

# MORAL IDENTITY AND THE LEADER'S RESPONSE

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## Abstract

The subjective lens through which each person sees the world, attitudes about the obligations given to others, and the situational context in which ethical decisions are made all contribute to the definition of morality, which is a personal standard of good and wrong. The subjective lens is a result of each person's life experiences, underlying assumptions, and personal values; it serves as the foundation for judgments' about other people's behavior, their reliability, and the extent to which others are viewed as ethical or unethical.

*Keywords:* Moral Identity, Leader's Response, Judgments, People's behavior, Self-Defining, Ethical Response, Mixed Reaction.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

There are two primary perspectives on moral behavior that have been created as a result of extensive research into moral behavior by academics and philosophers: a male moral perspective by Lawrence Kohlberg and a female moral perspective by Carol Gilligan.Gilligan and Kohlberg both worked at Harvard University. Their research heavily draws from the pioneering theories of moral development put forward by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. Piaget studied how children made decisions cognitively and argued that when people interact with the outside world; their qualitative and quantitative thinking improves, resulting in more effective problem-solving on an individual basis. Most of Kohlberg's moral philosophy is reasoned, centered on justice, and based on the rule of law. Care for others, especially those to whom one has a specific duty as a result of their close interpersonal contact, is strongly emphasized in Gilligan's moral framework. The moral perspectives of both men and women take into account Piaget's claim that moral perception improves with age and life experience.



#### **II.THE MORAL IDENTITY**

The degree to which a person's moral and ethical decision-making process is consistent with their core values, their views on the obligations owed to others, and their sense of self-identity is referred to as their moral integrity. For managers and executives, moral integrity also refers to the set of guidelines by which they show that they are consistent with and supportive of the ideals that their companies promote. When a company makes a claim to support a particular set of moral principles, its managers and executives are only seen by others as upholding those principles when both their personal conduct and the company's adopted policies actually support those principles.

Each person's identity, according to Peter Burke and Jan Stets, consists of an ongoing process of selfappraisal in which that person continually assesses her/his own behaviour and the causes of that behavior. Figure reflects the identification norm created by Burke and Stets and the eight processes involved in directing one's behaviour.

The principles and ethical presumptions that shape how each individual views themselves or themselves serve as a comparator for their opinions about their identity. These presumptions serve as the framework for behavioural expectations. The majority of people identify performance expectations and the expected behaviours that result from them subconsciously. The nature and context of each social event ultimately determine actual behavioural decisions. A person examines her or his performance using feedback from both her and others, both verbal and nonverbal, and then uses that information to adjust expectations for them or make an attempt to adhere to previously established norms of behaviour.

The identity standard is rarely consciously considered in the clamor of busy life, but it is influenced by a subconscious calculation by which people make decisions, frequently rationalizing conduct at the emotional level without fully realizing the discrepancies between what one says and what (s)he actually does. Although remarkably frequent, this self-deception is rarely fully comprehended. By improving one's conscious comprehension of each of the eight processes that comprise one's moral identity and utilizing that comprehension to be more completely aware of the delicate decisions made at each of those steps, any individual can improve their moral identity.



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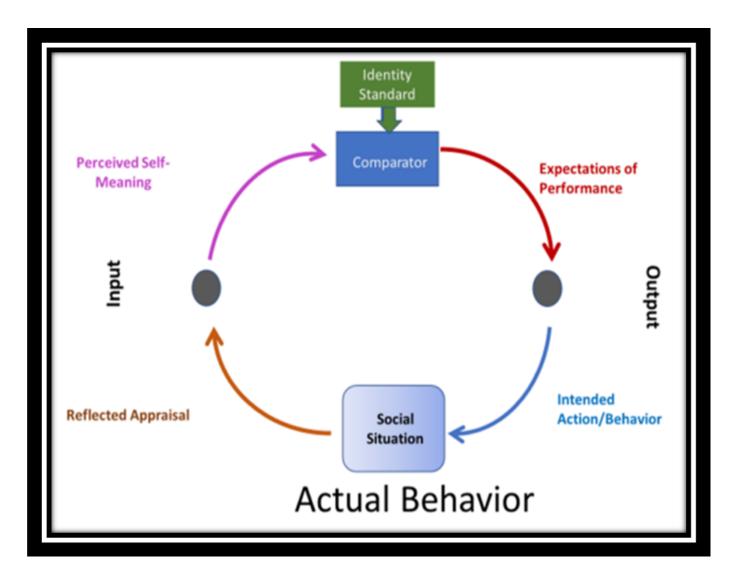


Figure1: The Moral Identity Model

The ability to assess one's own behaviour and judge whether one is genuinely upholding one's duties to others and to oneself is provided by one's moral identity. If the moral identity changes, the initial output standard can be jeopardized. Additionally, acting contrary to one's principles may serve as a catalyst for redefining one's moral identity or as a reminder to uphold them. One's failure to keep promises or behave in ways that are consistent with their moral identity may have a detrimental impact on their capacity to gain the trust and commitment of others. A person's self-confidence may also be affected by behavior that falls short of the ideal level.



- Understand your own comparator
- Define your specific expectations
- Translate the expectations into specific duties
- Anticipate intended actions
- Prepare for unanticipated situations
- Identify the appraisals that matter
- Measure your behaviors in context
- Keep your meanings positive

## III. IDENTITY AS A MORAL PERSON AND THE LEADER'S RESPONSE

A person's moral identity is defined as the extent to which their moral principles and beliefs are reflected in their self-concept and influence their behaviour. Strong moral convictions increase a leader's propensity to act morally, make moral decisions, and inspire others to do the same. When faced with moral issues or situations that need moral leadership, a leader who has a strong moral identity is more likely to respond in a way that upholds their principles and ideals. Making morally demanding and judgmental decisions may include giving moral considerations precedence over self-serving goals or short-term gains.

On the other hand, a leader who lacks a strong moral identity may be more likely to act unethically because they may prioritise personal gain or external pressure over their goals and values. This could result in decisions and actions that harm other people, violate morality, and damage the leader's reputation and trustworthiness.

As a result, how a leader responds to moral conundrums and their ability to preserve high moral standards while leading are greatly influenced by their moral identity. With the help of a strong moral identity, a leader can inspire followers, establish a culture of ethics inside their business, and generate trust.



## **IV.TYPES OF MORAL IDENTITY**

There are various ways to categorize the types of moral identity, but here are a few common ones:

Self Defining Moral Identity	This describes people who have a strong moral compass and regard morality as being fundamental to which they are as people. They are more inclined to put moral concerns first and behave in a way that is consistent with their ideals.
Role-Based Moral Identity	This kind of moral identity is connected to a particular function or place in society, such as that of a doctor, teacher, or parent. These people could feel very strongly that it is their duty to uphold moral principles in their different vocations.
Relational Moral Identity	A person's relationships with other people provide the basis of this type of moral identity. In order to preserve good relationships and refrain from doing harm to others, they could place a high value on ethical behaviour.
Situational moral identity	This kind of moral identity is more situation- and context-dependent and may change. This sort of moral identity may prioritise ethical behaviour in some circumstances but not in others, depending on the circumstance.



It's crucial to remember that people can possess many forms of moral identities, and that these identities can interact and have an impact on one another.

## V. TYPES OF LEADER'S RESPONSE

When faced with an ethical challenge or situation, leaders can respond in different ways. Here are a few common types of responses:

Ethical Response	This entails making choices and acting in ways that put moral principles and ideals first. Leaders who take moral decisions are dedicated to maintaining moral principles and acting in the interests of all parties involved.
Unethical Reaction	This entails making choices and acting in ways that put one's own interests or pressure from others ahead of moral principles and standards. Leaders that act unethically may engage in actions that hurt other people, go against moral principles, and ruin their credibility and reputation.
Moral Reaction	This is making choices and acting in a way that is unconcerned with ethical issues. Amoral leaders might not prioritise moral principles or other considerations like financial gain or legal compliance.
Mixed Reaction	This involves making choices and doing things that have elements of both morality and immorality. Mixed- response leaders may find it difficult to balance conflicting interests or may give priority to some values



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over others.

It's critical to remember that how a leader responds to an ethical dilemma could have a big impact on their organisation and stakeholders. While unethical or inconsistent responses can have negative effects and undermine the credibility and reputation of the organisation, ethical responses can foster trust, reputation, and long-term success.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Leaders do not have to compromise their moral principles or their identities, even though the problems they face seem to be greater than they have ever been. Leaders and managers can enhance their own lives, their organisations, and the connections they build by knowing their moral identities and considering the advice offered here. These actions will also help their people reach their full potential. Leaders and managers may reestablish the commitment that is so frequently lacking in too many of today's organisations by respecting those ties.

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