

Testing a Model of Ethical Leadership, Organizational Commitment and Its Outcomes with Social Exchange as Mediating Variable: A Pakistani Corporate Sector Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between Ethical leadership and organizational commitment with social exchange as mediating variable and further outcomes of organizational commitment in the form of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). To test this relationship, the study proposes a model to test with Pakistani corporate sector. The study is based on a local prospective; China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Data was collected through self-administrated questionnaire from 412 employees of corporate sector organizations in Pakistan. We used e-survey approach for the study and sample was selected through simple random sampling approach. The findings reveal that ethical leadership is positively associated with affective and normative commitment. Also, the results show that social exchange mediates positive relationship between ethical leadership and affective and normative commitment. Finally, the results of the study show that committed employees demonstrate voluntary behavior as organizational citizenship behavior for individuals and organizations.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership; Social Exchange; Organizational Commitment; OCB

Introduction

Market environment is getting challenging day by day and businesses are getting extreme pressure from their customers and stakeholders to provide better products and services, while maintaining a positive image of the organization. In this challenging environment, organizations are continuously looking for employees that are dedicated, skilled and committed to achieve organizational goals. In addition, employers prefer employees that are committed and go an extra mile to exhibit discretionary behavior. There are several factors that influence employee commitment, including; organizational justice, organizational culture,

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policies and leadership (Chen et al., 2011; Hansen, et al., 2013; Ruiz et al., 2011).

Recent financial scandals of business organizations have put the reputations of leaders at risk and senior leaders in the organization have realized that they need to play their role to engage employees' and enhance employee commitment to the organization (De Cremer et al., 2011). In the last few years, moral aspect of leadership has received significant interest from researchers, and Ethical Leadership (EL) has gained attention from researchers. Several studies have explored that ethical behavior is associated with leader's credibility and has significant influence on followers' attitudes and behaviors (Den Hartog and Belschak, 2012; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2011; Sami et al., 2016). The consequences of ethical leadership can be differentiated into two major categories; work attitudes, like follower job satisfaction (Hamed et al., 2013), affective commitment (Hansen et al., 2013; Neubert et al., 2009; Ruiz et al., 2011), and work behaviors; like OCB (Mayer et al., 2009; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2011) bullying (Stouten et al., 2010), misconduct (Mayer et al., 2010) and counterproductive behavior (Den Hartog and Belschak, 2012), unethical pro-organizational behavior (Kalshoven et al., 2016). Most studies on ethical leadership and its outcomes are conducted in the western countries (Avey et al., 2011; Avey et al., 2012; Brown et al., 2005; Brown and Trevino, 2006; Den Hartog and Belschak, 2012; Hansen et al., 2013; Kalshoven et al., 2016; Piccolo et al., 2010) and there is limited work done on this topic in Pakistan (Khalid and Bano, 2015; Mehmood, 2016; Sheraz et al., 2012a,b,c; Waheed et al., 2015, Wajaha, 2014).

Leader plays vital role to establish connection between employee and the organization. The relationship further flourishes if leader is principled, values justice and has strong moral values. Moral aspect of leadership plays an important role to develop a trust-based relationship in which employees are willing to positively exchange. Exchange process is time consuming, but once such relation is developed, it positively connects to two parties and both parties get benefit in long term. According to Blau (1964), Social Exchange (SE) entails unspecified commitment in which, when one party provides benefit or favor to another party, then it is expected that in future there will be a return from the other (Shore et al., 2006, Shore et al., 2009).

Research on employee and employer relation has received greater attention, because employees prefer to work with the organizations and

managers who are ethically sound, and establish a trust based relationship. Trust is important factor for establishing a relationship and it contributes to SE. Ethical leader is also considered as a role model for the followers. Ethical leaders are trusted and trust establishes social exchange between leader and subordinate (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2009; Hansen et al., 2013). Furthermore, studies have shown that ethical leadership promotes organization commitment (Hansen et al., 2013). In another study, Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, Foldger (2010) found that, ethical leaders through fair treatment and ethical role modeling attract employees to demonstrate positive outcomes.

Organizational commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs) are positive behaviors that organizations expect from their employees. OCBs are voluntary behaviors of employees, which are not part of the formal job description. These behaviors are voluntary and help to establish a healthy relationship between employee and the organization (Smith et al., 1983). According to William and Anderson (1991), OCB is divided into two major dimensions; Organizational Citizenship Behavior for Individual (OCBI) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior for Organization (OCBO). In OCBI, employee supports to co-workers, peers and sub-ordinates and in OCBO, employee contributes to the overall successes of the organization (William and Anderson, 1991). It is also noted that feeling of fairness could bring positive outcomes like OCB (Organ, 1990). Leaders are solely responsible to ensure that organizational policies and procedures are fair for all employees. Ethical leadership brings positive outcomes on employee behaviors, including; affective commitment (Hassan et al., 2013; Loi et al., 2015; Sami et al., 2016) and OCB (Ruiz Palomino et al., 2011).

This study is focused on the corporate sector of Pakistan, which is continuously growing, and in coming years major growth is expected in the private sector. One major reason for this expected growth is relationship between China and Pakistan that is opening new era of business for both countries. The recent agreements signed between Pakistan and China on Economic Corridor would open new avenues for the corporate sector. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is considered to be a milestone for Pakistan economy, which will strengthen the business relationship between two countries and contribute to economic growth. The expansion from CPEC will open new business avenues, and private sector organizations would be looking for qualified, skilled and committed employees. For the study, researcher conducted a comprehensive preliminary exploration involving senior

leadership, middle management and key staff of the Public and the corporate sector organizations in Pakistan. Brainstorming sessions with the senior leadership and the staff highlighted the current situation, and HR challenges. In addition, upcoming growth from CPEC will require a pool of talented, skilled and committed employees for the organizations. Employees also highlighted that senior leadership need to play their role to secure corporate identity, which is important for organizations, employees and external stakeholders. In addition, employees also highlighted that leaders' ethical behavior could positively influence employee commitment. Feedback from brainstorming sessions suggested that the model is necessary to test and provide practical and viable recommendations to the senior leadership. The purpose of the study was to test the model and identify the relationship of ethical leadership with organizational commitment. Also, to see the mediating effect of social exchange between ethical leadership and organizational commitment. Finally, to see the outcomes of employee organizational commitment. Findings from the study will be useful to provide practical recommendations to the senior leadership in the organizations.

Theoretical background and research hypotheses

Ethical leadership

Leaders play an important and significant role to motivate employees within the organization. Employee and leader relation is important for organizational success, team building, achieving common goals and displaying positive image of the organization. Leader's reputation is considered important in business environment. More recently, corruption scandals in public and private sector organizations have adversely affected on the image of these organizations and raised a big question on the leadership. Furthermore, it has drawn attention of researchers to identify how leaders can promote a positive image of the organization and enhance employee commitment (Brown et al., 2005; Colvin, 2003; Revell, 2003; Manz et al., 2008). Corruption scandals effect on organizational image in the public and employees. Employees' are considered as brand ambassadors of the organization. They do not want to be associated with the organizations whose leaders are involved in corruption. It is strongly believed that there is a dire need of ethically sound leaders (Brown et al., 2005; Colvin, 2003; Revell, 2003; Manz et al., 2008). With the passage of time public awareness and knowledge about business ethics has increased. The public strongly believe that senior leadership plays an important role to sustain positive organizational image (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011; Ghoshal, 2005; Eberlin and Tatum, 2008; Kujala et al., 2011; Trevino et al., 2008; Howard, 2010; Trevino et al., 2000).

Ethical leadership starts with personal actions of leaders that are decent, suitable, and moral. These actions strongly establish interpersonal relationships (Yang, 2014). Ethical leadership is defined as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown et al., 2005).

Relationship between leaders and followers is based on the leaders’ behaviors, actions and followers’ outcomes. The bonding between leaders and followers is important for a healthy and long-term relationship. Ethical leaders have high moral values with caring attitude, are easily approachable, and people-oriented (Michie and Gooty, 2005). They trust their followers and treat them with respect, fairness and are loyal with their followers (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2009). These actions establish strong relationships between ethical leaders and followers. As an outcome, followers are ready to reciprocate positive relationship through their actions (Neubert et al., 2009; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009).

Recent studies have examined the relationship between ethical leadership and followers’ outcomes, including: affective commitment (Hansen et al., 2013), job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work motivation (Toor and Ofori, 2009), and extra-role behaviors, like voice behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and relation-oriented behavior (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Mayer et al., 2009; Sirca, 2013). The relationship between employee and leader gets stronger when there is high level of trust between two parties. Ethical leadership plays a key role to establish trust-based relationship between employee and leader and the employee feels satisfied (Brown et al., 2005; McMurray et al., 2010; Sendiaya and Pekerti, 2010). In the last decade, researchers have focused on the role of ethical leadership (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Trevino and Brown, 2004) and associated outcomes, including: satisfaction, performance, pro-social behaviors, and deviant or counterproductive behaviors (Chen et al., 2011; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Mayer et al., 2012; Piccolo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011).

Social Exchange

The work on social exchange started by Thibaut and Kelly (1959) who worked on the theory of social exchange and then Homans (1961) worked on this theory based on social behavior. Later, Blau (1964) picked up this work and focused on reward and cost. Blau (1964) differentiated

social and economic exchange from two aspects; one due to notion of “discharge” and second due to “unspecified returns”. As the relation is between two people, if one does a favor or provides something important to other party, then that person feels obliged to reciprocate, but if the other party does not reciprocate despite several valuable inputs from the first party, then the relation may affect. Sometimes exchange is with “unspecified returns”. That means, it entirely depends on the recipient, how, when and where that person will reciprocate and how valuable that will be. The relationship gets stronger if the reward system is clear, open, and fair where everyone is treated equally without any bias (Bernerth et al., 2007).

The major distinction between social and economic exchange is trust vs financial benefit. Trust is viewed as the basis of social relationship (Blau, 1964), while the economic exchange is more impersonal. Social exchange focuses on the norm of reciprocity, whereas, economic exchange is linked with limited and bounded obligation. According to Shore et al. (2006), “*Economic exchanges do not imply long-term or open-ended and diffuse obligations, but rather emphasis on economic agreements such as pay for performance.*” The finding of their study was consistent with the norms of reciprocity, reflecting that the relationship was associated with higher level of citizenship, in-role performance, and lower absence.

There is a clear distinction between social and economic exchange and researchers have found that perceived investment in employees, senior management leadership style, and the employment relationship (Hom et al., 2009; Song et al., 2009) contribute to outcomes such as; commitment, OCBs and performance (Gakovic and Tetrick, 2003; Hansen et al., 2013; Shore et al., 2006 and Song et al., 2009).

There are several studies that have focused on finding the relationship of social exchange with organization, leaders and employee outcomes (Buch et al., 2014; Hansen et al., 2013; Shore et al., 2009). In the past, researchers have found that social exchange is a key source of establishing relation with organization or leaders, and certain factors such as; perception, culture, values, policies, supervisor’s role, and LMX support this relationship and contribute to positive outcomes (Hansen et al., 2013; Shore et al., 2006; Shore et al., 2009). Senior leaders through their ethical leadership style, solid judgment and decision-making effect on employees’ organizational commitment and the relation is further strengthened through social exchange (Hansen et al., 2013).

Previous work supports the social exchange theory connotation, that trust through social exchange develops long term relation between employees and organization or leader. Furthermore, economic exchange is not a motivational factor to sustain employees for long-term. The literature supports the model including, mediating effect of social exchange between ethical leadership and organizational commitment (Hansen et al., 2013).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was defined as “psychological state that binds the employees to organization” (Allen and Meyer, 1990). This state is developed based on different reasons and different dimensions of the OC further define that. The three types of commitments that were introduced by Allen and Meyer describe different perceptions of employees based on which they show their commitment towards the organization. Affective commitment is the type of commitment that employee demonstrates based on the affection towards the organization. Continuance commitment is the type of commitment in which employee perceives that he/she will lose the investment if he/she changes the organization. Normative commitment is developed when an employee feels moral obligation towards the organization and is not willing to change the organization.

Employees are one of the key asset of any organization and organizational success depends on dedicated and committed employees. Organizational commitment is a bonding between employee and organization and the relationship brings positive benefits for employee and organization. Organizational commitment refers to a psychological attachment of an individual towards an organization (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). Several researchers have tested organizational commitment (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2006; Meyer and Allen 1991; Somers, 2009).

Organization’s success depends on committed employees that are motivated and are ready to go an extra mile to achieve organizational goals. The relationship between employee and supervisor is important for employee related behavior, which supports organizational success. The relationship between supervisor and employee is usually referred as leader member exchange (LMX) and between employee and organization is referred as employee-organization exchange, or organizational social and economic exchanges (Shore et al. 2006; Hu et

al., 2011). It was found that examining the social and economic exchange simultaneously are important to understand employees' psychological attachment with the organization (Shore et al. 2006). There are several factors that contribute to employee commitment to the organization; however, leadership plays an important role to motivate employees to be committed to the organization and go an extra mile. There could be several ways through which leaders could influence employee positive behavior. This includes leader's fair treatment that establishes psychological bonding between leader and employee, and employee demonstrates positive work behavior in the form of commitment (Burriss et al., 2008).

Employee and employer relation is utmost necessary to achieve organizational goals and increase performance. Leaders are the main source of establishing this relationship. It is vital to understand how ethical leaders can influence their subordinates' attitudes and behaviors. The social learning theory (Bandura 1977, 1986) and social processing theory, suggest that subordinates learn acceptable behavior via their role models (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Relationship that a leader develops through social and economic exchange with employees could never be ignored. This relationship is important for positive organizational outcomes. Social exchange requires a significant amount of trust between two parties, and recent studies have seen that trust strengthens relationship between ethical leader and subordinates (Brown and Trevino, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2009).

Organizational commitment and OCBs are considered as highly desired behaviors of employees. What predicts organizational commitment and OCBs has been an important research topic in the field of Human Resources. Several studies have examined the relationship between type of leadership and employee outcomes. Empirically, research has found evidence that ethical leadership influences employee behaviors, such as; task performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011), OCB (Mayer et al., 2009; Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2011), job satisfaction (Kim and Brymer, 2011), affective commitment (Hassan et al., 2013; Neubert et al., 2009) and unethical behavior (Mayer et al, 2012). Studies have found several predictors of organizational commitment, including: work experience, group/leader relations, leaders' behavior, and job characteristics (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Joo et al., 2013).

Based on extensive brainstorming with the senior leaders and other the staff of the corporate sector organizations in Pakistan and further support

from the literature, the study explores the relationship between ethical leadership and two dimensions of organizational commitment; including affective and normative commitment by mediating social exchange. Based on the above discussion following hypotheses are developed.

Hypothesis 1 : Ethical leadership is positively associated with affective commitment

Hypothesis 2 : Ethical leadership is positively associated with normative commitment

Hypothesis 3 : Social exchange mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment

Hypothesis 4 : Social exchange mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and normative commitment

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizations are always looking for employees that are willing to support organizational goals and enhance the organizational performance. In addition, the most preferred employees are those who are willing to support colleagues and organizations through their volunteer behavior, typically known as organizational citizenship behavior. This behavior is not formally defined in the job description, but is always encouraged by employers for organizational success. OCB brings positive outcomes to the organizations. It is a tool to increase organizational performance, and effectiveness with the contribution from employees (Loi et al., 2006). Organizations always put their efforts to develop good relationships with employees and encourage them to display OCB for their colleagues and organizations that bring positive results for the benefit of the organization (Bolino and Turnley, 2003). Though researchers have worked on OCB from different dimensions, but there is one thing, which is common among all authors that OCB is not a formal behavior or a defined requirement in any document or the job description. It is a voluntary behavior that each employee may demonstrate based on his or her personal perception and feeling, and it supports to organizational success (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

Typically, OCB has three main characteristics: 1) it is a discretionary or voluntary behavior, 2) this behavior is not directly or indirectly linked to reward and 3) this increases efficiency of the organization. Most of the employees demonstrate such behavior at their own will rather than any formal job requirement (Smith et al., 1983). This type of behavior is neither directly nor indirectly related to a formal contract or reward system; however; positive behavior may lead to increase salary or

redefining role of a staff member. And lastly, OCB increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

William and Anderson (1991) conducted a study with full time workers, their colleagues and senior managers in the organization. The study showed positive results of OC and job satisfaction on OCB. The results of this study were useful because of two reasons; 1) it reconfirmed the effect of OC and job satisfaction on employees' discretionary behavior that were presented as OCB, and 2) the study also introduced two broader categories of OCB as organization citizenship behavior-organization (OCB-O) and organizational citizenship behavior-individual (OCB-I). OCB-O is related to the behavior of employee that directly benefits to the overall effectiveness of the organization, such as working extra hours for organizational effectiveness, following organizational norms, rules and procedures. The benefit of OCB towards organization positively influences the overall performance of the organization. OCB-I is a behavior, which directly benefits the individual and indirectly benefits to the organization. It is related to the co-workers' relationship and social relationship between co-workers that ultimately supports to the organizational performance.

OCB has received importance from researchers during recent years and has attracted critical concern of scholars and practitioners (Cheung; 2013; Cohen et al., 2012; Cun, 2012; Elamin and Tlaiss, 2015; Fassina et al., 2008; Grant and Mayer, 2009; Hongyu et al., 2012; Mayfield and Taber, 2010; Purba et al., 2015).

Recent studies have explored the relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment (Hansen et al., 2013; Hassan et al., 2013; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Neubert et al., 2009). Furthermore, previous studies showed positive relationship between OC and OCB (Feather and Rauter, 2004; Meyer et al, 2002; Rifai, 2005; Ng and Feldman, 2011; Purba et al., 2015; Zayas-Ortiz et al., 2015).

AC is considered the most desired forms of the OC and those who have higher AC are likely to demonstrate higher OCB (Zehir et al., 2012). However, other forms of the commitment, especially NC is also a strong contributor of employees OCB (Cohen and Keren, 2008). There are several other studies that support association between commitment and OCB (Benjamin, 2012; Prasetyo et al., 2017; Salehi and Ghotash, 2011; Ucanok and Karabati, 2013). Through the detailed discussion above, the following hypotheses are drawn:

Hypothesis 5: Employees with affective commitment demonstrate OCB-I

Hypothesis 6: Employees with affective commitment demonstrate OCB-O

Hypothesis 7: Employees with normative commitment demonstrate OCB-I

Hypothesis 8: Employees with normative commitment demonstrate OCB-O

Methodology

Sample

The survey data was collected from 412 employees of service sector organizations in Pakistan. We collected the data through e-survey following the simple random sampling approach. In the study, the male respondents were 63% and female respondents were 37%. Majority of the respondents were from the age group of 36-45 years, with a total percentage of 35.6 %, followed by age group of 25-35 years old=25.9%, 46-55 years=24.5 %, 18-24 years= 8 % and 56 and above=6 %.

Measures

The data were collected through self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire had two major parts; the first part included the demographic variables and the second part included the questions related to the variables, including, ethical leadership, social exchange, organizational commitment, and OCB. The items in the questionnaire were on 5 point Likert scale and respondents selected the options from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strong agree.

Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership was measured through Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) developed by Brown et al. (2005). This 10-items scale has been used and validated by several researchers in past in different studies. A sample item is “conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner”.

Social Exchange

The 8-items Shore et al. (2006) scale on social exchange was used to measure the social exchange. The scale has been validated by several studies in past by researchers in different contexts. The social exchange scale consists of 8 items, and a sample item is “my relation with my organization is based on mutual trust”.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment was measured using the scale by Meyer et al. (1993). The scale consists of 18 items to measure 3 forms of commitment, including: affective, normative and continuance. Each commitment type has 6 item subscales, that measures classified three sub categories. In the study, we measured two dimensions of organizational

commitment; affective and normative.

Sample item from affective commitment includes: “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization”, and sample item from normative commitment includes: I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it”.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

OCB has been widely studied in past and researchers have used OCB scales developed by (Gupta and Singh, 2013; Niehoff and Moorman; 1993; William and Anderson, 1991). In the study, 14-items William and Anderson (1991) OCB scale was used. The scale has two broad dimensions as organizational citizenship behavior-individual (OCB-I) and organizational citizenship behavior-organization (OCB-O). A sample item of OCB-I is “I take time to listen to co-workers problems and worries”. A sample item of OCB-O is “ I adhere to informal rules devised to maintain order ”.

Data analysis and results

As a first step, we conducted the pilot study with a sample size of 100 respondents. This process helped to check and confirm the validity of items and allowed an opportunity to include or exclude items for the final survey. We used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) by using AMOS version 21. Based on the results of CFA, items that had lower factor loading were excluded from the final survey. Item number 1 and 10 were excluded from the ethical leadership scale for the final survey. For other variables, like social exchange item number 4 was excluded from the final survey. All items related to affective and normative commitment were included in the final survey. Item number 2 from the OCBI scale and item numbers 1, 2 and 5 from the OCBOscale were excluded from the final survey.

After the data collection for the main study, SPSS and AMOS were used to test the variables and its relationship as conceptualized in the model. Different tests were applied to check the relationship and overall fit of the model.

Test of research hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, we used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. The results of the SEM for the full model are presented in table 1, and showed a good fit of the model. The overall result of the model showed value of AGFI = .923, GFI = .985, TLI = .939, CFI = .984 and RMSEA as .095. Almost all the value met the standards of the model fit (Klein, 2005). In addition to these indexes, the value of Chi square was 4.698 and the P-value was .001, which also supported fitness of the overall model.

Table 1. Index reflecting fitness of the model

Factors	Values	Factors	Values
CMIN	18.791	Df	4
Chi-square	4.698	P-value	.001
GFI	.985	AGFI	.923
TLI	.939	CFI	.984
RMSEA	.095		

SEM approach was used to test the relationship of different variables in the model. In the study, we have examined the relationship of variables with direct effect and an indirect effect through the mediation of one variable. For the mediation, we used the general guidelines provided by Baron and Kenny (1986). To test the hypotheses, we have followed two approaches; first we tested the relationship between independent and dependent variable and then we checked the relationship between independent and dependent variable through a mediating variable. The process helped to identify the difference between direct vs indirect relationship of the variables. In addition, it helped to analyze if the relationship between independent and dependent variable was insignificant.

Figure 1 shows the direct relation of EL with two forms of commitment; AC and NC.

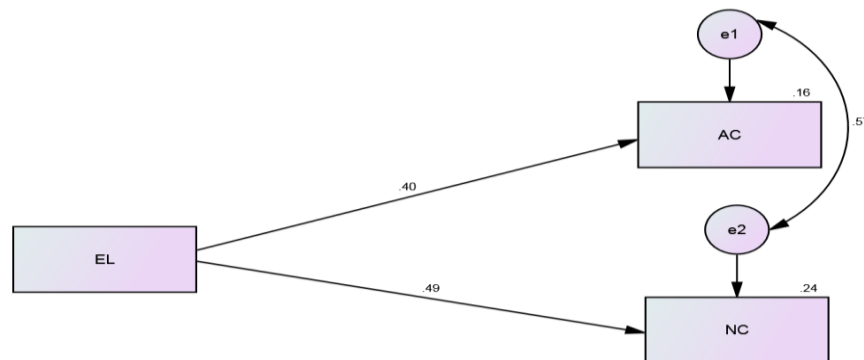


Figure 1: SEM model for variables EL with AC and NC as direct effect

The results of direct relationship between EL and AC, EL and NC are presented in table 2. The outcomes of the study showed that EL has strong and significant relationship with AC, as the r value is .398 and the p value is less than 0.05. Furthermore, the association between EL and NC was also positive as the r value for this relation was .489 and the p

value was less than 0.05. The findings of these results supported to H1 and H2.

Table 2. Details of regression with direct effect

Variables	Estimates	P-value	Decision
AC<--- EL	.398	***	H1 supported and accepted
NC <--- EL	.489	***	H2 supported and Accepted
OCBI<--- AC	.149	.002	H5 supported and Accepted
OCBO<--- AC	.183	.002	H6 supported and Accepted
OCBI<--- NC	.353	***	H7 supported and accepted
OCBO<--- NC	.265	***	H8 supported and Accepted

The results of study showed positive relationship between the AC and OCBs. The findings reveals that there was significant relationship between AC and OCBI. The r value for the relation was .149 and the P value was .002. Furthermore, the association between AC and OCBO was also significant. The relationship was positive and the result of r value was .183 and p value was .002. These findings supported H5 and H6 that were accepted.

The study also showed a strong and positive relationship between NC and OCBI, and NC and OCBO. The r value for relation between NC and OCBI was .353 with p value was less than 0.05, and for the relation between NC and OCBO the r value was .265 with p value was less than 0.05. These findings supported H7 and H8, which were accepted.

SEM allows to test the model with direct relation and the mediation. Baron and Keny (1986) have provided broader guidelines for checking the mediation and we followed their guidelines. In the study to check the mediation, we have presented details in figure 2 that portrays the full model of the study, including the mediation that is applied to the relationship between EL and AC and EL and NC through the SE.

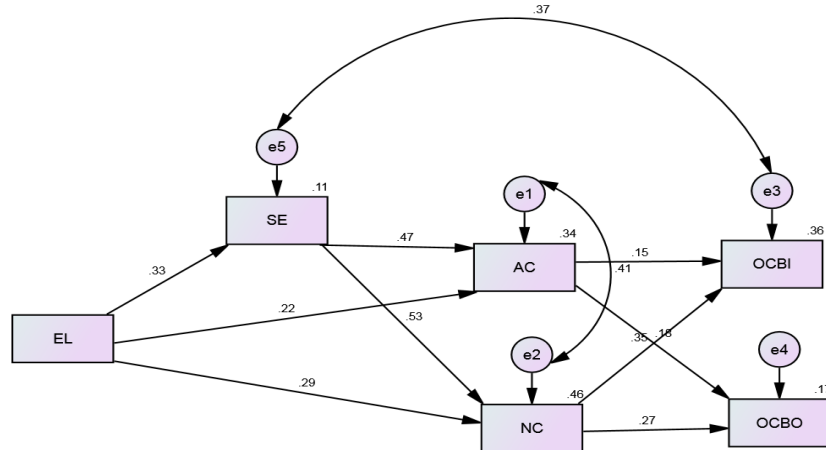


Figure 2: Full model

We have compared the results of direct vs indirect relation and the comparison showed positive results. Details in table 3 showed that the r value during the indirect effect of EL and AC reduced from .398 to .216, but the P – Value remained less than 0.05, which was an indicator that the relations was still significant. The results support to general guidelines for mediation, which highlights that if the regression weight is reduced, but is significant then it supports partial mediation of variables (Baron and Kenny, 1986). In the study, it meant that EL had direct and positive relation with AC and had indirect and positive relation with addition of SE, which supported partial mediation in the relation. This supported to H3, which was accepted.

Table 3: Direct and Indirect comparison of variables

Variables	Direct effects	Direct effects estimates	Indirect effects	Indirect effects P-values	estimates	P-values	Decision
AC<--- EL	.398	***	.216	***			H3 supported and accepted
NC <--- EL	.489	***	.289	***			H4 supported and accepted

In the case of EL and NC the regression weight reduced from .489 to .289, however, the relationship was still significant. This supported to H4, and that was accepted. The comparison of direct vs indirect relation showed strong linkage between EL and NC.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that, ethical leadership contributed to the positive outcomes of employee behaviors in the shape of

organizational commitment. Employees showed higher affective and normative commitment, if the leaders showed ethical leadership style. A leader represents the organization to internal and external stakeholders and his or her leadership qualities, association with employees' and behavior in personal and professional life is monitored. His or Her behavior effects on employee outcomes and contribute to corporate identity.

The study investigated the direct and indirect relationship of ethical leadership with affective and normative commitment. The indirect relationship was measured with social exchange as mediating variable. This relationship through indirect effect has not been explored in many studies before and to our knowledge it was only explored in one study where the researcher mediated SE between EL and AC (Hansen et al. 2013).

The results of the study supported that EL is a strong predictor of employee commitment towards the organization. We have tested direct relation of EL with two forms of commitment and the study showed that EL was positively associated with AC and NC. The results of the study supported to the previous work done on EL and OC (Hansen et al., 2013; Neubert et al., 2009; Ruizet al., 2011). In addition, with the inclusion of SE as a mediating variable between EL and the two forms of OC, the results showed that SE positively mediated between EL and AC and EL and NC. In the past, a few studies have examined such relation either directly or indirectly. Shore et al. (2009) found positive and direct relation between SE and NC. Hansen at al. (2013) in their study found that SE can mediate a positive relation between EL and AC. The findings of our study are in line with the previous work done by researchers on this topic.

In this study, we examined the relationship between two forms of OC with OCBs (OCBI and OCBO). In the past, normative commitment and its relationship with OCBs was not much studied, except a few studies that have explored this relationship (Meyer et al, 2002). Researchers have found that NC could contribute to similar type of employee outcomes (Meyer and Parfonova, 2010). The findings of the study showed that AC and NC were positively associated with OCBs (OCBI and OCBO). Gellatly, Meyer, Luchak. (2006) found that AC and NC could collectively contribute to OCB. In previous studies, it was found that employee OC positively contribute to OCB (Farzaneh et al., 2014). In another recent study, Purba et al (2015) found that AC is strongly

linked with OCBI and OCBO. The results of our study support to the earlier work on the relationship of affective commitment with OCBI and OCBO.

Implications

The results of the study are important for the organizations and especially for the senior leaders and the managers in the organizations to provide support to employees to build a positive relationship. The study shows that leader plays an important role to promote employee commitment to the organization. This commitment could be in the form of either AC or NC, but in general, both types of commitment are important and useful for the organizational success and performance. Organizational commitment is a time taking thing and there are several factors like leadership, organizational policies, HR system, role of supervisors, fellow colleagues, bonding with the organization, and corporate identity that contribute to employee OC. Top management has a very important role to set the tone in the organization through their leadership style. They need to develop a positive communication strategy and to secure corporate identity. Furthermore, they should ensure implementation of organizational policies and procedures through a fair and transparent process (Hansen et al, 2013). Role of middle managers and immediate supervisors is significant as they have direct connection with most of the employees in the organization. Senior leadership in the organization can set the tone that needs to be maintained by other senior managers and immediate supervisors in the organization. These managers regularly deal and coordinate with most of the employees and their actions and behaviors are important predictor of employee outcomes. Middle managers and immediate supervisors are custodian of the tone that is set by the senior leadership. EL is not merely the responsibility of senior leadership, it needs to be maintained at all levels in the organization to promote healthy relation between employee and the organization.

Senior leaders need to focus on positive exchange relationship with employees. For this relationship, social exchange can play a positive role and ethical leaders through their positive behavior can establish this relationship. Social exchange helps to develop better communication between leaders and employees. Furthermore, through social exchange employees feel valued, and empowered during the decision-making process as their suggestions are given importance for the organizational success. This relation contributes to different outcomes like; affective

commitment, OCB, satisfaction (Hansen et al., 2013; Ilies et al., 2007; Shore et al.2006, 2009).

Employees having affective and normative commitment demonstrate OCBs that are important for the organization. Leaders need to play their role to promote an ethical culture in the organizations to increase OC. This can be done through several ways. For example, organizations can introduce policies that are based on justice lens where employees are treated equally. Senior leaders and HR can provide support to employees' wellbeing. They can also handle employees' issues and problems and solve them professionally. Furthermore, organizations can promote a healthy culture that takes care of employees and provide them a respectful workplace. Previous work on OC has found that committed employees feel part of the family. They go beyond their normal JD and support to their colleagues and to the organization through their citizenship behavior, and such behavior supports to the individuals and organizations (Meyer et al., 2002; Purba et al. 2015).

Leaders in Pakistani organizations must promote an ethical culture by presenting themselves as role models to their followers. They must observe organizational rules and general ethics in personal and professional life. Ethical leaders should empower employees, and narrow down the communication gap. This will support employees to easily approach to managers and leaders and communicate with them. Leaders are ultimately responsible for overall well-being of the employees. Their positive role and duty of care of employees can develop long term relationship with employees and employees will demonstrate commitment towards the organization and reflect volunteer behaviors that are key to organizational performance.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

The current study is not without limitations and we acknowledge that there are shortcomings in this study, which need to be addressed in future studies of similar nature. The first limitation of this study is the self-report data, which at times leads to common method bias, and could also inflate the relationship (Crompton and Wagner, 1994). Participants in self-report bias either report on lower end, and the results are considered not relevant by the researchers or they over report which could be considered inappropriate (Furst, 2004). This type of report or data may not present a true picture and might be inflated to show the relationship between the variables (Spector, 2006). In social sciences and doing research in organizational context, it is highly likely that there could be

self-bias issues. One key reason is the fear that an employee has from his or her supervisor, Human Resources department or senior leadership in the organization that they may have access to the responses of the participants. To overcome this challenge, data were collected through an anonymous survey, which helped employees to share their responses honestly and openly. For future studies, it is advised that researchers continue to use anonymous data collection process by providing an opportunity to employees to share honest and bold feedback.

Another limitation was the data collection method. We collected the research data from e-technology, where a survey link was shared with the employees. This process was very helpful to collect the data in an easy and quick manner. Employees' responded to the survey at a convenient time by using their mobile phone, tablets or computers. The technology helped to collect the data from employees of different levels, but lower level employees' who either did not have access to the internet or smart devices could not participate. Future researchers need to consider alternative data collection method for lower level employees who do not have access to internet or smart devices.

Our study focused on the service sector organizations; mainly from banking, hotel industry and telecommunication. The service sector in Pakistan showed significant growth in last couple of years and employ a large number of staff; however, researchers in future could focus on large public sector organizations like; Pakistan International Airline, Federal Board of Revenue, State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan Steel Mill and other large organizations. Furthermore, future studies could also do a comparative study between private and public-sector organizations that would be helpful to see how leaders in each sector are engaging with employees to contribute to OC. It is further recommended to extend the study to non-profit sector in Pakistan, which is fairly large with a combination of International organizations, Local Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based organizations. The nonprofit sector has not gained much attention from researchers in the past and a study focusing on this sector would be useful. The findings of our study are from service sector organizations and the results may be generalized to the sample and the context.

The study relied on the measures that were developed and used in Western and other cultures and the items may not be culturally appropriate in Pakistan context, and may warrant the development of items that are culturally appropriate. Furthermore, while developing the

items in Pakistan context, a lot of attention needs to be paid to the language that is easy to understand by the respondents to have a better understanding in future studies.

The present study found positive influence of EL on employees' organizational commitment, especially to AC and NC. In the future, researchers could focus on EL and three forms of OC and could also see outcomes like; job satisfaction. The study also used SE as a mediating variable to see the relationship, which was supportive. We used only one mediating variable, future studies could use other mediating variables like trust, LMX, culture. We have explored the outcomes of AC and NC as OCBI and OCBO, future studies could examine the relationship and explore other outcomes like; turnover intention, counterproductive work behavior, pro social work behavior.

Conclusion

The present study advanced to identify the impact of EL on employees' outcomes, which contribute to achieve organizational goals. It is a contribution to the literature on EL and OC and further outcomes, which are studied in the present study. In addition, SE is not much explored topic with EL that is an important area of this research and a way forward for future work.

The results reflect that Ethical leaders are well respected and win the heart of employees. Their leadership style supports to gain positive employees' outcomes, including different dimensions of OC. Committed employees further engage in voluntary behaviors known as; OCBs that are related to individuals or organization. In addition, leaders through social exchange develop positive relationship between employees and organizations that bring positive and long-term results. Senior leadership, supervisors, managers and key personnel in the organizations could take benefit from this study and focus on reviewing and revising the organizational policies that are based on equality and meet the ethical standards. In addition, senior leaders in organizations could play an important role to set the tone of ethical leadership in the organizations and to promote a trickle-down approach where managers demonstrate ethical behavior in personal and professional life for the betterment of the organization. The study also gives guidelines to the organizations to develop training programs for managers on ethical leadership.

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