

Do as I say *and* do as I do? The mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment in the relationship between ethical leadership and employee extra-role performance

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of ethical leadership on two important employee extra-role behaviors; organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and creative performance (CP). Drawing on social exchange and organizational support theories, psychological contract fulfillment (PCF) was proposed as the mediating mechanism explaining this relationship.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected via questionnaire from 248 employee-supervisor/colleague dyads employed in a large fast-moving consumer goods multinational company in Pakistan. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling.

Findings – Supervisors' ethical leadership style (ELS) was positively related to employees' OCBs and CP. The predicted mediating role of PCF in the relationship between ELS and extra-role behaviors was also supported. **Research limitations/implications** – While it benefitted from dyadic data, a significant limitation of this study is the cross-sectional nature of the data. A noteworthy implication of the findings is the important role that supervisors' ELS plays in employees' behaviors within the organization. Furthermore, it appears that ethical leadership is a significant factor in employees' evaluations of PCF and their ensuing behavioral responses. **Originality/value** – This study contributes to addressing the inconsistent findings in prior research on ethical leadership. An additional novel contribution is that it identifies PCF as an underlying mechanism linking ethical leadership and employees' extra-role behaviors.

Keywords Quantitative, Creativity, Psychological contract fulfillment, Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), Ethical leadership style