

2024-05

Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perceptions of their Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

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Sharif, S. (2024). Non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools (Doctoral thesis, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada). Retrieved from <https://prism.ucalgary.ca>.
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UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perceptions of their Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

CALGARY, ALBERTA

MAY, 2024

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Abstract

This case study explores non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in kindergarten to grade twelve (K to 12) Nunavut schools. Educational leadership influences student achievements, including graduation, in schools of Indigenous communities (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Understanding the context that includes the social and historical circumstances of K to 12 Nunavut schools, perceptions the non-Indigenous educational leaders bring to the system, and the relationship between the two, is vital for non-Indigenous educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Leaders' perceptions of their leadership are also vital to educational pedagogy in schools as they influence their choices when leading. There is also insufficient research on non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The following questions guided the study: How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? I approached the study through a qualitative case study methodology in keeping with Merriam's (1998) interpretation. I gathered data using semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and public records. The analysis of data reveals four main findings: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from the perspective of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, (b) the understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools. The interpretation process highlights how I perceived my leadership, gaps in the K to 12 Nunavut education system, and the importance of Inuit Indigenous

involvement in educational leadership in Nunavut to overcome the colonial narrative in Nunavut education.

Keywords: educational leadership, Indigenous Educational leadership, Indigenous education, Northern schools, Nunavut education, Inuit worldviews.

Acknowledgements

My journey would not have been the same without the teachers who inspired me and supported me every step of the way. Thank you for your profound impact. I am grateful for the constant support of my thesis supervisory committee, Dr. Marlon Simmons, Dr. Jim Brandon, Dr. Brenda Spencer, and Dr. Patricia Danyluk. Their insightful feedback challenged me and ultimately led to a much clearer understanding of the thesis phenomenon.

I am deeply grateful to Dr Marlon Simmons, my supervisor, for his guidance. His ability to motivate me, offer constructive feedback, and help me navigate research standards was essential in overcoming obstacles and completing this work.

I strive to model the compassionate guidance Dr Jim Brandon showed me during my studies. His kind, humble approach to mentorship instilled in me a sense of confidence and determination. I am grateful for Dr. Brenda Spencer's and Dr. Patricia Danyluk's patience and thoughtful feedback, which significantly improved my clarity of thought and writing. Additionally, the constant encouragement and support from my leadership cohort and thesis group were invaluable throughout this journey. The exchange of ideas, thoughtful questions, and supportive encouragement have significantly broadened my understanding and deepened my perspective.

I am deeply grateful for the influence and support of my K-12 colleagues and students throughout my journey. My students, in particular, have been essential to this study and have profoundly shaped my understanding of educational leadership.

This study was made meaningful thanks to the contributions of the participants. Their willingness to share their time, trust, and experiences has deeply enriched my understanding of

educational leadership. I hope the knowledge gained through our interactions will positively impact how educational leadership is understood in K-12 schools throughout Nunavut.

My family's constant support has been a pillar throughout this journey. I especially want to thank my sons, Zeeshan and Armaan, and their partners, Karyn and Jackie, for their thoughtful feedback, encouragement, and belief in me. I am also incredibly grateful for the prayers and support from my extended family, especially Nattu and Shri, who always answer when I needed them.

To my husband, Umar, who has stood by me through years of this study – thank you from the bottom of my heart for your enduring support.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, the late M.A. Sharif. His unwavering support and belief in me were my motivation, and he would have been my greatest champion.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Dedication.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Context.....	2
Research Phenomenon.....	4
Research Purpose.....	4
Research Questions.....	5
Research Design.....	6
Situating Myself.....	6
Rationale and Significance.....	12
Definitions of Key Terms.....	13
Organization of the Dissertation.....	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	16
Overview.....	16
Conceptual Framework.....	18
Inuit Indigenous Educational Leadership.....	20
Inuit Indigenous Worldviews in Educational Leadership.....	21
Inuit Indigenous Knowledge.....	25
Understanding Inuit Indigenous Leadership.....	27

Language and Education.....	28
Culture and Education.....	30
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP).....	32
Education in Nunavut: An Overview.....	34
Colonialism and Education.....	35
Non-Indigenous Educational Leaders' Perceptions	41
Beliefs, Moral Purpose, and Ethics of Educational Leaders.....	43
Value-Based Leadership.....	46
Power and Education.....	47
Exploring Respect.....	49
Leadership for Student Engagement.....	49
Student-Centred Instructional Leadership.....	53
Chapter Summary	55
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	57
Introduction.....	57
Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings	59
The Rationale for Qualitative Research.....	60
The Rationale for Case Study	62
Bounding the Case.....	63
Research Participant Selection and Recruitment	64
Participant Selection	64
Recruitment.....	65
Data Collection Methods	67

Zoom Software as a Data Collection Method.....	67
Interviews.....	68
Semi-Structured Interviews	69
Interview Process.....	70
Reflection on Interviews.....	71
Transcriptions.....	71
Document Review.....	71
Public Records	72
Personal Documents.....	72
Researcher’s Reflective Journal.....	72
Planning and Conducting the Case Study.....	73
Data Management.....	73
Data Preparation.....	74
Data Identification	74
Data Manipulation	75
Data Analysis.....	75
Data Analysis in NVivo Software.....	76
Developing Interpretations and Conclusion.....	79
Ethical Considerations	80
Trustworthiness.....	82
Credibility	82
Dependability.....	83
Confirmability.....	83

Transferability.....	83
Study Limitations and Delimitations	84
Limitations	84
Delimitations.....	84
Chapter Summary	85
Chapter 4: Findings.....	87
Overview.....	87
Context.....	87
Findings: Inuit Indigenous Educators’ Perspectives.....	88
Inuit Indigenous Participant Profiles	88
Participant ID.....	88
Participant MK.....	89
Finding 1: A Necessity for Understanding Educational Leadership from Elders’ and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers’ Perspectives.....	90
Finding 2: The Need for Understanding the Continuity of Colonial Relations within K to 12 Nunavut Schools	93
Colonialism in Educational Leadership.....	94
Preservation of Inuit Indigenous Knowledge and Identity.....	95
Inuit Indigenous Representation in Educational Leadership.....	97
Finding 3: A Necessity for Indigenous Representation of Their Language, Culture, and Knowledge within K to 12 Nunavut Schools.....	99
Finding 4: The Importance of Embedding Inuit Indigenous Perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut Schools.....	101

Findings: Non-Indigenous Leaders’ Perspectives.....	103
Non-Indigenous Participant Profile	103
Participant Lou.....	103
Participant FT.....	104
Participant BJ.....	105
Participant Simon.....	106
Participant DN	107
Participant HB.....	107
Participant Eula.....	108
Participant Tom.....	109
Finding 1: A Necessity for Understanding Educational Leadership from Elders’ and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers’ Perspectives	11010
Meaning of Leadership	110
Leaders’ Values	114
Knowing People and Collaboration.....	115
Facilitating Communication.....	117
Finding 2: The Need for Understanding of the Continuity of Colonial Relations within K to 12 Nunavut Schools	121
Colonialism in Educational Leadership	121
Preservation of Inuit Indigenous Knowledge and Identity.....	123
Inuit Indigenous Representation in Educational Leadership.....	125
Finding 3: A Necessity for Indigenous Representation of Their Language, Culture, and	

Knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut Schools.....	126
Finding 4: The Importance of Embedding Inuit Indigenous Perspectives within K to 12 Nunavut Schools.....	128
Chapter Summary.....	131
Chapter 5: Interpretation and Synthesis.....	132
Overview.....	132
Revisiting Conceptual Framework	134
Changes to Conceptual Framework	137
Interpretation.....	138
Understanding Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools	139
Education Structure.....	139
Inuit Indigenous Representation.	141
Leaders’ Values.	142
Leaders’ Purpose.....	145
Understanding Knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut Schools.....	146
Colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut Schools	148
Culture and Language in K to 12 Nunavut Schools.....	150
Chapter Summary	153
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	155
Overview.....	155
Resituating Myself.....	155
Conclusions Based on Findings.....	156
Inuit Indigenous Worldviews in K to 12 Nunavut Schools	157

Conclusion	157
Values in Educational Leadership	158
Conclusion	159
Colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut Schools	161
Conclusion	162
Inuit Indigenous Representation	162
Conclusion	162
Collaboration.....	162
Conclusion	163
Cultural Revitalization.....	163
Conclusion	164
Recommendations.....	164
Creating Spaces for Reflection and Connection.....	164
Preparing Leaders for Nunavut Education and Ongoing Support	165
Alternative Education Systems.....	166
Recommendations for Further Research.....	167
Researcher’s Final Reflection.....	167
References.....	169
Appendices.....	182
Appendix A: Introductory Call to Participants	182
Appendix B: Study Description.....	184
Appendix C: Letter of Invitation.....	186
Appendix D: Individual Interview Protocol	188

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form – Individual Interview	191
Appendix F: Individual Interview Schedule	196

List of Figures

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 Presentation of Findings

Figure 3 Conceptual Framework During Proposal Stage

Chapter 1: Introduction

Non-Indigenous educational leaders play a significant role in supporting educators in kindergarten to Grade 12 (K to 12) Nunavut schools. This case study explores non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Understanding the context that includes the social and historical circumstances of K to 12 Nunavut schools, perceptions the non-Indigenous educational leaders bring to the system, and the relation between the two, is an ongoing process for non-Indigenous educational leaders such as high school educators, principals, and senior administrators. Their perceptions affect leadership processes in Nunavut schools. The study seeks to understand the perceptions of their leadership and how these perceptions influence leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

There is little literature on the influence of non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The non-Indigenous educational leaders' struggle to understand leadership in the Northern schools could be one of the reasons for the reported lower rates of high school certification among Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people. These facts have raised my interest in knowing how non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in Nunavut's K to 12 schools.

As an educational leader in Nunavut communities, I have experienced that educational leaders play an essential role in engaging the community, educators, and students in the academic achievements of students. In communities where I have worked, a large percentage of high school students exhibit some form of disengagement in school. This disengagement could be attributed to the perceptions and beliefs that educational leaders bring to the schools. Based on literature, gaps exist in educational achievements between students of Northern communities with high percentages of Indigenous people and the larger population of Canada (Carr-Stewart,

2019; Csontos, 2019; Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2013; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016; Statistics Canada. (2017); Pratt et al., 2018; Whitley, 2014). This gap results from the inadequate acknowledgement of Indigenous history, language, culture, and knowledge by educational leaders (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). When educational leaders value marginalized people's history, language, culture, and knowledge it enables youth to experience a sense of engagement and see themselves as valued global community members (hooks, 2003). To improve educational achievements such as graduation rates, leaders need to work toward creating educational environments where Indigenous Peoples' history, language, culture, and knowledge is respected, leading to a sense of inclusion, belonging, and well-being (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

This chapter presents an overview of the context and background leading to this study of non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools, followed by the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. I also discuss the research approach, chosen methods and methodology, and researcher assumptions. Finally, the chapter concludes with an explanation of the rationale, significance of this study, and definitions of select terms.

Context

The study context explains the circumstances leading to the research, the current state of the problem, and the reasons for this exploration. As an experienced educator in Nunavut communities, the focus of my work had been to reflect on my leadership and its influence on student learning and Grade 12 graduation rates. According to the Government of Canada's Office of the Auditor General's (2019) report to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut details the

obstacles to student achievement in Nunavut. It suggests low attendance levels as one of the obstacles (Government of Canada, 2019), which also impacts student engagement (OECD, 2017). *The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples in Canada* (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018) report affirmed my experience that the high dropout rates in schools serving Indigenous populations indicate the quality of education in education systems. I believe the belief and values of educators and educational leaders influence the quality of education. The report also confirmed my understanding that among various other reasons, such as poverty, homelessness, lack of mental health support, etc., low student engagement results from the disconnect between schools and students' cultural identity. The fact that the residential school system in Canada has had intergenerational effects on Indigenous Peoples, such as loss of culture, language, and identity, was emphasized by Battiste (2000), Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2013), Fredua-Kwarteng (2016), Odulaja and Halseth (2018), and Whitley (2014). These effects have caused distrust among the Indigenous population toward schools, teachers, and educational administrators, hindering collaboration between the community and the school. The loss experienced by the Indigenous population continues to impact the current educational achievements of students (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018). Therefore, educational leadership in Indigenous communities must be informed by the cultural context and history of the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which any educational institution is situated.

However, as a principal in a school in a Nunavut community for a 3-year term, I saw the Grade 12 graduation numbers increase from five students graduating in the first year to thirteen in my third year. As a school community, we motivated students to return to school and work toward graduation. We also experienced success because there was a belief that success could not be attained without collaborative effort at all levels. This leadership experience had

influenced me to reflect on personal and systemic practices, perceptions, and decisions that affected the leadership process.

Understanding and connecting with the community's history and culture was essential in creating a positive learning environment and in leading a school involved in self-reflection, connecting, and understanding the school community. Leading also meant creating an environment for collaboration and a sense of belonging. In addition to understanding educational legislation, the exchange of an educational leader's beliefs and moral purpose with the community's cultural identity informs how educational leaders understand leading a school (Goulding et al., 2016). As my experiences were in Nunavut education systems, this study of non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership is positioned in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Research Phenomenon

An educational leader's understanding of the Indigenous community's social and historical context impacts education (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018). According to a study about the effect of perceptions and practices of school principals on Indigenous students' educational experiences, Preston et al. (2017) stated that the perceptions of principals impact Indigenous students' educational experiences. Preston et al. argued that the pedagogy educational leaders bring to the education system must be informed by Indigenous worldviews to create positive experiences for Indigenous students. In keeping with Preston et al.'s contention, I experienced that in Nunavut schools, non-Indigenous educational leaders' understanding of the Nunavut context and worldviews impacted their perceptions of educational leadership. Also, Burleigh and Burm (2013) argued that self-reflection and critical analysis of invisibility of privileges are necessary for non-Indigenous educators to teach equitably in Indigenous communities. In

keeping with Burleigh and Burn's contention, I believe that awareness of or reflection on who we are as leaders influenced educational pedagogy, affecting students' achievements.

The phenomenon explored in this study was that the effect of perceptions that the non-Indigenous educational leaders bring to K to 12 Nunavut schools, and the relation between these perceptions and Nunavut's cultural history is a struggle for educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools. This struggle could be an obstacle for leadership in creating environment for and learning through Inuit Indigenous ways of knowing. My rationale for examining this topic was the need to understand how non-Indigenous educational leaders' perception of their leadership impacts educational leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Research Questions

To explore the non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership, I designed the following overarching research questions to guide this case study: How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? These overarching questions led to four sub questions:

- How do educational leaders describe leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?
- What beliefs and values shape non-Indigenous leaders' understanding of educational leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

- What are leaders' perspectives on being non-Indigenous educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools?
- What distinguishes leadership experience in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

Research Design

Through an explorative case study using qualitative research methods, I learned about the experiences and perceptions of eight non-Indigenous educational leaders and two Inuit Indigenous educational leaders working in various capacities in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Participants had been employed by the Nunavut Department of Education three to five years prior to this study.

I believe that research and knowledge are contextually situated. With the approval of the University of Calgary Ethics Board, I explored the understandings and perceptions of non-Indigenous educators of their leadership through Zoom software-based semi-structured interviews. The literature review and my conceptual framework guided the data collection and analysis. For the data analysis, first, I transcribed and coded the interview data by assigning words and phrases to reveal emerging themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Next, I analyzed emerging theme patterns in depth to understand the complexity of non-Indigenous leadership in Nunavut schools. Finally, my findings were presented by using a thick description of participants' perceptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These interpretations informed my recommendations and my conclusion.

Situating Myself

The concept of a critical pedagogy of place was introduced by Gruenewald (2008) and discussed in the context of decolonization and rehabilitation of place in educational research. Developing a critical pedagogy of place is about challenging ourselves to interpret our

experiences and determine what needs to be transformed and conserved. Gruenewald argued that the purpose or practice of learning should involve a place's cultural, political, economic, and ecological dynamics. India and Nunavut are important locations influencing my educational leadership process and understanding. These locations have shaped my experiences as a student and educator. I grew up in India and received a Eurocentric education because it was considered beneficial for my future progress even though the culture and language, which were English, were different from that of my home. I spent 25 years working in the education system in India, during which I taught in economically and socially disadvantaged communities. I moved to Canada for postgraduate studies in Nova Scotia, then taught in Nunavut for more than 10 years.

Most communities of Nunavut were isolated, with the internet and phone being the primary mode of communication between communities in Nunavut and the outside world. Travelling in and out of communities depended on the weather, flight availability, and affordability. Most communities were small, and educators were easily recognized due to their interactions with the children, parents, community members, and other community services to meet students' educational needs. Finding very few like me in leadership roles in Nunavut, I approached leadership with a sense of doubt, often feeling isolated, and occasionally being misunderstood or misrepresented.

I believe educational leadership in a school is about taking a stand, self-reflection, and the dilemma of making decisions that require a moral position and purpose (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013). Educational leaders can enrich their practices through self-reflection, community engagement, and culturally respectful communication (Oskineegish, 2015). I believe leadership in Nunavut communities requires ongoing reflection on the meaning of leading due to Nunavut education system's dynamic nature. How an educational leader understands leadership also

depends on the focus of their leadership. The focus of my leadership in schools had been student engagement. I constantly questioned protocols or systemic requirements to increase student engagement, and I continually reassessed my educational leadership process. Through the ongoing process of self-reflection, I also sought to understand how I perceived myself as an educational leader.

My epistemology is grounded in social constructionism. Burr (2015) explained that knowledge construction is a social process influenced by history, culture, language, and geography. By interpreting our interaction with the environment, we construct knowledge. Self-reflecting on my epistemology in relation to my contexts, Indian and Nunavut communities, helped me, as an educator, understand the factors that inform my actions and decisions that impact students' experiences. As an educational leader, my context, the political and social-cultural dynamics of the communities I worked in, informed the balance between the operational, moral, and ethical dimensions of choices to lead in schools.

Nunavut communities in Canada have a colonial past, and the legacy of colonial history continues. English was the primary language of communication and instruction in Nunavut under the Eurocentric system. As well, the English language was prominent in commerce and education. My experiences as an educator in India and Nunavut, which have Eurocentric education systems, have made me conscious and critical of the hierarchical structures in educational institutions. My understanding of educational leadership also resulted from the interaction of the Indian, Eurocentric, and Indigenous interpretations of knowledge and educational leadership. These three perspectives were simultaneously at play when I tried to understand leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

I agree with Rabindranath Tagore, an eminent 19th century Indian poet, educator, and polymath (Ghosh et al., 2012), along with Paulo Freire the Brazilian educator and philosopher (Freire, 1996), that the colonial education system is not conducive to independent thought or creative thinking. The focus on reasoning ignored the relationship between education and nature and the importance of imagination, emotions, and creativity. Tagore was a proponent of the globalization of education. He also believed education should be grounded in local traditions and knowledge (Ghosh et al., 2012). Freire was a proponent of the dialogical approach in education, where students had a say in their education and were not passive recipients. Freire believed education facilitates social change and that self-development was its primary purpose. According to Freire every person has a right to freedom where they can understand and change their conditions.

When speaking of decolonizing education, Marie Battiste, a prominent Mi'kmaq Indigenous scholar, shared that the forced assimilation of Indigenous people into Eurocentric systems had suppressed and rejected the Indigenous heritage and knowledge which also applies in Nunavut. For the legacy to be reversed, colonialism in the education system must be confronted, and Indigenous languages, worldviews, and traditions respected (Battiste, 2013). Scholars also agreed that language and culture are essential in a child's sense of self and, therefore, crucial to their education. Unfortunately, many K to 12 schools in Nunavut and elsewhere fail to connect with the students' homes, languages, and cultures to support the academic and employability goals. Consequently, students move between two worlds with different expectations, which adds to disengagement and apathy toward school (Gruenewald, 2008).

Nunavut has 25 communities divided into three regions, each having its Regional School Operations office for administration. The District Education Authority (DEA), represented by community members, has responsibility and accountability roles at community levels. Nunavut education is multilingual and has Indigenous ideology as its foundation (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016). Nunavut, on its creation, inherited the K to 12 education system from the Northwest Territories. At the time of this study, Nunavut adopted the Alberta provincial curriculum in secondary schools. The adopted curriculum did not consider cultural relevance, which contributed to a disconnect between the school and community expectations (Aylward, 2009; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016; Government of Canada, 2019; Smagorinsky et al., 2012; Tulloch et al., 2016). There was an effort by the Nunavut Department of Education to create a curriculum that is culturally informed. The isolation, limited resources, and gaps in understanding culture by non-Indigenous educators all add to the complexity of educational leadership in Nunavut.

As an educator in a Nunavut community, I experienced being visible when I stepped out of my house, which was a new experience for me. Though Nunavut is a vast territory comprising three time zones, I felt people all over the region knew me. Despite the distance, relationships were close, which was overwhelming for a person from a large Indian city. However, the community accepted me with an open heart, and I experienced their love, struggles, and pain. The students I taught influenced my understanding of the role of an educational leader in Nunavut. Consequently, leading meant going beyond the confines of the school and understanding through the lens of student lives and interactions. It was about listening to what they were trying to show or say to me, which is depicted in the following incidents.

I was a student support teacher in a school in Nunavut, which required that I support students with special needs. One girl spent most of her hours in my office, rarely leaving my side

or wanting to do any academic work. Though she benefited from my attention, it was exhausting. One afternoon, as I left for home, the girl followed me, keeping 10 paces behind, trying to make conversation, and would not stop. Finally, after some time, I stopped and said to her, “I am sad and tired. I want to be alone, and you need to go home.” As I started walking, she yelled, “Shamim, you are not going to do suicide!” She walked away when convinced I was going to be safe. I realized this girl was empathetic, intuitive, and compassionate toward the people she connected with. I experienced her struggles, pain, affection, and hidden intellect. On reflection, I realized that she viewed the world from the lens of her traumatic experiences, and for her, the school was less about academic success and more about sharing, acceptance, and care.

The following incident portrays how school space was understood by this student and possibly many others in Nunavut. Throughout Nunavut, teachers and students go home for lunch or have personal time during lunch breaks. During my walk-through at the school on one such lunch break, I found a 17-year-old student sitting in the school foyer. Instinctively following school procedures, I said, “You are not supposed to be here; please go home for lunch.” The young boy responded with a blank, angry look, “What home?” At that moment, I did not perceive his reaction more than the fact that he had no option but to stay in school. However, I realized that for this student, school was a safe place. The two of us had very different perceptions of what the school space means, which has stayed with me. This incident compelled me to reflect on my moral purpose as an educator and view the school from a much broader context in Nunavut.

I firmly believe that leaders bring about change by fostering individuals through little acts of care daily. As a result, the students and fellow educators I worked with had a sense of hope, love, and urgency. The experience of such care could sometimes have a substantial impact. For

example, a Grade 12 student had stopped attending school very close to graduation. On inquiring, I found he had difficulty waking up in the morning. A wake-up call in the morning for two weeks made the difference. On my return from summer break, the student was happy to share that he had graduated. The following year, he was in school requesting tutoring for math to prepare for a qualifying exam for a post-secondary course. He engaged well with the support provided and successfully registered for the course. The engagement was a life-changing experience for this student, motivating him to aspire to higher goals. As an educational leader, I acquired a deeper understanding of what it meant to engage. It was about tiny steps to reach out, understand, and care for my students.

These instances added new dimension to my understanding of educational leadership and how I, as a non-Indigenous educator, perceived the students I taught in Nunavut. I believe I was able to give meaning to my work because I constantly reflected on experiences to inform my understanding of educational leadership.

Rationale and Significance

This study stems from the need to understand non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions in K to 12 Nunavut schools and the recognition that leaders' perceptions are crucial in enhancing educational leadership. Understanding the context that includes the social and historical circumstances of Nunavut's K to 12 schools, perceptions the non-Indigenous educational leaders bring to the system, and the relationship between the two, is vital for non-Indigenous educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools. My personal experiences as a parent, student, and teacher and my need to resolve unanswered questions stemming from these experiences informed this study. My interaction with students was instrumental in constructing my belief that the effort to enhance leadership begins with educators' reflection on their values and positionality in the

education system. I have experienced that when non-Indigenous educators look for a resolution to problems in the teaching-learning environment, they seldom self-reflect on their motives and positionality. The ability of non-Indigenous educational leaders to understand the effects of their motivations and actions on the teaching-learning environment is critical in improving educational leadership.

At the time of this study, I believed that understanding non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions and positionality could provide clues about ways to improve leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. There was also insufficient literature on non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. In addition, I hoped that the insights gained through the research could help non-Indigenous educational leaders to understand and to potentially create and implement ways to improve leadership in Nunavut schools.

Definitions of Key Terms

Indigenous Peoples: "Indigenous is often used within international discourse, discussions, and protocols when referring to the original inhabitants of a country or particular geographic territory" (Carr-Stewart, 2019, p. 205).

Aboriginal Peoples: In Canada, people of First Nations, Inuit Indigenous, and Métis ancestry are referred to as Aboriginal (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018).

Inuit Indigenous: Inuit Indigenous is used concerning the people, culture, knowledge, or any information about the Inuit Indigenous people of Nunavut.

Leadership in schools: Leadership is multiple synergies of roles that work to increase the individual and collective sense of self-worth, well-being, and organizational recognition of its members in the context of the school community. It is essentially a moral and ethical task

(Murphy & Louis, 2018). For this study, I use leadership when referring to the state of being a leader.

School leader: School leaders are “individuals who influence the behaviour, thoughts, and feelings of a significant number of other people by word or example” (Murphy & Louis, 2018, p. 4). For this study, I use “leader” when referring to the people who engage in the act of leading.

Indigenous education leadership: Leadership in school focused on leading from the Indigenous educational worldviews, which include First Nations, Inuit Indigenous, and Métis ancestry.

Student engagement: “Engagement is realized in the processes and relationships within which learning for democratic reconstruction transpires. As a multifaceted phenomenon, engagement is present in the iterations that emerge as a result of the dialectical processes between teachers and students and the differing patterns that evolve out of transformational actions and interactions” (McMahon & Portelli, 2004, p. 70).

Student achievement: “Achievement is a multidimensional concept, which can relate to many aspects of life and vary according to an individual’s aspirations” (OECD, 2017, p. 111). For this document, student achievement is understood as Grade 12 graduation.

Eurocentric: The views of histories and cultures of non-Western societies from a European or Western perspective. Eurocentric knowledge has a superior standing over Eastern wisdom (Smith, 2012).

Indian: An individual identifying with the culture and heritage of India.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter began with an introduction to the context of the study. Next, I articulated the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and the research questions. Following, I presented a brief explanation of the research design and the researcher's perspectives. Finally, I concluded the chapter with the rationale and significance of this research study and a list of definitions of key terminology used in this study.

Chapter 2 is the literature review. In this chapter, I engage the literature of the study's key concepts and discuss the conceptual framework that lays the path and guides the entire research process for this study. Chapter 3 relates the elements of the methodology and methods I used to address the study questions. Chapter 4 details the findings and analysis from the 10 interviews with Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational participants, followed by interpretation and synthesis in Chapter 5. The dissertation concludes with recommendations and my conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

To provide a framework for further exploring the research questions, I examined a select literature sample for this case study to explore how non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The process of reviewing the literature was iterative. Based on my experiences and literature, at the initial proposal stage, the conceptual framework consisted of three interlinked concepts:

- non-Indigenous leaders' beliefs and moral purpose, and the focus of leadership
- Inuit Indigenous leadership
- Northern Canadian education systems

The interviews with participants revealed new concepts and information that I hadn't considered during the initial proposal phase. I also gained a deeper understanding of non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools by critically analyzing the literature.

Consequently, I revisited, reviewed, and updated the literature review by adding new concepts. The analysis revealed that the Inuit Indigenous worldviews need to be woven into all aspects of leadership in Nunavut schools. These processes led me to arrive at a new conceptual framework to reflect my fresh understanding, resulting in the following three refined concepts:

- Inuit Indigenous educational leadership
- non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions
- Education in Nunavut

I have detailed the changes to the conceptual framework in Chapter 6.

To conduct the review, I researched existing literature using specific words and phrases based on the working title of my study. Phrases and words guiding the search included the following: Indigenous education in Canada, education in Nunavut, educational history, educational leadership, moral purpose, value-based educational leadership, leadership for learning, Indigenous research methodology, Inuit Indigenous research methodology, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Through Google Scholar, ERIC, and the University of Calgary library database, I consulted materials such as peer-reviewed journal articles, periodicals, handbooks, conference papers, online news articles, and government websites. However, the initial search revealed little literature on leadership in the Indigenous population, Northern communities, or Nunavut. Consequently, I used the snowball technique extensively, looking at the bibliography of resources to identify journal articles, books, published literature reviews, and grey literature on the topic (Ridley, 2012). I also searched The Government of Nunavut's website for official education policies and strategies documents. I also reviewed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) report, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publication titled *Promising Practices in Supporting Success for Indigenous Students* (OECD, 2017), and The First National Report by Willms et al. (2009), titled *What Did You Do in School Today? Transforming Classrooms Through Social, Academic, and Intellectual Engagement*. These documents were good initial sources of educational leadership strategies and practices in Indigenous populations, as they gave me an overall understanding of where to begin. Once developed, framework of the study and the research questions were the criteria for further deciding the relevance of the literature.

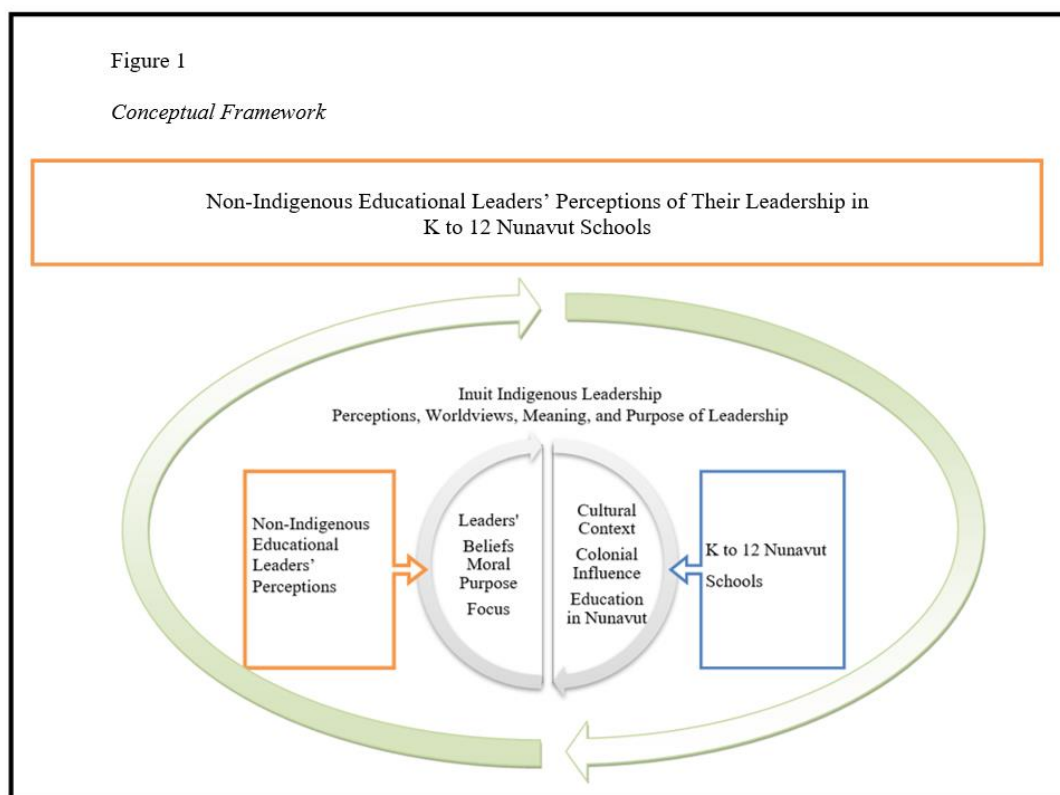
During the iteration process, I reflected on the similarity and connection between the literature and participants' information to that of my study topic. Consequently, I developed my

framework from this iterative process, which relates to my study's overarching research questions: How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

In this chapter, I discuss the conceptual framework for the study arising from the need to explore and understand non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to improve leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Next, I explore the Inuit Indigenous worldview for educational leadership in Nunavut, followed by the review of non-Indigenous leadership in Nunavut. The chapter concludes with my exploration of the education in Nunavut communities, understanding the historical and cultural context, and the literature review summary.

Conceptual Framework

Literature and my experiences as an educational leader in Nunavut communities informed the conceptual framework for this study. My students had been instrumental in shaping my identity as an educator, making student engagement and achievement the focus of my educational leadership. My history, the communities in which I taught, and my experience with the education systems have influenced the conceptual framework for this study, as seen in Figure 1.



A conceptual framework “guides the entire research process, enabling researchers to make reasoned defensible choices, match research questions with those choices, align analytic tools with research questions, and thereby guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 165). It is the link between the researcher’s beliefs, identity, interests, context, and formal and informal theories (Ravitch & Reggan, 2017). When working in Northern communities, the educational leaders’ epistemology and views on colonialism, cultural identity, and language impact decisions related to meeting student needs (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013; Campbell, 2008; hooks, 2003; Oskineegish, 2015; Sergiovanni, 2005; Sockett, 1989). Leaders in Northern Canadian schools with Indigenous students require a clear understanding of how to lead educators and a grasp of various forms of leadership and the context of students’

culture and experiences. Appreciating the uniqueness and complexity of schools in Northern communities is crucial for educational leaders (Fallon & Paquette, 2014).

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. To address the purpose of this study, I present literature review on Inuit Indigenous educational leadership in Nunavut schools, non-Indigenous educational leaders' perception and a brief description of K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Inuit Indigenous Educational Leadership

Though K to 12 Nunavut schools are in the process of transformation from a Southern-informed education to an Inuit Indigenous worldviews-informed system, they have a small number of Inuit Indigenous leaders to enforce the Inuit Indigenous worldviews (Snow et al., 2021). Some reasons have been suggested in literature for the low numbers of Inuit Indigenous educational leaders. However, according to Fallon and Paquette (2014), any dialogue on educational leadership must begin by acknowledging that the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are required to cope with a standard of living not comparable to that of their non-Indigenous counterparts. In a study about Aboriginal school leaders across Canada, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2016) reported that Aboriginal school leaders face a variety of challenges, including low socio-economic levels, trauma relating to colonization, and intergenerational trauma. In addition, providing bilingual education in a culturally based pedagogy to maintain Indigenous knowledge and language, and overcoming academic challenges resulting from a difficult educational heritage contributes to social problems. Consequently, Inuit Indigenous and First Nations education have been identified as a high priority due to low achievement and graduation levels of students in Canada (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016).

The Indigenous educational leaders in Northern schools have the responsibility not only to help students understand their history but also to help the non-Indigenous staff understand the relation of Indigenous history to that of Canada (Ottmann, 2010). However, genuine Indigenous leadership is complex because Indigenous leaders face the task of meeting the culture-specific needs of their communities, such as language revitalization and closing the achievement gaps as assessed by Eurocentric standards. According to Ottmann (2010), residential school history and current socio-economic conditions may have left Indigenous people believing education is unattainable. Ottmann asserted that acknowledging that traditional Indigenous education existed before the introduction of the colonial K to 12 education system, which prepared the young for life, would help validate the Indigenous system and build esteem. Oskineegish (2015) reiterated that self-reflection, communication, engagement with the community, and an attitude that fosters empowerment by non-Indigenous educational leaders are essential for educational leadership in the Northern communities.

Based on the literature, this section on Inuit Indigenous education leadership presents a discussion of Inuit Indigenous worldviews for educational leadership, followed by Traditional Knowledge. Next is an explanation of Inuit Indigenous educational leadership, the importance of language and culture in Inuit Indigenous education, and the effects of colonialism in Nunavut schools and leadership.

Inuit Indigenous Worldviews in Educational Leadership. According to Battiste (2000), Indigenous education is about finding one's identity—"who you are, where you come from, and your unique characteristics" (p. 183). Battiste discussed the foundations that underline Indigenous education as environmental knowledge, education through dreams or visions, mythical traditions as part of the Indigenous worldview, and spirituality. Carr-Stewart (2019), in

an account of Indigenous education in Canada covering colonialism, racism, and contemporary issues in education, explained Indigenous worldviews, consistent with Kant's understanding, as the way "people make sense of the things that happen around them" (p. 204). The visibility of the Indigenous worldviews in the educational processes is a meaningful way to bring to the fore the Indigenous Peoples' philosophies and understanding, which is an essential aspect of changing existing patterns in Indigenous education.

The Canadian Council on Learning (2007) report on determining success criteria for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Indigenous students discussed the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Indigenous learning models. According to the report, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (IQ) principles express the Inuit Indigenous values and beliefs that are the foundation for Inuit Indigenous lifelong learning. IQ principles, which are based "on three types of laws: natural laws (*maligarjuat*), cultural laws (*piqujat*), and communal laws (*tirigusuusii*)" (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, p. 20), have sustained the Inuit Indigenous for generations.

According to the Government of Nunavut's Inuit Societal Values Project (Government of Nunavut, nd), Inuit Indigenous societal values guide educational leadership in Nunavut based on IQ principles that embody Inuit Indigenous Traditional Knowledge. As Tester and Irniq (2008) explained, the IQ principles portray the seamless way that everything is connected, and that nothing stands on its own. According to Tester and Irniq (2008) and Tagalik (2010), IQ is grounded in how humans relate to nature and land at a spiritual, physical, and social-psychological level. They further clarified that IQ embraces traditional Inuit Indigenous culture, including values, worldview, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations (Tagalik, 2011; Tester & Irniq, 2008). According to Snow et al. (2021), IQ

principles, referred to as Inuit Indigenous Traditional Knowledge or societal values, detail eight principles that guide the educational leadership in Nunavut. These principles are,

Inuuqatuguutsuarniq (respecting others, relationships and caring for people);
Tunnganarniq (fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive); *Pijitsirniq*
 (serving and providing for family or community, or both); *Aajiiqatigiinni* (decision
 making through discussion and consensus); *Pilimmaksarniq* (development of skills
 through practice, effort, and action); *Piliriqatigiinni* (working together for a common
 cause); *Qanuqtuurniq* (being innovative and resourceful); and *Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq*
 (respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment). (p. 29)

Karetak et al. (2017), referring to a project through years of collaboration with Elders across Nunavut, explained IQ in their book *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: What Inuit Indigenous Have Always Known to Be True*. Compared to Western European culture and science, they argued that IQ is a framework or a way of thinking that links all aspects of living rationally: IQ does not split living into sections for reflection and study. Karetak et al. also discussed the four maligarjuat, meaning “big things that must be followed” (Introduction, para. 8), which are laws governing Inuit Indigenous living. The four maligarjuat are: “1. working for the common good and not being motivated by personal interest or gain; 2. living in respectful relationships with every person and thing that one encounters; 3. maintaining harmony and balance; and 4. planning and preparing for the future.” (Karetak et al., 2017, Introduction, para. 8).

Karetak et al. (2017) shared that children learn the IQ principles and maligarjuat through repeated storytelling by the Elders. According to Kalluak (2017), “Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit” means respecting and knowing about the Inuit Indigenous land, people, locations, and history. It calls for maintaining harmony with the people, land, nature, and living things, acquiring

traditional life skills and sharing them to build a healthy life. Kalluak further explained that IQ is Inuit Indigenous Traditional Knowledge from ancestors that guides people to live a good life and provides purpose and meaning for life in this world.

Tagalik (2010) argued that IQ defines reality and the meaning of knowledge from the Inuit Indigenous perspective. Tagalik also suggested that defining IQ “can be a spiritual and intellectual home, a safe place from which elders and youth alike can practice resistance through stories, art, music, research, writings, and very many forms of practice” (p. 59). However, understanding IQ in the process of redefinition in the face of globalization and economic growth, according to Tester and Irniq (2008), is a struggle. The *Incorporating Inuit Indigenous Societal Values* 2013 report by the Government of Nunavut defined IQ as “knowledge that has been passed down inter-generationally by Inuit prior to European contact, applicable in current governance, and that can also be utilized in the evolution of governance in Nunavut” (p. 33).

The IQ principles have informed the development of the principles for governance in Nunavut. These are the Guiding Principles

- i) Sulittiarniq – public servants must uphold the public trust by behaving honestly and with integrity;
- j) Ajjigiiktitsiniq – public servants must carry out their responsibilities in a way that is, and that the public sees to be, fair, objective and impartial;
- k) Ujjiqsuttiarniq – public servants must perform their work in a courteous and conscientious manner and be respectful of the needs and values of co-workers and the public they serve;
- l) Iqqanaijaqtitiavauniq – public servants must seek to achieve high standards of service and use and manage resources in a responsible, economic and efficient manner;

- m) Pijitsittiarniq gavamakkunnik – public servants have a duty of loyalty to the GN and to the public, and must carry out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities, regardless of their personal or political affiliations;
- n) Kiggaqtuittiarniq iqqanaijarvigijaminut – public servants must represent the GN with professionalism and not conduct themselves in a manner that could bring the reputation of the GN into disrepute. (Government of Nunavut, 2013, p. 33)

Though founded on Traditional Knowledge, IQ is a living management system that is used for governance by Inuit Indigenous communities and the Nunavut government (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007).

Inuit Indigenous Knowledge. The IQ principles communicate the Traditional Knowledge, values, skills, and ideas over generations to sustain kinship and develop healthy communities (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). Kalluak (2017) further explained that this Traditional Knowledge is geared toward learning and practising specific survival skills necessary in the harsh, unforgiving, and ever-changing Arctic environment. According to Kalluak, knowing the land, lakes, rivers, and other resources are essential to Inuit Indigenous living.

When discussing Inuit Indigenous knowledge, Karetak et al. (2017) and Tagalik (2010) wrote about it as a continuously evolving process. Karetak et al. agreed with Tagalik that knowledge defined by IQ is dynamic and a continuous “process of knowing, applying, experiencing, evaluating and creating new knowledge grounded in a continuum of knowing and continually improving” (Tagalik, 2010, p.2). Tagalik also discussed the time and relationship continuum. Tagalik referenced Pauktuutit (2006) when explaining the time continuum that the degree of future success depends on the understanding of past values and views. Time

continuum, according to Tagalik, is an “iterative approach of past informing present and future [and] is a critical underpinning of Inuit Indigenous worldview” (p. 2).

When discussing the relationship continuum, Tagalik (2010) stated that IQ addresses the relationship between body, mind, and spirit within a person and the relationship with other human beings and the natural environment. Respect for the worth and place of every other living thing and our shared dependence on our past, present, and future environments are prerequisites for being in a relationship. Tagalik joined Putulik (2015) in further elaborating that respect for a person’s contribution to society is valued through naming customs wherein a child carries the name of ancestors. Respect for the namesake’s contributions to the collective good is expressed by extending their name to a child (Tagalik, 2010). According to Kalluak (2017), IQ informed the Inuit Indigenous society about living that ensured continuous balance and respect for the environment. Kuniliusie (2015) added that sharing food and communal meals are essential to Inuit Indigenous lifestyle as they bring together family and friends. Kuniliusie also speaks of gender balance in sharing responsibilities and decision-making in traditional Inuit Indigenous camps to maintain harmony. Kalluak discussed areas informed by IQ as follows: maintaining social order, treating everything as is alive, reliance on Elders, open-heartedness, and family unit. Karetak et al. (2017) wrote about the importance of the knowledge of the cycle of seasons in the Inuit Indigenous way of life. *Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (Government of Nunavut, 2007) and Tagalik referenced the cycle of life when speaking of relationships. The cycle of life is closely linked to the cycle of seasons and supports building collective identity and belonging through an expectation of mutual dependence and sharing (Tagalik, 2010).

Understanding Inuit Indigenous Leadership. According to Arnaquq (2015), traditionally, Inuit Indigenous society did not use terms such as “leader” or “boss.” Individuals achieved leader status in camps through the respect gained for expertise and knowledge through experience. Leaders were not elected but sought after for direction and wisdom in decision-making. These individuals were considered Elders, could express themselves clearly and confidently, and were reliable and welcoming. Arnaquq further explained that the Elders “saw the truths of the *uqaujjuusiat* (gifts of words of advice) they had received being validated throughout their long lives, so they passed them on with gentle conviction” (p. 14). According to Kalluak (2017), due to the harsh conditions that Inuit Indigenous people lived in, they relied on the knowledge and experiences of the Elders. The Elders were looked upon to maintain the social order, and their teaching was and continues to be necessary to Inuit Indigenous people for healthy coexistence (Kalluak, 2017). Arnaquq argued that the resettlement of Inuit Indigenous people into larger communities brought in agencies such as schools, police, health centres, or money that took away traditional community roles, impacting the status of an Elder.

When sharing early camp life experiences as an Inuit Indigenous person, Kuniliusie (2015) stated that camp decision-makers were generally males who demonstrated the ability to lead through their knowledge, expertise, and wisdom. The consensus among camp members was the decision-making process rather than a top-down approach, specified Kuniliusie. In their study on Nunavut educators’ explanation of traditional Inuit Indigenous leadership, Preston et al. (2015) quoted Leon (2012) and Owljoot (2008) to assert that Elders were seen in various roles, which today are considered historians, professors, leaders, and consultants. Consequently, according to Kuniliusie, there could be more than one person seen as Elder in a camp. Historically, the Elders had a significant role in passing on knowledge and providing guidance to

Inuit Indigenous (Arnaquq, 2015; Kalluak, 2017; Karetak et al., 2017; Kuniliusie, 2015; Scott, 2021).

The *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (Government of Nunavut, 2007), with input of Elders, address the implementation and importance of IQ principles for education in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The framework detailed the strengths of Inuit Indigenous values that would provide students the grounding to navigate today's world as Inuit Indigenous people. The framework was designed to inform educators about creating an environment “where *silaturniq* (becoming wise) is fostered, and within which the strength of *inummarik* (a capable person) can develop” (Government of Nunavut, 2007, p. 22).

Preston et al. (2015) argued that, in schools, the core of Inuit Indigenous leadership was to build community relationships by fostering community leadership. Also, that the active engagement of Elders in the teaching-learning process enables wellness in students as they develop their language, social, and spiritual abilities. Preston et al. shared that team building and consensus decision-making are essential features of Inuit Indigenous school leadership.

Language and Education. Canada has approximately 60 to 70 Indigenous languages (Battiste, 2013). However, the residential school system suppressed the use of Indigenous languages; consequently, currently, Indigenous languages are considered endangered (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Nevertheless, Indigenous languages, in all their forms, inform Indigenous knowledge and are essential to the continuation of Indigenous culture and knowledge (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Watt-Cloutier, 2000).

Pennycook (2017) alerted us to the contribution of English as the dominant universal language and threats to other languages, cultures, and knowledge. Proficiency in English

symbolizes power and prestige, an advantage to economic progress and access to education, the entryway to global relations, and a mode to reinforce beliefs and ideologies. Pennycook's contention on the effects of the dominance of the English language was visible in many Northern communities wherein English is chosen over native languages. McCarty and Nicholas (2014) confirmed the language erosion, stating that of those who speak their traditional language, only half speak it daily.

Anoee et al. (2017) called to attention that Inuit Indigenous culture has an oral tradition where knowledge was passed on orally, making language crucial to the Inuit Indigenous way of life. Ottmann (2010) reiterated that educational leaders today need to remember that community Elders traditionally imparted Indigenous education through narrating stories and experiences, focusing on sustainability for the future. This form of learning is part of Indigenous heritage and culture and, therefore, a part of Indigenous identity (Ottmann, 2010). Appreciating the importance of language to Inuit Indigenous societies, Nunavut has a bilingual education motivated by the need to overcome assimilationist policies and preserve Inuit Indigenous languages, knowledge, and skills (Tulloch et al., 2016). Nunavut has favourable policies and legislation in place, such as Nunavut's Education Act (Education Act, Consolidation of Legislation. (n.d.)), Inuit Language Protection Act (2008), and Canadians First: National strategy on Inuit Education (Canadians F., 2011). These policies and legislations support language preservation and bilingual education in schools (Tulloch et al., 2016).

When expressing concern about the use of English language, *Māori* scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) sheds light on the obstacles to communication when concepts evident in the Indigenous language cannot be expressed in English, which Arnaquq (2015) confirmed in the Inuit Indigenous context. Karetak et al. (2017) spent many years in their endeavour to explain IQ

principles in English. However, they shared their struggles in translating the concepts in English and expressed concerns about consequent misrepresentation and misinterpretation.

The obstacles to communication and understanding Indigenous knowledge and worldviews is also seen in school. The high school educators and educational leadership in Northern Canadian schools mainly comprise non-Indigenous educators who do not speak the native language (Oskineegish, 2015). Concepts and reserves of knowledge inherent in the native language are dismissed as trivial to a child's education because educators do not speak it and, therefore, do not understand the cultural capital the child brings. As schools play an essential role in a student's life, the lack of language validation impacts their engagement in school (hooks, 2003; Jacob et al., 2015). Hooks (2003) stated that,

students who speak standard English, but for whom English is a second language are strengthened in their bilingual self-esteem when their primary language is validated in the classroom. This validation can occur as teachers incorporate teaching practices that honor diversity, resisting the conventional tendency to maintain dominator values. (p. 45)

The dominance of the English language and its impact on education is inescapable; however, educators need to be aware of the effects of this dominance and consciously value the diversity of languages in creating an inclusive and democratic educational environment.

Culture and Education. Cultural constructs are informed by value systems, unconscious hierarchical relations, and beliefs acquired through family, educational institutions, social interactions, and media (Dreamson, 2018; Little Bear, 2009). Said (1978) stated that an individual's cultural context limits understanding other cultures. Thus, intercultural dialogue and diverse sociocultural activities are essential to inform cultural understanding that supports accepting a collective sense of existence and inclusion (Dreamson, 2018) particularly in

Northern societies. The intercultural dialogue and shared experiences would provide opportunities for learners to gain awareness by understanding that validating oneself does not mean excluding another. Consequently, the awareness leading to a sense of belonging (Freire, 1996) and collective identity fosters student engagement in classrooms (Dreamson, 2018). This is also true for the Indigenous learners and educators in Northern communities.

Lam et al. (2016) discussed the influence of cultural factors on student engagement. Their study spanning 12 countries found a decline in student engagement in Grades 7 to 9. They also found that teacher support, parent support, and instructional practices impact student engagement across all countries. According to their study, the association between parent support and student engagement was stronger in collectivistic countries, where extended family cultures make parenting a shared responsibility. The collectivistic approach applies to Indigenous societies where extended families are integral to a child's upbringing (Karetak et al., 2017).

The foundation of the Indigenous worldviews in Nunavut, based on IQ principles, is showing respect to others, developing collaborative relationships, promoting environmental stewardship, developing knowledge and skill acquisition, being resourceful, promoting consensus decision-making, and serving others (Preston et al., 2015). Northern communities have a strong connection to land, nature, and the cycle of life or seasons, which often does not align with conventional educational expectations (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013), a notion that Tagalik (2010) shared when speaking of IQ in Nunavut society. Classroom expectations and conventions that do not account for the community way of learning create barriers to the relationship between teacher and student. The disconnect in expectation and conventions leads to a conflict of learning experiences between home and classroom and interferes with students' ability to conform to classroom expectations, which is an obstacle to students' achievement and

success (Anoee et al., 2017; Aylward, 2010; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013; Oskineegish, 2015; Tulloch et al., 2016). Often the disparity in the experiences of the teacher and students leads to a lack of participation and engagement, which could be perceived as learning deficiencies (Anoee et al., 2017; Tulloch et al., 2016).

Transformation through culturally relevant learning, assessments, and curriculum is vital for equitable education to become a reality. In its endeavour to make the much needed change a reality, Nunavut has developed policies and legislation such as the Nunavut Education Act (2008), the Inuit Language Protection Act (2008), and Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education (Canadians F., 2011). However, these efforts fall short because, at the classroom level, leadership needs to support educators in recognizing the colonial influence in education for Indigenous people and the need for a culturally relevant curriculum to enhance student engagement (Tulloch et al., 2016).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Culturally relevant teaching embraces students' sociocultural realities and histories through pedagogy and how teachers negotiate classroom cultures with their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In this process, teachers become aware of their learning, teaching, and socialization and how these experiences impact the teaching and learning process. In addition, teachers are encouraged to engage in reflective thinking and writing as they consider factors influencing student learning, such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and other forms of oppression (Lopez & Olan, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) in the classroom enables students to see, hear, and experience events and activities from their culture in their daily routines. It also empowers students to understand that their cultural identity is essential to their teaching-learning experience (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Karetak et al. (2017), in collaboration with Elders across Nunavut, when

explaining IQ, detailed experiences on the land that facilitated learning. Karetak et al. spoke of experiences in nature that fostered listening, critical thinking, collaboration, and respect for his environment. I had witnessed the learning that occurs through the sharing of experiences that Karetak et al. spoke about. Community Elders visited the school with seal skins, seals, and polar bear skins to show students the traditional ways of preparing the skin. As the Elders processed the skin, they shared their experiences on the land and narrated traditional stories and songs. The atmosphere felt free; students sat around the Elders on the floor, listened, and watched. Elders never missed the opportunity to share wisdom with students on the importance of academic progress and education using songs and storytelling. Karetak et al. explained how IQ principles are connected to learning experiences. For instance, in maintaining harmony as a life goal for youth, they referenced the principle *aajiiqatigiingniq* meaning “working together to deal with threats to social harmony and balance” (Introduction, para. 32). *Aajiiqatigiingniq* was essential to the decision-making process to solve problems, reach resolutions, and ensure *inuutsiargniq* (wellness) of the community (Karetak et al., 2017).

Ladson-Billings (1995) stated that teachers who value culturally relevant teaching utilize students’ culture as a teaching tool. Through CRP, teachers can also communicate that students are capable and will experience achievement. Teachers can create an environment where students choose to work toward academic excellence. Ladson-Billings stated that students must develop a deeper sociopolitical consciousness to critique the cultural norms, attitudes, mores, and institutions that create and maintain social disparities. CRP demands skills beyond those specific traits of academic accomplishment and cultural competency. CRP helps students become aware of their sociopolitical situation, questioning and not accepting the status quo (Ladson-Billings,

1995). Educators and educational leaders need to approach education from CRP to support student engagement in Nunavut schools.

Education in Nunavut: An Overview

Indigenous people across Canada are culturally diverse and have a young population. There are three constitutionally recognized Indigenous Peoples in Canada, also called Aboriginal: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2017; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health report titled *The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples in Canada* stated that education in most Northern communities is consistently underfunded (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018). According to the report, the funding for the various First Nations Band schools across Canada is less than that for provincial schools. Canada currently leads the world in terms of educational attainment. However, for multiple reasons such as colonial history, funding, and unavailability of educational resources, Canada's education system appears to be failing Indigenous students, as reflected in its low graduation rates (Aylward, 2010; Carr-Stewart, 2019; Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2013; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016; McGregor, 2013; OECD, 2017; Tulloch et al., 2016).

Nunavut education follows a hierarchical administration. The Department of Education in the Government of Nunavut and its regional offices govern the education system, including schools, colleges, preschools, and other subsidiaries (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016). Nunavut education is divided into three regions, each having its school operations regional office for school administration. The regions are Qikiqtani, with thirteen communities; Kivalliq, with seven communities; and Kitikmeot, with five communities. The DEA, represented by community members, oversees programs and finances and holds some accountability roles at community

levels (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016). In consultation with community Elders, the DEA supports all aspects of school operations in keeping with the Nunavut Education Act and the IQ principles (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016). Nunavut's bilingual education system has Inuit Indigenous ideology as its foundation (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016). In 1999, Nunavut inherited the K to 12 education system from the Northwest Territories. There is an effort to create a curriculum that is Inuit Indigenous-informed. However, Nunavut adopts the Alberta provincial curriculum for the core curriculum (English, science, and math) for its secondary schools (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016).

Colonialism has had a devastating impact on the Indigenous communities in Canada. For the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, "colonialism is not simply a historical event but continues to manifest in the present day through various political and social policies and institutional racism" (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018, p. 13). The legacy continues in the form of limited schooling facilities in remote Indigenous communities, which leaves students with no choice but to move out of their community for higher education. Limited educational opportunities in the community hinder their pursuit of higher education and economic progress. The educational situation in Nunavut, with a high Inuit Indigenous population, is no different (Tulloch et al., 2016).

Colonialism and Education. Colonialism is concerned with the political and economic domination of one over another, anywhere globally (Fleuri, 2018). Colonialism has brought about "epistemic violence on Indigenous and colonized people everywhere" (Lopez, 2021, p. 360) and has had a devastating impact on the Indigenous communities in Canada. For the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, "colonialism is not simply a historical event but continues to manifest in the present day through various political and social policies and institutional racism" (Odulaja & Halseth, 2018, p. 13). According to Aylward (2007), throughout Northern Canada,

the government-backed, church-run residential school system perpetrated cultural genocide. Even after residential schools were closed, the government was dissatisfied with the academic progress of Inuit Indigenous students, blaming their homes, values, and perceived abilities. A history of forced assimilation and imperialism has profoundly influenced Nunavut's education system (Aylward, 2007; Battiste, 2013). Part of the forced assimilation was to forbid Indigenous people from using their culture and language and learning something new. Battiste (2013) maintained that the education system was used to reinforce forced assimilation by not recognizing Indigenous knowledge and heritage. Battiste argued that forced assimilation imposed upon the Canadian Indigenous Peoples differs from the immigrant and refugee people as the later choose to learn a new culture and have schooling systems educate their children. Under forced assimilation, success is recognized only when Indigenous people transform into the White identity, taking on their language, history, traditions, songs, writing system, and customs—a notion supported by Inuit scholars (Arnaquq, 2015; Karetak et al., 2017).

Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) described “positional superiority” (p. 62) as the idea that Eurocentric knowledge has a superior standing over Eastern wisdom. Based on Smith's perspective, Eurocentric knowledge is considered the centre of all knowledge. It is universal, and any knowledge that does not originate from the Eurocentric ideology is outside the scope of knowledge. Knowledge must be presented afresh as the Eurocentric ideology to be of value. Thus, Eurocentric education is synonymous with an elite education. Smith stated that “the major agency of imposing this positional superiority is colonial education” (p. 62). This superiority is not just limited to information but also extends to the language of instruction. Battiste (2013) adds that a colonizing power uses education when it wishes to subordinate another culture.

McCarty and Nicholas (2014) asserted that colonialism has led to language loss in many nations and the erosion of traditions and culture, resulting in a loss of collective identity. They stated that acknowledgement of this loss has led to language reclamation efforts by communities in North America, in which schools play a vital role. McCarty and Nicholas emphasized that language and culture are inextricably intertwined and critical to constructing a noncolonial perspective. People are disempowered by wiping out both language and culture and making English the primary language of communication. The effects of colonial influence are visible in Northern Indigenous communities, resulting in a loss of language, identity, and achievements (Aylward, 2010; Battiste, 2013; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016; Karetak et al., 2017).

According to Patel (2021), decolonization of education is letting go of what we know. Achieving decolonization involves accepting that schools are not neutral learning locations and that education inequities are ever-present and persistent. Battiste (2013), when addressing decolonizing Indigenous education, spoke of collaborative, respectful dialogue that includes diverse perspectives. This dialogue needs to occur in the context of communities and students' lives and should involve deconstructing how we understand knowledge and engage in the decision-making process. According to Battiste, there needs to be a conscious awareness of the effects of colonial education and the need for systemic reconciliation and healing of the relationship.

Changing the dominant narrative due to colonization and including Indigenous worldviews and pedagogy that are genuine, not tokens, and arising from a space of authenticity and honesty is essential for transforming education in Northern schools (Burm, & Burleigh, 2022; Louie et al., 2017). Lopez (2021) maintained that as educators, we make conscious decisions to remain aware of colonialism and to develop a deep understanding of how

colonialism still operates in education today. In a study exploring White privilege in Indigenous education Burleigh and Burm (2013) argue that White privilege can perpetuate harm in Indigenous educational settings, even when White educators have good intentions. They state that dominant Eurocentric educational models create tension with Indigenous knowledge systems. Self-reflection and critical analysis of Whiteness are necessary for non-Indigenous educators to teach equitably in Indigenous communities. Burleigh and Burm emphasize that openness to questioning one's understanding, and assumptions is essential for growth and the betterment of Indigenous education.

According to Battiste (2013), supporting and embracing the diversity of languages is essential to the decolonizing process. Battiste's argument is reflected in the Nunavut Education Act and Inuit Language Protection Act, which speaks to creating bilingual education by the year 2020, extended to the year 2039 (*Education Act, Consolidation of Legislation*. (n.d.)). Battiste (2013) asserted that the world has an enormous diversity of knowledge, culture, language, and heritage. However, the education system and knowledge convention predominantly visible and embraced are hierarchal and Eurocentric. The visibility of diverse knowledge systems, such as those embodied in Indigenous traditions, is essential to education decolonization. This process requires affirming Indigenous knowledge traditions and creating respectful collaboration and dialogue spaces. Capacity building of Indigenous leadership to oversee education in Indigenous communities and working to preserve heritage is also essential to the visibility of diverse knowledge systems. Lopez (2021) asserted that decolonizing educational leadership involves intentional will and moral courage to distance from assumptions resulting from colonial legacies and embrace new forms of knowing. According to Burm and Burleigh (2017) in their study on non-Indigenous women teaching Indigenous education

highlight the complexities of navigating positionality, the potential power of personal narratives, and the need for open dialogue when approaching sensitive topics in the field of Indigenous education. Arnaquq (2015) stated that schools' leadership for Inuit Indigenous students requires collaborative approach, where staff can develop their leadership skills and be part of the decision-making process. Facilitation of options to volunteer for educators and the involvement of Elders, parents, and community members is essential to facing community challenges to meet educational needs. Arnaquq added that a team-based approach, mentorship, and foster the Inuit Indigenous language are crucial in cultivating respect for the culture and overcoming racist and exclusionary practices.

In understanding the Indigenous approaches to educational leadership, Canadian mainstream and Indigenous leaders must engage in open dialogue about mentoring and preparing leaders who can facilitate the restructuring of Indigenous educational institutions (Fallon & Paquette, 2014). Kovach (2013) reiterated a need for engagement between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators through reflection and solidarity. However, Kovach suggested that, due to fear of offending Indigenous people, non-Indigenous educators may choose to avoid the moral dilemma of the conversations and reflections. Consequently, the engagement may require that the non-Indigenous educators distance themselves from their own histories and engage in meaningful dialogue for truth and reconciliation.

Preston et al., (2016) discussed principals' practices in supporting educational experiences in Indigenous learners. They stated that, when non-Indigenous principals lead schools in Indigenous communities, "there is a great need for these individuals to cultivate a strong intercultural identity, which acknowledges the values, languages, and worldviews of Aboriginal and Western perspectives" (p. 330). Preston et al. affirmed that the traditional

Indigenous leadership is set up to work for social equity and enforce change when needed. The key focus points of Indigenous leadership, according to Preston et al., are community and family service and language and culture promotion. The consensus decision-making process and fostering spirituality in every individual are also essential to Indigenous leadership. They argued that student engagement becomes an ongoing struggle when non-Indigenous leaders fail to recognize and validate Indigenous worldviews (Preston et al., 2016). Which is also true in Nunavut when working towards student engagement, principals need to understand and discover ways to model and identify best practices that enact the values and principles governing the lives of community members (Docherty-Skippen & Woodford, 2017).

Calver (2015), Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2013), and MacIver (2012) were consistent with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (2015) report on the need for increased representation of Indigenous educational leaders. They agreed with Tulloch et al. (2016), who, writing from the Nunavut context, stated that the presence of Inuit Indigenous leaders in schools would benefit Inuit Indigenous students. Better representation of Inuit Indigenous leaders would increase graduation rates, improve the gap in educational achievements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and better address the need to care for the well-being of the students by incorporating the Indigenous way of learning. Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2013) argued that if student achievement, such as graduation rates, is to improve, "we must strengthen our commitment to the preparation, recruitment, and retention of school leaders who are culturally proficient and who reflect the values and beliefs of Indigenous communities and peoples" (p. 482).

Oskineegish (2015) argued that Indigenous educators have in recent times endeavoured to create a culturally appropriate school environment for Indigenous students. However, the

effort of the Indigenous educators could be rendered less effective when non-Indigenous educators are ignorant of the importance of culturally relevant teaching practices or the inability to reflect on teaching practices in the cultural context. In their study inquiring about the principal's role in Nunavut's bilingual and Inuit Indigenous-informed education, Tulloch et al. (2016) maintained that while supportive policies and legislation are constructive steps to foster Indigenous leadership, they are not enough to build local control and overturn colonial practices. They stated that educational leaders like principals play an important role in acting as agents of change to reflect community values, knowledge, and culture for improved learning. MacIver (2012) was consistent with Tulloch et al.'s assertion that teachers and educational leaders with Indigenous ancestry positively influence Indigenous students. However, Carr-Stewart (2019) cautioned that educational leaders and administration must be aware that addressing issues affecting Indigenous populations necessitates self-identification, leading to cultural marginalization.

Non-Indigenous Educational Leaders' Perceptions

Leithwood and Louis (2012), from their extensive study on educational leadership, found that one of the main goals of educational leadership is to facilitate student learning. Educational leadership for student learning involves careful attention to classroom instruction and other aspects required to create a healthy and safe teaching-learning environment and educational organization. Leithwood and Louis agreed with Robinson (2011) and Preston et al. (2017) concerning student-centred leadership in proposing criteria for educational leadership practices to support a healthy and safe education system. The requirements include shared vision, moral purpose, collaborative culture, strong relationships with communities and families, and commitment to providing instructional support to educators. For educational leadership to be a

student- or person-centred learning, Fielding (2006), Preston et al. (2017), and Smyth (2006) stressed that the voices, cultures, languages, and knowledge the students bring to the teaching-learning environment need to form part of the educational leadership process. Regarding educational leadership in Nunavut, Preston et al. (2015) added that connecting with the community and culture is essential in Nunavut schools.

There is an agreement among scholars that positive school leadership fosters student learning and engagement. Murphy and Louis (2018) shared some characteristics of positive school leadership, as follows: relying on confidence, hope, and optimism to meet individual and group needs; being authentic leaders that rely on values such as integrity, honesty, and humility rather than positional authority; grounding actions in morality and ethics; working toward collective good; self-aware; and service oriented. Positive school leadership results from ongoing engagement with the school community, including students, educators, educational leaders, parents, and community members (Preston et al., 2017). Murphy and Louis agreed with Preston et al. that positive school leadership affects several critical variables related to school outcomes, including student engagement, self-esteem, and motivation positively. Recognition, praise, reward, and group recognition are how education is attained in Indigenous communities, explained Little Bear (2000). Freire (1996) added that creating a safe environment and supporting student needs involves courage, determination, and pride in the student's path to achievement. Though stressful, my own engagement with the Inuit school community was life-changing, providing self-reflecting opportunities about who I am as an educator, the requirements for a positive teaching-learning environment, and a collaborative process. More importantly, as hooks (2003) and McMahon and Portelli (2004) emphasized, systemic progress is

impossible without belief in collective success, which requires trust and respect for the educational community.

Many non-Indigenous and Indigenous educational leaders endeavour to meet the students' educational needs in the Nunavut context. In a project to develop "an Aboriginal-specific, culturally appropriate, community-controlled model of social enquiry that is flexible enough to be replicated in time and place," Goulding et al. (2016, p. 784) sought paths for working inclusively within a cross-cultural environment. Among the many approaches, they shared one from a Canadian Aboriginal initiative guided by the principle of "Two-Eyed Seeing or *Etuaptmumk*" (p. 787). Goulding et al. (2016) quoted Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall, explaining that Two-Eyed Seeing or *Etuaptmumk* is,

...learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge and ways of knowing...and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. (p. 787)

Elder Albert Marshall's Mi'kmaw wisdom makes perfect sense in the current Northern educational environment. The educators from the non-Indigenous context bring their knowledge and diverse experiences into the rich knowledge systems of the Indigenous communities. Educational leaders must respectfully facilitate a teaching-learning atmosphere that makes the best of both worlds without losing sight of the people they serve, their needs, culture, and worldviews for the benefit of the students.

Beliefs, Moral Purpose, and Ethics of Educational Leaders. Morality is a person's ability to differentiate right from wrong based on their beliefs and understanding in taking a stand (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013; Freire, 1996; Wilson, 2014). Taking a stand is a moral dilemma, as the consequences could be positive or negative. According to Buzzelli and Johnston

(2013), “morality in this sense may involve judgments at several levels: It may refer to a person’s behavior, or only to that person’s thoughts, intentions, or words” (p. 3). Wilson (2014) includes concepts such as love, spirituality, religion, soul, care, justice, and courage, often not discussed in teaching and education. Buzzelli and Johnston stated that morality is dynamic as it is an ongoing interplay between personal beliefs and those of society and is determined contextually. They also said that “morality can be seen to exist at the meeting point of the private and the social” (p. 3). Modes of communication, relations of power, and authority influence morals and their interpretation.

When discussing the differences between the Eurocentric and Indigenous worldviews, Little Bear (2000) stated that the Indigenous values are based on the belief that all “things are animate, imbued with spirit and in constant motion” (p. 77). Little Bear explained that all things are interconnected and constantly in flux or change. This belief in constant motion leads to value of the whole rather than the individual. Consequent to this interconnectedness, the value for the whole lay’s emphasis on sharing and relationships to maintain balance and sustain harmony and strength. According to Little Bear, values such as honesty, kindness, and the pedagogy of storytelling are central to Indigenous living. As a child becomes an adult, the distinction between physical and spiritual becomes blurred in the Indigenous belief system, Little Bear explains, which is also true in the Nunavut context, according to Karetak et al. (2017).

Ethics are conventions of practice imposed by professional organizations and government bodies (Campbell, 2008). Issues related to care, courage, and honesty are components that a teacher must face when dealing with ethical and moral issues that arise while teaching (Sockett,1989). In a case study of 10 Indigenous schools, Bell (2004) shared the struggles, the ethical and moral dilemmas such as prioritizing local versus national concerns, and the

experiences of various stakeholders in working toward their students' achievements. Northern communities are influenced by multiple components, which include historical, cultural, and political. Consequently, working for student achievement is an ongoing process of creating a balance in providing care for students and governing priorities that require ethical and moral choices involving courage and honesty, as revealed by Bell.

Graduation is one of a student's academic life goals, and student engagement plays a significant part in achieving the goal (Carr-Stewart, 2019; Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, 2010; Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2010). When discussing the effort of Canadian education systems toward reconciliation, Carr-Stewart (2019) touched upon the importance of educational leaders' beliefs and moral purpose in facilitating learning. The leaders' beliefs and purpose are often the motivation to work toward bringing about the required change. Becoming aware of the beliefs and pedagogy one brings to the educational environment requires ongoing self-reflection (Oskineegish, 2015) as they influence an educator's choices according to Carr-Stewart. In a cross-cultural context, self-reflection allows educators to examine personal assumptions and reactions that carry forward into student and educator interactions, positively impacting student learning (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013).

Murphy and Louis (2018) stated that school leadership entails a moral and ethical obligation. In line with Murphy and Louis's argument, Campbell (2008) state that morality and ethics are essential to teaching learning. Campbell argued that the moral and ethical aspects that educators often find themselves in, such as situations where they must make choices that eventually influence students, are often taken for granted. Campbell added that the ethical and moral nature is not limited to the many decisions an educator must make about what knowledge is available to students and its presentation but also includes personal relations with colleagues.

Campbell further stated that these relationships could lead to conflicts within when educators struggle to do the right thing in the face of knowing what is needed to provide a caring learning environment or when witnessing the unethical actions of colleagues or others involved. The educator's choices are influenced by the educator's beliefs and systemic requirements (Carr-Stewart, 2019). As one cannot predict how these choices affect students, educators are responsible for being conscious of the motivations for their actions and professing a consistent commitment to the teaching-learning process, which are moral and ethical choices (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013; hooks, 2003).

Value-Based Leadership. Values are the moral compass that educational leaders adhere to, influencing their decisions and impacting the educational environment. The literature review revealed a common understanding that leadership is a process of providing direction and exercising influence, making the values that a leader brings to the school critical (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Robinson, 2011). Little Bear (2000), when discussing the differences between the Indigenous and Eurocentric worldviews and value systems, spoke of the "value of wholeness or totality" (p. 79) to explain Indigenous values. According to Little Bear, the "value of wholeness or totality" focuses on the group rather than the individual, an understanding also shared by Karetak et al. (2017) in the Nunavut context.

The school culture combines values many educators bring to the environment due to their personal histories and cultures (Baloglu, 2012; Graber & Kilpatrick, 2008). In addition to influencing and clarifying human values, aligning them with the needs of the educational environment is part of the leaders' practices. Influential leaders create a shared value system that helps shared vision and leadership. In many Northern communities, age-old philosophies such as IQ in Nunavut inform value-based leadership practices that sustain and foster shared leadership

(Tester & Irniq, 2008).

Characteristics of value-based leadership have been stated as truth, openness, accredit, mentor, honesty, care, integrity, vision, trust, listen, respect, clear-thinking, and inclusion (Baloglu, 2012; Graber & Kilpatrick, 2008; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Robinson, 2011). Graber and Kilpatrick (2008) also suggested that an authentic leader continuously engages in self-inquiry, seeking connection to their values to live up to them. They seek answers to who they are and strive to understand their societies and institutions. Authentic leaders consider challenges not only a test but also learning experiences.

Power and Education. Power relations are inescapable in schools and classrooms (Battiste, 2000; Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013; Darder, 2015; hooks, 2003; Marshall, 1989). Buzzelli and Johnston (2013) referenced Gore's (1994) study, which suggests we see power relations in different classroom environments; they are ever-present. Marshall (1989), when discussing the interpretation of power in school, argued that power is relational and can be used toward positive and negative ends.

When discussing power, culture, and language in classroom relations, Buzzelli and Johnston (2013) argued that power is contextual and governed by the operational systems set up in the school. They further stated that power is visible in schools when supporting discipline, conducting assessments, and enforcing social control. In classrooms, educators have the authority to exercise the ability to facilitate learning and make decisions about what and how knowledge is delivered. How educators use this power affects students' identity as learners (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013; Marshall, 1989). In my early years as an educator, in an augmentative communication program class, I experienced students exercising power in the classroom. This class required students who were verbal and nonverbal to communicate using

pictures. I tried to implement the communication program to facilitate inclusion in the classroom. I had the experience of my students of varied abilities exercising their power over how they chose to learn. They decided to use the program only when the teacher, me, in this instance, was out of their learning space. It was a big learning moment for me about listening to my students and fostering engagement. In the interaction with my students, the learning served better when the student chose how they would go about learning. I realized that part of being a teacher was letting go of my authority and creating a space for students to share their voices.

Voice is a power domain that plays out in the classroom. Voice is about expressing, being heard and valued, founded on respect and trust. Conversely, denial of voice devalues one's ability to contribute and tells that the contribution is not worth listening to (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013). Dewey (1966) stated that student involvement is essential in an educational environment. Buzzelli and Johnston (2013) emphasized that students must have genuine input into framing their purposes, needs, and desires, leading to student empowerment. They added that for voice to be meaningful, the use of power to acknowledge it must be balanced with the moral base and the ability to exercise the right to speak or be silent. Accepting viewpoints within the system requires the creation of a platform for ongoing conversations and allows for disruptions because of the exchange of ideas and perspectives (Fielding, 2006). Allowing for diverse voices creates new definitions of educator and student, according to Freire (1996). The resulting scope of flexibilities of definitions creates opportunities where the students, in some contexts and circumstances, experience educating the educator, keeping with Freire's ideas about an educational environment.

An atmosphere of trust and respect, Smyth (2006) argues is where students have ownership of their learning, and educators are open to letting go of power; education is relevant

to student experiences, openness to diversity, and building positive relationships among various stakeholders and members. According to Smyth, when students do not find their voice in educational policies, they show it by not learning, affecting academic achievements such as graduation. Smyth added, “We need spaces of leadership from which young people can speak back regarding what they consider to be important and valuable about their learning” (p. 282). According to Smyth, the active participation of students in the decision-making in schools makes school reform more meaningful.

Exploring Respect. Respect forms the basis for the teaching-learning process that unfolds in the classroom (Freire, 1996). A respectful environment encourages participation in which all voices are heard, and communication is inclusive. According to the renowned German philosopher Immanuel Kant (Kant & Gregor, 1998), respect is the unconditional recognition of a person. It includes being a co-member of the community to which all belong. Kant emphasized that respect is due to every individual as a human being and not to an end. According to Kant, humans can understand that all are entitled to respect. In explaining the meaning of respect, Kant stated that respect includes one’s right to believe in what one chooses to believe and commit to these selected values, which is in keeping with Dewey’s (1966) ideas on practice for the involvement of students. Freire (1970) stated that it is vital that oppressed people are aware of their situation in order for them to act upon it instead of accepting it unquestioningly. This awareness, I believe, particularly in the Northern Canadian educational context, leads to participation by the Indigenous educational community due to the recognition and respect of their contribution.

Leadership for Student Engagement. As a principal in a K to 12 Nunavut school, I continually engaged with students and the school community to make a difference and see

students achieve progress through engagement with their own goals and the school community. It required me to reflect on my values and beliefs to communicate with teachers and administration effectively, so they appreciate and believe in the changes necessary to meet student needs. The communication process also ensures a common understanding of vision and purpose.

According to Freire (1996), education is a continuous renewal of life experiences through which human beings strive to maintain social continuance. Teaching and learning are linked; one is not complete without the other. Freire argued that “Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning” (p. 31). This process becomes a reality through the sharing of experiences. The importance of sharing experiences in teaching-learning is also advocated by Little Bear (2000). According to Little Bear, the Indigenous worldviews draw from experiences, and education primarily transmits experiences and communication, such as storytelling. According to Dewey (1966), “communication is a process of sharing experiences till it becomes a common process” (p. 9). Consequently, sharing experiences and various communication forms are intricately linked and essential aspects of the teaching-learning process and student engagement. Freire argued that “education never was, is not and can never be neutral or indifferent” (p. 91). Education facilitates individuality and viewpoints based on personal experiences and critical thought. In other words, education is political, and one needs to take a firm stand in the teaching-learning process based on personal experiences.

Little Bear (2009) wrote about critical thought from the Indigenous perspective, stating that learners exercise critical thinking by analyzing stories for meaning. Critical thought is extended to all experiences that individuals encounter and arouses curiosity in students.

Knowledge grows from this curiosity and the exchange of ideas that a student experiences with adults and other students. According to Little Bear the Indigenous viewpoints extend the meaning of knowledge and learning beyond what is conventionally accepted. Little Bear claimed that from Indigenous worldviews, dreams, visions, rituals, ceremonies, taboos, and effigies are knowledge forms that inform and help remember. Elders, extended families, and divine forces are essential in transferring knowledge in the Indigenous tradition.

According to Willms et al. (2009), we are less likely to lose students engaged in day-to-day school life and have a voice in how and what they learn. They argued that differences in engagement levels have more to do with leadership decisions on school practices and policies concerning relationships, school expectations of students, instructional design, and classroom learning climate than family background. They advocated that an inclusive teaching-learning environment, collaboration, and welcoming diversity are critical factors in student engagement leadership. Willms et al. echoed Anderson et al. (2004), Fielding (2006), McMahon and Portelli (2004), Murphy and Louis (2018), Smyth (2006), and Vallee (2017) in emphasizing the importance of relationships in the school environment in fostering student engagement. Vallee referenced literature that situated engagement in diverse factors such as relationships between the social, institutional, economic, and historical influences rather than individuals' abilities. Thus, Vallee assumed that student engagement was generated and shared based on educational relationships.

In building relationships to foster student engagement, leaders must inevitably address relevant issues such as class, race, and culture (Dei, 2000; McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Vallee, 2017). Vallee (2017) agreed with Smith (2012) in concluding that the problem of the dominant discourse about student engagement and disengagement is a "problem of the institution of

schooling in contemporary western societies, that is, schooling is in both structure and ethos a middle-class institution” (p. 923). It is a discourse driven by political and socio-economic factors wherein engagement is connected to the economic autonomy of an individual. Though economic autonomy is an element in student engagement and the discourse is essential, Vallee found the idea problematic. Vallee argued that student engagement depended on the idea that the individual having “all the advantages of being able-bodied, neurotypical, un-labeled, and integrated into ‘General Education’ classrooms” (p. 925). According to Vallee, the concept of engagement was limited by a “racialized, normative, Eurocentric, [and] White individual” (p. 934) understanding. The current understanding of engagement excluded “students of color, students who are labeled (dis)abled, English language learner, and pathologized disengaged students” (Vallee, 2017, p. 934). Trowler (2013) added that understanding student engagement discourse from a wider inclusive lens,

obviates the need for centralized, top-down leadership, allowing for more dispersed forms of leadership as students – through their engagement with their learning and with the institution – internalize values and identify with institutional goals and absorb leadership attributes and part of the leadership function themselves. (p. 93)

To address the issue of student engagement, leaders need to understand it from a broader perspective that includes the histories, cultures, and economic processes.

In Northern schools, including community leaders, Elders, family, and other community members in the teaching-learning process is essential to broadening the experience beyond the school to connect with the home and community (Little Bear, 2009). By incorporating the history, literature, arts, perspectives, and ethnicities of communities in the teaching-learning process, teachers foster a positive teaching-learning environment. Including Indigenous ways of

learning would help students situate themselves as Canadian citizens historically, politically, and globally, impacting engagement positively. Students become apathetic and indifferent, leading to disengagement, when educators “impose the linear, detached, and mechanistic values of the European enlightenment on all students, thus producing chasms between many students—including those from Indigenous culture—curriculum ” (Smagorinsky et al., 2012, p. 26).

There is no straightforward answer to increasing student engagement in Northern schools. However, there are many aspects to student engagement, especially considering the current educational environment with more non-Indigenous educators in high schools. According to Oskineegish (2015), connecting with culture and community, land-based learning, and building a positive relationship with students through humour, honesty, and credibility are as important as being flexible and open-minded to unexpected changes to increase student engagement in Northern communities. A positive shift in student engagement in Northern communities would result from the collaborative effort and the need to care for students by all stakeholders, such as parents, community members, and educational leadership (OECD, 2017).

Student-Centred Instructional Leadership. Instruction forms the core of teaching and learning in schools. Students gain knowledge in school through instruction, which they access independently via advanced technology or through educators in schools, the latter being the primary mode. Instruction delivery and management become essential to a student’s learning behaviour and motivation, making it necessary for student engagement (Robinson, 2011).

Instructional leadership is about supporting teachers to increase instructional abilities. Blase and Blase (2000) described instructional leadership as containing area-specific professional development opportunities, discourses, and activities that foster equity and growth; endeavours that encourage teacher voices; and interactions and dialogues that address social

justice issues. Also, instructional leadership provides a platform for principals and teachers to monitor student progress and critically review the effects of principals' behaviours on teacher motivation. Instructional leadership is most effective when a principal uses multiple strategies to support teachers and believes in the teachers' abilities in a non-judgmental manner. Blase and Blase emphasized that "effective instructional leadership integrates collaboration, peer coaching, inquiry, collegial study groups, and reflective discussion into a holistic approach to promote professional dialogue among educators" (p. 137). Leaders create an environment where educators collaborate to improve instructional practices, positively impacting student engagement.

Blase and Blase (2000) explored various ways to define instructional leadership. These included encouraging teachers' input in the decision-making process on different aspects of teaching and learning, such as curriculum development, staff development, and equity issues in the classroom. Instructional leadership is about providing feedback to educators on improving their teaching practices and supporting teachers through relationship building to support student learning. According to Leithwood and Louis (2012), the effects of instructional leadership on students are indirect. They suggested collaborative work between teachers and principals to improve teaching practices to enhance student learning resulting in stronger working relationships and a higher possibility of teacher leadership opportunities. Leithwood and Louis emphasized that positive professional relationships lead to a healthy teaching-learning environment that promotes student engagement.

Robinson (2011) stated that improving teaching practices considering students' experiences leads to well-structured student-centred learning activities. Focusing on student-centred instructional leadership promotes awareness of approaches that foster a safe and caring

school environment. Robinson suggested that the paths to building a safe and caring school could include instructions that support student progress and strategies that encourage parent involvement in school, address the social behaviour needs of students, and enable learning based on personal experiences and culture. Educators encourage student engagement when adopting student-centred instructional leadership, promoting student autonomy and competence (Robinson, 2011).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the path for my case study to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential improvement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The review of literature brought to light that, various aspects of educational leadership, such as worldviews, language, and social-political environment, could influence how educational leaders perceive their leadership.

Through the literature review I presented various components and issues in the teaching-learning environment that could influence how non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 schools in Nunavut. Scholars argue that non-Indigenous educational leaders in Northern Indigenous communities require awareness of the histories and culture of the communities and self-reflection on the beliefs, moral purpose, and power structures. In addition, they need to understand the effects of colonialism and the importance of language and culture when teaching in Northern communities. Power, politics, and communication are integral to education and need to be appreciated by educational leaders.

A review of the Indigenous, Inuit Indigenous, and Eurocentric worldviews helped provide a

contextual understanding of educational leadership in Northern K to 12 schools. It also highlighted the importance of understanding worldviews in education, particularly in Indigenous communities.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Self-reflection and conversation with non-Indigenous leaders would help better understand leaders' perceptions of their leadership in the Nunavut context. Therefore, this study addresses the purpose through the overarching questions: How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? These questions lead to four sub questions:

- How do educational leaders describe leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?
- What beliefs and values shape non-Indigenous leaders' understanding of educational leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?
- What are leaders' perspectives on being non-Indigenous educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools?
- What distinguishes leadership experience in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

This chapter describes the research methodology of the study. It includes discussions about the following: ontological and epistemological underpinnings, rationale for qualitative research approach, rationale for the case study, bounding of the case, research participant selection and recruitment, data collection methods, planning and conducting the case study, developing conclusions and interpretations, ethical considerations, the study's limitations and delimitations, and chapter summary.

I approached this case study by interpreting the interactions and sharing of experiences, beliefs, and personal histories of non-Indigenous and Inuit Indigenous educational leaders that influence their leadership decisions and choices. The Inuit Indigenous leaders were also Elders in Nunavut. Based on the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans–TCPS 2* (2022), when conducting a study involving Indigenous Peoples of Canada, researchers must be informed “about formal rules or oral customs that may apply in accordance with a particular First Nations, Inuit or Métis authority” (p. 154). The Inuit Indigenous participants in this study were considered Elders in Nunavut and holders of the Traditional Knowledge in Nunavut. Hence, in keeping with the TCPS 2 requirements, I used the themes developed through interpreting Inuit Indigenous participants’ perceptions of their leadership to frame this case study’s analysis and interpretation. The Inuit Indigenous participants–informed themes framed my analysis and interpretation of the data from my interviews with the non-Indigenous participants.

The interaction with the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants helped me better understand the perception that may enhance educational leadership and clarify its meaning in K to 12 Nunavut schools. In keeping with Denzin and Lincoln (2018) and Smith’s (2012) view, a research participant’s, in this instance an educational leader’s, personal history, biography, gender, socio-economic class, race, ethnicity, and those of the individuals in the participants’ environment interact in shaping the research process. Participants bring their own beliefs, perceptions, and experiences into this inquiry on educational leadership. For this study, I approached the construction of knowledge as a collective understanding generated from conversations with non-Indigenous leaders and Inuit Indigenous leaders about perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings

Crotty (1998) explained ontology as “the study of being. It is concerned with ‘what is’ with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such” (p. 10). My interpretation of reality and how things fit into my world is that of a lifelong learner. I believe truth is relative to my experiences, perceptions, and relationships within a social setting.

The epistemology of social constructionism guides my belief that knowledge is socially and contextually situated, aligning with the Indigenous research methodology Wilson (2001) shared. Wilson stated that from the Indigenous paradigm, knowledge is relational in contrast to the individualistic notion of the Western view. According to the Indigenous viewpoints, we construct knowledge through interaction and relationships with the environment and people and resulting shared experiences (Wilson, 2001). History, language, and culture are essential in informing the construction of knowledge (Burr, 2003; Crotty, 1998; Dei, 2000; Gergen, 1992; Little Bear, 2009).

The location of my residences, such as Mumbai, Calgary, and Nunavut, and their historical, cultural, language, and political context informed my understanding of being a leader. In line with Burr’s (2015) contention, as a female Indian educator, my culture and history and that of the people I worked with brought to the interactions influence the collective interpretation and understanding. The construction of meaning about experiences is not automatic but a result of the active exchange between people and the relationships and cooperation that result from this interaction. The culture and history of the geographical area where these interactions occur form the context for the construction (Gergen, 1992; Gruenewald, 2008; Little Bear, 2009). My positionality and experiences in the Nunavut education system have made me conscious of

culture, language, and place in deciding what was acceptable or the norm. The norm is dynamic and continually evolving through my interactions in various locations.

Constructing what it means to be a non-Indigenous leader in the Nunavut K to 12 schools involved critical analysis and interpretation of experiences in collaboration with others.

According to Burr (2015), “social constructionism recommends that we take a critical and skeptical attitude toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world” (p. 223). In Northern education systems, Smith (2012) contended that Western ideas perceived as accurate and truthful are often imposed on Indigenous cultures, which can also be applied to Nunavut education (Karetak et al., 2017; Walton et al, 2015). Smith and Louie et al. (2017) argued that defining terminology, identifying, categorizing and hierarchizing, disciplining, and, finally, assigning value are all examples of how research has been exploited to the advantage of the dominant culture. Social constructionism facilitates questioning the current and dominant ways commonly accepted as valid and truthful, encouraging the critical spirit (Crotty, 1998).

The Rationale for Qualitative Research

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated that “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 6). Locating a phenomenon is a significant activity undertaken by qualitative research. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding the lived experiences of individuals in the environments they live and work. The emphasis is in keeping with Indigenous research, as Kovach (2010) stated that Indigenous research methodologies are based on a conversational exchange of experiences and stories to inform and understand. How subjectivity and multiplicity of individual perspectives and understandings are accepted and negotiated with others in the historical and cultural context is understood through

interactions between the researcher and the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The Indigenous methodologies are rooted in “ talking about relational accountability” (Wilson, 2001, p. 177), and according to Wilson (2001), they seek to answer questions about sustaining and nourishing your relationship with the world around you. This study was made complex and diverse due to the Nunavut context of cultural sensitivity, political history, the isolation of the educational environment, and the varied individual perspectives and understandings. The qualitative research methodology provided the platform to acknowledge the complexity of this research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

I constructed meaning from participants’ ideas and experiences about educational leadership for this study to address the purpose. In keeping with Indigenous methodologies, this construction required the inquiry to focus on process, understand through conversation, and build relationships (Kovach, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2001). I listened to the participants’ stories to understand their perceptions of their educational leadership in Nunavut’s K to 12 schools (Wilson, 2001), which are presented through a rich description.

For this research, I used an inductive process to construct my interpretations of my interactions with the participants. An inductive process, according to Crotty (1998), “is the process whereby a general law is established by accumulating particular instances” (p. 31). Through an interpretive and transformative process, to make visible the participants’ perceptions of their leadership, I used a researcher’s reflective journal, participant interviews, video and audio recordings of interviews, and memos to the self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The qualitative research methodology was best suited to meet the requirements of my study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The Rationale for Case Study

The framework of this study best aligns with the case study research tradition of Merriam (1998) and Simons (2009). Merriam defined a case study as an “in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40) and lists its characteristics to be “particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic” (p. 43). In the description by Simons, a case study is research based and evidence led, with the scope to include different methods. In a real-life context, in a case study, the originality and intricacy of a phenomenon can be explored in depth from different perspectives. Aligning with Merriam’s and Simons’s interpretation of the case study, my commitment was to actively listen to the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives in the real-life context in Nunavut and share my own.

According to Merriam (1998), a case study is particularly effective in examining educational programs, issues, and processes. It is also applicable to an understanding that leads to change and improvement. As a case study is grounded inquiry through real-life experiences of the participants facilitating holistic and rich interpretation, it sufficiently supported the purpose of this study. The case study methodology allowed me to gain insight into the participants’ perceptions and helped me interpret the meaning of leadership in the Nunavut context and the effect of the participants’ roles and experiences in Nunavut schools.

Educational leadership in Nunavut is complex, influenced by the leaders’ individual beliefs and moral stance and the setting’s cultural, political, and historical context. In keeping with Indigenous methodologies, the educational leaders’ moral values and beliefs were critical to this study in the Nunavut context (Wilson, 2001). The exploration and documentation of the participants’ histories and experiences in their context were of great importance to the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding, and the case study methodology facilitated this exploration

(Simons, 2009). My focus was not on hypothesis testing but on gaining insight, discovery, and interpretation, which aligned with the case study methodology (Merriam, 1998). A case study requires focusing on the process, which provides the necessary platform to explore and discover the non-Indigenous participants' journey toward achieving their goals and overcoming struggles to enhance leadership and analyze implications for the future. The case study methodology supported the process to provide insight into the complexity of the study.

Bounding the Case

This case study was bound by three main features: geography, participants, and institution. The geographic bounding of my study arose from my experiences as an educator in Nunavut schools. The participants are non-Indigenous and Inuit Indigenous educational leaders who, at the time of this study, had not been part of Nunavut education for the past five to six years and did not live in Nunavut. However, during their tenure in Nunavut they had rich educational leadership experiences. Ethics and time constraints led me to select participants who did not live in Nunavut at the time of the study. The ethical process involved in conducting the study with Nunavut participants living in Nunavut would not have suited my timeline. The decision to select participants who were not living in Nunavut or part of Nunavut education was also to mitigate power relations as I was part of the Nunavut Department of Education at the time of the study.

This study was bound by K to 12 schools in Nunavut. Therefore, the discussion with the participants was on leaders' perceptions of their leadership to enhance leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Due to their experience working in Nunavut, the selected participants understood its history and culture. As a result of their knowledge, their contextual understanding

of leadership in Nunavut supported the self-reflection and inductive process critical to this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Research Participant Selection and Recruitment

Participant Selection

I chose purposeful sampling for this study as leaders with experience and insight as educational leaders in Nunavut communities would best support the study's purpose (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Therefore, I invited Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants with extensive lived experiences as educational leaders in Nunavut to participate in this study. At the proposal stage, I intended to limit my interviews to six non-Indigenous educational leaders. However, following the review of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) of the University of Calgary, it was determined that the Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions were essential to the authenticity of this study. The CFREB appreciated that non-Indigenous leaders would have plenty to offer to the study but questioned whether excluding Inuit Indigenous educational leaders would affect the understanding change necessary to enhance leadership in K to 12 schools. The rationale for including Inuit Indigenous leaders was that the non-Indigenous voice alone in this study would unlikely lead to change without input, learning, or analysis from Inuit Indigenous people as the study was situated in Nunavut, and including Inuit Indigenous participants also met the TCPS 2 research requirements with research involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

Consequently, I included two Inuit Indigenous participants and eight non-Indigenous educational leaders with lived experience as educational leaders in Nunavut. I selected participants who had worked with me or had connections to those with whom I had previously worked. Some prior relationships existed with them, supporting feelings of empathy, respect, and

trust, which are essential aspects of a case study and Indigenous research methodologies (Merriam, 1998; Wilson, 2001). The number of participants who agreed to participate was adequate to meet the needs of this study.

The CFREB of the University of Calgary approved this study. In addition, as a requirement of ethics approval, I completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE-2022). In keeping with the TCPS 2: CORE-2022, this study engaged with the knowledge of Inuit Indigenous scholars about educational leadership. I included Inuit Indigenous participants to ensure that the Inuit Indigenous perspective and concerns informed the analysis and interpretation of this study.

Recruitment

In recruiting participants, I sought their contact information through social media such as Facebook and LinkedIn. I communicated with all the participants over the phone, informing them about my study, seeking participation, and confirming their email addresses. The phone call reconnected me with the participants, apprising them of my intentions and preparing them for an email describing the research. It notified them that participation was voluntary (see the script of the phone call in Appendix A). I followed the phone call with an email (see Appendices B and C) sent through the secure University of Calgary email. The study description (see Appendix B) included my study's purpose and rationale, an overview of the data collection methods, and an assurance that their identity was confidential. The invitation letter (see Appendix C) provided the timeline for the response and the opportunity to confirm or decline participation.

I invited 11 non-Indigenous participants to partake in the study. As a result of my prior relationship, all participants responded immediately. Eight educators agreed to participate, one declined participation, and two responded late. One non-Indigenous educator refused, stating that

she was not a principal and had no administration experience, doubting she could provide valuable input to the study. Despite being very experienced and leading many educational programs, she was not convinced she could contribute to the study as an educational leader. Two other educators stated the same concern. However, they participated following reflection and reviewing the study details.

When recruiting participants for the study, I realized that the meaning or understanding of educational leadership, specifically for experienced educators who had not served as administrators (i.e., principal, vice-principal, or superintendent), needed clarity. Therefore, I needed to present my understanding of educational leadership with clarity. Consequently, I connected with three participants who had concerns and explained my understanding of being an educational leader for this study as not limited to being an administrator but included an influential educator in any educational role. Unfortunately, two other participants who agreed to participate did not get back to me within the expected period, so they were not included in the study.

Five Inuit Indigenous participants were invited to partake in the study. Two participants accepted without hesitation, the remaining three declined. The Inuit Indigenous invitees who declined participation indicated pre-engagement with cultural activities and camping as reasons for not participating. In addition, one Inuit Indigenous educator expressed the need for time off from research activities. Once the participants expressed their willingness to participate by responding to my email invitation, they received a copy of the detailed study description, including the interview protocol and a request to schedule the interview (see Appendices D and E). The participant profiles are presented in Chapter 4.

Data Collection Methods

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) agreed that data collection methods in the qualitative research process require reflexivity. Bloomberg & Volp explain reflexivity as “a deep awareness on the part of researchers of their preconceptions and assumptions, and reflection on their roles and emerging understandings” (p. 190). For this case study, when collecting data, engaging with the participants’ beliefs, perceptions, histories, and culture as an educator in constructing the non-Indigenous leaders’ perception of their leadership in Nunavut K to 12 schools was essential. To address the purpose of this study, I used audio and video recordings from Zoom-based semi-structured interviews, document reviews, memos to self, and a researcher reflective journal to collect data.

Zoom Software as a Data Collection Method

Communities in Nunavut are isolated and small, except for Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, and two other communities. The populations of these communities range between 160 and 2,000 individuals. Lacking connecting land roads, these communities are linked to each other and the rest of the country primarily through air travel, telephone, or the internet. At the time of this study, while I was in Nunavut, online or internet software, such as Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing, was a crucial communication tool. I used the University of Calgary–authorized Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing software to conduct the interviews for data collection. This software allowed synchronous or asynchronous responses, enabling me to video conferences, record conferences, share documents, and text chat (Salmons, 2017). Salmons (2017) affirmed Bloomberg and Volpe’s (2019) explanation that the internet is something that “serves as an umbrella for multiple and multimodal digital technologies, capacities, uses, and social spaces, including social media, social networking sites, and discussion forums” (p. 197).

They also confirmed that the internet is a convenient and accessible mode of interaction for participants who are widely located, as was my case.

Salmons (2017) questioned whether researchers and participants must be face-to-face for meaningful dialogue. The residents of Nunavut conduct many of their day-to-day activities through online communication. It is part of the work culture in Nunavut, due to isolation and distance. Salmons suggested that researchers can use “Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) available in social media sites including text or video chat, discussion forums, archived written, visual or multimedia materials to assemble rich collections of data” (p. 178). Salmons describes some online data collection approaches, such as text-based communication in writing, posts or exchanges of visual images or media, video conference or video chat, games that allow for text, verbal and visual exchange, and voting or signalling likes or dislikes that can be useful, depending on the purpose of the study. When planning the study, the drawback I anticipated was potential poor internet connection, which would have required me to use teleconferences as a backup. I had anticipated the participants might be uncomfortable using video conferencing. However, all participants were comfortable with video conferencing, and there were no issues using Zoom sessions for the purpose of interviewing participants.

Interviews

Interviews are conversations conducted to obtain information about the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Salmons, 2017). An interview is a commonly used data collection method in qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Interviewing was necessary for this case study, as I could not observe how participants behave, feel or interpret the world around them during their time as educational leaders. Interviews were

also helpful, as I was interested in past events in the participants' lives in schools that were impossible to replicate. Creswell and Poth (2018) agreed with Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) that the interaction between the participant and researcher during an interview produces knowledge, which was true in this study. Based on their explanation, an essential purpose of the interviews for my research was understanding the phenomenon of this case study through the perspective and experiences of the participant. Through semi-structured interviews using Zoom, participants shared their stories as educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Through interviews, I elicited participants' views of their roles as educational leaders related to their experiences in Nunavut and gained access to their beliefs, experiences, feelings, and social worlds (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Semi-Structured Interviews. The degree of structure used to elicit information from the participant is one of the ways to categorize interviews ranging from oral surveys to open-ended interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For this case study, I used the semi-structured approach. Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) stated that the semi-structured interview includes a "sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some suggested questions" (p. 58). I chose to use semi-structured interviews as they allow flexibility in the sequence and nature of questions and allow follow-up on responses and stories by the participants in keeping with Brinkmann and Kvale's description. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), good questions are crucial to getting good data from an interview. Therefore, I chose 10 open-ended questions (see Appendix F) to elicit responses about experiences and behaviour, opinions and values, feeling, knowledge, and context related to the purpose of the study.

Interview Process. My approach to the interview process was non-judgmental, with sensitivity and respect for the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I was aware that assumptions, appearances, and attitudes we brought to the conversation affected the data produced as discussed by Merriam and Tisdell (2015). I kept a journal to document my feelings and thoughts during and following the interviews. In preparation for the interviews, I ensured that my pieces of equipment, such as a laptop, microphone, camera, and recording systems, were in order.

Pilot interview sessions with two additional volunteers were conducted to ensure connectivity and that the software was in order. These pilot sessions also helped me review the interview questions for appropriateness to the purpose of the study. The first pilot session revealed that my questions encouraged a critique of the education system rather than a reflection on personal values and stories. Therefore, I made changes to the questions due to the first pilot session to reflect the purpose of this study. Consequently, in the second pilot session, there was a change in focus in tune with the purpose of the study.

I interviewed each participant for one or two 60-to-90-minute sessions. The first interview session with each participant commenced with a brief introduction to the topic and assurance that I would maintain anonymity and confidentiality. I informed participants that pseudonyms or codes for their actual names, research sites, and research context would protect their identity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The participants consented to video recording the interview and were informed that the interview records would be securely stored. In addition, participants were informed that I would be taking notes during the interview. I shared transcripts and the interview recording for their review and approval. The participants were told that the transcripts were confidential and securely stored on the personal computer in an encrypted

password-protected folder or locked cabinets. Three participants were requested for a second session for clarification of topics discussed or ideas presented in the first session.

Reflection on Interviews. The interviews were a reflective process for me, consistent with Brinkmann and Kvale's (2018) explanation. I listened to what the participants were saying, not just the words but also the physical expressions, pauses, thoughtful expressions such as "I am not sure."; "I don't know."; "I think that worked for me."; "It was very hard."; or "When I reflected."; and other similar statements. During the interviews, questions often arose, and I sought clarifications. However, I always kept the framework of my study in mind to guide me through the reflective process and interaction. Listening to the interview recordings immediately after an interview gave rise to additional questions for the subsequent participants or the need to schedule another discussion with the same participants. The analysis of the findings for the study co-occurred as I engaged in the development of interview questions and conducted the pilot interviews (Merriam, 1998).

Transcriptions. Transcription was the conversion of interviews, an oral narrative, to a written description, and became the empirical data for the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). I transcribed all the interviews on separate Microsoft Word documents for each participant. The transcription process gave rise to comments or questions included as notes in the participant transcription document. As participants were either my past colleagues or acquaintances, I had to be very aware of my assumptions when listening for transcribing. The assumptions included prior and initial impressions of their beliefs and values based on our past interactions as colleagues or acquaintances. Once the transcriptions were completed, I copied the documents into NVivo software.

Document Review

In qualitative research, documents are described as ready-made and nonintrusive data sources in physical and online settings. Documents can be public and private records available as written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I reviewed two types of documents for this study: public records and personal documents.

Public Records. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described public records as records that are “official, ongoing records of a society’s activities” (p. 164). I reviewed public documents such as the homeschooling reimbursements directive, a backgrounder for departmental exams, resources available for family engagement, and legislative and policy documents listed for researchers on the Nunavut Department of Education website. As these are public documents, my access and use did not require special permission.

Personal Documents. Documents such as diaries, journals, and blogs that narrate a person’s actions, experiences, and beliefs are personal documents. Personal documents available online or in printed form can provide insight into the participants’ day-to-day experiences and perceptions related to my research purpose (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These documents can be highly subjective because the writer presents their attitudes, beliefs, and worldviews based on what they consider essential. Participants were asked to share personal documents such as year plans, educational program plans, or school IQ plans to support this study. The research details included this request and timeline (see Appendix B). Participants were to voluntarily email documents to my University of Calgary email account. However, participants did not share any personal documents for this study. I also maintained a reflective journal.

Researcher’s Reflective Journal. I maintained a journal documenting my reflections about my experiences during my interactions with the participants. In keeping with Merriam and

Tisdell's (2015) description, my reflective journal recorded my journey through the study, which included my perceptions, fears, emotions, vulnerable moments, mistakes, and thoughts about the methodology. This journal also had my preliminary analysis and interpretations during my interaction with the participants. My reflection process also included my interaction and conversations with my research supervisor and EdD cohort through emails, online chats, and Zoom sessions.

Planning and Conducting the Case Study

I secured approval from the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) of the University of Calgary in May 2021. The interview process commenced in June 2021. The study data collection and analysis were completed in November 2021. Multiple contact points, including telephone, emails, texting, and email reminders before the interview, helped build rapport and initiate social interaction that stimulated participation and discussions (Tuttas, 2015). The first contact with the participants via phone or social media occurred in early June 2021 (see Appendix A). Next, participants received an email with the research details (see Appendix B) and the invitation (see Appendix C). Once the participants accepted the invitation, a day or two before the interview, I emailed the Zoom conference link, teleconference number, interview protocol (Appendix D), and consent form (Appendix E). Interviews were scheduled between June and August 2021. The transcription and data analysis began in July 2021, and findings were documented between February and March 2022. The interpretation and analysis were completed between March and August 2022, followed by the development of the discussion and recommendation.

Data Management

Data management is the process of organizing data for analysis. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explained that data management is “divided into three phases: data preparation, data identification, and data manipulation” (p. 222). In what follows, I describe how these phases unfolded in my own study.

Data Preparation

Typing notes, transcribing, or preparing data for analysis were part of the data preparation. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) emphasized that transcription is verbatim and begins as soon as possible during data management. When transcribing interviews, along with the exact words, I included records of nonverbal expressions such as hesitation, pause, laughter, interruption, or changes in tone. All transcripts for each participant and my reflective journal notes were copied, dated, labelled, and categorized, and all data were stored in files on my encrypted, password-protected personal computer. The data were backed up on USB drives and stored in a locked cabinet. The computer folders and files were encrypted and password-protected to ensure confidentiality.

Data Identification

Data identification involved assigning codes to the interviews, reflective journal notes, and documents. I coded my transcripts to identify patterns and themes using the University of Calgary–approved, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, and Microsoft Word. For coding, I assigned words and phrases to the transcript to construct and interpret themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Merriam, 1998). As discussed by Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), the codes also reflected what I had learned from the reviewed literature and areas that needed additional literature review. The codes were also my educated guesses or hunches based on my experiences and knowledge of each research question. Further following Bloomberg and Volpe’s

discussion, I started the process by coding each participant's transcript to identify patterns or trends in ideas or conversations that emerged when analyzing the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). On completing the coding of individual transcripts, I repeated the process across all 10 participant transcripts to find common patterns in the discussions. On further analysis of the patterns, themes were developed based on the patterns from the data across all interviews.

Data Manipulation

Data manipulation involves searching, sorting, retrieving, and rearranging the coded data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used NVivo and Microsoft Word for data manipulation. Data manipulation involved revisiting the transcripts and literature review, creating files for each code, and colour coding transcript chunks in Microsoft Word documents. All participants' personal information, including pseudonym information, will be kept in my password-protected computer for five years in secure files, folders, or a locked cabinet to safeguard privacy and confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis are dynamic and simultaneous qualitative research processes (Merriam, 1998). Data analysis essentially makes sense of the data from interviews, documents, and reflective journals (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The data analysis for my case study focused on exploring non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership to enhance leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The perceptions of Inuit Indigenous educational leaders on their own leadership were used to inform the data analysis and interpretation process for the purpose of this study.

This study was an emergent process. I planned for the study based on my framework, literature review, and methodology. However, I could not confidently say who would participate

during the proposal stage, the questions that would arise during the process, or determine where I would look next until the data were analyzed (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, I used a comparative and inductive approach to analyze the data, which involved an iterative process of moving from detailed data to broad codes, patterns, and themes. This iterative process required me to move back and forth among the data collected from the interview, concepts constructed from the data, interpretation, descriptions involving inductive reasoning and comparison, and my framework and literature reviewed and updated consequent to the process (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Merriam, 1998). I used the University of Calgary–approved, computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo to support the iterative process. I found NVivo helpful software for making sense of data because of the options available for managing various data and for indexing, coding, and searching (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Analysis in NVivo Software

The transcripts were copied to NVivo software from the 10 Microsoft Word documents, and each transcript was saved using the assigned pseudonym for each participant. Some participants provided me with pseudonyms, and for others, I assigned one. The two overarching study questions—How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in Nunavut schools? and How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? guided my coding process. I initiated the coding process using NVivo software and assigned codes to chunks of the transcript. Then, I repeated the coding process for each transcript document of approximately 20 to 30 pages.

Guided by the conceptual framework and research questions, and in keeping with Merriam's (1998) interpretation of case study methodology, I used four main coding guidelines to develop themes and emerging findings. For coding, I used the in vivo and conceptual coding

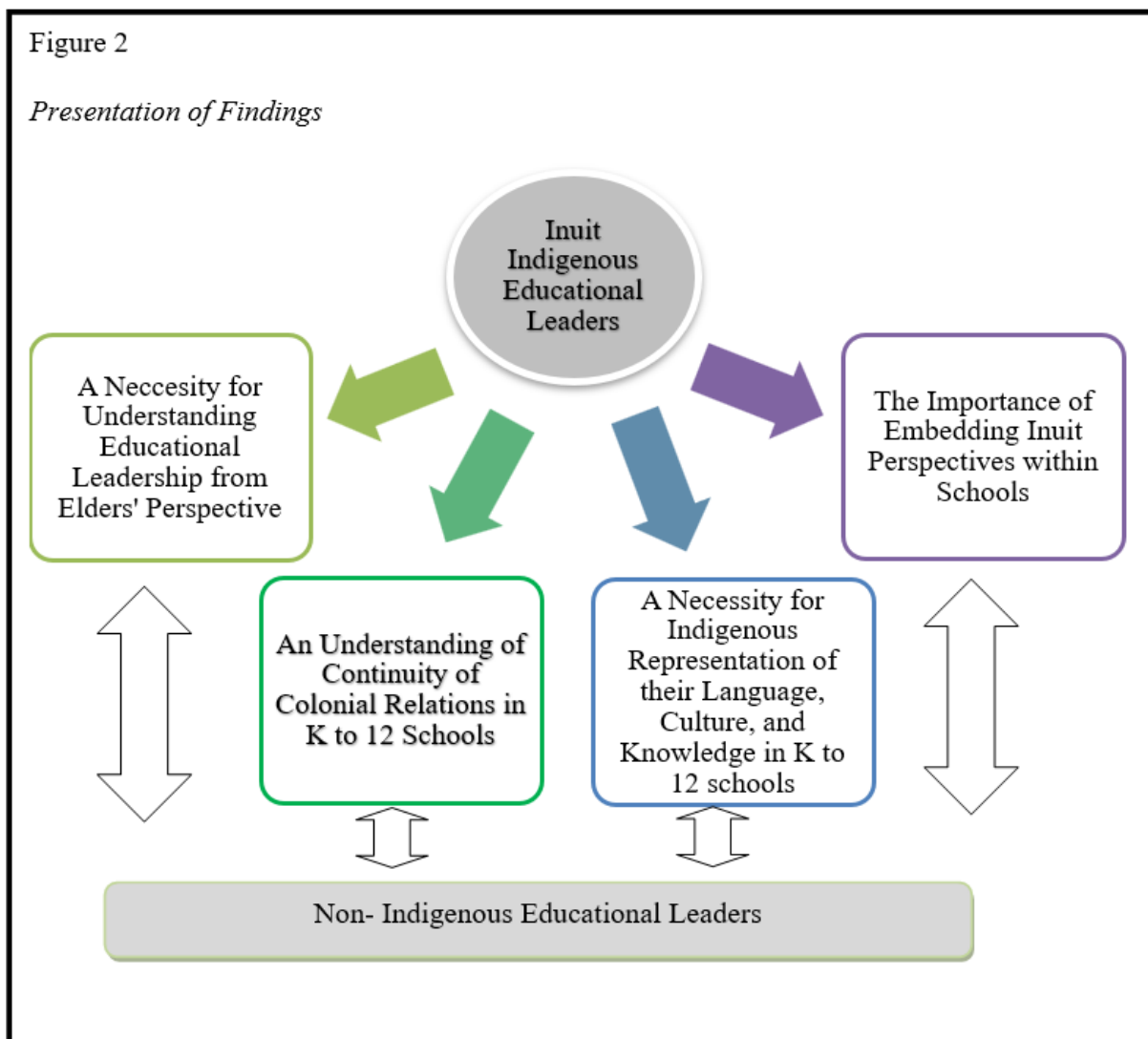
processes. First, following the in vivo coding process, I used words and phrases from the participants' transcripts as codes. These words and phrases appear repeatedly in the interview transcripts, pointing to patterns in the participants' settings (Miles et al., 2018). Second, I used conceptual coding in developing the themes. Conceptual coding, according to Miles et al. (2018) is using parts of transcripts to reveal a bigger picture or a concept. Third, I coded the transcripts based on the frequency of an idea or something said or the importance of an idea to the participant's experiences. Finally, I included subjects unique to a particular discussion or specific participants. Developing themes and emerging findings also included topics that provided additional insight into a matter of concern. The process also involved going back and forth between the interview recordings, the transcripts, the literature review, my conceptual framework, and the study research questions.

I assigned codes for each participant's transcript in multiple rounds of coding. As I assigned codes, I looked for emerging patterns in ideas presented in the transcripts. These patterns showed 23 broad themes in the initial three to four coding rounds. Each theme was saved as an NVivo software document with transcript chunks from each participant's transcript. A coding process across participant transcripts followed. In the next two rounds of coding, I reduced the 23 theme files to 12 theme files, which were broad concepts in my language, based on my experience. The 12 themes were as follows: knowing people and collaboration, colonialism, culture and language, acceptance by the educational community, focus and purpose, leadership for student engagement, hindrance for good leadership, values and meaning of leadership, Inuit Indigenous leadership, communication, systemic initiative, problem solving, and self-reflection.

Further coding and refining of the 12 themes lead to four significant findings for further analysis: (a) navigating Nunavut education through authentic leadership, (b) the need for reconciliation in Nunavut communities, (c) educational leadership by navigating social challenges, and (d) resilience as an underlying leadership skill. However, on reflection and input from my committee and supervisor, I changed my approach analysis and interpretation approach for refining themes to arrive at the final findings as detailed ahead.

For this study, I had the privilege of speaking to two Inuit Indigenous educators with deep insight into the Inuit Indigenous worldviews and who held the status of Elders. On reflection and the guidance of my thesis committee, I decided to use the perspectives of the Inuit Indigenous participants to guide my analysis for the development of the main findings. I revisited Inuit Indigenous participants' interview transcripts for further analysis. The perspectives and insight gained through the analysis of their interview transcripts were used to refine the themes, leading to four main findings. I also used the Inuit Indigenous participants' perspectives to guide my analysis of the non-Indigenous participants' data. The consequent findings are as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from Elders' and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers' perspectives, (b) an understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools. Figure 2 presents

the findings.



Developing Interpretations and Conclusion

The interpretation of qualitative research was based on personal experiences, views, and literature review. The researcher realized qualitative research by providing a rich or thick description to help readers live the participants' experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The interpretation and conclusions in qualitative research also included personal reflections based on hunches, insights, and intuition. In keeping with Creswell and Guetterman's (2019)

recommendations, for this case study, I derived the interpretation from marked individual passages or excerpts from the transcripts to identify patterns, and the patterns were refined, which led to themes.

In keeping with the recommendations of Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), I presented my interpretation through prominent themes from the data analysis. In addition, I selectively used quotations of participant contributions to authentically reflect perceptions and experiences when presenting my interpretations. As a result, the actual words of participants were connected to my conceptual framework, linked to the context within which they were made, and presented with clarity. The goal was to convey my study as engaging, meaningful, and credible.

The Inuit Indigenous participants' perceptions of their leadership were crucial to my interpretation process. Their interpretation of leadership provided the necessary direction for the development of the themes for this study. The interview conversations with Inuit Indigenous participants moved the nature of the themes from a classroom and school focus to deeper concerns, such as how colonialism influences the perception of leadership or how significant is the understanding of knowledge and its source in the perception of leadership. The conversations I had with the Inuit Indigenous participants framed my interpretation of the non-Indigenous participants' data from the Inuit Indigenous point of view.

Ethical Considerations

As a qualitative researcher, ethical consideration involved efforts toward protecting the rights of participants and included securing informed consent, protecting participants from harm, and ensuring confidentiality. It entailed ensuring clarity on participants' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Informed consent, central to qualitative research, "seeks to ensure that all human subjects retain autonomy and the ability to judge for themselves what risks

are worth taking for the purpose of furthering scientific knowledge” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 202). For this study, I also familiarized myself with the Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing user guidelines and the guidelines stipulated by the University of Calgary Ethics Board.

According to Stewart and Williams (2005), in “computer-mediated communications, complete anonymity is almost impossible to guarantee, as information about the origin of a computer transmitted message is, for most users, almost impossible to remove” (p. 411). In conducting this research, adhering to best practices such as encrypting files, restricting to my password-protected laptop to store information, and using only the University of Calgary–approved software for communication and data analysis largely ensured anonymity. However, best practices toward maintaining anonymity also required ensuring that the participants knew the potential security risks of online information, which I informed the participants of before the interviews.

Throughout the process, my assumptions, such as my positionality, influenced the portrayal of the participants’ perceptions. Awareness of my assumptions helped limit their influence on the analysis and interpretation process. The participant-researcher relationship is “determined by roles, status, and cultural norms” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 201). I knew most of my participants through my past work-related interactions with them. However, though my interactions with the participants through interviews and emails were interpersonal, the exchange was a power relation. I knew the relationship was not at the same level as I had initiated, determined the topic and questions, decided what required follow-up, and ended the interaction. I exercised my discretion as a researcher to interpret the participants’ perceptions and provide a conclusion. I was also aware that my prior relationship with my participants could

influence what my participants shared with me and why. I assumed that the fact that we had not been part of the Nunavut education system for five to six years before the interviews would inspire authenticity.

There were situations where participants' experiences in the Nunavut context, such as suicides, poverty, and stressful work situations due to high staff turnover, evoked some emotional reactions. I handled the emotions and inequity of the interactions with sensitivity by attentive listening. I tried to make the interaction as enriching and positive as possible for the participant and myself by listening to and being aware of anxiety-provoking situations in the participants and myself. As a result, I did not need to stop the sessions during the interview due to stress.

Trustworthiness

The study's trustworthiness depended on how well the description and analysis provided by the researcher represented the participants' perspectives, feelings, and situations. In addition, paying close attention to the rigour and design of the study ensured trustworthiness. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), Creswell and Poth (2018), and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) have listed the criteria for assessing trustworthiness as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Following Bloomberg and Volpe's (2019) explanation, credibility refers to how my interpretations matched participants' experiences and perceptions. I have tried to capture the complexity of the experiences, feelings, and actions as clearly as possible when exploring non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. I have tried to be respectful and sensitive to the Inuit Indigenous participants by listening to their perspectives to

inform my interpretation of non-Indigenous participants' contributions. I kept a reflective journal to check my subjectivity and assumptions in trying to do so. Collecting data from multiple sources, such as the Government of Nunavut education website, the University of Calgary databases, reports from organizations such as OECD and Statistics Canada, and participant interviews, supported triangulation, enhancing credibility. I also consulted and debriefed with my research supervisors and cohort to clarify my interpretation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Dependability

Ensuring dependability entails maintaining a clear record of data available for review by other researchers (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). I frequently checked data alignment to the research questions and the purpose to ensure the dependability of my study. Clearly stating the rationale for my choices concerning methodology, methods, and interpretation strengthened this study's dependability. In addition, I tried to detail the processes used in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to address dependability.

Confirmability

To attain confirmability, a transparent trail of the reasons for the decision-making process concerning the methodological and analytical choices needed to be documented (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). I achieved confirmability by ensuring that the interpretation of my data resulted from the research as opposed to my assumptions and prejudices. To minimize the impact of assumptions on data interpretation, I reflected on and documented my thought process and facilitated engaging and reflective virtual online interviews. I approached the study with the awareness that I could not be neutral. However, I could be open and accept various perspectives to support confirmability.

Transferability

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) described transferability as the reader's ability to "decide whether similar processes will be at work in their settings and communities by understanding in-depth how they occur at the research site" (p. 205). The thick description of the participants' perceptions about their leadership presented in this dissertation could enable readers to assess its transferability. In addition, the detailed account of the context, the participants' experiences, and the research setting could help the reader construct their meaning and interpretation. Through the deep description of this study, I anticipated that readers would be able to find similarities in their context and transfer this study to their settings.

Study Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Limitations are constraints regarding transferability, application to practice, or utility of findings due to design choices (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The limitations of this study are the study purpose, study questions, and the time of the experiences shared by the participants. The purpose of this case study is to explore non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The overarching questions in support of the purpose were, How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? and How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? The experiences of educational leaders were situated in the past. Therefore, I did not consider the education system changes, or current context, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, for this study.

My positionality may have hindered my interpretation of the participants' perceptions. Though most participants and I were non-Indigenous, we did not share a similar culture. The participants included educators of European, Jamaican, and Nunavut's Inuit Indigenous descent. I am a visible minority, whereas most participants were not, which may have posed obstacles to

interpreting their feelings and perceptions. My experiences as a person raised in India, strongly influenced by colonialism, and my experiences of living as a visible minority in Canada made me more sympathetic toward the experiences of the Inuit Indigenous participants and the participant of Jamaican descent compared to those of Canadians of European descent. Most participants were my colleagues, which may have impacted interaction and the study's data collection and analysis. Finally, the time constraints posed by the timeline of this study and the fact that I was conducting the study alone could have affected the depth and breadth of the interactions, consequently affecting the data collected.

Delimitations

Delimitations are choices by the researcher that lay the conceptual boundaries for the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Through a case study methodology and the social constructionist epistemology, I focused on the experiences of eight non-Indigenous educational leaders and two Inuit Indigenous leaders in relation to the purpose of this study. The interaction was limited to one-on-one Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing–based interviews. The study was also bound by its conceptual framework, which includes three main features: (a) non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions, (b) Inuit Indigenous educational leadership, and (c) education in Nunavut.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a detailed description of the research methodology for this study. Grounded in social constructionist epistemology, I inquired about non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership to improve leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Eight non-Indigenous and two Inuit Indigenous participants with educational leadership experience in Nunavut were purposefully selected for the study. Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing

facilitated interviews, and the researcher's reflective journal notes, and document review were the data collection methods employed. The analysis and interpretation of data were informed by the literature reviewed and the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 2. Trustworthiness was discussed concerning research credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Finally, the limitations and delimitations of this study were discussed.

Chapter 4: Findings

Overview

This exploratory case study explored non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to enhance the leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. I present my findings guided by my research questions, conceptual framework, and my interaction with my study participants during one or two 90-minute semi-structured interviews (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Participants' responses to the interview questions, my reflective journal, and the document review contributed to the findings presented in this chapter. The findings were as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from the perspective of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, (b) the understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools.

In this chapter first, I discuss the context for non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership in Nunavut. Then, following the context is an account of my journey with the Inuit Indigenous participants and a discussion of the findings from their perspective. Next, I introduce the non-Indigenous participants and present my discussion of the findings based on their perceptions. Finally, I close the chapter with a chapter summary.

Context

This study was situated in Nunavut's kindergarten to Grade 12 (K to 12) schools. I referred to Indigenous educators as Inuit Indigenous educators, as they are Inuit Indigenous. I contacted eleven non-Indigenous and five Inuit Indigenous educators. Two Inuit Indigenous and eight non-Indigenous educational leaders accepted the invitation to participate.

In the following sections, I present a discussion of the findings of this study. First, I discuss the findings from the Inuit Indigenous participants' perspectives, which includes the Inuit Indigenous participants' profiles and a discussion of each of the four findings. Next is the presentation of the non-Indigenous participants' perspectives, which includes the non-Indigenous participants' profiles and a discussion of each of the four findings.

Findings: Inuit Indigenous Educators' Perspectives

According to Smith (2012), an essential step in decolonizing research is to accept and be guided by Indigenous perspectives in research. In this section, I introduce the Inuit Indigenous participants and put forth the findings from their perspectives to guide my analysis of the non-Indigenous participants' data. The findings are as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers' perspective, (b) the understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools. The following section presents the Inuit Indigenous participants' profiles and a discussion of the findings.

Inuit Indigenous Participant Profiles

Participant ID. When I joined Nunavut as an educator, ID, a male Inuit Indigenous educator, was a highly respected educational leader and considered an Elder in Nunavut. My interaction with him occurred during my leadership training for the Nunavut principal certification. During the course, he provided valuable feedback and guidance on the Inuit Indigenous educational perspectives. He graduated from teaching college in the Northwest Territories in the 1970s. He was an educator and educational leader for thirty-plus years. He

retired from Nunavut education as a principal in a high school. As a boy, he experienced the federal day school, where he could not speak his language or show his culture. On being an educator, ID shared, “Being a full-fledged teacher, I wasn’t sure if the community would accept me or not.” ID’s leadership focused on getting the Inuktitut language and culture into the classroom. He believed in creating a teaching-learning environment where community members, parents, and Elders felt welcome and shared their knowledge and experiences with students. He expressed concern over the slow pace of implementing language and culture education in Nunavut and the shortage of Inuit Indigenous educators in schools.

Participant MK. I connected with MK through a mutual acquaintance. MK is well known in Nunavut as a storyteller and author of educational books for children that detail Inuit Indigenous history and culture in Inuktitut and English. MK is an Inuit Indigenous male born in Nunavut. At age 6, he moved to a residential school away from home. After moving to three or four communities for schooling, he graduated from high school in Saskatchewan. After graduation and various government jobs, he quit his job to be a writer. He is the author of 17 children’s storybooks, and he currently visits schools for storytelling. Presenting culturally accurate knowledge was the focus of MK’s work. He believed that youth need to connect with their identity as Inuit Indigenous and take pride in what the Inuit Indigenous people have to offer to the world of knowledge. MK expressed concern about the inaccurate presentation of Inuit Indigenous knowledge and culture in books. In addition, MK was concerned about the high suicide rates among youth, and, because of this, he gave motivational talks on Inuit Indigenous culture and history.

Finding 1: A Necessity for Understanding Educational Leadership from Elders' and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers' Perspectives.

Both MK and ID, who are of Elder status in education, spoke about how the Inuit Indigenous people understand leadership in educational settings. They explained what educational leadership meant to them. I begin the next section by summarizing the existing education structure for K to 12 Nunavut schools to explain the Inuit Indigenous leaders' perspective.

The Nunavut education system was hierarchical. The Department of Education in the Government of Nunavut governed the education system, which included schools, colleges, preschools, and other subsidiaries. With the overall administration of the Department of Education, the operation of the K to 12 schools was supervised by the Regional School Operations offices (RSO) located in the three regions and the DEA, represented by parents in respective communities. In consultation with community Elders, the DEA oversaw all aspects of school operations in keeping with Nunavut's Education Act and the IQ principles (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016).

ID shared his understanding of being a leader, saying that the word "leader" was not part of the Inuit Indigenous culture, as it was a White man's concept:

I don't know the White man's word "leader," "leadership," or "the boss," or "the principal." I never really thought of myself as the boss or the principal or vice-principal. Though I have the title, I always feel I am no smarter than the next teacher or another assistant beside me. I always feel I am equal to them, and they are equal to me. I just have the title.

In line with ID's contention, Arnaquq (2015) clarified that in traditional Inuit Indigenous society, community members who gain the respect of the people in camps due to their knowledge and experience were viewed as leaders. These people, generally referred to as Elders, made others feel welcome and were looked up to for direction and decision making in the camps. The resettlement process and the inclusion of various external systems into the Inuit Indigenous society, such as schools, RCMP, housing, money, health care, and religious establishments, gradually weakened the traditional understanding of leadership. The non-Indigenous systems provided food, housing, security, spirituality, and healing in Inuit Indigenous society, leading to Inuit Indigenous people losing many of their traditional roles such as Healers, Teachers, or Protectors. Arnaquq stated that Inuit Indigenous "cultural values and customs were based on survival and life in a context that depended on harmonious kinship and interdependency" (p. 15). This belief was reiterated by MK: The Inuit Indigenous society did not follow a hierarchical system or have ownership of land, but they believed in equality. MK said that the Japanese have, like, the upper class, middle class, lower class that are all common all around the world. But we never had any of those. We are all equal—we didn't have a class system. We didn't have thieves. We didn't have warriors because in our history, that I can find, we have never ever had a war. So, there is no reason to attack each other. For one thing, we never owned land, which is something people do—in all other places round the world—people own the land.

MK also added that as a youth he was always led by the one who knew best, be it his uncle or sometimes it could be his oldest brother depending on the situation. Both MK and ID viewed their leadership through the lens of preserving language and culture to effect change and equity in the education system. They also emphasized that Nunavut's leadership needed to be grounded in the IQ principles. ID sought happiness and joy in his work and believed in giving his

best and setting a good example as an educational leader. This also gave him the persistence and resilience to keep moving forward. He also believed that one needs to have belief in self to take on a leadership role. Both MK and ID spoke of being true to their values. They worked to instill values, such as trust, truthfulness, perseverance, joy, and a sense of happiness and hope. When speaking of his leadership values, MK shared, “In the final analysis, what you want to do is to be truthful to yourself.” ID spoke about seeking appreciation and acceptance from community members and parents, which, according to him, was important. He shared:

The trust from the community was getting warmer toward me. That really helped me in the classroom in the school being a VP, being a principal. I think that also played a role in my leadership. I also try to finish a job. Whether it is a lot of work or hardly any work or real pain, I made sure I finish the job.

ID facilitated good communication and worked toward knowing people and collaboration. In the absence of any set precedent for Inuit Indigenous educational leadership, as ID was one of the first Inuit Indigenous leaders, he worked for a balance between the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches and collaboration. ID shared his leadership approach:

When I became principal, I really learned how to be a team player. And assess who would do certain things in the school, look at the strong points, their way of doing things, look at the school at large—not so much themselves. Those kinds of people really helped me to run the school fairly good. Capitalize on the strengths of Inuit and non-Indigenous educators in the school was one of the things I did.

Inuit Indigenous participants rooted their leadership in their upbringing and the Inuit Indigenous way of doing things. ID said, “If I go back to my upbringing, how I was raised by my parents, I would use a lot of that to solve problems when I become a teacher.” According to ID, his actions

toward students, staff, and parents as a leader were informed by his experiences growing up. MK shared that no matter where he moved in his early years, he always remembered his family and Elders' teaching. He gained new knowledge growing up; however, the knowledge from his Elders and family guided him. MK added that, in his experience as a youth, he was always led by the one who knew best.

ID also spoke of the isolation he experienced when he became a principal, as he was one of the first Inuit Indigenous principals. He said, "There were times that I feel lonely." He had to work hard to reflect on what Inuit Indigenous leadership looked like. So, he improvised and chose to use the strengths available in the school. He was unsure of following one or the other way of leading and chose a middle ground combining both the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous forms of leading, which worked well for him. He worked toward a balanced approach.

Finding 2: The Need for Understanding the Continuity of Colonial Relations within K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Colonialism is concerned with the political and economic domination of one over another, anywhere globally (Fleuri, 2018). It has brought about "epistemic violence on Indigenous and colonized people everywhere" (Lopez, 2021, p. 360). Reconciliation, according to the Honouring the Truth, Reconciliation for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), is one of the important steps to undoing the effects of colonialism. Reconciliation involves creating and sustaining a relationship of mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities within Canada. For that to happen, an endeavour for awareness of the past, acknowledgement of harm incited, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour are vital (Truth and

Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The significant themes that emerged from my interview conversations with the Inuit Indigenous leaders were colonialism, preservation of identity and knowledge, and token representation of Inuit Indigenous leadership in the education system.

Colonialism in Educational Leadership. Both the Inuit Indigenous participants had experienced the residential school system of Canada. They touched upon the colonial nature of educational leadership, the lack of cultural representation, and its importance in Nunavut educational leadership. Educators spoke of the lack of Inuit Indigenous representation and the top-down nature of leadership in Nunavut. According to the Inuit Indigenous participants, there has been an effort to advocate for the Inuit Indigenous way of learning with non-Indigenous educators.

MK and ID shared their boyhood experiences in the residential school. ID was not allowed to speak his native language and was punished for doing so. He believed his teachers' main job was to remove his identity as an Inuit Indigenous person. He shared, "I think most of my teachers' job was to take my Inukness away from me." Speaking about his experiences in the federal day school, he shared that he was punished for any behaviour that showed his culture.

The learning was all about the South. ID said:

I am a product of federal day school in the 60s where the learning was everything about the South. Nothing about the igloo, nothing about Northwest Territory. It was all about the South, including the rules by the teacher that you are not allowed to talk your own dialect or show your culture when you are in his classroom. So, it was pretty hard most times because if you fail his rules the severe punishment is immediate.

MK agreed with ID that the residential school's purpose was to remove the Inuit Indigenous identity. MK explained:

Why the residential schools were invented is that there were too many people up north who were Inuit, and the Government of Canada decided that they wanted them to be more like English or the people from the United Kingdom. They wanted them to make them [Inuit people] more like themselves—to take Inukness out of us and to grow up like *Qallunaats* [or White people].

He reiterated that the sole purpose of the residential schools was to assimilate the Inuit Indigenous into the European way of life.

Preservation of Inuit Indigenous Knowledge and Identity. Indigenous knowledge varies greatly within nations and communities (Preston et al., 2015). Besides the differences between ordinary people and experts, such as Knowledge Keepers, Healers, hunters, or ceremonialists, there are also significant differences in the experiences and opinions of these experts about Indigenous knowledge. Preston et al. described the Indigenous knowledge systems as living, dynamic knowledge systems that continually responded to new phenomena and fresh insight.

For Inuit Indigenous people, IQ was and continues to be Traditional Knowledge. It is the worldview that guides their life in the world. It gives them purpose and meaning and ensures their survival and well-being in the world, as set down by their ancestors. (Karetak et al., 2017). Karetak et al. (2017) stated that Inuit Indigenous life is also governed by four laws called “maligarjuat”: “The four maligarjuat (big things that must be followed) are: 1. working for the common good and not being motivated by personal interest or gain; 2. living in respectful

relationships with every person and thing that one encounters; 3. maintaining harmony and balance; and 4. planning and preparing for the future” (Introduction chapter, para.11).

MK and ID spoke passionately about the place of culture and language in education. MK expressed concern about how Inuit Indigenous knowledge and culture are presented in the literature. He also spoke of the White writers presenting Inuit Indigenous knowledge incorrectly and not acknowledging that the Inuit Indigenous knowledge has helped the Inuit Indigenous survive in harsh isolated conditions. MK and ID shared their experiences in their effort to persevere the Inuit Indigenous knowledge in society. MK was concerned about the documentation of assumptions and beliefs in books about Inuit Indigenous customs that are not true. He said that “if you [non-Indigenous people] did not know anything about us, it would be a fun story to read, but it is very difficult to take it when you are an Inuk [person of Inuit Indigenous origin].”

He believed that the high suicide rates among the youth may be due to the expectation of Inuit Indigenous to be someone they are not. He spoke extensively about past Inuit Indigenous knowledge and its connection to modern concepts. He gave examples of the building of an igloo, which Inuit Indigenous people have been doing for centuries. According to MK, the igloo building uses geothermal heating concepts to preserve heat. MK believed that the youth needed to know and understand the value of Inuit Indigenous knowledge in sustaining Inuit Indigenous life in harsh conditions. According to MK, Inuit Indigenous knowledge was built out of reverence for the land and had helped the Inuit Indigenous people live peacefully and become self-sufficient. When speaking of the importance of Inuit Indigenous knowledge in today’s world, MK explained, “We are Inuit. We have been living peaceful life for thousands of years—at least 10,500 years as I figure out so far. Who is better to teach people than people who have known peace?” He believed there needed to be more effort in helping youth appreciate the Inuit

Indigenous knowledge and know their roots as Inuit Indigenous. MK gave motivational talks to youth and shared his purpose for doing so:

What I am trying to do is to tell these young people, look, you are an Inuk, you will always be an Inuk, be happy that you are an Inuk. But what is an Inuk? And that is what I am trying to get across to young people. Inuk is a person who ended up a long, long time ago in the coldest places in the world and he had to survive and had to make a life that is comfortable.

ID tried to preserve knowledge and build identity by incorporating traditional experiential knowledge into the school and classroom. He shared an example about how he would expose students and staff to the natural smells and odours in school, such as rabbits and caribou. After initial resistance, these experiences were appreciated and soon became school events.

Inuit Indigenous Representation in Educational Leadership. The two Inuit Indigenous leaders, MK and ID, spoke of token representation of Inuit Indigenous leaders in the governing systems in Nunavut, such as boards and committees. They experienced not being included in the discussions or being consulted in meetings. ID was concerned about equity issues and not being accepted as a leader in the educational community. According to him, the principalship is not for all Inuit Indigenous educators. The top-down approach to leadership and unfriendly authoritative bodies made him feel lonely and the odd person in the group. According to ID, there was resistance to accepting Inuit Indigenous people in leadership roles as only White people were perceived as leaders by community members.

According to Battiste (2013), the education system follows forced assimilation, where the Indigenous people are assimilated into the existing system. In this scenario of forced assimilation, according to Battiste, Indigenous people are taught to distrust their own education

systems, which include knowledge, Elders' wisdom, and belief in their own spirit. ID entered as a leader into this colonial legacy of mistrust. ID reasoned that traditionally, leadership roles were often taken by White educators. Consequently, an Inuit Indigenous person had difficulty accepting Inuit Indigenous people in leadership roles.

MK shared his experiences in a board meeting where “the first thing they [board members] said was that we have this thing we wanted approved, and I said, ‘You want us to approve it?’ They said, ‘Yeah.’ I said, ‘If you want us to approve, why don’t you approve it yourself? Why are we here?’” MK’s experience was an example of token Inuit Indigenous representation where the elite arrive at decisions and the Inuit Indigenous are not part of the process. ID also shared his experience of not feeling included or accepted, saying, “seems like every meeting felt like I am the odd person of the group. I feel that all the time.” He shared that his journey as an educational leader was lonely and made him feel like the lowest of the low in the Inuit Indigenous community. He received unfair treatment, like shorter work contracts. ID shared, “Being a full-fledged teacher, I wasn’t sure if the community would accept me or not. Many Inuit [Indigenous] folks think about my group or think about me sometimes lowest of the low.” The feeling of being the “lowest of the low” is again the result of the forced assimilation suggested by Battiste (2013). The assimilation approach aims to integrate Indigenous people and their knowledge into the dominant colonial system, leading to acceptance of the colonizers’ culture while subjugating their own argues Battiste, thus making the Indigenous people feel they do not fit the leadership role.

ID expressed frustration over the fact that for the past 30 plus years, it has been a struggle having Inuit Indigenous people take up teaching positions in Nunavut, and the situation continues to be so. He struggled with the fact that Inuit Indigenous teachers rarely choose to

teach at higher grades. He said, “Many parents are still in that bracket, when my child graduate from Grade 12. That’s it ... it’s okay ... they don’t have to go anywhere else.” He believed that the Inuit Indigenous students need to be motivated to pursue higher education. This would enable them to venture into various leadership positions in education. He believed there should have been a more significant and faster push to get more Inuit Indigenous teachers employed at multiple levels in Nunavut schools.

When speaking of his achievements as leader in Nunavut, ID attributed his success to the support of parents, community, and colleagues. However, he also shared that some non-Indigenous educators did not believe in his leadership. ID shared his view:

I also know some of the teachers that fly here from outside, from south, they have their own ideas of what Inuit should be doing. Some think that they should not be principals. But also, there are few who said look at this; I want to see an Inuk being promoted like that.

According to ID, the acceptance of Inuit Indigenous leadership in Nunavut was not consistent among non-Indigenous educators.

Finding 3: A Necessity for Indigenous Representation of Their Language, Culture, and Knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

MK and ID spoke passionately about the place of culture and language in education. ID spoke on the need to have more cultural knowledge in the school. He said, “The school need to have Inuit cultural spirit floating around.” He shared his vision as an educational leader: “more Inuktitut, hear more Inuktitut, more songs in Inuktitut, more Inuit culture in the classroom.” He recalled his initiative of having a culture day where Elders were invited, in an open area near the school, to speak to students in Inuktitut. However, he found it difficult because there was not

much to guide him on leading culture and language programs, and most resources were in English. Experiencing the slow pace of change over the years, he expressed his doubts whether the governing bodies are consulting the Inuit Indigenous scholars and communities. Speaking of teachers from the South entering Nunavut education, ID stated that often they need to be forced into appreciating the importance of teaching Inuktitut and culture in the school. ID also had concerns about teachers moving to Nunavut for adventure and money. These teachers, according to him, did not stay long in Nunavut, which impacted students' education.

MK was disturbed by how Inuit Indigenous culture and language are presented in books. He shared that he had come across books that give incorrect information about Inuit Indigenous culture. He said, "What I really objected to was when people made up some kind of customs about us that are not true." MK emphasized the importance of language learning in schools. He said:

It would be nice to have a language program everywhere. Because it is very hard to live in a place and not know the language. If you are going to live there you should know at least some of the languages. Lot of the things that you talk about mean something in Inuktitut, but they don't mean anything in other language.

Language is the medium that expresses various cultural values and concepts unique to the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. Hence, language is vital in preserving culture and building Inuit Indigenous identity (Anoee et al., 2017). MK also believed that the youth needed to be informed of the knowledge, which would help the youth take pride in being Inuit Indigenous. He said:

The message I want to reach young people this is about our heritage. We have been living peacefully for a long time, and we are so used to the land. We know every part of the North, and I could go from here to your village blindfold because we know it so well. We

know every bump on the way, so we know all that. We must be worth something, you know, and I think we have a lot to teach the rest of the world.

MK was keenly aware of the lack of validation for Inuit Indigenous language and culture in modern society. He worked hard to bring awareness about the importance of Inuit Indigenous language and culture to Inuit and the larger society.

Finding 4: The Importance of Embedding Inuit Indigenous Perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Both MK and ID commented on the schooling system that it is hierarchical and top down. They would like to see schools more open and welcoming. According to MK, traditionally, learning was done at home with family and Elders. He said:

I have not thought of it in terms of education system because traditionally, education was done at home. We didn't have schools to go to. We didn't have these establishment like education system because everyone learnt from home; you learnt from your parents. And now this hierarchical system is everywhere.

ID and MK both wanted schools to have more Inuit Indigenous Elders and community members in the school, so students have the exposure they need to culture and language. MK agreed with ID and explained that teaching-learning was done at home by Elders in Inuit Indigenous societies in the past. Traditional Knowledge from Elders taught the young preservation of land and nature, skills for survival, and for them to become responsible members of the community. The Inuit Indigenous way of teaching and learning was different from the hierarchical system that exists in all aspects of our society today. MK shared:

I would like to see more schools invite Inuit to come and speak, like the Elders. May not necessarily be elders, but to make schools much more inviting place for older people like

older Inuit who don't, you know, they don't really have to learn to know how to speak English. They just have to know how to talk to the young people. I think, we need that more along with teachers, we need this connection with the community in the schools.

MK explained the importance of having community members in the school. These community members may be Elders or older people who are able to connect with students and the teachers in educating them about the Inuit Indigenous worldviews and bring the Inuit Indigenous perspective on teaching and learning into the schools.

ID reminisced about the activities with students where they spoke with Elders in the open with no walls. He also believed that when we have an Inuit Indigenous principal in a school, there is better planning and implementation of education from an Inuit Indigenous perspective: "If you are an Inuit principal in an elementary, intermediate or high school and there is Inuit [educator] planning, Inuit cultural programs, I think that is a good positive step." According to ID, the motivation of the educators for joining Nunavut K to 12 schools was essential. He believed that whether a teacher is in Nunavut for financial gain, adventure, or cultural learning makes a difference in how they approach both teaching and living in Nunavut.

ID found that the lack of Inuktitut resources made implementation of the culture and language plans difficult. He was compelled to create culturally appropriate resources by translating English resources. There always was a shortage of teachers for Inuktitut Language Arts. He was disappointed that the development of culture and language teaching was slow as the authorities were unsure of the progression. The slow progression is particularly so in getting Inuit Indigenous staff into leadership roles, consequently slowing the process of adopting Inuit Indigenous perspective in the school.

The findings resulting from the conversation with the Inuit Indigenous participants presented the guide for the analysis of the non-Indigenous participants' data. I had modelled the findings for the non-Indigenous participants' data based on the themes from the interviews of the Inuit Indigenous educational leaders.

Findings: Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perspectives

Non-Indigenous Participant Profiles

The following section introduces the non-Indigenous participants. The introductions include my relationship with the participants and observations during the time together as educators in Nunavut, their leadership roles, and their context growing up. Participants were comfortable and shared information without any hesitation. They all approached the interview with the attitude of helping me with my study. I wondered whether they gained anything from the interaction because of the helping-my-study perspective.

Participant Lou. I met Lou while organizing a professional development session at my school in Nunavut. I found her a very patient listener and ally in supporting the school's needs. Lou shared, "I see leadership as a partnership, and when I went to Nunavut, leadership to me was a partnership. It was a partnership with the schools and teachers and parents." "My leadership has always been focused on how teachers should become better teachers." For the most part, Lou had a positive experience in Nunavut and stated that she would return in a heartbeat if she had the opportunity.

Lou, a White female, grew up and completed her teacher education in Northern Ontario, specializing in guidance and special education. After taking on various jobs, she took up teaching in Ontario. Lou had principal's certification but had not served as a principal. Instead, she was a long-term educator in Ontario as a resource teacher. After retirement, Lou joined Nunavut's

education to fulfill her need to live in Nunavut. She lived and worked in Nunavut for four-and-a-half years. Growing up in Northern Ontario, living and working with the Indigenous population was not new to Lou. In Nunavut, she worked in leadership roles at the regional offices providing support to school leaders and developing curricula.

Lou had requested the interview questions before the interview and prepared answers. Her experience of working in Nunavut seemed significantly affected by the lack of movement or slow pace in the implementation or approvals of policies and development plans. During the interview, I could see her reflecting and expressing her self-understanding through the pauses and facial expressions. I experienced the process of her gaining awareness about herself about her professional life when she shared her experiences. During the interview, she repeated information but added more information, and a new perspective was revealed each time. Sharing my experiences with her also motivated her to share her perspective. We explained our views and thoughts to each other; this process helped me clarify my thoughts and beliefs about the study through the sharing of experiences.

Participant FT. As a school principal, FT, a high school teacher, reported to me for a year. His sensitive and creative approach to teaching-learning fostered student engagement, which he shared through anecdotes during the interview.

FT, a White male, grew up in New Brunswick. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in political science and history, a minor in English and anthropology, and a Bachelor of Education. FT's childhood was in a homogenous Caucasian community where he was acquainted with one Asian family. He had a European upbringing and a Eurocentric education during his early school years, where he knew two Canadians of African origin and one Indigenous student in his elementary school.

FT was born in Nunavut. During his early years, he was exposed to Inuit Indigenous lifestyles. FT believed that educational leadership focuses on what is best for the child. As an educator, he believed in attending to all aspects of the mind, body, and soul of the student. He and his wife were educators and applied for jobs in Nunavut when they couldn't find any positions where they lived. They lived and worked for two years at the same school in Nunavut, where FT served as a high school teacher and his wife as a junior high teacher. But, FT said, "I was born in Iqaluit and always felt a connection to the North."

FT was aggressive in how he expressed and spoke. For example, he said, "What are they going to do" whenever he felt emotional about an issue or topic. However, he did not hesitate to share his ignorance or lack of understanding, which showed humility. I believe the aggression came from a place of concern for the well-being of his students. As an educator, he clearly understood what was acceptable and unacceptable, based on his experiences.

Participant BJ. BJ and I worked together as educators in an elementary school. As she was new to the community, I tried to support her in settling in. She moved about the school with a friendly smile and did not hesitate to speak her mind when she disagreed with me.

BJ was a White female from Ontario, where she finished post-secondary before moving to Australia to secure a graduate diploma in education and teaching. Following this, she moved to Nunavut as a teacher. She felt she learned a lot about herself and became aware of different ways and styles of teaching during her time in Nunavut. Until she went to high school outside her community, her environment was not multicultural. However, the high school she joined outside her community brought people of various backgrounds together and made her curious about people from different places and cultures. It also allowed her to make new friends and see more about what life offered. This exposure also motivated her to travel overseas.

When speaking about leadership, BJ talked more about self-learning than teaching. She facilitated her students' learning while learning herself at the same time. BJ saw herself as a coach to her students. Building student engagement through trust and listening to students was essential to her.

During the interview, BJ was cautious about what she said and did not hesitate to admit that she did not know the answers to some reflective questions, such as what led her to make learning her focus of leadership.

Participant Simon. Simon and I worked together at a high school. When he joined, I had already been in Nunavut for four years. Simon received my support when teaching students with exceptional needs. Simon and I often discussed various aspects of education. Conversations with him widened my views about education and life as we came from different perspectives.

A White male, Simon grew up in Alberta, completing a Master of Science degree in psychology. During his early school years, Simon was in a largely homogenous Caucasian environment. His first exposure to a different culture occurred when he was 17. After completing his bachelor's in education, Simon moved to Nunavut to take up a teaching position. He lived in Nunavut for three years. He had travelled the world motivated by his interest in experiencing different cultures. Simon, seeking an egalitarian approach to leadership, said, "I think that it is important that everybody is on an equal playing field of egalitarianism, and true collaboration between colleagues is crucial to have actual learning community." As an educational leader, Simon wanted to learn the needs and expectations of the place of work. He believed one needs to adapt, change, and adjust one's leadership based on the needs of the place of work.

Simon expressed his unhappiness with the authoritarian structure during the interview. However, he was honest about his journey toward understanding what was valuable to the Inuit

Indigenous people. His narrative was about the problems in Nunavut, and the reflection was about how to solve the issues faced.

Participant DN. I met DN during my first year as a teacher in Nunavut. DN was my go-to person if I needed support understanding life in Nunavut. In addition, she organized after-school get-togethers, which provided me with the opportunity to meet people.

DN, a White female, grew up in a small Ontario town with little cultural diversity. She had a bachelor's degree in music and a bachelor's in education for intermediate and senior education Grades 7 to 12, focusing on French and music. After graduation and marriage, her motivation to travel and seek employment brought her to Nunavut as a social studies high school teacher. She taught in Nunavut for 10 years. She was a vice-principal when she moved out of Nunavut. DN believed in leadership through example. Instead of instructing, she believed in modelling what needs to change in the school, hoping that others will follow by example.

DN appeared diplomatic in her conversation. However, I sensed her dissatisfaction and anger toward higher authorities and principals. This anger came across in the little smile or sarcasm. She supported colleagues based on her negative experiences as a new teacher. She also strongly emphasized that she learned from the Inuit Indigenous educators, repeating it often during the interview. She also spoke of "allowing opinions to come out" and "allowing experiences to speak for itself" concerning the Inuit Indigenous colleagues. The word "allow" made me feel uncomfortable. However, the education system in Nunavut was hierarchical, so permitting and not permitting was part of the principals' role, making room for the language of power.

Participant HB. HB was a prominent educational leader when I took up a job in Nunavut as an educator. I first met her while undergoing a 15-day leadership training for the

Nunavut principal certification. She was my team lead and advisor during the course. Despite not agreeing with her form of leadership, my bond with her grew as I took on principalship, and she provided encouragement and support.

HB, a White female, grew up in a small community north of Montreal. According to HB, Montreal, though very European, was multicultural. She studied in a bilingual school. Her undergraduate degree was in sociology, and she had a Bachelor of Education degree specializing in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). In the early 90s, she moved to Nunavut as an educator and stayed for 20-plus years. She had been a school administrator and educational leader most of her time in Nunavut before retiring. Student achievement and inclusivity in practice were her leadership focus.

During the interview, HB insisted that everything in the school she led was good and that there were no problems. They did the right things as a team. She agreed that some teachers came to Nunavut for the money and were ineffective. She was unequivocal that such teachers were not part of her team. She was diplomatic during the interview and spoke with care simultaneously, revealing her passion for the work.

Participant Eula. Eula reported to me as a high school educator, where I was a principal. Eula was enthusiastic and led programs at the school. He did not hesitate to express his thoughts or be critical of my leadership. However, his disagreement with me was not an obstacle to our relationship or communication.

Eula, a Black male, was from the Caribbean Islands. With a teaching degree, after working for a few years in the Caribbean, he decided to immigrate to Canada for further education. Following a degree in education, Eula worked in Northern communities in Ottawa and Manitoba, then moved to Nunavut with his wife and family. He was a science and math

teacher for six years before taking vice-principal and principal roles. Eula lived in Nunavut for 12 years.

Eula believed that the needs of students should be the focus of an educational leader. He sought to look at issues or challenges and implemented changes to resolve the problems. Eula explained his leadership approach:

I have ideas that I would love to implement but can't do that at this level, so I wanted to influence that change. I need to be part of a conversation at another level. But the focus has always been the same: The needs of the students.

During our time together in Nunavut, I was anxious working with Eula. However, I understood him better during the interview because of his experiences as a visible minority. I connected with his regarding negotiating relationships with others in the workplace. He had accepted his reality and learned to work around it. On the other hand, I experienced disappointment when he did not seem to share his views openly during our conversation, as I was aware of the circumstances he referenced.

Participant Tom. Tom was one of my supervisors during my term as a principal. Tom was critical and supportive, guiding me in navigating complex situations as a principal. In addition, he encouraged me to familiarize myself with various authoritative documents for school operations, which also helped me appreciate their importance.

Tom, a White male, was born and raised in Ontario. According to Tom, growing up in Ontario, there was no ethnic diversity. He shared, "I literally remember the first time I met a Black man. And the first time I met somebody who was East Indian. I was in my early teens." He graduated from university with a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education from Windsor. He started as an educator in British Columbia (BC) and worked as a school principal in BC and

Yukon, spanning over 25 years. Before retiring, he moved to Nunavut to work as an educational leader in the regional and territorial offices. He was in Nunavut for four years. Tom believed that educational leaders' focus should be working toward the success of all students. He also thought that an educational leader needed to observe and respectfully provide guidance based on the strengths and weaknesses of educational staff. Investing time and effort into system-wide educational initiatives was critical to Tom.

Tom was my first interviewee. He was my supervisor, and I was a little anxious speaking to him because of our interaction during my work in Nunavut. However, the feeling of anxiety changed during our conversation. I was unaware of a side to his work, and his perceptions and learning about his journey as an educational leader and reflecting on his account made me comfortable.

Finding 1: A Necessity for Understanding Educational Leadership from Elders' and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers' Perspectives.

Leadership was generally understood by participants as a process of reflection and learning. Most participants understood leadership as facilitating positive change to support student learning. They identified leadership with human values such as love, compassion, honesty, courage, and moral responsibility. However, their experiences and role in the education system inform their leadership path.

Meaning of Leadership. The participants previously served as teachers, principals, regional consultants, and superintendents in Nunavut. Each interpreted the meaning of leadership in the school based on their role in the education system. Their role also informed their focus to lead in their role.

BJ, HB, and Eula presented their understanding of educational leadership concerning school teaching. BJ as an ESL teacher, focused on classroom instruction. She tried to align the teaching-learning strategy to include students' interests and experiences in meeting educational goals. BJ shared that she took time to know her students and their interests and added that she "definitely like building student engagement. It took a while for the student to trust me and listen to me." According to BJ, leadership was about being open to new experiences and learning from them, which requires adjusting personally. Eula added that school student engagement could be facilitated through programs such as breakfast and exchange programs and providing immediate and tangible incentives. HB added that students learn from their good and bad choices under the guidance of their parents and teachers.

Serving in administration roles, HB, DN, Tom, and Lou focused more on leadership geared toward accountability of the educators and students. Lou and DN shared their beliefs regarding the direction and guidance offices provided to the schools; however, there was minimal follow-up on implementation at the school level. According to DN, follow-up was particularly crucial for school administrators. She stated:

I think, really [regional administrators] travelling to those places and checking in on those principals, to see and consult with the staff that works in the schools. Do you feel supported? Do you feel like Inuit Indigenous voices are heard? These kinds of real direct questions and presence in the community [make a difference].

Lou spoke of creating spaces of trust where teachers were responsible for and accountable to each other. She added that people feel empowered in an environment of trust. In such an environment, the educators self-monitor by supporting each other through open conversations, feedback, and critique, and people feel responsible for each other. Lou said:

It [accountability] became self-monitoring; it also empowered people to be responsible for each other and to be accountable to each other. And I think that's part of leadership, too, making people feel like they are doing their job well, with the support that they needed. That whole accountability without somebody going in.

Lou explained that accountability would be most effective from within, where school educators support each other. According to Lou, accountability was not as effective when imposed by the regional offices or externally monitored, which was a top-down approach. DN added that principals could ensure higher standards by building relations and caring for their teams. According to Lou, an environment of trust involves self-motivation toward accountability, which could be gained through self-monitoring and peer support.

When speaking about her experience as a supervisor, DN stated that accountability depended significantly on what principals reported and the openness with which they shared information with the school and staff. Simon expressed concern that not enough effort was put into evaluating how much work educators put into implementing IQ principles. He said, "So I think the best thing that Nunavut could do is supervise teachers and direct them early on to ensure that they are learning the culture and learning the worldview". HB addressed accountability through restorative practice, laying clear and high expectations for staff and students.

Tom believed accountability would be served better with more clarity on the role of the superintendent. The education system structuring, he said, needed to keep in step with technology and learning dynamics. Tom emphasized that leaders needed to be "tougher in dealing with bad actors," that is, dealing with educators in the system. According to him, there needed to be a better implementation of accountability structures by educational leaders. He

added, “The structuring has not caught up to technology or the learning dynamics that are necessary to accommodate what we know around PD [professional development] and student achievement being linked.” Implementing protocols in remote communities was difficult as the technology was not current. According to Tom, accountability also needed the courage to enforce consequences when staff expectations were not met.

As high school teachers, FT, Simon, and DN believed in making a difference by establishing relationships and taking care of the emotional well-being of the students. They stated that consistency in expectations can lead to better student engagement. When speaking about differentiation Simon explained that

knowing your kids, and knowing what they need, not only what they need to master but also providing, like, a clear specific target that is achievable for them and celebrating that success in a very meaningful way where they don’t have to feel dejected, their mental health that needs to be taken care of.

DN, Simon, HB, Eula, and FT touched upon systemic initiatives and their importance in educational leadership. However, as a superintendent, Tom spoke in depth about putting effort and time into systemic initiatives wherein a system-wide unified approach to literacy and data collection to analyze teaching strategies is implemented. He also shared his efforts in creating guides that would inform educators and educational leaders of their contracts and what they must do in their roles.

There was a belief among the participants that their leadership abilities, among other factors, were because of the appreciation, recognition, and acceptance they received from the education community, including parents, colleagues, and community members. Participants’ words and phrases indicated that appreciation, acceptance, and recognition were essential for

them to give and receive as leaders in the educational community, for example, working “without pissing everybody off” (Eula), “want to be liked” (FT), “being recognized for my leadership abilities” (HB), “felt unsupported” (DN), “makes people feel good about themselves” (Lou), “principals called me and said thanks” (Tom), “students really connected” (BJ), and “it went a long way in building rapport” (Simon).

Leaders’ Values. Most participants were inclined to perceive their leadership through a lens of hope and optimism. Lou, Eula, and Simon saw leadership as being optimistic, being pragmatic, having the ability to compromise, and working toward balance or seeking a middle ground between the various points of view. “One needs to be a model of hope and optimism,” said Simon. Simon added that leaders possess the courage to challenge things toward positive change. Eula, FT, and Simon spoke of leadership through humility, accepting that one does not know everything. Eula added that acknowledging one’s weakness was part of growing as a leader. Eula added, “What Nunavut has taught me is to appreciate the process. That comes with a lot of patience. Trust, humility, and a sense of openness may not happen in your lifetime.” According to FT, humility helped in building bridges that support relationship building. Eula said leaders had to let go of their egos and remember that we served the community and students. Eula believed in perseverance and to keep trying to improve things with the knowledge that we may not see the change in our lifetime but are part of the process. FT and Eula saw their leadership as a process that facilitated a positive change in themselves, the individuals they work with, and the school community. BJ perceived leadership in the “aha moments” of learning, where something new excites her.

Eula shared that leadership was often the ability to push back, stand ground, step back, and let events take their course so learning takes place. These abilities, according to him, took

courage and patience. He agreed with Tom about having the courage to think and challenge complex or difficult issues. Lou added that effective leadership acknowledged that change was a collective effort and involved the willingness to accept differences and take the middle ground. She said, “Leadership is recognizing people’s strengths and weaknesses/needs and meeting them in the middle.” DN, Simon, HB, Tom, and FT indicated that leadership was a reflection of the inner self of the leader. HB and DN led by setting good examples and letting positive change speak for themselves, hoping others would follow their lead. DN shared, “If I need something to be done or I need something that I want to change, then I wanted to be that example of change.” Tom added that educational leaders are morally obligated to do the right thing:

A principal under common law has a great deal of authority. They are the adult parental figure to their students. And that places a lot of moral obligation on them in how they behave and how they speak, and the decisions they make. So, they are going to be making decisions of lifelong importance.

Lou and Tom mentored educators, helping them by focusing on their strengths. According to Tom, education was not an easy profession. However, Tom strongly believed that educational leaders impact individuals’ lives. He emphasized that “you can’t underestimate the impact you have on an individual level fostering individual lives just by kindness, good advice, and humanity.” He shared his view that if one had chosen to teach, there was a passion that needed support, irrespective of skill level.

Knowing People and Collaboration. All participants approached their role in Nunavut, understanding that Inuit Indigenous educators have insight into the culture, which helped inform their teaching. As well, they believed in maintaining relationships to build strong teams. There was agreement among participants that educational leadership was a collaborative effort. Eula

saw himself as a team member who appreciated the strengths of both the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators.

As a lead ESL teacher in an elementary school, BJ saw her role as a collaborator with Inuit Indigenous educators and valued reflecting or taking time to know her colleagues. BJ said:

So, we [Inuit Indigenous educators and BJ] kind of bounced ideas off each other, and I would translate things that they were doing from Inuktitut to English, so we kind of worked together. That way, I felt like I kind of learned a lot from them.

Like HB and Lou, BJ sought support from Inuit Indigenous teachers to bounce ideas and resources. She appreciated the knowledge of Inuit Indigenous teachers and the fact there was a historical context to the resistance to learning English. She advocated for learning English and sought leadership support where required. DN sought collaboration and guidance from the Inuit Indigenous school community members, which made the solutions culturally relevant and connected with community needs. DN emphasized that:

this is their hometown and they have invested interest in that, and they have really great perspectives. I found that what really helped, was really getting involved into the community and supported by the members that were there. And with people that were positive and had really positive outlook at things and that kept you going.

According to DN, Inuit Indigenous input and consultation were crucial to facilitate change that met the needs of Inuit Indigenous students.

All participants sought collaboration in and out of school to build relationships with Inuit Indigenous educators and community members. Building relationships and welcoming parents and teachers into the school and community was essential to FT, Eula, and HB. Simon added that working from an egalitarian approach formed the basis for true collaboration. He said, "It is

important to have everybody on an equal playing field of egalitarianism, and true collaboration between colleagues is crucial.” Eula and Tom facilitated collaboration to achieve personal and collective goals to serve parents and the community.

FT believed in maintaining professional relationships irrespective of personal differences. He said, “There doesn’t have to be a personal relationship, but there has to be a professional relationship between us. I will be the one who works to the way you are.” He tried to understand people as who they are and work with them. HB facilitated a school atmosphere where community Elders and members feel comfortable being part of the school community.

HB and Lou acknowledged that delegation was vital to facilitating team effort requiring knowing and recognizing co-workers’ strengths. Lou believed:

somebody saying or the principal saying [to the teachers] you are the leader. Could you take on this for us? And that builds capacity in the system. And it makes people feel good about themselves. I am doing something to help the school.

Tom added that the collaboration facilitated the sharing and exchanging of knowledge between Elders, educators, and youth. He said, “We really should move into becoming a school system where teachers and principals feel connected to each other as part of the system working together with common goals.” Tom reiterated that there needed to be a focus on systemic initiatives where teachers and administrators could connect and share perspectives to work toward common goals.

Facilitating Communication. Directly or indirectly, most participants based their leadership on clear, respectful, and positive communication. Tom shared that he believed in communication at all levels, including one-on-one guidance and information sharing at a systemic level. Keeping in touch with technological advancements was vital to effective

communication in Nunavut, reducing isolation among educational leaders. In Tom's experience, a systemic guide clearly outlining educational leaders' responsibilities helped leaders work efficiently. Tom had been instrumental in assisting educational leaders in understanding their roles and responsibility by creating concise, informative documents. Tom said:

I knew that principals did not really know their role. So I asked my staff to devise a quick guide that would just list for principals timeline about what you needed to do, what their basic duties were, what the authoritative document they would refer to."

He believed that principals learned on the job and had many issues to deal with daily, which required listening and advising calmly for effective communication. FT added that patience, calm listening, and advice could save student lives.

Lou saw leadership as a process that guided the respectful sharing of opinions, keeping cultural and personal differences in mind. Lou shared:

Why principals become overwhelmed is because they don't learn how to give an opinion respectfully, it eats you. I am shut down as teacher in the staff meeting, so what do I do? I go to my principal and vent, so when we were talking about cultures and roles of principals, how can those respectful conversations happen?

HB communicated consistent and clear expectations. She made a point to impart learning with her staff to build collaboration and a shared vision focusing on the needs of the students. She said, "I call and say something is going on, what do you think about this that I did, and whatever, and have a conversation about it because I wanted her perspective." She sought various perspectives, particularly Inuit Indigenous perspective, to inform her decisions.

FT, Lou, BJ, and Eula said facilitating a respectful, open, and honest conversation about disagreements or uncomfortable feelings was the best way to face and resolve issues and build

relationships. BJ shared her experience with her co-worker where she needed to step out of her comfort zone to resolve differences. She shared her experience that “I actually had to approach my co-coach about something I didn’t feel comfortable with, but it was so much easier to have that conversation instead of letting it fester inside.” According to BJ, honest and respectful communication supports relationship building.

According to Eula, clear communication of the school community’s capacity and individuals goes a long way in moving forward. He stated:

Communication is key. The worst thing you can do to me as a leader is the silence. By silence I don’t mean people not talking, but not being aware. Because as a leader, you have to have your eyes on everything.

According to Eula, communication cleared misunderstandings and kept issues from going out of proportion. Simon said that openness in communication facilitated understanding of various philosophies and perspectives, creating opportunities to challenge them. These discussions could lead to new learning, challenging assumptions, reaching a compromise, and building a collaborative spirit. He shared the following opinion:

I think it [finding common ground] starts with communication and being able to sit down and have discussions and understand why that person holds those views and perhaps challenge them on those views to consider other perspectives. And maybe there is something I can learn through that discussion that I might have missed that might challenge my biases.

DN believed in communicating and talking with all community members, including Inuit Indigenous educators, community members, and parents. Any change, she thought, began with having such conversations.

When speaking about what leadership means, the participants shared their perspectives, given their roles and responsibilities. However, though the participants acknowledged the top-down nature of the education system, there seemed to be an acceptance of it. Simon spoke of the need to work toward an egalitarian approach in education. However, he was speaking in the context of addressing colonialism. There was minimal comment on the suitability of the hierarchical nature of leadership in Nunavut in light of Inuit Indigenous Elders' and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers' perspectives.

The participants shared personal values that influenced their work in the educational environment based on their experiences in their respective roles. All participants believed in honesty, respect, optimism, and caring for their students and colleagues. All participants felt that collaboration and teamwork are essential to understanding leading. They thought collaboration with Inuit Indigenous educators was vital to connecting with students to succeed as educators in Nunavut. They appreciated the importance of parent and community involvement in creating an effective teaching-learning environment. There was a common understanding among participants that ongoing open and honest communication was crucial to team building and collaboration. Their leadership's focus was often on seeking solutions to operational issues they faced in their roles. The participants did not consciously establish the connection between their values and IQ principles or Inuit Indigenous worldviews in their conversations. The participants may not have appreciated that culture, language, and knowledge are intricately connected in the Inuit Indigenous worldview. There seemed to be a tendency to categorize the three separately. The participants said very little about the Inuit Indigenous knowledge and its importance in Nunavut education.

Finding 2: The Need for Understanding the Continuity of Colonial Relations within K to 12 Nunavut Schools

The coding process revealed that though all non-Indigenous participants acknowledge colonialism in the Nunavut education system, six participants spoke explicitly about the topic. The non-Indigenous educators spoke of respecting Inuit Indigenous culture, language, and perspectives. They touched upon how they were instrumental in encouraging it in their environment. The participants were acutely aware of the colonial nature of educational leadership and discussed the lack of cultural representation and its importance in education. Educators spoke of the lack of Inuit Indigenous representation and the top-down nature of leadership in Nunavut. Among the participants, there was an effort to connect and advocate for learning from the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. They also spoke of being the guest or visitor in Inuit Indigenous land and that their behaviour needs to reflect the same.

Colonialism in Educational Leadership. FT was conscious that he is a White male and brings a White culture into the environment. However, he made an effort to reflect on his assumptions and privileges. Being a non-White educator, Eula acknowledged that some of his actions are motivated by the need for self-preservation, such as being silent in meetings with little cultural representation. According to Eula:

colonialism has created a sense of if you are not White you don't know. If you are not White, you don't have the skill. We aspire to be perfect. Aspiring to be White. Even those you see as an ally in Nunavut have that mentality.

FT found it problematic that some educators come into Nunavut with an attitude of fixing things or improving education for students. FT said:

The problem people have is when they go in feeling like they are bringing something to better the community. The community is broken. I am coming to save you, and I am coming to fix you, or they come in and they have the misconception of why it's broken, or they place blame on the individual.

According to FT, many educators move into Nunavut with assumptions about the education system and the students. There was not enough effort to understand or see from the Inuit Indigenous perspective by educators who move to Nunavut.

HB, BJ, and DN believed that one way to offset colonialism is to listen to Inuit Indigenous staff because they know the community and students best. HB stated, "I often said when leading, listen to your Inuit staff because often maybe they don't have the book knowledge you have, but they have the community knowledge that you don't have." As a result, HB made an effort to include Inuit Indigenous educators in the decision-making process by asking for their input on various operational issues in school.

Speaking of decolonization, Simon thought educating Inuit Indigenous people to take on leadership roles to run their system is the road to decolonization. In his opinion, "the key to, I guess, decolonizing would be to train and educate Inuit. Make sure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attributes to take on those leadership positions." Tom agreed with Simon and added that more systemic-level discussions on decolonization needed to be conducted. Tom stated, "I don't think the idea that these are nation-to-nation discussions are really understood or resonate the fact that how we all are treating the people, they aren't in the consciousness of most people when we are talking about or considering Indigenous issues if they consider them at all." He believed an effort must be made to create better awareness of truth and reconciliation nationally.

Preservation of Inuit Indigenous Knowledge and Identity. The Inuit Indigenous worldviews were presented in a Government of Nunavut document called *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Educational Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (Government of Nunavut, 2007) . This document detailed the IQ principles presented by Elders that are expected to be incorporated in schools. The document also presented the beliefs, values, skills, and knowledge that form the foundation of Inuit Indigenous living. All non-Indigenous participants understood Inuit Indigenous knowledge and identity are encompassed in the IQ principles and culture. During the conversations, they shared numerous problems faced by educational leaders in Nunavut and ways to overcome them.

When speaking about issues faced by educational leaders, Simon touched upon the difference between the Western and Inuit Indigenous worlds. He appreciated that the Inuit Indigenous society and worldviews have a collective good at the core. Caring for one another and the community came naturally to Inuit Indigenous, which may not necessarily be the case in Western worldviews, which, according to him, is about individualism and competition:

In the South, you probably have to intentionally make a decision to care for your community, doesn't necessarily come as second nature to somebody in the South. But it does to somebody in Nunavut. And also care for the land and the environment. Unless you intentionally make that decision here or are an environmentalist or whatever ideologies might influence you, those things might never be thought of. You meet somebody in downtown Calgary who lives in a high-rise building is not necessarily who is going out on the land to value that connection with land and the environment.

Simon understands the Inuit Indigenous worldviews to be very distinct and explained that one needs to understand by living it, without which it is all theory:

It doesn't matter what the biased worldview of a Southern teacher is, you are working in a distinct society with a completely different worldview and societal values. So, without that focus and without that intentional effort to promote and incorporate IQ values in every facet of the school community, it doesn't even matter.

Findings revealed that most non-Indigenous participants moved into Nunavut with little knowledge of the Inuit Indigenous culture, knowledge, and history. The appreciation of Nunavut context and history in nearly all participants has occurred on the job through the relationship and collaboration with Inuit Indigenous educators and community members. As Simon summed up the understanding, "you move to Nunavut without an understanding of IQ you are not necessarily going to do very well. You cannot come in with a Western worldview and expect success in Nunavut schools." In their work period in Nunavut, all participants had intended and made an effort to learn about the IQ principles and the Inuit Indigenous connection to the land.

According to Lou, connecting with the community and having Elders share their perspectives on IQ principles makes a big difference in the teaching-learning process. She argued, "If we had an Elder have one-to-one with a new teacher, with a new principal and saying this is our perception in this community, this is how we see IQ principle. Principals would feel more comfortable." Lou appreciated that the IQ principles need to be understood from the community perspective.

Eula shared the perception that due to colonialism, "if [knowledge] is Inuk, it's not so good. When it comes from my White leader, then it is perfect." Eula spoke of colonialism's White dominance of knowledge and leadership. Consequently, according to Eula, there was the perception that non-White people did not have the necessary knowledge or leadership skills.

Inuit Indigenous Representation in Educational Leadership. When speaking about collaboration and problems that educational leaders face, DN, Eula, HB, and FT spoke specifically about the importance of Inuit Indigenous representation in educational leadership. There was consensus among all non-Indigenous participants that the Inuit Indigenous perspective is essential in the decision-making process. They actively sought Inuit Indigenous collaboration in understanding student needs and the Inuit Indigenous worldviews to facilitate school operations.

DN acknowledged that the Inuit Indigenous needed a stronger voice in school operations. DN believed in allowing for the expression of Inuit Indigenous leadership and representatives. DN shared her approach:

Presenting a situation where I found that something needed to be changed, presenting it to them [Inuit Indigenous educators] and then sitting back and letting them hash it out and just listening. I think that listening is huge. Allowing opinions to come out, allowing experience to speak for itself, letting it be led by Inuit. I think a lot of times, people downplay the value of Inuit staff in our school.

DN believed in focusing on successes. She also pointed out that there needed to be more appreciation of what the Inuit Indigenous educators brought to the school environment. She believed in “focusing on the value of their roles in the school.”

When speaking of representation as a visible minority, Eula spoke of his experiences in leadership conferences:

With my colleagues, when I go to conferences and whatever, I keep silent in the room. I don't speak because I am the other. Beginning of the process, I am the only Black person

in the room. Representation is just not there. And I find that we don't have a voice in certain circles.

FT believed that we needed more Indigenous representation in educational leadership for the system to be truly grounded in the Inuit Indigenous culture, which HB enforced by hiring Inuktitut language speakers and having cultural programs in the schools. However, FT doubted the effectiveness of culturally relevant education without Inuit Indigenous representation. He stated:

The [educational] foundation they are building from is Inuit. The community seems to have a say in some of the matter and culture parts of it though are still driven by Eurocentric model because a lot of non-Indigenous people are going up and working through the system.

According to FT, having Inuit Indigenous representation in school is not enough. For the implementation of Inuit Indigenous education systems in Nunavut, there needs to be representation at the regional and territorial leadership.

Finding 3: A Necessity for Indigenous Representation of Their Language, Culture, and Knowledge within K to 12 Nunavut Schools

The non-Indigenous participants appreciated the importance of culture and language when working in Nunavut. Most non-Indigenous participants did not grow up in a culturally diverse environment, so moving to Nunavut for them was an education in working with diversity. They had to adjust to a different environment and learned to appreciate the uniqueness of the Inuit Indigenous culture as they worked in communities. They also spoke of their responsibility to foster language and culture in the education system.

Simon, HB, DN, Tom, FT, Lou, BJ, and Eula have persevered in understanding Inuit Indigenous culture through observation and interaction and appreciated its importance in educational leadership in Nunavut. As educators from Southern Canada, they realized that the Inuit Indigenous worldviews are different from theirs and believed in adjusting their perspective to meet the community's needs. Eula summed up the understanding by saying, "The thing I learned early in my career in Nunavut is that when it comes to hunting that all bets are off." According to him, Inuit Indigenous people are fighting for the protection of culture, and the education system has to accommodate various forms of learning, cultural activities being one of them. According to Simon, appreciating and understanding Inuit Indigenous culture and working in it is an awakening and cannot be taught.

BJ, HB, and DN actively sought collaboration and collaborated with Inuit Indigenous educators in decision-making processes and incorporating language and culture when working in the school. For them, cultural learning went beyond the school building through interactions outside of school. DN added that connecting with community members and engaging with Inuit Indigenous colleagues was the best way to create a safe and caring learning environment for students. HB explained, "Acknowledging the culture of the community, I think, was really critical too. It is not just learning the language and customs but also being reticent of certain cultural practices. Every community has it [unique culture practices]." In her explanation, HB acknowledged that cultural practices are community specific and are unique in each community. DN added, "It is so important to provide situations for our kids where they can feel valued and proud and successful in the Inuit based education." DN emphasized that culture-based education would help students to take pride in their culture. In keeping with Inuit Indigenous culture, DN

and HB tried to make all feel welcome, particularly Elders and parents. Lou added that fostering language and culture in the school was a collaborative effort.

BJ found there was resistance to learning English in school because of the historical context of residential schools. However, Inuit Indigenous educators appreciated the importance of learning English. BJ presented her understanding of why there was resistance to English learning. She said, “some of the teachers I worked with at the school were taken away from their families down south, so there was definitely that resistance to learning English.” She understood the resistance to learning English resulted from the Inuit Indigenous residential school experiences in Nunavut.

Tom argued that the Inuktitut language was changing. Inuktitut was no longer a language of hunting. It has become the language of governance and social media. French and English were incorporated into it, and different Inuktitut dialects blended due to social media and travel. Tom shared his experience:

It [Inuktitut] is becoming the language of the government —kind of Facebook. So, when I walk around in community, when I hear kids talking to each other, I could recognize they are using some English and French words along with Inuktitut. I could pick out some of the words they are saying; it told me that probably the dialects are starting to blend— probably because of the kids travelling and because of Facebook and because of the technology.

Tom seemed to see the language change and blending positively as a sign of progress and acceptance of globalization.

Finding 4: The Importance of Embedding Inuit Indigenous Perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut Schools

According to Simon, cultural revitalization through a sense of hope needed to be the focus when addressing systemic issues in Nunavut. He said, “Cultural revitalization, bring it [culture] back to life, injecting hope in the system so that the systemic issues will gradually fade away.” Simon expressed concern that there is not enough effort put into evaluating how much work educators put into implementing IQ principles. According to Simon there needs to be more supervision and direction into ensuring teachers are learning Inuit Indigenous culture and worldviews when working in Nunavut schools. DN agreed with Simon, who shared his experience about how incorporating the Inuit Indigenous worldviews into education transforms students. He shared his experience with his students:

Watching how students change from the classroom setting moving on to the land just seeing how they transform into somebody who never thought they could be. Necessarily, your most difficult challenging disrespectful, in a sense, “hateful student” toward Southern teachers, start taking them under their wing and showing them their traditional ways of living when they go on a land trip. And suddenly, a teacher that might have been an enemy becomes a friend, in a sense, in that context. It completely changes their personality when they are able to connect with their culture. So it is something that I think is hard to teach, in a sense; you can’t really teach appreciation. You can expose people to Inuit values, here are the values in Inuit Indigenous society. But the appreciation for them and the understanding how meaningful they are, that’s more of an awakening, a bit of an epiphany. I suppose that might happen in each individual personally as they interact with the Inuit society.

According to Simon, educators needed to appreciate the importance of immersing students into their culture and worldviews that shape the essence of who they are. Ignoring the importance of

language and culture for student learning, Simon said, “is the most dangerous thing an educator can do going to Nunavut.” He and DN agreed in expressing unhappiness with the teachers who came to Nunavut for the money, questioning their ability to work sincerely and learn about the culture.

Tom believed that Nunavut has done some excellent work in culture and language competency. He appreciated and facilitated the cultural-competency training to assist teachers in understanding the impact of colonialism and residential school history on Inuit Indigenous society, for non-Indigenous educators. He believed that Nunavut is ahead of the rest of the country in implementing language and culture programs in education, particularly cultural-competency programs:

I think that is one area [cultural competency] where you are doing some good work in Nunavut. It wasn't the stuff that I started. It was the stuff I participated in and also at some point responsible for it. And that was Indigenous cultural competency, something that we looked at, and it was a very good place to start, especially with Southern principals to help them become aware of the realities around the residential schools and colonial attitudes that is systemic racism—help them grapple with that and become aware of it to insert into the practice.

Tom believed Canada had much to learn from Nunavut in implementing cultural-competency initiatives. Tom agreed with Simon and contended that:

the systems have to look at making sure that they set the bar for leadership and cultural competency and make sure that it is addressed. It takes time, but it is one of the things that needs to be addressed.

According to Tom, setting the bar to ensure educators understood expectations is crucial. He believed many changes could not be implemented through small conversations but require great system-level effort. In his opinion, Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators need training in cultural competency. He shared learning experiences of collaboration with Inuit Indigenous educators to facilitate conferences in Inuktitut to foster language program leadership.

DN and Simon agreed that students did very well and developed positive self-awareness when education was immersed in culturally relevant education. Simon added that a Southern teacher would not do well in Nunavut without understanding IQ principles. By default, due to IQ and necessity, it is a society focused on caring for one another and the community. Simon also shared that Southern educators need to understand that students in Nunavut are not looking “to adopt a Western worldview.” Eula understood the importance of culture in school operations. He pointed out that on-the-land activities take time away from academics, which the teacher had to accommodate, as on-the-land activities are essential for student learning in Nunavut.

Chapter Summary

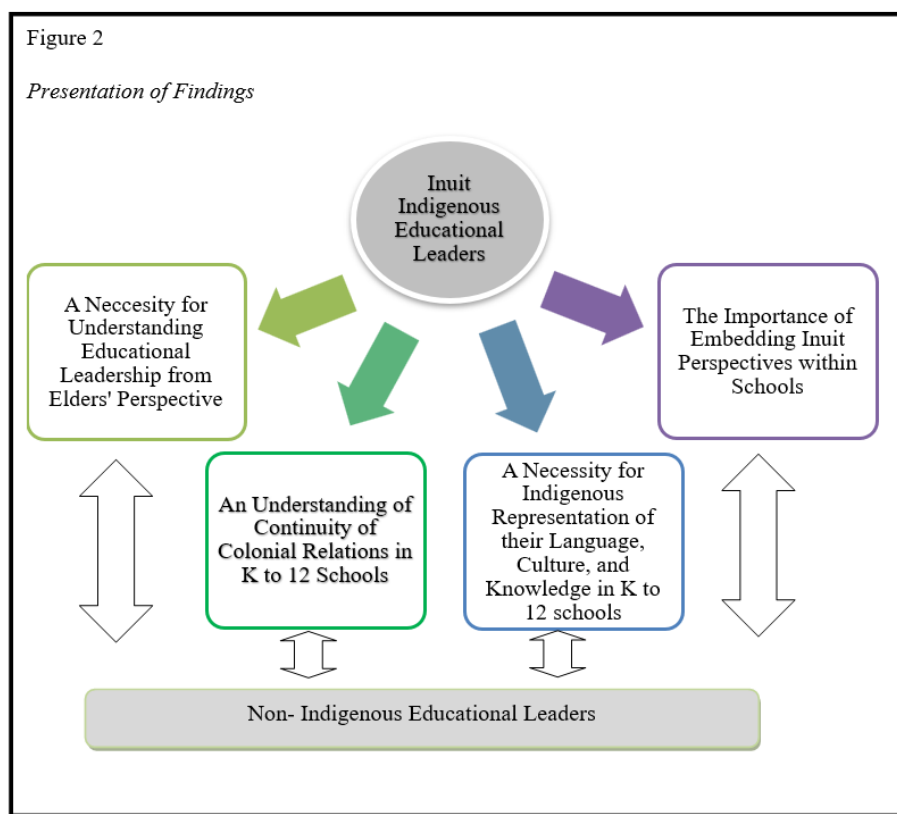
This chapter presented the findings generated from the interviews with non-Indigenous and Inuit Indigenous educational leaders’ perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Four significant findings emerged from the data analysis of the interviews as participants shared their perceptions of their leadership. The findings are as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from the perspective of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, (b) the understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Chapter 5: Interpretation and Synthesis

Overview

In this chapter, I will examine the findings and literature review to present an analysis and interpretation related to the purpose of this study, the framework, and the research questions. The research questions guiding the study are: How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools? These questions I use to address the purpose of this case study, which is to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

For this case study, I interviewed eight non-Indigenous and two Inuit Indigenous educational leaders from Nunavut's kindergarten to Grade 12 (K to 12) schools. The Inuit Indigenous leaders' perception of their leadership was used to inform the analysis and interpretation of the non-Indigenous participant data. The data analysis revealed four significant findings as presented in Figure 2.

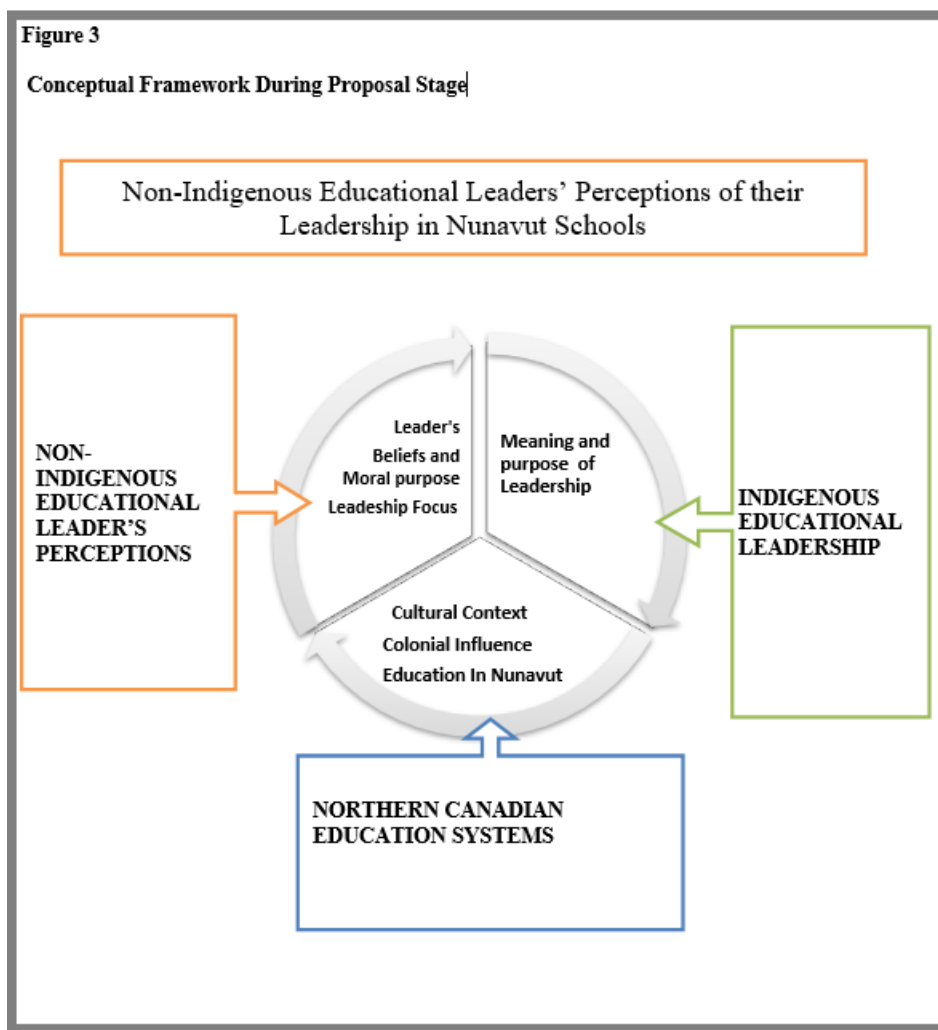


The study's findings are as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from the perspective of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, (b) an understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), the interpretation of findings begins by inquiring about what the findings tell the researcher about the study phenomenon, what is going on, and what it means to me. To inquire about what is going on and what the study phenomenon means, I revisited the research purpose, questions, literature review, and conceptual framework to interpret the findings. I also looked for themes that seemed to run through my findings. As a result, I found the structure of my conceptual framework needed to be modified to include the

revelations from the analysis and reflection. I begin this chapter with an overview of the conceptual framework, and I present the changes to my framework that emerged in the analysis process. Next, I discuss the interpretation of the themes concerning my literature review and findings for the research topic: non-Indigenous perception of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a summary.

Revisiting Conceptual Framework

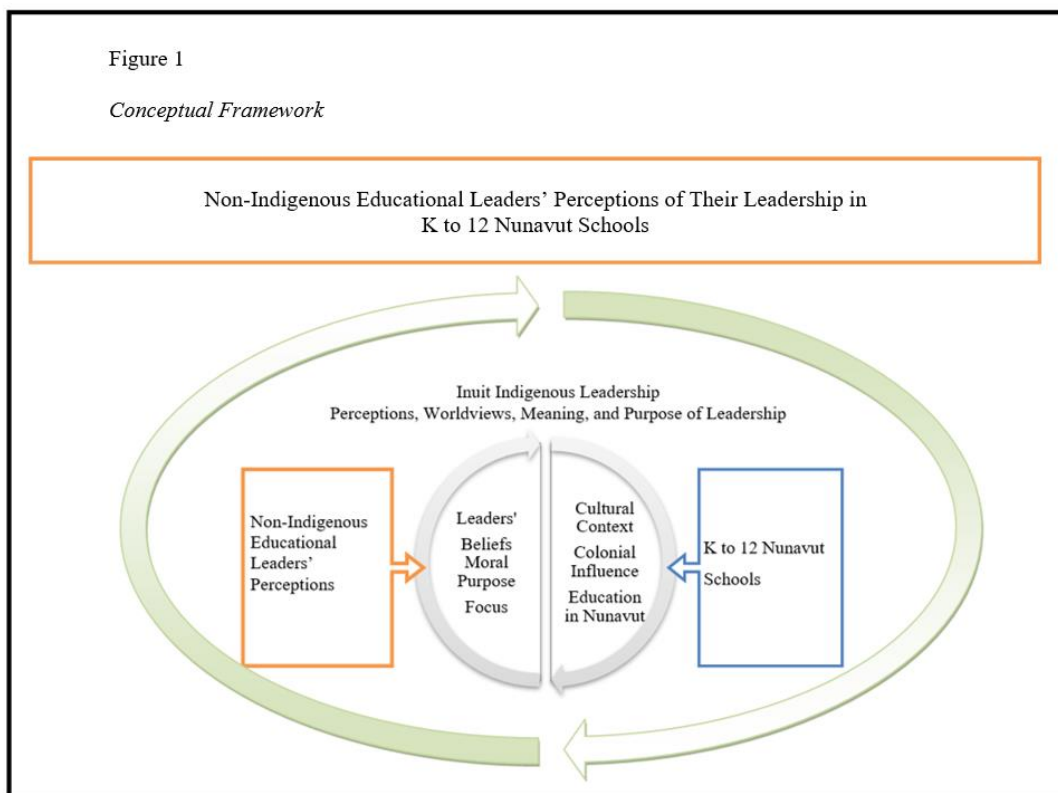
The interpretation process for this research made me reflect on my position on colonialism and its effect on my thought process and actions. During the study's proposal stage, I envisioned the conceptual framework in three parts: non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions, Indigenous leadership, and Northern Canadian education systems as in Figure 3.



My review of the themes and findings revealed that Inuit Indigenous leaders' worldviews were woven through the themes of the conversations during the interviews. The non-Indigenous leaders rely heavily on the Inuit Indigenous leaders in the school to connect and understand their role in the post-colonial environment. As discussed in the literature review, social equity, enforcing change, community and family service, and language and culture promotion are vital aspects that occupy the leadership of Indigenous educational leaders (Preston et al., 2015). The Inuit Indigenous leaders' endeavours to promote the advancement of social change in Nunavut are reflected in all aspects of school leadership such as pedagogy, curriculum, school

environment, etc., as confirmed by MK and ID. The data supporting the findings reveal that the non-Indigenous leaders try to understand and accept the Inuit Indigenous leaders' endeavours, by bouncing off ideas, seeking Inuit Indigenous leaders' input during problem solving, or seeking their support in organizing professional development for educators. Bringing the community into the school and ensuring cultural competency aligns with the needs of the Inuit Indigenous social change priorities such as development of culture and language (Preston et al., 2015) and the systemic need for reconciliation between the Inuit Indigenous leaders including their communities and non-Indigenous educational leaders advocated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). Reconciliation was the tone that participants sought in the wake of the federal day school history in Nunavut.

I believe that the framework I developed at the proposal stage resulted from my experiences growing up in a Eurocentric education in the English language. Compartmentalization, a colonial process, was also an approach I used to develop my study framework. According to Patel (2015), "compartmentalizing complex wholes into disparate pieces facilitates the naming and ordering of those pieces and parts in order to have dominion over them [the colonized]" (p. 19). Listening to the participants' lived experiences and reflecting on them in the context of my own experiences led to reviewing my framework and making the changes to represent this new understanding. Figure 1 presents my changes in the framework post interpretation.



Changes to Conceptual Framework

I began data collection and the analysis process with the outlook of analyzing the data of the Inuit Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous leaders as one body of data to support the purpose of this study. However, during the analysis process, I realized that Nunavut education and educational leadership needed to be informed by Inuit Indigenous leaders' perceptions and worldviews. Consequently, I went back to the Inuit Indigenous leaders' data to review what they had said about educational leadership in Nunavut schools. This process revealed new themes for findings discussed in Chapter 4. Upon arriving at the new themes, I updated the literature review. The literature review and the data from Inuit Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous leaders informed the changes to the framework. Instead of the Inuit Indigenous leadership and worldviews being an independent topic, in the updated framework, the non-Indigenous

educational leaders' perception and K to 12 Nunavut schools were enclosed in Inuit Indigenous leadership perceptions, and worldviews.

The interpretation process through self-reflection, conversation with participants, and literature review revealed for me how my experiences influenced my decisions. This revelation was possible due to purposeful self-reflection I engaged in during this study.

Interpretation

Interpretation for this study meant stepping back to look at the findings and shape meaning out of what Inuit Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous leaders were saying about leadership in Nunavut. To address the purpose of this study, the interpretation process was iterative and intuitive, based on my understanding, knowledge, and experiences as reflected against the literature review and interaction with participants. I compared the literature review, my personal views, and the findings of this study based on my understanding formed through past experiences in Nunavut (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). I also relied on my supervisor and supervisory committee to critique and question my interpretation to check its meaningfulness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I also looked for patterns that emerged across the findings during the interpretation process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). My personal experiences and understanding of the participants' stories and experiences impacted the emergence of the patterns to narrow down my interpretation. In this case study guided by the perceptions and worldviews of the Inuit Indigenous educational leaders, I explored non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into improving leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The findings revealed in this study are as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from the Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers' perspectives, (b) the understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a

necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools. Informed by the Inuit Indigenous participants' perspectives, I discuss the themes that run through the non-Indigenous participants' findings. I discovered the following themes that run through the findings: (a) understanding leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools, (b) understanding knowledge in Nunavut schools, (c) colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) culture and language in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Understanding Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

There were four main themes that showed how non-Indigenous participants understood educational leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. They are as follows: education structure, Inuit Indigenous representation, leaders' values, and leaders' purpose.

Education Structure. The Department of Education, with the regional offices, governs the education system in Nunavut. Literature and the non-Indigenous participants agreed with Inuit Indigenous participants that the principal leads the school. The principal is the educational leader responsible for overall school leadership (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016). However, the literature reflects the Inuit Indigenous participants that the word "leader" is not part of the traditional Inuit Indigenous culture (Arnaquq, 2015). The non-Indigenous participants and the Inuit Indigenous participants discussed that the education system is hierarchical. MK and ID also emphasized that hierarchy in leadership, which, according to MK, present everywhere, was not a part of the traditional Inuit Indigenous living. The non-Indigenous participants shared that they consistently work toward having the participation of Elders in schools, which is strongly advocated by Arnaquq (2015) and Inuit Indigenous participants. The non-Indigenous participants and literature review, for example, as indicated in Clarke & O'Donoghue (2016) and Tagalik

(2010) affirm Inuit Indigenous participants' assertion that Nunavut leadership needs to be grounded in IQ. Tunnganarniq (fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive) and Piliriqatigiinniq (working together for a common cause) are the two IQ principles, among others, that form the foundation for a non-hierarchical leadership in Inuit Indigenous way of life.

The non-Indigenous participants spoke of providing leadership in implementing IQ principles in school in collaboration with Inuit Indigenous educators. They also shared that they had sought guidance from Inuit Indigenous educators in creating a teaching-learning environment that supports Inuit Indigenous culture. The non-Indigenous participants' discussions and Battiste (2013), support the Inuit Indigenous participants' belief that collaboration and creating respectful spaces for meaningful exchange of ideas are essential to systems informed by Inuit Indigenous worldviews. There was understanding that the non-Indigenous participants see themselves as leading change in the teaching-learning environment so that Inuit Indigenous students experience culturally relevant education as stated by Tom, FT, Simon, and HB (see Chapter 4, Finding 4). However, there seemed to be an acceptance of the hierarchical system among the non-Indigenous participants for example, Simon and Tom discuss the importance of educating the Inuit Indigenous educators to address decolonisation however it is to provide a stronger Inuit Indigenous voice in the existing hierarchical structure. There was a minimal critique on whether a hierarchical leadership system could support the Inuit Indigenous worldviews in Nunavut schools. Where MK and ID state that the current hierarchical structure does not represent the Inuit Indigenous worldviews, the non-Indigenous participants on the other hand state that the Inuit Indigenous worldviews need to inform the educational system but there seems to be acceptance of the system in its hierarchical form.

It seems that the non-Indigenous participants have accepted the hierarchical leadership system as is, with many layers of authority telling them what is allowed and not allowed in leading the school. A hierarchical leadership system is not culturally responsive to the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. For culturally responsive education to be effective in Nunavut schools, the Inuit Indigenous worldviews need to be reflected throughout educational leadership. There needs to be a dialogue on alternate leadership systems to address the community and Elder engagement requirement in the decision-making process. Engagement of communities and Elders with leadership systems would shed light on the needs of the communities and leadership capacity within the communities. The non-Indigenous educational leaders, who occupy most of the leadership roles as principals and vice-principals in Nunavut school systems (Snow et al., 2021), play a vital role in leading this change in Nunavut.

Inuit Indigenous Representation. One way to increase student engagement, build local control, and overturn colonial practices is to increase Inuit Indigenous representation in educational leadership. There was consensus among the non-Indigenous participants that an increase in Inuit Indigenous leaders is needed to implement Inuit Indigenous programs and worldviews effectively. The Inuit Indigenous participants also confirmed the need for increased representation. The non-Indigenous participants shared their effort to create spaces for Inuit Indigenous educators to share their perspectives. ID expressed that Inuit Indigenous programs are better implemented when an Inuit Indigenous principal leads the school. ID voiced concern that there are not enough Inuit Indigenous educators in Nunavut schools, and the existing Inuit Indigenous teachers choose to limit their work to elementary schools. Literature review, for example, as discussed in Calver (2015), Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2013), and MacIver (2012), Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (2015) confirm the Inuit Indigenous

participants' experiences of lack of appropriate recognition in the education system. They expressed frustration over not being valued in leadership meetings or not being included in the decision-making process. The non-Indigenous participants, such as Tom, had led programs that had facilitated opportunities to foster Inuit Indigenous leadership. Simon and Tom asserted that educating Inuit Indigenous individuals to take on leadership roles is an essential step toward progressing for change, a point confirmed by ID.

Indigenous leaders have the multiple tasks of teaching students about their history, while also helping non-Indigenous staff learn about Indigenous history in relation to Canada's history (Ottmann, 2010). This responsibility they fulfill while leading cultural programs in schools. In addition, many Indigenous educators continue to face the effects of residential school history. These conditions make leadership for the Indigenous educators a tough choice. Based on the literature and the study findings, I think the current non-Indigenous leaders who occupy most of the leadership roles in Nunavut could have a role in leading change. There is a need for better strategies, such as training and hiring policies, to motivate Inuit Indigenous educational leaders to take on more leadership roles. Hiring and professional development strategies must be responsive to history, education, community needs, and Inuit Indigenous worldviews.

Leaders' Values. The IQ principles detail the values and beliefs that guide educational leadership in Nunavut. The guiding principles are showing respect to others, developing collaborative relationships, promoting environmental stewardship, developing knowledge and skill acquisition, being resourceful, promoting consensus decision-making, and serving others. All non-Indigenous participants agreed with Inuit Indigenous participants that Nunavut's educational leadership needs to be grounded in IQ principles. There was also a common understanding among the non-Indigenous participants like ND, BJ, David, and others that they

need the Inuit Indigenous educator's support in understanding and implementing the IQ principles in schools.

Based on the literature review as in Battiste (2013), the collaboration between the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators is essential to meet the educational needs of students. The non-Indigenous participants such as HB, DN, David, and others sought collaboration in and out of school to build relationships with Inuit Indigenous educators and community members. The non-Indigenous participants actively sought collaboration with Inuit Indigenous educators in problem solving, which corroborates with ID's ideas of working with non-Indigenous educators and literature. For example, Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall shared the Two-Eyed Seeing, or *Etuaptmunk*, which uses different perspectives to benefit all. The literature review, for example, as reflected in Battiste (2013), Arnaquq (2015), Kovach (2013), and non-Indigenous participants discussions on collaboration between Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators reflect ID's views, who worked to balance the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches and collaboration.

Value-based educational leadership in literature as in Murphy and Louis (2018) Leithwood and Louis, (2012) and Robinson, (2011) is described with characteristics such as truth, openness, credit, mentorship, honesty, care, integrity, vision, trust, listen, respect, clear thinking, and inclusion. The non-Indigenous participants support literature for example as indicated in Baloglu, (2012) Graber and Kilpatrick (2008) and with the Inuit Indigenous participants about the place of values in educational leadership. Humility, patience, optimism, and hope were some values that non-Indigenous participants stated were in play in leading Nunavut education. For example, Simon said, "One needs to be a model of hope and optimism." In addition to being optimistic and hopeful, leadership is also described as being pragmatic,

having the ability to compromise and working toward balance, or seeking a middle ground between the various points of view, which is in keeping with the Inuit Indigenous perspective, as stated by ID and MK. When speaking of problem solving, both MK and ID shared that they think about their early teachings, such as “go back to my upbringing, how I was raised by my parents” (ID) and “always remembered the teaching of my family and Elders” (MK).

Language is a mode of expression of our values. What informs values is bound to reveal itself in the language a leader uses (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2013). When values are expressed using language from IQ, this would most likely reinforce the IQ principles in the teaching-learning environment. All non-Indigenous participants genuinely believed IQ forms the basis for Nunavut education. Lou, Eula, and Simon saw leadership as being optimistic, being pragmatic, having the ability to compromise. Eula, FT, and Simon spoke of leadership through humility, accepting that one does not know everything (see Chapter 4, Non-Indigenous Leader’s Perspectives, Findings 1, Leaders’ Values,) when expressing their understanding of values. However, IQ may not necessarily be the reference for expressing their values as it was for the Inuit Indigenous participants where they speak of values.

How they were perceived as leaders was essential to all non-Indigenous participants. They wanted to appear as people who cared about the issue faced in Nunavut and working to mitigate them to the best of their ability. The participants also actively sought acceptance and appreciation from the communities and parents by doing the right thing in embracing culture and IQ in the schools.

When viewed from the current social-political context of reconciliation, I think the need to do the right thing and seek approval has its roots in the moral and political responsibility as leaders in Nunavut education. However, unless all aspects of the education system, such as the

Department of Education, regional offices, and other connected bodies, embrace the IQ principles, the efforts of the non-Indigenous leaders may not be as effective.

Leaders' Purpose. All non-Indigenous participants, based on the discussion of their focus and purpose, seemed to work for change through positive school leadership. Murphy and Louis (2018) explained the characteristics of positive school leadership, some of which appear in the discussions with the participants. To meet individual and school needs, non-Indigenous participants relied on hope and optimism. They led authentically; they relied on values such as trust, respect, care, etc. as shared by Eula to influence change as leaders rather than positional power. This was in keeping with the Inuit Indigenous participant views. The non-Indigenous participants focused more on the interest of the school and community than on personal interests. They valued the small everyday actions in meeting the larger goals. These instances showed that participants believe in positive school leadership. However, Simon and HB reflect the Inuit Indigenous participants' notions that there were educators who move to Nunavut for monetary benefits and that they were not effective. ID stated that the motivation of the educators in Nunavut was important. He thought that whether a teacher was in Nunavut for money, adventure, or knowledge about Inuit Indigenous culture made a difference in how they approached teaching and living in the Nunavut. However, I would draw attention to the fact that the non-Indigenous participants had moved to Nunavut in search of better job opportunities, and effectively worked through positive school leadership based on the conversation. This effectiveness, I assumed, is due to their need to be authentic leaders, which is at the core of IQ principles.

The participants shared their experiences of the problems they faced meeting student needs and their efforts to mitigate them and create a positive teaching-learning environment

through positive school leadership. Participants' focus areas differ based on their roles and responsibilities in Nunavut education. The leadership focus areas of non-Indigenous participants were student engagement, staff and student accountability, culture and language education, student wellness, and IQ. The non-Indigenous participants views confirmed the Inuit Indigenous participants' view that the leadership focus in Nunavut needed to be making the teaching-learning environment culturally relevant by including land-based activities and an open and welcoming school environment supported by literature as in Ladson-Billings (1995). There appears to be an agreement among the non-Indigenous participants that their understanding of the Inuit Indigenous society, its history, and values and their willingness to incorporate it into the teaching-learning environment impacts students' achievements. This acceptance also drives the purpose of leading in Nunavut to a great extent.

Understanding Knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

There was a common understanding among the participants that Inuit Indigenous worldviews are embraced in the IQ principles. Based on the literature review, the IQ principles guide the Inuit Indigenous way of life, and educational leadership needs to be rooted in them which agrees with the non-Indigenous participants' understanding and emphasized by the Inuit Indigenous participants. The non-Indigenous participants appreciated that the core of the Inuit Indigenous worldview is working for the common good, building respectful relations, preserving harmony and balance, and planning for the future (Karetak et al., 2017). There is also an acceptance by the non-Indigenous participants that educational leadership in Nunavut requires that leaders understand knowing the Inuit Indigenous identity is deeply rooted in connection with the land and history. The Inuit Indigenous participants also shared this fact. There was an appreciation by the non-Indigenous participants of the uniqueness of Inuit Indigenous

worldviews, and living it is the way to understand it. Simon summed the understanding in that “you move to Nunavut without an understanding of IQ you are not necessarily going to do very well. You cannot come in with a Western worldview and expect success in Nunavut schools.” Based on the findings, all non-Indigenous participants had begun their work in Nunavut with little understanding of the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. The learning and appreciation of the worldview occurred on the job with support from the communities and Inuit Indigenous colleagues.

MK spoke extensively about his concerns and efforts toward the preservation of Inuit Indigenous knowledge. My discussions with non-Indigenous participants reflected MK’s beliefs that appreciation of Inuit Indigenous knowledge history is essential to the well-being of the Inuit Indigenous youth. Also, instilling pride in the Inuit Indigenous worldviews is crucial to the youth's identity as Inuit Indigenous, according to MK.

However, very little was said by the non-Indigenous participants about working toward preserving Inuit Indigenous knowledge and identity in the educational system. There was a genuine effort by the non-Indigenous participants to learn, appreciate, and implement Inuit Indigenous worldviews in schools. Nonetheless, they didn’t seem to connect this effort to their role in preserving Inuit Indigenous knowledge. The conscientious effort to support maintaining and sharing the Inuit Indigenous worldviews and knowledge needs attention at a territorial level and should not fall on the shoulders of Inuit Indigenous educational leaders alone.

All non-Indigenous participants appreciated the role of the Inuit Indigenous Elders in knowledge sharing. Based on Karetak et al. (2017), traditionally, Elders played an important role in knowledge sharing, providing guidance and support in Inuit Indigenous society. The non-Indigenous participants confirmed the Inuit Indigenous assertion that Elders must play a more

prominent role in educational leadership in Nunavut. They reflected what MK and ID said about schools needing to be more open in inviting Inuit Indigenous Elders into schools. Lou specifically spoke about the importance of having the Elders share Inuit Indigenous worldviews with the non-Indigenous educators and educational leaders. In her view, “if we had an Elder have one-to-one with a new teacher, with a new principal and saying this is our perception in this community, this is how we see IQ principle. Principals would feel more comfortable.”

There are resources, such as the Education Act, and foundation documents and resources for educators, available on the Nunavut education website on incorporating Inuit Indigenous worldview into overall governance and leadership in the education system. These resources also outline the importance of Elders in education. However, based on the findings, there seems to be inconsistency in the involvement of Elders in schools. The participants indicated a greater need to ensure that Elders play a greater role in sharing knowledge in schools. The need for consistency in Elders’ involvement in the schools points to more effort at the territorial level to ensure Elders are consistently welcomed in all schools.

Colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Though there is an acknowledgement of the historical wrongs at many levels in literature for example, as reflected in Oskineegish (2015), Ottmann (2010), Odulaja and Halseth (2018), Battiste (2000), Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2013), Fredua-Kwarteng (2016), Whitley (2014), and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), I believe that in Nunavut, educational leaders were still trying to learn and understand the colonial and residential school history and the impact of this history at an individual and systemic level (see Chapter 4, Findings: Non-Indigenous Leader’s Perspectives, Finding 2, Colonialism in Educational Leadership). All non-Indigenous participants were deeply aware of the colonial nature of the education system in

Nunavut. They approached the issue by expressing their views on strategies to overcome colonialism. To offset colonialism, the non-Indigenous participants conceded that there needed to be a high level of Inuit Indigenous representation in educational leadership at all levels, as expressed by the Inuit Indigenous participants.

There was consensus among all non-Indigenous participants that the Inuit Indigenous perspective was important in the decision-making process, which was also emphasized by ID. ID stated that “if you are a [Inuit Indigenous] principal in an elementary, intermediate, or high school and there is Inuit [educator] planning Inuit cultural programs, I think that is a good positive step.” ID also argued that when an Inuit Indigenous principal leads a school, implementation of language and cultural programs is smoother. As discussed by Burm and Burleigh, (2017), the non-Indigenous participants actively sought Inuit Indigenous collaboration and dialogue in understanding student needs and the Inuit Indigenous worldviews to facilitate school operations. According to Battiste (2013), Lopez (2021), Arnaq (2015), and Kovach (2013), this collaboration is essential to the decolonization process. The non-Indigenous participants such as BJ, FT, Simon, DN, and HB shared their endeavours to include Inuit Indigenous educators and Elders in the decision-making process and create opportunities for Inuit Indigenous leadership. Tom shared his experiences coordinating conferences where the Inuit Indigenous educators led programs on language education, which, according to him, was a new learning experience on Inuit Indigenous leadership.

According to FT, Simon, and Tom, the conversation and change toward decolonization was more effective if it occurred both at the school and system levels. Tom added that the nation-to-nation conversation was not in the consciousness of or understood by those in the education system in Nunavut.

Agreeing with them, I believe that the dialogue on colonialism needs to focus on bringing colonialism issues to a conscious level. Consequently, colonialism would be understood from the perspective of everyday activity in the schooling system. Education and training of the Inuit Indigenous are critical to this process. Unless education and training for educational leadership of the Inuit Indigenous educators are organized by the existing system with the goal of Inuit Indigenous educators leading an education system created by them, decolonization would be challenging to achieve. The leaders in the current system are predominantly non-Indigenous, making their role in this change crucial.

Culture and Language in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Traditionally in the Inuit Indigenous culture, knowledge is communicated through narration and stories by community Elders, as stated by Karetak et al. (2017), in agreement with the Inuit Indigenous participants. This tradition is part of culture and heritage, making it part of Inuit Indigenous identity. The connection between language, culture, and identity makes Inuit Indigenous languages vital for preserving Inuit Indigenous culture and worldviews. According to MK and ID, preserving language and culture through stories was crucial to culturally responsive pedagogy. The non-Indigenous participants appreciated the importance of culture and language when working in Nunavut. For most non-Indigenous participants, Nunavut was the first exposure to diversity in culture and language. Their learning and appreciation of the culture and language occurred on the job as educators. All the non-Indigenous participants shared their experiences in implementing culture and language in the schools. The non-Indigenous participants also agreed with ID and MK, who believed that culture and language needed to be more visible in schools. ID shared that “the schools need to have Inuit Indigenous cultural spirit floating around.” He also stated he would like to hear more Inuktut spoken in Nunavut schools.

The Inuit Indigenous participants view their leadership through the lens of preserving language and culture to effect change and equity in the education system. Literature review, for example, as presented in Battiste (2000), Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2013), Fredua-Kwarteng (2016), Odulaja and Halseth (2018), and Whitley (2014), echoed MK's and ID's awareness of the Inuit Indigenous people's loss due to past events, particularly in culture and language. Inuit Indigenous leadership is made complex by the responsibility of informing the education system including the non-Indigenous leaders and educational operations, about the Inuit Indigenous history and its relation to Canadian history. The Inuit Indigenous leaders are also responsible for cultural and language revitalization. The effort of Indigenous educators and leaders in informing and creating awareness about culture and Indigenous history as discussed by Oskineegish (2015) and Tulloch et al. (2016) can be rendered more effective with active involvement and understanding of Indigenous cultural context and history by non-Indigenous educators and leaders. Burleigh and Burm (2013) add that the future of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators' relationships relies on establishing deeper understanding and partnerships focused on mutual benefit, rather than performative acts. In other words, Oskineegish, Tulloch, and Burleigh and Burm advocate shared responsibility of creating awareness of the Indigenous history and culture in the education system by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. MK and ID appeared to carry the weight of understanding their history, undoing the effects of colonization, and motivating the young toward hope and achievement. In addition, the journey they have shared with me revealed that they had carried the weight of helping the non-Indigenous staff understand the Indigenous history to that of Canada; meeting the culture-specific needs of their communities, such as language revitalization; and closing the achievement gaps as assessed by Eurocentric standards. MK and ID are long-term educational leaders who understand the

importance of spreading awareness about the Inuit Indigenous history and knowledge and actively pursued it through their time as educational leaders in Nunavut. They pursued this within a system dominated by non-Indigenous educators and had to prove their abilities as leaders to non-Indigenous educators and their community members.

Based on the findings there was no mention by the non-Indigenous participants of the responsibility that the Inuit Indigenous leaders bear in culture and language revitalization. Instead, the discussion on cultural and language revitalization focused on learning, problem-solving, implementing culture and language in the school, and facilitating Inuit Indigenous leadership. According to Simon, “cultural revitalization, bringing it [culture] back to life, could be achieved by injecting hope in the system so that the systemic issues will gradually fade away.” However, the non-Indigenous participants seemed to have not fully appreciated the complexity of Inuit Indigenous leaders’ role in the process. Oskineegish (2015) and Tulloch et al. (2016) emphasize that non-Indigenous leaders and educators’ deeper involvement and understanding of the Indigenous history and effects on the education system is essential in overcoming the effects the historical losses in language and culture. According to Fallon and Paquette (2014) educational leaders in Indigenous schools need to appreciate the complexities of teaching in Northern schools. This includes understanding and appreciating the role Indigenous educational leaders play in overcoming the effects of the historical losses in language and culture and supporting the Inuit Indigenous educators in their effort towards revitalization and decolonization.

The non-Indigenous participants sought to understand culture by interacting outside the school by participating in community events and celebrations. HB explained, “Acknowledging the culture of the community, I think, was critical too. It is not just learning the language and

customs but also being reticent of certain cultural practices. Every community has it [unique cultural practices].” Based on the findings, non-Indigenous participants were trying to implement cultural and language programs in schools. The non-Indigenous participants understood the importance of fostering language and culture in schools in the current context of global connectivity. They recognize that the Inuit Indigenous language was evolving to accommodate and has become the language of governance. However, the effort is insufficient, according to the Inuit Indigenous participants. The 30-plus-year-long journey of creating a culturally relevant and bilingual education, according to ID, is slow.

The Government of Nunavut had in its Nunavut Education Act and Inuit Language Protection Act the goal of creating bilingual education by 2020, which was extended to 2039. The impact of the residential school system on culture and language in Nunavut has been well documented in the literature and shared by ID and MK. As language and culture are deeply connected to the Inuit Indigenous identity, the delay in having bilingual education impacts the Inuit Indigenous youth. The Inuit Indigenous youth trying to understand their place in the world in the context of the Nunavut history of culture and language loss due to the residential school system and colonialism are losing out due to the delay in implementing the bilingual education system.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the interpretation of the findings to explore non-Indigenous educational leaders’ perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into improving leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The discussion reveals themes that run through the findings presented in Chapter 4. In addition, the analysis of the findings resulted in me gaining a

better understanding of my assumptions and, consequently, revisiting and revising my conceptual framework.

My endeavour in presenting the analysis and interpretation of the findings was to uncover the multiple layers in the perception of their leadership by the non-Indigenous and Inuit Indigenous educational leaders in Nunavut. The interpretation process was an iterative and intuitive experience for me.

The interpretation process revealed the commonalities and differences in the perceptions of leadership by educational leaders in the following themes that run through the findings: (a) understanding leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools, (b) understanding knowledge in Nunavut schools, (c) colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) culture and language in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Thesis's themes shed light in knowing how non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership. I present conclusions of the thesis and forward some recommendations in chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Overview

In this case study, I explored non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into improving leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. The conclusions from this study follow the research questions and the findings. Therefore, I addressed four areas: (a) understanding leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools, (b) understanding knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) culture and language in K to 12 Nunavut schools. I begin this chapter by discussing the shift in the perception of my own leadership through the conceptual framework. Next, I put forth the conclusions I derived based on the findings. Finally, the chapter concludes with my recommendations for educational leaders moving forward and a final reflection on this study.

Resituating Myself

As a non-Indigenous educator, trying to understand the perception of myself as an educational leader began by situating myself in the Nunavut education. I drew the process of resituating myself by reflecting on the experiences and values I bring to the education system in conversation with the participants.

This study transformed how I perceive leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Some of the revelations were surprising as I was unaware of how colonialism affected my perceptions. My position as an educational leader in Nunavut required that I negotiate the understanding of various cultures and seek inclusion. As a person who moved to Nunavut from India, Nunavut's residential school history and the Inuit Indigenous struggles to hold on to their culture and identity was a painful awareness.

I moved to Canada from India, striving for the best for my family. Among other arguments, the move was influenced by the notion that the West had something better to offer. However, my move to Nunavut brought to light the Indigenous Canadian history that changed my assumptions and influenced how I perceived myself as an educational leader. My new understanding is an ongoing process of self-reflection and learning in relation to my environment. How I perceived Inuit Indigenous leadership in Nunavut also transformed as I understood IQ principles and Inuit Indigenous worldviews. I created my framework based on my understanding of the systems I worked in and my experiences as an educator in India. Based on my experiences, I viewed Inuit Indigenous worldviews and leadership as parallel to the current Eurocentric leadership. Accepting Inuit Indigenous leadership as parallel leadership was an understanding based on the assumption that Eurocentric leadership is essential to student achievement. However, resulting from the conversation with the participants and self-reflecting, I understood that for the non-Indigenous leadership to be effective in Nunavut, Inuit Indigenous principles must be lived and understood to be woven into every aspect of educational culture.

Conclusions Based on Findings

In the following section, I present my conclusions based on my findings. The study findings are as follows: (a) a necessity for understanding educational leadership from the perspective of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, (b) the understanding of the continuity of colonial relations within the K to 12 Nunavut schools, (c) a necessity for Indigenous representation of their language, culture, and knowledge in K to 12 Nunavut schools, and (d) the importance of embedding Inuit Indigenous perspectives within the K to 12 Nunavut schools. I discuss my conclusions for the following—Inuit Indigenous worldviews in K to 12

Nunavut schools, values in educational leadership, colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut schools, Inuit Indigenous representation, collaboration, and cultural revitalization.

Inuit Indigenous Worldviews in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

I find that there was an authentic effort by the non-Indigenous educational leaders to understand and facilitate Inuit Indigenous principles and culture in leading K to 12 Nunavut schools.

As Little Bear (2000) and Carr-Stewart (2019) suggested, the Indigenous worldviews are based on the belief that values are in a constant state of motion and are cyclic, in contrast to the linear, objective views of the Eurocentric worldview. The Inuit Indigenous participants also shared this Indigenous perspective, as informed by Karetak et al. (2017). The non-Indigenous participants perceived their leadership as influenced by the Inuit Indigenous leaders in Nunavut and endeavoured in creating a teaching-learning environment informed by Inuit Indigenous worldviews.

Conclusion. The leadership structure in Nunavut follows a hierarchical and Eurocentric approach (see Chapter 2, “Education in Nunavut”). The Inuit Indigenous societal values are strongly advocated in leading the education system in Nunavut. However, implementing the IQ principles as suggested by the Government of Nunavut (Orientation Supports, n.d.) is problematic when the day-to-day operation and language have a top-down approach. The hierarchical structure encourages language of allowing and not allowing, by those in leadership, people, generally Inuit Indigenous people, to act, which does not align with Inuit Indigenous IQ principles. Some non-Indigenous participants spoke of allowing for the expression of Inuit Indigenous educators’ voices (see Chapter 4, “Inuit Indigenous Representation in Educational

Leadership”) in working toward Inuit Indigenous representation. This idea of allowing something is expressed from a position of power in keeping with the hierarchical structure.

The education structure in Nunavut has communication and reporting protocols that follow a clear hierarchy. Each level is bound by what it can and cannot do, requiring the approval of a higher level of authority. The levels of control do not seem to fit in the IQ principles of Aajiiqatigiinniq (decision making through discussion and consensus) and Tunnganarniq (fostering good spirit by being open and welcoming). The non-Indigenous leaders tried integrating Inuit Indigenous worldviews and values into education. However, the hierarchal approach that exists acts as a barrier. Promoting Inuit Indigenous principles to guide educational leadership may not be feasible when the systemic structures are Eurocentric.

The hierarchical approach based on a Eurocentric model also affects the building of trust and self-reliance among educators. The establishment of trust and self-reliance are values incorporated in Inuuqatuguutsuarniq, Tunnganarniq, and Qanuqtuurniq of the IQ principles (see Chapter 2, “Inuit Indigenous Worldviews in Educational Leadership”). According to participant Lou, trust, resourcefulness, and caring may not be fostered in a top-down approach where educators are held accountable by administrative offices such as the Regional Office (see Chapter 4, “Meaning of Leadership”). Instead, accountability is better addressed from a sense of commitment by educational leaders such as principals to students, colleagues, and the community. Again, the misalignment of the systemic structures to the IQ principles makes educational leadership in Nunavut problematic.

Values in Educational Leadership

Leadership through positive educational leadership was suggested by all the non-Indigenous participants and confirmed by Inuit Indigenous participants (see Chapter 4, “Non-

Indigenous Leaders' Perspectives"). In addition, many characteristics of positive school leadership listed by Murphy and Louis (2018) also form part of the IQ principles (see Chapter 2, "Inuit Indigenous Worldviews in Educational Leadership & Non-Indigenous Educational Leader's Perception").

The non-Indigenous participants perceived their leadership based on their values and experiences. Building relationships with the Inuit Indigenous educators and communities was critical to them. The non-Indigenous participants in educational leadership roles in Nunavut perceived their leadership to go beyond meeting the academic needs of the students. Their perception of leading included caring for the students and building relationships by understanding and acceptance of the history of the students through love, empathy, and positive relationships (see Chapter 4, "Meaning of Leadership"). Non-Indigenous leaders, according to the participants, should strive to know the communities they work with and communicate with them in a way that builds a positive environment, as emphasized by DN and HB (see Chapter 4, "Meaning of Leadership").

The perception by community members, students, and colleagues, particularly Inuit Indigenous colleagues, about their leadership, was essential to non-Indigenous participants. The Inuit Indigenous participants also shared this notion. They also cared about being perceived as people who empathized with and understood the problems of the Inuit Indigenous students and wanted to be part of the solution.

Conclusion. Non-Indigenous educators in Nunavut must reflect on who they are as leaders and their purpose as educators. The non-Indigenous educational leaders need to be aware of Nunavut's residential school and colonial history (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), Understanding this history, educators need to approach leadership with

sensitivity and appreciate the ethical dimension of leading in Nunavut. This approach may require prioritizing relationship building and understanding Inuit Indigenous colleagues' and students' social and emotional needs. Non-Indigenous leaders need to go out of their way to understand and meet students' social-emotional needs and, occasionally, that of their colleagues. However, the understanding essential to support student needs is challenging without the support and encouragement of the Inuit Indigenous educators. This support and encouragement that the Inuit Indigenous educators provide needs support at the policy level and ongoing training for the Inuit Indigenous educators.

Policies and training are essential in improving the non-Indigenous leaders' understanding of leadership in Nunavut. Policies and procedures should be in place to encourage and provide a safe environment for inclusive and reflective dialogue between Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. Nunavut Education holds annual educator conferences and professional development opportunities. However, these conferences are generic, with little opportunity for critical dialogue between the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational leaders. These conferences could be a good opportunity and space to facilitate thoughtful exchange between Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational leaders about understanding Inuit Indigenous worldview and educational leadership in Nunavut. I believe more effort is needed in creating these spaces at all levels of leadership.

There also is needed collective inquiry into alternate forms of leadership, which aligns with the IQ principles. However, this inquiry needs to be led by the Inuit Indigenous educational leaders in collaboration with the community Elders and Knowledge Keepers, which again requires procedural and policy-level support and training for Inuit Indigenous educators to lead

such initiatives. In addition, the inquiry requires sufficient and appropriate supports so that Inuit Indigenous educators and leaders don't have to carry all of the weight at the expense of their own wellbeing.

I believe there is also a requirement to implement appropriate measures to ensure that IQ principles are applied to school operations. The operational expectations that IQ is Nunavut's core education principle must be emphasized during the hiring process. The expectation of incorporating IQ principles must be an ongoing part of the educator's accountability at every level. Following the IQ principles cannot be an educator's choice in schools but a requirement. In the current hierarchical system, the senior management has a role in modelling, supporting, and supervising the application of the Inuit Indigenous worldview in schools.

Colonialism in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Colonialism continues to present itself in various forms in Nunavut education. The policy decisions are taken at the administrative offices, such as the regional or department offices, with little input from communities, as suggested by ID (see Chapter 4, p. 119). At the school level, policies are implemented by predominantly non-Indigenous educators who may not fully understand or appreciate the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. Therefore, the lack of Inuit Indigenous representation in Nunavut education is detrimental to addressing colonialism. Though the non-Indigenous participants are aware of the continuing colonialism in the education system, the approach has an outsider undertone where they perceive themselves as guests trying to help the Inuit Indigenous. This assumption arises from a position of the belief that non-Indigenous educators have the power to help the Inuit Indigenous educators who need help in influencing change. This narrative only continues the colonialism in Nunavut instead of breaking it.

Conclusion. The colonial narrative will change only if the non-Indigenous educators immerse themselves in the Inuit Indigenous worldview and follow the Inuit Indigenous educators' lead, and there is an increased representation of Inuit Indigenous representation in educational leadership.

Inuit Indigenous Representation

Nunavut is short of Inuit Indigenous educational leaders, and non-Indigenous educators hold the majority of vice-principle and principal positions in schools. The responsibility of overseeing the execution of the Inuit Indigenous worldviews in the school falls on the few Inuit Indigenous educational leaders who also have operational duties. This would make the few Inuit Indigenous educational leaders with little support or provision to connect with other Inuit Indigenous educational leaders or educators feel isolated or overwhelmed. Nunavut needs more Inuit Indigenous educators in leadership roles.

Conclusion. Nunavut has teacher training educational programs for Inuit Indigenous educators. The program has been structured through the Inuit Indigenous worldviews as reviewed by Snow et al. (2021). However, according to Snow et al., some work must be accomplished to accommodate community needs, such as accessible, face-to-face programs in communities and online programs. In addition, English as the primary mode of instruction, university admission and course selection processes, financial constraints, and moving away from home could all be barriers for Inuit Indigenous people to successfully enrol in and complete the courses (Snow et al., 2021). There needs to be effort put into strategies to encourage Inuit Indigenous people to enrol and complete training with sensitivity to their circumstances. Incentives such as a stress-free process for enrolment, financial support and incentives, and accommodation would go a long way in encouraging training enrolment and completion.

Ensuring an increase in Inuit Indigenous enrolment and completion of educator training programs so they take on leadership roles is essential in facilitating decolonization in Nunavut.

Collaboration

Collaboration was addressed by all participants during the discussions. I wondered whether the reason for seeking collaboration had an effect on the colonization narrative. When the reason for seeking collaboration is limited to maintaining appearance, professional success, or monetary benefits, such collaboration does not support the Inuit Indigenous worldview of the collective good. Such collaboration also gives rise to an us-versus-them dialogue where the educators thought themselves on one side trying to make a difference and the community on the other. When collaboration is sought from the Inuit Indigenous educators for personal benefit, I think colonial narrative continues.

Conclusion. The systemic leaders and school-level leaders need to create spaces for reflective dialogue about the purpose and motivation of joining Nunavut education and whether they fit the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. This reflective dialogue would help reconciliation between the Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. Policies for screening the suitability of educators for Nunavut education is also a vital step in ensuring educators suit the needs and understand Nunavut education.

Cultural Revitalization

Cultural revitalization concerned most non-Indigenous educators (see Chapter 4, Finding 4). The fact that the residential school history has impacted the language and culture of Inuit Indigenous people requiring revitalization was understood by the non-Indigenous participants. They also appreciated the deep connection between culture and language and its importance to the identity of the Inuit Indigenous students. Their conversations were in agreement with the

Inuit Indigenous participants that engaging students in cultural and language activities was crucial. The non-Indigenous leaders genuinely believed in incorporating culture and language through IQ in Nunavut education. However, I found that they seldom used the terms in the IQ principles during our conversation when speaking of the Inuit Indigenous worldviews.

Conclusion. As told by the Inuit Indigenous participants, the Inuit Indigenous knowledge has an oral tradition. The Oral Tradition makes Inuktitut central to understanding and transmitting knowledge (see Chapter 2, Language and Education). Concepts lose their authentic meaning in translation (see Chapter 2, Language and Education). I believe it is essential that leaders' perceptions of their leadership are extended to incorporating Inuktitut (words such as "Inuuqatuguutsuarniq") into the language of leading. Participation and organizing cultural activities in schools by non-Indigenous participants is incomplete if the students do not see educators valuing the language connected with it.

Recommendations

With the insights gained through exploring non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools I hoped to support the understanding of ways to improve leadership in Nunavut schools. Based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions, I offer three significant recommendations, in addition to the suggestions I have included within the "Conclusions" above, for individual non-Indigenous educational leaders, system leaders, and Inuit Indigenous educational leaders.

Creating Spaces for Reflection and Connection

Based on the findings, non-Indigenous educators in Nunavut need to engage in self-reflection and dialogue with Inuit Indigenous educational leaders to be grounded in who they are as leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools. As stated by Burm and Burleigh (2022), this dialogue

could open up possibilities for reimagining how non-Indigenous educators can work together with Indigenous Peoples and become more effective partners.

Educational leadership in Nunavut can be dynamic, leaving little time or space for reflection and building relationships. For self-reflection, leaders need the time and space to engage with their learning and experiences. Opportunities are available through educational leadership conferences to informally exchange experiences with other educational leaders. However, there is a need for a conscious effort by educational leaders in schools, system-level leaders, and Inuit Indigenous educational leaders to create the space and time for leaders to engage in reflection through collaborative dialogue and exchange of experiences. This space must be created in schools, with operational calendars, technological support, and financial incentives. It is also crucial that the Inuit Indigenous educational leaders actively engage and lead these spaces to provide the necessary guidance to the educational leaders. These safe spaces should be grounded in IQ principles where the educators could better understand their leadership in the K to 12 Nunavut education through the lens of the Inuit Indigenous worldviews.

Preparing Leaders for Nunavut Education and Ongoing Support

Many non-Indigenous educators enter Nunavut education without knowledge of the Inuit Indigenous worldviews or understanding of the Nunavut communities. There are documents available on the Nunavut Department of Education website that provide information on Nunavut's education and communities. However, reviewing these is the educator's choice, and few systems are in place to ensure compliance. Nunavut education provides such opportunities to know Inuit Indigenous worldviews; however, they are not mandatory for all educators but only for those taking on an administrative role. A mandatory preparatory process for all educators before they commence their positions that could lead to certification to understand Nunavut's

education and worldviews would be a positive action for Nunavut's education system. Such practice would allow new educators to understand the history, IQ principles, and culture. Such exposure would also allow them to situate themselves in the Nunavut educational context and reflect on their role as educational leaders in collaborating with Inuit Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to make a difference in the Nunavut education system sensitively and respectfully.

Alternative Education Systems

The Nunavut education is hierarchical, with little in common with the Inuit Indigenous worldviews. Better integration of education systems with the communities, approaches that allow for decision-making at the community level, and leadership that is culturally responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community require inquiry in Nunavut (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2016). The DEA listens to the needs of the parents, Elders, and community members in supporting educational programs and operational requirements in Nunavut. However, the participants seldom mentioned the DEA in their understanding of educational leadership in Nunavut. The lack of reference compels me to believe that the DEA may not be living the role it is set up for. The DEA needs to receive support to have a stronger role in Nunavut education and become a core structural part of it. The interactions of the DEA with community members could lead to alternative educational systems that originate from community needs and are culturally relevant. The alternative to the Eurocentric and hierarchical education must develop from the experiences and views of the Inuit Indigenous educational leaders and Elders to ensure long-term sustainability and ownership.

Recommendations for Further Research

In exploring non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership, I hope my research will provide insight into aspects of leadership that support the improvement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Finally, reflecting on the study's findings, I suggest areas and aspects for further research that deepen understanding as follows:

- Include the female Inuit Indigenous leaders in the study.
- Include leaders who create policies and legislation.
- Expand the study to other territories and provinces.
- Explore how non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership as agents of decolonization.
- Expand the study to post-secondary educational institutions in Northern Canada.

I believe a focus discussion with Inuit Indigenous and non-Inuit Indigenous leaders in all the areas listed above would enhance the data for the study. Participatory Action Research and Narrative Inquiry could be other research methodologies that could be used to guide this study.

Researcher's Final Reflection

This study has been a journey for me in understanding my educational leadership. There were a few surprises about my authenticity as a leader and the system I work within, which I share here. As I reflect on the journey, I hope that the participants have been able to reflect on their leadership in Nunavut in the process.

My journey about how I perceive myself as a leader began during my school years when I thought the best way to navigate systems and feel included was to blend in. Through my education as a student and educator, I felt like an outsider, even though I blended well into the general population. I have always wondered if the people I work with would be as open and honest if my ethnicity were seen. I have admired visible leaders, like my Inuit Indigenous and

visible minority colleagues. They are leaders who dare to be authentic in their leadership, which I have been unable to achieve. I have just begun to understand how deeply colonial knowledge systems influence the perception of my leadership. I need to commence my journey of decolonial thought.

The discrepancy between the hierarchical education structure and the Inuit Indigenous worldviews was a revelation I did not expect but was not surprised to learn. Most of the participants seem to accept this disparity and work with it. I think an alternate educational structure formed from the Inuit Indigenous worldviews needs to be set in place to undo the colonial legacy. Such a system will be in the culture and language of the Inuit Indigenous people, making it meaningful to them to take on leadership roles and work toward positive change. The non-Indigenous leaders need to view the facilitation of this goal as the centre of understanding their role in Nunavut. Leading through the Inuit Indigenous worldviews would mean entering the Nunavut education system with the collective good of the Inuit Indigenous community in mind.

I also believe that if leaders do not incorporate the Inuit Indigenous language into their operational communication, the work toward cultural revitalization and culturally relevant education is ineffective. There is a need for an awareness that incorporating the Inuit Indigenous worldviews in everyday language is essential in the path toward cultural and language revitalization, which the non-Indigenous participants agreed was linked to the identity of the students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Introductory Call to Participants



WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Graduate Division of Educational Research

2500 University Drive NW

Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4

ucalgary.ca

Hello Xx. Xxxx,

This is Shamim. How are you doing?

Response from participant

As you may be aware, I am enrolled in doctoral studies in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary.

Response from participant

My dissertation is about leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Response from participant

You have been part of Nunavut education. You have experience working as an educational leader in Nunavut education. I was hoping you would be interested in participating in my study. All information and identity from the study will be confidential. "This study has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary, REB20-2084." Primary Investigator: Dr. Marlon Simmons, Associate Professor, Adult Education Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Email-simmonsm@ucalgary.ca T- 403-220-2875

Response from the participant: If the participant accepts.

Great, I would like to assure you that your identity will remain confidential. I will send you the research details and the formal invitation in an email in a day or two. Please go through it and email it back to me at shamimara.sharif@ucalgary.ca The timeline for response is in the invitation.

Response from participant: If the participant hesitates.

Would you like to take some time to think about it? I will call you back in a day or two, or you can let me know by email.

Response from participant: If the participant declines.

Thank you for your time XXX. Would you know of leaders like yourself who I can approach?

Shamim

Appendix B: Study Description



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Study Description

Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perceptions of Their Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Background and Rationale

Non-Indigenous educational leaders play a significant role in supporting educators in Northern Canadian kindergarten to grade 12 education institutions. The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Understanding the context that includes the social and historical context of K to 12 Nunavut schools, perceptions the non-Indigenous educational leaders bring to the system, and understanding the relationship between the two is vital for non-Indigenous educational leaders in K to 12 Nunavut schools. Non-Indigenous educational leaders' understanding of the context impacts their perceptions of educational leadership. Their perceptions affect leadership processes in Nunavut schools. The study seeks to understand the perceptions of non-Indigenous educational leaders such as high school educators, principals, and senior administrators of their leadership and how this perception influences leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

The non-Indigenous educational leaders struggle with the understanding of leadership in the K to 12 Nunavut schools. This struggle to understand could be one of the reasons for the reported lower rates of high school certification among Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people. There is little literature on the influence of non-Indigenous leader's perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Research Questions

- How do non-Indigenous leaders perceive their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?
- How do the beliefs and values of non-Indigenous leaders inform their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

Research Design

This study will be conducted through an exploratory case study. This methodology will enable me to explore in depth and intimately the bounded phenomenon through participants' perceptions, experiences, and stories. This study is driven by the desire to understand how participants experience and make sense of their leadership and the perceptions that affect leadership in the K to 12 Nunavut schools through close interactions with the participants in their real-world context. The social constructionism approach will enable an all-inclusive and flexible process of collecting data through different methods, which will then be interpreted to construct new knowledge and capture a rich and deep understanding of the central phenomenon. Hopefully, the rich descriptive report of the study will result in a heuristic experience that casts new light on leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools and the perceptions that enhance it.

Methods

A combination of data collection methods will result in a rich description of participants' experiences, actions or practices, and perceptions in relation to their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Data will be collected through multiple methods:

1. Semi-structured individual *Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing* based interviews with eight non-Indigenous and two Inuit Indigenous educational leaders;
2. Reflective journal and
3. Document review.

On acceptance of the interview, the participants could voluntarily share any personal documents such as year plans, educational programs plan, or school Inuit Indigenous Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) plans, online blogs, or websites that they think would help understand the research topic. Participants could email these documents to shamimara.sharif@ucalgary.ca a week before the interview.

Ethics Approval

Note : "This study has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary, REB20-2084."

Primary Investigator: Dr. Marlon Simmons, Associate Professor, Adult Education Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Email-simmonsm@ucalgary.ca T- 403-220-2875

Appendix C: Letter of Invitation



WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Graduate Division of Educational Research

2500 University Drive NW

Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4

ucalgary.ca

Date

Xxxx

Re: Non-Indigenous Educational leaders' Perceptions of their Leadership in Nunavut's K to 12 schools.

Dear Mx. Xxx:

I am writing to you today to request your participation in a university research project on the topic of non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. I am conducting this project as part of the dissertation requirements for completion of an Ed.D. Degree in the Department of Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary.

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

My rationale for examining this topic was the need to understand how non-Indigenous educational leaders' perception of their leadership impacts educational leadership in Nunavut's K to 12 schools. Non-Indigenous educational leaders' understanding of the context has an impact on their perceptions of educational leadership. Their perceptions are vital to leadership processes that impact high school graduation. Understanding non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions and positionality could provide clues about ways to improve leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. There was also insufficient literature on non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. In addition, I hope that the insights gained through this could help non-Indigenous educational leaders to understand, create and implement ways to improve leadership in Nunavut schools.

For this investigation, I am seeking eight non-Indigenous educational leaders and two Inuit Indigenous leaders who have been part of K to 12 Nunavut schools in the past. Specifically, I would like to have the opportunity to engage you in an individual interview. There will be one interview, with the possibility of a short follow-up interview should further

information or clarification be required. The discussion will be conducted over *Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing*. I will be taking notes and record the interaction. We would meet for approximately 60 to 90 minutes to discuss your perception of leadership and its influence on your leadership. Once you have accepted the invitation, I will email you detailed information about the project, and we can then set up an interview time convenient for you.

This study has received approval through the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board of the University of Calgary. You are under no obligation to participate and, if you do consent to participate, you may decide not to continue your involvement or to refuse to answer any question without consequence. If you choose to withdraw your participation after the interview, any data collected from you will be removed from the study before July 25th, 2021. Additionally, once interviews have been completed and transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review the interview transcripts and make additions, corrections, or deletions to the record of the things you have said if you choose. Further, at any point, you are free to ask questions about the research and your involvement with it. Most importantly, at no time will you be judged, and you will at no time be at risk of harm.

Additionally, the data gathered in this study will be kept in strict confidence and will be stored securely. I will be the person to have access to the data. I will retain the interview notes and transcripts in password-protected files and folders for five years, after which time they will be deleted in a manner that safeguards privacy and confidentiality. A final copy of the dissertation can be made available to you if requested.

Attached is the participant consent form for the interview. By completing this form, you would be consenting to participate in the study and allow me to use the information as explained above. Please complete the form and email it to me by June 20th, 2021 if you would like to continue participating in this research.

Feel free to contact me at (587) 435-9372 or email me at shamimara.sharif@ucalgary.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for considering this request. I am very excited about the possibility of learning more about your experience. Thank you in advance for your interest, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Note : "This study has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary, REB20-2084."

Primary Investigator: Dr. Marlon Simmons, Associate Professor, Adult Education Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Email-simmons@ucalgary.ca T- 403-220-2875

Sincerely,

shamim

Shamimara Sharif,

shamimara.sharif@ucalgary.ca

T- 5874359372

Appendix D: Individual Interview Protocol



WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Graduate Division of Educational Research

2500 University Drive NW

Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4

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Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perceptions of Their Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools

Participant: _____

Date of Interview: _____ Location: _____

Start time: _____ End time: _____ Researcher: _____

Research Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to explore non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the improvement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. I will seek a deep understanding of non-Indigenous educational leadership and the influence of leaders' perceptions to improve leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools. I anticipate that an understanding of the educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership will provide an insight into aspects of leadership that support the enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

Individual Interview Procedures

The accompanying discussion prompts guide our scheduled one-and-a-half-hour *Zoom Web-Based Video Conferencing (Zoom)* recorded conversation. At any point during the interview, you may ask to stop the recording. I will be taking notes during the interview, and you may request a copy of these notes after the interview. The Zoom recording will be available to you for review. I will email the transcript of the recording from this interview as soon as it becomes available so that you could review it and make corrections, additions, or deletions to your parts within the transcript. I request that you review the transcript and email ssharif@ucalgary.ca with any changes within 14 days of receiving the information.

Please feel free to share documents that may be helpful in this inquiry, for example, Educational Program Plans, IQ program plan, etc.

This study has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary, REB20-2084."

Primary Investigator: Dr. Marlon Simmons, Associate Professor, Adult Education Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Email-simmons@ucalgary.ca T- 403-220-2875

Informed Consent

Before we begin the formal interview, I want to make sure that you have read the accompanying participant consent form that I emailed to you upon agreeing to participate in this study. It is important to me that you clearly understand what your participation in the study involves, and the steps that I will take to protect your anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality. Please feel free to email me any questions about the informed consent process, or about your participation. Please sign the form and email it back to me at ssharif@ucalgary.ca

Signed and Received _____

[Begin audio recording.]

Non-Indigenous Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools

How would you describe leadership in your experience as an educator K to 12 Nunavut schools ?

What beliefs and values do you think have shaped non-Indigenous leaders' understanding of what it means to be a Nunavut educational leader?

What is your perspective on being non-Indigenous educational leader in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

What distinguishes leadership experience in K to 12 Nunavut schools?

[Stop audio recording.]

Next Steps:

As soon as the transcript is ready, I will email you a copy. If you would, please take a few minutes when you receive the transcript to read it through and either let me know that it looks accurate or mark any required changes on it and return it to me by email

(shamimara.sharif@ucalgary.ca). You are welcome to forward any additional information that you would like to include if you think of details or information as you read the transcript.

I will also read through the transcript and reflect upon all that you have shared during our discussion today. As I continue to collect more data for the study, it may be necessary to contact you to see if you would be willing to answer just a few more questions. Would that be okay? [Pause to note participant's willingness to participate in a secondary interview.]

Closing

Once again, thank you very much for spending time with me today and openly engaging in this discussion. Your perceptions and insights are very helpful, and I appreciate you sharing with me. Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions about today's session or about the research itself. I will be happy to answer them for you.

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form – Individual Interview**WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Graduate Division of Educational Research

2500 University Drive NW

Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4

ucalgary.ca

Name of Researcher: Shamimara Sharif
Faculty of Graduate Studies, Education
5874359372, ssharif@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor/

Primary Investigator: Dr. Marlon Simmons, Associate Professor, Adult Education
Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, [Email-
simmonsm@ucalgary.ca](mailto:simmonsm@ucalgary.ca) T- 403-220-2875

Title of Project: Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perceptions of Their Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut
Schools

Sponsor:

(If applicable, identify the project funding source here)

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This study has been approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary, REB20-2084.

Participation is completely voluntary and confidential.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to learn more about non-Indigenous educational leaders' perceptions of their leadership to gain insight into the potential enhancement of leadership in K to 12 Nunavut schools.

The researcher, Shamimara Sharif, is specifically interested in discussing leaders' perceptions, of their and their impact on leadership in Northern Canadian educational institution.

What Will I Be Asked to Do?

The researcher would like to engage you in one individual interview, which will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes to complete. There is the possibility of a short follow-up interview should further information or clarification be required. Participation in the follow-up interview is completely voluntary. Our discussion will focus on non-Indigenous leaders' perceptions of their leadership that enhances leadership in Northern education institutions.

The researcher requests that you voluntarily share any personal documents such as year plans, educational programs plan, or school Inuit Indigenous Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) plans that you think would be of support to this study. There is no obligation that you share these documents.

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you may, without consequence, refuse to respond to any prompt or question or withdraw from the study at any point before the analysis of the data as a whole begins. If you decide to withdraw your participation after the interview and before the final data analysis begins, any data collected from you will be withdrawn from the study.

You are free to ask questions about the research and your involvement with this study at any point. Most importantly, at no time will you be judged or evaluated, at risk of harm, or asked to do anything that is beyond the scope of your role as a non-Indigenous or Indigenous educational leader. Your privacy and confidentiality, including your work location and personal identity, will

be strictly maintained during this study and upon its completion. You may assume a pseudonym if you wish to further protect your privacy and confidentiality.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

The researcher, Shamimara Sharif, will be taking notes and recording the interview on Zoom or a digital recorder. The researcher will prepare written transcripts of each interview. Only the researcher will have access to the interview recording and the corresponding transcript. The information you provide in the interview will be kept anonymous. Once interviews have been completed and transcribed, you will have the opportunity to review the written transcripts and, if you choose, make additions, corrections, or deletions to the written record of your contributions. The transcripts will never be shared publicly or with anyone. Should you agree to participate, all personal information collected will be for use only by the researcher.

There are several options for you to consider if you choose to take part in this study. You can choose all, some, or none of the options. Please review each of these options and select Yes or No:

I grant permission to be audiotaped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my pseudonym name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

There is no anticipated harm or predictable risks associated with participating in this research project. This study is not considered “high-risk”. At no time will you be judged, at risk of harm,

or asked to do anything that is beyond the scope of this study. This study does not offer direct benefits to participants.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

All data gathered in this study, including the information you provide, will be kept anonymous and in strict confidence. Only the researcher, Shamimara Sharif, will have access to the interview notes and the recordings. All data will be stored securely, to which only the researcher will have access. The researcher will retain the interview notes and transcripts in password-protected files and folders or locked in a secure cabinet for five years, after which time they will be destroyed in a manner that safeguards your privacy and confidentiality.

Once data collection is complete, it will undergo a thorough analysis before being presented in the research dissertation. The written discussion will include the researcher's findings, personal reflections, and interpretations as they relate to the findings, comparisons to the literature reviewed before and during the collection of data, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future study. A final copy of the dissertation can be made available to you upon request.

Please choose from the options listed.

"Would you like to receive a summary of the study's results?"

Yes: ___ No: ___

If yes, please provide your contact information (e-mail address, or phone number)"

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Shamimara Sharif
Faculty of Graduate Studies, Werklund School of Education, University of
Calgary
Phone: 5874359372
Email: shamimara.sharif@ucalgary.ca

Or

Dr. Marlon Simmons,
Associate Professor, Adult Education Werklund School of Education,
University of Calgary, Email-simmonsm@ucalgary.ca T- 403-220-2875

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, the University of Calgary at 403.220.6289 or 403.220.8640; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix F: Individual Interview Schedule**WERKLUND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Graduate Division of Educational Research

2500 University Drive NW

Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4

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Non-Indigenous Leaders' Perceptions of Their Leadership in K to 12 Nunavut Schools**Interview Questions**

1. Could you tell me about yourself, your education and how you came to be an educator in Nunavut.
2. In your experience what is the focus of your leadership and what is the motivation for the focus?
3. How would you describe leadership in your experience as an educator in Nunavut schools?
4. What do you think is the importance of culture and language in educational leadership?
5. What beliefs and values do you think have shaped non-Indigenous leaders' understanding of what it means to be an educational leader?
6. What is your perspective on being a non-Indigenous educational leader in Nunavut schools?
7. What distinguishes leadership experience in Nunavut schools?
8. How has your work enhanced educational leadership in Nunavut schools?
9. How do you think non-Indigenous leaders could enhance educational leadership in Nunavut schools.