# LEADERSHIP IN FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS:

# PERCEPTIONS OF ABORIGINAL

# EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

A Thesis

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# Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Aboriginal school-site administrators regarding effective leadership behaviors in First Nations schools. Thirteen Aboriginal educational administrators were interviewed over a period of one month and a half using a semi-structured interview approach. The sample of participants was drawn from a list of Tribal Councils and Independent First Nations in Saskatchewan. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to 70 minutes. Participants were asked to reflect on: (1) what leadership characteristics an effective administrator of a First Nation school must possess; (2) whether ethnicity and gender of the educational administrator were important considerations in First Nations schools; (3) positive characteristics of role models of Aboriginal educational administrators; (4) personal and social problems on First Nations that affected the role of the educational administrator; and (5) what training activities were helpful in the preparation of potential educational leaders.

Findings suggested that the main characteristics of effective administrators in First Nations schools included being person-oriented and flexible. All thirteen administrators interviewed considered the ability to speak a First Nation language important, although not essential, if the major language spoken on the First Nation was English. Ethnicity of the administrator may not be a necessary consideration for administrators in First Nations schools. Being able to adapt to the cultural milieu of the First Nation was more important. Findings further suggested that gender of the administrator in a First Nation school was not an important consideration. Female administrators could be effective if given the opportunity. Role models in the lives of the participants played a major part in the overall success of the participants.

Findings of this study further suggested that effective administrators had definite plans and programming in place when dealing with social problems which exist on First Nations. Being knowledgeable about the types of support services available at the Band level was important. The main strategy employed by the interviewees involved the utilization of a team approach to problem solving. When dealing with student behavioral problems, most administrators followed policies set by the school board. Last of all, the participants made recommendations which potential Aboriginal educational leaders could use in order to move into administrative positions at the First Nation level.

## Acknowledgments

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I would also like to express my appreciation to the friends who opened their homes to me during my travels on the interview trial. Their warmhearted generosity cannot go unmentioned.

Last but not least, this thesis is dedicated to Aboriginal educational administrators in First Nations schools. Their willingness to share experiences, as well as the openness, sincerity, and honesty they exhibited during the interviews has indeed inspired me to work towards the development of those characteristics.

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE PROBLEM

Since the inception of band controlled schools in the 1970s, their numbers have increased significantly over the past twenty years. From 1975 to 1976, fifty-three band controlled schools were in operation in Canada. By 1992, there was a total of 329 Band controlled schools in operation across Canada (DIAND, 1992). The total number of students within Band controlled schools in 1990-91 was approximately 40,508 (MacPherson, 1991, p. 8). However, despite the progress accomplished throughout the years in terms of Indian control of Indian Education, statistics indicate that there exist many problems which educational administrators must deal with on a daily basis. Such problems include: apathy amongst students and teachers, absenteeism amongst students, overall feelings of discouragement, high drop-out rates, age-grade displacement, lack of parental involvement, and non-native teacher alienation (Kirkness, cited in Jules, 1988). With the continuing expansion of Band controlled schools, the increasing number of students within these schools, and the significant problems, the need for quality Aboriginal education becomes more critical. In addition to this need for quality Aboriginal education, the need for quality leadership within these educational institutions remains imperative. Jules (1988) mentioned "as Native Indian people have taken control of their own affairs, positions of leadership have arisen; more and more Native Indian people are taking leadership roles in many areas, including education" (p. 4).

Jules (1988) affirmed that the demand for filling these educational administration positions with Aboriginal people was a problem, because of the lack of Aboriginal leadership training programs. She mentioned another difficulty that arises

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from this demand for Aboriginal leaders. She noticed that there was an apparent lack of leadership models developed explicitly for and by Aboriginal people aspiring to positions of leadership. She stated, "the only models of leadership readily available to trainers and students are those developed in the non-Native Indian cultures (usually that of North America)" (p. 4).

If Band controlled schools are to continue to work towards becoming effective schools readily dealing with and adapting to issues as they arise, then potential Aboriginal educational leaders will have to be equipped with the necessary skills required to meet the needs of such Band controlled schools. The identification of these skills is important to all First Nations peoples.

## BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The federal government's legal obligations and responsibilities to First Nations people in Canada began with the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which acknowledged pre-existing land rights and recognized First Nations as the rightful occupants of what is now Canada (Mercredi and Turpel, 1993). In 1867, the Constitution, Section 91 (24) (also known as the British North America Act) gave the federal government legal obligations and trust responsibilities for Indians and Indian lands. Furthermore, additional treaties signed by Indian Nations and Her Majesty the Queen were, and still are, another source of the government's legal responsibility to Indian Nations. More recently, the Constitution Act 1982, Section 15 confirms equality and collective rights of First Nations people while Section 25 confirms the continued application of the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

From 1867 to 1880, the first treaties in Western Canada were signed between Indian nations and the federal government. In exchange for the rights to occupy and settle on the land, the government accepted, *inter alia,* the responsibility to provide

education to Indian children in fulfillment of legal and treaty obligations. Other treaty rights of First Nations included the right to health services, exemption from tax, and the exemption from war service, to name a few. Consequently the federal government remains obligated to provide First Nations peoples a legal right to education, as stipulated in the treaties (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 1993).

Native education has progressed somewhat arduously since the signing of the treaties. A major turning point occurred in 1969 when, as stated by MacPherson (1991), the federal government introduced the now infamous White Paper which proposed, among other things, the abdication of federal responsibility for Indian education to the provinces and territories. In response to this White Paper "Indian leaders maintained that the federal government was trying to renege on its fiduciary and treaty obligations towards Indians" (Mabindisa, 1989 p. 107). The National Indian Brotherhood (1972), now Assembly of First Nations (AFN), a native organization which represents the interests of First Nations people across Canada, countered with the introduction of the policy paper entitled Indian Control of Indian Education (1972) which called for local Indian governance of education on reserves. Kirkness and Selkirk Bowman (1992) suggested that "the policy was based on two educational principles recognized in Canadian society: parental responsibility and local control...and to promote the need to improve the quality of Indian Education" (p. 15). The federal government believed it was representative of Indian beliefs; therefore, it was accepted as Indian Affairs policy in 1973. This document set the stage for native people to start taking a more active role in the implementation of education for their children. This inevitably led to the commencement of Band controlled schools. The most important outcome that can be noticed today in terms of

Indian control of Indian education is the improvement in the quality of education (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 1993, p. 27).

## Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken to determine the perceptions of Aboriginal school-site administrators regarding effective leadership in First Nations schools and to study the implications of being an Aboriginal administrator. The purpose of this study was addressed through the following questions:

1. What leadership characteristics must an administrator of a First Nation school possess?

2. To what degree is ethnicity of the educational administrator an important consideration in Band controlled schools?

3. Is gender of the educational administrator an important consideration in Band controlled schools?

4. Who best serves as a role model for educational administrators? What are their positive characteristics?

5. What personal and social problems on First Nations affect the role of an educational administrator?

6. What training activities are helpful in the preparation of potential educational leaders?

## Significance Of The Study

The insights of Aboriginal principals and vice-principals within First Nations schools contribute positively to a broader understanding of effective Aboriginal educational leadership. Perceptions of Aboriginal school-site administrators helped to determine the necessary characteristics required of them. The results of this study

provided information and feedback to administrators of First Nations schools and other decision-makers on how best to prepare and support future potential educational administrators who will eventually become the leaders of First Nations schools. As very little literature and research exists in the area of Indian educational leadership, it was hoped that this study would act as a catalyst in establishing a literature-based foundation on which to begin the process of developing Aboriginal educational programs for potential Aboriginal educational leaders. Also, it was hoped that this study would provide help to Aboriginal educational administrators in need of a peer support system, especially for those who have little or no contact with other Aboriginal educational administrators in Saskatchewan.

## Researcher's Story

This short story of my life will hopefully give the reader a clearer understanding of my background and my perspective on life. As a person of First Nation descent, I am aware that my values and beliefs will have an influence on this thesis.

My early years were spent on the Opasquiak Cree Nation, and then for a period of one and a half years, between the ages of eight to ten years, I attended a residential school in Dauphin, Manitoba. Dauphin was approximately 200 miles away from home. For an eight year old, this must have been a fearful experience. I can not remember too many of the emotions I went through; however, I do remember my little sister, who was six years old at the time, exhibiting behavior which indicated the stress of leaving home and being thrust into a totally new environment.

When I returned home from residential school, I attended public school in the Town of The Pas for a number of years before dropping out. Unemployed, untrained, I realized the mistakes I had made, but not wanting to return to the same public

education system, I pursued an alternate route. Through adult education training I was able to secure employment on the reserve.

Later on in life, after marrying and having children, the topic of education resurfaced. Through encouragement from my husband and friends, I attended an upgrading program and managed to attain a grade 12 equivalency diploma. From there I was accepted into the Indian Teacher Education Program, University of Saskatchewan as a mature student. I taught for five years in the Onion Lake Education System as the computer teacher, before applying and being accepted into graduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan. My pursuit of higher education has not been an easy journey. It has been an uphill climb all the way, but through hard work and determination, I have succeeded thus far.

## Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

1. That the participants interviewed had sufficient experience as administrators of First Nation schools so they could respond to the questions.

2. That the research and data collection were reflective and representative of characteristics of Aboriginal educational administrators in Saskatchewan.

3. That the perceptions of Aboriginal educational administrators provided a rich source of data for the study.

## Delimitations

The following considerations were used to delimit the scope of the study:

1. Interviews were delimited to the perceptions of Aboriginal principals and vice-principals working in First Nations schools in Saskatchewan.

2.      The data were collected from thirteen First Nations educational administrators of First Nations schools in Saskatchewan, which were selected from ten First Nations Tribal Councils and four Independent First Nations not belonging to Tribal Councils.

3.      The research was conducted during the months of October and November, 1994.

## Limitations

1.      Data collection was limited by the information and perceptions offered by the participants in interviews.

2.      The constraint of time in conducting the one-time interviews and the level of trust established may have limited the willingness of the participants to share in-depth perceptions.

3.      Data collection during the interviews and data analysis after the interviews was limited by the level of expertise of the researcher.

4.      Data collection was limited to the viewpoints of Aboriginal administrators, and did not encompass the viewpoints of teachers, elders, parents, students, and non-Aboriginal administrators.

5.      The researcher's own experience and opinions influenced the sense made of collected data.

6.      The first language of the researcher was English; therefore this may have limited the interviewee's opportunity to speak in the first language of his/her choice.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Aboriginal and/or Native

Catch-all term which includes Indian, Inuit, and Metis people, often used

interchangeably with "Indigenous".

American Indian Education

Refers to Indian Education in the United States.

Band controlled schools

Federally funded schools, according to legal and financial obligations as

outlined by the treaties, operated by First Nations people on First Nations.

Also referred to as First Nations schools.

Characteristics of a Leader

Characteristics include traits, behavioral activities, skills, abilities, and

strategies of a leader. Authors, quoted in this thesis, often refer to

characteristics as a catch all phrase to include behaviors, skills, and strategies;

therefore, the writer employs the same format when referring to effective

characteristics.

Culture

As defined by Brizinski (1989), culture is "the collection of rules, values, and

attitudes held by a society which allows people to communicate, to interpret

behavior, and to attach shared meaning to behavior and events" (p. 372) and as

defined by Barnhardt and Harrison (1992) Indian culture includes "traditional

values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and customs" (p. 9).

First Nations

Previously referred to as Indian Band/Reserve, now the preferred term is First

Nation (as in Onion Lake First Nation). Also, it is often used as an adjective

(as in First Nations education) instead of using the phrase Indian education or

a noun to describe a First Nations person or people.

<u>Indian</u>

An Indian is a person with treaty status as recognized by the Indian Act

(1989). The researcher uses this term interchangeably with First Nations

people.

<u>Leadership</u>

The ability and readiness to inspire, guide, direct or manage others.

## Organization of the Thesis

In this chapter, the problem of the study has been outlined. Chapter 2 includes

a review of the literature related to the topic of effective characteristics of Aboriginal

educational administrators. The methodology used to conduct the study is described

in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the findings of the research study are presented. Finally,

Chapter 5 offers a summary of the research study, a discussion of the findings,

recommendations for First Nations interested in developing a leadership program

geared specifically for Aboriginal people, and recommendations for further research.

# CHAPTER 2
# A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The researcher found that very little literature pertaining to leadership in First Nations education existed. Similarly, other researchers interested in this area agreed that "very little literature, and virtually no research exists which pertains to leadership in the field of Indian education" (Pavlik, 1988, p. 18). Because of the apparent lack of research studies from which to draw, the writer made use of as many reliable sources as possible which pertained to the field of Indian leadership. These sources, considered an important part of the background information, included book chapters, journal articles, and research studies on Indian leadership in general from both Canadian and American authors. In some instances authors did not specify whether the leaders discussed were of Indian ancestry. In cases such as these, the writer felt that the oversight of this magnitude was necessary due to the lack of literature in this field.

The organization of this literature review includes an examination of changes in Indian education, the need for training of Indian leadership, and characteristics of effective Indian leaders. As well, this literature review investigates the perceptions of Indian students, Indian elders, and Indian women regarding effective Indian leadership. Last of all, models of leadership and problems faced by First Nation schools are examined. The chapter concludes with a summary of effective characteristics compiled from the literature review.

## Changes in Indian Education

The impetus behind the need for quality Indian educational leadership in Canada arose from the policy entitled <u>Indian Control of Indian Education</u> (1972). This policy, developed in 1972 by the Assembly of First Nations (formerly National Indian Brotherhood), became the cornerstone of Indian education as it exists today. It clearly identified Indian parents as having full responsibility and control of education. It further called for the federal government to live up to its responsibilities and commitments to fund Indian education for Indian people (Pauls and Carter, 1987). Consequently, as Indian people assumed more and more control over their own affairs, the need for qualified Indian educational leadership grew as well. This policy called for qualified personnel to assume control over all aspects of First Nations education. If the policy were to have any significant impact, Indians had to take control of their own affairs, and this has taken place over the past two decades. The number of Band controlled schools in operation has increased dramatically, but despite this progress, most administrators were not of Native ancestry. It is only a recent development that Indian people began assuming leadership roles. Lynch and Charleston (1990) explained that only 20 years ago there were very few Indian administrators of schools or universities and added that the true impact of Indian control of schools would have meaning only when "administrators who were Indian were ready to assume the administration of schools" (p. 7).

Presently, change continues to occur in all aspects of Indian education, including the need for Indian leadership. Foster and Boloz (1980) found that changes had been and still were taking place in American Indian education, and that Indian school administrators had to look more seriously at their evolving roles as these changes took place. As change continues to occur in First Nations education in Canada, Indian leaders must recognize that Indian people need to have a more

meaningful involvement in the total education process (Kirkness, 1984; cited in Jules, 1988). For example, Onion Lake First Nation (Onion Lake Education Department, 1993) indicated that a step towards change, in their minds, was a step towards self-determination (Indian control of Indian education). The promotion of Indian teachers to administrative positions was such a step towards change. However, the Onion Lake Board of Education stressed that the reigns of leadership would not be handed over to just any one but to a trained, and qualified Native person.

Further indication of the change that is taking place is evident in the statistics reported by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, (cited in Malloy and Nilson, 1991) who reported that in Saskatchewan alone , while 3.7% of teachers were of Indian ancestry, 15% of the province's student population was of Indian ancestry (p. 34). As the Indian student population increases, so does the need for Indian educational leadership. Indian school administrators need to become more conscious about leadership as opposed to merely performing the traditional duties of planning, controlling, and organizing (Foster and Boloz, 1980). Chance (1992) also pointed out that educational administrators in Indian schools need to have skills and abilities beyond that of organizational manager. Menderhall (cited in Barnhardt[**] , 1982) stated that "there are almost no Native administrators and very few Native teachers to draw from. The first long-term priority must be the development of the local people as professionals and para-professionals" (p. 90). Programs geared specifically for training Aboriginal educational leaders are urgently needed. The next section deals with this topic.

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[**] In subsequent references to Barnhardt, if no date appears after the authors name, it is an indication that the article was an unpublished manuscript without a date.

## Need for Training

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993) in its third round of hearings, crossed Canada, visited 35 communities, heard from 454 organizations, and listened to 167 individual interveners on a wide variety of issues. The Commission found that there was an emerging need for Aboriginal people to become administrators and professionals especially as self-government becomes a reality. These administrators and professionals would affect all areas of First Nations life.

Past research in American Indian education also emphasized the need for trained Indian leaders to assume vital roles in all fields (Roupe and Tippeconnic, 1987). Lemon (1986) suggested "It appears obvious that more must be done to fulfill the need for trained and qualified Indian educational leaders " and that "Indian graduate students [must be] trained to occupy the role and perform the functions of educational administration and leadership." (p. 4). Lemon further stated that the training of American Indians to assume leadership roles in the administration of elementary and secondary education would move Indian people closer to the goal of self-determination, that is, Indian control of Indian education (p. 2).

Several other authors pointed out the need for Aboriginal educational administrators. In his discussion on building new indigenous higher education institutions, Barnhardt (1991a) suggested that if such initiatives were to succeed, they had to be spearheaded by Native leadership from the local community and represent the interests of the community. He warned that locally derived leadership was not a guarantee of success, but its absence could greatly diminish its chances of survival. Brass and Demay (1987) recommended that Indian people must begin using the educational system to acquire western knowledge and skills, and yet at the same time they must continue to keep what is good from Indian traditions. In acknowledgment

of this need for qualified Aboriginal educational administrators, Pauls (1984)

commented that

> It is a pity that there is no national policy or national institute to
> provide training to Indians which would enable them to manage their
> own educational system. One of the primary effects of lack of
> training is that of bands taking over control of the schools and not
> knowing how to manage the school. (p. 35)

In a major study designed to assess the impact of the 1973 policy Indian

Control of Indian Education, and to provide options for the future direction of Indian

Education, the Assembly of First Nations (1988 vol. 1) alluded to the fact that the

majority of non-teaching positions were held by First Nations people; whereas

professional positions were held by non-Aboriginals. In order to address this obvious

deficiency, the Assembly of First Nations (1988 vol. 2) strongly recommended that

First Nations people be trained as directors of education, administrators, teachers,

counselors, and principals to work in First Nations, as well as other kinds of schools.

They acknowledged that "a significantly greater number of First Nations people are

needed to fill key and senior management positions that impact upon First Nations

education" (vol. 1, p. 102).

Chance (1992) reported that there was a need to develop a pre-training format

for those interested in becoming principals in Indian schools. Lemon (1986) also

agreed that educators should be trained "who are from the same ethnic group as the

students. Educators would then bring the same cultural background and

understanding to the...situation" (p. 2). Barnhardt stated that "native people, with

appropriate training and the opportunity to bring their unique perspective and skills to

bear, are generally in a better position to break institutional barriers to Native

participation, because they have inherent within them the necessary cultural

predispositions." (p. 5). The Assembly of First Nations (1988 vol. 1) affirmed that

"new and comprehensive training initiatives by governmental and First Nation bodies

are required in the field of educational administration" (p. 103). In recognition of this need for qualified Indian educational leadership, the next two sections were structured to examine the literature in the area of characteristics required of effective Aboriginal leaders and factors which influence the effectiveness of Aboriginal leaders.

## Characteristics Of Effective Indian School Administrators

Several American authors made suggestions as to what they felt were the necessary characteristics required of an effective Indian school administrator (Barnhardt, 1977; Boloz and Foster, 1980; Chance, 1992; Cotton, 1987; Lynch & Charleston, 1990; Pavlik, 1988; Pepper & Nelson, 1985; Tippeconnic, 1983, 1984). Their list included a mix of behavioral activities, skills, and personality traits that the person should possess. One Canadian author,Jules (1988), also made suggestions in the general area of Native Indian leadership with implications for educational leadership. Barnhardt (1977) and Pavlik (1988) gave a detailed account of an effective Indian school administrator as one who has the ability to operate with a people-oriented type of personality. They further stated that this person must be sensitive, warm, outgoing, caring, honest, and flexible. Pavlik (1988) stated that this person must be able to work with a multitude of variables such as native culture, tradition, and language. Cotton (1987) described the reservation administrator as being open and flexible, having a sense of humor, and having the capacity to see and expose his/her own weaknesses. Pavlik (1988) continued by stating that the person must accept the Indian school as a unique entity and must come to grips with the fact that Indian schools are different and have the right to remain different from mainstream schools.

A fourth characteristic outlined by Pavlik (1988) was that this person must possess a self-perception as an Indian educator, that of a specialist Indian educator

who is unique. Boloz and Foster (1980) defined this as self-understanding. They asserted that the administrator must continuously be examining his/her personal values and needs, and should use the community, staff, and students as a source of feedback in his/her quest for self-understanding.

An awareness of the role culture plays in Indian communities is essential. Barnhardt (1982) emphasized that administrators who are culturally sensitive, and who understand how cultural systems and bureaucratic institutions interact with one another, and understand how they influence human behavior are the type of individuals needed in the administration of Indian schools.

The fifth attribute that would increase the Indian school administrator's effectiveness, as suggested by Pavlik (1988) was the possession of a repertoire of specialized knowledge and skills in the following areas: (a) Indian-White relations, (b) development of federal Indian policy, (c) concepts of self-government and sovereignty, (d) Indian culture, (e) community kinship, and last of all (f) understanding native teaching and learning styles. Tippeconnic (1984) confirmed this, stating that an administrator on an Indian reservation is not only expected to be an effective public school administrator, but also to be knowledgeable about the local tribal culture, and to understand how federal policy impacts on Indian education. Chance (1992) added that the principal must develop a cultural understanding of specific tribal needs and expectations that exist in an Indian school before he/she could take the position.

The sixth area listed by Pavlik (1988) is that the leader must believe the Indian child can succeed and must set realistic expectations for Indian students, as opposed to low expectations which merely patronize the Indian child. Pepper and Nelson (1985) went on to describe the effective Indian school leader as one who is able to demonstrate and communicate high expectations for self and others. Tippeconnic

(1983) indicated that negative attitudes of Indian students lead to low student expectations. He further pointed out that public school personnel perceived Indian students to be inferior to white students and expected them to fail in all aspects of their lives. But he emphasized that fortunately, Indian students had risen above this criticism and had earned college degrees in spite of those self-fulfilling prophecies. The American Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior, United States (cited in Chance, 1992) pointed out that the principal is the central figure in reversing the vicious cycle of low expectations.

The seventh characteristic of effective Indian school administrators as outlined by Pavlik (1988) was that this leader must make an effort to work with, and if possible, become part of the community. Although total integration may never occur, an effort must be made to work towards feasible goals. Tippeconnic (1984) added that the administrator who does not live in the community, faces the challenge of establishing and maintaining effective communication and contact in a community of which he/she was not a part.

Pavlik (1988) suggested an eighth characteristic. The administrator must possess dedication and commitment. As there is easy access to leadership positions, and a high turn over rate of administrators, he advised that administrators must not use Indian schools as a stepping stone for personal gain.

The mark of effective Indian leadership, according to Lynch and Charleston (1990), was that an administrator must be adaptive to changing conditions and able to create new possibilities for the people. This requires creativity and energy on the part of the administrator. Barnhardt (1977) described this person as one who understands the nature of change processes. Boloz and Foster (1980) suggested that the administrator is seen as a change agent who introduces new approaches and procedures to accomplish the school's goals and objectives. They describe an

effective administrator in an Indian school as one who believes that a certain amount of risk taking is necessary.

In the area of participatory decision making, Jules (1988) commented that "Native Indian administrators are likely to think of themselves as colleagues of the staff" and if given the opportunity "they would likely involve teachers in decision-making"(p. 21). Pepper and Nelson (1985) described the effective Indian school administrator as a person who uses a decision-making process which involves input from those affected by the decision. Cotton (1987) also described the administrator as having the ability to involve the staff in participatory school-related decision making. Barnhardt (1977) characterized this type of administrator as one who can delegate responsibility through a decentralized and horizontally oriented administrative organization.

Pepper and Nelson (1985) further described the qualities of an effective Indian school leader as one who takes initiative; demonstrates consideration for those with whom he/she works; communicates openly and encourages others; establishes and maintains well-defined structures; and as one who uses a logical, clear problem-solving process (p. 12). Barnhardt (1977, 1991) described this person as one who ensures a free flow in communication in all directions. This leader organizes people in such a way that utilizes their diverse interests, talents, and efforts for a common purpose. Barnhardt (1991b) continued his description of this type of administrator as one who "functions less as an authority figure and more as a facilitator, coordinator and mediator, leading by example and consensus rather than by decree." (p. 13). Malloy and Nilson (1991) and Verble and Walton (1983) also contended that Indian people preferred decisions arrived at by consensus.

Several authors described the political aspects of the role of the Indian administrator. Cotton (1987) suggested that administrators from reservation schools

invariably need to "be knowledgeable about and respectful of tribal politics." (p. 25).

Boloz and Foster (1980) suggested that administrators must be aware of possible

hidden curriculum or environmental expectations, and should recognize the school

community as a highly complex political society. Barnhardt (1977) defined the roles,

administrative styles and behaviors of persons in educational administration in Indian

schools as adaptive, innovative, and loosely structured. He suggested that

administrators must possess a high degree of tolerance for ambiguity. Last, but not

least, one of the basic requirements of becoming an effective administrator, as

indicated by Brass and Demay (1987), was gaining trust from the people whom you

were working with/for.

> I don't think that even to have a degree from the University ensures
> that you are going to be looked upon as a leader. If one goes to the
> Indian community, you find that you still have to go the route of
> somehow gaining trust from the people and it's not gaining trust so
> much with your academic credentials as by your social relationship
> with them (p. 31).

## Factors Influencing Effective Native Leaders

A study conducted in the spring of 1984, by Silverman and Demmert (1986)

indicated that many factors had an influence on, and contributed to the characteristics

of successful Native leaders today. The individuals who participated in this study

were successful Native leaders in Southeast Alaska who held positions of

responsibility in business, government, or the professions. The authors suggested that

applications could be made to educational situations. When analyzing the data,

Silverman and Demmert came up with eight criteria they felt had influenced native

leaders to become successful. These factors included: (a) past educational

experiences, (b) family members, (c) outside the immediate family members, (d)

out of school experiences, (e) socio-economic level, (f) positive relationship between

success in adult life and success as a student, (g) goals and objectives setting, and (h) real or perceived opportunities to succeed.

Silverman and Demmert (1986) found that effective leaders did well in school, liked school and were involved in school related activities. The results indicated that the respondent's mother played a key role as being a positive influence. The study found that outside influences such as teachers, and community leaders also helped influence the success of the respondents . The respondents indicated that positive learning experiences outside of the school were important to success in adult life with social skills being identified as the most important skill learned from parents and/or employers. Regarding socio-economic level, Silverman and Demmert found that eighty percent of the respondents indicated that their family members were in some sort of leadership position in the community or were recognized in some skill or activity. School was fairly easy as indicated by two-thirds of the respondents, with four-fifths receiving an honor or award, and ninety-eight percent remember doing well in school. Seventy percent of the respondents in Silverman and Demmert's study indicated that they established goals as young persons and were encouraged to become certain kinds of individuals. The last area explored was whether respondents felt they had been given opportunities to succeed. More than one-half of the respondents indicated that they felt they had a lot of opportunities to succeed. Last of all, Silverman and Demmert found that covert racism, lack of money and overt racism were barriers most often mentioned by the respondents.

Another major factor, which greatly influences the tasks of leadership, is the situation in which the leader finds him/herself. "Historically, Indian leadership practices have been geared toward 'shared situational leadership'--the best person tackling particular situations; not one person fulfilling all needs" (Verble and Walton, 1983, p. 32). "Leadership in Indian Country is defined by function. In other words,

different situations require different types of leaders" (Verble and Walton, 1983, p. 29). Boloz and Foster (1980) suggested that effective Indian school administrators must be able to adapt to the immediate environment in which they work.

Some authors indicated that culture also played a role in influencing perceptions on leadership. Culture, as defined by Brizinski (1989), is "the collection of rules, values, and attitudes held by a society which allows people to communicate, to interpret behavior, and to attach shared meaning to behavior and events" (p. 372) and according to Barnhardt and Harrison (1992) Indian culture includes "traditional values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and customs" (p. 9). Research in the field of Indian leadership, found that culture plays a major role in influencing perceptions of leadership, and that educators must become knowledgeable concerning the cultural differences in perceptions of leadership (Roupe and Tippeconnic, 1987; Chance, 1992; and Jules, 1988). Ignoring the influence of culture has led to failure of various federal and public program implementation (Gipp and Fox, 1991). Jules (1988) strongly emphasized the importance of culture by stating that "before one can be a leader, one has to know one's culture" (p. 20).

In his discussion of Indian culture, McCaskill (1987), stated that when one thinks of Indian culture, images of art, totem poles, pow wow dancing, canoes, teepees, moccasins, and headdresses are conjured up. Barnhardt stressed that Native culture should not be viewed as an artifact nor should it be treated as a thing of the past, but should be viewed as a way of life and a way of knowing. McCaskill (1987) commented that the conjured up images gave the impression that Indian culture was static when, indeed, it was actually dynamic and contemporary.

Malloy and Nilson, (1991) and McCaskill (1987) mentioned that while there are a wide range of Indian cultures in Canada they have a common thread running through them--the spiritual world view in which most Indian people believe all things

in life are related and everything happens for a reason and purpose. Another widely held belief is that Indian people consider the land as sacred and to be respected (McCaskill, 1987). Gipp and Fox (1991) also pointed out that "many Indian cultures stress a focus on the group and a holistic, non-materialistic approach to living" (p. 4). However, notwithstanding homogeneity, distinctions in culture can be found from one race to another as pointed out by Verble and Walton (1983). While most people hold certain values in common, e.g., goodness, courage, and honesty, there remain distinctions in cultural values that can be found between Indians and non-Indians. They also warned that regardless of these distinctions "we must recognize that differences themselves are not to be feared; only our reaction to them has the potential to be either positive or negative" (Verble and Walton, 1983, p. 15).

Aside from culture, it was also found that ethnicity of the administrator may affect his/her effectiveness. Thus the next section deals briefly with this topic.


## Ethnicity Of School Administrators

In a study conducted by Chance (1992), the notion of leadership was examined in American Indian schools on reservations. One area of the study included the ethnicity of the administrator and whether or not a difference in ethnicity affected the results of his study. The survey instrument administered by Chance consisted of two parts. Part one consisted of a descriptive component, while part two comprised a leadership style questionnaire. This instrument was established on non-Indian leadership practices. Whether such an instrument was developed by Natives or non-Natives could have had a direct bearing on the outcome of the study (Jules, 1988; and Roupe & Tippeconnic, 1987). However, despite this fact, Chance (1992) reported that both ethnic groups were remarkably similar, and the main difference found was in the area of teaching and administrative experience. When examining leadership

differences, the author found that both ethnic groups envisioned themselves as instructional leaders but found themselves to be more involved in managerial duties. The author also found that Native American administrators saw themselves as strong in the area of challenging, which according to Kouzes and Posner (cited in Chance, 1992), represented the desire to 'seek out new opportunities' and a 'willingness to change the status quo', and to be risk takers. The non-Indian group viewed themselves as being weaker in these particular areas.

In addressing the reasons for differences in perceptions of both ethnic groups, Chance (1992) commented that these differences may be attributed to the culture in which the administrator was raised: "Culture may play a part, or the answer may be that Indian administrators have not been bureaucratically socialized to the extent that their non-Indian counterparts have been" (p. 9). Tippeconnic (1984) acknowledged that background and ethnicity of the Indian school administrator help to determine his/her effectiveness, whether the individual is Indian or non-Indian. He also believed that tribal affiliation and cultural factors can make it difficult for an Indian administrator.

The above-listed factors which influence perceptions of leadership provide the reader with a glimpse of what is expected of an Aboriginal educational administrator of a First Nation school. The next three sections deal with perceptions of various different groups of Aboriginal people on effective leadership. Some relate specifically to an educational milieu, while others have implicit applications only.

**Indian Students' Perceptions Of Effective Leadership**

In a study done by Roupe and Tippeconnic (1987) which involved four American schools, two non-Native (urban and rural) schools, and two Native (urban and rural) schools, a total of 174 junior high school students were asked to rank

leadership characteristics of an effective educational administrator in order of importance. The characteristics were then grouped into the following areas: physical characteristics, social background, intelligence and ability, personality, task-oriented characteristics, and social characteristics. The study compared Indian students' perceptions with those of non-Indian students. On the basis of leadership characteristics, Indian students selected character traits which were more concrete and readily tangible, whereas non-Indian students selected more abstract, and esoteric characteristics. Indian students ranked the following characteristics as more important: was generous, had money, was neat, was well-dressed, had a good speaking voice, was well-educated, was talkative, and was not wasteful. The non-Indian students ranked the following traits in a leader as more important: mature for his/her age, energetic, good imagination, flexible, emotionally stable, motivated to achieve, and sensitive to feelings of others. Aside from the above mentioned areas, both groups were very similar in their perceptions of leadership. However, Roupe and Tippeconnic (1987) strongly believed that the similar perceptions among the groups may be attributable to the inculcation process which was taking place during the Indian students' formal education years--from kindergarten onward. They also felt that if external factors were controlled to a greater degree, the results would have been different. An example the authors give is in creating a less formal environment, such as conducting the study in a community setting rather than in the schools. Another factor that Roupe and Tippeconnic (1987) felt had an impact on the results of the study was whether the Indian student communicated better in his/her first language or in English.

Another flaw of the study, as Roupe and Tippeconnic (1987) pointed out, was in the instrumentation development process. When compiling leadership traits data, none of the studies they utilized were based on Indian values, and that "Educational

leadership at these traditional institutions often does not reflect tribal values" (Roupe and Tippeconnic, 1987, p. 13). The authors stated that an instrument more sensitive to the leadership concepts of Indians would be much more relevant with viable leadership traits obtained from leaders of various Indian tribes.

## Elders' Perceptions On Effective Indian Leadership

As stated by Barnhardt and Harrison (1992), elders are regarded "as the culture-bearers with regard to the practice and transmission of traditional values, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and customs" (p. 9). Barnhardt and Harrison also confirmed that elders act as the critical link between Indian institutions, Indian culture, and the Indian community with which they are associated.

Jules (1988) conducted a study in which three elders were given the opportunity to provide insights on leadership from a native perspective. This study does not specifically relate to educational leadership, however, the author stressed that it could be used in the field of education. After conducting separate unstructured interviews, the author analyzed the responses, grouped them into categories, and compared the statements of the elders with that of the other elders and finally to the literature. The ideal format, according to Jules would have been to have all three leaders together in open dialogue. The author then went on to match qualities and behaviors identified by the elders, with those in the video, I Am an Indian: The Circle of Leadership" (Spiller et al, 1984, cited in Jules 1988). Cited in the video, the six descriptions of qualities and behaviors of leaders described a leader who: (a) is not isolated or separated from the people, and is not above the people; (b) has wisdom; (c) has humility; (d) serves rather than bosses; (e) has personal integrity and practices honesty; and (f) is a facilitator - directs the people without giving the impression that they are being told what to do. Jules warned that the examination of

the elders' perceptions on Indian leadership are not offered as a recipe or a quick fix, but are examined as a way to reflect where Indian leadership has come from. She suggested that the teachings of the elders might be utilized in the development of leadership models.

## Indian Women In Leadership

The role of Indian women is in a continuous state of development and change. Stereotyping, discrimination, and racism are but a few obstacles faced by Indian women in the workplace. The fact that they are Indian, and women, automatically means two strikes against them before they even begin their careers. The researcher has first hand experience to this as she fits both categories; of being Indian and female. Despite this fact, Indian women are assuming leadership roles in society. Warner (1991), in her discussion on American Indian women, stated that "Indian women are beginning to have more visibility as role models because more and more women are assuming leadership roles in tribal and governmental activities" (p. 6).

Verble and Walton (1983), in the development of a leadership training manual for American Indian-Alaskan Native women (AI-AN), collected information from interviews with 100 AI-AN women on their perceptions and knowledge, reviewed over 2,000 pieces of information, and analyzed the 1980 Census Bureau statistics. The manual included a list of leadership characteristics which Indian women perceived as essential in order to be effective leaders:

a) Has vision--able to see what needs to be done and how to do it,

b) Can mobilize--able to motivate and organize available resources,

c) Has intelligence--able to see options and make decisions,

d) Is adaptable--exercises flexibility to meet different situations,

e) Is accountable--willing to accept responsibility for actions,

f) Has sensitivity--able to relate, understand, and listen to the needs of others,

g) Is committed--has strong sense of purpose, determination, discipline to carry out objectives,

h) Is willing to take risks,

i) Is objective--able to take criticism, exercises judgments based on facts rather than personal bias,

j) Has communication skills--able to convey to both followers and others, the purposes of her group,

k) Is enthusiastic--conveys energy to others,

l) Has a sense of humor,

m) Serves as a facilitator--is open, shares talents, willing to help others, and

n) Acts with humility--especially if she possesses all these talents. (p. 31, 32).

Verble and Walton (1983) encouraged Indian women, whether they were veteran leaders or neophytes, to continue enhancing their leadership skills and to see leadership as an important activity.

In order for these characteristics to begin falling into a semblance of order, models of educational leadership need to be examined, but as stated by Jules (1988) no model created for and by Aboriginal people exists. Again the writer utilized the literature which was available.

## Models Of Leadership

In recognition of the need for Indian models of educational leadership, this literature review attempted to concentrate on Indian studies of leadership. However, since very little literature exists pertaining to Indian models of educational leadership the writer included non-Native authors research and literature. Non-Native authors

contributions to the whole notion of Indian educational leadership proved to be an invaluable source of documentation.

In Pulling's (1990) discussion on creating and implementing shared vision, she came up with two models of leadership; the first being the military model and the second being the Lakota Indian model. A brief mention of the military model should suffice to help clarify the comparison to the Native American model of vision. Pulling commented that the military model operates in a linear fashion, which follows a top-down line of command. In this model, Pulling indicated that the lines of authority and responsibility are clear cut, leaving no room for flexibility. She believed most schools follow this "pseudo-militaristic" model in that the superintendent is at the top of the line, down to the principal, leaving no room for creative vision at the lower end of the line (p. 2). This model, she stated, is excellent for defeating the enemy and winning the war, and is very useful in times of crisis and high stress situations. However, Pulling emphasized that this model is not good for: (1) allowing input from the broader base, (2) fostering creativity, and (3) fostering bottom up communication.

The Lakota Indian model of vision originated from the concepts of religion and culture of the Lakota, which were formulated around circular patterns (Pulling, 1990). In terms of leadership, Pulling mentioned that leaders arose for a variety of purposes and reasons such as hunting, and religious ceremonies. She stated that decision-making was a collaborative process in which all in the group were equal. Pulling believed that this model of vision is good for: (a) generating a high level of commitment among the people involved; (b) offering positive possibilities for problem solving; and (c) easing the burden of leadership. However, Pulling warned that the model does have its shortcomings, such as not being able to generate action fast enough, as decisions take longer to reach as everyone has a right to speak. The

author concluded by stating that what was needed was a merger between the two models of leadership. Though it creates "some management challenges it can also inspire and engender great creativity in the solution of problems", however, these models of leadership must originate from Aboriginal people (p. 9).

As mentioned previously, not many models exist which have been developed explicitly by Aboriginal people. Begley (1994) in a report of a university-sponsored research project carried out in Ontario, Northwest Territories, and Western Australia from 1990 to 1992, discussed the development of situationally sensitive profiles of contemporary school leadership practices. The production of these profiles employed procedures derived from non-native techniques (Begley, 1994, p. 324). Of particular interest to this literature review though is the section dealing with the Northwest Territories principal profile. The profiling project team was composed of 12 members, two of which were of Aboriginal descent. The team produced a "situationally sensitive image of the role that reflects the cultural base of the Northwest Territories" which is predominantly indigenous (p. 330). Begley reported that four key dimensions emerged in the profile, advocacy, school culture management, instructional leadership, and organizational management (see Table 1).

Begley (1994) reported that these profiles were developed by blending research findings from the literature with local craft knowledge. Research revealed that the NWT profile placed heavy emphasis on transformational strategies which were: (1) collaboration, (2) teacher empowerment, and (3) community empowerment and that the ideal NWT principal was portrayed as engaging in school culture or organizational management as opposed to being the manager; an emphasis on facilitation and consensus building rather than control (Begley, 1994, p. 333). As reported by the author, these leadership profiles are currently being used in a variety

of ways by Canadian administrators. He concluded by stating that there was a need

for more field development projects of this type.

Table 1. Key Dimensions And Subdimensions Of Principal Practice

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1. Advocacy: The principal develops a shared vision which supports the educational needs of students and the aspirations of their community
   : Community Values
   : Empowerment
   : Community Education Plan
   : Student and Staff Support

2. School Culture Management: The principal creates and maintains a supportive school climate which is conducive to learning.
   : School Environment
   : Decision Making
   : Language and Culture Promotion

3. Instructional Leadership: The principal initiates and directs a growth-oriented process to maximize learning outcomes for staff, students, and community
   : Planning
   : Development and Implementation
   : Evaluation

4. Organizational Management: The principal ensures the effective operation of the school.
   : Finances
   : Facilities
   : Human Resources
   : Policies and Procedures
   : Time Management

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Note. From Begley (1994), p. 324.

Jules (1988) stated that the only models of leadership available were those

developed in the non-Indian cultures. Barnhardt warned that the use of Western

administrative models to provide services to a non-Western cultural community

creates pervasive problems. The development of leadership models suitable for and

created by Aboriginal people will continue to be a concern as long as further research

in the field is not done.

## Existing First Nations Problems

When viewing the entire scope of effective Aboriginal educational leadership,

one cannot ignore ongoing problems on most First Nations reserves. The following

section explores briefly, the paramount problems which do exist. Chance (1992) stated that problems such as poverty, alcoholism, single parent households exist on reservations in North America. Gipp and Fox (1991) listed the problems as: poverty, unemployment, encroachment on Indian lands and resources, lack of quality personnel and other resources. Gipp and Fox realized that even though education was recognized as offering hope to Indian people, limiting conditions and daily struggles faced by Indian people on reservations were more critical and urgent and had to be dealt with on a daily basis. As a result of this, education was often pushed to the background, and as affirmed by Kirkness (1985; cited in Jules, 1988) the following types of school-based types of problems perpetuate: apathy amongst students and teachers, absenteeism amongst students, overall feelings of discouragement, high drop-out rates, age-grade displacement, and lack of parental involvement. Barnhardt (1977) suggested that an open-ended, evolutionary approach was needed to address such problems that existed on reservations.

The welfare of the Indian child should be the primary concern of any administrator, if he/she expects to become an effective administrator. Once the students' essential needs have been addressed, the holistic approach to educating the Indian child can become relatively easier. Building a positive self-identity and providing the means by which the Indian child can gain sufficient knowledge about his/her own culture are two key areas with which the Assembly of First Nations (1988 vol. 1, p. 107) are concerned.

## Summary

Based on the general findings of the literature, the writer identified characteristics, skills/abilities, and strategies required for effective Indian leaders as well as those of educational administrators. This person must be: trustworthy,

culturally sensitive, people-oriented, sensitive, warm, outgoing, caring, honest, flexible, open, self-analytical, adaptive, dedicated, committed, creative/innovative, energetic, a risk taker, an initiator, tolerant of ambiguity, and considerate of others feelings. As well this person must have a sense of humor. Having an understanding and knowledge of the following variables were found to enhance the educational administrator's repertoire of skills: native culture, tradition, kinship, native teachings and learning styles, language, Indian-white relations, development of Indian policy, concept of self-government/sovereignty, and First Nations politics and needs.

The following abilities were also identified as being helpful to the Indian school administrator: to act as a facilitator, coordinator, or a mediator; to accept the Indian school as a unique entity; to see self as Indian educator, and as a unique person (specialist); to understand specific tribal needs and expectations; to believe that the Indian student can succeed; to set high expectations of Indian students and self; to understand the nature of change processes; to understand human behavior; to establish and maintain well-defined structures; to utilize people's talents, interests, and efforts; to communicate openly in all directions; and to encourage others.

Awareness of the following areas were also acknowledged as being important to the Indian school administrator: awareness of loosely structured environment; importance of being a part of the community; and awareness of hidden curriculum, and recognition that the school community was a highly complex political society.

The following strategies were identified as being helpful to the Indian school administrator: being able to utilize a participatory decision making process (consensus); and being able to utilize a clear problem solving process.

The next area of the literature review delved into what Indian students' perceived effective Indian school administrators characteristics were. The participants suggested an effective administrator: was generous, had money, was

neat, was well-dressed, spoke well, was well-educated, was talkative, and was not wasteful.

The third area of the literature review explored elders' perceptions of important aspects of effective leaders. They suggested a leader: is not isolated or separated from the people; is wise; is humble; serves rather than bosses; is trustworthy; is honest; and acts as a facilitator.

The fourth area of the literature review concerned Native women's' perceptions of effective leadership. An effective Native woman leader: has vision, can mobilize, has intelligence, is adaptable, is accountable, is sensitive, is committed, is a risk taker, is objective, communicates well, is enthusiastic, has a sense of humor, facilitates, and is humble.

As can be ascertained from all four groups of perceptions of effective Indian leadership various characteristics overlap, except for the Indian students' perceptions which deviated from the other perceptions presented. Indian leaders require specific characteristics which will help them become more effective in the ever changing world of Indian education. The recent phenomenon of quality Indian leadership, which is fast becoming an integral ingredient of effective Indian schools, must be comprehensively studied if Indian education is to progress. An Aboriginal model of educational leadership created by and for Aboriginal people would be an important tool for First Nations.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research strategy and methods used for data collection and analysis are outlined. The procedures for establishing trustworthiness and maintaining research ethics are also described.

The primary purpose of this research was to determine the perceptions of Aboriginal school-site administrators regarding effective leadership in Band controlled schools. Aboriginal educational administrators were asked to offer their perceptions on characteristics required of Aboriginal educational administrators in First Nations schools.

## Research Strategy

As indicated by Borg and Gall (1989), the main purpose of educational research is to discover new knowledge about educational happenings. This research study was designed to specifically determine characteristics of effective Aboriginal educational administrators in First Nations schools. A qualitative research design (also described as naturalistic inquiry by Lincoln and Guba, 1985) was utilized. The naturalistic paradigm is "based upon inductive thinking and is associated with phenomenological views of 'knowing' and 'understanding' social and organizational phenomena" (Owens, 1982, p. 3). The researcher viewed herself as the primary instrument for collecting data; thus, interacting closely with those involved in the study during the interview process (Borg and Gall, 1989; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This approach was selected because it aided in the collection of valuable insights and

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perceptions of Aboriginal educational administrators within the context of their own educational milieu.

The interview process as a part of this research study allowed the researcher to observe the facts as they normally occur in a natural setting as opposed to being contrived in an artificially controlled environment (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The intent of interviewing, as stated by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), is to capture how respondents think or feel about something, as well as how they explain or account for something.

## Data Collection

In this section the site and sample selection, and the data collection methods used in the study are described.

### Selection of Site

Thirteen participants were selected from First Nations schools in Saskatchewan. The process by which the participants were selected is as follows: (a) a list of Tribal Councils was compiled, (b) another list of First Nations independent of Tribal Councils was compiled, (c) First Nations schools within these two groups were compiled, (d) Aboriginal educational administrators within these First Nations schools were identified, and finally (e) one Aboriginal educational administrator was selected from each Tribal Council, as well as one from the group of independent First Nations. Two Aboriginal educational administrators were selected from the larger Tribal Councils. The list of Tribal Councils, First Nations independent of Tribal Councils, and number of Aboriginal administrators is included in Appendix A.

First Nations schools were selected because, as First Nations schools, these types of schools are under-represented in the literature in terms of educational

leadership research. Secondly, First Nations schools were selected because that was the ideal location in which to collect relevant data pertinent to Aboriginal educational leadership.

## Selection of Participants

To address the need for more research pertaining to and involving Aboriginal people, Aboriginal principals and vice-principals provided the data for this study. It was anticipated that individuals from this group of principals and vice-principals would speak from their experiences and from their observations of other Aboriginal educational administrators when identifying characteristics required of effective Aboriginal educational administrators.

Once permission was received from the Directors of Education at each First Nation participating in this study, Aboriginal principals and vice-principals were identified, contacted, and asked to participate in the study. The Aboriginal principals and vice-principals who were selected for this study were willing and available to participate. Criteria for selection included size of First Nation, location of First Nation, and availablility and willingness, of participants to participate in this study. It must also be noted that the pilot study interview was included because perceptions of the administrator involved were considered as valid as other participants' perceptions. Also, it must be mentioned that one interview was conducted via taped telephone conversation, and one other interviewee wrote his responses to the interview questions and forwarded them to the interviewer. These were all due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the interviewers control as can oftentimes be the case in qualitative research.

## Data Collection Methods

Data collection in this study consisted of: a) recorded interviews and transcriptions of the interviews, b) written accounts of all non-recorded interviews, c) field notes generated during schools visits, d) written comments provided by participants following perusal and verification of their interview transcripts, and e) collection of First Nations schools and central administration office documents pertinent to this study.

Interviews An interview schedule was arranged for each First Nation educational administrator involved in the study. Semi-structured personal interviews were used to collect the data (see Appendix B). This type of interview process was selected because it has the advantage of being reasonably objective but at the same time permitting a deeper understanding of the respondent's opinions and the reasons behind them (Borg and Gall, 1989). The authors also suggested that semi-structured personal interviews tended to be more appropriate for studies in education.

Questions were intended to keep participants relaxed, yet motivated enough to stay focused; therefore, the researcher structured the interview questions to be fairly open-ended and conversational. Borg and Gall (1989) suggested that it was not a good idea to ask too many closed-formed questions in succession or to change the subject of the interview too often, otherwise the respondent may feel that the interview was not necessary and that the interviewer was not interested in obtaining the respondent's own in- depth views (p. 462). Wolcott (1994) suggested that the interviewer should proceed in an unstructured manner until he/she has become better acquainted with the new setting (p. 161). The interview questions were field-tested on a volunteer Aboriginal principal of a First Nation school in Saskatchewan, which according to Borg and Gall (1989) helps to improve order of the questions.

All participants agreed to be taped recorded during the interview process. Tape recorded interviews were conducted in October and November, 1994, each lasting between 45 to 70 minutes. Tape recorded interviews reduce the tendency of interviewers making unconscious selections of data which favor their own biases, can be played back many times, and can be studied in more detail (Borg and Gall, 1989). Another advantage of using tape recorded data, as indicated by Borg and Gall is that the researcher is able to evaluate and classify responses much easier. Formal consent to participate in the study was obtained from each individual. (see Appendix C).

Field notes Notes were taken while at each First Nation school and following the completion of each interview. Notes taken while the interview was in session, helped the researcher when the analysis of data took place. A field notebook was used to organize ideas, reflections, and any pertinent information the researcher felt could be used later as an additional data source.

Document collection When possible, participants were requested to provide documentation which supported their administrative practices or policies described in their interviews. Program records and documents provide a rich source of information to increase the researcher's knowledge and understanding (Patton, 1990). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that documents assist in confirming the observations and interviews conducted by the researcher; thereby making the findings more trustworthy. Documents also provide the researcher "with historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that is unavailable from other sources" (p. 52).

## Data Analysis

As denoted by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) "data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have

learned" (p. 127). They further explained that the researcher creates explanations, poses hypotheses, then develops theories. This was done by categorizing, synthesizing, and searching for patterns and interpreting the data. The process of "making sense" of the field data, as indicated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) was defined simply as "inductive data analysis" (p. 202). Patton (1990) further described inductive analysis to mean looking for patterns, themes, and categories that come from the data; that emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis ( p. 390). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed that data collected in the field must be analyzed from specific, raw units of information to larger categories of information (p. 203).

Verbal interactions in the form of what people revealed to the researcher and the researcher's impressions formed the main part of the researcher's analysis of the data (Borg and Gall, 1989). After the completion of the interviews, prepared transcripts of the interviews were submitted to each participant for verification of the data. The participants were then given the opportunity to add or delete any comments. In reporting the data, the researcher began by giving a demographic description of each Aboriginal educational administrator. Wolcott (1994) confirmed this by stating that "readers may also appreciate the opportunity of a broad look around, to have for themselves an introductory overview" to the setting (p. 161). Next the data were analyzed according to recurring themes found in the transcripts of the interviews by counting responses of participants and putting these responses onto charts for each research question.

Holsti (as cited in Lincoln and Guba, 1985) confirmed the use of categories for coding of raw data. Contextual information about the participant included age, gender, ethnicity, spoken language, school attended, highest level of education attained, and years of experience in a First Nation school. Contextual information

about the school included enrollment of First Nation school, proximity of First Nation school to an urban centre, and size of community. After the responses were charted, the data were then examined to note similarities or differences in responses depending on the personal data supplied by the participants of the Tribal Councils and independent First Nations. Finally, results from the data collected were compared to the literature to check whether Aboriginal principals' perceptions expressed were comparable to those found in the literature.

## Research Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is the ability of the researcher to persuade his/her audience that the findings of the study are worthy of attention. They stated that the conventional methods for testing for trustworthiness included internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. However, they proposed that internal validity be replaced by credibility, external validity with transferability, reliability with dependability, and objectivity with confirmability. In order for a study to establish trustworthiness, Guba (as cited in Lincoln and Guba, 1985) suggested that consideration be given to procedures which foster credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study worked to maintain trustworthiness by using varying strategies to address each of these components.

### Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested five techniques which can be implemented when testing the trustworthiness of the study: (a) prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation, (b) peer debriefing, (c) negative case analysis, (d) referential adequacy, and (e) member checking. In this study, member checks were conducted to allow participants to respond to written

summaries of data provided. Data from interviews were triangulated with First Nation education policies, and other related documents. Most researchers advocate data collection by more than one method. This triangulation helps to demonstrate validity and open up new perspectives about the topic under investigation (Borg and Gall, 1989). Triangulation was also achieved through interviews with participants in different locations throughout the province. Lastly, debriefing occurred with the researcher's advisor and colleagues of the Onion Lake First Nation Education System who examined the findings and conclusions for possible researcher bias.

## Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested the technique used to establish transferability was thick description. Thick description as defined by Owens (1982)

> conveys a literal description that figuratively transports the readers into the situation with a sense of insight, understanding, and illumination not only of the facts or the events in the case, but also of the texture, the quality, and the power of the context *as the participants in the situation experienced it* (p. 8)

It is not the naturalistic researcher's task to decide if there is application or generalization possibilities; the responsibility lies with the reader to make transferability judgments for possible applicability or generalizability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

## Dependability and Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that an audit trail helps to "systematize, relate, cross-reference, and attach priorities to data" (p. 319). An audit trail was developed to account for dependability. The authors suggested that dependability and confirmability can be simultaneously determined if the audit trail is executed properly. Both the research process and decisions related to the analysis of data and

the findings and conclusions were recorded. Field notes helped to uncover biases and assumptions arising during the study.

## Research Ethics

Ethical considerations were adhered to ensure all individuals involved in the study were afforded respect and consideration. Permission to conduct the research was received from the University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Human Experimentation. Contact was made with administrative personnel in each of the First Nation schools and permission was obtained from each Aboriginal principal to do research. Participants were informed of the intent and objectives of the study. The nature of all procedures for conducting the research and using the data were fully explained. Individuals were informed of their voluntary consent to participate in the study and their right to withdraw at any time. They were also informed that any new information that might have a bearing on their decision to continue participation would be supplied. The confidentiality and anonymity of interview responses was protected by removing from quotes and descriptions all names and details which might otherwise breach the agreement regarding anonymity of the participants. Also, any comments the participants wished to make "off the record" were respected. Finally, each participant was given the opportunity to review the interview transcripts and to add, edit, or delete comments. Throughout the study great effort was made to respect the rights and professional careers of all the participants.

# CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS

The main purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Aboriginal school-site administrators regarding effective leadership in First Nations schools and the implications of being an Aboriginal administrator. The first section describes the sample population involved in the study employing the use of demographic profiles. The second section, leadership Stories, describes unique characteristics of each educational administrator so as to give the reader a deeper understanding of the administrator.

### Description Of Participants And Setting

In order to give the reader a sense of the participants involved, as well as the setting of the participants in the study, the following description is given. Thirteen Aboriginal educational administrators working in the capacity of principals or vice principals in First Nations schools in Saskatchewan were interviewed by the researcher during the months of October, and November, 1994. To assure anonymity of participants, numbers assigned for each administrator will be renumbered at the end of each section as they are discussed. To further assure anonymity broad categories were used to group the participants according to age, and size of school: Age categories were: Younger (39 years of age and younger), Middle (40 to 50 years of age), and Older (51 years of age and older). Size of schools were grouped as: Small (1-150 students), Medium (151-250 students), and Large (250 students and up). Ancestry of participants were mainly Cree, Metis and Cree-Saulteaux. To ensure anonymity, disclosure of participants' ancestry is not given. First language of

participants was either Cree or English. The following table illustrates the groupings involved.

Table 2. <u>Demographic Groupings of Administrators</u>

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Age of Administrator

| Younger | Middle | Older | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 7 | 2 | |

Gender of Administrator

| Male | Female |
|---|---|
| 10 | 3 |

Years of Experience as an Administrator

| < 5 Years | 5-10 Years | > 10 Years |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | 4 | 2 |

Years of Post-Secondary Education

| 1 Degree | 2 Degrees or More |
|---|---|
| 13 | 6 |

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## Demographic Profiles

<u>Administrator one</u> was a male person belonging to the younger age group and his first language was Cree. This person attended various types of schools in his younger years starting off as a day student at an Indian residential school, and eventually attending the residential school for approximately two years. He completed most of his high school years on the reserve and at provincial schools in urban centres. At the age of 23 he obtained his teaching certificate. Despite numerous personal problems encountered during this time, he attained his B. Ed. In terms of experience, administrator one has been in the education field for 12 years. He had served five years as an administrator in First Nations schools or in a provincial school that mainly catered to a native population. Seven years were spent

as a teacher and/or an administrator in provincial schools. He is presently administrator of a large junior and senior school system.

Administrator two was a female person classified in the middle age group whose first language was Cree. Her early education was obtained attending day schools on First Nations as well as provincial schools. Administrator two acquired her high school education at an Indian residential school. After receiving her teaching certificate she began her teaching career. All of her ten years of teaching experience were acquired at First Nations schools. Fifteen years of administrative experience were gained at various levels, some in Indian organizations, and some at the school level. Years of summer classes and night classes were the methods she chose to complete her Bachelor of Education degree. She is presently an administrator of a medium-sized nursery to high school.

Administrator three was a male of the middle age group whose first language was Cree. All of his early education was acquired through a provincial school system. After completing his Bachelor of Education degree, administrator three began his teaching career with two years being at a provincial school followed by five years at First Nation schools. He had a total of four years administrative experience, all obtained within First Nation schools. He is presently employed as an administrator of a large school system from nursery to high school.

Administrator four, a male belonging to the middle age category considered Cree his first language. He did mention that when he attended Indian residential school, English was his dominant language and still is. "I do understand and speak some Cree." He attended, as mentioned, a residential school as well as an integrated school where he completed his grade 12 education. He began as a teacher's aide with some university courses, but eventually received his Bachelor of Education degree. He had 20 years experience in the school, working in different capacities. The last

four years have been spent as an administrator of a large school from nursery to junior high.

Administrator five was a female who fitted into the younger age category. Her first language was English. All of her early years of schooling were spent at Indian residences. Secondary education was not achieved, however various types of training certificates were attained. Administrator five eventually received her Bachelor of Education degree. and has been in the field of education for four years; all within First Nation schools. This year is her second year as administrator of a small nursery to elementary school.

Administrator six, a male belonging to the middle age category considered his first language to be English. His first years of education were spent attending a community school. Administrator six's high school years were spent at a residential school away from home where he acquired his grade 12 education. He obtained his teaching certificate and has now worked for a total of fifteen years in the teaching profession. Ten years teaching experience were gained at a provincial school and five years teaching experience were gained in First Nation schools. This was his first year as administrator of a medium-sized junior and senior high school system.

Administrator seven was a male person who fell under the younger age category. His first language was Cree. The types of schools he attended for his early and senior education were provincial schools, joint schools and private schools. Upon completion of his high school, this person went on to finish his Bachelor of Education degree and throughout his first years of employment he attained his second degree, a Bachelor of Arts. His teaching career included five years in a provincial system and five years in First Nations schools. Of the five years in First Nations schools, two were as administrator of a large school from nursery to junior high.

Administrator eight was a male person who belonged to the older age group. His first language was Cree. The types of schools he attended included day schools, Indian residential schools, and provincial schools. After graduating from grade 12, he went to teacher's college after which he started teaching. He has been in the teaching profession for approximately 25 years, and has been an administrator of a provincial school system for approximately 22 of those years. This is his first year as an administrator of a medium-sized First Nation nursery to senior high school.

Administrator nine was a male person who fell under the older age category. His first language was Cree. He began his early schooling in day schools on the reserve. He also attended Indian residential school for one year. He completed his grade 12 in a provincial school system. Administrator nine received his Bachelor of Education degree, Bachelor of Arts degree, and Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Administration. He has a total of 23 years experience working in First Nations educational systems with twenty one of those years in administrative positions. The system in which he is presently employed has a medium enrollment from nursery to senior high school.

Administrator ten, a female person, who fitted into the middle age category, considered Cree her first language. She began her early education attending an Indian residential school. She also attended a convent for one year and then she dropped out. After attending upgrading classes she went to university where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree, and after another year of education classes received her teaching certificate. After relocating to another university, this person received her professional teaching certificate as well as her Masters in Education degree. Administrator ten had approximately eight years experience as a teacher and instructor in First Nations schools. This is her second year as an administrator of medium-sized nursery to senior high school.

Administrator eleven was male person of the younger age category whose first language was Cree. He attended grades one through five on his home reserve with his further education taking place at an Indian residential school away from home. After graduating, he went to university for four years to get his Bachelor of Education degree. This administrator has had experience working in a provincial school system as well as experience working in a First Nation school. He has been the administrator of a small nursery to junior high school for the past eight years.

Administrator twelve, a male person, fell under the middle age group. His first language was Cree. He attended both day school on the reserve as well as an Indian residential school. His post-secondary training included a Bachelor of Education degree and a Bachelor of Arts in Indian Studies. Administrator twelve worked for 12 years in First Nations schools and five and a half years as an administrator of First Nations schools. He is presently employed in a medium-sized nursery to senior high school.

Administrator thirteen was a male person who fell under the middle age group. His first language was Cree. He attended a combination of schools which included Indian residential schools, day schools on the reserve, and provincial schools in an urban centre. He received his Standard "A" as well as his Bachelor of Education degree. He has worked a total of thirteen years in First Nations schools, eight years as a teacher and five years as an administrator. He is presently employed in a small nursery to senior high school.

The next section entitled Leadership Stories describes the unique characteristics of each administrator. As stated earlier, the order of the administrators' comments will be changed to assure anonymity.

## Leadership Stories

Administrator one was a strong advocate of an open-door policy; that is, being accessible to students, staff, and community members. He strongly believed in the collaborative decision-making approach to leadership and giving power back to the teachers. He perceived that there was a moving away from the old type of administration which employed a top-down type of decision-making process. Working collaboratively made for "a better school environment, a better school climate." He referred to a book "Laughing Boy," which he found helpful in understanding the two worlds, the Indian world and the white world.

> Oftentimes I refer to the two circles, one being dominant, and one
> being the Indian world, and putting a third circle in there which is
> intertwined in both worlds. And that is sort of your world view or
> that is where you are coming from; taking the best from two worlds.

Administrator one also referred to a quote from Jean Val Jean "Isn't it wrong not to do the best that you can?" to emphasize the importance of putting out that extra effort and time and of reaching for the starts and beyond. He discussed setting high standards for ourselves and maintaining those standards, but still going beyond them.

Administrator two felt that understanding the native community was very important in terms of how many families followed the traditional way and how many were more contemporary. He stated that he saw people with Master's degrees whose administration was totally ineffective simply because of their attitude. He believed that if one lived the Indian way of life it would help them be more understanding. He felt that native people should be teaching in native schools if education was to be effective for Native students and that there were enough native teachers out there that could fill up all the native schools. He further felt the stigma that "white schools" were better than Indian schools was slowly disappearing as good teachers, better programming, and good sports programs in First Nations schools were procured.

Administrator three felt that respect for other people was the foundation of her job, not only on a professional basis, but also on a personal basis. She related a story of being sent to the principal's office as a child and how condescending it was for her: "it was very intimidating and I try not to bring that into my position." Being approachable was what she emphasized. She also pointed out that teachers and principals need to understand the Indian way of life, that they needed to be able to empathize with the people on the reserve and understand their way of life.

Administrator four perceived that common sense in working with people, building their trust with people, and building the morale of the people was very important. She stated that if these were maintained then "in turn you see it in the students." In her discussion of students, it was apparent that this administrator treated students the way she would have liked to have been treated when she was in school. Another important comment this administrator pointed out was "thinking first before you act." She believed this was an important characteristic of an Indian person, "You have to remain calm and think about the situation, and think about the family also that is being affected."

Administrator five had a similar view to Administrator two, in that knowing the fabric of the community, knowing what the community was like, and understanding what the community wanted was very important. He also believed as did Administrator one, that the authoritarian way of administering wasn't the best way for a First Nation school to operate. He realized that culture, athletics, and most importantly academic excellence played a big part in the overall education of the students at the school. He pointed out that one of the things that he has encountered in working for that particular Band was that sometimes there were double standards.

> There's a standard for non-native teachers, and then there's a
> different standard for Indian teachers. Sometimes the community
> will not really put the native teacher at the same level with the white
> teacher. They sometimes think that the native teacher is not as
> capable as the non-native teacher, and I don't think that's right. I
> think sometimes, as a native educator, you have to work twice as
> hard to prove yourself to your community.

He also commented that one of the shortcomings of First Nations schools was the role politics could play in the educational system. "Sometimes the politics can really affect the school in a negative way." He also felt that not enough parents become involved in the school.

Administrator six felt that making the staff feel comfortable so they would enjoy coming to school was important. Having respect for his colleagues was important to him. Being a traditional authoritarian type of administrator didn't mix with the whole idea of native education, stated this administrator. He felt that cultural awareness was important to knowing the staff, students, and community. He gave an example of a teacher who kept referring a student to his office. This teacher didn't seem to understand what was happening to this student at the home level.

> This teacher kept referring the student to my office, saying that this
> kid was bad and doesn't listen. I asked the teacher, "Did you ever
> observe how that kid dresses." This was about the middle of
> January. "No," he says. I said, "Look at his winter clothing. Did
> you ever look at them?" "No" the teacher replied. I said, "I'll tell
> you then. That's guy's winter clothing consists of two wind breakers
> and a shirt. Did you look at his shoes?" "No." Well, I said, "Look
> at his runners. It's probably like walking around with a block of ice.
> Furthermore, do you know anything about this student?" The
> teacher replied, "No." I said, "His parents drink a lot, and they live
> in this little bungalow. There's about two families there. There's
> about 14 of them in that home. Did you know that?" Again he
> replied, "No." I said, "I'm surprised. You've been here for seven
> years and you don't know anything about these students." So things
> like that. It's hard. After meeting with that teacher, he had an
> entirely different attitude toward that kid. And it ended up that he
> was one of the best behaved students within two weeks after the
> teacher gave him opportunities to improve his attitude.

Administrator seven stressed the importance of being sensitive and understanding about problems that exist on First Nations. He stated that many of the problems faced by students are not the same as in the white society, that a lot of native people suffer from the residential school syndrome, and that the administrator has to make the staff aware of this. He stated that the students have special needs, that they are hurting inside and the administrator has to make the staff aware of this. As a native administrator, who has come from that setting, he believed he is more sensitive to those types of problems. Another advantage of being a native administrator, he stated, was that these issues could be viewed from a native perspective; however, not all the problems could be solved. Another important point that he brought out was that he was not from that First Nation, and was able therefore, to view issues from a neutral standpoint.

Administrator eight emphasized the importance of making the people feel like they were human beings by dealing with them as fairly as possible. He believed in thinking positively about everything, and turning a negative around to a positive. He stressed that consulting with staff on certain things was essential, rather than utilizing a dictatorship style of leadership. Home life of the leader shouldn't conflict with his/her job was also mentioned, "If you have problems with family life, just leave the problems at home. Deal with it when you get home and come back to school as an administrator." This administrator felt that it was very important not to separate himself from the staff, students, and the community. His goal was to bring the community and the school into closer contact.

Administrator nine found that being direct with the people of the community, the staff, and the students was important. As a female administrator, she felt that females were more understanding, more caring, and more motivated to go for their

goals and reach for the top because of the previous experiences they went through. She believed that being this type of person gave them the capability to handle matters adequately at the school level. One area this administrator felt she could improve in was oral skills. She felt more comfortable speaking in her first language as she is a fluent Cree speaker, "I'd rather do it in Cree, rather than trying to fumble around with the English words when I'm talking to the staff. I don't want to have to be forced to go up there and speak to people when I'm still trying to improve those oral skills." A strength she mentioned was being able to think before speaking, but she understood some people would perceive that as a weakness:

> I tend to be a quiet person at times. It's always been my nature to be
> a quiet person; I think a lot. Some teachers perceive me as being a
> passive person, or as one who cannot do the job, but that's just my
> nature. I was like that throughout my life.

She further commented that it takes her a while to respond if a teacher asks her something. She won't say anything until she's thought it through and then she'll respond to that teacher. Whether it takes a few minutes, five minutes, or even up to the next day, she always thinks first before she speaks.

Administrator ten couldn't overstress the importance of having trained principals and administrators in First Nations schools. He expressed that they should be prepared for what they were going to come up against in a First Nation school, and that training had to come from professionals who had been there, who had paid their dues, and who knew about it. One area he discussed that Native administrators needed to be aware of was how the external environment affected the school, and that Native administrators needed to use practical approaches to a lot of the problems that they faced, as the problems were quite a bit different from the public school system. An example he cited was in reference to use of the school gym for funerals.

> That certainly jeopardizes the school day. In a lot of cases, I know in
> some of the First Nations schools, school is canceled. And this
> affects the school program so they have to be aware of that. They
> have to honor that. That's just one example, there are many other
> external forces.

He would like to see a Master's program in First Nations education implemented.

What he would like to see done is to take the theories that are now being used, that

are now being put forth in graduate school, and turn those theories around and

identify them within First Nations schools. He believed that those theories would

work in a First Nation school as well as in a non-Indian school.

Administrator eleven felt that in order to be a successful administrator, one

had to have a very basic understanding of what is expected in a First Nation school or

community. He found that in certain situations where administrators did not

understand the expectations of the community and tried to impose their own values,

or way of seeing things, clashes were caused in that environment. He also stated that

treating people as human beings was very important. He mentioned that he made

some important changes in the system that helped promote the feeling of well-being

amongst the staff and students. First of all he had the photocopier, which had been in

the office, moved to the staff room. He stated, "Why would I want to have it in my

office? The staff need it, the staff use it. Little things like that I am aware of."

Another thing this administrator did was to give each staff member a master key.

Consequently he had a staff member come up to him and comment, "You know, you

treat us like human beings. You treat us like adults." This administrator stated that

his primary role as administrator was to support his staff, and

> as a leader in native tradition, a leader is not someone who walks up
> front and says "follow me, I will lead you", a leader in native sense
> will stand and walk behind his people and support them in what
> direction they are going. And that's what I try to do. They set the
> direction, I only follow them, and support them. I try to do
> everything I can to make sure they can accomplish those things.

He ended by stating that he saw himself as a rebel--a person who had a definite mind, a definite idea of what native education should be and that it was different:

> I think we are living in a very exciting time for native people. It's also a time where, as native people, we're going to have to try and set, come to real firm grips as to "who are we really?" I think we are different, and we should be different, we should look different, we should sound different, we should act different, and our system should definitely show that difference. And we should be proud of that.

Administrator twelve was perceived by the interviewer as a very strong, yet quiet type of person, who exuded authority in a very quiet dynamic way. His oral skills were excellent, yet he felt improvement was required in that area. This administrator listed four areas that the role of the principal could be summarized into:

> One is the organization of the school. That's taking the student, and the teachers and organizing them in a way that will service the students' needs the best. Second area, the administration of the school. It's important that the principal outlines to everyone, students and staff, how the school will operate. The third area, has to do with supervision and supervision of the school programs, supervision of staff members. If you don't do any kind of supervision there's no way that you would be able to evaluate the effectiveness of what's going on in programming and with the people who are delivering the program. The fourth role is to be a liaison person between the school and the various people you have to deal with, the School Board, the parents, the entire community. There are many people that live on the reserve that don't have children coming to the school who probably have an interest of what's going on at the school and so you have to be aware of them as well. You also have to be liaison between the school and the various agencies that have anything to do with the clients, the students; public health nurse, police on occasion, social workers. And you have to be the liaison between other schools.

He stressed the importance of communication with the people being served as communication led to better understanding.

Administrator thirteen's comments were handwritten as opposed to being tape recorded. Getting a sense of this administrator's unique characteristics was difficult as he had a very busy schedule, thus limiting the time for this interview. His written comments were that, in order to be effective, a person had to have educational

administration theory. He further wrote that "Indian Control of Indian Education hasn't moved since its inception. All that happened is the provincial curriculum is placed in Indian country." His written comments were very concise and the meaning was unlikely to be misconstrued.

## Findings To The Research Questions

The next section will present the findings to the six research questions as posed to the participants of this study. Responses to all questions varied according to how they were perceived from the standpoint of the participant. As part of the semi-structured interview format, the participants were permitted to answer the questions from their own frames of reference--from their own world view. They understood there were no right or wrong answers. The responses to the questions were categorized and grouped by their frequency.

## Leadership Characteristics of Aboriginal Administrators

Participants were asked to describe what they perceived to be the characteristics, abilities, skills, and strategies of an effective Aboriginal educational administrator in a First Nation school.

### Characteristics

The two most frequently given responses were that of being a people-person and being flexible. When discussing people-orientedness, Administrator nine stated, "You have to be a good people person. You have to know how to get along with people, how to resolve differences, and how to get people working as a team." Administrator ten commented that "You have to have skill in managing people. You

need to know how to deal with them in a way that is encouraging, so that they do become involved. You need to recognize their contributions." In addressing flexibility Administrator three stated that, "sometimes what's right for the student is to side with the parents, and to side with the teacher because that's best for the student," An example of how he showed flexibility regarding the staff, he "restructured the school to accommodate the staff so they could do their jobs, to be professionals." Administrator two warned that flexibility was important but that it had to be practiced after consulting with the person involved. Administrator seven found that flexibility involved being able to "go with the flow of what works best at the time."

Honesty was listed as the next most frequently given response. Administrator eight expressed that "people can see through you if you are not honest with them. It's better to be up front." After honesty, the characteristics of being a good listener, being approachable, having respect, and being dedicated were listed as being important. Administrator three commented on respect saying "I don't demand respect. Respect is given, not something you can take."

Next in line of important characteristics of effective Aboriginal educational administrators were: being humanistic, being supportive, being sensitive, being open-minded, having an open-door policy , being energetic, having common sense, caring, being educated, having a sense of humor, being positive, being involved in the community, being consistent, being fair, being friendly, and keeping confidences. Administrator two understood being humanistic to mean "making the people feel like they're human beings first. That's been my philosophy when I started here, that is to treat each person as a human being." Administrator three felt that being supportive meant to allow the staff to set the direction, and to follow them, whereas Administrator eleven perceived it meant to treat all staff members equally no matter where they taught or what they taught. Being sensitive to the students, community, to

parents, and to staff was considered an important characteristic to Administrator three. Administrator eleven commented on being friendly by stating that "if you're standoffish, parents, teachers, and students are going to know immediately." Open-mindedness was considered an important characteristic to Administrator ten who stated that an administrator "cannot come in here with any fixed or preconceived notions about anything."

Three administrators talked about involvement in the community. Administrator six stated that having an open-door policy meant being accessible to students, staff, and the community. Administrator ten concurred that having an open-door policy and making people feel that the school belongs to them was important, and that the people should be able to come in and express any concerns at any time if they so wish. Administrator thirteen believed involvement in the community was very important because "that way the parents have an easier time coming in because they trust you."

In discussing the characteristic of being consistent, Administrator thirteen emphasized that being consistent involved being strict with the students as well as with the staff. To Administrator seven, being consistent in dealing with situations such as discipline entailed being fair and reasonable to both staff and students.

Last but not least, the following characteristics were listed as being important: patient, enthusiastic, outgoing, a team player, a motivator, accountable, Native, calm, a thinker, empathetic, a sharer, a good observer, discretionary, innovative, a risk taker, assertive, responsible, understanding, strict, trustworthy, and direct. Being patient was important to Administrator ten because he perceived that "lots of times things don't happen as quickly as you'd like them to happen and people respond just maybe a little slower to things than you would normally expect in a non-native community."

When the participants were asked to state and discuss what they perceived to be the two most important characteristics of all, responses varied and in some cases were not included in their response, instead abilities, skills, or strategies were listed. Characteristics listed as important were, being: dedicated, trustworthy, and people-oriented, knowledgeable, responsible, respectful, open-minded, patient, professional, educated, objective, self-driven, and flexible. Administrator three elaborated that an effective administrator was a person who genuinely cared, and being this type of person helped set the tone and the direction in the school. Some administrators listed abilities or useful strategies as most important, such as: being on task with the paper work, building staff relations, getting along with students and teachers, working collaboratively, knowing where the community was coming from, and having good communication skills

The next section discusses abilities that participants perceived to be important for the Aboriginal educational administrator.


**Abilities and Skills**

All administrators agreed that speaking a First Nation language was an important attribute to possess as it opened the door to better communication at the community level, and some believed that to understand culture you needed to speak the language. Administrator nine said:

> The importance of speaking an Aboriginal language is a definite asset. I personally speak Cree and it becomes more important when you're dealing with the Band Councilors, with parents. When parents have a concern, they feel very comfortable coming into the school, coming into my office, and being able to communicate in Cree. It puts them at ease. So I think that makes a big difference, just for communications reasons

Administrator eight stated, "I definitely feel that a First Nations language is a definite asset because a lot of the people that you deal with, the parents, a lot of them are not

educated. They don't understand the English language as well as their own language." Administrator two also stated, "I speak the first language, and many times people come here and I have to explain things in the first language because they don't understand the second language which is English." Administrator six believed that language and culture went hand in hand and that more should be done to promote this. Administrator seven stressed how important Native languages and culture were

> It's becoming even more important nowadays because a lot of our Native languages are being lost, I think mainly because of the student residence situation. There were about two or three generations that went through, and some of them were not allowed to speak the language. Now if we want to get back to our culture, I think language is a very integral part of getting back our own culture.

Administrator twelve was extremely grateful to able to converse in the Native language, stating that on,

> This reserve, the first language is Cree and I found that to be one of the best things that could happen to me, as I'm a fluent Cree speaker. I find when we are in meetings at the Band level or even at the school level, when I use the Cree language you can see the people perk up and look at you. English is not their first language and it's hard for them to understand.

Administrator ten pointed out that he believed that language played an important part of culture, and that speaking in a First Nation language was helpful. However, he suggested that, "I don't think you would necessarily need to be able to speak the language, as long as you would have somebody that would be available to do it." Administrator ten felt that having the ability to speak a First Nation language would be important in a community that spoke predominantly in a First Nation language; however, in his particular community, English was mainly spoken thus having that ability was not as essential a requirement. He stated that in a "community where language is still alive, I think it's a real asset to have the ability."

Having the ability to communicate effectively was discussed by at least seven administrators. Communication skills included written and verbal skills. As

indicated by Administrator ten, you "have to have a certain level of skills in communicating with people, making people feel that they have worthwhile ideas, that their contributions are appreciated. You have to be a good communicator, and you have to express your ideas in words to people." Administrator two saw communication skills as important because as an administrator he was the ambassador of his school. Communication in the English language was also considered an important ability because as stated by Administrator twelve, sometimes acting as a translator was a necessity at the school level. Ability to communicate was considered important to Administrator nine who stated that "if you don't know how to communicate ideas ... to the teachers or to the Board or to the Band membership or to the Band Council, what you've learned in university might not be helpful at all."

Six administrators regarded having good organizational skills as essential. As stated by Administrator eight, "you've got to be able to organize, you've got programs to organize, not only your daily routine" and as stated by Administrator six, "making sure that proper programming is in place, making sure policies and procedures are all in place and that everybody is following regulations." Administrator two included preparing month end reports in his list of organizational skills. Administrator five found documenting what takes place in the school an important part of the administrator's repertoire of skills. Being knowledgeable in areas such as politics, law, Band structure, the school system, and core curriculum was considered important by four administrators.

Another ability perceived to be important was being able to delegate assignments and responsibilities. Administrator ten pointed out that the administrator could end up being quite frustrated and stressed out if he/she didn't depend on people that are around. Having the ability to facilitate, to build trust, to build staff moral, to remain neutral, to be oneself, to interact with the community, to be visible in the

community and to the students, to deal with crisis situations, and to dish out disciplinary action were also listed as important.

## Awareness

Several administrators felt that having an awareness of community cultural values, customs, traditions, and religion was of utmost importance. Administrator five stated "Our people have different thinking styles. You have to teach out of their world view. A lot of teachers start teaching right away without looking at cultural differences, without realizing that these students have a different thinking style." Along with having an awareness of community cultural values, having a basic understanding of what is expected in a First Nation school or community was also considered essential. Administrator nine stated that "it is vital that the person that does come in knows the fabric of the community, knows what the community is like, to understand what the community wants." An example of this was given by Administrator eleven who suggested

> If you have a school gym, sometimes people will request that gym for use for a funeral or awake, and that certainly jeopardized the school day. In a lot a cases, I know in some of the First Nations schools, school is canceled. And this affects the school program so they have to be aware of that. They have to honor that. That's just one example, there are many other external forces.

## Strategies

Strategies utilized by the Aboriginal administrators depended on the leadership style of the administrator, and the situation in which they found themselves. At times, no strategy was necessary especially when an autocratic directive from the School Board or Chief and Council was made. In such a case,

most administrators made it known to their staff that it was a top-down decision which they had no input into.

Another strategy involved utilizing a collaborative approach. Administrator five stated "what I usually do is call a fast meeting, and I will bring out this concern. I use a team approach. If you make a decision, 20 heads are better than one. I like to have the input of the staff. Usually I'll consult with them." As aptly described by Administrator six,

> I believe in collaborative decision making, giving power back to the
> teachers because ultimately they are the ones that have to work with
> the students and often times they know what is needed in the school. I
> think it's more effective when it's more of a group decision and plus it
> provides for better moral for students and staff.

As part of the team approach, another strategy employed was to meet with staff members individually or collectively to get their personal feelings on the issues being dealt with. As many tasks needed to be done at the school level, Administrator eight thought that the staff should be involved in these decisions. He did this by providing the staff with the necessary information, and getting a consensus based on the information. He stated that "if you are going to have people around you work together, you have to get their input, you have to make them feel that they are a part of the whole operation." Again depending on the situation and issues involved, being democratic was considered important. However, as stated by Administrator twelve, "if you don't have a consensus it causes a lot of conflict and anger after awhile when their voices are not heard. So it's a lot better to have a discussion, a consensus, as a group and then make a decision there."

The last type of approach utilized was a unilateral approach in which the administrators had to make decisions on their own where convening of staff members was considered unnecessary. Administrator six found that "if there's a hung jury, or there hasn't been a decision made at the school level, then sometimes it's up to the

administration to say, 'Well, this is what the majority are saying, and this is what we'll try,' ... but I do mention that sometimes as an administrator you get paid to make these decisions." Administrator eleven found that at the school level, when no decision could be reached, he would usually side with the teachers on a decision rather than with the students because he found them to be more knowledgeable as they were with the students most of the time, whereas 70% of his time was spent dealing with administrative issues.

Administrator four as well as Administrator three addressed the use of strategies from a different angle. Administrator four stated that she was free to make major decisions because of the personnel manual that was in place. "If I make a mistake, I discuss it with the Board. The staff goes along with me, as long as I explain what its all about, as long as there is communication.." She also mentioned that everybody couldn't be pleased at all times. Administrator three also made a similar statement, "you can't please everyone all the time." He stated that "we are here for the community, we are here in a First Nation school, in a First Nation community, and we have to follow the direction that the people of [this First Nation] set. You are hired to do that. That's what you're here for."

When asked to discuss the type of strategy utilized when dealing with student issues such as if a student is caught with drugs, most administrators engaged in the use of the school system's policy procedures, protocol, guidance counselors, and social programs that have been built into the school system. Administrator thirteen found that flexibility was important when dealing with situations that were unique. Administrator nine found that there were a lot of gray areas where no policy was in place and "sometimes you're left with making a judgment call." He continued that the schools role is to protect and support the child. Administrator six believed that students should be held accountable for their actions, and that an action plan should

be in place for them when inappropriate behavior occurs. He further stated that the use of a positive, humanistic approach was necessary from the administrator. Administrator eleven always likes to give the student the benefit of the doubt at least once before action was taken. However, depending on the severity of the situation the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) would definitely have been called in if required. Table 3 summarizes the leadership characteristics as indicated by participants.

## Self-Perception

When given the opportunity to describe themselves in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, administrators listed the following characteristics as their strengths: confident, people-person, goal-oriented, empathetic, understanding, compassionate, approachable, friendly, respectful, assertive, democratic, politically neutral, responsible, enthusiastic, open-minded, patient, knowledgeable through experience, dedicated, accurate, direct, honest, team builder, flexible, calm, fair, adaptive, bilingual, retrospective, a thinker before speaking, a good organizer, a good listener, a motivator, a good communicator, and a visionary. Perceived strengths included the ability to use humor in the workplace, and to be a giver and taker of constructive criticism.

Perceived weaknesses were: oral skills, over organized, too emotional, too quiet, not involved enough, a procrastinator, inability to separate from work when at home, too impersonal, too personal, worried too much, not assertive enough, dislike of dealing with money, not being firm in certain areas, and not as articulate as hoped. One administrator had a feeling of inadequacy, of not being able to please everybody. Two administrators felt that they would have been better prepared for the position if they had all the necessary training offered at university. In their discussion regarding

Table 3. <u>Important Leadership Characteristics Described by Administrators</u>

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| <u>Characteristics</u> | <u>Abilities</u> |
|---|---|

<u>Characteristics</u>

Is person-oriented
Is flexible
Is honest
Is humanistic
Is supportive
Is sensitive
Is open-minded
Has open-door policy
Is energetic
Has common sense
Is caring
Is educated
Uses humor
Is positive
Is involved in the community
Is consistent
Is fair
Is friendly
Is confidential
Is patient
Is enthusiastic
Is outgoing
Is a team player
Is a motivator
Is accountable
Is calm
Is a thinker
Is empathetic
Is a sharer
Is a good observer
Is discretionary
Is innovative
Is a risk taker
Is assertive
Is responsible
Is understanding
Is strict
Is trustworthy
Is direct

<u>Abilities</u>

To speak a First Nation language
To communicate orally and on paper
Knowledgeable in politics, law, Band
   structure, the school system, core
   curriculum,
To delegate assignments and assignments
To act as a facilitator
      To build trust
To build staff moral
To remain neutral
To interact with the community
To remain visible in the community
   with the students
To deal with crisis situations
To dish out disciplinary action when necessary

<u>Awareness</u>

Of cultural values, customs, traditions, religion
Of First Nations peoples thinking style
Of First Nations peoples world views
Of community expectations of the school

<u>Strategies</u>

Utilized a collaborative, team approach depend-
   ing upon situation
Followed school system's policies and pro-
   cedures

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assertiveness, one administrator commented that in dealing with staff or people from the community such as teacher aides, he had a difficult time to get on the problem if it had to do with absenteeism or lateness. Another administrator found that he usually gave students and teachers the benefit of the doubt, but felt that he needed to be a little more assertive in that area.

In addressing various aspects of their respective school systems, some administrators admitted that more parental, community, and elder involvement would be beneficial to their system. One administrator's goal was to ensure that dynamic teachers in the Kindergarten and Division were in place. Another administrator believed that by the year 2000 at least half the student population would be of Aboriginal ancestry, and with that in mind, more Aboriginal administrators were needed in leadership roles in First Nations schools as well as provincial schools.

## Ethnicity of the Educational Administrator

When called upon to discuss whether ethnicity of the educational administrator was an important consideration, participants responded in at least four ways: Yes, Yes and No, No, and Not sure. Administrator six believed that being a native administrator helped because that person understood the language, culture, reserve life, and interpersonal relationships amongst Indian people. Native administrators, he/she believed, understood what was happening at the community level, in terms of the social and economic problems. He/she emphasized that non-Indian people, were not able to relate in that way. Administrator eight definitely thought it was an asset to have a native administrator who came from similar settings as his/her First Nations students as they served as a role model for those students. He believed that native administrators were more sensitive to the problems faced by native people, and were more understanding. Administrator two also believed that

Aboriginal administrators acted as role models for the students. Other advantages of being Aboriginal included: (1) quicker at gaining rapport, especially if the First Nation language was spoken; (2) more sensitivity to environment, both politically, and socially; and (3) deeper understanding of the people in the community in relation to their innermost thoughts and emotions.

Administrator four held the belief that First Nations schools should employ native administrators because their style was different. However, if a non-Native administrator were hired, this person should be top notch with Natives Studies courses, and cross cultural training. Administrator five was of the opinion that Aboriginal administrators had more insight, did things differently, and looked at the world differently, but "just because you're native doesn't mean you'll understand the circumstances, the culture." He pointed out that he saw some non-native principals that were good because they had adapted to the values of the community they were in. Administrator three thought that being a native administrator had its advantages; however, he has met non-native people who had a deep, genuine concern, who were caring and understanding. He commented that if a person had the ability to learn and be open minded, then he/she would probably be good administrator. He further commented "Size, color, race, it doesn't matter. You can be four feet high, purple, whatever, as long as you treat people fairly, with respect." Administrator thirteen stated:

> I may be biased in this but I think a native principal would be more effective simply because if they're native, and they understand their culture, and practice their culture, the parents feel more at ease with them. They know where they're coming from. A white principal could be just as effective if they had that knowledge as well. But a person who never had the experience of being in a native community, and becomes a principal, then they are going to run into a lot of problems, simply because they have a certain way of doing things and it just doesn't work [in a First Nation school]

Administrator seven perceived that ethnicity was not an important consideration as long as the administrator understood the people, where they were coming from, and their world views. She stated that whether the administrator was white or any other race was not important as long as he/she understood where the people were coming from, and what the people hoped to be. Administrator nine believed that a non-native person could come and do an excellent job as long as that person was aware of the makeup of the school and the community. He added that "as long as somebody has worked with Indian people before or has some cross cultural training, and understands the people, then they can come in here and do a great job."

Administrator ten wasn't sure one way or the other whether being native was a necessary qualification. He stated that "in my case, I guess it helps me that first of all, I'm a Band member, and my years of experience outside the community, I think has helped, in that the people have some trust in me to make the right decision for them."

## Gender of the Educational Administrator

During the interviews participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the importance of gender. In analyzing the findings to this question, it was found that two administrators felt that gender could be an important consideration depending on which First Nation was being discussed as some First Nations were traditionally male dominated. Administrator five stated "there are certain First Nations that still don't respect the female. They haven't accepted them. In some areas, certain reserves pull out the red carpet, where they are given the opportunities."

Administrator eleven commented that being male was a plus in some situations: "in a First Nation school that is having problems with students, I think a male is a plus because from indications here, from what they've told me, students and parents ran over the principal because she was female. However, I saw a female

principal in one of the First Nations schools do a very effective job." At the other extreme, Administrator twelve stated,

> I think it's very important to be a female administrator. I sometimes feel that a female person has gone through more than the male person in terms of being a mother, a housekeeper, a problem solver within the home level, and a good listener. Also to be a mother and father when the father is not there. I also feel that the female Aboriginal population went through a lot more than the male. Those experiences they bring into the school are a big asset.

Administrator eight thought that gender was not *that* important, but felt the most important attribute that the administrator should possess was to be understanding, and to know how to work with both students and staff members.

After further analysis of the data, it was found that eight administrators believed that the gender of the administrator was not important as long as that person, among other things, treated people fairly and respectfully, had the ability to communicate with students, colleagues, parents, and community, and had the desire to be an administrator. Administrator seven considered that a female principal could do just as an effective a job as a male principal, and vice versa, but that it depended on the individual characteristics of the person. This administrator further commented: "A lot of students look at me and I don't yell at them or anything. I just get them to talk, and get them to think, and I fire questions as them. ... And I make sure that they give me answers before I let them go. I make them think." Administrator six and eight mentioned that the stereotype image that administration had to be male-dominated had prevailed for many years, but they commented that times were changing. Administrator thirteen commented that:

> You have to realize too how a lot of people on reserves perceive things, residential school and all that, what happened in the past. Male chauvinistic attitudes are still out there, and they are alive and well. That's why in certain reserves, you rarely see any women in leadership roles. Those attitudes need to be changed too and that just takes education.

Administrator nine was a strong advocate that females needed to be in leadership positions, stating that "I think that females can do just as good a job, if not even a better job, because sometimes we don't get to see and hear their ideas as much as we should. They certainly have a lot of expertise that can be utilized."

When asked to share their personal perceptions on Aboriginal women in leadership, all participants felt that if given the opportunity, females were just as capable as their male counterparts. Administrator four added, "they are the ones that are able to take the stress of sticking and staying in school. And now they are the ones that are coming out as leaders." Administrator nine would like to see more women given a chance to move into leadership positions, stating that "they can't, to put it bluntly, screw up any more than the males have in the past." Administrator eleven believed that if women had the ability they could do a good job; however, he warned,

> I do have a feeling that when we have a female administrator in
> school, I think she's going to be tested far more than a male. I think
> that may come from the traditional thought where the male is the
> dominating figure in our Indian communities. So therefore it sort of
> rubs off on the students as well.

Administrator thirteen was of the opinion that it didn't matter what gender the person was, as long as the person had the abilities and qualities needed for the job.

## Role Models for Educational Administrators

Participants were asked to identify circumstances or individuals that helped them to get where they are today. It was hoped that this section would complement research question comments on Leadership Characteristics of Aboriginal Administrators. Role models cited were of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry. Listed were close family members such as fathers, mothers, grandparents,

and children. Also listed were teachers, guidance counselors, principals, directors, superintendents, professors, Band Chiefs and Council members, and local, provincial, and national Aboriginal leaders. Some participants pointed out that they learned a little from everyone, that is, taking the best possible traits from some of the positive influences they had experienced.

When asked to identify positive characteristics of persons who served as role models for them in the past and/or present, participants gave a variety of responses. Administrator four described her father as one who was giving, unselfish, and always there for his own people. Administrator twelve's mother served as a negative role model, stating that "She was taking a lot of abuse; verbal, physical, and emotional. I never wanted to be that kind of a person. I went out of my way to not be that type of person." Administrator six considered his grandparents as one his role models. Their characteristics included respect, and integrity which he tried to maintain and pass on to his colleagues.

Participants whose role models were teachers, guidance counselors, principals, directors, superintendents, and professors described these people to be: visible in the community, down to earth, fair yet firm, knowledgeable, wise, experienced, no-nonsense types, encouraging, dedicated, person oriented, direction-oriented, organized, orderly, accurate, personable, friendly yet businesslike, supportive, strict, well respected, stern, outspoken, committed, a constructive criticizer, a good writer, a recognizer of others' potential, a listener, a doer, a setter of high expectations, a delegator of responsibility, and a person who always had time for people.

Positive role models for Administrator twelve were national Aboriginal leaders of renowned success whose attributes included being goal oriented, quiet, pleasant, and not being overly critical or sarcastic. Administrator four had always worked with First Nations people and realized that they inspired her to stick to her

goals. Administrator five's Aboriginal role models were Chiefs at the Tribal Council level of government. His comments regarding the Chiefs were that the Chiefs wanted to give First Nations people the opportunity to develop as administrators. Consequently this was how he first got into administration. A positive force on Administrator nine was a Band Council member who had a strong educational background, being a former teacher, and former Director of Education. He appreciated that the people at his central officer were educated, listened, discussed matters, and were open minded. Administrator thirteen recognized Aboriginal teachers at the residential school he attended as a student, as his role models. He took on their same attitude of trying to help people at all times.

The next research question examined personal and social problems on First Nations which affect the role of the educational administrator.

## Social Problems on First Nations

Diverse responses were supplied by participants when asked to describe social problems which they perceived existed on First Nations. Some participants approached the question from the community perspective, while others approached it from the school perspective. Alcohol abuse, drug abuse, solvent abuse, sexual abuse, child abuse, physical abuse, poverty, housing shortages, single parents families, dysfunctional families, and residential school syndrome were some of the problems listed which they perceived existed on First Nations.

Administrator eight believed that a lot of the social problems stemmed from the residential school syndrome where parents no longer have the parenting skills. He strongly believed that parents didn't know how to handle the problems of their children as they hadn't been taught how to do that properly. Administrator eleven

noticed that older parents who were products of residential schools had a certain dislike for white people because of what they experienced in residential school.

These social problems do affect the role of the administrator in many ways. Administrator eleven commented that students were very rebellious and indifferent, absenteeism was very high, and that drugs were filtering into First Nations schools. He found that students would sometimes wander the hallways aimlessly. Some problems, he believed, couldn't be dealt with at the school level as they stemmed from the home. Administrator five acknowledged that children who were being abused usually exhibited behavioral problems. Administrator ten also discovered that social problems definitely impacted on the school, stating that "there's a lot of anger in the children who come to the school and that anger manifests itself in their behavior, their conduct in the classroom, and on the playground." He further commented that "these kids don't need any more punishment. I think they've experienced a lot of hardship already and the last thing they need is punishment."

Administrator nine found that lack of lunches, transportation, and telephones affected the school because the school had to accommodate the needs of the students first. As stated by Administrator six, the needs of the students had to be met before they were ready to sit down and so some academics. He further commented that "having plans in place on how you're going to deal with them" were necessary. Administrator six also realized that social programming within the school system needed to be in place. Administrator ten pointed out that his school was trying to have the teachers understand the children and the problems they were experiencing, and to have the teachers deal with them in ways that were supportive.

The school system in which Administrator thirteen was employed, had the services of a very effective guidance counselor who was a qualified social worker trained to do her own therapy at the school level. This administrator found that the

social problems didn't affect him at all because of the support system that is in place in his school.

Administrator twelve found that social problems experienced by students affected her role very much as she was a survivor of various types of abuses. She felt that it drained her when she had to divulge her own experiences, but eventually was able to "bounce back" and forget the ordeal within an hour. She explained that this type of behavior has made her a harder person.

Administrator two perceived that the role of the administrator was affected because ultimately "you are the person that is being called." He relied on the guidance counselor, and Social Services to intervene in some cases, and he informed that a protocol agreement was in place which declared that the school was obligated to report cases. Every teacher, he stated, was encouraged to report cases and document it, with the school merely acting as facilitator between the parties involved. Most schools had interagency support services available from all aspects of the Band level, right from guidance counselors to Indian Child Family Services.

The last research question investigated what was being done in the preparation of potential educational leaders in terms of training activities available to them.

## Training Activities for Potential Educational Leaders

Participants were asked if they had any advice they would offer to potential educational leaders, and were asked to suggest training activities that would be helpful in the preparation of potential educational leaders. Some participants viewed this question from the perspective of the graduating high school student, others viewed it from the perspective of the teacher interested in administration, while some mixed the two perspectives. Listed in random order were: (1) ensure that education is completed; (2) be willing to make sacrifices to attain that education; (3) be goal

oriented; (4) take training that is relevant to the situation one is in, such as Principal Short Courses; (5) gain experience of working in First Nations schools, (6) attend as many inservices, workshops, and seminars as possible such as the Saskatchewan School Based Association's six-module training program; (7) put students into leadership positions where they have to use their skills and abilities; (8) set up Career Awareness Days for students; and (9) take graduate studies. Administrator eleven recommended that a Master's Program in First Nations education would be very beneficial.

Some administrators felt that at the Band level, Bands could be: (1) setting up incentive programs to steer graduating students into the field of education; (2) starting up literacy programs to encourage people to finish their education and (3) communicating more with school-based administrators. At the personal level, Aboriginal administrators felt that just being a Native administrator provided a role model for students to look up to. Administrator two stated, "It is unwritten. They see me behind the desk."

# CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was undertaken to determine the perceptions of thirteen Aboriginal school-site administrators regarding characteristics of effective leadership in First Nations schools and the implications of being an Aboriginal administrator. It was hoped that findings from this study would offer a compendium of characteristics for potential Aboriginal educational administrators in First Nations schools and that the findings would provide information and feedback to administrators of First Nations schools and other decision-makers on how best to prepare and support potential educational administrators. As very little literature and research exists in the area of Indian educational leadership, it was hoped that this study would help in the establishment of a research-based foundation on which to begin the process of developing Aboriginal educational administration programs for potential Aboriginal educational leaders. Last of all, it was hoped that this study would be of assistance to present Aboriginal educational administrators in need of additional information concerning effective leadership.

To address the need for more research pertaining to and involving school-site Aboriginal principals and vice-principals, the participants were selected from First Nations schools in Saskatchewan. The process by which the participants were selected is as follows: (a) a list of Tribal Councils was compiled, (b) another list of First Nations independent of Tribal Councils was compiled, (c) First Nations schools within these two groups were compiled, (d) Aboriginal educational administrators within these First Nations schools were identified, and finally (e) one Aboriginal educational administrator was selected from each Tribal Council, as well as one from

the group of independent First Nations. Two Aboriginal educational administrators were selected from the larger Tribal Councils.

Once permission was received from the Directors of Education at each First Nation participating in this study, Aboriginal principals and vice-principals were identified, contacted, and asked to participate in the study. Semi-structured personal interviews were used to collect the data. It must also be noted that the pilot study interview was included because perceptions of the administrator involved were considered as valid as other participants' perceptions. Also it must be mentioned that one interview was conducted via taped telephone conversation, and one other interviewee wrote his responses to the interview questions and forwarded them to the interviewer. These were all due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the interviewers control as can oftentimes be the case in qualitative research.

All participants agreed to be tape recorded during the interview process which were conducted in October and November, 1994. These interviews lasted between 45 to 70 minutes each. Notes were taken at each First Nation school, following the completion of each interview. A field notebook was used to organize ideas, reflections, and any pertinent information the researcher felt could be used later as an additional data source.

After the completion of the interviews, prepared transcripts of the interviews were submitted to each participant for verification of the data. The participants were given the opportunity to add or delete any comments. In reporting the data, the researcher began by giving a demographic description of each Aboriginal educational administrator as well as a leadership story of each administrator. Next the data were analyzed according to recurring themes found in the transcripts of the interviews by counting responses of participants and putting these responses onto charts for each research question.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed that data collected in the field must be analyzed from specific, raw units of information to larger categories of information (p. 203). Verbal interactions in the form of what people revealed to the researcher and the researcher's impressions formed the main part of the researcher's analysis of the data (Borg and Gall, 1989). The designated names of categories were: (a) Characteristics, and Self-perception, (b) Most Important Characteristics, (c) Negative Comments, (d) Positive Comments, (e) Abilities/Skills, (f) Strategies (dealing with staff), (g) Strategies (dealing with students), (h) Perception on Ethnicity, (i) Social Problems on First Nations, (j) Role Models, (k) Perception on Gender, and (l) Helping Potential Educational Administrators, The results of these categories were summarized in Chapter Four and so will not be repeated here.

## Conclusions

The main purpose of this study was not to make comparisons, but to examine school-site Aboriginal educational administrators' perceptions on characteristics of effective leaders. Upon examining the literature reviewed and the research findings, differences were present. Consequently, the summarized information from the literature review will be juxtaposed with responses from the participants. Conclusions made from the findings of this investigation are presented.

### Leadership Characteristics of Effective Administrators

In Chapter 2, the literature review listed the characteristics of an effective leader as: trustworthy, culturally sensitive, people-oriented, sensitive, warm, outgoing, caring, honest, flexible, open, self-analytical, adaptive, dedicated, committed, creative/innovative, energetic, a risk taker, an initiator, tolerant of ambiguity, and considerate of others feelings. As well, this person must have a sense

of humor. Having an understanding and knowledge of the following variables were found to enhance the educational administrator's repertoire of skills: native culture, tradition, kinship, native teachings and learning styles, language, Indian-white relations, development of Indian policy, concept of self-government/sovereignty, and First Nations politics and needs.

Participants of this study suggested that effective administrators of First Nations schools should be person-oriented and flexible. Having the ability to get along with people, to resolve differences, and to get people working as a team were seen as a way of achieving person-orientedness. Flexibility, in the eyes of one administrator meant siding with either students, parents, or teachers, all based on what was best for the student. Another administrator warned that consultation with the person involved was important when practicing flexibility. Flexibility to another administrator was purported to mean the ability to "go with the flow of what works best at the time."

Being honest was listed as the next most important characteristic of an effective administrator. Being up front was a way of achieving honesty as "people can see through you if you are not honest with them" stated one administrator. Being a good listener, being approachable, being dedicated, and showing respect were considered the next most important characteristics of an effective Aboriginal educational administrator in a First Nation school.

Next in line of important characteristics required of effective administrators in the research on First Nations schools were being humanistic, being supportive, being sensitive, being open-minded, having an open-door policy , being energetic, having common sense, caring, being educated, having humor, being positive, being involved in the community, being consistent, being fair, being friendly, and keeping confidences.

Last, but not least, the following characteristics required of effective administrators in First Nations schools were listed as being important: patient, enthusiastic, outgoing, a team player, a motivator, accountable, Native, calm, a thinker, empathetic, a sharer, a good observer, discretionary, innovative, a risk taker, assertive, responsible, understanding, strict, trustworthy, and direct.

The most important suggested characteristics required of an Aboriginal educational administrator in a First Nation school were dedication, trustworthiness, people-orientedness, knowledgeability, responsibility, respect for self and others, open-mindedness, patience, professional, educated, objective, self-driven, flexible and caring. Abilities in the following areas were suggested: being on task with the paper work, building staff relations, getting along with students and teachers, working collaboratively, knowing where the community was coming from, and having good communication skills.

The review of the literature identified the following abilities and awarenesses as being helpful to the effective administrator: to act as a facilitator, coordinator, or a mediator; to accept the Indian school as a unique entity; to see self as Indian educator, and as a unique person (specialist); to understand specific tribal needs and expectations; to believe that the Indian student can succeed; to set high expectations of Indian students and self; to understand the nature of change processes; to understand human behavior; to establish and maintain well-defined structures; to utilize people's talents, interests, and efforts; to communicate openly in all directions; and to encourage others. Awareness of the following areas were also acknowledged as being important to the effective administrator: awareness of loosely structured environment; importance of being a part of the community; and awareness of hidden curriculum, and recognition that the school community was a highly complex political society.

In terms of abilities, skills, and awarenesses, participants of this study made the following suggestions. First of all, effective administrators who spoke a First Nation language possessed an important attribute. Others believed that culture and language were intertwined and that effective administrators should be able to promote both at the school level. One administrator did however point out that although having the ability to speak a First Nation language was important, it might not necessarily be that important on a First Nation where mainly the English language was spoken. Another administrator commented that on a First Nation where the language was still alive, speaking a First Nation language would be a real asset to the administrator.

Furthermore, effective administrators should have excellent communication skills in written form and oral form, in the First Nation and English languages, as well as good organizational skills. Effective administrators should be knowledgeable in areas such as politics, law, Band structure, the school system, and core curriculum. Other important abilities include being able to: delegate assignments and responsibilities, act as a facilitator, build trust, build staff moral, remain neutral, interact with the community, remain visible in the community and with the students, deal with crisis situations, and dish out disciplinary action when necessary. As well, participants suggested that effective administrators in First Nations schools should have an awareness in the following areas: First Nations cultural values, customs, traditions, and religion, thinking styles of First Nations peoples, world views of First Nations peoples, and community expectations of the school.

The following strategies were identified, in the literature review, as being helpful to the effective administrator: being able to utilize a participatory decision making process (consensus); and being able to utilize a clear problem solving process.

In reference to problem-solving strategies, participants of this study believed that effective administrators in First Nation schools utilized a collaborative, team approach to solving problems at the staff level. Proper utilization of this approach also depended upon the situation in which the administrator found him/herself. Administrators found this type of strategy to problem solving most appropriate. Not utilizing this strategy would cause a lot of conflict and anger if staff input is not encouraged. When an autocratic directive from the School Board or Chief and Council was made, most administrators made it known to their staff that it was a top-down decision into which they had no input. It was a "cut and dry" decision which did not require the input of the staff. When dealing with students, effective administrators in First Nations should follow the school's system's policies and procedures that are in place. Being flexible, positive, and humanistic were important when it came to dealing with gray areas not stipulated in the policies.

Self-Perception. Present administrators perceived themselves to be: confident, person-oriented, goal-oriented, empathetic, understanding, compassionate, approachable, friendly, respectful, assertive, democratic, politically neutral, responsible, enthusiastic, open-minded, patient, knowledgeable through experience, dedicated, accurate, direct, honest, a team builder, flexible, calm, fair, adaptive, bilingual, retrospective, a thinker before speaking, a good organizer, a good listener, a motivator, a good communicator, and a visionary, a user of humor in the workplace, a giver and a taker of constructive criticism, all of which would greatly enhance the effectiveness of an Aboriginal administrator in a First Nation school.

The researcher concluded that First Nations Aboriginal administrators were very concerned about the culture of their communities, were deeply concerned about knowing their First Nations languages, and were keen on utilizing a collaborative approach to problem solving. The researcher also found that the political nature of

the administrator's role in a First Nation school seemed to be changing. Some administrators believed that not being from the First Nation in which they were employed was an advantage because they were perceived by the community as being politically neutral. Also, the research perceived the administrator as often being caught in the middle in which he/she is given a directive from the school board and being requested to carry out that directive whether he/she agrees with it or not. It must however be remembered that the notion of First Nations schools has only been in existence for approximately 20 years. It will take time to resolve the quirks that are evident in some First Nations schools.

## Degree of Importance of Ethnicity of the Administrator

The literature review did not clearly indicate whether ethnicity of the administrator was an important consideration in his/her effectiveness; however, the 1973 policy on Indian Control of Indian Education, and the Assembly of First Nations (1988 vol. 1) pointed out that the majority of non-teaching positions were held by First Nations people, and in order to address this obvious deficiency, they strongly recommended that First Nations people be trained. The participants of this study were divided on whether ethnicity of the administrator was or was not an important consideration. Participants commented that ethnicity may not be a necessary requirement of an effective administrator in First Nations schools, as long as this person was able to adapt to the cultural milieu of that First Nation. As well, particpants also stated that ethnicity was an important consideration, and that an administrator of Aboriginal ancestry would be in a better position to understand the language and culture, be more sensitive to the problems faced by Native people having come from a similar setting him/herself and would be better able to understand various aspects of reserve life. Participants also stated that a non-Native administrator

could be effective if he/she, at minimum was a "top notch" person with Native Studies courses, cross cultural training, with an ability to adapt to the values of the community in which he/she was situated. This person, as stated by participants, should also to be caring, understanding, open-minded, and willing to learn. Having experience of working in a First Nation school was also an important consideration for the non-Native administrator.

The researcher therefore draws a similar conclusion, based on the perceptions of the participants, that ethnicity may not be an important consideration in a First Nation school. This, however, is in direct contradiction to the 1973 Indian Control of Indian Education policy and the Assembly of First Nations' (1988 vol. 1) position.

## Degree of Importance of Gender of the Administrator

The role of Indian women is in a continuous state of development and change. The literature suggested that stereotyping, discrimination, and racism were but a few obstacles faced by Indian women in the workplace. The fact that they are Indian, and women, automatically means two strikes against them before they even begin their careers. Despite these obstacles, Indian women were assuming leadership roles in society. Verble and Walton (1983) encouraged Indian women to continue enhancing their leadership skills. Of the thirteen administrators interviewed, two suggested that gender might have a slight bearing on the effectiveness of the administrator. One administrator commented that on certain First Nations, the female was still not respected, or accepted in leadership positions, whereas on other First Nations, females were given the "red carpet treatment." Another administrator believed that the female administrator was going to be tested far more than the male. All thirteen administrators believed that female administrators could be effective, if they were given the opportunity, if they treated people fairly and respectfully, and if they had

the ability to communicate with students, colleagues, parents, and community. The researcher therefore concludes that acceptance of Aboriginal females into positions of leadership within First Nations schools depends on the types of situations the female finds herself in and the milieu of each particular First Nation. As more Aboriginal females move into positions of leadership on First Nations, the barriers of gender discrimination will continue to be broken.

## Positive Characteristics of Role Models for Aboriginal Administrators

A study conducted by Silverman and Demmert (1986) indicated that many factors had an influence on, and contributed to the characteristics of successful Native leaders today such as: past educational experiences; family members; outside the immediate family members; out of school experiences; socio-economic level; positive relationship between success in adult life and success as a student; goals and objectives setting; and real or perceived opportunities to succeed.

The participants of this study suggested that emulating, and using as a guide, the important characteristics, abilities, skills, and strategies of effective leaders encountered throughout their lives, was one way participants acquired their own expertise. Role models which influenced the lives of the participants were: teachers, guidance counselors, principals, directors, superintendents, professors, Band Chiefs and Council members, and local, provincial, and national Aboriginal leaders. These role models were both of Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal descent. They exemplified characteristics of: unselfishness, practicality , person-orientedness, orderliness, accurateness, respect, integrity, and friendliness. These role models were also businesslike, supportive, strict, well-respected, stern, outspoken, open-minded, committed, constructive criticizers, good writers, recognizers of others' potential, listeners, doers, setters of high expectations, delegators of responsibility, and were

also persons who always had time for people, and were visible in the community. Organizational skills, being personable, being goal oriented, quiet, pleasant, and not being overly critical or sarcastic were other characteristics listed. Role models played an important function in the lives of the participants. The participants took the attributes which they felt were significant and were endeavoring to implement those attributes into their own style of leadership. Being successful at emulating leaders attributes would greatly enhance the Aboriginal administrator's repertoire of skills far quicker than trying to develop them on one's own cognition.

## Social Problems on First Nations

In the literature review section of this thesis poverty, alcoholism, unemployment, single parent households, encroachment on Indian lands and resources, lack of quality personnel and other resources, were but a few problems listed which exist on First Nations across North America. As can be ascertained from this list of problems which exist on First Nations, the need for effective Aboriginal leaders who understand the needs of the community is evident. Social problems on First Nations inevitably manifest themselves in First Nations schools and undoubtedly affect the role of the administrator.

Participants of this study suggested that an effective administrator of a First Nation school should have definite plans and programming in place as to how to cope with and deal with these social problems. If further assistance is required in dealing with social problems, the effective administrator should be knowledgeable as to what types of support services are available at the Band level, such as Social Services, RCMP, Social Workers, and Indian Child Family Services. Effective administrators realized that problems were not created overnight and therefore could not be expected to be solved overnight. Administrators should make an effort in developing amongst

their staff; an understanding of the Indian child and the problems they may be experiencing at the home level.

## Helpful Suggestions for Potential Educational Leaders

Participants in this study recommended some helpful suggestions for potential educational leaders to the following groups of individuals: high school students, teachers interested in administration, and Band members. They suggested that anyone interested should: (1) ensure that their education is completed; (2) be willing to make sacrifices to attain that education; (3) be goal oriented; (4) take training that is relevant to the situation they are in, such as Principals' Short Courses; (5) gain experience of working in First Nations schools; (6) attend as many inservices, workshops, and seminars as possible such as the Saskatchewan School Based Association's six-module training program, and (7) attend graduate studies. Participants further suggested that potential leaders should be given the opportunity to try out leadership positions where they have to use their skills and abilities; and attend Career Awareness Days. To encourage potential leaders at the Band level to move into positions of leadership, the suggestions were that Bands should: (1) set up incentive programs to steer graduating students into the field of education; (2) start up literacy programs to encourage people to finish their education, and (3) communicate more with school-based administrators.

## Implications

Implications generated from the study are as follows:

1.  On most First Nations, the people are closely-knit, and tend to interact with each other at a very personal level. Establishing good rapport during the interview sessions was not a concern of this study. Participants responded to

the research questions with sincere openness and honesty. With this in mind, participants listed being people-oriented as one of the most frequently discussed characteristics. Educational administrators should realize the connection between working in a closely-knit community and the openness and honesty of the people in the community and work towards becoming more people-oriented.

2. Events occur on First Nations, which subsequently the administrator has no control over. An example is when the school gym is requested for a funeral. It is suggested that when this transpires, flexibility, another characteristic considered very important by participants, be exercised with utmost caution and the students' best interests be kept in mind at all times.

3. Deep concern was expressed by some participants in this study that Indian culture and languages were slowly disappearing. They believed that First Nations schools should take a firmer stance in reviving this whole area. Administrators should strongly emphasize the importance of culture and language to their respective staffs at the beginning of each year. Long range plans should be devised as to how to retain and encourage Indian culture and Indian languages at the school level.

4. First Nations communities should continue to bring or should begin setting up training programs at the First Nations level so more people at the graduate level can take advantage of them, as suggested by one Administrator. An example he gave was how Onion Lake First Nation was able to set up first-year university courses for its Band members.

5. Social problems exist not only on First Nations, but at all levels of Canadian society. As one administrator pointed out, his school has to deal with the social skills and values before academic training can even begin to take place.

Administrators should ensure that definite plans, policies, and protocol agreements are in place in the event that problems arise.

6.    Again, social problems do exist at all levels of society. Along with social problems are behavioral problems manifested as discipline problems amongst the students. Some First Nations schools are in the process of constructing Discipline Committees made up of administrators, teachers, and community members to address these problems, that consume so much administrators time. It is suggested that Aboriginal administrators of First Nations need to be sensitive and vigilant to the causes or roots of the problems that occur amongst the student population, so as to take a preventative and intervention approach as opposed to disciplinary approach. As one administrator stated, "these kids don't need any more punishment. I think they've experienced a lot of hardship already and the last thing they need is punishment."

## Recommendations for Further Research

Investigating perceptions of Aboriginal educational administrators on characteristics of effective administrators and implications of being Aboriginal administrators of First Nations schools is necessary if we are to gain a better understanding of the Indian control of Indian education. Based on this study, it is suggested that further research could include:

1.    Interviews with students, parents, elders, and teachers at the First Nation level, regarding their perceptions of what characteristics effective administrators of First Nation schools must possess, and to compare their perceptions with those of this study.

2.    Interviews with non-Aboriginal administrators of First Nations schools as to their perceptions on what characteristics an effective administrator of a First

Nation school must possess. Biases created by doing a study of Aboriginal administrators.would be alleviated.

3. Interviews to gain the perceptions of provincial and national Aboriginal educational leaders on what they perceive to be the necessary requirements of an effective administrator of a First Nation school.

4. A study on the impact of the residential school syndrome on Aboriginal educational administrators, whether it is a detriment to their effectiveness or not.

5. A comparative study could be conducted in which all the above suggested interviews be examined in an in-depth manner, to gain further insight as to what constitutes an effective administrator of a First Nation school.

## Reconceptualization of the Study

Upon reflection I have concluded that, if I was to do this study over, I would make the following changes: First, I would conduct a study which compared Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perceptions on characteristics of effective administrators of First Nations schools to find out if ethnicity made a difference in perceptions. Second, I would go back to each First Nation school and interview the administrator a second time to gain further insights missed on the first visit. Third, I would utilize the services of an interpreter for those participants who felt more comfortable in speaking their First Nation language. Fourth, if I were to do another qualitative study, I would make sure that I took classes which focused more on qualitative research methods.

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Appendix A

Tribal Councils and Independent Bands in Saskatchewan

## Battlefords Tribal Council

| Band Name | | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Little Pine | 1 | VP |
| 2. | Lucky Man | 0 | 0 |
| 3. | Mosquito | 1 | 0 |
| 4. | Sweet Grass | 1 | 0 |
| Total =4 | | 3 | 1 |

## Meadow Lake Tribal Council

| Band Name | | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | Canoe Lake | 1 | 0 |
| 6. | Flying Dust | 0 | 0 |
| 7. | Makwa Sahgaiehcan | 1 | 0 |
| 8. | Island Lake | 1 | 0 |
| 9. | Buffalo River | 1 | 0 |
| 10. | English River | 1 | P |
| 11. | Clearwater River | 1 | P |
| 12. | Waterhen Lake | 1 | P |
| 13. | Turnor Lake | 0 | 0 |
| Total =9 | | 7 | 3 |

## Confederation of Tribal Nations

| Band Name | | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14. | Saulteaux | 1 | 0 |
| 15. | Onion Lake | 2 | P |
| | | | VP |
| | | | VP |
| 16. | Moosomin | 1 | 0 |
| 17. | Red Pheasant | 1 | 0 |
| 18. | Thunderchild | 1 | P |
| 19. | Poundmaker | 1 | P |
| Total =6 | | 7 | 5 |

**Prince Albert Grand Council**

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|
| 20. Cumberland House | 1 | Act. P |
| 21. Fond du lac | 1 | 0 |
| 22. Hatchet Lake | 1 | P |
| 23. La Ronge | | |
|    - Chief James Roberts | 1 | P |
|    - Sally Ross School | 1 | P |
|    - Nithithow Awasis | 1 | P |
|    - Little Red Kndgrtn. | 1 | 0 |
|    - Senator Miles Venne | 1 | 0 |
|    - Keethanow School | 2 | P |
|    - Mikisiw | 1 | 0 |
| 24. Montreal Lake | 3 | P |
| | | VP |
| | | VP |
| 25. Peter Ballantyne | | |
|    - Pelican Narrows | 1 | VP |
|    - P.A. Angus Merasty | 1 | VP |
|    - Boucher School | 1 | P |
|    - South End | 1 | |
|    - Dechambault Lake | 0 | |
|    - Sturgeon Landing | 0 | |
|    - Denare Beach | 0 | 0 |
|    - Kinosao | 0 | 0 |
| 26. Red Earth | 2 | P |
| 27. Shoal Lake | 1 | P |
| 28. Wahpeton | 1 | P |
| 29. Black Lake | 1 | VP |
| 30. Sturgeon Lake | 1 | 0 |
| 31. James Smith | 1 | 0 |
| Total =12 | 25 | 17 |

**Yorkton Tribal Council**

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|
| 32. Cowessess | 1 | P |
| 33. Kahkewistahaw | 1 | 0 |
| 34. Cote | 1 | 0 |
| 35. Keeseekoose | 1 | 0 |
| 36. Key | 0 | 0 |
| 37. Ocean Man | 1 | 0 |
| 38. Sakimay | 1 | Designated P |

| Total =7 | 6 | 2 |
|---|---|---|

## Saskatoon Tribal Council

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|
| 39. Muskoday | 1 | 0 |
| 40. Moose Woods | 1 | 0 |
| 41. One Arrow | 1 | 0 |
| 42. Mistawasis | 1 | P |
| 43. Muskeg Lake | 1 | 0 |
| 44. Yellow Quill | 1 | 0 |
| 45. Kinistin | 1 | P |
| Total =7 | 7 | 2 |

## Touchwood File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|
| 46. Carry the Kettle | 1 | 0 |
| 47. Little Black Bear | 0 | 0 |
| 48. Nekaneet (non-aln) | 0 | 0 |
| 49. Muscowpetung | 1 | 0 |
| 50. Okanese | 0 | 0 |
| 51. Pasqua | 0 | 0 |
| 52. Standing Buffalo | 1 | 0 |
| 53. Wood Mountain | 0 | 0 |
| 54. Day Star | 0 | 0 |
| 55. Fishing Lake | 1 | 0 |
| 56. Gordon | 1 | 0 |
| 57. Muskowekwan | 2 | 0 |
| 58. Kawakatoose | 1 | P |
| 59. Peepeekisis | 1 | 0 |
| 60. Piapot | 1 | P |
| 61. Star Blanket | 1 | 0 |
| Total =16 | 11 | 2 |

## Agency Chiefs Tribal Council

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
|---|---|---|
| 62. Big River | 1 | 0 |
| 63. Witcheken Lake | 1 | 0 |

| 64. | Pelican Lake | 1 | 0 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Total =3 | | 3 | 0 |

## Willow Cree Tribal Council

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 65. Beardy's &<br>Okemasis | 1 | P<br>VP |
| Total =1 | 1 | 2 |

## Southeast Treaty 4 Tribal Council

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 66. Ochapawace | 1 (K-10) | P |
| 67. White Bear | 1 (K-12) | 0 |
| Total =2 | 2 | 1 |

## Independent Bands

| Band Name | First Nation School | Aboriginal Administrator |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 68. Ahtahkakoop | 1 | P<br>VP |
| 69. Joseph Big Head | 1 | P |
| 70. Pheasant Rump | 1 | P |
| 71. Young Chippewayan | 0 | 0 |
| Total =2 | 3 | 4 |
| Grand Total | 70 | 38 |

Appendix B

Interview Guide

<u>**Interview Guide:**</u>

**Preamble:** Adaptations from the following sources were used to formulate questions for this interview: (Amodeo, 1985; Irwin, 1992; Lynch & Charleston, 1990; Silverman & Demmert, 1986; Verble & Walton; 1983), also used were the researchers own ideas.

The researcher used the following interview format to conduct semi-structured interviews:

**Opening:**

"I am doing this study in collaboration with the University of Saskatchewan in order to learn more about effective characteristics of Aboriginal educational administrators in First Nations schools.

Age:             _____ Younger (39 and younger)     _____ Middle (40 - 50)
                 _____ Older (51 and older)

Gender:

_____ Male     _____ Female

To begin, could you tell me your:

Ethnicity:

_____ (Cree)  _____ (Ojibway)  _____ (Stoney)  _____ (Dene)

_____ (Metis)  _____ (Inuit)  _____ (Other)

First Language:

_____

Type of school/s attended:

_____ Indian Day School

_____ Residential/Boarding School

_____ Provincial School

_____ Other (please specify): _____

Post-secondary training:/ have you had the opportunity to receive post secondary training?

_____ Certificate of Teacher Training

_____ Bachelor of Education Degree

_____ One other Degree in _____

_____ Master's Degree in _____

_____ Other (please specify) _____

Length of employment as a teacher within a:

First Nation School_____

Provincial School _____

Other _____

Length of tenure as an administrator within a:

First Nation School _____

Provincial School _____

Other _____

_____

1. Can you describe the school and community in which you work in terms of:

   (a) enrollment

   (b) what grades do you have

   (c) how many teachers

   (b) geographic location (distance to and type of nearest urban centre)

   (c) size of your community (population)

   (d) other characteristics not mentioned

2. What leadership characteristics do you perceive make an educational administrator effective in a First Nation school ? (e.g. trust)

3. Which two characteristics do you believe are the most important? Why?

4. Besides characteristics, what abilities/skills do you believe an effective educational administrator of a First Nations school should possess? (e.g. ability to speak First Nation language)

5. Identify strategies an effective educational administrator of a First Nations school utilizes when:

   (a) making a decision which involves the entire staff.

   (b) a problem needs to be solved concerning a student caught with drugs

6. Is ethnicity of the educational administrator an important consideration in Band controlled schools? Why? Why not?

7. What social problems do see that exist on First Nations that affect the role of an educational administrator? (e.g. child abuse)

8. How do they affect your role?

9. What person, in the past or present, comes to mind when you think of a role model for educational administrators? Describe this person.

10. Is gender of the educational administrator an important consideration in this First Nation?

11. Is it traditional for women to be leaders on this First Nation? Have things changed?

12. What are your thoughts on Aboriginal women in leadership?

13. Can you identify individuals or circumstances which helped you become an educational leader?

14. What are we, (Native society) doing that is helpful in the preparation of Aboriginal people aspiring to positions of educational leadership?

15. What and how (else) should we be doing this?

16. What is your perception of yourself as an Aboriginal leader? (How do you see yourself?)

17. Strengths and weaknesses?

18. Do you wish to make any further comments?

**Closing:**

"Thank you for participating in the creation of knowledge. Your opinions, perceptions, insights are valued.

Appendix C

Participant Consent Form

Dear Aboriginal Administrator,

I am in the process of completing my Master's Degree in Educational Administration through the University of Saskatchewan. My area of study is the examination of characteristics, skills/abilities, and strategies of Aboriginal administrators in First Nations schools. Presently, no model of educational leadership exists for Aboriginal people aspiring to positions of leadership. Thus, I am investigating what Aboriginal educational administrators perceive are the essential requirements of effective educational leadership. My Thesis topic is <u>Perceptions of Aboriginal Educational Administrators: Leadership In First Nations Schools.</u> I believe that results of this study could provide helpful information to administrators and decision-makers on how to prepare and support potential Aboriginal educational leaders.

Data collection will involve personal interviews with consenting participants. The interviews will include some specific questions as well as a provision for participants to share personal opinions and experiences. The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes to 60 minutes. I would like to tape record the interviews for the purpose of accuracy. Data on the taped recordings, transcripts of tapes, and any field notes generated during the interview are of utmost confidentiality; therefore only my advisor and myself will have access to the above information.

You are one of a number of Aboriginal principals who have been selected to participate in this study. Your input and perception will be greatly appreciated, and I invite your participation in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and if you consent to become a participant, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. As the researcher, I will advise you of any new information that may have a bearing on your decision to continue in this study.

Your responses in the interview will be protected by the use of fictitious names in reference to the site and participant, and the utmost care will be taken to maintain your confidentiality and anonymity. You will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts, and the summary of the information collected to determine accuracy and agreement on your perceptions. Any information collected in the study will be used for academic purposes only, and confidentiality will be maintained with respect to all other purposes.

While this study is in progress, you may contact either myself (344-4250), or my advisor, Vivian Hajnal (966-7611) of the Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, to receive any further information or answers to your questions or concerns relating to this research.

Thank you for giving this request your fullest consideration.

Sincerely,

Pauline Muskego

I consent to become a participant in this study entitled <u>Perceptions of Aboriginal Educational Administrators: Leadership In First Nations Schools</u> under the conditions set out in this letter. I understand that my participation involves a personal interview and that information gathered may be used as data for publications related to this study, and I am free to withdraw at any time.

Participant's Signature      _____

Researcher's Signature      _____

Date:      _____