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Research Article

Effect of Ethical Leadership on Followership Dimension
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ABSTRACT

Ethical leadership behavior has positive influences on followership dimensions. This study aimed at investigating the relationship Ethical leadership and followership dimensions. This research study used Kelley's followership framework, to analyze each dimension of the leader-follower relationship. This study use social learning and social exchange theories to test the relationship between ethical leadership and follower. The social learning theory is used to support ethical leadership. Quantitative design was adopted for this purpose, and survey was chosen to collect primary data. Nature of data was cross-sectional. The population of the study consists of all public sector employees in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Non probability snow ball technique was used to select the sample size and specific formula gave the sample size of 395. Total 500 questionnaires were distributed among employees working in public sector organizations, among which only 412 came, 395 were used to yield the results. Findings revealed that ethical leadership has a significant relationship with followership dimensions and further analysis of results revealed that these data provided insights into the followers' current followership style (i.e., their current levels of independent critical thinking and active engagement), their leaders 'behaviors, and the quality of their individual leader-follower relationship. The findings of the current study declare a significant connection between followership and ethical leadership effect. The study showed that ethical leadership and followers have had a significant relationship. There is a positive and significant relationship exists between ethical leadership and followership dimension in Pakistan public sector. Discussion and implications are presented based on the results of the study.

KEYWORDS

Ethical Leadership, Followers, Active Engagement, Independent Critical Thinking

1 | INTRODUCTION

Research on followership or leadership frequently follows a well-known pattern. They frequently take into account one construct while ignoring or taking one for granted. The leader-follower dyad's bifurcation paints an imprecise picture of the complex connection. An organization's leadership views themselves as the direction authorities. The idea that ethics should play a significant role in leadership has long been discussed (Babalola et al., 2019; Badran & Akeel, 2022). Recent years have seen a significant increase in interest in ethics and leadership studies as a result of significant scandals involving unethical behavior and pervasive corporate wrongdoing. Ethics-based leadership is more widely seen as a crucial type of leadership (Bavik et al, 2017; Bedi et al, 2016; Chughtai et al, 2015; Neves & Story, 2015). This study classified followership style according to their levels of active engagement and independent critical thinking using Kelley's (1992) framework. Albert Bandura, the founder of social learning theory, proposed the full range leadership paradigm, which is used in this study to examine ethical leadership.

According to Trevino and Brown (2005), ethical leadership is defined as the manifestation of normatively acceptable behaviors that are shown by interpersonal interactions and personal acts. It is a two-way process that involves decision-making and two-way communication in order to strengthen strategy with followers. There is no correlation with demographic ranking, a positive association with the affective confidence of the leader, and a negative relationship with coercive supervision. Expectations of moral leadership from the subordinates were a significant predictor of their level of happiness with their leader, as well as of their perception of their efficacy, readiness to put in more effort, and desire to address management issues. Given that these outcomes come before the idealized power component of transformative leadership, it's possible that modern leadership is theoretically very similar to ethical leadership (Bigema et al., 2015). As the body of evidence supporting ethical leadership expands, an ethical leader is someone who makes morally sound, principled decisions based on reason and balance. Leaders who establish clear ethical guidelines also have ethical conversations with their followers (Brett et al., 2016). It has been discovered that inefficient leadership and unethical behavior are issues that contemporary businesses face (Plinio, et al., 2010).Researching followers and their acceptance of followership is a crucial component of leadership that is frequently overlooked in leadership literature.

According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), there is a lack of knowledge and clarity regarding followership and how it relates to leadership, which is why followership is overlooked. We don't know how to develop leadership because we don't comprehend how it is shared and formed in social and interactional connections. According to DeRue and Ashford (2010), if an individual works as a leader and embraces the position of a follower, then leadership entails actively influencing others, while followership entails passively being influenced by leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Furthermore, because of shared and distributed leadership, in which people assume both leadership and following responsibilities simultaneously, the concept of followership has gained increased significance for academics and researchers (Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Chou et al., 2016). According to Kelley's (1992) theory, followership is defined as the actions associated with being worthy follower. Specifically, he represents followership behaviors on two levels: independent critical thinking and active engagement. Independent critical thinking is the first dimension. Independent critical thinkers carefully consider the information provided to them, assess political events and activities with caution, and draw conclusions without considering the implications for politics (Kelley, 1992; Latour & Rast, 2004). According to Kelly (1992) Active engagement is the second dimension. Followers in an active engagement group take initiative, take accountability, and actively engage in carrying out their duties. Active followers take on greater accountability than they do as employees.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

The majority of research on ethical leadership can be divided into two camps: the first honors individual leaders for their "authentic" character and morally sound management of their organizations, while the other condemns toxic leaders or people in positions of authority who have "dark" personality traits or questionable morals. In the middle ground, leadership is "done" by fallible people who attempt to navigate the social and organizational realities without going against their own moral principles (Foroughi et al., 2019). The notion of ethical leadership (EL) has a long history and has been applied in various contexts. Although this notion has been the subject of several studies and discussions, the majority still use normative approaches. According to Brown and Treviño (2014), an ethical leader must possess a variety of traits, including honesty, loyalty, integrity, and a caring attitude toward his followers as well as ethical behavior while dealing with employees. In general, an ethical leader carries out their responsibilities with sincerity; they are honest, reliable, and possess high moral and ethical standards (Li et.al., 2017). They are also eager to build positive relationships with their followers that foster confidence in their leadership (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Greenbaum et al., 2021). Many leadership theories, including transformational leadership genuine leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership place a strong emphasis on ethical behavior For example, transformational leadership places a strong emphasis on ethical role modeling, authentic leadership places a strong emphasis on making decisions based on principles (Brown & Trevin·o 2014; Karabey, & Aliogullari, 2018)), and spiritual leadership places a strong emphasis on the integrity of the leader and treating others ethically. Although ethical behavior is crucial for effective leadership, according to Brown and Trevin´o (2014), none of these models adequately explains how leaders' ethical behavior affects followers' ethical behavior.

2.2 | KELLEY'S FOLLOWERSHIP STYLE FRAMEWORK

In 1992, Robert Kelley created his followership model. The aspects of followership, effective follower development, and the function of the leader were introduced in his initial book (Kelley, 1992). He observes that while followership is a far more ubiquitous aspect of the economic world, it is debated and given more thought than leadership. Different followers find inspiration in different ways, therefore in order to better serve them, leaders must attend to their requirements. Kelley agrees that leaders and followers should be viewed as equals but with distinct roles inside the company (Khatri, 2006; Kieserling, 2019).). This perspective runs counter to a lot of leadership research, which sees the connection between a leader and a follower as only hierarchical rather than as a collaborative effort between the two sides (Latour, & Rast, 2004). Because of this, Kelley's model is necessarily ephemeral and dependent on the followers' capacities for autonomous critical thought and proactive participation in a particular context. In his book, Kelley (1992) spent a lot of time talking about how followership styles might be improved by leaders. Two axes are used by Kelley (1992) to map followership style: the degree of autonomous critical thinking and the degree of active vs passive engagement with the organization. The degree to which followers think independently rather than relying on the leader's judgment is what constitutes the independent critical thinking component, not necessarily mental capacity (Kelley, 1992).This trait can be demonstrated by followers by asking the leader to approach a problem in a new way or by questioning the status quo when carrying out a procedure. Kelley (1992) developed a followership questionnaire that emphasizes certain behaviors, such as behaving in accordance with followers' ethical standards, raising constructive questions about the leader's decision-making process, and extending followers' responsibilities beyond the immediate job at hand (Mayer et al., 2012; Mughal & kamal, 2018).

The degree of active versus passive engagement among followers is the subject of the second axis. High-active followers seek out opportunities to better both within and outside of their positions, as well as to contribute more. According to Kelley (1992), followers who exhibit low levels of active participation, also known as passive engagement, frequently do not go above and beyond the call of duty and provide little additional value. Kelley's questionnaire on followership is centered on behaviors such as zeal, agreement with the leader, and congruence between the aims of the follower and the organization (Kelley, 1992). Higher achievers in independent critical thinking are able to evaluate complex data, spot mistakes, and come up with original solutions to challenging issues (Ouma, 2017; Pearce et al., 2014). Additionally, followers who practice independent critical thinking are better able to communicate, manage their time more effectively, and critically assess their own performance in order to pinpoint opportunities for development. According to Busari et al. (2017), idealized influence practices may aid followers in understanding active participation, teach them new methods for solving problems, and increase their acceptance of organizational change..

2.3 | GAP OF THE STUDY

2.3.1 | ETHICAL LEADERSHIP WITH FOLLOWERSHIP DIMENSIONS

The business world is full of relationships between leaders and followers. Together, followers and leaders accomplish goals, encourage innovation, and advance the company. The organization gives leaders the duty of developing their followers and leaders choose how best to carry out this goal for them. For instance, in recent studies it was discovered evidence in favor of a positive correlation between organizational commitment and the Four I's framework in the United Arab Emirates, and Busari et al. (2017) found, through their research in Pakistan, a positive correlation between transformational leadership and positive attitudes regarding organizational change.

One of the primary problems with leadership literature is that it tends to focus mostly on leaders, and research on followers or followership is still in its infancy. A neglected facet of leadership that has drawn attention from academics in the past 20 years is followership (Kelley, 1992; Meindl, 1995; Kellerman, 2008; Bjugstad et al., 2006; Sy, 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In the fast-paced and uncertain world of today, organization structures and leadership theories are evolving, and new domains of leadership including dispersed, shared, and team leadership are starting to take shape (Raja et al., 2004). As a result, relationships and roles for followers are evolving. Researchers will need to concentrate on implicit leadership and followership theories in order to analyze the cognitive classification of both leaders and followers. In flatter organizations as well, the nuanced dynamic between leaders and followers would be visible. Earlier research has concentrated on leaders instead of followers (Tanoff & Barlow, 2002). Over the past 20 years, scholars have also examined the followership aspect of leadership (Khan, et al., 2020). Since followership research is still in its early stages, future investigations should examine followership from several angles, including implicit followership theories, followers' identities, and followers' role orientation. It

is still necessary to research followership and organizational change in altered samples and situations (Khan, et al., 2020). This study has examined the relationship between ethical leadership and followership dimensions as the second gap. Due to this, the present research aims to fill the gaps in follower-focused research.

2.3.2 | PUBLIC-PRIVATE DISTINCTION

Global corruption is pervasive regardless of a nation's level of development. It has an impact on both public and private entities (Begley et al., 2010). Private-sector organization theories are often established with an emphasis on the private sector and may not always transition well to the public sector, according to a number of academics. The subject of the public-private divide in their groundbreaking study from 1983, private and public sector organizations ought to be seen differently depending on their goals. Theories from the commercial sector must be reinterpreted in order to be used to public institutions. They looked at how implementing agency theory in the public and private spheres will affect things. While managers in the private sector work on behalf of people, public sector leaders represent the interests of the general public. Investigating ethical leadership and its effects in Pakistani public sector organizations will be done while keeping in mind the next gap.

2.4 | PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main mechanism that translates favorable leader treatment into negative and positive follower behavior and attitude is absent from the literature as it stands today. Furthermore, merit-based decision-making is hampered by Pakistan's public sector's lax accountability structure (Shaheen et al., 2017; Treviño, & Brown, 2007; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003).

2.5 | HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H_1:   There is significant relationship between ethical leadership and followership.
H_{1a}:   Ethical leadership has a significant positive relationship with followership dimensions (ICT & AE).
H_{1b}:   There is a significant relationship between ethical leadership and Independent Critical Thinking
H_{1c}:   There is a significant relationship between ethical Leaders and Active Engagement,

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive correlational research design used to analyze this study.

3.2 | POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Employees from several public sector organizations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa southern areas make up the study's population. The belief that Pakistani public sector institutions encourage wealth and power discrimination and have a high power distance is widely held around the world. There are 8769 provincial government employees in district D.I. Khan. There are 3000 employees in Lakki Marwat, 6250 in Bannu, 5420 in Kohat, 3425 in Karak, and 3000 in Tank in another district. Thus, there were 29864 people in the study overall. In the current investigation, Yamani's (1967) sample size formula was employed by the researcher. This sample size formula is used to determine the sample size for the current investigation. The table below shows that the computed. Sample Size is 395.2713, thus n= 395.

Table 1
Statistics for computation of sample size

E	N	Sample Size
0.05	29864	395
Formula	n = N/1+Ne	
	=29864/1+29864(0.0025)= 395.2713	

3.3 | PROCEDURE

By gathering data on the number of workers working in 23 departments within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public sector organizations, the study's population was determined. Based on this information, personnel in those departments provided data.

3.4 | DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Questionnaires were utilized to gather data for this analysis. The data collection process took longer than anticipated. As a result, the data collection process took roughly ten months, from January to October 2019.

3.5 | QUESTIONNAIRE

Two tools were used for data collection namely; Ethical Leadership Behavior

Table 2
Questionnaire (ELBQ); and followership dimension

Variable	Total items	Description	Adopted item
Ethical leadership	13	1-13	Brown and Treviño (2003) Kalshoven et al., (2011).
Followership	22	1-22	Kelly (1992) Khan et al., (2018)

3.6 | STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A PC was used to review, code, tabulate, and import the gathered data using the IBM SPSS 20.0 statistical software for social sciences. Data were shown, and appropriate analysis was carried out in accordance with the kind of data found for each parameter. For numerical data that is parametric, the mean, standard deviation (+ SD), and range are used; for non-parametric data, the median and interquartile range (IQR) are used.

The link between two qualitative variables was examined using the Chi square test for frequency and proportion of non-numerical data; however, Fisher's Exact Test was utilized when the predicted count was less than 5 in more than 20% of the cells. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r): Correlation was used as a measure of the strength of a linear association between two quantitative variables. P-value: Level of significance: P>0.05: Non significant (NS) – P

3.7 | DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 3
Gender

Respondent	N	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	355	89.9	89.9	89.9
Female	40	10.1	10.1	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

N=395

The above table looks into gender of respondents. Most of respondents are male while only 10% female respond our survey it is because of low rate of female employees in organizations.

The sample makeup is examined in relation to age groups in the above table. Approximately 14.4% of the participants were found to be in the 20–30 age range. Thirty-one to forty percent of responders are in this age range, while thirty-seven percent are older than forty.

Table 4
Age

Respondent	N	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-3- Years	57	14.4	14.4	14.4
30-40 Years	197	49.9	49.9	64.3
> 40 Years	141	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	395	100.0		

N=395

Table 5
Qualification

Respondent	N	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Metric	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
Intermediate	40	10.1	10.1	11.1
Bachelors	220	55.7	55.7	66.8
Masters	99	25.1	25.1	91.9
Any one	32	8.1	8.1	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

N=395

A sizable portion of participants Just 8.1% of respondents have an MS or PhD, compared to 55.7% who have a bachelor's degree and over 25.1% who have a master's degree. 10% were acting as intervening mediators. Therefore, an effort was made to collect data from staff members with a range of educational backgrounds.

Table 6
Experience

Respondent	N	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 1	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
1-5 years	48	12.2	12.2	14.4
5-10 years	104	26.3	26.3	40.8
> 10 years	132	33.4	33.4	74.2
15 and above	102	25.8	25.8	100.0
Total	395	100.0	100.0	

N=395

2.3% of responders to the questionnaire said they had less than a year's experience. Only 1 to 5 years of experience make up 12.2% of the respondents. Of the responders, 26.3% had five to ten years of experience. 132 respondents, or 25.8% of the total, reported having more than ten years of experience. The percentage of people with more than 15 years of experience is 25.8%.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Mean | S.D | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
Variables	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	S.E	Statistic	S.E
Followership	395	2.9867	.47692	.058	.109	-.037	.218
Ethical Leadership	395	3.7899	.37577	-.036	.109	.358	.218

The mean value of followership was (Mean = 2.98, SD = .477). The mean value of ethical leadership was (Mean = 3.79, SD = .396). According to Sekaran (2003) skweness values falls between +2 and -2 whereas kurtosis values falls between +3 and -3 are considered as normal in range.

Table 8
Correlation

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
F	1								
PS	.038	1							
RC	-.045	.131**	1						
PO	.051	.180**	.248**	1					
IN	.095	.300**	.281**	.293**	1				
EG	-.008	.042	.234**	.267**	.266**	1			
ICT	.000	-.110*	-.278**	-.223**	-.273**	-.170**	-.385**	1	
AE	.072	-.093	-.267**	-.175**	-.174**	-.107*	-.321**	.430**	1

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above correlation table indicated that there is significant association between ethical leadership and followership because their p-value is less than critical value (p-value = .000<.05). The above correlation table indicated that there is significant association between ethical leadership and organizational cronyism because their p-value is less than critical value (p-value = .000<.05). So, H1 is acceptable.

3.8 | REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The effect of criterion on predictor is tested through multiple regression analysis.

Table 9
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	S.E
1	0.429a	0.184	0.182	0.38116

a. Predictors: (Constant), ethical leadership

The above table shows the effect of ethical leadership on followership. The table shows that R is 0.184 which means Ethical leadership brings 18.4 % variation in followership.

Table 10
Analysis of Variance

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.274	1	16.274	112.016	.000b
	Residual	72.206	497	.145		
	Total	88.480	498			

a. Dependent Variable: followership; Predictors: (Constant), ethical leadership ANOVA was checked to find out whether regression model is good fit for this data or not. The finding in the table above showed that the criterion which is followership in above table statistically significantly predict the by predictor because F value is 112.016 and P-value is below .05 which explained that this regression model is good fit for data.

Table 11
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.174	.164		13.236	.000
	Ethical leadership	.456	.043	.429	10.584	.000

a. Dependent Variable: followership

The above table no 4. Shows the coefficient where Beta values for Ethical leadership is positive and P-value is significant which is .000 as it is <.05

The tables 4.10 illustrate the mediation results. It shows the overall performance the model where ethical leadership has impact on followers though mediator organizational cronyism. The p valve is <0.05 and significant variation is observed which is R^2=0.1839. Ethical Leadership and cronyism explained 18.39% variance in followership dimensions. Likewise, it also point out that there is a significant effect of ethical leadership on organizational cronyism where beta is 45.62% while p-valve = .0000) hence the first condition is satisfied. The path c in table explores that there is -17.34% changes in followership due to ethical leadership. There is significant effect of EL on FD p-valve <0.05. The path b is identify impact of cronyism on followership dimension -45.88% <0.05 & c'(c prime) of mediation analysis explores that there is 25.8% variation independent variable due to predictors e.g. EL and OC in followership dimension.

There are three effect i.e. direct effect, indirect effect and total effect that exist in Hayes process. The total effect demonstrates the effect of IV Ethical Leadership on DV followership dimensions when the mediator's organizational cronyism is being there. The total effect lower level confidence interval (LLCI) is -.4831 and upper-level confidence interval (ULCI) is -.2822 both of which have same signs with the value of (beta = -0.3827). Direct effect identifies the effect of IV Ethical Leadership on DV followership dimension.

4 | FINDING AND CONCLUSION

Examining the roles of followership and ethical leadership was necessary for this study. The population under research was concentrated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa southern districts. Based on Yamani's formula (1967), 395 was the size of the research sample. The results from the current study were collected using customized questionnaires. The five-point Likert scale served as the basis for the questionnaires. Employed personnel have received the questionnaires. Since English is Pakistan's official language, the questionnaire was only available in that language (Raja et al., 2004). To make sure that participants could comprehend the questionnaire, a basic random sampling technique was used with the stipulation that they had to be at least as educated as the metric (Naseer, et al, 2016). Respondents could expect to remain completely anonymous. Only 412 of the 500 employees who were given surveys to complete at public sector organizations responded. In the social sciences, an acceptable response rate was 82.4%. The questionnaires passed validity, reliability, and normalcy testing, yielding satisfactory findings. A check for normalcy was made using kurtosis and skewness. Factor analysis was used to verify validity, while Cronbach Alpha was used to assess dependability. 92% of the 395 responders were men and 8% were women. Respondents were also asked their age, and 16% of them said they were between the ages of 20 and 30. 33% of respondents were older than 40, while almost 50% of respondents were between the ages of 30 and 40.

Therefore, the results are more indicative of young people's opinions. Additionally, respondents' educational backgrounds were split, with 54.4% having a bachelor's degree, about 24.3% having a master's degree, and just 8.6% having an MS or PhD. 2.2% of responders, according to the questionnaires, had less than a year of experience. Just 1 to 2 years of experience make up 13.2% of the answers. Of the responders, 25.8% had two to three years of experience. While 170 respondents—or 34% of the population—had three to five years of experience, 23.8% of the population had more than five years of experience. The results of this study demonstrate a strong relationship between followership and the impact of ethical leadership.

The same is true of Pakistan's public sector organizations, where a select group of workers frequently benefits from incentives, leadership backing, and trust at the expense of others, and that specific group aims to maintain a long-term and positive response. The same is true of Pakistan's public sector organizations, where a select group of workers frequently benefits from incentives, leadership backing, and trust at the expense of others, and that specific group aims to maintain a long-term and positive response.

5 | RECOMMENDATION

Because only public sector organizations were included in this study, extra caution should be used when extrapolating the results to private sector organizations. Therefore, it is advised that future research involve public sector and semi-government groups. Fourth, this study only used one technique to collect data, which is a major source of common method bias. As a result, in order to better grasp the topic, future research may combine methodologies and conduct longitudinal studies.

In order to confirm or contradict these results, it is intended that this work has inspired other research examining these correlations using various measurement approaches. Future research that investigates these links in more detail and uses different measuring methodologies to support or refute its findings may use the findings of this study as a model. Numerous avenues could be pursued for additional investigation. This study suggests future directions for leadership research, including followership and cognitive style. There are fundamental issues that should be investigated in relation to conceptual, sample, and methodological considerations in subsequent study.

1. It is the ethical leader's duty to downplay the importance of group members and members of other groups. In order to eradicate cronyism in the company, executives need to value each and every one of their subordinates.
2. In order to reduce the gap between followers and their leaders, moral leaders ought to keep a healthy balance of communication.
3. Ethical leaders should permit independent advocates to participate in official meetings in addition to pushing critical thinkers to take on challenging assignments.
In order to cultivate enduring positive outcomes and forge solid bonds with moral leaders, organizations must give followers' development more consideration.

6 | FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings of this study can guide future research in a variety of ways. Researchers ought to be able to draw inspiration from the current work to do more research that looks at these characteristics from different angles. Here are some suggestions to help guide future study.
1. The public sector organizations in the Southern District of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan, are the subject of this study; the followership study has greater application in other contexts and sample sizes.
2. The models are further measured using the relationships found in the current study in order to confirm or refute its findings.
3. More research may be needed to investigate how organizational cronyism influences the relationship between followership dimension and ethical leadership.
4. More research could be needed to analyze the current CFA and SEM study.

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