

*Kai Christian Bormann, Understanding Ethical Leadership: An Integrative Model of its Antecedents, Correlates, Contingencies, and Outcomes*

In the past two decades, regular reports about corporate greed, irresponsible managerial behavior, or social recklessness increasingly capture researchers' as well as practitioners' interest. This trend facilitated an understanding that economic activities may not be evaluated in terms of sheer rational effectiveness, solely, but also in terms of their ethical and normative appropriateness. This development has also taken its toll on leadership literature. Here, the construct of ethical leadership is at the cutting edge of contemporary research. It focuses on the normatively appropriate conduct of leaders, referring to attributes such as dependability, honesty, and integrity, and the promotion of that same behavior towards followers through reinforcement and visible actions. Although academic interest in studying ethical leadership is growing there are still ways to go, especially with regards to empirical research, in order to understand its nature, comprehensively. The aim of this dissertation is to systematically deepen our understanding of ethical leadership by developing and validating an integrative model covering its antecedents, effects, facets, mediating mechanisms, and contingencies in course of three studies. The first study focuses exclusively on the impact of ethical leadership. The latter is modeled through indicators for employee occupational efficacy and inefficacy. To carve out a more detailed perspective on the exact processes the exhibition of ethical leadership implies, the leadership style is modeled multifaceted and trust and justice are postulated as mediating variables. The sample comprised 470 participants from different organizations. Results indicated that ethical leadership is related to the different impact criteria. Also, trust and justice were partly confirmed as full mediators for the relationship between ethical leadership and the outcome criteria. The second study also examines the impact of ethical leadership. More precisely, subjective as well as objective measures are applied. Next to ethical leadership impact, the second study also deals with leader personality traits as important antecedents of ethical leadership. Furthermore, this study addresses the leadership context. The posited relational model is tested for two data samples, separately. The first sample captures all departments from an industrial company (1263 employees in 173 teams) and addressed the relation between leader traits, ethical leadership, and employee job satisfaction. The second sample covered sales forces only (107 employees in 24 teams), an organizational

department with rather unique contextual features. In difference to the first sample sales performance data were used as an objective measure of leadership impact. Results indicated a distinctive positive relation between leader personality and ethical leadership. Additionally, ethical leadership was shown to exhibit substantial effects on both organizational outcome criteria. The differences in the relational patterns between both data sample, however, give preliminary insights on contextual affection related to ethical leadership. The third study gauges the usefulness of ethical leadership impact in a non-traditional setting: professional basketball. This setting allows for significant contribution to existing research as it enables exceptional coverage of occupational, i.e. sportive performance on both the team and the individual level. For instance, by using advanced sport economic metrics, objective development of player performance can be modeled objectively and over time. On top, the study also investigates the effects of transformational and laissez-faire leadership, thus, giving a chance to oppose ethical leadership to such leadership constructs. The sample encompassed data on coaches ( $N = 22$ ) and their respective players ( $N = 200$ ). Across levels, results did not reveal any significant influences from coaches' ethical leadership on the performance measures. Conversely, facets of transformational leadership were shown to be positively related to both individual and team level performance. Implications for leadership research and practice are discussed.