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Positive Leadership Action Framework (PLAF): Simply doing good and doing well

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Positive Leadership, Virtue Ethics, Positive Organizational Scholarship, Practical Wisdom, Humble Magnanimity.

RESUMEN:

Positive Leadership (PL), a new approach to ethical leadership, has been gaining ground. This is particularly encouraging in the context of spiraling business scandals, global inequalities and the disastrous consequences of a financial and economic crisis that threatens to be repeated. On the one hand, PL, still a novel concept, suffers from an underpinning that is not clearly articulated. This has hindered the advancement of the research field. The fact that certain key terms are not well-defined has added to a poor understanding of the nature of PL. Still, on the other hand, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that, in terms of ends, positive businesses do well and do good. “Doing well” refers to “marked improvements in terms of multilevel performance including economic, human, and environmental aspects, indicating the magnitude of change in an upward trajectory and highlighting future viability and sustainability” (Meyer, 2015: S184). “Doing good” implies “undertaking actions to create a beneficial and sustainable situation for a company, the stakeholders and the community the environment, and for society as a whole” (Meyer, 2015: S188). Using this consensus, we present the Positive Leadership Action Framework (PLAF).

The novelty of the PLAF is twofold. First, it incorporates the connections of PL to positive outcomes - in terms of financial and economic performance and social well-being - organizational virtuousness and it acknowledges its conditional nature on the virtues to achieve flourishing within the organization and society at large. We argue that the leader’s actions function as the engine for positive change within the organization, and they bridge the gap between individual virtues and organizational virtuousness, creating self-reinforcing feedback effects among both. Second, it illuminates how leaders can develop positive organizations and compete ethically. They need to create positive assumptions among coworkers, positively impact the personal and professional development of employees, and balance positive formal and informal conditions at work. Furthermore, positive leaders need to exhibit the virtues of practical wisdom and humble magnanimity. Hence, this article provides PL with a solid foundation and sheds light on what exactly positive leaders do and what the specific virtues are that these leaders need.