

Do you want better employee engagement? An Umbrella of Ethical Leadership

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Abstract: This research aimed to assess ethical leadership among district government employees of Khairpur Sindh, Pakistan. The chosen context felt immense need to observe the ethical leadership in making better engagement level of employees at workplace. The primary data was collected and self-administered questionnaires were used as research instrument. The data screening and coding was initially performed in SPSS than it was further analysed in AMOS software. The descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed through SPSS and hypotheses of study were assessed with structural equation modelling (SEM). The results show that ethical leadership has positive and significant impact on employee engagement. In addition, dimensions of ethical leadership such as trust, integrity, honesty, and justice also have positive significant impact on employee engagement. The study outcomes are very essential for HR policy makers.

Keywords: *Ethical Leadership, Employee Engagement, AMOS, SEM.*

Introduction

In today's competitive global market, businesses seek to be as productive and successful as possible. Work engagement is one of the most important variables or motivators of productivity and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010; Tims, Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2011). Work involvement is critical to an organization's performance and competitiveness, according to Gruman and Saks (2011, p. 124). When employees are involved in their work, they will generate more for the company. It indicates that the individual appreciates his or her job, is dedicated to it, and is more productive and engaged at work. 2004 (Schaufeli & Bakker). Identifying the circumstances that encourage employee engagement at work is critical to an organization's long-term viability and growth (Lin, 2009). Building organisational trust is the foundation for increasing employee engagement at work. Employees are more engaged at work when they are self-motivated to complete their tasks, and trust is an important aspect of management. Excessive management enforcement and monitoring prohibit employees from remaining engaged in their task. Ethical leadership yields positive results. It increases top-management effectiveness, follower performance, and job satisfaction, all of which contribute to organisational effectiveness (Eisenbeiß & Giessber, 2012). This trust between a leader and a follower is likely to be influenced by the credibility of ethical leaders (Bellingham, 2003) Ethical leadership has a favourable impact on employee engagement and has a beneficial impact on organisational success. Ethical leadership is one of the value-based leadership styles included in these criteria. Ethical leadership is essential for a leader's reputation and ability to influence others (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog & Folger, 2010). Employee work engagement as an important indicator of work-related employee well-being (Chughtai and Buckley, 2011) and organisational performance (see

Halbesleben, 2010 for a review), especially in non-western economies, received little attention despite extensive research on the positive impact of ethical leadership on various employee attitudes and behaviours (see exceptions for Chughtai et al., 2015; Demirtas, 2015). Ethics in leadership may have diverse meanings in different countries, according to Resick et al. (2011). For example, the impact of ethical leadership on employee job satisfaction in places like Pakistan is fascinating to study. More research is needed to better understand the link between ethical leadership and employee engagement, such as trust in the organization's leadership (Chughtai et al., 2015). Exogenous and endogenous factors were used in this study to examine how ethical leadership affects employee job satisfaction. Based on past research, we first hypothesise that ethical leadership has a positive impact on subordinates' job satisfaction (Chughtai et al., 2015; Demirtas, 2015). It is our belief that ethical leadership has an impact on subordinates' job satisfaction not only in the United States, but also in Pakistan.

Those who live and work in the District are directly influenced by the quality of District government. Both at the colonial and district levels, the district government is the principal engine of service supply. There is a shortage of well-trained staff in the district government. To achieve high-quality work, employees must be actively involved. Involved employees shown a strong commitment to the industry. Increasing staff engagement and morale in the District Government is crucial to its success. Dishonesty may "undermine the prestige of the District Government," according to Kelley et al. Ethical aspects of employee involvement have been overlooked in the past, despite a great deal being written about it. Due to previous research showing the favourable impact of ethical leadership (Mai & Do, 2015), it is necessary to evaluate the employee engagement of District Government Employees in Khairpur in terms of ethical leadership. As a result, this research project was born. Khairpur District Government employees will benefit greatly from this research, which will be used to improve employee engagement.

"According to recent studies, highly engaged employees both contribute to and are a cause of organisational failure." Achievement (Saks, 2006). The participation of teaching faculty is crucial. In widely accepted dimensions, it is often thought to be the main metric by which the success of an organization's human resource is assessed". As previously stated, an ethical workplace supports organisational engagement; therefore, we may conclude that involvement of district Government Employees in Khairpur have certain ethical implications. Climate change, leadership, and ethical work are all issues that need to be addressed. "Until date, no recognised and significant study has looked into the relationship between employee engagement, ethical leadership. "As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of ethical considerations."

Significance of study

In any organization employees are considered as a backbone of the organization. The role of engaged employees is undisputable in today's world. Engaged employees are always the high degree of commitment and involvement in their profession. In government sector employees should be engaged, so they could deliver efficient performance for the betterment of organization. "Employees are regarded as the backbone of every business." The importance of engaged employees today cannot be overstated. "It has been observed that engaged personnel are always very involved and committed in their work." "Government employees should be fully engaged so that they can offer world-class performance for the benefit of the organisation." "As a result, the findings of this study will assist the government sector in better understanding employee engagement, which is an essential factor, as well as adding to the current literature on employee engagement."

Problem statement:

Modern research indicates that highly engaged individuals contribute to and become the source of success and achievement of organization (Saks, 2006). Furthermore, employee engagement is a critical component recognised in the workplace and is frequently seen as the primary determinant of an organization's effectiveness. Therefore, it is felt as immense need to determine engagement level of employees working Khairpur district government". As previously stated, an ethical work environment fosters organisational involvement; consequently, we can deduce that employee engagement in the public sector has some bearing on ethical leadership. "Until now, no recognised and substantial study has examined the relationship between employee engagement and ethical leadership." Hence, it has necessitated to conduct this type of study in public sector. Therefore, the problem statement for this study would be to see the impact of ethical leadership on employee engagement in government sectors of Khairpur district.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this research to understand employee engagement, ethical leadership in District Government employees of Khairpur through the four major dimensions: Trust, integrity, justice and honesty.

Scope of the study

Government is the primary sector in the twenty-first century for assisting any country in improving its economic sustainability". Towards this end, government sectors are tasked with the responsibility of developing persons who not only benefit the employment industry, but also benefit society as a whole (Yadav, 2004)". "In order to develop such persons, it is necessary to have highly engaged employees who operate efficiently and successfully." "While there are numerous aspects that contribute to employee engagement, ethical leadership

should also be addressed, as demonstrated by (Mai & Do, 2015) and (Yener et al, 2012). The purpose of this study is to ascertain the effect of ethical leadership on employee engagement among district government employees in Khairpur." "The study has a broad scope, as its conclusion will help not only government sectors, but also the entire society." The study's scope also expands, as its findings will serve as a roadmap for future researchers as they explore the area with further additions.

Literature Review & Hypothesis

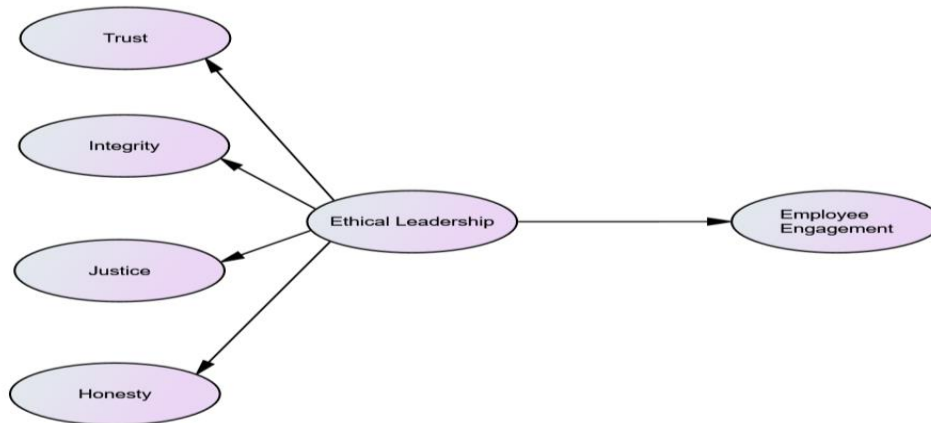
This section will address the studies on employee engagement and ethical leadership. Initially, this section discusses the definitions and meanings of employee engagement, the relevance of employee engagement, and the "correlation of employee engagement with other connected variables." By observing previous research work on chosen variables, this research traces research gap. Academic literature defines employee engagement in a variety of ways. Kahn (1990) developed the phrase "personal engagement" and applied it to his study for the first time. "Personal engagement is the process by which organisation members' identities are connected to their professional responsibilities; through engagement, individuals utilise and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while performing at workplace". He also defined the phrases "personal engagement," which refers to an individual's attachment to their employment, and "disengagement," which refers to an individual's disengagement from their work. According to Kahn (1990), the three psychological elements related with job engagement and disengagement are safety, meaningfulness, and availability. "Additionally, engagement refers to a person's active participation in work through the commitment of significant time and effort toward accomplishing an organisational goal." Another study defined employee engagement as an individual employee's emotional, cognitive, and behavioural position geared toward desired organisational outcomes (Shuck and Wollard, 2010, p.103)" after combining language and conceptual frameworks. "In comparison to other aspects affecting an organization's success, employee engagement is an unquestionable source of competitive advantage at all levels" (Schwartz, 2011). Furthermore, several academics operationalize employee engagement from their own perspective. There are several major conceptions of engagement that have been proposed by various researchers. "Engaged employees devote more of their heart and soul to their work than disengaged people." "Work engagement is a measure of an employee's physical and psychological connection to the company's well-being, whereas work satisfaction is primarily concerned with the employee's well-being." Additionally, "satisfied people simply complete required activities and do not contribute in performance improvement." 2012) (Abraham). Employee engagement refers to employees' active use of their cognitive, behavioural, and emotional resources. Employee engagement benefits organisations in a variety of ways. With the support of training and development programmes for employees throughout their tenure, the competence management framework, and career management schemes employee engagement tend to provide numerous benefits for organisations. Efforts must be coordinated with the organization's goals and long-term objectives. Sofian and Andrew (2011) (Andrew & Sofian, 2011). "Active employees are more optimistic and spontaneous, and they are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and proactive behaviours at work" (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Salanova&Schaufeli, 2008)". This is demonstrated by self-correction, chastisement, morality, and integrity, as well as a helpful attitude toward colleagues and co-workers, low absenteeism, and compliance with workplace rules. Employees that are engaged in their work regularly provide a consistent sense of fulfilment to their co-workers, themselves, and even their employers. According to Saks (2006), employees receive resources proportionate to their level of commitment with the organisation. They are internally motivated and exhibit positive attitudes toward their work, such as supporting, conjoining, supporting, and sharing, which adds to a well-rounded psychological, social, and structural framework of work. Engaged employees are more productive than disengaged employees. Employee involvement results in talent retraining inside the organisation and decreased absenteeism. In a nutshell, engaged employees serve as brand advocates for the organisation. Numerous studies have been conducted in the past to categorise the variables affecting employee engagement. Their primary objective in conducting their research was to identify elements that increase employee engagement. The Towers Perrin Talent Report (2003) listed the top ten workplace characteristics that influence employee engagement, with three of the most significant drivers being demanding job assignments, senior management's involvement in employees' well-being, and decision-making power.

Research Methodology

Research framework

The research is based on five constructs based on one path from exogenous to endogenous construct. The exogenous constructs include Trust, Integrity, Justice, Honesty and the one endogenous Construct is employee engagement.

Figure 1: Study Model



Hypotheses of the study:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is positive significant impact of ethical leadership on employee engagement among district Government employees of Khairpur.

Hypothesis 1a (H1a): The Trust has positive and significant impact on the employee engagement among district Government employees of Khairpur.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b): The integrity has the positive and significant impact on the employee engagement among district Government employees of Khairpur.

Hypothesis 1c (H1c): The justice has the positive and significant impact on the employee engagement among district Government employees of Khairpur.

Hypothesis 1d (H1d): The honesty has the positive and significant impact on the employee engagement among district Government employees of Khairpur.

Research Design

The design of study is quantitative because the research is based on the primary data which is obtained from the District Government employees of Khairpur.

Population of study

Population for this study is the District Government employees of Khairpur. Moreover, those who are directly concerned to the Government Departments and have more than 100 employees. The sampling frame includes total 240 Government employees of District Khairpur.

Sampling Design

Sample for this study is Government employees of (e.g., District Administration, Revenue Department, Education Department, Local Municipal Committee) District Khairpur which are working a different job level (i.e., Head of the Department, Clerk, Accountant, office superintend, Tapedar, Peon) sampling was selected using convenient sampling method.

Data Coding

The collected data was properly coded and recorded in SPSS software and further analysed through AMOS software.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis for this study has been by using Descriptive Statistics of demographic and study variables, Reliability Analysis, Correlation Analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM).

Results and Interpretation

Respondents' profile

Table 1: Respondent profile

Factor	Profile	Total number	Percentage %
Gender	Male	147	64
	Female	83	36
	Total	230	100
	18-20	24	10.3

Age	21-23	30	13.0
	24-26	63	27.4
	27-29	61	26.7
	30+above	52	22.6
	Total	230	100

In respondent profile table-1 it denotes the demographic detailed collected through the questionnaires. Profile of respondent consist of two demographic profile including gender and age 64 percent of male respondents from the total number of 240 and 36 percent of female respondent present for this research. Moreover, research concluded that maximum number of survey fulfilled by age group of 24-26 and the minimum number of survey fulfilled by age group of 18-20.

Reliability statistics

In this research non-probability convenience sample method is used to explore the relational influence of ethical leadership on employee engagement. All the items used in the instrument tested to check the reliability. The coefficient of 0.7 is applied as a road map (Canvana et al., 2001) Table -2 presents the reliability test analysis of all the items used in the instruments. The reliability test analysis in table-2 depicts adequate reliability of independent variable where as trust with .871, integrity with .841, justice with .919, honesty with .902 reliability. This percent doubtlessly shows all the items which were used in the instruments have the consistency and are the highly reliable for this research. Cronbach's alpha of the dependant variable is .930 which also denotes that scale of employee engagement is reliable to this research. Results of table-2 denotes that the scales are used in this research are the good in the reliability and the consistency in this research.

Table 2: Reliability statistics

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha
Ethical Leadership (Exogenous variable)	
Trust	0.871
Integrity	0.841
Justice	0.919
Honesty	0.902
Employee Engagement (Endogenous Variable)	0.930

Table 3: Pearson Correlation

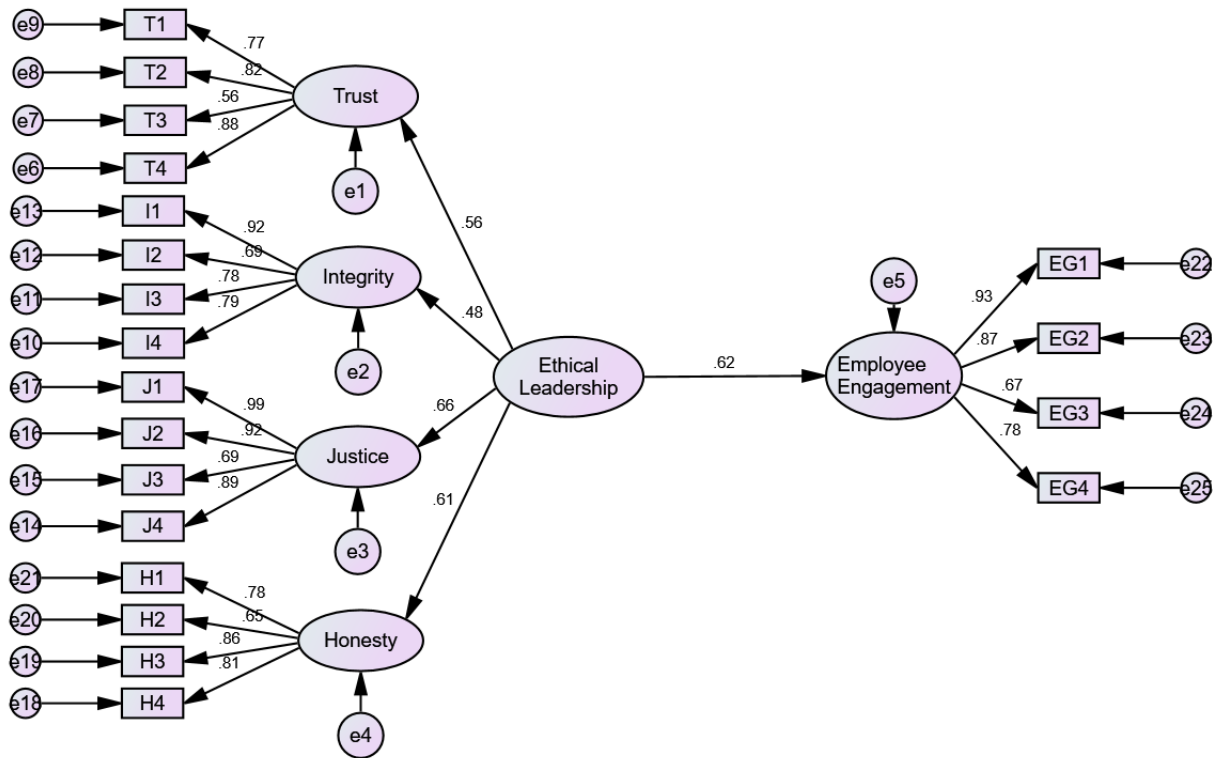
Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Trust	1	.561**	.478**	.620**	.442**
Integrity		1	.591**	.720**	.390*
Justice			1	.533**	.590**
Honesty				1	.394*
Employee Engagement					.1

The above table shows the degree of association among study variables. It was seen that trust has a positive significant correlation with integrity ($r=.56, p<.001$). In same way, Trust represents positive correlation with justice, the statistical results shows ($r=.47, p<.001$). There is positive association between trust and honesty ($r=.62, p<.001$). In addition, Trust with employee engagement has positive correlation ($r=.44, p<.001$). Furthermore, integrity has also positive association with justice, honesty and employee engagement, the results are ($r=.59, p<.001$), ($r=.72, p<.001$) and ($r=.39, p<.05$) respectively. In the same manner, justice and honesty also positively associated with employee engagement. The results confirmed that there is no negative or weak correlation among constructs. Hence, the assumption to assess the structural model been fulfilled.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

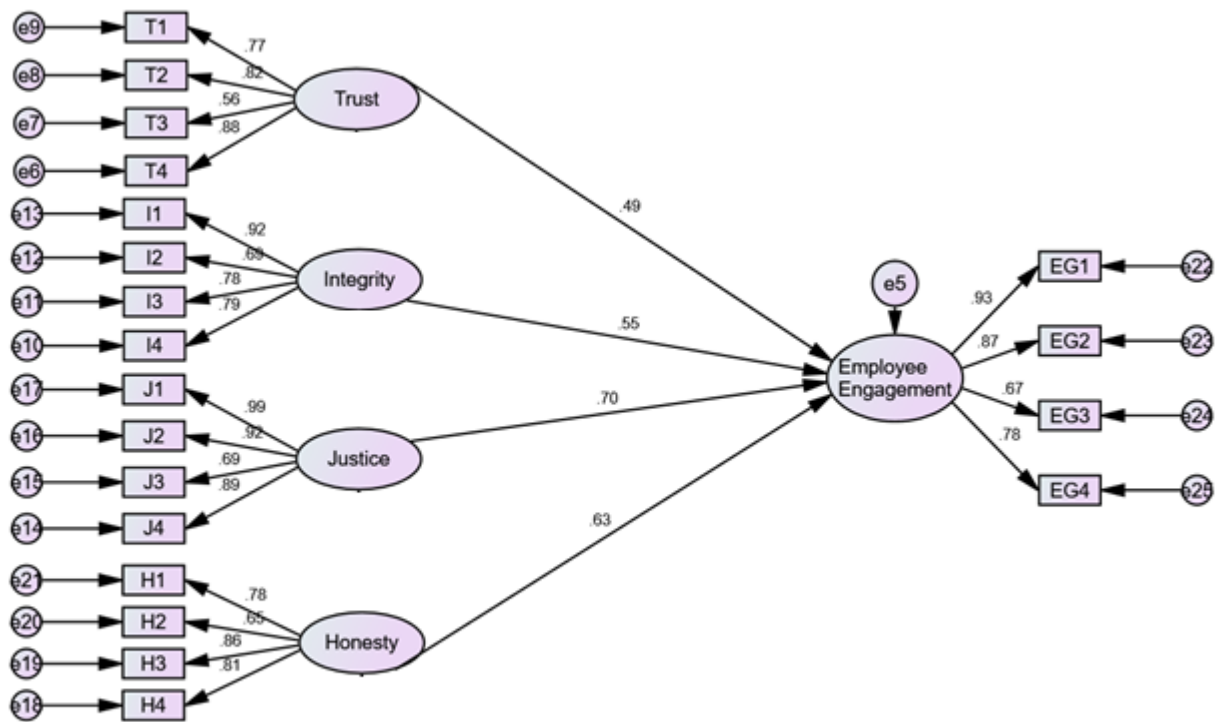
This study has used multivariate statistical approach, it is comprehensive approach that deals in measurement and path analysis. This study focused on path analysis to predict employee engagement (endogenous construct) with predictors like ethical leadership (exogenous construct) and its dimension such as trust, integrity, justice and honesty. The SEM outcomes presented 2nd order reflective model to assess the proposed hypotheses. Figure 2 shows the results for H1 as main hypothesis of this paper.

Figure 2: Hypothesis 1 (H1)



The above figure represent the path results to assess H1 of this research. The Results shows the reflective 2nd order path outcomes that confirms the unidimensionality of ethical leadership. The ethical leadership is all together a positive predictor for the indicators such as trust, integrity, justice and honesty. These four indicators hang together and reflect ethical leadership as a whole. Furthermore, the factor loading of trust, integrity, justice and honesty are suitable enough to have goodness of fit of the model. It should be noted here that all latent factors are estimated with four (each) measured items that made the model to be over-identified. After examining the indicators of ethical leadership, now, it is important to observe the direct effect of exogenous construct over endogenous. In this regard, it is examined that ethical leadership has positive significant impact on employee engagement. It summarises that ethical leadership tend to be important in making employee properly engaged towards their work. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 of this study has been accepted. After assessing the main hypothesis of this study, now the sub-hypotheses of this paper are also assessed with the help of path analysis.

Figure 3: Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d



The above figure represents results for H1a, H1b, H1c, and H1d. In this regard, path model shows that trust has positive significant impact on employee engagement. The results shows .49 positive impact on engagement at 0.001 level of significant. Hence, H1a has been retained. Furthermore, integrity has .55 positive impact on employee engagement which also confirms H1b. Justice has also positive significant effect on engagement of employees and honesty tend to have positive significant impact on employee engagement. Meanwhile, H1c and H1d have been retained. Lastly, the goodness of fit of the model were examined through model fit indices (CMIN/DF=2.33, CFI=.96, GFI=.99, TLI=.87 and RMSEA=.041).

Conclusion

This study has investigated burning issues of ethical leadership in the context of district government employee of kahirpur, Sindh, Pakistan. The ethical leadership was comprehensively observed with four dimensions (trust, integrity, justice, and honesty). The ethical leadership and its dimensions were observed to predict the level of employee engagement. The survey data was collected from respondents using self-administered questionnaires. The face validity of instruments were initially checked before examining reliability of scales. The scales were validated and assessed correlation to observe the degree of association among variables. Furthermore, a robust multivariate statistical approach, structural equation modelling (SEM) were implicated for hypotheses assessment. The path results confirmed that there is significant positive impact of ethical leadership on employee engagement and the dimensions of ethical leadership such as trust, integrity, justice and honesty have also positive impact on engagement. The outcomes of this study is very useful for HR policy makers to make utmost engagement level of employees at workplace by including the immensity of ethical leadership.

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