



Ethical Leadership and Employees' Trust Matters in Mitigating Employees' Burnout

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Abstract- Employee burnout has become an important issue in most of the organizations. However, the previous literature investigating the role of ethical leadership have received relatively little attention in relation to employees' burnout. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of ethical leadership on employee burnout, and the mediating role of employees' trust in the relationship between ethical leadership behavior and employee burnout in the public sector hospitals of Pakistan. This research utilized a survey strategy and data was collected from 203 doctors through the convenience sampling technique. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 in order to test the hypothesized model. This research found a(i) negative and significant relationship between ethical leadership and employee's burnout, (ii) positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership and employees' trust (iii) negative and significant association between employees' trust and employee's burnout, and (iv) that employees' trust mediates between the relationship of ethical leadership and employee's burnout. Findings of this research show that organizations should promote ethical leadership behaviors thereby fostering employees' trust leading towards minimizing employees' experiencing burnout. Lastly, limitations and suggestions for further research are provided.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership; Employees' Trust; Employees' Burnout

I. INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of research studies have emerged into negative attitudes and behaviors such as burnout (McFadden et al. 2018; Khan et al., 2019) which is most common in employees who do "people work". Burnout is associated with poor physical and mental health, impaired job performance, and deterioration in relationships with friends and family (Becker et al., 2006). Moreover, the increased risk of depression, anxiety, and lowered self-esteem, and increased substance abuse, are other negative mental and physical health outcomes associated with burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Maslach (1981) defined job burnout as a "syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who engage in "people work" of some kind" (p. 3).

Prior literature has linked leadership styles to the prevention and occurrence of burnout, for instance, past literature has shown the association between burnout and transformational leadership (Gong et al., 2013; Kanste et al., 2007; Stordeur et al., 2001) and authentic leadership behavior (Laschinger et al., 2012). However, the majority of these researches have focused on the effects that authentic and transformational leadership behaviors have on burnout symptoms without taking into account the moral effect that leaders have on the attitudes and behavior of followers in an organization (Aronson, 2001; De-Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Trevino et al., 2003).

Recently scholars indicated that employees tend to have a greater job satisfaction and less stress level when they work under the leadership of those individuals who act as a source of ethical guidance (Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; Sharif and Scandura 2013). Thus, ethical leadership behavior that focuses upon ethical behavior has been recognized as a significant factor in minimizing employees' burnout (Vullings et al., 2018; Okpozo et al., 2017). Brown et al. (2005) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationship, and the promotion of such conducts to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making" (p. 120). Therefore, serving as credible, attractive, and legitimate

role models, individuals who exhibit ethical leadership behavior may positively influence subordinates' attitudes and behavior (Trevino et al. 2003; Brown et al. 2005).

Furthermore, employee's trust in the leadership of an organization plays an important mediating role between each specific type of leadership style and job outcomes (Yasir and Khan, 2020; Mo and Shi 2015; Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, and Avey, 2009; Yasir et al., 2016; Liu, Siu, and Shi, 2010). Trust is defined as "a state in which individuals and groups are willing to make themselves vulnerable to others and to take risks with confidence that others will respond to the own actions in positive ways, that is, with benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness" (Forsyth et al., 2011, p. 19-20). Therefore, subordinates may develop an augmented level of trust in leaders of the organization that keep promises, are honest and behave consistently.

Specifically, this study is in response to the future call of Okpozo et al. (2017) who argue that future research is required in order to examine the effect of trust in leadership as a mediator between ethical leadership and employees' burnout. Furthermore, Mo and Shi (2015) also argued that the underlying mechanisms that prevent the employee's from experiencing burnout under the supervision of an ethical leader needs to be examined. Thus, further research is needed to examine the psychological mechanisms that link ethical leadership behavior with subordinate's burnout. So, current research intends to study employees' trust as a mediating variable in the association between ethical leadership behavior and employee burnout. Consequently, the objectives of this study are; (a) to investigate the effect of ethical leadership on employee's burnout (b) to examine the effect of ethical leadership on employees' trust, (c) to investigate the effect of employees' trust on employee's burnout, and (d) to analyze the mediating role of employees' trust in the relationship between ethical leadership and employees' burnout. Hence, this study will signify the importance of ethical leadership behavior and employees' trust towards reducing the level of employees' experiencing burnout in the context of public sector hospitals of Pakistan.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical leadership

Ethical leaders are fair and honest persons who use numerous forms of communication, punishment and rewards systems to influence subordinates' attitudes and behavior (Brown and Treviño, 2006). Brown et al. (2005) define ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making" (p. 120). Ethical leaders are those individuals who take ethics into consideration when making any decisions and are expected to enforce procedures, policies, and practices thereby upholding subordinates' ethical behavior (Mayer et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2017). So, ethical leaders seek to influence employees' by managing their ethical attitudes and behaviors (Brown and Treviño, 2006). According to Brown et al. (2005), ethical leadership has two main components: (a) moral person and (b) moral manager. As a moral person, ethical leader exhibit honesty, integrity, fairness, respect others, and raises ethical awareness. Whereas, as a moral manager, ethical leaders keep subordinates accountable in order to comply with rules and regulations, moreover, set ethical standards and take decisions for subordinates and the organizations best interests.

Employees' burnout

Maslach (1981) defined job burnout as a "syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who engage in "people work" of some kind" (p. 3). Afterwards, Maslach et al. (1996) identified three factors of burnout syndrome, for instance: (a) depersonalization: it indicates an indifference to the organization, colleague, and clients, thus treating coworkers and clients as objects rather than persons thereby making oneself distance from the job and individuals one works with, (b) emotional exhaustion: it is one of the most obvious manifestations of burnout which reflects its stress dimension and is identified as a feeling that one's emotional resources are consumed consequently having lack of energy, (c) reduced personal accomplishment: this dimension shows an individual's drop in the feelings of successful achievements in the job, interactions with people and job competence. So, the probability of the emergence of this feeling in the work environment is higher where employees already feeling detached from other individuals or exhausted (Maslach et al., 2001).

Employees' trust

The employees' trust in their leadership is generally accepted as a key determinant of organizational success (Chughtai et al., 2015). Previous research indicates that employees' trust in leadership will contribute toward positive results, such as organizational change capacity (Yasir et al., 2016), greater

performance levels (Neves and Caetano, 2009) and also a better exchange of knowledge and ideas (Renzi, 2008). Trust has been conceptualized in various forms in previous literature. Rousseau et al., (1998) defined trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (p. 395). Furthermore, Nyhan and Marlowe (1997) identified trust as “the level of confidence that one individual has in another’s competence and his or her willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner” (p. 616). So, a trust includes the employees’ assumptions, beliefs, and expectations about the positive outcomes of others’ future behavior (Robinson, 1994). Moreover, prior literature indicates that persons from different intellectual, cultural, and social backgrounds differ in their propensity to trust (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2001).

Ethical leadership and employees’ burnout

Prior literature shows that each specific type of leadership style plays a significant role in any organization and has the ability to influence important job outcomes (Hashim et al., 2017; Shah et al., 2017). Previous literature on leadership also indicates a direct effect of ethical leadership on subordinates’ outcomes for instance satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment (Brown and Treviño, 2006), however, the literature on the direct effect of ethical leadership on burnout is scarce (Okpozo et al., 2017). As the focus of ethical leadership style is on justice, altruism, providing ethical guidance to followers and involving subordinates in decision making process (Yasir and Mohamad, 2016; Yasir and Rasli, 2018). In addition, ethical leaders demonstrate integrity and fair treatment of subordinates (Brown et al. 2005), takes care of the followers (Resick et al. 2006). Thus, when employees perceive such ethical leadership behavior, this will influence subordinates’ level of trust, thereby affecting employees’ burnout (Mo and Shi 2017). As, research on the relationship between ethical leadership and burnout is still limited (Vullings et al., 2018; Okpozo et al., 2017). Prior studies have shown an indirect effect of ethical leadership on employee burnout (Mo and Shi, 2017). Hence, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: *Ethical leadership is negatively related to employees’ burnout.*

Ethical leadership and employees’ trust

Ethical leadership and trust-based relationships are important elements for the creation of effective, and sustainable organizations (Xu et al., 2016; Gelb and Strawser, 2001). The high moral values of ethical leaders increase the trust and desire to work for the interests of the organization (Zhu et al., 2004). The moral, positive, and just relationship with the subordinates of an ethical leader will help to establish employees’ trust in an organization (Leana and Van Buren 1999). Prior literature demonstrates a strong association between ethical leadership and employee trust in an organization and how they affect each other (Gomibuchi, 2004; Engelbrecht, et al., 2017; Yasir and Khan, 2020). Thus, the current study intends to examine the effect of ethical leadership behavior on employees’ trust, thus having the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: *Ethical leadership is positively associated with employees’ trust.*

Employees’ trust and employees’ burnout

Trust is at the heart of most social interactions and it can act as a barrier against burnout, and a lack of trust can be associated with employee’s burnout, that is why the levels of burnout are lower when employees trust their management and supervisors (Lambert et al., 2012). Recently, Mo and Shi (2017) also identified that there exists a negative association between employees’ trust in the leader and employees experiencing burnout. However, empirical studies regarding the association between employees’ trust and burnout are still limited and that is why this study proposes the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: *Employees’ trust is negatively related to employees’ burnout.*

Employees’ trust as a mediator

Mo and Shi (2017) suggested that employees may be distressed and upset psychologically when they feel that they lost trust in their leadership. Subsequently, those negative feelings lead to long-term exhaustion, deviation from work, and decreasing interest in the job (Bechtoldt et al. 2007). However, those who are cared for and supported by leaders of their organizations could be less at risk of burnout (Dirks and Ferrin 2002; Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence 2012). Moreover, subordinates having a trust-based association with their ethical leaders mostly have a higher sense of psychological identification with the organization, thereby having a greater motivation level in order to exert more effort thus achieving a higher performance level in the organization (Schaubroeck et al. 2013). Therefore, this study is having the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: *Employees' trust mediates in the relationship between ethical leadership and employees' burnout.*

Conceptual framework

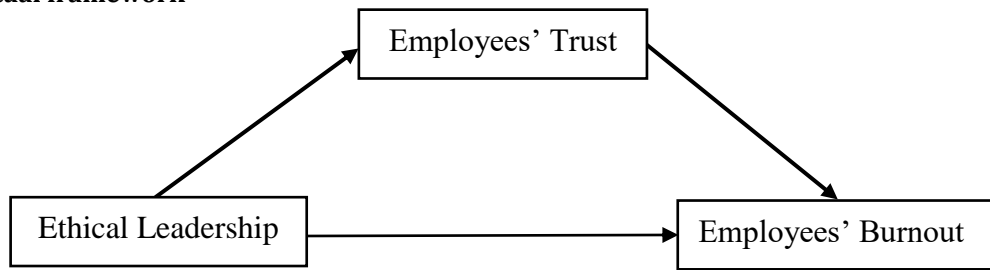


Figure 1: Framework of the study

III. METHODOLOGY

Sampling

In this study, data was collected using a convenient sampling technique. 280 questionnaires were distributed among doctors in the public sector hospitals in Pakistan of which 203 completed questionnaires were returned. The sample consists of 150 male and 53 female respondents, making it a 73.9% and 26.1% sample size respectively. Furthermore, respondents having an age less than 30 years were 43 individuals, 30 to 40 years were 94 individuals, and 40 to 50 years were 66 individuals making it 21.2%, 46.3%, and 32.5% of the sample respectively. Moreover, individual education status was as follows; graduates were 111 individuals, and postgraduates were 92 individuals, making it 54.7%, and 45.3% of the sample size respectively. Lastly, the level of experience of the individuals was as follows: 1 to 5 year(s) were 114 individuals, 5 to 10 years were 83 individuals, and more than 10 years were 6 individuals, making it 56.2%, 40.9%, 3.0%, of the sample size respectively.

Measurement instruments

Ethical leadership was measured using a scale provided by Yasir and Rasli (2018) having seventeen items. Trust in supervisor was measured using a scale provided by Robinson and Rousseau (1994) having seven items. Whereas, employees' burnout was measured using a scale provided by Maslach et al., (1996) having twenty-two items. All items were anchored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly agreed to (5) strongly disagreed.

IV. ANALYSIS

Multivariate normality was examined using a normal P-P plot of the regression standardized residual, histograms, and scatter plot. A straight line on the normal probability plots, a bell-shaped curve on the standardized residual histogram and a scatter plot (the relationship is linear) highlighted in figure 1 indicates a normal distribution of the data (Pallant, 2005).

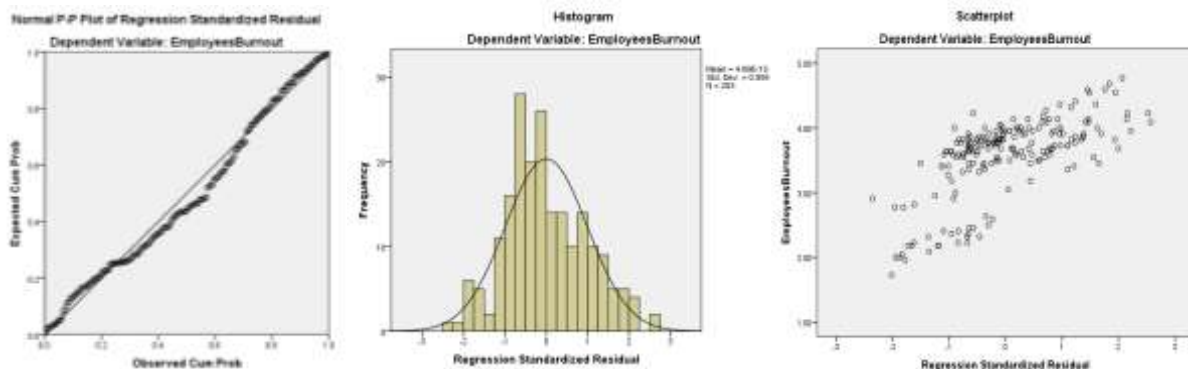


Figure 1: Multivariate normality

Moreover, to examine univariate normality, values of skewness and kurtosis were observed. Results (see table 1) indicate that the values of skewness and kurtosis are within the acceptable range of ± 2 (Kline, 2015).

Tables 1: Skewness and Kurtosis (N203)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
EL1	2.5616	.89548	.607	-.923
EL2	2.3941	.96594	.703	-.399
EL3	2.9163	.92162	.053	-1.430
EL4	2.8325	.99081	.096	-1.315
EL5	2.5172	.94053	.671	-.773
EL6	2.5961	.94627	.676	-.599
EL7	2.4680	.82816	1.001	.147
EL8	2.5813	.82477	.860	-.358
EL9	2.3153	.69590	1.263	1.093
EL10	2.6650	.88223	.623	-.466
EL11	2.3300	.91977	.723	.136
EL12	2.5911	.90942	.743	-.759
EL13	2.5123	.91392	.612	-.655
EL14	2.5222	.84622	.648	-.655
EL15	2.8522	.95846	.164	-1.071
EL16	2.5320	.79148	1.104	.020
EL17	2.3498	.79031	1.113	.374
ET1	2.7586	.96773	.600	-.886
ET2	2.9261	.97972	.277	-1.119
ET3	2.6601	.89980	.685	-.972
ET4	2.9163	.97893	.489	-.771
ET5	2.7241	.88035	.526	-.816
ET6	2.7882	.93314	.324	-.934
ET7	2.8177	.88513	.453	-.960
EB1	3.4335	.93304	-.672	-.421
EB2	3.6749	.89703	-.765	-.060
EB3	3.5320	.87468	-.771	-.144
EB4	3.6355	.82960	-.859	-.025
EB5	3.5222	.86931	-.822	-.144
EB6	3.5517	.92331	-.668	-.346
EB7	3.6158	.96992	-.676	-.409
EB8	3.5665	.91698	-.821	-.233
EB9	3.7833	.91322	-.817	-.067
EB10	3.4631	1.03998	-.514	-.718
EB11	3.0837	1.03306	-.169	-1.198
EB12	3.4680	.92421	-.342	-.880
EB13	3.3547	.95561	-.351	-1.072
EB14	3.5074	.93008	-.767	-.167
EB15	3.7389	.78716	-.977	.930
EB16	3.8128	.89245	-.889	.744
EB17	3.7882	.86714	-.817	.792
EB18	3.7586	.76162	-1.056	1.279
EB19	3.7537	.89466	-.792	-.063
EB20	3.5123	.82270	-.659	-.471
EB21	3.5074	.86385	-.721	-.175
EB22	3.6453	.88570	-1.226	.829

Note: EL = Ethical Leadership, ET = Employees Trust, EB = Employees Burnout

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of this study and indicates that the mean value varies between the highest value of 3.5777 to the lowest value of 2.5610 of employees' burnout and ethical leadership respectively.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (N203)

Constructs	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Ethical leadership	1.41	4.18	2.5610	.60487
Employees' trust	1.57	4.29	2.7987	.72559

Employees' burnout	1.73	4.77	3.5777	.59393
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Moreover, the value of Cronbach's alpha for ethical leadership was .928, employees' trust was .891, and employees' burnout was .938, hence it is within the acceptable range (Sekaran, 2006). Furthermore, table 3 summarizes the correlation analysis of this study.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

		Ethical Leadership	Employees Trust	Employees Burnout
Ethical Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.700**	-.722**
	Sig.		.000	.000
	N		203	203
Employees' Trust	Pearson Correlation		1	-.649**
	Sig.			.000
	N			203
Employees' Burnout	Pearson Correlation			1
	Sig.			
	N			

**p < .01

Table 3 indicates a negative and significant relationship between ethical leadership and employees' burnout ($r = -.722$, $p < .01$). Moreover, a positive and significant relationship exists between ethical leadership and employees' trust ($r = .700$, $p < .01$). Lastly, a negative and significant relationship was found between employees' trust and employees' burnout ($r = -.649$, $p < .01$).

Table 4: Regression analysis for ethical leadership and employees' burnout (N203)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.394	.126		42.813	.000
	Ethical Leadership	-.709	.048	-.722	-14.813	.000

$R^2 = 0.522$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.520$, $F = 219.428$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$

Table 4 shows the regression analysis carried out for ethical leadership and employee' burnout. The value of R^2 was 0.522 which reveals that 52.2% variation in employees' burnout is brought due to ethical leadership. Beta value was -.722 which reveals a negative association between ethical leadership and employees' burnout.

Table 5: Regression analysis for ethical leadership and employees' trust (N203)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.648	.159		4.077	.000
	Ethical Leadership	.840	.060	.700	13.899	.000

$R^2 = 0.490$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.488$, $F = 193.183$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$

According to table 5, the value of R^2 was 0.490 which reveals that 49% variation in employees' trust is brought due to ethical leadership. Beta value of .700 reveals a positive association between ethical leadership and employees' trust.

Table 6: Regression analysis for employees' trust and employees' burnout (N203)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.065	.127		39.902	.000
	Employees Trust	-.531	.044	-.649	-12.103	.000

$R^2 = 0.422$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.419$, $F = 146.485$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$

According to table 6, the value of R^2 was 0.422 which reveals that 42.2% variation in employees' burnout is brought due to employees' trust. Beta value of -.649 indicates a negative association between employees' trust and employees' burnout.

Table 7: Regression analysis for ethical leadership, employees' trust and employees' burnout (N203)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.394	.126		42.813	.000
	Ethical Leadership	-.709	.048	-.722	-14.813	.000
2	(Constant)	5.544	.126		44.083	.000
	Ethical Leadership	-.516	.064	-.525	-8.020	.000
	Employees Trust	-.230	.054	-.281	-4.296	.000

$R^2 = 0.562$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.558$, $F = 128.474$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$

Table 7 highlights the mediating role of employees' trust between ethical leadership and employee burnout. As beta weight reduced from -.722 to -.525 and remained significant indicating partial mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

V. DISCUSSION

There is a growing understanding of the importance of ethical leadership in the management of employees at work. However, the psychological processes that link ethical leadership with subordinates' job-related outcomes have rarely been analyzed in past studies (Walumbwa et al. 2011; Mayer et al. 2012; Yasir and Rasli, 2018). Therefore, this study is in response to demands for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanism that is influenced by ethical leadership. Specifically, present research deals with the psychological mechanism that links ethical leadership with employee burnout, thus investigating the mediating role played by employee's trust in the context of public sector hospitals of Pakistan.

The findings of this study indicate that ethical leadership is negatively related to employee burnout. As ethical leadership behaviors include one's integrity and fair treatment of subordinates (Brown et al. 2005). As well as individual actions, such as showing sincere concern for subordinates and their desires (Treviño et al., 2003; Resick et al., 2006). This would also make them feel greater well-being and lesser burnout (Vullings et al., 2018; Siegrist 1996). Thus, previous literature shows that ethical leadership is negatively related to emotional fatigue (Chughtai et al. 2015) and burnout (Vullings et al., 2018; Mo and Shi 2017).

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that ethical leadership is positively related to employees' trust. Ethical leaders guide subordinates that what is expected of them and how they can contribute positively to the company (Simons, 2002; Yasir and Rasli, 2018). So, when workers feel respected and equally compensated, they appear to trust their leadership (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008). Furthermore, Kalshoven et al. (2011) identified that expectations of ethical leadership of employees greatly contribute towards the trust of employees in their top management. In addition, subordinates imitate leaders who are mostly regarded as desirable and reliable role models; (Brown et al. 2005; Bandura 1977). Therefore, previous literature shows that ethical leadership is positively related to the trust of employees (Brown et al., 2005).

Moreover, the results of this study indicate that employee trust is negatively related to the burnout of employees in the under study sector. Mo and Shi (2017) suggest that employees can become emotionally disturbed and distressed by the lack of trust in their leader. These negative feelings contribute to long-term exhaustion and a reduced interest in job duties and even deviant workplace

behavior (Bechtoldt et al. 2007). On the other side, people getting good treatment and help from their supervisors could be at a lower risk of experiencing burnout (Kannan-Narasimhan and Lawrence 2012; Dirks and Ferrin 2002). Thus, previous literature also indicates a negative association between organizational trust and emotional burnout level (Özgür and Tektaş, 2018).

Current research further shows that employee trust plays a key mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership and employee burnout in the understudy sector. Previous literature shows that employees are more capable of acquiring the psychological resources under the guidance of ethical leaders to establish improved trust-based relationships between leaders and followers (Sharif and Scandura 2013; Hobfoll 1989; Pearlin et al. 1981). Moreover, subordinates are more likely to feel comfortable when they share their inner feelings with the leadership of the organization (Hochschild 1983) which may enhance psychological identification and commitment to the organization (Walumbwa et al. 2011; Neves and Story 2015). Thus, the employee's burnout is less likely to occur (Mo and Shi 2017).

Theoretical implication

Ethics discussions are common because of various unethical activities in organizations, and these misconducts can be costly as well as dangerous. Ethical leadership affects ethical related outcomes, for instance, employee performance and attitude, that is why this leadership style helps prevent employees from experiencing burnout. Thus, this study adds to the existing body of knowledge related to ethical leadership theory by analyzing burnout which is an important workplace outcome. Moreover, past literature on ethical leadership shows the significance of trust in leadership and has been studied in several different fields, for instance, ethics, management, psychology, and other related disciplines (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Thus, trust between subordinates and leaders is critical in an organizational environment, as trust enhances the degree of cooperative partnerships, which can provide organizations with substantial positive results (Brower et al., 2008). This research, therefore, enriches current literature by offering a better understanding of the value of ethical leadership in fostering employees' trust thereby minimizing burnout among employees.

Managerial implication

This research has several managerial implications as well. As organizations are increasingly interested in providing ethics-related training as part of their leadership development programs (Yasir and Rasli, 2018). Therefore, organizations should provide ethics training workshops and seminars for their supervisory level employees in order to improve their ethical behavior and moral reasoning, because it is necessary for a leader to pay attention to issues such as the extent to which employees feel comfortable in expressing their inner feelings and are trusted by subordinates as well. Thus, supervisors are encouraged to cooperate with subordinates openly and honestly (Hochschild 1983). Moreover, when subordinates do not trust their leadership and are also having low self-esteem or they fear to communicate openly with their supervisor, thus leading towards negative workplace outcomes. Hence, a leader can only be successful when subordinates trust him/her thereby openly cooperating with him/her, thus reducing the level of employee experiencing burnout.

VI. LIMITATIONS

The current study has some limitations that need to be addressed. The first limitation is related to sample size. While the sample size of this study is relatively small, the results may not be generalized. Another limitation might be the low response rate. The reason might be that people were reluctant to answer long questionnaires and some of them thought that their attitudes will be learned by their supervisors and organizations. Furthermore, this study was carried out only in Peshawar, Pakistan: therefore, we may not be able to generalize its results conclusively on a macro level. Moreover, one of the limitations of this research is that the current study employed convenience sampling techniques which is a non-probability sampling technique.

VII. FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study sample is from Pakistan's public sector hospitals, so, the understudy research model is needed to be explored in other dissimilar sectors, industries, and cultures. Moreover, future research is needed in order to explore other possible mediating variables to further explain the underlying process through which ethical leadership is linked to the employee's burnout. Furthermore, a longer period is needed for analyzing the association between ethical leadership, employees' trust, and

employee's burnout, therefore further studies are needed to investigate the relationship between ethical leadership, employees' trust, and employee's burnout thereby utilizing longitudinal research design. Lastly, future research is needed that should be based on probability sampling technique.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The top management of the public sector hospitals of Pakistan needs to exhibit ethical leadership behavior thereby fostering employees' trust, leading towards minimizing the level of employees experiencing burnout. Thus, this study adds to the existing body of knowledge related to the relationship between ethical leadership, employees' trust, and burnout, as it supports the significance of ethical leadership style that assists in fostering employees' trust in supervisor, which lead towards reducing the chance of employees' experiencing burnout.

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