National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

BY

JAMES ROBERT JEFFERY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1990

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Service
Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

ISBN 0-315-60227-9

NL-339 (r. 88/04) c

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: JAMES ROBERT JEFFERY

TITLE OF THESES: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

DEGREE: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1990

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(Signed)

Permanent address: P.O. Box 2520
Mt. Pearl, NF
CANADA AIN 4M7

Date: April 18, 1990

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR submitted by JAMES ROBERT JEFFERY in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

K. L. Ward, Supervisor

D. A. MacKay

F. Peters

J. Paterson

D. M. Richards

P. Renihan, External Examiner

Date: April 18, 1990

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to utilize the perceptions of school principals in Newfoundland and Labrador in identifying and describing those factors which influence their professional ethics. A secondary purpose of the study was to determine if the identified ethical factors and considerations utilized in non-normative situations, varied according to selected school, respondent, and organizational characteristics.

Data were gathered using a questionnaire which included 66 fixed response items as well as 10 open-ended response items directly related to two given scenarios. The sample for this study consisted of 129 randomly selected K-12 school principals in Newfoundland and Labrador. The response rate was 85.2%. Statistical data were analyzed through one-way analysis of variance, t tests, factor analysis and Pearson correlation coefficients. The open-ended comments on the scenarios were subjected to content analysis.

The results of the factor analysis were 17 factors. A number of these factors were significantly related statistically to school setting and school size. As well, there were significant relationships with the principals age, gender, level of education, commitment to the beliefs of a church, familiarity with the Newfoundland Teacher's

Association Code of Ethics, and written and unwritten school board ethical guidelines.

A content analysis of comments related to the two scenarios confirmed two major ethical approaches utilized by the respondents in dealing with situations in which there was an absence of specific ethical policies and guidelines. However, no conclusive reasons could be advanced for the respondents' pattern of selecting various approaches in dealing with the ethical dilemmas posed in the two scenarios.

The study concluded with recommendations for further research into the topic of organizational influences on the ethical decision-making of school principals. As well, the need was advanced for an up-to-date model to describe the ethical decision-making processes associated with the school principalship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many individuals have contributed a great deal of time and energy towards the successful completion of this study.

Special thanks are extended to Dr. Ken Ward, thesis supervisor for his guidance and special encouragement throughout all stages of this study. Special thanks also to committee members, Dr. D. A. MacKay, Dr. F. Peters, Dr. D. M. Richards, and Dr. J. G. Paterson for their valuable contributions and criticisms. Acknowledgement and appreciation is also extended to Dr. P. Renihan who served as the external examiner.

Special recognition must be extended to Mrs. Gwen Brokenshire, Memorial University for her extensive help in the questionnaire development phase. Also to Mrs. Chris Prokop, University of Alberta for her encouragement and invaluable assistance in the analysis of data.

My deepest appreciation however, must be extended to my wife Donna and our three sons, Jason, James, and Justin. Their moral support and individual understanding have made this project obtainable. I am particulary appreciative of Donna's comment that the impact away from family time during this whole exercise was hardly noticeable.

Table of Contents

Chapter		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
	PURPOSES OF THE STUDY	3
	The Statement of the Problem	5
	JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY	7
	Practical Significance of the Study	8
	DEFINITION OF TERMS	9
	ASSUMPTIONS, DELIMITATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS	11
	Assumptions	12
	Delimitations	12
	Limitations	13
	ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS	13
2.	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
	ETHICS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION: AN OVERVIEW	15
	The Historical Perspective	15
	Ethical Codes: Attempts to Fill the Gap	18
	Ethical Concerns in the 1970s-80s	20
	A CONSIDERATION OF ETHICS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION	22
	Introduction	22
	Societal Concerns About the Influences of Education	23
	Ethical Concerns About Organizations	23
	Power and Authority	24
	Concerns with Moral Autonomy	25

PHILOSOPHICAL BASES FOR ETHICS..... 27

Historical Perspectives..... 27

Ethics: Towards a Definition..... 28

Normative Ethics..... 29

Metaethics..... 30

Problems in Ethical Decision-Making..... 32

Summary..... 36

THEORY, RESEARCH AND WRITING ON ETHICS IN ADMINISTRATION..... 37

Barnard's "Moral" Dimensions of Leadership. 37

Hodgkinson on Values..... 40

Research on Ethics in Administration..... 44

Writing on Ethical Influence Factors in Educational Administration..... 47

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK..... 52

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY..... 55

RESEARCH DESIGN..... 55

Focus of the Study..... 55

The Nature of the Study..... 58

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... 59

The Questionnaire..... 61

Questionnaire Development..... 65

Issues of Reliability and Validity..... 66

Sample..... 70

Administration of the Questionnaire..... 70

DATA ANALYSIS..... 71

Quantitative Analysis..... 72

Qualitative Analysis..... 72

Summary..... 73

4. PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS..... 76

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOLS... 76

School Setting..... 75

Grades in School..... 76

Student Populations..... 77

Teacher Populations..... 78

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS..... 79

Gender and Age of Respondents..... 80

Years of Administrative Experience..... 81

University Education..... 83

SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS SCHOOLS..... 86

Commitment to the Beliefs of a Church..... 86

Personal Satisfaction with the Principalship..... 87

Desire to be a Principal and Desire to Advance to a Higher Position..... 88

Familiarity with the NTA Code of Ethics.... 90

Written/Unwritten Ethical Guidelines..... 90

Responses to Unwritten Guidelines..... 91

SUMMARY..... 92

5. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1 AND 2..... 94

INTRODUCTION..... 94

PART A..... 95

Responses to Questionnaire, Section 2..... 95

Factor Analysis of Questionnaire, Section 2..... 100

Responses to Questionnaire, Section 3..... 104

Factor Analysis of Questionnaire, Section 3..... 107

Responses to Questionnaire, Section 4 Statements of Ethical Principles..... 110

Factor Analysis of Questionnaire, Section 4..... 113

Responses for Questionnaire, Section 5..... 115

Factor Analysis of Questionnaire, Section 5..... 117

Rank Ordering of Questionnaire, Section 5.. 119

PART B..... 122

School Characteristics/Principals Personal Characteristics..... 122

Responses by School Setting..... 122

Responses by School Type..... 126

Responses by School Size..... 126

Responses by Principal Gender..... 130

Responses by Age..... 133

Responses by Level of Education..... 137

Responses by Commitment to Beliefs of a Church..... 142

Responses by Familiarity with the NTA Code of Ethics..... 148

Responses by School Board's Written Ethical Guidelines..... 151

Responses by School Board's Unwritten Ethical Guidelines..... 154

SUMMARY..... 156

6. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS 3 AND 4..... 158

INTRODUCTION..... 158

PART A..... 159

Introduction..... 159

Scenario 1..... 160

Approaches accepted and reasons for rejection..... 161

Analysis of Approach *d*. responses..... 164

Approach *d*. Ethical Considerations..... 168

Introduction to Scenario 2..... 172

Scenario 2..... 172

Approaches accepted and reasons for rejection..... 174

Analysis of Approach *d*. responses..... 177

Content Analysis of Approach *d*. Ethical Considerations..... 181

PART B..... 184

Introduction..... 184

General Analysis of Responses to Scenarios 1 and 2..... 185

The Relationship of Selected Approaches With Specific Variables..... 187

Summary..... 195

The Relationship of Respondents Ethical Principles Approach with Selected Variables..... 196

SUMMARY..... 201

7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS..... 203

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY..... 203

Purpose of the Study..... 203

Justification for the Study..... 204

Conceptual Framework..... 205

Research Design, Instrumentation, and Methodology..... 206

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS..... 210

Significant Ethical Influence Factors..... 210

Factors Categorized..... 212

Relationship of School, Respondent, and Organizational Characteristics with Identified Factors..... 213

Ethical Considerations in Situations with an Absence of Normative Ethical Guidelines. 213

Ethical Considerations and Variations..... 214

CONCLUSIONS..... 215

IMPLICATIONS..... 215

Implications for Practice..... 216

Implications for Theory..... 217

Implications for Research..... 218

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 220

APPENDIX A: COVERING, FOLLOW-UP LETTERS..... 226

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE..... 232

List of Table

Table		Page
4.1	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Organizational Characteristics (School Setting and Grades)	77
4.2	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Students and Teachers in Respondent Schools	79
4.3	Frequency and Frequency Distributions of Respondents by Sex	80
4.4	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distribution by Respondents Age	81
4.5	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents' Years of Experience in Principalship	83
4.6	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distribution of Respondents University Education	85
4.7	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Commitment to the Beliefs and Practices of their Church	87
4.8	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distribution of Respondents Present Job Satisfaction	88
4.9	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distribution of Respondents Desire to Be a Principal/Advance Higher	89
4.10	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Familiarity with NTA Code of Ethics	90
4.11	Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Respondents Boards with Written/Unwritten Ethical Guidelines	91
5.1	Principals Perceptions of Ethical Influences Questionnaire, Section 2	97
5.2	Varimax Factor Solution for Questionnaire, Section 2	101
5.3	Principals Perceptions of Ethical Influences Questionnaire, Section 3	105

5.4 Varimax Factor Solution for Questionnaire, Section 3..... 108

5.5 Principals Perceptions of Influence of Ethical Principle Statements, Questionnaire Section 4..... 112

5.6 Varimax Factor Solution for Questionnaire, Section 4..... 114

5.7 Summary of Principals Perceptions of Ethical Influences, Questionnaire, Section 5..... 116

5.8 Varimax Factor Solution for Questionnaire, Section 5..... 118

5.9 Rank Ordering of Factors According to Ethical Influence, Questionnaire, Section 5..... 120

5.10 One-way Analysis of Variance of Ethical Influence Factors Classified by School Setting..... 123

5.11 One-way Analysis of Variance of Ethical Influence Factors Classified by Student Population..... 129

5.12 *T* Tests of Ethical Influence Factors as Classified by Principal Gender..... 132

5.13 One-way Analysis of Variance of Ethical Influence Factors Classified by Principals Age..... 134

5.14 One-way Analysis of Variance of Ethical Influence Factors Classified by Level of Education..... 140

5.15 One-way Analysis of Variance of Ethical Influence Factors Classified by Commitment to Beliefs and Practices of their Church..... 143

5.16 One-way Analysis of Variance of Ethical Influence Factors Classified by Familiarity with NTA Code of Ethics..... 150

5.17 *T* Tests of the Ethical Influence Factors Classified by School Board's Written Ethical Guidelines..... 153

5.18 *T* Tests of the Ethical Influence Factors Classified by School Board's Unwritten Ethical Guidelines.... 155

6.1 Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions of Approaches Used in Scenarios 1 and 2..... 186

6.2 Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Respondents Choice of Own Approach *d.* and Level of Commitment To a Church..... 192

6.3 Frequency and Percentage Frequency of Respondents Choice of Own Approach *d.* and Level of Familiarity with NTA Code of Ethics..... 194

List of Figures

Figure		Page
2.1	An Abbreviated version of Hodgkinson's Model of the Value Concept.....	43
2.2	Immegart and Burrough's Concept of the Administrator's Ethical Screen.....	53
2.3	Immegart's Model of a Broad Conceptualization of Leadership.....	54

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Many prominent writers allege that ethical concerns and consideration of values have been forgotten or overlooked in the study and practice of educational administration (Hodgkinson, 1978; Miklos, 1978; Enns, 1981; Sharples, 1984, Greenfield, 1985; Kimbrough, 1985; Rizvi, 1985).

As well, writers have observed that many of the issues and significant problems that confront school principals in the late 1980s, exhibit definite and pervasive ethical overtones. In fact, some writers have commented that matters involving ethical decisions and actions have become a normal and routine part of educational practice and administrative life (Hodgkinson, 1978; Sola, 1984; Crowson, 1986). As Strike et al. (1988) claim: "Administrators deal with fairness, equality, justice, and democracy as much as they deal with test scores, teacher's salaries, parents, and budgets" (p.14). It is in the process of decision-making that administrators are called upon to act responsibly and to do their utmost to make the "right" choice. Hodgkinson (1978, p.50) has observed that administrative decisions are made for, and about others, and thus bear a special "moral" aspect.

Some of the current, out-of-school issues, requiring

ethical considerations, centre on the polarization of unique societal groups with different beliefs (Kimbrough, 1985). Diverse racial, ethnic, and religious groups in society often confront one another over educational values. As well, different generations often do not have the same values and society's educational stakeholders often "disagree about desirable policies, procedures, and outcomes" (Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984, p.195).

Within the school setting itself, there are numerous situations which can generate ethical concerns. There are opportunities for principals to manipulate and deceive individuals, to treat students and teachers as objects, and to lapse into immoral, unprofessional conduct (Miklos, 1978; Enns, 1981; Thom, 1983; Crowson, 1986; Hostetler, 1986). As Kimbrough (1985) has observed, "educational administrators have a special need to observe high moral standards in the face of multiple temptations"(p.3).

The particular role of the school principal also provides opportunity for many and varied ethical concerns. Hodgkinson (1978) has observed that the administrator is in an interface position, standing "at the nexus of organization and environment"(p.16). Campbell et al. (1977, p.205) observed that principals are positioned squarely in the middle of several groups. They are the pivotal link between society, students, teachers, and parents on the one hand, and the policy making structure of

governments, school boards, professional organizations, and superintendents on the other. Because principals are often charged with making decisions which must consider *all* these groups, they must, as Kimbrough (1985) noted "be their own ethicists in determining right from wrong in nebulous situations" (p.47). As well, they must often "think through defensible positions on difficult ethical questions" (Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988 p. ix.).

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

During the last two decades the school principal has become the focus of a heightened interest by scholars in the field of education. Researchers have examined the principalship from many different perspectives. These have included the role of the principal (Miklos, 1983), principals' job satisfaction (Friesen, Holdaway, & Rice, 1984; Gunn & Holdaway, 1985), the link between principal effectiveness and school effectiveness (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986), and the everyday worklife of the principal (Kmetz & Willower, 1982; Pitner & Russell, 1985-86).

However, a review of available literature appears to reveal a dearth of research into the ethical concerns and considerations experienced by school principals. In particular, what factors influence school principals as they

determine different ethical courses of action? Of special interest also, is the question regarding the varied ethical considerations which influence the decisions of school principals in circumstances where there are no specific professional or organizational (school board) ethical policies or guidelines?

Thus, the main purpose of this study was to use the perceptions of school principals to explore, identify, describe, and categorize those factors which influence their professional ethical behaviour. As well, perceptions were sought about the ethical considerations utilized by school principals in nebulous situations, where there is often an absence of normative ethical guidelines and policies.

A secondary purpose of the research was to determine whether the ethical influence factors and ethical considerations employed by principals are contextually based. In the literature on the school principalship, contextual distinctions are noted between secondary school principals and elementary school principals, and urban and rural school principals (e.g. Kmetz and Willower, 1982; Leithwood, 1986). Differences are also apparent within groups. Kmetz & Willower (1982, p.74) noted various differences among principals and argued that these could "be attributed to such things as administrative style, personal preference, and *situational factors like school design and size or environmental demands*"(emphasis added). Crowson &

Porter-Gehrie (1981, p.49) have observed that little attention has been paid, in research, to the work of principals in their various organizational and societal/community contexts.

In this study, the question of how ethical influence factors are related to the principals' school, personal, and selected organizational characteristics is examined. School characteristics included the variables of size, setting, and school level. Personal characteristics examined were gender, age, level of education, current commitment to the beliefs of a church, and familiarity with the Newfoundland Teacher's Association Code of Ethics. Organizational characteristics were written and unwritten guidelines as espoused by the respondents school boards.

The Statement of the Problem

To explore the ethical influences on the school principals professional considerations and actions, answers were sought to four general questions. These questions have guided this research project, the development of the questionnaire, the analysis of data, and the discussion and presentations of the findings.

1. As perceived by school principals, what are the factors which influence their professional ethical behaviour?
2. Do the perceived ethical influence factors vary according to school characteristics (size, setting,

level); personal characteristics (gender, age, level of education, current religious commitment, familiarity with the Newfoundland Teacher's Association Code of Ethics), and organizational characteristics of written and unwritten ethical guidelines?

3. What are the ethical considerations which influence principals as they deal with situations in which there is an absence of normative ethical policies and guidelines?

4. Do the ethical considerations in these non-normative situations vary according to school characteristics (size, setting, level); personal characteristics (gender, age, administrative experience, course work in educational administration, current religious commitment, familiarity with the Newfoundland Teacher's Association Code of Ethics); and organizational characteristics (written and unwritten ethical guidelines)?

Because the study was descriptive and to some extent exploratory, no research hypotheses were generated. Besides these general questions, the current literature on ethics in educational administration served as a conceptual guide.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

In a world that grows more complicated, there is renewed interest in the ethical problems that society faces. As the Task Force on Ethics at the University of Alberta noted, "Society today faces [ethical] dilemmas of far greater complexity than any previous era"(p.1). These societal dilemmas have directly influenced schools, school administrators, and the study of educational administration.

As Hodgkinson (1978, p.146) observed

> The opportunities presented by organizational life for various forms of value sickness or pathology are manifold. This subject demands more exploration, but already it is clear that because of his power position the administrator faces uncommon demands of a value nature.

Riffel (1986) concurred with this view noting that "Seen comprehensively, most aspects of life and work in organizations are ethically problematic and merit sustained analysis" (165). Crowson (1986) determined that in their jobs, principals were frequently confronted with moral dilemmas and ethical "shoulds". As Enns (1981) commented "the ethical-moral variable is crucial in administration. It is an area for further investigation and analysis in the development of administrative knowledge"(p.8).

Theory and research on ethical concerns associated with the study of educational administration seem to provide little help. Indeed, the training of educational

administrators appears to reveal a dearth of ethical considerations (Enns, 1981; Kimbrough, 1985). As Miklos (1978) observed "inadequate attention has been given to the moral and ethical components and dimensions of administrative action"(p.4). He urged that this area be attacked through scholarly inquiry. As Sharples (1984) concluded, "The major concern for some time to come will be to redress the imbalance that has evolved between the technical and moral aspects of administration"(p.33).

In summary, very little research has been undertaken in this important area of educational administration. It is a complex area for study, made difficult as Immegart and Burroughs (1970) suggested because "of the impingement of societal, personal, professional, organizational, and means ethics" (p.105). However, as Kimbrough (1985) has admonished, "The formal study of administrative ethics is essential if administrators are to cope effectively with the complex problems they face"(p.46).

This study, which examined the many factors associated with influencing the professional ethical behaviour of school principals in Newfoundland and Labrador, will serve to address some of those needs.

Practical Significance of the Study

In the 1980s, professional occupations must have an articulated set of ethical standards. Thoughtful, well

developed administrative ethics strengthen school administrators as they deal with increasing numbers of ethical dilemmas and conflicts. As Rich (1984, p.25) wrote:

> The study of professional ethics cannot be a sufficient condition for impeccable ethical practices, but it can provide a background of knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for ethical behaviour.

Sharples (1984) observed that "by having a well developed set of educational values, an administrator is no longer subject to the vagaries of fashion like the reed in the wind...(p.37). Thom and Klassen (1986) concurred by observing that "the administrator who draws all of his cues of behaviour from others and lacks a solid value system of his own will be as lost as a ship without a compass, chart and pilot"(p.131).

It is hoped that this study will provide a better understanding of how a multiplicity of distinctive elements, influence the professional ethical behaviour of school principals. As well, it is hoped that this study will generate awareness and discussion of ethical thought and practice in the decision-making processes of school principals.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Within the domain of this study are the following general and operational definitions of significant terms.

In all instances the definitions are drawn from relevant literature.

Ethics. Concern questions of right and wrong...duties and obligations, rights and responsibilities. Within the context of this study, it is assumed that there is no important philosophical distinction between the commonly used terms "ethics" and "morals". Both terms denote the principles of right and wrong in conduct. As such, ethical discourse is characterized by a unique vocabulary including words such as "ought" and "should", "fair" and "unfair".

Values. Values refer to a persons' belief structures. Values concern what people like or believe to be good. Often there is nothing right or wrong with a persons values. They are a matter of free choice.

Professional Ethical Behaviour. Refers to ethical considerations and actions associated with a given profession. Other synonymous terms are "professional ethics" and "administrative ethics". For this study, reference is to both professional, educational, and administrative ethical considerations and actions.

Value judgements. Judgements about what a person likes or wants. These judgements concern preferences or matters of taste.

Moral judgements. Judgements which tell individuals what they ought to do and what they ought not to do. They tell individuals what their duties are.

School Principal. Reference here is to the person designated as directing the operations of a school, Kindergarten through Grade 12.

Societal ethics. Universal obligations for which each member of a society is responsible. Societal ethics represent the collective or "normative" good sense or proper behaviourial desires of a society.

Personal Ethics. Those duties or obligations (standards) which an individual feels personally responsible to uphold. These individualized behaviourial standards result from experiences, interactions, and expectations of individuals throughout their lifetime. They are indeed part of the very fabric of an individual's personality.

Professional Ethics. Guidelines for professional behaviour. Professional educators often have a formalized Code of Ethics, consciously and deliberately evolved, which gives members guidelines for dealing with moral and ethical problems they face.

Organizational Ethics. Policies, normative standards, and legal structures which govern and regulate all human behaviour within an organization.

Means Ethics. Day to day behaviour - approaches, procedures, and strategies of school administrator as they work with students, teachers, and parents. These methods are often behaviourial and pragmatic, and concern ethical ramifications which are not always explicit and normative in

nature. Examples include how a principal should deal with a child that has been mistreated by a teacher or how to motivate teachers (through force or encouragement?).

ASSUMPTIONS, DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Assumptions

Basic to this study were the following four assumptions:

1. The conceptual framework of Immegart and Burroughs (1970) was pertinent in assessing the factors which influence the professional ethical behaviour of school principals in Newfoundland and Labrador.
2. The significant factors influencing the professional ethical behaviour of school principals could be measured by a questionnaire which contained forced choice responses and provision for open-ended replies.
3. The selected respondents were aware of, and could judge, the influence of significant factors on their professional ethical behaviour through the use of a questionnaire.
4. Principals would provide authentic and accurate responses to the questionnaire.

Delimitations

The primary delimitation of this study was that it