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When Do Ethical Leaders Become Less Effective? The Moderating Role of Perceived Leader Ethical Conviction on Employee Discretionary Reactions to Ethical Leadership

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Abstract Drawing from the group engagement model and the moral conviction literature, we propose that perceived leader ethical conviction moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB as well as deviance. In a field study of employees from various industries and a scenario-based experiment, we revealed that both the positive relation between ethical leadership and employee OCB and the negative relation between ethical leadership and employee deviance are more pronounced when leaders are perceived to have weak rather than strong ethical convictions. Further, we argued and showed that employees' feelings of personal control and perceived voice opportunity mediated the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on OCB and deviance. Implications of these findings for theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords Ethical leadership · Perceived leader ethical conviction · Organizational citizenship behavior · Deviance

Introduction

Over the past decade, the increasing attention for organizational ethics has encouraged the call for ethical leadership (Den Hartog 2015). Brown et al. (2005) defined

ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct…and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (p. 120). A fundamental tenet of this definition is that ethical leaders act as role models of ethical behaviors by explicitly communicating ethical standards and inspiring high moral practices, which contributes to desirable employee attitudes and behaviors (Brown and Treviño 2006). Indeed, beyond influencing direct ethical outcomes, accumulating evidence—relying mainly on samples from Western and Eastern societies—argues that ethical leaders are attractive and credible role models and that that such leadership is positively linked with discretionary behaviors intended to benefit the organization as well as coworkers (organizational citizenship behavior: OCB; Newman et al. 2014; Piccolo et al. 2010) and negatively linked with discretionary behavior that violates significant organizational norms, thereby harming the organization (i.e., deviance; Mayer et al. 2009). These outcomes are important because they are discretionary behaviors under individuals' control through which employees respond to ethical leadership (Resick et al. 2013) and contribute to or restrain organizational functioning (Berry et al. 2012; Organ et al. 2006).

Although previous research has highlighted the value of ethical leadership in both encouraging employee OCB and discouraging deviance, the empirical studies examining these relationships have provided mixed results. Whereas some studies demonstrated that ethical leadership is associated with more OCB and less deviance (e.g., Mayer et al. 2009), others found weak or nonsignificant associations (e.g., Detert et al. 2007; Liu et al. 2013). These varying effects suggest that the influence of ethical leadership is more complex than initially assumed. Therefore, a deeper and more fine-grained understanding of *when* ethical

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leaders are more or less effective in encouraging OCB and discouraging deviance is highly warranted.

A potential explanation of these varying effects is that when ethical leaders demonstrate and promote *ethical conduct*, they risk being perceived as too strict in their enactment of moral rules and principles. Emerging findings suggest that ethical leaders sometimes communicate such a strong ethical conviction that it becomes a threat for employees' own moral values (Stouten et al. 2013). Indeed, it has been speculated that leaders who promote ethical behaviors to subordinates and possess a strong and absolute ethical mindset are likely to appear intolerant, thereby limiting their effectiveness as a leader (Weaver et al. 2014). As a result, employees may *not always* respond positively to ethical leaders, which might explain the mixed findings reported to date. Yet, to our knowledge, no empirical research has explicitly examined how employees' evaluation of the nuanced and open-minded manner in which leaders pursue their moral ends might strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of ethical leadership. Without a proper understanding of this contention, it is difficult to reconcile the inconsistent findings regarding the effects of ethical leadership on employee OCB and deviance.

In the present manuscript, we draw from the moral conviction literature (Skitka and Mullen 2002) and the group engagement model (Tyler and Blader 2003) to enhance our understanding of when ethical leadership is more or less likely to affect employees' OCB and deviance. The group engagement model (GEM; Tyler and Blader 2003) postulates that the extent to which employees are able to voice their opinion about and have control over the way things are done in the workplace plays a crucial role in shaping their discretionary behavior. Although ethical leaders strive to be a role-model through two-way communication (Babalola et al. 2016; Brown et al. 2005; Mayer et al. 2009), we argue that a leader's ethical conviction is crucial in determining whether or not employees feel they have influence over how things are done at work. When a leader holds strong ethical convictions, (s)he signals to employees that his/her opinion about how things should be handled is rather absolute and thus not open for debate. As a result, employees working for a leader with strong ethical convictions might actually feel that they have little say in or control over the way things go at work, which subsequently limits the effectiveness of ethical leaders with regards to employees' discretionary behavior. Extending the prevailing insights on ethical leadership by drawing from the group engagement model (Tyler and Blader 2003) and the moral conviction literature (Skitka 2010; Skitka and Mullen 2002) will thus help refine our theoretical understanding of ethical leadership functioning and offer important practical insights into how ethical leaders can better pursue their moral ends and still remain effective in the workplace.

With our research, we aim to advance the ethical leadership literature in several ways. First, we re-evaluate the influence of ethical leadership on employee OCB and deviance by investigating whether and how *perceived leader ethical conviction*, which we define as the perception that a leader maintains a strong and absolute stance on his or her ethicality and projects such non-negotiable views on others, interacts with ethical leadership to predict employee OCB and deviance. We specifically focus on *perceived* ethical conviction rather than *actual* moral conviction used in previous research (e.g., Skitka et al. 2005). We do so because *actual* moral conviction refers to strong and absolute feelings or attitude about a specific issue (e.g., capital punishment, abortion, deportation etc.), yet such views on moral issues/events may not always be observable by employees in the workplace. *Perceived* leader convictions regarding ethics, which are more tied to general principles and ethicality, are more relevant with regards to how things are done in the workplace because research has shown that people are generally more influenced by their own perceptions rather than factual features (Lewin 1951). In doing so, we draw from a model of discretionary behavior—the group engagement model (GEM; Tyler and Blader 2000, 2003)—and the moral conviction literature (Skitka and Mullen 2002) to advance the moderating role of perceived leader ethical conviction. Given GEM's focus on the role of leadership in facilitating discretionary behaviors, we argue that it is an especially useful framework for understanding ethical leadership effectiveness and extending the existing knowledge to date. As we will argue later, we expect that when ethical leaders are perceived to have strong ethical convictions, employees will become less positively engaged to contribute to the group, eliciting lower motivation to engage in OCB and to refrain from deviance.

Second, aside from offering a balanced view that acknowledges both the strengths and potential weaknesses in ethical leadership, we further draw on GEM to identify employees' feelings of *personal control* (the belief that one has autonomy on the job and impact on work outcomes; Brockner et al. 2004) and *perceived voice opportunity* (the feelings that one can express his or her views and concerns; Avery et al. 2011) as two core mechanisms through which the aforementioned interactive effect takes place. GEM highlights that discretionary behaviors are motivated by the extent to which employees feel they belong to a group and are valued by its members. In order to experience such belongingness, it is vital that employees feel they have personal control over decisions in the workplace and that they are able to voice

their opinion—core aspects of procedural justice (Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008). We suggest that when leaders are perceived to maintain a strong or rather absolute ethical position/stance (i.e., strong ethical conviction), ethical leadership installs an environment in which such feelings of personal control and perceived voice opportunity are strongly reduced, which in turn results in lower levels of OCB and higher levels of deviance. As such, we contribute to the literature by uncovering when ethical leadership engenders a sense of personal control and voice opportunity in their employees.

Third, although ethical leadership theories have been tested in both Western and Eastern cultures (e.g., Liu et al. 2013; Mayer et al. 2009)—at least to our knowledge—very few empirical studies have examined the validity of such leadership construct beyond Western and Eastern context (for an exception see Babalola et al. 2016). Johns (2006) has cast doubt on the extent to which theories proposed and tested in the Western context are generalizable to other cultural contexts and has called for testing these theories in other cultural settings. Here, we respond to Johns' (2006) call by testing our theorized model (see Fig. 1) in a field study involving employees from diverse sectors in Africa, specifically Nigeria. Given the increasing entry of multinational corporations in emerging economies such as the Nigerian economy, we believe that such an environment offers a unique context for re-examining the effectiveness of ethical leadership. In Study 1, we focus on the moderating role of perceived leader ethical conviction in the relation between ethical leadership and employee OCB as well as deviance. We then constructively replicate and expand our model in Study 2 by using a scenario-based experiment to explore the mediating roles of personal control and perceived voice opportunity as an explanation for this moderating effect. This approach not only allows us to optimize the external validity and mundane realism (Study 1), but also to enhance internal validity and be more confident in the proposed causal relations (Study 2).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Ethical Leadership and Employee OCB and Deviance

Theoretically, past research has drawn upon social learning (SLT; Bandura 1977) and social exchange theories (SET; Blau 1964) to explain why ethical leaders are linked with employees' OCB and deviance. SLT (Bandura 1977) suggests that individuals learn appropriate behaviors in a social context (e.g., the workplace) by observing and mimicking the behaviors of credible and legitimate role models who they find around them. As such, SLT proposes that employees who are faced with ethical leaders are more likely to ensure that their behavior is in line with acceptable behavioral norms that are rewarded (e.g., citizenship behavior), while refraining from unacceptable behaviors that are punished (e.g., deviant behavior). From another perspective, SET (Blau 1964) suggests that when an exchange party provides benefits to the other, he/she triggers a sense of obligation to reciprocate these benefits during future interactions (see also Gouldner 1960). As such, when employees perceive their leader as fair and ethical, they feel more obliged and motivated to reciprocate their leader's fair and ethical treatments by going the extra mile in performing their job (i.e., OCB) and refraining from deviance (e.g., Mayer et al. 2009; Newman et al. 2014).

In the present research, we argue that our understanding of the relation between ethical leadership and employee discretionary or voluntary behaviors in terms of OCB and deviance can be enhanced by drawing from the group engagement model (GEM)—a model of discretionary behaviors in organizations (Tyler and Blader 2000, 2003). According to GEM, people's discretionary reactions are motivated by the treatment they encounter in their work group (cf. Blader and Tyler 2009). Leadership plays a crucial role in facilitating positive discretionary behaviors (OCB) and discouraging negative discretionary behaviors
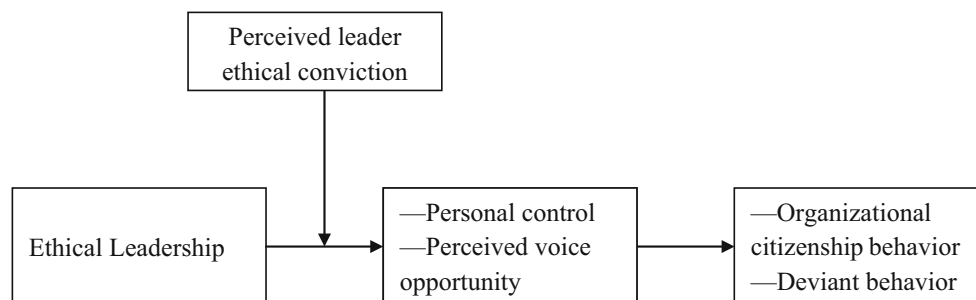

Fig. 1 Proposed model

(deviance) because of leaders' position in the organization (Yukl 2010). When ethical leaders demonstrate ethical conduct and treat employees fairly through two-way communication, they signal to employees that they belong to the group/organization and as such, stimulate a positive work environment where its members (i.e., employees) are motivated to contribute to the overall group or organizational goals (Tyler and Blader 2000). According to the group engagement model, employees who witness ethical and fair treatment through two-way communication are likely to engage in extra-role behavior as well as refrain from deviance.

Although empirical evidence generally supports the relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB as well as deviance, existing studies did show mixed results. For instance, a recent study reported a curvilinear relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB in such a way that OCB was greatest at moderate levels of ethical leadership, while a decrease in OCB was found at high levels of ethical leadership (Stouten et al. 2013). In another study, Detert et al. (2007) found no significant relationship between ethical leadership and employee deviance. These findings suggest that employees working for an ethical leader may not always display desirable discretionary behaviors, hence indicating that there may be some instances in which even ethical leaders are less effective in encouraging OCB and discouraging deviance. In order to resolve these inconsistencies, we propose that perceived leader ethical conviction acts as a boundary condition for the relation between ethical leadership and both employee OCB and deviance.

The Moderating Role of Perceived Leader Ethical Conviction

Broadly, conviction refers to clarity and certainty about self-relevant topics (McGregor and Marigold 2003). Tied to an individual's moral point of view, this concept has gained attention in the moral psychology domain (for an overview see Skitka 2010). Yet, virtually no research in the organizational behavior domain has drawn from these insights to enrich our understanding of important moral-based phenomenon such as ethical leadership. Following the moral conviction literature (Skitka and Mullen 2002; Skitka et al. 2005; Skitka 2010), as we noted earlier, we define perceived leader ethical conviction *as an employee's perception that a leader maintains a strong and absolute stance on his or her ethicality and project such nonnegotiable views on others.* Although a leader's ethical conviction may seem desirable in order to influence subordinates, such conviction highlights not only the importance and centrality of beliefs, but also their extremity and absoluteness (Skitka et al. 2005). People

who hold such convictions express them as universal standards or truths that others must follow, and are more likely to view their convictions as an instrument to enforce their moral beliefs on others (Skitka 2010).

According to the group engagement model (Tyler and Blader 2003) employees' discretionary behavior directly results from whether they feel their group membership is secured or not. In order to determine whether they are a valued member of their group, employees consider the extent to which they are able to voice their opinion as well as the extent to which they have control over how things are done. Ethical leaders, who install fair and ethical conduct through two-way communication, are expected to embrace employees' input and signal to them that they are valued members of the group, thereby promoting appropriate discretionary behavior (Brown et al. 2005). Yet, we argue that a crucial factor determining whether ethical leaders will indeed be able to install such feelings of control and voice opportunity among employees concerns a leader's ethical conviction. Because leader ethical conviction reflects the lack of welcoming others' perspective on ethical conduct and bearing an open mind, we argue that ethical leaders who hold strong ethical convictions are less likely to create an attractive situation for stimulating discretionary behaviors—enhanced employee OCB and reduced deviance. Indeed, when people have strong convictions about a particular issue, they are determined to approach things in line with only their own perspective (Mullen and Skitka 2006; Skitka and Houston 2001; Skitka and Mullen 2002). For instance, leaders with strong ethical conviction may urge employees to follow the way they think about rules and principles to the latter. As a result, such leaders are more likely to disregard the opinion of others or allow their employees to have a say in how things are handled, which is vital for employees to feel part of their work group. Therefore, when leaders are perceived to have strong ethical conviction, ethical leadership is likely to become less effective in stimulating employees to willingly display OCB and refrain from deviance.

In contrast, when a leader is perceived to have a less strong ethical conviction, demonstrating flexibility, ethical leadership is likely to be more effective in encouraging employee OCB and decreasing deviance. In such a setting, employees are likely to feel that the leader is not merely trying to exert absolute authority over them or control their behavior but instead is sincere about encouraging normatively appropriate conduct through two-way communication. In other words, the absence of a strong ethical conviction signals to employees that their leader welcomes their suggestions and allows them to exert influence over decisions, which is essential to nurture employees' motivation to engage in discretionary behavior that supports the functioning of the organization (Lind and Tyler 1988;

Tyler and Blader 2003; Tyler and Lind 1992). Thus, we suggest that when leaders are perceived to have more flexible ethical convictions, ethical leadership creates an environment that is particularly influential in encouraging OCB and decreasing deviance. In sum, we expect ethical leadership to be most effective in promoting OCB and discouraging deviance when employees perceive their leader as having a weaker rather than a stronger ethical conviction.

Hypothesis 1 Ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction will have an interactive effect on employee OCB. Specifically, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB will be most pronounced when the ethical conviction of the leader is experienced as weak (at lower levels of ethical conviction) rather than strong (at higher levels of ethical conviction).

Hypothesis 2 Ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction will have an interactive effect on employee deviance. Specifically, the negative relationship between ethical leadership and employee deviance will be most pronounced when the ethical conviction of the leader is experienced as weak (at lower levels of ethical conviction) rather than strong (at higher levels of ethical conviction).

The Mediating Role of Personal Control and Perceived Voice Opportunity

Crucial in these theoretical arguments regarding the proposed interactive effect on employees' OCB and deviance is that this effect will occur through employees' feelings of personal control and perceived voice opportunity. Accordingly, in this section, we propose that the reason for the moderating role of perceived leader ethical conviction is that such conviction can alter the positive observational experience that is expected to accompany ethical leadership and thereby reduce employees' feelings of personal control and voice opportunity.

Research suggests that both feelings of personal control and perceived voice opportunity are means by which an employee reaffirms his or her alliance with the leader or belongingness to the organization (Aryee et al. 2014; Piccolo et al. 2010). *Personal control* has been conceptualized as including the *autonomy* and *impact* components of psychological empowerment (Aryee et al. 2014; Brockner et al. 2004; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008). Whereas autonomy refers to the extent to which employees see themselves as having control over their work behavior, impact is defined as the extent to which they believe they have influence over important work outcomes (Spreitzer 1995). On the other hand, *perceived voice opportunity*

refers to the feelings that individuals have regarding the opportunity to express their views and opinions (Avery et al. 2011). Being able to voice one's opinion and having control over the process and outcome of decisions are exactly what constitutes procedural fairness and reaffirms to employees that they are valued members of their workgroup and the organization (Tyler and Blader 2003). Ethical leadership creates the platform for such reaffirmation. Specifically, researchers have shown that experiencing ethical leadership at work creates a sense of personal control (Zhu, May, and Avolio 2004) and the feeling that employees can express their voice (Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009). Although extant research implies that the sense of involvement gained from these feelings of personal discretion or control and the opportunity to express one's opinions and views are important determinants of employees' discretionary reactions to ethical leadership (Avey, Wernsing, and Palanski 2012; Brown et al. 2005; Piccolo et al. 2010; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009), we are unaware of any prior study directly examining *under which condition* ethical leadership may or may not help nurture such feelings of personal control and voice opportunity. In the present research, we propose that perceived leader ethical conviction is likely to weaken the extent to which ethical leaders engender employees' personal control and voice opportunity, which subsequently shapes employees' OCB and deviance.

Although through ethical leadership, leaders encourage employees to behave ethically and exhibit appropriate behavior in the workplace (Babalola et al. 2016; Brown et al. 2005; Walumbwa et al. 2017), being perceived to hold strong ethical conviction may come across as not providing employees with the opportunity to voice their opinion or sufficient discretion to process the leader's display of ethical behaviors and decide whether they are worth *modeling*. This is because such leaders are likely to pursue their preferred adherence to ethics in a rather absolute manner and become intolerant (attributes that come with absolute certainty about one's ethicality; Wiltermuth and Flynn 2013) to opinions or approaches that deviate from their own perspective. Through their heightened ethical conviction, leaders signal that they are rather intolerant to other approaches and do not value or respect employees' suggestions. Regardless of their genuine intentions, leaders imposing their views on subordinates signal a strong disregard for others and reduce employees' personal sense of control and opportunity to voice their opinions (e.g., Aryee et al. 2007; Chan et al. 2013; Zhang et al. 2011). Therefore, leaders perceived to be strongly convinced of their ethicality may weaken employees' involvement (as the leader signals 'you are with me or against me') that accompanies ethical leadership (cf. Brown et al. 2005) and trigger a feeling that they have

neither sufficient *freedom* or personal control, nor the opportunity to express their views (i.e., perceived voice opportunity). Based on the above arguments, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3 Ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction will have an interactive effect on employees' feelings of personal control. Specifically, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and personal control will be most pronounced when the ethical conviction of the leader is experienced as weak (at lower levels of ethical conviction) rather than strong (at higher levels of ethical conviction).

Hypothesis 4 Ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction will have an interactive effect on employees' perceptions of voice opportunity. Specifically, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and perceived voice opportunity will be most pronounced when the ethical conviction of the leader is experienced as weak (at lower levels of ethical conviction) rather than strong (at higher levels of ethical conviction).

GEM suggests that employees who are reassured that they feel respected and valued by their leader are more likely to exert greater effort for the benefit of their group and their organization (Tyler and Blader 2003; Tyler and Lind 1992; Van den Bos et al. 1998). The feelings that employees have personal control and that their views are considered by their leader (*in word* and *in deed*) give such reassurance of respect and value (Tyler and Blader 2003) and as a result, subsequently increase employees' motivation to engage in more OCB and less deviance.

Research has shown that individuals often seek to restore their sense of control and lack of opportunity to voice their ideas by refraining from behaviors that contribute to the organization (Ashforth and Saks 2000; Brehm 1966; Wortman and Brehm 1975). Because OCB and deviance are behaviors under employees' control, they represent behaviors through which employees exercise their control and reinforce the opportunities provided them at work (Dineen et al. 2006). Hence, reducing OCB and enacting deviance may allow employees to redress the reduced feelings of personal control and lacking voice opportunities associated with ethical leaders perceived to have strong ethical conviction. From this perspective, we suggest that the reduced feelings of personal control and voice opportunity will be associated with decreased OCB and increased deviance. That is, reduced feelings of personal control and voice opportunity are likely to discourage employees to contribute positively to their group and as such, be less engaged to show citizenship behaviors (e.g., helping the organization out when needed but not required) and instead display deviance (e.g., refusing to listen or

follow their leader's instructions). Taken together, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5 Personal control will mediate the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on (a) employee OCB (b) deviance.

Hypothesis 6 Perceived voice opportunity will mediate the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on (a) employee OCB (b) deviance.

Overview of the Research

We tested our hypotheses in a field study (Study 1) and a scenario-based experiment (Study 2). In Study 1, we examined the interactive effect of ethical leadership (EL) and perceived leader ethical conviction (PLEC) on both employee OCB and deviance. In Study 2, we manipulated EL and PLEC, measured the mediators (i.e., personal control and perceived voice opportunity) and dependent variables (i.e., OCB and deviance). Below, we provide information regarding the methods utilized and the two studies in which we tested our hypotheses. This approach not only allows us to increase external validity and mundane realism (Study 1), but also to enhance internal validity and be more confident in the causal relations (Study 2).

Study 1

Sample and Procedure

We administered questionnaires in two phases to employees working in different organizations in Nigeria. Noteworthy, the participants were from different sectors including financial, fast moving consumer goods, pharmaceutical, oil and gas, public service, medical, education, and banking sector. The questionnaires were administered in English, as this is the official language in Nigeria. For the purpose of this study, one of the authors traveled to Nigeria to discuss the purpose of our research (i.e., to examine how leadership may elevate constructive work behavior) with top management and human resources professionals in the network of a major Business school in the country. Using this approach helps to gain the support of top management and enhances participant motivation (Dilman 2000). With the assistance of several human resource personnel, three hundred employees were randomly selected to participate in the study. Before we administered the surveys, participants were informed about the voluntary nature of participation and were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially (we also indicated the purpose of the study) and stressed that the

survey would be used for research and feedback purposes only. Moreover, the participants were told that all identifying information would be removed to preserve their anonymity.

Data regarding the independent and dependent variables were obtained at two different times separated by 6 weeks. This time lag was chosen in order to reduce common-method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2012) and, as noted by Podsakoff and colleagues, the time lag in data collection should neither be too short nor too long. If the time lag is too short, memory effects may artificially inflate the relationship between variables. On the other hand, if the time lag is too long, certain factors (e.g., strong response attrition or leadership development programs) may mask existing relationship between variables. Hence, we felt 6 weeks offer an optimal choice of time lag (for a similar approach, see Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009). At Time 1, participants provided demographic information (e.g., age, gender, education, and tenure), completed 10 items of the ethical leadership scale, and 4 items that measured the perceived ethical conviction of their immediate supervisor. At Time 2, the same respondents were invited to complete the measures of OCB and deviance, as well as the extent to which they believed there was value congruence—which we assessed as a control variable. Respondents provided four unique codes prior to submitting the survey so that we could match their responses at Time 2 with those of Time 1. Two hundred and twenty-one employees completed all variables of interest at Time 1 (for a response rate of 70%), and 131 employees completed the Time 2 measures (62% of Time 1 respondents). Thus, our final sample consisted of 131 employees who completed all measures at both time.

Measures

We measured all items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership was measured using Brown and colleagues' (2005) 10-item scale. Employees provided ratings of their supervisors' ethical leadership. Sample items are: "My supervisor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics" and "My supervisor discusses business ethics or values with employees." ($\alpha = .88$).

Perceived Leader Ethical Conviction

Based on the moral conviction literature (e.g., Skitka et al. 2005; Mullen and Skitka 2006) and our conceptualization of perceived leader ethical conviction, a four-item measure

was developed to assess the extent to which employee perceived leader ethical conviction. Items include "My leader considers his/her own view on ethical values the only standard that should be used," "My leader considers his/her own ethical convictions to be the only right choice," "My leader considers he/she is right in his/her values, therefore feels entitled to act on those convictions," and "My leader is strict in terms of which standards should be employed." The internal reliability of this scale was .93.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Employees provided ratings of their coworkers' OCB using a 16-item scale (8 items for OCBO and 8 items for OCBI) developed by Lee and Allen (2002). Although direct supervisors' ratings of OCB have been mostly used in the literature, in our study participants evaluated their own OCB because it fits into our theoretical rationale. Moreover, recent meta-analysis by Carpenter et al. (2014) found no differences between supervisor and self-report of OCB. Sample items for OCBO are "I offer ideas to improve the functioning of my organization," and "I keep up with developments in the organization." OCBI include, "I help others who have been absent'' and ''I go out of my way to make new employees feel welcome." (OCBO: $\alpha = .91$, OCBI: $\alpha = .85$).

Deviance

We measured employee deviance using Benneth and Robinson's (2000) 12-item organizational deviance scale. Sample items include "I have neglected to follow my leader's instructions" and "I come late to work without permission" ($\alpha = .93$).

Control Variable

Because research on moral conviction has shown that people who have strong moral convictions are likely to be intolerant of attitudinal dissimilar others (e.g., Skitka et al. 2005), we controlled for value incongruence in order to rule out the likelihood that disagreement or value incongruence with the leader may be responsible for the interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction. We measured employees' value congruence with their leader at Time 2 using Hoffman et al.'s (2011) 3-item scale. A Sample item is "My personal values match my supervisor's values and ideals" ($\alpha = .87$). Following the recommendation of Becker (2005), we excluded this variable in reporting our analyses since including value congruence did not change the outcome of our hypothesis tests.

Harman's One-Factor Test

Even though we did not expect common-method variance (CMV) to be a threat in our study given the proposed interactive effect (Evans 1985), we nonetheless examined the extent to which CMV could have distorted our findings. Following a number of recent leadership studies (e.g., Greenbaum et al. 2015; Mitchell and Ambrose 2007), we used Harman's one-factor Test to address concerns about common-method bias. In running this analysis, all study variables were entered into an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with unrotated principal component analysis. If our results were distorted by common-method bias, a single factor would emerge and account for majority of the variance explained. The results obtained revealed that more than one distinct factor emerged and that only 22.17% of the total variance was explained by one factor. We also conducted an additional analysis following the procedure outlined by Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989). We compared our hypothesized model, with a model including an uncorrelated method factor. The results showed that the model with the method factor improved the model fit and the method factor accounted for a total variance of 8.77%, which is less than half of the 25% method variance reported in past studies (Podsakoff et al. 2012). Hence, both tests provide support for the fact that CMV is unlikely to confound the interpretation of our results.

Results

Before testing our hypotheses, we first conducted a CFA to examine the distinctiveness of the five variables included in our study (i.e., EL, perceived leader ethical PLEC, OCBO, and OCBI, deviance). To maintain favorable indicator to sample size ratios (see Landis et al. 2000), we used randomly created parcels of items for ethical leadership (5 items), OCBs (4 items each), and deviance (6 items), while we retained the four-item measure of perceived leader ethical conviction. The CFA results show that the baseline five-factor model fits the data well ($\chi^2 = 314.24$, $df = 220$, $p < .001$, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RSMEA = .057) compared to other alternative models. For example, a four-factor model in which both EL and PLEC were set to load on one factor ($\chi^2 = 631.10$, $df = 223$, $p < .001$, CFI = .80, TLI = .75, RSMEA = .119), four-factor model were OCBO and OCBI were set to load on one factor ($\chi^2 = 333.39$, $df = 224$, $p < .001$, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RSMEA = .061), three-factor model were both EL and PLEC, and both OCBO and OCB1 were set to load on one factor ($\chi^2 = 643.35$, $df = 227$, $p < .001$, CFI = .79, TLI = .75, RSMEA = .12), two-factor model were both EL and PLEC were combined and OCBO, OCBI, and deviance were set to load on one factor ($\chi^2 = 840.45$, $df = 229$, $p < .001$, CFI = .69, TLI = .64, RSMEA = .143), and a one-factor model in which EL, PLEC, OCBO, and OCB1, and deviance were all set to load on one factor showed a poor fit ($\chi^2 = 1319.03$, $df = 230$, $p < .001$, CFI = .46, TLI = .35, RSMEA = .19).

In Table 1, we show the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among all variables in our study. As expected, ethical leadership was positively correlated with employee OCBO ($r = .21$, $p < .05$) and OCBI ($r = .24$, $p < .01$). Additionally, ethical leadership was negatively correlated with employee deviance ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$). To test our hypothesized moderation model, we used the SPSS PROCESS macro for testing moderation (model 1; Hayes 2013).

In line with Hypotheses 1 and 2, we found that the interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction had a significant effect on employee OCB (OCBO: $b = -.16$, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $p < .05$; OCBI: $b = -.15$, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $p < .01$), and on employee deviance ($b = .12$, $\Delta R^2 = .06$, $p < .01$). We plotted the nature of the interactions. As shown in Figs. 2, and 3, these graphical depictions are consistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2. As shown in Table 2, test of simple slopes further reveals that the positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB is more pronounced when perceived leader ethical conviction is low (OCBO: $b = .52$, $p < .01$; OCBI: $b = .49$, $p < .001$), rather than high (OCBO: $b = .16$, $p > .05$; OCBI: $b = .14$, $p > .05$). For employee deviance, test of simple slopes reveal that the negative relationship between ethical leadership and organizational deviance is more pronounced when perceived leader ethical conviction is low ($b = -.36$, $p < .001$) rather than high ($b = -.07$, $p > .05$).

Taken together, the results obtained from this study suggest that ethical leadership has a greater effect on employees' OCB and deviance when leaders are perceived to have weak rather than strong ethical conviction. In study 2, we replicated these findings based on Skitka et al.'s (2005) moral conviction scale (see also Mullen and Skitka 2006) to measure "perceived leader ethical conviction." Beyond constructively replicating Study 1, in Study 2, we expanded our model by outlining the underlying processes through which the interaction between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction affects employees' OCB and deviance. To do so, we test feelings of personal control and perceived voice opportunity as these mechanisms.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Study 1							
1. Ethical leadership	3.41	.51	–				
2. PLEC	2.87	1.15	−33**	–			
3. OCBO	3.69	.56	.21*	−.09	–		
4. OCBI	3.58	.45	.24**	−.08	.76**	–	
5. Deviance	1.41	.34	−.22*	−.16	−.11	−.17	–
Study 2							
1. Ethical leadership	.52	.50	–				
2. PLEC	.49	.50	.01	–			
3. Personal control	2.68	.91	.11	−.26**	–		
4. PVO	3.11	1.10	.34**	−.29**	.59**	–	
5. OCB	2.80	1.21	.35**	−.05	49**	48**	–
6. Deviance	2.42	1.04	−.21*	.19	−.34**	−.54**	−.31**

OCBO organizational citizenship behavior toward the organization, *OCBI* organizational citizenship behavior toward individuals, *PLEC* perceived leader ethical conviction, *PVO* perceived voice opportunity. Study 1: $N = 131$, Study 2: $N = 103$
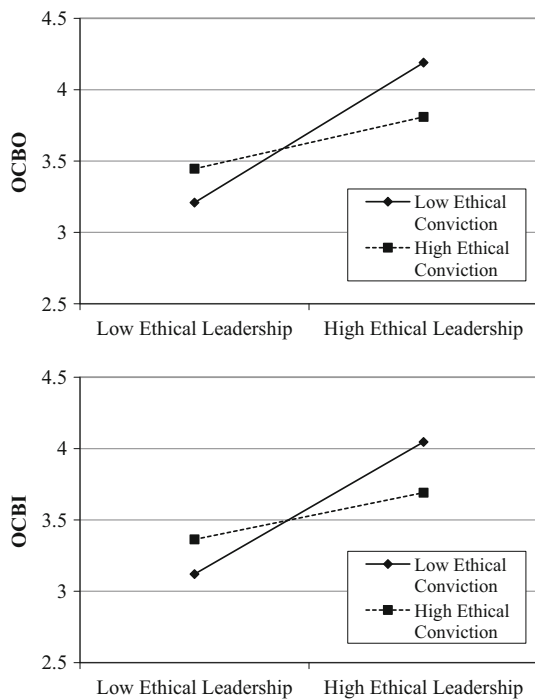
** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Fig. 2 Study 1: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on employee OCBO. Study 1: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on employee OCBI

Fig. 3 Study 1: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on employee deviance

Nigeria—were invited to participate in this study. Participants were informed about the voluntary nature of participation and were guaranteed that there the data would be treated confidentiality. In exchange for their participation, they were entered into a draw to win one out of five online shopping vouchers valued at 5000 Naira (this represents a value of $25 at the time the data were collected). We received data from 103 participants (response rate of 69.59%). Of the respondents, 48% were female. 38.7% were between 20 and 29 years old, 60% were between 30 and 49 years old, and 1.3% were between 50 and 64 years old. The average organizational tenure at their respective job was 4 years ($SD = 2.84$). 72.8% of them held at least a bachelor degree.

Study 2

Sample

A total of 148 individuals—including employees coming from the human-capital and education industry, and part-time postgraduate students from a southwestern university in
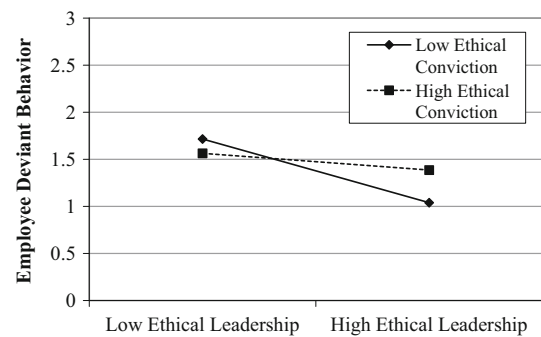
Design and Procedure

We used a 2 (ethical leadership: low vs. high) × 2 (perceived leader ethical conviction: low vs. high) between-subject scenario-based experimental design. Manipulations

Table 2 Regression results for the moderating effects of perceived leader ethical conviction for Study 1

	Employee OCBO				OCBI				Deviance			
	b	SE	t	p	b	SE	t	p	b	SE	t	p
Ethical leadership (EL)	.34	.11	2.99	.01	.31	.09	3.57	.001	−.21	.07	−3.20	.01
Leader ethical conviction (PLEC)	−.04	.04	−.81	.42	−.03	.03	−.81	.42	.05	.03	1.86	.07
EL × PLEC	−.15	.07	−2.17	.03	−.14	.06	−2.69	.01	.12	.04	2.94	.01
R^2				.08				.11				.12
ΔR^2				.03				.05				.06
Conditional effects of ethical leadership on employee OCBO, OCBI, and deviance at low versus high levels of PLEC												
Low PLEC ($M − 1 SD$)	.52	.16	3.13	.01	.49	.13	3.78	.001	−.36	.10	−3.66	.001
High PLEC ($M + 1 SD$)	−.16	.11	1.44	.15	.14	.08	1.64	.10	−.07	.06	−1.06	.29

PLEC, perceived leader ethical conviction; OCBO, organizational citizenship behavior toward the organization; OCBI, organizational citizenship behavior toward individuals

$N = 131$. Bootstrap sample size $= 5000$

of ethical leadership were based upon Stouten et al. (2013) and Brown et al.'s (2005) conceptualization and measures of ethical leadership, while manipulations of perceived leader ethical conviction were based on Skitka et al.'s (2005) conceptualization and measure of moral conviction (see also Mullen and Skitka 2006), but were slightly adapted to reflect *perceptions of leader ethical conviction*. Participants were asked to read the scenario and carefully think about what they would do if they actually experienced the described situation. After reading this scenario, they were asked to complete a survey containing the manipulation checks of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction, our proposed mediators (i.e., perceived control and perceived voice opportunity), dependent variables (i.e., OCB and deviance) and demographic variables of interest.

Experimental Manipulations

In the scenarios presented, we described a direct supervisor named Mr. David Solomon. The scenario started with the following statement.

Imagine that you are an employee at *Gateway Bank* and you have been working there for 3 years. The following represents a description of your *line manager* or *direct supervisor*—David Solomon—with whom you have been working starting from your first day on the job.

Next, the manipulation for ethical leadership was introduced. Participants in the high [low] ethical leadership condition read the following:

Mr. David is a line manager who [does not] live(s) his personal life in an ethical manner. He is [not] a reliable person and [does not] ask(s) himself what is the right thing to do before making decisions. Mr.

David [does not] also make(s) honest and balanced decisions at work. He [does not] listen(s) to what employees have to say and [do not] act(s) in their best interest. At work he [does not] discusses the importance of ethical norms and [do not] discipline(s) employees who violate ethical standards. He defines success not only in terms of results, but also in the way the results are obtained [Mr. David defines success only in terms of results and does not care about the way results are obtained]. In addition, he also [does not] set(s) an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.

Finally, we added another paragraph describing the manipulated perceived leader ethical conviction. The *high* perceived leader ethical conviction condition does not include the words in brackets, while the *low* perceived leader ethical conviction does include the words in brackets.

Apart from the above, you notice that Mr. David's feelings about *following his principles* are [not] very much connected to his beliefs about fundamental right and wrong and this is strongly [slightly] a reflection of his core more beliefs and convictions. In fact, to him, his position on *following principles* is [not] strongly a moral stance that is, [not] seen as absolute and very much [slightly] based on moral principles [that is, he can be sometimes flexible in his moral principles].

Measures

The manipulation checks were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (=not at all) to 5 (=very much). All other items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (=strongly disagree) to (5 = strongly agree).

Manipulation Checks

We assessed whether our manipulation of ethical leadership was successful using Brown et al.'s (2005) 10-item measure ($\alpha = .98$). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to what they agreed or disagreed that the supervisor described in the scenario engaged in ethical leadership behaviors. A sample item is "Disciplines employees who violate ethical standard." We assessed whether the manipulation of *perceived leader ethical conviction* was successful with four items based on Skitka et al.'s (2005) and (Mullen and Skitka's 2006) measure of moral conviction ($\alpha = .95$). A sample item is "To what extent are your supervisor's position on following his principles a moral stance that is seen as absolute."

Personal Control

Perceived control was measured with a six-item scale that includes the autonomy and impact dimensions of Spreitzer's (1995) psychological empowerment measure and that have been used by previous studies to measure personal control (e.g., Aryee et al. 2014; Brockner et al. 2004; Tangirala and Ramanujam 2008). Participants were asked to respond to the questions based on the supervisor described in the scenario. Sample items include "I have significant autonomy or control in determining how I do my job" and "I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department" ($\alpha = .87$).

Perceived Voice Opportunity

Perceived voice opportunity was assessed with Avery et al. (2011) three-item scale. Sample items include "My supervisor is not open to new ideas and suggestions" and "At work, my opinions do not seem to count." Both items were reversed-coded ($\alpha = .80$).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

We measured OCB using Liden, Wayne, Jaworski, and Bennett's (2004) three-item OCB scale. Sample items include "Assist my supervisor with his duties when needed even though it may not be formally required" and "Volunteer to do things not formally required by the job" ($\alpha = .89$).

Deviance

We measured deviance using six-item from Benneth and Robinson (2000) deviance scale. Sample items include "Neglect to follow my leader's instructions," and "Drag out work in order to get overtime" ($\alpha = .91$).

Manipulation Checks

Before testing our hypothesized model, we first examined the extent to which the manipulations were successful by conducting an ANOVA. The ethical leadership manipulation had a significant effect on participants' ratings of ethical leadership, $F(1, 101) = 1237.08$, $p < .001$. The results indicated that participants assigned to the high ethical leadership condition reported higher levels of ethical leadership ($M = 4.32$, $SD = .41$) than participants assigned to the low ethical leadership condition ($M = 1.53$, $SD = .38$). Moreover, the ANOVA results also showed that participants assigned to the high perceived leader ethical conviction condition reported higher perceptions of leader ethical conviction ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .56$) than participants in the low leader ethical conviction ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.03$), $F(1, 101) = 181.56$, $p < .001$.

Results of Hypotheses Testing

We tested our hypothesized mediated moderation model using the method described by Preacher et al. (2007). In doing so, we used the SPSS PROCESS macro created by Hayes (2013) to test our hypotheses (the results are shown in Table 4). Means and standard deviations for the dependent variables (i.e., OCB and deviance) and mediators (i.e., personal control and perceived voice opportunity) across experimental conditions are also presented in Table 3.

Hypothesis 1 predicts an interaction between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on OCB, such that, when perceived leader ethical conviction is low, the relationship between ethical leadership and OCB will be more stronger rather than when it is high. As proposed, the results show a significant interactive effect between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction in predicting OCB ($b = -1.45$, $t = -3.38$, $p < .001$). Moreover, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and OCB was more pronounced when perceived leader ethical conviction was low ($b = 1.56$, $t = 5.16$, $p < .001$) rather than high ($b = .10$, $t = .39$, ns). This relationship is depicted in Fig. 4. In support of Hypothesis 2, the results reveal a significant interactive effect between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction in predicting deviance ($b = 1.36$, $t = 3.64$, $p < .001$). As proposed, the negative relationship between ethical leadership and deviance was more pronounced when perceived leader ethical conviction was low ($b = -1.12$, $t = 4.25$, $p < .001$) rather than high ($b = .24$, $t = .92$, ns). This relationship is also depicted in Fig. 4.

Hypothesis 3 predicts an interaction between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on personal control. As proposed, the results show a significant

Table 3 Regression results for the moderating effects of perceived leader ethical conviction for Study 2

	b	SE	t	p	b	SE	t	p
	Personal control				PVO			
Mediator variable models								
Ethical leadership (EL)	.20	.17	1.17	.24	.77	.19	4.06	.00
Leader ethical conviction (PLEC)	−.47	.16	−2.82	.01	−.65	.19	−3.43	.00
EL × LEC	−.87	.34	−2.59	.01	−1.01	.38	−2.66	.01
	Employee OCB				Employee OCB			
Dependent variable models								
Personal control	.57	.11	5.02	.001	.41	.10	3.89	.001
Ethical leadership (EL)	.72	.19	3.75	.01	.52	.22	2.41	.05
Leader ethical conviction (PLEC)	.14	.20	.69	.48	.13	.21	.63	.52
EL × PLEC	−.95	.39	−2.38	.05	−1.03	.42	−2.48	.05
	Deviance				Deviance			
Personal voice opportunity (PVO)	−.25	.10	−2.30	.05	−.42	.08	−4.68	.001
Ethical leadership (EL)	−.39	.18	−2.13	.05	−.12	.18	−.64	.52
Leader ethical conviction (PLEC)	.29	.19	1.56	.12	.14	.18	.78	.43
EL × PLEC	1.14	.37	3.02	.01	.93	.35	2.66	.01

interactive effect between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction in predicting personal control ($b = -.87$, $t = -2.59$, $p < .01$). As predicted, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and personal control was more pronounced when perceived leader ethical conviction was low rather than high (see Table 4). This relationship is shown in Fig. 5. In support of Hypothesis 4, the results revealed a significant interaction between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on perceived voice opportunity ($b = -1.01$, $t = -2.66$, $p < .01$). As predicted, the positive relationship between ethical leadership and perceived voice opportunity was more pronounced when perceived leader ethical conviction was low rather than high. This relationship is shown in Fig. 6.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that personal control mediates the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on (a) employee OCB and (b) deviance. To test this hypothesis, we used the bootstrapping procedure recommended by Preacher et al. (2007) for testing mediated moderation. The bootstrapping shows that that personal control mediates the interactive effect between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on (a) employee OCB ($b = -.50$, 95% confidence interval $= -1.0648$ to $-.1344$); and (b) deviance ($b = .21$, 95% confidence interval $= .0248$ to .6490), therefore supporting Hypothesis 5. Further, in Hypothesis 6, we predicted that perceived voice opportunity would mediate the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on (a) employee OCB and (b) deviance. The bootstrapping

indeed demonstrate that perceived voice opportunity mediates the relationship interaction between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on (a) employee OCB ($b = -.42$, confidence interval $= -.9078$ to $-.1091$); and (b) deviance ($b = .43$, confidence interval $= .1170$ to .9152).

In sum, the results of Study 2 show that ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction interact to predict employee OCB and deviance (Hypotheses 1 and 2). Exploring the underlying mechanism for this interaction in Hypotheses (3-6) revealed that ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction interact to shape feelings of personal control and perceived voice opportunity, which in turn affect employee OCB and increase deviance. That is, personal control and perceived voice opportunity were shown to be mechanisms through which the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction predicts OCB and deviance.

General Discussion

In two studies, we tested the hypothesis that the relationship between ethical leadership and both employee OCB and deviance is moderated by perceived leader ethical conviction. Our findings provide evidence in support of this hypothesis, demonstrating that perceived leader ethical conviction weakens the association between ethical leadership and OCB as well as deviance. Specifically, we found that when ethical leaders were perceived flexible in their ethical convictions, employees respond positively by

engaging in more OCB and less deviance. However, we found that when leaders were perceived rigid or strong in their ethical convictions, employees responded less positively to ethical leaders. The use of a field study of employees working in different industries (Study 1) as well as an experimental study (Study 2) strengthens the validity of our conclusions and further suggests that feelings of personal control and voice opportunity explain the proposed interaction between ethical leadership and perceived

Fig. 4 Study 2: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on employee OCB. Study 2: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on deviance

leader ethical conviction. Below, we discuss the implications of these findings.

Theoretical Contributions

Our research contributes to the ethical leadership literature by taking a step toward resolving the varying effects regarding the link between ethical leadership and employee discretionary behavior. We proposed and found that this relationship is contingent on other aspects of the leader's attitudes and behavior that employees witness on a day-to-day basis. Specifically, ethical leadership is most likely to be associated with higher levels of OCB and lower levels of deviance when leaders are perceived to have less strong (rather than strong) ethical convictions. Although studies have begun to identify boundary conditions or moderators of the link between ethical leadership and both OCB and deviance, such as follower self-esteem (Avery et al. 2011), moral emotions (Eisenbeiss and Van Knippenberg 2015), and perceptions of organizational politics (Kacmar et al. 2011), these studies have largely focused on examining follower and organizational characteristics. However, hardly any research has addressed the possibility that other attributes of the leader may moderate these linkages.

Our research demonstrates that employees' perceptions of leader ethical conviction weaken the positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB as well as the negative relationship between ethical leadership and deviance. It appears that the absolute nature of leaders' pursuance of their ethical convictions constrains the positive effects of ethical leadership. Scholars have speculated that the absolute nature of a leader's ethicality that underlines such a strong ethical conviction can come across as too rigid and intolerant such so that his or her effectiveness as an ethical leader is weakened (Stouten et al. 2013; Weaver et al. 2014). However, little attention has been devoted to test the role of a leader's ethical conviction in the association between ethical leadership and OCB as well as deviance. Our research differs from the work of Stouten et al. (2013) in that the authors examined the curvilinear effect of ethical leadership rather than an attitudinal moderator. Although Stouten et al. (2013) found that at the highest levels of ethical leadership employee OCB decreases, they also found that deviance was highly reduced. This suggests the need to look beyond curvilinear effects and explore important attitudinal moderators of ethical leadership effectiveness. By introducing perceived leader ethical conviction into the ethical leadership literature, we not only help reconcile and resolve the inconsistent findings regarding the effect of ethical leadership on OCB and deviance (e.g., Detert et al. 2007; Stouten et al. 2013), but also answer the calls to identify moderators of this effect (Brown and Treviño 2006; Den Hartog 2015). In
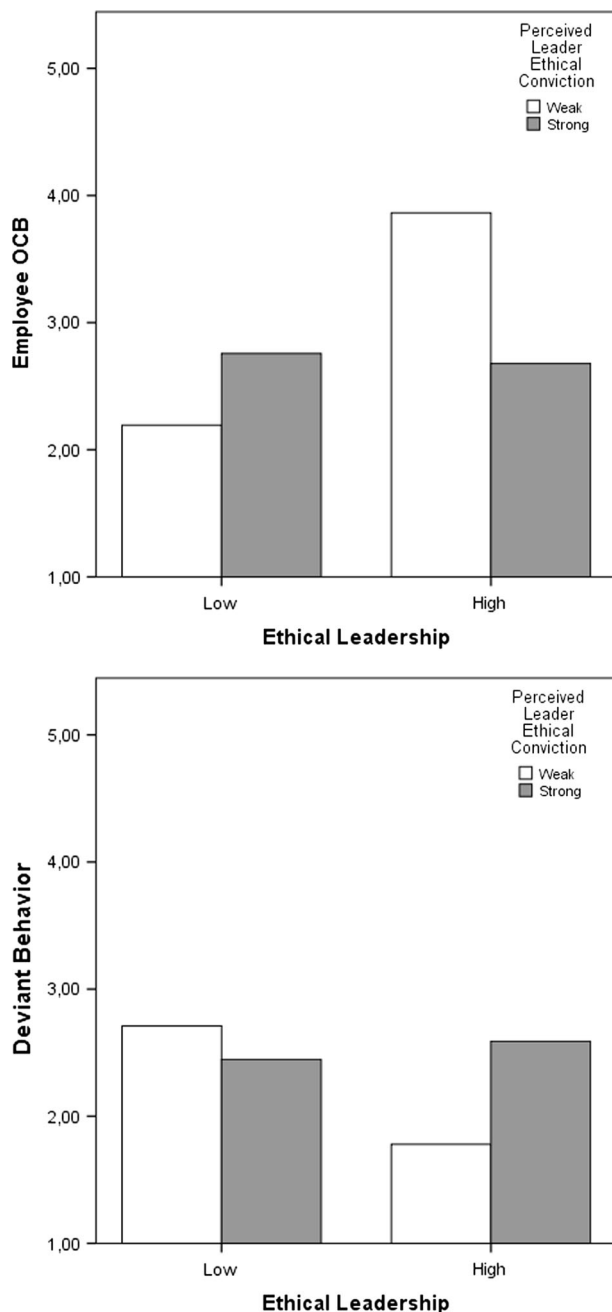
Table 4 Means and SD's of OCB, deviance, personal control, and perceived voice opportunity across experimental conditions in Study 2

Dependent variable	OCB M (SD)	Deviance M (SD)	Personal control M (SD)	PVO M (SD)
Conditions				
Low PLEC, low EL	2.05 (.86)	2.80 (1.04)	2.58 (.70)	2.77 (.76)
Low PLEC, high EL	3.62 (1.34)	1.68 (.73)	3.21 (1.03)	4.05 (.90)
High PLEC, low EL	2.68 (1.11)	2.50 (1.05)	2.57 (.91)	2.65 (.95)
High PLEC, high EL	2.79 (.97)	2.74 (.96)	2.33 (.71)	2.91 (.97)

OCB organizational citizenship behavior, *PVO* perceived voice opportunity, *PLEC* perceived leader ethical conviction, *EL* ethical leadership
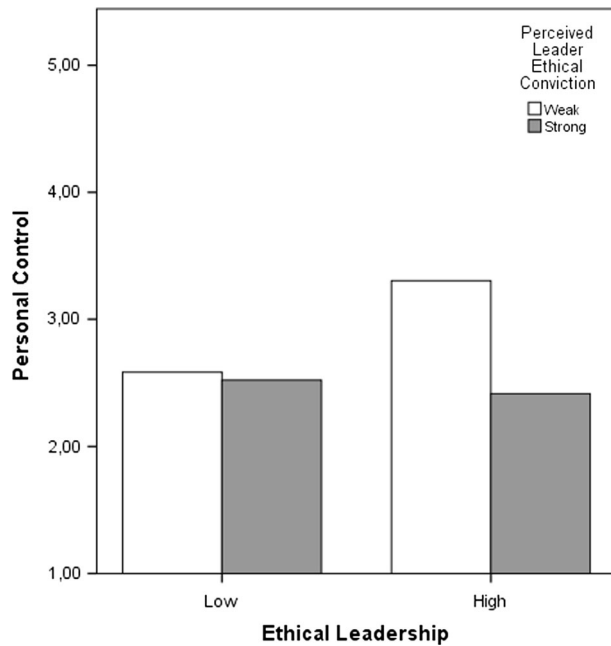
Fig. 5 Study 2: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on personal control

Fig. 6 Study 2: Interaction of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction on perceived voice opportunity

doing so, our research suggests that there is a need for scholars and practitioners to adopt a more balanced perspective to understanding the effectiveness of ethical leadership by acknowledging both its strengths and potential weaknesses and by considering other aspects of the leader's behavior or attitudes toward leading ethically.

Our research also deepens knowledge about the moderating role of perceived leader ethical conviction, addressing the call for leadership research to not only examine the moderators or interactive effects of leadership influence but also account for the mechanisms through which such effects occur (Yukl 2010). Although implicit in the ethical leadership literature is the assumption that ethical leadership increases employees' feelings of personal control and voice opportunity (Brown et al. 2005; Piccolo et al. 2010; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009; Zhu et al. 2004), few studies have examined whether this is *always* the case. Along this line, our research revealed that
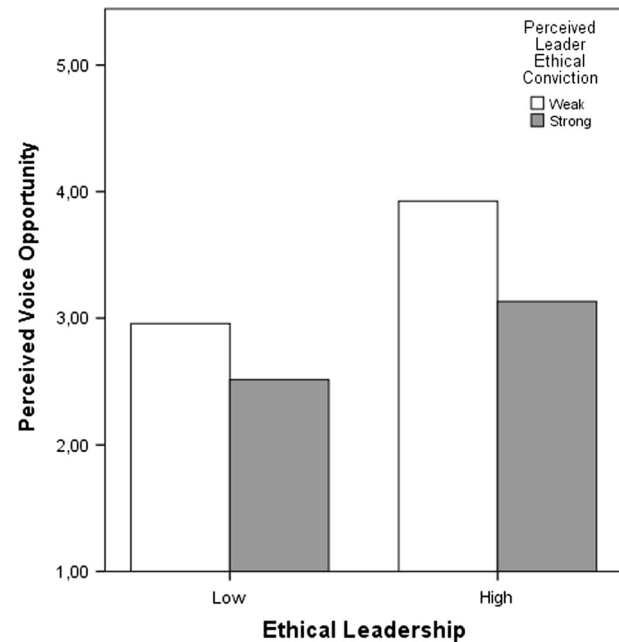
ethical leadership does not always engender employee personal control and perceived voice opportunity. In fact, employees are less likely to feel that they have personal control and voice opportunity when their leader is perceived to have strong ethical conviction. In such instance, employees view ethical leaders with strong ethical convictions as mainly concerned about ensuring that others follow their own ethical perspectives. This reduces the sense of personal control and voice opportunity attached to experiencing ethical leadership in the workplace. Thus, our findings suggest the need to reconsider the generally held assumption that ethical leaders always stimulate a sense of personal control and voice opportunity (Piccolo et al. 2010; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck 2009; Zhu, He, Treviño, Chao, and Wang 2015). In extending the moderating role of perceived ethical conviction in the relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB and deviance, our research fills a void in the existing research regarding the

boundary conditions of ethical leadership on employee feelings of personal control and voice opportunity and highlights that these mechanisms enhance our knowledge of why the aforementioned moderating effect takes place. Moreover, from an empirical point of view, our second study strengthens previous correlational studies by offering a more rigorous causal examination of our model.

Furthermore, to date SLT and SET have been the main theoretical lenses through which the effects of ethical leadership on employee OCB and deviance have been examined in the extant literature (e.g., Kacmar et al. 2011; Mayer et al. 2009). Although both SLT and SET are useful framework for explaining why ethical leadership shapes employee behaviors in the right manner, they are somewhat limited in that they cannot fully and sufficiently explain *when* ethical leadership becomes more or less effective (Eisenbeiss and Van Knippenberg 2015; Wo et al. 2015). By drawing from the group engagement model (Tyler and Blader 2000, 2003), we explicate both *a boundary condition* and *the psychological processes* that make ethical leadership more likely to engender higher levels of OCB and lower levels of deviance. Our findings suggest that the ethical leadership literature can benefit from drawing from insights of the group engagement model to enrich our understanding of ethical leadership functioning in the workplace.

Finally, our research extends the extant literature by demonstrating how ethical leadership promotes employee OCB and discourages deviance in a non-Western context. By investigating our assumptions in an African context, we offer initial evidence for the broader value of the ethical leadership construct across diverse cultural contexts, thus supporting its generalizability. This is an important contribution for the literature, as African economies are emerging and multinational corporations are increasingly moving to African countries (e.g., Nigeria, Africa's biggest economy). Yet, to our knowledge, no empirical attention has been devoted to uncover whether and how ethical leadership can equally influence important employee behaviors such as OCB and deviance in such setting. Our findings therefore respond to the call from Johns (2006) to test proposed models in the OB domain in non-Western settings. Our research also corroborates prior findings showing that new-genre leadership constructs are equally relevant in African societies and across cultural context (see authentic leadership; Walumbwa et al. 2008; servant leadership; Walumbwa et al. 2010).

Practical Implications

Given that encouraging citizenship and discouraging deviant behaviors are important for organizational success (Mayer et al. 2009), our research findings hold valuable information for practitioners. For leaders interested in promoting OCB and discouraging deviance, it is important for them to exhibit ethical behavior in terms of treating employees in a fair and ethical manner and role modeling expected ethical behaviors. However, managers should also note that ethical leadership might not always guarantee that employees will enact behaviors intended to benefit the organization (OCB) as well as refrain from behaviors harming the organization (deviance). In particular, our findings suggest the need to caution front line managers and other people occupying leadership positions in the workplace about the potential danger of pushing one's ethical conviction to employees or seeing one's belief on ethical or unethical issue as absolute, because it can discourage employee OCB and increase deviance in the quest to restore employees' sense of personal control and voice opportunity.

We want to emphasize that we are by no means discouraging ethical leadership, which is indeed beneficial in organizations (Brown et al. 2005). Instead, our findings suggest that leaders should be mindful that their ethicality is not seen as absolute because employees are more likely to perceive them then as intolerant, thereby weakening their effectiveness in motivating OCB and demotivating deviance. In line with the definition of ethical leadership, leaders should focus specifically on communicating and discussing ethical expectations through *two-way communication* because employees want to be involved in organizational and work-related processes due to the fact that interpretations of ethics is often relative (Hannah et al. 2014). By taking this into account, ethical leaders can stimulate employees' feelings of personal control and voice opportunity, which in turn increase employee OCB and decrease deviance. Relatedly, our findings also have practical implications for leadership development workshops that are directed toward developing ethical leaders. For such workshops and trainings, it is crucial to emphasize the need for supervisors to promote discussion about ethical issues in the workplace without putting forward an absolute mindset. This approach is most likely to further enhance the effectiveness of ethical leadership in the workplace.

Strengths and Limitations

The present research has a number of strengths, including the use of a multi-study and multi-method integrative approach to investigate the moderating role of perceived leader ethical conviction in the relationship between ethical leadership and employee OCB and deviance. Moreover, using multiple operationalization of the key construct (i.e., perceived leader ethical conviction) and replicating the results are noteworthy strengths of our research. Despite these strengths, our research is not without limitations.

First, although we introduced a time lag of 6 weeks in Study 1, the extent to which we can draw strong causal conclusions based on this study remains limited. We attempted to overcome this limitation by using a scenario-based experiment in Study 2, which allowed us to enhance the internal validity of our findings. Second, the data in Study 1 were collected from the same source and as such, we cannot completely rule out the fact that common-source bias might be an issue. However, we addressed this limitation by obtaining ratings of OCB and deviance 6 weeks after ethical leadership was rated. Furthermore, as Podsakoff et al. (2012) noted, common-method bias does not provide a sufficient explanation for relationships between variables collected at different times. Study 2 also attempted to address this concern using an experimental research design. In addition, due to the interactive nature of our model, common-method variance (CMV) is less likely to be a threat toward our conclusions (Evans 1985) as it can only result in the *under*estimation of interaction effects (Podsakoff et al. 2012). Yet, to further ensure that common-method bias was not a threat to our findings, we tested for CMV in our study. Our analysis revealed that our results were not tainted by such concern. Recent meta-analysis has also shown the convergence of self- and other report of OCB and suggests that self-report provides a more valid approach for measuring of employee OCB (Carpenter et al. 2014) and deviance (Berry et al. 2012). Nevertheless, future research should attempt collecting data from multiple sources (e.g., coworkers or supervisors).

Directions for Future Research

Whereas our research provides initial evidence for the external validity and applicability of the ethical leadership construct in an African context, future research is needed to examine cultural-specific moderators that could influence the effectiveness of ethical leadership in promoting appropriate employee behaviors. For example, cultural values identified in the previous work (e.g., power distance, Hofstede and Hofstede 2005; House et al. 2004) may be particularly relevant and worth exploring. In addition, a direct examination of the cross-cultural impact of ethical leadership provides a rich avenue for future research. With that said, although our study focused on the effects of ethical leadership on employee OCB and deviance, future research would benefit from expanding our theoretical model by investigating other behavioral outcomes. For instance, it would be interesting to examine whether the interactive effect of ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction has a similar influence on other employee outcomes that have been linked to ethical leadership in previous studies (e.g., in-role performance, voice, creativity, job satisfaction, and turnover intention). For instance, it is possible that ethical leaders with strong convictions still stimulate in-role performance, yet fail to encourage employees to go above and beyond what is formally expected, and thereby reduce creativity, voice, job satisfaction, as well as increase their intention to quit. Future research should explore these possibilities.

In general, having a strong conviction may not necessarily be destructive and as practitioners opined, it may be important for leaders to lead with conviction. However, our findings show that this can be a stiff slope that opens an interesting question for future research: Do ethical leaders (not) need "strong" *actual* ethical conviction to lead? Addressing this question is important, as it would help deepen our knowledge about the difference between "actual" and "perceived" ethical conviction in relation to ethical leadership. Moreover, future research could also examine the potential role of leader conviction regarding specific moral issues (e.g., capital punishment, abortion…) in relation with ethical leadership effectiveness.

Finally, as shown in our study, the enactment of moral values can be difficult for leaders as they might become too strict in it. A promising avenue for future research would be to examine how ethical leaders can best communicate their standards and how they can better manage open discussions regarding ethical issues. Similarly, investigating ways in which ethical leaders can resolve disagreements or handle different values between and with employees would be an interesting pathway for future studies.

Conclusion

Our research identifies perceived leader ethical conviction as an important boundary condition that weakens the effect of ethical leadership on employee OCB and deviance. In this regard, our research helps to resolve the varying effects regarding the relations between ethical leadership and both OCB and deviance. Specifically, our findings revealed that ethical leadership was less effective in encouraging OCB and discouraging deviance when leaders were perceived to have strong ethical convictions. Our findings also demonstrate that the interaction between ethical leadership and perceived leader ethical conviction relates to feelings of personal control and voice opportunity, which further translate into in the enactment of OCB and deviance. These findings suggest that ethical leaders should be cautious not to see their own ethical stance/point of view as absolute. We urge researchers to further explore this line of research, so that we may fully understand the organizational functioning of ethical leadership.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest The authors have no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants in the study.

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