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Enacting spiritual leadership in business through ego-transcendence

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Abstract

Ethical dilemmas in organisations can arise due to situational circumstances, the decision making process and the conditions in which they are made. Academic literature offers some insights into analysing ethical decision making; these include guidelines on how to deal with ethical dilemmas (e.g. Abramson, 1985; Loewenberg and Dolgoff, 1996; Reamer, 1990). Recently, several prominent corporate scandals have been reported in the media. These include News International Limited, Barclays and BP. According to business ethics scholars, one of the causes for the escalating incidents of corporate scandals is triggered by the weaknesses in the leaders' decision making process. For example, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) claim that ethical decision making studies have been focused mostly on ethical codes, cultures, and leadership styles. Scholars have shown that ethical codes on its own cannot be relied on to decrease unethical behaviour (e.g. Somers, 2001) and that leadership fails to promote ethical behaviour always (e.g. Victor and Cullen, 1988). More focus is called into looking into the "individual character, personality, and belief systems that may influence ethical cognitions as precursors to behaviour" (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003, p. 86). One such individual focused approach to improve ethical decision making is based on spiritual leadership.

Keywords

transcendence, business, leadership, spiritual, enacting, ego

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