person are ethical or moral. Behaviours can be learned and practiced, and can often change for different persons or purposes depending on a variety of circumstances and situations.

Characteristics identify a person’s qualities that make someone different from others. They create an image of one’s self to others and are often described as how others see us. Characteristics include behaviour-like mannerisms which cross-over to qualities of personality and physical traits such as disposition or countenance. *Ethical characteristics* include having
respect for self and others, having compassion, and having empathy; however, it is also about modelling and showing those characteristics as a way of being. Characteristics are inherent in nature and are more difficult to change than behaviours; at times, they are impossible to change.

Values are learned and upheld as morally and deeply ingrained in a person. Values are upheld, learned, practiced, and demonstrated through actions, behaviours, and beliefs. Truthfulness and honesty, integrity, fairness and justice, law, respect, freedom, compassion, caring and concern, loyalty, right and wrong, trustworthiness, and confidentiality are often things that many individuals and societies respect and value as ethical values.

However, values differ for people on a global perspective. Depending on geographic location, cultural influence, societal influence, and various other influences and factors that make up who we are, values reflect a given individual’s or society’s beliefs in things that are held to be true, or of a high opinion or standard, and are considered highly important or beneficial to that individual or society.

Other terminology found throughout this thesis includes a definition from Heslep (1997), who defined an educational leader as one who leads followers (students, support staff, other teachers) to reach a common goal or vision by interaction based on philosophy, behaviour, influence, or mandate (p. 73). It follows, then, that ethical educational leaders are leaders who practice or have ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values. Some examples of ethical educational leaders are teachers, principals, professors, deans, executive directors, and presidents of educational institutions.

Gardiner and Tenuto (2015) defined a leadership dilemma as a situation or incident that requires leadership and decision-making abilities when the leader is unsure of how to solve the
problem (p. 2). For example, Bowen, Bessette, and Cham (2006), in a reference to Starratt (1991), explained that educational administrators are forced to confront moral issues such as when schools disproportionately benefit some groups and fail others.

Finally, and importantly, a definition of trust. This is a far-reaching word that is central to relationships involving the (non) truthful interactions, communications, and feelings between people in relationships. Trust encompasses concepts, perceptions, and reciprocal feelings. Trust is grounded in reciprocal action and notion of how people think, how people behave, and how people respond.

Brief Overview of the Study

In this thesis, chapter one presents the background, introduces the research questions and hypotheses, and provides the purpose and justification for the study. The first chapter also introduces the nature of ethical leadership and touches on trust as a foundation of ethical leadership. A definition of terms relative to this research is included in chapter one.

Chapter two provides a review of the literature pertaining to ethics in educational leadership, an overview of ethics, and the importance of ethical leadership. This chapter summarizes the literature reviewed in relation to the goals and purpose of the study. In this chapter, the literature review highlights various ethical dilemmas and challenges educational leaders face. Empirical evidence and discussion regarding further connections between ethical leadership and trust is provided. Chapter two additionally presents insights from the literature regarding trust that is damaged or destroyed due to a lack of ethical leadership in education.

Chapter three details the qualitative design of the research describing the methodology and procedures used to carry out this study. Details of the participant selection process are
provided. This chapter also describes the value of conducting narrative interviews in research for the collection of qualitative data and analysis.

Chapter four includes my interpretation of the study data collected. This chapter provides detailed samples of the rich descriptions shared by the participants that pertained to each of the research questions. Observations and themes were discovered in the data that highlight this researcher’s understanding of their experiences and ways of ‘being’ an ethical leader. My interpretations of the findings pertinent to each of the research questions are described.

Chapter five is a comprehensive perspective of the research findings that emerged from the study. This chapter concludes the research by summarizing the findings. Connections and illustrations between the study’s findings and the existing literature are discussed. Limitations of the study, contributions, and considerations for future research are also identified in this chapter.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following literature review provides insight regarding the overall significance of ethical leadership in education. This chapter also explores possible connections between ethical educational leadership and the fostering of cultures of trust.

Included in this chapter is a broad overview of ethics in education and leadership, ethical competence, and challenges for educational leaders. Likewise, some issues of trust were briefly described in chapter one in the background section; however, this chapter details further matters of trust and the importance of trust in leaders. Additionally, by means of examples of damaged and destroyed trust, it is hoped that this researcher illustrates the ethical necessity of building and sustaining trust in education.

Ethics in Education and Leadership

Ethics encompasses values and beliefs about what is right and what is wrong. Ethical dilemmas are encountered on a day-to-day basis by educational leaders and involve the dimensions of right-versus-right and wrong-versus-wrong. The dilemmas may vary from simple situations, which require relatively obvious solutions, to extremely complicated and complex issues, which require a great deal of consideration, effort, and time to resolve.

The past two decades show an increased focus in many locales, including Canada, the USA, Sweden, and the UK (Begley & Wong, 2001) for using ethics as a framework for studying educational administration and leadership. Trends indicate that educational leadership can be viewed in terms of recognizing leadership as a reciprocal relation with followers. Leading by
processes of inquiry, ethical leaders ask questions and debate the rightness or wrongness of actions and outcomes.

Starratt (1994) explained that school leaders must conduct themselves ethically in order to create more equitable futures for students. Ethical leaders set examples for followers (Begley & Wong, 2001, p. 293-294), and serve with support and compassion. Respectful communication and interaction plays an ethical part in the values of schools and leadership. Situations of conflict and ethical encounters in school environments necessitate that leaders require patience and perspective, must be able to work with diverse groups, and be sensitive to other cultures (Begley & Wong, 2001, p. 293). Boggs (2003) claimed that future educational leaders must be models of integrity, honesty, and high ethical standards (p. 20).

Bowen (2006) and Furman (2003) emphasized the need for ethical practice by leaders in education. Considering the various issues that challenge educational leaders (such as building trust, working with codes of conduct and school values, finding ethical solutions to conflict and dilemmas, and envisioning the future direction of schools and their relations with connected communities), the emphasis on studying ethics in leadership education leads to enhanced awareness, understanding, and practice.

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2007) placed school leadership at an ethical level, placing emphasis on the importance of ethical leadership training (in schools), and argued that school leaders have a special responsibility to all stakeholders to be ethical in leading schools (p. 2). Moreover, there is a potential in practice to offer a more inclusive and equitable conception of education (Shields, 2010, p. 559).
Ethical Competence

Tschannen-Moran (2004) claimed that principals who engage collegially with teachers and students consistently, honestly, openly, and benevolently are perceived by teachers and students as capable of demonstrating sound knowledge, and are believed to be competent decision makers.

Ethical competence includes understanding ethical codes and ethical theories. Meine and Dunn (2013) argued that the ability to apply ethical codes and theories (using scenarios and case analyses) should be a primary method of assessing ethical competency. It was hoped by this researcher that abilities to apply ethical codes or theories would be apparent in the analyzed data.

Whitton (2009) (in Meine & Dunn, 2013, p. 163) recommended that in addition to the use of codes of conduct and ethical rules, the teaching and assessment of ethical competence is based on strengthening abilities in educational leaders with respect to the following areas:

a) Reasoning skills and subject-matter-knowledge including ethics codes or standards,

b) Identifying difficult ethical situations,

c) Problem-solving skills in situations where ethics standards, codes, and various interests must be considered,

d) Advocating for principled decisions and improving ethics focused attitudes and commitment, and

e) Building self-awareness and consensus-building skills.
Challenges for Educational Leaders

Gardiner and Tenuto (2015) defined leadership dilemmas as incidents or situations that require leadership and decision-making abilities when solutions to problems are unknown (p. 2). Educational leaders encounter challenges that require ethical standards of strengths and skills for solving ethically imbued problems. These problems include helping to promote common visions and inspiring others to follow, fostering encouragement and collaborative participation, resolving disputes and conflict management, and promoting genuine buy-in (Coleman, 2012, p. 82).

Berghofer (2009) recognized that some ethical issues are solved in a more practical or expedient manner rather than in an ethically competent manner of doing what is right. The challenges some educational leaders face with respect to solving ethical issues involves doing what is right in the best interests of the students (p. 1-3).

Likewise, some challenges presented by Kaiser (2004) were concerned with how we learn, teach, and practice ethical leadership. He questioned how leadership behaviours influence others and suggested another challenge involved the need for the creation and use of a toolbox for ethical practice and dilemma solving (p. 137-148).

Trust in Education and Leadership

Trust plays a prominent role in an ethically led school culture. From their multi-year study of Chicago elementary schools, Bryk and Schneider (2004) developed themes regarding relational trust. Examining changing qualities of relational dynamics within the schools, four discernments were highlighted in their work. Bryk and Schneider (2004) claimed these discernments (respect, personal regard, core role responsibility and competence, and personal integrity) are foundational to moral characteristics and ethical behaviours. Ethical leadership
practice incorporates these discernments when building and sustaining trust in schools (Bryk and Schneider 2004, pp. 40-45).

**Trustworthiness**

Coleman (2012) discussed the significance of trust in school-based collaborative leadership and emphasized the fundamentally important role trust plays in assuring the leader’s integrity and perceived competency in a leadership role. Trustworthy leadership is based on the leader’s consistent modelling of ethical values in their day-to-day behaviours (p. 79-106).

Coleman (2012) explored the nature of leadership required by school-based partnerships utilizing structured and unstructured interviews. In his study, he identified trustworthiness as the single most critical factor in effective collaborative working, and focused on factors that encouraged followers to trust leaders (p. 79-106).

Coleman (2012) developed concepts that would explain the phenomenon he observed. The results from Coleman’s (2012) study also emphasized that trust is implicitly relational in nature. The study participants consistently identified three distinct elements regarding trust and relations:

a) Values and ethics of potentially trusted individual (ideological trust),

b) Ways in which the values and ethics manifest on a day-to-day basis (behavioural trust), and

c) The trusted person’s perceived authenticity and integrity (perceptual trust) (p. 79-106).

Coleman (2012) recognized that trust is intuitive and this features prominently in the literature, but the paper also proposed that perceptual trust is largely neglected and overlooked.
The evidence from this study found that leaders who demonstrated the greatest awareness of perceptual trust enjoyed higher levels of perceived trustworthiness than their peers.

Although Coleman’s (2012) study found a degree of consistency in the values held by the respondents, simply believing in trust and honesty, for instance, is not enough. Trustworthiness is dependent upon clearly articulated and displayed behaviours over time. Surveys and interviews do not always indicate or measure trust itself, but often measure the perceptions of trust that are very subjective (p.79-106).

The Demonstration of Trust

Tschannen-Moran (2004) claimed that trust in the principal of a school arises out of building instructional and collegial climates, valuing teacher professionalism, and effectively communicating and liaising with the interconnected communities involved in education. Student achievement was correlated to trust in principal behaviour and school climates, with the implications that principals must foster and maintain trust, and that trust has interpersonal and task-oriented dimensions.

Trust must be present to some degree for individuals and groups who are dependent upon others within the school and school system. Along with a willingness to make oneself vulnerable to someone else in the belief that your interest or something that you care about will not be harmed, collective trust in school shows significant influence on achievement and success. Accordingly, school leaders in a trusted role, enacting trust, can also empower their teachers to improve professionally, thereby encouraging professional development and satisfaction (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).
Principals gain trust by demonstrating genuine caring for students, teachers, and parents. By being trustworthy, trustful, and extending themselves, as well as displaying honesty, fairness, and vulnerability, principals influence others’ perceptions and are validated by respectful interpersonal relationships (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Principals and teachers who demonstrate these ethical behaviours build engaging relationships with students and other communities, and reinforce cultures of trust. The principal, the teachers, and the students are responsible for the collaborative stewardship of the school vision. Cultures of trust engage, manage, and ensure effective school communities that value integrity and fairness by way of open communication and collaborative approaches to leadership, teaching, learning, and problem-solving (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015).

**Damaged Trust in Education and Leadership**

Garcia and Thornton (2015) presented an example of damaged trust by describing a breakdown and decline of ethical leadership in American schools (p.1). The researchers explained that this was influenced by administrators and policy-makers who were miles away from the realities in which these learning communities existed and were blind to such issues as disrepair of schools, inadequate curricula, and exclusion by lack of funding. Garcia and Thornton (2015) described that a pervasive threat to trust in education overall was the absence of ethical responsibility for the well-being and welfare of students.

**Destroyed Trust in Education and Leadership**

There are extreme examples of destroyed trust and resulting consequences which were recorded by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC, 2015). The TRCC documents reveal a history of educational leadership under the guise of ethical and religion-led
ethnic cleansing, whereby, strict tenets were followed to assimilate or eliminate Aboriginal children in Canada under a system of Indian Residential Schools (IRS).

Within these schools, abuse of power, deprivation, and a cultural genocide was perpetrated against Aboriginal populations rich with tradition, family connection, and history (TRCC, 2015). The abhorrent practices resulted in loss of life, language, and culture which left generations of Aboriginal people despondent towards education (TRCC, 2015). These generational scars and deep wounds are still prominent today in many Aboriginal communities with respect to the realms of education, ethics, and trust in schools (Meier Drees, 2016; TRCC, 2015).

**Summary**

This chapter has considered the need for ethical educational leaders. Foundations of ethical leadership for the purpose of this study were explained. The notions of ethical leadership and ethical practice were discussed and distinctions between these expressions were made. Ethical educational leadership, matters of trust, and trustworthiness as a value-driven perspective were discussed by means of reviewing the impact of damaged and destroyed trust.
Chapter 3

Research Design

This qualitative research was conducted involving a diverse sample of six educational leaders from a teaching university on Vancouver Island. Narrative interview methodology was utilized to gain insight into the ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values of educational leaders at Vancouver Island University (VIU). This sample of convenience enabled the researcher to understand and prepare for ethical leadership through face-to-face interviews and discussions. Through the collection of educational leader perspectives, this researcher analyzed the data for connections between ethical aspects and leadership practice, and how these aspects may foster a culture of trust in schools.

Sample Selection

A total of six invitations were emailed out to potential participants via a public contact address list at VIU. Three women and three men responded and agreed to participate. The participants were active administrators and educators in roles such as executive level administrators, deans and chairs of faculties, directors of departments, and senior instructional members within VIU.

The participants were chosen on the basis of each participant holding a senior leadership role within the university. The roles were comprised of direct leadership responsibilities and authority within the university. The participants were chosen from a broad scope of interactive staff and student environments within the university. These environs encompassed student affairs, university administration, ethics and healthcare, research and experiential learning, and instructional education.
At the time of this study, the university population consisted of 16,000 students including 1,500 international students representing over 50 different countries. Approximately 1,000 of the university students self-identified as Aboriginal. The employed population of the university was comprised of a diversity of leaders, faculty, and support staff (Office of University Planning and Analysis, VIU, 2015).

**Instruments Used**

Individual, semi-structured, 90-minute interviews were conducted in private spaces conducive to confidentiality and comfort. Within each interview, the researcher used six self-authored, open-ended, predetermined questions (Appendix A) and provided two self-authored case scenarios (Appendix B) that depicted ethical dilemmas. The participants were asked to share how they would resolve the ethical dilemmas depicted in Appendix B. The participants could choose from a list of solutions provided and were encouraged to discuss their choice and rationale. The participants were also encouraged to share in the interview process any ethical dilemmas they had encountered, how they approached solutions, and how they made the decisions to solve them.

These instruments were designed to elicit participant reflections, thoughts, and ideas about their own ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values. The participants were encouraged during the interview process to speak about personal experiences and share stories involving their own ethical leadership practices. The design of the instruments evoked ethnographic narratives and shared stories. The private interviews were recorded.
Methodology and Procedure

The decision to use narrative interview methodology was based on a study by Gardiner and Tenuto (2015). They utilized a narrative survey design consisting of a semi-structured oral interview process with their participants to elicit personal narratives, reflections, perceptions, thoughts, ideas, and visions. Narrative surveys can involve the recordings of oral speech, viewed observations from the researcher, written notes, shared experience, history, and story-telling from study participants.

Semi-structured interviews with pre-determined questions, case scenarios, and discussions regarding specific subject matter are tools that serve the narrative survey process. These instruments provide for an informal interview style that encourages discussion, sharing stories, and having conversations about experiences. The predetermined questions within a narrative survey keeps the study topics of conversation in focus. Tools such as open-ended questions and case scenario analyses enables in-depth dialogue and oral discussions to occur (Gardiner & Tenuto, 2015).

In their qualitative study, Gardiner and Tenuto (2015) utilized constructed questions and encouraged oral narratives from their participants. Gardiner and Tenuto’s (2015) analysis revealed patterns and themes in their participants’ orations and ethical dilemmas as well as decision-making processes of the participants. The results identified leaders’ codes of ethics, leadership dilemmas, and ethical decision-making.

After reviewing Gardiner and Tenuto’s (2015) study design, this researcher designed interview questions and case scenarios (Appendix A and Appendix B) as instruments for the purpose of conducting this research and collecting data for this study. The participants received
the instruments for review one week prior to the scheduled 90-minute interviews. It allowed the participants to review and reflect on their own experiences and ethical dilemmas prior to meeting and answering questions orally. All interviews were spoken in person and recorded with consent.

The procedure commenced with receiving consent from Vancouver Island University’s Ethics Review Board to conduct the research study. Invitations to participate and a consent form were directly emailed for the purposes of introducing the research study. Participants were selected for invitation based on their leadership roles held at the university such as director or executive director, or professor, for example, and were enrolled based on selecting the first three women and the first three men who responded. Each participant agreed by informed consent to be interviewed and recorded. Further correspondence containing the self-designed semi-structured interview questions (Appendix A) and the self-designed case scenarios (Appendix B) were forwarded to the participants for review approximately two weeks in advance of the interviews.

The individual, 90-minute interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from the study participants to have the interviews audio recorded and confidentially transcribed for data analysis. The individual interviews were then conducted in private office environments and were audio recorded.

Commencing with Appendix A questions and concluding with Appendix B case scenarios, each study participant was asked to answer the questions by providing their thoughts, reflections, and by sharing their experiences related to ethical considerations, ethical dilemmas, and ethical decision-making.
Appendix B depicted ethical dilemmas requiring solutions. The participants were provided with corresponding solutions lettered as A, B, C, or D, from which to choose. The participants were asked to discuss their reasons for their selected choice. Participant reflections, opinions, decisions, and solutions were discussed and recorded within the interview process.

Personal identification was not used in the recordings and the participants were coded alpha-numerically with the first participant listed as EELQ1 and the last participant listed as EELQ6. The recordings were immediately deleted upon transcription. The transcribed data were analyzed for recurring ethical themes. All consents, recordings, identifying data on the transcriptions, and data related to the participants, and the research study were stored in locked computer and physical files.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected from the interview process were analyzed for like or similar themes, repeating themes, ethical aspects, and leadership practices including behaviours, characteristics and values of the educational leader participants. They were coded and analyzed with the aim of illustrating dimensions of ethical leadership, behaviours, characteristics, and values as well as trust.

Each interview was transcribed. The transcripts were analyzed several times searching for recurring and similar ethical aspects, considerations, and practices. Review of each interview was undertaken several more times looking for recurring themes of ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values. Recurring themes of practice, problem-solving, and decision-making were inspected and noted. Attention was paid to the search and examination for new themes or aspects not initially considered as ethical behaviours, characteristic, or values, but
arose, for example, as a theme of making time for visiting with people, and sharing knowledge or seeking knowledge from others, and making time for this activity; for some participants, this was considered an ethical dilemma. This aspect of valuing time spent with people was seen as essential in some participants’ leadership practice, but was next to impossible to always be able to fulfill.

The behaviours, characteristics, and values that were sought were inclusive of, but not limited to, respect, loyalty, fairness, compassion, kindness, honesty, truthfulness, organized (commitments, time management), dedicated, professional, just, equal minded, and patient.

All of the recurring ethical themes, behaviours, characteristics, and values were then coded into categories for most recurrence, least recurrence, and similarities. The observations were analyzed and placed into categories that matched the researcher’s hypotheses of aspects that would foster cultures of trust. The themes that recurred the most often were depicted as the most effective or valuable traits for ethical leadership practice in education; however, the least recurring themes were noted and deemed to be valuable, but not necessarily the most common.

The data analyzed from this study provided examples of ethical traits and aspects that can be learned and practiced. Through the review process and analysis, the transcribed data was organized to design a visual scale for illustration purposes depicting some behaviours, characteristics, and values (see Fig. 1 in Chapter 5) observed.

Validity

Narrative surveys provide conceptual ideas that can inform theory building and provide the conceptual basis for new research questions (Fine, 2009). Qualitative action research
involves proving transferability rather than validity. In other words, the quality of the data and ensuing analysis must meet qualities of rigour, reliability, verification, and trustworthiness.

The findings in this study are applicable, important, and useful to similar groups or practice settings, and the results ring true for others as applicable to educational leadership. The sample was six participants in educational leadership. Transferability was assessed by reviewing all the data gathered. Quotes with rich detail from the participants were utilized. Figures and diagrams illustrate this qualitative data. Concepts and themes arose in the qualitative data as variables do in quantitative data. The credibility or truth of findings involved a high level of trustworthiness in this qualitative action research. The overall credibility of this qualitative research refers to the steps taken to ensure the study met high standards and the results can be trusted.

The sample, data collection, and analysis methods fit this researcher’s qualitative design. Dependability was necessary and shows if the data will stay consistent over time. Confirmability required neutrality and reduction of bias by reviewing this researcher’s own attitudes about the topic with reflections and use of journaling. Bracketing identified this researcher’s preconceptions about the topic in order to suspend them and attempts to set aside personal views on the subject were consistently made.

The individual, one-on-one, private interviews in this study were conducted, recorded and transcribed by this researcher. The interview settings were quiet and confidential to ensure the comfort of the speaker. The questions were asked in a conversational manner that encouraged the participants to provide several reflections (Gardiner & Tenuto, 2015). Personal identification was not used and recordings were deleted upon transcription for confidentiality purposes. The transcribed data was destroyed upon conclusion of the data analysis and all identifying features
were deleted from the transcription prior to incorporating them into the data set results within chapter five.

Although limited to six participants, the data collected from the interviews and ensuing transcription provided forty pages of information. Quotes and examples from the data have been provided. The narrative survey style of questions and case scenarios that this researcher designed for this study elicited an inspirational collection of data for the qualitative analysis required. Analysis of the qualitative data in this study provides findings and evidence related to the research questions and hypotheses.

**Design Validation by Participants**

The design of the research incorporated a confidential approach by interviewing in private environs with ample time for sharing candid conversations and discussions. At 90 minutes for each interview, each participant conveyed that they “did not feel rushed through the process” and “enjoyed spending time assisting with this action research”. The participants’ narratives felt authentic and honest to this researcher, and the participants seemed to be quite candid with respect to their own feelings, beliefs, thoughts, and practice as educational leaders.

**Limitations**

Limitations of the study include, but were not limited to, the smaller number of participants and by using only one university setting. A larger sample of participants and schools would improve the data outcomes with respect to variety and recurrence of themes. Ethical concepts and considerations in a larger-scale study could incorporate mixed methodology such as qualitative and quantitative data analyses resulting in a broader scope of findings and results.
A comparison between levels of ethical behaviours between institutions would improve comparative values, but this research was not designed to compare institutions, persons, or practices. It was designed primarily to learn and understand some of the ethical aspects of educational leaders that may help my own professional growth and development, and on a somewhat wider perspective to assist aspiring students in educational leadership. This study was not designed to evaluate leaders’ ethical abilities or competence, but rather to learn from and understand without judgement or prejudice some of the various ethical ways of being and leading in educational environs and cultures.

Furthermore, the study was designed to learn what VIU leaders employ in their roles through their behaviours, characteristics, and values, and to share this understanding with those who wish to become ethical educational leaders. Through the interview process, data collection, and analysis, it was hoped the design of this research would also reveal if the participants saw their ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values as beneficial to the fostering of cultures of trust.
Chapter 4

Findings and Results

The data collected from the narrative interviews in this study elicited a rich volume of information that was candidly shared by the educational leader participants. In this researcher’s analyses of behaviours, characteristics, and values, it was initially thought that lists would be compiled under these three concrete themes. It was subsequently envisioned that a categorization and organization of the analyzed data could be parcelled up as a neat and tidy result which would clearly depict how to be an ethical leader.

However, although the data has been arranged into an illustrative framework, graph, and tables, it is the richness and quality of the language used by the participants that best illustrates the ethics of educational leadership. Discovering concepts of the participants’ deeply rooted ways of being including their ingrained desire and responsibility for helping others rounded out the many ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values that individuals can learn or develop in their pursuit of ethical educational leadership.

Each narrative accentuated the value of service to others and each narrative revealed that valuing others was ethically integral to their leadership roles. This ultimately enriched the participants’ personal and professional lives. It was apparent to this researcher as well that ethically leading in a professional capacity in the daily life of an educational leader resulted anomalously in reduced stress, better sleep, and seemingly sustained a passion for their careers and roles. There were relatively few complaints about having to work, nor were there any complaints that would suggest or indicate a burnout syndrome such as hating tasks or
responsibilities, or mentioning feelings of stress, dissatisfaction, or disappointment within their roles.

As each narrative was reviewed, four themes about the nature of ethical educational leadership and ideas about what fosters cultures of trust were identified. The themes included respecting self and others, serving and supporting, consistent practice, and community collaboration. These themes reflect some of the experiences and ways of being an ethical educational leader and will be detailed later in this chapter.

The language that was used was also noteworthy. The leaders’ ways of thinking and speaking with words that corresponded to their beliefs captured their ethical ways of being and leading, of which this researcher had not noticed during the interview process. There are channels to communication that can be interrupted in the moment and we may lose meaning or misinterpret what is being conveyed at the time of face-to-face interactions. Nuances of speech and communication were not recognized until listening again to the taped narratives at the time of transcription.

By paying attention to the speech of each participant, inclusive of inflections, phrasing, timing and pauses, intonation and phonetic emphasis, enunciation, and projection of words which were chosen to convey meaningful answers, the value of my deeply listening repeatedly to their shared personal experiences and journeys was greatly appreciated. The recorded conversational responses became even more enlightening due to the benefit of repeating them as often as this researcher felt necessary during review and transcription.

Throughout the study of each leaders’ shared ways of being in the recordings as well as the transcribed data, this researcher respected that their answers were far more thoughtful and
considerate of the research questions and case scenarios for analyses than initially recognized. It became more apparent that their ethical ways of being were valuable while this researcher continued to move through the data sorting, grouping, and searching for meaning to my inquiries about ethical leadership.

When the participants of the study were interviewed, it was noted that the design of the research allowed ample room for conversation and in some instances when solving the case scenarios, choices were mixed to convey a process by which solutions could be found. The design of narrative interview enabled the speakers to draw from real life experience or imagine situations in order to provide answers.

The participants creatively, genuinely, and positively responded to the topics and questions. Rather than relying on scripted policies and procedures, resources readily available, or even practical solutions for the sake of expediency (an initial concern I felt might be a weakness of my interview instruments), their contributions were detailed and thorough.

**Observations**

The collected narratives as observed by this researcher depict some ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values of the educational leaders interviewed in this study. All of the themes that were extrapolated from the data are detailed individually by their own category. There are also sections of speech, tracts of words and phrases, as well as portions of discussions taken directly from the participants’ interview responses that this researcher felt to be most empowering and enabling regarding the enrichment of one’s knowledge base of ethical leadership.
This section commences with the behaviours, characteristics, and values as described by the participants. It concludes with the four themes that emerged from the data as well as participants’ perceptions of challenges.

**Ethical behaviours.**

Descriptions contributed by the participants about ethical behaviours included words and phrases such as “being authentic”, “behaving with confidence” and “being consistent or behaving consistently”.

Behavioural words of the participants included “creating”, “enabling”, “encouraging”, “being equitable”, “ethical actions”, “evolving as a leader”, “getting frustrated”, “honest actions”, and “being or behaving in a kind way”. Participants consistently reiterated that “acting respectfully in relationships” was of “particular importance”, and “acting in a truthful manner” was emphasized.

**Ethical characteristics.**

Descriptions contributed by the participants about ethical characteristics included words and phrases such as “authentic, truthful, and trustworthy”. Participants offered a necessity to be “community oriented”, “have excellent communication”, and be “connected”. Consistency was highly emphasized in all of the transcripts and included such descriptions as being “consistent and well balanced”.

Participants stated that leaders who were “creative”, “encouraging”, “ethically aware”, and “fair and respectful” had qualities they valued in leadership. The participants each valued an “honest”, “charming”, “humourous”, “personable”, and “effective” leader over those who carried an “important air” or “inaccessible”. Abilities that were also valued by the participants as ethical
characteristics included “objective listening”, “kindness and caring”, “patience”, “relating with and respecting others”, “reliability”, and “understanding”.

**Ethical values.**

Descriptions contributed by the participants about ethical characteristics included words and phrases such as “freedoms, rights, and privileges”, “awareness of right and wrong”, “authenticity”, “challenges”, “respectful communication”, and “personal space” were noted. “Eye contact” was mentioned as a valued behaviour playing a role in trustworthy interaction between individuals, and yet the awareness that other cultures may not value eye contact in the same manner, perhaps seeing it as a distrustful or disrespectful stance, was emphasized.

It was noted that many words, expressions, and phrases could be categorized in dual roles which overlapped behaviour, characteristic, and value. Things such as “community”, “confidentiality”, “interconnectedness”, were not only described as values, but were described as behaviours as well. “Contacts and networking” were valued, but also recognized as behaviours and characteristics of people who were adept at “communication and conflict resolution processes”, and included having “creativity” as a characteristic or behaviour.

All participants agreed that “conflict solving”, “encouragement”, “equality”, “fairness”, “evolution”, “honesty”, “truth”, and “trustworthiness” were important. “Kindness and being kind”, “being able to envision”, “having integrity, loyalty, and being reliable”, and “valuing what is necessary and best for students” were emphasized.

“Valuing students”, “valuing relationships”, “gratefulness”, “reciprocity”, “valuing differences”, “value of facts over opinions”, “valuing time and valuing others’ time”, came from the participants’ claims that these were the necessary traits of an ethical leader inclusive of
behaving in those manners, having characteristics that embodied those traits, and valuing each trait as of utmost importance in their ethical leadership roles.

**Four Emergent Themes**

Themes and concepts arise in qualitative data analysis. The following depicts the four themes rich with vocabulary and phrases that were discovered in the analysis of this researcher’s data. The themes included respecting self and others, serving and supporting, consistent practice, and community collaboration.

**Respecting self and others.**

This value of respect was obvious throughout each of the participants’ expositions. Respect included aspects of interpersonal communication and behaviour as well as respect for ecological sustainability. Some examples of participants’ statements regarding respect in its various forms include the following:

- *Speak clearly about what you think and allow those who differ to speak their minds as well.*
- *It is seeing a bigger picture and what is best for all and what society accepts and what is just.*
- *It is not enough to say we respect the land without saying thank you for the land, it is recognizing you have a relationship with the land as well.*

The above statements speak to the obligation of respectful individual interactions, societal connection, and respect for the well-being of our planet. Further examples taken directly from the data regarding various dimensions of respect for self and others include:
• Learn to coexist; build consensus rather than agreement.

• Having more people involved in decision-making leads to better decisions.

• Everyone brings something different to the table and I think we get to a stronger place.

• I am often able to recognize the position that likely someone else is coming from.

• I am trying not to be so hard on myself and am learning how to let some things go.

• Take care of yourself with good sleep, diet, exercise, and knowing that some days are going to be stressful, but there are better ways to deal with stress than denying it.

• Having the respect of the people that you are working with means what you say and what you do are in alignment.

Serving and supporting.

This statement, “Strive to do what is best for the university, its students, staff, and the public” was exclaimed in a variety of ways throughout the data. Each participant seemed to hold a belief that “connection to the university” was a necessary state of mind when serving and supporting the staff, students, and public. Various participant phrases depicting the value of service and support to others include:

• Look at what the basic human rights are that need to be upheld always.

• As a leader in an environment where we value equality and accessibility to education, I am always thinking about treating people fairly and listening to their side.
• Bringing needs forward for people who may not otherwise have had a voice is important.

• We solidly agree upon a list of values and then our list of priorities when serving and supporting our students.

• My group is constantly in a process of developing new procedures and guidelines and policies as issues come up and as challenges come up.

• The values don’t really change much but the priorities change.

• I cannot divorce myself from the impacts and influences other people have on me and how much I know that they do for me and how much I know I do for them.

Consistent practice.

Best practices, consistent practices, developing practices, and informed practices were discussed throughout the interviews. Reflecting on the value of modelling specific behaviours, one participant explained, “Whether I am working with students or staff, I don’t ask anything of them that I would not ask of myself, so you have to role-model in everything you do as a leader.” Further sections of dialogue from the data regarding consistency involve the following statements:

• There are certain modicums of behaviour at our campus and I had to let the students know their rights regarding what was acceptable and what was unacceptable.

• We live our values daily and indigenous education is that principle approach.

• Set boundaries and ensure that policies are in place for consistent practice.
• We are doing a disservice if we are not reliably looking at all perspectives when making decisions.

**Community collaboration.**

Most people agree that collaborative processes within classrooms, educational communities, and societies are beneficial to people overall. Participants’ thoughts about collaboration are as follows:

• *Be clear in your communication with everyone when outlining objectives and collaborate on those goals together.*

• *We deal with several different stakeholders, all of whom are important, and so that means we are dealing with equally important, but at times, competing interests.*

• *It is a balancing act to try to juggle the realities of a budget with the needs of employees against the best interests of students.*

• *All the communities decided there were other ways of dealing with the issue than just following codes.*

• *We demonstrate through our actions and the way we support various communities and people we lead.*

• *There’s reconciliation now, a heightened awareness, but you know some people say there never was conciliation. Communities still believe in the power of education and want to push the next generations to get their education.*

• *The sense of responsibility for building community and building relationships was highly important to my family and it was just part of what you did.*
• It is a true concern making sure people are successful; it is important we get this right so we don’t break the bonds in trust that we are building again.

Leaders’ Perceptions on Challenges

Many challenges and dilemmas occur in the day-to-day existence of educational leaders. Ethical dilemmas involve dimensions of fairness, trust, and often respect or lack thereof.

Participant reflections on challenges included:

• There are huge issues where trust has been broken.

• Building a culture of trust is difficult because good intentions can have negative impacts.

• The most difficult challenges were issues involving students who argued in class over whether certain cultures should have the same rights as other cultures.

• Ethical education allows for free speech, thought, and choices of religion and culture.

• Sometimes it is difficult to make everyone happy. That is the place when you must live your values and understand if you are making the best choice for the students first.

• It takes time to build relationships; so much of it needs to be an organic process. Many organizations do not foster cultural time and relationship building.

• Spending time with the Elders and spending time at community events are challenging because there are things that need to be done that only the leader can do and delegation is not always something you can do.
- Time commitments and advocating for the people that you work with to do those different jobs.

**Thoughts and ways of being.**

It was noted that participants stated they could not divorce themselves from, or could not separate themselves from their ethical ties both personally and professionally. The following statements made up a large part of the participants’ personal and professional ways of being including their behaviours, characteristics, and values:

- The values subscribed to are lived in and manifested in our daily experiences.
- Those moments when you are on a hike or by the water and you are overwhelmed by the beauty so you make an offering to say that we will take care of this for the future generations.
- Address the constraints in the best way you can.
- Collaborate and communicate with team members to make those transitions run smoothly.
- Tons of advocacy for everyone involved in education.
- Check facts and make sure there is justifiable reason to investigate, complain, inquire.
- It is our duty to help students learn how to solve their problems.
- We aren’t just educating children, but adults, too, so they have different choices as to how to work with people.
- We cannot lead perfectly but we can strive to reduce mistakes by thinking, planning, and having a vision.
Fostering cultures of trust.

The following participants’ thoughts emphasize the value of trust, building cultures of trust, fostering cultures of trust, and modelling dimensions of trust such as trustworthiness and being trusted or truthful:

- *I think honesty is very important.*
- * Authenticity I think is important. It is about being true to yourself and really understanding who you are as a person/as a leader, because if you’re taking stands that aren’t true to yourself or if you go back and forth and apply different rules to different situations, people see that very quickly.*
- *You will lose trust as a leader quickly if you’re not an authentic leader because you are not giving people any reason to trust you.*
- *I think that transparency is very important when you are trying to build and maintain trust. It goes back to the consistency piece; if you are consistent and transparent, this builds trust.*
- *I think being genuine is really important, but genuine in an appropriate way.*
  When somebody tells me that they are upset, I have good eye contact, good body language, I sit down and talk to them, and I show and demonstrate my support not just by the words that I am speaking, but through my body language, and actually taking the time.
- *People feel trust and if they don’t feel the trust coming from you or don’t perceive you as being trustworthy, then it is hard to build trust. The best way is to speak with people in groups and individually.*
- *Remember what they tell you and remember things about their personal lives.*
Summary

All of the above phrases, words, language used, beliefs, values, characteristics, and ways of being as quoted in this chapter convey some of the participants’ views on ethical leadership in education as analyzed and observed from the collected data. The dimensions of trust and fostering cultures of trust have been examined and outlined as depicted in this chapter. The ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values studied and depicted can be taught, learned, and embraced by those aspiring to be ethical educational leaders.

The ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values depicted in this study added to this researcher’s overall growth and understanding of educational leadership. Educational leadership development and training is enhanced by learning the ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values of educational leaders in practice.
The Findings

Awareness and understanding of my own experiences and influences were gained during the course of this research through active listening and discovering others’ shared experiences. Engaging with others, communicating and sharing, and story-telling are powerfully rewarding activities that enrich learning. Depicted in this study are the data and the themes that were apparent to this researcher as a result of the analysis, observations, and organization of the information collected. This research describes the viability of learning about behaviours, characteristics, and values of ethical leaders in education in order to learn, improve, or practice ethical leadership. A variety of ethical traits, ways of being, and thinking as shared by the educational leaders at VIU are delineated in this research.

Highlighting the need for ethical leadership, Mishra and Mishra (2013) claim that there are relatively few studies on the development of trust in leaders and organizations; more studies seem to examine interpersonal relationships (p. 60). Begley and Johansson (2003) provide theories and reflective practices that promote tolerance and understanding of cross-cultural perspectives, relationships of gender, and school organizational values which help to build trust, but do not necessarily emphasize ethical leadership education as a concrete tool or subject matter for learning, modelling, or practicing ethical leadership.

The overall aim of this current research is to provide the reader with ethical traits and ways of practice that can be learned and modelled. Not all leaders are ethical, but one can learn to be ethical, especially if ethical behaviour is crucial to education. This current research
proposes that the foundations to ethical leadership can be learned and practiced by understanding some of the behaviours, characteristics, and values of ethical persons.

**Implications and Connections**

Boon (2011) claimed that “Quality teachers are considered to be those individuals whose pedagogy is grounded in values and beliefs that lead to caring, positive teacher-student relationships, embedded in trust and high standards of professional ethics” (p. 76). “Beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives” (Pajares, 1992, p. 307). Pajares (1992) emphasized that beliefs are influential in determining how individuals define and solve problems, and are “stronger predictors of behaviour” (p. 311). This researcher reasons that by learning ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values, educational leadership can be enhanced and cultures of trust can be built.

Calling for teacher training courses to include ethical philosophy, Boon (2011) explained this supports professional practice and teacher quality by preparing and equipping teachers with techniques to explore and teach complex ethical issues in the classroom (p. 76).

This researcher has learned that the ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values of the educational leaders at VIU serve a solid purpose for learning, self-development, and growth. Regardless of one’s role, a student of educational leadership, a new educational leader, or anyone who wishes to improve upon their knowledge base regarding ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values in education, the aim of this study was to share ethical ways of being.

The themes that revolved around respecting self and others included necessary ways of thinking about how to serve and support others. Ethical leaders build connections with communities that network together to enrich all those involved with learning and sharing
knowledge. Knowing one’s values and practicing consistently by modelling the behaviours that enable trustful cultures and ways of being while leading in education was emphasized throughout the data by the participants. Each in their various ways, the participants defined educational leadership as a role with great ethical responsibility.

Data Illustrations

The following figure (see Figure 1, p. 41) depicts a visual illustration of an ethical framework developed from the data in this study. Each quadrant in the framework highlights some of the necessary considerations when determining and solving ethical dilemmas. The framework can be used as a resource for inquiry and reflection.

The ensuing tables (see Tables 1 and 2, p. 42-46) depict various portions of the data analyzed in a format that corresponds with the instruments used in the study. The tables provide some of the participant answers taken directly from the interviews regarding the questions and the case scenarios presented in the study.

Illustrating the most frequently used words is a graph (see Graph 1, p. 46) which depicts the number of times specific words were mentioned in the interviews. On the left side of the graph are the actual number of word occurrences in the narrative data. The corresponding percentages have been noted on the right side of the graph, with the listed words on the bottom of the graph.

These illustrations of the organized data taken directly from the study connect the meaning of this researcher’s understanding of ethical leadership behaviours, characteristics, and values as shared by the participants.
Figure 1. An Ethical Framework

- Ethical dilemmas
- Ethical problem solving
- Ethical action and impact of decisions
- Ethical behaviours, characteristics, values

- Do no harm
- Best interests of students
- Fairness and justice
- Inclusive and respectful

- Doing harm
- Disregard of others
- Serving self interests only
- Breaking codes or laws

- Cultures of trust
- Honesty and integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Truthful interaction
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<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Samples of Participant Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>In your opinion, what are the necessary values of an ethical educational leader?</td>
<td>Leaders need to have a solid understanding of themselves and what their values are; have a good knowledge base and awareness of ethical dilemma solving; portray trust; be trustworthy; enjoy working with people; valuing differences of opinions and others; meting out fair discipline; having morals; doing the right thing; seeing the bigger picture and long-term consequences or results of actions and decisions; knowing that situations arise that challenge your values and your ethics; main values are respect for self and others; honest, confidentiality, and authenticity; being transparent, fair, and accurate; be morally just at all times; awareness of human rights, morals, codes, and equality and equity for all; being passionate about education; being consistent in mood and actions; loyalty, valuing others, and being genuinely concerned; love what you are doing.</td>
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<td>Do you believe there are specific behaviours or characteristics that define an ethical leader?</td>
<td>Honesty, consistency, and setting boundaries; knowing the value of practice, policies, and procedures; role model your behaviours to the highest of standards, codes, and ethical practice; collaborate and treat others with respect; evaluate all perspectives; have a good rationale behind decision-making and use ethical philosophy, case scenarios, and discussions to problem solve; good communication skills; being able to mediate fairly; expand and learn; develop and grow; share knowledge; care for others; listen well; take risks; don’t avoid confrontation if it suits an ethical purpose; deal with difficulties and recognize conflict; speak clearly and let others speak their opinions; demonstrate through actions the way you support people.</td>
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<td>What kind of ethical challenges do you encounter as an educational leader and what</td>
<td>Dealing with different stakeholders, unions, varieties and levels of roles that people are in; dealing with each other</td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>are some of the practices that you employ to solve them?</td>
<td>equally; juggling various needs of people versus budget restraints or other constraints; racism and equality; readiness to learn versus fears or other barriers to education; prepare by studying and learning all supports available; implement discussions and problem solving via collaborative learning groups; avail all persons to human rights, safety, awareness, and intercultural campus responsibilities; figure out learning strategies; discipline and support strategies; support those who are facing difficult situations, stressors, or change; explain dilemmas and seek facts and solutions from various sources; keep an open mind and accept differences. Seek resources such as codes, mandates, algorithms, and various philosophies or ethical problems that are similar and determine how they were solved; anything to do with human resources, students and people can involve ethical situations that need resolving; truth and reconciliation process; teaching new teachers and embedding ethical problem solving and knowledge; build bonds of truth, trust, and respect with each other by acknowledgement and conciliation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you tell me about a time when you faced an ethical dilemma in your leadership role and what worked or did not work in solving the problem?</td>
<td>Confidential dilemmas take time to solve; solve cases hypothetically and discuss with only those you trust; arbitration; consensus building; building trust; increased communication and team activities to build respectful interaction; knowing your duty to provide the best in care and education; documenting everything; finding and seeking facts versus opinions or hearsay; outline course or work objectives and allow input from others for improvements; know that individuals are different and respond differently; be respectful of differences and be empathetic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are some of the ways that you have tried to build a culture of trust?</td>
<td>Being genuine; having eye contact; align what you are saying with your body</td>
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language and be open to others’ points of view; be available for others if they need assistance and recognize when someone is stressed, fearful, or misunderstanding; be encouraging and respectful; being transparent and consistent maintains trust; being a role model of trust and trusting relationships; building relations slowly and keeping good on promises made; telling people what you are going to do and then doing it; being fair and having the rationale behind decisions made and communicating them to your team.

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any ethical leaders who have influenced or inspired you?</td>
<td>Global leaders who have led great numbers of people to better ways of living and thinking; many people are inspiring when they help others; caring for one another and those who care for others are inspiring leaders; Howard Hughes because he risked much failure before and after success; Mother Theresa for her dedication to serving others, many leaders in business and in war who care about others have been successful (JFK, Trudeau, Ghandi, M. King); family members; great grandmother; many women who were leaders, chiefs, and elders were very strong women who led men, women, and children to better ways of life, and knowing, and being; ancestors and past family members who immigrated to Canada and were pioneers of business and education; several family members were teachers; my grandfather was a principal and he was a phenomenal influence on my leadership style as he was very fair and very kind, but quite serious when he needed to be.</td>
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Table 1. Responses to Interview Questions
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<tr>
<th>Case Scenarios</th>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Participant Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>A long-time colleague of yours has misappropriated substantial funds from</td>
<td>A) Anonymously contact police, or tell your colleague’s supervisor.</td>
<td>I liked this scenario because there was no easy solution. If you tackle it from an</td>
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<td>the university budget for personal gain. You have knowledge of your</td>
<td>B) Discuss directly with your colleague and encourage them to admit and seek</td>
<td>anonymous point of view, you will always have to face the guilt or shame of not</td>
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<td>colleague’s financial duress on a personal basis and are aware of this</td>
<td>help.</td>
<td>facing the situation. If you discuss directly with your colleague without collecting</td>
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<td>behaviour on your colleague’s part. How would you deal with this problem on</td>
<td>C) Stay quiet and not say anything hoping someone else will find out.</td>
<td>facts, and approaching it very sensitively, you risk confrontation that may prove</td>
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<td>a personal and/or professional basis?</td>
<td>D) Other.</td>
<td>to have not been valid in the first place. I would handle this in a manner that is</td>
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<td>Results: All six participants chose letter B and added various fact</td>
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<td>private and confidential in the first place. The bottom line is it must be discussed</td>
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<td>finding, conflict solutions, and further scenarios were envisioned to help</td>
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<td>and reported and acted upon. Encourage the person to seek help and give a timeline</td>
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<td>them solve this dilemma.</td>
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<td>before reporting it or escalating to others to investigate. Offer options of support,</td>
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<td>encouragement and assistance to seek restitution. Follow justice, rules and codes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of conduct, and policies and procedures. Ethically/legally theft is wrong in many</td>
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<td>ways and may indicate other difficulties the person is having.</td>
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<td>You are working with an educational leader who has “power over” you and</td>
<td>A) None. Ignore the situation as it does not directly involve you.</td>
<td>So this was tricky. My immediate question around this was did I witness this or is</td>
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<td>openly displays racist behavior. You have tried to convey that you do</td>
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<td>this hearsay? Facts about</td>
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not condone the behaviour. The leader’s behaviour is specifically directed at a minority group of students in your school and seems to be escalating. You are aware that the students are afraid to complain on a more formal basis. What is your ethical responsibility in this situation?

Results: All six participants chose a combination of letters B and C, as well as additional input from their own experiences with racism and solving conflict.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B) Discuss directly with your colleague about how the group of students feels.</th>
<th>C) Discuss privately with the students and inform them of support/complaint processes.</th>
<th>D) Other.</th>
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<td>situations must be gathered. Open discussions in meetings about expected behaviours, and even discussing hearsay about complaints about specific behaviours without pointing fingers helps to open the discussion about racism, inequality of treatment, and student conflicts with other students or teaching staff.</td>
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Table 2. Responses to Case Scenarios

Graph 1. Language of Leadership
Conclusions

Boon (2011) stated it is important that throughout our education, we place emphasis on creating curriculum that involves various scenarios and ethical philosophies that may help us solve a range of ethical dilemmas regardless of our roles as students, teachers, or leaders. Throughout this research, I realized that the value of the scenarios, discussions, and planning for solutions was very similar to how one learns by role play, sharing stories and fiction such as fables or proverbs, and learning from others’ shared experiences.

More than the questions, the scenarios enabled participant and researcher to hypothesize various outcomes without having to estimate impact on real persons. Rather than pulling from previous conflict situations, it also enabled the participants and the researcher to view the cases as something entirely new with a view to solving it differently than if encountered before. The ability to estimate or underestimate the impact of a decision or action was an interesting benefit to solving the case scenarios and having discussions about the solutions.

Ethical behaviours, characteristics, and values can be learned, practiced, modelled, embraced, and emphasized in educational leadership. These traits are crucial to educational leaders and their leadership. Of critical importance to the participants was knowing one’s self and values when it came to conflict and resolution, as well as having excellent communication skills including respect for others and good listening abilities. The third most critical aspect of educational leaders who practice in an ethical manner was the awareness of various ethical problem solving approaches to reach consensus, make decisions, serve justice, and support others.

Fostering cultures of trust, and trust building, regardless of relations with one or more persons, became the most interesting aspect of the study as it highlighted how behaviours,
characteristics, and values become intertwined, inseparable from ways of being, both professionally and personally. Trust was emphasized and noted to be the most important aspect in any relationship between leaders and followers and within education, trust was imperative for the success of students and schools.

The future of ethical leadership remains an open opportunity for curriculum developers, teachers and educators, as well as educational leaders to emphasize and develop necessary ethical education. Students aspiring to be ethical educational leaders will benefit from education that is centered around ethical dilemmas and their solutions. This researcher hopes to continue to develop, grow, and incorporate ethical education in future studies, classrooms, and leadership roles. By means of this research and by integrating processes of inquiry, case analyses, reflection, and future action research in ethical leadership, it is hoped that ethical awareness in curriculum will be sustained as a necessary component of leadership education.
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Interview Questions (Appendix A)

Ethical Educational Leadership

1) Strike (2007) claims an ethical and moral educational leadership is the foundation on which to build, maintain, and sustain trust in schools (p. 15-17). In your opinion, what are the necessary values of an ethical educational leader?

2) Do you believe there are specific behaviours or characteristics that define an ethical leader?

3) Coleman (2012) explains that leaders are challenged to solve ethically imbued problems such as helping to promote common visions and inspiring others to follow, fostering encouragement and collaboration, and resolving disputes and managing conflict (p. 79-106). What kind of ethical challenges do you encounter as an educational leader and what are some of the practices that you employ to solve them?

4) Can you tell me about a time when you faced an ethical dilemma in your leadership role and what worked or did not work in solving the problem?

5) What are some of the ways that you have tried to build a culture of trust?

6) Are there any ethical leaders who have influenced or inspired you?
Case Scenarios (Appendix B)

Ethical Educational Leadership

Please read the following two case scenarios and choose one of the solutions “A”, “B”, “C”, or “D” as provided for each of the scenarios. Please feel free to share your point of view and discuss your selection.

Case Scenario # 1

A long-time colleague of yours has misappropriated substantial funds from the university budget for personal gain. You have knowledge of your colleague’s financial duress on a personal basis and are aware of this behaviour on your colleague’s part. How would you deal with this problem on a personal and/or professional basis?

E) Anonymously contact police, or tell your colleague’s supervisor.
F) Discuss directly with your colleague and encourage them to admit and seek help.
G) Stay quiet and not say anything hoping someone else will find out.
H) Other.

Case Scenario # 2

You are working with an educational leader who has “power over” you and openly displays racist behavior. You have tried to convey that you do not condone the behaviour. The leader’s behaviour is specifically directed at a minority group of students in your school and seems to be
escalating. You are aware that the students are afraid to complain on a more formal basis. What is your ethical responsibility in this situation?

E) None. Ignore the situation as it does not directly involve you.

F) Discuss directly with your colleague about how the group of students feels.

G) Discuss privately with the students and inform them of support/complaint processes.

H) Other.