



RESEARCH PAPER

Ethical Leadership and the Organizational Citizenship Behavior of the Follower: A Case of Higher Education Institutes of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a significant role in the development of any organization. It is a key instrument which molds up the behavior of the organizational citizenship behavior of the follower. This study examines the impact of ethical leadership on the citizenship behavior of employees at higher education institutes in Pakistan. This study further aims to examine the mediation role of the ethical climate, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and affective commitment on the relationship of ethical leadership with the follower citizenship behavior of the follower. Data was gathered from a sample of 400 employees of the higher education institutes of overall Pakistan by purposive sampling. For the data analysis, Smart PLS was used. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that ethical leadership would first create an ethical climate. After that, this ethical climate will affect follower satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, leading them to citizenship behavior in the long term

Keywords: Affective Commitment, Employee Engagement, Ethical Climate, Job Satisfaction

Introduction

Pakistan Leadership is a trending topic among research scholars who are working on psychology. If we talk about any organization, then we cannot miss the leadership role in that organization (Abbas et al., 2022). There are several types of leadership: ethical leadership, toxic leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, abusive leadership, autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and so on (Hassan et al., 2023). The developing concept of ethical leadership is the focus of leadership literature It contrasts this notion with others with similar interests and interests in the moral aspect of leadership, such as spiritual, authentic, and transformational leadership. We make claims regarding the causes and effects of ethical leadership by drawing extensively on the literature on the nexus of ethics and leadership (Sikandar et al., 2022).

Ethical leadership is paramount in educational institutes, setting the foundation for a positive and conducive learning environment. Educational leaders, whether principals, administrators, or teachers, are responsible for guiding and shaping young learners' minds (Irshad et al., 2021). By practicing ethical leadership, they instill important values and principles in students and inspire their colleagues and the wider community (Irshad, Abro, & Sikandar, 2022). Firstly, ethical leadership in educational institutes promotes integrity and trust (Ali et al., 2022). When leaders prioritize honesty, transparency, and fairness, they cultivate trust among students, parents, and staff (Faheem et al., 2021). This fosters an environment where individuals feel safe to express themselves, share ideas, and engage in open discussions, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience (Asghar et al., 2022). Secondly, ethical leaders serve as role models for students. Their actions and decisions are guided by moral principles, emphasizing the importance of empathy, respect,

and responsibility (Wang et al., 2023). Through their behavior, they demonstrate the values they expect from their students, nurturing their character development and social awareness (Irshad, Khan, Akhlaq, et al., 2022).

Furthermore, ethical leadership in educational institutes promotes a sense of accountability. Leaders who hold themselves and others accountable for their actions create a culture of responsibility and continuous improvement. This encourages students and staff to take ownership of their learning, performance, and personal growth. Moreover, ethical leaders in educational institutes prioritize inclusivity and diversity. They value and respect individual differences, ensuring all students have equal opportunities to thrive and succeed. By embracing diversity, educational leaders foster an inclusive environment that celebrates cultural richness and prepares students for a globalized world. In conclusion, ethical leadership is vital in educational institutes as it establishes a foundation of integrity, trust, accountability, and inclusivity (Pelletier, 2012). By embodying ethical values, educational leaders shape students' character and values and contribute to developing a positive and nurturing educational community (Wang et al., 2005).

This study examines the impact of ethical leadership on the citizenship behavior of employees at higher education institutes in Pakistan. This study further aims to examine the mediation role of the ethical climate, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and affective commitment on the relationship of ethical leadership with the follower citizenship behavior of the follower.

Literature Review

Leadership guided by respect for moral principles, human rights, and ethical convictions is called ethical leadership (Khan et al., 2012). Thus, it connects to charisma, justice, consideration, honesty, and trust. An organization's or business's ethical environment can be described as a collection of common conceptions about the formal and informal rules and regulations that create expectations for ethical conduct (Irshad et al., 2023). Job satisfaction is the state of enjoyment and well-being a person experiences about their work performance and surroundings. It describes how employees feel overall about their occupations Click or tap here to enter text.. A measure of a worker's contentment with their job, whether they like the job or specific features or facets of occupations, such as the nature of the labor or supervision, is called job satisfaction, employee satisfaction, or work satisfaction (Ahmad et al., 2022). There are behavioral, affective, and cognitive ways to assess job satisfaction (Khan et al., 2022). Work engagement is defined as "the utilization of organizational members' selves to their work roles: in engagement, individuals employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally, and mentally during role performances (Ahmad et al., 2021)." An employee's perceived emotional relationship to their company is referred to as their "affective commitment." When an employee feels that the company's mission aligns with their values and goals and when they feel at home in the workplace, this is when effective commitment is found (Liu et al., 2022). Organizational citizenship behaviour is a person's voluntary commitment inside a firm or organization that is separate from their contractual obligations, according to industrial and organizational psychology (Arnold et al., 2000).

Ethical leadership and the establishment of an ethical climate within an organization have a profound impact on employee citizenship behavior. Ethical leadership refers to the ability of leaders to demonstrate and promote ethical conduct (Barry et al., 2015). In contrast, an ethical climate is the shared perception within an organization that emphasizes ethical practices and values (Paltu & Brouwers, 2020). When these two elements are present, employees are more likely to engage in positive citizenship behaviors that benefit the organization and its members (Teng et al., 2020). Ethical leadership sets the tone for the organization by providing a clear moral compass and serving as a role model for employees (Farahnak et al., 2020). Leaders who prioritize integrity, fairness, and transparency inspire

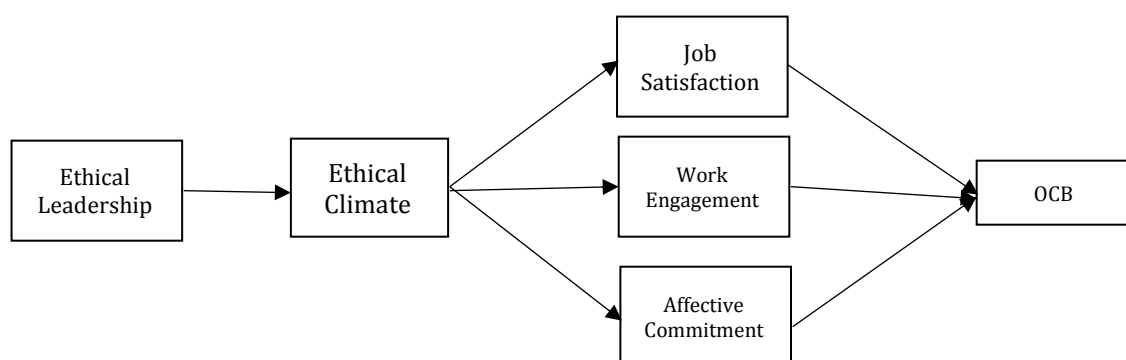
trust and respect among their subordinates (Y. Khan et al., 2022). Such leaders communicate expectations for ethical behavior, encourage open communication, and provide support and guidance to employees. Employees feel motivated to reciprocate this ethical behavior by engaging in citizenship behaviors (Ibrahim et al., 2014). These behaviors include going above and beyond their job requirements, helping colleagues, volunteering for additional tasks, and showing concern for the well-being of others (Ahmad et al., 2023). Establishing an ethical climate further reinforces the importance of ethical behavior within. When employees perceive that ethical conduct is valued and rewarded, they are more likely to internalize these values and align their behaviors accordingly. An ethical climate fosters a sense of shared responsibility and collective accountability, encouraging employees to act in the organization's and its stakeholders' best interests. Employees who feel that their leaders and the organizational culture prioritize ethics develop a stronger commitment to the organization. They become more engaged, satisfied, and loyal, leading to higher job performance and reduced turnover (Khan et al., 2022).

Additionally, the positive ripple effects of ethical leadership and climate extend beyond the organization, influencing the perception of stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and the broader community (Aamir et al., 2020). In conclusion, ethical leadership and an ethical climate significantly impact employee citizenship behavior (Li et al., 2023). By fostering a culture of integrity, fairness, and accountability, organizations can inspire employees to go beyond their formal roles, contribute positively, and create a virtuous cycle of ethical behavior (Islam et al., 2021).

Hypotheses

- H₁: Ethical leadership has a significant impact on the ethical climate.
 H₂: Ethical Climate has a significant impact on job satisfaction.
 H₃: Ethical Climate has a significant impact on work engagement.
 H₄: Ethical Climate has a significant impact on the Affective commitment.
 H₅: Job satisfaction has a significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior.
 H₆: Work engagement has a significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior.
 H₇: Affective Commitment has a significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

Research Model



Material and Methods

The philosophical basis of this study originated from the positivist philosophy. A quantitative technique was used to gather the data to test that data empirically by the deductive approach. The study's sample size was based on 400 faculty members and administrative employees drawn from the overall population by purposive sampling. The data was gathered from the higher education institutes across Pakistan. The data was gathered via a closed-ended questionnaire. The tool used for the data collection was Google Forms. The questionnaire development measures were adopted from prior reliable studies to enhance the scale's validity.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 of the demographic analysis shows the demographic distribution of the respondents of this research. According to the table, there are a total of 400 respondents. The first section of the table shows the gender-based distribution of the respondents, indicating that among the 400 respondents, 245 are males and 155 are females. The second section of the table shows the respondents' age group distribution, which shows that among the 400 respondents there, 175 respondents belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years. One hundred twenty-six respondents are between the age of 31 to 40 years. Sixty-five are in the age group of 41 to 50 years, while the remaining 34 are above 50. The third and last portion of the demographic table shows the designation of the respondents, which indicates that among the total of 400 respondents, 294 were faculty members. At the same time, the rest of the 106 belong to administrative employees. The percentage of each distribution is also indicated in the table separately.

Table 1
Demographic Analysis

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	245	61.3%
Female	155	38.8%
Total	400	100.0%
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
21 to 30 Years	175	43.8%
31 to 40 Years	126	31.5%
41 to 50 Years	65	16.3%
51 and Above	34	8.5%
Total	400	100.0%
Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Faculty	294	73.5%
Administration	106	26.5%
Total	400	100.0%

Reliability

Reliability is the measure that estimates how the construct is reliable to measure (Daraba et al., 2021). There are two types of typical reliability while using structural equation modelling: construct reliability and item reliability. The measure used for the item reliability is outer loading, while the measure used for the construct reliability is called composite reliability and Cronbach alpha. The threshold value for all three measures is 0.7. Table 2 of reliability shows that all the values are greater than the threshold value, which indicates that all the items and construct are reliable.

Table 2
Reliability

Constructs	Items	Outer loadings	CA	CR
Ethical Leadership	EL1	0.867	0.788	0.828
	EL2	0.765		
	EL3	0.765		
	EL4	0.687		
	EL5	0.856		
Ethical Climate	EC1	0.776	0.735	0.785
	EC2	0.698		
	EC3	0.745		
	EC4	0.722		
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.732	0.733	0.773
	JS2	0.811		

	JS3	0.712		
	JS4	0.678		
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.683	0.729	0.769
	EE2	0.765		
	EE3	0.711		
	EE4	0.742		
	EE5	0.744		
Affective Commitment	AC1	0.765	0.765	0.805
	AC2	0.793		
	AC3	0.788		
	AC4	0.714		
OCB	OB1	0.773	0.728	0.768
	OB2	0.715		
	OB3	0.678		
	OB4	0.744		

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is the measure that indicates how much the items of a construct are related to each other (Iqbal et al., 2022). The measure used for the convergent validity is AVE. The threshold value for the AVE is 0.5 or above. The below table of the AVE shows that all the constructs have an AVE value greater than the threshold value, which indicates that all the constructs are convergently valid.

Table 3
Convergent Validity

Construct	AVE
Ethical Leadership	0.588
Ethical Climate	0.535
Job Satisfaction	0.533
Employee Engagement	0.529
Affective Commitment	0.605
OCB	0.708

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is the measure that describes how much the construct of a model differs from each other. The measure used for the discriminant validity is HTMT ratios (Eva et al., 2019). The threshold value for the HTMT ratio is 0.85 or less. Below, the table of the HTMT shows that all the constructs have an HTMT value less than the threshold value, indicating that all the constructs are discriminately valid.

Table 4
Discriminant Validity

Construct	HTMT
Ethical Leadership	0.324
Ethical Climate	0.456
Job Satisfaction	0.534
Employee Engagement	0.734
Affective Commitment	0.423
OCB	0.334

Hypotheses Testing

Regression analysis based on bootstrapping is used for the hypothesis testing in the structural equation (Justin T Piccorelli, 2018). Below is the table of the regression analysis. The measures used for the statistical analysis are the p-value and the t-value. The threshold value for the p-value is 0.05 or less, while the threshold value for the t-value is 1.96 or above (Whyte et al., 2022). The below table of the hypothesis testing shows that there are a total of seven hypotheses, and all of them have a t-value greater than 1.96 and a p-value less than 0.05. This indicates that all the hypotheses of this study are statistically significant. While the beta value for each relationship describes the strength of the relationship.

Table 5
Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Beta	t- State	P value	Remarks
H ₁ : Ethical leadership >>> ethical climate.	0.345	12.43	0.000	Supported
H ₂ : Ethical Climate >>> job satisfaction	0.432	22.53	0.000	Supported
H ₃ : Ethical Climate >>> work engagement	0.332	10.43	0.000	Supported
H ₄ : Ethical Climate >>> Affective commitment	0.123	11.23	0.000	Supported
H ₅ : Job satisfaction >>> organizational citizenship behavior	0.324	17.43	0.000	Supported
H ₆ : Work engagement >>> organizational citizenship behavior	0.232	22.74	0.000	Supported
H ₇ : Affective Commitment >>> organizational citizenship behavior	0.112	26.54	0.000	Supported

Conclusion

This study examines the impact of ethical leadership on the citizenship behavior of employees at higher education institutes in Pakistan. This study further aims to examine the mediation role of the ethical climate, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and affective commitment on the relationship of ethical leadership with the follower citizenship behavior of the follower. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that ethical leadership significantly impacts the citizenship behavior of the followers. From the results of this study, it was concluded that ethical leadership first would create an ethical climate. After that, this ethical climate will affect follower satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, leading them to citizenship behavior in the long term.

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