MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND ETHICS

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Key Words—Decision-making, Department of National Defence, ethics, beliefs, individual characteristics, leadership, military, moral reasoning, National Defence, organizational issues, situational characteristics, values.

Abstract— The literature indicates that the issue of military leadership and ethics may be informed by an abundance of approaches and theories which speak to areas such as moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and ethical behaviour. These include theories of individual moral development as well as organizational and situational factors that directly affect ethical decision-making and behaviour. An interaction model developed specifically for the military is also discussed. Leadership ability, like moral decision-making, is a function of both the individual and the situation. As such, in order to provide the most effective approach for training military leaders regarding ethics, both individual and situational leadership factors are discussed. Similarly, specific theories and methods regarding ethics training that are directly applicable to the military are reviewed. Recommendations for implementation are outlined.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following report was commissioned by the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute (CFLI) at the Department of National Defence and prepared by Dr. Jeffrey Pfeifer and Ms. Katherine Owens of the Canadian Institute for Peace, Justice and Security at the University of Regina. The primary purpose of the project, in accordance with the criteria outlined in the original proposal, is to review the relevant literature on military leadership and ethics and employ this information as a basis for formulating practical training and policy recommendations for the CFLI.

The report itself is divided into a number of sections. Section 2 (below) describes the various search engines employed as a basis for identifying the literature on ethics and leadership in the military. Section 3 details a three-prong interaction approach to understanding organizational ethics and reviews the work of Kelloway (1999) as an application of this approach to the military. Section 4 of the report describes how training may be most effectively delivered on leadership and ethics in the military based on the model described in Section 3. Section 5 provides a summary of the literature as it relates to military leadership and ethics. Finally Section 6 provides a list of specific recommended strategies for the effective implementation of leadership ethics training in the military.

2. LITERATURE SOURCES

Clearly, the majority of literature and research regarding military leadership and ethics falls under a number of disciplines including business and management, psychology, and sociology. As such, a wide search of the literature was conducted across a number of resources including PsychINFO, ERIC, the Social Sciences Index, Business Periodicals Online, ABI/Inform Global, CARL, as well as an electronic search of the worldwide web. PsychINFO is an index of the international literature on psychology and material relevant to psychology in the related disciplines of education, medicine, business, sociology, and psychiatry. ERIC is a database of literature relevant to education and training and includes unpublished literature such as conference papers and government reports. The Social Sciences Index catalogues more than 342 periodicals in the subject areas of law, minority studies, planning and public administration, political science, psychology, social work, public welfare, sociology, urban studies, and women's studies. ABI Inform Global and the Business Periodicals Online are both indexes of business management and human resource journals. Uncover (from the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries: CARL) is an index of over 18,000 multidisciplinary journals.

The primary source for this report is a literature review by Kelloway (1999) on ethical decision-making in an organizational context with special attention to the Defence Ethics Program. In this work, a great deal of literature regarding ethical decision-making in organizations was reviewed and research findings were integrated into a model of ethical decision-making specific to the Department of National Defence (DND).

Apart from the above, a review of the literature on ethics and leadership indicates that the majority of research was not fashioned for the military specifically. However, it is clear that it holds some applicability due to the similar organizational and hierarchical structure of many associated areas. As such, the following report also reviews information on ethics and leadership from a variety of entities such as corporate environments, police services, and professional organizations. In addition, special care has been taken to highlight the potential application of these ideas to the military context as well as the specific demands of those in leadership roles (versus the roles of subordinates). It should be noted that a discussion of a number of leadership-related ethical dilemmas or issues in the military context would be far reaching and beyond the intent of this report. Such issues include the legitimacy of war, legitimacy in war, alliances, institutionalized management of life and death, use of force, cultural distinctions, nuclear weaponry, military employment for political goals, the expense of military endeavours, home-protection and peacekeeping (Gal, 1989).

2.1 Terminology

When examining the issue of individual ethics it is important to note that the literature employs a variety of terms that may lead to some confusion on the part of the reader. As such, for the purposes of this report, the terminology employed represents the theoretical position that one's *moral reasoning* is viewed as the basis for one's *ethical decision-making* which leads to one's *ethical behaviour*.

The above theoretical position suggests that a full understanding of an individual's ethical process begins with understanding his or her moral reasoning (i.e., the cognitions and thoughts we employ to evaluate dilemmas). Moral reasoning, in turn, serves as a basis for the ethical decision-making processes that an individual employs to choose their behavioural course of action (i.e., their ethical behaviour). This position indicates the importance of understanding the reasoning and decision-making processes which interact to produce ethical behaviour on the part of an individual.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS

The manner in which individuals characterize, identify, and resolve ethical dilemmas in organizations has been the focus of a great deal of empirical and theoretical enquiry (Kelloway, 1999). A review of this research indicates that the theoretical underpinnings of organizational ethics are based on three inter-related areas: individual moral reasoning, the ethical climate of the organization, and situational characteristics. Although interrelated, each of these areas will be discussed separately below in order to gain a better understanding of the role of ethics and leadership within a military framework.

3.1 Individual Moral Reasoning

In terms of gaining a comprehensive understanding of ethics at the individual level, it is clearly essential to describe the seminal work of Kohlberg on moral reasoning. Kohlberg and his colleagues (1969, 1973) formulated a cognitive-developmental model of moral reasoning that included the establishment of the stages of moral development as they relate to individual reasoning. This model is an important one given the fact that of the numerous potential predictors of ethical behaviour, the majority of attention has been focused upon the individual (Kelloway, 1999). Simply put, such a focus seeks to understand what it is about the *individual* specifically that influences his or her ethical decision-making and subsequent behaviour. Although the models discussed in subsequent sections of this report also identify a variety of situational and organizational influences upon one's ethical decision-making (e.g., Jones, 1991; Victor & Cullen, 1988), they also clearly indicate the importance of individual factors on ethics. As such, it is appropriate that any discussion on ethics begin with an understanding of Kohlberg's theory. A preliminary search of PsycINFO, an index of psychology literature, revealed well over 900 articles published from 1966 to the present in which Kohlberg's theory of individual moral reasoning is discussed. Although a full review of this wide body of literature is beyond the scope of the current report, a summary of the information is presented below in order to allow for a clearer understanding of how individual moral reasoning impacts the area of leadership and ethics in the military (for a review of studies of levels of moral development see Puka, 1994).

3.1.1 Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Kohlberg (1969) proposed that moral reasoning is a direct result of an individual's progress through a series of six stages of moral development that are nested within three overarching levels: the pre-conventional level, the conventional level, and the post-conventional level (see figure 1 below).

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Level	St	Stages			
A. Preconventional	1.	Obedience and Punishment Stage			
	2.	Instrument-Relativist Stage			
B. Conventional	3.	Good person Stage			
	4.	Law and Order Stage			
C. Post-conventional	5.	Social Contract Stage			
	6.	Individual Conscience			

Level 1: Pre-Conventional Moral Reasoning - The pre-conventional level of moral development, to begin with, consists of Stage 1 (Obedience and Punishment) and Stage 2 (Instrument-Relativist) and is thought to be typical of the type of moral reasoning employed by young children (Kohlberg, 1969). According to Kohlberg, moral reasoning in the Obedience and Punishment Stage is motivated by the avoidance of punishment (e.g., if one is to be punished for a behaviour, that behaviour is inherently 'wrong'). For example, one may decide not to steal an item from the workplace due to the fact that they fear they will be punished for doing so if caught. It is important to note that this stage of reasoning, like all other stages, does not focus on the ultimate behaviour (i.e., stealing or not stealing), but rather focuses on the *process* of how an individual will come to their ethical decision regarding that behaviour.

For individuals employing Stage 2 moral reasoning, Kohlberg (1969) suggests that individual moral decisions are motivated by the need to satisfy individual desires (i.e., the right thing to do is whatever maximizes one's own self interest). For example, at this stage, stealing an item from the workplace may be seen as an acceptable act because you simply "need" the item and possessing it fulfills this need. An understanding of Stage 2 reasoning may be especially important for the purposes of this report due to the fact that research indicates that many young adults employ this type of thinking to guide their ethical decision-making. For example, Weber and Green (1991) found that 46% of a university undergraduate sample reasoned at the Instrument-Relativist Stage. It is probable that military personnel from a comparable age group would perform similarly.

Level 2: Conventional Moral Reasoning – This level of moral reasoning is deemed to be especially important to an understanding of ethics and leadership in the military due to the fact that the majority of North American adults employ elements of this level to guide their ethical decisions (Kohlberg, 1969). The Conventional Level consists of Stage 3 (Good Person) and Stage 4 (Law and Order) and revolves around the impact of social approval on one's moral reasoning. Specifically, Stage 3 is characterized by a need to avoid social rejection and disapproval (i.e., to be viewed as 'good' by others). For example, one might decide not to steal an item from the workplace due to a fear that colleagues would define you as a "bad" person. It is important to note that one's decisions at this stage are often most affected by the immediate social group that an individual defines themselves as belonging to, rather than on the views of society at large. In other words, an adolescent at this stage may decide to use illegal drugs because they want their peers to view them as "good" - even though society at large might define their behaviour as "bad". As such, in terms of understanding ethical behaviour in the military, it is important to identify what group an individual might define as their "social group". Stage 4 (Law and Order) reasoning is also predominantly affected by social approval. In this case, however, an individual's moral reasoning is significantly impacted by the understanding that society has instituted a set of laws and rules to govern behaviour and to contravene these laws is to go against the wishes of the society to which you belong.

¹ Although Kohlberg designed his theory of individual moral reasoning in reference to developmental phases, adults may reason at any stage, regardless of age. In addition, although each individual is capable of reasoning at any stage, the majority of ethical decisions will be made in line with their predominant stage.

Therefore, individuals at Stage 4 generally tend to base their moral reasoning and subsequent ethical decisions and behaviour on abiding by the laws that have been put in place – even if they do not necessarily agree with the laws. An understanding of this level is of particular importance in terms of ethics and leadership in the military for at least two reasons. First, research indicates that a significant number of adults primarily employ Stage 4 reasoning to guide their ethical decisions. For example, Weber and Green's (1991) study found that 21% of their university-aged sample illustrated Stage 4 reasoning. Second, it is highly likely that individuals in the military who have attained leadership positions will be employing Stage 4 reasoning as a basis for their decisions and actions.

Level 3: Post-Conventional Moral Reasoning – According to Kohlberg (1969), post-conventional moral reasoning is rarely employed by individuals as a basis for their ethical decisions. Stage 5 (Social Contract) reasoning is based on the primary ethical motivation of understanding that certain societal norms are of benefit to all in that they help to avoid chaos. At this stage, for example, an employee might decide not to steal an item from the workplace because he or she feels that there is an "implicit" contract among co-workers not to steal from each other. Stage 6 (Individual Conscience) is based entirely on a belief that all rules and laws are very subjective and, as such, the right thing to do is what one's conscience alone dicates. Individuals at this stage tend to base their ethical decisions on a belief that their conscience is their only guide, even if it leads them to behaviours that are illegal and/or unacceptable to society.

3.1.2 Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning and Military Leadership

Although Kohlberg and Turiel (1973) considered Stage 1 (Obedience and Punishment) to be the most rudimentary type of moral reasoning found mainly in young children, it is also often the level at which subordinates are expected to reason in a military context (i.e., one does as he or she is told or faces the fear of reprisal). This supposition is supported by the work of White (1998) who investigated the extent to which the rigid organizational hierarchies found in military-like organizations impacts the moral reasoning of personnel. For the purposes of the study, the United States Coast Guard was identified as a stereotypically rigid military hierarchy and personnel were examined on their level of moral reasoning. The findings support the hypothesis that such organizations significantly impact the moral reasoning of their personnel. Specifically, results indicate that the more rigid the hierarchy, the lower the scores were on a measure of ethical decision-making. Given this research it is important to note the need for military leaders to acknowledge the impact that their organization may be having on the moral reasoning of personnel, and subsequently engage in practices that might counteract this process while still maintaining the hierarchical structure of the organization.

In addition to the above, a review of research by Blasi (1980) concludes that individual moral reasoning and ethical behaviour are directly related. As such, the manner in which an individual analyzes an ethical dilemma (i.e., their moral reasoning) appears to have a direct impact on their subsequent behaviour. This relationship, combined with the findings of White (1998) cited above, suggest that organizations with rigidly hierarchical

structures such as the military, may be disadvantaged in regard to both individual moral reasoning and the subsequent ethical behaviour of personnel. That is, if rigid hierarchical organizations tend to discourage the development of moral reasoning and there is a direct connection between reasoning and ethical behaviour, then these organizations, by their very nature, are in a difficult situation. This situation, however, may be positively impacted through investigating other factors that may increase one's level of moral reasoning regardless of the organization one belongs to. For example, Peek (1999) found that level of education was significantly related to level of moral reasoning regardless of the hierarchical structure or level of rigidity within the organization. This finding suggests that increasing educational levels of personnel may positively impact moral reasoning and ethical behaviours.

In summary, an understanding of individual moral reasoning is essential if one seeks insight into organizational ethics. The smallest, most primary, unit of any organization is the individual and, as such, analysis must begin at this level. More specifically, if greater knowledge is sought regarding ethical reasoning in a military setting, an understanding of individual moral reasoning, and how to affect that reasoning, is paramount as boundaries between the individual and the organization may become more difficult to distinguish in a structured, hierarchical context.

3.2 Ethical Climate of the Organization

In addition to the above information on individual moral reasoning, it is also important to investigate the effect of the organization's ethical climate as it relates to the issue of ethics and leadership in the military. Ethical climate may be defined as the norms, or generally accepted standards, for ethical decision-making that are found in an organization. Kohlberg (1984) himself recognized that the ethical climate of an organization plays a significant role in decision-making and suggested that it is especially vital to understand the impact that the ethical climate may have on individual moral reasoning.

A specific example of the effect of an organization's ethical climate on individual moral reasoning is provided by the work of Jones and Ryan (1997). These authors suggest that the predominant effect of the organizational ethical climate on individuals is that people tend to act in accordance with their perception of the "average" moral standard of others in the organization (i.e., people behave in ways they feel will be morally acceptable to others in the organization). As such, in order to determine a course of action, people rely on the opinions of their referent groups (i.e., those within the organizational culture) to guide their moral reasoning. The development of this approach is grounded in the notion that the majority of adults employ a conventional level of moral reasoning – a level that is anchored by a desire to be viewed as a 'good' person (Kelloway, 1999). It may be argued, therefore, that by establishing norms or sanctioned expectations of ethical behaviour, *organizations* influence the moral reasoning of the *individual*, causing individuals to make decisions and act as they believe those around them do. It is important to also note that leaders may play a paramount role in setting the ethical

climate of an organization, not only through their acceptance or rejection of particular philosophies but also through reinforcing related behaviours.

The importance of examining an organization's ethical climate is also supported by the work of Chang (1998) who found that a combination of the *perceived* wishes of others, and the desire to comply with those wishes, predicted intent to behave ethically. Similarly, Izraeli (1988) found the greatest predictor of ethical behaviour to be one's *beliefs and perceptions* concerning peers' behaviour. It is important to note that in both studies the *perceived* attitudes of others, not the *actual* attitudes, play a powerful role in individual ethical behaviour. As such, it may be argued that the perceived ethics of leaders, in terms of attitudes and behaviours, may significantly affect the ethical behaviours of subordinates. Similarly Bartels, Harrick, Martell and Strickland (1998) found that an organization's ethical climate was inversely related to the severity of ethical difficulties and was positively related to the ability to successfully resolve ethical dilemmas. In other words, organizations with stronger ethical climates (i.e., those having a greater focus on ethics) have less severe ethical problems, and are more successful in resolving such issues should they arise (Bartels et al., 1998), than organizations with weaker ethical climates

According to Kelloway (1999), given the above research, it is important to ascertain the specific nature and potential impact of the military's ethical climate when examining the role of leadership on ethics. Guidance for this may be found in the work of Victor and Cullen (1988) who define ethical climate as the pervasive quality of an organization that affects how organizational decisions are made and represents a shared perception of what behaviour is right (Cullen, Victor & Stephens, 1989). These authors suggest that individuals may make ethical decisions based on self-interest, the welfare of others, or on the basis of more abstract principles. Assessment of this model established five primary types of organizational ethical orientations or climates:

- Caring Orientation represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on a concern for the individual welfare of others, regardless of their group membership.
- The Law and Code Orientation represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on a concern for the impact it may have on society as a whole and is demonstrated by a focus on laws and professional codes of ethics that have been delineated on behalf of society.
- The Rules Orientation represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions solely on the application of the prescribed ethical principles and codes of the organization.
- The Instrumental Orientation represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on the best interests of the organization regardless of the impact on other organizations or individuals.

• Independence Orientation – represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on their own self-interest regardless of specified codes or the potential impact on others. Such an association would demonstrate an organizationally supported 'each person for themselves' code of ethics.

Subsequent research (Wimbush, Shepard & Markham, 1997; Kelloway, 1999) has largely supported the presence of these five ethical orientations within organizations. Clearly, the ethical reasoning and behaviour viewed as acceptable within an organization directly affects one's ethical decisions, their subsequent ethical behaviour, the severity of ethical dilemmas based on their behaviour, and the ability to solve these dilemmas. As such, the issue of establishing and maintaining an effective ethical climate is pertinent for leaders interested in developing positive ethical standards and expectations. According to Dickson, Smith, Grojean, and Ehrhart (2001) an ethical climate is an outgrowth of the personal values and motives of both organizational founders and other leaders within the organization. These authors argue that, in addition to developing formalized moral standards, a leader's acceptance of particular behaviours communicates acceptable limits for others in the organization. Evidence for this notion is provided by Kronzon (1999) who found that leaders' responses to transgressions played a more significant role in defining the ethical climate of an organization than an ethics code that formally sets forth moral standards for personnel to follow. In fact, the presence or absence of a written ethics code has not been shown to significantly affect how individuals perceive any given behaviour. The above research represents further confirmation of a leaders potential to impact the ethical behaviour of those they lead, often providing more impact than even a written organizational code of ethics.

Clearly, an understanding of the ethical climate within an organization is essential if one seeks detailed insight into individual ethical decision-making. The combination of individuals in an organization serves to produce not only a functional organization but also a new, and different, ethical territory - often different from the sum of each individual's moral reasoning. As such, an overall analysis of ethics in an organization must incorporate both individual information as well as information regarding the ethical climate. More specifically, ethical reasoning in a military setting requires an understanding of various organizational factors that may impact the ethical climate, including the role of leaders.

3.3 Situational Characteristics

In addition to the individual and ethical climate factors discussed above, it is imperative to also review characteristics of the *situation* that significantly impact ethical behaviour when examining the role of military leadership and ethics. This position is underscored by Jones (1991) who examined the importance of situational characteristics as predictors of moral decision-making. As opposed to previous assumptions that individual ethical decision-making remains relatively stable across situations, Jones (1991) contends that ethical decision-making is determined by the moral 'intensity' of the situation in question. Moral intensity, in turn, is determined by: the magnitude of consequences,

social consensus, the probability of effect, temporal immediacy, proximity, and the concentration of effect (Jones, 1991). Each situational characteristic is presented below in terms of the research supporting this model.

- Magnitude of Consequences defined as the perceived sum of the harms and benefits done to individuals based on one's ethical decision. This includes both scale (i.e., the number of people influenced) and force (i.e., the type of harm/benefit). A decision with a substantial capacity to either help or harm is considered to have a considerable magnitude of consequences. Thus, "an act that affects 1,000 people has a higher magnitude of consequence than does an act that affects 10 people ... [and] an act resulting in the death of an individual has a higher magnitude of consequences than does an act resulting in only minor injuries" (Kelloway, 1999, p.16). Support for the impact of this situational characteristic is found in the work of Weber (1996) who discovered that the type of harm embodied in a moral dilemma presented to subjects, and the magnitude of its consequences, significantly influenced their ethical decision-making.
- Social Consensus defined as the extent to which individuals agree that an act is 'good' or 'bad'. According to Jones (1991), ethical decisions are more likely to be impacted when there is a greater degree of perceived social consensus around the virtue of the act. For example, stealing money is generally agreed upon by society to be 'bad' and therefore would play a significant role in the ethical decision of an individual. However, other less morally intense issues may not garner such agreement (e.g., illegal copying of software) and as such would play a lesser role in the ethical decisions of individuals. In addition, research suggests that social consensus significantly impacts the recognition of issues as posing moral dilemmas, ethical judgments, and behavioural intentions (Barnett, 2001).
- Probability of Effect defined as the joint likelihood that an act will take place and the subsequent certainty of harm or benefit (Jones, 1991). For example, placing a bomb on an aircraft will ensure that a negative act will occur and will cause certain harm. Alternatively, driving while intoxicated increases the likelihood an accident will take place (but not to the level of complete certainty) and the probability such an accident will cause harm is also high (although not certain). As such, placing a bomb on an aircraft is more morally intense than driving under the influence of alcohol. Support for the impact of this situational characteristic is found in the work of Singhapakdi, Vitell and Kraft (1996) who found that the probability of effect impacts both perceptions of an ethical problem and behavioural intentions. Singhapakdi et al. (1996) distributed various ethical scenarios to a large sampling of organization members. As level of perceived probability of effect was varied between scenarios, the researchers were able to conclude that ethical dilemmas with a higher probability of effect were viewed as more ethically problematic and that the potential behaviours of participants were also correlated with this facet of moral intensity. It appears that an act not likely to take place or harm others will not draw as much ethical attention as a pending or potentially harmful one.

- Temporal Immediacy defined as the amount of time between one's actions and the onset of consequences (Jones, 1991). It has been argued that the shorter the time-span between one's actions and the subsequent consequences, the more likely one is to experience greater moral intensity and have their decision-making impacted. Therefore a situation that may cause an immediate negative consequence would be more likely to significantly impact an ethical decision than a similar situation involving a future consequence. Supporting this notion is research by Singhapakdi, et al. (1996) in which temporal immediacy was found to impact ethical perceptions and intentions. These researchers distributed assorted ethical scenarios to a large sampling of organization members. As temporal immediacy was varied between scenarios, the researchers were able to conclude that ethical dilemmas in which there was a shorter time-span between actions and subsequent consequences were viewed as more ethically problematic and that the potential behaviours of participants were also correlated with temporal immediacy.
- Proximity defined as the perceived distance between the agent and the victim (Jones, 1991). In terms of defining proximity it is important to note that research indicates that perceptions of distance may be impacted by social, cultural, and/or psychological factors (Kelloway, 1999). If an act is judged to have adverse consequences for individuals perceptually proximal to the agent, the issue gains in moral intensity and has a parallel effect on ethical decision-making. As such, it may be argued that an ethical behaviour that negatively affects a member of one's unit is more likely to impact a decision than a behaviour perceived to affect people on the other side of the globe. Indeed, research suggests proximity of the victim influences the ethical decision-making process (e.g., Singer, Mitchell & Turner, 1998). Singer and colleagues (1998) measured the perceived overall ethicality of a morally questionable scenario. The information presented was identical, differing only in the proximity of the hypothetical victims (either 'local markets' or 'overseas markets'). As hypothesized, respondents found the situation to be more morally intense when those to be affected were from the immediate area.
- Concentration of Effect defined as the perceived 'intensity-per-person' that a behaviour might produce. Therefore "if a given act results in 10 people each losing \$10,000, it has a more concentrated effect than an act which results in 10,000 people each losing \$10" (Kelloway, 1999, p. 18). The higher the concentration of effect the more recognizable the ethical dilemma will be.

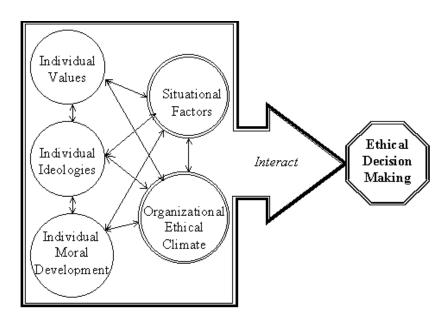
As noted above, a number of preliminary studies provide support for Jones' (1991) model of situational influence (e.g., Davis, Johnson & Ohner, 1998; Singer et al., 1998; Weber, 1996) on ethical decision-making. Understanding the role of situational characteristics is vital in that such dynamics directly affect ethical decision-making, intent, and behaviour. As such, this factor must be taken into account in the creation of a comprehensive model of ethical decision-making. Situational factors, or the subjective experience of these factors, are of particular importance for military leaders called upon to create and define ethical standards for personnel.

3.4 Kelloway Model of Ethical Decision-Making

It may be argued that combining individual, situational and organizational factors to create a military model of ethics parallels the research previously conducted in the business sector. For example, Trevino (1986) proposed an inter-related model of ethical decision-making in business, amalgamating individual variables with situational variables in order to elucidate and predict ethical decision-making behaviour as well as to guide future business ethics research. Although much of the literature in this area is theoretically based, research results have been found to support these theory driven models. Kurtines' (1986), for example, quantitatively investigated the empirical utility of a psychosocial approach to moral decision-making, combining both individual as well as social factors, to gain a broader understanding of ethics within an organizational context. Such research illustrates the integration of both person and situational variables in ethical decision-making and supports the development of explanatory theoretical models that are more persuasive than models that focus on either person or situational variables in isolation.

One such inter-related model is found in the work of Kelloway who identified five significant predictors of ethical decision-making in a military context; individual values, individual ethical ideologies, individual moral development, situational factors and organizational ethical climate (Kelloway, 1999) (see Figure 1). According to Kelloway, it is important to examine these five predictors from an interaction perspective. In other words, each of these factors can impact other factors and, in turn, ethical decisions and behaviour.

Figure 1: Kelloway's Model of Ethical Decision-Making



As per the above diagram, the five factors are described below.

- Individual Values One important factor with regard to defining and measuring ethical decision-making is an understanding of the values held by individuals (Kelloway, 1999; Kohlberg, 1984). Such values are generally measured by simply asking people how they believe the organization should be (i.e., evaluating how individuals feel the organization should be ethically). Organizations often attempt to benefit from these beliefs, incorporating them into a formalized code of ethics. Simply adopting the beliefs of individual members and leaders as a basis for addressing ethics has been shown to be ineffective because ethical policies are not powerful enough to affect moral reasoning (e.g., Clark & Leonard, 1998; Laczniak & Inderrieden, 1987). As such, the Kelloway model views individual values as only one element of many to be considered.
- Individual Ethical Ideologies Additionally, Kelloway (1999) argues that one should also consider individual ethical ideologies or philosophies when investigating ethics in an organization such as the military. This factor differs from individual values in that it seeks to assess how individuals feel the organization is ethically (as opposed to how it should be). These individually-held philosophies can be measured by inquiring as to whether respondents believe ethical decision-making emphasizes rules, care, consequences, virtue, or self-interest in their organization. The areas of emphasis reflect not only the pertinent research into ethical decision-making, but also the bases for ethical decision-making recognized by the Defence Ethics Program (1999).
- Individual Moral Development Like Kohlberg, Kelloway also suggests that individual moral development is an important factor in any ethics model. However, Kelloway states that the majority of assessment approaches regarding individual moral development and reasoning put forth by Kohlberg are somewhat ineffective in that they simply provide individuals with an ethically ambiguous situation and ask them to resolve it. As such, the measure of individual moral development employed by Kelloway utilizes a number of ethical scenarios that are more relevant to the military setting. As with Kohlberg, the level of moral reasoning is calculated by the reason an individual gives for their choices (Kelloway, 1999).
- Situational Factors Consistent with findings discussed earlier and the interaction approach of Kelloway's mode, there is a great deal of evidence to support the position that individual variables (i.e., individual values, individual ethical ideologies, individual moral development) interact with situational factors. As such the individual moral reasoning measured with ethical scenarios is combined with situational factors. As such, the interaction between moral intensity and individual moral reasoning is a vital component of this model.
- Organizational Ethical Climate Finally, according to Kelloway, an organization's ethical climate is believed to interrelate with individual and situational variables. (Kelloway, 1999; Kohlberg, 1984; Victor and Cullen, 1988). Ethical climate may be

measured by the degree to which respondents envision the organization's ethical atmosphere as emphasizing rules, caring, independence, or instrumental values (Kelloway, 1999). As discussed above, individual's perceptions of the organization are largely based on the behaviours and perceived attitudes of their co-workers and leaders. As such, perceptions of leaders' (i.e., supervisors') expectations of ethical behaviour, leaders' behaviour, and coworkers' behaviour must be addressed. In addition to the immediate work group, it has been argued that perceptions of the organization's broader ethical climate may also affect moral decision-making at all levels (Kelloway, 1999). The final facet, when evaluating ethical climate, is the degree of personal control respondents recognize themselves as asserting in regard to the morals and ethics of the organization.

Based on the above theoretical model, Kelloway developed the DNDEQ by assessing 111 members of the Canadian Forces. Although the results were not interpreted in reference to ethics or ethical decision-making specifically, this pilot study verified the acceptability of the DNDEQ as a useful measure. Future research in the area may not only seek to further confirm the psychometric validity and reliability of the instrument, but also to report the ethical findings this measure was designed to evaluate.

4. DELIVERY OF TRAINING

As with ethics, the manner in which instruction is delivered has been the focus of both empirical and theoretical enquiry. Clearly, leadership ability, like moral decision-making, is a function of both the individual and the situation. As such, in order to provide the most effective approach for training military leaders regarding ethics, both individual and situational leadership factors will be discussed. Similarly, specific theories and methods regarding ethics training that are directly applicable to the military will be reviewed throughout this section of the report.

4.1 Leadership

As previously discussed, an examination of the leadership role is a vital component in any attempt to positively impact the ethics of an organization. It must be recognized that leaders themselves are individuals and therefore information regarding individual moral reasoning provides valuable information with regard to the issue of ethics and military leadership. In addition, however, it is important to note that leaders themselves become one of the situational factors within an organization having the potential to affect the ethical behaviour of those they lead (Kronzon, 1999). The factors affecting ethical decisions of leaders are of added consequence in a hierarchical organization, such as the military, where individual members may be less encouraged to employ their own moral judgements, deferring instead to the decisions of their leaders.

Of the numerous potential factors contributing to leadership, a great deal of attention has been focused upon the individual. This research seeks to understand what it is about the *individual* specifically that influences his or her leadership ability. Other models, discussed below, identify not only individual factors, but also *situational* influences upon

one's leadership abilities(e.g., Fiedler, 1967; 1978). Although many theories regarding individual-factor contribution to leadership exist, researchers often employ the 'great person' theory (also referred to as the 'great man' theory) when attempting to predict leadership ability. This individual approach asserts that there are key aspects of a personality that consistently affect leadership potential and therefore the ability to affect the moral reasoning of the organization and its members. This philosophy has maintained a heavy presence in the management research literature (e.g., Metcalf, 1931; Stogdill, 1974; Albright & Forziati, 1995).

Specifically, the great person theory maintains that an individual's personality traits afford them the ability to lead effectively regardless of the nature of the situation facing them. If this rationale were strictly adhered to, the organizational and situational factors discussed regarding ethical behaviour would be of questionable importance. That is, if leaders are impervious to situational influences, consistent and replicable ethical reasoning could be expected regardless of the situation. A review of research findings, however, indicates that although there are modest relationships between personality factors and leadership (see e.g., Albright & Forziati, 1995; Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Whitney, Sagrestano, & Maslach, 1994) distinct situational influences also exist (see e.g., McCann, 1992; Markoff, 1996).

As might be expected, research such as that cited above has led to the great person theory, and other individualistic theories of leadership, largely being supplanted by more integrated models that take into account the individual as well as the situation. Thus, in order to positively affect the ethical decision-making of military leaders, one must consider the nature of the leader and the situation in which he or she is leading. Of the numerous leadership theories that integrate individual and situational variables (e.g., Dienesch & Liden, 1986; House, 1971), the most widely accepted model is the contingency theory of leadership (Fiedler, 1967). According to this model, there are two distinct types of leaders: (1) the task-oriented leader who is motivated mainly by a concern with job completion and success, and (2) the relationship-oriented leader who is primarily concerned with the feelings of workers as well as relationships between subordinates (1978).

In addition to the above, a number of other specific situational factors may serve to significantly affect leadership ability including: the control a leader exerts over the group, the nature of the relationship between a leader and group members, and the type of work the group is to accomplish (Fiedler, 1978). Military research into the significance of situational factors has proven relatively stable over time. For example, nearly forty years ago Fiedler (1966) tested the contingency model of leadership with both senior and junior military officers. The experiment clearly supported the hypothesis that, regardless of rank, the specific leadership style required for optimum performance is contingent upon the situation. Twelve years later, the findings of Csoka and Bons (1978) further support this hypothesis. These researchers found that student military leaders instructed to manipulate their leadership style to better meet the needs of the situation were rated significantly higher in performance ratings than those who did not take the situation into account. Similarly, the results of James and White's (1983) study on Navy managers

provide strong support for cross-situational specificity as a predictor of effective leadership in a military setting. Most recently, a review of the current literature on military leadership indicates that the army requires leaders who can adapt to the differing situations, challenges and opportunities (Hunt, Dodge, & Wong, 1999).

In summary, leadership ability, like ethical decision-making, is best viewed as a product of the integration of the individual and the situation. This parallel between the current ethical decision-making literature and leadership ability investigations must be taken into account when seeking the most effective methods for training military leaders regarding ethics. As such, familiarity with both individual and situational leadership factors is imperative when generating practical military training applications.

4.2 Ethics Training

As previously discussed, ethical training regarding individual moral reasoning is valuable in that leaders, as with any member of an organization, may be affected on an individual level by employing the theories and findings reported above. More important, however, is the fact that leaders have the potential to affect the ethical behaviour of those they lead (Kronzon, 1999) and, as such, ethical training completed at the leadership level is likely to subsequently influence individuals at each level of the chain of command.

As stated at the outset of this report, the real and potential moral issues surrounding the military are numerous and varied. Attempting to specify which should be included in a program of ethics training would be neither comprehensive nor sufficient. Instead, such training should be envisioned as a method of improving one's ability to make ethical decisions in general and engage in ethical behaviours. In this way, ethics instruction may be viewed as akin to effective mathematics training which gives one the tools to solve many problems rather than attempting to provide the 'correct answer' to each possible question. In all areas of training, the myriad of situational characteristics (e.g., perceived harm, magnitude of consequences) should be taken into account in order to ensure the most effective result. For example, according to Weber (1996), a training program on sexual harassment that revolves solely on the psychological harm caused to the victim would tend to evoke a low level of moral reasoning because it only addresses one of the significant negative aspects of this behaviour. Conversely, a training program on sexual harassment that presents a variety of situational repercussions (e.g., causing economic harm through discriminatory promotion practices, physical harm by restricting the victim's actions at work, and increased instances of sexual assault), is more likely to capture the attention of a larger number of individuals and evoke increased levels of moral reasoning.

One potential focus for an organization's ethical training is in the promulgation of a formal code of ethics. Some authors strongly support the view that the military, as a profession, should employ a written code of ethics to guide the moral behaviour of members (Diehl, 1985). Organizational research, however, indicates that formal codes of ethics are not influential in determining ethical decision-making behaviour because ethical policies are not powerful enough to affect moral reasoning (Clark & Leonard,

1998; Kronzon, 1999). In addition, examples abound of corporations and organizations that engage in poor ethical decisions regardless of ethical policies (see e.g., Wells, 1988). Given the above, it appears that neither providing specific moral 'answers' for each situation that may arise nor providing explicit ethical codes are effective solutions to ethics training. It has been suggested that the effective enhancement of cognitive skills such as decision-making may be a more productive approach to positively impacting ethical behaviour in organizations like the military (Wyld & Jones, 1997).

One such approach to ethics training through cognitive skills is found in the concept of Content Training or Formalized Ethical Instruction in which information is transmitted within a traditional learning environment. For example, in the lecture method an instructor speaks and the learners attend. Material presented may include definitions, step-by-step methods for ethical problem solving and information about specific topics such as confidentiality and competence (Teague, 1997). Such traditional teaching methods have been shown to impact the development of ethical decision-making skills (Chapuis, 1999). Another content-based method of ethical training is the case study method where examples of ethical quandaries are described, discussed, and the most appropriate resolution is explored. As with the lecture format, case study discussion has proven effective in increasing moral reasoning scores (Chapuis, 1999; Self, Olivarez & Baldwin, 1998) and is positively correlated with increases in ethical benefits (Self et al., 1998).

Overall, a review of the literature suggests that the lecture and case study approaches provide comparable levels of improvement to ethical decision-making (Chapuis, 1999; Self et al., 1998). Although those participating in the lecture method appear to learn more factual information than those in the case study method, attitudes and the ability to solve a dilemma was not found to differ between the two (Teague, 1997). As may be expected, combining direct classroom lecture with learner involvement (as is found in most case-based teaching) has been put forth as the most effective method for content ethics training (Sapp, 1995).

This formalized approach to training can be likened to the individual-based ethical decision-making and leadership ability discussed above. The individual is expected to incorporate the information into their personal decision-making and leadership style. The similarity to moral reasoning and leadership is also important to highlight with regard to acknowledging the variability of the situation when discussing ethics training. Researchers have come to the conclusion that for ethical training to be effective it should be practical, as opposed to theoretical, and focused on the decision-making process rather than rote learning of concepts (Schnapp, Stone, Van Norman & Ruiz, 1996). Such training intentions can be incorporated into all instruction and preparation rather than being taught in the classroom only during prescribed ethics content courses.

Although increasing ethical awareness through training and decision-making situations is one means of addressing the theoretical importance of situational factors, increasing the 'everyday' ethics of an organization may be more effectively addressed through increasing unit cohesion and morale (Dickson et al., 2001). Researchers suggest that

cohesion and morale may be significant mediating factors with regard to ethical climate. As such, consistent consideration of the morale and structure of each functional group during both training and routine operations may encourage an improved ethical climate. In addition, clarifying ethical expectations is also purported to be one method in which cohesion and morale may be increased (Dickson et al., 2001). Military theorists have suggested that a strong ethical environment based upon cohesion and morale provides a foundation in which further cohesion, morality, and unit strength can be achieved (Wickham, 1996).

Another process-based approach to improving ethical behaviour is through changing the *accepted* behaviours of members. By promoting recognition of how the actions of coworkers and leaders influence the behaviour of other members, a shift can be expected in ethical behaviour (Ferrell & Gardiner, 1991). By role modeling and attending to ethical behaviour, as well as limiting the opportunity to engage in unethical behaviour, members can be made more cognizant of their own personal ethical influences on the organization (Clark & Leonard, 1998; Ferrell & Gardiner, 1991). Finally, including ethical content in each training package offered can demonstrate the applicability of ethical decision-making across a wide spectrum of situations. Ethical components may be addressed in nearly all areas of training such as harassment training, cultural awareness training, leadership, and such diverse areas as troop movement and weapons training. Increasing moral reasoning in such a way has been shown to positively impact ethical behaviour (Blasi, 1980).

5. SUMMARY

The literature indicates that the issue of military leadership and ethics may be informed by an abundance of approaches and theories which speak to areas such as moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and ethical behaviour. These include:

- Kohlberg's model of individual moral development which suggests that people
 engage in moral reasoning in accordance to their stage of development. Strictly
 organized associations, such as the military, have been shown to foster low level,
 do-what-you-are-told, individual moral reasoning (White, 1998). This can be
 improved upon by altering factors such as hierarchical rigidity (White, 1998) and
 education (Peek, 1999).
- An understanding that, in addition to individual moral reasoning, the ethical
 decision-making and behaviour viewed as acceptable within an organization
 directly affects one's intent to behave ethically (Chang, 1998) and predicts the
 severity of future ethical dilemmas and one's ability to solve them (Bartels et al.,
 1998).
- The issue of establishing and maintaining a positive organizational ethical climate is most pertinent for leaders who develop standards and expectations. Critical to the acceptance of ethical behaviour by employees is the manner in which an organization and its leaders respond. In the context of the military, it appears that

leaders have the potential to affect the ethical behaviour of those they lead even more than codified ethical regulations or standards (Kronzon, 1999).

- In addition to individual and organizational factors, situational factors directly affect ethical decision-making and behaviour (Jones, 1991) and, as such, must be taken into account in the creation of a comprehensive model of ethical decision-making. The most applicable model, in terms of its military application, is Kelloway's (1999) Model for Decision-Making for the Department of National Defence. This interactionist model is empirically more powerful than models that focus on these variables in isolation. Kelloway's model identifies five predictors of ethical decision-making; individual values, individual ethical ideologies, individual moral development, situational factors and organizational ethical climate (Kelloway, 1999).
- As with ethical decision-making, situational factors must be taken into account in any discussion of leadership. Theories exist which highlight the role of individual variables in producing a 'great leader' (Albright & Forziati, 1995). However, in order to positively impact the ethical decision-making of leaders, and those under their command, one must consider not only the nature of the leader but also the situation in which she or he is leading. Leadership ability, like ethical decision-making, appears to be heavily influenced by a combination of the personality of the leader and the circumstances (Dienesch & Liden, 1986).
- When examining ethics training aimed at positively impacting moral reasoning of leaders at the individual level, it is most important to be aware that leaders have the ability to affect the ethical behaviour of those they lead (Kronzon, 1999). As such, ethics training offered at the level of commissioned members, noncommissioned members serving in leadership roles, and civilian managers will tend to influence the ethical climate of the military organization.
- Of the numerous methods of ethics training available, a written code of ethics to guide the moral behaviour of members is thought to be the least efficacious (Kronzon, 1999; Clark & Leonard, 1998). Formalized ethical instruction appears to present a more effective method to educate both leaders and subordinates. A review of the literature suggests the two primary approaches to formalized training (i.e., lecture and case study) are comparable in their effectiveness levels (e.g., Chapuis, 1999; Self et al., 1998; Teague, 1997). Combining direct classroom lecture with case study education appears to be the most effective method for content ethics training (Sapp, 1995).
- In addition to specific courses, practical ethics training should be incorporated into all instruction and preparation rather than being taught in the classroom only during prescribed ethics content courses. Including ethical content in each training package and in day-to-day operations demonstrates the applicability of ethical decision-making across a wide spectrum of situations and, as such, is likely to produce a greater change than regimented ethics training alone.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Factors affecting the ethical decisions of leaders, such as those discussed above, are of added importance within a military context given the important role this institution plays within society. As such, the following training recommendations were outlined largely to specifically address the issue of ethics as it relates to leadership in the military.

6.1 Specific Content Training

Formalized ethics instruction should be offered at *all levels* of leadership training. As discussed above, combining direct classroom lecture with learner involvement has been found to be the most effective method for content ethics training (see e.g., Section 4.2 above). In addition to imparting knowledge and skills, regimented ethics instruction will continue to place the issue of moral reasoning at the forefront of training. This position will increase the visibility, and therefore the perceived importance, of the issue.

6.2 Integration of Ethics Across Training Modules

Subject matter relating to ethics should be included in a *wide range* of classroom-type training material. Past research indicates that situational dynamics in ethical decision-making, training situations, and leadership account for a great deal of variability in ethical outcomes (see e.g., Sections 3.3, 4.1. & 4.2 above). Therefore, in order to positively impact ethical decisions and behaviour over a wide range of situations, ethics training should parallel the variability discussed throughout the literature. Including ethical content in each training package offered will demonstrate the applicability of ethical decision-making across a wide spectrum of situations.

6.3 Integration of Ethics Across Training Activities

Ethics should be discussed and dealt with in all *instruction, preparation and daily activities* rather than being taught in the classroom only. As stated above, situational variability in ethics calls not only for ethical instruction to be included in a wide range of classroom work, but also across activities. This approach is supported by the training literature as well as by research into the ethical atmosphere of the organization (see Sections 4.2 & 3.2 above). It may be argued that broadening the scope of ethics education in this way will further enhance its visibility and perceived importance. Such application will also serve to demonstrate the situational nature of both leadership and ethical decision-making. Increasing learning time and availability through the incorporation of ethics into all facets of operation should result in a corresponding increase in the amount of material learned.

6.4 Clear Delineation of Ethical Standards

With or without a formal code of ethics, the *general ethical expectations or standards* of members should be clearly delineated and communicated. Research on organizational

ethics indicates that the effective delineation and communication of ethical standards may positively impact both individual accountability and knowledge regarding organizationally sanctioned expectations and limits (see Section 3.2 above). It has been argued that clarifying ethical expectations may also produce positive results in terms of organizational cohesion and morale.

6.5 Recognition of the Influence of Leaders on Ethical Behaviour

Recognition of a *leaders' influence* on the organization's ethical climate should be highlighted within content training and day-to-day operations. Organizational ethics research suggests that by promoting recognition of how the actions of co-workers and leaders influence the behaviour of other members, a shift can be expected in ethical behaviour (see Section 3.2 above). Findings regarding individual and organizational moral reasoning advocate both self-awareness and understanding of organizational factors in ethical decision-making (see Sections 3.1 & 3.2 above). These factors would be positively impacted by the recognition of a leader's ethical influence.

6.6 Leadership and Role-Modelling

Leaders should continually seek to present themselves as positive role models for ethical reasoning and behaviour. By role modeling personal ethical behaviour, as well as limiting the opportunity to engage in unethical behaviours, leaders may also be made more cognizant of their own personal ethical influence on the organization as a whole. The importance of these personal influences is supported by organizational, situational, and ethics training research (see Sections 3.2, 3.3 & 4.2 above). In addition, it may also be argued that leadership specific examinations on role modeling abilities may serve to increase the positive impact of those being considered for leadership roles (see Section 4.1 above).

6.7 Extra-Organizational Input

The architects of any program on military leadership and ethics should continue to seekout civilian input. Findings regarding the inhibitory effects of rigid organizational hierarchies on ethical behaviour suggest the need for some level of civilian input in order to decrease the opportunity for the presence of negative operational elements such as groupthink (see Section 3.2 above). Such outside input would facilitate supplanting the difficulties inherent in a hierarchy (e.g., who executes the role of rule maker and enforcer in regard to individuals very high in the chain of command?). As well, civilian associates may serve to increase outward legitimacy of the organization (see Section 4.2 above).

6.8 Assessment of Programs

Any leadership ethics training-package that is implemented must be assessed in order to evaluate its success as well as to identify any deficits it may hold. The majority of ethics training research is outcome based and points to the need for outcome evaluation (see Section 4.2 above). As discussed above, the DNDEQ was specifically designed as an

evaluation instrument through which ethical education and programming of the DND may be evaluated (see Section 3.4 above). As such, the DNDEQ, or a similarly quantitative measure, may be employed both before and after such a training program is initiated as a measure of outcome and efficacy. Monitoring outcomes may lead to program changes and improvements. Finally, employing a quantitative instrument, such as the DNDEQ, serves to increase the legitimacy and impartiality necessary in high quality, effective, training programs.

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