The Effect of Ethical Leadership on the Work Performance of Employees

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A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The study sought to investigate the impact of ethical leadership on the individual work performance of employees. To enhance the understanding of this concept and develop theoretical frameworks, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. The study employed a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The target population consisted of all employees at the Divine Word College of Laoag, and data were collected through research questionnaires. The gathered data were analyzed using the weighted mean and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

The study's findings reveal a significant correlation between ethical leadership and both task performance and counterproductive work behavior. This research contributes to the existing literature by examining the impact of ethical leadership on individual work performance. Through a descriptive and correlational research design, the study comprehensively assessed the relationship between ethical leadership and different dimensions of work performance. The results suggest that ethical leadership has a positive influence on task performance and decreases counterproductive work behavior. However, there was no significant correlation found between ethical leadership and contextual performance, indicating that other factors may have a greater impact on this aspect of employee performance.

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Introduction

An organization's performance relies not only on its financial capacity but also on factors such as leadership and employee behavior. Research by Hurduezeu (2015) highlights the role of leadership in improving organizational performance, while Nandasinghe (2020) emphasizes its impact on changing employee behavior. Good leadership enhances resilience and organizational performance, while bad leadership negatively affects both organizational and individual performance (Aboyasin & Abood, 2013). These findings emphasize the need for ethical leadership across various types of organizations.

Global examples, such as the Enron and WorldCom accounting fraud scandals, demonstrate how unethical leadership practices can lead to bankruptcy. These cases involved deceptive accounting practices, concealing toxic assets and debts, and misleading reports (Nigam & Vaidya, 2022; Bondarenko, 2022; George, 2021). Similar corporate scandals, including the recent indictment of BPI officials for involvement in Wirecard fraud in the Philippines (Ordonez, 2022), highlight the negative outcomes associated with unethical leadership. The persistent presence of unethical practices

413

can ultimately lead to bankruptcy and have devastating effects on employee trust, performance, stakeholder trust, and organizational performance (Aronson, 2001; Brown et al., 2005; Kanungo, 2001). These recurring scandals have motivated researchers to investigate ethical leadership in both private and public sectors (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Sims & Brinkmann, 2003).

Unethical leadership is not confined to business and financial sectors; it also occurs in educational institutions. Unethical practices in education may involve teacher-student relations, self-centered decision-making, poor emotional regulation (Oplatka, 2016), absenteeism, indiscreet information sharing, abuses of power, favoritism, and prioritizing personal gain (Sam, 2021). These practices can tarnish an institution's reputation and hinder employee or faculty performance. Identifying and addressing such unethical leadership practices early on is crucial to avoid negative outcomes. Although research on ethical leadership in organizational settings is growing, there is a scarcity of studies focusing on ethical leadership in the educational context.

The current study identified unethical practices specifically in the Divine Word College of Laoag, an educational institution. The study proposed interventions for eliminating unethical practices and fostering ethical leadership. It is divided into several parts, including the introduction, literature review, research methodology, data presentation and analysis, and results and discussion. By conducting this study, the goal is to contribute to the understanding of ethical leadership in educational settings and its implications.

Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to gain more understanding of the concepts of the study and establish the theories.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.

The Concept of Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are often used interchangeably, causing confusion among people. It is essential to understand the differences between the two roles to appropriately navigate situations. Leader-managers must be aware of their functions as both a leader and a manager. This knowledge enables them to determine when to assume each role, as they are inherently connected and exercised by the same person (Abun, 2018).

Various authors have provided different definitions of leadership. Bennis and Nanus (1985) describe leadership as the ability to provide a vision for an organization and turn that vision into reality. Handy (1993, as cited in Silva & Gomes, 2015) defines leadership as the capability to shape and share a vision that provides direction for others' work. Conger (1992) defines leadership as individuals who establish direction for a group, gain commitment to that direction, and motivate members to achieve the desired outcomes. These definitions emphasize the importance of setting a long-term direction or vision for the organization (Abun, 2018). A leader must not only provide a vision but also have the capability to implement it, which requires cooperation with employees. Empowerment is another crucial element of leadership, involving granting employees the power to make decisions and take necessary steps in their work (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Honold, 1997; Herrenkohl et al., 1999).

Management is defined differently by various authors. Stoner (1995) defines management as the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational efforts to achieve stated goals. Koontz and Weihrich (1988) describe management as the art of getting things done through people in a formally organized group. Fayol (1984) views management as a process consisting of activities such as planning, organizing, mobilizing human resources, and implementing control to achieve goals. Haimann and Scott (1970) define management as a social and technical process that utilizes resources, influences human action, and facilitates changes to accomplish organizational goals.

The definitions of leadership and management highlight their differences. Bennis and Nanus (1985) summarize this distinction by stating that "managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right things." Managers excel in routines and tasks, while leaders focus on influencing others, creating a vision for change, and inspiring people. Both roles involve working with people and influencing them to achieve objectives, but they have distinct focuses. Management emphasizes planning, organizing, and controlling to accomplish objectives, while leadership emphasizes creating a vision, influencing, empowering, and motivating people to accomplish the vision (Wajdi, 2017; Liphadzi et al., 2017).

Based on the idea of Bennis and Nanus (1985), Boynton (2016) identified several characteristics of leadership, including a clear vision, inspiring others to be leaders, driving change, leading by example, stimulating ideas, experimenting with new concepts, and listening. Since leaders also engage in management activities, Baker (2014) suggests four elements of the leadership/management continuum: vision, strategy, operations, and tactics. A leader's first skill is to create a shared vision that others can visualize, while management translates strategies into operational activities.

Ethical Leadership and Its Dimensions to be Measured

Achieving high organizational performance requires not only knowledge, skills, and great financial capital but also requires ethical behavior or ethical leadership as pointed out by Yukl, et al., (2013) that to be effective, a leader must demonstrate ethical leadership behavior in addition to task, relations, and change-oriented leader behavior. But what ethical leadership is about is not even clear. The definition of ethical leadership and its dimensions to be measured are varied from one author to another. Kanungo (2001) argued that ethical leaders engage in ethical behavior that considers its good effect on others which allows them to avoid behaviors that cause harm to others. Kanungo's (2001) concept of ethical leadership is driven by accepted beliefs and appropriate judgment rather than self-interest which is beneficial for followers, organization, and society (Kalshoven, et al., 2011). A similar idea about ethical leadership is also pointed out by Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005). They suggested that a combination of integrity, ethical standards, and fair treatment of employees are considered important elements of ethical leadership. According to Kanungo (2001) and Aronson (2001), a major concern of ethical leadership is the effect of their behaviors on others. This is emphasized by Brown, et. al. (2005) that an ethical leader behaves appropriately in dealing with others and promotes good conduct through a way of communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. Brown, et al. (2005) and Trevino, et al. (2003) further argued that ethical leader plays role model for their followers and use reward and punishment to promote ethical behavior. Followers will behave similarly to their leader through imitation and observation learning. Ethical leadership is expected to have a positive effect on employees' behavior which result in good organizational performance (Trevino, et al, 2003).

The effect of many different definitions of ethical leadership is concerning the dimensions of ethical leadership to be measured. The authors present different ideas. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008), initially conducted a study measuring ethical leadership for top management teams and three years later, a follow-up study was done by De Hoogh and Den Hartog, Kalshoven, (2011) which was revised and called Ethical Leadership Work Questionnaires (ELWQ) and suggested that ethical leadership is a multidimensional construct which extended from three dimensions of the original study (fairness, power sharing and role clarification) to seven dimensions. Four additional dimensions are people-oriented behavior, integrity, ethical guidance and concern for sustainability. These dimensions are also found in Brown, et al (2005). Based on the literature review, Brown, et al. (2005), and De Hoogh, Den Hartog, and Kalshoven, (2011) identified several dimensions. The first dimension is *fairness* as part of ethical leadership behavior. An ethical leader treats others fairly and has no favouritism. The second is also *power sharing*. An ethical leader will allow subordinates to participate in decision-making, listen to their ideas and concerns and at the same time, empower employees to make decisions on their own related to their work problems (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009, Resick, et. al, 2006). The third-dimension ethical leadership is *role clarification*. An ethical leader clarifies responsibilities, expectations and performance goals so that followers know what is expected of them. The fourth dimension is *people orientation*. An ethical leader show concern for people. This fourth dimension was also revealed by the study of

Trevino, et al. (2003) when they interviewed people to describe an ethical leader and based on the people's description, an ethical leader must concern for people which is shown through ethical behaviors like caring, respecting, supporting subordinates and ensuring their needs are met (Kanungo & Conger, 1993). The fifth dimension of ethical leadership is *ethical guidance.* An ethical leader must communicate ethical or moral values to be followed by others and explain those values to followers and reward those who behave ethically. The sixth dimension is *integrity* which suggests that an ethical leader must align with what he/she says and what he/she does. Yukl (2006) pointed out that an ethical leader keeps his/her promises and behaves consistently. The eighth dimension is a *concern for sustainability* which recommends that an ethical leader tend to work in an environmentally friendly and encourage people to recycle materials to be used for saving the environment. These multidimensional measures suggest that ethical leadership is not only about traits such as integrity and honesty but also about efforts to make subordinates accountable for behaving ethically. Another researcher who viewed ethical leadership as a multidimensional construct is Wulumbawa, et al (2008). In their study measuring authentic leadership, there are four dimensions identified namely self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspectives and balanced processing. Adding to the existing dimensions, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) develop questionnaires to measure servant leadership and identified five scales which include altruism, organizational stewardship, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and emotional healing. The overlapping dimensions presented by different authors lead to the loss of focus on which dimensions are related to ethical leadership.

Yukl, et al., (2011) criticized those dimensions proposed by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008), Brown, et.al (2005) and Kalshoven, et al (2011) by pointing out that there are only three dimensions that are relevant to measuring ethical leadership which are fairness, integrity and ethical guidance, while others are not relevant to measure ethical leadership. Even the four dimensions that are found in the authentic leadership measurement of Wulumbawa, et.al.(2008), there are only two dimensions that are relevant to measure ethical leadership which are internalized moral perspective and relational transparency. Internalized moral perspective means a leader's behavior is guided by internal moral standards and personal moral values. Relational transparency refers to a leader who reveals his/her values and beliefs accurately (Yukl, et.al, 2011). Criticizing the dimensions proposed by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Yukl, et.al. (2006) pointed out that there is only one dimension in their proposed scale that is relevant to ethical leadership which is altruism, while the other three dimensions are not relevant to measure ethical leadership. Further Yukl, et al.(2013) accused the prior theory and research on ethical leadership as the main cause of the conceptual confusion about the scope of the ethical leadership construct domain and the appropriate way to measure it. According to Yukl, et.al (2006), the most dimensions that are relevant to ethical leadership are (a) honesty and integrity (including consistency of actions with espoused values), (b) behavior intended to communicate or enforce ethical standards, (c) fairness in decisions and the distribution of rewards (no favouritism or use of rewards to motivate improper behavior), and (d) behavior that shows kindness, compassion, and concern for the needs and feelings of others (rather than attempts to manipulate, abuse, and exploit others for personal gain). Based on the review of the different dimensions of ethical leadership presented in different studies (ethical leadership survey of Treviño, Brown, and Hartman, 2003, ethical leadership work questionnaires or ELWQ of De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2008), Kalshoven, De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2011), authentic leadership questionnaires of Wulumbawa, 2008, servant leadership questionnaires of Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006, and perceived leadership integrity survey or PLIS), Yukl, et al, (2006) developed ethical leadership questionnaires (ELQ) which contain 10 items that describe ethical leadership. The 10 items represent honesty, integrity, fairness, altruism, consistency of behavior with espoused values, communication of ethical values, and providing ethical guidance which was found in those different studies. Yukl, et al, (2006) developed ELQ as a *uni-dimensional* construct and not a multi-dimensional construct as recommended by different researchers and from 10 items becomes 8 items only that we use in the current research.

 Based on the evaluation of the current researcher concerning the several dimensions of ethical leadership presented by Kalshoven, et. al, (2011), Wulumbawa, (2008), Barbuto & Wheeler, (2006), Craig and Gustafson (1998), the current researcher agrees with the Yukl, et. al., (2013) that other dimensions of ethical leadership are not relevant to measuring ethical leadership, except honesty, integrity, fairness, altruism, consistency of behavior with espoused

values, communication of ethical values, and providing ethical guidance which was all found those studies. Therefore, the current study adopts the uni-dimensional ethical leadership questionnaires of Yukl, et al. (2013).

Achieving high organizational performance requires ethical leadership in addition to knowledge, skills, and financial capital. However, the definition of ethical leadership and its dimensions vary among authors. Kanungo (2001) and Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005) emphasize the importance of considering the well-being of others, integrity, ethical standards, fair treatment, and serving as a role model.

De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008), Wulumbawa et al. (2008), and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) Treviño, Brown, and Hartman, 2003, De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2008), Kalshoven, De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2011), Yukl, et al, (2006) propose multidimensional constructs of ethical leadership that include various dimensions such as fairness, power sharing, role clarification, people orientation, ethical guidance, integrity, and concern for sustainability.

Yukl et al. (2011) argue that only fairness, integrity, and ethical guidance are relevant dimensions for measuring ethical leadership. They suggest that honesty, consistency with espoused values, communication of ethical values, and concern for others' needs and feelings are important aspects of ethical leadership.

Based on the evaluation of different dimensions (Kalshoven, et. al, 2011, Wulumbawa, 2008, Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, Craig and Gustafson, 1998), the current researcher agrees with Yukl et al. (2013) that other dimensions are not relevant. Therefore, the study adopts the uni-dimensional ethical leadership questionnaire developed by Yukl et al. (2013), which includes honesty, integrity, fairness, altruism, consistency of behavior with espoused values, communication of ethical values, and providing ethical guidance.

Individual Work Performance and Its Dimensions

The performance of an organization depends on the individual work performance of employees. Thus, one of the focuses of management is managing individual work performance. But the discussion on the dimensions to be measured along with individual work performance drew different opinions. Sonnentag & Fresse, (2002) argued that individual work performance is not only about the output produced by the individual employees but it is beyond the output which includes behavioral aspects. The concept of Sonnentag and Frese (2002) which included output beside behavior in the performance evaluation influences, other researchers, to measure individual work performance on the work of the person (Bergeron, 2007, Griffin, et al., 2000) and is concentrated on the evaluation of the work output but neglecting the behavioral components. This one-sided evaluation of performance has drawn criticism. Many scholars have criticized this approach because it ignores the behavior dimensions of performance (Welbourne, 1998, Vera-Silva & Gouveia-Rodrigues, 2015). However, scholars agree that the absence of a clear definition of individual work performance is the main reason for such confusion. The solution is that there must be a common agreement on the definition of work performance as a basis for determining the dimensions of work performance. Campbell (1990) defined as cited by Abun, et al (2021) defined work performance as "the act of doing a job and it is a means to reach the goal within a job or organization". This definition emphasizes work performance as a means to achieve objectives and it has nothing to do with the output. Thus, measuring work performance is measuring the behavior of the employees that lead to the attainment of the goals. The concept led to a consensus among the researchers that measuring work performance is not about the output which is beyond the control of a person (Ramos-Villagrasa, et.al, 2019, Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, Koopmans, et al., 2013) but it is about the behaviors that are supporting for producing the output (Ramos-Villagrasa, et. al., 2019, Bergeron, 2007, Daderman, et al., 2020, Campbell, 1990, Griffin, et. al., 2000) that are under the control of the employees. As a result of this consensus, all researchers agree that individual work performance is multidimensional (Ramos-Villagrasa, et.al. 2019, Koopmans, et.al, 2016) and not a uni-dimensional construct. However, there are still disagreements among the researchers about what the dimensions are. Each scholar proposed different dimensions of work performance to be evaluated. For example, Koopmans, et. al., (2011) conducted a literature review, and as a result of the review, they identified similarities of different dimensions proposed by different researchers, and they finally proposed three dimensions which are called ***task performance,***

contextual performance, and contextual performance. These three dimensions are drawn from the similarities of different dimensions presented by different researchers such as Murphy (1989: task behavior, interpersonal behavior, downtime behavior or destructive behavior), Campbell (1990: job-specific task proficiency, non job specific task proficiency, written and oral communication, maintaining personal discipline, facilitating peer and team performance, supervision and leadership), Borman and Motowidlo (1993: task performance and contextual performance), Viswesvaran (1993:productivity, quality, job knowledge, communication competence, effort, leadership, administrative competence, interpersonal competence, compliance with and acceptance of authority, overall work performance), Hunt (1996: adherence to rules, industriousness, thoroughness, schedule flexibility, attendance, off-task behavior, unruliness, theft and drug misuse), Allworth and Hesketh (1999: Task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance), Viswesvaran and Ones (2000: Task performance, Organizational citizenship behavior, Counterproductive behavior), Michel (2000: Task performance, Interpersonal performance, Civic performance), Pulakos et al (2000: Task performance, Contextual performance, Adaptive performance), Rotundo and Sackett (2002: Task performance Organizational citizenship behavior Counterproductive behavior), and Bakker et al (2004: In-role performance and Extra-role performance).

The current study adopts the three dimensions of work performance as recommended by Koopmans, et al (2011) namely ***task performance, a contextual performance*** which is the same as organizational citizenship behavior and ***counterproductive behavior***. These three dimensions are similar to all the dimensions that we have presented above and these three dimensions are also similar to the dimensions presented by Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) which include task performance, organizational citizenship behavior which contains contextual performance and counterproductive behavior. To set the direction of the study, these three dimensions are adopted to represent all the dimensions offered by different authors.

The performance of an organization is influenced by the individual work performance of its employees. Therefore, management focuses on managing individual work performance. However, there is a disagreement on the dimensions that should be measured alongside individual work performance. Sonnentag and Frese (2002) argued that individual work performance includes not only the output produced by employees but also their behavioral aspects. This concept influenced other researchers, such as Bergeron (2007) and Griffin et al. (2000), to primarily measure work output while neglecting the behavioral components. This one-sided evaluation of performance has received criticism from scholars who argue that it ignores the behavioral dimensions (Welbourne, 1998; Vera-Silva & Gouveia-Rodrigues, 2015).

The lack of a clear definition for individual work performance is identified as the main reason for this confusion. To address this, there is a need for a common agreement on the definition of work performance as a basis for determining its dimensions. Campbell (1990), as cited by Abun et al. (2021), defined work performance as "the act of doing a job and a means to reach the goal within a job or organization." This definition emphasizes work performance as the behaviors that lead to goal attainment, rather than focusing solely on output. Consequently, measuring work performance involves assessing the employee's behaviors that contribute to achieving objectives.

This consensus among researchers indicates that measuring work performance is not about output, which is beyond an individual's control (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; Koopmans et al., 2013), but rather about the behaviors that support output production (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019; Bergeron, 2007; Daderman et al., 2020; Campbell, 1990; Griffin et al., 2000) and are within the control of employees. As a result, researchers agree that individual work performance is a multidimensional construct (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2019; Koopmans et al., 2016).

However, there is still disagreement among researchers regarding the specific dimensions of work performance. Each scholar proposes different dimensions to be evaluated. For instance, Koopmans et al. (2011) conducted a literature review and identified similarities among dimensions proposed by various researchers. Based on this review, they proposed three dimensions: task performance, contextual performance (similar to organizational citizenship behavior), and counterproductive behavior. These dimensions draw from the similarities found in dimensions presented by

Murphy (1989), Campbell (1990), Borman and Motowidlo (1993), Viswesvaran (1993), Hunt (1996), Allworth and Hesketh (1999), Viswesvaran and Ones (2000), Michel (2000), Pulakos et al. (2000), Rotundo and Sackett (2002), and Bakker et al. (2004).

The current study adopts the three dimensions of work performance recommended by Koopmans et al. (2011): task performance, contextual performance (equivalent to organizational citizenship behavior), and counterproductive behavior. These dimensions encompass the various dimensions presented by different authors, including those proposed by Viswesvaran and Ones (2000).

Task Performance

The definition of task performance varies from one author to another. Borman & Motowidlo, (1993) defined task performance as "the effectiveness with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services". This definition refers to task performance as the technical skills and knowledge of the job incumbents to perform his/her tasks effectively that lead to the organization's technical core. In other words, task performance refers to task proficiency or competency that someone possesses to perform the job effectively. It includes knowledge, and skills (Griffin, et.al., 2007, Wisecarver, 2007, Campbell, 1990, Rollins & Fruge, 1992). While Koopmans, et al., (2011) defined it as "the core job responsibilities of the employees which are also called "in-role prescribed behaviorand are reflected in specific outcomes and deliverables as well as their quantity and quality. This concept emphasizes task performance as the core job responsibilities of the employees prescribed in their job description that lead to the outcomes. The definition of Koopmans, et al. (2011) is similar to the definition presented by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) who defined task performance as "in-role behavior," that is demanded by the job to achieve individual and organizational goals (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999, Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994, Behrman & Perreault, 1982). In short, based on those definitions, task performance is a core behaviorthat is exercised by the person demanded directly by the task to achieve the goal which is supported by knowledge and skills of the task.

The definition of task performance varies among authors. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) define it as the effectiveness of job incumbents in performing activities that contribute to the organization's technical core. This refers to the technical skills and knowledge needed to effectively carry out job tasks that support the organization's core operations. Task performance is often associated with task proficiency or competency, including knowledge and skills (Griffin et al., 2007; Wisecarver, 2007; Campbell, 1990; Rollins & Fruge, 1992). Koopmans et al. (2011), on the other hand, define task performance as the core job responsibilities of employees, also known as "in-role prescribed behavior." This definition emphasizes that task performance involves fulfilling the specific outcomes and deliverables outlined in the job description, both in terms of quantity and quality. This aligns with Goodman and Svyantek's (1999) definition of task performance as the "in-role behavior" required by the job to achieve individual and organizational goals (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Behrman & Perreault, 1982).

In summary, based on these definitions, task performance refers to the core behaviors exercised by individuals directly demanded by the tasks at hand to achieve goals, supported by the knowledge and skills relevant to the task.

Contextual Performance

Measuring employees' performance is not just limited to the core task of the employees but it goes beyond the "in-role behavior" which is called contextual performance or extra-role behavior. As usual, not all authors defined contextual performance in the same way. Each researcher defines it differently. Podsakoff *et al.*, (2000) define contextual performance as an extra behavior exercised by the employees that affect the effective functioning of the organization without necessarily affecting employees' productivity. These are positive behaviors that are not reflected in their job descriptions but they may help improve the working environment of the organization (Kalia & Bhardwaj,

2019). Borman and Motowidlo, (1993), and Motowidlo and Van Scotter, (1994) define contextual performance as a volitional behavior that is exercised voluntarily by the employees that help promote the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which task performance occurs. Examples of contextual performance behaviors are voluntary services offered by the employees to help the organization, and helping co-employees who encountered difficulties in their work. As Dogru (2019) suggested that contextual performance is the degree to which the employees behave positively consisting of volunteering for extra duties, helping co-workers, and cooperating with them. As Yedgarian (2021) argued that it is about the relationship with other employees which goes beyond just doing the job which contributes to organizational effectiveness. Measuring employee performance extends beyond their core tasks to include contextual performance or extra-role behavior. However, the definition of contextual performance varies among researchers. Podsakoff et al. (2000) define it as additional behaviors that employees engage in, which positively impact the functioning of the organization without necessarily affecting their productivity. These behaviors, not explicitly outlined in job descriptions, contribute to improving the work environment (Kalia & Bhardwaj, 2019).

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) and Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) describe the contextual performance as voluntary behaviors undertaken by employees to enhance the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which task performance takes place. Examples include providing voluntary services to assist the organization and helping co-workers facing difficulties in their work. Dogru (2019) suggests that contextual performance encompasses positive behaviors such as volunteering for extra duties, assisting colleagues, and collaborating with them. Yedgarian (2021) argues that it involves fostering relationships with other employees that go beyond the scope of the job, ultimately contributing to organizational effectiveness.

Counterproductive Behavior

Individual work performance does not limit to task and contextual performance but it includes counterproductive behavior. Zhou (2020) defines counterproductive behaviors as "employee voluntary behaviors that harm organizations (CWB-O) or people working in the organizations (CWB-P). Examples of behaviors may include destroying company property, calling in sick when not ill, insulting another employee, and stealing something from the employer. Van Eerde (2016) defines counterproductive behavior as negative behaviors directed against other individuals in the organization or the organization, and other employees. Examples of these behaviors are procrastination, theft, using the employer's time for personal gain, absenteeism, not being present at work, and being at work but not engaging in the behavior that is required by the job. Lyons (2019) pointed out different reasons behind counterproductive behaviors such as thrill-seeking and status enhancement to laziness and seeking revenge. According to her, vengeance is a powerful motivator behind counterproductive behavior. When the employees feel that they have been treated unfairly, they are willing to get even by revenge. These behaviors are usually directed toward co-workers and supervisors and the organization itself.
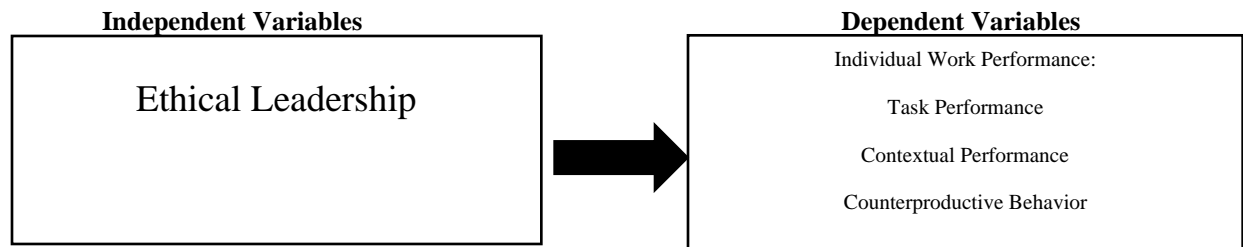
Individual work performance encompasses not only task and contextual performance but also includes counterproductive behavior. Counterproductive behavior is defined by Zhou (2020) as voluntary actions by employees that harm either the organization (CWB-O) or individuals within the organization (CWB-P). Examples of such behaviors include damaging company property, falsely calling in sick, insulting colleagues, and stealing from the employer.

Van Eerde (2016) defines counterproductive behavior as negative actions directed at individuals or the organization itself. Examples of these behaviors include procrastination, theft, using work time for personal gain, absenteeism, and failing to fulfill job requirements while physically present at work.

Lyons (2019) highlights various motivations behind counterproductive behaviors, ranging from seeking excitement and gaining status to laziness and seeking revenge. According to Lyons, a strong driver of counterproductive behavior is the desire for vengeance. When employees perceive unfair treatment, they may seek revenge by engaging in harmful behaviors directed at co-workers, supervisors, or the organization.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables	**Dependent Variables**
Ethical Leadership	Individual Work Performance: Task Performance Contextual Performance Counterproductive Behavior

Source: Yukl, et al. (2006), and Koopmans, et.al (2014)

Figure 1: The conceptual framework explains the relationship between ethical leadership and individual work performance. Ethical leadership affects individual work performance.

Statement of the Problems

The study examined the effect of ethical leadership on individual work performance. It specifically answered the following questions:

1. **What is the ethical leadership of administrators?**
2. **What is the individual work performance in terms of**
   2.1 task performance
   2.2 contextual performance
   2.3 counterproductive work behavior
3. **Is there a relationship between ethical leadership and individual work performance?**

Assumption

The study assumes that ethical leadership influences the individual work performance of employees.

Hypothesis

Ashfaq, et. al. (2021), and Chinwe, et. al. (2017) found in their study that ethical leadership affects the work engagement and organizational commitment of employees. The study suggests that ethical leadership and employee treatment influence the individual work performance of the employees.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The current study limits its investigation to the effect of ethical leadership, on individual work performance along with three dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior. It limits its population only to the employees of the Divine Word College of Laoag, Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

Research Methodology

A requirement for scientific research is the right research methodology, and therefore, this part presents the process of the study. The study was conducted through the use of appropriate research methodologies such as research design, data gathering instruments, population, the locale of the study, data gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. Descriptive research is a method that focuses on describing the characteristics of a population or phenomena being studied, emphasizing the "what" rather than the "why" (Baht, 2020). In this study, descriptive research was utilized to determine the level of ethical leadership and its impact on the individual work performance of employees in Divine Word Colleges located in the Ilocos Region.

The descriptive research design was also employed to provide profiles, frequency distributions, and descriptions of the characteristics of individuals, situations, phenomena, or relationship variables (Ariola, 2006, as cited by Abun, 2021). The study aimed to capture and present a clear picture of "what is" based on the data collected.

Additionally, the study utilized a descriptive correlational method to examine the relationship between ethical leadership and individual work performance. This approach allowed the researchers to assess the level of ethical leadership and explore its impact on employees' work performance.

The Locale of the Study

The locale of the study was Divine Word College of Laoag and Divine Word College of Vigan. These two colleges are located in two different provinces which are Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte.

Population

The study included all employees and faculty members of Divine Word Colleges in the Ilocos Region as the population. Total enumeration sampling was employed, meaning that every member of the population was included in the study. The sample size consisted of 250 respondents, selected from the faculty and employees, who participated in the study.

Data Gathering Instruments

The study adopted validated questionnaires of Yukl, et al. (2013) on ethical leadership, and Koopmans, et.al (2014) on individual work performance.

Data Gathering Procedures

In the process of data gathering, the researcher sent letters to the presidents of the colleges, requesting them to allow the researcher to survey the college.

The retrieval of questionnaires was arranged between the President's representative and the researcher with the help of employees and faculty of the college.

Statistical Treatment of Data

In line with the study's descriptive assessment and correlational research design, both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were utilized. To assess the level of ethical leadership and individual work performance, the weighted mean was employed. Additionally, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was utilized to determine the correlation between ethical leadership and individual performance. These statistical measures were chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the variables under investigation and explore their relationships.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

Statistical Range	**Descriptive Interpretation**
4.21-5.00	*Strongly agree/Very High*
3.41-4.20	*Agree/High*
2.61-3.40	*Somewhat agree/Moderate*
1.81-2.60	*Disagree/Low*
1.00-1.80	*Strongly disagree/Very Low*

Data Presentation and Analysis

This part presents the result of the data and interpretation. The presentation follows the statement of the problems of the study.

Problem 1: What is the ethical leadership of administrators?
Table 1: Ethical Leadership

	Ethical Leadership	**Mean**	**DI**
No	**Indicators**		
1	Shows a strong concern for ethical and moral values.	3.48	A/H
2	Communicates clear ethical standards for members.	3.40	SWA/M
3	Sets an example of ethical behavior in his/her decisions and actions	3.35	SWA/M
4	Is honest and can be trusted to tell the truth	3.44	A/H
5	Insists on doing what is fair and ethical even when it is not easy	3.99	A/H
6	Talks about the importance of honesty and integrity	3.36	SWA/M
7	Can be trusted to carry out promises and commitments	3.43	A/H
8	Holds members accountable for using ethical practices in their work	3.42	A/H
	Composite Mean	**3.41**	**A/H**

Source: *Yukl, et al. (2006)*

Legend:
4.21-5.00   Strongly agree/Very High
3.41-4.20   Agree/High
2.61-3.40   Somewhat agree/Moderate
1.81-2.60   Disagree/Low
1.00-1.80   Strongly disagree/Very Low

Research studies have consistently demonstrated the significant influence of ethical leadership on employee behavior and organizational performance (Malik et al., 2016; Bahadori et al., 2021). Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the conduct of employees, as well as their overall performance.

Based on the data presented in the table, the composite mean for ethical leadership of administrators is 3.41, indicating an interpretation of "agree/high". This suggests that, on the whole, the ethical leadership of the management is not exceptionally high, nor is it low or moderate, but rather falls on the higher end. The employees perceive that administrators are genuinely concerned about moral values, effectively communicate ethical standards to employees, serve as positive role models by demonstrating honesty and integrity, treat employees fairly, emphasize the importance of honesty and integrity, establish trust, and hold individuals accountable for their moral behavior. These findings highlight the presence of ethical leadership practices within the organization, which positively impact employee behavior and contribute to a favorable work environment.

Problem 2: What is the individual work performance in terms of

    2.1 task performance
    2.2 contextual performance
    2.3 counterproductive work behavior

Table 2: Task Performance

	Task Performance	Mean	DI
No	**Indicators**		
1	I manage to plan my work so that it was done on time	3.65	**A/H**
2	My planning was optimal	3.64	**A/H**
3	I kept in mind the results that I have to achieve in my work	3.66	**A/H**
4	I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work	3.63	**A/H**
5	I knew how to set the right priorities	3.64	**A/H**
6	I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort	3.65	**A/H**
	Composite Mean	**3.64**	**A/H**

Source: Koopmans, et.al (2014)

Organizational performance is closely tied to employees' job satisfaction, which in turn influences their task performance (Veeraragavan & Arulkumar, 2021). Therefore, management must prioritize and enhance employees' task performance.

Based on the data presented, the composite mean for employees' task performance is 3.64, indicating an interpretation of "agree/high". This suggests that, overall, the task performance of employees falls within a high range. When examining each indicator separately, all items consistently receive ratings within the same level of the mean range. Employees express agreement with their ability to effectively plan their work to meet deadlines, keep the desired outcomes in mind, differentiate between main and side issues, prioritize tasks appropriately, and efficiently complete their work with minimal time and effort.

These findings highlight that employees perceive themselves as performing their tasks at a high level, which can positively impact organizational performance. It underscores the importance of fostering job satisfaction and supporting employees in optimizing their task performance.

Table 3: Contextual Performance

	Contextual Performance	Mean	DI
No	**Indicators**		
1	I took on extra responsibilities	3.74	**A/H**
2	I started a new task myself when my old ones were finished	3.68	**A/H**
3	I took on a challenging work task, when available	3.62	**A/H**
4	I worked at keeping my job knowledge up-to-date	3.70	**A/H**
5	I worked at keeping my job skills up-to-date	3.70	**A/H**
6	I came up with creative solutions to new problems	3.66	**A/H**
7	I kept looking for new challenges in my job	3.72	**A/H**
8	I did more than was expected of me	3.66	**A/H**
9	I actively participated in work meetings	3.71	**A/H**
10	I actively look for ways to improve my performance at work	3.73	**A/H**
11	I grasped opportunities when they presented themselves	3.66	**A/H**
12	I knew how to solve difficult situations and setbacks quickly	3.74	**A/H**
	Composite Mean	**3.69**	**A/H**

Source: Koopmans, et.al (2014)

Engaging in organizational citizenship behavior goes beyond fulfilling the tasks outlined in the job description and has a significant impact on organizational performance. This behavior entails employees voluntarily contributing to the overall well-being of the organization (Kalia & Bhardwaj, 2019).

According to the data presented in the table, the composite mean for employees' contextual performance is 3.69, indicating an interpretation of "agree/high". This suggests that, overall, employees' contextual performance falls within a high range. When examining each indicator separately, all items consistently receive ratings within the same level of the mean range. Employees agree that they willingly take on additional responsibilities, embrace challenging tasks, continuously update their knowledge and skills, seek new opportunities in their roles, exceed expectations, actively participate in meetings, seize available opportunities, and demonstrate quick problem-solving abilities.

These findings emphasize the importance of employees' contextual performance in contributing to the organization's success. It highlights the value of employees' willingness to go beyond their prescribed duties and actively engage in

behaviors that benefit the organization. Fostering and encouraging such positive voluntary behavior can further enhance organizational performance.

Table 4: Counterproductive behavior

	Counterproductive behavior	Mean	DI
No	Indicators		
1	I complained about unimportant matters at work	3.08	SWA/M
2	I made problems greater than they were at work	3.08	SWA/M
3	I focused on the negative aspects of a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects	3.10	SWA/M
4	I spoke with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work	3.08	SWA/M
5	I spoke with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work	3.09	SWA/M
6	I did less than was expected of me	3.14	SWA/M
7	I managed to get off from a work task	2.98	SWA/M
8	I sometimes did nothing, when I should have been working	2.99	SWA/M
	Composite Mean	3.07	SWA/M

Source: Koopmans, et.al (2014)

Counterproductive work behavior poses a threat to organizational performance and can negatively impact the overall work environment (Shen & Lei, 2022; Sypniewska, 2020). Management must monitor and address such behaviors to maintain a positive work atmosphere and enhance productivity.

Based on the data presented in the table, the composite mean for employees' counterproductive work behavior is 3.07, indicating a interpretation of "somewhat agree/moderate". This suggests that, overall, employees' engagement in counterproductive behavior falls within a moderate range. When examining each indicator separately, all items consistently receive ratings within the same level of mean range with the same interpretation of "somewhat agree/moderate". Employees somewhat agree that they engage in behaviors such as complaining about unimportant matters, exaggerating problems, focusing on negative aspects of work, discussing negative aspects with colleagues, failing to meet expectations, leaving work early, and engaging in non-work-related activities instead of working.

These findings highlight the need for management to address and mitigate counterproductive work behavior among employees. By addressing the underlying causes and providing support and guidance, organizations can foster a more positive work environment and promote higher levels of productivity.

Problem 3: Is there a relationship between ethical leadership and individual work performance?

Table 5: Correlation coefficients obtained on the test of the relationship between   ethical   leadership   of administrators and individual work performance (n=160)

INDIVIDUAL WORK PERFORMANCE		ETHICAL LEADERSHIP
Task performance	r	.881**
	(Sig. 2 - tailed)	.000
Contextual performance	r	.017
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.827
Counterproductive performance	r	-.581**
	(Sig. 2-tailed)	.000

  * Significant at .05 level of significance (2-tailed)

  ** Significant at .01 level of significance (2-tailed)

Ethical Leadership & Task Performance

The obtained correlation coefficient of .881 which is significant at .01 level of significance indicates that a highly significant relationship exists between the ethical leadership of the administrators and individual work performance along with task performance.

The positive relationship between the variables tested implies that as ethical leadership increases, task performance also increases.

Ethical Leadership & Contextual Performance

The computed correlation coefficient of .017 between ethical leadership and contextual performance indicates that these variables tested are not significantly related. Thus, regardless of the degree of ethical leadership exhibited by the administrators, the individual work performance as to contextual performance remains the same.

Ethical Leadership & Counterproductive Behavior

The correlation analysis between ethical leadership and counterproductive behavior resulted in a correlation coefficient of -.581 which is significant at .01 level of significance. This implies that a unit increase in ethical leadership will result in a unit decrease in the counterproductive behavior of the respondents.

Discussion

The study findings highlight the impact of ethical leadership on task performance and counterproductive behavior (Norwich University Online, 2020). In recent years, the importance of ethical and moral leadership has gained significant attention due to unethical behaviors leading to organizational failures (Ash & O'Dell, 2020). It is crucial to prioritize discussions on ethical leadership, as it plays a vital role in fostering thriving and reputable organizations. Leader-managers must uphold high moral values and serve as role models, exemplifying the core values of the organization.

Instances of bankruptcies, such as Enron and WorldCom, serve as reminders of the connection between unethical behavior and organizational downfall (Brickey, 2003). The study findings indicate that ethical leadership positively influences both task performance and the reduction of counterproductive behavior among employees. Ethical leadership contributes to improved task and contextual performance while minimizing counterproductive work behavior. These results suggest that ethical and moral leadership can motivate employees to perform their tasks effectively and discourage unethical or counterproductive behavior, ultimately enhancing both individual and organizational performance. Previous studies have also highlighted the positive impact of ethical leadership on employee job satisfaction, organizational performance, and individual performance (Guo, 2022; Malik et al., 2016; Bahadori et al., 2021; Butt et al., 2016). Establishing an ethical environment begins with leadership, who should set an example through their conduct, while also implementing systems and policies to prevent and penalize unethical behavior.

Conclusion

Based on the study's statement of the problem, the findings suggest that the ethical leadership exhibited by administrators is rated as high, while the task and contextual performance of employees is also rated as high. On the other hand, the counterproductive behavior of employees is considered moderate. The results of the Pearson r correlation analysis reveal that ethical leadership is significantly correlated with task performance and counterproductive work behavior. However, there is no correlation found with contextual performance. These findings imply that as ethical leadership strengthens, task performance tends to improve, and counterproductive work behavior tends to decrease.

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