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A Meta-analytic Review of Ethical Leadership Outcomes and Moderators

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Abstract A growing body of research suggests that follower perceptions of ethical leadership are associated with beneficial follower outcomes. However, some empirical researchers have found contradictory results. In this study, we use social learning and social exchange theories to test the relationship between ethical leadership and follower work outcomes. Our results suggest that ethical leadership is related positively to numerous follower outcomes such as perceptions of leader interactional fairness and follower ethical behavior. Furthermore, we explore how ethical leadership relates to and is different from other leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership. Results suggest that ethical leadership is positively associated with transformational leadership and the contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership. With respect to the moderators, our results show mixed evidence for publication bias. Finally, geographical locations of study samples moderated some of the relationships between ethical leadership and follower outcomes, and employee samples from public sector organizations showed stronger mean corrected correlations for ethical leadership–follower outcome relationships.

Keywords Ethical leadership · Follower work outcomes · Social exchange · Social learning · Transformational leadership · Transactional leadership

Over the last decade, corporate scandals such as Enron, WorldCom, Nortel, AIG, and Lehman Brothers have attracted a great deal of attention. The subprime mortgage crisis of 2008 brought corporate greed and excess to the forefront and highlighted the issue of ethics in leadership. For decades, organizational researchers have defined ethical leadership in normative terms (Ciulla 1998). Most of this research focuses on moral principles and arguments leaders "should" use to constitute and shape their leadership styles and ethical decision-making (Brown 2007). In contrast, research that defines ethical leadership in descriptive terms or what "is" ethical leadership has only recently started to emerge (Brown and Treviño 2006). According to this research, ethical leaders are fair, honest, and principled individuals that use various forms of rewards, punishments, and communication mechanisms to influence their followers' ethical behavior (Brown et al. 2005). Within this literature, scholars have generally used social learning theory (Bandura 1977) and social exchange theory (Blau 1964) to explain the beneficial effects of follower perceptions of ethical leadership (referred to as ethical leadership from this point forward) on follower work outcomes. Examples include higher levels of job satisfaction (Avey et al. 2012), trust in leadership (Brown et al. 2005), and lower levels of counterproductive work behaviors (Den Hartog and Belschak 2012).

In this study, we contribute to the literature on ethical leadership in at least two ways. First, we use social learning (Bandura 1977) and social exchange theories (Blau 1964) to conduct a meta-analysis of ethical leadership and its

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consequences. Specifically, we assess the relationship of ethical leadership to follower work outcomes. Although many studies suggest that ethical leadership has a positive impact on follower work outcomes, these studies also show that the strength of this relationship varies. For example, Kalshoven and Boon (2012) found an insignificant relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) ($r = 0.02$), whereas Sharif and Scandura (Sharif and Scandura 2013) found a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.47$). Similarly, Strobel et al. (2010) found an insignificant relationship ($r = 0.04$) between ethical leadership and job stress, whereas Harvey et al. (2013) found a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.63$). A primary purpose of this paper is thus to reassess the empirical literature on ethical leadership and examine the inconsistencies in it.

Second, we extend our understanding of the relationship between ethical leadership and transformational and transactional leadership styles. Brown et al. (2005) proposed that their conceptualization of ethical leadership partially overlaps with two dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence and individualized consideration (Brown et al. 2005). Both ethical leaders and idealized influence leaders serve as role models that demonstrate and communicate their ethical values and behaviors to their followers. Ethical leadership also overlaps with the individualized consideration dimension of transformational leadership. Both ethical leaders and individualized consideration leaders act as mentors to their followers and are concerned about their growth and developmental needs (Brown and Treviño 2006). While ethical leadership and transformational leadership concepts overlap partially, they also differ in at least two ways (Brown et al. 2005). First, in addition to transformational behaviors, ethical leaders use transactional-type leader behaviors such as communicating ethical standards, and using rewards and punishments to encourage ethical behavior (Brown and Treviño 2006). Second, ethical leadership focuses solely and explicitly on ethical leadership on ethics and ethically driven behavior. In contrast, transformational leadership focuses on ethics in an ancillary manner where ethics is just one aspect of leadership style. Empirical studies on the distinction of ethical leadership from transactional and transformational leadership, however, have provided inconclusive results. For example, Riggio et al. (2010) found that ethical leadership correlated highly with consideration ($r = 0.80$) and inspirational motivation ($r = 0.81$). Without a comprehensive empirical review of how ethical leadership relates to transformational and transactional leadership, it is difficult to ascertain their empirical and theoretical distinctiveness. An important contribution of our meta-analytic review is therefore to determine the strength of the association between these leadership styles and provide some insights on their proposed uniqueness.

Finally, we examine a set of potential moderators of the outcomes of ethical leadership. Understanding the influence of potential moderators can contribute greatly to the theory and practice of ethical leadership and explain the inconsistent findings that scholars observed in previous studies. In the current study, we investigate the moderating effects of publication status, geographic location, and organizational sector of the study sample. Together, these three contributions will help guide future theoretical and empirical work on ethical leadership.

We begin with a discussion of the theoretical background of ethical leadership and propose study hypotheses. We also propose hypotheses concerning the relationship between ethical leadership, transactional, and transformational leadership styles. We then describe our meta-analytic procedures and results. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of our results, limitations, and possible suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Ethical Leadership

Researchers have argued that the essence of effective leadership is ethical behavior (Brown and Treviño 2006; Burns 1978). Ethical behavior is a key component in a number of leadership theories, such as transformational leadership (Bass 1985; Burns 1978), authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner 2005), servant leadership (Greenleaf 1977), and spiritual leadership (Fry 2003). Transformational leadership, for instance, emphasizes ethical role modeling (Avolio et al. 1999), authentic leadership emphasizes principled decision-making (Brown and Treviño 2006), and spiritual leadership emphasizes leader integrity and ethical treatment of others (Reave 2005). While these theories highlight the importance of ethics for effective leadership, none of them fully explains the influence of leaders' ethical behavior on follower ethical behavior (Brown and Treviño 2006).

To understand ethical leadership and address this gap, Brown and Treviño (2006) used two theoretical frameworks (Brown and Treviño 2006): social learning theory (Bandura 1977) and social exchange theory (Blau 1964). Social learning theory focuses on the antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership, and suggests that individuals learn the norms of appropriate conduct in two ways; through their own experience, and by observing others (Bandura 1986). In general, to learn such norms, individuals pay attention to and emulate credible and attractive role models (Brown and Treviño 2006). Ethical

leaders become attractive and credible role models when they demonstrate integrity and set high ethical standards for themselves as well as others (Brown et al. 2005). Employees are thus more likely to emulate and internalize the value driven behaviors of their role modeling ethical leaders (Brown and Treviño 2006). Role modeling influences ethical behavior through motivational and informational means (Bandura 1977). Leaders as role models motivate ethical behavior by demonstrating the type of actions they want to promote and reward. In addition, leaders also serve as an informational guide for acceptable behaviors. Scholars also suggest that ethical leadership shapes follower behaviors through social exchange processes (Blau 1964; Brown et al. 2005). Social exchange theory proposes that the norms of reciprocity or perceived obligation to return favors undergird many social relationships (Blau 1964; Gouldner 1960). According to social exchange theory, when followers perceive a leader as caring and concerned for their well-being, they feel obliged to reciprocate that leader's support. Building on these ideas, Brown and colleagues (2005, 2006) suggested that ethical leaders engender feelings of trust and fairness in their followers, and create an organizational environment where followers are more likely to reciprocate with beneficial organizational behavior.

Integrating both social learning and social exchange insights to the concept of ethical leadership, Brown et al. (2005) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al. 2005, p. 120). This definition highlights two key components of ethical leadership. First, ethical leaders are "moral persons," as role models they demonstrate ethical behavior. Second, ethical leaders are "moral managers"; they actively promote ethical behavior. They explicitly communicate their ethical standards and hold followers accountable for ethical conduct. Within this framework, ethical leaders shape followers' work-related outcomes in two ways: directly through role modeling and indirectly through social exchange.

The Ethical Leadership Scale

To examine empirically the impact of ethical leadership on follower work outcomes, Brown et al. (2005) developed the ten item Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS). The ELS is a unidimensional measure that assesses different types of ethical leader behaviors such as principled and fair decision-making, open two-way communication with followers, ethical role modeling, and disciplining unethical behavior. Although there are other measures of ethical leadership (Kalshoven et al. 2011; Resick et al. 2006; Yukl et al. 2013), Brown et al. (2005), ELS remains one of the most widely used measures of ethical leadership.

The field of ethical leadership has benefited significantly from Brown and Treviño's (2006) conceptual model of ethical leadership. In Brown and Treviño's (2006) model, ethical leadership has two main categories of antecedents: situational influences (e.g., role modeling and ethical context) and individual characteristics (e.g., leader personality characteristics). Brown and Treviño (2006) posit that ethical leadership gives rise to various consequences or functional outcomes such as follower ethical decision-making, pro-social behavior, and follower satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. Finally, Brown and Treviño's (2006) model proposes several factors (e.g., ethical context, moral intensity, self-monitoring, need for power, inhibition, moral reasoning, and moral utilization) that moderate the effect of situational influences and individual characteristics on ethical leadership. In the current study, we examine the most frequently studied consequences of ethical leadership in the literature.

Follower Consequences of ELS

Perceptions of Ethical Context

Ethical context refers to the prevailing perceptions of norms, procedures, and ethical policies within an organization. Researchers have used two related frameworks to represent ethical context in organizations: ethical climate (Victor and Cullen 1987, 1988) and ethical culture (Treviño 1990; Treviño et al. 1998). Ethical climate represents beliefs about "what constitutes right behavior" in an organization, and thus influences ethical decision-making and ethical conduct (Martin and Cullen 2006, p. 177). Ethical culture represents a subset of an organization's culture, and includes the formal and informal systems that influence an individual's ethical conduct (Treviño and Weaver 2003). We propose that perceptions of ethical leadership positively influence perceptions of ethical context. Social learning theory suggests that followers perceive organizational leaders as role models of ethical behavior by virtue of their ascribed role and authority to reward and punish acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Brown and Treviño 2006). To set the "tone at the top," ethical leaders implement and enforce ethical policies and procedures, communicate ethical expectations, and signal to all employees the standards for conducting the company's affairs (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Treviño 1990). Specifically, ethical leaders shape an organization's ethical climate by formulating policies and procedures that reinforce ethical behavior and discourage unethical behavior (Mayer et al. 2010; Sims and Brinkman 2003). As a result, employees

are more likely to perceive an ethical organizational environment.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) Ethical leadership positively influences perceptions of ethical context.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to perform a specific task or behavior successfully (Bandura 1977). Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn directly from their own experience and indirectly from the experiences of others (Bandura 1977). Bandura (1977) suggested that social relationships play an important role in enhancing a person's self-efficacy, and that there are four sources that influence self-efficacy: observational learning, verbal persuasion, enactive mastery, and psychological or physiological arousal. Ethical leaders influence all of these four sources to enhance followers' perception of self-efficacy. Ethical leaders facilitate observational learning and engage in verbal persuasion. They act as role models of ethical behavior, understand their followers' developmental needs, and encourage them to accept positions where they can realize their full potential (Zhu et al. 2004). Ethical leaders also facilitate enactive mastery; they delegate responsibilities and encourage followers to think strategically about how their decisions and tasks contribute to the unit work goals (De Hoogh and Den Hartog 2008). Finally, ethical leaders show that they appreciate and support their followers' efforts to contribute to organizational mission and goals. Ethical leaders' support and reassurance helps promote psychological and physiological arousal, and as a result, followers are more likely to believe that they are mentally and/or physically fit to accomplish their tasks.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) Ethical leadership positively influences follower perceptions of self-efficacy.

Ethical Behavior

Brown et al. (2005) used social learning theory (Bandura 1977), specifically, modeling, and vicarious learning processes to explain how ethical leaders influence follower ethical behavior. In work contexts, employees learn about ethical behaviors in two ways: directly by emulating their role models and vicariously through the experiences of other employees (Brown et al. 2005; Trevino et al. 2000). Ethical leaders are attractive role models as they are principled individuals who engage in normatively appropriate conduct, communicate the importance of ethical standards, and use rewards and punishments to reinforce ethical behavior (Treviño et al. 2003). Moreover, ethical leaders make ethics an explicit component of their practice and set expectations for followers to engage in ethical behaviors (Brown and Treviño 2006). Thus, ethical leaders influence positively follower ethical behavior in at least two different ways: they serve as role models and/or use rewards and punishments to reinforce ethical behavior.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) Ethical leadership positively influences follower ethical behavior.

Work-Related Outcomes

Several scholars have used social exchange theory to understand the relationship between ethical leadership and follower work outcomes (Brown and Treviño 2006; Kalshoven et al. 2011; Mayer et al. 2012). These scholars suggest that social exchange theory and its associated norms of reciprocity and trust may explain social interactions and exchanges at work (Blau 1964). According to this theory, exchanges at work develop as streams of transactions between two parties where one party feels a sense of obligation to reciprocate positive or negative actions of the other party (Blau 1964; Gouldner 1960). Thus, the quality of social exchange between the two parties motivates them to engage in beneficial or counterproductive behaviors directed at each other. In other words, when employees receive support, trust, and other tangible and intangible benefits from their organization or other individuals at work, they feel obliged to reciprocate such benefits (Gouldner 1960). We propose that ethical leadership will predict beneficial outcomes such as follower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, OCBs, job performance, job engagement, and organizational identification (Brown and Treviño 2006; Den Hartog and Belschak 2012; Walumbwa et al. 2011). Ethical leaders enjoy a high-quality, exchange-oriented relationship with their followers and engage in behaviors that are beneficial for their followers (Brown and Treviño 2006). When employees benefit from their leader's behavior, they feel obliged to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors that are valued by their leader and the organization that the leader represents (Foa and Foa 1980; Gouldner 1960). Such high-quality exchange relationships are due to ethical leaders' honesty, transparency, and two-way communication strategies that engender high levels of trust in followers, which, in turn, cause followers to reciprocate in mutually beneficial ways (Brown et al. 2005). Moreover, followers perceive ethical leaders as role models of ethical behaviors and emulate their ethical standards and positive actions (Brown and Treviño 2006). Conversely, when leaders behave ethically, communicate the importance of ethics, and treat their followers fairly, employees are less likely to turnover and engage in interpersonal conflict and other counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs).

Hypothesis 4 (H4) Ethical leadership positively influences follower (a) job satisfaction, (b) organizational commitment, (c) affective commitment, (d) normative commitment, (e) OCBs, (f) OCB-I, (g) job performance, (h) job engagement, and (i) organizational identification.

Hypothesis 5 (H5) Follower perceptions of ethical leadership negatively influence follower (a) turnover intentions, (b) CWBs (self-rated), (c) CWBs (leader-rated), and (d) relationship conflict.

Effort

Scholars have used both social learning and social exchange theory to explain the positive relationship between ethical leadership and follower work effort (Kacmar et al. 2013). For instance, some scholars have used social learning theory to emphasize ethical leaders as role models of honesty, dedication, and strong work ethic (Brown et al. 2005; Kacmar et al. 2013). Followers of ethical leaders are encouraged to emulate leaders' high levels of work effort and are even rewarded for displaying a strong work ethic. Other scholars have used social exchange theory to explain why followers reciprocate the high work effort of the ethical leader. Ethical leaders care genuinely about the well-being of their followers and invest time and energy to address followers' growth and development needs. Such supportive behavior from the leader enhances followers' work motivation and creates a desire to reciprocate with extra effort (Piccolo et al. 2010; Treviño et al. 2003).

Hypothesis 6 (H6) Follower perceptions of ethical leadership positively influence follower work effort.

Voice

Researchers have argued that employee voice is a constructive, change-oriented communication that allows employees to have a say in decision-making (Dyne Van and LePine 1998). Social learning perspective suggests that leaders that emphasize doing the right thing and voice concerns about unethical matters gain the trust and respect of their followers and become appropriate role models (Brown et al. 2005). Ethical leaders convey high moral standards to their followers and encourage them to speak out against inappropriate behavior (Brown et al. 2005). For example, Brown et al. (2005) found that ethical leaders encourage their followers to report problems to the management. In addition, ethical leaders provide a work environment that supports and encourages voice behavior.

Hypothesis 7 (H7) Ethical leadership positively influences follower voice behavior.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being or job-related affective well-being refers to the experience of positive emotions associated with happiness and satisfaction at work (Grebner et al. 2005). We propose that ethical leadership is positively associated with follower psychological well-being because of the important role leaders play in shaping the work experience of followers. Several scholars suggest that ethical leaders are fair and honest individuals who build quality relationships with their followers (Avey et al. 2012; Kalshoven and Boon 2012; Li et al. 2014). In particular, these scholars propose that ethical leaders enhance followers' psychological well-being by providing a work environment that is nurturing, supportive, and thus more conducive to positive emotional experiences at work. Because positive emotional experiences are associated with subjective well-being, increased levels of positive emotions can aid employees in developing new strategies for overcoming challenges and coping with work-related stress (Fredrickson 2002). In addition, ethical leaders provide increased access to resources followers need to cope with stress (Harvey et al. 2013).

Hypothesis 8 (H8) Ethical leadership positively influences follower psychological well-being.

Hypothesis 9 (H9) Ethical leadership negatively influences follower work stress.

Leader Associated Attitudes

Attitudes Associated With the Leader

Brown et al. (Brown et al. 2005) in their construct validation studies found positive relationships between followers' perceptions of ethical leadership and attitudes associated with the leader such as satisfaction with the leader, leader honesty, leader effectiveness, interactional fairness, and affective trust in the leader. More recently scholars have established a positive relationship between ethical leadership and cognitive trust in the leader (Dadhich and Bhal 2008; Newman et al. 2013). We propose that ethical leadership will positively influence cognitive trust and affective trust in the leader. Cognitive trust or 'trust from the head' refers to trust based on leader's capabilities and personal attributes such as competence, integrity, and reliability (McAllister 1995). On the other hand, affective trust or 'trust from the heart' refers to trust based on socio-emotional exchanges and admiration of the leader such as leader consideration, care, and concern (McAllister 1995). Ethical leaders are credible, honest, and trustworthy individuals who genuinely care about their follower's well-being (Brown and Treviño 2006). Moreover, ethical leaders

practice what they preach and demonstrate high levels of self-confidence. Social exchange theory suggests that a belief in leader's credibility and competence is likely to engender perceptions of cognitive trust because a leader is seen as capable of fulfilling the leadership role (Newman et al. 2013). Ethical leaders also build positive relationships with their followers and demonstrate fairness in their actions. This helps strengthen the followers' emotional bond with the leader, and thus their affective trust in the leader. Furthermore, ethical leaders are known for their integrity and treat their followers in a fair and bias-free manner which helps promote perceptions of leader honesty and interactional fairness. Indeed, scholars have shown that honesty and fairness are essential to the credibility and attractiveness of a role model and are significant predictors of effective and ethical leadership (Avolio 1999; Brown et al. 2005). Finally, we expect ethical leadership as effective and satisfying for the follower. Social learning theory suggests that ethical leaders are attractive and credible role models that clarify expectations, and engage in open and frequent communication. Specifically, ethical leaders mobilize the followers in the required direction and clarify the path to personal and organizational goal accomplishment (Yukl 2006). Followers who receive this extensive guidance and motivation from their leader are likely to report higher levels of leader satisfaction and leader effectiveness.

Hypothesis 10 (H10) Ethical leadership positively influences: (a) cognitive trust in the leader, (b) affective trust in the leader, (c) leader honesty, (d) interactional fairness, (e) leader effectiveness, and (f) satisfaction with the leader.

Leader Member Exchange (LMX)

LMX theory suggests that leaders develop different exchange relationships with their followers, and the quality of this relationship differs from one subordinate to another (Graen and Scandura 1987). Specifically, leaders have high-quality exchange relationships with some subordinates and low-quality relationships with others (Graen and Cashman 1975). A high-quality exchange relationship is characterized by high levels of trust, loyalty, and reciprocal influence (Liden and Maslyn 1998). In a high-quality exchange relationship, the leader provides resources desired by the follower (e.g., fair treatment, extensive guidance, additional responsibilities, and rewards), and in exchange the follower reciprocates with positive attitudes such as heightened loyalty, commitment, respect, and liking (Mahsud et al. 2010). In comparison, a low-quality relationship is characterized by low levels of trust, support, and rewards. We suggest that an ethical leader's fair and caring treatment, open communication, and credibility is likely to engender a high-quality relationship with the follower. Followers develop an exchange relationship with the ethical leader who acts in their best interest and is committed to followers' well-being (Walumbwa et al. 2011).

Hypothesis 11 (H11) Ethical leadership positively influences perceptions of high-quality leader member exchange.

Ethical Leadership and Other Leadership Styles

Abusive Supervision

Abusive supervision refers to hostile, verbal, and nonverbal behaviors directed toward subordinates, excluding physical violence (Tepper 2000). In particular, abusive supervision represents abuse of power by a person in authority and involves use of public denigration, undermining, and explosive outbursts toward employees (Tepper 2007). We suggest a negative relationship between ethical leadership and abusive supervision because an abusive leadership style is in sharp contrast to the basic tenets of ethical leadership that relies on fair and respectful treatment of others. As argued previously, ethical leaders genuinely care for the welfare of their followers, engage in ethical and principled behaviors, and practice open and fair communication. These are some of the reasons why we expect a negative relationship between ethical leadership and abusive supervision.

Hypothesis 12 (H12) Ethical leadership is negatively associated with abusive supervision.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is defined as a reciprocal relationship between leader and follower, where leaders use rewards and/or punishments to influence their followers (Burns 1978). Transactional leadership includes four dimensions: contingent reward, management-by-exception-active (MBE-A), management-by-exception-passive (MBE-P), and laissez-faire leadership (Bass 1985). Contingent reward refers to an exchange of valued resources or rewards by the leader in return for follower performance of desired behaviors. MBE-A is the degree to which a leader actively monitors the performance of the follower and takes necessary corrective actions. MBE-P is the degree to which a leader takes corrective action only after a problem has occurred. Finally, laissez-faire is an avoidance of leadership duties and responsibilities. We propose a positive relationship between ethical leadership and contingent reward because ethical leaders use rewards and punishments to influence followers' ethical behaviors. Specifically, ethical leaders set ethical standards and hold followers accountable to those standards

by using rewards and punishments (Brown et al. 2005). Furthermore, we expect a positive association between ethical leadership and MBE-A, and thus a negative relationship between ethical leadership and MBE-P. This is because ethical leaders genuinely care for the professional development of their followers and frequently take corrective measures that are in the best interest of their followers (Brown et al. 2005). Finally, we expect a negative relationship between ethical leadership and laissez-faire dimension because ethical leaders are actively involved in influencing follower ethical behavior through communication, reinforcement, and decision-making processes (Brown et al. 2005).

Hypothesis 13 (H13) Ethical leadership is positively associated with (a) contingent reward and (b) MBE-A, and negatively associated with (c) MBE-P, and (d) laissez-faire dimensions of transactional leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Treviño et al. (2003) suggested that ethical leaders use both transformational and transactional leadership to influence their followers. Transformational leadership refers to the ability of the leader to transform the norms and values of the followers and inspire them to move beyond self-interests toward a collective purpose (Yukl 1989). Transformational leaders develop an emotional attachment with their followers and encourage them to develop their full potential for the greater good of the organization (Bass 1985; Yukl 1999). According to Bass and Avolio (1993), transformational leadership is defined by four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence is the degree to which leaders act as charismatic role models, exemplifying the values of the organization. Inspirational motivation is the degree to which leaders articulate compelling visions that are appealing to followers. Intellectual stimulation is the degree to which leaders challenge the status quo, appeal to followers' intellect, and invite innovative and creative solutions from the followers. Individualized consideration is the degree to which leaders attend to followers' needs and act as mentors or coaches for follower development and self-actualization.

We propose a positive relationship between ethical leadership and transformational leadership because of the shared personal traits and characteristics between ethical and transformational leaders (Brown and Treviño 2006). Specifically, the "moral person" dimension of ethical leadership includes attributes such as integrity, fairness, concern for others, ethical decision-making, and ethical role modeling, which are also characteristics of transformational leaders (Brown et al. 2005). Furthermore, we propose positive relationships between ethical leadership and four dimensions of transformational leadership, and in particular, the idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership. Ethical leadership is closely related to idealized influence dimension because they both share an explicit focus on ethics and ethical behavior (Brown et al. 2005). Ethical leaders are similar to idealized influence leaders because they both emphasize the importance of ethics and engage in ethical role modeling which builds follower identification with the leader. Finally, ethical leaders provide challenging tasks to their followers, encourage them to be creative, and pay close attention to their growth and development needs, thus sharing characteristics of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration leaders.

Hypothesis 14 (H14) Ethical leadership is positively associated with transformational leadership.

Hypothesis 15 (H15) Ethical leadership is positively associated with (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration dimensions of transformational leadership.

Potential Moderators

In our meta-analysis, we also examine the role of methodological factors and other study characteristics (i.e., moderators) on the relationship between ethical leadership and follower work outcomes. Specifically, we examined the following moderators:

Publication Bias

Publication bias refers to the selective publishing of studies with significant results (Rosenthal 1979). According to Rosenthal (1979), studies producing non-significant or unexpected results are less likely to get published and are more likely to stay buried away in file drawers; this phenomenon is also known as the "file drawer problem." Rosenthal (1979) suggested also that the results of a meta-analysis that includes only published studies fail to represent the total research population and may produce inaccurate estimates of the relations in question. For instance, scholars like Lipsey and Wilson (1993) and Rosenberg (2005) have shown that on average unpublished studies have smaller mean effect sizes than published studies. Therefore, in published scholarly observation reports, we expect to see stronger associations between ethical leadership and follower outcomes.

Hypothesis 16 (H16) Published scholarly reports of ethical leadership and hypothesized follower outcomes will report stronger mean corrected correlations than unpublished scholarly reports.

Geographical Location and Organizational Sector

In our meta-analysis, we also examine whether geographical locations (country where the data were collected) and organizational sector (for-profit vs. non-profit) of study samples account for significant differences in mean corrected correlations. For example, Borgmann and Rowold (unpublished manuscript) surveyed employees of a department store chain in Germany and found a non-significant relationship between ethical leadership and job performance ($r = 0.07$). Ogunfowara (unpublished manuscript) surveyed not-for-profit employees in Canada and found a significant positive relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors ($r = 0.43$). Given that previous scholars have found mixed findings for the above moderators, we do not hypothesize directional relationships but instead propose the following research questions:

Research Questions

Are the relationships between ethical leadership and its proposed outcomes moderated by: (a) geographical location or (b) organizational sector of study samples?

Method

Literature Search

We used several techniques to collect empirical studies that examined the outcomes of ethical leadership. First, we conducted a computerized bibliographic search of EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, ABI/INFORM, and Dissertation Abstracts International by using the terms *ethical leadership*, *ethical leadership scale, ELS,* and *ethical leader behavior*. Second, we reviewed the reference lists of retrieved articles to identify additional citations. Third, we carried out manual searches of the conference programs and proceedings for Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Administrative Sciences Association of Canada, and Academy of Management conferences to identify unpublished articles. Finally, we contacted frequent contributors to the ethical leadership literature for copies of any unpublished or in-press articles. Using the above search techniques, we were able to identify over 147 conceptual and empirical publications, unpublished works, dissertations, books, and book chapters on ethical leadership.

Criteria for Inclusion/Population of Interest

We adopted three criteria to include studies in our meta-analysis. First, a study had to use Brown and Treviño's (2006) ethical leadership scale (ELS) and report a correlation coefficient or other effect size between ethical leadership and another variable. Second, studies had to report sample sizes for us to compute the sample size weighted effect size along with reliability values. When a study reported two or more independent samples, we coded these samples separately. We only included variables for which there were at least three correlations with ethical leadership available from independent samples. Finally, when multiple studies used data from the same samples, we included only the data from the study including the largest sample. These inclusion criteria resulted in a total of 134 independent samples involving 54,920 employees. Of these samples, 100 were from published journal articles, 23 were from unpublished dissertations, and 11 were other unpublished papers.

Coding of Studies

For each study, we coded for statistics such as sample size, key variables, correlation coefficients, and reliability values. The first author and a research assistant were responsible for coding variables. In order to assess the reliability of this coding, the second and third authors independently coded a random sample of 100 studies (i.e., 75 %). The average inter-coder agreement across the study variables was 99 %. We resolved any initial coding differences via discussion until a consensus was reached.

Meta-Analytic Procedures

We used the meta-analytic procedures by Hedges and Olkin (1985) to correct observed correlations for sampling error and unreliability. We only included variables for which there were at least three correlations with ELS available from independent samples. When reliabilities were not reported, we used the sample size weighted mean reliability from other studies (Hunter and Schmidt 2004). For each relation, we report the number of studies included in the analysis of that relation (k), total sample size cumulated across those studies (N), mean corrected correlation (ρ), average effect size (*Mean ES*), uncorrected standard deviation (*Sd*), standard deviation of corrected correlations (Sd_c), 95 % confidence interval (*95 % CI*), 95 % credibility interval (*95 % CrI*), and the Q homogeneity statistic, Q total (Q_T). We tested the homogeneity of the effect sizes by Q within (Q_W). Q_W has an approximate Chi square distribution with $m - 1$ degrees of freedom, where m is the number of effect sizes in each

group. A significant Q_W statistic suggests heterogeneity within a set of studies and the need for further moderator analyses (Hedges 1994). If the summary analysis of the effect sizes indicated heterogeneity, we computed Q between (Q_B), which has an approximate Chi square distribution with p -1 degrees of freedom, where p is the number of groups. A significant Q_B indicates that the magnitude of the effect differs between different categories of the moderator.

Results

Follower Consequences of ELS

Table 1 presents our meta-analytic findings for the follower consequences of perceptions of ethical leadership proposed in Hypotheses 1–10. We found support for Hypothesis 1 which predicted a positive relationship between ethical leadership and perceptions of ethical context ($\rho = 0.52$). Followers who perceived their leader as ethical were more likely to view their work context as ethical. We also found support for Hypothesis 2 which suggested that ethical leadership was positively associated with follower self-efficacy ($\rho = 0.53$). Hypothesis 3 predicted that follower perceptions of ethical leadership were positively associated with follower ethical behavior. This hypothesis was supported ($\rho = 0.61$).

Our Hypotheses 4(a) through 4(i) regarding ethical leadership and follower work outcomes were supported. Perceptions of ethical leadership were positively associated with follower's (a) job satisfaction ($\rho = 0.56$), (b) organizational commitment ($\rho = 0.38$), (c) affective commitment ($\rho = 0.45$), (d) normative commitment ($\rho = 0.53$), (e) OCBs ($\rho = 0.37$), (f) OCB-I ($\rho = 0.29$), (g) job performance ($\rho = 0.22$), (h) job engagement ($\rho = 0.37$), and (i) organizational identification ($\rho = 0.36$). In addition, we found support for Hypotheses 5 (a) through 5(c). Specifically, follower perceptions of ethical leadership were negatively associated with follower (a) turnover intentions ($\rho = -0.43$), (b) CWBs (self-rated) ($\rho = -0.34$), and (c) CWBs (leader-rated) ($\rho = -0.27$). Interestingly, our Hypothesis 5(d) that predicted a negative relationship between ethical leadership and relationship conflict was not supported ($\rho = -0.06$); the confidence interval for this relationship included zero. Consistent with Hypothesis 6, follower perceptions of ethical leadership were positively associated with follower work effort ($\rho = 0.36$). Likewise, we found support for Hypothesis 7. Follower perceptions of ethical leadership were positively associated with follower voice behavior ($\rho = 0.36$).

We also tested relationships involving follower psychological health outcomes. Hypothesis 8 predicted a positive association between perceptions of ethical leadership and follower psychological well-being. Hypothesis 8 was supported ($\rho = 0.29$). Finally, we found support for Hypothesis 9: follower perceptions of ethical leadership were negatively associated with follower work stress ($\rho = -0.19$).

Follower Perceptions About the Ethical Leader

Our Hypotheses 10(a) through 10(f) regarding ethical leadership and positive attitudes about the leader were supported (Table 2). Follower perceptions of ethical leadership were positively associated with: (a) cognitive trust in the leader ($\rho = 0.52$), (b) affective trust in the leader ($\rho = 0.59$), (c) leader honesty ($\rho = 0.53$), (d) interactional fairness ($\rho = 0.80$), (e) leader effectiveness ($\rho = 0.77$), and (f) satisfaction with the leader ($\rho = 0.70$). In addition, consistent with Hypothesis 11, leader member exchange was positively related to follower perceptions of ethical leadership ($\rho = 0.73$), suggesting that ethical leaders enjoy a high-quality exchange relationship with their followers (Table 2).

Ethical Leadership and Other Leadership Styles

Our last set of main effect predictions were about ethical leadership's relationship with abusive supervision and dimensions of transactional and transformational leadership (Table 3). Hypothesis 12 predicted that follower perceptions of ethical leadership are negatively associated with abusive supervision. We found support for this hypothesis ($\rho = -0.56$). Hypothesis 13(a) was also supported: we found a strong, positive association between ethical leadership and contingent reward dimension ($\rho = 0.87$) of transactional leadership. Hypothesis 13(b) proposed a positive relationship between ethical leadership and MBE-A dimension ($\rho = 0.05$) and it was not supported; the confidence interval for this relationship included zero. However, we found support for Hypotheses 13(c) and 13(d) that proposed negative associations between ethical leadership and MBE-P ($\rho = -0.63$) and laissez-faire ($\rho = -0.62$) dimensions of transactional leadership. Hypothesis 14 predicted that ethical leadership is positively associated with transformational leadership. This hypothesis was supported with a robust, positive effect size ($\rho = 0.94$). Finally, our hypotheses 15(a) through 15(d) regarding positive association between dimensions of transformational leadership and ethical leadership were supported. (a) Idealized influence ($\rho = 0.79$), (b) inspirational motivation ($\rho = 0.75$), (c) intellectual stimulation ($\rho = 0.68$), and (d) individualized consideration ($\rho = 0.71$) dimensions of transformational leadership were all positively associated with ethical leadership.

Table 1 Follower consequences of ethical leadership

Variable	Mean								
	k	*N*	ρ	*ES*	*Sd*	*SDc*	*95 % CI*	*95 % CrI*	Q_T
Perceptions of ethical climate	10	3890	0.52	0.58	0.22	0.48	(0.54,0.62)	(−0.37,1.53)	215.55**
Self-efficacy	3	624	0.53	0.58	0.13	0.62	(0.49,0.68)	(−0.63,1.80)	12.49
Ethical behavior	4	6993	0.61	0.70	0.12	0.94	(0.68,0.73)	(−1.13,2.54)	18.45**
Job satisfaction	18	5744	0.56	0.64	0.12	0.30	(0.61,0.67)	(0.04,1.23)	142.94**
Org. commitment	7	1524	0.38	0.40	0.19	0.44	(0.34,0.46)	(−0.47,1.27)	36.33**
Affective commitment	17	5193	0.45	0.49	0.17	0.32	(0.46,0.52)	(−0.15,1.13)	202.08**
Normative commitment	3	539	0.53	0.59	0.02	0.60	(0.50, 0.69)	(−0.58,1.77)	0.62**
OCBs	17	3958	0.37	0.39	0.15	0.27	(0.35,0.42)	(−0.15,0.92)	316.96**
OCB-I	7	1900	0.29	0.30	0.07	0.40	(0.24,0.35)	(−0.48,1.07)	10.18**
Job performance	16	3741	0.22	0.22	0.10	0.30	(0.18,0.26)	(−0.36,0.80)	65.67**
Job engagement	7	1463	0.37	0.39	0.16	0.44	(0.33,0.44)	(−0.47,1.24)	31.74**
Organizational identification	5	1263	0.36	0.38	0.10	0.49	(0.32, 0.44)	(−0.58,1.34)	14.90**
Turnover intentions	5	2747	−0.40	−0.42	0.21	0.55	(−0.46,−0.38)	(−1.49,0.65)	91.61**
CWBs (self-rated)	8	1807	−0.34	−0.36	0.06	0.51	(−0.41,−0.31)	(−1.37,0.65)	18.20**
CWBs (leader-rated)	9	1846	−0.27	−0.28	0.05	0.38	(−0.33,−0.23)	(−1.02,0.46)	4.98**
Relationship conflict	4	611	−0.06	−0.06	0.23	0.56	(−0.15,0.02)	(−1.16,1.03)	31.53**
Effort	8	1179	0.36	0.37	0.17	0.37	(0.31,0.44)	(−0.35,1.10)	34.70**
Voice	6	2171	0.36	0.38	0.12	0.51	(0.33,0.43)	(−0.62,1.38)	39.45**
Psychological well-being	4	1508	0.29	0.29	0.13	0.62	(0.24,0.35)	(−0.92,1.51)	30.03**
Work stress	6	3088	−0.19	−0.20	0.25	0.47	(−0.24,−0.16)	(−1.12,0.72)	102.00**

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation, *Mean ES* average effect size, *Sd* uncorrected standard deviation, Sd_c Standard deviation of corrected correlations, *95 % CI* 95 % confidence interval, *95 % CrI* 95 % credibility interval, Q_T *Q* total

** $p < 0.01$

Table 2 Leader-associated attitudes

Variable	*k*	*N*	ρ	*Mean ES*	*Sd*	*SDc*	*95 % CI*	*95 % CrI*	Q_T
Cognitive trust	5	782	0.52	0.58	0.23	0.52	(0.50,0.66)	(−0.44,1.60)	126.69**
Affective trust	4	550	0.59	0.67	0.21	0.54	(0.58,0.77)	(−0.38,1.73)	36.62**
Leader honesty	4	485	0.53	0.59	0.35	0.54	(0.48,0.70)	(−0.46,1.64)	69.27**
Interactional fairness	3	790	0.80	1.09	0.08	0.58	(1.01,1.18)	(−0.04,2.23)	22.30**
Leader effectiveness	11	2289	0.77	1.01	0.23	0.49	(0.97,1.06)	(0.05,1.98)	278.97**
Leader satisfaction	6	952	0.70	0.88	0.20	0.45	(0.80,0.95)	(−0.01,1.77)	223.68**
LMX	6	1377	0.73	0.93	0.09	0.45	(0.87,0.98)	(0.04,1.81)	76.75**

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation, *Mean ES* average effect size, *Sd* uncorrected standard deviation, Sd_c Standard deviation of corrected correlations, *95 % CI* 95 % confidence interval, *95 % CrI* 95 % credibility interval, Q_T *Q* total

** $p < 0.01$

Moderator Analyses

Publication Bias

Our Hypothesis 16 regarding stronger mean corrected correlations for published scholarly reports of ethical leadership and hypothesized variables received mixed support (Table 4). Specifically, counterproductive work behaviors (self), affective commitment, job performance, ethical context, and job engagement showed stronger mean corrected correlations for published research (ρs = −0.36, 0.55, 0.21, 0.72, and 0.48, respectively) than for unpublished research (ρs = −0.23, 0.43, 0.15, 0.45, and 0.30, respectively). However, job satisfaction reported stronger correlation for unpublished research ($\rho = 0.66$) than published research ($\rho = 0.49$). Finally, we did not find

Table 3 Leadership styles and ethical leadership

Variable	*k*	*N*	ρ	*Mean ES*	*Sd*	*SDc*	*95 % CI*	*95 % CrI*	Q_T
Abusive supervision	7	2919	−0.56	−0.63	0.21	0.45	(−0.67,−0.59)	(−1.51,0.25)	233.81**
Contingent reward	6	1260	0.87	1.32	0.16	0.57	(1.26,1.38)	(0.21,2.43)	214.83**
MBE-active	4	963	0.05	0.05	0.34	0.68	(−0.03,0.12)	(−1.28,1.37)	79.87**
MBE-passive	5	743	−0.63	−0.75	0.20	0.49	(−0.83,−0.66)	(−1.71,0.22)	34.43**
Laissez-faire leadership	4	374	−0.62	−0.72	0.15	0.58	(−0.84,−0.60)	(−1.86,0.42)	6.33**
Transformational leadership	5	856	0.94	1.72	0.13	0.49	(1.65,1.79)	(0.75,2.69)	314.73**
Idealized influence	7	1545	0.79	1.07	0.22	0.47	(1.02,1.13)	(0.16,1.99)	187.19**
Inspirational motivation	5	985	0.75	0.97	0.11	0.66	(0.91,1.04)	(−0.33,2.27)	37.02**
Intellectual stimulation	5	985	0.68	0.82	0.15	0.66	(0.76,0.89)	(−0.48,2.12)	50.66**
Individualized consideration	6	1069	0.71	0.89	0.28	0.62	(0.82,0.96)	(−0.32,2.10)	59.71**

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation, *Mean ES* average effect size, *Sd* uncorrected standard deviation, Sd_c Standard deviation of corrected correlations, *95 % CI* 95 % confidence interval, *95 % CrI* 95 % credibility interval, Q_T *Q* total

** $p < 0.01$

significant differences between results for CWBs (self-rated), organizational citizenship behaviors, and leader effectiveness for published (ρs = −0.27, 0.36, and 0.77, respectively) versus unpublished research (ρs = −0.26, 0.38, and 0.77, respectively). In sum, our results provided partial support for Hypothesis 16.

Geographical Location and Organizational Sector

Our research questions regarding the moderating effects of geographical location in the ethical leadership–outcomes relationships received mixed support (Table 5). For instance, OCBs showed stronger correlations for studies conducted in North America (ρs = 0.47) than in Spain or Netherlands (ρs = 0.42 and 0.16, respectively). Affective commitment showed stronger correlations for studies conducted in North America (ρs = 0.47) than in Germany (ρs = 0.38). On the other hand, CWBs (self-rated) reported stronger correlations for studies conducted in Netherlands (ρs = −0.26) than in North America (ρs = −0.23). Finally, follower job satisfaction showed stronger correlations for studies conducted in Germany (ρs = 0.64) than in North America (ρs = 0.48) (Table 5).

Table 6 shows our results for the moderating effects of organizational sector. Overall, we found stronger mean corrected correlations for employees working in the public sector than in the private sector. Specifically, OCBs, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and job performance showed stronger correlations for public sector employees (ρs = 0.35, 0.71, 0.60, and 0.21, respectively) than private sector employees (ρs = 0.19, 0.63, 0.36, and 0.10, respectively).

Discussion

In this study, we meta-analyzed the literature on the outcomes of ethical leadership. We found that perceptions of ethical leadership were associated with various follower outcomes such as increased job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Our results also indicated that perceptions of ethical leadership were associated with favorable attitudes toward the leader, thus lending support to social exchange and social learning theories (Bandura 1986; Blau 1964). Moreover, we found that ethical leadership was positively associated with transformational leadership and the contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership. With respect to the moderators, we found mixed evidence for publication bias. Finally, geographical locations of study samples moderated some of the relationships between ethical leadership and follower outcomes, and employee samples from public sector organizations showed stronger mean corrected correlations for ethical leadership–follower outcome relationships.

Our findings that perceptions of ethical leadership have beneficial outcomes for the followers suggest that previous studies showing insignificant relationships between ethical leadership and desirable follower outcomes (e.g., Kalshoven

Table 4 Moderating effect of publication status on follower consequences and leader-associated attitudes

Variable	*k*	*N*	ρ	*Mean ES*	*Sd*	*SDc*	*95 % CI*	*95 % CrI*	Q_w	Q_b
Perceptions of ethical climate										
Published	5	831	0.72	0.91	0.15	0.51	(0.83,0.98)	(−0.10,1.91)		
Unpublished	5	3059	0.45	0.49	0.22	0.60	(0.44,0.53)	(−0.69,1.66)	128.69**	86.86**
Job satisfaction										
Published	7	3400	0.49	0.54	0.08	0.44	(0.50,0.58)	(−0.33,1.41)		
Unpublished	11	2344	0.66	0.79	0.13	0.37	(0.74,0.83)	(0.07,1.50)	81.86**	61.08**
Organizational commitment										
Published	3	1025	0.55	0.62	0.05	0.62	(0.55,0.70)	(−0.59,1.83)		
Unpublished	14	4168	0.43	0.46	0.19	0.38	(0.42,0.49)	(−0.28, 1.19)	187.12**	4.38**
OCBs										
Published	13	3306	0.36	0.38	0.13	0.31	(0.34, 0.42)	(−0.22,0.98)		
Unpublished	4	652	0.38	0.40	0.19	0.57	(0.31,0.49)	(−0.72,1.52)	316.81**	0.15**
Job performance										
Published	5	1051	0.21	0.21	0.13	0.46	(0.15,0.28)	(−0.69,1.11)		
Unpublished	10	2165	0.15	0.16	0.07	0.39	(0.11,0.21)	(−0.61, 0.92)		
Job engagement										
Published	3	570	0.48	0.52	0.16	0.58	(0.43,0.61)	(−0.61,1.65)		
Unpublished	4	893	0.30	0.31	0.16	0.61	(0.24,0.38)	(−0.89,1.51)	19.14*	12.60**
CWBs (self-rated)										
Published	5	1587	−0.36	−0.38	0.08	0.57	(−0.43,−0.32)	(−1.50,0.75)		
Unpublished	3	220	−0.23	−0.24	0.06	0.78	(−0.39,−0.09)	(−1.76,1.28)	15.26**	2.94**
Leader effectiveness										
Published	7	1728	0.77	1.01	0.24	0.63	(0.96,1.07)	(−0.22,2.24)		
Unpublished	4	561	0.77	1.01	0.25	0.53	(0.92,1.11)	(−0.03,2.06)	278.97**	0.00

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation, *Mean ES* average effect size, *Sd* uncorrected standard deviation, Sd_c Standard deviation of corrected correlations, *95 % CI* 95 % confidence interval, *95 % CrI* 95 % credibility interval, Q_w *Q* within, Q_b *Q* between

** $p < 0.01$

and Boon 2012, $r = 0.02$ for OCB; Liu et al. 2013b, $r = 0.05$ for job performance) represent exceptions in the literature and may reflect the presence of statistical artifacts or errors. Overall, the positive relations that exist between ethical leadership and a wide range of attitudinal and behavioral variables suggest that ethical leadership has potentially significant direct and indirect benefits for individuals and organizations. These results should encourage organizations to develop and promote ethical leaders.

Furthermore, we found that the correlations between ethical leadership and attitudes about the supervisor were stronger than the correlations between ethical leadership and follower personal outcomes. The mean corrected correlations for leader associated attitudes were above $\rho = 0.50$, and ranged from $\rho = 0.52$ for cognitive trust in the leader to $\rho = 0.80$ for leader interactional fairness. In contrast, the mean corrected correlations for follower work and non-work outcomes ranged from $\rho = -0.19$ for job stress to $\rho = 0.56$ for job satisfaction. The above finding suggests that ethical leadership has a greater positive effect on follower attitudes toward their leader than follower work and non-work outcomes. It is possible that followers' perceptions of an ethical leader as a fair, honest, and caring individual has a more direct impact on the leader's reputation and the follower's positive evaluation of the leader's behavior. Our findings also provide further support to social exchange theory. Specifically, we suggest that, by increasing followers' positive perceptions about the leader, ethical leadership increases the quality of social exchange relationships between followers and leaders. These positive attitudes about the leader may then elicit followers to reciprocate in the form of positive work and non-work consequences such as increased job satisfaction, job performance, well-being, etc. Researchers should therefore investigate the mediating role of positive leader attitudes in shaping follower personal outcomes. Overall, the results of our study suggest that ethical leadership has a stronger impact on follower attitudes about the leader than follower personal outcomes. This finding is an important contribution to the literature on ethical leadership which has

Table 5 Moderating effect of geographical location on follower consequences

Variable	*k*	*N*	ρ	*Mean ES*	*Sd*	*SDc*	*95 % CI*	*95 % CrI*	Q_w	Q_b
OCBs										
North America	8	1570	0.47	0.51	0.12	0.36	(0.46,0.57)	(−0.19,1.22)		
Netherlands	4	699	0.16	0.16	0.23	0.56	(0.07,0.25)	(−0.94,1.26)		
Spain	3	1254	0.42	0.45	0.10	0.61	(0.38,0.52)	(−0.75,1.65)	247.18**	69.79**
CWBs (self-rated)										
North America	3	368	−0.23	−0.24	0.06	0.68	(−0.35,−0.12)	(−1.58,1.10)		
Netherlands	3	410	−0.26	−0.27	0.03	0.65	(−0.38,−0.16)	(−1.53, 1.00)	0.44	17.76**
Job satisfaction										
North America	5	2363	0.48	0.53	0.17	0.56	(0.48,0.57)	(−0.56,1.62)		
Germany	9	2171	0.64	0.76	0.12	0.39	(0.71,0.81)	(−0.01,1.52)	96.31**	46.63**
Affective commitment										
North America	7	2553	0.47	0.51	0.13	0.54	(0.47,0.56)	(−0.54,1.56)		
Germany	8	1998	0.38	0.40	0.16	0.41	(0.35,0.46)	(−0.41,1.21)	160.85**	41.23**

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation, *Mean ES* average effect size, *Sd* uncorrected standard deviation, Sd_c standard deviation of corrected correlations, *95 % CI* 95 % confidence interval, *95 % CrI* 95 % credibility interval, Q_w *Q* within, Q_b *Q* between

** $p < 0.01$

Table 6 Moderating effect of organizational sector on follower consequences

Variable	*k*	*N*	ρ	*Mean ES*	*Sd*	*SDc*	*95 % CI*	*95 % CrI*	Q_w	Q_b
OCBs										
Public	3	650	0.35	0.37	0.16	0.60	(0.28,0.46)	(−0.80,1.54)		
Private	3	639	0.19	0.19	0.08	0.59	(0.10,0.28)	(−0.97,1.35)	18.70**	298.26**
Job satisfaction										
Public	3	610	0.71	0.88	0.05	0.61	(0.79,0.98)	(−0.31,2.08)		
Private	5	1405	0.63	0.73	0.11	0.53	(0.67,0.80)	(−0.30,1.77)	12.32	130.62**
Affective commitment										
Public	5	1108	0.60	0.69	0.18	0.43	(0.61,0.77)	(−0.15,1.53)		
Private	5	1405	0.36	0.38	0.22	0.53	(0.32,0.44)	(−0.66,1.41)	96.07**	106.01**
Job performance										
Public	4	791	0.21	0.21	0.06	0.52	(0.13,0.29)	(−0.81,1.24)		
Private	6	1647	0.10	0.10	0.05	0.47	(0.05,0.16)	(−0.82,1.03)	6.35	59.32**

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation, *Mean ES* average effect size, *Sd* uncorrected standard deviation, Sd_c Standard deviation of corrected correlations. *95 % CI* 95 % confidence interval, *95 % CrI* 95 % credibility interval, Q_w *Q* within, Q_b *Q* between

** $p < 0.01$

focused predominantly on ethical leadership's impact on follower personal outcomes (Brown and Treviño 2006).

The Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Other Leadership Styles

Our study also clarifies the relationship of ethical leadership with other leadership styles such as transactional and transformational leadership.

Researchers have argued that ethical leadership is conceptually and empirically distinct from transactional and transformational approaches to leadership (Brown and Treviño 2006; Brown et al. 2005; Mayer et al. 2012; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009). For example, Brown and Treviño (2006) argued that ethical leadership differs from other styles of leadership because ethical leaders focus explicitly on ethics. Treviño and Brown (2007) suggested that ethical leaders differ from transactional and

transformational leaders because ethical leaders not only demonstrate ethical behavior to their followers but they also proactively influence their followers' ethical conduct. There is, however, a partial overlap between ethical leadership and other leadership styles (Brown and Treviño 2006; Brown et al. 2005). Brown et al. (2005) proposed that ethical leaders may use transactional leadership behaviors to promote follower ethical conduct. Examples of transactional behaviors include setting and communicating ethical standards and rewarding ethical behavior (Treviño et al. 2003). Ethical leaders may also use transformational leadership behaviors. For example, they may engage in ethical decision-making and role modeling and they show genuine concern for the well-being of their followers.

Our study further explores the relationship of ethical leadership with other leadership constructs such as transactional and transformational leadership. We found that ethical leadership was strongly associated with the contingent reward ($\rho = 0.87$), management-by-exception-passive (MBE-P) ($\rho = -0.63$), and laissez-faire ($\rho = -0.62$) dimensions of transactional leadership. In addition, our meta-analysis results revealed that ethical leaders use transformational approaches to influence their followers. The correlation between ethical leadership and transformational leadership was the strongest ($d = 0.94$). Overall, our results reinforce Brown et al. (2005) argument that ethical leaders use both transactional and transformational approaches to leadership.

These results raise questions about the construct validity of ethical leadership and its distinctiveness from other similar constructs. To assess this issue in more detail, we compared the results of our meta-analyses with previously conducted meta-analyses on transformational and contingent reward leadership (Judge and Piccolo 2004). We also performed separate meta-analyses for each of the Big Five personality traits and compared our results with transformational leadership (Bono and Judge 2004). Table 7 compares the results of follower job satisfaction, follower satisfaction with the leader, and leader effectiveness for ethical leadership and transformational leadership. Our comparison indicates a similarity between the results observed for ethical leadership and transformational leadership. Specifically, we observed similar correlations for follower job satisfaction ($\rho = 0.58$ for transformational leadership vs. $\rho = 0.56$ for ethical leadership) and follower satisfaction with the leader ($\rho = 0.71$ for transformational leadership vs. $\rho = 0.70$ for ethical leadership). In comparison, the only personality trait that showed similar results for ethical leadership and transformational leadership was extraversion ($\rho = 0.19$ for transformational leadership vs. $\rho = 0.21$ for ethical leadership) (Table 7). The mean corrected correlations between Big Five personality traits and ethical leadership ($\rho = 0.21$ extraversion, $\rho = 0.25$ for conscientiousness, $\rho = 0.28$ agreeableness, and $\rho = -0.43$ for neuroticism) were in general stronger than the correlations between Big Five and transformational leadership ($\rho = 0.19$ extraversion, $\rho = 0.10$ for conscientiousness, $\rho = 0.10$ agreeableness, and $\rho = 0.11$ for openness, $\rho = -0.15$ for neuroticism). Taken together, the above findings have two implications for theory and research on ethical leadership. First, our results indicate that both ethical leadership and transformational leadership have similar effects on follower outcomes. As argued previously, both ethical leaders and transformational leaders engage in key behaviors: they show genuine concern for others and engage in ethical decision-making and ethical role modeling (Brown and Treviño 2006). It is possible that regardless of the leadership style, followers pay attention and respond to certain specific leader behaviors. When leaders engage in these specific behaviors, followers respond with positive attitudes. Thus, it appears that even if ethical leadership and transformational leadership are distinct constructs, the effects these two leadership types are difficult to separate, and that they have similar effects on the followers. Future researchers should study these and other relevant explanations. Second, we found that Big Five personality traits had stronger association with perceptions of ethical leadership than perceptions of transformational leadership. These results are in agreement with Bono and Judge (2004) who found weak associations between personality and ratings of transformational behaviors. Additionally, we found that extraversion was the only Big Five personality characteristic that showed similar results for ethical and transformational leadership. On the surface, one might argue that Big Five personality traits will have an equally important role in shaping the perceptions of transformational leadership and ethical leadership. But transformational leadership includes other important characteristics such as inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, which are not a part of ethical leadership. Perhaps, rather than the Big Five, these other characteristics have a stronger role in shaping perceptions of transformational leadership. Thus, our results suggest that the Big Five personality traits have a varied effect on perceptions of ethical leadership and transformational leadership. The specific process by which the Big Five personality traits influences ethical leaders and makes them distinct from transformational leaders is an area that scholars need to investigate further.

Taken together, our finding that ethical leadership was strongly associated with transformational leadership needs further attention. This finding is consistent with Shao's (2010) proposition that the scope of ethical leadership is broader than what is defined by Brown et al. (2005). Thus, it is possible that ethical leaders influence their followers

Table 7 Relationships of ethical and transformational leadership to follower criteria

Follower criteria	Ethical			Transformational		
	k	*N*	ρ	*k*	*N*	ρ
Follower job satisfaction	18	5744	0.56**	18	5279	0.58**
Follower satisfaction with the leader	6	952	0.70**	23	4349	0.71**
Leader effectiveness	11	2289	0.77**	27	5415	0.64**
Neuroticism	5	834	−0.43**	18	3380	−0.17**
Extraversion	4	406	0.21**	20	3692	0.24**
Agreeableness	4	406	0.25**	20	3916	0.14**
Conscientiousness	4	406	0.28**	18	3516	0.13**

k the number of samples in each analysis, *N* the total number of individuals in the *k* samples, ρ mean corrected correlation

** $p < 0.01$

through more transformational and charismatic means than what was previously thought. In this vein, researchers have argued that ethical leaders may influence their followers by collective motivation and empowerment—mechanisms that are conceptually similar to charismatic and transformational leadership (Shao 2010; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009). Similarly, role modeling which is an essential component of ethical leadership is also of significance to transformational leadership (Avolio et al. 1999; Howell and Avolio 1992). Both ethical leadership and transformational leadership rely on role modeling, ethical decision-making and integrity to influence followers to ethical behaviors (Brown et al. 2005). Moreover, this similarity between ethical and transformational leadership is also evident in empirical research. In their construct validation studies, Brown et al. (2005) found a strong positive association between ELS and idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership ($r = .71$, $p < 0.001$). Overall, it appears that the boundary between transformational and ethical leaderships is blurred and requires further refinement and investigation.

Moderators of Ethical Leadership and Follower Work Outcomes

We also examined how the publication status, geographical location, and organizational sector of study samples influence the relationships between ethical leadership and follower outcomes. We found partial evidence for publication bias or the hypothesis that mean corrected correlations for published studies are larger than unpublished studies. The correlations in unpublished studies were in some cases weaker and in some cases stronger and in some cases comparable to the correlations in published studies. Regardless of our findings researchers need to be aware that effect sizes in published studies are different from effect sizes in unpublished research. Our results with respect to the geographical location of study samples indicated that correlations between ethical leadership and OCBs and affective commitment were statistically stronger for studies conducted in North America than outside of North America (e.g., Netherlands, Spain, and Germany). On the other hand, correlations between ethical leadership and job satisfaction were statistically stronger for studies conducted outside of North America (e.g., Netherlands and Germany) than in North America. These findings suggest that in North America, ethical leadership has a stronger influence in shaping the other-directed attitudes and behaviors. In comparison, outside of North America, ethical leadership has a stronger influence in shaping a follower's self-experienced attitudes and beliefs. We recognize that a number of explanations could be offered for the cultural/geographic differences and there is a need for more theoretical development and empirical research to understand the nature of this variation. Finally, we found that the correlation between ethical leadership and follower work outcomes was stronger for public sector employees than private sector employees. As argued previously, ethical leaders are principled individuals who make ethics an explicit component of their practices (Brown and Treviño 2006). It is possible that ethical leaders with a serving attitude are more inclined to work in public sectors where they can make a difference in other individuals' lives. Future scholars should explore the influence of organizational sectors in shaping employees' responses to ethical leadership.

Limitations and Future Research

Our study has several limitations. First, majority of the studies used in the current analyses were cross sectional in nature. Thus, it is hard to infer causality among variables. Furthermore, common method bias may explain the strong correlation between ethical leadership and other leadership styles such as transformational leadership and contingent reward. We therefore echo the call of many ethical

leadership researchers regarding the need for longitudinal research designs to understand better the causal directions between ethical leadership and its consequences.

A second limitation of our study is that relatively few studies were available for some of the relationships between ethical leadership and its consequences. Moreover, due to insufficient data, we were unable to estimate a broader range of predictors, consequences, and moderators of ethical leadership. For example, we were unable to examine the main and interaction effects of role modeling, self-monitoring, need for power, moral utilization, Machiavellianism, and other key variables specified in Brown and Treviño's (2006) model of ethical leadership. There is also a pressing need for research that examines the role of moral issues, moral intensity, and moral identity on ethical leadership (Brown and Treviño 2006; Mayer et al. 2012). Future researchers on ethical leadership should examine the antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership at the team level of analysis. For example, how do team structure, composition, and process variables affect the emergence and effectiveness of ethical leadership? How do teams experience and respond to ethical leadership?

Third, we meta-analyzed only the follower consequences of ethical leadership. Future scholars should use both organizational and leader level data to create a more complete model of consequences of ethical leadership. For instance, what is the impact of ethical leadership on organizational performance? What are the behavioral and attitudinal consequences for ethical leaders?

Finally, due to insufficient data, we were unable to construct a correlation matrix to conduct a meta-analytic path analysis for the variables in our model. A meta-analytic path analysis is useful in assessing the theoretical relevance of social learning (Bandura 1986) and social exchange (Blau 1964) theories in explaining the hypothesized relationships in our model. We need to construct a theoretically driven path analytic model to understand if, for example, ethical leadership explains variance in follower outcomes that is not explained by transformational and transactional leadership. With the data that are currently available, however, we were unable to examine these and other related questions.

To conclude, this study integrates social learning and social exchange theories to test the linkage between ethical leadership and its consequences. Our results indicate that perceptions of ethical leadership have a variety of work and personal well-being-related benefits for the followers. Moreover, our research provides initial evidence of how ethical leadership relates to and is different from other leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership. We hope these results promote further research on ethical leadership and advances the field.

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