

**CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY, ISLAMABAD**



**Impact of Ethical Leadership on Emotional  
Exhaustion: The Mediating Role of  
Organizational Citizenship Anxiety and  
Moderating Role of Psychological Safety**

by

**Amina Noor**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the  
degree of Master of Science

in the

**Faculty of Management & Social Sciences  
Department of Management Sciences**

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*I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my Tayya Abu, my dearest mother, and my beloved brother, whose unwavering support, prayers, and sacrifices have been the foundation of my journey.*



## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

**Impact of Ethical Leadership on Emotional Exhaustion: The  
Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Anxiety and Moderating  
Role of Psychological Safety**

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## *Abstract*

The present study's purpose is to investigate the impact of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion, through the mediating role of organizational citizenship anxiety. The study also examined the moderating effects of psychological safety on ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. While ethical leadership is generally perceived as beneficial, this research explores how, under certain conditions, it may inadvertently contribute to employee burnout in the educational sector of Pakistan. A quantitative method were employed, and the data were collected from 281 academic staff using a non-probability sampling technique. The Google forms was used for the purpose of online data collection. The data analysis was conducted through SPSS using correlation, regression, and PROCESS Macro by Hayes. The findings revealed, that ethical leadership significantly and positively impacts emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, organizational citizenship anxiety was found to mediate this relationship, indicating that pressure to exceed formal job roles could leads to psychological strain. However, the results showed that psychological safety may not be a moderator of the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion as hypothesized in the literature. This study contributes to the literature by offering a nuanced understanding of ethical leadership's unintended consequences and suggests practical implications for leadership development and mental health support in academic institutions. Limitations and future research directions are also discussed.

**Keywords:** Ethical Leadership; Emotional Exhaustion; Organizational Citizenship Anxiety; Psychological Safety.

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# Abbreviations

|            |                                    |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>EE</b>  | Emotional Exhaustion               |
| <b>EL</b>  | Ethical Leadership                 |
| <b>OCA</b> | Organizational Citizenship Anxiety |
| <b>PS</b>  | Psychological Safety               |

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The importance of comprehending elements that affect workers' mental health, especially mental exhaustion, has been brought to light by the increasing complexity of organizational difficulties. A crucial topic of research in the educational field, emotional exhaustion brought on by excessive work expectations not only compromises employees' well-being but also jeopardizes organizational sustainability, performance, and moral behavior. In this regard, the mental health of employees, more especially the employee's emotional exhaustion has gained significant attention in the recent years ([Lapalme et al., 2023](#)). Excessive job demands can lead to emotional exhaustion which is the state of permanent resource deficiency that is harmful to employees' mental and physical well-being as well as the viability of businesses ([Qian, 2020](#)). According to prior studies, emotionally spent workers often adopt attitudes that not only impair moral behavior and performance but also promote absenteeism and a clear desire to quit ([J. Lee, Resick, Allen, Davis, & Taylor, 2024](#)).

Since it has a significant effect on subordinates, leadership more especially the ethical leadership is a crucial situational factor in organization. Since [Brown, Treviño, and Harrison \(2005\)](#) introduced ethical leadership to subject regarding business ethics, it has drawn more attention. The focus of the ethical leadership is on the leader acting as stewards and representatives of moral principles. [Brown](#)

et al. (2005) defined 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). Despite the fact that there are many different perspectives on ethical leadership, several studies have relied on this definition. According to Treviño, Brown, and Hartman (2003), people generally link ethical leadership with personal traits including fairness, trustworthiness, honesty, principled-ness, and finally altruistic motivation.

According to Brown and Treviño (2006), it's a leadership style that is strongly associated with the good organisational behaviours and attitudes of employees. According to Theriono and Liantoa (2024), ethical leaders have managerial authority who can inspire employees to pay attention, can serve as a reliable and relevant role model linked to the qualities of compassion and treating others fairly. They can also offer attitudes, values, and behaviours which staff members can pick up and emulate. According to Brown et al. (2005), the ethical leader can instill in their staff certain behaviours that enhance their wellbeing and are necessary for them to deal with moral quandaries.

The ethical leadership is expected to promote, communicate, and reinforce followers' ethical behaviours which results in a variety of key employee attitudes and behaviours such as job satisfaction (Freire et al., 2020), good commitment (Asif, Qing, Hwang, & Shi, 2019), organisational citizenship behaviour (Huang et al., 2021), and organisational performance (Liu, Hu, Li, Wang, & Lin, 2014). Ethical leaders not only set a good example by following processes and regulations, but also utilize reward and punishment systems to encourage ethical behaviour among employees (Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000). The researchers have previously produced some conclusive evidence that ethical leaders can lower deviant employee behaviours (Tufan, Namal, Arpat, Yesil, & Mert, 2023). Furthermore, ethical leadership aims to persuade the number of employees with the uncommon, achievable convincing, and seemingly convincing message (Santiago-Torner, González-Carrasco, & Miranda Ayala, 2024). Ethical discourse has an impact on the quality of relationships and the final attitude of employees when combined with a proactive effort by the leader to influence based on normative criteria (Qian,

2020). According to [H. Lee, An, Lim, and Sohn \(2021\)](#), ethical leaders has a strong emotional impact on their employee's as there relationships develops over time. They argue that by consistently providing support and necessary resources, ethical leaders can positively shape employee's experiences. Supporting this perspective, [\(Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2016\)](#) through a meta-analysis, found that employees led by ethical leaders are more likely to be engaged in organizational citizenship behaviors, display positive attitudes, and report higher levels of job satisfaction.

In contrast, other research have found negative consequences of ethical leadership, demonstrating that the effects of ethical leadership are not always positive. The function of ethical leadership provokes intense debate. The research by [Feng, Zhang, Liu, Zhang, and Han \(2018\)](#); [Miao, Newman, Yu, and Xu \(2013\)](#); [Mo, Ling, and Xie \(2019\)](#), suggests that an excess of moral expectations in the workplace can creates ethical tension among employees. When employees feel constantly judged or scrutinized, it might diminish their motivation to voluntarily take part in organizational citizenship behaviors ([Stouten, Van Dijke, Mayer, De Cremer, & Euwema, 2013](#)). Followers regard leader who acted in highly ethical ways as looking down on their morality and as not being sufficiently moral, which reduces their incentive to engage in OCB ([Fu Long, 2020](#)). Similarly, followers will regard leaders who do not care about demonstrating ethical behaviour as looking down on their morals, because such leaders may be frowning on their own moral behaviour.

While previous research have primarily focused on the linear effects of ethical leadership on organisational good outcomes, current advancements in the business ethics literature have begun to call into question the standard linear assessment of ethical leadership's impact. Interestingly, [\(Yang, 2014\)](#) found that the link between ethical leadership and employee well-being at work was not positive.

In fact, the study revealed a negative association, suggesting that ethical leadership may adversely affect employee's workplace well-being and, consequently, there organizational behavior ([Mo et al., 2019](#)). Most studies currently regard ethical leadership to be a driving force behind beneficial organisational behaviours and attitudes in the workplace. However, the truth appears to be more convoluted than the findings of previous study. Multiple studies have looked into the contexts in which emotional weariness is reduced. Some scholars have concluded that social

support obtained from ethical leadership is connected with the provision of valuable resources and steps to prevent the follower's emotional degradation (Qian, 2020). When leaders became overly focused on directing their subordinates' ethical conduct, it can result in controlling behavior and trigger moral distress in employee's which ultimately drains their personal resources (Fu Long, 2020). For ethical leadership to have a constructive impacts, it must be grounded in a relationship of trust and supported by a system of rewards and consequences that employees clearly comprehend (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). According to (Feng et al., 2018), employees only readily replicate the ethical leader's actions when they view the leader as a credible and attainable role model. Actually, the leader view of positively putting impact on employee behaviour is linked to learning and modelling processes (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008).

Additionally, two-way communication and relationships built on kindness and attentive listening are promoted by ethical leaders. But when moral behaviour turns into a sense of duty, the alignment between a leader and their staff is no longer based on common values, and ethics turns into a requirement for employees (Stouten et al., 2013). Therefore, employees are overwhelmed by the leader's idea, even if it is completely ethical. According to Li, Lau, and Chan (2023), moral approaches which is viewed as unachievable neutralise the employee's voluntary behaviour and provide a compulsory scenarios which emotionally overwhelms the employee. Employees might then feel that their values are being questioned in such situations. Employees' feelings of moral rejection and injustice can lead to apathy and resignation (Mo et al., 2019).

Employees' perceptions of moral imbalance, on the other hand, may cause employees to engage in the greater number of overcompensation mechanisms, necessitating a bigger expenditure of emotional energy, which may weary them (Qian, 2020). As a result, considerable effort and active investment in unreturned resources would cause disproportionate stress. The perceived moral need to conform to the standards provided by the ethical leader imposes a significant psychological cost in order to avoid social criticism (Ekberg, Ekberg, Weinglass, & Danby, 2021). Therefore, when leadership promote ethical behavior, it is important that their message is framed not as an obligation but as a helpful strategy for managing

workplace stress (Zheng et al., 2015). However, if a leadership places too much emphasis on moral expectations, employees may begin to suppress their emotions and rely heavily on the self-control. While self-control can be an effective way to handle stress, its benefits are most evident when emotional and effort-related demands are kept in balance (Prem, Kubicek, Diestel, & Korunka, 2016; Wojdylo, Baumann, & Kuhl, 2017). Whereas, excessively high levels of ethical standards encourage followers to focus their efforts on the atmosphere of moral rigidity and low self-regulation, preventing spontaneity (Feng et al., 2018).

This purported emotional suppression accompanied by emotions of obligation, causes emotional exhaustion (Li et al., 2023). In this situation, the previously proven negative association between ethical leadership and emotional weariness takes on new meaning and becomes positive. That is, when an ethical leadership treats followers in a fair manner, he or she acts as an attenuating force, providing resources to employees to keep them from being emotionally tired (H. Lee et al., 2021). However, when there is a lack of ethical consistency in the communication between leaders and employees, it can create a sense of disconnection, negatively affecting employees' perceived well-being. In such cases, the ethical expectations placed on them may feel overwhelming, leading to emotional exhaustion (Fu Long, 2020).

This study adds ethical leadership to the study of emotional exhaustion from the less explored angle in light of these rather conflicting issues. The goal of ethical leaders is to enhance the organisational behaviour of their workforce. Accordingly, from the standpoint of social learning, behavioural changes may constitute significant emotional strains for the worker (Fu Long, 2020). According to Brown et al. (2005), there is a tendency for employees to mimic the actions of their leaders. The distinction between low, high and moderate levels of ethical leadership has so far received increased attention. For instance, studies have shown that moral leaders have an inverted U-shaped effect on employee OCB (Stouten et al., 2013). According to (Zhu, Treviño, & Zheng, 2016), employees' excessive attention to ethical issues and their attempts to internalise the ethical leader's principles and behaviours necessitate ongoing resource consumption. Employees may thus feel extremely frustrated when they try to match the leader's ethical standards, and

the ethical pressure the leader puts on them lowers their sense of wellbeing to the point of emotional exhaustion (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). Actually, employees experience role overload as a result of the excessive responsibility implied by striving to live up to the ethical leader's standards, which can cause worry and emotional tiredness (Junça Silva, Almeida, & Rebelo, 2024).

We need to investigate the extra implications of ethical leadership, taking into the account employees' emotional exhaustion, as well as the potential mediating and moderating mechanisms that may underpin negative effects. When investigating the ways by which ethical leadership negatively affects employees' emotional weariness, we took into account the significance of organisational citizenship anxiety. Cheng and McCarthy (2018) argued and demonstrated that the organizational environment play a crucial role in triggering state anxiety. When job roles involve high demands, they can create significant psychological strain, leading employees to perceive greater threats in their work environment, which in turn contributes to state anxiety (Warr, 1990).

Leadership style is a significant organisational context variable that affects employees' work attitudes and behaviours. Leaders have the greater psychological impact on employees than other members of the organisation because they directly assign work tasks to employees (Fu Long, 2020). According to Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, and Calvo (2007), state anxiety is the condition in which workers experience agitation and anxiety when confronted with work-related tasks that must be finished. (Burke, 2010) noted that a key element influencing workers' stress levels at work is leadership style. Organisational citizenship anxiety occurs when workers are concerned about the organisational citizenship behaviour they must practise (Fu Long, 2020).

The employees those who engage in organisational citizenship behaviours while working under ethical leadership are more likely to experience psychological strain. As previously indicated, employees would tend to emulate ethical leadership. Zhu et al. (2016) found that ethical leadership shapes the degree to which employees focus on the ethical matter. When guided by ethical leadership, employees are more inclined to recognize, absorb, and reflect the ethical standards demonstrated by their leaders, often striving to align their own behavior with those values. As a

result, the reduction in employee well-being when working under ethical leadership could be attributed to the leader's pressure on employees (Yang, 2014).

It is crucial to recognize that strong emphasis on organisational citizenship behaviours under ethical leadership could transform these actions into perceived job responsibilities. Consequently, employees may feel pressured to meet these expectations, leading to what is known as organisational citizenship pressure (Bolino, Turnley, Gilstrap, & Suazo, 2010). Cheng and McCarthy (2018) also noted that ethical leadership is often associated with heightened or increased managerial demands, which raise the performance expectations that are placed on employees. To meet the high demands imposed by the leadership, ethical pressure and emotional discomfort are developed. As a result, we hypothesised that ethical leadership causes employees to feel anxious about their organisational citizenship. The secondary result of this condition anxiety is predominantly emotional weariness (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

In the educational sector, which is intrinsically demanding and stressful, academics have conducted substantial research on the negative aspects of employment, such as work-related stress and emotional weariness. High rates of educator burnout have been linked to an increase in teacher dropout and early retirement, raising questions about the mechanisms behind this attrition in the field of teaching, which is frequently considered as a demanding and occasionally repetitive one (Chang, 2009). As educators encounter new difficulties and work-related hardships in the teaching process, educational institutions are becoming more and more concerned about their well-being (Fathi, Derakhshan, & Torabi, 2020). Since it affects both their personal health and student outcomes, a rising corpus of research highlights the significance of educators' professional wellness (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Although ethical leadership is typically linked to favourable results, it can also inadvertently put pressure on teachers. Teachers may have organisational citizenship anxiety as they work to satisfy the high moral and performance criteria that ethical leaders frequently set. Emotional tiredness may result from this added pressure, particularly if psychological safety is insufficient or if teachers feel they don't have the resources to meet these demands. Therefore, the well-meaning deeds of moral leaders might occasionally have unforeseen negative effects that have a detrimental

influence on the effectiveness and well-being of educators ([Bermejo-Toro, Prieto-Ursúa, & Hernández, 2016](#)).

This study investigates the impact of Psychological Safety as a moderator in mitigating the detrimental effects of ethical leadership on employee emotional tiredness. Psychological safety gives employees a sense of security, allowing them to engage genuinely without fear of repercussions, which may reduce the stress and emotional weariness associated with high ethical requirements ([Brown et al., 2005](#)). When Psychological Safety is strong, employees are less likely to be concerned about upholding strict ethical standards because they feel encouraged in expressing their concerns and seeking assistance ([Newman, Donohue, & Eva, 2017](#)). When Psychological Safety is insufficient, the demands of ethical norms may go unmet, causing Emotional Exhaustion.

In the present study, psychological safety is conceptualized as the moderator of the direct relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion, rather than within the indirect pathway. This positioning is taken in Conservation of Resources (COR) theory [Hobfoll \(1989\)](#), which shows that individual strives to obtain, retain, and protect their psychological and emotional resources. Emotional exhaustion occurs when these resources are somewhat threatened or depleted. While ethical leadership is often assumed to replenish employee resources, recent studies show that it may paradoxically act as a stressor when its expectations are perceived as too excessive or morally demanding [Li et al. \(2023\)](#); [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#).

Placing the psychological safety on the direct path between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion is further supported by recent empirical findings suggesting that psychological safety moderates impact of leadership behaviors on emotional outcomes [Newman et al. \(2017\)](#). These studies emphasize that the quality of the immediate social environment, rather than internal cognitive processes alone are often determines how employees react to the leadership. Hence, the current model positions psychological safety at the direct link to examine under what conditions ethical leadership becomes emotionally taxing.

As the result, this research study gives a novel perspective on ethical leadership that has still to be recognised by the scientific community. That is to say the

ethical leaders may increase employee emotional exhaustion as a function of perceived moral intensity. As a result, we claim that ethical leadership encourages employees to be engaged in organisational citizenship behaviour, putting them under pressure while also increasing their workload and challenges. In other words, in the setting of ethical leadership, organisational citizenship behaviour becomes a source of stress, prompting individuals to suffer organisational citizenship anxiety, which affects work-related well-being. Individuals will respond differently to organisational citizenship anxiety, thus this study investigated the moderating influence of psychological safety on the detrimental impact of ethical leadership on employee emotional tiredness at work. It is believed that psychological safety can help to mitigate the detrimental effects.

## 1.2 Gap Analysis

While ethical leadership has traditionally been viewed as a force for positive change in organisations, recent research reveals that it may also have unanticipated negative effects on employees. Ethical leadership has long been associated with trust, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction [Qian \(2020\)](#). However, the emerging body of research indicate that, ethical leadership may exacerbate negative psychological outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion and stress especially when moral standards are perceived as rigid or inconsistently applied [Li et al. \(2023\)](#). Despite these insights, limited scholarly attention has been given to understanding the conditions under which ethical leadership can lead to such detrimental outcomes.

This study seeks to expand the theoretical scope of ethical leadership by examining emotional exhaustion as a critical but underexplored outcome. Several scholars have recently called for research that explores less favorable consequences of ethical leadership, warning that an overly optimistic lens can obscure its complex impacts. For instance, [Fu Long \(2020\)](#) and [\(Tomczak & Kulikowski, 2024\)](#) underscore the need to investigate how ethical leadership styles contribute to emotional exhaustion, which has been linked to impaired performance. Furthermore, [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#) argues that influence of rigid ethical climates, such as

high moral intensity, on emotional exhaustion is an emerging issue that demands both theoretical and empirical exploration.

Moreover, the mechanisms through which ethical leadership might affect employee's well-being remain under theorized. One such mechanism is organizational citizenship anxiety, a form of internal pressure where employees feel compelled to exceed expectations to avoid negative evaluations [Fu Long \(2020\)](#). Although previously under examined, recent work by [\(He, Zheng, Zhao, Jiang, & Wu, 2024\)](#) suggests that such psychological demands can create a heavy emotional burden, particularly when employees internalize leaders' moral expectations as obligatory. By incorporating organizational citizenship anxiety as a mediator, the present study provides a more nuanced explanation of how ethical leadership may unintentionally generate the psychological strain.

Additionally, more clarification is needed regarding the circumstances in which ethical leadership results in negative consequences. According to [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#), it is crucial to take into account contextual modifiers like psychological safety in order to make clear when and for whom ethical leadership has detrimental impacts. However, there are very few empirical studies that incorporate psychological safety as a moderator. In order to clarify how perceived safety in the workplace may change the link between ethical leadership and employee exhaustion, this study adds psychological safety as a crucial moderating variable. Recent research suggests that psychological safety can buffer the emotional strain caused by demanding leadership behaviors, making it a relevant moderator in the direct link between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion [Newman et al. \(2017\)](#); [Li et al. \(2023\)](#). This study therefore positions psychological safety at the direct pathway to clarify when ethical leadership becomes psychologically taxing.

Lastly, although ethical leadership research is gaining attention globally, there is still the dearth of studies contextualizing these dynamics in non-Western settings. In particular, South Asian cultures, including Pakistan, tend to emphasize hierarchy and relational obligations, potentially altering how ethical leadership is interpreted and internalized by the employees. [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#) also highlight the importance of extending such research beyond culturally similar settings, recommending that future studies examine diverse regional contexts to

develop a more comprehensive understanding of how ethical leadership influences emotional exhaustion. Responding to this call, the present study investigates ethical leadership in the Pakistani educational sector, contributing novel insights to the cross-cultural leadership literature.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

While ethical leadership is widely recognized as a positive force in organizations, a growing body of research suggests that excessive or misaligned ethical leadership can paradoxically lead to negative outcomes. Previous studies have primarily focused on the positive impact of ethical leadership on employee outcomes and organizational performance.

However, there is a dearth of research examining the potential downsides of ethical leadership, and a limited understanding of how and why these adverse outcomes emerge particularly in educational sectors.

The educational sector operates under constant pressure due to tight deadlines, limited resources, and high societal expectations, which significantly strain educators. While ethical leadership is typically associated with fostering positive work environments, its potential to inadvertently intensify workplace stress remains a concern. When not carefully balanced, ethical leadership may amplify existing pressures, contributing to emotional exhaustion among employees. This presents a critical issue that warrants investigation, as understanding this unintended impact is essential for developing leadership approaches that safeguard the well-being of educators.

Despite these concerns, limited number of empirical research has explored how ethical leadership might contribute to the emotional exhaustion and the mechanisms and contextual factors that shape this relationship.

To be specific lacks evidence from the educational context of developing countries like Pakistan. This growing but underexplored issue calls the need for further investigation into the other side of ethical leadership and its psychological implications for employees.

## 1.4 Research Question

RQ1: Does ethical leadership positively impact emotional exhaustion?

RQ2: Does Organizational Citizenship Anxiety mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion?

RQ3: Does Psychological Safety has moderating effect on ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion?

## 1.5 Research Objective

- To examine the positive impact of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion.
- To examine the mediating role of Organizational Citizenship Anxiety in this relationship.
- To assess whether Psychological Safety moderates the effect of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

Research on the negative impact of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion is an emerging area that challenges conventional assumptions about ethical leadership's universally positive effects. Investigating the mediating role of Organizational Citizenship Anxiety and the moderating influence of Psychological Safety within this framework highlights important but often overlooked consequences of ethical leadership. Developing a model that explores these determinants and outcomes enriches the theoretical literature by adding nuance to our understanding of leadership dynamics, especially in high power distance cultures. Employee-employer relations are foundational to organizational success (Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999), and examining how ethical leadership may inadvertently strain these relations provides critical insights. In a country like Pakistan, where leadership styles often lean towards authoritarianism within a high power distance culture, rigid expectations for ethical conduct can add pressure on employees, leading to increased emotional

exhaustion. This study will explore how strict ethical standards of leader will affect the employee mental health. By understanding these nuanced dynamics, organizations can cultivate leadership styles that not only promote ethics but also protect employees from potential burnout, contributing to a more supportive and productive workplace.

## 1.7 Supporting Theory

The conservation of resources theory serves as the foundation for this study. According to the often acknowledged COR theory, which describes emotional exhaustion (Hobfoll, 2011), people often work to get, safeguard, preserve, and develop the resources they believe to be valued (Hobfoll, 1989).

According to the theory, losing resources has a greater impact than gaining them, and it can have detrimental emotional and psychological effects (Hobfoll, 1989). Additionally, it emphasises the importance of resource loss, arguing that it has a greater impact than resource gain and frequently sets off loss spirals, which make people more susceptible to future losses (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). COR theory is especially significant to workplace dynamics because organisational behaviours and leadership styles have the power to either reinforce or deplete individuals' resources. According to Hobfoll (1989), chronic stressors provide employees with intense motivation and a desire to preserve their resources and protect them from the potential more resource loss and depletion. Based on an in-depth interview, (Somech & Bogler, 2019) suggested that citizenship pressure gives teachers with a feeling of depletion of physical and mental resources, and they will feel frustrated and angry when they find themselves unable to comply. According to the COR theory, workers in CCBs are aware that their efforts will not be rewarded, which heightens their sense of helplessness at work, causes them to engage in withdrawal behaviour (such as stepping away from their jobs or avoiding tasks related to their jobs) and prevents them from participating in the creative process (Ahmad et al., 2023). Employees may need to use other internal resources to cope with stress brought on by high moral intensity, which can lead to resource loss loops and exhaustion (Swendiman, Edmondson, & Mahmoud, 2019). Ethical

leadership unknowingly placing high moral and ethical demands on staff members can result in organisational citizenship anxiety (OCA), whereby staff members spend a great deal of personal resources, including time and emotional energy, in an attempt to meet these demands and prevent possible disapproval. This strain depletes staff members' emotional and psychological reserves, raising the risk of exhaustion. Yet psychological safety acts as a buffer in this dynamic, enabling workers to voice problems and ask for help, so reducing emotional exhaustion and conserving resources. Thus, by lowering anxiety, high psychological safety helps counteract the draining consequences of ethical leadership. A resource loss spiral is more likely to occur in those with inadequate psychological safety, but it also makes resource depletion worse and intensifies emotional exhaustion.

## **1.8 Key Definition**

### **1.8.1 Ethical Leadership**

According to ([Brown et al., 2005](#)), ethical leadership refers to “the demonstration of normative appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making”.

### **1.8.2 Organizational Citizenship Anxiety**

According to ([Fu Long, 2020](#)), the organizational citizenship anxiety can be understood as a specific form of work-related state anxiety, representing an employee's emotional state of tension and nervousness when confronted with the demands of organizational citizenship behavior.

### **1.8.3 Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion has been referred as emotionally depressed and tired feelings of an individual towards work and the individual continues to display physical fatigue alongside emotionally depleted feelings ([Wright & Cropanzano, 1998](#)).

### **1.8.4 Psychological Safety**

Psychological safety refers to the belief that individuals can speak up, express their ideas, and take risks without fear of negative consequences ([Newman et al., 2017](#)). [A. Edmondson \(1999\)](#) also defined it as a shared belief amongst individuals as to whether it is safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace.

# Chapter 2

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Ethical Leadership and Emotional Exhaustion

Ethical leadership arises when a leader guides people via ethical principles and values such as trust, honesty, empathy, fairness, and charisma (Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Ethics includes a person's moral character and objectives. Ethical leadership uses principles to inspire followers who are morally decent or considered right (Rakhma, Fadhilah, Zhillani, & Yulianita, 2022). Ethical leadership reflects how employees perceive the moral conduct demonstrated by their leaders, based on specific attributes such as honesty, fairness, integrity, selflessness, and a genuine concern for values (Pahrudin, Marina, & Agusinta, 2018). When leaders make decisions, ethical considerations involve both their conscious and unconscious choices, shaped by their internal moral principles and value systems. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that ethics should be an integral aspect of the ethical leader's self-concept as well as a guiding principle for leaders in all actions (Giessner, Van Quaquebeke, Van Gils, Van Knippenberg, & Kollée, 2015).

Brown et al. (2005) provide a widely accepted definition of ethical leadership as the demonstration of normatively appropriate behaviour through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, as well as the promotion of that behaviour to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. Ethical leadership encompasses multiple dimensions. One major aspect is that

such leaders act in ways their subordinates recognize as morally sound, allowing them to be seen as credible ethical figures. Another involves actively promoting ethical communication by clearly articulating moral expectations and encouraging participation from employees. Additionally, these leaders define standards of ethical conduct and guide behavior by reinforcing appropriate actions and addressing violations accordingly. Finally, ethical leaders consider ethical principles in the decision-making process and make this approach visible to their followers.

Two elements of ethical leadership behaviour can be utilised to assess ethical leadership, according to the experts' conclusions. According to [Brown et al. \(2005\)](#), these two dimensions are the moral manager and the moral individual. Moral character as an individual and as a manager are essential components of ethical leadership. A reputation for ethical leadership is shaped by a number of key factors, including one's own sense of oneself as an ethical person and one's management style. Integrity, honesty, and dependability, as well as ethical behaviour, concern for society, openness, and personal morality, are traits of ethical people. According to ([Brown & Treviño, 2006](#)), managers' moral parts of ethical leadership behaviour pertain to how leaders utilise their position and authority to support and encourage moral behaviour and standards in the workplace. Moral leaders ought to be good role models for their staff ([Brown & Mitchell, 2010](#)). An ethical individual follows the standards of ethical decision making, cares about society, is fair and objective, and holds values.

According to ([Brown et al., 2005](#)), ethical leaders should be perceived as attractive, confident, and genuine by their subordinates. This can be accomplished by engaging in plainly proper behaviour, such as openness and honesty, as well as acting altruistically, such as treating employees fairly and thoughtfully. To draw its followers' attention to the moral message, an ethical leader must be able to clearly communicate ethics and use power to support it, be cautious when making decisions for an organisation that adheres to ethical principles, and assume that the ethical side is always the correct basis for making decisions. In addition to informing staff members that upholding ethics is a crucial aspect of their jobs, leaders should stress the value of ethical behaviour and its advantages ([Cheteni & Shindika, 2017](#)). Leaders communicate in an ethical manner and are explicit

about the roles and expectations of communities and organisations ([Brown et al., 2005](#)).

However, immoral leadership behaviour has received more media attention recently, and an increasing number of scientific research indicate that moral standards may, in certain situations, boost a leader's performance. These elements have led to a rise in interest in leadership ideas pertaining to ethical leadership ([Feng-I, 2011](#)). Because it reflects an observer's perception of a leader's character, personal nature, and altruistic inclinations, ethical leadership depends on the establishment of moral norms and moral management ([Theriono & Liantoa, 2024](#)). An ethical leader is regarded as just and moral, acting morally towards both himself and other people. However, this study also uncovered another crucial aspect of ethical leadership that is the moral manager factor. A leader who practices ethical leadership actively tries to shape his followers' conduct in this way. They accomplish this by delivering messages and moral principles, giving clear examples of moral behaviour, and employing a system of rewards and penalties to hold their members responsible for their actions. In addition to being articulate, ethical leaders take initiative and follow through on their commitments ([Brown & Treviño, 2006](#)). Additionally, ethical leaders frequently discuss ethics with their followers, establish unambiguous ethical norms, and enforce them through praise and discipline.

Moral development is unavoidable, and some people experience it at specific stages of their development. Leaders with a higher level of moral growth are often regarded as more ethical than those with a lower level of ethical development. A person with a strong moral identity is motivated to act in accordance with their ethical principles and views. When people commit to ethical behaviour, moral identity is no longer a determining factor in their behaviour. While individuals who lack a strong moral identity often still follow societal norms, ethical decision-making becomes more prominent in situations where moral consensus is absent ([Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007](#)).

Context plays a vital role in influencing moral conduct within social environments ([Kish-Gephart, Harrison, & Treviño, 2010](#)). When oversight is weak and uncertainty prevails, individuals may be more inclined to make unethical or illegal

choices in pursuit of better financial outcomes. In environments where performance goals are unrealistic, pressure to boost results is intense, competition for recognition is high, and organizational values around ethics and personal accountability are weak, both leaders and employees may be more prone to unethical actions.

Ethical leaders coach staff members on how to approach objectives in an ethical way on a daily basis and communicate and advance an ethical agenda. Morally sound standards, practices, and regulations are established by ethical leaders, who also hold staff members accountable for their actions by rewarding moral behaviour and penalising immoral behaviour (Mitchell, Hetrick, Mawritz, Edwards, & Greenbaum, 2024). Supervisors that exhibit ethical leadership constantly stress ethical standards, and their staff members are aware that ethics is a top concern and the standard by which their actions are evaluated. Moral consistency, which is characterised by recurring actions, conversations, and choices that prioritise ethics across time, is the cornerstone of ethical leadership (Lemoine, Hartnell, & Leroy, 2019). The moral manager and moral person aspects of ethical leadership serve as examples of this moral coherence (Treviño et al., 2000). When a supervisor consistently demonstrates moral character, altruistic motive, and honesty and integrity in all of their actions, they are seen as moral individuals. When a supervisor develops moral methods and structures, continuously reinforces ethics as a mandate, and continuously ensures accountability by rewarding and disciplining according to ethical norms, they are seen as moral managers.

Emotional exhaustion is the primary symptom of burnout, indicating prolonged stress and depletion of emotional and physical resources (Maslach, 2001). Emotional exhaustion is defined like the psychological pain caused by one's involvement in situations that lead to feelings of emotional suppression (Kirk-Brown & Van Dijk, 2016). Burnout is a long-term reaction to ongoing affective and interpersonal stressors at work (Maslach, 2003). Undoubtedly, there is agreement on three major aspects of burnout experience: emotional weariness, depersonalisation, and poorer personal achievement. Emotional exhaustion, the most significant of the three components of burnout, starts early in the process and progressively results in more depersonalisation and a reduced sense of personal fulfilment (Maslach,

2001). The definition of emotional exhaustion given is a feeling of diminished emotional resources and emotional exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion with in the workplace can lead to psychological along with physical health issues for employees, reduce work effectiveness, and place a strain on the organisation (Zhou & Chen, 2021). Emotional tiredness is a mental health condition that can have serious psychological and financial consequences for individuals, organisations, and society (Schermuly & Meyer, 2016). As a result, it is critical to identify the source of these issues and potential solutions (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Emotional exhaustion is defined as "the feeling of being emotionally extended and exhausted by one's work". Emotional weariness emerges as psychological and emotional drain, as well as physical sense of fatigue (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

The researchers contend that minimising unwanted outcomes, such organisational deviance (Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, Van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2015), subordinate misconduct (Moore et al., 2019), and counterproductive work behaviour (Huang et al., 2021), is another reason why ethical leadership is crucial. Although both Western and Eastern contexts confirm these findings (Eisenbeiß & Brodbeck, 2014), credible research have also found little indication that ethical leadership has an impact on the deviant or unproductive behaviours of subordinates (Dineen, Lewicki, & Tomlinson, 2006). As a result, additional empirical data is required to fully comprehend the complex and ever-changing nature of ethical leadership. According to earlier research, followers may experience more complex and nonlinear effects from ethical leadership (A.-S. Chen & Hou, 2016; Stouten et al., 2013; Miao et al., 2013). For instance, followers may view an ethical leader as "arrogant" if their level of ethics is excessive (Stouten et al., 2013). Therefore, when the degree of ethical leadership reaches a particular threshold, some of its beneficial effects can be diminished (Pierce & Aguinis, 2013). To generalise and expand our understanding of the connection between emotional exhaustion and ethical leadership, further detailed study in larger job and organisational contexts is required.

Ethical leadership is thought to be a component of effective leadership and can encourage employees to engage in more positive organisational behaviours. Ethical

leadership establishes a reward and punishment mechanism to encourage employees to engage in ethical behaviour and integrates ethics into employee evaluation systems (Qian, 2020). Because ethical leadership is an appealing role model, employees' attention shifts to ethical norms and normative behaviours, allowing them to identify and emulate ethical leadership behaviour. When employees experience support in the form of fairness, trust, and genuine concern from ethical leaders, they are more likely to develop a sense of gratitude, personal responsibility, and a desire to be reliable, often leading them to go above and beyond their formal job responsibilities (Fu Long, 2020). Researchers have also discovered that workers under ethical leadership have more autonomy and a tendency to see the significance of their job in accomplishing organisational objectives and their own worth (Piccolo, Greenbaum, den Hartog, & Folger, 2010). Most existing studies have concentrated on the positive impact of ethical leadership on employee performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011; Byun, Karau, Dai, & Lee, 2018), consistently supporting the notion that ethical leadership leads to beneficial outcomes.

Therefore, it is widely accepted that ethical leadership always benefits the company and its workers and never has any bad effects. But according to the Stouten et al. (2013), in the reality, ethical leadership may have the opposite impact on workers' constructive organisational behaviour. This is because individuals who work with ethical leaders are more prone to think that their own ethical level is low and to be concerned that these leaders would scrutinise their attitudes and behaviours to see if they align with the norms. Because both parties have varying levels of ethical cognition, employees often believe that moral leaders will view them as morally deficient and are hence scared of moral rebuke (Fu Long, 2020). This viewpoint shows that ethical leadership may have more than only good impacts. Therefore, in order to better understand how ethical leadership might be made more effective, we must investigate the potential drawbacks of the ethical leadership.

In response to the business crises involving the immoral actions of top executives in numerous prominent international organisations, the scientific community has been increasingly interested in the ethical aspect of leadership. Studying the effects of moral leadership on followers is crucial because of this. To what degree can high moral standards have a positive impact on employees' emotional tiredness, and

what distinguishing characteristics make ethical leadership a unique management style?. In order to promote moral behaviour, ethical leadership creates a system of rewards and sanctions and integrates ethics into the employee evaluation process (Qian, 2020).

Many studies have examined how ethical leadership can prevent emotional exhaustion (H. Lee et al., 2021; Zhou, Liu, He, & Qian, 2022). The COR theory is used by most authors to support this link. In other words, moral leaders become a source of resources like direction, trust, function clarity, or equitable treatment—all of which are essential traits to lessen stress and the sense of ambiguity (Zheng et al., 2015). Morality and the denunciation of unethical behaviour are the primary goals of ethical leaders, who really encourage an interpretation of work in line with specific normative behaviours (Lukacik & Bourdage, 2019; Okpozo, Gong, Ennis, & Adenuga, 2017). In order to prevent their moral inclinations from becoming a duty, ethical leaders work to preserve a moral equilibrium between themselves and their followers (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). However, an overemphasis on moral behaviour at work may be interpreted as criticism and irritate staff members (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). This unachievable paradigm creates an emotional rift between the two, as employees believe that leaders who are overly strict in their ethical vision undervalue their moral effort (Stouten et al., 2013).

Strong willingness to impart moral values is a characteristic of ethical leaders, which the theory of social learning explains (Bandura, 1985). According to this conceptual premise, people adopt particular behaviours when they observe someone who is regarded as a role model (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). Imitating a behaviour, however, can sometimes be involuntary. When followers are challenged, they could choose to act contrary to their beliefs in order to re-establish the moral equilibrium. Their psychological resources are weakened by this sense of duty, which turns into a demand.

According to Lee and Huang (2019), the impulse to counteract a perceived moral difference actually entails a number of forced automatic behaviours that demand a greater emotional energy expenditure, and this context of loss results in tiredness. Therefore, a conditional pattern of demand that strains the employees and creates a high impression of pain is determined by their incapacity to act in accordance

with internalised and previously accepted ideals (Fumis, Junqueira Amarante, de Fátima Nascimento, & Vieira Junior, 2017).

A strong sense of dependence is created between ethical leaders and their followers when they place a high value on trust, which lessens emotional tiredness. But trust requires contact and beliefs to be nurtured, thus it extends much farther (Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2015). Consequently, communication becomes unidirectional and ineffective as soon as the ethical leader is the only source of the message, shattering the previously built confidence. Irritability and emotional weariness are common outcomes of this stressful circumstance (Li et al., 2023). An overly rigid moral framework assumes that followers control their emotions which might lead to emotional exhaustion.

In these situations, there is a positive correlation between emotional tiredness and ethical leadership, and the ethical leader's influence is no longer helpful. Emotional tiredness results from prolonged emotional repression using a faked behavioural model (Chi & Liang, 2013; Jahanzeb & Fatima, 2018). In fact, followers become emotionally exhausted when they are unable to act in accordance with their principles and join a vicious cycle where acceptability is contingent on specific limitations. This occurs when followers are unable to express their feelings without feeling rejected or obligated.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

**Hypothesis 1.** Ethical leadership has a significant and positive impact on the employee's emotional exhaustion.

## 2.2 Mediating Role of Organisational Citizenship Anxiety

Organisational citizenship behaviour is defined as discretionary behavior which adheres to an organization's ethical standards. OCB is defined by Organ and Konovsky (1989) as "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation." This definition has advocated

for its favourable effects on employees and organisations (He, Zhou, Zhao, Jiang, & Wu, 2020). It can encourage the organization's effective operation, including a willingness to assist colleagues in completing work responsibilities and actively participate in various organisational activities.

An increasing body of research, has begun to investigate the possible drawbacks of OCB (De Clercq, Suhail, Azeem, & Haq, 2021) and challenge the exclusive discretionary nature of organizational citizenship behavior (Germeys, Griep, & De Gitter, 2019). Employees who put in extra effort at work (e.g., helping coworkers and supervisors beyond the call of duty) because they are under a lot of social or managerial pressure are more likely to experience anxiety, burnout, and role overload (He et al., 2020). According to (Zhang, Yang, Zhang, & Li, 2018), citizenship pressure may be positively linked to job stress or burnout, which is particularly detrimental to employees' motivation for their work (De Clercq et al., 2021) and can substantially jeopardise their health and well-being (Somech & Bogler, 2019).

Therefore, it is possible that companies would actively reward, reinforce, and promote these behaviours in addition to showing gratitude, and occasionally even encourage employees to participate in them (Netchaeva, Ilies, Magni, & Yao, 2023). Citizenship pressure is used to describe the pressure employees experience from their organisations to engage in citizenship behaviours (Bolino et al., 2010). Measures of resource status, or the total amount of resources available at a particular moment, are of interest to researchers. The most common methods for determining resource status are subjective assessments of burnout or fatigue (Weigelt et al., 2022). As previously stated, feelings of exhaustion are frequently used to describe resource status. For instance, weariness is specifically mentioned by Weigelt and colleagues (2022) as a sign of temporary resource condition. This study illustrates that people feel more exhausted when they perceive that their resources are limited, as symbolised by the image of a cell phone battery. As a result, in our research, we associate resource status with exhaustion: the less resource status, the more fatigue.

Therefore, participating in OCBs will result in a decrease in an employee's resource status, which will ultimately cause them to feel more exhausted. On the other hand, the perceived pressure to participate in OCBs does not entail any real

behaviours, yet it may nonetheless deplete resources and lower employees' resource status. But not every employee benefits equally from a job where good behaviour is expected. Indeed, some research have suggested that working for companies with a high prevalence of OCBs may have drawbacks (Bolino, Klotz, Turnley, & Harvey, 2013).

However, new studies show that organizational citizenship behavior can be exhausting and also draining (Bergeron, 2007; Bolino & Turnley, 2005). As a result, internal factors may work to discourage or even reverse an employee's desire or capacity to continue OCB. In fact, OCB entails the decision to devote mental, emotional, and physical resources to activities that surpass the technical requirements (Bolino, Hsiung, Harvey, & LePine, 2015). When these resources are limited, an internal conflict arises in which the individual begins to feel exhausted by these particular behaviours due to worries about the fairness and usefulness of participating in these activities. Finally, when faced with a subsequent opportunity for acts of citizenship, employees who might normally be very inclined to participate in OCB might show reaction adversely (Netchaeva et al., 2023). Though it clearly resembles emotional stress, duty overload, and burnout, citizenship fatigue differs from these concepts in significant ways.

For example, a sense of time pressure, anxiety, and worry that is associated with job tasks (Hunter & Thatcher, 2007) or a general sense that one's job is stressful and that stressful things happen at work (Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986) are examples of the felt stress. Citizenship fatigue can occur in workers who are not experiencing stress, role overload, or burnout (Bolino et al., 2015) civic weariness could be brought on by criticism of one's civic behaviour, a lack of appreciation for participating in OCB.

It might also due to be an individual's belief that excessive citizenship is necessary to achieve their goals. They point out that while OCB is not legally mandated, it is frequently rewarded both publicly and informally, which puts pressure on staff members to assist, speak up, take on more responsibility, and participate in other OCB activities (Bolino et al., 2010). If workers believe they need to participate in OCB to achieve desired results, like other people's approval, better performance reviews, or promotions (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009), those are

likely to believe these results are at risk if they don't participate in OCB when the chance presents itself.

According to [Sikaras et al. \(2023\)](#), anxiety is among the most prevalent mental illnesses in the general population. To cope with anticipated events or situations perceived as threatening, individuals engage in multifaceted response. These responses involving cognitive processing, emotional arousal, physiological changes, and specific behaviors ([Chand et al., 2022](#)). Anxiety is typically characterized by restlessness or nervous tension, which manifests through physical symptoms, emotional distress, and mental reactions ([W. Lee, Veach, MacFarlane, & LeRoy, 2015](#)). State and trait anxiety are "natural human reactions to unpleasant or threatening stimuli," according to [Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene \(1970\)](#). State anxiety describes the temporary emotional experiences of tension, fear, and worry that individuals might feel in specific situations ([Spielberger et al., 1970](#)). Whereas trait anxiety reflects a more stable personal characteristic, indicating how prone a person is to the experiencing anxiety in general. In circumstances that could endanger the person, state anxiety is more prevalent ([Tharpe, 2023](#)).

Trait anxiety is a more constant form of anxiety, whereas state anxiety is a temporally diffused emotional state brought on by a potentially dangerous circumstance ([Daviu, Bruchas, Moghaddam, Sandi, & Beyeler, 2019](#)). Trait anxiety is considered a long termed, consistent feature of an individual's personality, while state anxiety represents a sudden, short termed response to perceived threats or stressors ([Endler & Kocovski, 2001](#)). According to ([Spielberger, Butcher, & Spielberger, 2013](#)), state anxiety is the type of anxiety that individual experiences at a particular moment in time. According to ([Grillon et al., 2017](#)), state anxiety has been linked to detrimental impacts on a person's proponent and motor responses. The risk of shock, and a decline in reaction times and response accuracy are all experienced by those with high levels of state anxiety ([Tharpe, 2023](#)). Uncertainty and job overload are strongly and favourably correlated with work state anxiety. According to research, teachers' anxiety predicts burnout since they are exposed to unfavourable aspects of their workplace ([Craigie et al., 2016](#)).

According to the ([Fu Long, 2020](#)), organisational citizenship anxiety is a particular kind of work-related anxiety that refers to an employee's emotional state of

stress and nervousness when confronted with the demands of organisational citizenship behaviour. As noted by (Muschalla, 2017), state anxiety emerges as a temporary emotional reaction that is triggered by uncertainty and the anticipation of a possible threat related to a specific situation. Therefore, when employees go beyond their formal duties and engage in organizational citizenship behaviors under ethical leadership, they may experience a rise in state anxiety due to the perceived expectations and also the involved responsibilities (Fu Long, 2020). According to some researchers, the effectiveness and profitability of an organisation are directly correlated with employee performance in relation to organisational citizenship behaviours. As a result, when assessing employees' performance, managers should take into account both their organisational citizenship and in-role behaviours (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

Regarding the function of ethical leadership in encouraging organisational citizenship behaviour, it may be claimed that staff members under moral leadership place a high value on such behaviour. Brown and Treviño (2006) described how ethical leadership encourages employees to act in a way that demonstrates organisational citizenship. Furthermore, workers under moral leadership must continue to exhibit high standards of corporate citizenship. According to Fu Long (2020), employees will experience anxiety if their organisational citizenship behaviours are somewhat diminished and they are unable to match the leaders' expectations.

Positive employee behaviours and ethical leadership have a curvilinear relationship, according to Stouten et al. (2013). Using the social exchange theory (SET), (Stouten et al., 2013) contended that an ethical leader may come out as "arrogant" if their standards are way too high. The ethical leader may make followers feel as though they are "looked down upon," which will lower followers' OCB returns.

According to social exchange theory, along with that (Miao et al., 2013) demonstrated an inverted U-shaped relationship between followers' unethical behaviour and ethical leadership. According to research by Deery, Rayton, Walsh, and Kinnie (2017), those who take more initiative to practise organisational civic behaviour also experience more role overload and work-related stress. As a result of all of this, employees operating under ethical leadership who take on extra-role responsibilities may encounter high job pressure and a sense of work role overload. This

can then lead to heightened stress, feelings of anxiety, and concern about meeting the demands associated with organizational citizenship behaviors (Thatcher, 2007).

As stated by [Cheng and McCarthy \(2018\)](#), the strain of an individual's stress in the organisational context impacts the subsequent state anxiety level. An individual's organisational environment might create an range of pressures that affect his or her state anxiety level. Employees may experience organisational citizenship anxiety from two sources when moral leadership promotes organisational citizenship behaviour ([Fu Long, 2020](#)). By acting as role models, establishing reward and punishment systems, building strong leader-member exchange relationships with staff, offering resources, support, care, and trust, and encouraging staff to give reward to the positive attitudes and behaviours that leader value based on the reciprocity principle, ethical leadership can strengthen employees' ethical behaviours ([Theriono & Liantoa, 2024](#)).

Therefore, there are higher expectations for work engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour among employees who work under ethical leadership ([Bedi et al., 2016](#)). Employees' active engagement in organisational citizenship behaviour is accompanied by an excessive workload ([Deery et al., 2017](#)) and more complicated work arrangements ([Somech, 2016](#)). For example, there are questions about whether employees can finish organisational citizenship behavior-related tasks in a timely manner and in a sufficient amount of time. Because of the underlying uncertainty, this leads to employees believing that fulfilling organisational citizenship behaviours in accordance with leaders' expectations could endanger them ([Rodell & Judge, 2009](#)). According to ([Rotundo & Sackett, 2002](#)), a significant amount of an employee's overall performance review was based on their performance in relation to organisational citizenship behaviours. When employees are given duties that require them to perform organisational citizenship behaviours, they may experience organisational citizenship anxiety. To enhance their performance and align with the expectations of an ethical leader, employees who exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors must devote greater attention to the associated responsibilities which includes such as addressing the needs of the organization, supporting colleagues, and serving customers effectively. Organisational citizenship behaviour

is no longer a choice when employees are under pressure to engage in it (De Clercq et al., 2021). They will become anxious if they expect to fall short of ethical leaders' expectations and achieve the desired outcomes (Yam, Klotz, He, & Reynolds, 2017).

Cheng and McCarthy (2018) research indicates that state anxiety can result in low levels of work performance and emotional exhaustion. According to Elst et al. (2014), emotional exhaustion in the workplace is a sign of well-being at work and is characterised by a person's sentiments for a certain object being exhausted (Chang, 2009). Consequently, workers suffer unpleasant work-related emotions and experiences, including low self-esteem, anxiety, and despair (Soenen, Eib, & Torrès, 2019). Furthermore, workers who suffer from state anxiety often focus all of their attentions and energy on task related concerns and evaluate their skills strictly, which can impair their performance (Matthews & Edmondson, 2020). Organisational citizenship anxiety is a reflection of employees' anxious mindset over participating in organisational citizenship behaviours. When such fear reaches a particular threshold, it will impede employees' work motivation and job satisfaction (Boyd, Lewin, & Sager, 2009).

Workers who suffer from organisational citizenship anxiety often fear that they won't get the desired outcomes from their organisational citizenship activities (Fu Long, 2020). This diminishes their motivation and job satisfaction that in turn affects how good they perform on tasks involving organisational citizenship behaviours (He et al., 2020). The perceived and possible risks involved in performing organizational citizenship behaviors can lead to the feeling of insecurity. When employees struggle to fulfill leadership expectations or align their action with personal values, they may experience frustration, emotional strain, and finally emotional exhaustion (Elst et al., 2014). For example, (Fu, Greco, Lennard, & Dimotakis, 2021) discovered that employee fatigue was caused by worry during the COVID-19 pandemic. We argue that employees will feel anxious and tired on a daily basis as they believe their managers are putting more emphasis on the bottom line. Anxiety resulting from episodic performance demands is also thought to cause fatigue or "feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work" (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

When employees work under ethical leadership, they can sense that their bosses have higher standards for ethical behaviour. According to (Pahrudin et al., 2018), ethical leaders expect their employees to engage in altruistic motivated organisational citizenship behaviours, such as helping coworkers, organisations, or other stakeholders. When ethical leadership encourages employees to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors, it may be perceived by employees as the demanding expectation. This perception then can trigger state anxiety related to fulfilling these extra role responsibilities. In this way, employees may experience emotional exhaustion, cognitive interference, and distraction, also adverse effects on their physical and mental health at work (Cheng & McCarthy, 2018).

According to (Brown et al., 2005), ethical leader are also ethical manager who use rewarding and punishment systems to encourage their staff to act morally, including by practicing organisational citizenship. They also frequently incorporate organisational citizenship behaviour into performance reviews (Zheng et al., 2015). As a result, an ethical leader are a moral person who values their staff and treats them fairly and with integrity. Employees frequently respect and trust an ethical leader, particularly when they receive greater consideration and equitable, trustworthy treatment through dialogue and interaction.

Employees who feel they share a positive social exchange relationship with their leaders often view organizational citizenship behaviors as a way to reciprocate the respect and fair treatment they receive in the workplace (Treviño et al., 2000). Because of these two criteria, employees who participate in organisational citizenship behaviour do so not only out of necessity but also in order to accomplish results in an organisation with ethical leadership. To enhance the outcomes of their performance review, they must be able to live up to the leaders' expectations.

This might make employees feel apprehensive and nervous about the potential consequences of organisational citizenship behaviours. When ethical leadership is highly influential and the leader employee relationship is strong, employee's might start to view organizational citizenship behaviors as mandatory rather than voluntary. This perceived obligation then can increase pressure and lead to feelings of organizational citizenship anxiety (Fu Long, 2020). As a result, employees'

positive emotional reserves are depleted. Therefore, employees will experience emotional exhaustion and bad work-related emotions.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

**Hypothesis 2.** Employee organisational citizenship anxiety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion at work.

### 2.3 Moderating Role of Psychological Safety

The level of psychological safety in the organisation may influence the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. Psychological safety is the perception that people can speak up, express their opinions, and take chances without fear of repercussions (Newman et al., 2017). The phrase psychological safety is most commonly associated with (A. Edmondson, 1999) work in organisational psychology. A. Edmondson (1999) described psychological safety as a collective belief in employees that the workplace is a secure space for taking interpersonal risks. In such environment, individuals feel confident that being authentic, trying new approaches, or making mistakes will not result in rejection or negative consequences from the organization.

Employees are more inclined to express their opinions, communicate openly with coworkers, and ask for more feedback from their managers in a setting that is reasonably safe (Xu, Huang, Liu, & Zhang, 2025). On the other hand, those with low psychological safety tend to limit their risk-taking activities in order to prevent any unfavourable outcomes. In other words, while weighing the costs and benefits of speaking up or keeping quiet, psychological safety can lower the perceived risk (A. C. Edmondson, 2003). According to this framework, interpersonal risks are those that are directly related to the organization's work and involve actions that could expose the actor to professional criticism, such as speaking up about a problem with current practice, seeking assistance, or owning up to mistakes (Walters & Diab, 2016).

In certain situations, like the workplace, psychological safety refers to how people feel about taking on the danger of interpersonal connections (Zhou & Chen, 2021).

For people to feel safe and be able to alter their behaviour in the face of changing organisational problems, psychological safety is essential (A. C. Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Additionally, people are free to focus on job objectives and problem-solving instead of self-defence because of this safety (Schein, 1993). A safe environment where perceived risks are diminished, obstacles to change are eliminated, and mistakes are accepted without fear of retaliation is associated with an individual's experience of psychological safety (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). In the context of an organisation, psychological safety refers to how people view the social climate at work. There is a safe environment when people feel free to express who they are and what they think without worrying about the repercussions or feeling threatened.

The idea that taking interpersonal risks at work is safe is fostered by psychological safety as a cognitive state (A. Edmondson, 1999). COR theory states that psychological safety is an important interpersonal resource that increases the impact of constructive behaviours and ideas at work (Hobfoll, 2002). A meta-analysis by Newman et al. (2017) found that psychological safety is linked to enhanced interpersonal communication greater information exchange in team members and improved learning behaviors across individual, team, and organizational levels in the workplace.

Because it creates a sense of security and support at work, psychological safety is linked to lower levels of stress and anxiety, higher job satisfaction, and better resilience against burnout for individual employees (Newman et al., 2017). Employee morale is greater and emotional weariness is reduced in psychologically secure workplaces (Frazier, Fainshmidt, Klinger, Pezeshkan, & Vacheva, 2017). This suggests that one can express themselves without worrying about being attracted or having their self-esteem and professional standing negatively impacted (Han, Liu, & Lv, 2022). In today's rapidly evolving work environment, psychological safety has become essential as they provides employees with the security they need to develop, actively contribute, and perform effectively (Sobaih, Gharbi, & Abu Elnasr, 2022). Numerous intervention programs have demonstrated that psychological safety can be fostered in the individual, and psychological safety is widely associated with a number of organisationally desirable outcomes, including employees' mental health and performance (Almahri & Abd Wahab, 2023; Sasaki

et al., 2022), creativity (Han et al., 2022), and turnover intention (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2024).

The literature on psychological safety has continued to give leadership and supervision a lot of attention. Most of these research concentrated on psychological safety's mediating function, particularly in relationships between different leadership philosophies and desired behaviour at the individual and organisational levels (A. C. Edmondson, 2003). Erkutlu and Chafra (2016) conducted a study that examined the moderating function of psychological safety and discovered that it improved the impact of benevolent leadership on psychological well-being. Several studies focused on leadership at the group level have identified psychological safety as a moderating factor. Researchers have particularly explored how leadership styles such as transformational, ethical, and servant leadership interact with outcomes like team performance (Hassan & Jiang, 2021; Miao et al., 2013), team learning (Liu et al., 2014), and team creativity (Tu, Lu, Choi, & Guo, 2019). Organization-level research linking leadership to psychological safety and other outcomes was noticeably lacking (A. C. Edmondson & Bransby, 2023).

Despite being typically linked to favourable organisational outcomes, ethical leadership might paradoxically make employees feel more emotionally exhausted (Yang, 2014). Overly strict ethical standards enforced by ethical leaders compel followers to focus their energies on a setting of moral rigidity and poor self-regulation, which stifles spontaneity (Feng et al., 2018). Only when the ethical leader is viewed as a credible and attainable role model do employees freely replicate the leader's actions (Fu Long, 2020). Moral approaches that are seen as unachievable undermine employees' voluntary behaviour and create a compulsory situation that emotionally overwhelms them when ethics is turned into a demand for followers (Feng et al., 2018; Li et al., 2023). Emotional exhaustion results from this purported emotional repression, which is reinforced by feelings of duty.

When managers demonstrate concern and care for their staff, support them, and help them develop, they give them resources and help to create psychological safety for workers (Iqbal, Ahmad, Nasim, & Khan, 2020). The COR theory (Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014) states that people are more likely to experience stress and burnout and have lower employee well-being when they

have fewer resources at work. In contrast, people experience less stress and burnout and have higher levels of well-being when they have more resources at work. Employees who perceive an high level of psychological safety in the workplace they tends to feel valued and supported (C.-W. Chen, Liao, & Wen, 2014), and also they are more likely to express themselves openly (A. C. Edmondson & Lei, 2014). On the other hand, those in low psychological safety environments often expend significant mental and emotional energy managing interpersonal risks (A. C. Edmondson, 2018), which contributes to increased stress, resource depletion, and ultimately emotional exhaustion (Yam et al., 2017). Strong evidence, including empirical data, has been presented by a number of different academics to establish the links between psychological safety and employee wellbeing (Hassan & Jiang, 2021; Xu et al., 2025). According to (Kirk-Brown & Van Dijk, 2016), other people have pointed out that psychologically safe workplaces encourage good attitudes and feelings among employees. According to Singh et al. (2018), psychological safety is a resource that supports employee well-being and is consistent with COR theory.

Emotional exhaustion and other psychological health issues occur when job demands are high but resources are inadequate. Despite being often seen as a positive leadership style, ethical leadership can paradoxically lead to emotional tiredness when staff members feel undue pressure to live up to ethical standards (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). Employees may experience a sense of resource depletion, for example, if they feel under pressure to maintain ethical standards without receiving enough assistance or acknowledgement. On the other hand, employees who experience high levels of psychological safety are better equipped to handle these difficulties. By fostering open communication and improving a person's sense of control over their workplace, psychological safety lowers stress reactions.

Employees who experience high psychological safety feel confident to ask for help and voice issues without worrying about the repercussions (A. Edmondson, 1999; Newman et al., 2017). By doing this, the emotional toll of ethical duties is lessened, which lowers the risk of emotional tiredness. Employees can more effectively handle emotional demands through compensating or complementary processes when

psychological safety is strong, which lessens the detrimental effects on psychological health (Hobfoll, 2002). Employees may have stress reactions and emotional tiredness if they believe that the benefits they receive do not match the effort they put in. By offering a nurturing atmosphere that makes up for apparent resource shortages, psychological safety might mitigate these impacts.

Employees with strong psychological safety levels are probably better able to manage the responsibilities of moral leadership. Behaviourally, psychological safety encourages workers to express their concerns, communicate openly, and ask for more feedback—all of which are dangerous interpersonal behaviours (Pearsall & Ellis, 2011).

They might experience less emotional exhaustion as a result of feeling more assured about their capacity to live up to expectations. Employees who experience psychological safety are less likely to worry about upholding strict ethical standards because they feel encouraged to talk about their difficulties and ask for assistance (Newman et al., 2017). The demands of ethical norms, on the other hand, might not be met when psychological safety is insufficient, which would exacerbate emotional exhaustion.

Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

**Hypothesis 3.** Psychological safety moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when psychological safety is high and stronger when psychological safety is low.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

## 2.5 Summary of Hypothesis

H1: Ethical leadership has a significant and positive impact on the employee's emotional exhaustion.

H2: Employee organisational citizenship anxiety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion at work.

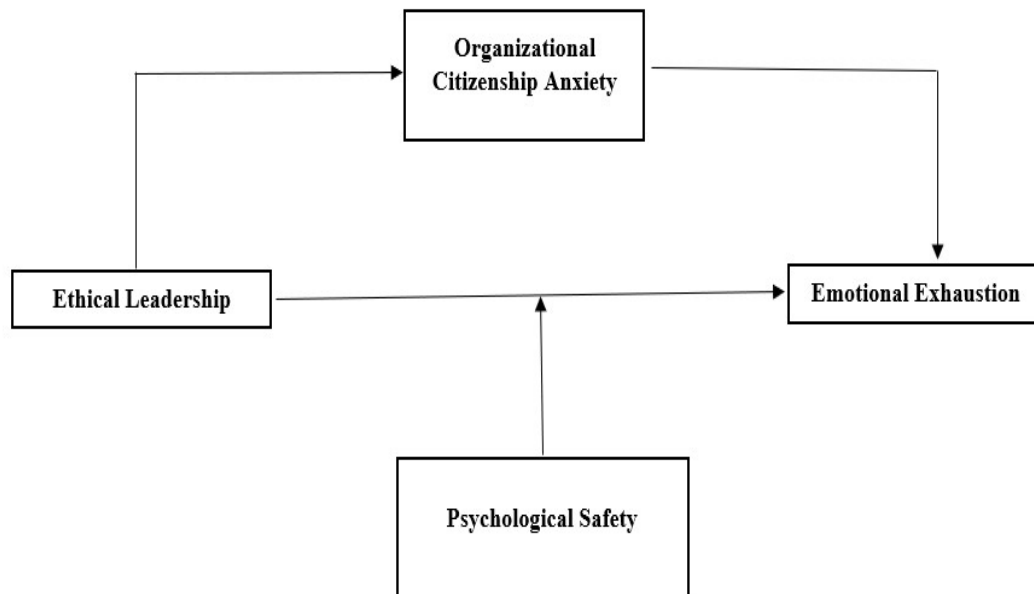


FIGURE 2.1: Research Model

H3: Psychological safety moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when psychological safety is high and stronger when psychological safety is low.

# Chapter 3

## Research Methodology

It is crucial to distinguish between the two because research methods and research methodology are so diverse from one another. Every approach or method used to adapt research is included in the research process.

The ways a researcher conducts research are referred to as research methods or techniques. To put it another way, research methods are all of the strategies that the researcher has used to explore the research problem.

Research methodology, on the other hand, is a source for methodically resolving study problems. Research methodologies are only one aspect of the consideration of research methodology.

Therefore, methodology encompasses more than just the methods; it also includes the reasoning behind the methods that emerge within the study's context and justify the use of one technique or method over another, allowing the research findings to be evaluated by both the researcher and others.

This chapter clearly present the methodology used to explore the impact of ethical leadership on employee's emotional exhaustion, while also examining mediating role of organizational citizenship anxiety and moderating effect of psychological safety. In the discussions in this chapter research design, population and sampling methodologies, model features, an instrument of all the variables, and the items included in each variable are all interconnected.

## **3.1 Research Design**

As guide for carrying out the study, research design helps researchers produce reliable and accurate findings while also increasing the study's overall efficacy. The quantitative technique and the qualitative method are the two main study design approaches that are frequently used in the social sciences. A quantitative research methodology was used for this study because it uses standardised methods and instruments to provide researchers with reliable and authenticated results (Chase, Flynn et al., 2016).

The quantitative approach is especially well-suited for this research because it makes it easier to convert observable occurrences into numerical data that can be examined to find correlations, linkages, causes, and consequences. Respondents (Pakistani college professors) express how much they agree or disagree with statements that represent their beliefs, actions, and experiences using quantifiable and visible methods. The ability to test hypotheses and analyse intricate correlations between variables is both crucial for comprehending the mediating and moderating mechanisms in the suggested model in order to further supports the quantitative design.

### **3.1.1 Type of Study**

This study is causal study in nature, which aims to investigate the cause and effect relationship between variables. To analyse these trends in the educational sector, data was obtained from Pakistani college professors. The desired sample size was 384 respondents, which ensured statistical reliability and generalisability of the results.

### **3.1.2 Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy develops the fundamental ideas that guide how researchers understand and investigate events. It reflects different perspectives on the nature of knowledge and the most effective strategies for learning a specific subject. The choice of research philosophy is influenced by both theoretical and practical

features of the investigation (Saunders & Townsend, 2018). A positivist research philosophy was adopted for this study, which aligning with its quantitative approach and focus on examining causal relationships.

The positivism is based on the concept that true knowledge comes from empirical evidence gathered via observation and measurement. This method emphasises objectivity, requiring that findings be reported consistently and reproducibly to maintain their validity. Given that the purpose of this study is to investigate the linkages between ethical leadership, emotional weariness, organisational citizenship anxiety, and psychological safety, positivism provides an appropriate framework for analysing these connections using observable and measurable data.

This study used a deductive approach, beginning with existing hypotheses and knowledge and then testing them empirically. This strategy enables the methodical evaluation of hypotheses and the application of findings to a broader population. Because positivist research frequently employs quantitative methodologies, systematic data gathering and statistical analysis were utilised to assure objectivity.

This study collected data from Pakistani college teachers, providing a solid platform for drawing relevant conclusions based on empirical evidence.

### **3.1.3 Quantitative Research**

This study takes a quantitative research strategy, collecting data through organised questionnaires. The use of numerical data assures that the research findings are measurable, objective, and statistically analysable. The data was assessed using a variety of statistical techniques and tools, allowing for a clear and systematic evaluation of associations between variables. This method improves the reliability and generalisability of the study's findings.

### **3.1.4 Unit of Analysis**

This study's unit of analysis is individual Pakistani college lecturers. These educators serve an important role in the academic and administrative structures of

educational institutions, acting as a liaison between students and upper management. Their responsibilities go beyond teaching and include mentoring students, organising academic activities, and enforcing institutional policies.

The focus on college professors provides unique insight in the effects of ethical leadership, emotional exhaustion, organisational citizenship anxiety, and psychological safety in the educational sector. Given their exposure to considerable stressors, such as heavy workloads, administrative constraints, and organisational expectations, they are an appropriate population to investigate the study's potential correlations. Their experiences contribute to a better understanding of how leadership approaches affect both emotional well-being and workplace behaviour in academic institutions.

## **3.2 Population and Sample**

### **3.2.1 Population**

The study's population of interest consists of college instructors employed by colleges in Pakistan. An online survey approach was used to collect data, addressing educators in the public and private sectors. To ensure that only college teachers participated, the survey link was shared directly with college faculty members during on-site visits to their institutions. This method helped confirm that the target population, of college instructors was accurately reached. Also to guarantee a representative sample, a total of 384 questionnaires were circulated. Strict protocols were implemented to preserve anonymity and confidentiality, which encouraged truthful answers.

This population was selected due to its high relevance to the core variables under the investigation. The academic sector especially at the college level is often characterized by tight schedules, performance pressure, limited resources, and increasing administrative demands, which place educators under the high psychological strain. The numerous studies have found that educators, particularly in developing countries, experience elevated levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout due to these pressures (Mijakoski et al., 2022). Within this context, the influence of

leadership behaviors can be particularly impactful, as inadvertently increasing the emotional strain, depending on how it is practiced [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#). Moreover, college instructors in Pakistan in a hierarchical and collectivist culture, where leadership expectations are strongly shaped by societal norms such as respect for the authority and relational interdependence. These cultural dynamics may heighten the impact of organizational citizenship pressure when moral expectations are enforced rigidly. Therefore, this population is theoretically well suited to examine how ethical leadership may have unintended impact on the emotional exhaustion of the teachers.

A response rate of almost 73%, which is deemed appropriate for social science research, was obtained from the 281 questionnaires that were sent. In order to provide sufficient statistical power, the target sample size was 384. To increase participation and guarantee prompt responses, the majority of the questionnaires were disseminated online. Given the geographical dispersion of college instructors throughout Pakistan, online data gathering was extremely beneficial due to its accessibility and simplicity. Furthermore, prior research has shown that, as long as the survey instrument is well crafted and consistently used, the data collection method does not substantially impair the quality of the data ([Church, Elliot, & Gable, 2001](#)). Online data collecting turned out to be a successful and efficient method for getting the data required for analysis, especially considering the study's time and budget limitations.

### 3.2.2 Sample Size

Calculation of Sample Size

The formula for calculating the required sample size is:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

- $n$  = required sample size

- $Z = Z$ -score (for 0.95 confidence level,  $Z = 1.96$ )
- $p =$  estimated proportion of the population (use 0.5 if unknown)
- $e =$  margin of error (e.g., 0.05 for 5%)

Substituting the values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

$$\therefore n \approx 384$$

### 3.2.3 Sampling

It was not feasible to survey every college instructor employed by Pakistan's public and private educational institutions due to time and resource limitations. In order to acquire a viable yet representative subset of the population, sampling was employed. By using sampling, researchers can get information from a smaller number of people while still being able to make insightful conclusions about the general population.

The convenience sampling was employed in this study due to the absence of a centralized or publicly accessible list of college instructors in Pakistan. This made probability sampling methods such as simple random or stratified sampling unfeasible. While convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of findings, it is a widely accepted approach in social science research where the target population is difficult to enumerate and access through the random selection. This method allowed us to reach participants efficiently while still maintaining relevance to the

study's objectives. Because participants are chosen according to their availability and willingness to engage, this approach is a sensible one in Pakistan's educational sector, where logistical obstacles and a lack of awareness can make study involvement difficult. Convenience sampling is frequently employed in social science research where accessibility and viability are important considerations, even if it may not provide the same degree of generalisability as probability-based approaches.

Other than requiring responders to be college instructors in Pakistan, no stringent selection criteria were used in order to guarantee sample variety. This method made it possible for educators from different public and private institutions in different areas to participate, which increased the variety of viewpoints that was included in this study.

### **3.3 Instrumentation**

#### **3.3.1 Measures**

This research's primary tool for gathering data was a structured questionnaire designed around Likert scale. A well-known psychometric instrument, the Likert scale gauges respondents' degree of the agreement or the disagreement with a set of question statements in order to evaluate their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours. Because it makes it easier to gather quantifiable data for statistical analysis, this approach works especially well in quantitative research.

In order to guarantee accuracy and reliability in measuring the study's primary variables, ethical leadership, emotional exhaustion, organisational citizenship anxiety, and psychological safety, where the questionnaire was designed by adapting previously approved scales from reliable sources. These measures were selected because prior research has demonstrated their validity and reliability. A reliability test (such as Cronbach's alpha) was performed to further verify their internal consistency while also making sure all measurements satisfied the necessary threshold. Four demographic factors were also included in the questionnaire: age, gender, qualification, and employment experience. In order to give background

information on the respondents and investigate possible differences in responses based on these attributes, some demographic data were included.

### **3.3.2 Ethical Leadership**

This variable was measured using scale by [Brown et al. \(2005\)](#). The scale contains ten items. For example, one sample item is “My leader can be trusted”. The responses have been relying on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)”.

### **3.3.3 Organizational Citizenship Anxiety**

To measure organizational citizenship anxiety, this study used a seven-item scale developed by ([Fu Long, 2020](#)), which was adapted from the state anxiety scale originally used by ([McCarthy, Trougakos, & Cheng, 2016](#)).

This scale captures various dimensions of anxiety associated with organizational citizenship behaviors. The scale contains seven items. One item scale is “I worry that my organizational citizenship behavior is less than others”.

The responses have been relying on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)”.

### **3.3.4 Emotional Exhaustion**

For measuring the Emotional Exhaustion 8 items scale was used developed by ([Maslach & Jackson, 1981](#)).. The scale contains eight items. The scale contains eight items. Emotional Exhaustion scale items include, “I feel emotionally drained from my work”. The responses have been relying on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)”.

### **3.3.5 Psychological Safety**

This variable is measured using the scale by ([Carmeli, 2007](#)). The scale contains seven items. One sample item is “It is safe to take a risk in this organisation.”

The responses have been relying on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)”.

TABLE 3.1: Scales Summary

| Variables                          | Scale                                      | Items |
|------------------------------------|--|-------|
| Ethical Leadership                 | <a href="#">Brown et al. (2005)</a>        | 10    |
| Organizational Citizenship Anxiety | <a href="#">Fu Long (2020)</a>             | 7     |
| Emotional Exhaustion               | <a href="#">Maslach and Jackson (1981)</a> | 8     |
| Psychological Safety               | <a href="#">Carmeli (2007)</a>             | 7     |

### 3.4 Statistical Tools and Techniques

To examine the gathered data in order to ascertain the variables mean, standard deviation (STDs), and the minimum and maximum values Descriptive analysis was used. This gave a summary of the data and made it easier to spot any anomalies or discrepancies. To evaluate the hypothesis, regression analysis were utilised to investigate the influence of independent factors on the dependent variable. A popular statistical method is regression which is used for figuring out how one or more predictors affect an outcome variable. Furthermore, correlation analysis was performed to evaluate the overall strength and direction of the correlations among the variables. The PROCESS macro from [Hayes and Preacher \(2014\)](#) was utilised in SPSS to investigate mediation and moderation effects. The [Hayes and Preacher \(2014\)](#) models 5 were used for analysis including moderation and mediation analysis. The use of SPSS really ensured a structured and statistically appropriate approach for testing this study’s hypotheses.

#### 3.4.1 Pilot Testing

A pilot test prior to large-scale data is carried out because it helps identify possible problems and avoids needless time and resource waste, along with that it is an essential phase in the research process. The pilot study was carried out with 50 respondents to guarantee the efficacy of the research tool. The purpose

of this initial testing was to confirm the validity of the suggested hypotheses and gauge respondents' comprehension and interaction with the questionnaire. The pilot test's outcomes verified that the chosen scales were suitable for additional examination. The research instrument was well-structured and suitable for gathering vast amounts of data, as evidenced by the fact that no significant problems with variable measurement, question clarity, or response patterns were found.

### 3.5 Reliability Analysis of Scales Used

Reliability is known as the degree to which a measurement tool consistently captures the construct as it is meant for evaluation of the measurement tool. It is essential for guaranteeing the validity and consistency of study results. Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used statistical measure of reliability, were used in this study to assess each variable's internal consistency. Values of Cronbach's alpha fall between 0 and 1, with values above 0.70 typically regarded as appropriate for social science research. Greater internal consistency between the elements on a scale is indicated by higher values. Every concept in this investigation had reliability scores that were significantly higher than the acceptable limit. In particular, the Cronbach's alpha for the 10-item Ethical Leadership scale was (0.811), showing strong internal consistency, while Emotional Exhaustion (8 items) displayed a alpha value of (0.860). Seven items were used to measure organisational citizenship anxiety, and the results showed great reliability (0.924). Psychological Safety with 7 items demonstrated the reliability at (0.937). These findings attest to the statistical reliability and suitability of the instruments employed to measure the study variables for additional analysis.

TABLE 3.2: Scales Reliability

| Variables                          | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Ethical Leadership                 | 10           | 0.811            |
| Organizational Citizenship Anxiety | 7            | 0.924            |
| Emotional Exhaustion               | 8            | 0.860            |
| Psychological Safety               | 7            | 0.937            |

## **3.6 Sample Characteristics**

This study looked at a number of important demographic factors, such as gender, age, educational background, and work experience, in order to have a better understanding of the respondents' nature. Examining these traits provides important background information for analysing the findings and comprehending the sample's diversity.

Finding patterns or variations in reactions and views that might be impacted by one's personal or professional history is another benefit of analysing demographic data. Since individual experiences can differ greatly, this type of insight is especially crucial in research on the educational sector.

Overall, the demographic profile strengthens the findings' credibility and generalisability, which adds to the research's robustness. The results reached are more likely to represent a wide range of viewpoints within the population of interest when the sample is well-represented and varied.

### **3.6.1 Gender**

The goal of this study was to guarantee that participants represented both genders equally. Female respondents made up 51.2% of the sample as a whole, while male respondents made up 48.8%, as seen in Table 3.3. It is possible to compare perceptions and experiences between genders fairly owing to this comparatively even distribution.

The somewhat larger percentage of female participants might be a reflection of recent changes in gender dynamics in Pakistani college teaching, especially in the city or semi-urban areas where female engagement in academics has been steadily rising.

This gender representation makes the study more inclusive and provides a chance to investigate if male and female faculty members have different perspectives on ethical leadership, emotional exhaustion, organisational citizenship anxiety and psychological safety.

TABLE 3.3: Frequency by Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative |
|--------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Male   | 137       | 48.8       | 48.8       |
| Female | 144       | 51.2       | 100        |
| Total  | 281       | 100        |            |

### 3.6.2 Age

Age was given in categorised ranges rather than exact numbers to preserve participant comfort and guarantee higher answer accuracy. Respondents were able to provide demographic information more freely by using ranges, as age is frequently seen as sensitive information. According to Table 3.4, the majority of responders (56.2%) were between the ages of 20 and 30, with equal numbers (28.1%) from the 20–25 and 26–30 age groups. After that, 21.7% were between the ages of 31 and 40, while 8.9% of participants were between the ages of 41 and 45. Respondents aged 46 and older made up the smallest segment, which is about 13.2%. According to this distribution, the sample is largely composed of younger professionals, which may have an impact on respondents' perceptions of workplace pressures, leadership behaviours, and their own psychological safety in the workplace. The generational context also offer insights into how early to mid-career educators engage with workplace norms and expectations.

TABLE 3.4: Frequency by Age

| Age          | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 20-25        | 79        | 28.1       | 28.1       |
| 26-30        | 79        | 28.1       | 56.2       |
| 32-40        | 61        | 21.7       | 77.9       |
| 41-45        | 25        | 8.9        | 86.8       |
| 46 and above | 37        | 13.2       | 100        |
| Total        | 281       | 100        |            |

### 3.6.3 Qualification

Educational background is an essential component of comprehending how people perceive and react to their workplace dynamics. It affects one's views on leadership, organisational behaviour, and psychological health in addition to forming professional knowledge and competencies.

A Master's degree was the most common qualification level among participants in this study, with the majority of respondents (52.0%) having one, as indicated in Table 3.5. Those with a bachelor's degree, who made up 44.1% of the sample, came next. Just 3.9% of respondents said they had earned a PhD.

The highly educated respondent pool represented by this academic distribution is especially well-suited for studies conducted in the field of education. The range of qualifications also makes it possible to investigate whether academic background influences how people perceive ethical leadership, emotional exhaustion, organisational citizenship anxiety and psychological safety.

TABLE 3.5: Frequency by Qualification

| Qualification | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative |
|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Bachelors     | 124       | 44.1       | 44.1       |
| Master        | 146       | 52.0       | 96.1       |
| PhD           | 11        | 3.9        | 100        |
| Total         | 281       | 100        |            |

### 3.6.4 Experience

Work experience was categorised into distinct ranges in order to gain a better understanding of the respondents' professional backgrounds. This approach promoted convenience and accuracy in responses by enabling participants to indicate their length of service without having to name specific years.

The plurality of participants (47.3%) had 0–5 years of experience, as seen in Table 3.6, indicating that a sizable component of the sample consisted of professionals in

their early careers. Furthermore, a sizable portion (44.5%) of mid-career educators reported having 6–11 years of experience. The percentage of responders with 12–17 years (4.3%) and 18 years or more (3.9%) of work experience was lower.

This distribution reflects a relatively young and dynamic workforce, and also still incorporating the perspectives of more seasoned educators. Examining how workplace experiences and perceptions of leadership, emotional well-being, and organisational dynamics may fluctuate across several career stages is made easier with the help of this combination.

TABLE 3.6: Frequency by Experience

| Experience  | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative |
|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 0-5         | 133       | 47.3       | 47.3       |
| 6-11        | 125       | 44.5       | 91.8       |
| 12-17       | 12        | 4.3        | 96.8       |
| 18 or above | 11        | 3.9        | 100        |
| Total       | 281       | 100        |            |

# Chapter 4

## Result and Analysis

In this chapter, the statistical results obtained from the data gathered for this research study are presented. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a commonly used program for quantitative research, was used to perform the analyses. This chapter's goal is to give a thorough explanation of the findings from the many statistical techniques used to assess the study's theoretical framework and hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, mediation, and moderation analysis were among the statistical methods used. The purpose of these studies was to investigate direct and the indirect links between the studies key variables.

This study specifically sought to investigate how ethical leadership affected emotional exhaustion, taking into account the moderating influence of psychological safety and the mediation function of organisational citizenship anxiety. The study, which focused on college-level teachers and was carried out in the context of Pakistan's educational system, offered insightful information about how leadership practices affect organisational climate and employee well-being.

This chapter's findings are arranged methodically to answer each study question and hypothesis. Next a summary of the sample's descriptive statistics, the other sections use correlation analysis to examine the correlations between the variables. The primary impacts are then tested using regression models, and additional analyses are carried out to look at the mediating and moderating mechanisms that the conceptual framework suggests.

Through these results, the study offers an empirical foundation for understanding how leadership practices, emotional states, and psychological perceptions interact within academic institutions, shaping employee outcomes and organizational effectiveness.

## 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

A thorough summary of the observed data is provided by descriptive statistics, which highlight important features like central tendency and variability within the variables of interest. The descriptive statistics for each of the primary variables in this study, ethical leadership (EL), organizational citizenship anxiety (OCA), emotional exhaustion (EE), and psychological safety (PS) were calculated using SPSS. These figures offer a glimpse into the perceptions and experiences of the sample of respondents regarding the constructs being studied.

TABLE 4.1: Descriptive Analysis

| <b>Variables</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std</b> |
|------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| EL               | 281      | 1           | 5           | 3.42        | 0.84       |
| OCA              | 281      | 1           | 5           | 4.03        | 0.80       |
| EE               | 281      | 1           | 5           | 3.95        | 0.84       |
| PS               | 281      | 1           | 5           | 2.29        | 1.28       |

Higher mean score indicate the greater agreement with statements on the scale, whereas lower mean scores indicate greater disagreement. The mean value represents the average level of agreement or perception among participants. Higher numbers indicate greater variety among participants' responses, as indicated by the standard deviation (Std), which measures the degree of variance or spread in the responses.

Data regarding the variables are shown in Table 4.1; the mean value of the independent variable, ethical leadership, is 3.42, and the standard deviation is 0.84. Emotional tiredness, the dependent variable, with a mean of 4.03 and a standard

deviation of 0.80. The mean and standard deviation of the mediator's organisational citizenship behaviour are 3.95 and 0.84, respectively. Psychological safety, the moderator, with a mean score of 2.29 and a standard deviation of 1.28.

## 4.2 Control Variables

A one-way ANOVA were performed using SPSS in order to investigate the possible impact of demographic factors on dependent variable. The purpose were to examine whether any demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, qualification, and job experience, significantly affected emotional exhaustion of the employees. A statistically significant difference between group means is usually indicated by a p-value of less than 0.05.

However, as all p-values were higher than 0.05, the analysis showed that there was no significant link between any of the demographic characteristics and the dependent variable. This implies that the study does not need to account for demographic factors, enabling a more direct investigation of the connections among the main variables as suggested by the model.

TABLE 4.2: One-Way ANOVA

| Control Variables | F    | Sig  |
|-------------------|------|------|
| Gender            | 0.44 | 0.50 |
| Age               | 0.63 | 0.69 |
| Qualification     | 0.04 | 0.95 |
| Experience        | 0.62 | 0.59 |

The results from the one-way ANOVA test are presented in Table 4.2 below, with further interpretation provided for each control variable.

Gender: The F-value for gender is 0.44, with a corresponding p-value of 0.50, indicating that gender does not has a significant impact on the dependent variable.

Age: The F-value for age is 0.63, with a p-value of 0.69, showing that age does not significantly influence the dependent variable.

Qualification: The F-value for qualification is 0.04, and the p-value is 0.95, indicating that educational qualification does not significantly affect the dependent variable.

Experience: The F-value for experience is 0.62, with a p-value of 0.59, suggesting that work experience does not have a significant impact on the dependent variable.

In the following phases of the research, the suggested correlations can be independently tested because these results verify that there are no significant associations between the dependent variable and the demographic components.

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

The association between variables is conclusively demonstrated via correlation analysis. A positive correlation between two variables indicates they increase or decrease together, whereas a negative correlation means that as one increases, the other decreases. Furthermore, the degree of correlation between the variables is indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) value.

A Pearson coefficient value between 0.1 and 0.3 indicates a weak correlation, a value between 0.3 and 0.5 indicates a moderate connection, and a value larger than 0.5 indicates a significant correlation. The direction and intensity of these associations are shown by the correlation coefficient.

Table 4.3's correlation analysis shows that organisational citizenship anxiety (OCA) and ethical leadership (EL) are positively correlated, with a correlation of 0.514 \*  $(p < 0.00)$ . This implies that an increase in organisational citizenship concern is linked to higher levels of ethical leadership.

Similarly, there is a positive correlation between emotional exhaustion (EE) and ethical leadership (EL) with a value of 0.578 \*  $(p < 0.00)$ , suggesting that emotional exhaustion is associated with greater levels of ethical leadership.

However, there is a negative association ( $-0.449^{**}; p < 0.00$ ) between psychological safety (PS) and ethical leadership (EL), suggesting that psychological safety is negatively correlated with ethical leadership.

TABLE 4.3: Correlation Analysis

| Variables | EL      | OCA     | EE      | PS |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|----|
| EL        | 1       |         |         |    |
| OCA       | .514**  | 1       |         |    |
| EE        | .578**  | .599**  | 1       |    |
| PS        | -.449** | -.476** | -.587** | 1  |

Additionally, the correlation analysis shows that organisational citizenship anxiety (OCA) and emotional exhaustion (EE) are positively correlated, with a correlation of 0.599\*\* ( $p < 0.00$ ), suggesting that emotional exhaustion is positively correlated with organisational citizenship anxiety. Furthermore, there is a negative correlation of -0.476\*\* ( $p < 0.00$ ) between organisational citizenship anxiety (OCA) and psychological safety (PS), indicating a relationship between higher organisational citizenship anxiety and lower psychological safety. With a correlation value of -0.587\*\* ( $p < 0.01$ ), there is a negative relationship between psychological safety (PS) and emotional exhaustion (EE).

Overall, table 4.3 shows that organisational citizenship behaviour, emotional exhaustion, and ethical leadership are positively correlated. However, there is a negative and reciprocal correlation between psychological safety and all other variables.

## 4.4 Regression Analysis

The study used the regression analysis particularly multiple regression, in order to investigate the underlying factors that explain the observed relationships between the variables. Regression analysis examines the impact of independent factors on the dependent variable while taking into consideration the possible impacts of other variables, in contrast to correlation analysis, which just determines the degree of association between variables. When determining the causal linkages between variables, regression analysis is helpful. The study utilized the Hayes' approach for regression analysis, using SPSS and applying the full scale model [Hayes](#)

and Preacher (2014), which also accommodates the examination of moderation and mediation effects.

TABLE 4.4: Direct and Indirect Effect

| Direct Effect   | B    | S.E  | P    | LLCI | ULCI |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| EL → EE         | 0.36 | 0.05 | 0.00 | 0.26 | 0.46 |
| Indirect Effect |      |      |      |      |      |
| EL → OCA → EE   | 0.21 | 0.03 |      | 0.14 | 0.29 |

A thorough description of the results is given in Table 4.4, which includes important information such regression coefficients, significance levels, standard errors (S.E.), and the upper and lower limits of the confidence intervals (LLCI and ULCI). With a focus on mediation effects, the table describes the direct and indirect correlations between the variables. Mediation and moderation studies were performed using model 5.

**Hypothesis 1:** Ethical leadership has a significant and positive impact on the employee's emotional exhaustion.

The results of regression analysis that is done for the Hypothesis 1 indicates a significant positive relationship between ethical leadership (EL) and emotional exhaustion (EE). The p-value for this relationship is 0.00, confirming statistical significance, while the regression coefficient that is noted as ( $\beta$  value) is 0.36, indicating a positively significant impact. This suggests that as ethical leadership increases, employees experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion. The positive  $\beta$  coefficient supports the acceptance of Hypothesis 1, implying that ethical leadership directly contributes to higher levels of emotional exhaustion.

**Hypothesis 2:** Employee organizational citizenship anxiety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion at work.

For Hypothesis 2, the regression analysis results as shown in table 4.4 as indirect effect, indicates a significant mediation effect of organizational citizenship anxiety (OCA) in the relationship between ethical leadership (EL) and emotional exhaustion (EE). The results show a p-value of 0.00 and a  $\beta$  value of 0.21 for the indirect

effect. This gives the suggestions that organizational citizenship anxiety plays a mediating role between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion, amplifying the effect of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion. The analysis shows a significant positive relationship between the variables, as indicated by the p-value of 0.00, which supports the Hypothesis 2. Additionally, the LLCI and ULCI values indicate that the confidence interval does not include zero, further strengthening the conclusion that the hypothesis number 2 is also valid and approved.

## 4.5 Moderation Analysis

Hypothesis 3: Psychological safety moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when psychological safety is high and stronger when psychological safety is low. The results shows that the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion becomes stronger when psychological safety is high. This pattern of moderation does not align with the originally hypothesized direction. For the interaction term (*ELPS*), the coefficient is 0.0811.

The positive coefficient ( $\beta = 0.0811$ ) suggests that as psychological safety increases, the positive association between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion also becomes stronger or in other words increases the association. In other words, higher levels of psychological safety intensify, rather than diminishing the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. This finding is opposite to the hypothesized assumption that psychological safety would weaken this relationship.

TABLE 4.5: Moderation Effect

| <b>Moderation Variable : PS</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>S.E</b> | <b>LLCI</b> | <b>ULCI</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Int-1 EL * PS                   | .0811    | .0373      | .0077       | .1545       |

Furthermore, the confidence interval for the interaction term (LLCI = 0.0077, ULCI = 0.1545) does not include zero, indicating that the moderation effect is statistically significant. Therefore, psychological safety significantly moderates

the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion, but in the opposite direction than as was predicted. This suggests that rather than acting as a buffer, psychological safety in this context might amplify the emotional impact of ethical leadership. Although the moderation effect is statistically significant, the direction of influence contradicts the expectations set in the hypothesis. Instead of weakening the relationship, psychological safety appears to reinforce it.

## 4.6 Summary of Hypotheses

This is a thorough synopsis of the hypothesis based on the statistical findings of the data gathered for the research. This synopsis demonstrates the accepted hypothesis. All of the suggested relationships were shown to be valid and true by the analysis except H3.

TABLE 4.6: Summary of Hypothesis

| <b>Hyp.</b> | <b>Statement</b>  | <b>Results</b> |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| H1          | Ethical leadership has a significant and positive impact on the employee's emotional exhaustion.  | Accepted       |
| H2          | Employee organizational citizenship anxiety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion at work.  | Accepted       |
| H3          | Psychological safety moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when psychological safety is high and stronger when psychological safety is low. | Not Supported  |

# Chapter 5

## Discussion and Conclusion

### 5.1 Discussion

The research findings based on the suggested model are thoroughly discussed in the chapter. It is divided into three primary sections, the first one covers the main findings from the hypothesis testing process, the second emphasises both theoretical and the practical implications of these findings and the third lists the limitations of the study and suggests the further research.

Using information gathered from college professors, the prominent goal of this study were to investigate the connections among ethical leadership, emotional exhaustion, organisational citizenship anxiety and psychological safety. Emotional pressure and ultimately emotional exhaustion might result from these elevated expectations [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#).

The first section provides thorough examination of how our findings relate to or differ from previous research by analysing the outcomes of hypothesis testing in the context of the body of current literature. Through the introduction of fresh viewpoints or the reinforcement of preexisting theories, this study adds to the larger scholarly conversation.

The study's theoretical and practical implications are explored in detail in the second section. Theoretically, this study advances our knowledge of leadership practices and how they affect workers' well-being. In terms of practice, the results provide insightful information for educational establishments looking to create a

workplace that reduces emotional exhaustion while advancing a culture of ethical leadership and psychological safety.

The researches limitations are discussed in last part, which also offers potential directions for further investigation. Although this study makes important contributions, its generalisability may be limited by factors like sample size and sector-specific focus. To better understand these dynamics, future research might examine similar correlations in various organisational contexts or include more moderating and mediating factors.

### 5.1.1 Ethical Leadership and Emotional Exhaustion

**H1:** Ethical leadership has a significant and positive impact on the employee's emotional exhaustion.

The results of this study confirm Hypothesis 1 by showing a strong and positive relationship between ethical leadership and employee emotional exhaustion. This finding implies that although ethical leadership is typically viewed as the positive leadership style, it could unintentionally contribute to increased emotional exhaustion among staff members in Pakistan's educational (colleges) sector.

Given that prior research has mostly put focus on the positive effect of ethical leadership, including greater job satisfaction, organisational engagement, and decreased burnout, this finding may at first seem paradoxical (Brown & Treviño, 2006). But according to new research, ethical leadership can also put employees under covert pressure by establishing high moral standards, causing emotional strain, and instilling a sense of emotional exhaustion (Yam et al., 2017).

The study's findings support the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which states that people work to preserve their psychological and emotional capital. Ethical leaders may unintentionally put extra pressure on staff members to exhibit organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), diligence, and ethical conduct, which drains their emotional reserves. Emotional exhaustion may eventually result from the constant pressure to live up to these standards without sufficient emotional recovery (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). Additionally, workers may feel more emotional pressure to uphold moral and ethical norms in collectivist

cultureThe study's findings support the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory [Hobfoll \(1989\)](#), which states that people work to preserve their psychological and emotional capital. Ethical leaders may unintentionally put extra pressure on staff members to exhibit organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), diligence, and ethical conduct, which drains their emotional reserves. Emotional exhaustion may eventually result from the constant pressure to live up to these standards without sufficient emotional recovery. This study contributes to the small but growing literature of research that questions the generally favourable view of ethical leadership. It emphasises how crucial it is to understand the emotional strain it could put on workers, particularly in situations where psychological safety or personal boundaries are not sufficiently upheld.

In conclusion, organisations should be mindful of the possible unforeseen effects that ethical leadership may have on workers' well-being, even while it encourages honesty and accountability. Leaders must strike a balance between ethical leadership and supportive, emotionally sensitive behaviours that lessen worker exhaustion and foster psychological resilience.

### 5.1.2 Organizational Citizenship Anxiety as Mediator

**H2:** Employee organizational citizenship anxiety mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion at work.

The study's results supported Hypothesis 2, showing that organisational citizenship anxiety significantly mediates the association between employees' emotional exhaustion and ethical leadership. This finding highlights a significant psychological mechanism through which the ethical leadership even when done with the best of intentions, can exacerbate mental strain at the workplace.

Although trust, dedication, and moral behaviour are frequently linked to ethical leadership ([Brown & Treviño, 2006](#)), new study indicates that it can also put moral and psychological strain on staff members. Employees may feel more pressured to participate in organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) as a result, even if it means sacrificing their own wellbeing ([He et al., 2024](#)). Employees may feel more pressured to participate in organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) as a

result, even if it means sacrificing their own wellbeing. Organisational citizenship anxiety can result from this sense of compulsory citizenship, when workers feel compelled to go above and beyond instead of choosing to. This anxiety is brought on by guilt about not contributing enough, dread of falling short of expectations, or concern about coming across as disengaged. A key element of burnout, emotional exhaustion is the result of this emotional stress building up over time.

The support for this mediation mechanism is also found in existing literature. This result is consistent with previous research that identified organizational citizenship anxiety as a key psychological mechanisms through which, ethical leadership can influence various employee outcomes (Fu Long, 2020). Their results imply that while morally righteous behaviour is encouraged by ethical leadership, the need to live up to high moral standards may inadvertently cause psychological stress. This supports organizational citizenship anxiety as a key explanatory mechanism in this association and is in good agreement with the findings of the current study.

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which argues that people want to protect their emotional and psychological resources, lends greater support to the mediating role of organizational citizenship anxiety. While promoting a morally sound workplace, ethical leadership may raise employees' perceived expectations for selfless deeds. Employees may overextend themselves when these expectations are internalised with anxiety, which can result in emotional exhaustion and resource depletion. Furthermore, the moral standards of leadership are frequently highly valued in collectivist and high power distance societies like Pakistan, which may exacerbate employees' desire to live up to the leader's expectations. This cultural backdrop magnifies the emotional burden of citizenship anxiety, as employees are more likely to suppress their discomfort and push themselves to meet unspoken social and moral obligations.

This study concludes by pointing out that if organisational citizenship anxiety is not controlled, the outward appearance of ethical leadership may have unintended emotional consequences. Acknowledging organizational citizenship anxiety as a mediating mechanism highlights the necessity for companies to keep an eye on workers' welfare and make sure that promoting moral behaviour doesn't result in excessive psychological strain. Leaders should create cultures where people are

empowered to set appropriate boundaries without feeling guilty or judged, and where organizational citizenship behaviours are truly optional.

### 5.1.3 Psychological Safety as Moderator

**H3:** Psychological safety moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. In such a way that this relation will be weaker when psychological safety is high and stronger when psychological safety is low.

The findings of this study revealed a significant moderating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, the interaction's direction was the reverse of what was predicted in Hypothesis 3. Psychological safety exacerbated the association between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion rather than lessening it; higher psychological safety was linked to more emotional exhaustion under ethical leadership. This paradoxical result may be explained by several potential mechanisms.

First of all, workers may feel more internal pressure to live up to high moral and behavioural standards set by their leaders when they work in a psychologically safe atmosphere and are exposed to ethical leadership. They may unknowingly feel more accountable and responsible as a result of the freedom to express concerns and the transparency that psychological safety fosters, which may lead them to go above and beyond in an attempt to meet ethical standards. This relationship may increase emotional strain, which exacerbates rather than decreasing the burnout. The strong psychological safety may motivate workers to go above and beyond, not out of choice, but out of a sense of duty, in culturally collectivist environments like Pakistan, where social peace and obedience to authority are highly prized. When paired with the moral demands of ethical leadership, this can lead to a situation in which workers consistently repress their own needs in order to meet group or leader-driven standards, which exacerbates emotional tiredness.

This study's surprising conclusion shows that, contrary to expectations, psychological safety did not lessen the link between exhaustion and ethical leadership. One rationale could be that employees' emotional reactions are strongly and dominantly influenced by ethical leadership, leaving little opportunity for contextual

elements like psychological safety to change the dynamic (Newman et al., 2017). Instead of relying on the perceived safety atmosphere, workers may directly base their emotional experiences on the moral behaviour of their leaders. Another way to look at it is that psychological safety could potentially make employees' emotional demands more intense in some situations. Employees may feel more pressure to uphold moral principles and organisational requirements in psychologically safe settings, for example, which may paradoxically exacerbate emotional weariness rather than lessen it (Li et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown similar trends, with psychological safety strengthening rather than mitigating the positive link between employee strain and leadership demands (Frazier et al., 2017).

Furthermore, employees may continue to place a higher priority on hierarchical authority than on interpersonal climate due to cultural variables in the Pakistani educational sector, which are marked by high power distance and collectivism. This could restrict the buffering effects of psychological safety. Therefore, the lack of a moderating effect of psychological safety in this study is consistent with growing evidence that its function can vary depending on the situation.

Conceptually, this phenomena is comparable to the organisational citizenship anxiety found by (Fu Long, 2020). Under ethical leadership, staff members may internalise moral duties in a psychologically safe environment to such an extent that the ongoing pressure to "do the right thing" causes them to feel psychologically strained. Therefore, although while psychological safety is generally advantageous, it may in some situations exacerbate the emotional toll that ethical climates take, especially when workers mistake safety for permission to overcommit or overconform.

Another viewpoint is provided by the Conservation of Resources (COR) hypothesis (Hobfoll, 1989). Because they believe that the safe environment would shield them from unfavourable outcomes, workers in high psychological safety situations could devote more emotional and mental energy to meeting expectations. However, if these resources are continuously used without being sufficiently replenished, it may paradoxically lead to more emotional tiredness, particularly if their extra efforts go unnoticed or unrewarded. In conclusion, our study demonstrates that, even while psychological safety is commonly acknowledged as a protective feature, it

can also exacerbate emotional labour in situations where moral leadership establishes high behavioural expectations. Organisations need to find a balance between encouraging psychological safety and making sure it doesn't turn into a conduit for internalised performance pressure, according to this unanticipated interaction effect. Even in secure, morally guided workplaces, employees should be encouraged to establish healthy boundaries in order to keep well-meaning leadership from causing burnout.

## 5.2 Research Implications

This section discusses both the theoretical and practical implications of this investigation. In addition to offering practical advice for educational institutions and leadership styles, the findings add to the expanding body of literature already available on ethical leadership, organisational citizenship anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and psychological safety.

### 5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

Three significant contributions are made by this research to the literature on ethical leadership, mainly by filling in knowledge gaps and expanding theoretical comprehension via the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. The majority of previous research has focused on the advantages of ethical leadership in cultivating favourable organisational behaviours and attitudes among desirable workers. The majority of these studies took into account the beneficial effects of particular leadership philosophies on organisations and workers from the leaders' point of view, as well as the tasks that employees perform within the organisation, such as encouraging efficient operations, offering advice to employees, and encouraging proactive behaviour (Wu, He, Imran, & Fu, 2020). The psychological toll that ethical leadership takes on staff members, particularly when the pressure to be morally aligned becomes too great, hasn't been thoroughly studied, though.

First, by drawing attention to the unexpected emotional costs of ethical leadership, our study questions the generally favourable narrative around it. This study

contributes to the theoretical understanding of how resource-depleting demands, like continuously fulfilling high ethical standards, can cause psychological strain by concentrating on emotional exhaustion. According to COR theory, ethical leadership may enforce unspoken standards for moral excellence, which staff members may internalise as pressure to show exemplary behaviour at all times. This then depletes emotional and cognitive resources, contributing to exhaustion.

Second, the study presents organisational citizenship anxiety (OCA) as a mediating mechanism. Although other research has looked at organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB) as a result of ethical leadership, this study goes beyond that by taking into account the discomfort in the shape of anxiety that can result from ongoing expectations to participate in OCB. This anxiety stems from a sense of duty to go above and beyond the call of duty, which can cause emotional exhaustion when workers do not have means to meet these demands. This study tested the mediating role of organisational citizenship anxiety in the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion on workplace, and it used conservation of resources (COR) theory to explain the mechanism through which ethical leadership has an exhausting impact on employees' emotional exhaustion at work. The findings demonstrated that ethical leadership contributes to employees' emotional exhaustion by increasing organizational citizenship anxiety, supporting the conclusions drawn by [Santiago-Torner et al. \(2024\)](#). This outcome also reinforces and builds upon the insights of [Fu Long \(2020\)](#) and [Feng et al. \(2018\)](#) who mentioned the developing dark side of ethical leadership.

Moderation orientation and responsibility and sustainability orientation are two of the four fundamental ethical orientations of ethical leadership that [Eisenbeiss \(2012\)](#) outlined. A leader's attention on the organization's long-term growth is emphasised by the responsibility and sustainability orientation, which calls for enhancing each person's sense of accountability to the organisation. According to the moderation approach, leaders should be humble, moderate, and self-controlled. They should also be able to control their own emotions and impulses and be willing to put the organization's or important stakeholders' interests ahead of their own. Employees are more inclined to follow humble leaders and then practise organisational citizenship, according to research by [Mao et al. \(2017\)](#).

According to Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, and Wu (2018), transformational leadership have the greater predictive and explanatory power on organisational citizenship behaviour than ethical leadership, but they might also push their own vision forward and filter out critical opinions from subordinates that contradict their own (Li & Yuan, 2017). Ethical leadership is more strongly linked to organisational citizenship behaviour, which has a significant ethical component (Yam et al., 2017). Because workers who work under the wing of ethical leadership practise organisational citizenship behaviours and adhere to the value orientations of ethical leadership, organisational citizenship behaviour was chosen as the study's starting point. In this regard, incorporating organisational citizenship anxiety to develop a theoretical model that describes the detrimental consequences of ethical leadership can improve our comprehension of the consequences taking place at workplace under ethical leadership.

Third, in order to enhance the theoretical model's context adaptability and explain the positive effect of ethical leadership on workers' emotional exhaustion at work, the moderating variable of psychological safety were added. Remarkably, results revealed the opposite pattern: psychological safety reinforced the favourable correlation between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion.

This surprising finding advances theory by indicating that workers may feel more pressured to live up to the moral and ethical standards in psychologically comfortable settings, which could lead to increased stress and resource depletion. In other words, psychological safety may unintentionally increase the internalised demands of ethical leadership rather than reducing stress.

### 5.2.2 Practical Implications

This study offers important practical insights for educational institutions aiming to foster emotionally healthy and ethically grounded work environments. While ethical leadership is widely promoted as a positive force, the findings suggest that even well-intentioned leadership can lead to unintended psychological strain, particularly through the emergence of organizational citizenship anxiety (OCA) and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, educational leaders and administrators must

be cautious not to overwhelm employees with constant moral expectations that unintentionally burden them into exhaustion.

First, despite the fact that ethical leadership is meant to encourage moral behaviour, the results show that it might cause employees to feel pressured to perform extra-role activities that are beyond their psychological capacity. The anxiety brought on by this strain may eventually lower productivity at work. Therefore, when assigning job responsibilities that heavily rely on organisational citizenship behaviours, educational leaders and administrators should exercise caution, especially if doing so could cause employees to feel guilty or emotionally strained. Managers must be able to tell the difference between anxiety-driven compliance and genuine motivation in order to set reasonable objectives that don't overwhelm employees.

Second, the perceived moral divide between a leader and their followers may grow if some workers believe that highly ethical leaders are morally judgemental. Leaders should purposefully convey appreciation and respect for workers' individual values in order to lessen this impact and promote a feeling of psychological safety and support. Leaders can avoid defensiveness and strengthen emotional ties by publicly recognising teachers' efforts and treating them with empathy rather than strict moral superiority. According to Jordan et al. (2013), this can also lessen the apparent moral divide between superiors and followers by making moral guidance seem more inclusive rather than coercive. College administrators must establish systems that give instructors psychological safety and autonomy in order to reduce the risk of emotional weariness. Teachers may experience less pressure to adhere to idealised ethical norms when they believe that their opinions are valued and that their moral principles are respected. To foster an inclusive and caring environment, institutions might encourage frequent reflecting sessions, public feedback forums, and collaborative decision-making procedures.

Third, training programs for college administrators should emphasize not only ethical standards but also emotional intelligence, empathy, and psychological sensitivity. Ethical leadership development should go beyond moral rhetoric to include strategies for recognizing early signs of anxiety, stress, and burnout among teachers. Leaders should be trained to offer support that restores employees' emotional

resources, rather than imposing expectations that further deplete them. Leaders should be trained to identify and respond to psychological discomfort associated with work tasks that require frequent OCBs.

Research suggests that anxiety in such contexts can deplete self-control resources, leading to lower job performance (Ford, Cerasoli, Higgins, & Decesare, 2011). Thus, when it is not feasible to reduce OCB expectations, institutions should provide additional resources and emotional support to compensate for this psychological toll, such as opportunities for recovery, recognition, and autonomy in how extra-role efforts are performed.

Fourth, organisations must encourage a two-way conversation on ethics in the workplace in order to lower the emotional cost of ethical leadership. In addition to setting expectations, leaders should let instructors voice their opinions about how these principles are being used in their day-to-day work (Van Prooijen, 2009).

According to Tyler and Blader (2003), establishing such open channels fosters a feeling of community and shared purpose, lessens the moral gap between employees and management, and promotes more genuine, stress-free engagement.

Lastly, the results highlight the need for leaders to practise ethical leadership in a balanced manner, they should maintain high moral standards while also being approachable, cooperative, and sensitive to others' feelings.

Efforts to lessen the moral distance between executives and staff are particularly crucial in the setting of Pakistani educational institutions, where cultural hierarchies may exacerbate this gap. Leaders should start discussions about ethics, justice, and values.

They could also encourage teachers to share their thoughts on how ethical standards are implemented in their day-to-day job. Institutions can lessen emotional exhaustion, encourage better organisational citizenship practices, and create a learning environment where wellbeing and performance may coexist by addressing these issues.

In the end, the study provides a pertinent reminder that effective leadership must not only provide direction but also safeguard and restore the emotional reserves of individuals it seeks to inspire.

### 5.2.3 Limitations

Despite the valuable contributions of this study to the literature on ethical leadership and employee's emotional exhaustion, several limitations must be acknowledged. The restricted generalisability of this study, which results from its exclusive focus on Pakistan's educational system, is one of its main limitation. While the findings provide insights into how ethical leadership influences emotional exhaustion through organizational citizenship anxiety, these relationships may not necessarily hold in other industries, such as corporate organizations, healthcare, or government institutions. Pakistani cultural and contextual elements may also influence how employees see ethical leadership and how they react emotionally in ways that differ from those in other areas. In order to increase the findings' external validity, future studies should try to evaluate these correlations in a variety of industrial and cultural contexts.

The cross-sectional research approach is another limitation, as it limits the capacity to infer causal relationships between variables. Even though the study indicates that organizational citizenship behaviour is one way that ethical leadership causes emotional tiredness, it's also likely that other unmeasured factors influence this association or that emotionally spent employees have a different perception of ethical leadership. A longitudinal study would capture possible changes in employees' psychological states and experiences at work, giving a more thorough knowledge of how these dynamics develop over time.

The convenience sample method used in this study also presented sampling challenges. The sample may not accurately reflect the diversity, because teachers, administrative staff, and lower-level personnel found in the educational sector may have varied experiences with ethical leadership and psychological safety. Furthermore, the relatively small sample size might have played a role in the failure to identify some predicted effects. To increase the reliability of the results, future research should strive for bigger and more varied samples from several institutions. Furthermore, although psychological safety was investigated as a moderator, its complex function in mitigating or intensifying the impacts of ethical leadership may not have been adequately represented in this study. Numerous organisational

elements, such as team cohesiveness, supervisor support, and prior leadership experiences, might have an impact on psychological safety. Finally, time and resource constraints limited the number of institutions and participants that could be included in the study. Stronger causal insights would be obtained by extending the study to an experimental or longitudinal design. Furthermore, the study's quantitative methodology might not adequately represent the employees' subjective feelings, anxieties, and real-world experiences.

#### **5.2.4 Future Direction**

The study opens up several promising avenues for future research. The use of longitudinal study methodologies is a crucial avenue for further investigation. Although this study used a cross-sectional strategy, longitudinal research can offer more convincing proof of causal linkages by monitoring changes over time in organisational citizenship anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and views of ethical leadership. These designs can shed light on whether extended exposure to ethical leadership causes more emotional stress or if these effects change based on changing organisational and environmental circumstances.

Additionally, it is crucial to broaden the research's focus outside of the educational field. Future research should look into how ethical leadership functions in many contexts, where employee expectations, leadership styles, and cultural norms may differ greatly, such as government agencies, nonprofits, healthcare facilities, and corporate enterprises.

This more thorough examination would provide a more thorough comprehension of the context-specific repercussions of ethical leadership.

Examining alternate moderators and mediators that may have an impact on the connection between emotional exhaustion and ethical leadership is another worthwhile avenue. Although psychological safety was taken into account as a moderator and organisational citizenship anxiety as a mediator in this study, there are other possible factors that merit investigation. In addition to individual-level characteristics like emotional intelligence, personality, resilience, and coping styles, organisational factors like team cohesion, perceived fairness, and the quality of

leader-member exchange may also shed light on why some people view ethical leadership as helpful while others find it burdensome.

In future studies the psychological processes via which moral leadership may unintentionally result in emotional exhaustion should also be examined. For example, when confronted with high ethical standards, employees may feel inadequate, internalised shame, or subtle kinds of moral pressure. These complex emotional reactions could be captured with the aid of qualitative techniques like focus groups or interviews, which could also provide fuller, contextualised data on how staff members perceive ethical leadership in practical contexts.

Future research might also examine how ethical leadership differs from other leadership philosophies including transformative, authentic, and servant leadership (Santiago-Torner et al., 2024). Although moral orientation, follower development, and relational transparency are some of the characteristics that these styles have in common, it is yet unknown whether ethical leadership has a special effect on emotional tiredness or if these effects are shared by other value-based leadership methods. Deeper understanding of any possible overlaps or unique contributions various leadership philosophies may make to employee outcomes may be obtained by comparing their effects.

Lastly, adding additional moderating factors like trust, intrinsic motivation, or personality qualities (such neuroticism or conscientiousness) could help us better understand how the impacts of ethical leadership fluctuate depending on the type of employee. Particularly in settings where ethical leadership entails a high moral intensity, trust may be a crucial protective factor against emotional stress. Investigating these factors may improve theoretical frameworks and advance a more comprehensive comprehension of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and leadership.

### **5.2.5 Conclusion**

This research study provide the insights of value into the impact of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion, with the focus on the mediating role of organizational citizenship anxiety and the moderating role of psychological safety. Ethical

leadership is often associated with positive workplace behaviors, this study's findings however highlight its potential drawbacks in certain contexts. To be specific, employees may suffer from higher degree of emotional exhaustion when they feel under the pressure from ethical leadership to participate in excessive citizenship behaviours. This supports that employees may experience unanticipated pressures as a result of even well-meaning leadership approaches.

This study highlights organizational citizenship anxiety as a significant mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership and emotional exhaustion, where it offer a deeper understanding of the psychological processes that may underlie this process. The findings show that anxiety about organisational citizenship can arise when morally high standards are communicated by ethical leaders or when they subtly encourage staff members to act pro-socially. Employees experience emotional exhaustion as a result of this anxiety over time. These results deepen our understanding of how ethical leadership, even when done with the best of intentions, can backfire when employees internalise its demands to an unhealthy degree.

The results of the study, however, contradicted the idea that psychological safety moderates this association. The adverse consequences of ethical leadership on emotional exhaustion were not mitigated by the psychological safety, as anticipated. This surprising finding raises the possibility that a psychologically safe environment alone may not be sufficient to lessen the stress brought on by high moral standards. This result can be explained in a number of ways. One theory is that psychological safety does not immediately lessen the moral load and performance pressure imposed by ethical leadership, even though it is helpful in encouraging open communication. Regardless of whether they feel comfortable raising concerns, workers may still feel pressured to participate in extra-role activities. Furthermore, other contextual elements like workload, job autonomy, or individual resilience might be more important in moderating this link.

These findings emphasize the need for a balanced approach to ethical leadership. Leaders must refrain from establishing an atmosphere that encourages excessive prosocial behaviour at the expense of workers' wellbeing, even though upholding high moral standards is vital. In order to ensure that ethical expectations are

communicated in a way that does not result in guilt, anxiety, or burnout, organisations should train ethical leaders to be more sensitive to the stress levels of their workforce. To further understand how to lessen the unexpected negative effects of ethical leadership, future study should include additional factors such as job demands, emotional intelligence, and leadership communication styles.

Ultimately, this study underscores that ethical leadership, despite its widely recognized benefits, can also produce unintended psychological costs for employees. The results highlight the significance of applying ethical leadership in a way that does not jeopardise employee well-being by illuminating the possibility of organisational citizenship anxiety and emotional tiredness. Companies should be careful about how they convey ethical standards and make sure that workers aren't subjected to undue pressure or moral strain.

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# Appendix A

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
ISLAMABAD

## Questionnaire

**Dear Respondent,**

I am a student of MS (Management Sciences) and pursuing research on the topic of “Emotional Exhaustion”. You are requested to take some time out of the busy schedule and answer a few questions listed below. I would be thankful if you answer this questionnaire, it would probably take your 10-15 minutes. Your answers will be treated with complete confidentiality and will be kept entirely anonymous. If you are interested in the findings of this research or have any questions regarding this, feel free to contact.

Your time and input are greatly appreciated.

Regards,

**Amina Noor**

**MS Research Scholar**

**Email: noor.amina005@gmail.com**

**Section I****Demographic Questions****Gender:**

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> |
| <b>0</b>    | <b>1</b>      |

**Age:**

|              |              |              |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>20-25</b> | <b>26-30</b> | <b>31-35</b> | <b>36-40</b> | <b>41-45</b> |
| <b>1</b>     | <b>2</b>     | <b>3</b>     | <b>4</b>     | <b>5</b>     |

**Education:**

|                   |                |            |
|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| <b>Bachelor's</b> | <b>Masters</b> | <b>PhD</b> |
| <b>1</b>          | <b>2</b>       | <b>3</b>   |

**Experience:**

|            |             |              |                       |
|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>0-5</b> | <b>6-11</b> | <b>12-17</b> | <b>18 &amp; above</b> |
| <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>    | <b>3</b>     | <b>4</b>              |

**Scale:** Responses to each item are measured on a five-point scale as:

(1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither disagree nor agree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree

## Section 2

## Emotional Exhaustion

|    | #Items  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I feel emotionally drained from my work.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. | I feel used up at the end of the work day.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. | I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. | Working with people all day is really a strain for me.                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. | I feel burned out from my work.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6. | I feel frustrated by my job.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7. | I feel I am working too hard on my job.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8. | Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.                              |   |   |   |   |   |

**Reference:** Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 2(2), 99-113.

## Section 3

## Ethical Leadership

|    | # Items   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | My leader listens to what employees have to say.                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2  | My leader disciplines employees who violate ethical standards.                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3  | My leader conducts his/her personal life in an ethical manner.                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4  | My leader has the best interests of employees in mind?                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5  | My leader makes fair and balanced decisions   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6  | My leader can be trusted.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7  | My leader discusses business ethics or values with employees.                         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8  | My leader sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics,       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9  | My leader defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10 | When making decisions, my leader asks "what is the right thing to do?"                |   |   |   |   |   |

**Reference:** Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., & Harrison, D. A. (2005). Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, 97(2), 117-134.

## Section 4

## Organizational Citizenship Behavior

|   | #items  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I am overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly at work.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2 | I worry that my organizational citizenship behavior is less than others.                              |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3 | I feel nervous and apprehensive about not being able to meet performance targets.                     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4 | I worry about not receiving a positive job performance evaluation.                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5 | I often feel anxious that I will not be able to perform my job duties in the time allotted.           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | I worry that I will not be able to successfully manage the demands of my job.                         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7 | Even when I try as hard as I can, I still worry about whether my job performance will be good enough. |   |   |   |   |   |

**Reference:** Fu, J., Long, Y., He, Q., & Liu, Y. (2020). Can ethical leadership improve employees' well-being at work? Another side of ethical leadership based on organizational citizenship anxiety. *Frontiers in psychology, 11*, 1478.

## Section 5

## Psychological safety

|   | #items   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | If you make a mistake in this organization, it is often held against you. ®                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2 | Members of this organization are able to bring up problems and tough issues.                     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3 | People in this organization sometime rejects others for being different. ®                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4 | It is safe to take risk in this organization.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5 | It is difficult to ask people of this organization for help. ®                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6 | No one of this organization would deliberately act in the way that undermines my efforts.        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7 | Working with members of this organization, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized. |   |   |   |   |   |

R=reverse coded questions.

**Reference:** Carmeli, A. (2007). Social capital, psychological safety and learning behaviours from failure in organisations. *Long range planning*, 40(1), 30-44.