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Ethical Leadership and Perceived Work Performance among Employees of Various Fast-Food Chain in Noveleta

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Abstract

This sequential explanatory research design entitled Ethical Leadership and work performance of various fast-food chain in Noveleta: A sequential Explanatory Study aims to (1) identify the level of ethical leadership of various fast-food chains business; (2) determine the level of work performance of the employees; (3) analyze the significant correlation between ethical leadership (EL) and work performance (WP). Thirty (30) employees were selected from different fast-food chains through purposive sampling and will be the respondents for quantitative phase of this study. In qualitative phase, on the other hand, the researcher will use ten (10) respondents.

This study is divided into two phases. The quantitative phase and qualitative phase. The quantitative phase will use IBM SPSS to analyze the level of ethical leadership, work performance, and its significant correlation. The second phase was qualitative, using thematic analysis the data will undergo coding and themes to give more evidence to the study.

The findings of the study shows that the fast-food chain business who practice ethical leadership (ethics prioritization, communicating expectation for ethical practice, ethical decision making, support local ethics program) which helps to boost the work performance (skill/ability, work experience, and work motivation) of their employees. In conclusion, the business that practice ethical leadership enhances work performance of the employees and improves the company's overall performance.

Introduction

In today's corporate world, moral ethics have become more significant in business literature. Nowadays' entrepreneurs assist a lot more to producing bigger personal benefits in addition to their organization success. Businesses across the world will gain a great deal from this innovative concept, which will encourage them to embrace ethical and moral considerations as an important instrument for preserving organizational health. Employers can influence employee behavior and increase employee performance by using the initially proposed concept of ethical leadership. According to Taimouri *et al*. (2021), employee satisfaction is a positive psychological and social emotion linked to worker performance. Employee productivity and satisfaction both considerably rise under ethical leadership (Freire and Bettencourt, 2020). Ethical Leadership has a greater impact than orienting staff conduct to each person's preferences and needs. According to studies, ethical leadership (EL) controls employee attitudes, behaviors, and activities, which improves job satisfaction (Kaffashpoor & Sadeghian, 2020).

Organizational leaders frequently engage in behavior that is morally wrong. This includes being patronizingly or excessively stressing such shortcomings, blaming subordinates for their errors, and appreciating the efforts of others. Employee welfare receives less attention than study on business ethics, despite ethical culture, particularly the variables that are impacted and affected by ethical behavior, having been researched. The main subject of this study was how ethical work environment mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee performance. During the data gathering process, a highly organized questionnaire was given to 697 hospitality professionals in Italy and Pakistan. Then, utilizing measurement invariance tests and mediation techniques, a study of cultural differences was carried out.

Ethical leaders are someone who upholds specific ethical principles without compromising them. Ethical leaders inspire their followers to act righteously, which in turn makes them more virtuous. They gain loyalty, respect, and trust from them. According to Rabie & Abdul Malek (2020) [7], ethical leadership improves organizational performance by implementing ethical values into the practice of an organization. The development of appropriate ideas, beliefs, and values has a significant impact on an individual's behavior at work, conduct and actions. Moral ethics have become increasingly important in the modern business environment, providing businesses with opportunities for individual and organizational prosperity.

Understanding how leaders build an ethically supportive workplace for all staff members, express ethical concerns, serve as role models, and put in place processes that promote the growth of responsible employees will be aided by this. Additionally, ethical leadership encourages management effectiveness through their ability and skill, employee's work experience, employee's work motivation, and a climate that supports ethical leadership. In the end, it results in improved employee performance.

Ethics leaders acts respectfully, avoid favoring anyone, and treat everyone equally when managed fairly. Also, avoid being afraid to face and admit mistakes. Shared-power, ethical leaders engage their followers in decision-making and pay attention to their suggestions and worries. Ethical leaders use task definition to define tasks, deadlines, and performance roles. These traits include transparency and open communication. Genuinely caring, respectful, and supportive leaders show their staff members support. Additionally, they satisfy their own needs. Leaders that are trustworthy uphold their word and behave consistently. Ethical leadership is the practice of leaders rewarding and fostering moral behavior in their workforce. Sustainability is the main focus of going green. As per Badura *et al*. (2020). If a manager treats their employees fairly and honestly, that manager is seen as trustworthy.

Objectives of the Study
This research study aims to (1) identify the level of ethical leadership of various fast-food chains business; (2) determine the level of work performance of the employees; (3) analyze the significant correlation between ethical leadership (EL) and work performance (WP).

Method and Materials
Mixed Method is applied in this study as the type of research. In this research, the researcher combines qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Using explanatory sequential design, the proponents will gather and analyze quantitative data as the first phase before moving on to a qualitative phase to discuss the findings. Researchers use the qualitative phase in this method to provide a more thorough justification of the preliminary quantitative findings. In order to better comprehend a phenomenon and respond to the research questions, it requires gathering and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data.

According to Stolle (2022), Mixed methods research includes qualitative and quantitative research elements to propose solutions to research problems. Combining quantitative and qualitative techniques provides more comprehensive insights than using either technique individually. Using qualitative methods, examine natural phenomena using observations, interviews, and analysis of text data. Quantitative research involves numerical analysis of quantifiable variables. Mixed methods studies are often used in research cases with different variables and datasets, such as the social and behavioral sciences.

Using quantitative data, the proponents will determine the level of ethical leadership and the employees' work performance through surveys. After the survey, the researcher will analyze the data to create a new questionnaire. The questionnaire will be based on the findings of the first data gathering. Qualitative data that will be done using face to face interviews. This explanatory sequential design will help the researcher to explain further the result of the research study.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group		
18 - 25	28	93%
26 – 35	2	7%
Total		
Sex		
Male	16	53%
Female	14	47%
Total		
Years as an Employee		
Less than a year	22	73%
1-2 years	7	24%
More than 2 years	1	3%
Total		

Table 1 consists of demographic profile of the respondents. The age range 18-25 *(93%)* has the highest percentage compared to 26-35*(7%)*. Most of the respondents were male (53%) than female *(47%)*. The majority of the respondents work at fast-food for less than a year *(73%)* than to 1-2 years *(24%)* and more than 2 years *(3%)*. Thirty (30) employees were selected from different fast-food chains through purposive sampling and will be the respondents for quantitative phase of this study. In qualitative phase, on the other hand, the researcher will use ten (10) respondents.

Mixed analysis is used in this study which refers to the process of analyzing data of both qualitative and quantitative research. To examine the information acquired from the instrument or survey questionnaire, descriptive statistics will be used. The properties of a data set are organized and summarized using descriptive statistics. A data set is a compilation of observations or replies from a sample of people or the complete population (Bhandari, 2022).

This study is divided into two phases. The quantitative phase and qualitative phase. The quantitative phase will use IBM SPSS to analyze the level of ethical leadership, work performance, and its significant correlation. The second phase was qualitative, using thematic analysis the data will undergo coding and themes to give more evidence to the study.

Results and Discussion
This section of the paper will discuss the gathered data. The data gathered of quantitative phase will analyze the level of ethical leadership and work performance using IBM SPSS. While, Thematic analysis is the instrument used in the qualitative part to explain further the result of quantitative phase.

Table 2

Demonstrate that Ethics as a Priority	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
I tell my staff to make ethics a priority	2.97	1	Average
I use examples or stories from my facility or my experience to illustrate the importance of ethics.	2.53	10	Low
I initiate discussions of ethical concerns.	2.77	4	Average
In a typical day, I think about ethical issues.	2.57	9	Low
I demonstrate that I am sensitive to ethical issues in my everyday work.	2.63	7	Average
I object when someone is ignoring, avoiding, or smoothing over an important ethical issue	2.67	6	Average
I explicitly acknowledge staff contributions to promoting ethical practice	2.87	3	Average
I include specific expectations for ethical practice in staff performance plans	2.70	5	Average
I hold my staff accountable for meeting high ethical concerns	2.63	7	Average
When staff member raises an ethical concern, I thank them for sharing the concern	2.57	9	Low
I encourage discussion of conflicting values related to organizational decisions	2.90	2	Average
I create an opportunity for staff discussion	2.87	7	Average
When staff members raise an ethical concern, I ask them to say more.	2.60	8	Low
Total Average	2.70		Average

Table 2 shows the ethics prioritization of ethical leadership. The highest mean *(M = 2.97),* demonstrates that the leaders averagely advise the staff to make ethics as a priority. The lowest mean (M = 2.53) uses their stories to illustrate the importance of ethics.

The total average *(M = 2.70)* proves that the ethics prioritization among respondents is at average level. To avoid using unethical solutions to problems, you should look for information such as industry standards and organizational norms. Business owners and executives have a lot of important decisions to make on behalf of their companies.

According to Asif *et al*. (2019), leaders have the ability to influence people to behave morally. By setting a good example and offering advice on moral behavior, you can inspire others to do the same. By encouraging behavior that benefits all, moral leaders can positively influence many people. Employee ideas and ideals are recognized and embraced by ethics leaders. By promoting honesty, justice, compassion and morality in our interactions

Table 3

Communicate clear expectations for Ethical Practice	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
I make a conscious effort to serve as a role model for ethical practice.	2.83	1	Average
I use examples or stories from my facility or my experience to illustrate the importance of ethics.	2.43	6	Low
I initiate discussions of ethical concerns.	2.50	5	Low
In a typical day, I think about ethical issues.	2.33	8	Low
I clearly communicate my expectations for ethical practice to my staff.	2.57	4	Low
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I explain the values that underlie those expectations.	2.70	2	Average
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I use examples that illustrate what I mean.	2.43	6	Low
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I make sure those expectations are realistic and achievable.	2.63	3	Average
When I communicate my expectations for ethical practice, I make a point to address obstacles that staff might encounter.	2.63	3	Average
When staff members receive "mixed messages" that create ethical tensions, I take responsibility for clarifying my expectations for ethical practice.	2.37	7	Low
I encourage staff to talk to me if they feel pressured to "bend the rules.	2.63	3	Average
Total average	2.55		Low

Table 3 shows the communicating clear expectation for ethical practice. The highest mean *(M = 2.83)* says that the leader makes a conscious effort to serve as a role model for ethical practices and at the average level. The lowest mean *(M = 2.33)* proves that the level of thinking about ethical issues is at average.

The total average *(M = 2.55)* proves that the communication in clear expectations for ethical practice is at low average. Employee performance, satisfaction with work, company involvement, trust, and social responsibility can all be improved with increased ethical awareness. The civic conduct of an organization encompasses benevolence, conscience, civic virtues, sportsmanship, and courtesies.

Effective communication is required on all levels in order to resolve employee issues. This study aims to shed light on managers' effective employee problem-solving communication strategies. Ramadini *et al*. (2022) state. Respect is due to every workplace. Knowing their efforts are appreciated inspires them to perform at their highest level. Empathetic leaders base their decisions on the needs and feelings of their team members.

Table 4

Practice Ethical Decision Making	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
I explicitly consider ethical issues when making management decisions.	2.52	7	Low
I use a standardized process to make decisions on management issues with ethical implications.	2.43	8	Low
When faced with a tough decision, I look to VHA's mission and values statements (or similar documents) and use them to evaluate various options.	2.60	5	Low
When faced with a tough decision, I think through the short-term and long-term effects on various individuals and groups.	2.62	4	Average
When faced with a tough decision, I make sure that I am not unfairly favoring a particular individual or group.	2.90	1	Average
When I need advice on an ethical issue, I go to a person with ethics expertise.	2.63	3	Average
When I need advice on an ethical issue, I refer to published sources	2.70	2	Average
When making important decisions, I involve those who will be most affected.	2.40	9	Low
When important decisions are made by a group, I ensure that someone is specifically tasked to call attention to ethical considerations.	2.57	6	Low
When I announce important decisions to staff, I take time to explain the decision-making process and who was involved.	2.63	3	Average
When I announce important decisions to staff, I take the time to explain the rationale for the decision.	2.33	10	Low
Total Average	2.56		Low

Table 4 shows the practice of ethical decision-making. The highest mean (M = 2.90) proves that the business is fair when it comes to decision-making. The lowest mean (M = 2.33), on the other hand, is when the leader announces important decisions to staff they take the time to explain the rationale for the decision.

The total average (M = 2.56) proves that the practice of ethical decision making is at the average level. Making decisions based on ethical and moral values calls for dedication to an ethical decision-making process. Decision-makers in the workplace must act ethically to protect the varied workforce, and teams must support and help each individual.

According to Jeffs (2019), managers and employees want to make ethical decisions in their organizations for a variety of reasons, and these decisions can have a significant impact on organizational performance. Here are some reasons why it is so important to consider both personal and ethical values when making business decisions. There are many reasons why the ethical decisions of managers and employees have a significant impact on an organization's success.

Table 5

Support your Local Ethics Program	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
I talk to staff in my facility about how the ethics program works, including:	2.53	4	Low
- ethics consultation	2.17	7	Low
- compliance and business integrity	2.60	3	Low
- preventive ethics - ethical leadership	2.53	4	Low
- research compliance and assurance	2.50	5	Low
- government ethics I receive and review updates about local ethics program activities.	2.50	5	Low
I seek help from the local ethics program.	2.47	6	Low
I act to ensure that local ethics activities are adequately funded.	2.50	5	Low
I act to ensure that local ethics activities are adequately staffed.	2.47	6	Low
I inform my staff about current local ethics program activities.	2.60	3	Low
I highlight successes in local ethics program activities for staff.	2.70	1	Average
I encourage my staff to use the local ethics program when they have an ethical concern.	2.63	2	Average
Total Average	2.51		Low

Table 5 contains the support from local ethics program. The highest mean *(M = 2.70)* proves that they highlighted the successes in local activities for staff. On the other hand, the lowest mean *(M = 2.17)* it aids in the clarification and resolution of moral dilemmas that frequently result in contradictory and perplexing medical choices.

The total average *(M = 2.51)* proves that supporting local ethics program is at average level. Ethics programs make ensuring that owners and managers take into account the organizational culture, the relevant business context, and the reasonable expectations of stakeholders.

According to Haque *et al*. (2021) leadership that supports ethical principles can affect how psychological capital and work ethics are related. The findings have effects on both theory and application. This research is to comprehend how ethical leaders change followers' reactions to organizational preferences into duty-oriented attitudes that influence both in their functions.

Table 6

Ability/Skill	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
I am exceptionally quick at learning new tasks; I handle assignments easily.	3.17	2	Average
My work is extremely organized, resulting in most efficient workflow	3.13	3	Average
I work at a rapid pace; consistently produces a large volume of work	3.03	4	Average
I consistently produce accurate and quality work;	3.20	1	Average
I have excellent knowledge and comprehension of job	3.13	3	Average
Total Average	3.13		Average

Table 6 shows the ability and skill of the respondents. The highest mean *(M = 3.20)* indicates that the employees consistently produce accurate and quality of work. While the lowest mean *(M = 3.03)* indicates that the respondents works at the average level. Furthermore, they consistently produce a large volume of work.

The total average *(M = 3.13)* verifies that the ability and skill of the respondents is at the average level. The mental and physical characteristics which affect a worker's potential for flexibility are expressed through abilities and skills, which tend to remain instead fixed over time. It's important to identify these when trying to understand the actions of an organization as they often limiting an employee's capacity to

fulfill their duties.

A study by Kim *et al*. (2020) indicated that job stress was negatively connected with job performance in fast food workers, underscoring the need for better stress management measures in this business. is essential to keeping workers in

the fast-food business performing well and happy with their jobs. According to a study by Lin *et al*. (2020), fast food workers who had a better work-life balance performed better on the job and reported feeling more satisfied with their work.

Table 7

Work Experience	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
When staff members receive "mixed messages" that create ethical tensions, the leader takes responsibility for clarifying their expectations for ethical practice.	2.63	5	Average
When leaders communicate their expectations for ethical practice, they make a point to address obstacles that staff might encounter.	2.77	4	Average
The leaders encourage staff to talk to them if the staff feel pressured to "bend the rules.	2.90	2	Average
The leaders encourage their staff to use the local ethics program when they have an ethical concern.	2.80	3	Average
The leaders create opportunities for staff discussion of ethics topics.	2.97	1	Average
Total Average	2.81		Average

Table 7 demonstrates the work experience of the respondents of different fast-food chains in Noveleta. The highest mean *(M = 2.97)* interpreted as average level which means that the leader creates opportunities for staff discussion of ethics topics. On the contrary, the lowest mean *(M = 2.63)* is in the average level proves that the staff members receive "mixed messages" that create ethical tensions, the leader takes responsibility for clarifying their expectations for ethical practice.

The total average *(M = 2.81)* shows that the work experience of the respondents is at the average level. The leaders of the employees regularly encourage their staff and communicate to them to meet their expectations for ethical practices. Moreover, the leader encourages their staff to use the local ethics program.

According to Patrick Pilipiec (2020), a significant occupation related causal impact. After two years, there was vulnerability over efficiency resulting in a more than double reduction in output. According to the most recent study, having a job that isn't stable can, in fact, use up resources. It eventually has a negative impact on work performance in order to manage ongoing job instability.

Table 8

Work Motivation	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
The leader uses examples or stories from our facility or their experience to illustrate the importance of ethics.	2.67	3	Average
The leaders make a conscious effort to serve as a role model for ethical practice	2.67	3	Average
When the leaders communicate their expectations for ethical practice, they make sure those expectations are realistic and achievable	2.80	2	Average
The leader uses a standardized process to make decisions on management issues with ethical implications.	2.80	2	Average
When the leaders announce important decisions to staff, they take the time to explain the rationale for the decision.	2.83	1	Average
Total Average	2.75		Average

Table 8 contains the work motivation of employees in different fast-food chains in Noveleta. The highest mean *(M = 2.83)* interpreted as average level which means the leaders announce an important decision to staff, they take the time to explain the rationale for the decision. On the other hand, lowest mean *(M = 2.67)* interpreted as average level proves

that the leader often uses their stories from their facility or their experience to illustrate the importance of ethics. Moreover, the leader regularly makes a conscious effort to serve as a role model for ethical practice.

The general average *(M = 2.75)* shows that the work motivation of the respondents is at an average level. This means that the leader moderately influences the thought and behavior of the employees through attitude and motivation. The relationship between attitude and motivation can have a significant impact on how well a team works together to achieve its goals efficiently.

Ufaira & Hendriani (2019) says that to boost members' motivation at work, professional organizations need a strong leader. Some people lack initiative because they must be told what to do by others. Even though you need to be very motivated at work, problems do happen. If a person becomes dissatisfied with their professional group, they are more likely to leave and quit their job. They will become increasingly dissatisfied with their work responsibilities.

Table 9

Ethical Leadership	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Ethics Prioritization	2.83	1	Average
Communicate clear expectations for Ethical Practice	2.63	2	Average
Ethical Decision Making	2.56	3	Average
Support Local Ethics Program	2.51	4	Average
Total Average	2.70		Average

Table 9 consists of the level of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is divided into four terms; Ethics Prioritization *(M = 2.83),* Communicating clear expectations for Ethical Practice *(M = 2.63),* Ethical Decision Making *(M = 2.51),* and Support Local Ethics Program *(M = 2.51)*.

The total average *(M = 2.70)* from the table above proves that the ethical leadership of the employees of the various fast-food chains is at the average level. According to Kuligowski (2023) Ethical leadership is a leadership style that demonstrates the appropriate behavior towards the employees inside or outside the office.

According to Rabie & Abdul Malek (2020) [7], ethical leadership improves organizational performance by implementing ethical values into the practice of an organization. The development of appropriate ideas, beliefs, and values has a significant impact on an individual's behavior at work, conduct, and actions. Moral ethics have become increasingly important in the modern business

environment, providing businesses with opportunities for individual and organizational prosperity.

Table 10

Work Performance	Mean	Rank	Interpretation
Ability / Skill	3.13	1	Average
Work Experience	2.81	2	Average
Work Motivation	2.75	3	Average
Total Average	2.90		Average

Table 10 consists of the level of work performance of different fast-food chains. Work performance has three factors; Ability/Skill (M = 3.13), Work Experience (M = 2.81), Work Motivation (M = 2.75).

The total average (M = 2.90) from the table above proves that the work performance has the average level when it comes to evaluating whether employees are fulfilling their allocated tasks, responsibilities, or roles to the standards set by the employer and the objectives of the business.

According to Mrinmoy Rabha (2023) [5], effective managers work with talented personnel to attain their objectives. However, smart managers know how to maximize the potential of their failing staff members. It's crucial for workers to maintain their energy levels while stress and burnout levels are rising. Personal advancement and job happiness are directly correlated with job performance.

Table 11

Variable	M	N	1	2
1. Ethical Leadership	.001	30	-	
2. Work Performance	2.87	30	.739**	-

The table above shows the correlation between Ethical Leadership and Work Performance. Based on the findings using Pearson r, ethical leadership has a significantly positively high correlation to work performance (r (28) =.739, p<0.001).

Employee performance is significantly and positively affected by ethical leadership. Freedom to express oneself is strongly encouraged by ethical leadership, which gives workers confidence, gives feedback, and welcomes criticism, resulting in improved performance. Applying ethical leadership could involve setting an example for subordinates, disciplining dishonest workers, and paying attention to and appreciating their viewpoints. This has a significant effect on raising employees' performance. Adawiyah *et al.* (2022) state.

Conclusion
Ethical leadership is significantly and positively affected employee performance. This supports Adawiyah *et al.* (2022), freedom to express oneself is strongly encouraged by ethical leadership, which gives workers confidence, gives feedback, and welcomes criticism, resulting in improved performance. Applying ethical leadership could involve setting an example for subordinates, disciplining dishonest workers, and paying attention to and appreciating their viewpoints. This has a significant effect on raising employees' performance.

Fast-food chain business practice ethical leadership (ethics prioritization, communicating expectation for ethical practice, ethical decision making, support local ethics program) which helps to boost the work performance (skill/ability, work experience, and work motivation) of their

employees. In conclusion, the business that practice ethical leadership enhances work performance of the employees and improves the company's overall performance.

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