The Role of Ethical Leadership in Turnover Intention and Organizational Identification: Evidence from Cement Industry in Pakistan

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Abstract

Leadership is the central role of any organization, and the success of an organization depends on the leader. Scholars and practitioners focus on the need for leaders to be ethical and moral in conduct. Based on entity morality theory and social identity theory, the present research aspired to explore the character of ethical leadership in fostering organizational identification and mediating the role of Turnover intention. This study used a cross-sectional research design with a deductive approach and collected data through a questionnaire using a random sampling technique. Data were collected from 380 employees of the Cement industry of Pakistan and analyzed by regression analysis. Results suggest that ethical leadership is positively correlated to organizational identification and negatively correlated to Turnover intention. A core limitation of this study is the small sample size and cross-sectional design. Future studies may collect data from larger samples and data on actual turnover rather than intention. This research posits that leaders of cement industries working in rural outskirts of Pakistan may use ethical leadership to foster organizational identification and reduce turnover intention. This study is a significant contribution to the literature as it has collected data from the companies working in rural outskirts of Pakistan, which are away from traditional industrial zones.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, Turnover intention, organizational identification, Pakistan, Cement industry

Introduction

Ethical leadership is the most crucial factor that is considered in any organization. Every organization has a leader or manager responsible for that department's decisions (Shah, 2019). Sarroset al. (2006) researched that, generally, the managers of an organization reduce the risks of ethical failures by providing ethical leadership and promoting moral values. Mathisen et al.(2011) said that leaders or managers influence their employees or followers through their behavior and personality because leaders are generally made from general people, and people make them role models because they inspire them. Trevino et al. (2000) describes that followers' ethical behavior is motivated by communication and the ethical behavior of leaders. Organizational identification is produced and developed by the interaction between the supervisor and subordinates of an organization. Supervisor or leader tell their employees that their organization is essential to them and that they have to work in it with heart and soul (Lambert & Barton, 2001; Monahan, 2012). Leaders do not just give examples but prove them through their actions. Then definitely, this will create organizational identification in employees, and employees perceive themselves as a part of the organization and can work in the environment to achieve the goals of the organization. Lee et al. (2015) explained that the organization's employees feel obligated and work with pro-organizational behavior and attitude with organizational identification.

Turnover intention is produced in any organization when the employees of that organization are dissatisfied with their supervisor, work environment, and salary packages (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). Many reasons create turnover intention in any organization, and organizations consume a large amount of money for employee empowerment, so the present research endeavor elaborates on the impact of ethical leadership on turnover intention in the cement industries of Pakistan. Central Bureau of Statistics (2007) conducted a study called LOGG, which says that one out of four employees wants to change their jobs in the next three years. Abbasi& Hollman (2000) said the turnover intention is the most studied concept in organizational behavior. Memon et al. (2019) said that turnover intention and related concepts had been analyzed, integrated, and summarized in the turnover process for many years.

This research is conducted after a study of previous literature. Elçi (2012) conducted a study in Turkey and found that ethical leadership negatively affects turnover intention. They tested job-related stress as a mediator. The research also suggests that ethical leadership fosters

organizational identification, enabling employees to share their grievances and raise their voices for the improvement of the organization (Malik, 2013). Organizational voice and turnover are two related reactions to Job dissatisfaction (Lee et al., 2015). This study recommends that ethical leadership through the mediating role of organizational identification may reduce employee turnover intention. Although such a link may be available in a Western context, to the best of our comprehension, this may be the first study that has tested the role of ethical leadership in reducing turnover with the mediation of organizational identification in the Pakistani cement industries context. This research will evaluate the impact of ethical leadership on turnover intention with mediating role of organizational identification in cement industries in Pakistan. This research aims to evaluate the impact of ethical leadership on turnover intention grief of organizational identification in cement industries in Pakistan. This research aims to evaluate the impact of ethical leadership on turnover intentions and the mediating effect of organizational identification on the employees of cement industries in Pakistan.

Based on the above-stated research gap, the current research endeavor is conducted to respond to the following subjects.

Inquiry 1: What is the influence of ethical leadership on the intention of employees to leave their organization?

Inquiry 2: Is there a mediating effect of organizational identification in the relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention?

This research is divided into five sections. Section 1 is the introduction, which briefly introduces the comprehensive research study and explains the background and purpose of the study. Section 2 is a literature review conducted after reviewing the previous literature, and this chapter gives definitions of variables used in this study. Section 3 is a research methodology explaining the methods, techniques, tools, and instruments used to collect the data and define the research design. Section 4 is the result and discussion in which the result and findings of the study are discussed through charts and tables. Section 5 is the conclusion and future recommendations for this study, and limitations and recommendations are also provided for future studies.

Literature Review

According to Lee et al. (2015), the word ethical leadership is paying attention to ethics-based leadership, and nowadays, much research is focusing on ethical leadership.Said and Shah (2017)

stated that ethical behavior has many branches, and ethical leadership is its sub-branch. Brown and Trevino et al. (2000) described ethical leadership as a separate leadership and behavior. Watrous& Pritchard (2006) described that when leadership is conducted for the rights, respect, ethical values, and beliefs of others, this refers to ethical leadership. Luchak&Gellatly (2007)defined ethical leadership as desirable morals and values that any society and individual preferences. Jordan (2013) Elaborates that ethical manner is revealed by ethical leadership activities such as care, fairness, and honesty, which are considered aspects of ethical leadership. Trevino et al. (2000)described ethical leadership as a combination of two qualities of a leader: the first quality is to make decisions, and the other quality is to act according to their moral values, norms, rules, and obligations and then influence their followers.

On the other hand, they also said there are three pillars of ethical leadership; the first is that a leader is a moral person, and this relates to their personality. The second pillar is that, based on that pillar, leaders can cultivate integrity among their followers, and the last pillar is the communication and relationship between leader and followers. Abrams &Hogg(1988) said that nonexistent ethical leadership and poor ethical behavior is the big problem in organizations nowadays. Khan et al. (2011) said that search decisions and particular offers from other organizations for choosing a new job are turnover intentions. In sync surveys (2012), they described that individual choice of behavior is turnover intention. Watrous & Pritchard (2006) defined turnover intention has four types voluntary, non-voluntary, fictional, and dysfunctional turnover intention. Lambert & Barton(2001) described voluntary turnover intention as a process in which an employee has to decide whether he will remain in the organization or not, and involuntary turnover is a process in which an organization has to decide about an employee that employee will leave the organization or not. Monahan (2012) said that it is the responsibility of the leader to find, analyze and repair problems. Mathisen et al. (2011) suggests that it is a challenge for many organizations to maintain a competitive workforce. Shaikh &Khoso (2021)suggest that employee performance is ameliorated, and turnover declines when they feel satisfied. Haslam&Reynolds(2003) said that the costly matter for a company is the turnover of its employees. Barrick and Zimmerman (2005) said the turnover seen in best-performing and worstperforming employees is voluntary. Shaikh et al. (2023)explained that direct and indirect turnover intention ordinarily costs 11 billion annually for multinational organizations.

Organizational identification has four aspects. One aspect says that organizational identification is a cognitive construct, and this construct is not related to any behavior described by (Mael&Ashforth, 1992; Mael&Tetrick, 1992) describes the second aspect of organizational identification that defines that individually relates to another individual, and it is a comparative aspect. Mael & Ashforth (1992) describes the third aspect of organizational identification. Brown et al. (2005) said that the organization and organizational members describe the impact of organizational identification. Mael & Tetrick (1992) describes organizational identification as a feeling of solidarity and support for the organization. Haslam&Reynolds (2003) said organizational identification is a tie between the organization and its employees. In this study the independent variable is ethical leadership, dependent variable is turnover intention, while organizational identification is mediating role.

Hypotheses Development

From the above literature review following hypotheses can be considered for this study.

- H#1: Ethical leadership negatively influences turnover intention.
- H#2: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational identification.
- H#3: Organizational identification negatively influences turnover intention.

Figure 1 The Conceptual Model



Research Methodology

This section describes the overall design, methodology, population, and sampling techniques used in this thesis for data collection and analysis. Haslam&Reynolds (2003) said the research

design is the primary strategy for testing the theory. Memon& Khan (2019) said that the critical rationale of research design is to increase the validity of the research study by planning and structuring the study in a way. The present investigation's methodology encompasses the study type, study setting, time horizon/study design, and unit of analysis, as outlined in the works of (Khan et al., 2011). The present research is a quantitative and correlational study that aims to assess the influence of ethical leadership on turnover intention. The study also examines the mediating role of organizational identification in this relationship. The data for this study was collected through responses from the participants regarding the variables above. Questionnaires are the instruments that are used for data collection, and questionnaires consist of close handed questions. In this study, the data is collected from cement industries in Pakistan, and the employees of that organization fill out questionnaires during their working hours. It is a cross-sectional study in which data is collected at one point.

A cross-sectional study is conducted because data collection is accessible, and the data is collected within a month for this study. Raza et al. (2021) stated that a group of individuals or items with similar characteristics is said to be the population of the research study. The population for this research study is the overall staff, employees, and workers working in Pakistan's cement industries. The core objective of sampling is to select a sample from a population that represents the overall population. When sampling techniques are used, then it is carefully kept in mind that the result will represent the overall population. In this study, random probability techniques are used. They are following details the characteristics of the sample considered for this study. When data is analyzed, then it was reported that frequency wise. The scale used to measure ethical leadership was -the scale and item of the item include "The individual in charge of overseeing a specific department. The department manager is known for attentively considering the input of department employees and making equitable and impartial decisions. The instrument employed for measurement was the Likertencompassingompassed a range of values from 1 (representing strong disagreement) to 5 (representing strong agreement). The instrument utilized for ing the turnover intention was the item scale. The item inquires about the frequency of an individual's inclination towards seeking alternative employment that aligns better with personal requirements and the frequency of contemplating leaving their current job. The measurement instrument employed was the Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (representing strong disagreement) to 5 (representing strong agreement).

The instrument utilized for assessing organizational identification was the item scale. The individual expresses a sense of personal attachment to the organization by utilizing the first-person plural pronoun "we" when referring to it. Additionally, the individual experiences a sense of personal validation as others admire the organization of others. The scale utilized to quantify the data was the Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (representing strong disagreement) to 5 (representing strong agreement).

Data Analysis

The data for this study is collected through questionnaires, which are used to collect data in SPSS. The statistical software SPSS was utilized to assdata'sess the reliability, descriptive statistics, and core data. Correlation analysis assesses the association between the dependent and independent variables. It enables the examination of the interdependence between the independent and dependent variables. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the influence of ethical leadership on turnover intention, focusing on the mediating effect of organizational identification. This section presents the study's findings based on empirical evidence and demonstrates the relationships between study variables using correlation and descriptive statistics data analysis. This section contains the frequency distribution of the study variables in terms of numbers and percentages. This section includes the frequency distribution of independent variable ethical leadership, independent variable turnover intention, and mediator organizational identification in numbers and percentages.

Table 1 presents the sample consisting of 56.2% male and 43.8% female employees of the organization, which means the ratio of male employees was more significant than female employees. The age frequency of respondents 5% of respondents were less than 21 years which is the lowest one; 75% of respondents were between 21 to 30 years which is the highest; and 20% of respondents were between 31 to 40 years. The other aspect of demographic data is the marital status of the sample frequency-wise, 65% of respondents were single, and 35% were married. The ratio of married respondents was less than single respondents in the survey. The fourth aspect of the sample is the education level or qualification of the respondents and frequency; Wise, the sample comprised 17.5% of respondents were master qualified, and 3.8% respondents were other qualified. The ratio of master-passed respondents was more than others. The last one is monthly income which is the most basic level. The income Below 10,000 comprises the

respondent was 13.8%, the income of 10,000-50000 was 81.2%, and the income of 50000 to

100000 respondents was 5 %. The 10,000-50,000 respondents ratio was more than others, i.e., 81.2%.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	213	56.2%
Female	167	43.8%
Marital Status		
Single	247	65%
Married	133	35%
Experience		
Less than 21	19	5%
21-30 years	28.5	75%
31-40 years	76	20%
Education level		
Matriculation	65	17%
Bachelors	120	31.5%
Masters	195	51.5%
Monthly Income		
Below Rs. 10000	53	13.8%
Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 100,000	327	81.2%

Table 2

Correlations Estimations

	EL	OI	TI	
EL	1	.622**	402**	
OI	.622** 402**	1	488**	
TI	402**	488**	1	

Normally correlation analysis is materialized to evaluate the relationship between two variables that are moving in opposite or the same direction. So in this study, correlation analysis is used to know the relationship between variables and to check the hypothesis. The correlation analysis values range from -1 to +1. The statistical analysis of the correlation coefficient is conducted using Pearson correlation in conjunction with the software program SPSS. A correlation coefficient of 0 indicates the absence of a relationship between the two variables. A positive correlation is indicated by a value of +1, which suggests that the two variables are positively

related and move in the same direction. A negative correlation is indicated by a value of -1, which signifies that the variables are moving in opposite directions and that there is a negative relationship between them. Table 2 displays the correlation among the variables under investigation in this study. This study comprises three variables: ethical leadership, turnover intention, and organizational identification. Ethical leadership is the independent variable, while the turnover intention is the dependent variable.

On the other hand, organizational identification serves as the mediator between ethical leadership and turnover intention. This study's findings indicate an inverse relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intentions, as evidenced by the opposing trajectories of these two variables. The present study reveals a positive correlation between ethical leadership and organizational identification, indicating that these two constructs are positively associated 0.622. Additionally, the study found a negative correlation between turnover intention and organizational identification. Ethical leadership has weak negative correlation with turnover intention -0.402. While organizational identification has also negative moderate relationship with turnover intention -0.488.

Table 3

	Cronbach Alpha	No. of Items
EL	0.782	12
OI	0.892	10
TI	0.722	8
Overall	0.899	30

Reliability Statistics Analysis

The overview of the reliability statistics for all of our researched variables can be seen in Table 3. There are twelve questions in Ethical Leadership, and the Cronbach alpha value indicates that the test has a high degree of internal consistency (0.782). The organizational identification consists of ten items, and the Cronbach alpha value indicates that the items are highly consistent (0.892). Eight items make up the turnover intention, and the Cronbach alpha value suggests that it has a high internal consistency (0.722). The dependability as a whole is 0.899, indicating strong internal consistency among the variables.

Table 4

Regression Analysis (Direct effects)

Coefficients Estimations				
Model	Coefficients	Standard Error.	t	Sig.
С	.253	.879	.287	0.000
EL	-0.82	0.259	319	0.000
OI	158	.321	491	0.000
R-Square	0.877	Adjusted R-Square	0.855	

Dependent variable= Turnover intention

Table 5

Regression Analysis (Mediating effects)

Coefficients Estimations				
Model	Coefficients	Standard Error.	t	Sig.
С	.4232	.922	.388	0.000
EL	0.526	0.295	.5180	0.000
R-Square	0.672	Adjusted R-Square	0.652	

Mediating variable= Organizational Identification

Hypotheses for this study are tested through regression analysis. There are three hypotheses for this study. Table 4 shows the estimation results of regression coefficients. Beta depicts the volatility between the ethical leadership and organizational identification The beta 1 value (β 1= - 0.82, p= 0.00) shows that if a 1% increase in the ethical leadership, then Turnover intention will decrease by 82%. Similarly, the beta 2 value (β 2= -0.158, p= 0.00) shows that if 1% in the organizational identification, then turnover intention will be decrease by 15%. According to the coefficient of determination of 0.877, changes in the ethical leadership and organizational identificational identification for 87.7% of the variation in turnover intention. The model's R square, which measures how well the model represents the actual data, is 0.877. Since the P-values are below than 0.000 and it is below than 5%. It supports H₁ that ethical leadership negatively influences turnover intention (p>0.05). Table 5 presents the mediation analysis of ethical leadership on organizational identification. The beta 1 value (β 1= 0.526, p=

0.00) shows that if a 1% increase in the ethical leadership, then organizational identification will increase by 52%. According to the coefficient of determination of 0.672, changes in the ethical leadership account for 67.2% of the variation in organizational identification. The model's R square, which measures how well the model represents the actual data, is 0.672. Since the P-values are below than 0.000 and it is below than 5%. It supports H₂that ethical leadership positively influences organizational identification (p>0.005).

Discussions and Conclusion

Discussions

The main objectives of the present research endeavor are to examine the impact of ethical leadership on employee turnover intention with a mediator of organizational identification. With the help of empirical evidence, it was found that there is a negative impact of turnover intention on organizational identification and ethical leadership, and it is also found that there is a positive connection between ethical leadership and organizational identification. In contrast, organizational identification negatively impacts turnover intention (Malik, 2013). The current study it is confirmed that there is a negative relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention. When employees get ethical leadership during their working hours, they will get motivation and proper guidance from their leader, understand their moral values and norms, and show a positive attitude towards their job and their organization (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Van Knippenberg, 2000). As a result of ethical leadership, employees get interested in their work and are motivated by their leader, and they do not think about leaving or changing their job. It is also confirmed that those employees who think about leaving their job are de-motivated by the behavior of their boss and the discrimination and favoritism shown by their boss. It is confirmed from the current study that ethical leadership positively influences organizational identification (Memon et al., 2019). When employees are motivated by the leader of the department, then the positive behavior of the leader affects the employees, and they take an interest in the organization and work hard to achieve the goals of their organization. With the proper guidance, employees understand organizational success and their success, and when someone criticizes their organization, they feel that criticisms are their interest, and when someone praises their organization, they feel that their success and compliment (Jordan et al., 2013). The current study affirmed that the relationship between organizational identification and turnover intention is

negative. Employees committed to their organization never think about leaving or changing their job. Those employees who are interested in the success and matters of their organization will always stay in their job, so there is a negative affiliation between organizational identification and turnover intention (Lee et al., 2015; Memon & Khan, 2019).

Conclusion

This research was conducted for several different reasons. The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of ethical leadership on the likelihood of an employee leaving their position. The second objective was to understand the relationship between ethical leadership and the identification of a company. The third goal was to investigate the influence that organizational identification has on the intention of employees to leave an organization (Memon et al., 2019; Jordan et al., 2013). The fourth goal was to study the potential role that organizational identification plays in moderating the relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention. Correlation and descriptive statistics were utilized to examine the data after the data-gathering stage. A positive correlation between ethical leadership and organizational identity was found to exist, as shown by the data. Empirical studies have also demonstrated that ethical leadership has a negative impact on turnover intention and that there is a negative association between organizational identification and turnover intention. Both of these findings support the proposition that ethical leadership should be prioritized. The results of this study will assist residents of Pakistan in their future research endeavors and provide them with brief information about the impact of ethical leadership on the intention of employees to leave their jobs.

Policy Implications

This study suggests some practical implications for the employees and managers or leaders of Cement industries in Pakistan. For employees, this study says that they should be committed to their organization and job. If employees want to achieve their goals and promotions and high designations, they should consider their organization's success as their success. This study suggests that leaders and managers should be polite and optimistic with their employees, and they have to show their ethical and moral values not by words but by their actions and behave and guide others ethically and show a positive attitude towards their employees. This study also suggests that seminars and training must also be arranged for the ethical learning of employees and leaders.

Limitations

Every research contains some limitations, so this study also has some limitations. The first limitation of this study is the small sample size. Only 380 respondents take part in the study. The second limitation is that the time frame of the research was cross-sectional, so due to cross Sectional study, this study cannot recommend future employees' perceptions of ethical leadership and turnover intention. The third limitation is that this research endeavor only involved employees of cement industries in Pakistan. The fifth limitation is that only correlation and descriptive statistics are used in this study.

Recommendations

This study gives recommendations for the future. Upcoming research may continue to examine the impact of ethical leadership on turnover intention. Firstly, future research must increase the sample size. Secondly, research should include manufacturing industries to investigate the impact of ethical leadership on turnover intention. Thirdly future research should consider the longitudinal time frame so that employees' perceptions can be evaluated over a different period. Fourthly future research should use different methods and techniques to analyze the data.

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