



How and when the ethical leadership influence employee career success

Shahid Mahmood¹, Sahar Irshad¹, Kanwal Iqbal Khan^{2,*}, Farwa Asghar¹

¹. Institute of Business Management and Administrative Sciences, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

². Department of Management Sciences, University of Engineering and Technology, New Campus, KSK, Pakistan

* Corresponding Author: drkanwaliqbalkhan@gmail.com

Article Information	Abstract
Article history: Submitted: 29 th March, 2023 Accepted: 01 st May, 2023 Published: 30 th June, 2023	<i>This study determines the antecedent of employees' career success. Literature on employees' work-related predictors is well established but leaders' work-related behavior is noticeably overlooked as an antecedent of employees' career success. Additionally, the role of intervening mechanism in linking leaders' acts and employees' career success is yet to be fully examined. Based on social exchange theory and social learning theory, this study examines the influence of ethical leadership on employees' career success. It investigates the mediating process of psychological empowerment and trust in the leader, among the ethical leadership and employees' career success. Furthermore, the moderating role of emotional exhaustion is also examined. Data is collected from 336 employees in the banking sector of Pakistan. The findings reveal that psychological empowerment and trust in the leader mediates the relations among ethical leadership and employees' career success. Furthermore, the relation between ethical leadership and employees' career success is moderated by emotional exhaustion. The practical and theoretical implications are presented.</i>
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Introduction

In the last few decades, ethical leadership has received great attention as many eminent companies reported the 'ethical violations' of the leaders at work (Ofori, 2009). Concerning incidents alert both practitioners and academics to give great consideration to the ethical environment in the organizations and to inspect the consequences of ethical leadership (Mo & Shi, 2018). Ethical leadership is defined as leaders' appropriate conduct i.e. personal actions and interpersonal relationships with followers, promotion of two-way communication at work place as well as decision-making and reinforcement (Brown et al., 2005; Dust et al., 2018). Ethical leaders are self-motivated, cooperative, and willing to establish optimistic relationships with others (Brown et al., 2005).

The leaders' ethical values encourage the followers to make good changes in the workplace and become creative that may contribute to their career advancement (Chen & Hou, 2016). But there are only a few scholars consider ethical leadership as a predictor of employees' career success (Dust et al., 2018). Generally, the term career success is used to evaluate the status of employees' career expansion. It is considered as expected growth in their current position in the corporate hierarchy. It is also described as a construct comprise of a set of objective measures as well as criteria that is observable to others i.e. job status, job designation organizational progress, and employee rewards (Dries, 2011; Hall, 1996). This research focuses on two different dimensions of employee career success these are success potential and current success. Current success shows the in-role performance of employees and success potential reveals their future success potential. In organizations, the leaders' role is very important in an employee's career success. Leaders can improve organization performance by managing financial issues and focusing on ethical rules in the organization. Ethical leaders tend to be respectful and show trust in their employees through interactions at work. Ethical leadership is important because respectful behavior is essential for the ability and willingness of employees to cooperate.

Recently, scholars have examined the role of ethical behavior of leaders, and its impact on different organization-level outcomes i.e. organization citizenship behavior (Ahmad et al., 2019; Mo & Shi, 2017), organizational commitment (Zhu et al., 2004). In addition, research work also focused on the relation of ethical leadership and employees-level outcomes i.e. employees' well-being (Chughtai et al., 2015), job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011), task performance (Mo & Shi, 2018), creativity (Feng et al., 2018), innovative work behavior (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013), job satisfaction (Yozgat & Meşekiran, 2016) and their knowledge sharing behavior (Bavik et al., 2018). Extant literature has also examined different factors which may help to increase employees' career success. By viewing employee-level attributes, career success is a very important factor as every employee wants to get success in his or her career.

In this regard, recent research spreads light on some important factors (e.g., generative mechanisms) that may help employees to get career success through the ethical behavior of leaders. Similarly, little is known about whether ethical leadership is linked to employees' career success via employees' trust in the leader and their psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment is a process to enhance the spirits of the self-efficacy of employees. Psychological empowerment is described as employees' intrinsic motivation for task and satisfaction (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). At this point, there is a lack of studies that emphasized on psychological empowerment as an intervening mechanism between ethical leadership and employees' career success. Trust in the leader is described as employees' mindset or intention to accept openness, positive expectations or behavior of leader (Rousseau et al., 1998). Furthermore, the intervening mechanism of trust in the leader in the relation between ethical leadership and employee career is yet to be explored (Dust et al., 2018).

In addition, we consider emotional exhaustion that may exacerbate or mitigate the relation of ethical leadership and employees' career success. To examine the importance of emotional states during social learning processes, we accentuate emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is an employee's psychological state of having depression due to excessive job or personal problems and continuous stress. Social learning theory also shows that emotional states damage individuals' mental functioning and reduce the ability to learn in the social environment (Bandura, 1977).

To fulfill the research gap and to address the recent calls to advance the literature on ethical leadership and employees' career (Dust et al., 2018), this research attempts to examine the mediating mechanism of psychological empowerment and trust in the leader to understand the association of ethical leadership and employees' career success. Furthermore, we also examined emotional exhaustion as boundary condition for the direct relationship of ethical leadership and employees' career success.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Ethical Leadership and Employee Career Success

"Ethics is at the heart of leadership" (Ciulla, 2004). Ethical leadership is considered a leadership style that is most prominent in the context of social enterprise (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Although ethical leadership has received great concerns, there is a lack of empirical research for the relation among ethical leadership and employees' work-related outcomes (Ofori, 2009) e.g. "organizational commitment (Kim & Brymer, 2011), job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011), and job satisfaction (Neubert et al., 2009)". Ethical leaders tend to focus on employees' benevolence and developing needs that may help to raise their confidence and career growth. These leaders provide training sessions to encourage the employees to become creative as well as ethical organizational members. Therefore, employees under ethical leadership feel more competent in existing positions.

When trusted leaders show ethical behavior in the workplace, then employees' experience reduction in anxiety, fear, and risk. Accordingly, these employees feel that they have the abilities, confidence, and self-worth to influence events in workplace settings. The empirical findings have also confirmed that ethical leadership is connected to employees' work-related outcomes e.g. high levels of commitment, satisfaction, willingness to share difficulties with the leader, effective performance, and more organizational citizenship behaviors (Brown et al., 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Hence, ethical leadership actions tend to protect the rights of the employees' respect, autonomy, dignity and more likely to enhance their career development.

H1a: Ethical leadership positively affects employee career success.

Ethical Leadership and Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment is considered as an active intentions toward work, which can affect the potential of employees' success (Maynard et al., 2012). Specifically, empowered workers are more attentive in determining their work context, and feel more confident in performing their actions (Spreitzer, 1995). Empowerment is one of the key concepts that tend to promote favorable individuals and organizational levels outcomes. Psychological empowerment is perceived as an empowering process that improves employees' mission initiation and persistence (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Ethical leaders are expected to treat the employees with respect. In this way, they protect the rights of employees and create feelings of empowerment in employees. Therefore, the employees under ethical leaders are more capable to perform any task. According to social learning theory, ethical leader acts as an explicit role model of employees, by this way, employees may learn specific psychological states to deal with changes in the workplace (Gooty et al., 2009). Ethical leadership can also affect the psychological resources of employees and create similarities between the leaders and their followers, it influences employees' performance-related efficiency in the workplace (Bouckennooghe et al., 2015). Additionally, an ethical leader encourages

employees to implement their ideas and contribute to the decision-making process, which may increase employees' autonomy within the given work environment (Piccolo et al., 2010).

H1b: Ethical leadership positively affects psychological empowerment.

Ethical Leadership and Trust in the Leader

Trust is “psychological feelings embracing positive expectations or behavior of another” (Rousseau et al., 1998). According to Matloob (2018), there is positive relation between ethical leadership and project success. When employees believe that leaders encourage them and they perform tasks according to the direction of their leadership; it can lead to employees' trust in the leader. The employees believe that the work environment established by the leader is for their welfare, it can boost their trust in the leader (Whitener et al., 1998).

The ethical behavior of a leader helps and assists the employees at all stages in the organization (Brown et al., 2005; Piccolo et al., 2010). In reciprocation to ethical leadership, employees show good performance (Hassan et al., 2013). For instance, ethical leadership motivates and changes the belief, self-concepts of employees and affects their commitment (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012). Ethical leadership does not only improve the employees' creativity but also enhances their supportive attitude toward the leader and organization (Den Hartog, 2015).

Lasthuizen (2008) determined that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employees' trust in the leader, which recommends the relationship between ethical leadership and employee trust. Moreover, Den Hartog et al. (2003) found that the effect of perceived leader integrity on employee trust in the leader. Caldwell et al. (2008) theoretically found ethical stewardship to a high level of trust. Finally, honest leadership is considered as an essential perspective for being an ethical leader (Treviño & Weaver, 2003). Based on the above literature we expect that there is relation between ethical leadership and employees' trust in their leader.

H1c: Ethical leadership positively affects trust in the leader.

Psychological Empowerment and Employee Career Success

Psychological empowerment means employees' motivation and satisfaction. Prior findings proved that empowerment is associated with the in-role performance of employees (Seibert et al., 2011). An employee achievements or work-related outcomes that he or she accumulates during work experience (Judge et al., 1995). Previously, research work also determined that employees' careers can be influenced by situational factors. Numerous studies have focused on some personal and organizational factors such as are socio-demographic status (Ng et al., 2005), and organizational size (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) which tend to influence employees' career success and career satisfaction.

Limited research is conducted to incorporate the association of psychological empowerment and the career success of individuals. Empowering persons are more likely to exhibit job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment (Avolio et al., 2004). Employees are more likely to satisfy with their career, when they are psychologically empowered.

Researchers have used career success as a tool to assess employees' career growth. Indeed, It is a positive emotional outcome and attainment accrued during work (Seibert et al., 1999). Career continues throughout the job, even over the sequence of life. From the assessment to career expansion or progress, it is very important to receive gratitude and promotion from the leader. Psychological-based studies show that employees with high psychological capital can receive more positive evaluations (Chen & Lim, 2012). Thus we propose the following hypothesis.

H2: Psychological empowerment positively affects employee career success.

Trust in Leader and Employee Career Success

It has been determined that trustworthy leadership is positively related with employee-level attributes because when the employees have trust in their leader, they feel more confident and pay more attention to their career success (Chughtai et al., 2015). According to the social exchange theory, when employees have more trust in their leader, they are more likely to show positive attitudes. In contrast, when employees have less trust in their leader, they left to feel overwhelmed and withdrawal intention at work (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Research evidence also demonstrated that trust is an important element to extend social exchange relations and decrease uncertainty (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). Therefore, the employees who have trust in their leader, feel a sense of responsibility based on their reliable relationship with leaders (Colquitt et al., 2012). By following assumptions of social exchange theory, trustworthy leadership tends to decrease employees' turnover intention and helps them to improve their career success.

As mentioned, the parties operate based on trust in business, and also considered goodwill and mutual concern" (Blau, 1964; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Indeed, employees observe the element of trust in establishing a relationship with their leaders. It is important to consider this factor to examine the relationship of the leader with employees because when employees have more trust in their leader, it also enhances the employees' career success. Consequently, we suggest the following hypothesis.

H3: Trust in the leader positively affects employee career success.

Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment can ultimately influence individual and work-related outcomes. Individuals who are empowered e.g., intrinsic motivation, self-control would feel confident and show more involvement in their work role (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Likewise, empowered employees try to align their personal goals with the organizational goals (Spreitzer et al., 1999). More probably these employees participate in organizational benefits (Choi, 2007). Psychological empowerment is considered an important mechanism to enhance employee efficacy.

Thus, it is expected that employees' psychological empowerment enhances the association among ethical leadership and career success. Indeed, ethical leadership may increase employees' motivation and feelings of self-efficacy, which subsequently support the employees' career development. Recent research suggests that psychological empowerment may indirectly influence the positive relationship of servant leadership and employee career success (Dust et al., 2018). Combining research evidence, we propose that ethical leadership will increase employees' career success via psychological empowerment.

H4a: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee career success.

Mediating Role of Trust in Leader

Scholars have examined that trust has relation with job-related attitudes and behavioral goals (Davis et al., 2000). The social exchange viewpoint demonstrates two core sides e.g., trust and fairness. Fair interactions can increase the social exchange relationship and trust can strengthen the integrity between two parties (DeConinck, 2010). These factors are important to develop the intention to persist. Consequently, trust is considered as an antecedent of employees' well-being (Mulki et al., 2006). Numerous studies have highlighted the relationship between the behavior of the leader and the trust in different perspectives of workplace settings (Dirks & Ferrin,

2002; Joseph & Winston, 2005). But there is a lack of research that provides evidence for the intervening role of trust in the leader (Chan et al., 2008; Mulki et al., 2006).

Social exchange theory also supports indirect relationship of ethical leadership and employees' career success through trust in leader. When employees experience the ethical behavior of the leadership, it can enhance employee career success via trust in leaders. Prior research has focused on the mediating role of trust between ethical leadership and work engagement (Chughtai et al., 2015). To our best knowledge, this is the first research that empirically examines the mediating effect of trust in leader in understanding the relation between ethical leadership and employee career success. Hence, we suggest the following hypothesis.

H4b: Trust in the leader mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee career success.

Moderation of Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is the phenomenon of burnout that negatively influences individuals' behaviors in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). Generally, emotional exhaustion is linked with work-related activities and may cause to decrease performance and increase depression of employees. Numerous studies found that emotional exhaustion may damage work-related behavior e.g., work efforts (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011) as well as harms the work-related attitude e.g., organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Mulki et al., 2006). Further, it negatively influences organizational citizenship behavior (Cropanzano et al., 2003), and job performance (Babakus et al., 1999) and is positively associated with employees' turnover intentions (Moore, 2000).

Scholars have discussed the emotional exhaustion basis on the psychological foundations. When employees are emotionally depleted, they are unable to maintain psychological-physiological states in order to perform their job (Ambrose et al., 2014). As stated, emotional exhaustion leads to an employee's burnout, which can damage the interpersonal interaction of organizational members e.g., leaders and employees (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Moreover, when an individual feels a high level of emotional exhaustion, it decreases employee's performance (Cropanzano et al., 2003), increases intention to leave the job (Knudsen et al., 2009), and increases intended staff turnover (Beidas et al., 2016). Similarly, employees who experience emotional exhaustion, they are not able to maintain their efficiency and focus on their work. Prior research determined that emotional exhaustion can affect the indirect relation between ethical leadership and career success (Dust et al., 2018). We propose that emotional exhaustion will moderate the positive relation between ethical leadership and employees' career success.

H5: The direct relationship between ethical leadership and employee career success is moderated through emotional exhaustion such that the direct effect is stronger as emotional exhaustion decrease and vice versa.

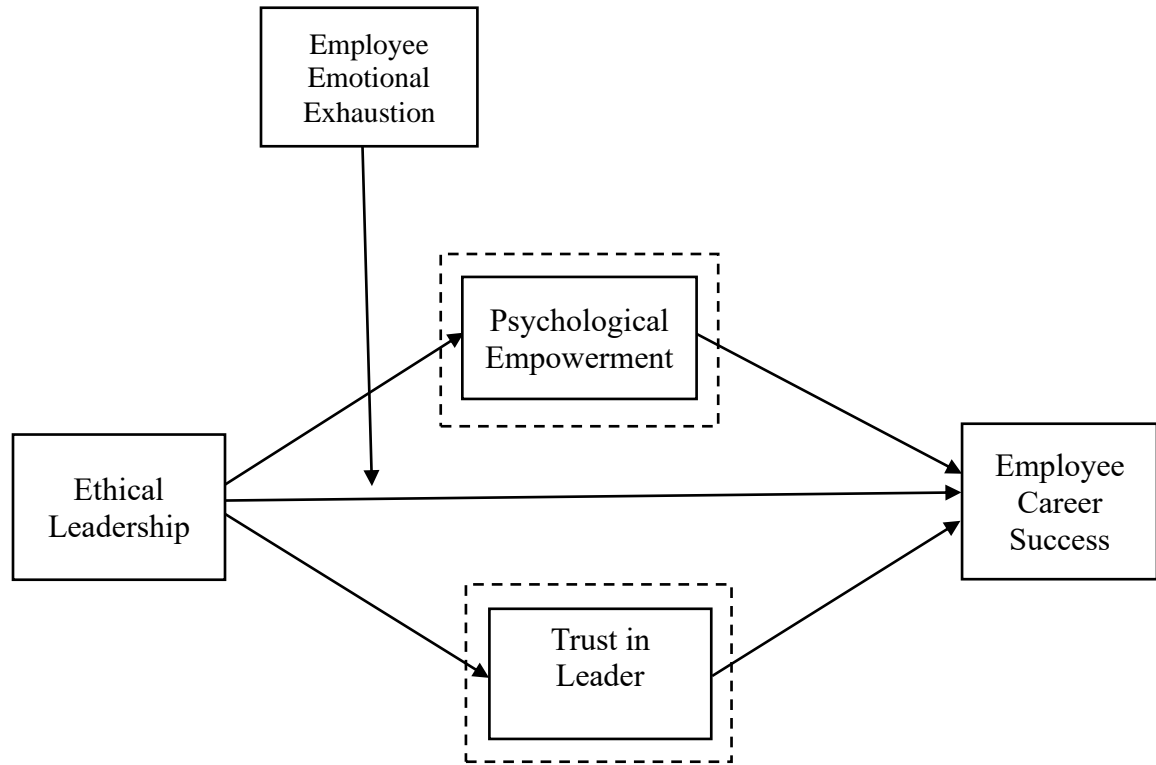


Figure 1: Hypothesized Model.

Research Methodology

In this study, we collected data from focal employees of the banking sector in Pakistan. The data collected through a self-administrated questionnaire from permanent employees of all public and private limited banks situated in metropolitan cities. To increase the effectiveness, we conducted a pilot test, before collecting the final responses of all participants. Firstly, we maintained the list of all banks, which are operating in metropolitan cities of Pakistan. Secondly, we contacted the HR department of each bank. We requested the HR department to assist in the process of data collection. We selected the online survey approach and administered the questionnaire along with a covering letter to the permanent employees of head offices and relevant branches. The participants were approached through their emails and WhatsApp. This process was continued for six weeks. The final sample consisted of 336 useable responses.

Ethical leadership

It is measured by adopted 10 items from Brown et al. (2005). A sample item includes “My organization’s manager makes fair and balanced decisions”. These items were measured by utilizing a six-point scale ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.

Employee career success

We considered two factors, which were associated with both employee success potential and employee current success. To measure employee success potential, we used four items from Schaubroeck and Lam (2004). A sample item is “I have a good chance of being promoted soon”. The employee current success was measured by utilizing 7 items scale from Frese et al. (1997). A sample item includes “I take initiative immediately, even when others don’t”. The employees rated these items by using a 6-item scale ranging from 1=not true and 6=absolutely true.

Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment *was* measured by using 12 items adopted from previous studies (Dust et al., 2018; Spreitzer, 1995). A sample item is “The work I do is very important to me”. The employees rate these items by using a 5-point scale ranging from 1=never and 5=always.

Trust in the leader: it is measured by using 5 items from Anand et al. (2012). A sample item is “I’m sure I could openly communicate my ideas to my organization’s Manager”. Employees responded to these items by using a 6-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.

Emotional exhaustion

To measure emotional exhaustion, we used 10 items scale from (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). A sample item is “I feel emotionally drained from my work”. The employees rate these items by using a 5-item scale ranging from 1=never and 5=always.

Results and Discussion

To analyze the data, we utilized AMOS Software and PROCESS macro for SPSS developed by Hayes (2013). Table 1 consists of the Mean, standard deviation and correlations of all variables. The results indicate significant correlation between hypothesized relations. The ethical leadership significantly positively affect employee career success (coefficient = 0.31**), psychological empowerment (coefficient = 0.37**) and employees’ trust in the leader (coefficient = 0.60**). The results also indicate that psychological empowerment and employee's trust in the leader both have significant and positive impact on employees' career success (coefficient = 0.52**) and (coefficient = 0.41**). Furthermore, emotional exhaustion has a significant and positive impact on employee career success (coefficient = 0.19**). Furthermore, all control variables were not correlated with the main variables of the current study. Consequently, control variables were not considered for further analyses (Petersitzke, 2009).

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Education	15.9	1.09	1						
2. Tenure	2.45	1.88	-0.14**	1					
3. Ethical leadership	4.59	0.86	0.02	0.14*	(0.89)				
4. Emotional exhaustion	3.08	0.89	-0.08	-0.01	-0.09	(0.86)			
5. ECS	4.23	0.87	0.01	0.11*	0.31**	0.19**	(0.84)		
6. Psychological empowerment	3.97	0.69	0.04	0.12*	0.37**	0.04	0.52**	(0.75)	
7. Trust in Leader	4.53	0.96	0.02	0.04	0.60**	-0.08	0.41**	0.38**	(0.91)

Notes: N = 336. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.001; ECS= Employee career success**

To examine the reliability of core variables, all the items were tested through Cronbach alpha, the alpha values of all scales were above 0.70 (Table 1). The convergent and discriminant validity was tested by following the process given by Hair et al. (2010). Table 2 depicts that the composite reliability of all variables is statistically significant and within the acceptable range. Moreover, the values of AVE are above 0.50 and the values of MSV and ASV are less than AVE. Hence, there is no issue of convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity

Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
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Employee career success	0.85	0.53	0.19	0.11
Trust in leader	0.91	0.56	0.44	0.18
Ethical leadership	0.89	0.50	0.44	0.16
Emotional exhaustion	0.86	0.51	0.04	0.02
Psychological empowerment	0.76	0.53	0.08	0.06

Notes: CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted; MSV: maximum shared variance; ASV: average shared variance

To test the hypothesized model, we applied the SPSS Process macros model five (Hayes, 2013) for simultaneously testing the direct, indirect, and moderating effects. Table 3 shows the results. The results show that the influence of ethical leadership on the employees' career success ($\beta=0.280$; $p<0.1$), psychological empowerment ($\beta=0.293$; $p<0.001$), and trust in the leader ($\beta=0.670$; $p<0.001$) was positively associated and significant. Thus, H_{1a}, H_{1b}, and H_{1c} were supported. Results also indicated that the association between psychological empowerment and employees' career success was positively associated and significant $\beta=0.477$ ($p<0.001$). Therefore, H₂ was supported. The relation of trust in the leader with employee career success was positive and significant $\beta=0.230$, ($p<0.001$). Thus, H₃ was supported.

The results of indirect effect suggested that the relationship of ethical leadership with employee career success was significantly mediated through psychological empowerment as $\beta=0.139$ (LLCI= 0.088 & ULCI=0.200). Both values, upper and lower-class intervals were positive. Hence H_{4a} was fully supported. The results also reveal the relation of ethical leadership with employee career success was significantly mediated through trust in the leader $\beta=0.154$ (LLCI= 0.083 & ULCI=0.221). Both values, upper and lower class interval were positive. Thus, H_{4b} was also fully supported. The results also show that the employee emotional exhaustion moderated the direct relationship of ethical leadership with employees' career success $\beta= -0.078$ ($p<0.05$). Thus, H₅ was also fully supported.

Table 3: Process Macro Results

Hypotheses	Path	Coefficient	LLCI	ULCI
H_{1a}	EL \longrightarrow ECS	0.280*	0.411	0.942
H_{1b}	EL \longrightarrow PE	0.293***	0.589	0.749
H_{1c}	EL \longrightarrow TIL	0.670***	0.221	0.398
H₂	PE \longrightarrow ECS	0.477***	0.133	0.277
H₃	TIL \longrightarrow ECS	0.230***	-0.253	-0.099
H_{4a}	EL \longrightarrow ECS via PE	0.139	0.088	0.200
H_{4b}	EL \longrightarrow ECS via TIL	0.154	0.083	0.221
H₅	EL \times EE \longrightarrow ECS	-0.078*	-0.153	-0.003

Notes: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.001; EL= Ethical leadership; ECS= Employee career success; PE= Psychological empowerment; TIL= Trust in leader; EE= Emotional exhaustion**

The graphical representation (Figure 2) shows the moderating effect of emotional exhaustion between the direct relation of ethical leadership and employee career success. The beta value of the interaction effect was negative and significant, which shows that the interaction effect of ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion was negatively associated with employees' career success ($\beta = -0.073$, $p=0.08$). Moreover, we also conducted the slope analysis to understand the moderating effect of emotional exhaustion. As shown in Figure 2, the positive relation of ethical leadership with employee career success was weak at high levels of emotional exhaustion and this relation was stronger when emotional exhaustion decrease. These findings further supported H₅.

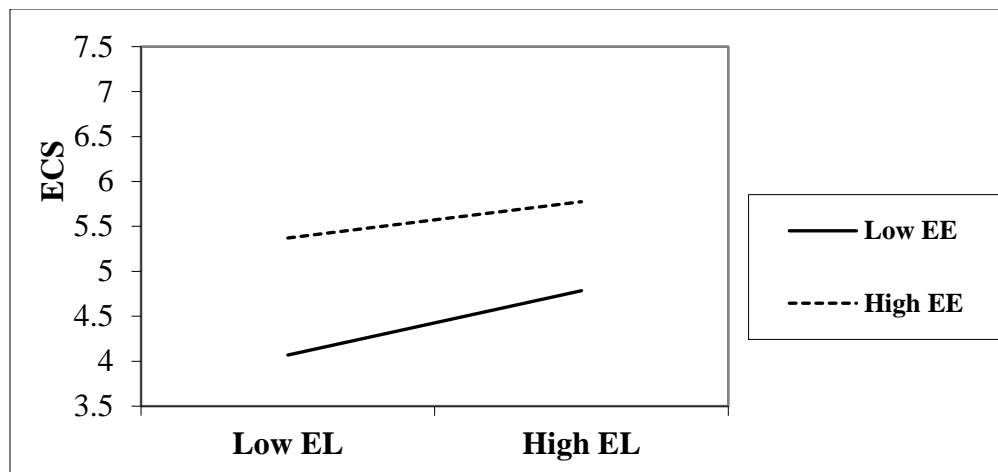


Figure 2: Slope analysis

Implications for research

This research extends the current literature on the consequences of ethical leadership. It determines a positive effect of ethical leadership style on employees' career success through psychological empowerment, and trust in the leader. It offers new insights to researchers and suggests them to pay attentions toward the ethical leadership role and its effect on the employees' level outcomes. Current research also enriches the literature and determines the potential antecedents of employees' career success. This proposes that employees' career success might not only connect with the employees' attributes but also stem from the ethical behavior of leaders. Previous research focused on the impact of ethical leadership on organizational and societal factors (Den Hartog, 2015). Moreover, this study provides theoretical understating through mediating mechanism of psychological empowerment; trust in the leader in examining linking between ethical leadership and employees' career success. This theoretical framework may help the scholars to further extend the research in different directions.

This study has also some practical implications. Leaders might wish to carry ethical behavior and influence the employees' career success positively. Because leaders' ethical actions may help to shape the employees' career development. This employee's career success is one of the organizational level objectives to improve the both employees' career related success and organizational level success. This study is important for policy makers specifically in the banking sector of Pakistan. Because, current research provides understanding to the top management to make policies according to the employees' related behavior e.g., employees career success, psychological empowerment, and trust in the leadership, specifically in the banking sector.

Limitations and Research Directions

Each research work has some limitations; this study has also certain limitations. First, the current study has measured both independent and dependent variables from the single source i.e. employees of banks, which may create common rater bias. The future researcher can collect the data and record the responses from two separate sources (e.g., leader and immediate employees). Second, the current study also shows a limitation that we used cross-sectional and collect the data at one point in time, which may not measure the fluctuation in the employees' career success path. In the future, scholars may collect data and measure employee career success at different intervals of time by using a longitudinal design. Third, this study focuses on only one kind of leadership approach i.e. ethical leadership. Future research should use different leadership styles (i. e. leader humility, transformational leadership and transactional leadership) and examine different effects

on employee career success. Finally, this study only focuses on the banking sector of Pakistan. Therefore, its findings cannot be generalized in different sectors, specifically manufacturing and services sectors. Future research may select different sectors (e.g., manufacturing and service), and investigate the generalizability of the current study.

Conclusion

This research has examined the relation of ethical leadership and the career success of employees. We also examine the intervening mechanism of psychological empowerment and trust in leaders, and moderating role of emotional exhaustion in the banking sector of Pakistan. The results supported the direct relations of ethical leadership and employees' career success, and indirect association via psychological empowerment and trust in the leader. Our findings have also supported the entire process that ethical leadership influences the employees' career success through psychological empowerment and trust in the leader, but not for employees with high emotional exhaustion at work. The moderating effect of emotional exhaustion has also supported the theoretical expectations. The hypothesized model will provide a forum to scholars to investigate that how ethical leadership may create an effective environment for employees' career success as well as the success of organization.

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