THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Ethical Leadership Paradigms among Indian Immigrant Professionals in Canada and Their Counterparts in India: The Effects of Acculturation

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Alana Hoare, my guide and supervisor, who has left a lasting impact on both my life and my research journey. Your kindness, compassion, and unwavering support have shaped this work and inspired me deeply. I am forever grateful.

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Abstract

This study explores the ethical leadership paradigms of Indian immigrant professionals in Canada and compares them with their counterparts in India, with a particular focus on the impact of acculturation. Drawing on acculturation theory and the recently conceptualized Bird's Eye View Model of leadership ethics, this research investigates how Indian immigrant leaders adapt their ethical beliefs and practices in response to the Canadian cultural environment. The study employs a qualitative research design, incorporating in-depth interviews and reflective dialogue with Indian leaders in both countries to examine their ethical values, decision-making frameworks, and leadership practices. Key findings reveal that Indian immigrant leaders often experience shifts in their ethical approaches, blending traditional Indian values with Canadian cultural norms to navigate leadership challenges. Notably, participants retained core values such as collectivism, respect for authority, and community-centric ethics while integrating Western ideas emphasizing individual autonomy and organizational transparency. This adaptation highlights the dynamic nature of ethical leadership in multicultural settings. This study offers a valuable contribution to cross-cultural leadership research, emphasizing the need for inclusive leadership frameworks that acknowledge diverse cultural influences. Practical implications include guidance for immigrant leaders seeking to balance cultural retention and adaptation, as well as strategies for Canadian organizations to foster inclusive leadership practices. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of cultural awareness in ethical leadership development and supports broader efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in global professional environments.

Keywords: leadership ethics, acculturation, multi-paradigms, qualitative research

Chapter 1: Introduction

My journey into the study of ethical leadership began through my involvement in a research project, where I contributed to the development of *Ethical Educational Leadership: Untangling Ethical Dilemmas and Imagining Alternative Futures* (Hoare et al., 2024), an open educational resource published by TRU Open Press. This experience not only enhanced my understanding of ethical leadership in higher education but also revealed significant gaps in the existing literature on the topic. One of the most critical issues identified in current research on leadership, particularly ethical leadership, is its predominant focus on Western perspectives. Most prevailing leadership theories and the empirical evidence supporting them are deeply rooted in American and European contexts (e.g., Ly, 2020; Resick et al., 2006). These theories often emphasize individualistic, hedonistic, and rational values, which stand in stark contrast to the collectivist, altruistic, and religious values prominent in many non-Western cultures (Ly, 2020). Consequently, these Western-centric frameworks may not fully capture or account for the ethical constructs that are integral to non-Western societies, such as those grounded in Confucian, Islamic, or other Indigenous peoples' traditions (Resick et al., 2006).

Moreover, recent scholars have begun to critique the "whiteness" entrenched within leadership theory, pointing out that much of the literature is generalizing from white, Western standpoints while presenting them as race-neutral norms (Liu, 2017). This exclusionary approach reinforces the symbolic ideal of leadership from a Western, predominantly white perspective, ignoring the diversity of racial and cultural leadership norms present globally. Furthermore, studies on workplace leadership, such as Ahmad's (2018) exploration of leadership's role in mitigating workplace bullying, have similarly been constrained by a predominantly Western lens. The lack of research into how ethical leadership operates in non-Western contexts, particularly in Eastern countries like India and Pakistan, highlights a

need for cross-cultural investigations that examine leadership effectiveness across diverse settings. Finally, while some research has touched upon leadership ethics in non-Western contexts, these efforts often remain limited in scope. Eisenbeiß (2014) noted that much of the existing literature on ethical leadership tends to focus on compliance-driven models within the private sector, primarily in Western societies. This focus has led to limited examination of ethical leadership within culturally diverse or Eastern contexts. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2022) emphasize the critical need for cross-cultural studies to address the nuances of ethical leadership across diverse contexts. They argue that existing research may overlook unique ethical challenges faced by leaders in non-Western contexts, underscoring the importance of broadening leadership frameworks to include perspectives beyond Western norms.

The absence of Eastern viewpoints in the discourse on ethical leadership became increasingly evident to me as I reviewed the literature, prompting a deeper exploration of leadership through the lens of India. This next step in my research was inspired by collective reflection and dialogue, a critical component of community-driven methodologies, particularly in community-based participatory research (CBPR) and participatory action research (PAR) (Wallerstein, 2021)**.** Collective reflection and dialogue involves sustained, iterative conversations among research team members and community partners (Wallerstein, 2021). These conversations encourage the sharing of experiences, identities, and perspectives, creating an environment of trust and mutual respect where all voices are valued equally. Through collective reflection, participants engage in self-reflexivity, openly acknowledging and addressing any power dynamics that may exist between academic researchers and community members. This approach is crucial for building authentic partnerships, as it allows for a more equitable distribution of influence, ensuring that research outcomes remain community-cantered and collaboratively shaped (Muhammad et al., 2015; Wallerstein, 2021). Engaging in open dialogue further strengthens trust among participants; when community

members feel heard and valued, relationships deepen, fostering ongoing collaboration. This trust is foundational for effective community engagement and sustainable partnership (Wallerstein, 2021). For me, embracing this participatory approach was not just a methodological choice; it became a personal commitment to ensuring that my research remained collaborative, reflective, and grounded in the diverse voices and lived experiences of the community I was working with.

As an international student, my quest to define my research focus began informally, through conversations with fellow international students in leadership positions at my Canadian university. Over time, these discussions expanded to include a wider group of international students, regardless of their roles or positions within the university, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the topics and questions relevant to the broader international student community. In these discussions, we explored numerous aspects of leadership, ranging from ethics and leadership styles to the impact of leadership roles, challenges, and opportunities. Although there was no consensus on a single aspect of leadership, the intercultural dimensions of leadership emerged consistently as a central theme. This recurring theme became the focal point of my research.

My personal experiences have played a crucial role in shaping my research interests. I was born in the small village of Karmad, located near the Narmada River in Gujarat, India, and my early life was heavily influenced by the traditions and values of this close-knit rural community. Later, my family moved to the nearby city of Surat, where many people from our village had also relocated in search of better educational and job opportunities. This proximity allowed us to quickly find a familiar community within the city, helping me stay connected to my village's cultural and religious values, which continued to shape my worldview and my approach to leadership. Throughout my life, these values have been fundamental to my community-driven leadership style, which often contrasts with the

individualistic and secular norms I encountered in Western contexts. However, when I moved to Canada, specifically to the small town of Kamloops, I experienced a cultural shift that made me more aware of the influence my Indian upbringing had on my perceptions of leadership and cultural identity. In India, each city, town, and even village has unique cultural markers that are vividly reflected in daily life, from the types of restaurants and local cuisine to clothing styles and community practices. For instance, my birthplace, a small village, had a close-knit, community-oriented lifestyle. In major village decisions, the village head would consult the elders, reflecting a deeply communal approach. The cuisine was simple, carbohydrate- and protein-rich, and focused on staple foods, as most people were part of a hardworking farming community. Festivals were celebrated in a modest way, emphasizing tradition over grandeur.

In contrast, the nearby city my family moved to later was more urban and business-oriented. Here, people were accustomed to working independently, often with a laid-back approach to life. This cultural difference was also visible in the cuisine, which featured a variety of dishes and a strong emphasis on desserts, side dishes, and quick snacks suitable for a lifestyle involving frequent travel for business. Festivals were celebrated on a larger scale, with more diversity and fanfare, and leadership was generally more output-focused, less involved in the community, and more individualistic in nature.

When I arrived in Kamloops, however, I was struck by the lack of an immediately recognizable local cultural identity. Most restaurants featured international cuisines such as Indian, Japanese, Mexican, and Middle Eastern with very few showcasing Indigenous or distinctly Canadian dishes. Grocery stores and shopping malls felt generic, without the unique regional products or styles I was accustomed to in India. It was unsettling to be in an environment where cultural markers were less obvious or rooted in tradition. I felt as though I was navigating a landscape less grounded in a specific heritage, making it difficult to find

familiar reference points or understand what was uniquely "Kamloops." This experience underscored how profoundly culture shapes not only personal identity but also leadership perceptions, as I found myself searching for ways to connect with an unfamiliar cultural landscape.

Motivated by my personal experiences and the insights gained from my interactions with international students, I began a focused literature search at the intersection of culture and leadership, particularly within the context of the international student community and immigrants in Canada. Coming from India and experiencing the cultural shift in Canada firsthand, I felt a strong need to understand how different cultural backgrounds shape perceptions and practices of leadership. The importance of this research lies in the fact that, while immigration continues to shape Canada's social and professional landscape, relatively little research has been conducted on how immigrants from non-Western countries adapt their leadership styles in a Canadian context. This is especially significant for understanding the unique challenges and perspectives of immigrant professionals who navigate distinct cultural norms and expectations.

During my literature search, I encountered a pivotal study by Liang et al. (2019) that directly informed my research direction. This study examines the implicit leadership theories of Chinese professionals in Australia and China, focusing on how acculturation influences leadership perceptions. The study's emphasis on leadership from a follower's perspective provided valuable insights into the role of acculturation in leadership dynamics, highlighting how cultural adaptation can reshape leadership styles and expectations. This approach underscores the relevance of exploring similar dynamics among Indian immigrant professionals in Canada, whose cultural background and experiences with acculturation may also shape distinct perceptions of leadership. By building on this understudied area, my research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural

adaptation affects leadership practices, specifically among Indian immigrants in Canada. Inspired by the work of Liang et al. (2019), I decided to adapt the study's framework to explore leadership ethics from a leader's perspective, comparing the experiences of Indian leaders in India with those who have immigrated to Canada. This exploration aims to bring an Eastern perspective to the discourse on ethical leadership, addressing the existing gap in the literature and providing a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural backgrounds influence leadership practices.

This study aims to explore and compare the ethical leadership paradigms of Indian professionals in leadership positions in India with those of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, focusing specifically on how acculturation, which is the process through which individuals or groups adapt to a new culture after prolonged contact and often involves changes in beliefs, behaviours, and identity while balancing elements of their original culture, influences their ethical beliefs and practices (Sam, & Berry, 2010). As globalization continues to accelerate, the movement of professionals across borders raises important questions about how cultural contexts shape leadership ethics (Bhal & Debnath, 2006; Baker, 2017). Canada, a major destination for immigrants, welcomed approximately 437,180 new permanent residents in 2022, with India being the top contributor, accounting for 118,095 of these new arrivals (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 2022; Singer, 2023). This influx highlights the significant role Indian immigrants play in Canada's professional and social landscape. Given that 364,166 permanent residents became Canadian citizens in 2022 to 2023 (Statista Research Department, 2024), understanding how these individuals adapt to Canadian leadership norms is crucial for fostering effective and inclusive leadership in diverse settings.

Despite the growing presence of Indian professionals in Canada, much of the existing literature on ethical leadership remains predominantly Western-centric. This leaves a

significant gap in understanding how Eastern perspectives, particularly those from India, adapt and evolve in a new cultural environment. This study builds on the foundational work of Liang et al. (2019), which explored the impact of acculturation on implicit leadership theories from a follower's perspective by comparing Chinese immigrant professionals in Australia with their counterparts in China who have not undergone acculturation. By shifting the focus to leadership ethics from a leader's perspective, this research will investigate whether, and how, the ethical beliefs of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada differ from those of their counterparts in India. Through qualitative research, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics influencing leadership ethics, offering valuable insights for both academic literature and practical leadership development across multicultural contexts.

1.1 Justification of the Study

This study is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it will provide crucial insights into how cultural contexts shape ethical leadership, a key factor for organizations striving to foster inclusive and effective leadership across diverse backgrounds. As of 2023, approximately eight million immigrants reside in Canada, representing over 21% of the total population (Statista Research Department, 2024). Among these, Indian immigrants form the largest group, contributing significantly to the country's economic and social fabric (Singer, 2023). This demographic shift underscores the need for research exploring how immigrant leaders adapt their ethical beliefs and practices within a new cultural environment. A recent study revealed that 63% of African and Asian immigrant men serve on boards of directors, comparable to 65% for Canadian-born men; while 45% of immigrant men hold officer positions, compared to 36% of their Canadian-born counterparts. Moreover, immigrant men have higher participation rates in top decision-making roles (63% versus 59%) (Longpré-Verret & McKee, 2022). In this study, "immigrant" refers specifically to individuals who

were born outside of Canada and later relocated to Canada, distinguishing them from those who are Canadian-born, including descendants of earlier generations of immigrants. These statistics illustrate the increasing prominence of recent immigrant leaders in Canada, further emphasizing the relevance of this study.

Secondly, findings from the current research can offer practical benefits to immigrant leaders in Canada by helping them navigate cultural differences more effectively, thus enhancing their leadership performance and career success. According to Lia et al. (2017), immigrant professionals often struggle to adapt to the cultural norms and expectations of Canadian workplaces, which can differ significantly from those in their home countries. These challenges include understanding unwritten rules and workplace etiquette. By examining the acculturation process and its impact on ethical leadership paradigms, this study will provide valuable guidance for immigrant leaders striving to reconcile their cultural heritage with the expectations of Canadian leadership norms. In addition, domestic leaders and organizations can benefit from these findings by better understanding how to support immigrant leaders, fostering a more inclusive and effective workplace environment.

Furthermore, this study will make a significant contribution to academic literature by addressing a gap in existing research, which is predominantly centred on Western perspectives of leadership ethics (Hoare et al., 2024; Liu, 2017; Ly, 2020; Resick et al., 2006). To date, few if any published studies specifically examine how the acculturation process impacts the ethical leadership perceptions of Indian immigrants, highlighting this research as a novel and valuable contribution to the field. The insights gained could inform leadership development programs and organizational policies, supporting the growth of diverse and culturally aware leadership within Canadian organizations. Moreover, the research could offer practical guidelines for organizations with diverse workforces, helping

them create inclusive environments that integrate and respect different ethical perspectives, ultimately leading to more harmonious and effective workplaces.

In conclusion, this project aims to bridge cultural gaps in leadership practices, promoting a deeper understanding of how ethical leadership is shaped by cultural influences and evolves in new cultural contexts. By addressing these issues, the study not only contributes to academic knowledge but also has the potential to support equity, inclusion, and diversity goals within organizations.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are structured to comprehensively explore how acculturation influences ethical leadership among Indian professionals in two distinct contexts: India and Canada. The general objective provides an overarching aim for the research, while the specific objectives outline targeted areas of investigation that will offer deeper insights into the ethical beliefs and practices shaped by cultural adaptation.

1.2.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore and compare the ethical leadership paradigms of Indian professionals in India with those of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, focusing on the impact of acculturation on their leadership ethics.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify and analyse the core ethical principles and practices valued by leaders in India, thereby understanding the foundational aspects of ethical leadership in an Indian cultural context.
2. To investigate the perceptions of ethical leadership among Indian immigrant leaders in Canada and assess whether their ethical views and practices have shifted or adapted because of integrating into the Canadian cultural environment.

3. To compare the ethical leadership paradigms between Indian leaders in India and Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, examining the nuances in the adaptation of ethical perspectives and practices resulting from the acculturation process.

These objectives are designed to provide a richer, more contextualized understanding of how cultural and environmental factors influence ethical leadership, contributing to both academic literature and practical applications in leadership development across multicultural contexts.

1.3 Research Questions

To thoroughly explore the impact of acculturation on ethical leadership paradigms, this study will address several key research questions. These questions are designed to examine the ethical beliefs and practices of Indian leaders in India and Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, with a focus on how acculturation influences their leadership approaches. By exploring these areas, the study aims to uncover both the differences and similarities in ethical leadership between the two groups and how their perspectives transform within different cultural contexts.

1. What core ethical principles and practices are valued by leaders in India?
2. How do Indian immigrant leaders in Canada perceive and practice ethical leadership?
3. How have the ethical views and practices of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada changed as a result of adapting to the Canadian cultural environment?
4. What are the key similarities and differences in the ethical leadership paradigms between Indian leaders in India and Indian immigrant leaders in Canada?

Each research question is directly aligned with a corresponding research objective. Research Question 1 addresses Specific Objective 1 by identifying and analysing the core ethical principles valued by leaders in India. Research Questions 2 and 3 respond to Specific Objective 2 by exploring how Indian immigrant leaders in Canada perceive and practice ethical leadership, and whether their ethical views shift through cultural adaptation. Finally,

Research Question 4 addresses Specific Objective 3 by comparing ethical leadership paradigms between leaders in India and Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, highlighting nuances influenced by acculturation.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study employs acculturation theory and multiple ethical paradigms as its theoretical framework to explore how Indian immigrant leaders in Canada adjust to a new cultural environment and how this adaptation influences their ethical leadership practices.

1.4.1 Acculturation Theory

Acculturation refers to the process through which individuals or groups adjust to a new cultural context by adopting certain cultural elements while maintaining aspects of their original culture (Barker, 2017). In this study, acculturation theory is used to examine how Indian immigrant leaders in Canada adapt their ethical beliefs and practices in response to the Canadian cultural environment, comparing them to Indian leaders in India. Acculturation theory has evolved significantly since its early usage by John Wesley Powell in 1880, who described the cultural changes that occur when different societies come into contact (Berry, 2017; Powell, 1880; Rudmin, 2003). The concept was further developed by Redfield et al. (1936), who defined acculturation as the process of cultural change resulting from direct contact between different cultures. Their "Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation" (Redfield et al., 1936) provided a foundational framework for understanding the complexities of cultural adaptation, distinguishing acculturation from related concepts like assimilation, which refers to when individuals or groups fully adopt the practices of the dominant culture and abandon their original cultural identity (Milton, 1964), and diffusion, which refers to the spread of cultural elements from one culture to another, often through indirect means, rather than direct contact (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

This study applies acculturation theory to explore the cultural adaptation processes experienced by Indian immigrant leaders, particularly focusing on how their ethical beliefs and practices shift as they engage with Canadian culture. By examining the ethical leadership paradigms of Indian leaders in India and comparing them with those of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, the study will assess how the acculturation process influences leadership ethics in a cross-cultural context. Key aspects of the Redfield et al. (1936) framework that are relevant to this research include:

1. **Direct Cultural Contact**: This study focuses on Indian immigrant leaders who have experienced direct, sustained contact with Canadian culture, exploring how this interaction has influenced their leadership practices. Through interviews, participants shared their experiences of adapting to Canadian cultural norms and expectations, allowing for a deeper understanding of the acculturation process in leadership contexts.
2. **Cultural Retention and Adaptation**: Acculturation theory helps examine which elements of Indian ethical leadership are retained and which are adapted or modified in the new cultural environment. This research analysed how Indian immigrant leaders balanced their original cultural values with the ethical expectations of their host country.
3. **Bidirectional Cultural Influence**: Although Redfield et al. (1936) emphasized the mutual influence between interacting cultures, this study primarily focused on how Indian immigrant leaders adapted to Canadian culture, while acknowledging that some aspects of Indian culture may also influence the Canadian leadership landscape (Berry, 2017).

By using this theoretical lens, the study seeks to identify the specific cultural elements that shape ethical leadership during the acculturation process. This analysis will highlight how

Indian immigrant leaders negotiate their ethical beliefs and leadership styles as they adapt to Canadian cultural norms, thereby providing insights into the dynamic nature of ethical leadership in multicultural settings.

1.4.2. Multiple Ethical Paradigms

The second framework guiding this research is the Multiple Ethical Paradigms framework. This framework, originally developed through the work of various scholars (e.g., Chryssides & Kaler, 1996; Engsjö-Lindgren, 2021; Nevarez & Wood, 2014; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016), has been extended and contextualized by Hoare et al. (2024) for leadership in higher education. In this study, I adopt Hoare et al.'s (2024) adapted version, applying it to leadership in a broader, cross-cultural context. The concept of multiple ethical paradigms has been used in various leadership settings, including corporate, business, healthcare, and other formal organizations (Engsjö-Lindgren, 2021; Jamal & Camargo, 2014; Linton & Koonmen, 2020; Skoe & von der Lippe, 2002).

The Bird's Eye View Model used in this study represents multiple ethical paradigms in leadership, each offering a unique perspective on ethical decision-making. This model encourages leaders to engage with ethical principles in a reflective, rather than reactive, manner, promoting self-awareness and critical examination of their assumptions and decision-making processes. The framework includes eight ethical paradigms:

- St’at’imc Matriarchal Leadership Ethics
- Ethic of Justice
- Ethic of Community
- Ethic of Care
- Ethic of Self-Care
- Ethic of Discomfort
- Ethic of the Profession

Leaders guided by these paradigms are prompted to make decisions that begin with self-reflection on their own beliefs and values, expanding outward to consider the well-being of those they impact, the broader community, and societal laws and policies. As part of the adapted Multiple Ethical Paradigms framework, adopting the Bird's Eye View Model encourages leaders to approach ethical dilemmas as an ongoing cycle requiring continual re-evaluation and adaptation, particularly as new information emerges, or unintended outcomes arise. These ethical lenses have been integrated into the data collection tools, such as the interview questionnaire and pre-interview sheets, to help identify the primary ethical lens that Indian leaders operate from and to assess whether these paradigms shift after the acculturation process. By applying this framework, the study aims to analyze how leadership ethics respond to cultural change, fostering a comprehensive understanding of how cultural adaptation influences ethical decision-making.

1.5 Summary

This introduction chapter introduced the study's background, motivation, and objectives, highlighting a gap in ethical leadership literature, which often centres on Western perspectives and overlooks Eastern contexts. Drawing from my experiences as an Indian immigrant in Canada, the study aims to explore and compare the ethical leadership paradigms of Indian leaders in India and Canada, focusing on the impact of acculturation. Utilizing acculturation theory and the Bird's Eye View Model of multiple ethical paradigms Hoare et al.'s (2024), the study seeks to analyse how cultural adaptation shapes ethical beliefs and practices. The next chapter will present a literature review on ethical leadership, acculturation, and cultural influences on leadership practices, identifying gaps and contextualizing this study's contributions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The aim of this literature review is to examine how ethical leadership is defined and explored in the literature, particularly in the Indian context, as well as how it is situated within broader Canadian or Western perspectives. The chapter begins by defining ethics and ethical leadership, outlining foundational philosophical concepts and contemporary interpretations. Following this, ethical leadership is examined within the Indian context, considering both ancient traditions and contemporary organizational perspectives to illustrate how cultural values shape leadership ethics over time. The next section explores ethical leadership within the Canadian context, integrating Indigenous worldviews and contemporary leadership practices in diverse sectors. This chapter also introduces acculturation theory to explain how cultural adaptation may influence leadership perceptions and practices among immigrant professionals. Finally, the multiple ethical paradigms framework and the Bird's Eye View Model are presented as the conceptual lens guiding this study's analysis. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the existing research and outlining the study's approach in addressing them.

2.1 Defining Ethics and Ethical Leadership

The term ethics is derived from the Greek word ethos. It signifies the customs or usages that are particularly associated with one group, as opposed to another (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). As stated by John Dewey (1902), ethics is the study that focuses on conduct as long as it is viewed as right or wrong, good or bad. Similarly, Harvey and Moeller (2016) defined ethics as "an understanding of what is considered to be right and wrong conduct" (p. 6). Expanding this view, Wood and Nevarez (2014) argued, "Ethics is defined as the systemic, critical, and summative study of standards needed for moral living" (p.13).

To explore how ethical behaviour is evaluated in terms of intent and outcome, Frankena (1973) outlined two main theoretical approaches: deontological and teleological

ethics. Deontological ethics is based on the idea that people should do what is right because it is their moral duty, regardless of the outcome. This means an action is considered ethical if it follows a rule or principle, such as always telling the truth. On the other hand, teleological ethics focuses on the results of an action. According to this view, an action is ethical if it leads to a good or desirable outcome. Building on this theoretical foundation, several scholars have examined the role of ethics within organizational settings. As per Sharma et al. (2019), ethics govern the actions, mindset, and behaviour of individuals. It plays a crucial role in enhancing trust, equality, transparency, sincerity, and honesty among the workforce within the organization. Similarly, Krishnamurthy (2011) argued that ethics generally refers to

> "The concept has come to mean various things to various people, but generally in the context of organizations coming to know what it right or wrong in the workplace and doing what's right -- this is in regard to effects of products/services and in relationships with stakeholders" (p.4).

However, as Hoare et al. (2024) noted, there is no single, universally accepted definition of what is considered ethical. Understandings of ethics are shaped by multiple influences, including political beliefs, cultural background, religion, personal experiences, and specific circumstances. In this study, ethics is understood as a comprehensive area of inquiry focused on determining what is morally right and wrong (Hoare et al., 2024).

Although discussions on ethics offer foundational insights, the concept acquires additional layers of complexity when examined within organizational and leadership settings. In such contexts, ethical conduct is not merely about individual choices but also about how those in positions of power influence collective behaviour, shape organizational culture, and respond to diverse stakeholder expectations. It is within this broader framework that the concept of ethical leadership emerges, linking personal morality with professional responsibility. Ethical leadership, therefore, extends beyond simply knowing what is right or

wrong. Gini (1997) describes moral leadership as a collaborative, influence-based relationship between leaders and followers that involves shared commitment, inspires ethical behaviour grounded in community values, relies on personal character and mentoring to set ethical standards, and is inseparable from the ethical values reflected in leadership decisions and actions. They further assert that "The leader's world view cannot be totally solipsistic. The leader's agenda should not be purely self-serving. Leaders should not see followers as potential adversaries to be bested, but rather as fellow travellers with similar aspirations and rights to be reckoned with" (p.73). Building on this, Kanungo (2001) offers a comprehensive perspective on ethical leadership, emphasizing its focus on what is morally good or right rather than what is merely legal or procedurally correct. According to Kanungo, ethical leadership is defined by three interrelated dimensions: the motives, acts, and character of leaders. These elements are not only central to ethical conduct but also to its broader impact, as he explains "In ethical leadership, the motives, acts, and characters of leaders result in the moral development of both the leader and the followers, which in turn serve the interests of their organizations and society at large" (p. 260). Similarly, Resick et al. (2006) define ethical leadership as "leading in a manner that is respectful of the rights and dignity of others – that is, ethical leadership" (p. 375). They explained, "As leaders are by nature in a position of social power, ethical leadership focuses on how leaders use their social power in the decisions they make, actions they engage in, and ways they influence others" (p. 346). The authors further outline six key attributes that characterize ethical leadership: character and integrity, ethical awareness, community or people-orientation, motivating, encouraging and empowering others, and managing ethical accountability. These dimensions collectively reflect a style of leadership that is inherently positive, people-centred, and grounded in ethical responsibility. Brown and Mitchell (2010) contribute to this discourse by highlighting the dual role of ethical leaders: they must not only embody strong moral character but also serve

as moral managers who institutionalize ethical practices within the organization. As they assert, “individuals in power must be both strong moral persons and moral managers in order to be seen as ethical leaders by those around them” (p. 585). In the context of education, Wood and Nevarez (2014) emphasize the moral expectations embedded within leadership roles. They state,

> “When one combines the words ethics and leadership there is an assumption that one is fulfilling their ethical standards through the practice of leadership. With this in mind, ethical leadership is the practice of inspiring others towards a desired outcome while exemplifying an established standard for moral living” (p.16).

Research conducted by Brown et al. (2005) serves as the foundational basis for how ethical leadership is conceptualized in this study. They define ethical leadership as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (p. 120). Importantly, the authors clarify that the phrase “normatively appropriate” is “deliberately vague,” acknowledging that ethical norms can vary significantly across organizations, industries, and cultural contexts (p. 120). For the purposes of this research, this definition will serve as the working understanding of ethical leadership, as it captures both the behavioural and relational dimensions of ethical conduct. Furthermore, it highlights the context-specific nature of ethical leadership, shaped by the values, expectations, and norms of the environment in which it is practiced.

2.2 Ethical Leadership in the Context of India

Ethical leadership in the Indian context can be understood through two main themes: (1) ancient India thought and traditions, and (2) contemporary perspectives in India. Before beginning the exploration of ethical leadership in ancient Indian, it is important to

acknowledge a key limitation in the available literature. Much of the existing literature in this area reflects a male dominated and Brahminical perspective, as it is primarily authored by individuals from Brahmin communities who historically held positions of power, education, and authority. As a result, the prevailing narratives often represent Brahminical and patriarchal interpretations of leadership. This limited scope is further shaped by the historical context of caste-based hierarchies in ancient India (Singh, 2014). The origins of caste and untouchability are commonly linked to the Aryan migration around 1500 BCE, during which Indo Aryan tribes came into conflict with Indigenous communities. These Aryan tribes, united by a shared language and religion, viewed the Indigenous populations as culturally inferior and ritually impure, leading to deeply entrenched social divisions (Singh, 2014). Over time, Brahmins emerged as the dominant caste, holding access to formal education, religious authority, and leadership roles, which reinforced their prominence in historical texts and interpretations of leadership (Singh, 2014). While India has a rich legacy of female leadership, including figures such as Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Lakshmibai, Razia Sultan, Begum Hazrat Mahal, and Indira Gandhi, much of the literature on these women focuses on their political and strategic leadership rather than ethical leadership specifically (Deshpande, 2022; Kaur, 2023; Mujawar, 2023). Since this section is centred on ethical leadership traditions, such accounts are not included here, although their historical significance is acknowledged and remains valuable for future exploration.

2.1.1 Ethical Leadership in Ancient India Thought and Traditions

India's rich intellectual heritage, especially its extensive literary traditions, has played a significant role in shaping its approaches to leadership (Arujunan, 2022). In light of this, this section explores what ancient Indian literature says about ethical leadership and how these principles continue to reflect in modern Indian leadership practices. The idea of servant leadership was embodied in the *Dharmasutras*, where the king was regarded as a servant of

the state, earning a wage through taxation. Thinkers like Kautilya (an ancient Indian teacher, philosopher, economist, jurist, and royal advisor) further emphasized that taxation established a mutual responsibility between the king and his citizens, placing them on equal terms regarding income and the distribution of resources (Altekar, 2002; Arujunan, 2022). Indian governance was historically grounded in theological and sociological principles, yet it allowed for the possibility of a ruler stepping down if he did not meet the established ethical standards. The ideal form of governance was envisioned as a duty-oriented, consensual relationship between the king and his subjects, guided by a Divine Code (Altekar, 2002). Similarly, consulting knowledgeable and capable advisors was considered essential in ancient Indian governance. The King's Council, or *Ratnins*, included influential figures such as Queens, the *Purohita* (Royal Chaplain), the *Senani* (commander-in-chief), and other key officials. Power sharing, known as *Ubhayayatta*, along with the delegation of authority, played a critical role in ensuring effective administration (Altekar, 2002, p.3). The secretariat, as a central organ of governance, was expected to comprise highly qualified and trustworthy individuals, thereby strengthening the overall functioning of the state (Altekar, 2002).

Expanding on internal leadership qualities, Arujunan (2022) discusses the concept of three *Gunas* (Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas) which play a fundamental role in shaping a leader. These *Gunas* describe internal qualities and behaviours of leaders. *Sattva Guna*, or the mode of goodness, signifies qualities like knowledge, happiness, purity, and self-control. Leaders who exhibit *Sattva* are characterized by intellectual capacity, responsibility, ethical conduct, openness to constructive feedback, and a focus on higher values. *Rajas Guna*, the mode of passion, manifests as restlessness, intense emotions, false pride, and emotional volatility. Leaders dominated by *Rajas* tend to seek power and influence. *Tamas Guna*, or the mode of ignorance, is associated with indifference, confusion, procrastination, and lack of control. Leaders heavily influenced by *Tamas* display disorderly conduct and an inability to

effectively inspire or manage subordinates. It is suggested that leaders must engage in self-reflection and strive to regulate these *Gunas* to pursue higher goals grounded in ethical standards and dharmic duty (Avancha, 2024).

Another classical source, ancient Indian scripture the *Tirukkural*, also known as the *Kural* introduced a leadership theory entitled leadership excellence (Chendroyaperumal & Meena, 2007). It presents a composite model of traits theory, behavioural theory, social cognitive resource theory, and ethical theory of leadership. In ethical theory is implied that ethics is an integral part of leadership. "To *Thirukkural* governance is just ethical behaviour, devoid of all unethical ones, in high esteem. This implies that unethical behaviour by the leaders is not governance but something else altogether" (Chendroyaperumal & Meena, 2007, p.5). Traits such as impartiality (remaining unbiased), truthfulness, intelligence in pursuit of truth, and social welfare orientation are highlighted as key leadership qualities. Ethical leadership ensures that governance is complete and functional (Arujunan, 2022; Chendroyaperumal & Meena, 2007).

Along the same lines, Nayak (2018) highlights that the Bhagavad Gita, a core scripture of Sanatan Dharma, describes various leadership traits across its chapters. One significant lesson drawn from the text is the idea of Nishkama Karma, which refers to performing actions selflessly without attachment to the results. This concept introduces an ethical dimension to leadership by encouraging leaders to act with a sense of duty and service rather than for personal gain. It urges leaders to consider the ethical implications of their actions and to make decisions guided by the principle of service instead of the desire for sensory or material gratification. Building on this integration of values, Bodhananda (2022), in his exploration of how the practice of yoga philosophy informs management and leadership, presents the ethical dimension of leadership as a balance between efficiency and moral values such as equity and compassion. He aligns this understanding of leadership with

the principles of conscious capitalism, emphasizing social impact and environmental responsibility as integral to ethical leadership.

Taking a historical view, Sarkar (2020) traces the evolution of leadership in India from the Vedic era through the epics of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to contemporary times, proposing that a consistent leadership ideal has persisted across these periods: the concept of *Rājarshi Leadership*. This model is fundamentally values and ethics-oriented, rooted in spirituality, and presents ethical leadership as a synthesis of two core dimensions. The *Rishi* dimension represents the spiritually enlightened sage who guides others with selfless wisdom, while the *Rāja* dimension embodies the ruler who governs with authority and ensures the welfare of society through the application of just laws. At the heart of this model is the leader's inner transformation, which serves as the foundation for a transformative impact on the collective. The leader is thus expected to act in the interest of the common good, skillfully balancing spiritual ideals with the practical responsibilities of governance.

Bringing in a comparative perspective, Nahavandi and Krishnan (2017), in their study on Indo European Leadership, examine how this model, which originates from the ancient cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions of India and Iran, differs significantly from typical Western leadership approaches. Indo European Leadership emphasizes a follower-focused and service-oriented perspective, in contrast to the more leader-centred nature of Western models. Ethics and moral values are viewed as essential to leadership, with integrity, honesty, humility, and accountability serving as foundational qualities. Leaders are expected to uphold moral character, act truthfully, and maintain a respected public image. One of its core principles is the practice of the middle path, which advocates moderation, careful judgment, and balanced decision making aimed at achieving the greatest good for the largest number of people. Leaders under the Indo-European Leadership model are accountable not

only to their followers but also to a higher moral or spiritual authority, where actions and good deeds are believed to influence one's fate and collective destiny. Drawing from the central themes explored in the preceding discussion, ethical leadership in ancient Indian literature may be understood as a values-based and duty-oriented form of leadership that integrates moral responsibility, spiritual wisdom, and public welfare.

Ethical leadership in ancient India is deeply rooted in spiritual, philosophical, and duty-oriented principles. Ancient texts such as the Dharmasutras, Bhagavad Gita, and Tirukkural emphasize servant leadership, moral responsibility, and governance guided by ethical duty (dharma). Leaders were expected to act as servants of the state, balancing authority with moral accountability and collective welfare. Internal qualities (gunas) like self-control, responsibility, and ethical reflection were seen as shaping effective leadership. Overall, ancient Indian perspectives frame ethical leadership as a synthesis of personal virtue, public service, and spiritual consciousness, distinct from the leader-centered and procedural approaches common in Western models.

2.1.2 Contemporary Perspectives on Ethical Leadership in India

Having examined ethical leadership through the lens of ancient Indian philosophy, this section turns to contemporary scholarly research that investigates how ethical leadership is studied across various organizational contexts in India. To begin, focusing on the telecom sector, Saini and Sengupta (2016) investigated how middle managers perceive ethical and responsible leadership. Their findings indicated that responsible conduct, particularly accountability and responsiveness, had a greater impact on job satisfaction and commitment than ethical behaviour alone. In fact, the study found that ethical behaviour showed no significant relationship with employee commitment, suggesting that practical responsibility may weigh more heavily than abstract ethics in employee assessments. Saini (2017) reinforced these findings through a quantitative survey of 564 employees across seven service

sector organizations in North India. The study identified a moderate but positive relationship between ethical leadership and both organizational commitment and perceived productivity. These results suggest that ethical leadership is not only a moral imperative but also a driver of organizational success. Jha and Singh (2019) extended this line of inquiry to examine the role of ethical leadership in shaping industrial relations. Using examples from Maruti Suzuki, Bajaj Auto, Tata Motors, and others, they explored the link between ethical leadership and employee voice. Their findings, framed through social support theory, revealed that ethical leaders earn employee trust and reduce reliance on unions, while a negative correlation was found between ethical leadership and union commitment; employees who received fair treatment from leaders felt greater loyalty to the organization itself (Jha & Singh, 2019). In addition, Sharmaet al. (2019) examined ethical leadership among 340 middle-level managers in Indian manufacturing firms. Using factor analysis, they identified two key dimensions: empowerment, and motive and character. The study revealed that private sector leaders were perceived more positively. Notably, superiors rated themselves higher on ethical leadership than their subordinates did, revealing a potential overestimation of their own ethical behaviour. Importantly, ethical leadership was associated with reduced unethical conduct and improved job performance and commitment among subordinates.

Building on these findings, Goswami et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectoral study involving 400 participants from Indian organizations across public sector research and development institutions, IT companies, and academic institutions on perception of ethical leadership. Their findings revealed that gender did not significantly affect perceptions of ethical leadership, with both male and female participants showing similar levels of moral reasoning (Goswami et al., 2021). However, differences emerged with age, particularly between individuals in the 20–29 and 30–39 age groups, while no significant variance was found in older age brackets (Goswami et al., 2021). Work experience also shaped

perceptions: those with more than 10 years of experience differed significantly in their assessment of ethical leadership compared to less experienced groups. Interestingly, employees in lower-level management perceived their leaders as more ethical than those in senior positions (Goswami et al., 2021). Sectoral comparisons showed that private sector employees rated their leaders as more ethical than those in public organizations, a distinction attributed to divergent work cultures and operational values within these sectors (Goswami et al., 2021). It is important to note that in the research conducted by Goswami et al. (2021), participants were not asked to define or describe ethical leadership in their own words. Instead, their perceptions of ethical leadership were measured using a standardized 10-item scale developed by Brown et al. (2005). The link between ethical leadership and employee outcomes is further supported by Mishra and Tikoria (2021), who examined the impact of ethical leadership on organizational climate and its subsequent effect on the commitment of doctors in Indian hospitals. Based on data from 537 professionals across public and private institutions, their study found that ethical leadership significantly influenced organizational climate, which in turn enhanced doctors' organizational commitment. They emphasized the need for training hospital leadership to foster an ethical environment (Mishra & Tikoria, 2021).

Finally, Mehra and Narwal (2025) offered insights into the mediating role of ethical climate. Based on responses from 150 employees in various Indian organizations, they concluded that ethical leadership alone does not guarantee ethical behaviour in the absence of a supportive ethical climate. Their study confirmed that organizational atmosphere plays a critical role in translating leadership values into employee actions.

Taken together, these studies suggest that contemporary ethical leadership in India is understood primarily as a pragmatic and relational practice, where accountability, empowerment, and trust-building play key roles in leader-follower dynamics. While ethical

leadership is recognized as a moral imperative, these studies emphasize its instrumental role in enhancing employee commitment, productivity, and organizational success. Leadership practices appear to be shaped by sectoral differences, hierarchical positions, and work experience, with private sector organizations generally perceived as fostering more ethical environments. However, the reliance on quantitative survey methods and standardized measures, such as Brown et al.'s (2005) scale, reveals a limitation in capturing deeper, context-specific understandings of ethical leadership. Overall, the findings characterize ethical leadership in India as largely managerial and outcome-oriented

2.3 Ethical Leadership in the Context of Canada

Ethical leadership in the Canadian context can be explored through two key lenses: (1) Indigenous perspectives rooted in traditional knowledge systems and community values, and (2) contemporary perspectives of the dominant culture in Canada.

2.2.1 Indigenous Peoples Perspectives

This section explores ethical leadership from lands which are now commonly referred to as Canada, and in doing so, it is essential to acknowledge that the land has a long and rich history shaped by Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. Any discussion of leadership in the Canadian context would be incomplete without considering Indigenous perspectives. However, it is important to note that while there is a growing body of literature on Indigenous ways of leadership and governance, there remains a noticeable lack of literature that explicitly focuses on ethical leadership from the diverse Indigenous cultures and traditions of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities. This section also examines potential reasons for this gap. Despite an extensive literature search, only one book was found to explicitly discuss ethical leadership through the lens of Indigenous peoples within what is now referred to as Canada as this source will be examined in greater detail within the methodology section, it will not be repeated here to avoid redundancy. However, in

order to provide relevant context and honour the knowledge that does exist, this section draws on key literature that highlights Indigenous peoples' perspectives on leadership. The following discussion therefore focuses on how Indigenous worldviews conceptualize leadership in ways that inherently align with ethical practice, even if not framed in those exact terms.

A study conducted by Brant (2021) offers valuable insight into how culture shaped the experiences and choices of six Indigenous leaders. The study was situated in Canada and focused on Indigenous leadership and cultural paradigms within the context of Indigenous communities in Canada. It explored Indigenous life specifically through the experiences and perspectives of Canadian Indigenous peoples, with references to the Assembly of First Nations, Canadian constitutional discussions, and Indigenous Nations such as the *Ongwehon:we* (Mohawk), *Nêhiyaw* (Cree), and other First Nations across Canada. For the study participants, Indigenous leadership is rooted in their traditional language, ceremonies, and cultural values, which are transmitted through family and community at an early age, rather than shaped by the formal education system in Canada: "First, Indigenous leaders are almost always mentored from a young age to assume the mantles of leadership" (p. 203). Additionally, participants described Indigenous leadership as grounded in relational accountability and collective decision-making, rather than the individualistic or hierarchical models commonly found in Western leadership paradigms (Brant, 2021). This cultural difference is evident in the observation of one study participant:

> I heard leader after leader state they had to consult their community when faced with agreeing to a new policy or program. This reticence was not because they were incapable of making a decision; rather, it was a deeply embedded value of community, a cultural characteristic that is synonymous with an Indigenous worldview (p. 195).

The importance of community is further emphasized by Macpherson (2024), who observed that leadership approaches in Indigenous cultures, including Celtic, Māori, North American Indian, First Nations communities in Canada, Australian Aboriginal, and Emirati communities, typically operate on principles of shared governance and collective participation. Macpherson found that these approaches prioritize inclusive decision making and reflect the communal nature of leadership rooted in Indigenous worldviews. The Indigenous worldview, as described by Macpherson (2024), refers to a holistic perspective that deeply integrates environmental, social, and spiritual dimensions. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living beings, the importance of maintaining balance and harmony within the natural world, and the collective well-being of communities.

In line with this, Indigenous (Mohawk Nation) governance structures are closely intertwined with cultural paradigms, language, ceremonies, and spiritual practices (Brant, 2021). These elements are not peripheral but central to defining leadership roles and responsibilities. In contrast, Western governance systems tend to separate leadership from cultural and spiritual dimensions, often emphasizing individual authority and secularism (Brant, 2021). In contrast, Brant (2021) highlights that “Indigenous population (Mohawk Nation) not only expects but also demands that Indigenous leaders comply with their cultural and tribal paradigms” (p. 204).

Equally significant is the Indigenous worldview regarding land. Land is not regarded merely as a resource or commodity but as a living, relational entity. This perspective reinforces values such as respect, responsibility, and interconnectedness with all elements of creation, including water, animals, celestial beings, and the land itself. Indigenous leaders, as Brant notes, believe that humans are just one small part of a broader living world (Brant, 2021). This holistic worldview was beautifully captured in the words of one Indigenous

leader from the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne reflecting on education and ceremonial practice:

> When you enter the Longhouse whether it is for a meeting or ceremony, they start with an opening or thanksgiving. We call it *Ohenta Karihwatehkwen* or the words that comes before all else and in that they offer thanksgiving from mother earth, it starts from there, waters, land, trees, animals, birds, winds, grandmother moon, grandfather sun beyond the heavens to ultimately to the creator. Everything dispatched to it and in each part reserves where you attribute all the parts of creation that have to be acknowledged and that sets a tempo. That sets the peaceful mind. It clears the mind so that at the end, you say whatever has to be done or said today we will do it in a clear mind and say things in a good way, respectful of each other. Not just to each other, but we have to have respect for the land that we walk on (pp. 143–144).

While exploring Indigenous leadership through the wisdom of Elders (Muskeg Inniwak community part of Swampy Cree Nation), Young (2006) asserts that Indigenous leadership encompasses both cultural and moral responsibilities. These responsibilities are guided by established protocols and intergenerational knowledge, which emphasize the importance of serving the community with honour while preserving cultural heritage. In support of this view, Macpherson (2024) conducted a comparative study examining Indigenous ethical frameworks across several cultural groups, including Celtic, Māori, North American Indian, First Nations communities in Canada, Australian Aboriginal, and Emirati communities. These were analysed alongside modern Western ethical ideas in the context of educative leadership. One of the central observations from this study is that “Indigenous moral philosophies often intertwine spirituality with ethical decision-making, while Western frameworks usually maintain a separation between the spiritual and secular” (p. 129). This observation suggests

that for educational and community leaders operating in Indigenous contexts, leadership must not only consider ethics and justice but also embrace spiritual expression and teachings.

Furthermore, Macpherson (2024) emphasizes that "Indigenous moral philosophies emphasise ethical conduct as a central leadership duty" (p. 128), reinforcing the idea that for many Indigenous cultures, ethics are not a separate consideration but inherent to leadership itself. This is echoed by Mixalhíts'a7 and Grizzlypaws (2024), who, while exploring St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics, questioned the need to label leadership as "ethical" at all: "When you say ethical leadership… Do we need to put 'ethical' in there? Leadership should be ethical to be begin with, right? It's one and the same" (Chapter 3, para.1). Such insights illustrate how Indigenous leadership inherently integrates ethics as a foundational element, not as an optional or external addition.

In more multicultural settings, a study by Morin and Talbot (2023) found that leadership within Nunavik's health system responds to a complex interplay of cultural, professional, and ethical challenges. Nunavik has a high population of Inuit, yet most health services in the region are delivered by non-Inuit professionals from outside the community. This creates significant issues related to representation, cultural alignment, and quality of care. Importantly, Morin and Talbot (2023) explored the contextual factors that influence ethical leadership in Nunavik. Ethical leadership is defined as "Being ethical is defined as demonstrating normatively appropriate conduct. Additionally, ethics are reflected in personal actions and healthy interpersonal relationships, such as two-way communications, positive reinforcement, and shared decision-making" (Morin & Talbot, 2023; p. 583). Moreover, they found that both individual and organizational elements shape ethical behaviour. On the individual level, barriers such as inauthenticity, strained relationships between senior and middle managers, and rigid adherence to standard norms can hinder ethical leadership. In contrast, organizational factors include the urgent need for culturally sensitive healthcare,

difficulties in maintaining uninterrupted services, and ongoing staffing shortages. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing both structural and interpersonal dynamics in fostering ethical leadership in Indigenous healthcare contexts.

In addition, Macpherson (2024) also explores how Indigenous ethical leadership is deeply rooted in ecological and spiritual principles. For example, “In Celtic and Māori traditions, ethical responsibilities are intertwined with spiritual and environmental respect, emphasising the moral duty to care for the land and future generations” (p. 128). Ethical leadership, in this view, extends beyond human relationships to include responsibility toward the natural world and the continuity of life across generations. By contrast, Western models of ethical leadership often prioritize secular, rational values such as integrity and justice (Brant, 2021). While important, these are typically grounded in formal legal systems and universal principles, which can overlook the embedded cultural, spiritual, and ecological dimensions emphasized in Indigenous moral frameworks. As Macpherson notes, “Indigenous moral frameworks often operate within customary laws and traditions, while Western ethics are typically grounded in formal legal systems and universal principles” (p. 129). Taken together, these perspectives highlight that although the terminology and emphasis may differ, Indigenous traditions articulate a rich and integrated approach to leadership in which ethics, spirituality, land stewardship, and community accountability are inseparably linked.

2.2.2 Contemporary Perspectives on Ethical Leadership in Canada

To understand how ethical leadership is conceptualized within the Canadian context, it is helpful to begin by examining how values and leadership intersect across cultural and institutional frameworks. Begley and Wong (2001), in their comparative exploration of ethical leadership in education, observe that both Eastern and Western societies have become increasingly pluralistic, leading to diverse and often conflicting demands in school environments. However, a key distinction they draw is that Western nations such as Canada

and the United States have developed ethics and values into more institutionalized and collective frameworks for educational leadership. For instance, research centres focusing on values-based leadership have emerged, alongside sustained scholarly dialogue through conferences and collaborations. Since 1996, two research centres dedicated to the study of values and leadership have been established in North America. The first is the Centre for the Study of Values and Leadership at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. The second is the Centre for the Study of Leadership and Ethics, which is affiliated with the University Council for Educational Administration and based at the University of Virginia. Both centres have contributed significantly to the scholarly exploration of ethical leadership, moral decision making, and the development of values-driven educational practices (Begley & Wong, 2001). In contrast, Eastern traditions including Chinese and Indian perspectives tend to frame leadership ethics through long-standing cultural heritages and personal practice, often emphasizing personal moral development over formal theoretical discourse (Begley & Wong, 2001).

Evidence of ethical leadership's influence is found in Siegel's (2013) study on the Canadian Armed Forces. In this context, ethical leadership is conceptualized as leaders acting with integrity and fairness, promoting ethical standards, and making morally sound decisions particularly in high pressure military environments. Such leadership practices are shown to play a critical role in maintaining personnel trust and commitment In the healthcare sector in British Columbia, Canada, Storch et al. (2013) explored the role of formal nurse leaders in guiding ethical behaviour within nursing teams. The study describes ethical leadership as a multifaceted responsibility. Ethical leadership involves leaders taking personal responsibility for their own ethical behaviour and actively fostering a work environment, a moral community where shared values are clearly defined, guide decision making, and where staff feel safe to express their opinions (Storch et al., 2013). Ethical leadership in this context

involves exemplifying ethical management behaviour, recognized as one of the most effective methods to encourage ethical conduct. Adding to this discussion, Haque and Yamoah (2021) investigated the role of ethical leadership in managing occupational stress and promoting innovative work behaviour in small and medium sized cargo logistics firms in Canada and Pakistan. Although the study does not offer a single formal definition, it outlines how ethical leaders build trust, foster open communication, and create environments where employees feel psychologically safe to challenge the existing system. Importantly, ethical leadership is presented as a stress reducing factor that enables risk taking and creativity, emphasizing autonomy, social responsibility, and moral judgment.

In a related but distinct context, Langlois and Lapointe (2007) investigated ethical leadership within French language minority schools across seven Canadian provinces. Their study focused on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by school principals as they strive to preserve and promote the linguistic and cultural identity of within the communities they serve. Langlois and Lapointe defined ethical leadership as "linked to moral leadership, [which] constitutes the highest level in the development of knowledge and skills in postmodern leadership" (p. 249). They authors highlighted the importance of combining three ethical perspectives of justice, care, and e-critique) to understand the multifaceted nature of ethical leadership more effectively within linguistic minority school environments. They found that ethical leadership develops over time, shifting from mainly relying on the ethic of justice among less experienced principals to adopting a more comprehensive approach that incorporates both care and critique ethics as principals gain experience.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that ethical leadership in the Canadian context is understood and practiced through a variety of lenses depending on the sector and setting. Whether in the military, healthcare, education, or French-language speaking communities, ethical leaders consistently emphasize integrity, fairness, accountability,

autonomy, and a strong sense of social responsibility. Moreover, this section highlights the growing need for context-sensitive approaches while studying ethical leadership, particularly in culturally diverse or underserved environments.

2.4 Acculturation

The concept of acculturation originated in the late nineteenth century with John Wesley Powell (1880), who used it to describe cultural change among Indigenous groups following contact with Western societies. This early usage reflected colonial assumptions that framed Indigenous cultures as primitive and in need of civilization (Powell, 1880; Rudmin, 2003). While initially used among Powell's academic circle, the term later gained broader relevance through anthropological and psychological research (Rudmin, 2003).

In 1936, Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits offered a foundational definition of acculturation as cultural change that results from continuous direct contact between distinct cultural groups. Their memorandum distinguished acculturation from assimilation and provided methodological guidance for its study (Redfield et al., 1936). The Social Science Research Council later expanded this definition to include internal adaptations and non-cultural triggers, such as environmental and demographic changes (Elhami and Roshan, 2024). John Berry's influential work introduced a fourfold model of acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. He emphasized that acculturation is not a one-way process but a reciprocal exchange that affects both migrants and host societies (Berry, 1980, 1997, 2006a). Sam and Berry (2010) later extended this view by describing acculturation as a dynamic and continuous negotiation of cultural identity, influenced by power dynamics, societal structures, and psychological development.

In educational settings, acculturation theory has supported researchers in examining student adjustment, identity, and well-being. Amos and Lordly (2014) found that traditional food practices helped international students in Canada preserve cultural identity and ease

their transition. Smith and Khawaja (2011) emphasized acculturation as a reciprocal process shaped by both student experiences and institutional practices, calling for more studies that consider institutional stressors and coping strategies. Berry and Hou (2016) identified four acculturation profiles among Canadian immigrants and found that integrative strategies, which involve maintaining connections to both heritage and host cultures, were associated with improved mental health and life satisfaction. Jia and Krettenauer (2022) demonstrated that mainstream acculturation predicted moral identity development in Chinese Canadian youth, particularly influenced by age of arrival. Barker (2017), examining organizational settings, concluded that bicultural individuals selectively blended cultural values and that the construction of third culture occurred most frequently when strong ties to the home culture were preserved.

While existing literature on acculturation outcomes provides limited theoretical insight into how acculturation influences perceptions of leadership, the following studies represent noteworthy exceptions (Liang et al., 2021). Trevino (2010) examined Latino elected officials in the United States and found that lower levels of acculturation were associated with a preference for transformational leadership, suggesting that stronger identification with Latino culture fostered more relational, supportive leadership approaches. Sibanda and Seyama-Mokhaneli (2024) investigated immigrant teachers in South Africa, emphasizing acculturation as a site of cultural negotiation and resistance within leadership roles. They highlighted how exclusion from dominant school cultures created barriers to leadership integration, positioning acculturation as both a cultural and political process. Finally, Liang, Sendjaya, and Abeysekera (2021) examined Chinese immigrant professionals in Australia and found that acculturation influenced both the stability and content of implicit leadership theories. Their findings suggest that cultural adaptation not only affects outward leadership behaviour but also reshapes internalized beliefs about what leadership should look like.

Together, these studies demonstrate the versatility and depth of acculturation theory as a tool for analysing cultural adaptation across settings. From student transitions and professional retention to leadership formation, acculturation provides a valuable lens for understanding how individuals respond to cultural change, navigate identity, and reshape social participation in diverse environments.

2.5 Multiple Ethical Paradigms

The multiple ethical paradigms framework is a conceptual approach that helps leaders analyse ethical dilemmas from various perspectives or lenses to determine what is right and wrong (Hoare et al., 2024; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). It recognizes that no single ethical lens is sufficient on its own, as each has strengths and weaknesses. By combining multiple paradigms, leaders can gain a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of complex ethical issues and become more reflective and thoughtful in their decision-making (Hoare et al., 2024). It is important to note that there is no hierarchy among these lenses; none is considered superior to the others. However, relying exclusively on a single lens can constrain understanding and reinforce existing biases (Hoare et al., 2024). This framework informs moral decision-making as part of the broader Bird's Eye View model, which expands ethical reflection from the self to community, institutions, and systems (Hoare et al., 2024).

2.5.1 Bird's Eye View Model

Starratt (1991) first defined ethical leadership as grounded in three interdependent dimensions of ethics: justice, critique, and care. These foundational paradigms laid the groundwork for early ethical paradigms frameworks and were subsequently expanded to incorporate additional ethical orientations. The ethic of community was later proposed by Furman (2004), and the ethic of the profession was subsequently added by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016). The Bird's Eye View framework represents a comprehensive model of

multiple ethical lenses that offers a holistic perspective on ethical leadership. The Bird's Eye View, first proposed by Hoare et al. (2024), functions as a conceptual framework that supports ethical decision-making by encouraging leaders to integrate multiple ethical paradigms rather than privileging a singular moral lens. It is designed to explore how various ethical orientations such as justice, care, critique, community, profession, discomfort, self-care and Indigenous leadership ethics interact with one another across diverse contexts. Rather than proceeding through a linear or static process, the Bird's Eye View encourages a dynamic and cyclical approach, wherein ethical reasoning begins from within and gradually expands outward to others, communities, and institutional systems. This movement outward is not simply procedural but reflective of growing moral awareness and ethical maturity.

As leaders evolve over time and encounter new information, relationships, and institutional demands, the Bird's Eye View Model invites continual re-examination of assumptions, values, and chosen ethical stances (Hoare et al., 2024). Decision-making is understood not as a fixed endpoint but as a recurring cycle that must remain open to revision. Leaders are encouraged to admit missteps, learn from unintended consequences, and revise their actions in the light of new understanding. At its core, this framework emphasizes that ethical leadership must be grounded in humility, self-reflection, and relational accountability. It affirms that the capacity for transformation lies not only within systems but within the leaders themselves, and that meaningful change begins with the willingness to lead ethically from a place of openness and continuous learning. The eight ethical paradigms are discussed in detail below:

1. Ethic of justice
2. Ethic of critique
3. Ethic of care
4. Ethic of community

5. Ethic of profession
6. Ethic of self-care
7. Ethic of discomfort
8. St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics (Indigenous perspective)

2.5.1.1 Ethic of Justice. The ethic of justice is a moral framework centred on principles of equality, fairness, and the protection of individual rights. It emphasizes treating individuals according to universal ethical standards and ensuring that fairness guides decision-making processes (Frick et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2014; Skoe & von der Lippe, 2002). In this approach, the primary concern is adherence to established rules, codes, and standards, rather than the outcomes of decisions. While leaders may hope for positive results, the emphasis remains on maintaining fairness and consistency throughout the decision-making process (Nevarez et al., 2013). This framework aligns with a deontological and non-consequentialist perspective, in which the morality of an action is judged based on its compliance with predefined rules, not the consequences it generates (Beckner, 2004). Chryssides and Kaler (1996) identified five forms of justice that relate to this paradigm: procedural, substantive, retributive, remedial, and distributive. Among these, the ethic of justice most closely aligns with procedural justice, which prioritizes the impartial and consistent application of rules, and distributive justice, which focuses on the fair allocation of resources and opportunities (Wood and Hilton, 2012).

The ethic of justice, grounded in Western philosophy, emphasizes individual autonomy, rational reasoning, and universal principles in ethical decision-making. Influential contributors include John Rawls, who introduced the idea of justice as fairness derived from an impartial veil of ignorance (Freeman, 2023; Rawls, 1971), and Lawrence Kohlberg, whose model of moral development placed justice-based reasoning at its highest level (Kohlberg, 1973). While foundational, this paradigm has been critiqued for its individualistic and male-

centric bias. Gilligan (1982) introduced the ethic of care in response, highlighting relational and contextual ethics. Scholars now call for broader perspectives: Randall (2023) promoted relational justice, while Blackstock (2007) and Confalonieri et al. (2007) advocated for ecological and Indigenous frameworks in response to global crises. In practice, justice-oriented leaders stress impartiality, equality, and rule-based fairness (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016), often upholding procedural justice. However, critics caution that strict adherence to rules may overlook structural inequities (Nevarez et al., 2013).

Critiques of the ethic of justice point to its historical development within Western philosophical traditions, which often centred the experiences of white, male, property-owning individuals (Botting, 2016). This narrow foundation has led to calls for a more inclusive and relational understanding of justice that accounts for power, privilege, and cultural identity (Engsjö-Lindgren, 2021). For example, Hare (2022) emphasized the importance of Indigenous rights and relational accountability in education, where justice must be grounded in community values and mutual responsibility. In summary, the ethic of justice provides essential ethical grounding in leadership, promoting transparency and fairness.

2.5.1.2 Ethic of Critique. The ethic of critique is grounded in critical theory and challenges leaders to interrogate systems of power, privilege, and exclusion within educational and organizational contexts. It positions ethical leadership as a reflective and disruptive force that identifies and seeks to dismantle inequities perpetuated by systemic norms, institutional policies, and cultural assumptions (Berges Puyo, 2022; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Wood and Hilton (2012) emphasized that the ethic of critique positions law as a potential vehicle for systemic oppression, and thus ethical leaders must actively question how institutional structures sustain privilege. They propose that ethical decision making requires not only moral sensitivity, which is the capacity to recognize and understand inequity and injustice, but also a willingness to address these inequities through

transformative actions. Unlike ethical paradigms focused on procedural justice or relational care, the ethic of critique compels leaders to examine how structures marginalize individuals based on class, race, gender, language, or immigration status (Wood & Hilton, 2012). It advocates for a praxis-oriented form of leadership that connects critical awareness with transformative action (Berges-Puyó, 2022). In this view, ethical leadership entails actively questioning whether the laws, rules, and expectations within an institution uphold fairness and inclusivity or reinforce dominant ideologies. Robert J. Starratt (1991) officially introduced the ethic of critique in 1991, highlighting ethical conduct focused on tackling social inequalities involving race, class, gender, ability, and other elements that influence power dynamics and resource accessibility. The intellectual roots of the ethic of critique are found in the Frankfurt School in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s, where thinkers like Iris M. Young, Jurgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno formulated critical theory (Langlois, 2011). Their aim was to free people from oppressive social, political, and cultural forces, particularly as a reaction to the emergence of fascism, the influence of mass media, and the growth of consumer culture (Horkheimer, 1982). The ethic of critique also draws from eighteenth century Marxist philosophy, which examined capitalism, class conflict, and dominant social systems in a critical way (Marx & Engels,1848/1888). This Marxist foundation influenced the development of critical theory's broader exploration of different forms of oppression, including those based on race, gender, and ability, thus strengthening the ethical foundation of the ethic of critique.

Empirical research shows that educational leaders who value the ethic of critique are often driven by a commitment to advocacy, cultural responsiveness, and social justice. For example, Vogel (2012) found that school leaders espoused ethical frameworks rooted in cultural proficiency, risk taking, equity, and empowerment, values that reflect a desire to create transformative change rather than uphold the status quo. Similarly, Berges-Puyó

(2022) emphasized the ethic of critique as a mechanism for creating “heartful” educational environments where diverse voices are heard, institutional flaws are addressed, and ethical leadership is human-centred and inclusive (p. 146). Applied in cross-cultural and immigrant leadership contexts, the ethic of critique is especially vital. It encourages the interrogation of Eurocentric leadership norms and supports the inclusion of diverse cultural values in decision-making. Leaders who embody this ethic facilitate trust-based cultures, promote equitable access to opportunity, and challenge systems that silence marginalized voices.

2.5.1.3 Ethic of Care. The ethic of care is a relational ethical framework that emphasizes empathy, responsiveness, and attentiveness to the needs of others within specific interpersonal and social contexts. Unlike rule-based or justice-oriented paradigms that prioritize autonomy, impartiality, or abstract reasoning, the ethic of care recognizes that moral understanding arises from human interdependence and lived relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 1984). Gilligan (1982) introduced the ethic of care as a challenge to Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, arguing that women often approach moral dilemmas through an orientation grounded in responsibility and care for others, rather than through abstract principles of justice. Noddings (1984) built on this by proposing that care is a moral attitude and practice, grounded in receptivity, engrossment, and commitment between the one caring and the cared-for. She emphasized that care ethics are contextual, rooted in specific relationships, and shaped by an ethic of response rather than obligation. Held (2006) expanded the scope of care ethics into political theory, arguing that the ethic of care reveals the moral significance of dependency, vulnerability, and relational obligations. She critiqued dominant liberal traditions for neglecting the ethical weight of caring relationships, particularly in globalized and institutional settings. In contrast to the ethic of justice, which emphasizes fairness and individual rights, the ethic of care focuses on responsiveness to

needs of others and the importance of interpersonal relationships (Frick et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2014; Skoe & von der Lippe, 2002).

Louis et al. (2016) highlighted three pillars of caring leadership: knowing those being cared for, being motivated to promote their well-being, and having that care recognized by others. Leaders who practice care intentionally cultivate culture of empathy where staff and students feel respected, supported, and heard. These environments foster collaboration, increase morale, and improve academic and social outcomes (Owens & Ennis, 2005). In educational leadership, this translates to prioritizing student and staff well-being, fostering inclusive environments, and making space for diverse voices. Leaders practicing the ethic of care are more likely to build trust, engage in dialogical processes, and promote shared decision-making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

Recent empirical work demonstrates how care-based leadership contributes to broader social and economic outcomes. For instance, Stajkovic and Stajkovic (2024) found that women mayors in the United States were more likely than men to adopt inclusive practices aligned with care ethics, such as addressing racial gaps in housing, education, and income which in turn positively affected the economic health of their cities. Their study provides evidence that ethics of care leadership fosters racial inclusion, which acts as a mediator for sustainable urban revitalization.

2.5.1.4. Ethic of Community. The ethic of community is an ethical framework that positions leadership as a shared, collective responsibility grounded in relationships, participation, and the pursuit of the common good. Rather than viewing ethical leadership through the lens of individual heroism or authority, this paradigm shifts moral agency to the broader community, emphasizing collaboration, mutual accountability, and inclusive decision making (Furman, 2004). At its core, the ethic of community rejects individualistic models of leadership and instead promotes a distributed approach, where all members of a community

contribute to ethical dialogue and action. This includes developing interpersonal and group capacities such as respectful communication, team collaboration, and ongoing engagement with diverse perspectives (Barcinas & Fleener, 2023). Leadership, in this view, is not a role held by one person, but a process that unfolds through the actions and commitments of many.

Community, within this paradigm, is not treated as a fixed or idealized outcome but as a dynamic, evolving process shaped by human interaction. Ethical community building requires a sustained commitment to relational practices such as reciprocity, dialogue, shared inquiry, and collective reflection (Furman, 2002). It aligns closely with the idea of deep democracy, which values inclusive governance, particularly in conditions of complexity and uncertainty (Furman, 2004; Mindell, 2002). The ethic of community is an ethical framework rooted in traditions that emphasize relational responsibility, shared values, and collective well-being. While formally developed by Gail Furman (2004), its philosophical foundations span ancient, communitarian, and democratic thought. The paradigm challenges liberal individualism by centring ethics in collaboration, interdependence, and social participation (Etzioni, 1996; Furman, 2002).

Modern communitarianism arose in response to liberal theories like Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971), emphasizing that individuals are socially embedded and have responsibilities to their communities (Etzioni, 1996, 2014; Bell, 2024; Galston, 1993). Bell (2024) and Chang (2022) outlined three forms of community: geographic, historical, and psychological united by shared norms and mutual care. Furman (2004), drawing on Dewey's concept of participatory democracy, redefined community as an evolving and dialogic process rooted in deep democracy (Barcinas & Fleener, 2023; Mindell, 2002). Deep democracy is defined as "the intellectual and practical commitment to equity, freedom, and self-determination through shared power and popular participation in free and just (sovereign) communities" (Barcinas & Fleener, 2023) (p. 133). She positioned leadership as a

collective, inclusive practice shaped by dialogue and relational accountability (Furman, 2002). This ethic supports social justice in education by centring equity, cultural exchange, and interdependence (Furman & Starratt, 2002). It challenges neoliberal priorities like competition and efficiency, instead valuing inclusive governance and marginalized voices (Busch, 2017; Schneider & Peek, 2018).

Research has shown that community-centred leadership reduces isolation, enhances student belonging, and fosters professional collegiality, for example, these relational conditions have been linked to stronger academic engagement and healthier work environments (Beck & Murphy, 1996; Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Shouse, 1996). Crawford (2017), for instance, found that decisions made through a communal lens, especially in contexts involving undocumented students, led to more equitable and inclusive school outcomes. In summary, the ethic of community is a relational and inclusive leadership framework that emphasizes shared responsibility, collaboration, and social justice over individual authority, positioning ethical leadership as a collective, evolving process rooted in dialogue and mutual care.

2.5.1.5 Ethic of the Profession. The ethic of the profession is an ethical paradigm that draws upon the internal norms, codes of conduct, and moral expectations specific to one's professional role (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Unlike the ethic of justice, which relies on external laws, this paradigm is grounded in the profession's own ethical codes, individual personal values, and the institution's mission (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Ethical decisions under this framework are not only guided by formal codes but also by reflection on the profession's role in promoting the public good.

This ethic is both deontological, in its orientation toward duty and adherence to professional codes, and axiological, in its concern for virtues such as honesty and fairness (Wood & Hilton, 2012). As such, it challenges leaders to consider not only what is

permissible, but what is responsible and expected of them as ethical professionals. In the context of community and postsecondary leadership, these values are articulated through frameworks like the code of ethics Academic Senate for California Community Colleges' Code of Ethics, **(**Academic Senate for California Community Colleges**,** 2021), which outlines leaders' responsibilities to boards, institutional personnel, students, peer institutions, and local communities. These standards emphasize transparency, equity, and responsible use of authority.

According to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), ethical decision-making within the profession should reflect a balance between personal moral conscience, professional standards, and sensitivity to contextual factors. Leaders who follow the ethic of the profession are expected to adopt a dynamic and multidimensional approach to ethics. They recognize the complexities of contemporary leadership and move beyond questions of justice, care, and critique to consider what their profession and community expect of them (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Similarly, Smith and Fox (2019) argued that emerging leaders must develop the practical wisdom to integrate professional expectations with evolving ethical challenges in complex environments.

In increasingly diverse and transnational contexts, such as those navigated by immigrant professionals, the ethic of the profession also involves negotiating across multiple professional cultures. As Ward (2020) observed, global and multicultural classrooms reveal the need for culturally responsive ethical reasoning that respects divergent norms while maintaining core professional values. The ethic of the profession becomes especially relevant for leaders operating across cultural contexts, as it encourages ethical adoptability while maintaining alignment with both codes of ethics.

2.5.1.6 Ethic of Self-Care. The ethic of self-care is a philosophical and moral framework *t*hat emphasizes individuals' responsibility to nurture their own emotional,

intellectual, physical, and spiritual well-being. Rather than treating self-care as indulgent or apolitical, this ethic positions it as a reflective and resistant practice, especially important for those in positions of leadership or those impacted by systemic oppression (Webb, 2021). Mary Astell's (1697) early feminist writings emphasized the importance of cultivating the self through practices such as meditation, self-regulation, and intellectual withdrawal from material distractions. She argued that ethical living begins with the mastery of one's own desires and passions, and that women, in particular, must resist societal customs that teach them to devalue themselves in favour of superficial norms (Webb, 2021). Michel Foucault (1997) later reframed self-care as an ongoing ethical project of personal autonomy and critique. For Foucault, self-care involves cultivating independence of thought, challenging social conditioning, and resisting the norms imposed by dominant institutions. He emphasized that the ethical self is one who practices critical reflection and develops alternative ways of being in the world (Foucault, 1997).

Contemporary thinkers such as Audre Lorde have extended this concept by highlighting the political significance of self-care for those whose identities and labour are often devalued. Lorde (1988) famously argued that self-care is not self-indulgence, but rather self-preservation, especially for marginalized people living under systems of racism, sexism, and heteronormativity. The ethic of self-care is not concerned with prescribing morality to others. Instead, it invites individuals to engage in a continuous and personal journey of ethical development. Through activities such as writing, introspection, and dialogue, individuals can build greater self-awareness, cultivate resilience, and confront the social norms that restrict their growth and freedom (Broad, 2015; Webb, 2021).

In summary, the ethic of self-care is a disciplined and reflective practice through which individuals actively work on themselves to cultivate autonomy, freedom, and moral self-development. Far from mere indulgence or retreat, it involves critical self-reflection,

rational inquiry, and sustained practices aimed at self-mastery and transformation (Webb, 2021). Drawing on both Astell's and Foucault's frameworks, this ethic emphasizes philosophy and askesis (a practice of self-discipline or self-cultivation) as tools for care of the self, enabling resistance to oppressive social norms and fostering feminist freedom.

2.5.1.7 Ethic of Discomfort. The ethic of discomfort is a contemporary ethical paradigm that invites leaders, educators, and researchers to confront the unease that emerges from critically engaging with power, identity, and social injustice. Rather than offering closure or certainty, this ethic treats discomfort as a productive and necessary condition for ethical reflection and transformation (Foucault, 1994; Zemblyas, 2015). Zemblyas (2015) describes discomfort as a feeling of uneasiness that arises during the teaching and learning process when students and educators are challenged by others who "de-centre" their cherished beliefs and assumptions about the world (p.11). This form of pedagogical discomfort is considered both necessary and unavoidable, as it disrupts dominant ideologies, social norms, and habitual practices that uphold systemic inequalities. In doing so, it opens up space for both personal and collective transformation Zemblyas (2015). Discomfort is thus framed not only as a pedagogical and ethical condition but also as a call to embrace vulnerability and the ambiguity of the self. It demands an ethical responsibility that extends beyond individual intention or action and recognizes discomfort as an inescapable part of social existence Zemblyas (2015). This paradigm draws heavily from Michel Foucault's (1994) notion of a critical ontology of the self, which urges individuals to never become fully comfortable with their own assumptions and to remain constantly vigilant about how their beliefs are shaped by dominant discourses. Zemblyas (2015) extended this concept in educational settings, suggesting that discomfort *opens* turbulent ground for questioning embedded ideologies and emotional attachments that sustain hegemonic social norms. Through what he calls a pedagogy of discomfort, Zemblyas advocated for teaching practices

that compel learners to examine their values, confront privilege, and engage with emotional tensions as part of ethical formation.

The ethical implications of this discomfort, however, are not without risk. Drawing on Judith Butler's work on ethical violence, Zemblyas (2015) warned that enforcing discomfort, especially through imposed norms can result in unintended harm when students are not ready to appropriate these values in a "living way" (p. 164). Thus, ethical discomfort is not a carte blanche for disruption, but must be practiced with critical restraint, acknowledging the vulnerability of the learner and the ambivalence of transformation (Butler, 2005).

In leadership contexts, particularly those involving intercultural or postcolonial dynamics, the ethic of discomfort becomes a tool for challenging the norm and embracing reflexive humility. Burns (2017) demonstrated how even seemingly mundane practices, such as cosmetic labelling, can reflect racialized norms and expose participants to the unsettling realization of complicity in broader systems of exclusion. Similarly, Wilson-Forsberg et al. (2023) showed that discomfort experienced during international fieldwork can deepen ethical insight and relational understanding when scaffolded through critical pedagogy, Wilson-Forsberg et al. (2023) referred to discomfort as the challenging feelings and experiences students undergo when confronted with unfamiliar cultures, social injustices, and moral complexities that unsettle their assumptions and familiar worldviews. It includes emotional responses like guilt, anger, confusion, and disequilibrium, which prompt critical reflection and transformation. This discomfort is not mere unease but a purposeful unsettling that fosters ethical insight and social change by exposing students to realities that disrupt comfortable narratives. Ultimately, the ethic of discomfort asks leaders not to avoid moral complexity, but to stay present with its tensions.

2.5.1.8 St'at'imc Matriarchal Leadership Ethics. Secwepemcúl'ecw, the traditional territory of the Secwepemc Nation, spans approximately 180,000 square kilometers across

the south-central interior of British Columbia, from the Columbia River Valley to the Fraser River and from the upper Fraser River to the Arrow Lakes (Aird, 2017). The Secwepemc people have inhabited this land for several thousand years (Ignace, 2008). The name "Secwepemc" is understood to mean "following the waters as it gathers more water and flows back down to the Pacific Ocean" (Billy, 2009) (p.1). This region is both ecologically and culturally diverse. The Secwepemc have preserved their history, laws, and knowledge through oral narratives passed down by elders. These stories, which reflect ancestral times, major events, ecological relationships, and cultural practices, form a living archive that continues to define their identity and relationship with the land (Ignace, 2008). I respectfully acknowledge that this research is conducted on the traditional and unceded territory of Tk̓emlúps te Secwépemc, located within the region known as Secwepemc'ulucw, which encompasses the ancestral lands of the Secwépemc Nation.

St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics is an Indigenous ethical framework rooted in the ancestral teachings, cultural practices, and intergenerational responsibilities of the St'at'imc Nation. This leadership paradigm emphasizes accountability through relationships, spiritual alignment, and community well-being as guided by the women of the community. It challenges dominant models of authority by prioritizing leadership that is grounded in land, language, and collective care rather than in hierarchical position or individual achievement (Mixalhits'a7 & Grizzlypaws, 2024). This perspective emerges as both a reclamation and resistance. It responds to the disruptions of colonization, particularly the imposition of patriarchal governance through the Indian Act **(**Government of Canada, 1985) and residential school systems, which displaced Indigenous women and attempted to erase matriarchal forms of leadership. Within this ethical model, women are not only community leaders but also cultural and spiritual caretakers. They make decisions based on understanding of kinship,

environment, and the long-term consequences for future generations (Mixalhits'a7 & Grizzlypaws, 2024).

Ethical leadership from this worldview is enacted through attention to seven core values derived from St'at'imc teachings: health, happiness, generosity, generational continuity, compassion, strength, and quiet wisdom (Bull, 2024). These principles guide decision-making through a strengths-based, intergenerational, and holistic lens, integrating physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of leadership (Bull, 2024). Leaders are accountable not only to their communities, but also to land, ancestors, and unborn generations. The ethic also places a strong emphasis on recognizing and nurturing individual gifts, particularly among youth, with the aim of supporting personal growth and strengthening the community (Mixalhits'a7 & Grizzlypaws, 2024). The St'at'imc matriarchal paradigm offers an important decolonial lens. It expands the understanding of leadership beyond Western traditions and highlights the importance of cultural identity, spirituality, and collective responsibility in ethical practice.

2.3 Research Gap and Study's Approach

The current research addresses two key gaps: (1) the lack of qualitative inquiry into how Indian leaders understand and practice ethical leadership, and (2) the limited understanding of how shifts in cultural norms influence leaders' perspectives on ethical leadership**.**

The review of recent studies on ethical leadership within the Indian context highlights a dominant reliance on quantitative research methods (Goswami (2021); Mishra & Tikoria, 2021; Sharma et al., 2019). Most investigations, whether in healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, or service sectors, use of surveys and statistical tools to assess perceptions, behaviours, and correlations related to ethical leadership (Goswami, 2021; Jha & Singh 2019; Saini, 2017). While these studies offer valuable quantitative data-driven insights,

they often overlook more nuanced, context- and culturally- relevant ethical principles and frameworks that influence leadership behaviour. Given the complex and contextual nature of ethical leadership, many scholars recommend investigating ethical leadership across diverse cultural and organizational settings (Khuntia, & Suar, 2004; Mishra & Tikoria, 2021; Saini, 2017; Saini & Sengupta, 2016; Sharma et al., 2019). This highlights a significant gap in the current literature, particularly the limited use of qualitative approaches to understand how leaders in India perceive and enact ethical leadership.

In contrast, the literature on ethical leadership within the Canadian context and Indigenous communities that pre-date colonization, presents a more balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative research (Brant, 2021; Macpherson, 2024; Siegel, 2013). However, a notable limitation remains in terms of minimal engagement with the cultural dimensions that influence ethical leadership practices. Many of the studies reviewed, including those by Haque and Yamoah (2021), Morin and Talbot (2023), and Siegel (2013), adopt or refer to the widely cited definition by Brown et al. (2005), which describes ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making" (p. 120). However, these studies often fail to critically examine or define what constitutes "normatively appropriate" conduct, even though such norms are likely to be shaped by cultural context. As Langlois and Lapointe (2007) pointed out, ethical leadership is influenced by a range of contextual variables. Therefore, there remains considerable scope to explore how cultural values, traditions, and identities inform ethical leadership practices.

This research addresses a gap in the existing literature by offering a qualitative analysis of whether ethical leadership is shaped by cultural context. Specifically, it examines how Indian professionals interpret and enact ethical leadership within their home culture, and

how these interpretations shift when they assume leadership roles in the Canadian context. By focusing on cross cultural comparison, the study distinguishes itself through its emphasis on lived experiences rather than abstract theoretical models. Drawing on in depth interviews, the research centres participant narratives to explore the moral reasoning that underpins leadership practices. Furthermore, my dual positionality as someone who is culturally embedded within the Indian context and an informed observer within the Canadian setting allows for a more layered and culturally sensitive interpretation of the findings. In doing so, the research aims to offer deeper insight into the role of culture in shaping ethical leadership practices and interpretations across two different cultures.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in this qualitative study, beginning with a discussion of my positionality and its influence on the research process. It then presents the qualitative research approach and explains the theoretical framework that guided the research design and analysis. The chapter describes the data collection process, including the use of a pre-interview worksheet and semi-structured interviews, and provides an overview of the coding strategy. Finally, it explains how the data were analysed and interpreted within the chosen theoretical framework.

3.1 Positionality: Self as Researcher

As a researcher, my academic and professional journey spans two countries and disciplinary domains, shaping the lens through which I approach this inquiry. I am currently pursuing a Master of Education degree in Canada, building on a prior academic foundation in mechanical engineering, which includes a diploma, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree in the discipline. My professional experience includes nearly seven years as an assistant professor in an engineering college in India, where I held several leadership roles, including Head of the Entrepreneurship Development Cell and Head of the Training and Placement Cell. These positions provided me with early exposure to leadership responsibilities within an academic and culturally specific context. In addition to my engineering background, I worked for one and a half years as an astronomy educator, coordinating public outreach programs in my home province. Since relocating to Canada, I have continued to engage in academic leadership through various roles, including graduate teaching assistant, research assistant, and graduate research mentor. These cross-cultural professional experiences have allowed me to witness, experience, and reflect upon leadership practices in both Indian and Canadian contexts.

Drawing from these lived experiences, I have personally observed and navigated cultural differences in leadership approaches. In India, leadership often involves strong cultural grounding, deference to hierarchy, and the expectation that decisions reflect both institutional rules and respect for culture. Solutions are often shaped by situational nuance, personal intuition, and lived wisdom. By contrast, my experience in Canada has shown me that leadership hierarchies are less formalized and more collaborative in nature, with emphasis on distributed decision making, and open dialogue. These contrasts inform my understanding of how culture shapes leadership expectations, and ethical decision making. Given my cultural roots and professional history in India, I adopt an *emic*, or insider, perspective in analysing participant narratives. In qualitative research, the emic perspective involves understanding participants' viewpoints and interpretations within their own social and cultural contexts (Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2016; Mazonde & Carmichael, 2020). This approach enhances the quality of educational research by foregrounding participants' meanings, perspectives, and lived experiences as situated within specific cultural environments. By adopting this perspective, I can construct detailed and nuanced interpretations that uncover the intricate cultural dynamics, relationships, and meanings embedded in the participants' experiences, thereby contributing to more authentic and contextually grounded analysis (Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2016). However, I have made a deliberate effort to approach data analysis with reflexivity, understood as a continuous process of self-examination and critical reflection on my own position, including personal traits, beliefs, biases, and lived experiences, and how these may influence the research process and outcomes (Berger, 2015). This stance contributes to the trustworthiness and ethical soundness of qualitative inquiry (Palaganas et al., 2017). I have stayed close to participants' words, grounded in the transcripts, and resisted imposing interpretations that stem solely from my personal experience. While my positionality offers contextual insight, I

am committed to ensuring that participants' voices remain central, authentic, and unfiltered in the representation of findings.

3.2 Qualitative Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to examine how Indian professionals in leadership roles interpret and experience ethical leadership across cultural contexts. This section is divided into two main parts. The first part presents the theoretical framework, which draws on acculturation theory and multiple ethical paradigms to guide the inquiry. The second part outlines the data collection strategy, with a particular focus on the use of semi-structured interviews as a primary method for gathering nuanced, contextually grounded participant narratives.

3.2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study employs a dual theoretical framework that brings together acculturation theory and the multiple ethical paradigms framework to analyse leadership ethics in cross-cultural contexts. Acculturation theory examines the process through which individuals or groups adjust to a new cultural environment, negotiating between retaining aspects of their original culture and adopting elements of the host culture (Berry, 2017). This theory is particularly relevant for understanding how Indian immigrant leaders in Canada navigate cultural boundaries in their ethical decision-making. The multiple ethical paradigms is a conceptual framework that employs several distinct ethical lenses or perspectives to analyse and resolve ethical dilemmas. This approach recognizes that no single ethical theory or paradigm fully captures the complexity of moral issues (Hoare et al., 2024). To complement this cultural lens, the study also draws upon the Bird's Eye View Model of ethical paradigms, adopted from Hoare et al. (2024). This model encompasses eight distinct ethical paradigms: the ethic of justice, the ethic of care, the ethic of critique, the ethic of discomfort, the ethic of the profession, the ethic of community, the ethic of self-care, and St'at'imc matriarchal

leadership ethics. Each of these paradigms offers a unique perspective on how leaders understand and respond to ethical dilemmas, moving from internal self-reflection to broader considerations of community, equity, and institutional responsibility. By integrating these two frameworks, the study aims to explore how Indian leaders in both India and Canada construct their ethical worldviews, and how cultural adaptation influences these constructions in leadership practice.

3.2.1.1 Acculturation. In this study, acculturation will be used as an analytical lens to examine how Indian immigrant professionals in Canada experience and interpret ethical leadership. Building on the work of Liang et al. (2021), who explored how Chinese immigrant professionals' implicit leadership theories are influenced by their acculturation experiences in Australia, this research similarly investigates whether and how sustained intercultural contact reshapes participants' ethical decision-making frameworks. Liang et al.'s study demonstrated that acculturation could lead to culturally dependent shifts in leadership perceptions, such as moving from authoritarian to empowering leadership styles and fostering a stronger co-production of leadership. My study adopts this premise by exploring how Indian leaders' cultural backgrounds and acculturation experiences influence the ethical paradigms they draw upon when responding to moral dilemmas. Rather than focusing solely on changes in ethical paradigm, I will use acculturation to understand how cultural transitions shape leaders' ethical reasoning, values, and interpretations of right and wrong in multicultural settings.

3.2.1.2 Multiple Ethical Paradigms Framework. The second theoretical framework employed in this study is the multiple ethical paradigms. It is a theoretical model that acknowledges the complexity and nuance of ethical decision making by drawing on a range of moral perspectives. Rather than relying on a single ethical orientation, this approach encourages leaders to examine dilemmas through multiple lenses, each offering distinct

values, priorities, and modes of reasoning (Hoare et al., 2024). This framework draws on a broad body of scholarship (Chryssides & Kaler, 1996; Engsjö-Lindgren, 2021; Nevarez & Wood, 2014; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016) and has been adopted in this research from Hoare et al.'s (2024) work on ethical leadership in higher education. Their work introduces the Bird's Eye View Model, a conceptual tool that enables leaders to reflect on their values, recognize the ethical nature of their choices, and draw on multiple paradigms as they navigate complex decisions. Together, these paradigms provide a multi-faceted approach to ethical analysis that reflects the lived complexity of leadership practice and encourages leaders to be flexible, contextually aware, and self-reflective in their moral reasoning. As noted by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), these paradigms assist leaders in identifying the moral principles they most frequently rely on and invite them to consider alternative ways of interpreting and resolving ethical dilemmas. By using multiple ethical frames, leaders can engage in deeper reflexivity, recognize competing obligations, and consider broader consequences in their decision making. Similarly, Wood and Hilton (2012) emphasized that the integration of ethical paradigms enables leaders to construct and evaluate multiple courses of action, thereby aligning theory with practical moral reasoning in real-world situations.

The multiple paradigms featured in this study include the ethics of justice**,** care**,** critique**,** community**,** self-care**,** discomfort**,** profession, and St'at'imc matriarchal leadership. These ethical lenses offer diverse orientations: for example, the ethic of justice emphasizes fairness and rules, while the ethic of care centres on relationships and empathy. The ethic of critique interrogates power and structural inequality, and the ethic of profession draws from formal codes and standards. The ethic of discomfort encourages leaders to confront internal tensions and systemic complicity. The inclusion of St'at'imc matriarchal ethics, rooted in Indigenous knowledge and relational responsibility, further expands the ethical imagination.

Together, these paradigms offer a multi-perspective framework that reflects the diversity and moral complexity of leadership across settings (Hoare et al., 2024).

Although the adopted framework's lies in educational leadership, it is adoptable to broader leadership contexts. The rationale for this broader application lies in the focus of the study, which is not on the institutional or professional structure in which the participants operate, but rather on the moral reasoning processes that guide their decisions. Ethical dilemmas are not exclusive to educational settings. The way leaders respond to these dilemmas, what they prioritize, what values they draw upon, and how they justify their decisions are questions that transcend disciplinary boundaries. This study uses the multiple ethical paradigms framework to analyse how leaders interpret and respond to ethical tension in their day-to-day roles, regardless of field. Furthermore, ethical paradigms have been extended to other fields such as healthcare**,** business**,** corporate leadership, and community organizing. For instance, the ethic of care is frequently referenced in nursing (Woods, 2011); the ethic of justice is fundamental in corporate compliance (Simola, 2003); and the ethic of self-care is widely applied in healthcare (Linton & Koonmen, 2020). These examples support the argument that the multiple ethical paradigms model has conceptual relevance beyond its initial disciplinary home.

The rationale for using multiple paradigms in this study is grounded in the recognition that ethical leadership is shaped by cultural**,** social**,** and institutional complexity **(**Hoare et al**.,** 2024**)**. Numerous scholars have argued that no single ethical lens is sufficient to account for the diverse perspectives and competing obligations that leaders navigate in multicultural societies. By drawing on multiple ethical paradigms, this study acknowledges that ethical reasoning is plural, dynamic, and context specific. This approach is particularly suited to cross-cultural research, where concepts of ethical leadership are informed by cultural identity, migration experiences, and ongoing negotiation between value systems.

3.2.1.2.1 Bird's Eye View Model. The multiple ethical paradigms framework and the Bird's Eye View Model of ethical leadership are closely interconnected. The multiple ethical paradigms framework offers diverse ethical lenses for analysing leadership dilemmas, encouraging leaders to approach ethical decisions thoughtfully and holistically (Hoare et al., 2024; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Rather than relying on a single ethical perspective, this framework promotes multi-dimensional thinking to help leaders navigate complex, culturally situated moral challenges. Complementing this, the Bird's Eye View Model enables leaders to adopt a broader perspective, viewing ethical leadership as an iterative, reflective process in which self-reflection, collective accountability, and contextual adaptation are central (Hoare et al., 2024). Together, these frameworks guide this study's exploration of ethical leadership, supporting a culturally sensitive and conceptually grounded analysis. This study is the first to apply all eight ethical paradigms of the Bird's Eye View Model to the analysis of ethical leadership narratives, offering a more nuanced and inclusive ethical lens. The eight ethics are presented below:

1. Ethic of justice
2. Ethic of critique
3. Ethic of care
4. Ethic of community
5. Ethic of profession
6. Ethic of self-care
7. Ethic of discomfort
8. St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics (Indigenous perspective)

Table 1

Multiple Ethical Paradigm Summary

Ethical Lens	Description
Ethic of justice	The ethic of justice centres on the protection of individual rights and freedoms, adherence to legal systems, and the promotion of fairness (Frick et al., 2012). Beckner

	(2004) described this ethical stance as grounded in formal rules, aiming to resolve moral issues through established laws and guiding principles. Those who follow this approach emphasize fairness, neutrality, and equal treatment under universally accepted standards and human rights legislation. There is a strong emphasis on consistency and the equal application of individual rights. Every person is treated identically, with justice administered in a uniform manner. The ethic of justice considers questions such as: Is there a law, right, or policy that relates to a particular case? If there is a law, right, or policy, should it be enforced? And if there is not a law, right, or policy, should there be one? (p.14)
Ethic of critique	The ethic of critique seeks to challenge the societal structures that perpetuate inequality. Leaders guided by this perspective view legal and institutional systems as tools historically shaped by those in power to preserve dominance and suppress marginalized groups (Berges Puyo, 2022). Their goal is to question existing norms and actively work toward transforming educational and social systems to better serve underrepresented and disadvantaged populations.
Ethic of care	The ethic of care emphasizes empathy, compassion, and responsiveness as central to moral decision making. It is rooted in relationships, aiming to foster connection and trust. Leaders guided by this ethic focus on supporting the dignity, welfare, and best interests of those they serve, and they are motivated to act. Leading with care requires more than concern for others; it involves challenging established systems and advocating for change that is both meaningful and just (Noddings, 1984).
Ethic of community	The ethic of community is grounded in the idea that leadership is a shared responsibility. Rather than relying on a single visionary or transformational figure, this perspective asserts that achieving social justice within institutions depends on the collective efforts of all. This ethical approach repositions moral responsibility from the individual to the broader community, emphasizing that leadership should be distributed across its members (Furman, 2004). It calls for individuals to cultivate interpersonal and collaborative skills, such as teamwork, continuous dialogue, and the ability to navigate complex and often polarized discussions. Moreover, the ethic of community is not static, or outcome driven; rather, it is an evolving process shaped by the active involvement of all the stakeholders.
Ethic of profession	The ethic of the profession offers a comprehensive framework for ethical decision making by integrating the principles of justice, critique, and care with the leader's own personal and professional ethical commitments. In educational settings, this ethic prioritizes the well-being and success of students as the central concern in all ethical considerations. It involves leaders formulating and examining their own professional codes of ethics in light of their personal ethical beliefs and the standards set forth by the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).
Ethic of self-care	The ethic of self-care centres on the individual to challenge and disrupt prevailing ideologies. It calls on leaders to critically examine and resist the forces of power that shape and standardize behaviour and identity by interrogating dominant historical narratives and accepted truths. Practicing this ethic involves consistent self-examination of how one is shaped by societal pressures and institutional expectations. Rather than imposing moral standards on others, it promotes personal ethical growth and rejects authoritarianism. This approach values the moral significance of sustaining one's own well-being and inner strength (Webb, 2021).
Ethic of discomfort	The ethic of discomfort is rooted in a commitment to confront and question prevailing systems and narratives that sustain injustice, including racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. Leaders who engage with this ethic actively push themselves and others to critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions. This process often involves stepping into the experiences of marginalized individuals, even if symbolically, to foster empathy and broaden one's perspective. Unlike frameworks that aim to avoid discomfort, this ethic embraces it as essential to moral and ethical growth (Zemblyas, 2015).
St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics	St'at'imc Matriarchal leadership ethics affirm the central role of Indigenous women in guiding decisions related to community well-being, cultural continuity, language preservation, and relationships with the Land. Leaders who embody this ethic uplift and support youth by drawing on ancestral knowledge, the guidance of Elders, and the teachings of the Land. This perspective holds that children possess inherent goodness and potential, which must be recognized and cultivated. Core principles of this ethic

include building consensus, passing knowledge across generations, preserving cultural identity, and upholding the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination (Mixalhits'a7 & Grizzlypaws, 2024).

3.2.2 Semi Structured Interview

The study's methodological foundation and conceptual framing are adapted from the work of Liang et al. (2021), who investigated the impact of acculturation on implicit leadership theories among Chinese professionals in Australia and China. Drawing on their comparative and qualitative approach, this research similarly examines how acculturation shapes leadership perceptions, with a specific focus on Indian leaders operating across two national and cultural contexts. Like the original study, this research uses semi structured interviews to explore how migration and exposure to new cultural settings influence individuals' ethical leadership values and expectations. This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the complex and culturally situated phenomenon of ethical leadership. As Creswell and Creswell (2022) explained, qualitative inquiry is especially appropriate when the aim is to understand how and why certain processes unfold, particularly those that are embedded within social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Ethical leadership, as examined through the framework of multiple ethical paradigms (Hoare et al., 2024), is inherently nuanced and influenced by personal values, lived experience, and sociocultural norms. This research investigates how Indian professionals both in India and as immigrants in Canada perceive and enact ethical leadership while navigating distinct cultural environments. These questions call for a research design that can engage meaningfully with variation, complexity, and participants' perspectives, making qualitative inquiry the most suitable approach (Merriam, 2002).

Acculturation theory and multiple ethical paradigms offer a guiding lens through which these cultural shifts are analysed, emphasizing the adaptations that occur as individuals move between heritage and host cultures. Acculturation refers to the changes in cultural patterns that emerge when groups come into continuous and direct contact. At the individual

level, this process includes shifts in value orientations, behavioural norms, practices, personal traits, and institutional frameworks, with particular emphasis on evolving cultural values (Barker, 2017). While Liang et al. (2021) approached leadership from a follower-centred perspective, focusing on the evolution of implicit leadership beliefs, this study broadens the scope to examine how leaders themselves engage with ethical reasoning and moral decision making. The comparative design, the attention to cultural dynamics, data collection and the application of acculturation as a theoretical anchor are key methodological components that have been adapted from Liang et al. (2021) to suit the distinct professional and cultural realities of my participant group.

One key difference between my research and the study conducted by Liang et al. (2021) lies in the approach to data analysis. While their study primarily followed a more interpretive thematic approach, my research adopts a hybrid process of deductive and inductive thematic analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The deductive component, also referred to as directed qualitative content analysis (Armat et al., 2018), is particularly suitable when there is an existing theoretical framework or prior research that informs the analytical process. In deductive coding, the researcher begins with pre-established categories derived from theory and applies them to the data, reflecting a structured and theory-driven mode of reasoning (Assarroudi et al., 2018; Armat et al., 2018). In this study, the analysis is guided by Hoare et al.'s (2024) multiple ethical paradigms framework *Bird's Eye view.* This framework provides eight ethical paradigms that serve as initial coding categories to examine whether and how these paradigms are reflected in participants' responses. Thus, the analysis involves a deductive process using these predefined ethical lenses. This approach enhances analytical efficiency, reduces ambiguity, and enables systematic data handling (Armat et al., 2018). Furthermore, deductive coding facilitates connections between empirical findings and theoretical constructs, supporting the refinement or extension of existing theory (Fereday &

Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Simultaneously, Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis framework is employed to incorporate an inductive dimension. This approach allows themes to emerge organically from the data, enabling the identification of patterns and meanings grounded in participants' lived experiences. Inductive coding is inherently data-driven and does not rely on preconceived categories, which enhances authenticity and the potential to uncover novel insights (Armat et al., 2018). The integration of both deductive and inductive strategies enriches the analysis by balancing theoretical structure with empirical openness and interpretive depth (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

3.2.2.1 Participants. This study involved Indian professionals in leadership roles from two distinct demographic groups: Indian-based professionals currently residing and working in India, and Indian immigrant professionals living and working in Canada. All participants voluntarily provided informed consent prior to participation. My study received Ethics Board approval from the research board of Thompson Rivers University. The sample was purposefully selected to ensure diversity across industries, disciplines, gender identities, levels of experience, age, and, for immigrant participants, time spent in Canada. This variation was intended to capture the cultural and institutional complexity of ethical leadership experiences within and across national contexts.

To be eligible for participation, all individuals, regardless of location, were required to be between the ages of 25 and 40, have a minimum of five years of professional work experience in their respective country, and at least one year of experience in a formal leadership role. In addition, participants were required to express a willingness to participate and provide informed consent. These eligibility criteria were designed to ensure that participants had sufficient professional and leadership experience to reflect meaningfully on ethical decision making in their respective contexts. This approach aligns with the participant inclusion criteria of Liang et al. (2021), from which this study draws inspiration, while

adding specific leadership-related requirements to strengthen the relevance of participants' reflections.

Additional inclusion criteria applied specifically to Indian immigrant participants: (1) that they be currently residing in Canada, (2) have lived in Canada for at least five years, and (3) have held a leadership role within the Canadian workforce for a minimum of one year. Furthermore, immigrant participants were required to have immigrated at or after the age of 18 to ensure that their formative educational and early professional experiences occurred within the Indian cultural context. These conditions were established to maintain alignment between the participants' cultural grounding and their leadership experiences within Canadian systems.

To maintain consistency in the cultural relevance and analytical scope of the study, individuals were excluded if they immigrated to Canada before completing high school (that is, before the age of 18), had resided in Canada for fewer than five years without leadership experience, were not currently living in Canada, or, in the case of Indian professionals, had lived and worked outside of India for more than one year. These exclusions ensured that participants had stable, culturally situated professional experiences within the intended national context of analysis.

A total of ten participants were recruited for this study, with the aim of achieving a relatively equal distribution between Indian-based professionals and Indian immigrant professionals in Canada. This sample size was considered appropriate for a qualitative study, offering sufficient depth for thematic analysis while remaining manageable. Participants were recruited using a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling strategies. Purposeful sampling ensured that the selected individuals met the study's eligibility criteria, while snowball sampling, initiated through the researcher's academic and professional networks, facilitated the identification of additional qualified participants through referral (Naderifar et

al., 2017; Merriam, 2002). Recruitment was carried out via email invitations, which outlined the purpose of the study, the nature of participation, and the estimated time commitment involved (see Appendix 1).

Each participant was asked to allocate approximately six to 10 minutes to review the research overview and sign the informed consent form. Semi structured interviews were then conducted, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. To enhance the credibility of the data, each participant also engaged in a member checking process, lasting 15 to 20 minutes, during which they reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of their interview transcripts. To ensure accessibility and linguistic comfort, participants were offered the option to complete their interviews in English, Hindi, or Gujarati. To protect participant confidentiality, pseudonyms are used throughout this study in place of real names. Each pseudonym is accompanied by the title of the participant's professional role to retain contextual relevance. This approach ensures anonymity while preserving the analytical richness necessary for understanding the participants' leadership experiences and perspectives. This approach serves the dual purpose of maintaining participant confidentiality while providing readers with contextual clarity regarding each participant's leadership perspective. Referring to participants by their positions allows for a richer understanding of the nuances in their ethical reasoning, shaped by the professional environments in which they operate. This method preserves anonymity without compromising interpretive depth. The following table provides basic information about all participants, including their professional role, country of residence, years of professional experience, and years in a leadership position.

Table 1

Summary of Participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Job Tittle	Demographic Group	Description
Pavan	Operational excellence engineer	Indian leader in India.	He is working in the pharmaceutical industry as an operational excellence engineer**.** He is 34 years old and has seven years of professional experience, including

Participant (Pseudonym)	Job Tittle	Demographic Group	Description
			two years in a leadership role. He holds a PhD in lean manufacturing. His job focuses on improving processes, ensuring compliance, reducing waste, and driving continuous improvement across manufacturing and operational systems. He defines ethical leadership as making decisions that reduce the problems faced by his workers, emphasizing empathy, efficiency, and long-term sustainability in organizational practices.
Ravi	Principal of Industrial Training Institute (ITI)	Indian leader in India.	He works as the principal of an industrial training institution in India. At 34 years of age, he has twelve years of professional experience, including three years in a formal leadership role. He holds a master's degree in mechanical engineering with a specialization in automobile engineering. In his current position, he oversees vocational and technical education programs focused on developing skilled professionals. His understanding of ethical leadership centres on collaboration and the efficient use of limited resources to achieve collective goals.
Kiran	Executive engineer	Indian leader in India.	He works as an executive engineer in the water supply department of a provincial government in India. He is 37 years old and has fourteen years of professional experience, including seven years in a leadership role. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and currently serves as the head of a department responsible for material procurement, vendor policy formulation, and inspection processes across all water supply offices in the province. His department also manages the maintenance of government vehicles. He defines ethical leadership as a commitment to serving his department to the best of his ability, with a focus on accountability, dedicated service, and responsible governance.
Hemant	Transport business owner	Indian leader in India.	He is the owner of a small transport business in India. At 36 years old, he has twelve years of professional experience, including five years in a leadership role. He holds a diploma as his highest educational qualification. In his role, he manages the daily operations of the business, coordinating logistics, client relations, and the work of his drivers. He describes ethical leadership as fostering smooth and respectful interactions between himself, his clients, and his drivers, ensuring trust, reliability, and fairness in all aspects of the business.
Ritu	School principal	Indian leader in India.	She serves as a primary school principal in a tribal region of India. She is 40 years old and has fifteen years of professional experience, including six years in a leadership role. Her academic background includes a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Education degree. She currently leads a school in a socio-culturally diverse setting, where she defines ethical leadership as the practice of creating an environment in which every individual feels included, valued, and respected.
Taha	Administrator of a religious institution	Indian immigrant leader in Canada	He has been working in Canada for the past fourteen years and currently serves as an administrator of a religious institution that supports a diverse community comprising members from approximately forty-five nationalities. He is 40 years old and holds a master's degree in physiotherapy. With seven years of leadership experience, he brings a nuanced understanding of cross-

Participant (Pseudonym)	Job Tittle	Demographic Group	Description
			cultural leadership and organizational coordination. He defines ethical leadership as the alignment between a leader's goals and the overarching mission of the organization they serve, emphasizing integrity, shared purpose, and cultural sensitivity.
Siya	Assistant store manager	Indian immigrant leader in Canada	She has been living and working in Canada for the past five years and currently holds the position of assistant store manager. She is 38 years old and holds a master's degree in business education. In India, she previously owned and managed a small stock broking firm franchise. Her Canadian work experience spans five years, including one year in a leadership role. She defines ethical leadership as the ability to inspire team members to work with full dedication toward the goals of the institution, highlighting motivation, responsibility, and alignment with organizational values.
Sachin	IT coordinator	Indian immigrant leader in Canada	He is 30 years old and has been living in Canada for the past nine years. He works as an IT coordinator at an IT management company, with nine years of professional experience, including three years in a leadership role. In his current position, he supervises a team of five people, managing work distribution, facilitating coordination, and addressing team members' queries. He emphasizes transparency and collaboration as key aspects of ethical leadership, believing these principles are essential for building trust, enhancing accountability, and supporting effective team dynamics.
Abhi	Operations manager	Indian immigrant leader in Canada	He is 30 years old and has been living in Canada for the past six years. He currently works as an operations manager in an automotive company, with six years of overall professional experience and two years in a leadership role. He holds a master's degree in computer science. His position involves overseeing operations in a warehouse setting, where he manages both coding-related tasks and robotics integration. In addition, he works closely with unionized labour, balancing technical responsibilities with people management. He reports to two managers, one hierarchical manager at the warehouse and a functional manager overseeing the North American supply chain. He views ethical leadership as going beyond task management, emphasizing that leadership shapes employees' workplace experiences and influences their career paths through mentorship and guidance. Although he has been described as rigid due to his strong moral compass, he sees himself as a growing leader, committed to learning, self-reflection, and adapting as he continues to develop in his role.
Rishi	Team supervisor	Indian immigrant leader in Canada	He is 35 years old and has been living in Canada for the past six years. He currently works as a team supervisor in a financial services firm, with six years of total work experience in Canada and two years of leadership experience. He holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. In his current role, he is responsible for overseeing a team of five employees, allocating work, providing training, ensuring their confidence, and understanding of financial products, resolving client queries, and managing interpersonal

Participant (Pseudonym)	Job Tittle	Demographic Group	Description
			conflicts within the team. He defines ethical leadership as being deeply team-oriented, emphasizing support, accountability, and shared success. He believes that leadership is not about managing people but about helping them grow, standing by them in both success and failure, and taking full responsibility for the team's outcomes.

3.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed a two-phase data collection approach consisting of a Pre-Interview Worksheet and a Semi-Structured Interview. The first phase involved a Pre-Interview Worksheet designed as a pre-interview activity to gather demographic and surface level data before conducting semi-structured interviews. Pre interview activities are recognized for enhancing memory recall, self-expression, participant autonomy, and interview quality (Ellis et al., 2011). In the first phase, each participant completed a Pre-Interview Worksheet (Appendix 2), which captured basic demographic and professional background information along with initial reflections on ethical leadership. The decision to include a Pre-Interview Worksheet was informed by Kristanto (2020), who employed a three-step data collection process involving a reflection phase, a questionnaire phase, and an interview phase. That study examined the impact of technology-based peer assessment in a Statistical Methods course. Drawing from that model, this study combined the first two phases into a single worksheet that achieved dual goals: collecting background information and prompting early reflection on ethical leadership. Starting the interview with a completed pre-interview activity provided a tangible reference point for conversation. This helped the interview proceed more smoothly, remain focused, and become more engaging for both the participant and the researcher (Ellis et al., 2011).

In the second phase, participants took part in a semi-structured interview, interviews of all Indian leaders in India were conducted virtual platforms and for Canadian cohort the

interviews where three interview where taken in person and two conducted on virtual platform. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, with the option to use English, Hindi, or Gujarati to ensure linguistic comfort. Two interviews in India were taken in English language and two interviews in Gujarati and one in in Hindi. Whereas all interviews in the Canadian cohort were conducted in English.

Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim manually. Some filler words (e.g., “like” and “hmmm”) were removed during transcription to improve clarity without altering the meaning of participants' responses. After transcription, a member-check process was implemented, allowing participants to verify the accuracy of their responses and make any necessary clarifications or additions. Member checks were incorporated in this study to ensure the accurate representation of participants' perspectives and experiences, which is central to the aims of this qualitative inquiry (Thomas, 2017). This process is valuable as it prioritizes participant voice and authenticity and provides an opportunity to seek clarification or elaboration on emerging themes (Thomas, 2017). By inviting participants to review and comment on preliminary interpretations, member checks contributed to the overall credibility and ethical integrity of the research (Thomas, 2017). The interview questions were adapted from Liang et al. (2021) and modified to align with the Bird’s Eye View model of multiple ethical paradigms developed by Hoare et al. (2024). The revised interview protocol (Appendix 3) was designed to prompt participants to reflect on ethical dilemmas they had encountered, the moral reasoning behind their decisions, and, for Canadian participants, how migration had influenced their views on leadership ethics.

For data analysis, this study employed a deductive qualitative content analysis approach, appropriate for research guided by an existing conceptual framework (Armat et al., 2018). The eight ethical paradigms from the Bird’s Eye View model: justice, care, critique, community, self-care, discomfort, profession, and St’at’imc matriarchal leadership served as

initial coding categories. These were used to identify which ethical lenses were evident in participant narratives. To complement the theoretically informed deductive approach, I applied Braun and Clarke's (2006) reflexive thematic analysis framework. While my coding was guided by pre-established ethical paradigms from the Bird's Eye View Model, the analysis remained reflexive, allowing for interpretation and deeper meaning-making beyond the initial deductive structure. Instead of creating new codes, I began with the eight ethical lenses as my primary coding categories. I conducted the coding manually using an Excel sheet, organizing data excerpts under each ethical lens to enable systematic analysis while allowing for nuanced interpretation within each category. I first divided the interview data into two main cohorts: Indian leaders based in India and Indian immigrant leaders based in Canada. This initial categorization helped preserve contextual clarity during analysis. I then reviewed each interview individually, identifying the ethical dilemmas described by participants and closely analysing the moral reasoning they used to navigate those dilemmas. For each dilemma, I assessed which ethical lens such as care, justice, or critique, best aligned with the participant's reasoning. I created a table for each cohort, consisting of eight columns corresponding to the ethical paradigms. For every dilemma, I recorded the aligned ethical lens in the appropriate column. For example, while describing how he addressed an ethical issue regarding employee lateness, a Canada-based Information Technology (IT) Coordinator stated: "When an intern struggled with punctuality due to his academic workload, I allowed a 30-minute grace period, recognizing his past dedication and balancing organizational rules with personal empathy." This response demonstrated empathy, responsiveness, and attentiveness to the intern's individual needs, this is a core features of the ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982). Therefore, during coding, I placed this instance in the Canadian cohort table under the column labelled ethic of care. It is important to note that several ethical dilemmas aligned with more than one ethical lens, meaning they could be interpreted and coded under

multiple categories. This overlap reflects the complexity and multidimensionality of ethical decision-making. The nuances of these overlapping codes are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. By the end of the analysis, I had two completed tables: one for the Indian cohort and another for the Canadian cohort each mapping participant responses to the eight ethical paradigms. This method allowed for a systematic yet context-sensitive comparison of how ethical leadership is enacted and interpreted across cultural contexts.

3.3 Ethics Approval

The Human Research Ethics proposal for this study was submitted to the Office of Research Services/Office of Research Ethics at Thompson Rivers University on August 1, 2024. A request for revision was received on September 12, 2024, and the revised application was submitted on September 20, 2024. Final ethics approval was granted on September 23, 2024 (see Appendix 4).

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the ethical narratives of Indian professionals in leadership positions, drawing from in depth interviews across public and private sectors in both India and Canada. The chapter brings forward the lived realities of leaders as they navigate complex ethical dilemmas shaped by cultural values, institutional expectations, and personal beliefs. Their stories are organized according to eight ethical paradigms: Ethic of Justice, Ethic of Care, Ethic of Critique, Ethic of Community, Ethic of Self Care, Ethic of Profession, Ethic of Discomfort, and St'at'imc matriarchal leadership. Each of these ethics serves as a guiding perspective through which ethical reasoning is expressed and practiced. Within each paradigm, major themes are explored using the participants' own words, showing how ethical leadership emerges through thoughtful decision making, cultural sensitivity, and moral strength. This chapter does not seek to generalize but rather to reveal the depth and complexity of ethical practice as it is experienced, questioned, and demonstrated in real leadership situations. The aim of this research is to provide richly detailed interpretive accounts of cultural practices that capture not only what people do, but also what their actions mean within cultural contexts and specific social realities.

4.1 Summary of Ethical Paradigms Across Cohorts

The following table presents a consolidated overview of the key findings from interviews with Indian professionals working in leadership positions in India and Canada. The table is organized according to the seven ethical paradigms. For each paradigm, the table highlights how it was demonstrated by participants in both cohorts, along with representative quotes and brief contextual explanations. This summary is intended to provide a visual reference for the reader and should not be viewed as a replacement for the detailed thematic analysis that follows. Many of the narratives shared by participants relate to more than one ethical paradigm, which reflects the complexity and interconnected nature of ethical

leadership. It is important to note that no evidence was found demonstrating the use of the Ethic of Discomfort or St'at'imc Matriarchal Leadership by the participants. For this reason, these two ethical paradigms are not included in the summary table.

To synthesize and compare the presence of each ethical paradigm, a summary table was developed. Each row in the table corresponds to a specific ethical paradigms degree of evidence was calculated using a standardized scale ranging from zero to five, with five representing the strongest evidence and zero indicating no evidence. This score reflects the extent to which participants across both cohorts demonstrated each ethical paradigm. Specifically, a score of five indicates strong evidence, meaning all participants demonstrated the ethic in question. A score of four indicates moderate to strong evidence, with approximately 80% of participants demonstrating the ethic. A score of three represents weak to mixed evidence, with around 60% of participants demonstrating it. A score of two indicates weak evidence, with approximately 40% of participants demonstrating the ethic. Finally, a score of zero indicates no evidence of that ethical paradigm among the participants. This score was derived by summing the number of participants from each cohort who demonstrated the ethical paradigm in question, then dividing the total by two. For example, if five participants in the India-based cohort and five participants in the Canada-based cohort exhibited a particular ethic, the total would be ten, resulting in a degree of evidence score of five (ten divided by two). If two participants in India and three in Canada demonstrated a specific ethic, the total would be five, yielding a degree of evidence score of 2.5. A score of 2.5 indicates mixed evidence, meaning roughly half of the participants demonstrated that particular ethical paradigm. This method offers a structured and comparative overview of how ethical paradigms were represented across both cultural contexts. It allows for a consistent and transparent assessment of patterns in ethical reasoning among participants, thereby supporting a more nuanced analysis of the findings.

Table 2

Summary of Ethical Paradigm Representation Across Cohorts

Ethical Paradigm	Evidence in Leadership in India (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Evidence in Leadership in Canada (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Degree of Evidence All Together	Interview Data
Ethic of Justice	4	4	Moderate to Strong	Operations manager (Canada based Cohort): While introducing a new technology at work, I created two performance sheets, one including idle time and one excluding it, to transparently show the full picture of worker efficiency. I shared both with upper management to ensure fairness toward both supervisors and workers, allowing them to make an informed decision without bias. This approach was fair to supervisors because it acknowledged the way they had traditionally calculated performance, and it was fair to workers by accurately representing the realistic conditions under which tasks were performed.
				Executive Engineer (India based Cohort): I chose to follow a path that preserved procedural justice and protected my employee. I informed my superiors about the request and explained that we could not act unless they issued a direct order. Once I received a verbal instruction from my superior, I asked my team member to proceed. This way, I ensured that our actions remained within the chain of command, in accordance with legal and institutional frameworks. I refused to allow informal political influence to override official procedures, but I also ensured that responsibility for the final decision rested with the appropriate authority.
				Transport business owner (India based Cohort): By redefining procedural roles and responsibilities through collaborative agreements, I was able to uphold fairness and transparency in our business practices. For me, it was important to ensure that every stakeholder, be it the driver, the consigner, or the consignee is treated justly, and that no one bears a disproportionate share of operational burdens.
				School Principal (India based Cohort): We ensured fairness by establishing clear rules, objective evaluation criteria, and accountability mechanisms. By doing so, we not only restored trust in the process but also strengthened the educational value of the Child Parliament, teaching students that fairness and transparency are essential principles in any leadership or governance system.
				Administrator of religious institution (Canada based Cohort): My primary responsibility is to ensure fairness and equal treatment. I must look beyond individual emotions or cultural pressures and instead base my decisions on rules that can be applied universally. As I often explain, “You cannot do one thing for one person and deny it to another.” Upholding consistent standards avoids favouritism and reinforces credibility.
				Team Supervisor (Canada based Cohort): To maintain fairness and transparency, we also decided to set a time limit on how many minutes an employee could be late. If someone exceeded this benchmark, a certain pay deduction would apply. Although I personally do not believe in punishment and prefer to focus on positive motivation, we understood that it was important to have clear boundaries to prevent the perception that some employees were taking advantage of leniency. This step reassured other employees that standards of fairness were being maintained, ensuring that the policies were consistent and just for all.
Ethic of Care	5	3	Moderate to Strong	IT Coordinator (Canada based Cohort): When an intern struggled with punctuality due to his academic workload, I allowed a 30-minute grace period, recognizing his past dedication and balancing organizational rules with personal empathy.
				Operations manager (Canada based Cohort): Beyond the legal obligations, my decision was also motivated by a deep concern for the well-being of my team. Although I was new and aware that challenging the standard operating procedure could expose me to professional risks, I prioritized the safety and dignity of the workers. I understood that removing their access to essential safety gear, even temporarily, would place them in vulnerable positions and signal a disregard for their health and safety. By reordering the task list, I ensured that the workers could perform their duties safely up until the very last stage of the warehouse transfer. I recognize that protecting my team's immediate physical safety was as important as meeting operational targets.
				Team Supervisor (Canada based Cohort): I had a team member who was excellent at her job. She was highly efficient and consistently one of the top performers. However, she struggled with consistently arriving on time in the mornings. I initiated one-on-one

Ethical Paradigm	Evidence in Leadership in India (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Evidence in Leadership in Canada (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Degree of Evidence All Together	Interview Data
				conversations to better understand the root cause of her lateness. Through these discussions, we discovered that her tardiness stemmed from a tendency toward disorganization rather than any malicious intent. Although her intentions were not harmful, I recognized that her actions were unintentionally impacting the broader team dynamics. Throughout this process, my priority was to address the situation with compassion and to guide her toward improvement rather than to penalize her.
				Transport Business Owner (India based Cohort): I could not ignore the human dimension of leadership, especially when lives - both of those receiving the aid and those delivering it; were at stake. I believe ethical leadership means not just making sound decisions, but ensuring that the people impacted by those decisions are protected, respected, and supported to the best extent possible.
				Principal of ITI (India based Cohort): Officially, all employees are required to live within an eight-kilometre radius of the institution. However, our campus is located in a very remote area, and it is extremely difficult to find suitable housing nearby. Moreover, since many of our employees hold transferable positions, it is not feasible for them to uproot their families every few years for the sake of this rule. Understanding the personal challenges this creates, I have chosen to offer flexibility. I prioritised the well-being and stability of my staff over strict enforcement of residency requirements.
				Executive engineer (India based Cohort): One of my team members was unwell last week. She had completed a key task, but due to her health, she was unable to submit the required report on the same day, as mandated by our department's policy. Timely report submission is critical because failure to do so can lead to penalties. However, she approached me asking for leave, and I told her to take the time she needed. She ended up submitting the report three days later. To support her, we adjusted the date on the documentation to reflect a delayed task completion. I knew this wasn't strictly by the book, but I felt it was more important to care for my employee's well-being than to strictly enforce the rule.
Ethic of Critique	3	2	Weak to Mixed	Operations Excellence Engineer (India based Cohort): There is often a gap between written policies and real working conditions. Procedures and policy makers frequently overlook the physical and operational limitations encountered on the ground. I chose to adapt the system not out of convenience, but to ensure that the work could be carried out safely, efficiently, and realistically under the given constraints.
				Principal of ITI (India based Cohort): The persistent gap between policy expectations and actual capacity creates a recurring ethical dilemma. When I reassign responsibilities in ways that deviate from official roles, I am not simply compensating for staffing challenges. I am making a conscious decision to question and respond to a policy framework that demands compliance without providing the necessary support for implementation.
				Executive Engineer: (India based Cohort) Being a leader in India often requires mastering the art of jugaad, a form of creative problem-solving. Sometimes, policies are written without fully understanding the lived realities of those expected to follow them. In this case, blindly applying the rule would have punished an employee for circumstances outside her control. I believe that rules should not override human dignity or ethical judgment.
				Administrator of religious institution (Canada based Cohort): The policy fails to account for individuals who are temporarily but legitimately disabled due to injury or illness. As I reflected on this, I realized the need not just to make an exception but to critically question the inclusivity of the policy itself. The incident prompted me to consider advocating for a revision that would allow for temporary accommodations
				Assistant Store Manager (Canada based Cohort): What I find particularly problematic is that the system, in its attempt to ensure fairness, sometimes fails to hold individuals accountable, especially those with long tenure or informal influence. This has required me to develop a critical awareness of how institutional protections may inadvertently perpetuate inequality and inefficiency.
Ethic of Community	4	4	Moderate to Strong	Principal of Primary School (India based Cohort): Before making any major team-related decisions, like reward allocations, I conducted open discussions with my team members to gather feedback and ensure everyone's perspectives were considered.

Ethical Paradigm	Evidence in Leadership in India (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Evidence in Leadership in Canada (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Degree of Evidence All Together	Interview Data
				Transport business owner (India based Cohort): I have learned that being overly rigid with rules and policies can be counterproductive. Instead, I focus on nurturing a culture of mutual respect and interdependence, where both employees and clients feel seen, heard, and valued. This is not just a strategy for retention, but a belief: we grow together, and we face challenges together.
				Principal of ITI (India based Cohort): Whenever a new task is assigned to our institution, particularly those mandated by the government, I make it a point to bring all staff members together for a meeting. I explain the nature of the task, the timelines involved, and any constraints we must work within. After presenting the full picture, we discuss together how best to approach it. The decision on how we will complete the task is always made collectively, as a team.
				Administrator of Religious Institution (Canada based Cohort): Even when people disagree with my decisions, they are more likely to accept them if they feel heard, respected, and included in the reasoning process. In this way, collaborative decision making process supports the implementation of Justice by helping ensure that even difficult choices are understood and accepted across diverse groups.
				IT Coordinator (Canada based Cohort): Beyond caring for individual needs, this decision was also rooted in my responsibility toward the broader workplace community. Rewarding a newer employee was a strategic way to encourage not only him but also other new employees who might look up to his achievement. It sent a message that dedication and hard work would be noticed and celebrated, regardless of tenure. Although the more experienced employee did not receive the main prize, he was honoured through a certificate, public appreciation, and a formal letter of recognition, ensuring that the sense of fairness and morale was preserved.
				Operations manager (Canada based Cohort): I respected the collective practices that had developed over time and allowed the entire organization to maintain trust. I ensured that the voices and concerns of all groups including supervisors, workers, and management were considered. This approach helped foster a sense of fairness, transparency, and unity within the organization.
				Executive Engineer (India based Cohort): In my view, effective leadership particularly in community-based institutions is not just about fulfilling your own responsibilities. It is about creating and sustaining a network of mutual support, where everyone feels invested in each other's success. Many times, I have seen that a leader's effectiveness is determined not only by their technical or administrative decisions, but by how well they are able to build trust and work in harmony with those around them.
				Team Supervisor (Canada based Cohort): While ensuring fairness was my primary focus, I was also deeply conscious of maintaining team morale and fostering a cooperative work environment. To further support this, I retrained the first-desk employee to guide walk-in customers toward other team members based on their expertise. This not only helped distribute the client load more evenly but also encouraged collaboration among team members. By doing so, employees who had previously felt excluded from walk-in opportunities now had a fair chance to engage new clients, and the first-desk employee no longer felt isolated in handling an overwhelming number of tasks. This solution promoted a stronger sense of teamwork and community within the team while also supporting the company's overall growth.
Ethic of Self-Care	1	1	Weak	Administrator of Religious Institution (Canada based Cohort): Over time, I learned that leadership, at least in my context, demanded an emotional resilience that deeply challenged me. I am someone who takes criticism to heart. When others disagree with my decisions or express frustration, I find myself affected to the point that it disrupts my peace of mind. I used to stay awake at night, replaying conversations, feeling the weight of judgment, and questioning whether my decisions had hurt someone unintentionally. The constant emotional strain began to affect my sense of balance and clarity. It also impacted my effectiveness as a leader. I realized that to preserve my mental and emotional health, I needed to set clear boundaries. I chose to step away from formal decision-making positions, not because I lacked commitment, but because I recognized that constantly bearing the emotional load of leadership was unsustainable for me.
				Principal of ITI (India based Cohort): Many times, I feel guilty for making imperfect choices as a leader because there is no clear or fully just solution. I am constantly navigating structural constraints that make fairness difficult to achieve. Yet I choose not to ignore or minimize these tensions. Instead, I reflect, listen, and act with that awareness in mind. I also accept that, in many situations, there is no simple or entirely satisfactory solution.

Ethical Paradigm	Evidence in Leadership in India (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Evidence in Leadership in Canada (e.g., 4/5 participants)	Degree of Evidence All Together	Interview Data
Ethic of the Profession	3	3	Mixed to Moderate	Team Supervisor in Financial Services (Canada based Cohort): In making work allocation decisions, I not only followed the company's professional codes but also personally ensured fairness by considering both team feedback and my manager's approval to maintain ethical integrity.
				Executive Engineer (India based Cohort): When it comes to resolving ethical dilemmas, I rely primarily on my own professional judgment. Given the nature of my role, I would say I make about 60 to 70 percent of my decisions independently. This is not because I reject collaboration, but because my position requires a deep understanding of specialized tasks and situational nuances that are often specific to my responsibilities.
				Transport Business Owner (India based Cohort): In this particular situation, we decided to make an exception by transporting hazardous chemicals at the request of one of our oldest clients. While this decision involved bending our internal policy, it was never taken lightly or without implementing rigorous safeguards. Our professional responsibility toward safety, compliance, and operational integrity remained paramount throughout the process. Before accepting the shipment, we thoroughly reviewed all regulations related to the transportation of hazardous materials. We also ensured that the items were properly packed and that every required safety protocol was strictly followed. This exception was not a deviation from competence, but a calculated, responsibility-driven decision aligned with our duty to serve both people and process with integrity.
				Operations Manager (Canada based Cohort): In my current role, the majority of the ethical dilemmas and decisions I face are heavily influenced by my professional expertise and responsibilities. I work with technologies that I have either introduced or helped implement in the warehouse, such as the Auto Store system. Because I possess the most in-depth knowledge of these systems, I believe it is both appropriate and necessary for me to take independent decisions regarding them. I rely on my specialized knowledge and technical understanding to ensure that the decisions made are sound, informed, and aligned with professional standards, ultimately ensuring the best outcomes for both the organization and the operational efficiency of the warehouse.

4.2 Ethic of Justice: India-Based Cohort

The Ethic of Justice is centred on fairness, individual rights, impartiality, and adherence to universal principles such as the rule of law and procedural equity (Beckner, 2004; Frick et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2014). It is aligned with a deontological approach to ethics, focusing not on outcomes, but on whether actions adhere to established norms and legal expectations (Beckner, 2004). Among the Indian professionals interviewed, this ethic appeared most vividly in moments when leaders defended due process, revised unfair systems, or sought to protect individuals from being disadvantaged by arbitrary decisions. The analysis of this cohort reflects a combination of procedural and distributive justice, with leaders striving to treat individuals equitably while reforming flawed systems (Chryssides & Kaler, 1996; Wood & Hilton, 2012).

A strong example of procedural justice emerged from Kiran, an executive engineer who described a situation in which political pressure conflicted with newly implemented government policy. In his account, he explained:

> One ethical dilemma I encountered recently involved a conflict between following a new government rule and responding to external pressure from political authorities. The government had issued a directive aimed at eliminating VIP [Very Important Person] culture, which included a strict policy that red lights and sirens should no longer be used on vehicles of senior government officials. However, not long after this rule was implemented, I received a request from the personal assistant of a high-ranking official, asking that a red light and siren be installed on his car. Since the maintenance and upkeep of government vehicles fall under our department, the request came to one of my team members, who rightly refused it, citing the new policy.

The engineer reported that despite the legitimacy of the refusal, both he and his team member experienced considerable backlash:

> A few days later, I began receiving calls from senior officials and political figures questioning how we could deny a request from the personal assistant of such a powerful official. My team member, who was simply upholding the law, started facing criticism, harassment, and threats of false suspension. It became clear that this situation posed serious risks to both him and me, despite our adherence to official regulations.

To uphold procedural justice and protect his employee, the engineer chose to elevate the issue through formal channels. He recounted:

> In response, I chose to follow a path that preserved procedural justice and protected my employee. I informed my superiors about the request and explained that we could not act unless they issued a direct order. Once I received a verbal instruction from my superior, I asked my team member to proceed. This way, I ensured that our actions remained within the chain of command, in accordance with legal and institutional frameworks. I refused to allow informal political influence to override official procedures, but I also ensured that responsibility for the final decision rested with the appropriate authority.

This approach exemplified a clear commitment to institutional fairness and accountability. His decision to involve higher authorities and insist on documented authorization protected both the employee and the process from informal interference. He concluded:

> By handling the situation in this manner, I was able to uphold fairness, protect my team member from unjust consequences, and ensure that our department acted transparently and within the boundaries of law. As a leader, I believe that justice

> is not only about enforcing rules, but also about safeguarding those who follow them in the face of undue pressure.

This account reflects a principled enactment of procedural justice, wherein the leader aligned his actions with the rule of law and protected institutional integrity. By resisting political pressure and ensuring that actions were carried out through formal authority, he demonstrated that ethical leadership includes not only compliance with policy but also the defence of those who uphold it in challenging circumstances.

Distributive justice, which emphasizes fairness in the allocation of tasks, responsibilities, and resources (Chryssides & Kaler, 1996), was also demonstrated by Kiran who navigated a complex organizational dilemma involving the assignment of inspection duties across three major offices. The companies to be inspected were unevenly distributed geographically, and the original strategy was based solely on proximity; which led to perceptions of inequity. The engineer explained the initial system:

> One ethical dilemma I encountered involved the allocation of inspection tasks among engineers across three major offices in the province. Each office has three engineers, and one of my core responsibilities is to assign companies to these nine engineers so they can inspect materials before procurement decisions are made. We work with approximately 30 to 40 companies, but they are not evenly distributed across the province; many are concentrated in specific locations. In my first year, I allocated companies based primarily on geographic proximity. If a cluster of companies was located near one office, I assigned those inspections to engineers from that office. This approach made logistical sense, it reduced travel time, minimized transportation costs, and expedited the inspection process. However, it soon became clear that this system was perceived as unfair. Some

> engineers ended up with significantly fewer inspection duties and were assigned alternative tasks, which led to concerns about bias and favouritism.

Faced with this feedback, the engineer found himself in an ethical dilemma: maintain operational efficiency or ensure a more equitable distribution of work. He reflected on the leadership challenge:

> This placed me in a difficult position. On one hand, I needed to ensure operational efficiency; on the other, I had to consider fairness in workload distribution. It became evident that there was no perfect solution that would make everyone equally satisfied. However, as a leader, I believe that fairness is not just about equal distribution but about reasoned, transparent, and context-sensitive decisions.

In response, he revised his approach. Rather than relying solely on location, he adopted a more holistic strategy that integrated individual expertise with logistical realities:

> To resolve the issue, I revised the allocation strategy. Instead of assigning companies based solely on location, I began factoring in each engineer's area of expertise along with logistical considerations. This approach did slightly increase transportation costs in some cases, but it allowed for a more balanced and just distribution of responsibilities. The revised system was not only more equitable but also helped to reduce perceptions of bias and foster greater trust among team members.

By changing the allocation strategy Kiran acknowledges that equal access to opportunities and resources will lead to fair and just outcomes for all (Beckner, 2004; Robbins & Trabichet, 2009). The Kiran summarized his intention:

> Ultimately, my goal was to uphold fairness in a complex situation where equal treatment was not always feasible. By making decisions that were principled,

> transparent, and sensitive to context, I aimed to ensure that all engineers felt respected and that their work was valued.

This example illustrates that distributive justice extends beyond simply assigning tasks equally. It entails the equitable distribution of benefits, opportunities, resources, and wealth among individuals. Additionally, it considers how outcomes are shared within the community and places importance on advancing the well-being of the majority (Chryssides and Kaler, 1996).

An example of remedial and procedural justice came from Hemant, a transport business owner who described the challenges his team faced in balancing efficiency, fairness, and stakeholder demands. He explained that a recurring ethical issue arose after he took over the business, specifically around delays experienced by drivers at the consignee's site. These delays stemmed from ambiguous responsibilities and prolonged inspections. He explained:

> One ethical dilemma I faced as a leader in my transportation business involved a recurring conflict between efficiency, fairness, and stakeholder expectations. In this business, we operate between two key parties the consigner, who ships the goods and is our primary customer, and the consignee, who receives them. A consistent issue arose after I took over the business: although we delivered goods on time, our truck drivers were often held up at the consignee’s site for prolonged periods, sometimes up to 8 to 14 hours, waiting for delivery acknowledgment forms to be signed.

The issue was not simply logistical but ethical, as drivers were left to bear the consequences of inefficiencies beyond their control. He added:

> The problem was that consignees insisted on conducting thorough inspections of the material before signing the delivery papers, with no fixed timeline. Meanwhile, our drivers were expected to wait, often unjustly blamed for any

> quality issues and couldn't proceed with their next delivery. This created significant logistical challenges: delayed deliveries, increased idle time, rising overtime costs, and growing frustration among drivers. Yet, enforcing a strict one-hour limit on consignee inspections could strain our relationship with consignees and jeopardize our service contract with the consigner.

Faced with this ethical tension, the business owner opted for a solution that upheld fairness for all parties involved. He described the strategy he implemented:

> This situation posed a clear ethical dilemma: How could I ensure fairness for our drivers and maintain delivery efficiency without compromising our obligations to clients? My solution was to pursue an approach grounded in procedural fairness and mutual accountability.

To achieve this, he proposed a new contractual arrangement:

> I proposed a contractual solution with the consigner, our primary customer. Under this agreement, consigners would provide our drivers with a summary document listing all relevant testing and inspections already conducted prior to dispatch. This would serve as a record to reduce redundant checks at the delivery site. Additionally, we requested the consigner and consignee collaborate to implement a basic acceptance sampling method, a streamlined inspection protocol that could be completed within one hour of delivery, allowing drivers to obtain the necessary signatures and leave without delay.

This new system addressed both the process and the imbalance of responsibility. He explained:

> This solution brought clarity, consistency, and accountability to the process. It protected our drivers from undue blame, honoured the consignee's right to inspect goods, and ensured that no party was unfairly burdened. Most importantly, it

> allowed us to maintain delivery schedules and customer satisfaction while addressing the ethical imbalance in how responsibilities were distributed.

Reflecting on the broader ethical implications of this decision, the business owner noted:

> By redefining procedural roles and responsibilities through collaborative agreements, I was able to uphold fairness and transparency in our business practices. For me, this decision reflects what ethical leadership means: ensuring that every stakeholder be it the driver, the consigner, or the consignee is treated justly, and that no one bears a disproportionate share of operational burdens.

This account illustrates a considered use of both remedial and procedural justice. Instead of accepting flawed practices, the leader took deliberate actions to reassign responsibility and institutionalize fairness. This reflects remedial justice, which seeks to correct past harms through reparative measures (Chryssides & Kaler, 1996). At the same time, the solution upheld procedural justice by ensuring fairness through transparent processes, clarified roles, and consistent application of rules (Wood & Hilton, 2012). This approach ensured that all stakeholders were treated with impartiality and respect.

Substantive justice, which emphasizes fairness, consistency, and honouring obligations even under complex conditions (Chryssides and Kaler, 1996), was exemplified by the same transport business owner (Hemant) who shared an incident during a period of extreme weather. He described a situation in which his business faced a serious ethical dilemma:

> Last month, we were operating under extremely difficult circumstances due to heavy rainfall and widespread waterlogging in many areas of my province. As the head of a transportation business, I typically reject or delay orders during such times, prioritizing logistical feasibility and the safety of our operations. However, this particular situation posed a serious ethical dilemma. One of our consignees,

> who had signed an annual supply contract with us, needed to urgently deliver critical materials to remote areas on behalf of the provincial disaster management department. The materials were essential for supporting emergency response teams tasked with saving lives.

Hemant was caught between two conflicting obligations: honouring a legal and contractual agreement and ensuring the safety of his personnel. He explained the stakes clearly:

> I was faced with two conflicting obligations, on one hand, I had a legal and contractual responsibility to honour the shipment; on the other hand, fulfilling the order meant sending vehicles and staff through areas submerged under up to three feet of water. This brought significant risks: the possibility of vehicle failure, delays, and even physical danger to our personnel. Moreover, failure to take the order would result in a financial penalty and likely the permanent loss of an important client.

Recognizing that any decision would carry costs and risks, he relied on procedural and distributive justice principles to weigh the outcomes:

> This situation left no fair outcome, whatever decision I made, someone would bear the cost. I evaluated which course of action would result in the least harm and how can I reach the fairest possible compromise.

Ultimately, the business owner chose to honour the contract despite the operational and financial toll it entailed:

> Ultimately, I chose to complete the order. Although this choice came with high vehicle maintenance costs afterward, it allowed us to uphold our contractual commitment and support a public service effort without defaulting on our responsibilities.

Reflecting on the moral complexity of the decision, he noted:

> This decision illustrates how justice-oriented leadership sometimes requires weighing harm across all stakeholders and selecting the most proportionate and ethically defensible response even when no option feels entirely fair.

This account reflects the core of substantive justice: a commitment to uphold established responsibilities and institutional agreements, even in adverse conditions (Chryssides and Kaler, 1996). It also demonstrates procedural judgment, as the leader considered all stakeholder impacts before deciding on a course of action (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Hemant's leadership was grounded in fairness, proportionality, and integrity not in convenience or avoidance of loss. By choosing a more difficult path, Hemant believed that "justice involves honouring commitments while also being attentive to the real-world risks faced by others."

In the educational domain, procedural justice was demonstrated by Ritu a school principal who reflected on the unintended consequences of introducing a student leadership award without predefined criteria. The situation arose within the framework of a year-long program known as the Child Parliament, which fosters student understanding of governance through participation and peer leadership. The principal described the context and the ethical challenge:

> In our school, we run a year-long educational initiative called the Child Parliament, designed to help students understand the principles of governance through active participation. Each year in July, we conduct student elections, and the elected representatives are placed in leadership positions, working alongside teacher mentors to manage various school-based activities. These student teams take turns, with each group responsible for school activities for a 15-day period throughout the academic year. For the first time, during our annual function in March, we decided to introduce an award recognizing the best-performing team of

> the year. However, we quickly encountered an ethical dilemma. Because this decision was introduced at the end of the year and we had not maintained a formal system to track each team's performance, the announcement of the winning team led to dissatisfaction and criticism from other students. Many felt that the decision was arbitrary and lacked transparency. In hindsight, their concerns were valid there was no prior notice about the award, and students themselves had not kept records of their efforts, assuming all participation was equal.

This oversight revealed a gap in procedural fairness that compromised trust in the recognition system. Rather than nullify the award entirely or proceed with a blanket solution, the principal made a principled decision that aligned with long-term fairness and accountability:

> At that moment, I realized that no matter which team was recognized, it would appear unfair to others due to the absence of predefined criteria. While one suggestion was to give all teams an award, I believed that doing so would undermine the purpose of introducing recognition to promote motivation, accountability, and healthy competition among students.

To restore trust and ensure transparency, the principal implemented a two-part solution:

> As a short-term measure, we provided participation awards to all teams to acknowledge their contributions. But more importantly, we introduced a formalized evaluation structure for future cycles. From the following year onward, we designed a transparent scorecard system: after each team completes its 15-day rotation, a performance report is compiled detailing their initiatives, outcomes, and point-based evaluations. These reports are maintained throughout the year and form the basis for selecting the best-performing team during the annual function.

This solution not only corrected the immediate concern but institutionalized a framework for justice going forward. The principal emphasized that the guiding principle was rooted in ethical leadership:

> It ensured fairness by establishing clear rules, objective evaluation criteria, and accountability mechanisms. By doing so, we not only restored trust in the process but also strengthened the educational value of the Child Parliament, teaching students that fairness and transparency are essential principles in any leadership or governance system.

This case illustrates procedural justice in action: the deliberate establishment of structures, evaluation tools, and communication mechanisms to ensure all stakeholders are treated fairly (Wood & Hilton, 2012). By introducing a transparent scorecard system that included clearly defined rules and laws for evaluating student participants, Ritu created a structure that ensured impartial, unbiased, and fair treatment for all students involved.

The ethic of justice was also demonstrated in how leaders approached workplace disputes with fairness and transparency. Pavan, an operational excellence engineer reflected on a conflict between a junior quality engineer and shopfloor workers over a report that had caused offense. Rather than taking a side, the engineer pursued a resolution grounded in fact-finding and equity. He described the situation as follows:

> In a conflict between shopfloor workers and a quality engineer (my subordinate) regarding false reporting, I found myself in a position where both sides felt wronged and in fact, both had acted in accordance with their roles and followed the rules as they understood them. In this situation, both the workers and my subordinate were right, and they both felt the other side should apologize. I didn't want to take sides without knowing the full story, so to solve the conflict, I went down to the shop floor and had a conversation with the workers about why

> they were late. After inquiring, I came to know that they're usually on time, but that particular day, there was a delay in the sanitation and gowning area and that's what caused the delay. Once I understood this, I assured the workers that moving forward, if any report reflects them negatively, I'll make sure to include their side of the story. I also spoke with my subordinate and told him that I appreciated his attention to detail and his honesty in reporting, but from now on, we should always clear any doubts with the workers first. We came to an agreement before sending any negative report, we'll confirm the facts directly with those involved. Usually, we aren't expected to involve shop floor workers in report preparation to avoid bias, but in this case, I felt that bending the rule was necessary to be just to both parties.

This detailed account exemplifies procedural justice in leadership. By refusing to assign blame prematurely, the engineer sought a unbiased and transparent process (Wood & Hilton, 2012). He conducted a thorough investigation, validated the concerns of both sides, and adjusted future procedures to include direct worker input, thus addressing the power imbalance often embedded in reporting hierarchies.

Each of these incidents illustrates a facet of the ethic of justice. Leaders applied procedural justice by insisting on proper processes, distributive justice by redistributing work responsibilities fairly, and remedial justice by correcting systemic inefficiencies. Across interviews, justice was not viewed as synonymous with rigid rule-following, but as a moral obligation to uphold fairness, transparency, and consistency. The leaders did not reject rules but interpreted them with flexibility when fairness demanded reform.

Overall, the India based cohort demonstrated that the ethic of justice was most frequently activated in situations where formal policies appeared to conflict with fairness or where ambiguous systems allowed inequity to persist. Four out of five leaders reported using

the ethic of justice in their decision making when addressing ethical dilemmas. Among these four leaders, one was female and three were male. There was no significant difference observed in how the ethic of justice was applied across genders. The next section discusses the ethic of justice from the perspective of the Canada-based cohort. The findings revealed that four out of five immigrant leaders followed an ethic of justice, however, their application of this paradigm differed in tangible ways from Indian leaders.

4.3 Ethic of Justice: Canada-Based Cohort

Among Indian immigrant leaders working in Canada, the ethic of justice was prominently demonstrated in situations where consistency, equitable access, and evidence-based decision-making were prioritized despite cultural pressures or institutional ambiguity. An example of procedural justice was shared by Taha an administrator of a religious institution in Canada who faced a complex ethical dilemma involving differing cultural expectations around religious ceremonies. With multiple valid perspectives emerging from various community groups, the administrator found himself needing to make a decision that upheld fairness without succumbing to individual pressures or the appearance of bias. He explained the broader framework that guided his reasoning:

> Alongside the community-focused approach, I also recognized the necessity for a decision that could be justified on the basis of fairness, consistency, and procedural reasoning. In situations where multiple valid viewpoints exist, my role was to identify a path that could be logically explained and publicly defended, without appearing to favour one group over another. After carefully weighing both perspectives along with the institutional guidelines and rules, I chose the course of action that best aligned with the institution's established policies. I then communicated this decision transparently to the congregation, emphasizing that it

> was not based on personal preference or bias but on adherence to rules that apply equally to everyone.

The clarity and fairness of his decisions were made evident through how he communicated the rationale to others: “The choice I made was not for the sake of favouritism to any group, but because it was the most logical and efficient way of doing things.” His explanation reflects a commitment to procedural justice, not only in the outcome of the decision but also in the reliance on universal rules applied equally to everyone. He reflected:

> In doing so, I wanted to ensure that everyone understood the rationale, and that the decision was made with integrity, not partiality. This reaffirmed people’s trust not only in the outcome, but in the fairness of the process itself.

The administrator’s leadership shows that when decisions are grounded in universal rules, fairness and openly explained, they can reinforce institutional trust and unity, even in diverse and potentially divided communities.

Distributive justice, which refers to employees’ perceptions of fairness in the outcomes they receive at work such as opportunities for growth, salary, promotions, and overall welfare (Le & Nguyen, 2023), was clearly demonstrated by Siya, an assistant store manager in Canada. She took action to address what she saw as a systemic imbalance in the assignment of shifts and advancement opportunities. Her intervention was rooted in the belief that justice must reflect both merit and commitment. She explained:

> Understanding the systemic imbalance, I felt a responsibility to act to restore fairness for deserving employees. I approached my manager and advocated for a policy where shift allocations and work hours are prioritized for those who have been consistently working with us for at least three years and have demonstrated strong performance. By ensuring that experienced and capable employees are

> given more work hours, we can provide them with a real opportunity to be considered for promotions in the future.

Her reflections revealed that her understanding of justice extended beyond rigid procedural adherence. She emphasized the moral imperative of recognizing loyalty and effort:

> This action was grounded in my belief that justice is not about blindly following rigid rules but about making sure that people's hard work and loyalty are recognized and rewarded. It was important for me to create a system where advancement opportunities were more fairly distributed, reflecting both merit and commitment.

This leader's approach demonstrates how distributive justice can be actively constructed within organizational systems. Rather than treating all workers identically regardless of contribution, she advocated for equity by designing a policy that acknowledged long-term effort and reliability. In doing so, she not only corrected unfair patterns but also embedded values of fairness and motivation into daily operational decisions. Her action reshaped advancement criteria to ensure that opportunity was earned through sustained contribution rather than informal influence or happenstance.

Similarly, the ethic of justice was demonstrated by Abhi, an operations manager who faced an ethical challenge shortly after assuming a leadership role. During a complex warehouse relocation, he encountered a directive that appeared to conflict with both legal safety standards and moral responsibility. He described the situation in detail:

> The first significant ethical dilemma I encountered as a leader arose when I was newly appointed to my organization. I was tasked with overseeing the relocation of all equipment and parts from our current warehouse to a new location. While reviewing the detailed To-Do List for this transition, I noticed an instruction that

> raised immediate concerns: we were directed to dismantle and transfer all safety equipment before completing the rest of the move.

Upon identifying the issue, he reflected on the potential risks this directive posed, despite management's insistence that the work remaining was minimal:

> Upon closer reflection, I realized that proceeding in this manner would violate established organizational safety regulations, as workers would be forced to complete tasks without proper protective measures. When I voiced my concerns to my immediate manager, I was informed that since the remaining items were relatively lightweight approximately 10 to 15 pounds there was little risk of injury, and I should proceed according to the instructions.

Despite these assurances, he chose to act in accordance with ethical and legal principles rather than managerial convenience:

> However, from an ethical standpoint, I believed that safety protocols must not be compromised, regardless of perceived risk levels. I recognized that having safety equipment readily available was not only a legal requirement but also a safeguard for any unforeseen circumstances.

His ultimate decision reflected a strong commitment to procedural justice and worker protection:

> To uphold the principles of fairness and protect the rights of workers, I chose to alter the task sequence: I instructed my team to leave the safety equipment in place until all other items had been moved. In this way, we remained compliant with organizational safety standards and respected the fundamental rights of the workers.

This case illustrates the application of justice through adherence to established rules. Abhi chose to modify the task sequence to comply with organizational safety standards while also

prioritizing worker safety. It serves as an example of achieving justice and fairness through the universal application of policy. As Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) explain, the ethic of justice prompts leaders to consider questions such as: “Is there a law, right, or policy that relates to a particular case? If there is a law, right, or policy, should it be enforced?” (p.14)

An example of substantive justice emerged in the Abhi’s (operations manager) handling of performance data during the rollout of a new robotics system in his organization’s warehouse. Substantive justice relates to the morality and legitimacy of the content of rules, regulations, and procedures themselves. It focuses on ensuring that the rules workers are bound by are fair, legitimate, and practical given real work conditions (Dekker & Breakey, 2016). He described a complex ethical dilemma involving how task efficiency was calculated for new equipment. The dilemma revolved around whether to include idle time periods during which no tasks were completed in the final performance report. He began by outlining his role and the purpose of the testing:

> One of the tasks that I perform in my company is to oversee the introduction or installation of new robots, equipment, or technologies in our warehouse. As part of this process, we conduct testing to identify the 'task per hour' rate, meaning how many tasks one worker can complete in an hour using the new technology. This helps us determine how efficient the new technology is compared to older systems. Before these tests, we typically have an estimated task per hour benchmark, but the actual testing is necessary for proper calibration and validation.

While conducting these tests, he observed a common practice among supervisors that raised ethical concerns:

> During this process, I noticed a common practice where supervisors, who spend most of their time on the warehouse floor, remove the idle time from the

> calculations. Their argument is that removing idle time allows for a clearer view of the equipment's potential performance, and it also makes the reported numbers look better against expected benchmarks.

This created a moral dilemma. Removing idle time might uphold previous practices but could set unrealistic expectations for workers. Including it, however, might call into question the validity of earlier reports. He explained:

> I faced an ethical dilemma: I could either report the numbers with the idle time removed, which would align with previous practices but would be slightly unfair to workers by setting unrealistic expectations; or I could report the actual task numbers, including idle time, to provide a more honest and accurate representation of the equipment's performance.

Weighing the risks of misrepresentation against the need for accuracy and fairness, he devised a balanced solution:

> On one hand, if I included the idle time, it could unfairly suggest that supervisors had previously manipulated data. On the other hand, if I removed the idle time, it would disadvantage workers by establishing a misleading benchmark.
>
> Recognizing that my primary responsibility was to ensure fairness and transparency in the reporting process, I chose a balanced approach: I created two sheets one with idle time included and one without. I shared both versions with upper management and explained what each represented.

This approach not only addressed the technical side of performance measurement but also aligned with ethical leadership principles: "In this way, I ensured that all sides were fairly represented, and that decision-makers had full, accurate information to evaluate the technology ethically and justly."

This case exemplifies how substantive justice in leadership involves more than compliance with reporting norms. It reflects a deliberate choice to present accurate, balanced data that acknowledges the complexity of worker performance and the risks of one-dimensional metrics. By providing two versions of the report and clearly communicating their implications, the operations manager ensured transparency, upheld worker dignity, and preserved institutional trust in decision-making processes.

Procedural justice was demonstrated by Rishi a Team supervisor, when working with a late coming complaint of one employee he established some clear rule and ensure that it was applicable to all. He explained his reasoning by stating that:

> To maintain fairness and transparency, we also decided to set a time limit on how many minutes an employee could be late. If someone exceeded this benchmark, a certain pay deduction would apply. Although I personally do not believe in punishment and prefer to focus on positive motivation, we understood that it was important to have clear boundaries to prevent the perception that some employees were taking advantage of leniency. This step reassured other employees that standards of fairness were being maintained, ensuring that the policies were consistent and just for all.

Overall, Canadian-based Indian immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of justice not only by following rules, but by creating and adjusting systems to make those rules work more fairly. Their application of justice was rule based, evidence-driven, and sensitive to individual rights. The next section discusses the ethic of critique from the perspective of the India-based cohort. The findings revealed that three out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of critique.

4.4 Ethic of Critique: India-Based Cohort

The ethic of critique challenges leaders to question and confront existing structures, rules, and traditions when those systems perpetuate inequality, inefficiency, or injustice. Rather than accepting flawed institutions as immutable, this ethic calls for thoughtful resistance, moral discernment, and leadership that seeks reform (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Among Indian professionals working in leadership roles, this ethic emerged as a significant mode of ethical reasoning. Their testimonies reveal a willingness to question formal systems and to act when institutional mechanisms fail to serve the people they are intended to protect.

One of the powerful illustrations of the ethic of critique comes from the Ravi, a principal of an Industrial Training Institute (ITI), who operates within a chronically understaffed government institution. An ethical dilemma raised from the state's reliance on contractual labour, where temporary workers hired through third-party agencies routinely suffer delays in salary disbursement due to bureaucratic inefficiencies. While full-time employees are paid promptly, contract staff often wait months for wages. The principal articulated the ethical breakdown:

> The system is failing them, and I see it happen over and over again. These delays are not anomalies, they are predictable outcomes of a structure that does not take the realities of temporary workers seriously. The official process upholds formality at the cost of fairness.

This failure disproportionately harms the most vulnerable. As the principal described:

> Many of them earn minimum wage and live from pay check to pay check. The impact of these salary delays on their lives is not just inconvenient, it is devastating. These are people who rely on every rupee for rent, food, transportation, and basic survival.

Rather than accept this injustice, the principal acts against the system:

> Because of this, I often find myself in the position of bending rules. I collaborate directly with the agencies and adjust or expedite documentation to ensure these workers receive their salaries on time. I do not take these actions lightly. I know they are technically outside the bounds of official procedure.

His resistance is not impulsive or self-serving, it is principled:

> If I chose to follow every policy strictly, I would be complicit in prolonging harm. As a leader, I feel a moral responsibility to act when the rules themselves create inequality. Bending those rules is not about defiance, it is about holding the system accountable to the people it should serve.

This account exemplifies the ethic of critique as a moral imperative to challenge rules when those rules reproduce inequity, particularly against marginalized groups. The principal's actions recognize power imbalances, amplify marginalized voices, and reject rules that perpetuate inequality (Berges Puyo, 2022).

The same leader provided another example of critical ethical reasoning, centred on how outdated institutional policies fail to align with current workplace demands. Government regulations prescribe that administrative tasks be performed by permanent senior staff, while probationary staff focus on teaching and training. However, in practice, most administrative tasks now require digital proficiency, an area where many senior staff lack competency. As the principal explained:

> Even in 2025, they receive instruction on tools from 2003, which are no longer relevant. The upskilling programs that do exist are either irregular or ineffective, making it impossible for senior staff to carry out tech-based administrative duties competently.

To ensure efficiency and fairness, he reassigns administrative responsibilities to digitally literate probationary employees, even though this contradicts official job descriptions:

> According to government rules, administrative responsibilities should primarily be allocated to senior permanent employees… However, in practice, I often assign administrative tasks to the probationary employees, even though it falls outside their defined role. This is not a decision made lightly, but rather one that emerges from a systemic gap between policy and reality.

This action, again, is not taken in secrecy. The principal makes the process transparent and participatory:

> To navigate this, I involve both groups in the decision-making process, offer flexibility, and ensure transparent communication. I always explain the rationale behind task assignments, especially when it deviates from formal policy.

His reflections reveal a leader not merely adapting but actively resisting dysfunctional norms:

> By reassigning responsibilities contrary to official roles, I am consciously challenging a system that demands compliance without enabling capacity… My approach reflects a belief that ethical leadership includes recognizing and resisting the limitations of rigid bureaucratic systems when they undermine functionality, fairness, and equity in the workplace.

Through both examples, the principal demonstrates that critique is not cynicism, it is a necessary act of leadership when formal structures become obsolete or unjust. His actions reflect the ethic of critique, which challenges leaders to engage in moral resistance, cultivate awareness of systemic issues, and practice principled disobedience in order to confront power and inequity, prioritizing equity for people over uncritical adherence to institutional norms (Berges Puyo, 2022; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

A similar pattern of systemic critique appears in the account of Pavan (operational excellence engineer) working in pharmaceutical manufacturing. After completing the production of one medicine, his team is required to clean and dry over three hundred machine

parts in a small facility not designed for such volume. Pavan observed that the formal cleaning process, though well intended, was practically impossible to follow without creating inefficiencies and fatigue among workers. Instead of insisting on strict compliance, he approved an adapted workflow. He shared:

> I have another example that reflects a structural issue in our process. After completing the production of one medicine, we are required to disassemble and sanitize over 300 machine parts that come into direct or indirect contact with the product. The official procedure involves scrubbing each part, washing it with process water, then with purified water, and finally drying it, all within a designated washing area. However, the washing area is extremely small and not designed to accommodate such a large number of parts at once. This makes it nearly impossible for workers to follow the procedure exactly as prescribed.

Faced with this constraint, he supported a modified process:

> Given this limitation, the workers adopted an alternative method... Technically, this method does not comply with the standard protocol. However, I recognized that the current infrastructure does not support full procedural compliance. Therefore, I chose to allow the workers to follow their modified method. To maintain safety and hygiene, I restructured the drying area into two distinct sections... This helped prevent cross-contamination and made the process more practical for the workers.

Reflecting on this decision, he added:

> This situation highlights a gap between written policies and real working conditions... I decided to adapt the system not out of convenience, but to ensure that work could be carried out safely, efficiently, and realistically under the given constraints.

In this case, the engineer does not discard the purpose of the policy but reimagines its application in a way that preserves both safety and practicality.

Another example comes from Kiran (executive engineer) tasked with registering companies for material procurement. According to the current policy, companies are assigned to one of two categories based on a set of fixed criteria. During one registration cycle, a company that performed exceptionally well was slated for the lower category due to a literal interpretation of outdated evaluation metrics. He explained:

> Recently, I encountered a situation where I felt the need to challenge an existing policy because it no longer served its intended purpose... Companies are categorized into Category A or B based on a set of predefined criteria. Category A includes companies that supply highly critical and high-value materials, while Category B is designated for companies dealing with less essential supplies.

He identified a failure in the system:

> During a recent registration cycle, we observed that one company... was being pushed into Category B due to a rigid interpretation of the current evaluation criteria. While technically correct, this decision felt ethically flawed, it penalized a qualified company and would have placed them in a lower category for at least three years.

Rather than accept the decision:

> I made the decision to reject the application instead of assigning it to Category B. Along with the rejection, we provided the company with a detailed list of suggested corrections... Although this action deviated from the standard process, it was rooted in a critical awareness that the current criteria were not functioning justly in this case.

He then took steps to address the structural root of the problem:

> I initiated a broader conversation within my department... I drafted a revised set of evaluation criteria and submitted it for approval to our superiors... This revision will allow us to better align our categorization process with the actual capabilities and performance of companies.

He concluded:

> This decision reflects my belief that leadership requires not only following rules, but also critically examining when rules fail to deliver just outcomes. Bending the policy in this case was not about personal preference, it was a deliberate, principled response to a systemic flaw.

Kiran's actions exemplify ethical critique. He recognized a flaw in the policy and took steps to amend it, ensuring that it aligns with principles of fairness and fulfils its intended goals. In doing so, he actively challenged the inequities embedded within systemic norms and institutional policies (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

In a final reflection, Kiran expressed a leadership perspective deeply rooted in Indian leadership traditions. He articulated a deeper concern: "This situation also reveals a broader issue with how rigid and unforgiving institutional policies can be." He described how decision-making in the Indian context often calls for flexible thinking and ethical courage: "Being a leader in India often requires mastering the art of jugaad - a form of creative problem-solving. Sometimes, policies are written without fully understanding the lived realities of those expected to follow them." In a final reflection on leadership, he emphasized: "Leadership, in this context, means not only complying with systems but questioning them when they do not align with fairness or reality." This statement aligns with Wood and Narvaez's (2014) view that critique involves a careful examination of a system's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders guided by the ethic of critique focus on challenging institutional structures that perpetuate inequality, dehumanization, and exclusion.

Together, these narratives illustrate that Indian leaders practicing the Ethic of Critique do not aim to undermine systems. Instead, they seek to humanize and improve them. Their actions represent an ethical paradigm grounded in reflection, resistance, and reform. When they encounter institutional barriers that obstruct justice or functionality, they do not passively comply. They act with purpose, critique with clarity, and create alternatives that better reflect ethical responsibility. The next section discusses the ethic of critique from the perspective of the Canada-based cohort. The findings revealed that two out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of critique.

4.5 Ethic of Critique: Canada-Based Cohort

First example of the ethic of critique came from Taha, who encountered a situation where compassion pushed against the boundaries of institutional regulations. A man with a fractured leg arrived at the masjid and requested permission to park in the designated accessible parking space. He did not have an official permit, and according to policy, only those with certified accessibility parking stickers were allowed to use that space. The administrator recounted, “According to the policy, only those with certified permits are allowed to park there. However, it was clear that his condition constituted a temporary disability that the current policy did not recognize.” This moment of tension between policy compliance and ethical responsiveness sparked a broader reflection on the policy itself: “This highlighted for me a systemic flaw in the policy: it fails to account for individuals who are temporarily but legitimately disabled due to injury or illness.” Rather than dismissing the issue as a one-time exception, he began questioning the inclusivity of existing institutional norms:

> As I reflected on this, I realized the need not just to make an exception but to critically question the inclusivity of the policy itself. The incident prompted me to consider advocating for a revision that would allow for temporary

> accommodations. My decision to relax the policy in this case was not about undermining rules, but about calling attention to their inadequacy in serving those they are meant to protect.

He also emphasized the human dimension of leadership the need to respond to people, not just rules:

> Alongside the structural critique, there was also a clear moral imperative to respond to the human need in front of me. The individual was in visible discomfort and simply seeking access to a place of worship. As a leader in a community space, I believe it is my responsibility to ensure that everyone especially those in vulnerable conditions feels supported and included.

His story illustrates how the ethic of critique can operate in tandem with care, challenging structural exclusion while upholding compassion, inclusion, and moral accountability.

Another example comes from Siya, an assistant store manager who described how long-tenured employees sometimes exploit legal protections in ways that undermine accountability. She explained:

> One recurring challenge is managing the behaviour of senior employees who have learned to navigate, and in some cases manipulate, institutional protections to their advantage. They are well aware that the Canadian labour system prioritizes employee rights to such an extent that disciplinary actions like termination are extremely rare and bureaucratically complex. This awareness has created a dynamic where some employees, despite being highly experienced, display complacency or even exploit gaps in the system, knowing there are minimal consequences.

She went on to reflect more broadly on what this means for her ethical responsibilities as a leader:

> What I find particularly problematic is that the system, in its attempt to ensure fairness, sometimes fails to hold individuals accountable, especially those with long tenure or informal influence. It is not enough to enforce rules blindly; I must constantly question whether the existing structures are truly serving the intended purpose.

In this account, her leadership is grounded in the ethic of critique, which compels leaders to examine and challenge institutional frameworks that may appear neutral but in practice create unequal or inefficient outcomes (Wood & Navarez, 2014). Her critical perspective reflects the belief that ethical leadership requires communities to act as drivers of change by confronting and challenging established power structures and systems (Berges Puyo, 2022).

A second narrative from the same assistant manager illuminated another structural flaw one involving promotion criteria. This dilemma regarding work allocation primarily demonstrated reliance upon the ethic of justice in the resolution but the leader also demonstrated ethic of critique in understanding the root cause of the dilemma. She offered a candid observation of how institutional advancement is often determined less by performance and more by availability:

> Despite the capability, dedication, and performance of employees who have been working with us for two to three years, many are not considered for higher positions. This is not because of their lack of merit, but because promotions are heavily dependent on their availability for shifts rather than their skills or contributions. Employees who cannot offer complete availability are overlooked, even though they may perform better than others.

The inequity extends even to those who meet availability expectations:

> Even those who provide full availability often end up getting only a few shifts, which forces them to seek multiple jobs for financial survival. This situation

highlights a critical flaw in the system, where economic vulnerability and inflexible rules about availability prevent talented individuals from advancing. In reflecting on these dynamics, she concluded: “As a leader, I recognize that the system does not always reward genuine effort and performance, and this continuous inequity needs to be questioned and challenged.” This account illustrates challenging the hidden inequities embedded in “neutral” institutional policies. Rather than accept the structural limitations of her role, this manager uses her critical awareness to advocate for fairness and rethinking what leadership and performance should mean within her organizational context.

Finally, the same leader described a difficult situation involving an assistant team leader who regularly neglected responsibilities due to ongoing health issues. Despite repeated disruptions to team operations, legal constraints prevented any reassessment or restructuring of her role. While the leader understood the importance of accommodation, she also recognized that this form of protection came at the cost of fairness to others. “In a different system, more suitable and balanced adjustments could have been made to protect both the individual and the broader team.” Her critique reveals a tension between individual rights and collective efficiency, and a leadership perspective that values structural reform to create more adaptive, balanced solutions. The next section discusses the ethic of care from the perspective of the India-based cohort. The findings revealed that five out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of care.

4.6 Ethic of Care: India-Based Cohort

The ethic of care is defined as an approach that prioritizes empathy, relational responsibility, and responsiveness to the needs of others over strict adherence to impersonal rules or institutional expectations (Held, 2006; Noddings, 2013). It values situational awareness and emotional attunement and regards moral decisions as inseparable from the relational and cultural contexts in which they occur. Among the India-based cohort of

leaders, all five out of five leaders demonstrated this ethic, underpinning leadership choices across sectors. Indian professionals framed ethical leadership not only as a matter of doing what is right, but as an ongoing commitment to understanding, supporting, and uplifting those they lead.

One of the expressions of the ethic of care in the India-based cohort emerged in the reflections of Ravi, a principal of an Industrial Training Institute (ITI), who navigated institutional policy in a way that centred the human realities of his staff. He encountered a policy requiring all employees to reside within an eight-kilometre radius of the institution a rule intended, perhaps, to ensure proximity and availability. However, he quickly recognized the ethical tension between bureaucratic compliance and compassion for employee well-being. He explained the context of the policy and its practical implications:

> Officially, all employees are required to live within an eight-kilometre radius of the institution. However, our campus is located in a very remote area, and it is extremely difficult to find suitable housing nearby. Moreover, since many of our employees hold transferable positions, it is not feasible for them to uproot their families every few years for the sake of this rule.

Rather than rigidly enforce this policy, Ravi chose to focus on the broader implications for his staff's lives. He articulated his reasoning with moral clarity: "Understanding the personal challenges this creates, I have chosen to offer flexibility. I prioritised the well-being and stability of my staff over strict enforcement of residency requirements."

Ravi shared another example of an ethical dilemma in which he used similar reasoning to guide his decision-making process:

> Our institutional schedule is supposed to align with the timelines prescribed by the government. But in practice, following the official timetable would exclude the majority of our students from meaningful participation. Approximately 70%

> of our students travel daily from nearby cities and villages, and the public transportation system in this rural area is extremely limited. If we adhered strictly to the mandated schedule, many students would miss a significant portion of their classes simply because the bus timings do not match the official timetable. To address this, we have made intentional adjustments to our daily schedule so that it aligns with the transportation realities of our students. These changes ensure that students can attend classes consistently and receive the full benefit of their training, which is, after all, the core purpose of our institution.

Explaining the reasoning behind his decision, Ravi stated:

> My decisions in both cases were driven by care, care for the lived realities of the people I work with and serve. I believe leadership must begin with empathy and responsiveness. Rules are important, but they should not come at the cost of people's well-being, dignity, or access to opportunity.

This leadership decision demonstrates a deliberate shift away from a purely rules-based approach and toward one grounded in empathy, contextual awareness, and human dignity. The principal's choice to relax institutional norms was not an act of rule-breaking, but rather an ethical interpretation of policy through the lens of compassion.

This same sensitivity is evident in the leadership style of the Pavan (operational excellence engineer), who described his role as relational and trust-based:

> I see myself as a leader whose role is to support and help my operators. My ultimate goal is to reduce their burden and make their work easier through the decisions I take. I believe that when I care for them and help solve their problems, they will stand by me when I need them.

Another illustration of the ethic of care came from Pavan, who described a conflict between his subordinate and a group of shopfloor workers regarding a perceived case of false

reporting. Alongside upholding fairness, the leader focused on emotional repair, demonstrating his empathy toward both parties. He described how the workers felt hurt by the implications of the report:

> The workers were really upset. They felt like they were being accused of not taking their job seriously, and that their sincerity was being questioned. That didn't sit right with me. I could see they were hurt, and they felt misrepresented. So, I went and spoke to them directly, and when I realized what had actually happened, I apologized on behalf of my subordinate. I told them that I understood now and that I would make sure their side of the story was heard in the future. I wanted them to feel seen and valued, that their work matters and doesn't go unnoticed.

His leadership extended beyond defending one side; he also validated the concerns of the subordinate:

> At the same time, I also spoke with my subordinate. He told me that even small delays like 15 or 20 minutes can affect production targets, and he reported it because he believes every detail counts. I told him I agree, his dedication and eye for detail are commendable. He admitted he should've asked the workers before reporting, and we both agreed to handle things differently in the future.

In summarizing his approach, the engineer reflected:

> For me, it was important to make sure that both the workers and my subordinate felt heard, respected, and supported. I didn't want anyone to feel disregarded or isolated in the process.

This example reflects an ethic of care, where the leader's role involves attending to the emotional impact of conflict and restoring dignity within relationships. According to Noddings (2013), the ethic of care is an invitation to adopt an alternative perspective, urging

leaders to look beyond their own needs and focus on the needs of others. Rather than asserting authority, the leader demonstrated care through listening, acknowledgment, and collaborative resolution.

The ethic of care was also evident in the decision-making of Kiran (executive engineer) who responded empathetically to a policy violation involving a sick employee. While departmental rules required immediate report submission following task completion, the leader chose to adjust formal documentation to accommodate the employee's health-related delay. He contextualized his decision within the broader values of Indian workplace culture: "Having worked in India, I can say that cultural context plays a major role in how I make decisions as a leader. Here, we are often guided by the heart rather than by strict rules or technicalities." He described the incident:

> One of my team members was unwell last week. She had completed a key task, but due to her health, she was unable to submit the required report on the same day, as mandated by our department's policy. Timely report submission is critical because failure to do so can lead to penalties. However, she approached me asking for leave, and I told her to take the time she needed. She ended up submitting the report three days later.

To protect her from institutional penalties, he made a choice that favoured compassion over procedural rigidity:

> To support her, we adjusted the date on the documentation to reflect a delayed task completion. I knew this wasn't strictly by the book, but I felt it was more important to care for my employee's well-being than to strictly enforce the rule.

He concluded by highlighting the guiding principle behind his decision: "Decisions like this reflect how much weight we place on empathy, compassion, and supporting one another during difficult times." This account exemplifies motivational displacement (Held, 2006),

where the leader consciously set aside bureaucratic requirements to prioritize the needs of another. It reflects a form of care-based leadership where ethics are rooted not in uniform rule enforcement, but in attentiveness to human vulnerability and relational trust.

For Hemant (transport business owner), care manifested both in formal business decisions and in the personal ways he supported his drivers. He explained: “My business relies heavily on our delivery drivers, and I have always believed that if they are content and supported, the business will naturally thrive.” His care extended beyond work: “If one of my drivers is getting married and needs financial help, I offer support; if someone is struggling to get their child admitted to school, I do what I can to assist.” Even in high-risk logistical operations, he refused to let employees face danger alone. During a flood emergency, he personally accompanied drivers, stating, “This was not a symbolic gesture, but a decision grounded in empathy and shared accountability.” These examples illustrate how care in leadership encourages educational leaders to move beyond hierarchical, top-down models to embrace collaborative leadership styles that emphasize relationships and connections (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

Finally, an example of care emerged in the reflections of Ritu (school principal) who was tasked with implementing a government initiative called “Donate Your Time” (Indian Express, 2021) following the pandemic. The initiative required teachers to arrive at school an hour earlier each day to help students recover from learning loss during extended closures. While the principal initially complied with the directive, she soon recognized a misalignment between policy intent and community reality. She explained:

> After the pandemic, when schools reopened, a government initiative called Donate Your Time was introduced, asking teachers to arrive one hour early each day to help students recover from the learning loss caused by school closures. As a principal, I initially implemented this as instructed. However, we soon observed

> that although teachers arrived by 9:30 AM, the students did not begin arriving until 10:30 AM, which was the original start time of the school day.

Seeking to understand the root cause, she consulted the school community and discovered a cultural barrier that the policy had overlooked:

> Upon inquiring further, we learned that most of our students belonged to a deeply religious and conservative community. Each morning, before school, they participated in religious lessons that ended only around 10:00 AM. It became evident that asking them to arrive earlier was not only impractical but also insensitive to their cultural and religious obligations.

Faced with this insight, she made a decision grounded not in compliance, but in care:

> As an educator, my first responsibility is to ensure that every child receives the education they deserve. If a policy, however well-meaning, fails to support that goal in practice, then it must be adapted. I decided that there was little point in asking teachers to donate time in the morning if it did not benefit the students. This decision was driven by care: care for the students' realities, their routines, and their right to a meaningful learning experience.

This action exemplifies situational care, where leaders adjust institutional expectations to align with the lived experiences of those they serve. According to Louis et al. (2016) "Caring is situational and therefore variable, idiosyncratic, and dynamic" (p. 314). This means that caring behaviours and relationships depend on the particular context and needs of individuals involved at a given moment (Louis et al., 2016). Rather than enforcing a one-size-fits-all mandate, the principal responded with ethical flexibility centring the community's cultural identity and preserving the integrity of the learning environment. Her leadership reflects sensitivity to the relational and cultural dimensions of education, ensuring that equity is not only a matter of access, but also of respect for diverse ways of life.

Across the cohort, leaders demonstrated the ethic of care in a variety of ways. This included supporting students by acknowledging transportation limitations, offering staff flexibility by adjusting institutional policies, and creating opportunities for all parties to share their perspectives and reach balanced resolutions, modifying documents, traveling with drivers during dangerous conditions, or adjusting policies to meet student needs, these responses reflect a culturally rooted ethic of care centred on empathy, relational responsibility, and responsiveness. The next section discusses the ethic of care from the perspective of the Canada-based cohort. The findings revealed that three out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of care.

4.7 Ethic of Care: Canada-Based Cohort

Among Indian immigrant leaders working in Canada, this ethic was demonstrated through thoughtful and compassionate leadership practices that placed human well-being, trust, and dignity at the forefront of their professional environments. While these leaders operated in more structured environments than their counterparts in India, they still made deliberate choices to prioritize care over blind adherence to policy when people's needs, struggles, and trust were at stake.

One clear expression of care appeared in the reflections of Sachin, an IT [Information Technology] coordinator responsible for managing software subscription renewals. When he became aware of a promotional offer that could benefit a long-standing client though technically restricted to new customers, he chose transparency and trust over strict adherence to company policy. He described the situation:

> One of our oldest clients had all of their office subscriptions managed through us, and their renewal was scheduled for November, as it had been every year. However, at the same time, there was a new promotional offer: any client renewing in the last two weeks of December would receive a 20 percent discount

> on their subscriptions… I immediately faced a moral dilemma, according to company policy, this offer was intended for new customers, and we were not supposed to inform our existing clients.

Despite the company's directive, the coordinator explained his decision to prioritize care and loyalty:

> Considering the deep relationship, we had built with this client over many years, I felt a strong ethical responsibility to prioritize their well-being. It was clear to me that acting solely based on the technical policy would disregard the trust and loyalty this client had shown to us.

Instead of silence, he chose transparency:

> I instructed my team member to transparently share the details of the upcoming promotion with the client, along with a full breakdown of costs and the implications of delaying the renewal including the risk of operating without the necessary software for two weeks.

Although the client ultimately chose to renew on schedule, the coordinator emphasized that the decision to disclose the promotion came from a place of care:

> For me as a leader, it was deeply satisfying to know that I had acted ethically by placing the relationship, trust, and well-being of the client above strict adherence to an impersonal company policy. By prioritizing care over convenience, I reinforced a relationship built on transparency, respect, and genuine concern for the client's best interests.

This scenario illustrates two core elements of the ethic of care: motivational displacement, where the one caring for another act on his or her behalf in a selfless way by prioritizing the needs and experiences of the cared for over their own; and authenticity, which involves

openness, transparency, and genuine engagement in the caregiving relationship (Louis et al., 2016).

Sachin also demonstrated care in the context of employee recognition. When two employees tied for top performance in a reward program, budget limitations meant only one could be awarded the prize. Rather than using a random or strictly procedural method, he considered the personal significance of the reward to each individual: “Two employees achieved the same sales figures, and technically, both deserved to win. However, we had not planned for a tie and did not have the budget for two prizes.”

He explained the thoughtful process behind his choice:

> This decision was guided primarily by care and consideration for individual circumstances. The employee who did not receive the prize already owned an Apple Watch, the item designated as the reward. It felt more meaningful to award the prize to someone who would genuinely benefit from it, rather than to someone who might not value it as much.

The winning employee was also new to the company, and the coordinator saw an opportunity to foster long-term growth:

> The winning employee was a newcomer who had demonstrated exceptional performance, and we believed that recognizing his efforts at this early stage in his career would have a greater positive impact on his growth and confidence.

This choice reflects care as a motivational force anchored not in equal distribution, but in thoughtful attention to what will meaningfully support and inspire individuals. Rather than reducing fairness to uniformity, the Sachin upheld care by honouring the emotional and developmental impact of recognition.

Care was also demonstrated in how the Sachin mentored a college intern facing punctuality issues. Although the intern was repeatedly late, the coordinator sought understanding before judgment. He recounted:

> One of our interns… had a reporting time of 8:00 AM. I observed that he frequently arrived around 8:30 AM. After monitoring this pattern for two weeks, I decided to have a conversation with him, given that our organization maintains a strict punctuality policy.

The intern's explanation revealed the strain of balancing academic and professional demands:

> The intern explained that he was taking online courses to complete his final semester. After finishing his internship duties each day, he dedicated his evenings to studying, which disrupted his sleep schedule and made it difficult for him to catch the early bus to work.

Rather than penalize him, the coordinator drew on his own experience: "Recalling my own experiences as a student balancing academics and work, I felt a deep sense of empathy for his situation." His solution reflected both flexibility and integrity:

> I decided to extend a measure of flexibility. I allowed the intern a daily 30-minute grace period, enabling him to report by 8:30 AM for the remainder of his internship. This small adjustment acknowledged his personal struggles without compromising the integrity of his work.

The decision embodied the core of the ethic of care, as noted by Noddings (2003). A central tenet of care ethics is the cultivation of empathy and compassion. Sachin demonstrated this by attuning himself to the experiences and realities of the intern working under his supervision. He explained: "Through this decision, I recognized his individual needs, valued his efforts, and provided the necessary support for him to succeed both academically and professionally." This act of leadership, grounded in responsiveness and trust, illustrates that

care is not about leniency, but rather an intentional effort to see situations from an alternative perspective (Noddings, 2003). It emphasizes a relational and context sensitive approach to professionalism (Gilligan, 1982).

An expression of the ethic of care surfaced in the reflections of Abhi (operations manager) responsible for overseeing equipment relocation and site maintenance. In both instances, the manager demonstrated a leadership approach that prioritized the physical safety, emotional trust, and dignity of workers even when such care required deviations from standard protocols. The first scenario occurred during a warehouse relocation project, where the manager was instructed to dismantle and transfer all safety equipment before completing the rest of the move. While the remaining tasks were deemed low-risk by upper management, Abhi made a different judgment based on his values and responsibilities as a leader. Even though the decision primarily guided by ethic of justice the resolution of this ethical dilemma also demonstrated ethic of care at play. He explained:

> Beyond the formal regulations, my decision was deeply rooted in concern for the well-being of my team. Even though my manager minimized the risk by emphasizing that the remaining tasks involved lifting lighter items, I was unwilling to expose my team to even the slightest potential hazard. I understood that accidents can happen unpredictably, and access to safety equipment can make a critical difference.

Rather than send the wrong message to his newly formed team, he made an intentional and symbolic decision:

> As a new leader eager to earn the trust of my team, I did not want to send a message that their safety was negotiable. By rearranging the task order to ensure that safety equipment would remain accessible until the final stage of the move, I demonstrated to my team that their health and security were a priority, not an

> afterthought. This action fostered a sense of trust, showing that I valued their dignity and welfare above simply following orders or appearing efficient.

This example illustrates a form of care that highlights the moral significance of dependency, vulnerability, and relational obligations (Held, 2006). The ethic of care contributes to fostering collaboration, enhancing morale, and promoting better social outcomes (Owens and Ennis, 2005).

A second instance further reveals his caring orientation during physically demanding work. While temporarily covering for an ill colleague, the manager found himself overseeing a high-stakes maintenance operation involving the movement of heavy parts such as engines and transmissions. Despite performance targets set by upper management, he adjusted expectations in favour of worker well-being:

> One time, one of our managers was seriously sick and had to take a leave for a few weeks, so I had to take over his tasks. During this time, I was responsible for overseeing all the maintenance personnel on the site. At that time, we were in the process of changing the racking configurations, and heavy parts like engines and transmissions had to be moved into the new racking. Based on the instructions from the upper management, I was told that we had to complete a certain number of parts per hour per day. However, the nature of the work was quite critical and physically demanding. Recognizing the potential strain and risk to my workers, I made the decision not to strictly enforce the parts-per-hour-per-day rule. Instead, I allowed them to work at their own pace and to take breaks as needed so that they could prioritize their safety over simply getting the work done.

In reflecting on his decision, Abhi made his values clear:

> Usually, I am a rule follower, but this time, I chose to be more lenient because I firmly believe that the health, safety, and well-being of my workers must come

> before all else. It was important to me to support my team by creating a safe environment where they could perform their best without unnecessary pressure.

Both narratives reflect how ethic of care engage in restorative practices that foster healing, understanding, and accountability, promoting trust and community cohesion (Wachtel & McCold, 2000). Abhi choice underscore that care is also about relational interdependence, empathy, and compassion as foundational elements, which enable him to create safe and supportive environment (Gilligan, 1982; Held, 2006).

An important demonstration of the ethic of care came from Rishi (team supervisor) who managed a recurring workplace conflict involving a high-performing employee. Despite her consistent lateness, the employee was well-regarded for her excellent work. The supervisor faced an ethical dilemma when other employees began to interpret her punctuality issues as favouritism, raising concerns about fairness and team morale. Instead of immediately using disciplinary action, the supervisor chose a compassionate and open conversation approach:

> My first instinct was to approach the situation with care rather than judgment. I began by giving her verbal intimations and decided to have one-on-one conversations to understand the root cause of her lateness. Through these discussions, we found out that she was simply a little disorganized by nature, and there was no malicious intent behind her behaviour.

Instead of seeing her behaviour as wrongdoing, the supervisor focused on understanding her situation and offering guidance:

> Although her intentions were not harmful, I realized that her actions were unintentionally affecting the broader team dynamics. Throughout this process, my priority remained to address the situation with compassion and to guide her toward improvement rather than penalize her.

This approach demonstrates the ethic of care through empathetic listening and conflict resolution. The supervisor centred relationship-building and emotional understanding, which not only supported the employee's growth but also preserved team cohesion (Louis et al., 2016). Care-oriented leaders use open discussion, empathy, and efforts to make amends to rebuild trust and strengthen the community (Thorsborne and Blood, 2013).

In a second example, the same supervisor demonstrated care in decision-making at the policy level while working in a financial services firm. The issue involved a general checklist required for all insurance transactions; a procedural safeguard designed to ensure customers are informed of policy terms. While effective in theory, the checklist created frustration for clients during simple policy renewals. The supervisor reflected:

> We have a general checklist that team members are advised to follow every time a customer takes an insurance policy. This checklist ensures that all critical aspects, what is included, what is excluded, payment terms, expiry dates, and conditions are properly communicated to the customer.

However, the application of this process became problematic in cases where no changes had been made to a policy:

> We noticed that during simple renewals, team members often omitted adding the checklist to the customer's document file. Upon inquiry, it became clear that customers, during renewals without any changes to their policy, found the checklist redundant and frustrating, seeing it as yet another document to sign unnecessarily.

Seeing the human side of this procedural burden, the supervisor revised the approach:

> Understanding this situation from a position of empathy and care, I decided to relax the policy and allow employees not to include the checklist for simple

> renewals, provided that no terms or conditions had changed and that the original checklist was properly signed when the policy was initially taken.

He clarified that the decision stemmed from a desire to reduce unnecessary friction: “My goal was to reduce unnecessary frustration for customers and to make processes smoother and more humane for both clients and employees.” This decision reflects Providing care means making thoughtful decisions in real situations by understanding the people and relationships involved (Held, 2006). Instead of clinging to formality for its own sake, the supervisor responded to the lived experiences of clients and frontline staff. By listening to feedback and adjusting practices, he exemplified how care in leadership means making systems more responsive, compassionate, and human (Louis et al., 2016).

Across these diverse contexts, Indian immigrant leaders in Canada expressed the Ethic of Care through personalized, empathetic, and morally attuned decisions. Their actions consistently sought to uphold the dignity of others, minimize harm, and foster trust in both hierarchical and peer relationships. The next section discusses the ethic of community from the perspective of the India-based cohort. The findings revealed that four out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of community.

4.8 Ethic of Community: India-Based Cohort

The Ethic of Community emphasizes collective well-being, inclusive decision-making, and the cultivation of shared responsibility. It reflects a worldview in which individuals are not seen as isolated actors but as members of interconnected groups (Furman, 2004). Among Indian professionals in leadership roles, this ethic was evident not only in how decisions were made, but also in how leadership was experienced and expressed. The importance of preserving institutional harmony, respecting cultural relationships, and ensuring that decisions serve the larger group was a consistent thread across the interviews. These leaders understood their ethical responsibility as extending beyond rules and outcomes,

reaching into the emotional and relational dimensions of the communities they led (Furman, 2004; Barcinas & Fleener, 2023).

One of the expressions of community leadership came from Ravi (Principal of an Industrial Training Institute), who emphasized inclusive decision-making in high-stakes institutional situations. When government authorities assigned last-minute duties, he avoided authoritarian responses and instead brought his team into the process:

> I very strongly believe that we are a community at work more than just colleagues, we function as a family. Whenever a new task is assigned to our institution, particularly those mandated by the government, I make it a point to bring all staff members together for a meeting. I explain the nature of the task, the timelines involved, and any constraints we must work within. After presenting the full picture, we discuss together how best to approach it. The decision on how we will complete the task is always made collectively, as a team.

This quote illustrates shared responsibility as a key aspect of the ethic of community, where moral agency is distributed across all members of a community rather than centred in a single leader (Furman, 2004). His leadership is not about delegating top-down instructions but facilitating consensus and instilling shared ownership. In his words, “When we succeed, it is a collective success. When something goes wrong, we share that responsibility too.” This orientation aligns with Furman’s (2004) framework that defines ethical leadership as a communal process of mutual accountability rather than isolated decision-making.

Ravi also described the moral imperative of protecting his staff from institutional blame:

> There is a lot of uncertainty in government roles, and often tasks are allocated without prior training or preparation. This understandably causes hesitation or anxiety among staff. That is why I make it a priority to ensure that everyone

> knows they have a voice in the process and that they are not alone. When they see that I will stand by them, they are more confident to step forward.

This quote reflects a key dimension of the ethic of community, which emphasizes inclusive and participatory governance, especially in situations characterized by complexity and unpredictability (Furman, 2004; Mindell, 2002).

Ritu, a school principal in a tribal region of India offered a poignant example of how communal ethics guide delicate personnel decisions. When a senior teacher requested to move from lower to higher grades after years of service, the principal had to weigh individual merit against institutional continuity. She reflected:

> Her presence in grades 1 and 2 has had a transformative effect: we've seen significant improvement in early grade learning outcomes and, importantly, a notable increase in student retention, an issue of ongoing concern in our region, where early dropout rates are alarmingly high. To resolve the tension this caused, I invited both teachers for a transparent and respectful dialogue. I explained the rationale behind my decision, placing emphasis on how vital the early learning environment is for the entire school's long-term success. I also reassured the teacher who stayed in the lower grades that her work is deeply valued and that her role is central to the success of our collective mission.

Her leadership demonstrates that the ethic of community relies on communication, reciprocity, open dialogue, and collaboration (Furman, 2002). She explained, "During our meeting, I ensured that the final decision would be based on our collective agreement, and everyone's opinion would be respected and considered".

A second example from Ritu shows how cultural sensitivity can be integrated into formal education policy through communal reasoning. After the COVID-19 pandemic, a state-wide initiative called "Donate Your Time" (Indian Express, 2021) asked teachers to

begin school an hour earlier to help make up for lost instructional time. However, this conflicted with the students' morning religious obligations: “Most of our students cannot come to school early. It is not that they are unwilling, but they have family and religious responsibilities that must be respected.” Rather than enforce the new schedule mechanically, she gathered input from staff and proposed a culturally appropriate alternative:

> We decided to reduce the lunch break by 30 minutes and extend the school day from 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM. This way, teachers still contributed additional instructional time, but in a manner that synchronized with when students were actually present and ready to learn.

This action shows leadership rooted in cultural empathy and communal time consciousness, illustrating how education systems can honour spiritual and familial rhythms while fulfilling policy mandates.

Hemant (transport business owner) articulated how the ethic of community manifests in long-term relationships with employees and clients. His leadership is built not on contracts, but trust:

> I have learned that being too rigid with rules and policies can be counterproductive. Instead, I focus on nurturing a culture of mutual respect and interdependence, where both employees and clients feel seen, heard, and appreciated... Whether I’m making a decision about supporting an employee or accommodating a client’s special request, I do so with an understanding that preserving relational harmony often serves the long-term health of the organization and the community it functions within.

His philosophy of “loyalty goes both ways” reflects relational reciprocity as a shared cultural value and a principle of mutual responsibility (Furman., 2004).

Kiran (executive engineer) offered another expression of community ethics by choosing discretion over discipline:

> Another key aspect of decision-making in our context is the importance of relationships. Maintaining harmony within the team often takes precedence, even over administrative correctness. As we say in India, sometimes you must follow *narowa kujawa*, meaning "neither here nor there," to navigate difficult situations without escalating conflict. I believe a strong leader in our cultural setting is one who prioritizes relational stability. Many times, our team's ability to function smoothly depends more on trust, mutual respect, and emotional balance than on strict adherence to tasks. In this way, leadership is as much about preserving social cohesion as it is about executing institutional responsibilities.

Finally, Ritu (school principal) described how she honours institutional hierarchy not out of formality, but as a as part of honouring her culture:

> Having worked in India, I have found that leadership and decision-making are deeply influenced by cultural expectations of collectivism, respect, and relational harmony. One key aspect of Indian leadership culture is the importance placed on consulting elders and superiors before making significant decisions. This is not merely a procedural formality, it is a reflection of a broader cultural value system that regards inclusion and respect within hierarchical relationships as essential to ethical leadership. In my own practice, I make it a point to consult my superiors whenever I am faced with a major decision or conflict, even when I am confident about the solution or can resolve the issue independently. Involving them is not only about guidance, but about honouring their position, acknowledging their experience, and reinforcing the interconnectedness of our roles. In our context,

> seeking input even when the likely response is already known is a meaningful gesture of respect and solidarity.

Ritu also described how shared responsibility, communal values, and collaborative decision making, which are central to the ethic of community, are practiced in her leadership (Crawford, 2017).

In my school, we function very much like a family, and this spirit of togetherness shapes how I lead. The majority of the decisions I make, especially those involving ethical dilemmas are made collaboratively with my staff. I believe that when a decision impacts others, especially my colleagues and teachers, it is not only respectful but also necessary to involve them in the process. Whenever we are faced with a conflict or a complex situation, we come together as a team to discuss the issue openly. We explore different viewpoints, identify the needs of everyone involved, and work toward a solution that benefits the whole school community. This collective approach ensures that no one feels excluded and that the final decision reflects a shared understanding and commitment. The next section discusses the ethic of community from the perspective of the Canada-based cohort. The findings revealed that four out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of community.

4.9 Ethic of Community: Canada-Based Cohort

Among Indian immigrant leaders working in Canada, the ethic of community emerged through their reflections and was consistently described in terms of dialogue, transparency, and decision making that reflected the needs and voices of the broader group. Taha an administrator of a religious institution, overseeing a congregation of over forty nationalities, described how cultural diversity required an ethical lens grounded in mutual respect. He shared,

> As the administrator of a religious institution serving individuals from approximately 45 nationalities, I regularly encounter the complexity of honoring

> diverse traditions, cultural expectations, and jurisprudential interpretations. In this setting, leadership is not just about procedural correctness, it is about building trust, maintaining harmony, and fostering a sense of belonging for all members of the community.

This sentiment was illustrated when he navigated a disagreement over the date of Eid, a conflict shaped by divergent theological and cultural interpretations. Rather than impose a unilateral decision, he engaged both sides in dialogue.

> As a leader responsible for the spiritual and emotional cohesion of a highly diverse congregation, I had to recognize that this was not merely a logistical issue, it was about honouring deeply rooted traditions and identities. Rather than imposing a decision, I chose to engage in dialogue with representatives from both groups. I emphasized our shared values and the importance of unity, reiterating that while we may come from different traditions, we are part of one community. This approach helped reduce polarization, sustain respectful engagement, and reaffirmed the idea that everyone's perspective matters in shaping our shared space.

His approach highlights how emphases on open dialogue, respect and collaboration are primary community-based ethical leadership (Furman, 2002). This commitment to inclusion extended into everyday decisions. The same administrator explained,

> As a leader, I firmly believe in the power of collective wisdom and shared responsibility. In our organization, we operate as a team, and my approach is always to include others in decision-making, especially when those decisions directly impact them. Our board comprises seven members, each responsible for different committees. Before taking any decision, I consult the relevant committee and ask them to evaluate possible options and outcomes. Together, we brainstorm

> and deliberate, ensuring that all voices are heard, even from those who are not part of formal committees. While justice is my guiding principle, I am also deeply aware of the relational context in which these decisions are made. In a multicultural religious space, people's perceptions of fairness are closely tied to their sense of belonging and inclusion.

He elaborated that decisions must be not only right, but also understandable and inclusive: "Even when people disagree with my decisions, they are more likely to accept them if they feel heard, respected, and included in the reasoning process." In community-based ethical leadership, the health of the system depends on everyone having opportunities and developing the capacity to engage in and practice a shared form of governance (Barcinas & Fleener, 2023).

Leaders in other sectors offered similar insights. Sachin (IT coordinator) reflected on how leadership in Canada had reshaped his approach to ethics.

> Having worked in Canada for more than five years now, I have observed significant differences in the practice of ethical leadership compared to my experiences in India. One of the most prominent changes I have embraced is a stronger commitment to the ethic of community.

He described how Canadian leadership culture emphasized participatory structures: "In Canada, leadership typically involves those who will be affected by a decision in the decision-making process." This shift encouraged him to adopt a more collaborative leadership style, focused on collective outcomes rather than positional authority. This collaborative orientation was reflected in his daily leadership practice.

> In my role, I work closely with a team, and a significant part of my leadership approach involves fostering collective decision-making. Whenever I am required

> to make decisions that directly affect my team members or the clients they serve, I prioritize involving everyone impacted by the decision.

He explained that consultation was more than a formality, it was an ethical responsibility. "By promoting transparency and shared ownership, I strengthen trust within the team and reinforce the collective responsibility we all share toward our work and clients."

In another example, the Sachin described how he used an award decision as an opportunity to reinforce community values.

> Beyond caring for individual needs, this decision was also rooted in my responsibility toward the broader workplace community. Rewarding a newer employee was a strategic way to encourage not only him but also other new employees who might look up to his achievement. Although the more experienced employee did not receive the main prize, he was honoured through a certificate, public appreciation, and a formal letter of recognition.

He noted that he took into account the broader impact of his decision, aiming to ensure it would benefit all members of the institution rather than just a single individual (Furman, 1998).

A compelling reflection on the shift toward community-oriented leadership came from Abhi (operations manager) who had worked in both India and Canada. Drawing from over five years of Canadian experience, he described how his understanding of ethical leadership had fundamentally transformed in this new context.

> Having worked in Canada for over five years now, I can clearly see how my understanding of ethical leadership has shifted, especially in relation to community engagement and decision-making. In Canada, leadership practices emphasize involving those who are affected by decisions, encouraging feedback, and fostering a collaborative environment.

This shift became especially apparent when he compared the hierarchical leadership norms of India with the participatory culture of his Canadian workplace:

> For example, in India, leadership often operates hierarchically where decisions are made behind closed doors, and employees are expected to comply without questioning the process. However, in Canada, you cannot simply walk into your office and instruct your workers to complete a task by the end of the day without consultation or consent. Back in India, I believed that strong leaders take decisions independently.

He emphasized that in Canada, leadership must consider not just the completion of tasks, but the readiness and well-being of those expected to carry them out: “Leadership here requires considering whether employees are willing to work on certain projects, whether they are available for overtime, and whether their rights and well-being are respected.” The principle of shared leadership extended even to senior levels of management. He described how plant managers modelled inclusive decision-making:

> I have also noticed that in Canada, even the highest-ranking leaders, like plant managers, engage in consultation. For instance, the plant manager still seeks suggestions from the operations manager before setting targets, which is very different from the rigid, top-down decision-making structures I experienced in India.

This consultative environment, he explained, had tangible effects on team dynamics and morale: “This collaborative approach ensures that leadership is shared, the workforce feels valued, and the goals are set with collective input rather than imposed unilaterally.” While he acknowledged missing aspects of Indian work culture, such as familial closeness among teams, he also appreciated the clarity and fairness introduced by professional boundaries: “Although I miss how, in India, teams felt like an extended family beyond work, I now

recognize that clear boundaries between personal and professional life strengthen fairness and respect within the workplace community in Canada."

In this narrative, the ethic of community is not simply a theoretical ideal but a lived practice embodied through inclusive consultation, shared responsibility, and respect for personal dignity in the workplace. His reflections offer cross-cultural insights into how ethical leadership evolves across contexts, reshaped by institutional norms and cultural expectations. He also emphasized peer consultation in decision-making.

> Although I do not frequently discuss my dilemmas with my superiors, as I feel they have grown more aligned with organizational profitability than the ground realities of shop-floor operations, I do consult one of my subordinates who serves as a supervisor.

He added that the supervisor's connection with workers offered valuable insight: "When he disagrees with my decision, it pushes me to reevaluate my choices and gain a broader perspective, ultimately contributing to more balanced and fair outcomes for the team."

Rishi (team supervisor) also practiced community-centred ethics. He described how decisions about punctuality were designed to strengthen morale rather than punish: "We added punctuality as one of the aspects in our annual reward program, where employees are already recognized for achievements like best employee, highest sales, or best customer service." He explained that the goal was to "motivate the latecomer to improve her punctuality without feeling singled out" while uplifting the entire team. He addressed inequality in walk-in client distribution through cooperative retraining. "This solution promoted a stronger sense of teamwork and community within the team while also supporting the company's overall growth."

Across these varied experiences, Indian immigrant leaders in Canada consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive decision-making, transparent communication,

and collective well-being. They did not view leadership as issuing orders from above, but as fostering environments where people felt heard, respected, and supported. Their leadership upheld the ethic of community by prioritizing group harmony, cultivating institutional trust, and embedding fairness into both everyday interactions and long-term strategy. The next section discusses the ethic of self- care from the perspective of the India-based cohort. The findings revealed that only one out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of self-care.

4.10 Ethic of Self-Care: India-Based Cohort

The ethic of self-care, as articulated within the multiple ethical paradigm framework (Hoare et al., 2024), acknowledges that ethical leadership must also attend to the mental, emotional physical and spiritual well-being and boundaries of the leader. It challenges the myth of self-sacrificial leadership by recognizing that those who care for others must also care for themselves to lead with clarity, sustainability, and authenticity (Hoare et al, 2024). Among Indian professionals in public leadership roles, the ethic of self-care emerges as a quiet but critical thread especially when leaders find themselves in ethically burdensome positions with limited institutional support.

Ravi, a principal of a government-run Industrial Training Institute, reflected on a continuous internal struggle he experiences:

> I frequently encounter an ethical dilemma in my role as principal of a government-run technical institution, where we do not receive overtime pay or compensation for additional duties. Beyond our core responsibilities of teaching, training, and managing the institution, we are often assigned a wide range of government duties. These include conducting population surveys, staffing COVID testing centres, assisting with elections at all levels, and supporting disaster

> management efforts. These duties are essential, but they place a heavy burden on an already understaffed team.

The principal is not only responsible for leading an educational institution but is also expected to perform extensive external functions for the state without additional support or recognition. These expectations create an ethical burden that exceeds standard role obligations, particularly when decisions must be made about how to distribute that burden among equally exhausted staff. He continued,

> The most difficult aspect of this situation is knowing that whatever decision I make, it will feel unfair to someone. For example, when 70 percent of our staff were assigned to election duty, the remaining 30 percent had to keep the entire institution running on their own. Soon after, a new government assignment came up, and many of the same staff were again selected. This led to frustration. Those chosen for repeated external duties felt exploited, while those left behind resented having to carry the full weight of institutional responsibilities.

His leadership is marked by an awareness that every action he takes could cause strain or resentment, yet he refuses to disengage or delegate thoughtlessly. He adds:

> I am expected to accept that all staff are overworked and underpaid, as if this is simply the reality of the government system and that nothing can be done to change it. My response has been to engage in open dialogue with higher authorities and the selection committee, requesting a more rotational approach to staff assignments. I advocate for selecting different individuals for each new duty so that the same people are not burdened repeatedly. This is not always possible, but when I can, I try to implement it.

He concludes with a recognition of moral complexity:

> Many times, I feel guilty for making imperfect choices as a leader because there is no clear or fully just solution. I am constantly navigating structural constraints that make fairness difficult to achieve. Yet I choose not to ignore or minimize these tensions. Instead, I reflect, listen, and act with that awareness in mind. I also accept that, in many situations, there is no simple or entirely satisfactory solution.

His reflection highlights the one of the aspect of ethic of self-care as suggested by Michel Foucault (1997) as an ongoing process of personal critical reflection. Ravi's reflection reveals that ethical leadership can carry a significant emotional burden. Despite expectations to accept worker exploitation as a systemic norm, he chooses to challenge it. Rather than passively accepting this reality, he responds with resilience and transparency, remaining committed to his ongoing ethical development as a leader (webb, 2021). The next section discusses the ethic of self-care from the perspective of the Canada-based cohort. The findings revealed that only one out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of self-care.

4.11 Ethic of Self-Care: Canada-Based Cohort

In the Canada-based cohort, this ethic emerged through a poignant reflection by an administrator of a religious institution, who offered a deeply introspective account of how his understanding of leadership evolved over time and across cultural contexts. He began by explaining how his journey into leadership was not driven by personal ambition but by communal need.

> After working in Canada for over 14 years, I have come to realize that my understanding of ethical leadership has significantly shifted; particularly in relation to my own emotional wellbeing. When I first stepped into a leadership role, it was not out of ambition but rather necessity. No one else was willing to take the responsibility, so at the board's request, I accepted it.

He explained that while he valued the work and its purpose, the emotional demands began to erode his inner balance.

> Over time, I learned that leadership, at least in my context, demanded an emotional resilience that deeply challenged me. I am someone who takes criticism to heart. When others disagree with my decisions or express frustration, I find myself affected to the point that it disrupts my peace of mind. I used to stay awake at night, replaying conversations, feeling the weight of judgment, and questioning whether my decisions had hurt someone unintentionally. The constant emotional strain began to affect my sense of balance and clarity. It also impacted my effectiveness as a leader. I realized that to preserve my mental and emotional health, I needed to set clear boundaries. I chose to step away from formal decision-making positions, not because I lacked commitment, but because I recognized that constantly bearing the emotional load of leadership was unsustainable for me.

The decision illustrates a key dimension of the ethic of self-care, which holds that leaders are accountable for maintaining their mental, physical, and spiritual well-being, while also fostering individual autonomy and personal growth (Webb, 2021). By choosing to protect his emotional health, he made space for others to lead and for himself to continue contributing in a way that felt sustainable. “Now, I offer support wherever needed, but without the pressures of being at the centre of governance. This decision reflects not weakness, but self-awareness.” The ethic of self-care is fundamentally a deeply personal and individual practice centred on developing oneself morally and ethically rather than imposing one’s beliefs on others (Hoare et al., 2024). The next section discusses the ethic of profession from the perspective of the India-based cohort. The findings revealed that three out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of profession.

4.12 Ethic of Profession: India-Based Cohort

The Ethic of Profession is grounded in a leader's commitment to uphold the responsibilities, standards, and integrity specific to their professional role. It calls on leaders to demonstrate not only ethical intention but also professional competence and accountability to the institutions they serve (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). In the India-based cohort, this ethic was strongly present in the voices of those who led within technical, industrial, and logistical contexts. Their narratives reflect a deep respect for process, accuracy, and the ethical weight of professional judgment, especially when these principles came into tension with institutional pressure, operational complexity, or interpersonal dynamics.

A compelling example of this ethic was offered by Pavan, an Operational Excellence Engineer working in the pharmaceutical manufacturing sector. He recalled a situation where his supervisor asked him to prepare a vendor report for a facility that had not engaged any vendors. He responded:

> When my supervisor asked me to prepare a vendor report for our plant, I explained that it would not be appropriate to do so, as we had not invited any vendor to our plant. Despite this, I was instructed to proceed with the report. However, I respectfully declined the request and reminded my supervisor that, according to our company policy, only the vendor is authorized to prepare such a report. Ultimately, I redirected the request to another plant that had indeed invited a vendor and was therefore qualified to prepare the report.

This decision highlights a principled refusal to comply with a directive that would compromise procedural integrity. The engineer did not escalate the issue nor confront his supervisor aggressively. Instead, he maintained respect while protecting the professional boundaries of his role. The same engineer elaborated on the necessity of independent thinking in his role:

> Because my role is highly specialized, I make most decisions independently, relying on my experience, knowledge, and analysis. While I consult with cross-functional teams like operations, production, and quality assurance, I take their input as part of a broader evaluation. Each department naturally prioritizes its own interests, so the final decision rests with me to ensure all perspectives are balanced and the decision aligns with professional standards.

His leadership is defined not by isolation but by analytical synthesis. He draws input from relevant stakeholders but does not delegate ethical responsibility. This careful balancing act reflects a mature understanding of the profession's demands and an internalized sense of duty to both performance and integrity.

A similar ethic was articulated by Kiran, an executive engineer, who described the nuanced judgment required in his governmental role.

> Given the nature of my role, I would say I make about 60 percent of my decisions independently. This is not because I reject collaboration, but because my position requires a deep understanding of specialized tasks and situational nuances that are often specific to my responsibilities. In sensitive matters, I inform or consult with my superiors not for permission, but for procedural accountability.

Here, the Ethic of Profession is expressed through an intentional commitment to transparency, even when formal approval is not needed. The engineer's consultation is not born of uncertainty, but of an ethical instinct to involve the institutional hierarchy in decisions that might later come under scrutiny. This dual respect for personal expertise and institutional process underscores his understanding that professionalism includes both technical competence and ethical foresight.

Hemant, a transport business owner echoed this balance in a commercial context. He described how, in most situations, he did not need to consult others due to the nature of his operational authority. However, in ethically charged situations, he actively engaged his team.

> In most cases, I do not consult others when resolving ethical dilemmas or making key decisions within my organization. Given the nature of my role, I am responsible for overseeing operations, ensuring compliance, and maintaining the professional standards of our service. However, when a case involves a dispute or human conflict such as an issue between the consignee and the driver about the condition of a delivery, I always consult the driver directly to understand what happened before reaching any conclusion.

This practice demonstrates that professional leadership does not exclude relational ethics. His attention to direct communication and factual clarity indicates a leadership style rooted in fairness, due diligence, and situational awareness. The next section discusses the ethic of profession from the perspective of the Canada-based cohort. The findings revealed that three out of five immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of profession.

4.13 Ethic of Profession Canada-Based Cohort

In the Canada-based cohort, the ethic of profession emerged as a strong and consistent guide for ethical leadership. Leaders across sectors emphasized their commitment to organizational policies, technical standards, and role-specific responsibilities. Their narratives reflect a clear understanding of professionalism as not only competence and accountability but also alignment with institutional expectations and boundaries. While each participant worked in a different setting, all of them conveyed how professional ethics shaped their decisions, particularly in moments of conflict, ambiguity, or operational pressure.

Professional autonomy was central to the reflections of Sachin, an IT coordinator. He described how specific technical decisions required him to act independently, relying on his expertise and judgment.

> At the same time, there are certain specialized decisions within my role particularly those related to client contracts, subscription renewals, or policy changes; where I must exercise professional autonomy. These matters require specific technical expertise and experience for which I have been hired. In such cases, I independently assess the situation and make informed decisions, recognizing that fulfilling my professional responsibilities sometimes requires swift and expert judgment.

However, he also demonstrated professional humility by recognizing when to seek input.

> When faced with unfamiliar dilemmas or when I lack complete information, I seek advice from my manager to ensure that my decisions remain aligned with professional standards and organizational expectations. This balance between independent action and collaborative consultation ensures that my leadership remains rooted in professional integrity, competence, and accountability.

The same participant reflected on how Canadian professional culture influenced his understanding of workplace boundaries.

> Alongside this enhanced focus on community, I have also observed and adapted to a clearer understanding of professional boundaries. In Canada, the separation between personal and professional life is much more distinct than it typically is in India. Relationships between coworkers, while friendly, usually remain confined to the workplace. For instance, if you meet a coworker outside of work, such as at a grocery store, interactions are typically brief and courteous without extending into personal invitations or gatherings, which would be more common in India.

This cultural insight extended to time management and respect for work-life boundaries.

> Moreover, there is a strong cultural emphasis on respecting working hours. Here, it is understood that once an employee's shift ends say, at 5:00 PM their time is considered their own, dedicated to personal or family matters. Working overtime is not an unspoken expectation, and employees are more conscious of maintaining their work-life balance. In contrast, in India, working extra hours is often seen as a sign of loyalty and dedication, and employees may willingly stay beyond official hours without formal compensation.

This understanding of boundaries reflects the Ethic of Profession as not only technical but cultural, shaping how time, space, and relationships are ethically managed in the workplace.

Abhi, an operations manager working in warehouse logistics reinforced the importance of domain-specific expertise in ethical decision-making.

> In my current role, the majority of the ethical dilemmas and decisions I face are heavily influenced by my professional expertise and responsibilities. As I mentioned earlier, I work with technologies that I have either introduced or helped implement in the warehouse, such as the Auto Store system. Because I possess the most in-depth knowledge of these systems, I believe it is both appropriate and necessary for me to take independent decisions regarding them.

His approach to leadership evolved as his confidence in professional knowledge increased.

> Over time, my decision-making process has evolved: when I started with the company, it was more of a 50-50 approach, where I discussed approximately half of my dilemmas collaboratively. However, it has now shifted toward a 60-40 or even 70-30 split, with the majority of decisions being made independently. I rely on my specialized knowledge and technical understanding to ensure that the decisions made are sound, informed, and aligned with professional standards.

Rishi, a team supervisor also demonstrated this ethic when relaxing a customer service policy.

> While relaxing the policy, I remained mindful of maintaining professional standards and responsibilities. I ensured that this relaxation would not compromise the essential principles of our work, such as transparency, informed consent, and compliance. The decision was framed carefully: the checklist could only be omitted if the renewal involved no changes to the original policy terms, and if the original checklist had been properly signed.

He further explained how he balanced responsiveness with regulatory integrity.

> This way, I upheld the professional responsibility of safeguarding the organization's integrity while still adapting processes to meet practical realities. It was important to maintain a balance between easing customer and employee experiences and ensuring that all legal and ethical professional requirements were met."

Across these reflections, Canadian-based Indian leaders demonstrated that the Ethic of Profession is both a personal commitment and a systemic obligation. Their narratives revealed how professionalism is enacted through procedural fidelity, policy awareness, technical competence, and the ability to balance autonomy with collaboration.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents a comparative examination of the ethical leadership paradigms demonstrated by Indian professionals in India and Indian immigrant leaders in Canada. It builds upon the findings by comparing how each ethical paradigm, save the ethics of discomfort and St'at'imc matriarchal leadership, was observed in both cohorts and by summarizing key insights shared by participants. The purpose is to explore whether the process of acculturation influences ethical leadership, and to what extent cultural context contributes to the development or adaptation of ethical frameworks.

This discussion is structured around the study's three specific objectives. First, it identifies and analyses the core ethical principles and practices valued by leaders in India, to understand the foundational aspects of ethical leadership in the Indian cultural context. Second, it examines the perceptions of ethical leadership among Indian immigrant leaders in Canada and evaluates whether their ethical views and practices have shifted through integration into the Canadian cultural environment. Third, it compares the ethical leadership paradigms of Indian leaders in India with those of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada, exploring how ethical perspectives and practices adapt as a result of the acculturation process.

Additionally, this chapter engages with the study's four research questions, which guide the analysis of ethical leadership through the lens of multiple ethical paradigms and the Bird's Eye View Model. Specifically, the discussion addresses: (1) What core ethical principles and practices are valued by leaders in India? (2) How do Indian immigrant leaders in Canada perceive and practice ethical leadership? (3) How have the ethical views and practices of Indian immigrant leaders in Canada changed because of adapting to the Canadian cultural environment? and (4) What are the key similarities and differences in the ethical leadership paradigms between Indian leaders in India and Indian immigrant leaders in Canada?

5.1 Comparison of Ethical Paradigms Through the Lens of Acculturation

Acculturation plays a significant role in shaping the leadership perspectives of individuals who migrate to new cultural contexts (Liang et al., 2021). It is defined as the phenomena that occur when individuals or groups from different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, resulting in changes to the cultural patterns of one or both groups (Sam & Berry, 2010). This process encompasses a variety of psychological, behavioural, and identity-related adaptations as individuals navigate intercultural contact. This section explores how acculturation affects the ethical perspectives of Indian immigrant professionals working in Canada, comparing their experiences with those of Indian professionals based in India. The analysis is structured through the lens of distinct ethical paradigms namely, the ethic of justice, critique, care, community, profession, self-care, discomfort, and St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics. Notably, there was no evidence of participants demonstrating the ethic of discomfort or St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics. The subsequent sections offer a comparative analysis of each ethical paradigm across both cohorts starting with ethic of justice.

5.1.1 Comparison: Ethic of Justice

In the India-based cohort, the ethic of justice was evident in the leadership practices of four out of five participants. This suggests a moderate to strong presence of justice-oriented reasoning in ethical decision making. On the other hand, also in the Canada-based cohort, the ethic of justice was similarly evident in the leadership practices of four out of five participants referencing its application in at least one ethical dilemma. This suggests a strong presence of justice-oriented reasoning in ethical decision making. Both Indian and Canadian-based leaders demonstrated strong commitments to the ethic of justice, but they did so in contextually distinct ways shaped by their organizational environments. Leaders in India often applied justice in response to ambiguity or absence of enforceable systems. For

example, Kiran, an executive engineer, faced political pressure to install unauthorized red lights on a government vehicle. Despite lacking an enforceable mechanism to resist, he upheld procedural fairness by escalating the issue through official channels, thereby protecting institutional integrity, and shielding his team from undue consequences. Hemant, a transport business owner, navigated prolonged delays faced by his drivers due to undefined consignee inspection timelines. In the absence of contractual clarity, he introduced a new system that formalized timelines and responsibilities, promoting procedural justice and protecting workers from arbitrary delays. Ritu, a school principal, introduced a student leadership award without predefined criteria, resulting in perceptions of unfairness. To correct this, she implemented a transparent scorecard system for future evaluations, demonstrating a commitment to procedural fairness in the face of prior ambiguity. Their actions reflected a personal commitment to fairness, often requiring them to revise procedures or challenge informal political pressures. Justice, for them, was about restoring balance in flawed systems, as seen in their restructuring of work duties, upholding contractual obligations, and efforts to formalize recognition systems in education.

In contrast, Canadian-based Indian immigrant leaders functioned in rule-bound environments where justice entailed ensuring that existing procedures were applied fairly and transparently. Their emphasis was less on reforming broken systems and more on adjusting structured policies to better serve equity and inclusion. For example, Rishi, a team supervisor, implemented a lateness policy that applied uniformly to all staff. Rather than penalizing employees arbitrarily, he introduced a consistent rule with a minor pay deduction after a set threshold. This policy ensured fairness and transparency while addressing team concerns about inconsistent enforcement. Abhi, an operations manager, handled performance data during a robotics rollout by offering two reporting formats, one including idle time and one excluding it. This adjustment preserved transparency and helped set realistic expectations for

workers, balancing fairness with organizational benchmarking needs. These leaders consistently demonstrated procedural and distributive justice by resisting favouritism, advocating for fair work distribution, and clarifying evaluation standards.

While India-based leaders demonstrated justice through discretionary adaptations, Canadian-based leaders exhibited justice through structured negotiation and evidence-based reasoning. Both groups showed high ethical awareness, but Canadian-based Indian immigrant leaders often relied on organizational protocols and data-driven decisions, whereas Indian leaders engaged in systemic correction and context-sensitive interpretation.

5.1.2 Comparison: Ethic of Critique

In the India-based cohort, three out of five leaders demonstrated the ethic of critique. It was moderately prominent and featured in the leadership practices of participants, particularly in contexts marked by systemic inefficiency, advocating for marginalised employees, systemic barriers and outdated policies. Leaders routinely challenged institutional structures when these systems failed to serve their intended purpose or actively perpetuated inequity. For instance, Ravi, a principal in a government Industrial Training Institute, repeatedly bent rules to ensure timely salary disbursement for contract workers. He demonstrated the ethic of critique by challenging the system that perpetuated inequality and protecting the vulnerable. Similarly, Pavan critiqued infrastructural inadequacies in pharmaceutical manufacturing that made compliance with formal cleaning procedures impossible. By modifying workflows and reorganizing workspaces, he made the process safer and more efficient. Kiran, another Indian engineer, critically examined outdated categorization policies for suppliers and actively initiated systemic reform by proposing revised evaluation criteria. Each of these examples illustrates ethical leadership as a reflective and disruptive force that identifies and seeks to dismantle inequities perpetuated by organizational norms and institutional policies.

In contrast, the ethic of critique was less prominent among Canada-based Indian immigrant leaders, with only two out of five demonstrating this approach. While leaders in India frequently confronted systemic inefficiency and described recurring ethical dilemmas when discussing ethic of critique, their Canadian counterparts engaged in critique more selectively, primarily in response to specific policy shortcomings. Taha, for example, challenged an accessibility policy that failed to account for temporary disabilities, advocating for future revisions to promote inclusivity. Similarly, Siya, an assistant store manager, raised concerns about a system that prioritized availability over merit and protected long-tenured employees at the expense of accountability. Her leadership involved a sustained interrogation of institutional norms that, despite their neutral appearance, produced unjust outcomes. These examples suggest that the Canada-based participants engaged in critique by questioning, challenging, and refining policies.

5.1.3 Comparison: Ethic of Care

In the India-based cohort, the ethic of care was evident in the leadership practices of all five participants. This suggests a strong presence of care-oriented reasoning in ethical decision making in the Indian cohort. On the other hand, in the Canada-based cohort, three out of five Indian immigrant leaders demonstrated the ethic of care. This suggests a moderate presence of care-oriented reasoning in ethical decision making in the Canada-based cohort. India-based leaders emphasized relational responsibility, often engaging in flexible, context-sensitive decision-making that prioritized empathy. Their choices reflected an attentiveness to the personal and cultural realities of those they led, particularly in environments where formal structures offered limited guidance. For example, leaders in India modified institutional policies to accommodate students' transportation needs, adjusted reporting timelines to support staff facing health challenges, and validated emotional concerns during workplace

conflicts. These actions were ethical responses rooted in interdependency, compassion, responsiveness, and empathy.

In contrast, Canadian-based Indian immigrant leaders demonstrated care-based reasoning, which often involved ethical interpretation of existing protocols to make them more humane and responsive. Rather than overhauling systems, these leaders introduced targeted adjustments grounded in empathy and transparency. Examples include disclosing restricted promotional offers to long-standing clients, mentoring interns with sensitivity to their academic burdens, and adapting recognition and policy procedures based on individual needs. Their actions showed care through compassion, open dialogue and putting others' needs before their own.

5.1.4 Comparison: Ethic of Community

Leaders in both India and Canada demonstrated a strong commitment to the ethic of community. In each cohort, four out of five leaders reflected this ethic, indicating a moderate to strong preference. Leaders in India frequently described their decisions as being shaped by a desire to maintain institutional cohesion and social harmony. For example, Kiran, an executive engineer, stated that maintaining harmony within the team often takes precedence, even over administrative correctness. Similarly, Hemant, a transport business owner, believed that sustaining a business in a highly competitive environment requires building a strong sense of community among all stakeholders and working for the common good rather than individual interests. In a related example, Ravi and Ritu emphasized that most decisions in their institutions are made collaboratively. Ritu, a school principal, managed a promotion related conflict by inviting both parties into a transparent dialogue, ultimately reaching an agreement that prioritized the needs of the community and the institution.

In the Indian cohort, leaders' interpretation of the ethic of community was shaped by the social context and cultural practices of India. For example, Ritu emphasized that one

reason she involves her superiors in decision making is rooted in the Indian cultural value of respecting elders. Kiran echoed this view, stating, “Relations come first.” By "relations," he was referring to communal values and shared responsibility. Hemant made a similar point, explaining that in India, from employees to clients, it is essential to maintain relational harmony for the overall health of the business. Another important aspect to consider is how Indian leaders define community in their specific contexts. For both educational leaders, Ritu and Ravi, the community included all staff members in their respective schools and industrial training institutions, as well as students, parents, superiors, and the village or local communities in which their institutions are located. Ravi explained that they regularly collaborate with elected village officials to meet shared needs and maintain harmony. For Kiran, an executive engineer, community primarily referred to his team members and the industries they collaborate with. Hemant similarly described his community as including everyone from drivers to administrative staff and clients.

Lastly, in terms of collaborative decision making, both Ritu and Ravi emphasized that they make decisions collectively, incorporating the perspectives of all staff members. Ravi added that students are also included when decisions relate to aspects of the teaching and learning process. Kiran and Hemant agreed with the value of collaboration but drew a distinction. When it comes to resolving ethical dilemmas, they noted that they usually make decisions independently. They explained that this is due to the specialized nature of their roles. Seeking help in resolving such dilemmas, they suggested, might be perceived as a sign of weakness in leadership.

In contrast, Indian immigrant leaders based in Canada practiced the ethic of community through communication, mutual respect, shared responsibility, collaborative decision making, and a focus on the communal good. For example, Sachin prioritized the overall benefit of the workplace community when making decisions regarding reward

distribution. Leaders like Taha emphasized mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a democratic decision-making process. He noted that while people might disagree with the final decision, they still feel represented and are more likely to accept the outcome when they are included in the process and take part in shared governance.

Abhi explained that, since working in Canada, he has shifted toward consulting stakeholders, inviting feedback, and adapting decisions based on group input. He reflected that while collaborative decision making is now expected in his practice, it would have been more difficult to implement this level of collaboration if he were still in India. This view was also supported by Rishi and Sachin. Rishi mentioned that in India, he felt pressured to act as a strong, independent leader due to the high level of competition and the struggle for limited resources. He noted that the Canadian context, in contrast, allowed him to embrace a more community centred approach to leadership. When asked how they define community, Taha explained that he considers all those associated with the masjid as part of his community. For Rishi, Sachin, and Abhi, community primarily included their colleagues, team members, and clients within their organizations.

Lastly, Siya, an assistant store manager who did not demonstrate a strong ethic of community, shared a contrasting view. She observed,

> I have noticed a lack of respect for people in leadership positions in Canada. In Indian culture, people respect leaders and elders, and their decisions are accepted. But in Canada, people expect me to consult everyone before making a decision. Sometimes this delays the process, and I feel they do not trust me as a leader.

It is important to note that, compared to others in the Canadian cohort, Siya has only one year of leadership experience in Canada. In contrast, the other participants have leadership experience ranging from two to seven years.

5.1.5 Comparison: Ethic of Profession

The ethic of profession was moderately prevalent in both the India-based and Canada-based participants, with three out of five leaders in each group demonstrating this ethical paradigm. Among Indian professionals, this ethic was expressed strongly in technical, industrial, and logistical contexts. Pavan, an operational excellence engineer, refused a directive that compromised procedural integrity and explained his rationale with reference to company policy and professional boundaries. Kiran, an executive engineer, emphasized independent decision-making grounded in technical knowledge while maintaining transparency with superiors. Hemant, a transport business owner, balanced operational authority with relational fairness, consulting employees directly in ethically sensitive cases.

In the Canada-based cohort, the ethic of profession was similarly demonstrated through professional autonomy, accountability, and boundary maintenance. Sachin, an IT coordinator, emphasized independent technical judgment balanced with consultation when appropriate. He also reflected on the cultural emphasis on work-life boundaries in Canada. Abhi, an operations manager, described how his confidence in professional expertise shaped ethical decision-making over time. Rishi, a team supervisor, adjusted a customer policy, but he did so without compromising his professional duty to safeguard the interests of the organization.

A key distinction between the cohorts lies in how professional autonomy was exercised. In India, autonomy often had to be asserted in contexts where informal expectations, hierarchical pressure, or outdated systems could threaten procedural integrity. In Canada, professional autonomy was exercised within clearer structural parameters. Leaders described themselves as empowered to make independent decisions but did so in consultation with legal frameworks, policy documents, and hierarchical protocols. Their autonomy was reinforced, rather than constrained, by the system.

5.1.6 Comparison: Ethic of Self-Care

The Ethic of Self-Care was weakly represented in both the India-based and Canada-based cohorts, with only one leader in each group demonstrating this paradigm. Among Indian professionals, this ethic emerged in the reflections of Ravi, a principal at a government-run Industrial Training Institute. Ravi described his ethical challenges in managing extensive government duties without institutional support or compensation. His leadership practice underscored the importance of navigating structural constraints with resilience while acknowledging the emotional toll of such responsibilities. Ravi committed to question the systemic norms and he focuses on personal ethical growth.

In the Canada-based cohort, this ethic was exemplified by Taha, an administrator of a religious institution. Taha shared how he accepted his leadership role out of communal need rather than personal ambition. Over time, however, the emotional demands of leadership began to disrupt his well-being. Recognizing the unsustainable nature of this emotional labour, Taha made the ethically grounded decision to step away from formal governance roles. His reflection emphasized that ethical leadership must include care for the leader's mental and emotional health.

In both cases, the leaders experienced the emotional and mental toll of ethical leadership. However, the leader based in India responded by reflecting on his own ethical beliefs and focusing on personal ethical growth, while the Canada-based Indian leader responded by setting boundaries to protect his well-being.

5.2 Evidence of Multiple Ethical Paradigms and Application of Bird's Eye View Model

Multiple ethical paradigms involve applying a range of ethical perspectives to interpret and evaluate notions of 'right' and 'wrong' in leadership decisions (Hoare at el., 2024). Instead of depending on just one ethical framework, leaders are encouraged to draw on eight distinct lenses to develop a deeper and more detailed understanding of ethical challenges. These lenses are considered equally important, as each offers unique advantages

and drawbacks. By integrating multiple perspectives, leaders can address blind spots in their viewpoint, leading to more thoughtful, reflective, culturally sensitive ethical leadership (Hoare at el., 2024). Table 3 presents how leaders across both cohorts have utilized different ethical paradigms to address various ethical dilemmas. Noteworthy was that nine out of ten participants demonstrated the use of at least three distinct ethical lenses. In the Indian cohort, the ethic of justice and the ethic of care were among the most common, demonstrated by four out of five and all five leaders respectively. In the Canada-based cohort, both the ethic of justice and the ethic of care were demonstrated by four out of five leaders, indicating strong representation in both contexts.

Table 3

Bird's Eye View Model: Demonstration of Leaders' Use of Multiple Ethical Paradigms

	Ethic of Justice	Ethic of Critique	Ethic of Care	Ethic of Community	Ethic of Profession	Ethic of Self-care	Ethic of Discomfort	St'at'imc matriarchal leadership
Pavan	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Ravi		✓	✓	✓		✓		
Kiran	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Ritu	✓		✓	✓				
Hemant	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Taha	✓	✓		✓		✓		
Sachin			✓	✓	✓			
Abhi	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Siya	✓	✓						
Rishi	✓		✓	✓	✓			

The findings also highlight that several participants employed more than one ethical lens to address a single dilemma. For example, Pavan, in responding to an ethical dilemma involving false reporting, primarily used the ethic of justice to ensure procedural fairness. However, he also viewed the issue through the lens of care, expressing that both the workers and his subordinate were equally important to him. He emphasized the need to understand both parties' perspectives and to show compassion toward them. Utilizing multiple ethical lenses in evaluating ethical dilemmas provides a deeper and more nuanced understanding of

the situation (Hoare at el., 2024). In this case, relying solely on the ethic of justice might have ensured fair treatment based on the universal application of policy, but it could have left the workers feeling unheard and unrepresented. By incorporating the ethic of care alongside justice, Pavan was able to refine the decision-making process to address the needs of all parties involved while still upholding fairness and impartiality. He balanced fairness and universal principles with empathy and care, adopting a more holistic approach to resolving ethical dilemmas and demonstrating the use of multiple ethical paradigms (Hoare at el., 2024; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

Similarly, Rishi demonstrated a combination of the ethic of justice and the ethic of care while addressing a case of repeated late arrivals. His solution ensured that the attendance policy was applied equally to all, so no one received preferential treatment. At the same time, he made an effort to understand the circumstances of the latecomer, ensuring the individual did not feel ostracized and remained motivated to improve their punctuality. In another example, Ritu applied both the ethic of care and the ethic of community when implementing the *Samaydaan* initiative in her school. She explained that her primary ethical lens was care, as she aimed to understand and prioritize students' needs even above her own. This led her to revise the school schedule to better align with students' daily lives. Additionally, she acknowledged a secondary objective rooted in the ethic of community. She considered a nearby tribal group as part of her broader school community and actively included their perspectives in the decision-making process. By doing so, she demonstrated a commitment to shared responsibility and the common good.

No evidence was found of the use of either the Ethic of Discomfort or St'at'imc Matriarchal Leadership among participants in either cohort. St'at'imc Matriarchal Leadership is a geographically and community-specific ethic, closely tied to the St'at'imc Nation. None of the participants in this study identified as Indigenous from India, nor were any immigrant

participants working within that territory, which likely explains why this ethic did not appear in their leadership practices. In contrast, the absence of the Ethic of Discomfort may be attributed to its inherently challenging nature. This paradigm involves deliberately unsettling or confronting followers to promote critical reflection, which can create discomfort or even pain (Zemblyas, 2015). In cultural contexts where leadership emphasizes service and care for others (Bodhananda, 2022), this confrontational approach may be especially difficult for leaders to adopt, potentially explaining its absence in the findings.

5.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study offers meaningful insights into the ethical paradigms guiding Indian professionals in both domestic and Canadian contexts. However, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, two paradigms, the ethic of discomfort and St'at'imc matriarchal leadership were not reflected in participants' narratives. Future research could explore whether this absence is due to contextual irrelevance, participant demographics, lack of exposure, or the need for more thoughtfully designed interview questions that guide participants to reflect on these frameworks. The perspectives of Indian tribal and Indigenous groups have also not been widely explored, making this an important area for future research (Turner, 2012).

Second, while this study focused on Indian professionals in Canada and India, expanding the comparative framework to include professionals from other immigrant communities or other regions of South Asia could reveal how acculturation shapes ethical paradigms in culturally distinct ways. Including perspectives based on gender, caste, and class would further strengthen the analysis, especially given that this study did not directly address class-based variables. In this research, only one out of ten participants belonged to a Scheduled Tribe. Future studies could include more participants from Scheduled Castes and

Scheduled Tribes to ensure that their perspectives, which have historically been overlooked, are meaningfully represented, and explored (Singh, 2014).

Lastly, the sample size was relatively small, with only five participants in each cohort. Additionally, gender diversity was limited, with only two women among the ten participants. Given that Indian women's perspectives in ethical leadership are often underrepresented, future research could improve both the sample size and gender balance to strengthen the depth and inclusivity of the findings (Deshpande, 2022; Kaur, 2023; Mujawar, 2023). While participants represented diverse professional backgrounds, age groups, and levels of work experience, narrowing the focus of the research, for example, by examining only educational leaders, could allow for more detailed comparisons across contexts and offer deeper insights into how a specific sector understands ethical leadership.

By addressing these limitations, future research can contribute to a deeper understanding of ethical leadership across cultural and institutional settings, enrich cross cultural comparisons, and support a more comprehensive application of the multiple ethical paradigm framework.

Conclusion

This research examined how Indian professionals understand and practice ethical leadership within the cultural contexts of India and Canada. Using qualitative methods, the study explored ethical leadership among Indian leaders through eight ethical paradigms: justice, care, critique, community, profession, self-care, discomfort, and St'at'imc matriarchal leadership ethics. It also analysed how acculturation to Canadian culture influences the ethical leadership perspectives of Indian immigrant leaders. The study compared how these paradigms are expressed and applied across two cultural settings. This research is distinct in its comprehensive scope. Unlike prior studies that often adopt a fixed definition of ethical leadership or examine only select paradigms, this study attempted to employ eight distinct ethical frameworks to analyse leadership practices. It stands as one of the first studies to use such a diverse set of paradigms in a cross-cultural context, thereby broadening the theoretical and practical understanding of ethical leadership. The findings show that six paradigms including justice, care, critique, community, profession, and self-care were present in both the India based and Canada based groups. In contrast, no evidence of the ethic of discomfort or St'at'imc matriarchal leadership was found among participants in either cohort, likely due to cultural or contextual factors. However, their interpretations differed. In the Indian context, justice and critique were often applied in response to unclear systems and limited institutional oversight. In the Canadian context, professionals used justice and care to strengthen existing procedures and promote fairness and equity. The ethic of community revealed important cultural differences that shape leadership practices, especially in relation to collaborative decision making.

In addition, this study speaks to dismantling the normative aspect of ethical leadership by illustrating how ethical reasoning evolves with changing institutional and cultural norms. It shows that ethical leadership is not only shaped by personal values but also

by the broader socio-cultural context in which it is practiced. The findings inform and extend the Bird's Eye View model (Hoare et al., 2024) by showcasing how leaders across both India based and Canada based cohorts interpret and implement multiple ethical paradigms. It demonstrates that ethical dilemmas are frequently approached through more than one ethical lens, emphasizing the complexity and contextual fluidity of moral decision making. Multiple ethical paradigms allows for a deeper understanding of how ethical leadership is enacted in practice, providing insights into the ways leaders integrate and navigate multiple ethical perspectives. Ultimately, this research challenges singular, universal definitions of ethical leadership and highlights the importance of culturally responsive, multi perspective approaches in understanding and supporting ethical leadership across global contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Email to Participants

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research Study on Ethical Leadership

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is **Rumana Patel**, and I am conducting a research study as part of my thesis at Thompson Rivers University. The study is titled **"Ethical Leadership Paradigms among Indian Immigrant Professionals in Canada and Their Counterparts in India: The Effects of Acculturation."**I am writing to invite you to participate in this study, which aims to explore the ethical leadership experiences of Indian professionals in leadership roles, both in Canada and India. Your insights will be valuable in helping us better understand how cultural contexts influence leadership practices and ethical decision-making.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete the following:

1. **Pre-Interview Worksheet:** You will be provided with a short worksheet, which includes a few questions about your background and your initial thoughts on leadership ethics. This should take approximately 15-20 minutes.
2. **Interview:** You will then be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview for about 45 minutes. During this interview, we will discuss your experiences and perspectives on moral decision-making.
3. **Member Check:** After the interview, you will have an opportunity to review and confirm the accuracy of the interview transcript, which should take about 15-20 minutes. Your name and any identifying details will not appear in my thesis or any reports, presentations, publications, or exhibitions of the research unless you provide explicit consent.

Attached to this email, you will find:

- The **recruitment letter**, which provides more detailed information about the inclusion and exclusion criteria and what participation involves.
- The **consent form**, which outlines your rights as a participant, including confidentiality and withdrawal options, study's purpose, and process.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please reply to this email, and I would be happy to provide more information.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to contribute to important research in the field of ethical leadership.

Best regards,

Rumana Patel
Student of Master of Education
Thompson Rivers University
patelr224@mytru.ca

Appendix 2 Pre-Interview Worksheet

Pre-Interview Worksheet: Background Information and Understanding Ethics

Please fill out the following information to help us understand your background and your views on ethics in leadership.

Name of the Participant:

_____

Background Information (all study participants)		
1.	Which age range are you?	□ 25–29 □ 30–34 □ 35–40 □ 40–45 □ 45–50
2.	What is your highest level of education?	
3.	How many years of work experience do you have in total?	
4.	How long have you been working for the current organization?	
5.	How many years of experience do you have in a leadership position?	
6.	Briefly, what do you do in your current job?	
Additional Background Information (Indian Immigrants in Canada)		
7.	What education did you receive in India and Canada respectively?	**India:** **Canada:**
8.	How many years have you been in Canada?	
9.	How many years of work experience do you have in Canada?	
Ethical Understanding (Applicable to all participants)		

This study explores leadership ethics and moral dilemmas. 'Ethics' deals with what is morally 'right' and 'wrong.' Perceptions of ethics vary and are influenced by one's political ideology, culture, religion, lived experiences, and other contextual factors. Yet leaders are often confronted with the demand to provide a one-size-fits-all answer to complex problems. Ethical dilemmas emerge when leaders are forced to choose among competing sets of principles, values, beliefs, or ideas.		
10.	In your opinion, how do you determine what is right and wrong as a leader?	

Appendix 3: Interview Questionnaire

Project Title: Ethical Leadership Paradigms among Indian Immigrant Professionals in Canada and Their Counterparts in India: The Effects of Acculturation.

Data Collection Method: Write and Talk Approach

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of participants' backgrounds and perspectives on ethics in leadership, I will use a two-step data collection method referred to as the "Write and Talk" approach. This method involves:

1. **Pre-Interview Worksheet:** Participants will complete a worksheet providing background information and their initial thoughts on ethical leadership. This step ensures participants are aware of the study's focus and helps them articulate their thoughts on ethics before the interview.
2. **Interview Questions:** Following the worksheet, participants will engage in a semi-structured interview where they will discuss specific experiences and perspectives related to ethical leadership. The interview questions are designed to delve deeper into the ethical dilemmas and decision-making processes of the participants.

The "Write and Talk" method helps in preparing participants for the interview, ensuring they have thought about the topics beforehand, which can lead to more in-depth and thoughtful responses during the interview.

Disclaimer:

This research involves interviewing professionals in leadership positions, a population generally considered to have stability and resilience. However, since many participants are (im)migrants, it is possible that reflecting on cultural adjustment, identity, and workplace integration during the interview may evoke emotions or distress. We acknowledge these factors to ensure that the research is conducted ethically and with care for your well-being.

Potential Emotional Impact: While the study is considered minimal risk, we want to inform you that discussing your personal or professional experiences may cause some discomfort. If at any point during the interview you feel distressed, please let me know, and we will pause the interview. You may choose to take a break or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Support Measures:

1. **Informed Consent**: You will be fully informed about the nature of the study, including any potential discomfort. You can choose to opt out at any time, without penalty.
2. **Immediate Support**: If you feel upset or distressed during the interview, the session can be paused, and you will be asked if you'd like to continue or withdraw. Support services will also be offered immediately.
3. **Access to Support Services**: If needed, you can access support services during or after the study. Below is a list of resources available to you:

Support Services Available:

- **Wellness Together Canada**: Free, confidential mental health counselling.
  - Website: https://wellnesstogether.ca
  - Phone: 1-800-668-6868
- **Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC)**: Counselling and settlement services for immigrants.
  - Website: https://issbc.org/
  - Email: info@issbc.org
  - Phone: (604) 684-2561
- **Multicultural Health Brokers**: Provides counselling and mental health resources for immigrants and refugees.

- Website: http://mchb.org/
- Email: mchb@mchb.org
- Phone: 780-423-1973

Your well-being is important to us, and we want to ensure that you have access to the necessary resources in case any distress arises during the study.

Interview Questions: Ethical Leadership and Moral Dilemmas

	Indians Holding Leadership Positions in India	Indian Immigrants Holding Leadership Positions in Canada
1.	Could you please share your name and your preferred pronouns?	Could you please share your name and your preferred pronouns?
2.	Describe an ethical dilemma that you have experienced as a leader. What did you do in that situation?	Describe an ethical dilemma that you have experienced as a leader. What did you do in that situation?
3.	Were you ever in a situation where you felt like no matter what decision you made it would be unfair to some people involved? If so, describe what you did in that situation.	Were you ever in a situation where you felt like no matter what decision you made it would be unfair to some people involved? If so, describe what you did in that situation.
4.	Have you ever relaxed a policy or bent the rules as a leader to uphold your principles? If so, describe what you did in that situation.	Have you ever relaxed a policy or bent the rules as a leader to uphold your principles? If so, describe what you did in that situation.
5.	Do you discuss how to resolve ethical dilemmas with other people in your organization? If so, who? Describe a situation.	Do you discuss how to resolve ethical dilemmas with other people in your organization? If so, who? Describe a situation.
6.	Having worked in India, how do you think your culture influences your decision-making processes as a leader? Give an example.	Having been working in Canada for at least 5 years now, do you think your idea of ethical leadership has changed? If so, how? Possible probes: • Does ethical leadership mean the same thing to you when you are working in Canada relative to when you worked in India? If not, what are some differences? • Can you think of decision-making processes that are effective in India, but not in Canada? Vice versa?

Appendix 4: Ethics Approval

6/30/25, 8:44 AM Email

From tlawrie@tru.ca
To Patel, Rumana(Primary Investigator) < patelr224@mytru.ca >
Subject REB Approval (COA)
Attachments

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

September 23, 2024

Ms. Rumana Patel
Faculty of Education and
Social Work\Education
Thompson Rivers University

File Number: 104088
Approval Date: September 23, 2024
Expiry Date: September 22, 2025

Dear Ms. Rumana Patel,

The Research Ethics Board has approved your application titled 'Ethical Leadership Paradigms among Indian Immigrant Professionals in Canada and Their Counterparts in India: The Effects of Acculturation'. You may begin the proposed research as it is written in this form. REB approval, dated September 23, 2024, is valid for one year: September 22, 2025.

To continue your proposed research beyond September 22, 2025, please submit Renewal Form before September 22, 2025. If your research ends before September 22, 2025, please submit a Final Report Form to close out REB approval monitoring efforts. Here is how:

1. Log into your ROMEO account
2. Locate the study (there is a search bar near the top of your homepage that may be helpful)
3. Click on the **events** button to the left of side of the page
4. Choose the appropriate form for what you want to do (renew, finalize)
5. Answer the few questions and click **submit**

Any and all changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved by the REB. If you want to add or change your research protocol then submit an amendment using the same above instructions. The Tri-Council would consider it non-compliant to implement a new or different protocol without REB review.

If you have an award that is contingent upon REB approval, then please present this letter as evidence of certification for this research.

If you have any questions about the REB process or ROMEO then please call (250) 852-7122 or email TRU-REB@tru.ca.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jennifer Shaw
Acting Chair, Research Ethics Board