# Role of Ethical Leadership to Promote Knowledge Sharing and Reduce Turnover Intentions among Employees: Evidence from Pakistan

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#### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine how ethical leadership affects sharing of information and leaving intention simultaneously using social exchange theory, social learning theory and social capital theory. Primary data is collected through online Google form Questionnaire from 156 employees of Allied bank limited through convenience sampling. Hypothesis are tested through correlation analysis using SPSS and mediation through Process by Hayes. We have also applied reliability and validity analysis. Our results after analysis is that the ethical leadership have a positive effect on knowledge sharing and negative effect on leaving intention with mediating role of normative commitment. Mediation role of normative commitment in the relation of ethical leadership and intention to leave are no proven significant in our study. Our study is very helpful for business organizations to deploy ethical leadership style to retain their employees and enhance knowledge sharing among them which will ultimately maximize their organization's efficiency.

**Keywords:** Ethical leadership, Normative commitment, intention to leave, knowledge sharing

Submission 09-April-24; Accepted 14-May-24; Published 20-June-24

## Introduction

Leaders are acknowledged for their role in enhancing their firms' competitive advantage through effective financial management and instilling ethical values in personnel (Koay and Lim, 2021; Yasin, 2021). In recent years, researchers have shown a growing interest in the ethics of the workplace. They have recognized the importance of ethics in shaping the character of employees (Van Gils et al., 2015). The rationale for studying ethical leadership arises from the observation that management often exhibits inadequate leadership abilities (Arham et al., 2017; Jamali et al., 2017; Musa & Chinniah, 2016; Hassan et al., 2014). Many recent studies have revealed leadership as a factor that motivates employees to share knowledge which increase firm performance and decision making ability. Previous research has exhibits a strong relation between knowledge-sharing behaviors and several leadership style trends, such as transformational leadership and servant leadership. (Dong et al., 2017; Wu & Lee, 2017; Tuan, 2017). Even though information sharing conduct has moral implications, little prior research has examined how leaders' ethics impact employees' knowledge sharing conduct. This is despite the fact that the majority of earlier research has used the social capital paradigm to explore knowledge sharing. The present study shows, Furthermore, in conjunction with previous research, (Sedighi et al., 2018; Xiao & Zhang, 2017), that Knowledge sharing is an act that is done willingly and without any obligation that gives people the choice of how and whether to share their knowledge. In light of this, we make an effort to connect ethical leadership with employee knowledge sharing behavior. We use social learning theory to illustrate how ethical leadership and knowledge sharing are directly related. According to the theory of social learning, individual people may attempt to imitate behaviors of their role models (such as their supervisors or managers) in workplaces. Following ethical leaders as role models, followers explicitly view their ethical behaviors as normatively acceptable, which promotes and motivates individuals to participate in constructive pursuits like knowledge sharing (Yan et al., 2016). Employees have a higher probability to demonstrate moral affiliation with their organization when their organization has a strong ethical foundation. As a result, normative commitment enables staff to share information with the organization in a manner that is normatively acceptable. Normative commitment refers to the dedication of employees to a company that they believe they have a moral obligation to stay with. Social capital theory illustrates how NC and knowledge sharing are related. Employees who are morally committed feel compelled to share their knowledge (Marques et al. 2019). A very few studies like (Zamir, 2019) demonstrate that the knowledge sharing also reduces intention to leave of the employees which is a crucial issue of the organizations and it is affected by ethical leadership too. The organizational expenses incurred as a result of workers quitting employment and the successive recruiting of old staff, newly-hired individuals training, and overall administrative expenses can be significant. Employee turnover is a significant danger

to firms, thus it is necessary to fully understand how it affects them. The likelihood of leaving the company can be affected by a variety of factors, including organizational dedication, job stress, job contentment, self-esteem, and supervisor support (Siong et al., 2006). Firth et al. (2004) found that employee commitment and job satisfaction are the primary factors influencing employees' intentions to depart their jobs. According to the authors, a leader's actions have a direct impact on an employee's commitment and job satisfaction, which subsequently influences the employee's inclination to quit their position. One of the essential qualities of a leader is their adherence to ethical principles. According to Trevino et al. (2003), a leader's influence on employees' behaviors makes the ethical aspect of leadership crucial. This study applies the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to show how ethical leadership affects employee withdrawal behavior. It also discusses how ethical leadership affects subordinate behaviors.

Objective of our study is to examine that how ethical leadership promote knowledge sharing behavior of employees and reduce their leaving intention with the mediating role of normative commitment. This study will help management of different business organizations to retain their employees and enhance their knowledge sharing behavior which ultimately increase firm performance by deploying ethical leadership style.

## Literature Review and hypotheses development

## Ethical leadership and knowledge sharing

As per Ipe (2003), making information available to others within a company is known as knowledge sharing. In an organization, sharing of knowledge does not occur on its own. It calls for the proper framework and the required assistance. Ethical leaders can have an enormous effect on information sharing (Srivastava et al., 2006). According to earlier research, ethical leadership encourages knowledge sharing within organizations and fosters good relationship between them. According to social exchange theory, a leader can increase followers' sense of reciprocity by giving them several incentives in exchange for their good deeds, Wang and Lee (2017). The behaviors of followers can be changed by ethical leaders by setting an example (Brown et al., 2005; Islam et al., 2019). By removing institutional barriers to knowledge sharing, encouraging trust, and facilitating equitable source sharing (Le and Lei, 2018), Moral leaders inspire their subordinates to put forward their awareness (Tang et al., 2015). The chances and inspiration necessary for knowledge sharing can be given to followers by ethical leaders. First, by putting in place morality-promoting policies and procedures (such as an ethics code, parameters for making moral decisions, an open channels of dialogue system, and a just reward system), ethical leaders contribute to lowering the actual obstacles that stop workers

from exchanging resources among themselves. Secondly, ethical leaders personally embody the norms and values of their organizations (such as fairness, friendliness, caring for others' needs, and trust) by setting an example of normatively acceptable conduct. According to a number of research, ethical supervisors encourage their subordinates to engage in socially consciousl behaviors including information exchanging and helping others learn (Gerpott et al., 2020; He et al., 2021) while lowering variance (Evans et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022). We made the following hypotheses based on above theoretical justifications and empirical facts,

H1: EL positively relate with KS.

## Ethical leadership and intention to leave

EL encourage and reward their followers' moral behavior by being honest and transparent. We emphasis on leaders' openness, Engaging in open dialogue with followers and making expectations and duties clear help ensure that employees know what is needed of them. This is categorized as a clarification of the moral supervisor role (Brown et al., 2005). According to Mulki et al. (2007) The relationship between ethical leaders and their workforce is stronger, which fosters a positive work environment, increasing commitment and lowering turnover intentions. EL practices have an impact on how well workers perform in their jobs (Mehmood et al., 2021; Ruiz et al., 2011). According to Brown et al. (2005) ethical leadership is "The representation of normatively accomplished behavior by two-way personal acts as well as interpersonal relations." Such leaders build a strong ethical climateto encourage staff to show greater dedication to their corporations (Loi et al., 2015). According to Hassan et al., (2014) The ethical stance taken by a leader at workplace to encourages employees to raise ethical concerns so that the manager may address them to mitigate employee reluctance .According to Reina et al., (2018) When supervisors use coercive verbal abuse toward those beneath them, employees are more likely to abandon their organization. Leaders may assist in to address the problem by being ethical, engaging in actions as well as attitudes that are beneficial to others, and staying away from actions and behaviors that might be dangerous to others (Yukl et al., 2013). According to research supporting the social exchange theory, managers may control their workforce's behavioral responses by implementing a system of incentive signals and reciprocity (O'Keefe et al., 2019; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Blau, 1964). Additionally, it has been recognized that there are few factors, particularly in developing nations like Malaysia, that contribute to bad outcomes like employee turnover intention. So our hypothesis will be,

H2: EL is negatively relate with intention to leave

# **Knowledge sharing and Normative Commitment**

of According to three-component model organizational commitment behavioral dedication creates internal drive and affect an individual's influencing organizational commitment, while socialization and organizational dedication create extraneous motivation and influence an individual's normative commitment towards organization. Normative and affective commitment towards organization consequently affects employee job behavior, especially KSB (Meyer and Allen's 1991). According to (Liu and Fang, 2010) Both intrinsic and extrinsic motives may exist simultaneously in an individual at different levels; so they are not distinct from one another. According to Mowday et al. (1979, p. 226), The term "organizational commitment" describes how much a person identifies with and corroborates in a certain organization. It fosters a supportive environment for information sharing among coworkers. When someone wants to keep working for an organization, it alludes to their or sense of duty or feelings. It might even happen when workers are dissatisfied and looking for better employment prospects. The normative commitment is "perceived obligation" which rooted in "internalization of norms through socialization" and "reciprocity of norms" which serves to build up the normative commitment, which in turn improves the KS behavior among employees (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). As per (Lin 2007a) there are some studies to suggest that reciprocity of norms and socialization are examples of extrinsic motivational factors that affect information sharing behavior. According to (Tangaraja and colleagues, 2015) Workers who acquired information from other organizational Members will be obligated to contribute in return for the action. Sharing information with others inside the company and fostering reciprocity norm produces the wisdom of responsibility and develops the normative commitment to the organization that results in knowledge Sharing practices. Additionally, when workers the organizational norms through socialization, have assimilated increasingly interconnected, which benefits social networks and trust, the group's relationships strengthen and they grow more commitment to their organization in a normative manner that also leads to knowledge sharing behavior. So we hypothesize that,

H3: NC is positively relate with knowledge sharing.

## Normative commitment and intention to leave

As per (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006) a person's purposeful wish to depart their company in the near future is referred to as having an intention to leave. According to (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000) It demonstrates a worker's willingness to look for job outside of their current company. it is significant to Understand that why workers desire to quit is crucial because this concept highly predicts actual turnover. We contend that poor normative commitment among employees to the company is one factor contributing to their desire to quit. According to Meyer and Herscovitch

(2001), Normative commitment refers to the perception held by employees that they possess a deep sense of moral duty. As a result, they frequently think and act in ways that support company goals. According to (Wiener, 1982) Employees who are normatively committed are prone to view any behavior that could jeopardize organizational interests as immoral. These workers, in the most extreme example, don't hesitate to make sacrifices for their employer's benefit. According to (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2013) These type of employees typically have a great motivation to fulfill their duties to their employer. This moral perspective would lead normatively committed employees to believe that considering leaving their employer is wrong because it would be damaging to the organization's interests and reduce organizational performance. Additionally, prior research has demonstrated that workers with an advanced level of normative commitment inclined to stay with their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Yao & Wang, 2006). According to Meyer and Allen (1991), normative commitment is the desire of an worker to retain with the company out of a loyalty, sense of duty, and ethical obligation. So we hypothesize that,

H4: NC is negatively relate with ITL

## Normative commitment and ethical leadership

Normative commitment (NC), as per Meyer and Allen (1991), Aminizadeh et al., (2021), is a part of organizational dedication. It is either a ethical obligation or a feeling of obligation (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). as per Hansen et al. (2013) In addition to social learning, ethical leadership is examined in terms of social exchange, which suggests that when leaders treat their followers ethically, they will receive the same in return. Abuzaid (2018) and Sharma et al. (2019) both observe that ethical leadership serves as a model for developing followers' commitment. This kind of commitment is determined by the intrinsic drive of workers to stay with a company in return for its investments in their professional growth, not on needs, wants, or emotions. When they see their employer behaving ethically and demonstrating genuine a desire for their welfare, employees show NC (Frederick et al., Citation 2010). Employees' intents to display NC are influenced by an ethically sound organizational structure. The application of these ideas to ethical leadership demonstrates the value of developing employees' NC for ethical leaders acting as role models. Employees' NC is founded on moral principles upheld by an ethical leader rather than rewards and benefits. Ethical leadership ensures that ethical value serves as a base for NC (Danish, et al. 2020).

H5: NC is positively relating with EL

#### **Mediating role of Normative Commitment**

Social Exchange Theory claims that organizational commitment reduces turnover by fostering ethical leadership that enables employees to reciprocate with their best efforts. The person's organizational commitment is the outcome of moral leaders who inspire them to stay at work and increase productivity for the company. As a result, we have concluded that those who are mentored by ethical managers possibly to remain in their current positions (Blau,1964). According to Mowday (1979), organizational commitment serves as a bridge between conforming to and adherence to organizational standards as well as ideals. It exhibits a readiness to act outrageously, a desire for ownership over one's job, and an emotive affection to the organization. It also redirects the mindset of the employee in thinking that he/she chooses to consume the remainder of his/her professional trajectory with the company (Allen, 1990). By adhering to organizational norms and values, people are more likely to feel motivated and experience fulfillment while carrying out their socially related and professional related responsibilities at workplace (Meyer, 2004). We contend that workers with great levels of devotion are motivated to stick with their current employers because they have internalized the norms and values of the company (Meyer, 2004). So we hypothesize that,

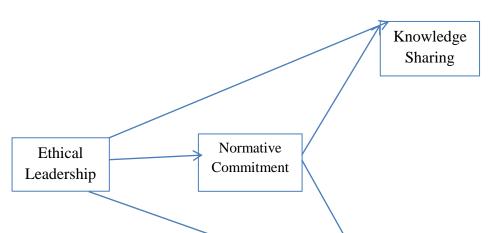
H6: NC mediates the relation of EL and ITL

#### Mediating role of normative commitment

The growth of a social group acting in the interests of all on the basis of Norms, rules, and cooperation is referred to as social capital theory (Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998). According to the

Social capital theory, relationships (such as trust, conventions, and obligations) drive information-sharing activities. Employees' reciprocal behavior is therefore influenced by their sense of self and belonging to a company, moral standards, and interpersonal interactions with leaders. Previous studies reveals that ethical leaders enhances employee's normative commitment. Workers with NC create social bonding with various coworkers to exchange knowledge and talents, a civic excellence displayed by workers that promotes outstanding organizational performance. Workers with Normative Commitment unintentionally circulate information with coworkers to get unusual treatment from their supervisors. Workers believe that sharing knowledge is morally required. (Ouakouak and Ouedraogo, 2019). Therefore, we hypothesize following:

H7: NC mediates the relation of EL and KS.



# Methodology

# Sample and procedure

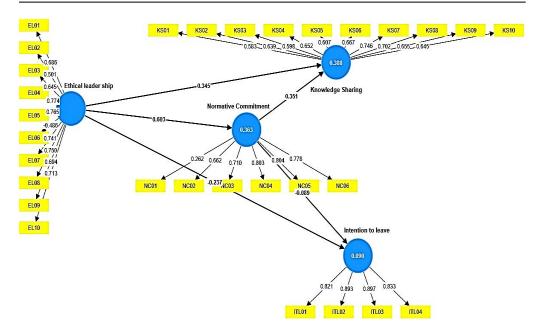
Allied bank limited branches from all over the Punjab province are selected as sample using non probability convenience sampling which is most cost effective (Sarstedt et al., 2018). Banking industry are chosen as population because there is a lot of problem in Pakistani banking industry regarding employee's turnover and knowledge sharing among them. The demonstration of ethical leadership by the supervisors in banking industry is the need of time to overcome these two main problems of banking industry. So the author put more effort to studying ethical leadership in this context. Online google form questionnaire were administrated to 250 employees in all over the branches of Punjab province out of which 156 responses were returned back at which the analysis has been run. All forms were in English language and were distributed among the grade of MG10 and above.

#### Measures

Primary data are used to measure all of our variables. A 10-item scale, adapted from (Brown et al.) was used to measure ethical leadership on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. The items were determined by assessing employees' perceptions of their leaders' level of concern and involvement in the decision-making process, based on their own experiences. Six item scale of (Meyer et al 1993) was used to measure normative commitment on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. (Van den Hooff and De Ridder's 2004) has established the 10 items measure of knowledge sharing which were be used in our study using 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree. Four items scale of intention to leave which is established by (Bluedorn 1982) were used in our study using 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree.

## **Data Analysis**

We analyse our data using SPSS and also use Process by Hayes for testing our mediation. We make confirmatory factor analysis and correlation analysis to test our hypothesis. First of all we check the internal reliability test using Smart PLS SEM where all of the items of variables has the values more than 0.5 and the diagram are given below.



To checked the internal consistency of all measures in our study we performed the test of cronbach's alpha The values of cronbach's alpha for all the variables is more than 0.7 which shows that all of the variables are reliable and the items of all variables is related with each other. Below is the table consisting the values of cronbach's alpha for all variables of our study.

Table 1

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	
Ethical leadership	0.796	
Intention to leave	0.887	
Knowledge Sharing	0.851	
Normative Commitment	0.767	

For the validity of construct, we performed the Heterotrait - Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) using SEM in PLS to check discriminant validity where the values for all is less than 1.0 which show that the constructs of our study is valid and are not highly related with each other and ready for further analysis. Table for discriminant validity is given below.

Table 2

Discriming validity	nant	Ethical ship	leader	Intention leave	to	Knowledge Sharing	Normative Commitment
Ethical ship	leader						
Intention leave	to	0.337					

Knowledge Sharing	0.62	0.203	
Normative Commitment	0.702	0.339	0.651

For testing our hypothesis we run the correlation analysis in SPSS by Spearman as our all data is not normally distributed. Our all hypothesis is correlational so we performed correlation analysis to test them.

Table 3

Variables	Particulars	EL	NC	KS	ITL
EL	Correlation	1			
	Coefficient				
	Sig.(2-tailed)				
NC	Correlation	.582**	1		
	Coefficient	0.000			
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000			
KS	Correlation	.486**	.457**	1	
	Coefficient				
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
ITL	Correlation	1.604	1714	0.12	1
	Coefficient	163*	171*	0.13	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.041	0.033	0.106	

<sup>\*\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In above table we can see that the relation between ethical leadership and normative commitment is highly significant at 0.01 level and its coefficient is 0.582, the relation between ethical leadership and knowledge is highly significant at 0.01 level and its coefficient 0.486, the relation between ethical leadership and intention to leave significant at 0.05 level and its coefficient is -0.163 which shows the negative relationship, the relation between knowledge sharing and normative commitment is highly significant at 0.01 level and its coefficient 0.457, the relation between intention to leave and normative commitment is significant at 0.05 level and its coefficient is -0.171 which shows the negative relation between them. Now we check the mediation effect of the normative commitment between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing by using process by Hayes in SPSS which shows the results are given below.

Table 4

Relationship	Total	Direct	Indirect	Confidence	t-	Conclusion
	Effect	Effect	effect	intervals	statistics	Conclusion

<sup>\*</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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ethical leadership- >normative commitment- >knowledge	0.5932 P=0.000	0.4283 P=0.0000	0.1650	Lower bond (0.0383)  Upper bond (0.3251)	8.4805	partial mediation
sharing				,		

In the below table of mediation effect indirect effect of the mediator is 0.1650 and direct effect of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing is 0.4283 so the total effect is 0.5932 with p value of 0.00 which shows the significant partial mediation in this relationship.

Our other mediation is that the mediation effect on ethical leadership on intention to leave which results are given below.

Table 5

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect effect	Confidence intervals	t- statistics	Conclusion
ethical leadership- >normative commitment- >intention to leave	-0.3319 p=0.0250	-0.1956 P=0.2846	-0.1363	Lower bond (-0.369)  Upper bond (0.1138)	-2.2628	insignificant mediation

In our second mediation our mediator is not significantly mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and intention to leave as our p value is greater than 0.05 and also there is 0 exists in upper bond and lower bond.

So above all discussion we are on following results regarding our hypothesis.

H1: EL positively relate with KS.	Supported
H2: EL is Negatively relate with intention to leave.	Supported
H3: NC is positively relate with knowledge sharing.	Supported
H4: NC is negatively relate with intention to leave.	Supported
H5: NC is positively relate with EL.	Supported
H6: NC mediates the relation of EL and ITL.	Not
	Supported
H7: NC mediates the relation of EL and KS.	Supported

# **Managerial implications**

This study will contribute in existing body of knowledge as well as there are some practical implication are also here in this study. As Pakistan banking industry is facing the problem of high turnover rate and also low knowledge sharing practice. Organizations can deploy ethical leadership style in their working environment which will ultimately boost up the ethical attitude to his subordinates and they will share their knowledge with their colleagues in organization and also their turnover intentions will be reduced because they will normatively have committed with organization due to inspiring ethically by their supervisors. From a strategic standpoint, the findings additionally indicate that firms should incorporate ethics as a substantial criterion in their employee recruiting and promotion strategies.

#### **Limitation and future directions**

Our study has also few limitations which can be catered by future researchers in their study. First of all we have very limited time due to which our sample size was small like 156 valid received responses due to this limitation our results was also affected and our one hypothesis is not supported. Future researchers can enhance their sample size to get more accurate and good results. Secondly we have used convenience sampling and collect data from only one organization which were Allied bank limited which definitely affect our study by reducing generalization of our study. Future researchers can also cater this problem by using other organization using the same model and make their study more generalize-able. Thirdly there are many other leadership styles like authentic leadership, benevolent leadership and humble leadership etc. which can affect the factors of turnover intention and knowledge sharing but we have used only ethical leadership to check the effect of leadership on different organizational factors. Future researchers can use other leadership styles in their studies for getting their affects too in organizational setting.

# Conclusion

Major determination of our work was to examine the ethical leadership effect on turnover intention of employees and their knowledge sharing behavior in the context of banking industry of Pakistan. Social learning theory and social exchange theory was used to establish further relationships between our variables of interest. The data was gathered from a conventional bank of Pakistan, which is playing an progressively vital part in South Asia's economy as well as the global economy. Researchers and specialists would be certain that Western theories are broadly applicable to different regions of the world if they were examined in non-Western contexts (Tsui at el, 2007). The application of concepts like normative commitment, information sharing, ethical leadership, and turnover intention in Pakistan is better understood thanks to this research. Although this research is only a small sample, we

hope that it will inspire further academics to work harder and disseminate these ideas' insights to other nations.

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