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**THE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE OF ETHICAL LEADERS: A CASE  
STUDY OF CHILEAN SCHOOL LEADERS**

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

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by

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## **ABSTRACT**

It is widely acknowledged that ethical leadership is of great importance to schools. Behaving ethically is indeed an imperative for school leaders. Being an ethical educational leader is something different. It is not only about behaving according to standards but rather involves an ethical way of being that engages the leader holistically in their attempt to do the right thing for students.

The purpose of this constructivist study was to explore the educational praxis of ethical school leaders in Chile. A multiple case study design was employed to gain insight into the feelings, beliefs and thoughts of ethical school leaders regarding their educational experiences. To this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight identified ethical school leaders. The data focused on the commonalities and uniqueness within and across participants.

Six main themes about the nature of ethical leadership were identified. They included: holding personal and professional ethics as inseparable, ‘consistently’ inspiring practice, valuing others, sustaining a humane view of education, being sensitive to the complex local context, and leading as serving. These themes reflect the experience of being ethical as a school leader in Chile.

It has been found that ethical leadership influences the relational context of leaders’ practice. Ethical leaders in education have been shown to influence educational contexts from a moral imperative that is grounded in a critical and humanistic concern that deeply affirms ‘others’ as a common good, rather than through any instrumental or technical change that they may initiate.

The findings provide key elements of ethical leadership within the Chilean school context that can influence current and future school leaders' practices and professional development. Moreover, becoming and being an ethical leader is indeed an experiential journey that integrates the leader's personal and professional way of being. This research calls for priority to be given to the encouragement and development of ethical leadership.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **My Motivation for the Research**

This thesis explores a particular leadership style, ethical leadership, in the current Chilean school context.

In Chile, school leadership has become a priority on the national policy agenda. There is growing agreement that “improving the quality of education for all children will require many more great school leaders” (Brunner, 2006, para. 1). However, how can this goal be achieved within the existing school context, which gives excessive importance to market tools, instead of seeking to improve teaching and learning? (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007).

During my employment with the Chilean Ministry of Education, I have worked closely with school leaders and observed that their practices appear to demonstrate a responsiveness to external requirements more than a moral commitment to do the right thing for students. In the same way, when school heads have been asked about the areas where they spend most of their time, they state that the majority of their time is dedicated to school administration tasks and just a little time to the educational (moral) aspects of their roles (OECD, 2007).

From my perspective, the context not only provides limitations and constraints for the exercise of leadership but also provokes the search for new leadership behaviours and skills. In this sense, within the Chilean school system context, prescribed policies and regulations do not necessarily have to be the parameters of

school leaders' actions. On the contrary, there may be an opportunity to explore and develop new types of leadership. This study reflects my personal interest in helping support current and future school leaders' practices in Chile towards a more humanistic expression of ethical school leadership. I think ethical leadership should serve as an expression of self-discovery, responsibility and real commitment to a moral intention. I believe that research in this area will showcase positive understandings of an ethical leadership style that might serve the current Chilean school context.

### **My Research Journey**

The development of this thesis was a long and involved process that transcended the content of this study. Because of this, my research not only constituted a valuable opportunity in which I have gained theoretical knowledge and insights into the research process, but it also represented an exciting journey of self-discovery and discovery of other people's beliefs and values.

My positioning as a researcher as well as my beliefs, values, and notions on the topic were made explicit throughout this study. This research was a trigger to uncover my own pre-assumptions and prejudices on the research topic. Thus, awareness and understanding of my own experiences and influences were gained during the course of the research. Both the researcher positioning and bias will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

In developing this research, I came to understand and value the power of others' voices and stories, the power of speaking for others, the power of telling others' stories, and therefore the responsibility involved in developing the voice of the

research. For this reason, the decisions made and the procedures employed during the course of this study reflected my determination to honour and respect the human experience at all times. This can be seen through the expansiveness of my research and the impartial incorporation of people's views and ideas.

Finally, being an international student, with English as a second language, was an experience of no less importance during the process of my study. Challenges such as being able to sensitively address and communicate my research in an additional language were present at every phase of the research process. Despite the challenges I experienced and the extra efforts required to overcome them, the journey has been of immeasurable value both personally and professionally. I am extremely grateful for the experiences and possibilities this research has given me, to cross continents and to provide ethical school leaders from Chile with a space to show their realities.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to explore the educational praxis of ethical school leaders in Chile. Essentially, the central endeavour of this constructivist inquiry is to gather understandings of the varied and multiple meanings constructed by school leaders regarding their experience of being an ethical leader. Thus, the objectives of this thesis are:

- To explore the educational practices of school leaders whose practice is seen as ethical.
- To explore the influences by which school leaders move to ethical practices.

- To explore the position that ethical leadership is a qualitatively different way of being in leadership.

These points are addressed by answering the following major research question:

- What is the nature of the educational praxis of ethical school leaders?

### **Significance of the Research**

It is envisaged that the information gathered from this study will influence the practice of current and future school leaders in Chile and also assist others involved in the implementation of professional development initiatives for school leaders. Additionally, the results of this study will have the potential to assist the Chilean Ministry of Education in the implementation of training programmes designed for aspiring and currently employed school leaders.

This research may also be of significance for researchers interested in the field of ethical educational leadership. The findings may offer a helpful foundation to continue the exploration of ethical leadership praxis.

### **Thesis Structure**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. While this introductory chapter has reviewed my motivation for the thesis and my research journey and provided the purpose of this study, the subsequent chapters offer a more comprehensive perspective of the research itself.

Chapter 2 reviews the salient literature pertaining to the field of ethical leadership. It examines the need for ethical educational leaders in the current school context, the meaning of ethics as the foundation of ethical leadership, the distinctions between ethical leadership and ethical practice, the similarities between transformational and ethical leadership, and, finally, the dynamics involved in the work of ethical educational leaders.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodological framework that was considered to best support this research. It explains the constructivist underpinnings guiding the study, the research design, and the procedures involved in the collection and analysis of the data. Details of the research context and the selection process of participants are provided. This chapter also sets forth the researcher bias and pre-understandings, uncovered through a process of self-interview, and the ethical considerations that are pertinent to the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings that emerged from the data. Here, the display of the data is organised in two subsections. Whilst the first subsection reports on individual stories of participants' experience, the second subsection turns to the shared themes found across the group of participants. In this section, six common themes are articulated. In both subsections excerpts from participants' commentaries are presented for illustration and illumination.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of the findings. This discussion covers the six themes traced in Chapter 5 and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of 'being' an ethical leader. Here, connections between the study's findings and the existing literature are made.

Chapter 6 concludes the research by summarising the findings of the present study, discussing the contributions and limitations, and identifying areas for further research.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter explores some of the main ideas that underpin the ethical educational leadership literature. This review begins by reflecting on the call for ethical educational leadership in contemporary school settings. Subsequently, an explanation of the notion of ethics is provided. Ethical leadership and its similarities to transformational leadership are discussed, followed by a consideration of the concept of ethical practice. Finally, the complexities of the work of educational leaders as ethical leaders are examined.

### **A Call for Ethical Educational Leadership**

It is difficult to imagine that ethical leadership should not be the basis of administration for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools, since the place of ethics and morality in the field of educational leadership has been strongly emphasised (Bottery, 1992; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 2004). In fact, school leadership is no longer conceptualised in terms of technical efficiency but as a predominantly moral and ethical activity (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 2004). Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) place school leadership at an ethical level, arguing that school leaders have a special responsibility to all stakeholders to be ethical in leading democratic schools. Starratt (1994) expands upon this by saying that in order to create more equitable futures for students, school leaders must conduct themselves ethically.

Certainly, there are a variety of compelling reasons that justify the need for ethical leaders in today's schools. A first reason stems from the notion that education, in essence, is a moral endeavour. As stated by Zubay and Soltis (2005), education

has a moral nature because it is concerned with the development of human beings in all their dimensions. This fact is clearly reflected in the twofold purpose of schooling. According to Hall (2008) schools are expected to not only promote learning but also to promote the moral development of their students. In his words:

Schools are expected to promote learning which includes the development of an appreciation of and commitment to values that are prized by the wider community, and which promote moral development. This is not easy in a pluralistic society such as ours, because of conflicting public expectations. Nevertheless, it is widely expected that teachers will teach their charges to behave morally. (Hall, 2008, p. 225)

In this way, schools define not only what students should know but also how they should think and act. This fact becomes more relevant when considering that children by nature are vulnerable and parents expect schools to keep their children from harm (Soder, 1990). This situation places school leaders in positions of power, in which any decision made within the school will unavoidably have an impact on the lives of students. The moral character of education therefore requires school leaders to promote learning as a moral activity, to see themselves as moral agents, and to act ethically with the aim of making a difference in the lives of learners (Fullan, 2008; Kaser & Halbert, 2009).

A second reason for school leaders to be ethical arises from changes that are occurring in the school environment which are requiring a different kind of leadership within schools. Although the central purpose of schooling is clear, now more is expected of these institutions and therefore of their leaders. In the current school context, dominated by high expectations, accountability, standardisation and a growing concern for measurement of schooling outcomes (Greenfield, 2004), Starratt (2004) notes that “school leaders are called upon to accommodate



these challenges coming from outside the school by making adjustments to their schools” (p. 1). However, the adjustments made by those leaders do not always reflect the moral character of their role. Hence, some school leaders are acting as institutional managers rather than moral agents, using primarily instrumental approaches to face educational (moral) problems, which have resulted in a technical view of the learning process (Fullan, 2008).

To lead in an environment of external pressures, school leadership should be based on technical expertise as well as human virtues (Sergiovanni, 1992). Principally, it must be grounded in strong ethical values that serve to deal with impositions and constraints and focus upon what is best for students (Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin & Collarbone, 2003). In addition, Smith, Bhindi, Hansen, Riley and Rall (2008) observe that there is a context of cynicism about leadership and, in turn, disappointment in the quality of leaders:

There is an entrenched public perception that the leadership rhetoric does not match workplace reality and therefore a great deal of cynicism and disdain about organizational leaders prevails. This cynicism is fuelled by perceptions of ‘Self’ before ‘service’, profits before public good, deceitful practices and cover-ups, insincerity and superficiality in relationships and obsession with efficiency and outcomes without regard to human cost. (Smith et al., 2008, p. 2)

The ethical problems embedded in the work of school leaders, observed by Smith et al. (2008), constitute a further reason for leaders to be ethical. The authors add that,

This prevailing context of cynicism and perplexity about falling leadership standards coupled with the increasing complexity of the workplace has impelled the search and call for alternative leadership paradigms that are more value-driven, ethical, credible, compassionate and people-centred. (Smith et al., 2008, p. 2)

The numerous challenges requiring ethically sound school leadership are unlikely to decrease in the near future (Hermond, 2005). Inescapably, the ethical

dimensions of educational leadership will become increasingly important. For this reason, it is imperative that educational leaders understand learning as a moral enterprise and lead their schools ethically, despite all the pressures to do otherwise (Greenfield, 2004; Starratt, 2004).

### **Ethics**

The notion of ethics covers a variety of meanings. In ordinary language, ethics is often utilised to label people or their actions as either good or bad. In the academic world, ethics is defined as “a division of philosophy which includes studies of the nature, origin and field of good and bad, right and wrong, justice and other concepts related to these areas” (Saarinen as cited in Thoms, 2008, p. 419). Within the work environment, ethics has been commonly linked to codes of conduct for an individual or a group (The Ethics Resource Center, 2009). According to Hall (2008), “codes of conduct are formulated by employers as conditions of employment .... [U]sually such codes tell practitioners what to do rather than providing broad bases for professional decision making” (p. 228). As such, ethics is prescriptive rather than descriptive. Consequently, ethics is concerned with behaviours which are perceived to be right in terms of the conformity with the rules for appropriate conduct.

Without denying the value of codes of conduct in terms of ethical guidance, the present study argues that ethics cannot be reduced to following the rules. Ethics goes beyond compliance and practice. Rather, it responds to an inner desire of doing what is right. Jacoby (2004) supports this point by saying that “true ethics will only be exhibited when an individual has internal motivation for their

behavior” (p. 2). Such motivation is that which appropriately defines ethical behaviour.

If we accept that ethics comes from an internal source that distinguishes between right and wrong, then ethics has everything to do with one’s beliefs and values. This view is expressed in Starratt’s (2004) definition of ethics. He describes ethics as “a study of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles and values that support a moral way of life” (p. 5). From this perspective, an ethical person is one who holds a moral value system which decides what is right and encourages moral action in everyday life. As can be seen, Starratt (2004) expands the notion of ethics towards a more inclusive concept of human life. Hence, being ethical is a way-of-being in life.

There appears to be agreement that the holistic character of ethics is what distinguishes it from morality. As Freakley and Burgh (2002) point out, ethics “is a much broader sphere of human activity, one that seeks an understanding of what it is to live well” (p. 97). Morality, in turn, is seen as “the acting out of ethical beliefs and commitments” (Starratt, 2004, p. 5). Morality is thus the part of ethics that is concerned with behaviours and practices.

While such distinctions are useful, Haynes (1998) does not dwell on this differentiation. For her, “ethics and morality can be seen as two interconnecting ends of the same spectrum” (p. 5). Similarly, Starratt (2004) argues that when applying the notions of morality and ethics to leadership activities both terms are synonymous. That is, moral leadership and ethical leadership mean the same

thing. Following this perspective, both terms will be employed interchangeably throughout this study.

### **Ethical Leadership**

Ethical leadership is a moral activity that is grounded in the moral foundations of the leader. Fundamentally, it is “the attempt to act from the principles, beliefs, assumptions, and values in the leader’s espoused system of ethics” (Starratt, 2004, p. 5). Considering ethical leadership as the act of leading in line with one’s beliefs and values raises the idea that ethical leadership is more than expertise, skills and competency. It is more than an ethical conduct that is applied in a particular situation. Rather, Lashaway (1996) suggests, ethical leadership is a “constant companion” (p. 4), that is, a way of being in life and this is expressed in all that an ethical leader does (West-Burnham, 2008). Hence, ethical leadership implies the engagement of the leader as a whole.

It might be argued that ethical leadership is built on two central elements. The first one is the autonomy of the leader to operate from the strength of his or her values. Ethical leadership is based on the notion that the leader is an autonomous agent. Starratt (1994) has this to say about ethical leaders as autonomous individuals:

They are independent agents who act out of an intuition of what is right or appropriate in a given situation. Their autonomy is in contrast to those who act out of a mindless routine, or simply because others tell them to act that way, or who act out of a feeling of obligation to or fear of those in authority. Autonomy implies a sense of personal choice, of taking responsibility for one’s actions, of claiming ownership of one’s actions.

Assumed in the notion of autonomy is the sense that the autonomous person is an individual. An individual is a person who has a sense of him or herself as standing out from the crowd. It does not mean necessarily an opposition to all that the crowd stands for. Rather it means a willingness to oppose the crowd in certain

circumstances, to walk in a direction different from the crowd if it seems called for. (Starratt, 1994, p. 30)

Starratt (1994) observes that the actions of ethical leaders are deliberate and chosen and that this is the result of a certain autonomy that is shaped by a deep commitment to one's own meaning and values. Furthermore, the autonomy of ethical leaders entails a definition of one's self that provides leaders with the courage to stand up for what they believe is right.

The second element of ethical leadership is the genuine concern the leader shows for others. The ethical approach is people-oriented. This means that ethical leaders care about people and therefore relationships are at the very centre of their work (Greenfield, 2004). They encourage high-quality interactions based on respect and trust, rather than agreement (Berghofer & Schwartz, n.d.). In addition, ethical leaders relate to others in ways that transcend self-interest (Strike, 2007). They engage in actions that benefit others, putting aside ego and personal interests. As Bass (2002) describes, an ethical leader is "a leader whose effort is to be a benefit to others and avoid harming others" (para. 7).

However, ethical leadership is not only about working for others but also with others. Dufresne and McKenzie (2009) note that leading from an ethical perspective is about working interdependently to construct a collective good for an organisation. To encourage people to work together towards the common good, ethical leadership focuses on values and vision. Ethical leaders claim their core values, develop a vision and deliberately align their beliefs with their behaviours and actions (Dufresne & McKenzie, 2009). They motivate people to achieve the same purpose, vision and values which are for the benefit of the entire

organisation. Ethical leadership involves the development of shared values and goals that inspire people and improve relationships within the organisation because, as Burns (1978) states, “leadership is a process of morality to the degree that leaders engage with followers on the basis of shared motives and values and goals” (p. 36).

Furthermore, ethical leaders understand and respect others’ values and, in turn, seek to reconcile the potential tensions between personal values and people or organisational values (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). In the process, they create open and reflective conversations about ethics; they create spaces where people’s values can be expressed and heard. Freeman and Stewart (2006) affirm that “bringing such a conversation to life means that people must have knowledge of alternatives, must choose every day to stay with the organisation and its purpose because it is important and inspires them” (p. 5). Moreover, by promoting discussion of ethical issues, ethical leaders facilitate the creation of an ethical culture within organisations (Dufresne & McKenzie, 2009; Zubay & Soltis, 2005).

Ethical leadership draws on principled decision making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). As ethical leaders are aware of the impact of their actions on others, they see the decision-making process as a fully ethical task and therefore are determined to do “the right thing” (Lashaway, 1996, p. 1). In doing so, ethical leaders always take into consideration the question “leading to what ends, and by what means?” (Greenfield, 2004, p. 174).

Leading in an ethical manner also involves leaders acting as role models by first showing ethical conduct themselves. McGuire (1997) notes that “moral leadership, after all, is about exemplifying excellence” (p. 6). It is indeed about character, honesty, integrity, equity, trustworthiness, self-discipline, courage, fairness, generosity, passion, compassion, optimism, service, encouragement, and love (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Kouzes & Posner, 1992; Starratt, 2004; Thoms, 2008). According to Hudson (1997), these “ethical virtues are reflected in the way we see ourselves as well as the way we see others, and are culminated in our relation to those others in the community in which we live” (p. 514).

Ethical leadership is inclusive of other personal qualities such as responsibility, authenticity and presence. Starratt (2004) proposes that these three virtues frame the idea of ethical leadership. The author suggests that responsibility calls leaders to be proactive in assuming responsibility for their organisations and stakeholders, whilst authenticity calls leaders to be true to themselves and to their relationships. Presence, in turn, involves looking carefully at people and circumstances in order to assume responsibility for them. It is the link that connects the two previous traits. Thus, an ethical leader is responsible, is authentic, and is present.

Invariably, discussion on ethical leadership has shown this approach as a positive leadership style or “good leadership” (Cranston, Ehrich & Kimber, 2004, p. 18). Toor and Ofori (2009) point out that “for good leadership, it is important that leaders are not only competent but also ethical in their everyday conduct” (p. 534). In fact, ethical leadership has been seen as a positive form of leadership not only for the distinctive attributes of ethical leaders or the constant search for the highest good but also because, as research evidence has demonstrated, it has

positive effects on leaders, followers and organisations (Ciulla, 1995; Toor & Ofori, 2009).

### **Transformational Leadership**

Over the last two decades the notion of transformational leadership has been very influential. It emerged as an alternative to the classic approach focused on tasks and behaviours described as transactional leadership (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). Transformational leadership may be regarded as an inspirational style of leadership, in which the members of an organisation are influenced to move in a set direction through the recognition and satisfaction of their wants, needs, aspirations and values (Burns, 1978). According to Gurr (2001), “it is very much a people focused view of leadership, one in which the leader defines direction, inspires, motivates, challenges and develops those around them” (p. 189).

In their discussion about the distinctions between authentic transformational leadership and pseudo transformational leadership, Bass and Steidlmeier (1998) note that transformational leadership is only authentic when it is grounded on moral foundations. As such, transformational leadership contains four components: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. They argue that:

If the leadership is transformational, its charisma or idealized influence is envisioning, confident, and sets high standards for emulation. Its inspirational motivation provides followers with challenges and meaning for engaging in shared goals and undertakings. Its intellectual stimulation helps followers to question assumptions and to generate more creative solutions to problems. Its individualized consideration treats each follower as an individual and provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities. If such transformational leadership is authentic, it is characterized by high moral and ethical standards in each of the above dimensions. (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998, p. 2)



As can be seen, ethical leadership has strong theoretical connections with transformational leadership and its components. In this way, the ethical perspective embraces the act of inspiring others that makes up the transformational approach. In order to inspire and motivate people, ethical leaders articulate a vision (inspirational motivation), show a special concern for people (individualised consideration), and provide a role model for ethical behaviour (idealised influence), among others. As ethical leadership, transformational leadership comprises “moral character”, “concern for self and others” and “ethical values” (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 181), which are embedded in the leader’s vision.

It is important to acknowledge at this point that being ethical is an attribute that is also shared with other forms of leadership such as authentic, spiritual, servant and passionate (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Davies & Brighouse, 2008; Greenleaf, 2002; Smith et al., 2008).

### **Ethical Practice**

Ethical practice constitutes an essential part of the framework that an ethical leader uses to relate to others and face every situation (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). On the one hand, ethical practice is the responsibility of the leader to fulfil his or her professional obligations in ways that are ethical (Sockett, 1993); but on the other hand, it is also the expectation and demand of those who are led. As stated by Newman (2000), “inherent to the role of leadership is an expectation by those who follow and support the leader that their leader will act ethically” (p. 42).

Ethical practice needs to be understood in the light of professional membership. Soltis (1986) observes that “the very act of becoming a professional commits one to ethical principles and standards of that profession and to the service of its general purposes” (p. 3). In most professions, the ethical principles and standards by which practitioners are expected to conduct their professional matters are set out in a code of ethics or a code of practice (Hall, 2008). As described by Hall (2008), a code of ethics is “both a statement of aspiration and a bottom line statement that may be used to judge behaviours” (p. 229).

A code of ethics provides general guidelines for ethical practice. In this way, ethical practice is the product of acting in conformity with the aspirational and regulatory functions of a code of ethics. It requires behaviours that stem from a commitment to the ethical standards and principles that guide professional service delivery (Sherry, 2007). When discussing ethical practice in relation to the work of educational leaders, Haynes (1998) suggests a school leader’s code of ethics might look as follows:

The school leader:

- makes the well-being of students fundamental in all decision-making and actions.
- fulfils professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.
- Support the principle of due process and protects the civil and human rights of all individuals.
- maintains professional confidentiality at all times.
- implements the governing board of education’s policies and administrative rules and regulations and/or pursues appropriate measures to correct those laws, policies and regulations that are not consistent with sound educational goals, ensuring that where possible no person shall be disadvantaged by a change in regulations.
- pursues appropriate measures to overcome apparent injustices and unethical practices.
- avoids using positions for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic or other influence.
- maintains the standards and seeks to improve effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development.
- honours all contracts until fulfilment, release or dissolution mutually agreed upon by all parties to contract. (Haynes, 1998, p. 41)

Codes of conduct can be as or more specific than the one presented by Haynes (1998), or they can also be built on the basis of broader ethical principles. For instance, in New Zealand, the code of ethics for teachers presents a more aspirational character. By establishing four general ethical principles, the New Zealand Teacher Registration Board expects to promote the professional ethical practice of teachers. These principles are:

- Autonomy: Treat people with rights that are to be honoured and defended,
- Justice: Share power and prevent the abuse of power,
- Responsible care: Do good and minimise harm to others,
- Truth: Be honest with others and self. (Hall, 2008, p. 229)

Ethical practice then, demonstrates a concern for doing the right thing. As such, ethical practice is an important component of ethical leadership. If leaders are ethical, then ethical practices will be exercised within their organisations. However, ethical practice does not always lead to ethical leadership. As Flores (cited in Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 55) notes, “acting ethically and being ethical are substantially different”. Ethical leadership is about an ethical approach to living in which the motivation to be ethical is internally defined and adopted, whilst ethical practice is related more to acting in accordance to accepted principles and standards that reflect the highest expectations for members of a professional community.

### **Educational Leaders as Ethical Leaders**

As previously stated, ethics is a value-laden concept and education is a value-laden endeavour. Values are at the heart of the work of ethical educational leaders. Gold et al. (2003) capture this point when they say that “school leaders are essentially value-carriers” (p. 128). Every school leader has values. Some engage in “the translation of the moral dimension into a coherent and meaningful set of

personal constructs which inform language and action” (West-Burnham, 2008, p. 4). Therefore, ethical leadership entails educational leaders not only outlining a personal vision but also explicitly declaring a set of values and conducting themselves according to them (Marshall, 2009).

Ethical educational leaders do not see their values as mere personal attributes. They do not separate personal and educational values. On the contrary, they allow their own values to influence their leadership behaviours and the school as a whole (Strike, 2007). If leaders are of this kind, Raihani and Gurr (2006) suggest that all of their actions and decisions regarding their leadership role will be in harmony with their values. For Gold et al. (2003), these leaders “are able to articulate their personal values with total conviction, creating a clear sense of institutional purpose and directions” (p. 135). For this to occur, certain elements should be present in ethical leaders.

Firstly, ethical leadership is based on consistency and commitment to values. As such, ethical educational leaders are aware of their own values, beliefs and principles. Branson (2004) supports the idea that “the knowing of personal values might help the principal to be led by these values and, thereby, to be able to act more effectively” (p. 3) as an educational leader. Ethical leaders also need to recognise the moral character of their role and consequently show authentic and coherent commitment to their values (Burns, 1978; Marshall, 2009; Sergiovanni, 1990). Bezzina (2007) refers to educational leaders as “strong and committed individuals...who express a strong, sincere and passionate commitment to their values” (p. 27). Importantly, such commitment can serve as a guide through any ethical dilemmas that leaders have to face.

Secondly, ethical leadership has the responsibility for creating a values-driven culture within educational organisations. According to Bottery (1992) this “enables others to become leaders and thereby not only to be liberated, but also to accept their share of responsibility in the running and conduct of both institution and society” (p. 187). To build a principled culture, ethical leaders have to use every opportunity to communicate their vision and shape the ethical environment of their schools. Newman (2000) contends that ultimately, “without vision, leadership becomes mere management” (p. 40). Bottery (1992) suggests that school leaders “need to possess a vision of a good and just community” (p. 188) to develop their schools as socially just and inclusive institutions. They have to promote ethical treatment of others within and outside the organisation and have to be seen “as someone on whom others could depend or rely on” (Sison, 2003, p. 31). In this way, ethical educational leaders must generate conditions that value learning and they must act as role model and educator to the people they seek to lead. Newman (2000) captures this view when she observes that “leaders in ethics will assist those people they lead to think through, and reflect upon, their ethical responses to many situations, including teaching and learning, management, work and families” (p. 41).

Finally, ethical leaders should make values central to their decision-making processes (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Parsons and Shils’s (1962) definition of values established that “values are a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action” (p. 395). From this perspective, values need to be considered as an integral part of the decision-making process. Every action and every policy implemented within an

educational organisation should be guided and permeated by a strong set of values (Davies, Ellison, & Bowring-Carr, 2005). As a values-led practice, educational leadership requires leaders to make decisions habitually that involve favouring certain values over others. As such, the main concern of ethical leaders should be to do the best for the collective good and to operate with a moral purpose, which in Fullan's words (2003) means acting "with the intention of making a positive difference in the school as whole" (p. 23). In summation, throughout the decision-making process, ethical leaders, guided by a coherent set of values, should always seek the best interests for the students and the school as whole (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

It is clear that educational leaders exercise their leadership based on values, so now it is valid to ask what these values are. For Gold et al. (2003) the following educational values should guide leaders in their mission of leading schools. The authors state that leaders should be:

- Transformative;
- Dispersed, democratic;
- Invitational and consensual;
- Visionary and optimistic;
- Empowering;
- Educative, for staff and students alike;
- Consultative and respectful;
- Inclusive and participatory;
- Critical, sceptical and experimental. (Gold et al., 2003, p. 129)

As can be seen, the framework that should inform and inspire the work of educational leaders is consistent with a vision of community and encourages these professionals to work towards openness, collaboration and participation.

There is agreement that values are enacted when people perceive that their values are demonstrated by their leaders, and thereby these values can be shared and

practiced by all (Bottery, 1992; Strike, 2007). The translation of these values into practice relates to the way-of-being an ethical leader.

Advocates of ethical leadership argue that the exercise of ethical leadership has numerous strengths for educational organisations. Sergiovanni (1990) believes that ethical leadership responds to higher-level psychological needs which “lead to strong commitment, performance, and satisfaction” (p. 41). In the same way, Burns (1978) pointed out that leadership of this kind “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of both leader and led and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 40). According to both authors, ethical leadership is aligned with a view of schools as moral institutions, in which what matters is what West-Burnham & Kedian (2008) called “the three Ps: purpose, principle and people” (p. 6). Ethical leadership has the ability to bring people together to work towards these common goals.

Hopkins (2001) asserts that values-driven leadership has positive and direct repercussions on real school improvement as it provides a meaningful purpose to make schools better places for students to learn. Ethical leadership provides “a distinctive approach to educational change that aims to enhance student outcomes as well as strengthening the school’s capacity for managing change” (Hopkins, 2001, p. 13). On the other hand, “the direct impact of a particular strategy will be inhibited or distorted” if educational leaders and schools do not hold a strong base of values that supports such strategy (Hopkins, 2001, p. 19).

Bottery (1992) explains the significant influence that ethical leadership can make as follows:

Leadership conceptualized as the holding of determinate values, but in an open, self critical and tolerant manner, suggests a form of leadership which can make the bridge between the structures already in place in an educational establishment, and can generate new perspectives and new leaders within the school community. (Bottery, 1992, p. 188)

In a similar way, Gold et al. (2003) assert that in a context of political constraints and impositions, where goals and values are established nationwide rather than locally defined, a values-driven leadership style is a valuable means that serves to lessen this tension. It provides “the necessary latitude that enhances choices in an otherwise bureaucratic and political world of demands and constraints” (Sergiovanni, 1990, p. 41). Ethical leaders are able to translate their value systems into educational practice. They focus on “mediating government policies through their own values systems ... mediating change, negotiating it effectively and adapting it to fit the school’s values and ethos” (Gold et al., 2003, p. 130).

### **Summary**

This chapter has considered the need for ethical educational leaders. The meaning of ethics, as the foundation of ethical leadership, has been explained. The notions of ethical leadership and ethical practice were discussed and distinctions between these expressions were made. Discussion regarding the similarities between transformational and ethical leadership was provided and finally, ethical educational leadership as a value-driven perspective was reviewed.

The next chapter explains the research methodology employed in the present study.



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about the chosen research method and the methodological decisions made in the course of this research inquiry. Accordingly, the nature of this study and the research design in relation to the research topic are firstly discussed. Next, the context of the research and the participants are introduced. The procedures for data collection and data analysis are explained soon after. The final section includes a discussion of the process of self-interview and the ethical considerations that are pertinent to this study.

### **The Nature of the Research**

This research is set within the constructivist paradigm which proposes that reality is viewed and interpreted by the individual in accordance with his or her ideological positions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, there is no objective reality. Instead “there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest” (Krauss, 2005, p. 760). This study assumes a relativist ontological position of constructivism and consequently sees the experiences of case participants as subjective, personal, unique, and meaningful, particularly when the experiences are shared (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

In epistemological terms, the perspective taken in this research sees the relationship between the knower and the known as essentially subjective and interpretive (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As a researcher I acknowledge my subjective position too. I do not deny my own bias in approaching the phenomenon under study and my involvement with participants. I assume thereby that my central role is “to make sense of or interpret the meanings others have

about the world” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). Such interpretations are unavoidably influenced by my personal experiences and background.

Since the central endeavour of this study was to understand and make sense of the varied and multiple meanings constructed by ethical school leaders regarding their educational praxis, there was an attempt to see the situation of interest from the “participant’s viewpoints” (Krauss, 2005, p. 764). Therefore, participants’ perspectives were respected and honoured, and the assumption was made that meanings were created in interaction between myself as inquirer and those involved in the phenomenon under study.

The theoretical underpinnings of the constructivist paradigm were also transferred to the methodological approach employed in the study. Thus, the qualitative methodology was considered more appropriate to explore the subjective worlds of identified ethical school leaders.

### **Research Design**

A case study is defined as a detailed exploration of a bounded system (e.g. a particular participant, group, community, or event) (Creswell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1989). A case study methodology enables a researcher to “portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ of a participant’s lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for, a situation” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 254).

The case study design presents major advantages for qualitative (constructivist) research. It not only helps “to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and

meaning for those involved” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19), but also “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 2). In this research, a case study design was utilised to gain insight into the feelings, beliefs and thoughts of ethical school leaders, thereby capturing some of the meanings of their subjective worlds.

Case study methodology includes both single and multiple or collective case studies (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2003). According to Stake (1994), the latter may result in a fuller picture of the phenomenon of interest. In order to provide an enhanced understanding of the experiences of ethical school leaders in Chile, this research examined multiple case studies. Thus, eight cases were selected to identify common and unique features of these ethical leaders as well as to disclose the events that are relevant to the case.

## **The Research Context**

### *School leaders' features*

In Chile, there are a total of 5,159 school leaders working in the school system. From this total, 93.7% work at public and private subsidised schools and only 6.3% at private non-subsidised schools. In terms of the school settings, 63.3% of school leaders work in rural areas, while 36.7% work in urban areas (OECD, 2007).

With respect to gender, the majority of school leaders are male; in the whole system the proportions are 54.1% men and 45.9% women. Regarding age, the greatest proportion of school leaders are aged 51 to 60 years old. The average age

is approximately 52 years. On the other hand, the smallest proportion of these professionals are 21 to 30 years old (OECD, 2007).

In terms of initial training, the majority of school leaders (97%) have degrees in education. However, 75% of these professionals obtained their degree before 1979. A smaller proportion of school leaders (3%) do not have a professional degree. With regard to professional development programmes taken by school leaders, most of their postgraduate courses focus on learning administration theory (86%) and to lesser extent topics such as curriculum (1.5%), assessment (0.7%), counselling (5.9%), and other topics (5.8%) (OECD, 2007).

### *Policy framework*

Over the last two decades, Chile's school system has undergone profound transformations in response to the demands of globalisation and a number of international and domestic changes resulting from the current economic, political and social circumstances (Cox, 2004). These demands have not only redefined the purpose of education but have also changed the context of educational leadership.

The current scenario for educational leadership is characterised by the devolution of power embodied in the introduction of a "new public policy approach focused on the autonomy and accountability of schools" (OECD, 2007, p. 15) and the implementation of strategies aimed to promote more participative leadership styles in schools (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2005). As a result of recent regulations, school leaders have been given new duties, which involve a key role and a number of functions within the pedagogical, administrative and financial spheres of the school (MINEDUC, 2005, p. 8), as shown below:

#### Teaching and learning sphere:

- Formulate, follow-up and assess the targets and goals of the school, the study plans and programmes, and strategies for their implementation.
- Organise, guide and observe the technical-pedagogical and professional development work of the school teachers.
- Adopt measures necessary for parents to regularly receive information about the operation of the school and the progress of their children.

#### Administrative sphere:

- Organise and supervise the work of teachers and non-teaching staff at the school.
- Propose contract and replacement staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
- Promote appropriate coexistence at the school and participate in the selection of teachers.

#### Financial sphere:

- Assign, manage and control resources (in accordance to the law on delegated attributions). (MINEDUC, 2005, p. 8)

Within this context, today's school leaders in Chile face complex challenges and significant pressures. At the same time they have more opportunity and responsibility for exercising leadership.

The response of school leaders to this environment has been revealed by various studies. Research evidence suggests that school leaders have been dominated by managerial thinking. Indeed they present "a marked tendency towards internal management, preferably administrative, with highly authoritarian leadership styles, and little disposition towards change and accountability" (OECD, 2007, p. 76). Similarly, national research demonstrates that only 4.4% of schools leaders believe that their work has a significant impact on their students' outcomes (Universidad Central, 2008). In addition, questionable practices have been

detected in some Chilean principals, such as asking weak students to stay at home on the day of a national test in order to achieve a higher average score for the school (Delannoy, 2000).

To what extent do school leaders exercise ethical leadership practices in an age of restructuring and change in the Chilean schools? Some school leaders appear to be acting ethically, and thus are acting as moral agents having moral responsibilities to students, stakeholders, and to society. This research explores the nature of such ethical leaders' practices.

### **The Participants**

As stated earlier, the present research examined multiple case studies; each case study represents a single participant.

The participants of this study were school leaders who are currently working in Chilean public schools throughout Chile. The purposive sampling technique (Cohen et al., 2007) was utilised to find the first participants. Before the selection of participants took place, I defined the criteria necessary for a subject to be chosen as a case (see Appendix A). These criteria were sent to the Chilean Ministry of Education (CMOE) in order to get their assistance in the selection process. On the basis of the criteria that I supplied, the counterpart of the CMOE, represented by the Director of the Educational Leadership Programme, selected four potential participants. The recruitment and selection of other participants who might serve the purpose of this study involved the use of the snowball sampling technique (Cohen et al., 2007).

Potential participants were sent a letter of invitation and an information sheet about the present research. After two weeks, I contacted the school leaders to gauge their willingness to take part in the study. As a result of the selection process, eight school leaders, two females and six males, participated in this research. Further description of the participants will be provided in the next chapter.

### **Data Collection**

Case studies often use multiple qualitative methods of data collection. Since the present study intended to gather information regarding the selected school leaders' experiences and interpretations of the world, the use of interviews for collecting data was essential. Burns (2000) describes the qualitative interview as one of the most important sources of information for case study researchers because it allows participants to communicate how they look upon situations from their own point of view.

Interviews range from very informal conversations to quite formal and standardised ones (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). This research adopted a semi-structured approach. This consists of a series of close-ended and open-ended questions (see Appendix B) designed to elicit responses from the participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). With regard to both types of questions, Creswell (2002) asserts that close-ended questions "provide useful information to support theories and concepts in the literature", while open-ended questions "allow participants to provide personal experiences that may be outside or beyond those identified in the close-ended options" (p. 205). The reason for selecting a semi-structured interview for the present study relates to the fact that this approach has

not only the ability to gather data that can be later compared and contrasted but also allows participants to describe detailed personal information. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview gives the interviewer the opportunity to clarify the questions, have more control over the type of information received, and stay alert for additional information that participants may provide (Cohen et al., 2000).

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in December 2009. Arrangements for time and place were made for the convenience of participants. The public schools where the participants were employed were the venues for the interviews.

The interviews took the form of a dialogue between the participants and myself. The interview questions aimed to explore the nature of the educational practice of participants (ethical school leaders), with emphasis on personal and professional experiences that have influenced their practice. The interview schedule consisted of two sections. The first section was intended to collect limited demographic information of participants, whilst the second section was designed to cover the research topic extensively, giving participants the opportunity to decide what aspects of their personal opinions, beliefs, or practices were to be communicated.

The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and were audio-recorded to have an accurate record of the conversation. Informal notes were also taken with the consent of the interviewees.

### **Transcripts**

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed. Because of the large amount of data, they were not fully transcribed but selectively transcribed for information



pertinent to the research questions (Davidson, 2009). I personally transcribed the interviews within a two week period after the interviews were conducted, while the data were still fresh, in order to be able to resolve potential ambiguities.

The transcripts were returned via email to participants for either amendment or confirmation. Upon receiving the transcripts back from the participants, the documents were reviewed again. Only one participant made corrections to the transcript. In all documents, the names of people were replaced by pseudonyms.

As the interviews were conducted in Spanish, the translation of the transcripts into English was required. I translated the relevant parts of each transcript myself, and these were later language-checked by a translator who was a native Spanish speaker.

### **Data Analysis**

As the approved transcripts were returned I started to read through them to become familiar with the data. This was complemented by the written notes that I had taken during the individual interviews. This gave me a superior overview of the data.

The transcripts were read several times in order to identify themes. It is important to say that since the data were based on participants' personal perspectives and experiences, there was an emphasis in the data analysis process on seeing the situation through participants' eyes. Thus, themes emerged from the data and were not imposed by the researcher.

The analysis focused on finding core meanings of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and practices described by participants and also on finding commonalities and uniqueness within the data. Once the themes were organised, with the assistance of my supervisor, the relevant and important sentences of the transcribed interviews were relocated under specific headings to illustrate and illuminate the emerging themes.

### **The Self-Interview**

Before commencing the data collection process, I conducted a self-interview in preparation for carrying out the proposed research. It focused on my own experiences within the context of ethical educational leadership. This self-interview enabled me to become more aware of the process in which participants would be involved and also to reflect upon my pre-understandings of the phenomenon of study (Giles, 2008).

In order to have a more precise sense of what I was trying to obtain in the present study, in consultation with my supervisor, I started with the description of my personal experience before asking participants to describe theirs. Van Manen (cited in Mcleod, 2009, p. 45) asserts that “before we ask others to furnish us with a lived-experience description about a phenomenon that we wish to examine, we might do well to try such descriptions ourselves first”. My Bachelors degree in Educational Psychology equipped me with the practice of interviewing, so rather than improving my ability in asking questions what I sought through the process of self-interview was to experience myself what I was asking participants to do.

The description of my own experiences in relation to the educational praxis of ethical leadership made me more sensitive to the feelings and thoughts that could potentially be present in the interpretative act. In this sense, I began to explore my own meanings and as a result, certain pre-assumptions were identified. These pre-assumptions are the consequence of acknowledging my own bias as a researcher and include the following:

- a) Ethical educational leadership emerges as a result of internal struggles and external negotiations.
- b) Ethical educational leadership is inseparably bound with a concern for 'others'.
- c) Ethical educational leadership can be experienced in relation to vocation, human fulfilment and religion.
- d) Ethical leadership is the product of a life-long learning. Accordingly, school leaders tend to move to ethical practices at older ages.

The pre-assumptions described above will be revisited in Chapter 6, the final section of the study.

Finally, the process of self-interview was also helpful in evaluating the relevance and appropriateness of the proposed interview questions. As a result of this reflective practice, I decided that no amendments were needed to the initial interview schedule and questions.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval for this research was gained from the University of Waikato School of Education's Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix C). I was aware that any research activity involving human beings is not only a technical act; it also requires respect, responsibility and trust (Cohen et al., 2007). The following are the ethical provisions considered to protect participants from any potential harm resulting from the present study.

### *Access to participants*

Permission from the Chilean Ministry of Education was gained to access to the schools and the participants, who decided whether they wanted to participate in this research. These participants were sent a letter asking if they would like to be involved in the study.

### *Informed consent*

Every potential participant was given an information sheet for their understanding of the research (see Appendix D), which was discussed prior to signing the informed consent form (see Appendix E). After the consent was gained, participants were invited to have an individual interview of 45-60 minutes approximately.

### *Voluntary participation*

Participants freely decided to take part in the interviews and were given the possibility to decline their participation at any stage of the research without giving reasons.

### *Confidentiality*

Participants' identities were protected by the use of pseudonyms. It was agreed that all the information gathered would remain private and anonymous and sensitive data, that might put participants at risk, would be removed or modified with their consent. Participants also had the right to withdraw, add or change any information provided before the analysis of data (1<sup>st</sup> February, 2010). After the interviews, participants were sent the transcripts to make any amendments.

### *Privacy*

The issue of privacy was addressed by asking participants questions that were strictly related to the purpose of the study. In this way, participants decided what aspects of their personal opinions, beliefs, or practices were to be communicated.

### **Summary**

This chapter has explained the major methodological procedures undertaken during the course of this study. The theoretical framework guiding the research has been examined and the rationale for choosing the research method was discussed. Contextual details of the research and relevant information of the procedures involved in the selection of participants were provided. This chapter has also explained the methods by which data has been collected and analysed. Finally, discussions regarding the process of self-interview and the ethical considerations of the study were provided.

The next two chapters are dedicated to present and discuss the findings.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The analysis of the interviews allowed the identification of unique and common features of ethical school leaders in Chile. The first part of the findings chapter presents the unique experiences of each case in this study. The second part presents the areas of consensus across the eight cases in the form of emerging themes.

### **Part I: Cases**

This subsection presents the individual stories of participants, with an emphasis on the personal and professional experiences that have influenced their educational practice. Participants are referred to by pseudonyms in order to protect their identities and preserve confidentiality. Extracts from the interview transcripts are presented to support these stories and are denoted with speech marks.

#### ***Participant 1: Sevefi***

Sevefi has over 30 years teaching and administrative experience in different levels of education, including schools, polytechnics, and municipal education departments<sup>1</sup>. He gained his Masters in Educational Administration and then completed a Doctorate in Education. For the last 20 years, Sevefi has been working as a school leader in a diverse range of schools and, since last year, he has also been providing training for school leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Municipal Education Departments: Units within the organisational structure of public education in Chile to which a school reports.

The context in which Sevefi operates involves a considerable number of students who have been marginalised in society for different causes. For this reason and motivated by a sense of ‘social responsibility’, Sevefi works persistently to build a more inclusive school. In this way, principles such as “democracy, justice, [and] social inclusion are the base of my practice”, he said. Now, his goal is to promote just, fair and democratic practices in teaching and learning. He wants teachers to become more aware of their social responsibilities for students.

In moving towards more inclusive ways of working, he carefully considers people’s participation. “I am very interested in participation”, he affirmed, as he considers it crucial to building an inclusive culture. Sevefi also values collaboration and he is proud of the willingness of his staff to collaborate in school initiatives.

Sevefi rejects any form of authoritarian or undemocratic practice within the school. For him, everyone deserves equal treatment. He believes that sometimes his leadership style is perceived by others as a weakness because he is not an authority in the school. He explained:

“The other day I had a conversation with my boss, he said to me: ‘maybe you need to be more authoritative’. Perhaps, I could show more authority, put more pressure, sanctions, lay off, but it would be inconsistent, because I am talking about inclusion, I am talking about including children in our education. I am talking about non-discrimination”.

### ***Participant 2: Jorpoll***

Jorpoll has been working within the educational arena for 20 years. He has been working for a decade in the same school, where he was appointed school leader

last year. Previously, he taught for 11 years and at the time of the interview he was still involved in maths tutorials.

Jorpoll has a Master in Counselling qualification and for a long time served as a school counsellor. He assumes that the exercise of his leadership role is shaped by his academic and professional background. He said: “I was a counsellor for 10 years, so in some ways I do not feel I have to leave the style that I had as a counsellor to be a school leader”. In this way, his practice focuses on guiding, supporting and assisting people. He believes that as a school leader he is required to be more involved in decision-making within the school and act with determination; however, this fact does not imply putting aside his genuine interest in people. In effect, in his view, this is what makes his leadership distinctive.

He is critical of the functioning of the educational system in terms of the relationship that it promotes between teachers and students. In his words, “the educational system can generate a kind of ethical hypocrisy by taking a student and saying that it does everything for them and at the end of the year it leaves them alone”. For this reason, he is a strong supporter of cultivating good quality relationships and being close to people. Tolerance, patience and respect are crucial for him. He trusts that teachers relate to students in the same way he treats teachers because “this is a string that cannot be broken”.

Currently, Jorpoll is interested in developing an identity for his school as it is linked to moral purpose. He expressed:

“It is very important for me to have a school identity; that we can all say our school is like this.... If my practice is ethical, we will have a school with certain elements, we could say that the school has an ethos. That



would be good. Developing such an identity is what I think we have to do now”.

***Participant 3: Cirilo***

Cirilo has 35 years of experience in the field of education. After teaching for 26 years in a diverse range of schools, he has worked as a school leader in the same institution for nearly a decade. At the time of the interview, Cirilo was applying to enrol in postgraduate study in mathematics, which would enable him to have some teaching hours next year.

Cirilo believes his leadership was extremely challenged when he arrived at his school nine years ago. He said that, at that time, it was very difficult to introduce a democratic leadership style focused on students in “a school with broken relationships between teachers and with a purely hierarchical leadership, which located students at the bottom”. In this sense, he had to deal with a strong school culture, which helped him to strengthen his personal and professional values.

Through the years, he has been persistent in his efforts to transform the school culture into a democratic community and after a long process the results seem to be positive for him. He said:

“They [teachers] thought that I would not last long in the school because they were accustomed to [an-] other kind of leadership, they thought that things were not going to work well. I think things worked, we have a better school, more participative, but we have to keep working”.

Cirilo acknowledges he exercises his leadership role with passion, which in his view sometimes generates a kind of obsession: “I try to give more time than I have assigned. I live for work, for school; even if I leave here [the school], during the weekends, I find myself working, thinking. I cannot avoid it”.

#### ***Participant 4: Pedro***

Pedro has worked in education for over three decades, including 28 years as a teacher and five years as a school leader. For a long time, he also served as a manager in a social organisation. He has a Master in Business Administration and is currently doing a Doctorate in Administration.

Pedro regards his educational practice as being inclusive of values such as “respect, responsibility, effort and excellence”. As a school leader, through these values, he wants to inspire others to higher levels of performance in order to achieve a high quality education. He is determined to improve performances by working with teachers and the school community to provide students with the highest possible quality learning experience.

When he thinks of his own process of becoming a school leader, he recognises he has been influenced by certain academic and work experiences. He stated:

“I studied at a Catholic school and the school leader I had there influenced my life, not through religion and its dogmas, but by his example and closeness; and I worked at a religious school, where the leader’s daily action rested on principles and values that he did not negotiate; from them I created my own scheme of work oriented towards a high quality ... educational leadership”.

Pedro looks critically at the values that prevail outside the school community, which sometimes act as external pressures. Within this context, “to distinguish between what is right and what is convenient is probably one of hardest things we have to do as a school”, he said.

***Participant 5: Melipillano***

Melipillano is an experienced school leader who has been in this role for 30 years. During his 50-year career in education, he has been involved in teaching and leading and other initiatives such as the establishment of various schools. After a life of dedication to education, he is now looking at his retirement.

For Melipillano, love constitutes the most important principle in his philosophy of leadership. He said: “for me, being a school leader is a major commitment; to me, it is a relationship full of love between the school leader and teachers, between the school leader and students”. Love is even the answer to his goals as a school leader. In this sense, during his career he has aspired “to conduct an educational community with love, give hope, get better achievements, reach academic excellence but above all, we must reach an excellence of the heart”.

Melipillano describes himself as a very religious person. As a result of this, he perceives his leadership role as a “gift of God”. Thus, his faith in God and the Christian values have always been present in his vision and purpose, and have also determined the way his educational practice has been conducted.

In leading his school, Melipillano thinks of himself as an educator that puts his knowledge and practice towards the benefit of others. He is always talking to people, teaching, advising, and assisting. In doing so, humility is his starting point. He affirmed: “I have learned that humility is an incredible value and makes one sleep in peace, is the best pillow and conscience for sleeping”.

Melipillano believes that as a leader and as a human being he has always tried to do the right thing. However, he feels that sometimes people misunderstand his way of being. In his words:

“Many times you are misunderstood; people do not believe that one is authentic and you have two possibilities, you start to fight or accept this as a reality. In my heart I am in peace, I do not want to hurt anyone, but there are difficult realities in life that can break you down”.

### ***Participant 6: Yiye***

Yiye has worked in education for 34 years, including nine years as a teacher and 20 years as school leader. A large part of her professional career has been developed in the same district, where she has served in different positions such as teacher, technical-pedagogical manager, counsellor, and school leader.

Yiye works with students who have a low socioeconomic status. She is convinced that schools can play an important role in breaking the cycle of poverty. For this reason, “my main motivation for school leadership has been to achieve social equality”, she said. This motivation has been influenced by her own life story:

“I had a home that these girls do not have, a home with a caring mother and father [who were] concerned about our basic needs. They always told us that as we were well fed and healthy, we were in good condition to be good students, and now we are all professionals”.

She expressed that working as a school leader to create a more equitable future for her students involves truly believing in the potential of the students and creating a culture of high expectations within the school. Yiye is very proud of ex-alumni who come back to the school for internships after completing their technical education. She said: “many people have told us they [students] cannot do more and the truth is they can”.

In Yiye's view, the education system does not always facilitate the achievement of her objectives; however, she does not get frustrated and often finds the way to overcome obstacles: "I do crazy things; I am not stuck in the education system....The truth is that we are innovative in many things, thinking about our girls and their future".

### ***Participant 7: Pelusa***

Pelusa has been working within the education sector for 25 years. After teaching for over two decades and completing her Masters degree in School Counselling, she is currently in her third year as a school leader. However, this is not her first experience in a leadership role; previously Pelusa had worked as an academic manager.

Her leadership is understood as a personal experience. Pelusa believes that it is the result of a process of reflection and personal growth. She expressed:

"Everyone has a teacher, father or mother as a reference. This is not my case, for me [my leadership] has really been a process, a process that interestingly has been given by my years of work with children.... When you are a school leader you question yourself and reflect, and that is what happened to me".

For Pelusa, this personal process is motivated by her desire to serve students' needs: "so I have to grow and change, to become stronger as a person because if I do not do that, I cannot give these children what they need".

She thinks that deeply held values are the basis of her leadership; "for me there are things that are not negotiable", she affirmed. These values, in addition to her strong vision, have allowed her to focus on what is best for students, particularly

“when you have to deal with not only the school internal reality but also with the outside [national] reality”.

In exercising her leadership role, Pelusa is not afraid to fail or recognise her failure. She is honest in providing an appraisal of her school situation and has a critical view of her colleagues from other schools who do not dare to show the reality of their institutions to their Heads. She said:

“Sometimes there is a double standard among school leaders, what I want to show my boss is not the same as I show my peers.... They say: ‘everything is ok in my school, everything is going well, I do not have problems with parents’, and I say what world are they living in? I have millions of problems in my school”.

#### ***Participant 8: Pablo***

Pablo has been working within the educational sector for over three decades. For most of this time, he has served in different leadership positions in both public and private schools. His leadership experience includes 22 years as a school leader, 18 years of which have been in the same school.

In reflecting upon his educational practice, Pablo believes that presence is his main characteristic. He explains this concept as follows:

“Presence does not mean a dress; presence is a whole... I think a school leader has to be fully present, one needs permanent presence. I have to be in spaces where children are, I must be with the teachers, because my work is not filling myself with papers or filling myself with administration tasks”.

However, for him, presence does not only imply physical presence. He acknowledges that being present to others also involves a sense of connectedness and appreciation. In this sense, he relates to others with affection, which in turn

allows others to be present to him. He said: “I feel loved, valued and respected by teachers, parents and students”.

Leading with affection is something that Pablo learnt at the beginning of his professional career. His vision of leadership was substantially shaped by his first teaching experience. He commented:

“... and fortunately I arrived to a school where nearly 99% of teachers were ‘normalistas’<sup>2</sup>, and it marked me you know, it marked all my life. Such devotion and love for what they [teachers] were doing; the level of demand that those teachers had but with great affection at the same time; and thanks to that group [of people,] my life changed”.

Pablo is currently working to maintain the school identity created throughout the years. From his perspective, external pressures make this work more difficult. Nevertheless, he is very satisfied with the kind of students they are forming. In his words, “I am so happy with the children. They have the school values, the values of our school.... They have the values of the school leader”.

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<sup>2</sup> The term ‘normalistas’ refers to teachers who were trained in Normal Schools. In Chile, Normal Schools were established to train high school graduates to be teachers and operated until the mid-1960s. Since then, the function of normal schools has been taken by Schools of Education.

## **Part II: Emerging Themes**

This subsection describes the emergent themes across the eight cases. These themes reflect various aspects of the nature of the educational praxis of ethical school leaders. The themes relate to the integration of personal and professional ethics, the way ethical practice has a consistent quality of valuing others, through to the sensitive and ethical practice of leaders in context. Quotations from the participants which appear to best capture each theme are presented here for the purpose of illustration and illumination. Of course, while the themes are separated for their presentation, the themes are lived experientially in an interwoven manner.

### ***Holding Personal and Professional Ethics as Inseparable***

For participants there were no boundaries between personal and professional ethics. In fact, personal ethics form the basis for ethical professional conduct.

I believe that ethics is part of life, is a way of life.... Having personal ethics takes you to convey this into the professional life, if you cannot live ethically in your daily life, you cannot be ethical in your professional life. These experiences cannot be separated. One cannot stand in front of the school gate, put your personal ethics aside and say: Ok, I am now a school leader, so I put myself in the role of school leader. No, you cannot separate that. No, you cannot be one person inside the school and someone different outside the school. (Pelusa)

I think that ethics goes beyond the codes [of ethics] because it is more than a commitment to the career I chose; it is an attitude of life. So, the way you are as a person you are as a professional. (Sevefi)

Ethics is about principles and values of an individual and ethical practice is to live according to these principles and values, is to enforce the personal values in the profession as a way of life. (Pedro)

It becomes increasingly apparent that one's private and professional life ethics have the same source.



### *'Consistently' Inspiring Practice*

Participants regarded their educational practice as being consistent with their values, beliefs and principles. Consistency was also evident in the manner in which ethical leaders stand for their personal convictions, inspiring vision, values, and practice in others.

Being consistent was a common characteristic of participants' practice.

I think the first trait of my leadership is to be consistent.... I think my practice has to do with what I believe and do. I believe in what I say and do. (Pelusa)

Within the limitations that we have as human beings, I try to be consistent with my values and consistent between what I say and what I do. (Melipillano)

I have my own values and as a school leader I act according to them. (Cirilo)

As a school leader I have always tried to be consistent with my principles. (Sevefi)

Participants' consistency with values and beliefs encouraged them to stand for what they believe is right.

One has values and defends such values. (Sevefi)

One has to defend his/her beliefs; the rest is just wordiness. (Pelusa)

A participant illustrated her experience in standing for her personal convictions as follows:

Being an ethical leader is like rowing in an opposite direction; however, the ethical leader is aware that she/he is rowing to the other side. So, one gets tired at some point and sits and says: I am done, I am tired of this, but you are aware that you are rowing in other direction and then you stand up and keep rowing to the other side, well, these are your convictions, and more than one person turn to you and row with you. (Pelusa)

Being consistent in one's values also involves inspiring a vision and values for others.

I try to introduce to the [school] system the way I think and my own beliefs. (Cirilo)

This was also explained as follows:

You have a vision and values regarding how a community should be led and you have to engage people but not through imposing these values, but influencing them, so they can assume these values as their own values. Once this happens, one can go further with them.... Sometimes there are some personal values that are not shared by the community, such as religious values, the values of good and bad, but these values are part of my life, and I try to make sure that these values are part of the work of this institution. For me it is very natural. (Pedro)

By acting according to their values, participants call others to pursue a moral ideal.

I think one thing you do is to believe in your values, to live what you believe and convey in attitudes what you really are, and, well, others see that and try to act in the same way. (Pelusa)

A leader that is unethical lost support because words are not binding, and the image of the person who is acting is what remains, what remains on others and is imitated by others. (Pedro)

I have the notion that the leader, through his/her values, guides, supports and exemplifies. (Yiye)

These stories suggest that living a consistency of values appears to be the foundation of participants' behaviours and actions.

### ***Valuing Others***

Caring for and valuing others appears to frame the work of participants. This includes a respectful view of others, respect for individuals and relationships, constant interaction and communication with people, and shared leadership.

For participants, the notion of ethical leadership involves regarding individuals with respect, connecting with others as human beings.

I think ethical leadership begins with seeing other as a person and having an attitude, a behaviour consistent with it. Ethical Leadership for me is always thinking of people and their needs... when I am in front of a group of students I know that I am in front of people. (Sevefi)

Having a fundamental respect for others and relationships is central to participants.

Here [in the school], the person is the most important thing in the world. (Pelusa)

For me the human issue is important. I am a humanist by nature in that regard. Respect for human beings, for human relationships, for human diversity is an important thing. I've been cultivating this for many years and I am convinced that is the way it should be. (Jorpoll)

Participants provided examples of their practices that reflect their valuing of others. For example:

In particular, I can tell about the experience of the daily greeting to students at the school gate as a sign of respect and consideration for others, to keep an open doors office is a sign of interest in the person and their problems. (Pedro)

To me, it is so important that teachers feel good, so during the breaks they rest, they have morning and afternoon tea.... But the authority forbids me to do that, the authority tells me if they do not work [during breaks] you have to deduct these hours from their salary... In this situation, I do not care about the system because within the school I say: this is also work for me, and teachers are well trained. I tell them: you have to say that it is part of your time for technical work, because, I tell you, during classes the teacher is with 40 children... (Yiye)

Teachers were on strike. After the strike they had to recover hours of work after their regular workday. We agreed that those hours were going to be dedicated to professional training for them. I was not on strike, however I signed up for courses as well in order to be with them, and I went with teachers to these courses. I did not want them to feel that this was a punishment, but something that would benefit them. (Cirilo)

Interaction and communication with people constitutes an essential part of participants' daily routine.

An ordinary day for me is an interaction with teachers and students, seeing how they are regarding their personal and professional or academic matters. (Sevefi)

I am a school leader of open doors policy; everyone comes [into my office] and talks to me, teachers, children and parents. I arrive here at 8:00 or 7.30 and I am here until 6 in the evening and sometimes I feel I have not done anything because all I have done is talking to people and I say: I have not done anything that I formally had to do, but I think communication is very important because you cannot make decisions, you cannot do anything as a leader if you do not communicate with people.... So the only way [to exercise my leadership] is through communication and that takes a long time, so conversation is my habitual context. (Pelusa)

For participants, their leadership is about sharing and collaboration among people.

I know I exercise shared leadership, which is associated to ethics because being a leader is not the same as being a manager... but I essentially believe that people have capabilities which need to be made the most of. (Pelusa)

I do not start from the idea that I am here because I am the most capable. I start from the idea that I need the rest of the team to build something.... I like to allow participation. (Jorpoll)

I share my leadership... you have to give spaces. (Pablo)

It is evident that participants' leadership is a relational process that occurs in considering others.

### ***Sustaining a Humane View of Education***

Participants held a humane view of the educational process, which is reflected in distinctive understandings of the notions of education, efficiency and quality.

Participants showed understanding of the traditional view of education and learning. However, they had a wider perspective regarding the kind of education they wish to provide students in their schools. For example:

What calls us to be here is that students need to learn in all areas: cognitive and as a person. I think that a child can learn that 2 plus 2 equals 4 at any time, but learning to be a person is a long process and it is only learned when you are a child.... I think this would be my personal vision of education. (Cirilo)

Education goes beyond the delivery of knowledge; education is to develop the feelings of children. To educate is to stimulate the emotions, to allow dreams. My mission is to build a school that's worth opening every day. (Melipillano)

For me education goes beyond the intellect, the brain. To me, education is to open spaces for light, for hope. It is to develop the emotions first, to develop a sensitive child who loves God, who loves nature, who loves his/her family, who loves their classmates, who loves life. (Melipillano)

I always tell teachers: do not standardise children because we are going to miseducate them, because children mean activity, games, dynamism. (Sevefi)

Our goal is that people can be happy.... I want girls to feel that we are people, even though the world is competitive and they are acquiring the tools. I do not want them to lose the human thing. (Yiye)

Common to participants was the notion that the concept of efficiency in education should be extended to include qualitative indicators that report on the holistic nature of children's development.

I think my educational background has allowed me to think about the way things are [in education]. I cannot visualise the technocrat thing, for example, even if it is full of efficiency. I think there are other qualitative factors that have to do with efficiency. For example, what to do for people to come happy [to school]? For me this is also efficiency. I could hardly get rid of those factors. (Jorpoll)

Participants acknowledged the importance of national standardised achievement tests. However, they revealed a broader understanding of what is meant by quality.

My leadership style brings me problems, many problems, because when the authority calls me to account for the results I have, sometimes we have had the best results of the district in the SIMCE<sup>3</sup>, I say: look, I can tell you how my girls work in the school, how they are, but do not ask me for just figures, ask me other things too. 'No', they say, 'SIMCE is measured in numbers' and I oppose that. (Yiye)

It appears to be that the development of students as human beings are the centre of the views and meanings of education, efficiency and quality provided by participants.

### ***Being Sensitive to the Complex Local Context***

Participants were attuned to their complex local context. This manifests as being sensitive to the challenges of the local environment, considering the kind of students they serve and serving their needs, and finally being determined to make a contribution.

Participants regarded the local context as a challenge in exercising their leadership. The challenging circumstances in which they work are described as follows:

In public schools we have the poorest children with greater problems, with greater needs, with broken families, so it is a complicated situation. (Sevefi)

We have very vulnerable children, children with lack of care, and all the things that happen around a broken family. (Pablo)

We are in a school where the majority of families, not all, are illiterate; they commit crime for a living, use drugs, makeshift weapons, counterfeit notes. So being an ethical leader is complicated. (Pelusa)

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<sup>3</sup> SIMCE is the Education Quality Measurement System. Its aim is to produce objective and reliable indicators about education quality, useful for the design of actions and programmes to improve education quality. Based on the measurement of learning outcomes, SIMCE works on the basis of a standardized test taken nationwide, once a year, by all the students of 4th and 8th grades at primary level, and 2nd year at secondary level, alternately. The system's design and administration relies on the MINEDUC Curriculum and Evaluation Unit (OECD, 2007, p. 7).

In fact, one of the major challenges is to adjust one's ethics to the local context.

Here, we have to be ethical enough to say we are doing a job according to the reality of our students. Not to create other realities or invent practices we do not have. This is the best relationship between ethics and ethical practice: the translation into reality. In other words, it is not a merely philosophical matter. (Jorpoll)

Participants thought carefully about the kind of learners they serve within this context and place students' needs at the heart of their work.

As a school leader, one has to ask oneself: how are students? Have they seen their parents? Have they heard their parents argue? Have they heard the economic problems of the family?... (Melipillano)

I think in this profession you have to have clear that you are dealing with people in need who seek to satisfy their needs, of all kinds, through the school.... My practice is based on doing concrete things based on students' needs. (Sevefi).

Despite the challenges presented by the local context, participants chose to stay in their schools because they felt they could make a contribution to those in need.

I really prefer to work here because I feel that these children need me more. (Yiye)

I have learnt that we have to be with those in need when one has something to offer. (Sevefi)

Participants' leadership is not theoretical. Acting with practical wisdom based on their school realities is critical for them.

### ***Leading as Serving***

Serving others emerged as an important characteristic of participants' leadership, and seemed to be connected with vocation and the search for excellence.

Participants noted that being a school leader is to act as a servant to others.

To me, being a school leader is a great opportunity that I have to serve.  
(Melipillano)

It is important to understand that one comes [to school] to serve and not to be served. (Cirilo)

Life has meaning when one gives his/her life for others to live. (Pedro)

The act of serving was linked to vocation.

I have tried to be a servant, influenced by the fact of having a vocation to giving others my best. (Sevefi)

As can be seen, in serving others, participants strive for excellence. They said:

I can do better; this is a starting point, no matter how good you are, I can do better. (Pelusa)

[Ethical leadership] is to give my best. (Sevefi)

... You do not improve to be more than others, but to be better with others.  
(Pedro)

I start from the idea that we are not doing things right and we need to improve. (Jorpoll)

In this school, we must try to be the best. (Cirilo)

It becomes apparent that for participants leadership was about giving, not taking, always giving one's best.

## **Summary**

In seeking to explore the educational praxis of ethical school leaders in Chile, this chapter has outlined the uniqueness of the participants' stories and traced six emergent themes across the data. These themes seek to capture an aspect of the experience of 'being' an ethical leader. The themes can be listed as: holding personal and professional ethics as inseparable, 'consistently' inspiring practice,



valuing others, sustaining a humane view of education, being sensitive to the complex local context, and leading as serving.

In the next chapter, the essential aspects of the emerging themes are discussed in more detail in the light of the existing literature.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

As outlined in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to explore the educational praxis of ethical school leaders in Chile. To this end, the research question “What is the nature of the educational praxis of ethical school leaders?” was raised. This chapter focuses on providing a response to the stated question. It draws on the discussion of the six themes articulated and presented in Chapter 4: holding personal and professional ethics as inseparable, engaging in ‘consistently’ inspiring practice, valuing others, sustaining a humane view of education, being sensitive to the complex local context, and seeing leading as serving. In this section, findings are explored and discussed in relation to the existing literature and particular areas of agreement and dissonance are thus identified.

### *Holding Personal and Professional Ethics as Inseparable*

The first theme is that of holding personal and professional ethics as inseparable. The data show that participants endorsed the belief that there are no boundaries between personal and professional ethics. Although significant differences might exist, for participants the roles of personal and professional ethics seem to have merged into a single and indivisible entity.

In this study, ethics has been described as “a study of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles and values that support a moral way of life” (Starratt, 2004, p. 5). As such, being ethical requires integrity. This is supported by the findings of this study. Participants described ethics as an integral part of their lives. For instance, Pelusa acknowledged that ethics is part of her way of life, with professional and personal ethics being dependent on each other.

This interdependent relationship may be explained by the capacity of personal ethics to inform the professional dimension of ethics. In other words, ethical leaders allow their personal values to influence their leadership behaviours (Strike, 2007). This assertion is consistent with the findings. Data reveal that, in the participants' view, personal ethics guides the professional mode of ethics; hence the two forms cannot be separated. For example, for Pedro, educational practice involves the enforcement of your personal ethical values to your profession as your refined way of life. This means that individuals cannot neglect their personal aspects when they are in a position of leadership but rather that the personal attributes of an individual influences his/her success in the profession.

The above situation draws attention to the tension that exists between ethical practice and ethical leadership (Hall, 2008; Newman, 2000; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Starratt, 2004). Hall (2008) observes that ethical practice is the product of acting in conformity with the aspirational and regulatory functions of a code of ethics. On the other hand, ethical leadership entails the act of leading in line with one's beliefs and values (Starratt, 2004). The tension between these two notions is well represented by Flores (cited in Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 55), who says that "acting ethically and being ethical are substantially different". The findings of this study suggest that participants' view of ethics helped reduce this tension because they were able to see their educational practice holistically. In the exercise of their role, participants seemed able to make their personal beliefs and values an integral part of their daily life. This demonstrates that the concern to be "doing the right thing" (Lashaway, 1996, p. 1) that is symbolic of high standards of ethical values can be seen as a way of being in life. Furthermore, this supports the assertion that ethical leadership is more than a set of behaviours (Lashaway,

1996) and that leaders should base their leadership on human virtues as well as technical expertise (Sergiovanni, 1992).

In addition to the above, regarding personal and professional ethics as inseparable appears to lead to the quality or condition of being undivided (Palmer, 2004). Participants believed that one cannot present one personality while at work and a different personality at home. These two attributes go together since the way one behaves at home is most likely the way one behaves in the work place. Thus, the findings also reinforce the notion of the inherent unity or wholeness of ethical leadership (Lashaway, 1996; West-Burnham, 2008). The educational practice of ethical leaders embraces the whole person.

It seems clear that to successfully uphold high ethical standards, personal values and beliefs must be permanently entrenched in the daily life of an educational leader; and this was evident in participants' educational practice.

### ***'Consistently' Inspiring Practice***

The second theme is that of 'consistently' inspiring practice. The data reveal that this notion was not only presented but also well defended by the participants. Consistency is the ability to remain in line with your own system of ethics. More specifically, it is acting in accordance to your values, principles and beliefs (Branson, 2004; Marshall, 2009). For the participants, consistency seemed a critical component of their educational practice. In this way, their experiences demonstrated behavioural congruency with their value system. For instance, Sevefi acknowledged that as a school leader he strives to be consistent with his principles, while Melipillano portrayed his practice as being coherent with what

he thinks, says and does. These assertions suggest that participants were concerned with more than just ‘talking the talk’ but rather with “the translation of the moral dimension into a coherent and meaningful set of personal constructs which inform language and action” (West-Burnham, 2008, p. 4).

Current literature supports the notion that being consistent is directly connected with the quality of authenticity in a person (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997; Smith et al., 2008; Starratt, 1994). Authenticity means that one “acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Harter, 2002, p. 382). This assertion implies that by being consistent, participants embraced the concept of authenticity, which in turn corroborates the link between these two personal qualities. In fact, it may be argued that the act of being true to oneself is what ensures the participants’ congruency of values and actions and is also what makes them consistently the same person whether at home or in the workplace. The result of this is a person of integrity. Hence, the consistency and authenticity of the participants in this study further reinforce the notion of what makes a whole person (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997).

The findings also show that participants’ consistency enabled them to stand up for their beliefs. More specifically, the ability to stay on the path of consistency with their values provided participants with the courage to strongly stand for what they believe is right in the light of their inner world. A potential explanation for this may be found in the notion of autonomy proposed by Starratt (1994): “Autonomy implies a sense of personal choice, of taking responsibility for one’s actions, of claiming ownership of one’s actions... it means a willingness to oppose the crowd in certain circumstances” (Starratt, 1994, p. 30). Since consistency is understood

as the commitment of a person to his/her internal world, the behaviours and actions resulting from such commitment will necessarily be self-directed or autonomous. This autonomy enables a person to be in a position to clearly indicate what things they oppose or reject. Thus, as autonomous individuals, the participants do not hide behind others, but rather they stand up and defend their convictions.

According to the data, being consistent in one's values also involves instilling a vision and values in others. This is supported by Burns (1978) who contends that creating and inspiring a shared vision, values and goals is the cornerstone of ethical leadership. As Pedro said, by providing a vision and values, participants seek to engage people in becoming part of such a vision. Moreover, their experiences also reflect the intentional creation of an educational environment that draws upon other's ideologies and belief systems. The notion of transformational leadership suggests that the members of an organisation are influenced to move in a set direction through the recognition and satisfaction of their wants, needs, aspirations and values (Burns, 1978). Following this perspective, it may be argued that participants know what motivates and inspires people and therefore their vision outlines the benefits that are associated with it. This indicates a connection with the principle of the common good. Thus, it becomes apparent that participants motivate people to achieve the purpose, vision and values which are for the benefit of the entire organisation.

Furthermore, the data reveal that consistency calls others to pursue a moral ideal. Participants endorsed the belief that by acting according to their values, they would inspire others to follow their steps. Conversely, they said that a leader is

likely to lose support and following in the event of a lack of consistency. By acting consistently, participants not only define ethical parameters or standards but also set the example. In other words, they serve as role models to those who lead (Newman, 2000). Indeed, they do more than exemplify a set of values; they help to shape the organisational culture as an ethical environment (Dufresne & McKenzie, 2009). In consequence, these findings further corroborate the positive effects that ethical leaders have on people and organisations (Ciulla, 1995; Toor & Ofori, 2009).

This theme which emerged from the findings shows that consistency enabled participants to be grounded and stable in their values, beliefs, principles, visions, and ultimate goals. Their consistency also has the power to arouse interest in the others and inspire their practice.

### ***Valuing Others***

A further theme is that of valuing others. This attitude has been described as being characterised by showing respect for individuals and relationships, having constant interaction and communication with people, and sharing leadership. These findings align with Hudson's suggestion (1997) that "ethical virtues are reflected in the way we see ourselves as well as the way we see others, and are culminated in our relation to those others in the community in which we live" (p. 514). In fact, the participants see others not only as members of the educational community but most importantly as humans, and connect with them accordingly.

Current literature emphasises the notion that relationships are the very centre of the work of ethical leaders (Berghofer & Schwartz, n.d). In this regard,

participants acknowledged that their interactions are based on a profound respect for individuals and human diversity. The ability to respect and appreciate people's differences indicates not only that participants understand and respect others' values (Stefkovich & Begley, 2007) but also that they are active in promoting ethical treatment within their learning institutions.

In this study, the concern for others was coupled with the participation in quality interaction and communication with the members of the school community that, in the analysis of the data, constituted an important part of the participants' daily lives. Their practice was thus characterised by accessibility, which in the school setting means close interaction with students, teachers and parents, and an 'open door' for quality engagement. Practices like these enhance the capacity to influence and positively impact on people, and help create ethical cultures within the organisation (Ciulla, 1995; Dufresne & McKenzie, 2009)

Dufresne and McKenzie (2009) note that leading from an ethical perspective is about working interdependently to construct a collective good for an organisation. This was evident in the practice of participants, for whom working with students, teachers, staff and parents is central. In particular, the data suggested that the participants endorsed the importance of practices based on collaboration and shared leadership. The reason for the centrality and connection to ethical leadership within this study is not particularly hard to discern. This is because collaborative practices have the potential to motivate people through the use of shared goals. The importance of giving value to others by working collectively is echoed by Burns (1978) who states that "leadership is a process of morality to the



degree that leaders engage with followers on the basis of shared motives and values and goals” (p. 36).

It may be argued that the above situation also relates to the ability of participants to influence others through the use of more inspirational practices. Certainly, transformational practices have a significant influence on collaboration (Burns, 1978). Advocating for a vision and setting direction cannot be achieved without sharing and collaborating with others. For this reason, transformational leaders engage others and create organisational climates where people feel involved and important (Burns, 1978).

According to Greenfield (2004), showing a genuine concern for others constitutes one of the definitive elements of ethical leadership. This study’s findings have revealed that caring about and valuing other people was a major commonality in the educational practice of participants and, as such, confirms that ethical leadership is a people-oriented approach (Greenfield, 2004).

### ***Sustaining a Humane View of Education***

The fourth theme is that of sustaining a humane view of education. The findings show that participants held a distinctive view of the educational process characterised by a concern for the development of students as full human beings. This involves looking at teaching and learning not only from the perspective of the intellectual development of students but also with a concern for their emotional and personal growth. For instance, Cirilo emphasised the importance of schools as places that deliver more than knowledge, while Melipillano’s view of education involved the development of the students’ emotional and social

attributes. Certainly, Zubay and Solties (2005) support this perspective by stating that education has a moral nature because it is concerned with the development of human beings in all their dimensions. The findings are also aligned with the notion that schools promote not only learning but also the moral development of their students (Hall, 2008).

It can be seen that the humane perspective with which participants saw the notion of education places the individual as a whole at the centre of the development process. It is noteworthy to observe how participants' views went beyond the unit of the individual within a system that promotes people as tools for economic development (OECD, 2007). This may suggest that the participants, as ethical leaders, hold the view that considers schools as moral institutions that are charged with the responsibility of transforming the lives of their students for the better (Sergiovanni, 1990). Consequently, they are concerned with more than just fostering cognitive and productive competencies, and include the well-being of students.

The participants went to some lengths to demonstrate the wider and richer perspective of learning in regard to perceived efficiency and quality. They were critical in their analysis of the functioning and impact of the systems currently employed for measuring quality and efficiency in schools, arguing that numbers alone do not account for the development of students over their entire spectrum of capabilities. According to them, efficiency and quality in education should be extended to include qualitative indicators that report on the holistic nature of children's development. Thus, education will be of high quality and efficiency if it

promotes the development of all the potentials, capabilities, and talents of students and staff.

Efficiency and quality are some unanimously accepted factors that define a good education system. Therefore, it is up to the leaders to ensure quality in terms of their services. However, participants acknowledged that many conflicts arise as a result of the different approaches they adopt to maintaining high levels of education. For instance, whenever they are called upon to account for their performance by superior authorities, they face strict scrutiny. Nevertheless, their visions are sustained.

It can be suggested that what drives and nurtures participants' leadership to persist in their moral view of the learning process lies in a strong foundation in a coherent set of values, principles and beliefs that enables them to balance any tension between external and personal goals and to guide their educational practice. The assertion of Bottery (1992) agrees with this suggestion:

Leadership conceptualized as the holding of determinate values, but in an open, self critical and tolerant manner, suggests a form of leadership which can make the bridge between the structures already in place in an educational establishment, and can generate new perspectives and new leaders within the school community. (Bottery, 1992, p. 188)

The findings regarding this theme are therefore interesting in providing contributions and reinforcing the literature on the role of ethical leadership in steering the school to the realisation of desired goals, which in this study are concerned with providing education from a humane perspective.

### *Being Sensitive to the Complex Local Context*

The fifth theme for exploration is that of being sensitive to the complex local context. It is important to note that, although some conceptual connections with the current literature are corroborated, the discussion of the present theme is context-based and therefore it primarily reflects the particular experiences of this study's participants regarding being part of and feeling the impact of a particular local environment, the Chilean school context.

The findings of this study show that participants had a very full appreciation of the realities of the existing local context and a critical consideration of the kind of students they are serving within their schools. Participants agreed that public schools in Chile confront a greater number of difficulties than their private counterparts. Teachers and leaders in public schools are faced with challenges ranging from students from poverty-stricken backgrounds and broken families to children exposed to all sorts of crime. The data show that participants had identified all these characteristics and have come up with ways to counter them. They were convinced they could change the context for the better by serving the real needs of students. They did not perceive the contextual factors as elements that impede change or improvement but as challenges that they have to address in order to make a difference in the lives of students, making it apparent that they operate with deep moral purpose (Fullan, 2008; Kaser & Halbert, 2009). The moral intention with which participants lead their institutions may also be regarded as the reason why they had decided to stay in their schools and districts despite the mentioned adversities.

Being sensitive to the economic, political and social aspects that surround the students and the school extends the assertions within the current literature in relation to the focus of ethical leadership, from a focus on people (Greenfield, 2004) to a focus on people and their environments. In this way, this theme which arouses from the data makes explicit the 'presence' virtue of ethical leadership (Starratt, 1994). The ethical virtue of presence involves looking at people and circumstances in order to assume responsibility for them. It is an important virtue in ethical leadership in that it forms the link that connects the responsibility and authenticity virtues of ethical leadership (Starratt, 1994). This appears to indicate that when a school leader is sensitive to his or her local context they are also likely to be responsible and authentic.

The findings of the study also indicate that the participants' leadership is not theoretical in the first instance, but practical, in that they act with a practical wisdom that draws its basis from the existing realities. In other words, participants allow their local environments to shape their leadership and practices in order to address the context-specific needs of students, teachers, and other community members.

Gold et al. (2003) argue that school leadership must be grounded in strong ethical values that serve to deal with impositions and constraints and focus upon what is best for students. The focus on what is best for the students cannot be achieved without a sensitivity to the complex local context and knowledge of the challenges that the students face in and out of the school compound. Indeed the challenges that demand the application of ethically sound school leadership are likely to increase in the near future with more complex dimensions and demanding

perspectives (Hermond, 2005). The study's findings have shown that to successfully achieve ethically sound leadership that is compassionate and people-centred, educational leaders have to understand not only the localities they are working in but the complexities of those localities, and make appropriate adjustments to their leadership practices.

### ***Leading as Serving***

The final theme to be explored is that of leading as serving. The data reveal that participants perceive the context of ethically sound leadership as selfless service to people. In fact, the analysis shows that the participants considered that being a school teacher and leader offered the opportunity to be a servant to others.

As servants, the participants' educational practice focused primarily on people. Such a focus implies placing the common good ahead of one's own best interests. More precisely, it is taking away from the self in order to be able to serve others. This appears to reinforce Strike's (2007) idea that ethical leaders relate to others in ways that transcend self-interest, thus putting aside ego and personal gain.

Certainly, the findings of this study support current literature alluding to the notion of ethical leadership as an act of engaging in actions that benefit others (Strike, 2007). Bass (2002) describes an ethical leader as "a leader whose effort is to be a benefit to others and avoid harming others" (para. 7). This means that for participants, their own interests come after those of the community they are serving, seeing the opportunity to lead as a heightened way of offering their services to people.

This becomes particularly relevant when education is considered as a moral endeavour (Fullan, 2003; Zubay & Soltis, 2005) where children by nature are vulnerable and where parents expect schools to keep their children from harm (Soder, 1990). I suggest that the participants, as ethical leaders being in the position to offer selfless service to the school community, recognise the moral character of their role (Burns, 1978; Marshall, 2009; Sergiovanni, 1990), and consequently apply educational practices that endorse the concept of leading as a service.

Furthermore, participants believed that to serve others within the school context one must strive for perfection. It may be argued that the recognition of the moral character of education and their role as leader acts as a primary driver to the search for excellence. They are required to promote learning as a moral activity, to see themselves as moral agents, and to act ethically with the aim of making a difference in the lives of learners (Fullan, 2008; Kaser & Halbert, 2009). Such requirements can only be met by giving one's best for the interest of others. In underlining the fact that the definition of ethics entails our inner-circle's desire to do what is right and do it best and that ethical leadership involves transcending self-interest to benefit others, ethical leadership calls for leading as service.

Finally, it may be argued that in embracing the act of serving ethical leaders strive to reach higher levels of ethical conduct. In subjugating one's own interest to those of the community, one enables important virtues such as altruism, humility, solidarity, empathy and awareness, to appear (Greenleaf, 2002).

### *Summary*

This chapter has provided a discussion of the research findings. After tracing six emerging themes in Chapter 4, this section has analysed the themes which reflect diverse aspects of the nature of the educational practice of ethical school leaders in the current Chilean school context. Evidence and knowledge provided by the literature has informed the discussions.

The next and final chapter concludes the research by summarising the key findings of the present study, indicating its contribution to our understanding of ethical leadership, discussing the limitations, and identifying areas for further research.



## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter begins with a brief summary of the findings. Subsequently, it provides a discussion regarding the contributions of the study to our understandings of ethical leadership. Finally, the limitations of the research are addressed and areas for further exploration are offered.

### **Summary of the Findings**

This study has sought to explore the ethical leadership style in the current Chilean school context. The educational praxis of ethical school leaders has been the main scope for this research. This was made possible through a constructivist exploration with eight case participants. This process captured the varied and multiple meanings constructed by the ethical school leaders regarding their educational practice.

Diverse interwoven aspects of the nature of the educational praxis of ethical school leaders became evident during the study, and the findings opened a number of themes that together can be used to describe the experience of being an ethical school leader. It was clear that the eight Chilean school leaders experienced the integration of personal and professional ethics; that consistency of values appeared to be the foundation for their behaviours and that this has an inspirational effect on others; that their actions showed that they care and value people and that they relate with others accordingly; that they saw the educational process and students from a humane and holistic perspective; that their practice demonstrated a sensitivity and attunement to the local context; and that they perceived their role as educational leaders as an act of serving others.

As can be seen, while some aspects appear to be primarily of a personal nature, others reveal more of a relational character. Thus, the evidence from this study suggests that the educational practice of Chilean ethical school leaders has its roots in their interior world, that is, it is informed by personal beliefs, values, principles and goals, and this is recognised and validated in the context of interaction. In other words, despite ethical leadership emerging from the self, it is not developed in isolation but rather in relationship with other people. It is a way of being in life, a way of being together.

It is worth noting that while the findings of this study clearly support the main ideas found in the ethical educational leadership literature, the educational practice of the Chilean ethical school leaders is charged with certain context-specific connotations. It was clear that the existing realities and challenges that surround the public school sector play a critical role in orienting school leaders towards the expression of sensitive and ethical educational practices aimed to change the school and the lives of students. The evidence suggests that ethical leadership within the Chilean school environment is not only about an ethical response to the context but most importantly about the transformation of that context.

### **Contribution of the Research**

One significant contribution of this study is that it is the first to explore the ethical leadership style within the Chilean school context. It examines the characteristics of the educational praxis of ethical school leaders within the public school sector. It is interesting to note that much of the earlier research on educational ethical leadership has been conducted in developed countries. Chile is a developing

nation; however, the findings of this study have aligned with the existing theory and research carried out in developed countries such as Australia, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK, and the United States, among others. It is my hope that the study I have presented here may provide a basis for researchers in Chile to deepen and extend the understanding of ethical educational leadership.

A second contribution of this study is that it has implications for practice. It has helped identify key elements in ethical leadership that could help influence current and future school leaders' practices and perspectives regarding educational leadership. The findings of this study might encourage self-assessment and reflection regarding the need for ethical awareness, reasoning, and practices in the foundation and make- up of all schools.

Thirdly, this study provides empirical evidence that could be used by the Ministry of Education to promote ethical educational leadership and develop professional development programmes for school leaders. This study has revealed that ethical leadership is experienced as the integration of professional and personal ethics. An implication of this is that the development of both technical and personal aspects of school leaders should be taken into account when designing professional development initiatives.

Finally, at a personal level, this study contributed to my awareness of the ethical values and ideologies that are significant in my personal as well as my professional life. In addition, my pre-assumptions and bias as a researcher, identified in Chapter 3 and uncovered through a process of self-interview, were also tested during the course of this research. While my pre-assumptions appeared

to be confirmed, this research experience provided me with a broader understanding of my beliefs.

I had previously believed that ethical leadership emerged as a result of internal struggles and external negotiations; that it was inseparably bound with a concern for others; that it could be experienced in relation to vocation, human fulfilment and religion; and that it was the product of a life-long learning. I now understand that all of these processes take place because ethical leadership is essentially a function of human development and formation. As such it is a life-long exploration of a way of being. I have come to believe that ethical leadership is a journey that tries to express a way of life, and which engages the person as a whole. This research experience has shown me that ethical leadership is not simply about 'what I do' as a leader but primarily about 'who I am'.

### **Limitations of the Research**

During the course of this study a number of limitations were perceived which need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the research was confined to Chilean school heads in the public education sector, which represents a small proportion of the people in the education fraternity. I believe that there could be many more elements that are characteristic of an educational leader which might not have been represented in this study.

Secondly, the time allocated for conducting this research did not make possible an extensive and detailed examination of the data. In this regard, some aspects the research may not be comprehensive enough nor represent the ideas held by the majority of the ethical leaders.

Finally, the size and type of sample utilised in the study makes the level of generalisability problematic (Cohen et al., 2007). In this regard, it is important to note that since this research sought to gain exhaustive information from identified ethical school leaders, generalisability was not a primary concern. However, further investigations utilising different methodologies and larger samples would be of great value in order to obtain a fuller and more representative picture of the phenomenon of interest.

### **Areas for Further Research**

This study has revealed many areas in need of further investigation.

- It is recommended that further research on ethical educational leadership be undertaken across the school community in Chile in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the practices of ethical school leaders and represent the whole.
- The present study has deliberately focused on describing the nature of the educational practice of ethical school leaders in Chile and not on corroborating the validity of such experience. Further work could be done to evaluate the accuracy of the participants' descriptions. For instance, what are the perceptions of teachers regarding the educational practice of their school leaders?
- Future research could also assess the impact of the described educational practices on students, teachers, parents, and staff. This would be useful to

investigate the extent to which the school members and the school as a whole benefit from the ethical leadership style.

- This research has described the practices of ethical school leaders in regard to the challenges posed by the Chilean public school context. It would be interesting to explore the extent to which these practices are effective in addressing such challenges, or to examine the kind of leadership that is required to the Chilean context.
- For comparative purposes, a replication of this study in the New Zealand school context might also be carried out.

### **Summary**

Leaders and leadership influence the relational context of their practice. Thus, educational leaders have the opportunity to act transformatively to influence a local context. More significantly than through instrumental change, ethical leaders in education have been shown to influence and shape educational contexts from a moral imperative that is grounded in a critical and humanistic concern that affirms the ‘others’ that are integral to their practice. Intuitively responding to real human needs, ethical leaders find a way of being that is for the common good. This research calls for priority to be given to the development of ethical leadership.

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## APPENDIX A: SELECTION CRITERIA

Participants will have many of the following qualities (Sergiovanni, 1990; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Starrat, 2004):

- Recognise the moral character of their role.
- Know their own values, beliefs and principles.
- Declare a set of values in an explicit way.
- Show authentic and coherent commitment to their values (e.g. transparency, honesty and openness).
- Articulate their personal values with total conviction, creating a clear sense of institutional purpose and directions.
- Outline a personal vision and inspire a shared vision.
- Embody the purpose, vision, and values of the school.
- Influence with their values the school as a whole.
- Translate their value systems into educational practice.
- Promote ethical treatment of others within and outside the school. Treat people with dignity and respect.
- Create conversation about ethics and values with stakeholders.
- Lead the process of value creation.
- Create a values-driven culture.
- Frame actions in ethical terms. Put values as central to their decision making processes.
- Focus on the best interest of others rather than on personal ego.
- Seek the best interests for the students.
- Provide a moral reason to change teaching and learning practices.

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### *Background information*

1. Principal: .....
2. Training/ qualifications: .....
3. Educational experience (years): .....
  - a. As a teacher.....
  - b. As a principal.....
  - c. In this school.....

### *Research- related questions*

- I. Terminology
  - a) What does the expression “ethical practice” mean to you?
  - b) What does the expression “ethical leadership” mean to you?
- II. Praxis
  - a) Would you describe yourself as an ethical leader? Can you explain your position?
  - b) How is your leadership as a principal ethical?
  - c) How is your practice as a principal ethical?
  - d) Is it important to you that your leadership is ethical?
  - e) Is it important to you that your practice is ethical?
- III. Experience
  - a) Can you describe a particular experience which shows your practice as ethical?
  - b) Are there other experiences that show your practice in this way?
- IV. Contextual Influences
  - a) What are some of the professional challenges you face in being an ethical leader?
  - b) What are some of the personal challenges you face in being an ethical leader?
  - c) How do these experiences influence you as an ethical leader?

## APPENDIX C: ETHICAL APPROVAL

**Dean's Office**  
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*Te Kura Toi Tangata*  
The University of  
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Private Bag 3105  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** **Carolina Becerra**  
**cc:** Dr David Giles; Dr Margaret Franken

**From:** **Dr Rosemary De Luca**  
School of Education Research Ethics Committee

**Date:** 2 October 2009

**Subject:** Research Ethics Application

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Thank you for submitting the amendments to your research proposal:

#### **The Educational Practice of Ethical Leaders: A Case Study of Chilean Principals**

I am pleased to advise that your application has received ethical approval.

Please note that researchers are asked to consult with the School's Research Ethics Committee in the first instance if any changes to the approved research design are proposed.

The Committee wishes you all the best with your research.

**Dr Rosemary De Luca**  
Chairperson - School of Education Research Ethics Committee

## **APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

### **Project Title**

The Educational Practice of Ethical Leaders: A Case Study of Chilean Principals

### **Background**

I am an educational psychologist and I have developed my career in the Chilean education arena, a field I feel very passionate about. I am currently undertaking this research as part of my Master of Educational Leadership qualification. I am studying in the School of Education at the University of Waikato in New Zealand and I am supervised by Dr David Giles.

I wish to explore a particular leadership style, ethical leadership, in the current Chilean school context. It is envisaged that the results of the study will influence the practice of current and future school leaders in Chile and also assist in the implementation of professional development initiatives for school leaders.

### **Aim**

The aim of this research is to explore the educational praxis of ethical school leaders in Chile. I am interested in examining the nature of your educational practice and the personal and professional experiences that have influence your practice.

### **Method**

For this research I would like to carry out several individual interviews. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. This experience will enable me to hear your opinions, perspectives, experiences and stories regarding your ethical practice.

### **Your involvement**

I believe your thoughts and experiences would be of a particular value to this research. For this reason I would like to invite you to participate in the individual interview. The interview will be audio-recorded in order to have an accurate record of your conversation. The recorded interview will be selectively transcribed. Before data from the interview is analysed, you will be sent the transcript, which I would like you to check in order to confirm the accuracy of the information. Please note that your participation in this research is voluntary.

### **Participants' rights**

All participants have the right to:

- Decline to participate at any stage of the research without giving reasons;
- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw, add or change any information you have provided before the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010, when the information will be analysed.
- Ask for the deletion of any materials they do not wish to be used in any reports of this study; and
- Ask questions about the study at any time during participation.

### **Confidentiality**

All the information you provide will remain private and confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the supervisor. Unless your permission is obtained, your identity will not be disclosed in the final report or any other report produced in the course of this research. The recording and written transcripts will be stored securely. If you are unhappy

with the answers you have given in the interview or your feedback to written material, the tape will be erased and/or the written answers destroyed.

### **The results**

The results of my research are to be presented as part of my Masters Thesis. In case you are interested in being notified of the final results from this study, you will be provided with an electronic copy of a summarised report. Also, please note that an electronic copy of the thesis will become widely available, as Masters theses are required to be lodged in the Australasian Digital Thesis (ADT) database.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and consider this invitation. I will contact you in the next two weeks to see if you might be willing to take part in this research. Please feel free to contact my supervisor or myself if you have any questions about the project.

### **Contact details**

Carolina Cuellar  
Mobile: +64 211074131  
Email: [cec10@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:cec10@students.waikato.ac.nz)

Dr David Giles  
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The University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105  
Hamilton, New Zealand  
Phone +64 7 838 4831  
Email: [dlgiles@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:dlgiles@waikato.ac.nz)

## APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

*Project: "The educational Practice of Ethical Leaders: A Case Study of Chilean Principals"*

Project Supervisor: Dr David Giles

Researcher: Carolina Cuellar ([cec10@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:cec10@students.waikato.ac.nz))

I have read and understand the information sheet and I am willing to take part in this research project.

I have had the opportunity to discuss the study and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

I understand that interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary.

I understand I can refuse to answer any particular question and terminate the interview at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the research without giving reasons or withdraw sections of the interview at any time before the data is analysed (1<sup>st</sup> February 2010).

If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts will be destroyed.

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential. My identity will remain confidential unless I state otherwise.

I understand that the data I contribute to this research will be used for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the Master of Educational leadership Thesis and as the basis of conferences presentations and journal publications.

I agree to take part in this research and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form and the participant information sheet.

Participant's name: .....

Participant's signature: .....

Date: .....

Please provide the following information if you are interested in receiving a final summarised report of this research.

Address:

Email: