

Announcement: Humboldt-Year | Bachelor & Master

## **Ethical culture in organization: Determinants and consequences**

Chair of Economic Psychology and Leadership Ethics

Prof. Dr. Carmen Tanner, Dr. Katharina Gangl

### **Background:**

The ethical culture in organization is defined as the sum of all factors which inhibit unethical conduct (e.g., stealing, fraud) or promote ethical conduct (e.g., honesty, cooperation) in the organization. We developed an initial instrument, the Corporate Ethical Culture Barometer (CECB), to assess the ethical culture based on compliance, integrity and role-modeling factors. Compliance factors are related to strategies which prevent misconduct based on clear, complete and useful rules, controls and sanctions. Integrity factors are designed to encourage intrinsic motivation by allowing individuals to stick to their own values and to speak up to their supervisors. Also organizational goal-setting and accountability are integrity factors. Finally, role-modeling factors are related to the influences of top managers, direct supervisors and co-workers as they are models through visible action. The initial version of the CECB was successfully tested by conducting two surveys with a sample of 300 Swiss and 990 German employees and leaders.

### **Research possibilities:**

Future research could examine possible preconditions and consequences of an ethical culture or single factors of the ethical culture. Research on the causal effects of an ethical culture utilizing laboratory or field experiments is rare. Also the relationship between the single factors needs further investigation. It is also not well understood which of the proposed factors of an ethical culture are more important than others for specific outcomes such as attitudes, motivations, or behaviors. To clarify the importance of the single factors, it also would be beneficial to examine the relationship between the CECB and “harder” factors in business organizations such as profit, turnover rates, customer complaints, or social media discourses. To further validate the instrument, assessments in different countries or among culturally different organizations could be conducted.

Within the Humboldt year, students plan and conduct their own empirical study and present their results in a scientific paper. For Bachelor and Master Theses an empirical work is not mandatory, however encouraged. Also Bachelor and Master Theses are written in the style of a scientific paper. Working language is German or English.

### **Requirements for students**

Students should be interested in psychological research; however, knowledge and experience in other fields (e.g. economics, business administration) is a plus. Experience and willingness to learn and apply statistical and empirical methods and to write scientific text is desired. For those who pursue an empirical work, first experience with statistical software (e.g., SPSS,R) is necessary.

### **Examination**

The scientific paper on the results of the Humboldt year, Bachelor or Master Thesis will be examined.

### **If you are interested:**

Send a short letter of interest and a transcript of records to: [katharina.gangl@zu.de](mailto:katharina.gangl@zu.de)