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Ethics-Related Mentoring: A Scale Development and Test of its Role in Promoting Protégé Ethical Behaviour

Corinna Busch,[1] Jonathan Crawshaw,[2] Yves Guillaume[3] and Alison Legood[4]

[1]Sales Consultant and Coach, Tietzestrasse 22, Hamburg, 22587, Germany, [2]Department of Work and Organisation, Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham, B4 7ET, UK, [3]Work, Organisation and Management Department, School of Management, Liverpool University, Liverpool, L69 7ZH, UK, and [4]Exeter Centre for Leadership, Exeter Business School, Exeter University, Exeter, EX4 4PU, UK
Corresponding author email: j.r.crawshaw2@aston.ac.uk

Our research examines the importance of ethics-related mentoring, its measurement and potential role in promoting protégé ethical behaviours. In Study 1, 25 interviews with mentoring experts generated 40 items for a new measure of ethics-related mentoring. Across studies 2 and 3, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, using data collected from 114 and 152 protégés, respectively, reduced these to 15 items and supported its confirmatory and discriminant validity. Study 4, a scenario-based experiment, confirmed that protégé perceptions of their ethics-related mentoring increases their organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) whilst reducing their counterproductive work behaviour (CWB). Drawing on social learning theory and moral identity theory, we demonstrate that both moral identity and moral self-efficacy mediate the relationship with CWB, but only moral identity mediates the relationship with OCB. We found limited support for a moderating role of mentor prototypicality. Overall, we present strong evidence for the reliability and validity of our new ethics-related mentoring measure and a new theoretical framework explaining its potential role in promoting protégé ethical behaviours.

Introduction

Mentoring involves the formal or informal pairing of inexperienced employees with more experienced colleagues or professionals (Kram, 1985), with the mentoring literature consistent in identifying at least two main roles – providing protégés with psychosocial and career-related support (Haggard *et al.*, 2011). Implied within the mentoring literature, but under-explored, is a potential role for ethics-related mentoring in the mentor–protégé relationship (Brown and Treviño, 2014). Given the importance of ethics in organizations (Bedi, Alpaslan and Green, 2016), this lack of research into the potential of ethics-related mentoring as a valuable tool for employee ethical learning and development is surprising. To date, research has tended to focus on ethical leadership and the roles played by supervisors in the moral management of their employees (e.g. Brown and Treviño, 2006). Ethical leaders are those who – through their regular daily interactions with their subordinates – set and role model ethical standards and make their team accountable for their (un)ethical behaviour (Brown and Treviño, 2006).

We see ethics-related mentoring as a different, but complementary, tool in the organizational armoury for developing ethical employees. While ethical leaders have been shown to promote ethics through both transactional (i.e. communicating to employees the ethical standards of the organization and monitoring and rewarding their delivery)

and transformational functions (transforming the values of employees) (see Brown and Treviño, 2006), we view ethics-related mentoring in more ethical learning and developmental terms. In other words, ethics-related mentoring – like all mentoring functions (Kram, 1985) – transcends the day-to-day role modelling and ethical management of employees associated with ethical leadership and is more focused on their longer-term moral learning and growth through the mentor's ethical guidance, support and advice. We also believe that the mentor–protégé relationship may provide a safer, and thus more reflexive, space for employees to discuss workplace moral and ethical issues that the more hierarchical leader–follower relationship may not (at times) be able to provide.

It is important to recognize that one's line manager can also be one's mentor (Mullen and Klimaitis, 2021). This raises important questions regarding the differences between a line manager's ethical leadership and ethics-related mentoring roles. Importantly, empirical research has long distinguished mentoring from a variety of developmental leadership styles and other related developmental tools such as coaching (e.g. Mullen and Klimaitis, 2021). For example, Scandura and Williams (2004) found that when transformational leaders were also able to effectively engage in the career mentoring of their protégés, these protégés had enhanced career outcomes compared to those with non-supervisory mentors. We argue, therefore, that ethics-related mentoring is also a separate developmental role ethical leaders can engage in with their protégés, and that this may have additional beneficial outcomes for those mentored by their ethical leader.

Our research seeks to further define and operationalize this ethics-related mentoring role, clarify its potential role in promoting protégé ethical behaviour and understand why the benefits of ethics-related mentoring may be realized. As such, we propose important empirical and theoretical contributions to the mentoring and ethical development literatures. First, we develop and validate a new measure of 'ethics-related mentoring'. In doing so, we provide research and practice with greater clarity regarding the specific activities and functions of ethics-related mentoring, and how this differs from, and overlaps with, related constructs such as ethical leadership and the traditional career and psychosocial mentoring roles (see Mullen and Klimaitis, 2021; Wu *et al.*, 2019).

Second, we develop and test a new model that explains the reasons why ethics-related mentoring leads protégés to engage in ethical behaviours and disengage from unethical behaviours. Extant ethical leadership literature has variously drawn upon social exchange theory (e.g. Hansen *et al.*, 2013), social learning theory (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005) and moral identity theory (Gerpott et al., 2017) when explaining its effects on follower ethical behaviours. Building on this, we draw from *both* social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) and moral identity theory (Stets and Carter, 2012) to examine the dual roles of protégé moral self-efficacy and moral identity as parallel mechanisms through which protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring impact upon their ethical (organizational citizenship behaviour, OCB) and unethical (counterproductive work behaviour, CWB) behaviour. We thus extend an ethical leadership literature that has not previously explored these dual explanatory pathways for employee ethical development and a mentoring literature that has largely explained the benefits of mentoring in self-efficacy (social learning) terms only.

Finally, and drawing on the social identity theory of leadership (van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg, 2005), we introduce mentor organizational prototypicality as a potential moderator of these effects. A prototypical mentor is one who reflects the wider shared organizational values and attitudes to work and is therefore likely to be more influential. In exploring these effects, we examine not only how and why, but also when ethics-related mentoring might influence protégés' ethical and unethical behaviour.

Overview of studies

In developing our programme of research, we followed the scale development guidelines of Hinkin (1998) and DeVellis (2012). Study 1 draws on an inductive and deductive logic to generate items tapping into our new ethics-related mentoring construct. Using qualitative methodology, a sample of mentors, protégés and experts in mentoring programmes were interviewed and an initial item pool produced. These items were then filtered using a separate panel of subject matter experts, asking them to identify repetition, redundancy and saliency. In Studies 2 and 3, using samples of working protégés, we sought to reduce these items

further and, using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), identify the factor structure of our new measure. With these samples, we also tested the convergent and discriminatory validity of our new measure. Finally, in Study 4 we tested a theoretical model using a scenario-based experimental design to address concerns revolving around common source and method bias, as well as endogeneity. Below we describe in more detail each of these studies, the theoretical work that underpins them and their results.

Study 1: Item generation

While a significant amount of research has confirmed the benefits of traditional career and psychosocial mentoring roles (e.g. Eby *et al.*, 2013), work has also touched upon an additional role for mentors in influencing protégés' ethical values, attitudes and behaviours. For example, Bailey et al. (2016) found that protégés' ideal mentor prototype involves guidance, understanding and role modelling ethical values. Moberg (2008) concurs, theorizing ways that mentors may potentially influence protégés' moral character, including the provision of real examples of ethical dilemmas and the opportunity to reflect upon these experiences. Similarly, Goosen and Van Vuuren (2005) propose key roles for mentors and mentoring in disseminating organizational ethical values and facilitating protégé ethical behaviour by playing an active part in their better awareness of, sensitivity to and critical reasoning about ethics at work (see also Taylor and Curtis, 2018).

Although promising, this research is still in its infancy, both theoretically and empirically. Thus, while Taylor and Curtis (2018) found support for a relationship between mentoring and protégé prosocial behaviour, their study emphasized the importance of mentor–protégé relationship quality and not the nature and content of the mentoring itself. Indeed, despite this burgeoning interest in the potential role for mentors and mentoring in promoting protégé ethical behaviour, we could find no research that has sought to define or measure 'ethics-related mentoring' above and beyond the traditional mentoring functions described earlier. Using a working definition of 'a formal or informal relationship between two individuals, in which the mentor takes on the role as ethical guide or advisor to their protégé', Study 1 therefore sought to develop a measure capturing the nature and content of ethics-related mentoring (Figure 1).

Methods

Settings and procedure. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 mentors, 9 protégés and 4 experts in mentoring programmes in Germany. Participants were drawn from the lead researcher's professional network and all were contacted by email to participate in the study. Informed consent was sought from participants at the time of their recruitment. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed before analysis. These transcripts were anonymized and all data kept secure and confidential. Participants came from small, medium and large organizations and represented a cross-section of sectors including consultancy, manufacturing, finance, real estate and insurance, healthcare and social services, transport and logistics, construction, trade and media. They were both male (76%) and female (24%) and came from all ages and ranks including trainee, employee, (senior) manager, managing director, CEO and supervisory board chairperson.

We asked interviewees to describe ethics-related mentoring and, using template analysis (King, 1998), analysed their responses to generate an initial pool of potential items for measurement. There were two stages of the analysis. First, transcripts were read thoroughly and coded into meaningful units. Second, these codes were reviewed and grouped into conceptually similar categories. By the 25th interview, saturation was achieved and many of the same themes were being raised by participants; it was felt that additional interviews would not add greatly to our understanding of ethics-related mentoring.

We then exposed these items to a separate panel of six subject matter experts (i.e. doctoral researchers in the field of organizational psychology in the United Kingdom and experts from mentoring programmes in Germany) to judge the degree to which they were representative of our conceptual definition of ethics-related mentoring. These subject matter experts were again drawn from the lead researcher's network and contacted to participate in the study. The same reassurances regarding the rights to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity were also afforded these individuals. Items that were not perceived to tap mentor

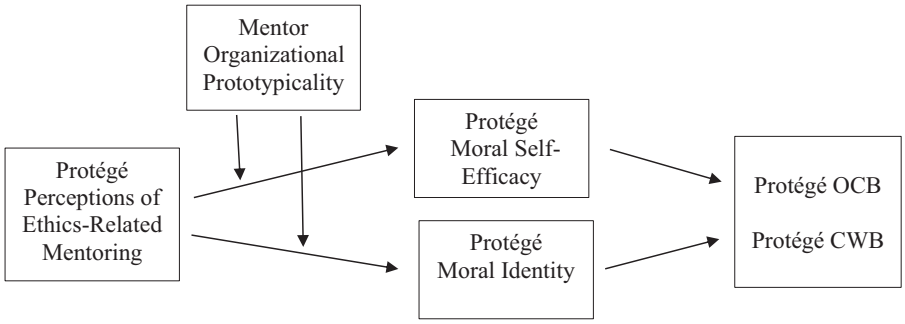

Figure 1. Theoretical model – Study 4

actions or behaviours, or were repetitive or lacked clarity, were removed.

Results

Ninety nine ethics-related mentoring items were initially generated from the 25 interviews. After the six subject matter experts filtered these items for redundancy, clarity and focus, we were left with 40 items and constructed our initial measurement scale using these (see Table 1). Given the mixed evidence for the salience of reverse-scored items in effective measurement scales (e.g. Harrison and McLaughlin, 1991), we chose not to use them in our ethics-related mentoring scale. We did, however, follow Hinkin's (1998) recommendation that items should be worded very carefully to ensure appropriate interpretation by respondents.

Study 2: Factor analysis and tests of scale validity

Study 2 sought to progress our scale development through (1) exploratory and CFA and then (2) tests of convergent and discriminant validity (Hinkin, 1998).

Methods

Settings and procedure. Within Germany, we gained access to conduct a questionnaire survey with two consultancies offering external mentoring services, four private sector companies and one university that all had established mentoring programmes. In all cases, the individuals responsible for the mentoring programme identified current or recent (within the past 3 years) protégés and distributed the link to our online survey through their company's internal mail system. They explained that the survey had been approved by the company and asked the protégés to participate in the study. A separate letter described the study procedure and its importance, and confirmed participants' right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity.

In the final sample of 114 protégés, 45.6% were female (17.5% did not report their gender) and the most prevalent age group was represented by those aged 31–35. Of the participants' mentors, 54.8% were male (19.2% did not report their mentor's gender) and the most prevalent age group was represented by those aged 46–50. In comparison to the protégé, 20.2% of mentors worked one rank higher and 55.7% worked two ranks higher. 57.7% of protégés reported that they were in a formal (rather than informal) mentoring relationship.

Measures. Unless otherwise stated, all survey measures required participants to respond on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Ethics-related mentoring was measured using the 40 items generated in Study 1.

Traditional mentoring roles were measured using the 15-item scale of Scandura (1992). Six items measured protégés' perceptions of their career-related mentoring (e.g. 'My mentor takes a personal interest in my career'), five items their psychosocial mentoring (e.g. 'I consider my mentor to be a friend') and four items their role modelling (e.g. 'I admire my mentor's ability to motivate others'). Cronbach's α for these sub-scales was 0.87, 0.87 and 0.83, respectively.

Supervisor ethical leadership was measured using the Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) 10-item Ethical Leadership Scale. An example item is 'My direct supervisor makes fair and balanced decisions' ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Table 1. Initial scale items and codes – Study 1

Item	Code
My mentor 'leads by example' in terms of ethical behaviour.	ethic1
My mentor shares his/her view on ethics and morality with me.	ethic2
My mentor values me as a person.	ethic3
My mentor insists on doing what is right even if the underlying conditions are not so easy.	ethic4
My mentor practices his/her moral values every day.	ethic5
My mentor listens to my concerns and problems I face.	ethic6
My mentor makes considerate decisions according to his/her personal value system.	ethic7
My mentor cares about me.	ethic8
My mentor is my role model in terms of ethics.	ethic9
My mentor shows a strong concern for business ethics or moral values.	ethic10
My mentor promotes environmental and social benefit rather than profit maximization.	ethic11
My mentor takes time when I need his/her help.	ethic12
My mentor gives me advice on how to solve an ethical issue.	ethic13
My mentor is a positive role model in terms of ethical behaviour.	ethic14
My mentor provides ethical guidance.	ethic15
My mentor discusses business ethics or moral values with me.	ethic16
My mentor gives me ideas and advice when making decisions with ethical or moral implications.	ethic17
My mentor shows concern for sustainability issues.	ethic18
My mentor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.	ethic19
My mentor signals me when he/she does not agree with my behaviour.	ethic20
My mentor discusses consequences of unethical behaviour in business with me.	ethic21
My mentor helps me to make decisions with ethical and moral implications.	ethic22
My mentor sets clear ethical and moral standards.	ethic23
My mentor's wisdom and experience influence my personal value system.	ethic24
My mentor clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behaviour by myself.	ethic25
My mentor communicates ethical standards.	ethic26
My mentor can be asked for advice on legal and ethical issues.	ethic27
My mentor helps me make thoughtful decisions and actions.	ethic28
My mentor discusses the likely consequences of possible solutions to the ethical problem.	ethic29
My mentor and me share similar values.	ethic30
My mentor shares his/her experience on ethical dilemmas with me.	ethic31
My mentor is someone I identify with in terms of personal and moral values.	ethic32
My mentor is my moral and ethical sparring partner.	ethic33
My mentor inspires me to reflect on my personal value and moral system.	ethic34
My mentor guides me to act in a self-responsible manner.	ethic35
By working with my mentor, I am able to reflect on my personal and moral principles.	ethic36
My mentor and I have similar value systems.	ethic37
My mentor talks about bad decisions and defeats that he/she made.	ethic38
My mentor asks me questions to help me think about my problem at hand.	ethic39
My mentor serves as a sounding board for me to develop and strengthen my value system.	ethic40

Social desirability was assessed with the impression management items of Paulhus's (1991) Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding measure. An example item is 'I sometimes tell lies if I have to'. As per Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005), one of the 20 items was dropped (i.e. 'I never read sexy books or magazines') out of concerns about its likely reactivity. After reversing all negatively worded items, a social desirability score was calculated by counting all extreme responses (6, 7) on a seven-point response format as 1 and all other responses as 0 ($\alpha = 0.72$).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis. We conducted EFA using SPSS v.26 (IBM Corp., 2015) and utilised principle axis factoring and direct oblimin oblique rotation (Conway and Huffcutt, 2003). Factors were extracted based on eigenvalues greater than 1, while also studying the scree plot. To achieve a simple structure, only items which predominantly loaded on a single appropriate factor were retained. That is, a criterion level of 0.40 and above (Ford, MacCallum and Tait, 1986). In addition,

Table 2. Items, loadings and communalities after extraction of the third EFA – Study 2

Items	F1	F2	F3	Communalities
Ethical role modelling				
My mentor 'leads by example' in terms of ethical behaviour. (ethic1)	0.781			0.689
My mentor is my role model in terms of ethics. (ethic9)	0.718			0.675
My mentor shows a strong concern for business ethics or moral values. (ethic10)	0.582			0.671
My mentor is a positive role model in terms of ethical behaviour. (ethic14)	0.570			0.679
My mentor sets clear ethical and moral standards. (ethic23)	0.582			0.682
Ethical guidance				
My mentor provides ethical guidance. (ethic15)		−0.592		0.661
My mentor discusses business ethics or moral values with me. (ethic16)		−0.828		0.667
My mentor gives me ideas and advice when making decisions with ethical or moral implications. (ethic17)		−0.617		0.702
My mentor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics. (ethic19)		−0.702		0.759
My mentor helps me to make decisions with ethical and moral implications. (ethic22)		−0.578		0.640
My mentor clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behaviour by myself. (ethic25)		−0.675		0.619
My mentor discusses the likely consequences of possible solutions to the ethical problem. (ethic29)		−0.722		0.721
My mentor is my moral and ethical sparring partner. (ethic33)		−0.446		0.615
Concern for protégé				
My mentor takes time when I need his/her help. (ethic12)			0.727	0.592
My mentor helps me make thoughtful decisions and actions. (ethic28)			0.559	0.650
My mentor guides me to act in a self-responsible manner. (ethic35)			0.727	0.708
By working with my mentor, I am able to reflect on my personal and moral principles. (ethic36)			0.666	0.672

Note: N = 104; extraction method = principal axis factoring; rotation method = direct oblimin.

communality statistics were examined. MacCallum *et al.* (1999) found that communalities greater than 0.60 may affect the accuracy of parameter estimates, reducing the impact of sample size. Good recovery of population factors can, therefore, be achieved even when N is well below 100. Therefore, only items with communalities after extraction greater than 0.60 were retained in the present study.

Conducting EFA is an iterative process. In the first EFA, the initial solution contained six factors accounting for 71.05% of the variance, exceeding the minimum acceptable target of 60% for scale development (Hinkin, 1998). After deleting items that did not load strongly on factors, cross-loaded on multiple factors or had low communalities, 25 items remained. The second EFA resulted in four factors explaining 71.33% of overall variance. Once again, items that did not load strongly on factors, cross-loaded on multiple factors or had low communalities were removed, leaving 19 items. The third and final EFA resulted in three factors and accounted for 71.14% of variance. Items were again discarded that had low factor loading or low communalities, leaving 17 items that loaded onto three dimensions: ethical role modelling (5 items), ethical guidance (8 items) and concern for protégé (4 items) (see Table 2).

Confirmatory factor analysis. CFA - using AMOS v.26 (Arbuckle, 2014) - was carried out to test the fit of this three-factor model and compare it to alternative models (see Table 3). Following convention, we used multiple fit statistics to assess the fit of our proposed model: chi-square (χ^2) with corresponding degrees of freedom (df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA < 0.08; Browne and Cudeck, 1993), comparative fit index (CFI > 0.90; Hu and Bentler, 1998) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI > 0.90; Bentler

Table 3. CFA comparing alternative factor structures – Study 2

Model	χ^2(df), p	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
One-factor structure	327.63(119), 0.000	0.13	0.85	0.81
Two-factor structure[1]	259.97(118), 0.000	0.10	0.90	0.87
Two-factor structure[2]	271.60(118), 0.000	0.11	0.89	0.86
Two-factor structure[3]	270.63(118), 0.000	0.11	0.89	0.86
Three-factor structure	203.46(116), 0.000	0.08	0.94	0.92

Note: N = 104; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index.
[1] Ethical role modelling and concern for protégé were combined into one factor.
[2] Ethical role modelling and ethical guidance were combined into one factor.
[3] Ethical guidance and concern for protégé were combined into one factor.

and Bonett, 1980). Results confirm a three-factor model – ethical role modelling, ethical guidance and concern for protégé – as the best fit (see Table 3). Cronbach's α for each factor was 0.92, 0.93 and 0.88, respectively, highlighting their internal reliability.

Convergent validity. To test for convergent validity, we examined the average variance extracted (AVE) scores of our three factors (e.g. Fornell and Larcker, 1981). AVEs are calculated using the following formula: K^2/n (where K = standardized factor loading, n = number of items), with an observed AVE not significantly smaller than 0.5 and standardized factor loadings of all items not significantly less than 0.5 accepted evidence of convergent validity (e.g. Cheung and Wang, 2017). AVEs of 0.69, 0.64 and 0.66 for our three scales (role modelling, guidance and concern, respectively) and no individual standardized factor loading of lower than 0.73 across all three therefore gave us confidence in their convergent validity.

Discriminant validity. To test for discriminant validity, we correlated our new ethics-related mentoring dimensions with the three established traditional mentoring functions and line manager ethical leadership and expected a moderate positive correlation. For example, those protégés who have positive views of their mentors' ethics-related mentoring may be more likely to hold more positive views of their wider mentoring relationship, including their career and psychosocial support. We may also expect that protégé perceptions of their line managers' ethical leadership would also influence their perceptions of their ethics-related mentoring – in particular, for those whose mentor is also their line manager.

Discussion

As predicted, our new ethics-related mentoring dimensions were significantly and positively correlated with the established mentoring scales and ethical leadership (see Table 4). Importantly, no correlations were above 0.56, well within the 0.75 cut-off for acceptable discriminant validity (Cheung and Wang, 2017). However, as the correlations between ethics-related mentoring and social desirability and between ethics-related mentoring and ethical leadership are of similar size, we also tested the correlation between ethics-related mentoring and ethical leadership whilst partialling out social desirability to rule out that it fully explains the relationship between ethics-related mentoring and ethical leadership. This was not the case, and the partial correlations between ethical leadership and overall ethics-related mentoring ($r = 0.31$, $p = 0.004$), ethical role modelling ($r = 0.28$, $p = 0.012$), concern for protégé ($r = 0.26$, $p = 0.019$) and ethical guidance ($r = 0.29$, $p = 0.009$) were still of moderate size. We are confident, therefore, that our new ethics-related mentoring dimensions constitute meaningful independent variables that are moderately associated with other related constructs in the ways that we would predict. These results provided a positive first step in our scale validation.

Study 3: Further factor analysis and scale validity testing

Our sample in Study 2 was relatively small and did not meet Hinkin's (1998) minimum size for valid EFA and CFA (Osborne and Fitzpatrick, 2012). It was also cross-sectional in nature and thus suffered from potential issues of common

Table 4. Correlations for tests of discriminant validity – Study 2

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Ethical role modelling	3.74	0.74							
2. Ethical guidance	3.47	0.70	0.75**						
3. Concern for protégé	4.08	0.71	0.68**	0.67**					
4. Career mentoring	3.64	0.81	0.38**	0.45**	0.56**				
5. Psychosocial mentoring	2.95	0.99	0.49**	0.52**	0.51**	0.57**			
6. Role model mentoring	3.70	0.69	0.56**	0.50**	0.54**	0.65**	0.65**		
7. Ethical leadership	3.48	0.78	0.30**	0.29**	0.27**	0.21**	0.14**	0.27*	
8. Social desirability	4.62	0.76	0.27**	0.08	0.11	−0.02	−0.06	0.13	0.17

Note: N varies between 84 and 113, due to missing variables.
*p < 0.05.
**p < 0.01.

source and method bias. We therefore carried out additional EFA and CFA on a new larger – and time-lagged – sample of working protégés in the United States. We also carried out further tests of convergent and discriminant validity, introducing two new correlates – protégé motivation to act ethically and protégé ethical leadership behaviour.

Methods

Settings and procedure. Participants were recruited via the US-based Qualtrics Panels. We requested that respondents *must* have a mentor and currently work in a management role. A time-lagged study design was employed, as the temporal separation between measures (i.e. predictors and outcome variables) is an appropriate method to reduce the negative impact of common method variance on empirical results (Brannick *et al.*, 2010).

At time 1, 210 protégés enrolled in the study and completed a survey containing all predictor variables and controls. At time 2 (approximately 2 weeks later), 152 protégés (72.4% retention rate) completed a second survey containing the outcome variables. 69.7% of these participants were male and the average age was 38.7 years. Most mentors were aged between 40 and 49 (31.6%), with 58% of protégés reporting that they were currently in a formal (rather than informal) mentoring relationship. 72% indicated that their mentor was their immediate line manager and that they spent on average 25.3 hours per month on the mentoring relationship.

Measures

Unless otherwise stated, all survey responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Ethics-related mentoring was measured using the newly developed 17-item three-dimensional scale.

Supervisor ethical leadership was measured using the same Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) scale as in Study 2.

Protégé motivation to act ethically was measured using the moral choice scale developed by Aquino *et al.* (2009). Participants were presented with the following scenario: 'Please imagine that you are the brand manager for a breakfast cereal company. Recently, you were approached by the American Cancer Society (ACS) to initiate a cause-related marketing programme. Specifically, ACS would like you to donate 25 cents to a special fund for cancer prevention each time one of your products is purchased. According to your research department, adoption of the programme is likely to cost more than it earns through an incremental sales increase. Consequently, if you choose to initiate the programme, you would be less likely to earn a year-end bonus.'

Participants were then asked to complete two questions: (1) What is the percentage chance that you would choose to initiate the cause-related marketing program? (0–100%) and (2) How likely are you to initiate the cause-related program? (1 = extremely unlikely to 9 = extremely likely). Responses to these items were standardized and averaged to form a measure of motivation to act ethically ($\alpha = 0.73$).

Protégé ethical leadership was measured using an adapted – self-rated – version of Brown,

Table 5. Items, loadings and communalities after extraction of second EFA – Study 3

Items	F1	F2	Communalities
Ethical role modelling			
My mentor is a positive role model in terms of ethical behaviour. (ethic14)	0.805		0.609
My mentor 'leads by example' in terms of ethical behaviour. (ethic1)	0.795		0.532
My mentor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics. (ethic19)	0.714		0.616
My mentor takes time when I need his/her help. (ethic12)	0.707		0.458
My mentor shows a strong concern for business ethics or moral values. (ethic10)	0.656		0.542
My mentor sets clear ethical and moral standards. (ethic23)	0.638		0.539
My mentor helps me make thoughtful decisions and actions. (ethic28)	0.588		0.444
By working with my mentor, I am able to reflect on my personal and moral principles. (ethic36)	0.428		0.515
Ethical guidance			
My mentor clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behaviour by myself. (ethic25)		0.720	0.450
My mentor provides ethical guidance. (ethic15)		0.683	0.574
My mentor is my moral and ethical sparring partner. (ethic33)		0.705	0.406
My mentor discusses the likely consequences of possible solutions to the ethical problem. (ethic29)		0.619	0.527
My mentor discusses business ethics or moral values with me. (ethic16)		0.599	0.558
My mentor gives me ideas and advice when making decisions with ethical or moral implications. (ethic17)		0.517	0.562
My mentor helps me to make decisions with ethical and moral implications. (ethic22)		0.478	0.541

Note: N = 210; extraction method = principal axis factoring; rotation method = direct oblimin.

Table 6. CFA results of alternative models – Study 3

Model	χ^2 (df), p	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
One-factor model	214.20 (90), 0.000	0.08	0.92	0.91
Two-factor model	142.95 (89), 0.000	0.05	0.97	0.96
Three-factor model	170.37 (87), 0.000	0.07	0.95	0.94

Note: N = 210; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index.

Treviño and Harrison's (2005) scale. All protégés were employed in line management roles at the time of participation in the survey. An example item is 'I make fair and balanced decisions' (α = 0.83).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis. We first conducted EFA on the 17-item ethics-related mentoring scale identified in Study 2. Eigenvalues and the scree plot suggested two factors accounting for 58.2% of variance. One item (ethic9) was deleted as it did not load strongly on its factor (<0.40). The remaining 16 items factored into two dimensions: ethical role modelling (9 items) and ethical guidance (7 items). At this point, we also removed the ethic35 item ('My mentor guides me to act in a self-responsible manner') from the ethical role-modelling scale as, conceptually, this seems to be clearly more aligned with the ethical guidance factor. A second EFA was conducted with the remaining 15 items, with two factors again emerging and accounting for 58.9% of the variance (see Table 5).

Confirmatory factor analysis. We conducted CFA using these 15 items, comparing alternative one-, two- and three-factor models. Table 6 confirms a two-factor solution – ethical role modelling and ethical guidance – as the best-fitting model, providing an excellent fit with the data (RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.97 and TLI = 0.96) (e.g. Hu and Bentler, 1998). We noted, however, that the one-factor model was also a very good fit of the data (RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.92 and TLI = 0.91). Given the high correlations between the ethical role modelling and ethical guidance factors in both this study (r^2 = 0.75) and Study 2 (r^2 = 0.75), we

Table 7. Correlations for tests of discriminant validity – Study 3

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Ethics-related mentoring	4.16	0.56			
2. Supervisor ethical leadership	4.14	0.65	0.37**		
3. Protégé moral motivation	0.00	0.90	0.20**	0.26**	
4. Protégé ethical leadership	4.35	0.46	0.32**	0.42**	0.17*

Note: N varies between 152 and 210 due to different survey waves.
*$p < 0.05$.
**$p < 0.01$.

decided to proceed with the more parsimonious one-factor model (DeVellis, 2012). Cronbach's α for this overall ethics-related mentoring scale was 0.93.

Convergent validity. To test for convergent validity, we again examined the AVE score of our measure (e.g. Fornell and Larcker, 1981). An AVE of 0.47 for our one-factor scale of ethics-related mentoring and no individual standardized factor loadings of lower than 0.54 gave us confidence in its convergent validity (e.g. Cheung and Wang, 2017).

Discriminant validity. As predicted, our single-factor ethics-related mentoring scale was significantly and positively correlated with supervisor ethical leadership ($r = 0.37$, $p = 0.000$). Importantly, this was again a moderate correlation and well within the 0.75 cut-off for acceptable discriminant validity (Cheung and Wang, 2017). Our scale was also positively related to protégé perceptions of their own motivation to act morally ($r = 0.20$, $p = 0.004$) and ethical leadership ($r = 0.32$, $p = 0.000$). This gave us further confidence that our new scale is related to important protégé ethical attitudes and behaviours in the ways we would expect, providing an important next step in our scale validation (see Table 7).

Discussion

We again explored the factor structure of our new ethics-related mentoring scale. After two additional rounds of EFA and a round of CFA, we proceeded with a one-factor ethics-related mentoring scale. While this differs from the three-factor structure reported in Study 1, the larger sample in Study 2 gave us confidence in the validity and reliability of this more parsimonious measure (Hinkin, 1998). Additional tests for convergent and discriminant validity also gave us further evidence of our scale's independence and validity, and we found some initial support for its relationship with important protégé ethical attitudes and behaviours.

A comparison of the items of our new ethics-related mentoring scale and ethical leadership scale items (e.g. Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005) appears to confirm our proposition that ethics-related mentoring and ethical leadership offer different, and complementary, functions when it comes to promoting ethics in the workplace. While of course parallels exist, we posit that ethical leadership taps mainly into the broad traits of fairness and trustworthiness of the line manager and their impact as an ethical role model and moral manager (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005). In contrast, while ethics-related mentoring also involves some role-modelling behaviours, it is also about the mentor as an ethical guide, advisor and sounding board. In other words, ethics-related mentoring is not particularly about leading by example, treating employees with fairness and dignity and disciplining those who violate ethical standards and thus moral management. Instead, it is about ethical learning and development, and the roles mentors play in providing protégés with a safe space to discuss and reflect upon ethical issues.

Study 4: Model testing

Study 4 tests a new model where moral self-efficacy and moral identity act as cognitive mechanisms through which ethics-related mentoring may predict protégé (un)ethical behaviour. Two new outcomes – ethical behaviour (OCB) and unethical behaviour (CWB) – are introduced to further extend the utility of our new ethics-related mentoring construct. To allow a valid test of our causal assumptions, we utilize a scenario-based experimental design.

Table 8. Means, standard deviations and correlations – Study 4

Variable	Mean	sd	1	2	3	4	5
1. Ethics-related mentoring[a]	0.49	0.50					
2. Mentor prototypicality[a]	0.48	0.50	0.01				
3. Moral identity	4.29	0.59	0.28**	0.21*			
4. Moral self-efficacy	5.50	1.04	0.40**	0.09	0.35**		
5. OCB	6.39	1.20	0.19*	0.08	0.34**	0.23**	
6. CWB	1.78	1.02	0.01	−0.04	−0.42**	−0.26**	−0.29**

Note: N = 142.
[a] Conditions: 0 = low, 1 = high.
*p < 0.05.
**p < 0.01.

Hypothesis development

Research has tended to explain the effects of ethical leadership on follower ethical behaviours by drawing upon either a social exchange (Hansen *et al.*, 2013), social learning (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005) or identity (Gerpott et al., 2017) logic, with little integration of these different approaches. Thus, from the perspective of social exchange theory, the moral management of ethical leaders is reciprocated by followers' own ethical actions and behaviours (Hansen *et al.*, 2013). Alternatively, social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that ethical leaders become role models, passing on to their followers the behaviours required of them to become ethical employees. Finally, the more recent identity perspective (e.g. Gerpott et al., 2017) suggests that ethical leaders make salient the moral dimension of work, thus developing in their followers a greater moral identity to work.

In the context of ethics-related mentoring, we do not see social exchange theory as a suitable framework for explaining its effects, as mentoring does not entail the day-to-day exchange of social resources in the same way as between leaders and their followers. However, we do see potential in both social learning theory and moral identity theory as parallel cognitive mechanisms through which ethics-related mentoring may predict protégé un/ethical behaviour. We develop these ideas below.

Ethics-related mentoring and protégé ethical (OCB) and unethical (CWB) behaviours: The mediating role of protégé moral identity. Moral identity refers to one's self-regulatory mechanisms that motivate moral action (Stets and Carter, 2012) and may be the basis of one's self-definitions associated with certain ethical beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Aquino *et al.*, 2009). Recent research has begun to examine how context may stimulate or alter one's moral identity (e.g. Zhu, Treviño and Zheng, 2016). For example, ethical leaders may provide moral cues or signals – through their own actions and conversations with followers – that help to activate and stimulate followers' moral identity (Gerpott et al., 2017). We propose, therefore, that mentors – through their ethics-related mentoring activities – are particularly well positioned to provide protégés with the moral advice and guidance that activates and stimulates their moral identity.

H1: Protégé perceptions of their ethics-related mentoring are positively related to their moral identity.

Research also shows that those individuals with a high moral identity are more likely to engage in OCB (Gerpott et al., 2017) and refrain from CWB. OCB refers to those individual prosocial and discretionary behaviours that are outside one's formal job description, and include ethical behaviours such as helping a colleague without being asked (e.g. LePine, Erez and Johnson, 2002). CWB, on the other hand, refers to those individual behaviours and actions that are deemed by an employer to be counter to its legitimate interests and may include – amongst other unethical actions – stealing or lying (Marcus *et al.*, 2016).

Thus, when an individual's moral identity is rendered salient they are more likely to want to behave in ways that are aligned with this moral identity (Gerpott et al., 2017). Helping and not harming others at work is consistent with this. For example, across an experimental and field study,

Gerpott et al. (2017) found support for the mediating role of follower moral identity in the relationship between ethical leadership and their OCB directed at both the individual and the organization. While we could not find current research exploring the direct relationship between moral identity and CWB, there is emerging work showing that those with a high moral identity are more likely to self-regulate their unethical reactions to mistreatment – such as CWB (e.g. Mingzheng *et al.*, 2014).

H2a: Protégé moral identity is positively related to their OCB and mediates the positive relationship between ethics-related mentoring and their OCB.

H2b: Protégé moral identity is negatively related to their CWB and mediates the negative relationship between protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their CWB.

Ethics-related mentoring and protégé OCB and CWB: The mediating role of protégé moral self-efficacy. In addition to moral identity, we propose a parallel mediating role for protégé moral self-efficacy, where moral self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to deliver moral performance (e.g. Hannah, Avolio and May, 2011). Self-efficacy has provided the theoretical underpinning for the majority of mentoring research, arguing that mentoring matters because it helps to build the self-confidence of protégés. For example, Day and Allen (2004) found that protégé career success was a function of the positive effects of career mentoring on protégé career self-efficacy. We extend this work to a moral context, arguing that the ethical role modelling, advice and guidance provided by ethics-related mentoring should positively impact protégés' self-confidence when it comes to their own ethical decision-making (see May, Luth and Schwoerer, 2014). In other words, moral self-efficacy is activated and becomes more meaningful to protégés because ethics-related mentoring increases their confidence in dealing with the moral dimensions of work.

H3: Protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring positively impacts on their moral self-efficacy.

A growing body of research has begun to highlight the importance of moral self-efficacy in predicting employee (un)ethical behaviours, including their OCB and CWB (e.g. Owens *et al.*, 2019). Put simply, those with a strong moral self-efficacy are more likely to have the confidence to make the morally 'right' decision when faced with ethically ambiguous situations at work. This may include decisions to go above and beyond the call of duty to help co-workers in need (OCB) or avoid the temptation to lie and deceive customers even if this may help the organization financially (CWB) (e.g. Owens *et al.*, 2019). We propose, therefore, that ethics-related mentoring can trigger protégé moral self-efficacy and, in turn, motivate them to engage in more OCB and less CWB

H4a: Protégé perceptions of their moral self-efficacy are positively related to their OCB and mediate the positive relationship between protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their OCB.

H4b: Protégé perceptions of their moral self-efficacy are negatively related to their CWB and mediate the negative relationship between protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their CWB.

The moderating role of mentor organizational prototypicality. Mentor organizational prototypicality refers to those mentors who share the social identity of the wider organizational membership (Hogg and van Knippenberg, 2003). As such, prototypical mentors are more likely to be able to mobilize and influence protégés as they are more readily trusted (e.g. Gerpott et al., 2017). We propose that the impact of ethics-related mentoring on protégé moral self-efficacy and moral identity will likely be heightened when mentors are perceived to be prototypical of the organization, and thus more trustworthy. In turn, this should lead to more OCB and less CWB (i.e. a first-stage moderated mediation model).

H5: The mediating role of protégé moral identity in the relationship between their perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their OCB (H5a) and CWB (H5b) is stronger (H5a)/weaker (H5b) when protégés perceive their mentor to be prototypical as it strengthens the relationship between ethics-related mentoring and protégé moral identity.

H6: The mediating role of protégé moral self-efficacy in the relationship between their perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their

OCB (H6a) and CWB (H6b) is stronger (H6a)/weaker (H6B) when protégés perceive their mentor to be prototypical as it strengthens the relationship between ethics-related mentoring and protégé moral self-efficacy.

Methods

Settings and procedure. One hundred and fifty participants based in the United Kingdom were recruited using the online Prolific survey recruitment pool. We paid each participant the rate of £8.91/hour (at the time of survey, the UK National Living Wage) and estimated the survey would take 15 minutes to complete. Informed consent was secured from everyone at the time of recruitment.

Using the Qualtrics survey platform, we randomly assigned participants to one of four scenarios based on our 2 × 2 between-subject design. In each scenario, individuals were asked to imagine leading a sales team in a manufacturing company and having as mentor Sam. Sam's mentoring varied across each scenario, depending on whether Sam emphasized ethics-related mentoring (high/low) and whether Sam was a prototypical employee in the organization (high/low) (see Appendix A for the scenarios). To better immerse participants in their scenario, we first asked them to briefly describe Sam's approach to mentoring before completing the rest of the questionnaire.

After removing incomplete cases, we were left with 142 usable responses. Of these, 72.5% were female and 88.7% were of White British ethnic origin. The average age of respondents was 37.6 years and 67.7% had an undergraduate degree or higher. At the time of survey, 82.4% were currently employed, with 28.2% acting as a mentor to someone and 20.4% being mentored themselves.

Measures. Given the scenario-based nature of our experimental study, we adapted all measures so that they explored participants' hypothetical responses to our measures.

Ethics-related mentoring was measured using the same 15-item scale developed in Study 3 ($\alpha = 0.98$).

Mentor prototypicality was assessed with five items adapted from the leader prototypicality work of van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg (2005). An example item is 'My mentor is a good example of the kind of people in my organization' ($\alpha = 0.87$).

Protégé moral self-efficacy was measured using three items used by Owens *et al.* (2019) and which were adapted from Spreitzer (1995). An example item is 'I am self-assured about my ability to do my job in a way that meets the organization's ethical standards' ($\alpha = 0.89$).

Protégé moral identity was measured using 12 items developed by Stets and Carter (2012). This scale presents respondents with 12 bipolar moral values (e.g. honest–dishonest) and asks individuals to rate themselves on a five-point continuum between the opposite ends of the scale ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Protégé OCB was measured using three short scenarios based on the helping dimension of OCB (Williams and Shiaw, 1999). The scenarios were as follows. (1) A colleague in your sales team has just returned to work after being absent for a few days. Your workload is manageable. How likely are you to help them in any way to clear their work? (2) A colleague in your sales team seems to be having some problems. Your workload is rather heavy. How likely are you to volunteer your help? (3) A colleague in your sales team is waiting for you to finish your part of the work before they can start working. How likely are you to make sure you do your work as fast as possible? Participants were asked to respond on a nine-point Likert scale ($\alpha = 0.71$).

To measure *protégé CWB*, respondents were provided with the following scenario: 'Your annual performance review is approaching. A successful outcome of this review is essential for being awarded your end of year bonus. You also know that this review is central to succession planning and promotion decisions in PLC. Having been passed over for promotion in the previous year you believe it is now or never for you achieving the next step in your career path at PLC. In order to achieve a successful outcome from your performance review, how likely are you to …?' They were then presented with the five misuse of information items from Gruys and Sackett's (2003) CWB scale. Example items included 'Destroy or falsify company records or documents' and 'Intentionally fail to give a supervisor or co-worker necessary information' ($\alpha = 0.82$).

Analysis strategy. We used SPSS v.26 (IBM Corp., 2015) and Hayes's (2013) PROCESS macro to test for moderation, mediation and conditional indirect analysis (i.e. moderated mediation).

Results

Manipulation checks. We conducted t-tests with our ethics-related mentoring and mentor prototypicality variables to check that our scenario-based manipulations worked as expected. Results showed that those in the high ethics-related mentoring condition reported higher mean scores in ethics-related mentoring ($\mu = 4.16$) than those in the low condition ($\mu = 1.84$), and this mean difference was statistically significant ($t = -22.05$, $p = 0.00$). Results also confirmed that those in the high mentor prototypicality condition reported higher mean scores in mentor prototypicality ($\mu = 4.15$) than those in the low condition ($\mu = 1.69$), and that this mean difference was also statistically significant ($t = -20.32$, $p = 0.00$). Overall, we were confident that our manipulations had worked as expected.

Means, standard deviations and inter-correlations. Table 8 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations for our model variables. All variables are correlated in the direction one would predict and this gave us confidence to proceed with our main analysis.

Ethics-related mentoring and protégé OCB and CWB: The mediating role of protégé moral identity. As hypothesized, protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring are positively related to their moral identity ($b = 0.32$, $p = 0.00$), supporting H1 (see Table 8). Moreover, protégé moral identity is positively related to their OCB ($b = 0.57$, $p = 0.00$) and mediates the relationship between their perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and OCB ($\gamma = 0.18$, CI = 0.03–0.34). There was no main effect of ethics-related mentoring on OCB once moral identity was entered into the regression, suggesting full mediation. We accepted H2a.

Protégé moral identity was also found to be negatively related to their CWB ($b = -0.69$, $p = 0.00$) and mediated the negative relationship between protégé perceptions of their ethics-related mentoring and their CWB ($\gamma = -0.22$, CI = -0.40 to -0.09). There was a main effect of ethics-related mentoring on CWB once moral identity was entered into the regression, suggesting partial mediation. We accepted H2b.

Ethics-related mentoring and protégé OCB and CWB: The mediating role of protégé moral self-efficacy. As hypothesized, protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring are positively related to

Table 9. Protégé ethics-related mentoring and their OCB and CWB: The mediating roles of protégé moral identity and moral self-efficacy – Study 4

	Moral identity			Moral self-efficacy			OCB			CWB		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Constant	4.14	0.07	0.00	5.09	0.11	0.00	3.17	0.78	0.00	5.67	0.63	0.00
Ethics-related mentoring	0.32	0.10	0.00	0.83	0.16	0.00	0.15	0.21	0.46	0.42	0.17	0.01
Moral identity							0.57	0.17	0.00	−0.69	0.14	0.00
Moral self-efficacy							0.12	0.10	0.24	−0.20	0.08	0.02
Indirect effects of ethics-related mentoring on OCB												
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI								
Moral identity	0.18	0.10	0.03	0.34								
Moral self-efficacy	0.10	0.12	−0.10	0.27								
Indirect effects of ethics-related mentoring on CWB												
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI								
Moral identity	−0.22	0.08	−0.40	−0.09								
Moral self-efficacy	−0.17	0.09	−0.35	−0.00								

Note: N = 141; bootstrap sample size = 5000; PROCESS Model 4.

their moral self-efficacy (b = 0.83, p = 0.00), supporting H3 (see Table 9). Against expectations, however, protégé moral self-efficacy was not positively related to their OCB (b = 0.12, p = 0.24) and, therefore, did not mediate the relationship between their perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and OCB ($\gamma = 0.10$, CI = −0.10 to 0.27). We rejected H4a.

Protégé moral self-efficacy was, however, found to be negatively related to their CWB (b = −0.20, p = 0.02) and mediated the negative relationship between protégé perceptions of their ethics-related mentoring and their CWB ($\gamma = -0.17$, CI = −0.35 to −0.01). There was a main effect of ethics-related mentoring on CWB once moral self-efficacy was entered into the regression, suggesting partial mediation. We accepted H4b.

The moderating role of mentor organizational prototypicality. Against expectations, mentor prototypicality did not moderate the positive relationship between protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their moral identity (b = 0.18, p = 0.34). That said, analysis of the conditional indirect effect statistics did show that the indirect effects of protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring on their OCB and CWB, via their moral identity, are only significant at high levels of mentor prototypicality, providing some weak support for H5a and H5b (see Table 10).

There was a weak moderating effect of mentor prototypicality on the positive relationship between protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring and their moral self-efficacy (b = 0.64, p = 0.07). This interaction effect accounts for 2.0% of additional variance in protégé moral self-efficacy. However, analysis of the conditional indirect effect statistics shows that the indirect effect of protégé perceptions of ethics-related mentoring on their OCB and CWB, via their moral self-efficacy, is non-significant at both high and low levels of mentor prototypicality, thus rejecting H6a and H6b (see Table 10).

Discussion

Our findings show that protégés exposed to ethics-related mentoring report significantly higher levels of moral identity and moral self-efficacy than those who are not. It appears, therefore, that ethics-related mentoring makes salient workplace ethics and gives employees a greater confidence to deal with ethical issues at work, extending past mentoring research that had only hinted at this ethics-related mentoring role (e.g. Bailey et al., 2016). Importantly, both protégé moral identity and moral self-efficacy explained the relationship between ethics-related mentoring and their CWB, supporting our dual social learning theory and moral identity theory explanatory framework. For OCB, however, only protégé moral identity mediated this relationship, supporting the findings of Gerpott et al. (2017). We found limited support for the moderating role of mentor prototypicality.

Overall discussion

Empirical and theoretical contributions

We present the mentoring and behavioural ethics literatures with a new measure of ethics-related mentoring, building on research that has – to date – only hinted at this important mentoring function (e.g. Bailey et al., 2016; Moberg, 2008). Our studies significantly strengthen the understanding of what ethics-related mentoring is and how it may differ from, and complement, ethical leadership's function of moral management (see Table 11 and the traditional career and psychosocial mentoring roles (e.g. Eby *et al.*, 2013). Studies 2–4 also provide excellent evidence that ethics-related mentoring may promote protégé ethical attitudes and behaviours – including their moral motivation, moral self-efficacy, moral identity, ethical leadership, OCB and CWB – suggesting that effective ethics-related mentoring helps motivate protégés to act ethically, improves protégé self-confidence in dealing with morally ambiguous situations and makes morally ambiguous situations at work salient. In short, ethics-related mentoring – through the shared experiences, stories, advice and support of a mentor – may be a useful tool for organizations wishing to develop and promote ethical employees (Moberg, 2008).

We also find support for our dual social learning theory and moral identity theory explanation for the effects of ethics-related mentoring on protégé *unethical* CWB, extending the mentoring literature that has tended to emphasize a social learning theory explanation of the effects of mentoring (via a focus on self-efficacy) (e.g. Kram, 1985) and the ethical leadership literature that has more recently emphasized a moral identity framework (e.g. Gerpott et al., 2017). Our research also hints

Table 10. The moderating role of mentor prototypicality – Study 4

	Moral identity			Moral self-efficacy			OCB			CWB		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Constant	4.07	0.09	0.00	5.15	0.15	0.00	3.51	0.81	0.00	5.64	0.65	0.00
Mentor prototypicality (MP)	0.15	0.13	0.25	−0.13	0.22	0.56	−0.28	0.27	0.30	0.17	0.22	0.42
Ethics-related mentoring (EM)	0.23	0.13	0.08	0.55	0.22	0.02	−0.13	0.27	0.63	0.49	0.22	0.03
EM × MP	0.18	0.19	0.34	0.59	0.32	0.07	0.64	0.38	0.10	−0.13	0.31	0.69
Moral identity							0.55	0.18	0.00	−0.71	0.14	0.00
Moral self-efficacy							0.10	0.10	0.35	−0.20	0.09	0.02
Conditional indirect effects of ethics-related mentoring on OCB												
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI								
Moral identity – low MP	0.13	0.10	−0.04	0.34								
Moral identity – high MP	0.23	0.14	0.03	0.57								
Moral self-efficacy – low MP	0.05	0.08	−0.09	0.24								
Moral self-efficacy – high MP	0.11	0.16	−0.18	0.42								
Conditional indirect effects of ethics-related mentoring on CWB												
	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI								
Moral identity – low MP	−0.16	0.11	−0.38	0.04								
Moral identity – high MP	−0.29	0.12	−0.58	−0.11								
Moral self-efficacy – low MP	−0.11	0.08	−0.29	0.01								
Moral self-efficacy – high MP	−0.23	0.13	−0.50	0.00								

Note: N = 141; bootstrap sample size = 5000; PROCESS Model 8.

Table 11. Comparison of ethical leadership and ethics-related mentoring scale items

	Ethical leadership	Ethics-related mentoring
Definition	Demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005: 120).	A formal or informal relationship between two individuals, in which the mentor takes on the role as ethical guide or advisor to their protégé.
Function	Moral management	Ethical learning and development
Theoretical basis	Either social learning theory, social exchange theory or moral identity perspective.	A dual social learning theory and moral identity perspective.
Scale items	1. Listens to what employees have to say. 2. Disciplines employees who violate ethical standards. 3. Conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner. 4. Has the best interests of employees in mind. 5. Makes fair and balanced decisions. 6. Can be trusted. 7. Discusses business ethics or values with employees. 8. Sets an example of how to do things the right way. 9. Defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained. 10. When making decisions, asks 'what is the right thing to do?' Source: Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005)	**Ethical role modelling** 1. My mentor is a positive role model in terms of ethical behaviour. 2. My mentor 'leads by example' in terms of ethical behaviour. 3. My mentor sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics. 4. My mentor takes time when I need his/her help. 5. My mentor shows a strong concern for business ethics or moral values. 6. My mentor sets clear ethical and moral standards. 7. My mentor helps me make thoughtful decisions and actions 8. By working with my mentor, I am able to reflect on my personal and moral principles. **Ethical guidance** 9. My mentor clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behaviour by myself. 10. My mentor provides ethical guidance. 11. My mentor is my moral and ethical sparring partner. 12. My mentor discusses the likely consequences of possible solutions to the ethical problem. 13. My mentor discusses business ethics or moral values with me. 14. My mentor gives me ideas and advice when making decisions with ethical or moral implications. 15. My mentor helps me to make decisions with ethical and moral implications. Source: Newly developed ethics-related mentoring scale

that there may be a different explanation for the effects of ethics-related mentoring on protégé *ethical* behaviours (e.g. OCB), where moral identity appears to be salient. Indeed, this finding supports those of Gerpott et al. (2017), although these authors did not include moral self-efficacy in their studies. Future research, therefore, is needed to continue to explore the roles of both moral self-efficacy and moral identity when examining the effects of ethics-related mentoring or ethical leadership on protégé/employee ethical outcomes.

Limitations and future research directions

First, while a broad sample of mentors, protégés and mentoring experts were accessed in Study 1, they were all based within a German working context. We cannot be certain, therefore, that similar exploratory research, conducted in different contexts, would lead to similar findings, and strongly encourage this additional work. To mitigate these concerns, a separate panel of six subject matter experts from the United Kingdom and Germany were used to judge the degree to which our items

were representative of our conceptual definition of ethics-related mentoring. We also found support for the reliability and validity of our newly developed scale in other national contexts, including the United Kingdom and the United States.

Second, we recognize that the EFA and CFA results across Studies 2 and 3 are inconsistent, and that this could be a function of the small sample sizes in both (Hinkin, 1998). Thus, while we believe our research has established a new valid and reliable measure of ethics-related mentoring, we acknowledge that scale development is a continuous process and future work should continue to refine, and determine the validity of, our measure in different settings and for different outcomes.

Third, while we have collected data utilizing both field and experimental designs, in all studies we used single-source protégé-centric data, which may raise concerns of common method bias. To mitigate these issues, in Study 3 we separated the collection of the independent and dependent variables by approximately 1–2 weeks (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Similarly, in Study 4 we used different methods to assess our mediator (self-rating) and outcome (situational judgement scenario) variables. Future research, however, should focus on collecting multiple sources of data – for example, peer ratings of protégé ethical and unethical behaviours.

Fourth, we acknowledge the limitations of our hypothetical scenario study for observing the kinds of longer-term moral development that would characterize ethics-related mentoring. Thus, despite finding support for the role of ethics-related mentoring in our experimental setting, future research should replicate and extend these effects in the field. One suggestion is to employ a longitudinal field-experimental design where a sample of mentors are exposed to ethics-related mentoring training and research examines whether protégés who are mentored by them are more likely to develop ethical decision-making than those who are not.

Such a design would also allow researchers to test – over time – the differential roles of ethical leadership and ethics-related mentoring in the moral development of employees. It would also allow the further testing of our dual moral identity and moral self-efficacy explanatory mechanisms, and a better examination of whether these processes compete or can be integrated. Recent work has started to explore a sequential mediation model whereby moral identity predicts moral self-efficacy (e.g. Rullo, Lalot and Heering, 2022) and a longitudinal field experiment would also allow us to explore this alternative explanation for the effects of ethics-related mentoring.

Our experimental design may also explain our limited findings regarding the role of mentor prototypicality. While the prototypicality manipulation worked, the meaningfulness of this construct in a scenario study could be questioned. Exploring ethics-related mentoring in the 'real world', therefore, may make salient mentor prototypicality given the added importance of context, and we support this work.

Finally, we encourage future research that better examines the differential effects of ethics-related mentoring from the other traditional mentoring roles. For example, while we would not expect ethics-related mentoring to predict protégé career-related outcomes, we do recognize that it could influence protégés' attainment of a socially responsible career. Future research should, therefore, examine the overlapping and independent effects of these different mentoring roles for different work-related outcomes.

Practical implications

Despite these limitations, we propose practical implications of our research for organizations. First, our findings suggest that mentoring programmes – either formal or informal – may be effective in developing protégé ethical behaviour and thus future ethical leaders. Investment in mentoring programmes, particularly for those organizations keen on developing ethical leaders, may provide an ethical return on this investment. The current findings also draw some important implications for mentor training. Mentors should be trained to understand the importance of their role as an ethical guide and role model to their protégés. Training topics could include things like communicating the importance of ethics, serving as ethical role models and providing ethical guidance.

Conclusion

We set out with two aims. First, to systematically describe ethics-related mentoring and develop a psychometrically sound instrument for its measurement. Second, to examine the importance of

protégés' perceptions of ethics-related mentoring for their ethical behaviour and the potential theoretical explanations of these effects. We believe that we have provided a strong first step on both counts and encourage more research, using our new ethics-related mentoring scale, to further refine this scale and provide further theoretical and empirical insights into the role of mentors and mentoring in the ethical development of their protégés.

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Corinna Busch received her PhD from Aston Business School, Aston University and is now a freelance sales consultant and coach with over 10 years experience advising, training and coaching employees working in a wide range of industries and sectors. Dr Busch's clients have ranged from SMEs to large corporate organizations.

Jonathan Crawshaw is Senior Lecturer and Director of Research for the Department of Work and Organisation, Aston Business School, Aston University, from where he also received his PhD. Dr Crawshaw's research and teaching focuses on organizational justice, behavioural ethics and careers, and he has published in leading academic journals on these interests.

Yves Guillaume is a Professor of Organisational Behaviour at the University of Liverpool Management School. His research revolves around the study of diversity, leadership, innovation, effectiveness and well-being in teams and organizations, and has been published in leading academic journals and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and industry.

Alison Legood is a Senior Lecturer in Leadership at the Exeter Business School, Exeter University, having previously gained her PhD and held a faculty position at Aston University. Dr Legood's research focuses on relational leadership and trust and, more specifically, the trust dynamics of leader–follower relationships. She has published in leading outlets in this area.

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