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NEXUSES OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, JOB SATISFACTION AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN ACADEMIA OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA PAKISTAN

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Ethical Leadership, Job Performance, Job Satisfaction, Universities, Academic Staff	<p>Nowadays universities are going through the transition due which new performance standards have been created. In such situation, performance of employees can be enhanced through effective ethical leadership. The current study has examined the dynamic links between job satisfaction, job performance and ethical leadership in the academia of Pakistan. Using a cross sectional design, quantitative data were collected from 150 academic staff working in three universities. Data were analyzed both by descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that four characteristics, i.e., practicing preacher; safe haven creator; moral motivator and ethical justice were positively associated with job performance, whereas this link was partially mediated by job satisfaction. The results obtained were in a strong concurrence with the existing literature. Hence, universities of Pakistan should focus on developing ethical leadership among their employees. In this way, universities can grow and contribute towards the socioeconomic development of Pakistan.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: right;">2021 Gomal University Journal of Research</p>
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INTRODUCTION

21st century has globally brought paradigm shift in universities around the world (Mohrman, Ma & Baker, 2008). Days are gone when university teaching was thought to be the tension free occupation (Meng & Wang, 2019). Universities have now experienced a transition, which has created high performance standards (Khan & Anwar, 2021). Resultantly universities are getting conscious about its outcomes by thinking about how to ensure high job performance of its employees, since it is critical to the success of universities (Manzoor, Wei, Bányai, Nurunnabi, & Subhan, 2019). The need for matching pace with the prevalent performance standards has further increased due to advent of COVID-19 pandemic, which has really change the working

lives inside universities (Anwar, Khan, & Sultan, 2020). The outcomes of universities can be enhanced over positive behaviors that are adopted by leaders inside universities (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). Due to such importance of the leadership and job performance, it is of a great interest to both researchers and practitioners (Dinh et al., 2014). Findings from previous research indicates that ethical leaders can influence the behavior of their employees in positive direction, by building their character and modify their personality (Zhu, Treviño, & Zheng, 2016).

Previous research studies, like Kinsambwe, (2016), Karuhanga (2015) and Ofoegbu and Alonge (2017) further shows that the organizational outcomes for example job performance, and job satisfaction of the universities can be boost up with the help of ethical leadership styles, which most influential style. For this reason authors like Obicci (2015), Kelidbari, Fadaei and Ebrahimi, (2016) and Khokhar and Rehman (2017) have recommended that researchers should examine the positive impacts of moral leadership on job performance and satisfaction (organizational outcomes) in higher education sector around the world. The dynamic interconnection between the concepts of ethical leadership and the resultant organizational outcomes is not that much simple since it includes both direct as well as indirect effects. For instance, ethical leadership does not affect the performance directly rather than there is indirect factor of job satisfaction, which mediate this relationship (Shafique, Kalyar, & Ahmad, 2018). For this reason previous studies, like Yuan, Tan, Huang, and Zou (2014), Shafique et al. (2018) and Işık (2020) have strongly suggested that future researchers should examine meditating effect of job satisfaction. In this way, the researchers can understand both direct as well as indirect link between the two variables.

To comprehend the nexus between ethical leadership, job performance and satisfaction in the universities of Pakistan, we need to initially understand dynamics of Higher Education sector in Pakistan. The Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan are divided into public and private. In the initial years, the higher education sector of Pakistan was mostly dominated by the public sector universities, however, after the creation of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan in the year 2002, private sector universities also started to develop rapidly and Higher Education Commission of Pakistan allocated funds for the private sector universities (Halai, 2013). Now the Government of Pakistan is encouraging higher education sector in Pakistan to make liaison with the industry for engaging in the Research and Development related activities, which will ultimately enable Pakistani universities to participate in the national development. In order to know results of government efforts for improving higher education sector of Pakistan, different evaluation studies need to be conducted by independent researchers (Qazi, Raza, Jawaid & Karim, 2018).

The results of these studies can tell us about the factors that have profound effect of overall performance and productivity of the universities (Asrar-ul-Haq & Kuchinke, 2016). If we look at existing published literature, then we can trace research studies, e.g., Okan and Akyüz (2015), Barnett (2017), Adeoye (2020) and Grobler and Grobler (2021) on positive effects of the ethical leadership in the academia of western countries (or countries other than Pakistan). In Pakistani context, few studies have been conducted, Torlak and Kuzey (2019) did research on linkages between ethical leadership and job performance in private universities of Pakistan: and more recently Zamin and Hussin, (2021) and Sabir (2021) have conducted research on ethical leadership and it link with the commitment and job performance in the different universities of Pakistan. However, there is an overall lack of empirical research on the said topic in the universities of

Pakistan. Moreover, the theoretical models on ethical leadership, employees' satisfaction and performance have not been widely tested in Pakistan. Thus, it indicates a serious research gap, which needs to be filled. Keeping in view the importance of this topic, the current study aims at examining the dynamic connection between the positive effects of the ethical leadership and the performance of employees in the academia of Pakistan, through the mediating role of the job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical leaders have the qualities of honesty and fairness with organization, care and respect for employees and goal orientation with ethical courage (Shakeel, Kruyen, & Van Thiel, 2019). Good ethical leadership practices are vital to success of any organization, since ethical leaders acts as notion of trust in organization by letting the employees feel that someone is taking care of them (Zaim, Demir, & Budur, 2021). It motivates the employees to work harder for development of organization. Whereas good organization can keep its employees satisfied by instilling high work performance inside them (Sendjaya, Pekerti, Cooper, & Zhu, 2019). For this drive, it is thought that employees work related performance is outcome of many factors, including the motivation given by a good leader, the degree of employees' satisfaction with assigned job and the overall conducive but challenging working environment (Cleveland, Huebner, Anderson & Agbeke, 2019). The Higher Education Sector in Pakistan is growing rapidly and it has been divided into public and private universities. Initially back in 1990s, higher education of Pakistan was mostly dominated by the public sector universities, however, once the higher education commission of Pakistan was established in 2002, private sector universities started to develop rapidly and even higher education commission of Pakistan allocated funds for private sector universities (Halai, 2013).

To comprehend the nature of ethical leadership, job satisfaction and work performance, it is imperative to review the existing theoretical models on such concepts. The ethical leadership can be understood from the three broad approaches, i.e., the utilitarian approach that states that ethical leader maximizes welfare of all employees (Udofia & Alexander, 2017); libertarianism approach that states that ethical leaders protect the rights and freedoms of employee (Read, 2018); and finally the deontological approach states that ethical leaders should do right things (Dion, 2012). Thus, other approaches are the justice approach (Koopman, Scott, Matta, Conlon, & Dennerlein, 2019); servant leadership, shared leadership and authentic leadership approaches (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). On other side, the popular approaches to job satisfaction includes affect theory of job satisfaction (Tomkins, 1984), the equity theory of job satisfaction (Huseman, Hatfield & Miles, 1987) and two factors theory of job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1993). In this connection, the job performance can be understood by in-role/out-role job performance model (Campbell, 1990), the organizational citizenship behavior model (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983) in addition to the heuristic conceptual model (Koopmans et al., 2011).

The review of theoretical models can provide valuable insights about the linkages between the concepts of leadership, satisfaction and performance. For review of theoretical models we can derive certain characteristics of ethical leadership, like e.g., ethical insights of organization, fair treatment of workers, role model for others, considering ethics important, good communicators, empathetic and holding self and others for unethical actions (O'Connell & Bligh, 2009). Also, there are sure characteristics of satisfied employees including happiness with salary, contented

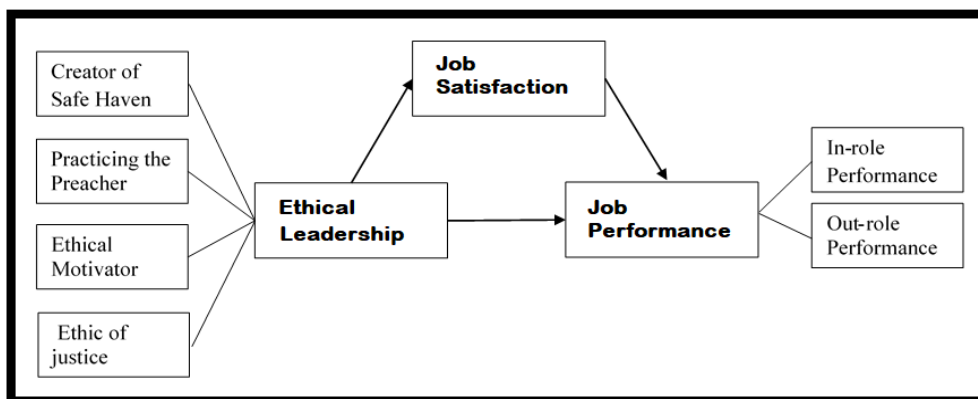
with working environment, satisfied with boss behavior, sure about job security and happily meeting new challenges (Blanz, 2017). These underlying features of the ethical leadership and employee satisfaction make a strong match with each other. In this regard Yang and Wei (2018) have explained that ethical leaders take care of the employee's needs, that is why they receive positive response from employees. It motivates the employees to work harder for development of organization. However, good organization can keep its employees satisfied by instilling high work performance. Similarly, Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) found that employees feel satisfied with those ethical leaders who disciplines wrong-doers, and treats right-doers fairly and respectfully. In this manner, the ethical leaders is predictable to built the trust among employees and trustworthy employees are those who are highly satisfied from work (Mozumder, 2018).

The ethical leader always tries to keep employees happy and satisfied. Based on such nexus, the current study hypothesizes that "H1: The ethical leadership will have a positive influence on the employees' Job Satisfaction in Universities of Pakistan". The review of theoretical models also gives insights about linkages amid concepts of ethical leadership and job related performance. Since, ethical leaders also work fairly, and honestly which makes them trust worthy road models for employees (Malik, Awais, Timsal, & Qureshi, 2011). Moreover, ethical leaders work hard, and they communicate importance of hardworking, thus becoming heuristic model of hardworking (Amos, Zhang, & Read, 2020). Apart from this employees also feel their leaders have best interest all employees, therefore, employees in return work harder (Zhang, Zhong & Ozer, 2020). In this way the employees can learn so many positive behaviors from their ethical leaders and such positive behaviors helps in instilling a positive work performance attitude (Liu, Kwan, Fu, & Mao, 2013). It motivates employees to work harder for development of organization whereas good organization can keep its employees satisfied by instilling high work performance in diverse contexts. Based on such strong linkages, this study further hypothesizes that "H2: The ethical leadership will have a positive influence on the employees' job performance in the universities of Pakistan".

As discussed earlier, the connection amid the concept of the ethical leadership and work related performance is not that much simple since it includes both direct as well as indirect effects. For e.g., ethical leadership doesn't affect the performance directly rather than there is an indirect factor of job satisfaction, which mediate this relationship (Shafique et al., 2018). It is because satisfied employees always put energy toward enhancement of their job performance, however, since employee's satisfaction is dependent on ethical leadership of boss, therefore, employee's satisfaction actually mediate this effects of ethical leadership over job performance (Rizwan, Zeeshan, & Mahmood, 2017). Thus, this study finally hypothesizes that "H3: Job Satisfaction will mediate (fully or partially) the link amid the concepts of ethical leadership and job related performance of employees working in universities of Pakistan". Previously mentioned theoretical backgrounds and the detailed discussion on the nature and relationship of the concepts of the ethical leadership, job satisfaction and work performance have helped us in the construction of a research framework for the current study. The research framework has three parts as seen in the Figure 01. The first part is indicating the independent variable of ethical leadership and its four sub dimensions. The second part is indicating the dependent variable of job performance and its two sub dimensions. Finally, the third part is indicating the mediating variable of job satisfaction.

Figure 1

Research Framework of Study



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional research design has been adopted, since it will help in conducting research one single point of time, thus, a cross sectional research design is more cost and time effective as compared to the longitudinal research design (Lavrakas, 2008). Since the data was collected through an online self-administered questionnaire, therefore, the quantitative paradigm has been chosen, which focuses on figures and numerical data (Djafar, Yunus, Pomalato, & Rasid, 2021).

Population & Sampling

The population of the current study is academic staff who are working in the three universities of southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. As clear from table 01, there were 441 academic staff in the selected three universities. Since it was not practically possible to collect data from whole population (due to time & cost limits), later, sample was drawn from the total population through a multi stage sampling process. In the first step the whole population was divided into three clusters and then in the second stage, strata were made on the basis of job positions held by the academic staff within the each cluster. In the final step a simple random sampling was done within the arch stratum, and in this way a sample of 251 was obtained as clear from table 01.

Table 1

Population and Sample of Study

Universities (Clusters)	Strata							
	Lecturer		Assistant professor		Associate Professor		Professor	
	N	n	N	n	N	n	N	n
Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak	34	25	19	15	00	00	01	01
Gomal University, D.I.Khan	98	49	113	53	09	04	30	22
University of Science, Technology Bannu	71	42	56	35	05	03	05	02
Total	203	116	188	103	14	07	36	25

Note: N=Population; n=Sample

Data Collection

Data were collected from the academic staff through an online self-administered questionnaire. In this connection, the questionnaire comprised the following sections as described in different section:

1. The first section was about the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and data was collected about the variables like age, gender, marital status, education and job position.
2. The second section was about ethical leadership dimensions. It was measured by the 12 items of the ethical leadership statements developed by Heres (2014) and 05 items of Ethical Leadership Questionnaire developed by (Langlois, Lapointe, Valois, & Leeuw, 2014).
3. The third section of questionnaire was about job satisfaction and it was assessed by the 06 items of global scale of job satisfaction, developed by Yuan et al., (2014) and 06 items of the job satisfaction scale, as developed by Körner, Wirtz, Bengel, and Göritz (2015).
4. The final section of the questionnaire was about job performance, and it was measured by the 06 items of job performance scale, developed by Goodman and Syvanteck (1999) and 06 items of the work performance scale, as developed by Williams and Anderson (1991).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical techniques were applied to analyze demographic data. Data Reliability was determined by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients. On other side, the inferential statistics include a series of Confirmatory Factor Analyses, which were run for determining the construct validity of collected data. Moreover, Structural Equation Modeling was performed to examine the direct relationship between the ethical leadership and job performance as well as to know indirect (mediating) relationship between the ethical leadership and job performance via through job satisfaction. Before performing Structural Equation Modeling, the model fit was determined by calculating fit indices like Chi-square (χ^2), Normed Chi-square (χ^2/df), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI). For the latent variable of ethical leadership, the Structural Equation Model consisted of four indicators, whereas for the latent variable of job satisfaction a single indicator chosen.

Finally, for latent variable of job performance, two factor model was chosen. To test hypotheses, the Structural Equation Modeling method suggested by Holmbeck (1997) was followed. This approach states that at beginning there should be adequate model fit among the independent variable (A), mediator variable (B) and dependent variable (C). In next stage, there should be a direct path between A-C, A-B and B-C. For testing mediation, the A-B (relationship between independent and dependent variables) path should be constrained to zero, and improvement in model fit and path significance should be examined, since if there is no improvements in the fit indices of forced model following inclusion of direct A-C path, then there is full mediation. In contrast, if improvements occur in fit indices of constrained model along with significant paths following the inclusion of direct A-C path, then there is a partial mediation. Improvement in fit indices is assessed through examination of the significance levels and changes in Chi Square values.

RESULTS OF STUDY

Before data analysis, raw data was examined for any missing data and violation of assumptions of multivariate analysis. Following the preliminary examination, it was found that out of 251 distributed questionnaires, 186 questionnaires were usable. Usability criteria were developed according to guidelines provided by [Hair et al. \(2010\)](#). These guidelines states that the missing data per each case (questionnaire) may be within range of 01% (minimum) to 11% (maximum). However, if the missing data per each case (questionnaire) exceed the limit of 11%, then such case (questionnaire) should be discarded. Data obtained from 186 cases were checked for the assumptions of multivariate analysis and no violation of assumption of multivariate analysis was found.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of academic staff revealed that overall there were more male teachers as compare to female teachers, as clear from table 02, most probably because in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan mostly the male members of the family work and female members mostly work inside their homes. Marital Status wise, most of the teachers (60%) are married. In this connection, teaching staff within the Pakistani universities is hired after the age of 25, especially after they have completed their Post Graduate studies, therefore, in such age, mostly teacher have already got married. In this regard, moreover, the marriage can act as strong source of social support, therefore, those employees who are married have more satisfied family life and in this way they can have better work-family life balance, which off course has the positive effects on the job performance of such employees ([Torlak & Kuzey, 2019](#)).

Age wise, most of the teachers (65%) exists in age category of 26 to 35 years, while the rest of the teachers are within the age category of 36 to 50 years. Such age distribution is because most of the seniority level of teachers within the university, also clear from their job positions, the majority of them (75%) hold either job positions like lecturers or assistant professors, and a less number (25%) of teachers holds positions like associate and full professors. The age has a unique relationship with working performance and it is believed that employee are energetic in their young age, however, with age, the job maturity and skills could be acquired, therefore, it is expected that senior employees will perform more better since they possess more knowledge, experience and overall maturity in career ([Cleveland et al., 2019](#)). Finally, most of teachers have either masters or doctorate degree and few of them have post doctorate. In Pakistan the recent trends show that majority of academic staff are holding PhD degrees. The formal education has direct link with performance and it is believed that those employees who have more education qualification are in better position to perform well within organizations ([Hidayat & Budiartma, 2018](#)).

Table 2

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Academic Staff

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Number (%)
Gender	
Male Teachers	115 (61.80%)
Female Teachers	71 (38.20%)
Marital Status	

	Married Teachers	112 (60.20%)
	Unmarried Teachers	74 (39.08%)
Age	20 to 25 years	08 (4.30%)
	26 to 30 years	73 (39.20%)
	31 to 35 years	48 (25.80%)
	36 to 40 years	27 (14.50%)
	41 to 50 years	20 (10.80%)
	Above 50 years	10 (5.40%)
Education	Masters	94 (50.54%)
	Doctorate	82 (44.10%)
	Post Doctorate	10 (5.36%)
Job Positions	Lecturers	81 (43.55%)
	Assistant Professors	58 (31.19%)
	Associate Professors	32 (17.20%)
	Full Professors	15 (8.06%)

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients were calculated for determining the Reliability of collected data. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients should be above the 0.50 for demonstrating that all of the variables are possessing internal consistency (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The results for reliability are given in the table 03, showing that all of variables have Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients above 0.50.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis of Data

Variables	Cronbach's Alphas
Task Performance	0.86
Contextual Performance	0.90
Job Satisfaction	0.91
Ethic of justice	0.86
Moral Motivator	0.82
Practicing Preacher	0.76
Safe Haven Creator	0.77

Examining Model Fit

A series of Confirmatory Factor Analyses were run to examine the model fit. In this regard, the model fit indices were calculated. Table 04 shows that the fit indices for the first model for the latent variable of ethical leadership had four factors and all of its fit indices were within the acceptable range. Next was mediating variable of job satisfaction, which had one factor and all of its fit indices were within acceptable range. Finally the latent variable of job performance, which had two factors, and all of its fit indices were within acceptable range, as clear from table 04.

Table 4
Examination of the Model Fit Indices

Variables	Models	X2	df	X2/df	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	GFI
Ethical Leadership	Four Factors Model	3.22	02	1.62	0.025	0.016	0.999	0.995
Job Satisfaction	One Factors Model	84.2	25	3.36	0.047	0.025	0.926	0.922
Job Performance	Two Factors Model	94.3	30	3.14	0.097	0.074	0.823	0.789

Hypotheses Testing

The current study has formulated two hypotheses, one is about the direct effects and other is about mediating effects. These two hypotheses were tested according to procedure mentioned in the previous data analysis section. In the first step a hypothesized model (M1) was built and was fitted into the data, as clear from fit indices in table 05. In next step, a Direct Effect Model by excluding mediator (M2) was built. In this model mediator variable was excluded, so that direct link between independent and dependent variables could be observed. The results for model fit were satisfactory and all of fit indices were within the acceptable range as clear from table 05. The latent independent variable of ethical leadership was positively associated with latent dependent variable of job performance ($\beta=0.012$, $p=0.001$). In next step, a Direct Effect Model by excluding Job Performance (M3) was built. In this model the Job Performance was excluded.

The results for model fit were satisfactory and all of the fit indices were within the acceptable range as clear from table 05. The standardized beta coefficient showed that there was positive association between mediator variable and independent variable ($\beta=0.108$, $p=0.001$). In the third step, a Direct Effect Model by excluding ethical leadership (M4) was built. In this model, the independent variable of ethical leadership was excluded. The results for model fit were satisfactory and all of the fit indices were within acceptable range as clear from table 05. The mediator variable and dependent variable were positively associated with each other ($\beta=0.104$, $p<0.0.0001$). On the basis of these three direct relationship models, first hypothesis was accepted.

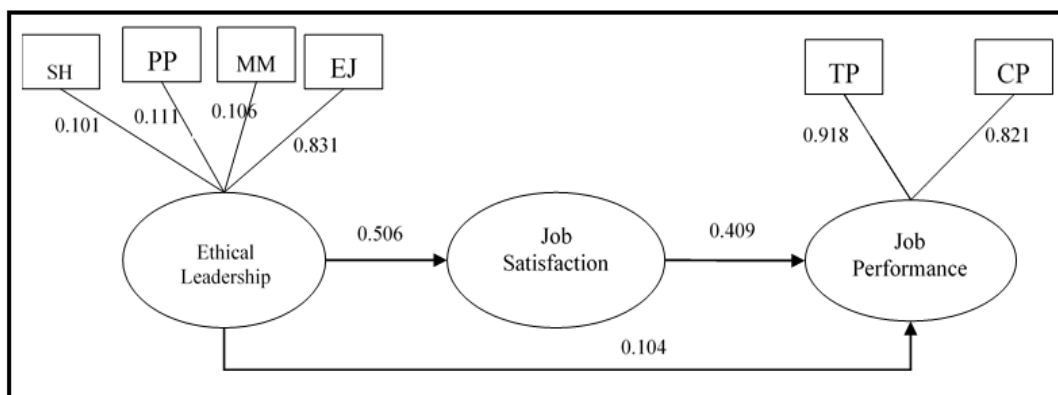
Table 5
Structural Equation Modeling Results

Models	X2	df	X2/df	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	GFI
Hypothesized Model (M1)	286	105	2.72	0.097	0.026	0.901	0.972
Direct Effect Model (M2)							
Excluding Mediator	20.51	05	4.102	0.091	0.011	0.968	0.965
Direct Effect Model (M3)							
Excluding Performance	230	77	2.981	0.096	0.027	0.901	0.867
Direct Effect Model (M4)							
Excluding Ethical Leader	186	53	3.501	0.099	0.028	0.901	0.869
Hypothesized Model (M5)							
Constrained	322	106	3.047	0.105	0.026	0.880	0.831
Hypothesized Model (M6)							
Non Constrained	283	02	2.781	0.089	0.023	0.901	0.853

Finally the Hypothesized Constrained Model by constraining A-B to zero (M5) was created, as clear from Figure 02. In this model initially relationship between independent and dependent variables was constrained to zero, due to which the model fit had decreased, as clear from the fit indices of (M5) in table 05. Therefore, in order to know whether partial or full mediation had occurred and to check whether model fit increases by non-constraining the M5 model, a non-constrained model (M6) was created, and then tested, as clear from table 05, figure 02. In the (M6) model, the model fit improved, however, the relationship between A-B-C paths was significant, consequently, the partial mediation had occurred (A-B, $\beta=0.104$, $p=0.001$; A-C, $\beta=0.506$, $p=0.001$; B-C, $\beta=0.409$, $p=0.131$). In this way the second hypothesis was successfully accepted.

Figure 2

M6 Final Non-constrained Model with Standardized Beta or Path Coefficients



Note: SH= Safe Heaven; PP= Practice Preaching; MM= Moral Motivator; EJ= Ethics Justice; TP= Task Performance; CP= Contextual Performance

DISCUSSION

The current study had proposed that ethical leadership would have a positive relationship with the job performance. In the other words, a good ethical leader will boost up the performance of the employees. After running Structural Equation Modeling, the results revealed that all of the four dimensions (safe haven creator, practicing preacher, moral motivator and ethics of justice) of ethical leadership were positive associated with two dimensions of job performance (task and contextual performance). The review of the existing literature shows that results of current study are in concurrence with results obtained from previous studies on the impact of ethical leadership on job performance. The review of existing literature contain studies in this regard, like, e.g., study by [Budihastuti and Hamali \(2016\)](#), which was conducted on the association of ethical leadership with teachers job performance working in Indonesian education institutions. The authors found that ethical leadership qualities like delegating authority, being mentor, lead meeting and make fair decisions were positively related with the job performance of teachers. Other similar as well as recent studies, e.g., studies by [Adeoye \(2020\)](#) and [Grobler and Grobler \(2021\)](#) were conducted on positive effects of the ethical leadership in the academia of western countries while [Zamin and Hussin, \(2021\)](#) and [Sabir \(2021\)](#) have conducted research on the

ethical leadership and its link with commitment and job performance in different universities of Pakistan.

Moreover, another study by [Yang and Wei \(2017\)](#) was conducted to examine the influence of the ethical leadership on the employee's task performance in China. They found that the ethical leadership had a positive impact on task performance of Chinese employees. The findings of these previous research studies on relationship between ethical leadership and job performance show that ethical leadership has an influential role in boosting the employees' performance. The fact is that an ethical leader within the organization can guide the employees towards their goals, such leader can provide direction, can help them to get innovative idea, and can also help in times of crisis and disaster ([Mulki & Laskk, 2019](#)). In this connection, this study further proposed that job satisfaction would mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance. Consequently, in other words, the good ethical leader can better boost the performance of the employees once the employees are more satisfied. Moreover, practices of a good ethical leader can cause employee satisfaction, which will ultimately help in boosting performance. Thus, after running structural equation modeling, the results revealed that the job satisfaction had partially mediated the relationship between the ethical leadership and the job performance.

The results of the current study regarding mediating role of job satisfaction are in concurrence with the results of previous studies on mediating role of job satisfaction in ethical leadership and job performance relationship. The review of existing literature has studies, like, e.g., study by [Shafique et al., \(2018\)](#) on the mediating role of job satisfaction in the ethical leadership-performance association in Pakistan and found that job satisfaction had mediated the impact of ethical leadership on job performance. Similarly another study conducted in Malaysia by [Jamaludin et al., \(2014\)](#) on the mediating role of job satisfaction in the ethical leadership and organizational commitment link. This study revealed that job satisfaction had mediated the effect of ethical leadership on commitment, meaning that the Malaysian employees were more motivated and committed due to the good ethical leadership inside their organization. Finally study conducted in Vietnam by [Khuong and Quoc \(2016\)](#) on mediating role of job satisfaction in ethical leadership and job performance, found that job satisfaction had ethical leadership had played a significant role in improving the job performance. Ethical leadership had positive direct effects on the job performance and indirect impact on job performance through the job satisfaction. The researchers need to examine both direct as well as indirect link between two variables.

This study has yielded important research findings regarding the empirical testing of the some of the theories on ethical leadership and job performance within the context of Pakistan. This study has tested both the direct as well as indirect linkages between the ethical leadership and job performance. The findings of this study will be significant to employees that are working in universities of Pakistan, especially universities in southern KPK province of Pakistan. Findings will also be significant to researchers in field of Human Resource Management. The employees can get awareness about factors which can influence their job performance and satisfaction. The employees can also get awareness about the qualities of successful ethical leadership. On the other side, the researchers in the in field of Human Resource Management can get latest information about empirical testing of the construct of ethical leadership and its impacts on job performance in Pakistan, especially empirical testing of mediating role of job satisfaction. The findings of current study will be significant to administrator of universities, since they can

understand dynamics of the ethical leadership and its effects on the job performance and job satisfaction.

In this way they can improve their own leadership qualities and can provide training to their employees. The administrator of universities can take measures to provide conducive working environment to its employees, thus that the employees are satisfied and can work in more productive and innovative way. At policy level, the policy makers in ministry of education and higher education commission can understand role of ethical leader in universities of Pakistan. They can work on appointing good leaders in universities of Pakistan and they can also work on formulating good work-related policies for development of the higher education sector as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The current study aimed at exploring the dynamic relationship between ethical leadership, job satisfaction and job performance of employees working in the higher education institutions of Pakistan. The findings of study revealed that there is both direct and indirect linkages between the ethical leadership and job performance of employees. Since it has been empirically proved through findings of this study that organizational outcomes of universities can be enhanced through positive behaviors that are adopted by the leaders of the universities, therefore, it has been concluded that ethical leadership is a very vital factor in the success of organizations. The universities in Pakistan should focus on appointing such administrators which have high level of ethical leadership qualities, and who can instill job satisfaction and boost up job performance of the employees. Moreover, the management of the Pakistani universities should take care of employees' satisfaction by providing them conducive working environment, so that employees feel satisfied. In this way, the ethical leaders would be able to instill the better employees' job satisfaction and higher work performance by playing the vital role in success of universities in Pakistan.

Limitations & Recommendations

This study has certain limitation, on the basis of which some future research directions have been given. First, this study was cross sectional quantitative in nature and data was collected with questionnaire for one-point time, which can affect generalizability of the results. For this reason, future researchers should conduct longitudinal study by combining both qualitative and quantitative data. Such investigation will be helpful in knowing the changes in employee's performance with passage of time. Moreover, the ethical leadership concept could be more comprehensibly examined qualitatively. Second, this study has been conducted on a handful number of respondents taken from few universities; consequently, the future researchers can take broader sample from many universities. Third, this study has relied on subjective perceived data related to employees' performance, which may not be helpful in making any causative conclusion. Therefore, the future researchers should study employees' performance objectively by collecting objective data from official records of universities. Finally, this study has not examined the moderating role of training and career development in the nexus between ethical leadership and job performance, thus, the future researchers should work on examining such relationship.

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