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Unraveling the Effects of Ethical Leadership on Knowledge Sharing: The Mediating Roles of Subjective Well-Being and Social Media in the Hotel Industry

Misbah Hayat Bhatti [1], **Umair Akram** [2] , **Muhammad Hasnat Bhatti** [3], **Hassan Rasool** [4] **and Xin Su** [5,*]

1   School of Management and Economics, Beijing Institute of Technology, Beijing 100081, China;
    misbahbhatti76@yahoo.com
2   Guanghua School of Management, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China; akram.umair88@pku.edu.cn
3   School of Economics and Management, Dalian University of Technology, Dalian 116200, China;
    hasnatbhatti506@yahoo.com
4   Department of Business Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad 44000, Pakistan;
    rasool.hassan@gmail.com
5   School of Economics and Management, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunication,
    Beijing 100876, China
*   Correspondence: xin.su@bupt.edu.cn

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Abstract: Given the pivotal function of ethical leadership (EL) in the hospitality industry, this study explains how moral guidance can help to reduce mental stress. The modern complex and hectic working style of organizations demands ethical conduct, in order to sustain the positive behavior of employees for knowledge sharing (KS). For this reason, in this study, we restrict our awareness to the usage of social media (SM) for social identity and aspects of subjective well-being (SWB) for happiness intensity. The time-lag method is applied for data collection from 406 supervisors and subordinates of the hotel industry in Pakistan. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and bootstrapping are utilized to scan the data. The results of the current study demonstrate that ethical leadership provides motivational strength for knowledge sharing amongst employees. Moreover, the serial mediation effects of subjective well-being and social media boost knowledge sharing by the induction of ethical values. Our findings indicate that knowledge sharing is an important product of subjective well-being and social media. Therefore, we recommend that managers focus on ethical leadership values and employee well-being (e.g., life satisfaction), as well as highlight the individuality of employees to promote knowledge sharing. The presented research adds to the literature by establishing a new connection between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing by opening the black box of contextual (i.e., ethical leadership) and developmental (i.e., subjective well-being and social media) factors.

Keywords: ethical leadership; knowledge sharing; subjective well-being; social media; hospitality industry; perceived supervisor support; partial least squares method; Pakistan

1. Introduction

Employee motivation to engage in knowledge sharing has been shown to result in a great deal of organizational effectiveness and success. Research has demonstrated that knowledge sharing can have a significant impact on important outcomes such as creativity, problem solving, and decision making [1].

Valuable knowledge resides within the minds of individual employees, who share this knowledge with other individuals to enable the collective utilization of information. Despite the organizational benefits of knowledge sharing, employees are frequently unwilling to share their knowledge, as it turns their valuable knowledge into a public good. Knowledge sharing enables others to approach specialized knowledge and provides leeway to claim the associated benefits, such as reputation and status [2].

Scholars have recently explored leadership as a tool to address this challenge and to facilitate knowledge sharing in organizations. The existing literature has provided initial evidence that different leadership styles, such as transformational, empowering, and respectful leadership, can facilitate knowledge sharing [1,3,4]. However, the mechanisms through which leaders affect knowledge sharing at an individual level still have not been explored [5]. Hence, Bavik et al. [5] considered the extrinsic motivation of followers, in combination with their moral identity, as mechanisms linking ethical leadership to employee knowledge sharing. The present research depicts a follower-centric mechanism that focuses on subjective well-being and social media in combination with ethical leadership, in order to promote knowledge sharing in employees.

Organizations have recently become much more focused to setting up ethical codes and organizing ethical committees to ensure ethical compliance within the organization, as an ethical atmosphere is a key element of organizational culture, which affects the overall administrative strategies. It can empower satisfaction and commitment, which are essential for the comfort of employees. One of the main factors affecting employee welfare is leadership. Leadership portrays the association between manager and employee, in which the manager should understand how to deal with people. A leader acts with high stimulus and fine divine change to run a superior leadership style [6,7].

Ethical leadership refers to the demonstration of reliable approaches with suitable norms and values, as perceptible through a leader's action and affiliations [8]. Related to numerous leadership styles and factors, employees want ethical leadership due to its inherent characteristics, such as trust, equity, responsibility, ethicality, respect, and understanding of human rights. It assists employees in making intricate decisions, looking for useful guidance, and communicating opportunities, thus resulting in an increased feeling of empowerment and employees showing more willingness to share knowledge when working in stressful environments [9].

In the organizational perspective, knowledge must flow inside the organization to facilitate growth and competitiveness. It is vital not only for individuals but also for organizations to improve their performance and to confront ethical conflicts [10–12]. Organizations must help their employees to practice KS by providing them a healthy and caring atmosphere [13]. Organizations have recently become more focused on establishing ethical working climates, as this is a key element of organizational culture affecting overall managerial policies.

In some situations, an organization undergoes an inactive flow of KS—for example, when employees perceive themselves as strangers due to the embarrassing actions of others, leading to feelings of worthlessness—which is not beneficial for the well-being of the organization or its employees; this kind of differentiation invites pessimistic attitudes and feelings [14].

The current study highlights the aspects necessary to encourage KS behavior among employees, concentrating on the leadership techniques which can motivate the KS behavior of employees. This relates to motivating employees to transform their qualified knowledge into organizational knowledge, even though several studies have been carried out considering knowledge as a source of competitive advantage, as well as how to generate, maintain, share, and use it inside an organization [13].

Employees are considered important assets of organizations; for this reason, there has been a recent increase in interest in their subjective well-being, due to serious problems such as rethinking goals, social adjustment, psychological capacity, and employee happiness. Incidentally, it has been identified that ethical leadership characteristics can predict the dimensions of SWB [15]. Subjective well-being suggests frequent pleasant emotions, infrequent unpleasant emotions, and life satisfaction, where these three factors are are combination of cognitive and affective components. Cognitive effects are based on an individual's beliefs and attitudes about their own life, while affective effects are based

on their positive or negative feelings. Overall, SWB indicates what an individual thinks and feels about their life [16,17].

The significance of social media and its number of users have been increasing dramatically, where workplace and companies have been strategically implementing such tools to support their employees and improve their abilities [18]. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Whatsapp, among others, are platforms where people can connect with each other, share their opinions, and enhance KS [19,20]. Many different researchers have different views about SM and have devoted their attention to exploring the influential factors of SM, such as with respect to technological, organizational, and environmental frameworks, but have not shown how SM assists in character building and recognition [21,22]. Perceived supervisor support (PSS) theory explains the model of the current study and highlights the following points [23]: leaders are supportive when they believe and have confidence in employee competencies, value their contributions, offer assistance, and are concerned about their happiness.

Ethical challenges in the workplace have recently become a critical issue. Due to the intensive human interactions in the hospitality industry, employees confront the challenges of ethical decision-making and ethical dilemmas. Ethical business practices add value for customers and increase business profitability and efficiency [24]. However, researchers have found that, regardless of the importance of ethics, it is not generally emphasized by managers in the hotel industry [25]. Therefore, by identifying and reducing the ethical perception gaps with respect to the hospitality industry, the current study will meet the perception of the hospitality industry through practicing ethical leadership and imposing ethical values.

The hotel industry of Pakistan was selected for data collection. This industry is proliferating among industries of Pakistan. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council 2019, the contribution of hotel industry in GDP was 10.3%. This industry is eminent source of foreign exchange earnings of Pakistan. Hotel industry of Pakistan has capacity to provide employment opportunities to large number of people. Hotel industry contribution to employment grows 3% in 2019 (WTTC, 2019).

This study has two research questions: First, can ethical leadership increase KS when employees face indifferent behavior and become emotionally cold? Second, do subjective well-being and SM successfully mediate between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing? This study has the following major contributions, which fill gaps in the literature; previous research has examined SWB and SM separately, but this study combines both into one model (as mediators). Furthermore, previous studies have examined the effect of social media on KS, but we study SM through the aspects of social interaction and recognition to enhance KS.

This study was conducted in a non-Western country (Pakistan), examining leader behavior through the lens of moral values and investigating ethical leader behavior as a predicator of KS. We also try to identify whether ethical leadership fosters an ability to care about the emotions, well-being, and individuality of employees. Last, we test a serial mediation model, in an attempt to identify the affiliation between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing through the mediating effects of subjective well-being and social media.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Ethical Leadership (EL)

Leaders have a vital responsibility in the execution of KS practices in organizations; through the design of a pertinent atmosphere, leaders permit employees to convey their valuable ideas. Different leadership techniques have different impacts on the emotions of employees but ethical leadership differs greatly, as ethical leaders extend ethical standards in accordance with their moral behavior, which provides emotional relevance for KS. The willingness of employees to connect with KS relies on the recognition of definite ethical schemes [26]. Therefore, ethical leadership is the most appropriate leadership approach to encourage employees to engage emotionally with their work. Ethical leaders have sincerity, compassion, integrity, and can influence employees by practicing

normatively appropriate behavior. They are distinguished by the demonstration of individual qualities such as trustworthiness, faithfulness, and nobility. In addition to these qualities, they express genuine concern and kindness toward their employees and concentrate on joint interests. Through two-way communication, they confirm the contributions of employees in decision-making and endorse moral behaviors by evidently communicating their moral values, which are likewise compulsory for employees in their performance [27].

Even though previous research [28] has generally provided insights into the utility of ethical leaders in the hospitality context, a critical question remains unanswerable for hospitality scholars: Are there actual benefits associated with ethical leadership in the hospitality context, beyond outcomes associated with the internal aspects of organizations, especially on important behaviors needed for the long-term survival of the industry (e.g., the citizenship behaviors of service employees directed toward customers)? [29]. The goal of hotel industries is to offer high standard services, and the provision of these services is more likely to be achieved when employees are supported by morally strong leaders. Therefore, an ethical leader tries to establish an ethical climate that follows a normative acceptable code of conducts, motivating frontline employees to strive for service excellence and creativity [30].

The moral values and transparency of leaders are considered influential aspects for the organized, healthy, and sustainable development of hospitality and tourism enterprises. The service patron in contact with the customers is the main focus of the hospitality industry, which purely depends on employee customer-oriented behavior. Ethical values of ethical leaders have been shown to have a significant impact on employee behavior towards customers [25]. Haldorai [31] reported that the deviant behavior of frontline employees is a major cause of customer dissatisfaction. Frontline employees demonstrate deviant behavior due to unethical organizational climates and unfair management practices. The study of Koch [32] validated that organizational provisioning of ethical leadership increased both customer satisfaction and sustainable service performance.

2.2. Knowledge Sharing (KS)

Knowledge is main asset of an organization which, due to its stinginess, differs from other resources [33]. In order to retain knowledge and use it for increasing the efficiency of organization, it has to be split properly. According to Wang and Noe [34] KS means a course of action in which knowledge is provided by one person to other in form of work information, expertise to help coworkers with the intension of promoting collaboration, problem solving, development of new ideas and implementation of procedures. KS indicates the act of assembling information accessible to others within the institute, which is affected both environmentally and socially. Studies examining the forerunners of KS normally pursue the social capital perception divided into three segments: relational, structural, and cognitive factors. In the relational aspect, knowledge sharing can be conducted in an environment of shared confidence between the information sharer and receiver, perceived supervisor support, and strong social attachments. Under the structural perception, knowledge sharing can be affected by components such as the pattern and type of social network or organizational administrative system, structural diversity level of teams, knowledge management systems, and incentive systems. In terms of cognitive perception, organizational culture and individual perspectives about norms (e.g., reciprocity norms, subjective norms, and performance objectives) play key roles [35,36].

2.3. Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) Theory

PSS theory describes a firm assurance in which employee feels that their leaders value their contributions and concern for their happiness. This theory was derived from the organizational support theory, clarifying the connection between employee and employer based on social exchange theory and how they perceive support and how the leader is exemplified [23]. The theory points out that an employee's belief regarding productive co-operation and appreciation is obtained from their leaders, in return for their endeavors, and considers leaders as agents working on behalf of

the organization. Leadership co-operation is assumed to be more proximal for the employees of an organization, as compared to perceived organizational co-operation [23]. It foresees the work outcomes and quantity of constructive employees [37]. Past studies have confirmed that immediate leaders hold a strategic position in affecting an employee's opinion about work settings, such as affecting an employee's loyalty towards organizational strategies and procedures [38]. For instance, leaders can ease their employees by diminishing their stress through offering training opportunities when required. However, the excellence of exchange association between leaders and employees fundamentally relies on the trust that employees have in their leaders.

2.4. Ethical Leadership (EL) and Knowledge Sharing (KS)

Knowledge sharing refers to acts of making knowledge accessible to others inside the organization, although constructs pressured by social, emotional and individual context, the ratification of KS is often a function of the knowledge sharer's enthusiasm, eagerness and mind set [34]. KS can be considered in an ethical manner in the workplace and, therefore, ethical leadership can shape the sharing behavior of employees. As clarified above, KS requires personal attachment and the attained knowledge could be helpful and influential for persons, in order to protect resources such as position, authority, and incentives in organizations; however, knowledge is "sticky" in nature, and KS has even been referred to as a kind of moral act of "donation", specifically in the workplace [39]. It is true that, ln some conditions employees deliberately refuse to share information for prosocial causes like; when leaders treat them like outsider and they feel worthless. In this context, an unethical attitude has objectionable outcomes.

Leadership has been underlined as a key aspect influencing the inter-personal practice of KS inside organizations and, given the ethical worth of KS, we speculate that leader morality can influence the KS behavior of employees, as the leader is responsible for the psychological state of employees through individual actions and interpersonal associations [26]. According to Brown and Treviño [39], ethical leadership can be described by ethically attractive modes, such as justice, openness, and fidelity [40], all of which are indispensable aspects that endorse KS. Ethical leadership values provide motivational strength for employees to do well by positively envisaging their working attitudes through factors such as psychological well-being, strong employee voice, emotional support, and optimistic self-worth and associations; all of these factors serve to enhance KS in the workplace [41].

An ethical leadership style is different from other leadership styles, such as empowering leadership, authentic leadership, and spiritual leadership. Of the various approaches to leadership, ethical leadership accentuates the importance of an ethical code of conduct through the promotion of normative appropriate behavior among subordinates. The central focus of ethical leadership is on normative appropriate behavior [41,42]. Brown et al. [41] highlighted that normative appropriateness has a contextual nature and can be implemented in an explicit environment. From an organizational perceptive, normative appropriateness is verified against organizational interests. Hence, the importance of knowledge sharing should be conceptualized to the organizational interests [3,43]. Ethical leadership recognizes this as normative appropriate behavior and encourages it throughout the organization. Implementing ethical leadership can help the organization to urge employees towards knowledge-sharing behaviors and contribute towards organizational goal attainment and excellence [44].

Ethical leadership helps to reduce the serious psychological setbacks which result from long periods of stress or frustration in the workplace while having too little recovery time, which causes employees to not wish to share knowledge in the workplace, due to their tendency to experience feelings such as worthlessness [45]. Ethical leaders follow high moral standards to invoke positive feelings and reduce mental stress, following which employees feel positive commitment and respond to the organization with encouraging behavior [46]. Ethical leadership boosts communication and co-operation among employees (often taking the form of joint-support) and, as a result, coworker engagement in mutually beneficial actions [47]. It encourages high-quality workplace relationships,

through which employees respond well to others and create a supportive communication environment in which sharing knowledge is facilitated [48].

Ethical leaders provide opportunities and motivation to their employees, as both are vital for KS. First, by executing strategies/systems that endorse principles (e.g., ethics codes, instructions for ethical decision making, and open two-way communication systems), they help to reduce the possible barriers which restrain employees from KS. Second, through normative role-modeling suitable conduct, ethical leaders individually demonstrate the values and norms (e.g., trust, outgoingness, care for others, and justice) of their organization. Consistent with the theory, we believe employee KS can be promoted by the ethical behavior and standards exhibited by their leaders [49]. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *Ethical leadership is positively connected to knowledge sharing.*

2.5. Mediating Role of Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

With the help of the PSS approach, the connection between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing can be clarified with subjective well-being as a mediator.

Subject well-being has become an integral part of organizations in recent years. A study of SWB consists of three feelings—optimistic, pessimistic, and appraisal of existence—which are connected to the consciousness of happiness, fulfillment, and contentment [50,51]. SWB concentrates on the viewpoint of existence that an employee experiences: When and employee experiences a better level of comfort, it is more possible to enhance their life and job satisfaction, allowing them to experience a higher level of positive emotions, life satisfaction, and a lower level of negativity [52].

The theory promotes leader support towards employees, in order to value their contributions, help and care about their well-being level [23]. One study found that productive KS tendencies are absolutely connected with sharing activities, which is why employees are more likely to share knowledge when they have constructive feelings (i.e., SWB) [53]. SWB demonstrates that unethical supervision declines OCB and organizational commitment by discouraging the recognition of employees within the organization [20]. Erdogan et al. [54] proposed that SWB relies on satisfaction with the overall organizational atmosphere, with respect to life satisfaction/happiness, and proposed antecedents such as the satisfaction of needs and mindful activities. Leaders control the organizational climate and, therefore, when an employee's well-being suffers, leadership itself is an important antecedent. Ethical leadership controls well-being through social relationships with employees [55], as supportive and caring bonds between leaders and employees activate loyalty, which increases well-being and KS behavior [56].

As discussed above, ethical leadership is a normative appropriating approach that helps to reduce psychological stress levels through ethical standards, by verbally convincing employees and confirming how their exertions are valuable in meeting organizational goals, paying attention to their ideas, and creating a psychologically safe working environment which promotes KS behavior [6,57]. Ethical leaders encourage self-confidence and independence among employees, thus increasing their well-being level. They assist employees to show more independent behavior by providing them with more autonomy and putting them in situations that make possible confidence and growth in job-related expertise through verbal influence, in order to enhance their well-being [6,58].

Leisure satisfaction also improves well-being, as it leads employees towards positive feelings and relaxation, refreshing their energy and creating positive experiences. Leisure satisfaction is directly connected with an employee's personality and strongly affects their happiness, peacefulness of mind, quality of life, and can reduce negative emotions in employees [59,60]. Ethical leaders focus on job satisfaction through employee engagement, which has turned into a major subject of scholars/practitioners because engaged employees are more enthusiastic, productive, involved in KS and more passionate to go beyond [61,62].

An empirical study by Chumg et al. [52] showed that an employee's sense of well-being, such as happiness and satisfaction, has a positive impact on KS; in sum, employee KS can be enhanced when they have better experience of well-being [63]. Based on above discussion, we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *The relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing is mediated by subjective well-being.*

2.6. Mediating Role of Social Media (SM)

Knowledge sharing happens when an individual conveys information to others: it is an activity to exchange between individuals/groups to collaborate to solve problems, develop new ideas or implement policies and procedures. The increasing growth of social media usage has facilitated KS and ensured its broad diffusion among individuals/groups that use SM tools, forming a virtual space to support KS activities [64].

Social media is a blend of Internet-based technologies designed on the technical and ideological bases of Web 2.0 [65], having the benefit of social and interactive aspects of communication. It permits the two-way sharing of information through such means as messages and videos, which is made possible by free apps such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube. Leaders provide these platforms to ensure that employees experience less uncertainty and can develop their identity through KS [66,67].

SM has turned into a vital component of human life. Leaders have attempted to merge SM into their work by using apps to enhance their communication and relationships with employees. Some organizations have developed online communication by opening accounts on social networking sites; due to this, employees can become highly comfortable with obtaining and sharing knowledge [68].

Perceived leadership support theory explains how leaders respond to increase efforts in the workplace, through leader–employee associations based on social exchanges and employee willingness to share their knowledge at work through the use of technologies like apps or Web 2.0 [23]. Previous studies have verified that SM usage enhances the satisfaction that individuals obtain from social experiences, such as learning from each other and KS with immediate contacts. Such mutual communication and KS can lead to new proposals. Consistent with the theory of employer–employee relationships based on reciprocal exchange, leaders can provide a platform for employees to interact with each other. A recent study has confirmed that virtual interactions increase creativity by 49%, self-thinking by 23%, and company influence of events by 17%. SM practices have effects on organizational norms and policies, communication, and vision, as well as personal factors such as hedonic values, employee workplace perception, co-worker support, and administrative support [69].

SM practices influence the interactions of ethical leaders and employees, with the aim of promoting employee creativity through nurturing organizational learning and KS behaviors [8,68]. In this regard, SM increases the impact of ethical leadership and KS [70]. Earlier studies have specified how various companies persuaded employees to share their knowledge using SM tools, as they facilitate well-organized information flow, and explained what, how, and where to obtain functional knowledge within the organization [71,72]. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing is mediated by social media interaction.*

2.7. Sequential Mediation

For the current study, we constructed a multiple mediation model by conceptualizing that SWB and SM successfully mediate between ethical leadership and KS. This model explains the importance of employee perceptions, happiness intensity with the working environment, and opinions about individuality [6,73].

Ethical leadership and KS have a positive relationship, but the effect of ethical leadership on employee KS cannot lead to productive outcomes until some useful mediating mechanism is incorporated to develop positive employee attitudes towards KS. Therefore, SWB pushes employees to strive for KS. Ethical leadership plays an unquestionable role in improving the capabilities of employees and encouraging their positive feelings. By providing employees with favorable working conditions, recognizing their progress not only results in employee well-being but positively contributes to KS behaviors. The existence of partial connections from ethical leadership to SWB and SWB to KS indicates that SWB has the capacity to mediate between ethical leadership and KS [74,75].

Furthermore, ethical leadership supports SM by promoting open communication, an aspect which can serve to psychologically strengthen employees. Lacking a hedonic approach, it is comparatively difficult for employees to experience a meaningful existence. Thus, SM raises employee status by setting up social relations through social networking sites. This courteous behavior of ethical leaders pushes employees to utilize their expertise for KS [61,76].

Based on the observed facts, it can be concluded that ethical leadership, through subjective well-being, can stimulate positive behavior among employees for KS, while social media works as a progressive communication channel to promote positive knowledge sharing amongst employees. Taken together, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *Ethical leadership has positive impact on employee knowledge sharing through sequential mediation effects of subjective well-being and social media.*

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Sample and Procedure

The data in this study were gathered under a research project that aimed to look into the relationships between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing (KS) with the mediating role of subjective well-being (SWB) and social media (SM) in employees of the hospitality industry (Hotel) in Pakistan. Figure 1 describe the graphical relationship among study variables.
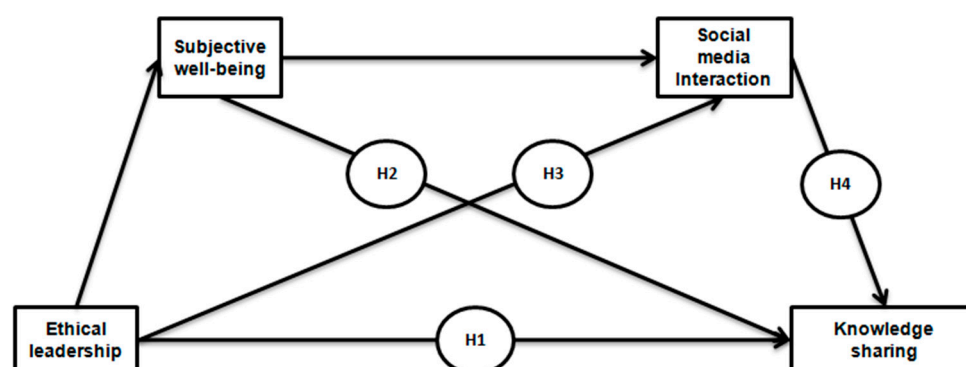

Figure 1. Theoretical model.

Hotel industry of Pakistan was selected for data collection. This industry is proliferating among industries of Pakistan. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council 2019, the contribution of hotel industry in GDP was 10.3. This industry is eminent source of foreign exchange earnings

of Pakistan. Hotel industry of Pakistan has capacity to provide employment opportunities to large number of people. Hotel industry contribution to employment grows 3% in 2019 (WTTC, 2019).

At present, the concentration of the industry is to bring the continuous innovation in their working style—which is realistically possible by managing uncertainties and developing the emotions of employees toward KS [77]. An insecure environment shapes ruthless strain among employees and, if a manager fails to create feasible opportunities, then several psychological disorders could result in the employees. Previous studies have confirmed that many psychological issues are caused by environmental factors, not personal weaknesses [78,79].

For our research, we chose the 500 employees of the 10 best downtown hotels of metropolitan cities of Pakistan such as Faisalabad, Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi and requested to participate in this study three times, with a 2-week lag time. Due to time saving and cost-efficient approach, the convivence sampling method was applied to collect data from desired respondents.

Before collecting data, we contacted the associated HR departments for approval, collected the list of managers and employees of different departments, and confirmed that these organizations honored employee emotions towards KS. During the meeting, the following questions were emphasized:

1.   Does your company give value employees ideas, well-being and individuality?
2.   Do you provide time-to-time opportunities to your staff to participate in decision making?

Data were collected from both leaders and followers, in order to reduce the threat of common method variance. Therefore, managers and employees in human resource, information technology, marketing, front office, and guest relationship representative departments were included for data collection. Face-to-face meetings were arranged to inquire about participants' potential willingness to take part in the survey before the questionnaires were given to the different departments. We did not know any respondent personally and made sure that they read the instructions and statement of confidentiality attached with questionnaire, stating: Please read the instructions carefully, complete the attached questionnaire and your honesty is highly appreciated. In addition, we provided envelopes and advised respondents to place their complete questionnaires in the envelope, seal it, and hand it to the relevant departmental manager.

The potential participants mostly engaged in office work where communication was essential. Data were obtained from 105 department managers (supervisors) and 395 employees (subordinates), with a minimum of 5 employees working under 1 manager, and the information and answers of all participants were kept confidential. Each form was marked with a specific ID, to match the feedback forms from time one to time three. For time one (i.e., the first survey), we collected the demographic information of leaders and asked the subordinates to rate the ethical leadership level in their workplace, as well as to share their individual background information. For time two (i.e., the second survey), we requested the same subordinates to rate their SWB and SM with respect to their workplace. For time three (i.e., the third survey), we requested each leader to rate their subordinates with regard to KS.

A total of 500 constructive questionnaires were distributed, of which 406 constructive questionnaires (94 supervisor and 312 subordinates) were collected after the elimination of incomplete responses, with a response rate of 81%. Of the 406 participants, 70% were male respondents and 30% were females. 60% respondents were between the age of (26–35 years), 80% of them had at least master degree. Very few (20%) respondents had bachelor degrees. As far as organizational tenor is concerned, 60% respondents had worked there more than 5 years and only 10% had worked there less than 1 year.

3.2. Survey Measures

The questionnaire was designed in English after an extensive literature review, which was based on pre-existing measures and a pre-test conducted to ensure participant identity and content accuracy before the final exchange. Six PhD scholars analyzed the questionnaires after managers of the selected organizations had examined it thoroughly and minor corrections were made after their suggestions. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", was applied to evaluate

ethical leadership, knowledge sharing, subjective well-being, and social media. Table 1 provides the complete description of measures. Please see the questionnaire of all items in Appendix A.

Table 1. Scale Description.

Scale	No of Items	Source
Ethical leadership (T1)	10	Brown et al. [41]
Knowledge sharing (T3)	13	Wang and wang [80]
Subjective well-being (T2)	5	Diener et al. [81]
Social media (T2)	9	Wang et al. [82]

Note: T1= Time1, T2 =Time 2 and T3 = Time 3.

3.3. Control Variables

We collected demographic variables such as age, gender, and experience, according to previous studies, as these variables have the capacity to influence the tendency of an employee's towards sharing knowledge with others.

3.4. Analytical Strategy

The partial least squares variance-based structural equational modeling approach (using PLS 3.2.6) recommended by Ringle [83] was applied to examine our research model. We used PLS because (1) the research model was complex, according to the type of relationships hypothesized (i.e., both direct and mediation) and its level of dimensionality (i.e, containing both first- and second-order constructs); and (2) we utilized latent variable scores in subsequent analyses of predictive relevance in the implementation of the two-stage approach for modeling the multi-dimensional construct. Evaluation of the measurements and of the structural model was performed separately, following the guidelines of Hair et al. [84]

4. Results

4.1. Assessment of Measurement Model

Assessment of the measurement model was carried out following the criteria of Hair et al. [84] and Henseler [85], by analyzing Cronbach's Alpha (α), convergent validity, and discriminant validity values. As shown in Table 2, the values of Cronbach's Alpha (α) and composite reliability were greater than the criteria threshold of 0.70. Moreover, the Average variance extracted (AVE) of all reflective constructs was above the cutoff value of 0.50. Indicator loadings for all constructs were 0.70–0.90 (Table 2). These results demonstrate good reliability and convergent validity [86].

Table 2. Constructs Reliability and Validity.

Latent Variable	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	(AVE)
EL	0.78–0.80	0.82	0.823	0.563
KS	0.75–0.89	0.90	0.856	0.678
SWB	0.82–0.86	0.86	0.845	0.789
SM	0.85–0.90	0.89	0.867	0.756

Note: EL=Ethical leadership, KS=KS, SWB=Subjective well-being, SM=Social media.

The Fornell-Larcker [87] criterion was used to evaluate discriminant validity, as demonstrated in Table 3. The square root of AVE was higher than the correlation values in columns and rows, hence suggesting a good discriminant validity. According to the recommendation of Henseler et al. [82], a modern approach was adopted—namely, Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)—to analyze the discriminant

validity (DV). Henseler et al. [85] proposed a more rigorous criteria: that an HTMT value should not be higher than 0.85. Table 3 exhibits the HTMT values of each pair of variables which were not above the threshold. Thus, it was confirmed that the discriminant validity was not a serious concern in this study.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix and Discriminant Validity.

Fornell–Larcker Criterion					Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
Constructs	**EL**	**KS**	**SWB**	**SM**	**Constructs**	**EL**	**KS**	**SWB**	**SM**
EL	0.667				EL				
KS	0.489	0.785			KS	0.587			
SWB	0.523	0.487	0.734		SWB	0.645	0.783		
SM	0.467	0.568	0.556	0.793	SM	0.576	0.548	0.789	

Notes: Diagonal elements (bold) are the square root of the variance shared between the constructs and their measures (average variance extracted). Off-diagonal elements are the correlations among constructs. For discriminant validity, diagonal elements should be larger than off-diagonal elements.

Specifically, correlation results are prescribed in Table 3. According to the Table 3, there is a positive correlation between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.489$, $p < 0.001$). Influence of ethical leadership on subjective well-being and social media is also positive respectively ($\beta = 0.523$, $\beta = 0.487$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that the influence of EL on SWB is greater than its influence on social media.

4.2. Structural Model

We used 5000 bootstrap resamples to estimate the significance of the path co-efficient. Figure 2a,b and Table 4 provide the findings of the structural path coefficients, along with the confidence interval and t-values. The total effect (c) of ethical leadership on KS was significant ($c = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$; Figure 2a), thus supporting H1. However, after the inclusion of mediators (i.e., subjective well-being and SM), the direct effect of ethical leadership on KS became insignificant ($c' = 0.018$, n.s.; Figure 2b). The other direct effects of ethical leadership on SWB and SM were significant ($a_1 = 0.435$, $p < 0.05$; $a_2 = 0.282$, $p < 0.05$, respectively).
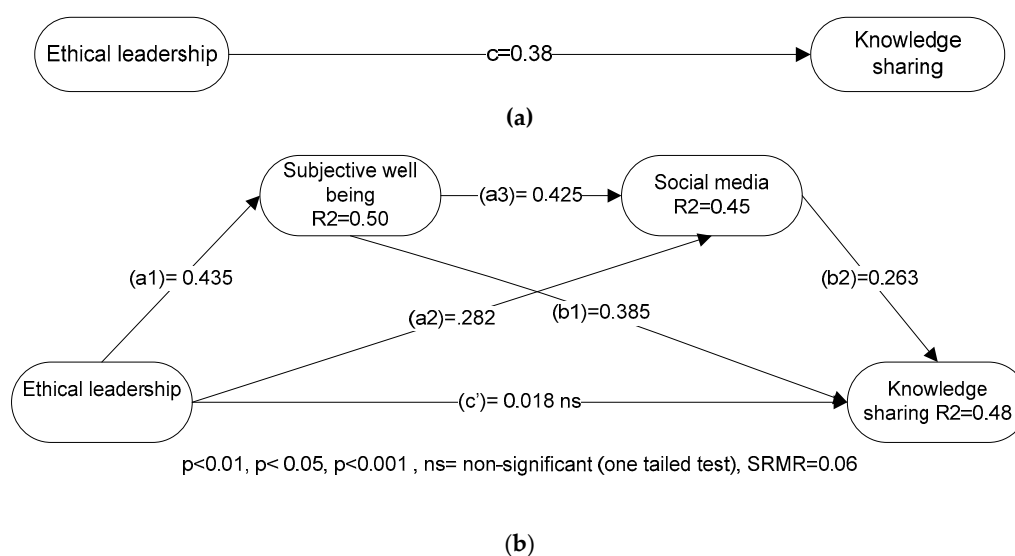

(a)

(b)

Figure 2. (**a**) Model with total effect and (**b**) Model with three-path mediated effects.

Table 4. Effects on endogenous variables.

Effects on Endogenous Variables	Direct Effect	*t*-Value	Percentile Bootstrap 95% CI
Subjective well-being (R2 = 0.50 /Q2 = 0.37)			
Ethical leadership (a1)	0.435***	10.632	[0.156; 0.332] Sig.
Social media (R2 = 0.45/Q2 = 0.26)			
Ethical leadership (a2)	0.282***	5.673	[0.252; 0.372] Sig.
Subjective well-being (a3)	0.425***	6.728	[0.192; 0.256] Sig.
Knowledge sharing (R2 = 0.48/Q2 = 0.32)			
H1: Ethical leadership (c′)	0.018ns	0.278	[0.042; 0.103] N.Sig.
Subjective well-being (b1)	0.385***	5.672	[0.148; 0.269] Sig.
Social media (b2)	0.263***	4.529	[0.267; 0.349] Sig.

Note: Sig. denotes a significant direct effect at 0.05; Ns. denotes a non-significant direct effect *** $p < 0.001$, ns: not significant. Bootstrapping based on n = 5000 subsamples.

4.3. Mediational Analysis Result

We applied the analytical approach described by Nitzl et al. [88] to test the mediation hypotheses (H2–H4). Following this purpose, we contrasted and specified the indirect effects through mediators (i.e., SWB and SM). Examinations of the total (*c*) and direct (H1: *c′*) effects of the independent variable (ethical leadership) on the dependent variable (KS) were carried out. Two- and Three-path mediational effects were tested, following the recommendations of Hayes [89] and Preacher and Hayes [90], through applying 5000 bootstrap resamples with 95% confidence intervals. As shown in Table 5 (Figure 2), after induction of SWB between ethical leadership and KS, the indirect effect was significant, as confirmed by bias-corrected bootstrapping at the 95% confidence interval (a1b1 = 0.34, LL = 0.165, UL = 0.338), thus supporting H2. Similarly, when SM was the exclusive mediator between ethical leadership and KS, its indirect effect was significant (a2b2 = 0.28, LL = 0.145, UL = 0.256), thus supporting H3. An indirect effect between ethical leadership and KS also existed through sequential mediation effects of both SWB and SM, in support of H4 (a1a3b2 = 0.23, LL = 0.186, UL = 0.234). Moreover, the total indirect effect between ethical leadership and KS (in terms of the 95% confidence interval) was also significant ($a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_1a_3b_2 = 0.48$).

Table 5. Bootstrap mediating Results.

Total effect of EL on KS (c)		Direct Effect of EL on KS				Indirect Effects of EL on KS	
Coefficient	t Value		Coefficient	t Value		Point Estimate	Bootstrap 95% CI
0.484 ***	5.298	H1:c′	0.018ns	0.563	Total(a1b1+a2b2+a1a3b2)	0.48	[0.178; 0.237]
					H2: a1 b1 (via SWB)	0.34	[0.165; 0.338]
					H3: a2 b2 (via SM)	0.28	[0.145; 0.256]
					H4: a1 a3 b2 (via SWB + SM)	0.23	[0.186; 0.234]

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ns: not significant (one-tailed test), SWB: Subjective well-being, SM: Social media.

The results confirmed (Figure 2b) that ethical leadership was a significant positive predictor of subjective wellbeing with path coefficient (a1) β = 0.435, ($p < 0.05$). The relationship between subjective well-being and social media significant and positive, with path coefficient(a3) β = 0.425 ($p < 0.05$). Social media was significantly related to knowledge sharing, with path coefficient(b2) β = 0.263 ($p < 0.05$). In the same way, subjective well-being was positively related to knowledge sharing, with path coefficient (b1) β = 0.385 ($p < 0.05$).

Calculations of R^2, SRMR (standardized root means square residual), and Q^2 (predictive relevance of endogenous constructs) completed the structural-model analysis. The R^2 values of the model were 0.50, 0.45, and 0.48 for subjective well-being, SM, and KS respectively; hence, they had good explanatory power [84]. The SRMR value should be less than 0.08; that in our model value was 0.06, indicating that it had good fit. Finally, the Q^2 value was calculated following the Stone–Geisser technique, for which the predictive value must greater than zero (i.e., $Q^2 > 0$). The Q^2 values of the used model were 0.37, 0.26, and 0.32.

5. Discussion

In this study, we examined the process by which ethical leadership enhances knowledge sharing (KS) among employees, as employees are influenced by the behavior of leaders, who probe employee feelings for KS. Our results showed that ethical leadership is positively connected with KS, considering the mediating roles of subjective well-being (SWB) and social media (SM). After applying three-path mediation effects, our finding supports our hypothesis.

Ethical leaders give worth to the contributions of employees and understand their emotions, seeking to extend and promote friendly links. By attaining high psychological satisfaction/value, employees become more motivated for KS without any stress. Ethical leader transparency and meticulous communication open doors for employee knowledge sharing. Inspiring employees through role modeling and emotional support encourages them to think critically and share knowledge. Providing subordinates with more opportunities for self-determination serves to facilitate knowledge sharing. Other studies, such as [41] and [46], have provided further solid evidence of this relationship.

Our results also provide evidence that subjective well-being mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing. The rationale behind this strong relationship is that ethical leadership improves SWB through care, self-belief, and confirming the helpfulness of employee's ideas, which are helpful in their engagement in KS. Consequently, SWB encourages participation and reduces the generation of negative emotions in the workplace. Ethical leadership, through reducing anxiety and emotional instability, improves the subjective well-being of employees, thus promoting their knowledge sharing. Other studies, such as [52] and [53], have provided firm proof of this relationship.

Furthermore, our study findings exposed that social media also mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge sharing. In reason for this intervention is that social media can enhance work practices and enable new ways of knowledge sharing in organizations, thereby increase organizational competitiveness. An ethical leader can enhance the social individuality of employees by connecting them through social media (e.g., using Facebook or Twitter) and promoting leader–employee knowledge-based interactions. Our framework highlights the statistically significant importance of social media, under which employees change their choice from a freerider position to a co-operative strategy in which they share knowledge. Other studies, such as [70] and [68], have provided firm evidence of such relationships.

Finally, we tested whether ethical leadership could take an indirect approach to KS, as mediated through subjective well-being and social media interactions. By integrating the results of both mediators, we discerned a serial mediation function which operates in such way that ethical leadership encourages SWB in employees through hedonic values and social uniqueness through SM interaction, both of which serve to promote knowledge sharing. Other studies, such as [61] and [76], provides further evidence of this relationship.

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

The results of this study comprise essential contributions to the literature in several manners, primarily pointing out that a manager who shows ethical leadership characteristics can, indeed, enhance knowledge sharing (KS).

First, by simultaneously looking into the contextual and developmental factors, we upgrade the KS literature by setting up the perspective of employee emotions. This provides incredible enlightenment

with respect to how ethical leadership should be considered as essential in the future future, in order to recognize employee emotions towards KS. Employees emotions indicate how they interpret their leader's treatment and allows us to identify the relationships between ethical leadership and KS [46]. Previous studies have found different, individual aspects which stimulates KS, such as thinking styles, culture, aptitude, and personality; aside from these earlier-acknowledged aspects, the leadership style has also been indicated as most decisive contextual factor to understand KS. We found that subjective well-being and social media were positively correlated with each other. The current approach clarifies the significant serially mediating effects of SWB and SM (developmental factors) and ethical leadership (contextual factors) on knowledge sharing within one model.

Our study also advances perceived supervisor support theory by explaining how an ethical leader has the ability to value employee contributions and offer emotional support. This theory presents new outlook and explanations, regarding how ethical leadership can increase self-awareness and decrease triviality and reticence [26], as leaders may focus on the growth requirements of employees and allow them to face different challenges that encourage their progress and self-belief in their work. Furthermore, managers who demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors give a voice to employees in decision making and listen to what they say [48].

High well-being employees are more likely to undertake a positive approach to KS under hectic work circumstances than those with low well-being. Differentiation in feelings and stress are intensified by a lack of opportunities to develop professionally. PSS theory presents moral outlook to lift the confidence of employees, through proper care and proving to them the value of their efforts, eventually leading to happiness, peace of mind, and a quality work–life balance. Our findings revealed that well-being has considerable impact on KS, where an employee who is enthusiastic about KS is more innovative [60].

Our study also enriches the individuality of employees under the perspective of social identity and personality making. PSS theory states—how the quick response of leaders increases the efforts at workplace and make employees enthusiastic for KS [8]. KS, as mediated through SM, leads to knowledge-seeking, contributions, and social interactions. Our findings revealed that SM platforms offer rapid knowledge flow and that ethical leaders can provide a welcoming approach through SM to improve communication and interactions with their employees [61].

Finally, our findings theoretically support and develop that "social model of emotion" for KS and explain the significance of the feelings, levels of happiness, and individuality of employees [6].

5.2. Practical Contributions

The results of the present study provide some practical insights which are ethically important in protecting the well-being and individuality of employees. We propose that the ethical behavior of leaders can enhance KS and, thus, cultivating ethical leadership is significantly important. Considering insufficient organizational resources, leaders are passionate to identify which dynamics are most complimentary for understanding employee's emotions for KS. Therefore, the results of our research can facilitate managers, in this respect.

An organization should identify the significance of ethical leadership. We propose that the support of ethical manners has an intimacy intended to enhance KS, in the form of the fair treatment of employee's self-confidence and showing concern for their well-being. Organizations should instruct and stimulate leaders to be energetic in their role by taking on their responsibilities, interacting with employees warmly, and giving direction, feedback, and moral support.

These results offer a practical structure through which organizations can analyze the level of happiness and individuality of employees. Managers should not overlook the learning and well-being environment where employees can share knowledge, which affects the psychological conditions of employees through several phases, such as job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. We propose that, by having ethical leaders, an organization can facilitate the positivity of their employees, who consequently become more engaged in KS and can better protect themselves from emotional exhaustion.

According to previous results, emotional coldness is not genetic; when a working environment is psychologically safe, employees are led to KS and organizations can better carry out innovative and enthusiastic activities such as praise, innovation awards, and internal contests, in order to stimulate well-being and uniqueness. This strategy serves to strengthen the awareness of managers in identifying the conditions of employees and analyzing their past success—failure ratios.

Finally, an organization should consider the emotional care of employees and pay more attention to their desired satisfaction level. Managers should carry out flexible job design, open communication, and ethical practices, allowing employees to feel inner pride in their work and to eventually support KS.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

While the present research has meaningful outcomes, some inexorable deficiencies must be underlined, which can be helpful in designing future studies.

First, the research was carried out only in Pakistan and, so, it is not apparent to what level our results can be generalized. Furthermore, our research achieved significant results within a single organization type (hotels), thereby limiting our findings. Different and diverse organizational settings, such as banking, manufacturing, telecom, and health industries, may increase the credibility. Second, a cross-sectional method was applied for data collection, which may have generated ambiguity in clarifying causes and effects; therefore, future research should re-test the presented hypotheses by applying a longitudinal approach in each period, in order to verify the reasons and consequences. Third, while SWB and SM were found to be significant mediators between ethical leadership and KS, in the future other mediators can be tested, such as job crafting, autonomy, fear of future, happiness, and passion. Finally, the present research focused on how ethical leadership affects KS when employees become emotionally cold; in the future, ethical leadership and KS must also be explored under the framework of emotional exhaustion and reduction of personal accomplishment. Other leadership styles can also be considered, with a comparison of which style can create significant results.

6. Conclusions

This study served to deepen the perception of ethical leadership and knowledge sharing, as serially mediated by SWB and SM. The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that it attempted to enlighten employee emotions toward KS, as explained through perceived supervisor support theory, and clarified the worth of ethical leadership. Drawing from PSS theory, our results verified the following points: (1) ethical leaders have the ability to understand the emotions of employees and give value to their opinions; (2) they can understand the stress level of employees and know how to guide them towards happiness and higher well-being; and (3) they can provide social identity to employees and advocate for their individuality. These results prove that ethical leadership is favorable for KS, through placing focus on the opinions, subjective well-being, and identity of employees.

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Appendix A Appendix

Table A1. Questionnaire.

Ethical Leadership.

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

Tacit Knowledge Sharing

1. Share knowledge based on our experience
2. Collect knowledge from others based on our experience
3. Share knowledge of know-where or know-whom with others
4. Collect knowledge of know-where or know-whom with others
5. Share knowledge based on our expertise
6. Collect knowledge from others based on our expertise
7. Share lessons from past failures when we feel it is necessary

Explicit Knowledge Sharing

1. We frequently share existing reports and official documents with members of our organization
2. We frequently share reports and official documents that we prepare by ourselves with members of our organization
3. We frequently collect reports and official documents from others
4. We are frequently encouraged by knowledge sharing mechanisms
5. We are frequently offered a variety of training and development programs
6. We are facilitated by IT systems invested in knowledge sharing

Subjective Well-Being

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
3. I am satisfied with my life.
4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Social Media

1. Using social media makes my work fast.
2. Using social media makes my work easier.
3. Using social media increases my working performance.
4. Using social media makes my work effective.
5. Using social media increases my work productivity.
6. I often use social media to perform my work.
7. Use of social media is helpful at my workplace.
8. It is easy to learn how to use social media.
9. It is easy to interact on social media.
10. I like to use social media.

Note: All items were measured on five points likert scale such as "(1) Strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree".

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