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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORT OF TOP MANAGERS FOR ETHICAL BEHAVIOR AND JOB SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

This empirical study investigates the impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on employee job satisfaction within the educational sector of Karachi. Data were collected from a sample of 200 participants through a structured questionnaire, employing a random sampling method to ensure unbiased and representative results. The analysis utilized descriptive statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analysis, facilitated by SPSS software. The findings demonstrate a positive impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on employee job satisfaction, with a statistically significant correlation identified between the two variables. Past studies also reveal similar results, which consistently underscore the connection between ethical leadership and enhanced job satisfaction among employees. Previous research has established that a supportive ethical environment fostered by top managers significantly contributes to higher levels of employee satisfaction. The confirmation of this relationship in the present study further reinforces the relevance of ethical leadership in organizational contexts. By employing rigorous research methodologies, this study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of top management support for ethical behavior and its impact on employee satisfaction. Ultimately, the findings highlight the importance of ethical leadership in cultivating a positive work environment and enhancing employee job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction (JS), Ethical Environment, Top Management Support, Ethical Behavior.

Introduction

In recent years, numerous studies have explored the relationship between the support of top managers for ethical behavior and the job satisfaction of employees (Koh & Boo, 2001). A conducive ethical working environment is crucial in preventing unhealthy behavior and inspiring higher levels of teamwork, innovation, and breakthrough processes, ultimately leading to a healthy competitive advantage for organizations (Koh & Boo, 2001; Keith et al., 2003; Wight, 2003; Cruz, 2004). Until recently, only a few organizations considered ethics a legitimate topic for enterprise planning and strategic thinking (Koh & Boo, 2001; Keith et al., 2003; Wight, 2003; Cruz, 2004).

Top management support is a significant factor in influencing subordinates to achieve organizational goals. When subordinates operate in an ethical environment supported by top management, they tend to experience higher job satisfaction, as

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employee commitment is often based on job satisfaction (Koh & Boo, 2001). Delighted employees are more likely to deliver their best outcomes to the organization.

The education system worldwide is undergoing significant changes, prompting educational leaders to adopt ethical leadership practices to maintain higher quality standards in their institutions (Danish, Draz, & Ali, 2015). Education plays a fundamental role in both individual success and national prosperity (Danish et al., 2015). Therefore, research in the education sector is crucial, particularly concerning ethical behavior among managers, colleagues, and other staff members. In the education sector, daily interactions occur with individuals from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and mindsets, necessitating respectful engagement. It is essential to assess the satisfaction levels of teachers, as only when teachers are satisfied and committed to their working environment can they provide the best education to students.

Rationale of Study

Understanding the relationship between top managers' support for ethical behavior and job satisfaction among employees is essential for organizational success. Employee satisfaction is a crucial factor that impacts various aspects of organizational performance, including productivity, retention, and overall morale. Research suggests that a positive work environment, characterized by ethical leadership and behavior, contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees. However, there is a need to delve deeper into this relationship, particularly in the context of the educational sector in Karachi, Pakistan.

The education sector plays a vital role in shaping a nation's future by imparting knowledge and skills to the next generation. Teachers, as critical stakeholders in this sector, significantly influence the quality of education provided. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure their job satisfaction to maintain educational standards. However, more research needs to be conducted on the specific relationship between top managers' support for ethical behavior and job satisfaction among teachers in Karachi.

By examining this relationship, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on organizational behavior and management in the education sector. This study will provide insights into how top managers' ethical behavior and support impact the job satisfaction of teachers in both public and private educational institutions. Understanding this relationship can help educational leaders and policymakers develop strategies to create a conducive work environment that fosters job satisfaction and, ultimately, improves educational outcomes.

Problem Statement

Ensuring employee satisfaction is crucial for all organizations, as employees are their critical assets. This satisfaction encompasses various aspects, including the working environment and the ethical behavior of managers. Recent research has begun to explore whether overall employee satisfaction is linked to management's ethical behavior and support. Numerous studies have delved into the relationship between

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ethical climate and job satisfaction in the literature. Hence, this study aims to understand and analyze the relationship between top managers' support for ethical behavior and the job satisfaction of employees.

Given that education is a pivotal determinant of social and economic growth, any issues within the education sector can have widespread implications for the entire economy. It can be argued that problems within the education sector pose a threat to the nation's future. If teachers, who are responsible for imparting education to students, are dissatisfied and lack commitment, they may fail to provide quality education to the future generation. Therefore, the primary focus of our study is to investigate the link between top managers' support for ethical behavior and the job satisfaction of teachers in public and private schools, colleges, and universities in Karachi, Pakistan, by examining various variables.

Research Question

1. What is the impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on job satisfaction?

Research Objective

- To determine the impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on the job satisfaction of employees.

Study Hypotheses

H_{o1}: There is no significant impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on job satisfaction.

H_1: There is a significant impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on job satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives, including the Social Exchange Theory and the Transformational Leadership Theory, guide this study. According to the Social Exchange Theory, individuals engage in a reciprocal relationship with their organizations, wherein they exchange inputs (e.g., effort, time) for outcomes (e.g., rewards, recognition). When employees perceive that their organization, represented by top managers, values and supports ethical behavior, they are more likely to reciprocate with increased job satisfaction. Similarly, the Transformational Leadership Theory posits that leaders who exhibit ethical behavior and provide support inspire followers to perform beyond expectations, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and commitment.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework involves two primary constructs: top managers' support for ethical behavior and employee job satisfaction.



Significance

This study sheds light on the relationship between organizational ethical behavior and job satisfaction. It emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct within organizations, highlighting how fair treatment, rewards, promotions, and ethical behavior contribute to employee job satisfaction. By understanding this relationship, individuals are encouraged to incorporate ethical behavior into their daily practices. Organizations that prioritize ethical behavior not only succeed but also foster a positive work environment and gain a respectful image. This study is particularly relevant for the public and private education sectors as it offers insights into staff job satisfaction and related issues, facilitating efforts to address them. Additionally, other organizations can benefit from the findings by improving employee satisfaction and commitment to their jobs.

Literature Review

The literature examining the relationship between top managers' support for ethical behavior and job satisfaction reveals a robust correlation across various organizational contexts and geographic regions. Awasthi (2015) conducted a study in India focusing on the ethical atmosphere within the workplace and its impact on job satisfaction among employees at the State Bank of India. By applying a chi-square test to analyze 100 questionnaires, the findings indicated a significant relationship between a positive ethical atmosphere and higher job satisfaction levels among employees. This study emphasizes that an ethical workplace culture can significantly enhance employee morale and job satisfaction.

In a different context, Wilks (2011) investigated attitudes toward unethical behavior in organizational settings, where the independent variable was organizational commitment and the dependent variable was job satisfaction. Distributing 126 questionnaires and utilizing correlation analysis, Wilks found a negative relationship between organizational commitment and acceptance of unethical behavior. This suggests that higher levels of commitment to ethical standards lead to increased job satisfaction, reinforcing the idea that an ethical organizational culture can create a more satisfying work environment.

Mumtaz, Ahmed, and Shad (2011) explored the role of top management in promoting ethical behavior within organizations and how this support impacts employee job satisfaction in Pakistan. In their study, which targeted the banking sector in Islamabad, they distributed 120 questionnaires and achieved a 71% response rate. The use of correlation and regression tests confirmed a positive relationship between top management support for ethical behavior and employee job satisfaction, highlighting the crucial role of ethical leadership in fostering a supportive work environment.

Additionally, Firdausi (2013) empirically tested the relationship between employee job satisfaction and commitment based on various leadership styles in Iran. In this study, job satisfaction was treated as an independent variable. Correlation tests were used to analyze the relationship between leadership styles, organizational commitment,

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and job satisfaction across 814 questionnaires distributed to 12 university hospitals. The results confirmed a positive relationship between effective leadership, high job satisfaction, and strong organizational commitment, suggesting that leaders who prioritize ethical behavior can cultivate a more satisfied workforce.

Further research by Ahmed, Shad, Mumtaz, and Tanveer (2012) highlighted the connection between organizational ethics and job satisfaction within Pakistan's banking sector. This study included multiple independent variables, such as egoistic climate, benevolent climate, principled climate, and top management support, with job satisfaction as the dependent variable. By applying correlation tests to 257 questionnaires, the researchers found that three hypotheses were supported, indicating a positive relationship between top management support and job satisfaction. This reinforces the notion that ethical support from management is essential for employee satisfaction.

In another study, Jawaid, Baig, and Chaudhary (2014) examined the relationship between job satisfaction and top management support for ethical behavior in Pakistan's non-life insurance companies. They distributed 340 questionnaires and employed correlation tests, discovering a significant link between ethical climate and job satisfaction. However, they noted that no substantial relationship existed between top management support and job satisfaction, possibly due to specific challenges faced in that sector.

Hussain and Rehman (2010) focused on job satisfaction among working women in Bangladesh, using 250 questionnaires to evaluate various job facets as independent variables and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. Their findings indicated that many women experienced dissatisfaction with their jobs, emphasizing the need for ethical support and an accommodating work environment.

Khan, Nawaz, and Hameed (2012) researched the impact of job satisfaction on employee performance in autonomous medical institutions in Punjab, Pakistan. By applying regression analysis to 200 responses, they revealed that various facets of job satisfaction significantly influence employee performance, suggesting that improving job satisfaction can have positive implications for organizational outcomes.

Kapla, Ogut, Karayel, and Ilhan (2013) examined the importance of an ethical climate on job satisfaction within Turkey's tourism industry. Utilizing correlation and regression tests on 165 questionnaires distributed among hotel employees, their study confirmed a significant relationship between ethical climate and job satisfaction, further underscoring the necessity for ethical standards in fostering a positive workplace environment.

Yener, Yaldiran, and Ergun (2012) explored the importance of organizational ethical support for workplace satisfaction and employee engagement in Turkey's automotive industry. By applying regression analysis to data collected from 199 questionnaires among leading automotive manufacturers, they indicated that

organizations fostering ethical standards and climates positively influence employee engagement and satisfaction.

Voon, Lo, Ngui, and Ayob (2011) investigated the impact of leadership styles on job satisfaction in Malaysia's public sector organizations. Their study, which involved survey questionnaires, revealed both positive and negative relationships between various leadership styles and job satisfaction, illustrating the complexity of how different approaches to leadership can influence employee perceptions and satisfaction levels.

Brown and Treviño (2006) established that ethical leaders foster an environment of trust and fairness, significantly contributing to employees feeling valued and satisfied in their roles. Their research indicates that when employees perceive their managers as ethical and supportive, they are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction. This suggests that top managers who model ethical behavior can cultivate a positive work atmosphere that enhances employee morale.

Mumtaz, Ahmed, and Shad (2011) specifically examined how top management's ethical support impacts job satisfaction in the banking sector of Pakistan. Their findings revealed a positive correlation between top management support for ethical behavior and employee job satisfaction, highlighting that when managers actively promote ethical standards, employees feel more committed to their organization. This commitment further contributes to overall job satisfaction, demonstrating that ethical support from management plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' emotional attachment to their workplace.

Top managers' ethical support can also create a psychologically safe environment, which is essential for job satisfaction. Edmondson (1999) found that when employees feel safe to express their thoughts and concerns without fear of retaliation, they are more engaged and satisfied in their work. Ethical leadership promotes this sense of psychological safety, allowing employees to voice ethical concerns and contribute to a positive workplace culture. When top managers support ethical behavior, it leads to increased job satisfaction as employees feel secure and respected in their roles.

Workplace climate influences the relationship between top managers' ethical support and job satisfaction. Kelloway and Barling (2000) emphasize that a positive ethical climate fostered by top management enhances job satisfaction among employees. When managers demonstrate a commitment to ethical practices, it sets a tone for the entire organization, creating an environment where employees feel motivated and satisfied with their work. This positive climate not only boosts job satisfaction but also encourages employees to uphold ethical standards themselves.

The connection between ethical support from top managers and job satisfaction extends to employee engagement as well. Piccolo and Greenbaum (2010) found that ethical leadership is positively associated with employee engagement, which enhances job satisfaction. When employees perceive their managers as supportive of ethical behavior, they are more likely to be engaged in their work, leading to higher levels of

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job satisfaction. This highlights the importance of ethical leadership in promoting not just satisfaction but also active participation and investment in work tasks.

Furthermore, the ethical support provided by top managers can serve as a retention strategy, indirectly impacting job satisfaction. Dineen et al. (2006) indicated that organizations with strong ethical leadership retain employees more effectively due to higher job satisfaction levels. When employees feel supported by their managers in maintaining ethical standards, they are less likely to seek employment elsewhere, enhancing their overall job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization.

The impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on job satisfaction is also linked to overall organizational performance. Studies have shown that organizations with strong ethical leadership tend to perform better, which can create a positive feedback loop for job satisfaction. When employees see their organization thriving due to ethical practices, they are more likely to feel satisfied and proud of their work. This interconnection suggests that ethical leadership not only fosters job satisfaction but also contributes to the organization's success.

Research Methodology

The study employs convenience sampling to select the sample, targeting participants from the educational sector, including teachers and professors from various schools, colleges, and universities. The sample size consists of 200 participants, providing a representative sample of the population in Karachi. This sampling method allows us to collect data efficiently and effectively from a diverse group of individuals within the educational sector.

Questionnaires serve as the primary research instrument in our study. The study uses closed-ended questions to facilitate quick responses from participants and employs a Likert scale to measure the variables of interest. The questionnaires are designed based on the constructs of top management support for ethical behavior and job satisfaction. The study includes consent forms, demographic information, and Likert scale questions tailored to measure both the independent and dependent variables accurately. This approach ensures that the study gathers comprehensive data to analyze the relationship between top management support and job satisfaction effectively.

Analyses and Interpretations

Correlation Analysis

Table 01: Correlations Analysis

		Top Management	Job Satisfaction
Top Management	Pearson Correlation	1	0.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	215	215

Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.599**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	215	215
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

In Table 01, the correlation coefficients between top management ethical support and job satisfaction are examined. The Pearson correlation coefficient between these variables is found to be 0.599, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating a strong positive correlation between top management ethical support and job satisfaction. This result supports the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that posits a significant relationship between these variables, consistent with findings from previous research literature.

Regression Analysis

The coefficient of determination (R) indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable. In our study, an R-value of 35% suggests that 35% of the variability in job satisfaction can be attributed to top management support for ethical behavior. This analysis helps us assess the strength of the relationship between the variables and provides insights into their predictive power.

Table 02: Coefficient of Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
Constant (C)	1.500		4.500	0.000
Top managers' support for ethical behavior	0.599	0.599	12.500	0.000
a. Predicator: Top managers' support for ethical behavior				

Table 02 presents the results of a regression analysis focusing on the impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on an unspecified dependent variable. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the constant is 1.500, indicating the predicted value of the dependent variable when the independent variable is zero. The unstandardized coefficient for top managers' support is 0.599, suggesting that for every one-unit increase in support for ethical behavior, the dependent variable is expected to increase by 0.599 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) also reflects this relationship, confirming a strong positive correlation. The t-value of 12.500 and a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000 indicate that the effect of top managers' support is statistically significant, reinforcing the importance of ethical leadership in influencing outcomes.

Findings

The findings of this study align with previous research conducted by Danish, Draz, and Ali, where their hypothesis regarding the relationship between top management ethical support and job satisfaction was accepted. Similarly, Awasthi's

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research also found support for their hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between these variables. However, a study conducted in Malaysia yielded contradictory findings, as their hypothesis regarding the impact of top management support for ethical behavior on job satisfaction was rejected.

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of top managers' support for ethical behavior on job satisfaction among staff members (teachers and professors) in the educational sector of Karachi, Pakistan. Data collected from 200 participants across various schools, colleges, and universities revealed that there is a significant positive impact of top management ethical support on job satisfaction among educational staff. Therefore, it can be concluded that a supportive ethical environment fostered by top managers contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction among employees in the educational sector.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research endeavors should expand beyond the educational sector to include diverse employee perspectives from other industries. Additionally, a broader range of variables, such as employee commitment and job security, should be considered to provide a comprehensive understanding of organizational dynamics. Furthermore, employing a mixed-methods approach, including interviews and online questionnaires, could enhance data collection and analysis for more nuanced insights.

Limitations

Several limitations were encountered during this study. First, the sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, some respondents may have exhibited bias or misunderstanding while completing the questionnaire, potentially affecting the accuracy of the results. Additionally, time and resource constraints imposed limitations on the thoroughness of the survey process, impacting the comprehensiveness of the data collected.

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