Police Leadership and Ethics: Training and Policy Recommendations

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Abstract
Past research indicates that the issue of police leadership and ethics may be informed by many approaches and theories which speak to areas such as individual moral development as well as organizational and situational factors. It is argued that leadership ability, like moral decision-making, is a function of both the individual and the situation. As such, in order to provide the most effective approach for training police leaders regarding ethics, individual, organizational and situational leadership factors are discussed. It is suggested that a more comprehensive understanding of these factors would increase the effectiveness of police leaders to encourage ethical behaviour within their services. Specific recommendations for designing and implementing ethics training for leaders of police services are outlined.

It may be argued that police are perceived as upholders and exemplars of the law and that such a position affords its holders power, status, and respect. This position, however, results in extraordinary expectations and, as such, police personnel are expected to be mindful, dutiful, and, perhaps above all, ethical. Specifically, police agencies and their members are understood to not only uphold the law, which may be described as a formalized system of ethics, but also serve as examples of unfailingly ethical behaviour (Pfeifer, 2003). In fact, it may be argued that more ethical precision is expected from the police than from almost any other segment of society. When this expectation is breached (e.g., an officer engages in ethically questionable behaviour or makes a poor ethical decision) the attention of society becomes riveted upon the 'offending' member and trust in the profession as a whole may be compromised. As such, it is clear that a broad and deep understanding of ethical decision making, not simply the letter of the law, is a vital component of police training as with other professions (see e.g., Pfeifer, 1997; Pfeifer & Hadjistavropoulos, 1998).

Although a firm background in ethics is essential at all levels of policing, it is suggested that the attitudes and behaviours of senior members (i.e., leaders) are vitally important due to their influence over other members of the service. Leaders play a paramount role in setting the ethical standards of an organization through their acceptance or rejection of particular philosophies as well as through reinforcing behaviours. As such, it has been argued that the perceived ethics of leaders will significantly impact the ethical behaviours of subordinates. In fact, the behaviours of leaders often produce more ethical influence than written organizational codes of ethics (Kronzon, 1999).

Given the above, the primary purpose of this article is to examine the relevant literature on leadership and ethics and employ this information as a basis for for-
mutating practical training and policy recommendations. Specifically, this article will review the individual, organizational and situational factors that impact ethical decision-making in a policing environment. Following the review of these factors, specific recommendations will be made regarding ethics and the training of police leaders.

It should be noted that, although a review of the literature on ethics and leadership indicates that the majority of research was not fashioned specifically for police services, on the whole, hierarchical organizations (i.e., those in which there are clear distinctions between levels of subordinates and leaders) function similarly in terms of leadership, ethics, and training. As such, the following article reviews information on ethics and leadership from a variety of sources including corporate environments, military services, and professional organizations. In addition, special care has been taken to highlight the potential application of these ideas to a police context as well as the specific demands of those in police leadership roles.

Individual Factors: Moral Reasoning and Ethics
In seeking greater knowledge regarding ethical reasoning in a hierarchical setting, an understanding of individual moral reasoning, and how to positively impact that reasoning, is paramount. When examining the issue of individual ethics it is important to note that the literature employs a variety of terms that may lead to some confusion on the part of the reader. As such, for the purposes of this article, the terminology employed represents the theoretical position that one’s moral reasoning is viewed as the basis for one’s individual reasoning in a hierarchical setting, an understanding of individual moral reasoning, and how to positively impact that reasoning, is paramount.

Any discussion of individual moral reasoning must begin with a description of the early work of Kohlberg (1969). Kohlberg (1969, 1984) formulated a cognitive-developmental model of moral reasoning that included the establishment of the stages of moral development as they relate to individual reasoning. This model is an important one given the fact that of the numerous potential predictors of ethical behaviour, the majority of attention has been focused upon the individual (Kelloway, 1999). Simply put, such a focus seeks to understand what it is about the individual specifically that influences his or her ethical decision-making and subsequent behaviour (see e.g., Puka, 1994). Although the research discussed in subsequent sections of this article also identify a variety of organizational and situational influences upon one’s ethical decision-making (e.g., Jones, 1991; Victor & Cullen, 1988), they also clearly indicate the importance of individual factors on ethics. As such, it is appropriate that any discussion on ethics begin with an understanding of Kohlberg’s theory.

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

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

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

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

Stage 4 (Law and Order) reasoning is also predominantly affected by social approval. In this case, however, an individual's moral reasoning is significantly impacted by the understanding that society has instituted a set of laws and rules to govern behaviour and to contravene these laws is to go against the wishes of the society to which you belong. Therefore, individuals at Stage 4 generally tend to base their moral reasoning, and subsequent ethical decisions and behaviour, on abiding by the laws that have been put in place — even if they do not necessarily agree with the laws. An understanding of this level is of particular importance in terms of ethics and leadership in policing as research indicates that a significant number of adults primarily employ Stage 4 reasoning to guide their ethical decisions. For example, Weber and Green's (1991) study found that 21% of their university-aged sample illustrated Stage 4 reasoning. As such, it is highly likely that individuals in policing who have attained leadership positions will be employing Stage 4 reasoning as a basis for their decisions and actions.

**Level 3: Post-Conventional Moral Reasoning**

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

**Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning and Police Leadership**

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

In addition to the above, a review of research by Blasi (1980) suggests that individual moral reasoning and ethical behaviour are directly related. As such, the manner in which an individual analyzes an ethical dilemma (i.e., their moral reasoning) appears to have a direct impact on their subsequent behaviour. This relationship, combined with the findings of White (1998) cited above, suggest that organizations with rigidly hierarchical structures such as the police, may be disadvantaged in regard to both individual moral reasoning and the subsequent ethical behaviour of personnel. That is, if rigid hierarchical organizations...
tend to discourage the development of moral reasoning and there is a direct connection between reasoning and ethical behaviour, then these organizations, by their very nature, are in a difficult situation. This situation, however, may be positively impacted through investigating other factors that may increase one’s level of moral reasoning regardless of the organization one belongs to. For example, Peek (1999) found that education was significantly related to moral reasoning regardless of the hierarchical structure or level of rigidity within the organization. This finding suggests that increasing educational levels of personnel may help to counteract the impact of organizational rigidity and positively impact moral reasoning and ethical behaviours.

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

**Organizational Factors: Ethical Climate and Leadership**

In addition to the above information on individual moral reasoning, it is also important to note the effect of an organization’s ethical climate on ethics and leadership in police services. Ethical climate may be defined as the generally accepted standards for ethical decision-making that are found in an organization (Kelloway, 1999). It has been argued that by establishing norms or sanctioned expectations of ethical behaviour, organizations influence the moral reasoning of the individual, causing individuals to make decisions and act as they believe those around them do (Kelloway, 1999). As such, not only does the individual affect the overall ethics of the organization, but the perceived ethical standards of the organization similarly affect each individual member.

Leaders play a paramount role in setting the ethical climate of an organization, not only through their acceptance or rejection of particular philosophies but also through reinforcing related behaviours (e.g., an ‘off-the-record’ pat on the back for officially unacceptable behaviour). The importance of the ethical climate in each organization is supported by decades of research suggesting that the perceived wishes of others, combined with the desire to comply with those wishes, predicts intent to behave ethically (e.g., Bartels, Harrick, Martell, & Strickland, 1998; Chang 1998; Izraeli, 1988). It is important to note that the perceived attitudes of others, not the actual attitudes, play a powerful role in predicting ethical behaviour. As such, it may be argued that the perceived ethics of leaders, in terms of attitudes and behaviours, may significantly affect the ethical behaviours of subordinates.

Given the above, it may be argued that ethical training in a police setting requires an understanding of various organizational factors that may impact both ethical climate and individual reasoning, including the role of leaders. A specific example of the effect of an organization’s ethical climate on individual moral reasoning is provided by the work of Jones and Ryan (1997). These authors suggest that the predominant effect of an organizational ethical climate on an individual is represented by the tendency of the person to act in accordance with their perception of the “average” moral standard of others in the organization (i.e., people behave in ways they feel will be morally acceptable to others in the organization). As such, in order to determine a course of action, people rely on the opinions of their referent groups (i.e., those within the organizational culture) to guide their moral reasoning. The development of this approach is grounded in the notion that the majority of adults employ a conventional level of moral reasoning — a level that is anchored by a desire to be viewed as a ‘good’ person (Kelloway, 1999). It may be argued, therefore, that by establishing norms or sanctioned expectations of ethical behaviour, organizations influence the moral reasoning of the individual, causing individuals to make decisions and act as they believe those around them do. It is important to also note that leaders may play a paramount role in setting the ethical climate of an organization, not only through their acceptance or rejection of particular philosophies but also through reinforcing related behaviours.

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

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

1. Caring Orientation — represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on a concern for the individual welfare of others, regardless of their group membership.

2. The Law and Code Orientation — represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on a concern for the impact it may have on society as a whole and is demonstrated by a focus on laws and professional codes of ethics that have been delineated on behalf of society.

3. The Rules Orientation — represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions solely on the application of the prescribed ethical principles and codes of the organization.

4. The Instrumental Orientation — represented by an organizational climate that encourages personnel to base their ethical decisions on the best interests of the organization regardless of the impact on other organizations or individuals.

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

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

Clearly, an understanding of the ethical climate within an organization is essential if one seeks detailed insight into individual ethical decision-making. The combination of individuals in an organization serves to produce not only a functional organization but also a new ethical climate — one that is often different from the sum of each individual's moral reasoning. As such, an overall analysis of ethics in an organization must incorporate both indi-
idual information as well as information regarding the ethical climate.

**Situational Factors: Situational Diversity and Ethics**
In addition to individual and organizational factors, situational factors also directly affect ethical decision-making and behaviour (Jones, 1991). As such, situational diversity must be taken into account in any comprehensive set of ethical training recommendations. Many studies support a theorized situational influence on ethical decision-making (e.g., Davis, Johnson & Ohmer, 1998; Siaker, Mitchell, & Turner, 1998; Weber, 1996). Such dynamics directly affect ethical decision-making, intent, and behaviour. Situational factors, or the subjective experience of these factors, are of particular importance for police leaders called upon to create and define ethical standards for personnel.

A review of research findings indicates that although there are modest relationships between individual personality factors (such as conscientiousness and agreeableness) and leadership (see e.g., Albright & Forziati, 1995; Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Whitney, Sagrestano, & Maslach, 1994), distinct situational influences also exist (see e.g., McCann, 1992; Markoff, 1996). As such, individualistic theories of leadership have largely been supplanted by more integrated models. These models take into account the individual as well as the situation and have been consistently supported throughout the organizational leadership research (e.g., Csoka & Bons, 1978; Fiedler, 1966; Hunt, Dodge, & Wong, 1999; James & White, 1983). Thus, in order to positively affect the ethical decision-making of police leaders, the variable nature of policing situations should be incorporated into training protocols.

This position is underscored by Jones (1991) who examined the importance of situational characteristics as predictors of moral decision-making. As opposed to previous assumptions that individual ethical decision-making remains relatively stable across situations, Jones (1991) contends that ethical decision-making is determined by the moral 'intensity' of the situation in question. Moral intensity, in turn, is determined by the following six factors:

1. **Magnitude of Consequences** — defined as the perceived sum of the harms and benefits done to individuals based on one's ethical decision. This includes both scale (i.e., the number of people influenced) and force (i.e., the type of harm/benefit). A decision with a substantial capacity to either help or harm is considered to have a considerable magnitude of consequences. Thus, "an act that affects 1,000 people has a higher magnitude of consequence than does an act that affects 10 people... [and] an act resulting in the death of an individual has a higher magnitude of consequences than does an act resulting in only minor injuries" (Kelloway, 1999, p.16). Support for the impact of this situational characteristic is found in the work of Weber (1996) who discovered that the type of harm embodied in a moral dilemma presented to subjects, and the magnitude of its consequences, significantly influenced their ethical decision-making.

2. **Social Consensus** — defined as the extent to which individuals agree that an act is 'good' or 'bad'. According to Jones (1991), ethical decisions are more likely to be impacted when there is a greater degree of perceived social consensus around the virtue of the act. For example, stealing money is generally agreed upon by society to be 'bad' and therefore would play a significant role in the ethical decision of an individual. However, other less morally intense issues may not garner such agreement (e.g., illegal copying of software) and as such would play a lesser role in the ethical decisions of individuals. In addition, research suggests that social consensus significantly impacts the recognition of issues as posing moral dilemmas, ethical judgments, and behavioural intentions (Barnett, 2001).

3. **Probability of Effect** — defined as the joint likelihood that an act will take place and the subsequent certainty of harm or benefit (Jones, 1991). For example, placing a bomb on an aircraft will ensure that a negative act will occur and will cause certain harm. Alternatively, driving while intoxicated increases the likelihood an accident will take place (but not to the level of complete certainty) and the probability such an accident will cause harm is also high (although not certain). As such, placing a bomb on an aircraft is more morally intense than driving under the influence of alcohol. Support for the impact of this situational characteristic is found in the work of Singhapakdi, Vitell and Kraft (1996) who found that the probability of effect impacts both perceptions of an ethical problem and behavioural intentions.
leaders called upon to create and define ethical standards for personnel.

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

**Policy and Training Recommendations**

The real and potential ethical issues surrounding the provision of police services are numerous and varied. As such, attempting to specify which should be included in a program of ethics training would be neither comprehensive nor sufficient. Therefore, it is argued that such training should be envisioned as a method of improving one’s ability to make ethical decisions in general and engage in ethical behaviours. In this way, ethics instruction may be viewed as akin to effective mathematics training which gives one the tools to solve many problems rather than attempting to provide the ‘correct answer’ to each possible question. Often the focus of organizational ethical training is in the creation and promulgation of a formal code of ethics. However, organizational research indicates that formal codes of ethics are not influential in determining ethical decision-making behaviour because such policies are not powerful enough to affect moral reasoning (Clark & Leonard, 1998; Kronzon, 1999). In addition, examples abound of corporations and organizations that engage in poor ethical decisions regardless of ethical policies (see e.g., Wells, 1988). Given the above, it appears that neither providing specific moral ‘answers’ for each situation that may arise nor providing explicit ethical codes are effective solutions to ethics training. Our goal is to present effective research- and theory-supported recommendations for ethical training of police leaders.

Given the above, it is argued that combining individual, situational and organizational factors to create comprehensive and useful recommendations for police leader ethics training parallels successful research previously conducted by business analysts (e.g., Trevino, 1986), psychologists (e.g., Kurtines, 1986), and military theorists (e.g., Kelloway, 1999) alike. As such, the following recommendations for training incorporate each of these areas, maximizing applicability and usefulness while stemming from a comprehensive research base.
1. Identification of the Desired Ethical Climate

It is clear that a variety of ethical climates might exist within a police organization and that these climates can significantly impact the decision-making and subsequent behaviour of personnel. As described above, ethical climates may include orientations related to caring, laws and codes, rules, instrumentality, or independence. Given this situation, it is suggested that police organizations formally identify and encourage an ethical climate that they believe reflects their needs and the needs of the community they serve. This clear identification of an ethical climate will allow police leaders within a police organization, and its leaders, clearly identifying and encouraging a specific ethical climate. That is, if the climate represents a “Caring Orientation” then the officer might opt to informally warn the offending colleague about his or her behaviour due to a concern for their welfare. In contrast, in a “Rules Orientation” climate the officer would be encouraged to formally report the breach as it would be in keeping with the mandated organizational rules and codes. Finally, an officer in an “Independence Orientation” environment might be more likely to ignore the incident as it would be in his or her best interest to do so in terms of potential reprisals for “whistleblowing”.

Although an organization may want to impart to its leaders, and subsequently to the rest of its personnel, that there may be a variety ethical responses to situations within the organizational environment, it is incumbent upon each police service to decide which of the organizational climates is identified as their guiding force. Until an organization can specify the organizational climate that best suits their needs and the needs of their community, the ability of its leaders to train personnel in ethical behaviour and decision-making will be greatly hampered.

2. Identification of Moral Intensity Factors Related to Policing

As above, it is suggested that the training of police leaders would be greatly enhanced by an organizational understanding of the factors underlying the concept of moral intensity, specifically in relation to the situations commonly faced by police personnel. In essence, it is argued that police leaders who have a firm grasp of the factors that impact moral intensity are more effective conduits for guiding the ethical behaviour of subordinates than leaders who are unaware of these factors. For example, a senior police officer with an understanding of how the magnitude of consequences and probability of effect impact a person’s ethical decisions would be much more likely to effectively develop and promote ethical performance than a senior officer who is unaware of how these situational factors operate.

3. Ethical Training and Instruction

Combining direct classroom lecture with learner involvement has been found to be the most effective method for ethics training (Sapp, 1995). Such specific lecture-style teaching methods, when combined with the case study method, have been shown to impact the development of ethical decision-making skills (Chapuis, 1999). This method has also proven effective in increasing moral reasoning scores (Chapuis, 1999; Self, Olivarez & Baldwin, 1998) and is positively correlated with increases in ethical benefits (Self et al., 1998). As may be expected, combining direct classroom lecture with learner involvement (as is found in most case-based teaching) has been put forth as the most effective method for content ethics training (Sapp, 1995) and should be included at each level of training.

In addition to imparting knowledge and skills, specific regimented ethics instruction will continue to place the issue of moral reasoning at the forefront of training. This position will increase the visibility, and therefore the perceived importance, of the issue.

In addition to the above, past research indicates that situational dynamics in ethical decision-making account for a great deal of variability in ethical outcomes. This position is underscored by researchers who examine the importance of situational characteristics as predictors of moral decision-making (e.g., Jones, 1991). Indeed, it has been demonstrated that ethical decision-making is determined by the intensity of the situation in question (Jones, 1991). As such, to positively impact ethical decisions and behaviour over a wide range of situations, ethics training should parallel the variability discussed throughout the literature and be presented across a similarly wide range of situations. Similar support for the impact of the situational is found in the work of Weber (1996) who discovered that the type of harm embodied in a moral
The dilemma presented to training participants, and the magnitude of its consequences, significantly influenced their ethical decision-making.

In addition to the situational nature of ethical decision-making and training situations, the situationally-dependent nature of leadership accounts for a great deal of variability in ethical outcomes. As discussed above leaders themselves become one of the situational factors within an organization having the potential to affect the ethical behaviour of those they lead (Kronzon, 1999). Including ethical content in each training package offered will demonstrate the applicability of ethical decision-making across a wide spectrum of situations to a wide variety of leaders.

4. Ethics Training vs. Ethics Courses

As stated above, situational variability in ethics calls not only for ethical instruction to be included in a wide range of classroom work, but also across activities. This approach is supported by the training literature as well as by research into the ethical climate of the organization. A formalized approach to ethics training can be likened to the individual-based ethical decision-making and leadership ability discussed above. The individual is expected to incorporate information into their personal decision-making and leadership style. In acknowledging the variability of the situation when discussing ethics training, researchers have come to the conclusion that for ethical training to be effective it should be practical, as opposed to strictly theoretical, and focused on the decision-making process rather than rote learning of concepts (Schnapp, Stone, Van Norman, & Ruiz, 1996). Such training intentions can be incorporated into all instruction and preparation rather than being taught in the classroom only, during prescribed ethics-content courses. It may be argued that broadening the scope of ethics education in this way will further enhance its visibility and perceived importance. Such application will also serve to demonstrate the situational nature of both leadership and ethical decision-making. Increasing learning time and availability through the incorporation of ethics into all facets of operation should also result in a corresponding increase in the amount of material learned.

5. Clear Delineation of Ethical Expectations

Organizational ethics research indicates that the effective delineation and communication of ethical standards may positively impact both individual accountability and knowledge regarding organizationally sanctioned expectations and limits. The effect of an organization’s ethical climate, including ethical constraints, on individual moral reasoning has been studied in the past (Jones & Ryan, 1997). Findings indicate that the predominant effect of the organizational ethical climate on individuals is that people tend to act in accordance with their perception of the “average” moral standard of others in the organization (i.e., people behave in ways they feel will be morally acceptable to others in the organization). As such, in order to determine a course of action, people rely on the opinions of their referent groups (i.e., those within the organizational culture) to guide their moral reasoning. The development of this approach is grounded in the notion that the majority of adults employ a level of moral reasoning that is anchored by a desire to be viewed as a ‘good’ person (Kelloway, 1999; Kohlberg, 1969, 1984).

It has also been contended that clarifying ethical expectations may also produce positive results in terms of organizational cohesion and morale (Dickson et al., 2001). Most importantly, researchers suggest that this cohesion and morale may significantly mediate the ethical climate (Wickham, 1996). Theorists have suggested that a strong ethical environment based upon cohesion and morale provides a foundation in which further cohesion, morality, and unit strength can be achieved (Wickham, 1996). As such, consistent consideration of the morale and structure of each functional group during both training and routine operations may encourage an improved ethical climate (Dickson et al., 2001). By establishing norms or sanctioned expectations of ethical behaviour, organizations influence the moral reasoning of the individual, causing individuals to make decisions and act as they believe those around them do.

6. Recognition of Leaders’ Influence

Clearly, the ethical reasoning and behaviour viewed as acceptable by leaders within an organization directly affects subordinates’ ethical decisions, their subsequent ethical behaviour, the severity of ethical dilemmas based on their behaviour, and the ability to solve these dilemmas (Bartels et al., 1998). A leader’s acceptance of particular behaviours communicates acceptable limits for others in the organization (Dickson et al., 2001). As such, it is paramount that police leaders know this, appreciating the length of their ethical reach. Evidence for this notion is provided by Kronzon (1999) who found that leaders’ responses to transgressions played a more significant role in defin-
ing the ethical climate of an organization than ethical codes formally setting out moral standards for personnel to follow. Contrary to the weighty influence of codes has not been shown to significantly affect how individuals perceive any given behaviour. The above research represents further confirmation of a leaders potential to impact the ethical behaviour of those they lead, often providing more impact than formal organizational codes of ethics. Organizational ethics research suggests that by promoting recognition of how the actions of co-workers and leaders influence the behaviour of other members, a shift can be expected in ethical behaviour (Ferrell & Gardiner, 1991).

By role modelling and attending to ethical behaviour, as well as limiting the opportunity to engage in unethical behaviour, leaders can be made more cognizant of their own personal ethical influences on the organization (Clark & Leonard, 1998; Ferrell & Gardiner, 1991). The importance of these personal influences is supported by the organizational, situational, and ethics training research discussed above. In addition, it may also be argued that leadership specific examinations on role modelling abilities may serve to increase the positive impact of those being considered for leadership roles.

7. Community Input
In addition to police-specific content, training package creation, and training delivery, community input should be considered. This proposition is supported by the work of White (1998) who investigated the extent to which the rigid organizational hierarchies found in military and paramilitary organizations impacts the moral reasoning of personnel. Specifically, results indicate that the more rigid the hierarchy, the lower the scores were on a measure of ethical decision-making (White, 1998). Given this research, it is important to note the need for police leaders to acknowledge the impact that their organization may be having on the moral reasoning of personnel, and subsequently engage in practices that might counteract this process. These findings suggest the need for program architects to obtain community input in order to decrease the opportunity for the presence of negative operational elements. Such outside input would facilitate supplanting the difficulties inherent in a hierarchy (e.g., who executes the role of rule maker and enforcer in regard to individuals very high in the chain of command?). As well, community members may serve to increase outward legitimacy and public accountability of the organization.

8. Formal Assessment
Once a training program has been created and implemented, success must be judged. In order to evaluate success and identify deficits, a formal assessment of the ethics training program is necessary. The majority of training research is outcome based and points to the need for continuing outcome evaluation. As such, a quantitative measure of ethical knowledge and decision-making may be employed both before and after a police leader ethics training program is initiated or altered, as a measure of outcome and program efficacy. Monitoring outcomes may lead to program change, adaptation, and improvement. Employing a quantitative instrument serves to increase the legitimacy and impartiality necessary in high quality, effective, training programs.

Summary
There exists a wide body of literature pertinent to the issue of police leadership and ethics. Individual moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, ethical behaviour, leadership ability, and the training of leaders must all be taken into account when developing an ethics-based training program. Each area can be further realized in terms of individual, organizational and situational factors, directly affecting ethical decision making and behaviour. Including these diverse but integral areas into one set of recommendations maximizes their usefulness while capitalizing on the comprehensive existing research. This article has attempted to provide the reader with a fairly comprehensive review of the relevant research and theory regarding the issue of police leadership and training. Clearly, the issue of ethics in the police service is something that will continue to hold a position of importance and one that should encourage continual review and revision in terms of policies and training. It is hoped that this article will aid in this endeavour.

References


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