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# Conflict of Cross-Country Ethical Values: President of China and Prime Minister of Canada at G20 Indonesia

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### **Article Info**

### **ABSTRACT**

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### Keywords:

Chinese and Canadian Culture, Cognition, Culture Value, Ethical Leadership, G20 The ethical conflict between the President of China and the Prime Minister of Canada at the G20 Summit in Indonesia deserves to be studied as to the causes of ethical differences between leaders. Ethical leadership, appropriate prescriptive behaviour, and promotion among staff through personal behaviour and interpersonal relationships. The focus of ethical leadership is obedience, and the content material of norms and ethical requirements varies in line with the cultural context of each country. Community members develop cognitive templates of behaviours that leaders prefer. This indicates that leaders tend to act in a manner that corresponds to their respective societal expectations of being more effective. This study uses a systematic literature review method. Ethical leadership in China is rooted in Confucian philosophy, whereas ethical leadership in Canada emphasizes performance, future orientation, and individualism. Lawrence Kohlberg on moral reasoning said that most people go through what is called the conventional cognitive level of moral development. This study provides reference material in the study of culture and cognition in ethical leadership that has not been extensively studied by researchers. This research helps people see the cultural differences that affect ethical leadership among state leaders, particularly in China and Canada. Communities can understand this difference and thus prevent conflicts in the future.

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### INTRODUCTION

On 15-16 November 2022, Indonesia hosted the Group of Twenty (G20) Summit. The G-20 is a global discussion board for financial cooperation on key troubles of the worldwide financial and economic agenda (Delivorias, 2022). On November 16, 2022, Chinese Leader Xi Jinping rebuked Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the G20 Indonesia Summit (Cahyani, 2022). In media-recorded clips of Indonesia's G20 summit, President Xi appealed to Canada's prime minister,

saying it would be inappropriate to share details of previous meetings between the two leaders with the media. The Prime Minister of Canada considers this an ethical act because in Canada people believe in free, open, and honest dialogue (Cecco, 2022). Some of the information distributed to the media at the meeting included Canada's concerns about China's interference in espionage in its country, Russia's attack on Ukraine, and North Korea, and the importance of the COP15 biodiversity conference (Sopiah, 2022; Cecco, 2022).

The President of China considers that the Prime Minister of Canada violated ethics in conveying information that has not been agreed upon by both parties, while the Prime Minister of Canada considers that this is a reasonable thing to do and does not violate ethics. The existence of ethical differences in leaders varies widely as a consequence of the strength of the culture in the countries in which leaders function (Li et al., 2021). Leadership influence depends on national culture (Ahmad, 2018). Culture is a system of internalized beliefs that guides individual behaviour in a variety of situations (Schwartz, 2006). Culture as a dynamic arrangement of thoughts and practices shared by individuals is passed down through generations and allows for intentional coexistence (Wang et al., 2022). The cultural variations that dominate the geopolitical landscape can be a significant source of conflict (Gelfand et al., 2011). Different cultural values have different predictive powers of attitudes and behaviours, like preferences and consequences of leadership style (Taras et al., 2010; Tsui et al., 2007). Ethical leadership is a leadership relationship built on social exchange and norms of reciprocity (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Someone learns certain behaviours by observing someone who is considered legitimate in their actions (Chen & Hou, 2016). Ethical leadership as a distinct structure based on ethical behaviour requires a theoretical investigation to determine the unique potential of that style of leadership (Ahmad, 2018). Cognition is a critical detail of organizational behaviour (Toader & Martin, 2022). Leaders are considered to be key shapers of organizational cognition (Lord et al., 2016). Cognition allows members of an organization to not only develop a cognitive interpretation of a leader but also to communicate a shared vision or understanding of events, directing the team member's attention to specific things, thereby enhancing the team member's interpretation of their surroundings. It is a two-way process of explicit formation, and interpretation of reality (Toader & Martin, 2022). The cognitive approach was used to examine the impact of culture on ethical leadership processes in China and Canada.

This article has novelty based on a publication review on the Scopus page using keywords "ethical leadership", "ethical leadership AND cognition", "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value", "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value China" and "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value Canada". A search was conducted on December 8, 2022, based on publications from 1990 to 2021 found 200 publications with the keywords "ethical leadership", 30 publications with the keywords "ethical leadership AND cognition" and there are no publications with the keywords "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value", "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value", "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value China", "ethical leadership AND cognition AND culture value Canada".

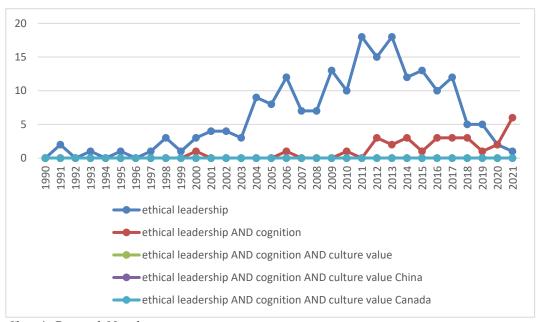
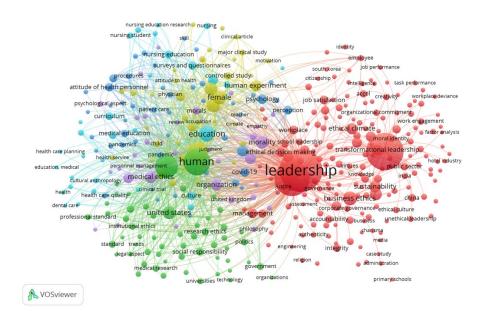


Chart 1: Research Novelty
Processed by Researcher (2022) [source]

### **METHODS**

The research has a novelty value which was analyzed using VOSviewer with bibliographical data mapping. Data were extracted from Scopus using keywords and summaries on ethical leadership from 1990 to 2021. The data is then processed in his VOSviewer to see the relevance of ethical leadership keywords to other topics. Data mapping has revealed ethical leadership linked to China, ideology, and ethical identity. Analysis indicates that ethical leadership is a focus of current research, but no research leads to the impact of cultural values and cognition of ethical leadership (Picture 1). Mapping this reference helps prepare a systematic method for document analysis.



Picture 1: Ethical Leadership Data Mapping
Processed by Researcher (2022) [source]

This study used a literature review approach to investigate the relationship between perceptions, cultural values, and ethical leadership in Canada and China. We searched the literature using the systematic literature search method established by Munn et al. (2018). First, we create information search terms from an initial selection of documents. Search terms are applied to titles, keywords, and abstracts in the database to ensure the relevance of results. We use a combination of terms ("ethical leadership" OR "cognitive leadership") AND ("cognition" OR "cognitive") AND ("culture value" OR "culture value china" OR "culture value Canada" OR "cognitive culture values"). Our research was restricted to academic journals published in English.

Because this field of study is still understudied and interdisciplinary in nature, it requires widespread dissemination of common databases. We use and search for titles and abstracts using the app Publish or Perish by using the Scopus journal filter. A database search provides articles in a wide variety of fields (n = 459) (Picture 2 PRISMA diagram). The researchers then independently filtered the remaining abstracts (n=42) using the following criteria: (1) related to issues of ethical leaders, cognition, and cultural values; (2) peer-reviewed; and (3) published in Scopus journal. Third, a deeper analysis was carried out on the remaining articles. This screening criterion yields n = 12 articles that were screened. The relevance of the articles reviewed was checked in their entirety according to three criteria: (1) in line with our purpose of understanding the relationship between ethical leaders, cognition, and cultural values in China and Canada; (2) the quality is suitable for data analysis; (3) not a duplicate literature review.

# 459 records identified through electronic database search 42 record titles/abstracts screened for relevance. Criteria: (1) related to the subject of ethical leaders, cognition, cultural values; (2) has undergone peer-review; and (3) published in the Scopus journal 12 full-text articles assessed for eligibility Criteria: (1) relevant to our aim of understanding the relationship between ethical leaders, cognition, cultural values in China and Canada; (2) the quality is suitable for data analysis; (3) not a duplicate literature review.

Picture 2: PRISMA for systematic literature review Page et al. (2021) [source]

	Study Design		Methods		Focus			
Article	Empirical	Conceptual	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed	Culture	Cognition	Ethical Leadership
Treviño, den								
Nieuwenboer,							•	
and Kish-		V		V			V	V
Gephart (2014)								
Eisenbeiss	v	V	V			v		v
(2012)								
Eisenbeiß and								
Brodbeck (2014)	V		V		v		V	
Strydom (2021)	V		V				V	v
Warner-								
Soderholm,								
Minelgaite, and	V		V		V	V		V
Littrell (2020)								
Solomon and								
Steyn (2017)	V		V			V		V
Euwema,								
Wendt, and van	v		v			v		v
Emmerik (2007)								
Mo et al. (2012)	V		V			v		v

	Study Design		Methods			Focus		
Article	Empirical	Conceptual	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed	Culture	Cognition	Ethical Leadership
Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson (2006)	V			V		V		v
Martin et al. (2013)	V		V			V		v
Resick et al. (2011)	V				v	V	v	v
Brown and Mitchell (2010)	v	V		v		V		v

Table 1: Data extraction table for systematic literature review Processed by Researcher (2022) [source]

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ethical leadership is defined as demonstrating and encouraging employees to behave in a normative manner through personal behaviour and interpersonal relationships (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). The awareness of moral management is obedience, and the content material of norms and ethical requirements relies upon the cultural context of every country (Eisenbeiß & Brodbeck, 2014). According to Eisenbeiss (2012) four key normative points of ethical leadership: 1) human orientation; 2) justice orientation; 3) direction of responsibility and sustainability; 4) moderation orientation. There are cultural differences between nations and organizations. That is because the collective programming of human thought separates the contributors of one human organization from those of another human organization (Eisenbeiß & Brodbeck, 2014). The cultural value systems collectively held in society tend to socialize people and influence how they perceive ethics in leadership (Kennedy 2000). Cultural value orientation is the cultural values and beliefs held individually (Kirkman et al., 2006).

According to Hofstede, the influence of national culture is related to several aspects of nationality. When comparing core cultural values, inland areas tend to be clustered along national borders rather than being dispersed and intermixed with areas of other countries in the same cultural or geographic region (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012). Western/Anglo-Saxon culture is very different from eastern culture, especially in terms of individualism and collectivism (Mo et al., 2012), especially Confucian Chinese culture. Individualism-collectivism is the most studied topic in culture, and individualism-collectivism is defined as supportive leadership and behaviour as an organizational citizen of the group, and direct leadership and relationship of the group. It is the link between behaviour as an organizational citizen (Euwema et al., 2007). Individualism Collectivism can also soften the relationship between ethical leadership and its members (Strydom, 2021). Horizontal collectivist social identity orientations with groups tend to get relatively strong moral identities in response to ethical leadership, more pronounced when leaders are viewed as prototype groups according to the social identity model shows that it will be (Bavik et al., 2018; Gerpott et al., 2019). Horizontal individualists are independent and motivated by the desire to express their uniqueness, which is reflected in their relatively high auto-effectiveness (Strydom, 2021). Strong independence and horizontal personal identities do not create solid relationships between leaders and members (van Knippenberg et al., 2007), and weaken the process of social interaction to create positive relationships between ethical leadership and members. The horizontal aspects of individualism and collectivism highlight the difference between independence-oriented (horizontal individualism) and cooperation-oriented (horizontal collectivism), their relationship to ethical leadership, and members' responses to ethical leadership. Relationships have different meanings (Strydom, 2021).

Individuals faced with an ethical dilemma first experience moral awareness, recognizing that the problem they are facing is an ethical problem. Then it has to do with moral judgment or the process of determining what is right and what is wrong. It shapes moral motives, intentions, and finally action (Treviño et al., 2014). Findings from an act of empirical studies suggest that community members develop favourable cognitive behavioural patterns for leaders and tend to behave in ways that are in line with their respective social expectations for leaders to be more effective (Warner-Soderholm et al., 2020).

Kohlberg's theory proposes six stages of moral reasoning, organized into three broad categories (Treviño et al., 2006). In theory, an individual's progression through the stages occurs in a definite, irreversible sequence. This is because the higher stages rely on cognitive abilities not available to the lower stages. At his two lower levels (conventional levels), the individual learns about what is based on submission to authority and worry of punishment (level 1) or concern for relationship exchange (level 2). There are self-assigned but outward reasons. Between the two levels (traditional level), moral judgments are more externally oriented and based on the expectations of significant others (level 3) or rules or laws (level 4). Finally, at the highest (principal) level, individuals are more autonomous in deciding what is right, looking at generally accepted principles of justice and rights. Table 2 shows the motivations for moral behaviour and how Kohlberg's theory perceives "right" at each level.

Framework		Preconvention	Conventional	Principled	
Dependent		Mutual expectations	Laws and articles of incorporation	Universal principles	
Motivation behaviour	for moral	Feelings of rejection from others	Anticipate breach of duty / Strive for self-esteem and respect for the community	for violating one's	
Right		their feelings motivated	Maintain social order and social or collective well-being / uphold the fundamental rights, values and legal contracts of society	ethical principles that all mankind must	

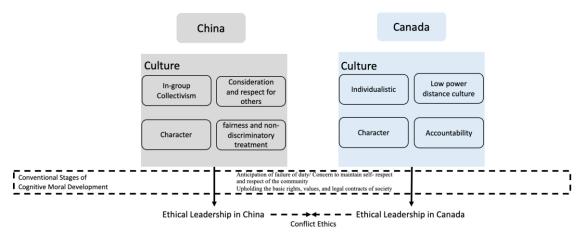
Table 2: Kohlberg's Stages of Cognitive Moral Development Processed by Researcher (2022) [source]

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Based on Lawrence Kohlberg's work on moral reasoning, most people intend to seek guidance from outsiders in making ethical decisions, what he calls the conventional cognitive level of moral development (Treviño et al., 2006 2014). The right and wrong thinking of most people is highly susceptible to external influences (norms, peer behaviour, culture, etc.) (Treviño et al., 2006). The substance of ethical leadership lies in the cognitive components of the leader's values and knowledge (integrity, ethical awareness, community/people orientation) that influence their behaviour and their use of social powers (motivate, encourage, empower followers discourage) (Solomon & Steyn, 2017).

The roots of moral management in Chinese society lie in Confucian philosophy (Resick et al., 2011). Confucianism points out that leaders are models whose behaviour should be imitated (Tjosvold & Hui, 2001). Confucian ideology maintains that the morality of the individual is the inspiration of society, and that regulation can most effectively translate into observable behaviour, which is no longer an internal virtue (Solansky et al., 2017). In China, the leader's emphasis is on value, team, and human orientation (Fu et al., 2007). Confucianism also influences organizations with group collectivism, institutional collectivism, the distance of power, and people orientation (Resick et al., 2011). The main emphasis is on building interpersonal bonds or interpersonal relationships with members in groups (Goh, 2009). Characteristics of ethical leadership, according to Chinese society emphasize consideration and respect for others (72.5%), character (52.5%), fairness, and non-discriminatory treatment (50.0%) (Resick et al., 2011). Leaders prefer to communicate indirectly so as not to jeopardize the harmony of the group, to maintain positive relations, and to be perceived as defenders of their members (Fu et al., 2007). Conversely, a leader who breaks the harmony of the group by thinking only of his interests is seen as a disadvantage (Resick et al., 2011).

Anglo-cluster countries, including Canada, are performance-driven, future-oriented, and individualistic (Dirilen-Gumus, 2017; Resick et al., 2011). Canada has a low power distance culture that encourages the exercise of participatory leadership (Farh et al., 2007; Martin et al., 2013). Individuals with low power-distance orientation might also additionally have better subjective well-being because of better autonomic motivation brought on via way of means of direction-orientated management behaviour (Wang et al., 2022). Ethical leadership within the Anglo cluster emphasizes character, and accountability, whereas consideration and respect for others, are at a much lower level (Resick et al., 2011). A strong focus on leadership, including honesty and personal integrity (Resick et al., 2011). Picture 2 depicts cultural cognitive processes influencing ethical leadership.



Picture 3: Cultural Cognitive Processes Influencing Ethical Leadership Processed by Researcher (2022) [source]

Therefore, in the case of a conflict between the Chinese and Canadian leaders in the G20 because of cultural differences. There are different cultural values between China and Canada. Chinese cultural values include in-group collectivism, consideration and respect for each other, character, fairness, and non-discriminatory treatment so that ethical leadership prioritizes collectivity in decision-making. Canada has an individualistic culture, low power distance culture, character, and accountability so ethical leadership is characterized by information transparency and respects freedom of speech. This cultural difference results in differences in the cognitive process, cognition creates a person's perception of something right or wrong, which is influenced by the environment in which society resides. It is necessary to increase mutual understanding and respect between the two countries so that there is no prolonged conflict.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research fills in the gaps in how external cognitive processes of state cultural values affect ethical leadership processes by exploring the cultural values of China and Canada. Furthermore, the cognitive process is a process of ethical leadership formed by the presence of external cultural factors. Leadership is considered ethical when it is following the cultural values adopted in the country. The existence of differences in cultural values in the cognitive processes of leaders can cause conflicts between countries. The main limitation of this study is the use of the literature review method because there is still little literature that discusses Canadian cultural values of ethical leadership. To improve better results, future research should consider using a quantitative approach and then testing the application of the model and measuring what key traits a leader must possess to become an ethical leader in Canada. Finally, this research is a pioneering study that demonstrates the types of traits and actions that ethical leaders in China and Canada need to have. Therefore, future research should consider the traits that ethical leaders should have in different countries and provide a larger primary sample, not only the number of respondents but also the diversity of countries.

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