



Ethical Leadership and Program Performance in the Community Development Context: A Review of Literature

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Abstract: Increased ethical challenges in the 21st century organizations has bolstered research in ethical leadership. Numerous ethical scandals have demonstrated that leadership that is devoid of ethics is destructive to organizational stakeholders and the society in general. Although ethical leadership has gained more scholarly attention, there is limited research done on the influence of ethical leadership and program performance in the community development context, hence, the impacts have not been fully explored. Programs implemented by community development organizations are done over a specific period of time, and have well outlined objectives and performance indicators. Like institutions in the corporate sector, these organizations are prone to ethical challenges in the course of execution of their programs. These include corruption, fraud, unethical use of information, lack of accountability, misuse communication and technology. Existing studies have been critiqued on the basis of difficulties in establishing appropriate rewards for ethical behaviour, lack of efficient measurement parameters of ethical practices and lack of consensus on the responsibility of enforcing the ethical values in organizations. Therefore, review and synthesis of existing literature is highly required. Scholars have also suggested that it is critical to explore the practice of ethical leadership across different sectors in order to draw the contextual peculiarities. Consequently, there is a research gap in application of ethical leadership in the community development context. The researcher thus reviews extant conceptual, theoretical and empirical literature on ethical leadership and points to various gaps that present a case for a new theoretical model, linking ethical leadership to program performance outcomes. The model assesses the association between ethical leadership and program performance as mediated by organizational culture. The framework illustrates the causal linkages established through the research.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, Community Development, Organizational Culture, Institutional Environment, Results-Chain Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been increased scholarly attention to the discipline of leadership, as applied in diverse domains. These range from family spheres, religions institutions, companies, Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations. Leadership is a universal phenomenon which exists in all societies and cultures. According to Northouse (2015) there are diverse definitions of leadership as well as corresponding leadership theories. Most descriptions of leadership tend to focus on the leader as a person, the behaviour of the leader, effects of the leader, and on the interaction process between the leader and the led (Amanchukwu, Stanley & Ololube, 2015; Bass & Bass, 2008). In essence, leadership focuses on the relationship of the leader and followers. Van Wart (2014) bemoans leadership that is led by unethical motives. According to Van Wart, it is almost impossible to read, watch or listen to any news without being overwhelmed by ethical issues to do with leadership. This has underscored the importance of exploring the practice ethical values, and given prominence to ethical leadership research.

Ethical leadership draws its constructs from ethics and leadership (Northouse, 2015). The study of ethics in particular, is traced to Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and Socrates. It is also linked to European Renaissance and political philosophers including Niccolo Machiavelli. In addition, eastern cultures have their ethics and leadership standards based on philosophers such as Confucius and Sun Tzu. According, Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) as cited in Ko (2018), ethical leadership is described as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through

personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (p. 120).

Community Development (CD), on the other hand, entails rendering services that improve the welfare of the targeted population. The United Nations defines (CD) as an organized effort of individuals in a community conducted in such a way to help solve community problems with a minimum help from external organizations (Ismail, 2009 & Pawar, 2014). These include government, non-governmental organizations and corporations. This emphasizes on the need for creativity and self-reliance on the part of the community members, for their short and long term goals. However, it does not completely disregard the input of other institutions through Corporate Social Responsibility (McEwan et al., 2017). On the contrary, some scholars opine that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have a role to play NGOs in community development, and have many programs and functions (Stubbs, 2018; Islam, 2017; Westoby, 2016; Gray, 2016, Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010; Ismail, 2009). These organizations support the community to be empowered and ultimately achieve sustainable development. The areas championed include: microfinance programs, education and health through capacity building. Such programs promote well-being, job creation, income generation and eventually lead to self-reliance.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Fasla and Ramya (2018) argue that organizations in the community development sector are critical in stimulating social economic and social development. They are however, prone a myriad of challenges accruing from leadership and governance practices, as evidenced in various Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) globally, regionally and in Kenya (Frimpong, 2017; Stojanović, Ateljević & Stević, 2016; Mgonja, 2014; Waweru, 2014). The challenges, which are mostly ethical in nature, include fraud, corruption, conflict of interest, harassment, discrimination and breach of safe guarding standards. This impedes on the achievement of mandate of NGOs in promoting the welfare targeted beneficiaries. Therefore, the need for ethical practices in leadership has been a lingering requirement in the governance of such organizations (Heyman & Brenner, 2019). This is important in enabling them to achieve their mandate. Nevertheless, there lacks a generally agreed model for assessing ethical leadership in the community development context.

In addition, despite of numerous literature on ethical leadership, there has been inadequate attention to application of ethical leadership in the community development context (Tushar, 2017). Ko(2018) further notes that ethical leadership is still in the early stages of research and therefore has insufficient traditional findings to authenticate it. Furthermore, the generational differences affect perspectives on ethical leadership. This therefore requires constant research in order to be relevant. Moreover, findings from empirical studies on ethical leadership are highly fragmented (Gnatenko, 2021; Osifo, 2016). This poses challenges in application of the research in contemporary organizations. Consequently, review and synthesis of existing literature is therefore highly required. Additionally, Lawton and Páez (2015) suggests that it is critical to contextualise the practice of ethical leadership across different sectors in order to draw unique findings for further research. The researcher proposes to study ethical leadership and its program performance outcomes in the community development context.

Given the review of literature and the enumerated gaps, the researcher identified the necessity to consolidate the existing literature and emerging research agenda as ethical leadership is constantly evolving. Therefore this study proposes a conceptual model that demonstrates how deployment of ethical leadership impacts on program performance in the community development context. The paper addresses five main objectives namely: examine the existing conceptual literature on ethical leadership and program performance in community development context, review theoretical literature on ethical leadership and program performance in community development context, analyse empirical literature on ethical leadership and program performance in community development context, to identify knowledge gaps from reviewed literature and propose a suitable theoretical model for advancing research or knowledge development on leadership. The researcher considers that the study will be of great value to leadership scholarship.

3. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

3.1. Conceptualization of Ethical Leadership

3.1.1. *Origin and Nature*

Ethical leadership is derived from two constructs, leadership and ethics. According to Halloran (1982) ethics is a philosophical term that has its origin in the Greek word “ethos”, refers to character and the Latin word mores which means customs. It is concerned with analysis of moral attributes and behaviours. It also describes the acceptable and unacceptable standards of conduct (Minkes, 1999). Sims (1992) further indicates ethical conduct is defined as behaviour that is morally accepted as “good” and “right”, instead of “bad” or “wrong” in certain situations. Ethical behaviour should be modelled from the senior leadership and constitute the organizational culture (Trevino, 1986).

Further, according to Ikegami (1998), ethics as a philosophical discipline originated from Ancient Athens, one of the Greek city-states over 2000 years ago. Socrates is considered one of the greatest Greek philosophers in Western civilization who delved into the field of ethics, consequently becoming one of the founders of ethics. He played a significant role in Greek society when it was undergoing changes from an agrarian economy to commercial and industrial democracy. This was to address the requirement for new rules and ways of life to guide interpersonal relationships. Therefore, ethics influenced the political and social transformation of Greece and the realization of Greek civilization. Socrates believed that by using reason, people could arrive at a set of ethical principles that can balance between self-interest and the common good of society.

Subsequently, there have been substantial research on ethics. The initial research work in the area of ethical leadership was conducted by Trevino and counterparts through a series of studies (Treviño et al., 2003; Treviño et al., 2000). The research was aimed at determining the characteristics which ethical leaders espouse and who qualifies to be referred to as an ethical leader. Subsequent to these two studies, Brown et al. (2006) further theorized that ethical leadership is associated with positive organizational outcomes. Brown et al. further conceptualized ethical leadership using social learning Bandura & McClelland (1977) and social exchange constructs (Blau, 1964). In addition, they argued that an ethical leader’s behaviour is mirrored by their followers, hence ethical leadership impacts on positively on followers (Treviño et al., 2003). This, they argued, was achieved when followers study the nature of accepted conduct by the set rewards and punishment that are established by the leaders, hence regarded as transactional in nature.

Moreover, ethical leadership is demonstrated by set of characteristics. For instance, Zhu (2016) indicates that ethical leaders exhibit fairness and care for their followers. This challenges the followers, in that they feel compelled to respond by acting according to their leader’s expectation. This is done through discipline, communication and acting as role models. Additionally Neider and Schriesheim (2014) observes that ethical leaders do not only display personal traits, but also engage in moral guidance, and inspire employees to be conscientious of ethics thus compelling them to act morally.

3.2. Perspectives and Dimensions of Ethical Leadership

3.2.1. *Ethical Leadership*

According to Den Hartog (2015) ethical leadership entails demonstrating and promoting appropriate conduct according to a set of principles that are known to be sound; and enhance the common good in the society. It also involves nurturing and supporting people to promote positive values and act as an example by demonstrating appropriate ethical behaviors in the workplace. Ethical leadership helps organizations create a positive ethical culture of trust, honesty, respect and justice for others (Lawton & Páez, 2015). This paper explores five dimensions of ethical leadership comprising of: respect, justice, honesty, and building community with others (Krisharyuli, Himam & Ramdani, 2020; Treviño & Brown, 2014).

3.2.2. *Respect*

Treviño and Brown (2014) posits that respect involves being polite, mindful and considerate of other people in the community or workplace. Similarly, Cureton (2013) concurs that respect for others is an

essential moral value. Mutual respect at work place enables employees value the presence of their colleagues their achievements, abilities and qualities (Nikolakaki et al., 2020). Hartley et al. (2016) further argue that mutual respect enhances team work. Additionally, respect for others increases their feeling for safety and self-worth as important people that can contribute positively to the team tasks. This enhances and encourages polite and respectful discussions on difference issues involving a group of people.

3.2.3. Justice

One of the critical ethical principles that create fairness in leadership actions and decisions is justice for others. According to Al Halbusi et al. (2020), justice means ensuring that everyone in the organization is treated impartially by prioritizing equality and upholding the moral principles of determining what is a just conduct. It is concerned with the rights of individuals and how they are realized in various settings of the society. The principle of justice involves equitable treatment of populations across work groups or communities. For instance, people prefer living in a community that promotes equal economic, educational and employment opportunities for all irrespective of their social status. Promoting and enhancing justice for others as an ethical principle in organizations ensures that people develop a notion that they are being treated as fairly (Azeem et al. (2015). It also regulates the interpersonal relationships by creating a civilized society that upholds the rule of law and ideals of fairness. Justice in the work place can be evident through the promotion of employees based on experience, performance and merit.

3.2.4. Honesty

The ethical principle of honesty entails people being truthful. According to Cohen et al. (2014) honesty encompasses being truthful, sincere and forthright. Further, honesty is an effective and efficient way of establishing a positive work culture and propelling an organization to success. It also creates a suitable organizational climate in which employees feel they are respected, valued and empowered. Companies can therefore encourage honest behaviour by promoting open and honest communication and ensuring that the work place is free from rumours and negative dishonesty activities. According to Brunner and Ostermaier (2019), creating an environment that promotes honesty and transparency allows improves managerial transparency.

3.2.5. Integrity

Integrity is a core ethical principle that is crucial in good governance (Huberts, 2018). Integrity at the work place fosters outstanding character traits among employees including sound judgment, dependability, loyalty and honesty. It also promotes consistency at work and shapes people's values of trustworthiness and reliability enforcing vital ethical standards. High degree of integrity among employees promotes open and honest communication and encourages people to be responsible for their actions. Further Holmes and Parker (2018) note that integrity enhances one's trustworthiness. Encouraging integrity among employees therefore fosters an open, transparent and positive work environment which increases instances of ethical approach to the decision making process.

3.3. Organizational Culture

Different organizations establish shared believes and values through which they operate. A culture is communicated and enforced through various means such as code of ethics to help shape the perceptions of the employees guide their behaviours. Martinez et al. (2015) posit that organizational culture is essential in defining the proper behaviours of the people within a company guiding their perceptions, expectations and actions. Organization culture is expressed in the member's behaviour, self-image ad the way they interact with others outside their company (Tong, Tak & Wong, 2015). It also represents shared attitudes, believes and customs that a firm has developed over time. This study covers are various dimensions of organizational culture. These include adherence to organizational rules and code of ethics, effective communication and accountability.

3.3.1. Adherence to Organizational Rules and Code of Ethics

Organizations have a responsibility of developing laws, regulations and code of ethics that should be followed by its members. Hardy (2016)states that ethical code of conduct are a set of rules and

guideline illustrating company's best practices that are essential in guiding employee's behaviours. It shapes the conduct of employees through enhancing professional behaviour based on honesty and integrity. Hill and Rapp (2014), notes that compliance to the organizational code of ethics makes employees behave in an appropriate manner and avoid cases of indiscipline. Organizational culture helps in the development of rules, regulations and guidelines that provide guidance on how employees should behave fostering independent thought and autonomy.

3.3.2. Effective Communication

Developing effective communication mechanism and building efficient and healthy relationships is critical in enhancing a positive organizational culture. Uka (2014) posit that organizations with effective and efficient ways of communication creates a suitable business environment that promotes positive relationships between employees and external stakeholders. Consequently, organizational leaders need to clearly communicate the goals and objectives of the firm in order to ensure that there is a common understanding while executing strategies (Kelvin-Iloafu, 2016). Effective communication also creates a positive business culture that allow organizations to listen to their employee's concerns providing valuable suggestions that drives the success of the firm (Babatunde, 2015). It enables organizations to create an environment that foster productivity, collaboration and efficiency across all levels of the organization. Effective communication also facilitates sustainable strategies fostering better performance (Genç, 2017).

3.3.3. Accountability

Promotion of the practice of accountability is critical in the success and growth of an organization (Han & Hong, 2019). Accountability entails taking responsibility for one's actions and being ready to give a justification when required. Creating a purposeful, positive productive work environment that promotes mutual respect and accountability develops effective leaders that can inspire the culture of accountability. Ejere (2013) indicates that fostering accountability among workers helps create a business environment based on trust and openness. Moreover, research indicates that creating a positive organizational culture based on respect and accountability contributes to high social performance of the NGOs (Jiao, 2021). Further, to cultivate accountability, organizations should at culture ensuring that they follow ethical code of conduct, values and policies that are crucial in ensuring improved ethical performance. Accountability also supports sustainable development and good governance. This is achieved through enhanced transparency, and reduction of corruption (Ortega-Rodríguez et.al, 2020).

3.4. Program Performance

According to Sánchez and Mitchell (2017), program performance is conceptualized as the long lasting effects of a project. This is expressed in terms of ecological, economic, socio-cultural, political, technological and institutional aspects. Community development projects implemented by NGOs are critical in creating social impact. They also contribute to reducing disparities among the vulnerable persons, thus establishing a more equitable environment affording opportunities for empowerment for community members. The specific contextualization of program impact is based is the stated objectives of the project.

Program impact is demonstrated through a results chain framework. This is a planning, communications and management tool that emphasizes on results, in order to provide clarity on the key project objectives. It was developed in the mid-1990s by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as an approach to monitor its programs throughout the agency (Blair et al. 2021). It is based on a mix of logic, a good results framework is based on a blend of logic, analysis, standard theories in the specific technical sector and practical expertise. Further, a results framework uses a chain sequence to depict project theory of change, activities, processes and planned changes that are expected to materialize throughout the project life cycle to achieve project objects. The components of the chain are illustrate at different levels and connected by a cause and effect relationship. The identification of the results framework level varies, but it is commonly labelled as

activity, output, outcome and impact. Further, evaluation of program performance is done through the OECD DAC criteria (Chianca, 2008). It assesses the performance of community based development projects interventions through six criteria namely relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

4. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Since the paper seeks to advance the case for ethical leadership and its impact on program performance, the phenomenon therefore needs to be anchored on the relevant theoretical literature. The researcher considered contributions from transformational leadership theory, social learning theory, institutional theory, and impact evaluation theory.

4.1. Transformational Leadership Theory

According to Ghasabeh et al. (2015) transformational leadership concept was developed by James V. Downton and explored by James Burns between 1973 and 1978 respectively. The model is essential in encouraging leaders to develop authentic leadership that can inspire their followers to build strong organizations. Transformational leadership is based on the ability of a leader to motivate others towards achieving a particular objective and success in an organization. Transformational leadership theory encourages facilitation of social identification within members of a particular group by ensuring that employee's goals are linked to the values and objectives of the organization. Ghasabeh et al. (2015) further claim that transformational leaders are effective in influencing their followers by appealing to their emotions. They encourage, motivate and increase self-efficacy in their followers sure that their followers enhancing positive development. Transformational leadership theory, like ethical leadership, is based on enhancing performance of the followers and increasing their capacity to achieve better results to improve the organization's bottom-line. It also entrenches positive corporate culture and values such fairness, honesty and justice. These principles enhance ethical leadership.

4.2. The Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory was founded by Albert Bandura between 1961 and 1963. The theory is based on the importance of observation modelling and mimicking the behaviors of others in enhancing learning (Johnson, Sakamoto & Director, 2017). Social learning involves understanding how both environmental and cognitive factors influence people's actions, attitudes and emotional reactions. Social learning theory is highly correlated with ethical leadership due to the significant influence of leaders on their followers. Ethical leaders exhibit important traits such as respect for everyone, effective communication, transparency, honesty and fair mediation (Zhu, Treviño & Zheng, 2016). Through social learning, employees identify, emulate and practice positive behaviours from their leaders. The learning happens through modelling and imitation. Ethical leaders also motivate their followers by reinforcing positive behaviours that produce favourable outcomes for their organizations. Bandura's social learning theory is therefore essential in increasing the ability of the employees to build their self-value and enhance self-belief (Nabavi, 2012). It also enhances ethical leadership by encouraging the development of positive traits and cultivating integrity, trust, fairness and honesty among employees for the good of the organization.

4.3. Institutional Theory

According to Peters (2019), institutional theory focuses on the role of institutional environment in influencing the development of formal structures and understanding management practices as products of social rather than economic pressures. It is an important perspective of management theory because it provides a basis for systematic analysis of organizational culture. Institutional theory can also be used by organizational leaders to explain some of the organizational behaviors within their firms that defy economic rationality. Peters (2019) further notes that institutional theory has played significant role in assisting organizational leaders explain why organizational structures and practices become entrenched in their companies and how the changes occur.

Further, institutional theory reflects the net effects of institutional pressure and how it increases the similarities of organizational structures in a particular environment (Willmott, 2015). It illustrates

why companies adopt similar structures, due to coercive mimetic and normative isomorphic pressures. According to Willmott, institutional theory further points out that the success of an organization is influenced by factors such as political decisions, consumer behaviours and economic conditions. In this study, the institutional theory is vital in illustrating the effect of the operating environment on the link between ethical leadership and program performance.

4.4. Impact Evaluation Theory

The impact evaluation is the provision of results as a result of an intervention such as project, program or a certain policy. Mishra and Das (2017) observes that organization conducts impact evaluation to improve, reorient an intervention or inform the decision on whether it should be continued, scaled up or ceased. It is also used to determine the changes in outcomes using rigorous methods. Hence, it accounts for counterfactuals indicating what would have occurred if the particular intervention would not have been initiated, through quasi experimental designs (Legovini, Di Maro & Piza, 2015). Impact evaluation theory is therefore essential in enabling program designers answer certain essential questions about the choices they have made and some of the alternatives that provide more effective results. Impact evaluation therefore plays a significant role in the quality of projects and in influencing development outcomes.

Additionally, Gertler et al. (2016) note that impact evaluation provides opportunities for accountability for all stakeholders, donors and beneficiaries involved in the project acting as a tool of evidence generating activities. It provides useful information on the positive and negative impact of the project by undertaking a systematic causal attribution. It is also used for formative purposes such as in improving implementation of a program; as well as summative purposes to provide information on what is needed to ensure that an intervention is successfully working for different groups. Thus it involves a broad range of causal attribution the exploration of unintended impacts and why the project should be replicated or discontinued. This theory is therefore critical in expounding on the organizational outcomes, based on program performance perspective.

5. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The researcher reviewed empirical literature in order to interrogate the knowledge gaps based on which the study propositions advanced.

5.1. Ethical Leadership

According to Bachman (2017) ethical leadership comprises several dimensions namely respect for others, justice for others, honesty, integrity and building community. Several empirical studies on ethical leadership were reviewed. Azeem et al. (2015) studied the impact of organizational justice on the perceived performance and citizenship behaviour of employees. The authors delved into the role of promoting justice and fairness in organizations and it is directly related to motivation and level of commitment among employees. The research was based on resource-based, theory of justice and citizenship behaviour theory. The study collected data from 260 Pakistani employees working for different banks to analyze the relationship between organizational justice, citizenship behaviour and employee performance. The researchers used Baron and Kenny's regression to test the mediation. Results from the study showed a significant positive relationship between organizational justice, citizenship behaviour and performance. Further, findings points out that an organization with enhanced perceived justice encourages high performance. Limitations of the study is in the small sample size used future studies be conducted in various countries and organizations to have increased validity of the data and enhance quality of results. The study had the limitation of focusing on justice as the only dimension of ethical leadership. Further, the sample size was limited and context specific, thus affecting generalization of the findings.

Ng (2016) studied the importance of embedding respect among employees in the early stages of their employment and how it influences the success of the organization. The researcher examined the role workplace respect plays in promoting cohesiveness and team work in a company. A sample size of 198 employees was used. The participants were college graduates from a university in Hong Kong. Five waves of data collection were used over a period of 18 months using five-point Likert-type

scales. The analysis was done using confirmatory factor analysis to assess selected variables. Data from the study suggested a significant increase in perceived respect is associated with increase in gratitude and lower turnover rates. Findings from the study indicated that all the employees valued being respected at their workplace. The study cited limitations in nature of data collected which was self-reported meaning respondents could have given false or biased information. The study recommended further studies on other forms of respect such as respect by supervisors and co-workers rather than relying on only senior positions at work.

Aga, Noorderhaven and Vallejo (2016) investigated the mediating role of team-building in enhancing project success through transformative leadership. The study focuses on how transformational leaders utilize team building to develop positive relationships with their followers and increase the success of their projects. The researchers in this study have conducted a baseline survey of 200 development project managers in Ethiopian Non-Governmental Organizations. A two stage sampling techniques is utilized to randomly select the participants. Transformational leadership is measured through a Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) consisting of 36 items that measure core leadership styles. The results from the study discovered that the leadership style of the project manager plays a significant role in project success. Moreover, team building and positive community engagement is directly related to the success of the project. One of the weaknesses of this study is that results are based on subjective ratings rather than objective data. Team building is also measured as a mediating variable and not as an antecedent of ethical leadership. The study recommended that further research is focused on the relative importance of team-building dimensions through experimental designs that can better identify causal relationships.

Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe (2017) examined the role of integrity, honesty and trust through ethical leadership in enhancing employee engagement. The study focused on how leader integrity and honesty encourages workers to have positive engagement and perform better in their roles. Findings from the study show a positive relationship between trust, honesty of leaders and employee engagement. The limitation of the study is the use of convenient sampling method with a small sample size that fails to represent the general business population. The research recommends the use of multiple sources of data and explore other mediating and moderating variables in future studies. The study is focused on multiple variables namely integrity, honesty and trust as dimensions of ethical leadership. However, this was not related to program performance as defined in this study.

The research studies appraised focus on ethical leadership through the various dimensions namely respect, justice, integrity, honesty, trust and team building (Azeem et al. 2015; Ng, 2016; Aga et al., 2016; Engelbrecht et al., 2017). From the review of the empirical studies, some gaps were identified. First, none of the studies focused on the reviewing program performance in the relation to ethical leadership. Second, the research studies reviewed indicated ethical leadership evaluated in respect to team building in respect to team performance, organizational success, transformative leadership and organizational innovation. Third, studies also cited contextual limitations that may affect generalization of the results). The sampling methodology also presents some biases due to limited size, as well as contextual biases (Ng, 2016; Aga et al., 2016; Engelbrecht et al., 2017).

6. PROPOSED THEORETICAL MODEL

Undertaking theoretical review is considered as vital in scientific research. This is in view of establishing the state of research for the specified discipline from the present state to the future advances in knowledge (Kivunja, 2018). A theory is defined as a premise from which there are deducible empirical consequences that have the capability to challenge the extant knowledge within the limits of essential assumptions. Modelling a concept needs identification of the constructs of the given phenomenon and a clear specification of roles each is meant play. The researcher is of the view that adoption of ethical leadership in the community development context presents a phenomenon of interest to leadership scholars and practitioners (Tushar, 2017). The researcher thus seeks to advance knowledge in ethical leadership, as applied in community development organizations. The mediating influence of organizational culture is also integrated in the model. The case is more persuasive given the increased concerns of unethical conduct in leadership in various spheres of the society, which yield negative organizational outcomes. Through extensive review of literature, requisite indicators have been drawn from extant conceptual and theoretical literature. However, the deduced theoretical

framework requires validation through empirical work. Therefore, the emerging phenomenon is bound to create empirical interest to scholars. Besides, proposing a new theoretical model not only informs future empirical work, but also develops authentic scientific knowledge in the area of ethical leadership in relation to program performance in the community development context.

7. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Following the review of extant theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature, the study proposes a conceptual framework that is in line with identified conceptual and empirical gaps. The model is premised upon four constructs namely ethical leadership, program performance, organizational culture and institutional environment. Each of this instructs contributed to building the phenomenon under research. The researcher thus proposes a new model that connects ethical leadership and program performance, as mediated by organizational culture. Figure 1 below is the visual representation of the suggested conceptual framework.

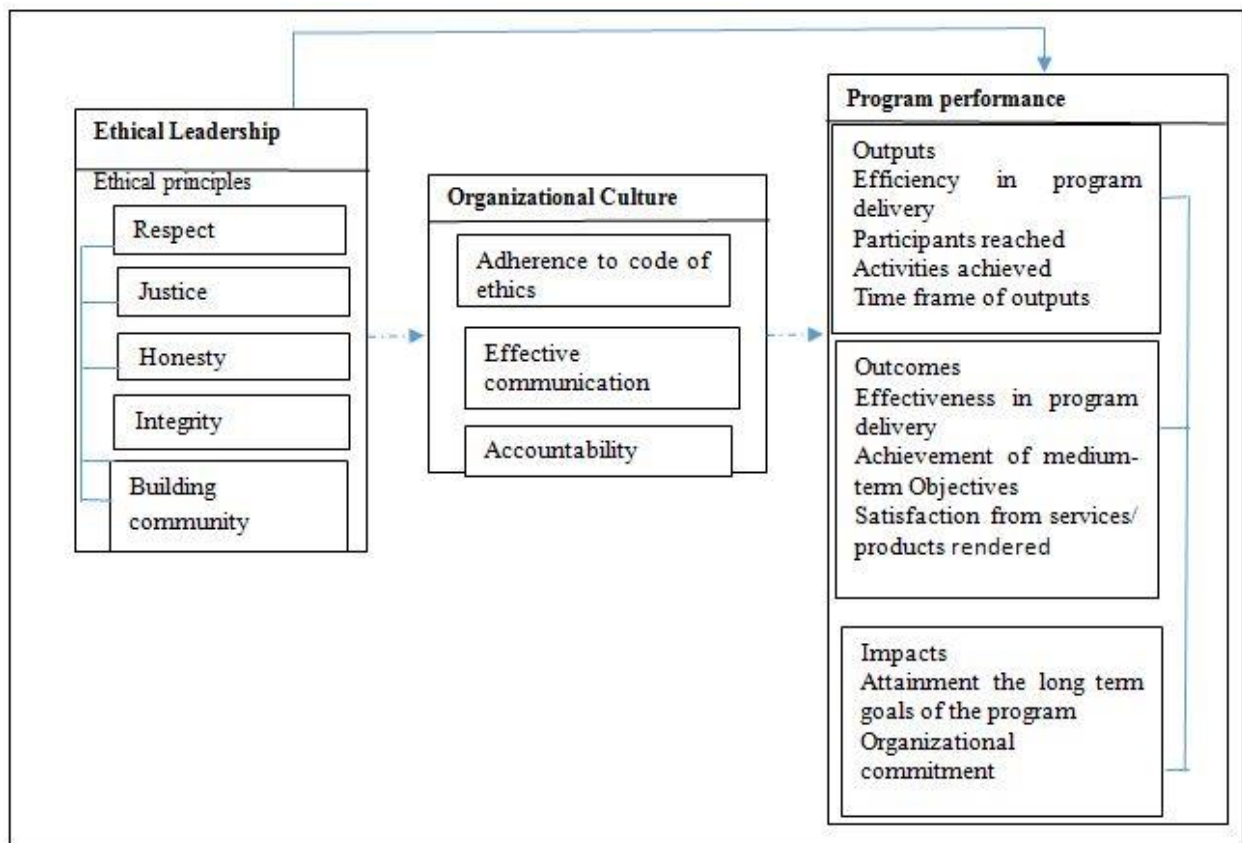


Figure1. *Conceptual framework*

7.1. Ethical Leadership and Program Performance

Den Hartog (2015) indicates that ethical leadership is essential in demonstrating desirable moral conduct. According to Bachman (2017), this is demonstrated by principles such as respect, justice, honesty, teamwork, and integrity, which are the main indicators under this variable. Extant literature also indicates that ethical leadership also is influenced by the organizational culture. Program performance on the other hand, highlights the results of the specified interventions (Oliveros-Romero& Aibinu, 2019). The programs are based in various sectors such as Agriculture, education, health among others. Consequently, program performance is measured from the results chain framework (Blair et al. 2021). This demonstrates a logical flow depicted by a cause-effect link mostly labelled as activity, output, outcome, and impact. According to Befani and Stedman-Bryce (2017), the results chain framework is further underpinned by the impact evaluation theory.

The reviewed conceptual and empirical research indicates scarce evidence on a causal relationship between ethical leadership and program performance. The analyzed literature assessed organizational

performance in relation to other leadership styles and management practices (Azeem et al. 2015; Ng, 2016; Aga et al.; 2016; Engelbrecht et al., 2017). These include variables such as transformational leadership, strategic management, governance practices, staffing strategies, and financial stability strategies. In addition, the studies conceptualised ethical values as a sub-set of strategic leadership. The researcher, therefore, seeks to demonstrate address this research gap by assessing the link between ethical leadership and program performance in the community based organizations context.

Proposition 1: Program performance is influenced by ethical leadership.

7.2. Organizational Culture and Ethical Leadership

Organizational culture is important in establishing the values, as well as the expected standards of conduct (Martinez et al., 2015). According to Christiansen and Chandan (2017), organizational culture comprises mutual attitudes, beliefs and customs established over time. It is expressed in the employees' behaviour, self-image, and relations in and outside the organization. Conceptual literature reviewed revealed that organizational culture significantly influences organizational performance (Warrick, 2017). Moreover, it guides the enactment of values as well as program activities. Drawing from the extant literature explored, dimensions of organizational culture include adherence to organizational code of ethics, accountability, and effective communication.

Further, drawing from empirical literature appraised, organizational culture has not been conceptualized as a mediating variable on performance. Further, it is evident that organizational culture has an influence on the dimension of organizational performance. Therefore there is a gap in research on the mediating effect of organizational culture on ethical leadership and program performance. From the foregoing, the following proposition has been derived:

Proposition 2: organizational culture is dependent on ethical leadership.

Proposition 3: Organizational culture is an antecedent of program performance.

Proposition 4: Organizational culture mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and program performance.

8. CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research paper was to review the extant theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature to comprehend the construct of ethical leadership and the subsequent organizational outcomes. The study proposes a theoretical framework appropriate for modelling the relationship among the constructs and dimensions identified. Subsequently, the researcher has proposed a conceptual framework that indicates a connection between ethical leadership and program performance, with reference to performance measurement framework in the community development context. Through this, researcher proposes that the association between ethical leadership and program performance is mediated by organizational culture. The paper addressed the conceptual understanding of each of the construct by identifying the relevant indicators as well anchoring each of the constructs on a theoretical framework premised on transformational leadership theory, social learning theory, institutional theory and impact evaluation theory. In this paper, the researcher acknowledges some limitations and constraints. First, although ethical leadership has gained more scholarly attention, there is limited research done on the influence of ethical leadership and program performance in the community development context. Secondly, the propositions in this study have not been empirically proven. Hence the study proposes empirical studies to be conducted using the identified constructs and indicators in order to validate the claims indicated by the identified propositions.

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