
Ethics and Leadership: Examining the Roles of Honesty and Integrity

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Abstract

Objective – This literature review aims to examine the importance of honesty and integrity in the practice and theories of leadership, and how both are fundamentally attached to the concept itself, particularly to the types of leadership that are characterized by the presence of ethics.

Design/Methodology/Approach – It is written to elaborate the existing literatures on this very topic in a systematic manner and to examine them thematically, creating an organized discussions on how the understanding of the correlation of those two qualities with leadership developed.

Findings – This paper elaborates on the very definition of leadership; how different perspectives may define the concept differently and how it shapes the practice of leadership itself. It highlights the gaps in previous theorization of transformational leadership and how it does not place heavy emphasis on moral values such as honesty and integrity. Furthermore, it explains the various perspectives on honesty and integrity and their connection to leadership, how the two qualities shape both the leader as the moral agent and the people or the organization as the extension of the given leader.

Implications – Integrity and Honesty are indeed fundamental to leadership and its overall practice and theorization.

Keywords: Ethics, Honesty, Integrity, Leadership, Virtue

INTRODUCTION

The virtues of honesty and integrity are widely regarded as fundamental to many concepts that are linked to ethics, one such concept is leadership. The honest leader is not one who practices honesty and integrity merely for practical benefits but for the sake of staying true to his moral principles and to ingrain it upon his group so that the group is constituted by the very qualities that he himself is constituted by. In the practical side, honesty ensures truthfulness in speech and action in the general sense, or communication

and interaction in terms of organizational behavior (Roberts & West, 2020). If both virtues are present and are placed at the very essence of leadership, then the leader is arguably one who navigates challenges with moral clarity and is not deterred by ethical and organizational dilemmas, becoming a leader that inspires the group or the organization to develop morally.

The importance of ethical qualities such as honesty and integrity to leadership should not be underestimated, both are vital to the moral fabric of the group and the society as a whole, their role go beyond personal realms and are, therefore, qualities that are arguably holistic by nature (Ganguly & Pandey, 2024). In an era where public scrutiny and demand for accountability are even more pronounced, understanding the fundamental role of those virtues is key in creating an environment that is trustworthy, transparent, and is holistically ethical. By examining and shedding light on these crucial themes, this paper will contribute to the discourse on the ethical side of leadership, and how it will address ethical dilemmas with a way that is aligned with both one's personal convictions with the societal general expectations of it.

Despite the extensive focus on leadership in existing literatures, significant gaps remain in how integrity and honesty are practiced within diverse contexts. Much of the current research examines the role of ethical virtues in relation to leadership mainly through the lens of Western cultural and philosophical framework or paradigm, resulting in less extensive research on other paradigms and cultural frameworks which arguably remain underexplored to this day. Furthermore, though honesty and integrity are often cited as traits that are essential to leadership, the emphasis on such virtues and the application thereof are not discussed sufficiently (Rhode, 2006; Palanski & Yammarino, 2007).

This literature review aims to synthesize the cultural, philosophical, and organizational perspectives of honesty and integrity to leadership in order to deepen our understanding on their impact on leadership in its theories and practices. Further emphasis will be placed on the practical applications of these virtues, and how they may foster trust, accountability, transparency, and social cohesion on the given group, making an environment that is both ethically developed and secularly efficient, which further leads to a state of human flourishing and prosperity in the group or organizational level, or even to the society as a whole.

METHODS

This paper is a review of the previous literatures with the purpose of examining the relationship between leadership with moral values, particularly honesty and integrity. Scholarly sources, including journal articles and books were systematically and thematically review based on their relevance to key themes such as discussions of honesty and integrity as moral virtues, connection to leadership in theory and practice, and the cultural and philosophical perspectives on those two moral qualities. Thus, relevant points and quotes were extracted and examined, then using those as foundations to organize the paper into several themes and discussions. Furthermore, research gaps in previous literatures are briefly explained for future examination. This literature review does not involve original data collection, but instead relies on existing academic work to provide a scholarly theoretical discussion and review of the aforementioned themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature Review

A common theme among existing literatures on the topic of leadership is that it is a concept which has fundamental values embedded in it. Among the most commonly defined types of

leadership are transformational, ethical, and authentic leadership, and each of those types has its own defining characteristics, among such characteristics are integrity and honesty. The purpose of this literature review is to explore existing theories, empirical studies, and cultural perspectives on how honesty and integrity define and shape leadership. This paper argues that an emphasis should be given on how those two aspects elevate leaders' credibility, influence, effectiveness, and the overall practice of leadership, in addition to why one may deem the two as traits that are essential to the concept itself (Rhode, 2006).

Defining Leadership

Leadership, especially if it is defined as something that is moral or ethical, may be defined as the alignment or even synthesis of moral values or virtues with professional conduct. Within such context, that is, in the aforementioned understanding of leadership, honesty and integrity emerge as key traits that enable a leader to foster trust, loyalty, and the condition wherein the leader's reputation is recognized to be positive among the given leader's environment or organization, furthermore, if we see the two as genuine virtues, then both honesty and integrity are essential to the concept itself and the theorization of it, so much so that the absence of those genuine virtues alongside moral altruism in a practice of leadership will render that very leadership to be inauthentic, in the sense that it cannot be seen as a truly authentic leadership (Hannah et al., 2005). Therefore, by understanding the importance and the foundational nature of those two aspects in regards to leadership, this review will demonstrate how honesty and integrity contribute to leadership and identify areas which can be further studied in order to enrich and deepen our understanding on these values in practice.

Leadership, in the sense of a person's quality to lead, is a multifaceted concept with many experts attempting to define it according to various views across various disciplines (Abasilim, 2024). The traditional and common way to define it is as a quality to lead people towards a certain goal through various ways (Yusup, 2022), especially ways that are generally seen as moral or adhering to certain ethics. This can be further expanded through the lens of the organization, to define leadership as a quality of the "director" to lead the organization as a whole towards a goal that is agreed upon (Peterson & Sorenson, 1991). Thus, director and leader are somewhat synonymous in the context of an organization, a person who holds the position to lead the organization and to direct it towards their goal. However, the previously mentioned definition of leadership is by no means the only definition that one should adhere to, the traditional or moral view and the view of organizational behavior differ from the aforementioned understanding in their very definition of leadership, rather than defining it as a "position" or a state in which one might acquire it, leadership is instead defined as a quality consisting of various traits which constitutes a person so they may lead the people efficiently in the context of organization behavior (Tang, 2019), or morally in the context of moral and ethical leadership, thus a person is called a "leader" if they are constituted by that very quality.

The distinguishing quality of the moral or ethical leader is how he is holistically constituted by morals and ethics, thereby using morality and ethics as his guide on how he should lead the people (Badrinarayanan et al., 2017). One of the defining characteristics of such leader is the alignment of his actions and his professed moral values, a fundamental quality known as integrity. Honesty, the alignment of one's words or actions with what is perceived to be real or what is professed, is arguably the very essence of integrity (Pratch, 2014), there is no integrity without honesty, should we trust a leader to be moral if he is known as a liar? The very fact that he is known

to be a liar renders his professed integrity and morality as false, and based on this alone, one should understand how foundational honesty to ethical leadership is.

Studies have shown how these moral values foster an environment in which mutual respect, trust, and loyalty are embedded or ingrained in the behavior of the people (Westover, 2024), for the people's trust in the moral consistency of their leader brought upon themselves the confidence and motivation to be moral as well (Hattke & Hattke, 2019). Thus, a leadership that is constituted by morals and ethics is not merely about achieving results, or to be entirely concerned about efficiency and how should one reach one's own goals as quickly as possible without putting morals into consideration, even so far as to ignore it completely which arguably is worse in the long-term even if it may work well in the short-term.

In addition to that, moral leadership that has genuine virtues ingrained within it stands in contrast to transformational leadership, which, although effective in inspiring and transforming the people in the secular sense, may not inherently uphold ethical standards and values. A leader that is "transformational" may lack the integrity that is inherent in ethical leadership and thus creates the potential for it to be morally ambiguous and may lead to harmful moral or material outcomes if such misalignment were to occur (Parry and Proctor-Thomson, 2002), and it is therefore not an invalid conclusion if one were to conclude that integrity and honesty are not something that are essential in transformational leadership (Effelsberg et al., 2013). Honesty is not emphasized in transformational leadership theories, one research that is published in 2020 provides an explanation of the elements that are commonly seen as essential to transformational leadership such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration (Bojović & Jovanović, 2020), while ethical considerations and moral values such as integrity are not among the essentials, thus supporting the point that there is not much emphasis given on integrity and honesty in the theories and interpretations of transformational leadership. If a leader who placed heavy emphasis on transformation does not emphasize honesty the same way he emphasizes transformation, will his role as a transformational leader be rendered null? It is arguable that it is not so, owing to the fact that honesty is not given much emphasis on the theories and interpretations of transformational leadership such as what is originally conceived as transformational by Bass (1985) (Parry and Proctor-Thomson, 2002), as opposed to its moral and ethical counterpart.

Perspectives on Honesty and Integrity

Honesty, and its later developed form Integrity, are core virtues that are celebrated as moral qualities that a human being ought to have across many cultures and philosophies, not merely as personal qualities but also as moral foundations that shape the ethical people or society as a whole, it goes beyond the personal realm and ought to be understood as virtues that are both personal and societal, influencing and shaping both realms. These virtues are universally acknowledged, especially the more archaic honesty, as qualities that should be aspired and sought after, reflected by the high importance and significance most cultures assign them to, for the influential nature of the moral virtues are in regard to human interactions and relations. The essential nature of these moral virtues on human morality and ethics represents the relevance and applicability of those virtues in various social concepts that may be tied to morality and ethics, and this certainly does not exclude leadership. Moreover, integrity, with honesty being its core, is indeed a form of moral or ethical expression and commitment to truthfulness, transparency, social cohesion, and moral consistency, acting as a guide to align one's actions with one's ethical beliefs, and this may certainly be practiced

by a leader as a particularly moral or ethical form of leadership (Reynolds et al., 2023; Kobayashi, 2004).

Throughout the western world, honesty is seen as one of the core moral virtues that is essential to the moral self, it is a virtue that is located in the very heart of the morals and ethics of peoples in the west. Since the ancient times, most, if not all, peoples and nations have concepts that is akin to honesty, and Europe is certainly not an exception to this. In Ancient Greece, there is a word that the philosophers used to describe a moral virtue that is characterized by the alignment of one's thoughts and emotions with one's actions and speech, it is called *eilikrineia* (meaning "purity, genuineness, honesty"), it is a word that is used to represent one whose intentions and actions are free from deceit or hypocrisy, one who is genuine in speech by reflecting their true intentions without lies or hidden motives. Aristotle described as the harmony of one's internal and one's external, that individuals who are virtuous and moral act in a way that is free of pretense, and that those virtues are not merely for display but it is, in actuality, deeply ingrained in the moral self (Nicomachean Ethics, [ca. 350 BCE]/1925).

In the eastern part of the world, honesty is also highly revered among the people whose ethics are ingrained in Confucianism, their ideals of *junzi* (literally means "princely one") is one of the teachings of Confucianism in which many people strive to be, the meaning of the word is now generally understood as a "man of virtue", one whose character embodies the core virtues of Confucianism. One of those virtues is a quality that is commonly known as *cheng* (meaning "sincerity, honesty, genuineness"), it is a quality that is described as the truthfulness of one's nature, one that is signified by the honesty of one's thoughts and actions, thereby creating a harmony of both the intentions and the expressions thereof (Liu & Stening, 2015). Therefore, one may see that *junzi* is one who embodies most, if not all, of those virtues including *cheng*, and that it is not a misrepresentation to define the man of virtue also as a man who lives by integrity, and one who is sincere in all aspects of his life.

The aforementioned virtues of the Greeks and the Chinese represent the foundational and inseparable nature of honesty and integrity from the moral self and the moral people. Moreover, they represent the ways of expressing those fundamental virtues of man that seek to pursue social cohesion, the enhancement of the ethical society and that seek to promote truthfulness among the people, thereby ingraining a deep sense of trust and trustworthiness of both the self and the society as a whole, which certainly lead to a morally and realistically better condition of human society.

In western ethical philosophy, it has been argued that honesty and integrity are in the essence of the moral self and are fundamental for us to understand how it is to behave in an ethical manner. Across western philosophical traditions, these virtues have been celebrated and lauded as praiseworthy traits, for their intrinsic value and their huge role in fostering trust, authenticity, and moral responsibility. Many philosophers of varying schools of thought have explored the two qualities and have attempted to elaborate on their role in ethical decision-making, placing an emphasis on the necessity of such virtues to the moral self and the broader societal implications of such moral constitution (Miller, 2021).

Just as it was stated in previous paragraphs, the western world has a long history in the philosophy of honesty and integrity, and the discussion of their necessity in society had long been discussed and argued since ancient times. The aforementioned figure, Aristotle, was certainly a part of the broader discussion on the philosophical perspectives on honesty and integrity, and to further add on the previously mentioned understanding of *eilikrineia*, Aristotle has also argued on its necessity alongside other virtues in reaching *eudaimonia* (meaning "well-being, prosperity,

flourishment, fortune”), that is, such moral virtues are necessary for man to reach virtuous flourishing in the way he defined it in his writings. He defines his virtuous view of honesty as a mean between dishonesty and excessive bluntness, advocating for a balance that reflects authenticity and moral responsibility as a part of the broader society. These virtues, he argued, are not isolated traits that have no direct correlation upon each other; rather, they are essential aspects of a moral and ethical life, enabling individuals to constitute themselves upon moral qualities and contribute to the moral fabric of society (Cox et al., 2021).

Immanuel Kant’s deontological ethics places honesty at the core of moral duty. According to Kant, truthfulness is a categorical imperative, a moral duty that must be upheld unconditionally, regardless of the consequences that it may bring. In his understanding, truthfulness is absolutely essential and unconditional, and therefore should be upheld without any sort of compromise so that the virtue may constitute one’s own subjectivity. For Kant, honesty is an expression of respect towards the dignity and autonomy of others, which enables the rational agent to form decisions that are informed and without manipulation or deceit, which are fundamentally opposed to honesty and truthfulness. This particular understanding of honesty requires one who subscribes to it to perceive honesty not merely as a trait or quality that is desirable, but as a fundamental requirement of ethical action. Kant further argues that integrity, understood as the alignment and consistency between one’s principles and actions, is crucial and essential for the moral agent to maintain self-respect and credibility (Cox et al., 2021).

Modern ethical theorists have expanded on classical ideas and thoughts, exploring how integrity and honesty function in contemporary moral contexts. For instance, integrity is often described as a trait that is holistic in nature, where one maintains consistency and coherence between their inner values and their outer expressions. It is therefore suggested that such virtue is not merely a moral quality that is only concerned about the person, but also about how one may navigate ethical and moral dilemmas while staying true to one’s own innate beliefs. In a similar manner, honesty is seen as a virtue that is directly influential and relational, seeing it as an essential part for fostering trust and authenticity, leading towards social cohesion and a generally better societal condition (Cox et al., 2021).

These philosophical perspectives underscore that honesty and integrity are not only concerned on the person and the personal dimension of ethics and morality; rather, they are foundational to a life that is ethical, and to be understood as an imperative for the moral agents who are also a part of the broader society (Cleary & Horsfall, 2013). Whether one may perceive the two through the lens of Aristotle, of Kant, or of the modern interpreters, the two virtues are ought to be understood as a representation and an expression of the moral self to truthfulness and social cohesion, where trust is fostered and thus leads to human flourishing or *eudaimonia* as Aristotle puts it. Therefore, it logically follows that practices of the given virtues are to be understood as contributions to moral coherence and mutual respect, thereby laying the groundwork for a society that is characterized by ethical virtues such as trustworthiness and justice.

The Connection to Leadership

Honesty is commonly regarded as a cornerstone of trust, an element that is in the essence of the act of fostering trust itself, one may argue that without honesty being the core of ethics of a particular group, trust will be a very difficult thing to be established in the minds of the people or even virtually impossible in a moral sense (Bellucci et al., 2019). In a moral view of leadership, honesty should not be simply defined as a quality that a leader should aspire, but it ought to be

defined as something that is at the foundation of leadership ethics, as it directly influences how the leader's credibility and dependability are perceived by their followers (Roberts & West, 2020). By expressing honesty in a consistent manner and placing it as one of the core values in which one may implement it in all aspects, one may foster an environment that is characterized by transparency and mutual respect, encouraging communications that are open which arguably leads to a functionally better outcome.

Empirical studies have repeatedly demonstrated the relationship of honesty and integrity in leadership, arguing that a leader who is honest and transparent in his communications and actions is more likely to gain the trust and loyalty of his followers. For instance, Palanski et al. (2014) in their research placed an emphasis on honesty and the way it enhances the perceived integrity of the leader, which in turn strengthens and fosters the trust of followers for the given leader. By doing so, the leader will then foster an environment that is connected in trust, which is an element that is crucial for the team's cohesion, as it creates a sense of psychological safety that enables individuals to voice their concerns, share their ideas, and engage in a more efficient but also ethical manner.

The virtue also plays a pivotal role in the role of maintaining consistency of the leader's words and actions, as it is previously mentioned that this other virtue may be defined as the alignment of one's internal thoughts and external expressions, a concept that is often referred to as integrity, and honesty is the heart of that virtue. Behavioral integrity, behaving in a way that is morally consistent, is key in sustaining trust, as it reassures the people that the leader will act in accordance to his expressed principles and values. By doing so, the leader will reduce uncertainty in the minds of his people and further reinforcing the belief that their leader is one who is reliable and is moral, and will continue to stay true to his values even in challenging situations and conditions (Kannan-Narasimhan & Lawrence, 2012)

Furthermore, honesty may also foster accountability, a thing that is vital in maintaining leadership, for the reason that the people will trust the leader as long as he is true to his principles, and they may hold him accountable if not so (Roberts & West, 2020). The leader who admits mistakes and takes responsibility for actions that he may have done is a leader who expresses and demonstrates transparency and authenticity, thereby leading to a deeper trust among the people since they know that they may held him accountable for his actions. This emphasis on transparency and accountability further solidifies and amplifies the connection of the leader and the people, ensuring that trust endures even in the face of challenges and setbacks.

Therefore, honesty is a moral trait that is indispensable for building trust and sustaining it in hopes for a better relationship. By promoting and instilling transparency, accountability, and integrity, the leader will create an environment where trust may flourish, paving the way for prosperity (Mehrotra et al., 2024). It not only affects the people morally and enhancing the morale of the followers, but also strengthens the overall effectiveness of leadership.

The cornerstone of ethical decision-making is integrity, by which the leader is provided with a moral paradigm that requires consistency from himself to navigate complex dilemmas and challenges throughout his time as a leader (Gottlieb & Sanzgiri, 1996). The decisions of the leader who is constituted by integrity is in contrast with decisions whose nature is merely to seek more profit and is purely based on expediency or external pressures, whereas decisions that are grounded in integrity are expressions and reflections of one who is committed to ethical virtues and one who is concerned with the alignment of their inner virtues and their acts, whether it is aligned or contradicting those personal virtues. This virtue, therefore, endows the leader with a sense of

morality to not only act based on his self-interest but also in the interest of his group and must be in accordance with his own moral code.

Studies emphasize the role of integrity in fostering ethical clarity. Leaders with high levels of integrity are more likely to weigh the moral implications of their choices, contemplating on whether or not their acts are truly aligned with the ethics of themselves and their group, and thus ensuring that what they decide is in accordance with both the values of the given group or organization and the societal norms and morals. Integrity is, therefore, identified as a trait or quality that is essential and is at the very core of the moral leader's constitution, which enables the leader to uphold ethical virtues even in the face of challenging situations or dilemmas (Mohi Ud Din & Zhang, 2023). For that very reason, integrity may be perceived as a help or an assisting force or value that drives the leader to prioritize fairness, justice, authenticity, transparency, and accountability in order to foster trust and respect that last for a long period of time, thereby creating a group or an environment that is imbued with social cohesion and a strong sense of ethics and trustworthiness.

One of the most important aspects of integrity is the fact that it endows the person with the moral sensibility to be able to resist compromises, especially in terms of moral or ethical matters. The leader who is constituted by that virtue will demonstrate an adherence to moral principles and values, staying true to his own moral sensibility in light of challenges and predicaments. As Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence (2012) argue that what they dub as behavioral integrity, the alignment of the leader's words and deeds, is critical and essential for the purpose of maintaining trust among the people or organization.

Reflective behavior on decision-making is also one of the ability which sets apart the leader that acts with integrity with who is not so (Miao et al., 2019), creating a consistency within his own self to act in accordance to his principles which in turn enables the leader to foster a culture, whether in the normative or organizational sense, that is ethically aware and thus endows both the leader and the people to have the moral capacity in order to create a moral environment, which may lead to an overall better condition due to the high level of trust and social cohesion (Holtug, 2021). This cultural emphasis on integrity will lead to the surety of ethical considerations being embedded in everyday life, or if it were to be said in the organizational context, in day-to-day operations, and will result in an environment that is transparent in its practices, reducing the likelihood of corruptions and unethical conduct (Das Neves & Vaccaro, 2013). Furthermore, the leader who model integrity will inspire the group or organization to adopt and act in a similar manner in accordance to the shared moral principles, creating an effect which strengthens the ethical foundation of the group as a whole (Mihelic et al., 2010).

Honesty and integrity are no less influential through the perspective of organizational behavior, they shape the way how employees interact, form decisions, and align themselves with the shared ethical values (Becker, 1998). The leader who embodies these virtues serves a moral role by which a standard of organizational behavior should be made in order to foster transparency, accountability, and mutual respect within the environment, which in this case is the workplace. By making honesty and integrity the priorities in which the organization should operate, the leader, therefore, may establish a cultural framework that encourages ethical conduct and making a cohesive organizational identity (White & Lean, 2007).

The role of the leader's integrity is paramount in cultivating trust and promoting an ethical behavior throughout the organization. If consistency is found in the leader's expressed inner beliefs and his outer expressed acts, it will reinforce a culture wherein accountability and authenticity are firmly established. Many studies, such as those by Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence (2012),

demonstrate that behavioral integrity, in the context of leadership, is the thing that influences what they call as the “ethical climate” of the organization, in which trust and accountability are fostered across all layers of the organization. This consistency not only reinforces and cultivates trust within the environment, but also reduces ambiguity in forming decisions which are aligned with the organization’s values in reaching the shared goal or purpose, thereby creating a sense of certainty for the employees.

And to further add on the importance of integrity and honesty, organizations that are driven by honesty and integrity often experience higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement in comparison to the organizations that are not. The perception that the leader is trustworthy and morally honest may be the driving factors to increase the sense of being valued among the employees, strengthening their commitment to the cause, which in this case is the goals of the organization (Wiltshire et al., 2013). This positive impact is, by no means, limited to the behavior of the single person; rather, it extends beyond it and thus fosters a commitment that is collective in nature to ethical excellence. Therefore, the effect of the ethical leader for the people, inspiring them to prioritize ethical considerations in their framework, is also can be applied in an organizational context, so if one were to consider what is vital in shaping the organization and its culture in order to create an ethical and efficient organization wherein trustworthiness and transparency are embedded in its very core, then one should at the very least consider the role of honesty and integrity in light of the aforementioned understanding.

Comparing Different Types of Leadership

The role of honesty and integrity vary widely among different types of leadership, each type has its own view on those two qualities, thereby creating a degree of variance on emphasizing their role in regards to leadership. Honesty and integrity have pivotal role or even paramount importance in types of leadership that is especially characterized by a semblance of ethics or the wholeness of it, among such types are transformational, ethical, and authentic leadership (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). The incorporation or embedment of those two values vary among the three types of leadership, each has its own perspective on the importance of honesty and integrity, whether it is merely qualities to be added or qualities that are in the essence of leadership itself.

Transformational leadership commonly refers to a practice of leadership whose main focus is transforming the people by inspiring them through strong vision, charisma, and deep sense of motivation, in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Although this type of leadership is arguably effective in driving change and innovation, its nature does not require prioritization of moral and ethical considerations. As Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002) previously observe, transformational leadership may lead followers towards unethical outcomes if the leader or the shared vision is not rooted in moral values and principles such as honesty and integrity. In contrast, a leadership that is ethical requires one who subscribes to it to prioritize moral values and considerations, in order to ensure that the given leader acts only in accordance to his expressed values and principles, aligning his internal beliefs with external expressions of those beliefs, and prioritizing the well-being, whether in the moral sense or the “real” sense, of his followers, paving the way to human flourishing and organizational efficiency (Bush et al., 2020). This particular arrangement of leadership creates a leader that is more resilient to potential abuses and misuses of power, as it renders honesty and integrity as uncompromisable principles.

Authentic leadership, similar to ethical leadership, places an emphasis on moral values such as honesty and integrity, though with a stronger concentration on transparency and authenticity.

The authentic leader is the one who strives to align his inner values and his outer actions and speech, creating a harmony between the internal self and the expressions of it, in order to foster trust by developing an authentic environment and genuine social fabrics. Authentic leadership should not be separated from the huge role of morality that influences the practice heavily, the leader is expected to achieve higher levels of agency, to develop one's own moral self and building the greater moral capacity to form the right and ethical decisions that are centered around truthfulness (Hannah et al., 2005).

Each type of leadership incorporates moral values such as honesty and integrity in different manners, but each of those types are arguably inseparable from honesty and integrity although in a quite varying degree, this indeed shows how paramount integrity and honesty are in leadership. Transformational leadership requires the two virtues in order to avoid unethical decisions and to inspire trust within a given group or organization, whereas ethical and authentic leadership places them in the very essence of the practice and thus ensuring the moral clarity and capacity of the leader and the people (Mohi Ud Din & Zhang, 2023).

Thus, we concur that honesty and integrity serve an important role as essential values across varying styles of leadership, shaping a morally and logically sound leader in order to foster the group's trust and overall moral capacity. By incorporating these virtues, the leader will enhance his own credibility, and fosters loyalty and trust among the given group, creating an ethical and efficient environment which may lead to human flourishing.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, honesty and integrity are fundamental values that constitute the ethical foundation of leadership. The multifaceted roles these virtues play in fostering trust, forming moral decisions, and influencing organizational behavior are certainly cannot be ignored. By examining cultural and philosophical perspectives on those values, such as those of the Ancient Greeks, Immanuel Kant, Confucianism and empirical studies which seem to suggest the fundamental roles of honesty and integrity, one may now conclude that the two virtues are indeed essential to leadership, not merely in the personal realm but also in the broader group level or even societal level.

However, there are still gaps left to be answered, such as the lack of empirical studies that examine honesty and integrity in specific contexts. Current studies often focus on contexts that are general in nature, thereby leaving gaps in understanding how these virtues manifest across various cultural, social, psychological, and organizational contexts (Rhode, 2006). Moreover, many studies often begin with the assumption and perspective that honesty and integrity are static traits rather than dynamic qualities that evolve alongside one's experience, outside demands, and challenges (Palanski et al., 2014). Future research should explore how leaders develop these values over time and how they adapt and reconstitute themselves in the face of changing circumstances, by doing so, it will provide a more nuanced understanding on how these virtues are practiced in various contexts.

Nevertheless, the fundamental role of honesty and integrity to leadership and their strong connection to trust, ethics, social cohesion, transparency, and accountability should be reiterated and emphasized, and this certainly includes the possibility of further research on this topic to deepen our understanding of it. Regardless whether one may disagree on how strong their connection to leadership really is, one simply cannot ignore or overlook their roles in fostering the aforementioned values, and their potential to further entrench ethics, morality, and overall efficiency to a given group or organization.

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