

# Ethical Leadership Style and Employee Job Satisfaction: The Mediating role of Trust and Work Engagement in the Ghana Education Service

Adam Issahak Salifu<sup>1</sup>, Huming Zhu<sup>2</sup>, Hassan Rakib<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Master of Business Administration, Hunan University, China;

<sup>2</sup>College of Business Administration, Hunan University, Changsha 410082, China

<sup>3</sup>Master of Business Administration Hunan University, China

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6536303>

Published Date: 10-May-2022

---

**Abstract:** This study examines the impact of ethical leadership style on employee job satisfaction. To further enrich the debate around leadership style and job satisfaction relationship, the mediating role of trust and employee work engagement were accounted for in the Ghana education service sector. Owing to the nature of the study, the data collected were in longitudinal form. The questionnaires were given out to randomly chosen respondents from the Ghana education service. The survey considered the age, educational level and employee position in the education service. 321 out of 500 sets of questionnaires distributed were valid for coding, analyzing and testing the hypothesis. Collected data were then analyzed. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used to run the analysis. Prior to running and analyzing the model, several statistical tests were executed to test the validity and reliability of the dataset. Results from the findings reveal that there is statistically significant positive relationship between ethical leadership style and job satisfaction among employees at the Ghana education service. The results further showed a significant mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between ethical leadership and employee job satisfaction. The study concluded by informing policy for both theory and practice.

**Keywords:** employee engagement, ethical leadership, job satisfaction, trust.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To comprehend the situational influences in the leadership paradigm, the implications of trust on both individual and organizational effectiveness have been highlighted. People are considered to be dissatisfied with the performance of their leaders as a result of repeated ethical scandals, such as cheating and corruption (Ahmad Mukhtar & Chan, 2020), in both the private and public sectors (Yukl et al., 2018; Afsar et al., 2019). What matters is the function of leadership in ethical behavior change (Afsar et al., 2019), demonstrating the importance of the ethical dimension of the leadership construct (Asif et al., 2019). As a result of these crises, it has been noticed that ethics and integrity concepts have received more attention in the leadership domain in recent years, and studies on ethical leader conduct have increased at all levels of the organization (Qing et al., 2019).

Moreover, as a result of corporate scandals in which CEOs concentrated on enhancing their own needs through unethical corporate tactics, ethical leaders who display and encourage high moral standards have become increasingly crucial. The desire for leaders who not only displayed ethics, but also provided open communication, reliability, and fair, balanced

decision making grew as a result of this rising interest in ethics. According to Kim and Thapa (2018), ethical leaders' fair and compassionate treatment, consistent behavior, and clear, open communication are likely to lead to trusting relationships. In this regard, trust is strongly linked to ethical leadership behavior (fairness, role definition, and power sharing). Similarly, this research claims that ethical leadership and trust in the leader have a beneficial link.

Job satisfaction, on the other hand, is a topic that piques the interest of not just those who research and study the notion, but also those who work with others and persons. From a humanitarian standpoint, individuals should be treated fairly and with respect (Yanik, 2018). Job satisfaction also refers to how well the workplace answers workers' concerns and expectations, as well as the individual's reaction to that environment (Yozgat & Meşekran, 2016). Furthermore, a body of studies suggests that a manager's leadership style is linked to the job satisfaction of their followers (Qing et al., 2019; Sabir & Bhutta, 2018; Afsar et al., 2019). As a result, it is important to underline that leadership is an attribute that is heavily dependent on employee perceptions. As a result, leaders become leaders not only because they are assigned to specific departments to manage by the company, but also because their followers recognize and regard them as such (Hoch et al., 2018; Hassi, 2018; Jing, 2018). As a result, good leadership is increasingly being associated with ethical workplace practices, on the grounds that, across all ethical dimensions, leadership has the capacity to strengthen the leader–employee relationship, resulting in a variety of positive employment outcomes for employees (Qing et al., 2019).

In a similar vein, various studies in the public sector have discovered a correlation between ethical leadership and desirable employee outcomes, such as work satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and work engagement (e.g., Sabir & Bhutta, 2018; Gok et al., 2017; Andrews, & Mostafa, 2017). However, none of these researches has looked at how or why ethical leadership is linked to both of these outcomes. This study looks into the mediating role of trust in leaders and employee work engagement on the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction, which is defined as the degree to which work assignments have positive significance and help achieve goals that are in line with an individual's values and principles (Ahmad Mukhtar & Chan, 2020). According to previous research, leadership effectiveness may be derived from its influence on employee engagement and (Wang & Hsieh, 2018). This shows that work engagement and trust may operate as mediators in the ethical leadership–job satisfaction relationship, explaining how and why ethical leadership influences job satisfaction.

Ghanaian society's perspective on leadership styles and their relationship to trust in a leader and job satisfaction need special study because it is a mixed culture setting. As a result, by emphasizing a leader's moral side, this behavioral element of our culture presents a unique perspective in contemporary leadership theory.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research adds to the body of knowledge in a number of ways. First, we investigate the impact of ethical leadership style on job satisfaction in Ghana's public sector in response to calls for more attention to the primary drivers of trust, employee work engagement, and job satisfaction in the public service.

Second, we aimed to analyze the direct links between trust and job satisfaction, and engagement and job satisfaction in a non-Western context, namely, in Ghana. We were able to validate previously established correlations between study variables in a new environment by doing so. In the social sciences, replication studies are crucial (King, 2011). To demonstrate their generalizability, study findings should be revalidated in new work situations on a regular basis (Mackey and Porte, 2012).

Third, we expected that the extent to which employees believe their leaders to be ethical will play a crucial role in supporting job satisfaction and work engagement through trust in their leader. Researchers have individually evaluated the associations between ethical leadership style and work engagement (Demirtas et al., 2017) and ethical leadership style and trust (Mostafa and Abed El-Motalib, 2020), but we combined four constructs into one model for our study. We investigated work engagement and trust as an intermediary mechanism through which employees' perceptions of their leaders' ethical behavior can influence job satisfaction using the model. Figure 1 depicts the research model that has been proposed. The following is a diagram of how the hypothesis is developed. In the literature review, we first explore the direct links among study variables, then go into the mediating roles of trust and work engagement in the relationship between ethical leadership style and job satisfaction.

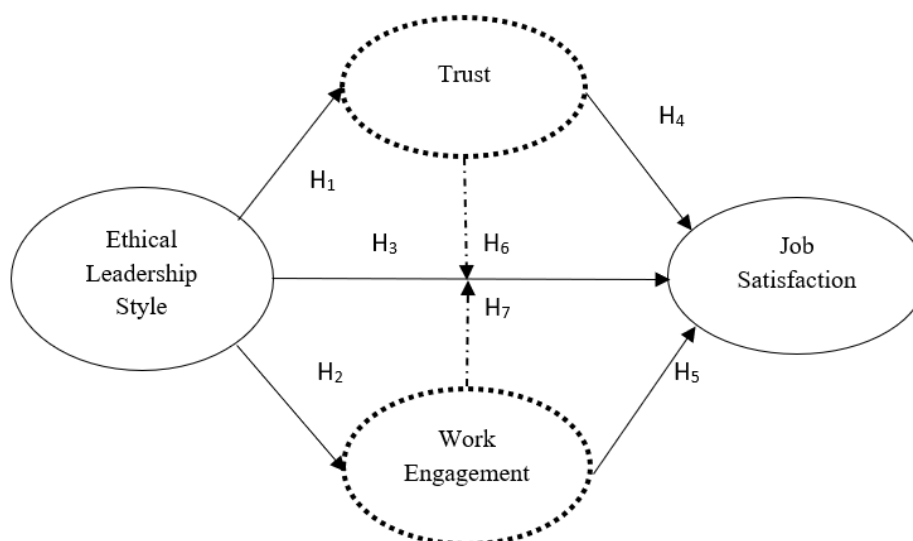


Figure 1: Research Model

## Hypothesis Development

### 2.1 Ethical Leadership Styles and Trust

Researchers discovered a correlation between ethical leadership and an organization's managers' and leaders' trust (Chughtai et al., 2019; Lu, 2018). According to Chughtai et al., employee trust in the larger organization improved when organizational leaders displayed ethical behavior (2019). Ethical leadership, according to Mayer et al. (2015) and Pucic (2018), fosters a positive ethical climate, which leads to increased employee work satisfaction and commitment. Employees will respect and trust a leader who shows trustworthiness attributes like honesty, friendliness, generosity, and acceptance (Zeffane, 2020). In the trust relationship between a leader and a follower, different qualities of ethical leadership can be seen.

Although there was a vacuum in the study on the relationship between ethical leadership and employee trust levels, a few studies that were related to ethical leadership or trust with commonalities were found. For example, Seppälä et al. (2019) discovered a link between employee fairness and trust levels, as well as management fairness, which is a component of ethical leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2016; Mihelic et al., 2020;). Connell et al. (2021) did research on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee trust levels before ethical leadership was recognized as a unique leadership style.

The study looked at the link between ethical leadership and organizational and management trust (Brown & Trevino, 2016), however it didn't look at how ethical leadership affected employee trust. Employees will be more inclined to trust the work environment and the business if they show willingness to trust the leader and an ethical leader develops a foundation of trust. Following the above arguments from different scholars on ethical leadership styles and trust, the following hypothesis is made:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Ethical leadership style positively influences trust*

### 2.2 Ethical Leadership Styles and Work Engagement

It is necessary to define work engagement before comprehending the relationship between ethical leadership and work engagement. Work engagement is a positive, motivational state of mind that is characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption in one's work (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2018). Having vigor, high energy levels, mental resilience, and the willingness to put out effort into job duties; dedication, feeling excited about one's work and being highly immersed in it; and absorption, totally concentrating and being engrossed in work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2018). Because of its significance, there has recently been a request for research into the organizational elements that may contribute to job engagement, particularly in the public sector (Andrews & Mostafa, 2017). The importance of leadership as an organizing

factor is examined in this study, and it is suggested that it plays a key influence in determining the work engagement of public sector personnel.

Tims et al. (2021) discovered a link between transformative leadership and the everyday work engagement of followers. They go on to define transformational leadership as "individual consideration and assistance" for employees by a leader (Tims et al., 2021, p. 122). According to Wong et al. (2020), authentic leadership and work engagement have a good link. Because they are considered as value-based leadership, both transformational and authentic leadership can be linked to ethical leadership. This has a good impact on the followers' work engagement.

Using regression analysis, Den Hartog and Belschak (2018) confirmed that ethical leadership has a positive connection with work engagement. They suggest that a focus on shared moral ideals, as well as the honesty, care, and justice exemplified by ethical leaders, will increase employee engagement at work (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2018). They discovered that when followers believe their leaders are operating ethically, they are more engaged in their task. As a result, it is possible to hypothesize that ethical leadership has a favorable impact on employee work engagement. According to Den Hartog (2018) and Brown et al (2019), ethical leadership is defined as the demonstration of a leader's characteristics through personal and interpersonal actions, as well as the promotion of such behavior to their employees through fair decision making and reinforcement in the organization, which has the tendency to engage employees on their work.

Following the above arguments from different scholars on ethical leadership styles and work engagement, the following hypothesis is made:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Ethical leadership style has a positive effect on work engagement.*

### **2.3 Ethical Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction**

In the literature, ethical leadership is frequently linked to favorable employment outcomes (Ruiz-Palomino et al., 2018). The research includes narrative support that ethics and job satisfaction are linked (Koh and El'Fred, 2021). Furthermore, it is claimed that subordinates have a tendency to show higher levels of job satisfaction in the direction of an ethical leader who 'disciplines wrongdoers,' handles their employees fairly and intelligently, and displays transformative authoritative style (Kim and Brymer, 2021). Furthermore, if the "ethical" components of job satisfaction can be identified, leaders may be able to choose the best method to deal with the consequences of the organization's ethical environment in order to redesign job satisfaction while maintaining ethical settings (Vitell and Davis, 2020). According to another study (Mustafa and Lines, 2014), leader traits and behaviors play an important role in improving employee job satisfaction and helping them develop a positive attitude about their work. As a result, when leaders express individualized opinions in a non-controlling manner, people are more likely to generate excellent work environment outcomes.

The association between ethical leadership behaviour and employee job satisfaction was investigated by De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2018). As a sample size, they used 175 employees from Estonian financial and telecommunications firms. A questionnaire and a systematic survey approach were used to collect data. To summarize, the findings of this study lend empirical support to the hypothesis that ethical leadership is linked to employee job satisfaction (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2018).

In general, it is also possible that an "ethical environment" may boost job satisfaction (Vitell and Davis, 2020), and ethical leadership is strongly linked to positive employee attitudes in the sense that it influences employee overall satisfaction at work (Kim and Brymer, 2021).

Following the above arguments from different scholars on ethical leadership styles and job satisfaction, the following hypothesis is made:

*H<sub>3</sub>: Ethical leadership style has a positive effect on job satisfaction.*

### **2.4 Trust and Job Satisfaction**

Since the post-Enron scandal, issues of trust and employee satisfaction have taken on a greater strategic role in businesses (Callaway, 2016). The Enron affair, which broke in October 2001, resulted in the bankruptcy of Enron Corporation, an American energy business based in Houston, Texas, as well as the de-facto breakup of Arthur Andersen, one of the

world's top five audit and accounting firms. Enron was regarded as the largest bankrupt company in American history at the time, as well as the largest audit failure. Its demise was brought about by a lack of mutual trust among its organizational components, including employees and management.

The development of a trusting relationship with employees will have a favorable impact on employee job satisfaction in a business. In the employee-organization connection, trust will increase pleasant mental situations, accessibility, and well-being for employees (Anonymous, 2020). This could imply that if employees rely largely on their skills and abilities, they will develop a strong bond with top management. When employees collaborate with management, their primary respect for them allows them to create trust behaviors that are both physical and mental. As a result, the employee-organization trust relationship will develop high-level cores of job satisfaction, allowing individuals to fully engage and commit to their jobs.

Furthermore, employees will contribute to a high degree of job satisfaction in a company as a result of the employee-organization relationship's trust. This is because when employees believe their management believes in their abilities to complete a task, they are more inclined to take on all of their tasks in order to satisfy their senior management's expectations (Kester, 2020). In this way, the creation of an employee-organization trust connection can assist firms in providing internal incentives to their employees while also satisfying senior management's expectation of trust value. As a result, people who believe in trusting one another and working as a team in the workplace are more likely to be satisfied with their work. Following the above arguments from different scholars on trust and job satisfaction, the following hypothesis is made:

*H<sub>4</sub>: Trust has a positive effect on job satisfaction*

## 2.5 Employee Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Employee engagement can be both physical and mental, representing the behavioral and attitude foundations of the notion (Abdullah et al. 2021). In today's competitive market, there is a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the benefits of having highly engaged employees (Ahmed et al. 2021). Employees that are engaged are less likely to leave the organization (Ahmed et al. 2021), and they are more likely to attend meetings on a regular basis (Ahmed et al. 2021). In today's world, no business can exist without employees (Ali & Anwar, 2021). As a result, it's critical to understand both the concept of involvement and its potential consequences (Ali et al. 2021). According to Ali et al. 2021, engagement is a concept that describes a person's level of commitment to a company (Ali, 2014). The goal of this section is to see if there is a link between job satisfaction and work engagement.

Furthermore, some academics and researchers have sought to define various work happiness components, analyze each component's relative value, and investigate the impact of all of these job satisfaction components on employee satisfaction (Anwar & Ghafoor, 2017; Anwar & Climis, 2017). Job satisfaction is a mental condition that results from a detailed plan and a list of specific likes and dislikes from previous jobs (Anwar & Balcioglu, 2016). Human resources are almost every company's most significant and valuable asset (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). A person's level of happiness with their job determines their job satisfaction, which varies depending on the type of work they do (Anwar & Abd Zebari, 2015). A high degree of individual satisfaction is significantly linked to a low rate of staff turnover in any firm. As a result, a company's primary focus should be to ensure that its employees are happy and pleased with their current positions (Anwar & Climis, 2017). Human resource management methods strive to allocate and assign human resources in the most efficient and effective ways possible to meet long-term organizational goals, and they offer a host of advantages and benefits that contribute to increased job satisfaction (Anwar & Ghafoor, 2017; Anwar & Qadir, 2017). Following the above arguments from different scholars on employee work engagement and job satisfaction the following hypothesis is made:

*H<sub>5</sub>: Employee work engagement has a positive effect on job satisfaction*

## 2.6 Mediation Mechanism

Researchers studying leadership behavior have just recently begun to incorporate trust and work engagement as a mediating factor (Jung and Avolio, 2020). For example, according to Newman et al. (2018), affective trust moderates the impact of ethical leadership on OCB directed at the firm and coworkers. According to Lu (2014), affective trust plays a

significant role in mediating the relationships between ethical leadership and organizationally oriented citizenship behavior as well as ethical leadership and personally focused civic behavior. Ethical leadership, according to Tourigny et al. (2017), has a favorable impact on CSR, and corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on organizational trust, both of which have a big and positive impact on OCB. According to the theory, managers can virtuously affect trust-based relationships within the organization, which will positively influence employees' attitudes and behaviors. Following the above arguments from different scholars on the mediating role of trust on the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction the following hypothesis is made:

*H<sub>6</sub>: Trust mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction.*

*H<sub>7</sub>: Employee work engagement mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction*

### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1 Sampling Method

The current study used a cross-sectional methodology to collect data from 321 employees from various departments of the Ghana Education Service in Accra, Ghana's capital city. Figure 1 depicts the research model that has been proposed. The researchers went around to different departments, emphasizing the relevance of the study and encouraging employees to take part. Before data collection, every departmental head signed a formal consent form. All of the possible responders were given a set of self-administered questions. In addition, the researchers ensured that respondents' responses were kept anonymous.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of respondents**

| Demographics             | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Gender</b>            |            |             |
| Male                     | 235        | 73.21%      |
| Female                   | 86         | 26.79%      |
| <b>Age</b>               |            |             |
| 21-30                    | 137        | 42.68%      |
| 31-40                    | 105        | 32.71%      |
| 41-50                    | 57         | 17.76%      |
| Above 50                 | 22         | 6.85%       |
| <b>Education</b>         |            |             |
| Bachelor                 | 187        | 58.26%      |
| Master                   | 121        | 37.69%      |
| PhD                      | 13         | 4.0%        |
| <b>Tenure</b>            |            |             |
| 1-5 years                | 208        | 64.80%      |
| 6-10 years               | 73         | 22.74%      |
| Above 10 years           | 40         | 12.46%      |
| <b>Total respondents</b> | <b>321</b> | <b>100%</b> |

We circulated 500 questionnaires using a convenient sampling approach, but only 321 were completed. A bachelor's degree was held by the majority of respondents (187: 58.26 percent). About 42.68 percent of those polled were between the ages of 21 and 30. Males made up the majority of the responses (235: 73.21 percent). The bulk of the respondents (274: 85.36%) were employed as employees, and 14.64 percent were employed as managers. Finally, 64.8 percent of the respondents have worked for 1–5 years.

#### 3.2 Measurements

**Ethical leadership:** Ethical leadership was measured with the 5–item scale developed by Brown et al., (2015). The alpha of the scale was 0.863. The 4–items scale of work engagement used by Schaufeli et al (2003) was used to measure employee work engagement. The alpha of the scale was 0.815. Trust was measured with 3 items which was developed by Robinson & Rousseau (1994) instrument of trust. The alpha of the scale was 0.809. Overall job satisfaction was measured



using an adapted version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), developed by Weiss et al., (1967). The questionnaire was designed to measure satisfaction levels for various personal and job-related facets. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions and the first five items were selected for this study. The alpha of the scale was 0.809.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, and correlations, as summary statistics of all variables are presented in Table 2. Ethical leadership was significantly and positively correlated with work trust ( $r = 0.49, p < 0.01$ ), and work engagement ( $r = 0.47, p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, ethical leadership was found positively correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.38, p < 0.01$ ), as expected. Overall, these results present preliminary validation to support our main research hypotheses. These findings suggest that a supervisor's ethical leadership can lead to trust and facilitate a subordinate's work engagement.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix**

| Variables          | Mean  | SD   | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4     | 5    | 6    | 7    |
|--------------------|-------|------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|------|------|
| Ethical leadership | 3.64  | 0.84 | 1.00   |        |        |       |      |      |      |
| Trust              | 3.27  | 0.53 | 0.49** | 1.00   |        |       |      |      |      |
| Work Engagement    | 3.55  | 0.71 | 0.47** | 0.45** | 1.00   |       |      |      |      |
| Job Satisfaction   | 3.31  | 0.68 | 0.38** | 0.36** | 0.39** | 1.00  |      |      |      |
| Age                | 32.73 | 4.62 | 0.05   | 0.42*  | 0.07   | 0.04  | 1.00 |      |      |
| Tenure             | 7.82  | 1.35 | 0.31*  | 0.15   | -0.04  | -0.13 | 0.08 | 1.00 |      |
| Education          | 1.86  | 0.34 | 0.27*  | 0.06   | 0.02   | 0.12  | 0.08 | 0.06 | 1.00 |

Note: N = 321; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed).

### 4.2 Analysis of the measurement model

The measurement model was validated using Factor loadings ( $>0.70$ ), reliability (acceptable if Cronbach's  $> 0.70$ ), and variance extracted ( $>0.50$ ). These tests were all used to determine the instrument's convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and the computed values were all above their thresholds (see table 3). According to the results all constructs have extremely high predictability in explaining the study model's predictive capacity. All of the factor loading values in confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model were greater than 0.70, as recommended by Anderson (2006).

**Table 3: Test of construct validity and reliability**

| Construct                 | KMO  | Bartlett's Test | Items | Standardized Loading | CR   | Cronbach's Alpha | AVE  |
|---------------------------|------|-----------------|-------|----------------------|------|------------------|------|
| <b>Ethical Leadership</b> | .932 | 0.000           | EL1   | .833                 | .949 | .938             | .727 |
|                           |      |                 | EL2   | .864                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | EL3   | .894                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | EL4   | .873                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | EL5   | .844                 |      |                  |      |
| <b>Trust</b>              | .854 | 0.000           | TRU1  | .873                 | .945 | .932             | .763 |
|                           |      |                 | TRU2  | .882                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | TRU3  | .914                 |      |                  |      |
| <b>Work Engagement</b>    | .820 | 0.000           | WE1   | .904                 | .905 | .886             | .771 |
|                           |      |                 | WE2   | .893                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | WE3   | .801                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | WE4   | .914                 |      |                  |      |
| <b>Job Satisfaction</b>   | .820 | 0.000           | JS1   | .802                 | .889 | .899             | .716 |
|                           |      |                 | JS2   | .873                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | JS3   | .874                 |      |                  |      |
|                           |      |                 | JS4   | .833                 |      |                  |      |

Note: EL = Ethical leadership, TRU= Trust, WE= Work Engagement, JS = Job Satisfaction

### 4.3. Hypothesis Testing

#### Structural Model Estimate

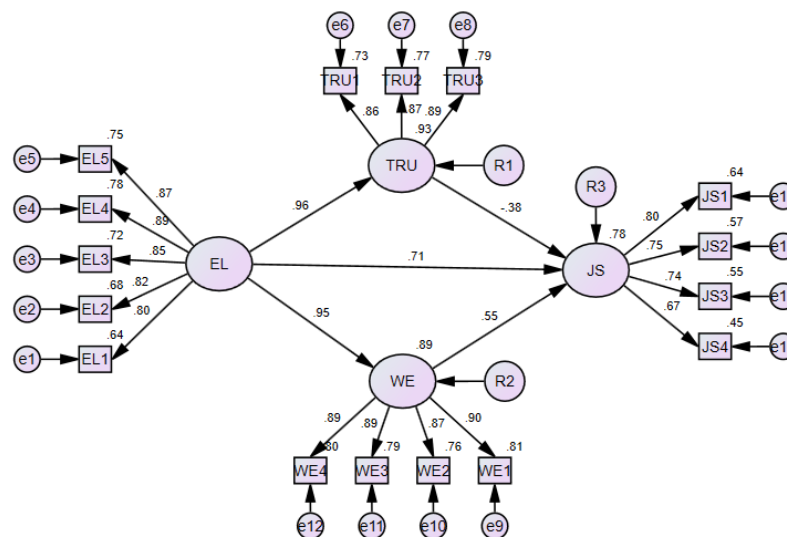
In SEM, the inner model refers to the path structure between constructs. The results of the hypothesis testing and path analysis according to the inner model are presented in figure 2 for the standardized path coefficients.

**Table 4: Path Coefficients of the Standardized Model**

| Variable   | Path          | Variable     | Estimate      | S.E.    | C.R.   | P    |
|--|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------|--------|------|
| EL   | →             | TRU          | .964          | .065    | 18.893 | ***  |
| EL   | →             | WE           | .946          | .060    | 19.871 | ***  |
| EL   | →             | JS           | .711          | .350    | 2.095  | .036 |
| TRU  | →             | JS           | -.384         | .214    | -1.462 | .144 |
| WE   | →             | JS           | .550          | .133    | 3.383  | ***  |
| Explained variance for each dependent variable ( $R^2$ ) |               |              |               |         |        |      |
|  |               | TRU          | WE            | JS      |        |      |
|  |               | .931         | .892          | .784    |        |      |
| Mediating effect of TRU and WE between EL and JS         |               |              |               |         |        |      |
| Path   | Estimate      | SE           | Sobel Z-Value | P-value |        |      |
| EL→TRU→JS  | .964<br>-.384 | .065<br>.214 | -1.781        | 0.074   |        |      |
| EL→WE→JS   | .946<br>.550  | .060<br>.133 | 4.000         | 0.000   |        |      |

The paper gears towards assessing the association between ethical leadership style and job satisfaction, and the mediation effect of trust and work engagement and on ethical leadership and job satisfaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The sequence of hypothesized relationships is illustrated in the proposed research model. Therefore, we used SPSS and AMOS to test the relationships (figure 2) and (table 4) by representing ethical leadership as independent variable and job satisfaction as dependent variable. The findings revealed that *ethical leadership style* is positively related to *job satisfaction* ( $\beta = 0.711$ ,  $p < 0.036$ ). This supported hypothesis  $H_3$ .

The results also revealed a positive and significant relationship of *ethical leadership style* with *trust* ( $\beta = 0.964$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and *work engagement* ( $\beta = 0.946$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), supporting hypothesis  $H_1$  and  $H_2$  respectively. A positive and statistically significant relationship was found between *work engagement* and *job satisfaction* ( $\beta = 0.550$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) lending support to hypothesis  $H_5$ . However, the hypothesized relationship between *trust* and *job satisfaction*  $H_4$  was not supported as the result shows a negative insignificant relationship between the variables ( $\beta = -0.384$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).



**Figure 2: structural model**



Furthermore, the results show significant positive mediation effect of *work engagement* and on the relationship between ethical leadership style and *job satisfaction* ( $z = 4.000, p < 0.01$ ). Thus, hypothesis  $H_7$  was also supported. However, the mediating effect of trust on the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction was found to be negative and statistically insignificant ( $z = -1.781, p > 0.05$ ) in this study. Therefore, hypothesis  $H_6$  was not supported by the study.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research explains how ethical leaders influence their subordinates through trust and work engagement. It proposes social learning theory as a critical antecedent for ethical leadership. This study thus underlies that the objective of the leader is to influence employees' behaviors, which is achieved by the leader's role modeling position. The leader is here expected to be attractive and credible, which allows him to influence followers' behaviors through trust and work engagement and thus spread an ethical message to subordinates

This paper investigated the seven research hypotheses that were given in the theoretical framework of the hypothesized model. Furthermore, in order to collect sufficient information from public service employees, we used the simple random sampling technique. After that, the data was prepared by inputting it, coding it, and editing/cleaning it up before being tested for the proposed relationships (research hypotheses). The study used descriptive analysis to first understand the total response rate and determine the demographic features of the respondent connected with the data acquired. The research carried out the processes for CFA after analyzing the description. Beyond the single hypothesis evaluation, SEM path analysis was used to show the applicability of practicing ethical leadership for employee job satisfaction. The results of the direct tests between the variables, as well as the mediating tests, were reported in the appropriate manner. Five of the research hypotheses were approved, as shown in table 5, demonstrating that the hypotheses for this study were accurately formulated and reflected the literature review undertaken.

In parallel, organizations should provide training sessions to managers in order to develop their ethical thinking. It would make them become aware of ethical behaviors and their outcomes, therefore emphasizing the importance of ethics in their leadership style. It will also teach them about the different types of behaviors they should engage to spread an ethical message, foster the relationships with their subordinates and encourage followers' ethical behaviors. Since ethical behaviors are developed over the long run, follow-up and practicing are vital to the effective implementation of ethical behaviors. Organizations should therefore pay attention to these dimensions after the training sessions. On an organizational level, it would be important for public organizations to create an ethical climate through a strong vision, which will be transmitted thanks to the managers. The present study suggests that ethical leadership results in a number of positive outcomes on employees' behaviors.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abdullah, N. N., & Anwar, G. (2021). An Empirical Analysis of Natural Gas as an Alternative Fuel for Internal Transportation. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 6(1).
- [2] Afsar, B., Maqsoom, A., Shahjehan, A., Afridi, S. A., Nawaz, A., and Fazliani, H. (2020). Responsible leadership and employee's proenvironmental behavior: the role of organizational commitment, green shared vision, and internal environmental locus of control. *Corporate Soc. Responsibil. Environ. Manage.* 27, 297–312. doi: 10.1002/csr.1806
- [3] Ahmad Mukhtar, N, Chan, Y.F. (2020) The Effects of Perceived Leadership Styles and Emotional Intelligence on Attitude toward Organizational Change among Secondary School Teachers. *Asian Journal of University Education*. 16(2) 36-45.
- [4] Ali, BJ, Saleh, Akoi, S., Abdulrahman, AA, Muhamed, AS, Noori, HN, Anwar, G. (2021). Impact of Service Quality on the Customer Satisfaction: Case study at Online Meeting Platforms. *International journal of Engineering, Business and Management* (Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 65-77).
- [5] Andrews, R., & Mostafa, A. (2017). Organizational goal ambiguity and senior public managers' engagement: Does organizational social capital make a difference? *International Review of Administrative Sciences*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/0020852317701824

- [6] Anwar, G., & Abdullah, N. N. (2021). The impact of Human resource management practice on Organizational performance. *International journal of Engineering, Business and Management (IJEEM)*, 5.
- [7] Anwar, K., & Qadir, G. H. (2017). A Study of the Relationship between Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction in Private Companies in Kurdistan. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering, Management and Science*, 3(12), 239944.
- [8] Brown, M.E., & Trevino, L.K. (2016). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 595–616.
- [9] Chughtai, A., Byrne, M., & Flood, B. (2019). Linking ethical leadership to employee well-being: The role of trust in supervisor. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 128, 653-663.
- [10] Demirtas, O., Hannah, S. T., Gok, K., Arslan, A., & Capar, N. (2017). The moderated influence of ethical leadership, via meaningful work, on followers' engagement, organizational identification, and envy. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 145, 183-199.
- [11] Den Hartog, D.N., & Belschak, F.D. (2018). Work engagement and Machiavellianism in the ethical leadership process. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 107, 35–47.
- [12] Gok, K., Sumanth, J. J., Bommer, W. H., Demirtas, O., Arslan, A., Eberhard, J., . . . Yigit, A. (2017). You may not reap what you sow: How employees' moral awareness minimizes ethical leadership's positive impact on workplace deviance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 146, 257-277
- [13] Hassi, A. (2018). 'You Get What You Appreciate' Effects of Leadership on Job Satisfaction, Affective Commitment and Organisational Citizenship Behavior. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27, 756-811.
- [14] Hoch, J. E., Bommer, W. H., Dulebohn, J. H., & Wu, D. (2018). Do ethical, authentic, and servant leadership explain variance above and beyond transformational leadership? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management*, 44, 501-529.
- [15] Jing, F. F. (2018). Leadership Paradigms and Performance in Small Service Firms. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 24, 339-358.
- [16] Jung, D.I. & Avolio, B.J. (2020). Opening the black box: An experimental investigation of the mediating effects of trust and value congruence on transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21, 949-964.
- [17] Kim, M.-S., & Thapa, B. (2018). Relationship of ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility and organizational performance. *Sustainability*, 10(2), 447.
- [18] Kim, W.G. & Brymer, R.A. (2021). The effects of ethical leadership on manager job satisfaction, commitment, behavioural outcomes, and firm performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30, 1020–1026.
- [19] King, G. (2011). Ensuring the data-rich future of the social sciences. *Science* 331, 719–721.
- [20] Koh, H. C., & El'Fred, H. (2021). The link between organizational ethics and job satisfaction: A study of managers in Singapore. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 29(4), 309-324.
- [21] Lu, X. (2018). Ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating roles of cognitive and affective trust. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 42, 379-389.
- [22] Lu, X. (2018). Ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior: The mediating roles of cognitive and affective trust. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 42, 379-389.
- [23] Mackey, A., and Porte, G. (2012). Why (or why not), when and how to replicate research. *Replic. Res. Appl. Ling.* 2146, 21–46.
- [24] Mayer, R.C. & Gavin, M.B. (2015). Trust in management and performance: Who minds the shop while the employees watch the boss? *The Academy of Management Journal*, 48(5), 874-888.

- [25] Mihelic, K. K., Lipicnik, B., & Tekavcic, M. (2020). Ethical leadership. *International Journal of Management and Information Systems*, 14(5), 31-41.
- [26] Mostafa, A. M. S., and Abed El-Motalib, E. A. (2020). Ethical leadership, work meaningfulness, and work engagement in the public sector. *Rev. Public Pers. Adm.* 40, 112–131.
- [27] Pucic, J. (2018). Do as I say (and do): Ethical leadership through the eyes of lower ranks. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 129, 655-671.
- [28] Qing, M., Asif, M., Hussain, A., & Jameel, A. (2019). Exploring the impact of ethical leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in public sector organizations: The mediating role of psychological empowerment. *Review of Managerial Science*, 1-28.
- [29] Ruiz-Palomino, P., Sáez-Martínez, F. J., & Martínez-Cañas, R. (2018). Understanding pay satisfaction: Effects of supervisor ethical leadership on job motivating potential influence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 118(1), 31-43.
- [30] Sabir, S., & Bhutta, Z. M. (2018). Leader motivating language as predictor of organizational commitment among generation Y teachers: The mediating role of organizational climate. *NUML International Journal of Business & Management*, 13(1), 118-133.
- [31] Salanova, M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2018). A cross-national study of work engagement as a mediator between job resources and proactive behaviour. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 19, 116-131.
- [32] Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2018). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 293-315.
- [33] Seppälä, T., Lipponen, J., & Pirttilä-Backman, A. M. (2019). Leader fairness and employees' trust in coworkers: The moderating role of leader group prototypicality. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 16(1), 35-49
- [34] Tims, M., Bakker, A.B., & Xanthopoulou, D. (2021). Do transformational leaders enhance their followers' daily work engagement? *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22, 121–131.
- [35] Vitell, S. J., & Davis, D. L. (2020). The relationship between ethics and job satisfaction: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 9(6), 489-494.
- [36] Wang, Y.-D., & Hsieh, H.-H. (2018). Toward a better understanding of the link between ethical climate and job satisfaction: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 105(4), 535-545.
- [37] Wong, C.A., Spence-Laschinger, H.K., & Cummings, G.G. (2020). Authentic leadership and nurses' voice behaviour and perceptions of care quality. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 18, 889–900
- [38] Yanik, O. (2018). The mediating role of trust in the effect of ethical leadership on employee attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Business Research Türk*, 10(1), 447–464.
- [39] Yozgat, U., & Meşekiran, G. (2016). The Impact of Perceived Ethical Leadership and Trust in Leader on Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management*, 4(2), 125-131.
- [40] Yukl, G., Mahsud, R., Hassan, S., & Prussia, G. E. (2018). An improved measure of ethical leadership. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20(1), 38-48.
- [41] Zeffane, R. (2020). Towards a two-factor theory of interpersonal trust: A focus on trust in leadership. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 20(3), 246–257.