

Title: Prototypical Leadership Traits: Honesty, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness
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The Leadership Categorization Theory (Lord, Foti, & de Vader, 1984) explains the appeal of leaders through the presence of prototypical leadership traits. While previous research has indicated that some personality traits, such as agreeableness and extraversion are perceived as prototypical leadership traits (Judge & Bono, 2000; Leung & Bozionelos, 2004), this study investigates whether ethical leadership is a prototypical leadership trait by examining whether the personality traits associated with ethical leadership, including honesty, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, affect leadership perceptions. Participants (n = 75) read paragraph descriptions of leaders and rated them on how leader-like they were. Results indicated that the honesty, agreeableness, and conscientiousness of the leaders affected the leadership perceptions. This suggests that ethical leadership is a prototypical leadership trait. Similar to the explanation of charisma as a prototypical leadership trait (Hogg, 2001), ethical leadership may hint at possible reasons why personality traits are considered prototypical leadership traits.

References

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