IDENTIFYING LEADERSHIP ETHICS: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF WARRICK'S (1981) LEADERSHIP STYLE IDENTIFIER FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Ethical leadership exists on a continuum and is influenced by the managerial skills, personal philosophy, and individual characteristics of a leader. While some leaders who follow a specific leadership style may demonstrate higher ethical standards than others, it is crucial to recognize that specific leadership styles alone cannot determine their ethicality. Leadership styles may vary due to the inherent imperfections of leaders and their inability to strictly adhere to a predefined framework. Therefore, it becomes crucial to prioritize the examination of ethical and unethical aspects as they serve as more significant determinants of the type of leader an individual embodies. This research paper focuses on the identification and examination of ethical and unethical elements within leadership. Rather than categorizing leaders into specific pre-defined styles, this study employs Warrick's (1981) Leadership Style Identifier as a framework to evaluate and differentiate between ethical and unethical leadership, implementing items from reliable and validated leadership measures. This analysis allows us to form a holistic understanding of how a leader's management skills, philosophy, and characteristics determine their levels of ethicality. By examining these aspects, we gain valuable insights into the factors that shape a leader's ethical stance and how they are perceived by their followers.

Keywords: *Leadership, Ethics*

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been a subject of continuous study, with researchers exploring various aspects of this complex phenomenon. Leadership, like other paradoxes, does not necessarily require a definitive resolution; instead, it can be embraced by acknowledging the existence of multiple valid ideas and solutions (Handy, 1995). There are over 66 leadership theories, creating a situation where leaders and scholars are left overwhelmed searching for an inclusive leadership theory (Mango, 2018). The existence of such a multitude of theories poses a hindrance to the advancement of progressive practice and research in leadership. Mango's (2018) research emphasizes the urgency of consolidating the multitude of leadership theories into a cohesive framework. This consolidation process serves to enhance the comprehension of leadership and enables more targeted and impactful leadership development initiatives. To gain insights into the nature of leadership ethics and consolidate leadership styles down to ethical and unethical components, it is essential to examine past research findings and frameworks, particularly those from Warrick (1981), who has paved the way for past, current, and future research in this field. Warrick's work provides valuable perspectives and serves as a foundational source for identifying and understanding different dimensions of leadership. His contributions have not only shaped our understanding of leadership styles and their makeup but also influenced subsequent research efforts into different leadership avenues. By building upon Warrick's pioneering work, we have been able to delve deeper into the complexities of leadership ethics, leading to further potential advancements in theory and practice.

Measuring leadership ethics can be a daunting task for researchers as many methods and scales have been used. According to Argyropoulou and Spyridakis (2022), multiple sources can be utilized to assess a leader's ethics, such as self-reports, 360-degree ratings, and the followers' judgments. Each source or technique has its advantages and disadvantages. The 360-degree rating is a multifaceted method used to