

Ethical Leadership and Organizational Excellence in the Hospitality Industry: A Descriptive Literature Review Based on the 4V Model

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Abstract

The hospitality business, with its dynamic environment and high levels of contact with customers, requires an effective foundation in ethical leadership to achieve organizational excellence. This paper discusses the applicability and use of the 4V Model of Ethical Leadership Values, Vision, Voice, and VirtuE, in fostering organizational excellence in the hospitality industry. Through a synthesis of existing research, an in-depth review is conducted to discuss the manner in which ethical leadership is used to foster an environment based on trust, integrity, and ongoing improvement, which is needed to sustain an excellent brand image and achieve prolonged success. The review documents the positive link between ethical leadership and numerous organizational outcomes such as employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intentions to quit. The review also establishes some of the challenges such as high levels of employee turnover and the competitive environment in a hospitality business that threaten to dethrone ethical standards. By putting in place the 4V Model in practices, hospitality businesses are able to improve efficiency in operations as well as delivery services, thus resulting in higher customer loyalty as well as business success. The study ends by highlighting the pivotal role that is played by ethical leadership in enhancing organizational excellence and calling on future researchers to study best practices in addition to approaches to encouraging ethical conduct in such a dynamic as well as diversified business.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Organizational Excellence, Hospitality Industry, 4V Model, Employee Satisfaction

Introduction

The hospitality industry, spanning a wide array of services including lodging, food and beverage, event planning, and travel, is one that plays a central role in the world economy. This is an industry that is dynamic in nature and is built on the requirement for high-quality service delivery to assure customer satisfaction as well as loyalty (Tribull, 2024). Success in this particular industry is contingent on adapting to trends in consumer choice as well as in the markets, thus providing fertile ground for an investigation of the influence of organizational practices as well as that of leadership (EHL Insights, 2023; Forbes, 2023). High-lighted in recent studies is the role that innovative leadership strategies as well as change management techniques play in responding to the topical landscape in this industry (Tribull, 2024; EHL Insights, 2023). Ethical leadership, as the practice of leading in respect to ethical values and beliefs, and to others' dignity and human rights, is very important in the hospitality field (Megheirkouni, 2023). Hospitality leaders have to deal with sophisticated ethical challenges as a result of direct, face-to-face contact with customers and workers (Ermanno, 2024). Ethical leadership builds an environment such that trust, openness, and integrity exist, for which positive word-of-mouth is needed for creating a strong reputation and achieving longevity (Hasanein, 2024). In addition, it is thanks to ethical leaders that an environment is built in which employees act ethically, thus performance for the organization improves in all ways (Sarofeem, 2025; DiNardo, 2025).

Ethical leadership helps to enhance employees' dedication by increasing workplace fairness, respect, and transparency (Jay, 2025). Ethics is crucial for high employee satisfaction and improved performance output, ethics are crucial in balancing the opposing forces of creativity and efficiency known as exploration and exploitation (Wang, Ilyas, Ni, & Rasheed, 2023). examines more closely the dynamic features of the interaction between ethical leadership and employee service innovation, hence addressing how one's rest affects this interaction. The results of this study imply that ethical leaders actively oppose the detrimental effects of insufficient sleep on an employee's creativity and promote new ideas. Rasheed (2023) found the complex relationship between ethical leadership and employee service innovation, highlighting the role that can be played if treated with fairness and get a good sleep. As per the research ethical leadership play an important role in encouraging an environment for innovative thinking but also in mitigating the detrimental role that lack of good-quality sleep can have on an employee's creative abilities. As Rasheed (2023) explains, "ethical leadership not only directly impacts service innovation but also lessens the negative impact of poorer-quality sleep on employee innovative abilities" (p. 32).

Organizational excellence is all about continual endeavoring to devise systems and processes that mobilize and inspire staff to deliver services that meet or even surpass customers' expectations (EHL Insights, 2023). In hospitality, even that is more challenging to accomplish since it is quite often being subjected to unpredictable customers' demands, as well as demands for unyielding high standards for services (Tribull, 2024). In such an environment, excellence demands on-going innovation and growth, fueled by high-level management and positive company culture (Forbes, 2023).

The link between excellence in organizations in hospitality and ethical leadership is both profound as well as intricate. As evidence from recent research reveals, ethical leadership plays an important role in creating positive company culture—a crucial pillar for top-grade service as well as efficient operations. Sarofeem (2025) stresses that companies that embrace ethics and integrity foster settings in which trust, cooperation, and on-going development prosper. This results in more engaged employees as well as greater customer satisfaction, opening doors to long-term success (Sarofeem, 2025). Styles such as servant-based management as well as active listening are also central to creating cohesive, goal-focused teams (DiNardo, 2025). Additionally, researchers such as Megheirkouni (2023) and Ceralde (2024) have demonstrated that adherence to ethics enhances innovation and flexibility—essential in remaining competitive in an emerging environment. Adopting ethical principles is thus crucial in maintaining high standards as also in achieving lasting success in hospitality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The hospitality sector, encompassing services such as lodging, beverages, event planning, as well as travel, is an integral part of the world's economy. This is an industry known for dynamism in its operations and for playing an indispensable role in creating exceptional customer experiences (Tribull, 2024). The success of this industry is highly dependent on adapting to emerging consumer attitudes as well as altering circumstances in the environment, thus making it an excellent avenue for analyzing management practices and leadership (Xu, Li, & Zhang, 2022; Khattak et al., 2022).

Ethical management in this industry is crucial because of the close contact with customers and workers, which in most cases involves complicated moral dilemmas (Hasanein, 2024). Ethical

managers primarily maintain an environment that is based on trust and integrity, crucial for retaining a good image and overall success in the long term (Megheirkouni, 2023).

Further, striving for excellence in an organization in this industry means constant efforts at doing better at every step, which is fueled by good management and an excellent organizational culture (DiNardo, 2025). Learning about the relationship between ethics in management and organizational excellence can make one understand more about improving service provision and operational effectiveness in this line of business (Rowtons Training, 2025). This review of existing literature focuses on unraveling such dynamics and their impact on the hospitality business.

2.1 Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership has grown in importance over recent years, especially in areas such as organizational behavior, management, and management development. Ethical leadership is evident in showcasing normatively appropriate behavior through individual conduct and interpersonal relationships, and encouraging such behavior in followers through two-way communications, positive reinforcement, and decision-making processes (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Ethical leadership is crucial in developing an ethics-based climate in organizations, which in turn affects employee conduct as well as organizational performance. Various studies have concluded that ethical leadership is associated with diverse organizational gains such as increased employee job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment, and decreased intentions to quit (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). Ethical leaders also play roles as models, with high standards for ethics that influence followers to accept them as an individual's ideals, thus creating an environment where trust and integrity thrive within an organization (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009).

The importance of ethical leadership goes beyond personal and organizational gains to wider societal effects. Ethical leadership plays an important role in averting scandals in corporations as well as encouraging responsible business practice. Illustratively, the moral failures at corporations such as Enron and Lehman Brothers have highlighted serious consequences resulting from unethical management and the need for responsible governance (Green & Odom, 2003). Ethical leaders possess improved abilities to resolve moral challenges in managing complex situations and making choices that reconcile multiple stakeholder interests, hence improving the company's image and longevity (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Additionally, responsible leadership enhances corporate social responsibility efforts by encouraging business practices that contribute to society and the environment (Plinio, Young, & Lavery, 2010). As more corporations appreciate the importance of responsible leadership, it is important that ethical considerations are assimilated in training for administration as well as company guidelines to support ongoing development for ensuing sustainability as well as responsible behavior (Khattak et al., 2022; Xu, Li, & Zhang, 2022; Zaghmout et al., 2024).

2.2 Organizational Excellence

Organizational excellence is an all-encompassing theory that involves ongoing improvement, innovation, and efficient management to achieve or surpass customers' demands. As noted by Ubaid, Dweiri, and Ojiako (2020), organizational excellence methodologies (OEMs) play an essential role in high performance in diverse business fields. Through systematic review, their study yielded 46 OEMs and an integrated list of 47 critical success factors (CSFs) that support organizational excellence. These include strategic planning, leadership commitment, focus on

customers, and ongoing improvement. The research stresses adopting these methodologies in an integrated manner in organizational practice for improved performance and longevity. Further, research is needed to study how to apply OEMs in other geographical locations and sectors, as well as digitalization and Industry 4.0 technologies' effects on organizational excellence (Ubaid, Dweiri, & Ojiako, 2020).

In addition, results from the First Global Assessment on Current State of Organizational Excellence highlight the positive link between adopting best management practices and enhancing organizational performance (Ringrose, Carvalho, & Sampaio, 2018). The assessment offers an overall overview of organizational excellence strength areas and areas for improvement in an array of diverse sectors and regions. The research finds that organizations subscribing to excellence models, including the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award and European Excellence Award, have increased performance levels and competitiveness. The study pinpoints future areas for investigation, including creating excellence models for the public sector and non-profit organizations, as well as linking sustainability ideas to business excellence models (Ringrose, Carvalho, & Sampaio, 2018).

2.3 Hospitality Industry

The hotel, food and beverage, event planning, and travel services sector is a pillar of world economics. This is an active sector that is characterized by dynamic operations and playing a crucial role in offering high-quality experiences to customers (Elkhwesky et al., 2022). The success of this industry is greatly dependent on being able to adjust to demand trends and market situations, making it a promising arena to study leadership and organizational practices (Adekuajo et al., 2023). Ethical practice is necessary in this industry because it involves constant interactions with clients and workers, often resulting in complicated moral situations (Gomes et al., 2023). Leaders who emphasize ethically aligned practices create an environment that exudes trust and integrity, thus playing an essential role in sustaining an image that is positive and in gaining long-term success (Jiang & Jiang, 2023). Additionally, striving for operational excellence in this hospitality business entails ongoing improvement and innovation, facilitated by effective management and an improved organizational culture (García-Madurga & García, 2023). An examination of the dynamics between ethical practice in leadership and operational excellence can offer beneficial knowledge on service delivery improvement as well as operational efficiency in this business (El Archi et al., 2023).

2.3.1 Ethical Leadership in the Hospitality Industry

Ethical leadership is now an indispensable part of management in hospitality, including services like lodging, food and beverage, event planning, and travel. As an industry that is dynamic in nature and plays a crucial role in creating world-class customers, ethical leadership in this context is characterized as the manifestation of normatively correct conduct through personal behavior and interpersonal relationships, as well as encouraging such behavior in followers through two-way communication, rewards, and decision-making (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Ethical leadership is central to creating an ethical climate in such organizations, linking directly to employee conduct and organizational results.

Research has shown that ethical leadership is linked positively to numerous benefits for an organisation, such as employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and decreased intentions to leave (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). In hospitality, where employee contact with customers is common and immediate, such outcomes are especially

crucial. Ethical leaders act as models for other followers, establishing high standards of ethics and expectations, thus creating an environment based on trust and integrity (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). Such an environment is crucial in sustaining an excellent image and obtaining long-term success in hospitality.

A systematic review undertaken by Megheirkouni (2023) focuses on the significance of ethical leadership in tourism and hospitality contexts. The review pinpoints four themes: the attributes of ethical leaders, healthy work environment as an outcome, effectiveness of ethical leadership, and application in cross-cultural settings. The research focuses on the fact that not only does ethical leadership increase organizational performance but more so facilitates a healthy work environment, which is essential for employee health as well as for customer satisfaction. The review also implies that different settings need to adopt ethical leadership practices for greatest impact (Megheirkouni, 2023).

Ethical leadership is an important force in encouraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the hospitality sector. Agag's (2020) study formulates a multilevel model that tests impacts on employees' green behavior due to supervisory ethical leadership behavior, mediated by CSR. The results suggest that ethical leadership behavior increases organizational trust and employee's own well-being, such that it leads to green behavior and employee responsibility-taking. The study highlights that ethical leadership is crucial to inculcating sustainable business practices and an overall positive ethical climate in an establishment (Agag, 2020).

The link between ethical leadership and organizational excellence is equally deep. Ethical leadership establishes the roots for an excellence culture by instilling high moral standards in addition to being an example to emulate. This, in turn, creates an environment in which people are inspired to deliver at their best, leading to overall company success. Sarofoem's (2025) research highlights that leaders who have ethics and integrity at heart create an environment that instills trust, teamwork, and ongoing improvement. This improves employee motivation and public confidence, resulting in long-term company success (Sarofoem, 2025).

In addition, ethical leadership plays an important role in averting company scandals as well as encouraging responsible business practices. The ethical misconduct by companies such as Enron and Lehman Brothers underscored the tragic results of unethical management and the importance of ethical governance (Green & Odom, 2003). Ethical managers can more effectively solve complicated moral quandaries and make choices that harmonize the competing priorities of multiple stakeholders, thus improving the company's image as well as future success (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Further, ethical leadership informs company social responsibility projects that have positive impacts on society as well as the environment (Plinio, Young, & Lavery, 2010).

Ethical leadership is an important force for organizational excellence in hospitality. Through creating an atmosphere of trust, integrity, and ongoing improvement, ethical leaders can increase employee happiness, customer loyalty, and overall organizational performance. As companies more fully embrace the importance of ethical leadership, it is more important to incorporate ethics-based considerations in leadership development programs and company policies to achieve lasting growth and ethical practice. Subsequent studies must move ahead to study best practices and methods for encouraging moral conduct and organizational excellence in this fast-changing and culturally diverse field.

2.3.3 Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Organizational Excellence

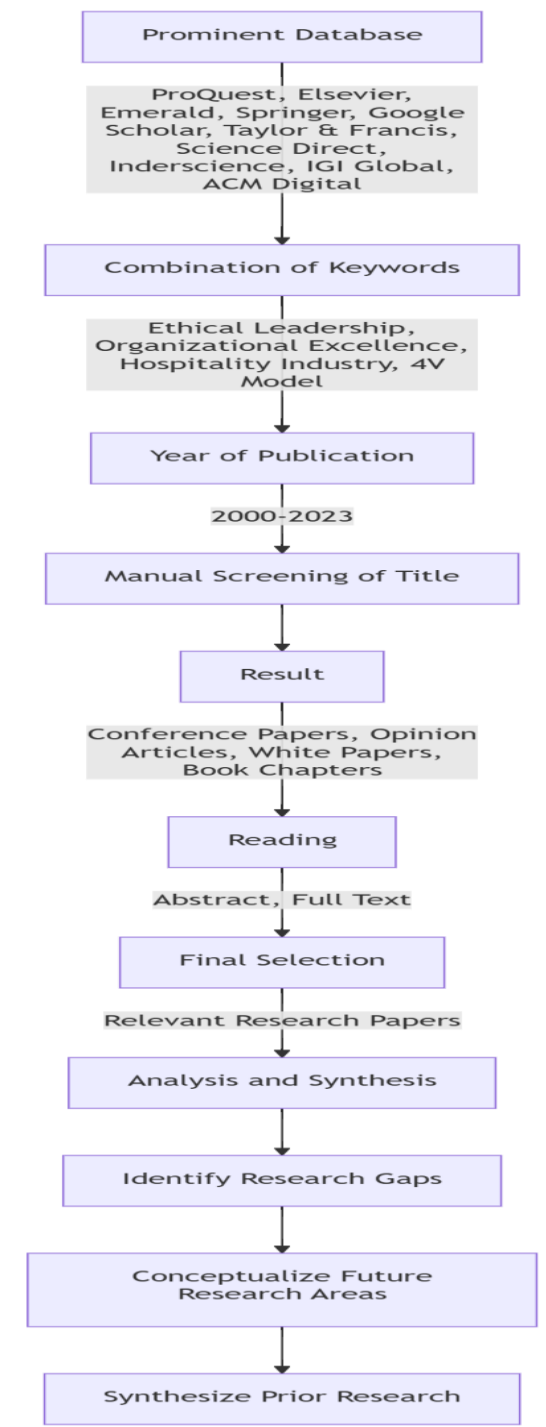
Organizational excellence in the hotel sector is a multifarious idea including constant improvement, creativity, and efficient resource management to satisfy or beyond customer expectations. Studies have indicated that good leadership is absolutely vital for reaching organizational excellence by fostering a culture of ongoing improvement and innovation (Baghdadi & Fahes, 2023). Good leaders in the hospitality sector are those that can inspire and involve their staff members, so empowering them to provide outstanding services and guarantee customer happiness. Emphasizing the need of leadership in forming organizational culture and pushing performance changes, the Burke-Litwin model of organizational performance and transformation (Baghdadi & Fahes, 2023). A useful tool for grasping organizational excellence in the hospitality industry, this model implies that transformational leadership might greatly influence employee involvement and organizational success. Another important factor influencing organizational effectiveness in the hospitality sector is workplace innovation. Research has shown that a deliberate emphasis on workplace innovation—including talent development and the capacity to self-organize—improves corporate success (Stoffers, Eringa, Niks, & Kleefstra, 2021). Higher income growth, sustainability, and lower absenteeism in the Dutch hotel sector, for example, have been connected to greater internal rates of change and knowledge investment (Stoffers et al., 2021). Notwithstanding these advantages, the hotel sector usually trails behind other industries in workplace innovation, hence stressing the need of further research and pragmatic interventions to improve creative behaviors. Combining creative ideas with good leadership will help hospitality companies to keep a market edge and reach greater levels of organizational excellence (Xu, Li, & Zhang, 2022).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The basic goal of a literature review is to identify research deficiencies, define prospective research domains, and synthesize existing studies. To enhance understanding in the discipline, it is important to perform a comprehensive and compelling evaluation of the current literature (Webster & Watson, 2002). Descriptive study, a form of conclusive research, methodically illustrates a scenario, topic, or issue. It also delineates the traits of people or groups and the extent related to the variables under investigation. This methodology aids in formulating precise predictions and offers a systematic and rigorous framework for locating, filtering, and categorizing research materials.

This study analyzed 110 research publications sourced from nine important databases: Science Direct, Inderscience, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis, Elsevier, Emerald, Springer, Deloitte, and Google Scholar. The selection procedure included a combination of terms like "Ethical Leadership," "Organizational Excellence," "Hospitality Industry," and "4V Model." The documents examined for this study were published on or prior to October 2023.

Figure 1: Flow chart explaining the process adopted for Literature Review



Description on how Literature Review was Done

The process to conduct this review included some crucial steps to adopt an exhaustive and systematic review approach. The initial step was to choose prominent academic databases that have high-quality and ample publications. The databases used were ProQuest, Elsevier, Emerald, Springer, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, Science Direct, Inderscience, IGI Global, and ACM Digital. The reasons behind selecting these databases were that they offer access to numerous peer-review journals, conference proceedings, book chapters, as well as other scholarly articles related to the research question (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020).

Finally, keywords directly connected to the research aim were combined to find related literature. Here, in this study, keywords such as "Ethical Leadership," "Organizational Excellence," "Hospitality Industry," and "4V Model" were used. Combining these keywords filtered down available articles to those directly related to the research aim (Liberati et al., 2009).

The results were filtered by publication year, including works from 2018 to 2025. This was done to ensure that, in addition to including recent studies that were relevant to contemporary times, foundational literature in the study area was also included. Once filtered by publication year, from among the remaining articles, titles were screened by hand for relevance to the study in question. This consisted of reading over titles and making an assessment as to whether or not an article contained useful data based on title (Liberati et al., 2009).

The titles that survived manual title screening were grouped according to different document types, including conference papers, opinion articles, white papers, and book chapters. This grouping facilitated synopsis and knowledge on the kind of documents being utilized. In addition to that, abstracts or full documents of selected articles were read in order to further review their relevance and quality. This included more detailed review on their contents to confirm that the articles contained significant insights and data for use in research (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020).

From reading abstracts or complete texts, the selection of relevant research articles was determined. These articles were selected because they made meaningful contributions to knowledge in the study of ethical leadership and organizational excellence in hospitality. The selected research articles were subsequently read for analysis and synthesis to determine common themes, trends, and observations. This included critically analyzing individual results and synthesizing them to form an integrated story (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013).

From analysis and synthesis, research gaps were determined. These include those in which insufficient studies have been conducted or additional research is warranted. By determining these gaps, opportunities for future research were made apparent. From the determined research gaps, future research areas were developed. This included suggesting new research questions, hypotheses, and potential methodologies that could fill gaps in available literature (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013).

Lastly, the existing research was synthesized to offer an extended overview of all that is known about this subject to date. This synthesis placed the study's results in context to show in which ways they add to existing knowledge in the field. This meticulous process not only made the literature review exhaustive, systematic, but also revealed rewarding insights on how ethical

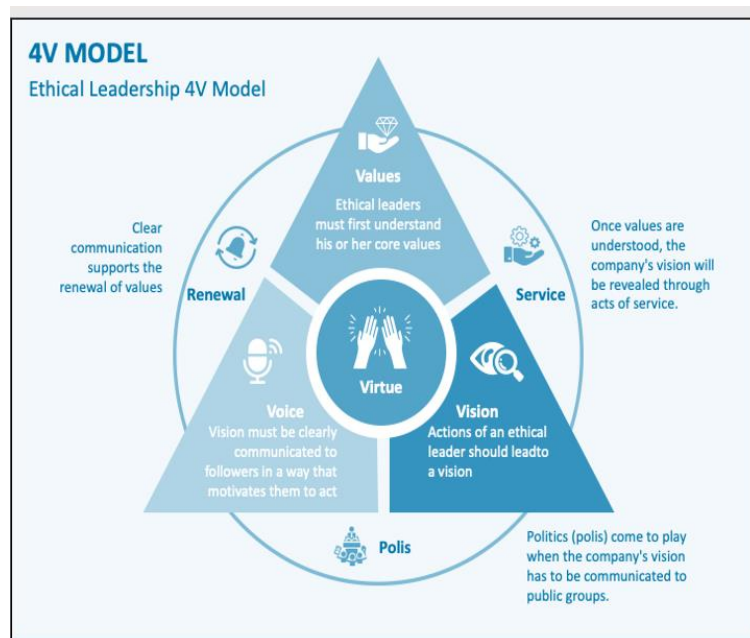
leadership is associated with organizational excellence in hospitality (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020).

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this research is borrowed from the 4V Model of Ethical Leadership, which is comprised of Values, Vision, Voice, and Virtue. The 4V Model was developed by Dr. Bill Grace and offers an expansive template for linking one's inner associated beliefs and values with one's outer conduct in order to promote the common good (Grace, 1990). The 4V Model highlights core values as central to ethical leadership, encouraging leaders to develop a clear and convincing vision that is aligned with these values. Voice is used to describe leaders' ability to effectively communicate their vision and inspire others, with Virtue highlighting moral character and proper conduct that leaders should possess (Center for Ethical Leadership, n.d.; Grace, 1990).

In this study, 4V Model is most relevant because it emphasizes the central role that is played by ethical leadership in creating organizational excellence in hospitality. Through the application of values, vision, and voice, hospitality leaders can instill in their organizations a culture based on trust, integrity, and ongoing improvement, all of which is needed to achieve high service standards and operational effectiveness (Center for Ethical Leadership, n.d.; Grace, 1990). This system offers an organized way of knowing why practices in ethical leadership can improve company performance and bring lasting success to hospitality businesses.

Figure 2 : 4-V Model of Ethical Leadership, developed by Bill Grace



The 4V Model of Ethical Leadership, conceptualized by Dr. Bill Grace, offers an integrated approach to linking internal thoughts, values, as well as external execution, behaviors, and actions, to pursue the common good. The 4V Model has four elements: **Values**, which constitute the core ideas and concepts that influence a leader's conduct and decision-making, including integrity, fairness, respect, responsibilities, among other values. These values shape

responsible conduct and decision-making, including how a leader interacts with employees, clients, as well as other stakeholders (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005).

Vision entails being able to project a clear, compelling future for the company aligned with moral practices, customers' satisfaction, as well as company excellence. A good vision unifies the company, creating a sense of purpose as well as direction, moving it towards constant improvement as well as innovation (Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009). Voice is being equipped to express one's values, as well as their own vision in an open manner, arguing for moral conduct, establishing standards, as well as guiding workers. Good communication builds an open culture characterized by trust as well as openness, playing an immense role in determining company performance (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009). Virtue is about possessing moral character as well as moral conduct on the part of the leader, encompassing being in constant evidence for moral conduct and being role models. Virtuous executives influence subordinates to act morally as well as promote an organization's values, leading to an enhanced company image as well as resulting in lasting success (Green & Odom, 2003).

The 4V Model is most applicable to hospitality because of the high-quality service that is dependent on high standards in the sector and because of the constant moral dilemmas encountered by workers. Ethical leadership is at the core for developing an environment for excellence by establishing high moral standards and an example to follow, creating an environment where workers will perform at their best (Nicolaidis, 2019).

Through studies, it has been proven that ethical leadership has been correlated with positive outcomes in an organization, such as employee job satisfaction, an increase in employee organizational commitment, and less employee turnover intentions (Neubert et al., 2009). In hospitality, such outcomes are very important because of high rates of employee-customer interactions and constant demands for service standard. Ethical leaders act as role models, establishing high standards of morality and expectations that create an environment that is built on trust and integrity in an organization (Mayer et al., 2009).

Ethical leadership is also responsible for championing corporate social responsibilities by spreading practices that positively impact society and the environment. As organizations begin to see that there is value in ethical leadership, there is an urgent need to incorporate ethical considerations in development plans for leadership as well as company guidelines to ensure sustainability and ethical performance (Plinio, Young, & Lavery, 2010). By applying the 4V Model in practices for the leadership, hospitality companies can create guidelines that improve their operational effectiveness as well as service production, thereby creating more customer loyalty as well as business success.

3.2 Conceptual Model

The reflective model synthesizing the 4V Model for Ethical Leadership with Sikh teachings. Independent variables in this model encompass Seva (selfless service), Humility, Fairness, and Discipline. Dependent variables entail Employee Engagement, Inclusivity, Innovation, and Sustainability. This model provides an organized means to explore how there can be flexibility in adapting ethical leadership across contexts while upholding constant moral standards (Grace, 1990; Singh, 2019).

The conceptual model shows the interrelationship between ethical leadership and performance outcomes, noting specifically in the hospitality context. The 4V Model of Ethical Leadership (Values, Vision, Voice, Virtue) is combined with Sikh spirituality-based principles that stress selfless service (Seva), humility (Nimrata), justice (Nyay), and rigor (Anushasan). The model

demonstrates the manner in which these factors impact employee satisfaction, inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability performance outcomes (Grace, 1990; Singh, 2019).



4. DISCUSSION

4.1 In what way does the practice of selfless service by a leader affect employee satisfaction within the hospitality sector?

Selfless service, or "Seva," is a basic principle of ethical leadership that focuses on prioritizing the needs of others over one's personal ones. In the hotel and tourism sectors, selfless service is demonstrated by leaders with a true sense of commitment to the general well-being of their staff and clients. This selflessness creates a positive and caring work culture, and this can contribute to increased employee contentment. Studies have established that employees who believe their leaders are selfless and service-focused are more likely to feel appreciated and valued, and this would result in increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Neubert et al., 2009). Further, selflessness by the leaders can build people-centered respect and cooperation, and this contributes to a positive work culture and better staff morale (Brown et al., 2005). Further research has confirmed the findings with emphasis placed on selfless leadership and its role in boosting employee satisfaction and organizational commitment (Fouts, 2019; Louveau, 2020).

4.2 What role does humility in ethical leadership play in fostering inclusivity among employees in hospitality organizations?

Humility is an essential element of ethical leadership that entails an understanding of one's own limitations, appreciation of others' inputs, and receptiveness to feedback. Leaders in the hospitality sector are more likely to foster an inclusive work culture where all staff members are valued and respected when they are humble. Approachability and willingness to hear different viewpoints are characteristics of humble leaders, and they make all staff members feel part of a community and included (Mayer et al., 2009). Empirical evidence suggests that a

humble style of leadership contributes to improved levels of employee engagement and inclusiveness since the workers are more at ease to provide inputs and raise concerns (Owens & Hekman, 2012). There have been subsequent studies that have confirmed earlier findings and indicated that expressions of humility by a leader have a positive effect on employee involvement and inclusiveness (Yang et al., 2019; Chintakananda et al., 2023).

4.3 In what ways does fairness in leadership contribute to fostering innovation within hospitality organizations?

Fairness in leading entails taking equitable decisions, treating workers fairly, and ensuring that rewards and appreciation are merit-based. Fair leaders in the hospitality sector provide a working culture where workers believe that their efforts are appreciated and that there are equal chances of growth and development. Fairness fosters a sense of security, causing workers to take risks and be creative, with the promise that their work will be honored and rewarded suitably (Colquitt et al., 2001). Evidence indicates that workers' perception of fairness in leading is positively related to worker creativity and innovation since fairness earns a feeling of psychological security and provides workers with the courage to think differently (Janssen, 2004). Recent research has echoed similar relationships with a focus on the role that fairness plays in driving innovation and psychological safety in the workforce (Jo & Shin, 2025; Center for Strategy & Leadership, 2020).

4.4 How does the discipline demonstrated by ethical leaders impact the sustainability practices of hospitality organizations?

Disciplined ethical leadership is the consistent practice of ethical behaviors and commitment to doing the right thing, even under difficult circumstances. Disciplined leaders in the hospitality sector provide a good example to their workers by consistently practicing ethics and taking responsibility for their actions. Such a commitment to ethics can encourage workers to practice similar behaviors, and this brings a culture of responsibility and ethics to the organization (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Disciplined leadership has been identified in research to play a key role in promoting and sustaining business ethics, since this helps ensure that ethics are incorporated into business procedures (Plinio et al., 2010). In recent studies, disciplined ethical leadership has emerged as a key factor in supporting sustainability and ethics in organizations (Metwally et al., 2019; Tatum et al., 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

The dynamic and highly people-focused nature of the hospitality sector calls for a solid platform of ethical leadership to ensure organizational greatness. In this paper, the validity and application of the 4V Model of Ethical Leadership—Values, Vision, Voice, and Virtue—have been considered in ensuring organizational greatness in the hospitality sector. Ethical leadership based on values of integrity, equity, respect, and accountability is crucial to ensuring a positive and honest culture. Leaders with these values provide a prime example that sets high expectations and encourages workers to give their all, and ensure the overall success of the organization (Nicolaidis, 2019; Agag, 2020).

The literature emphasizes that ethical leadership has a positive relationship with different organizational factors, such as job satisfaction among employees, commitment to an organization, and lower turnover intentions. In the hospitality sector, where consistent service quality and a high degree of employee/customer interaction is a requirement, such factors play a very critical role (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mayer et al., 2009). Ethical leaders act as role

models, influence ethical action and ethical decision-making, and this builds a culture of integrity and trust within an organization. Such a culture creates a work climate in which its members are encouraged to perform to the maximum, and this results in better organizational performance and satisfaction of the customers (Metwally et al., 2019; Tatum et al., 2020).

In addition, the adoption of the 4V Model in leadership practices can also improve operational effectiveness and service quality in the hospitality firm. Through ethical considerations and a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, the leaders of a hospitality firm are able to attain organizational excellence and retain a market advantage. A few challenges, e.g., a high rate of staff turnover and the highly competitive nature of the sector, that can jeopardize ethical standards have also been identified by the review. These challenges should be met by addressing them through the development of leaders and ethical policies to maintain organizational excellence (Chintakananda et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2019).

In conclusion, Ethical leadership is a key driver of organizational excellence within the hospitality sector. A culture of trust, integrity, and continuous improvement is created by ethical leaders that helps to improve employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, and overall organizational effectiveness. Future research should maintain a focus on the best practices and strategies that promote ethical conduct and organizational excellence in this dynamic and multicultural sector (Jo & Shin, 2025; Center for Strategy & Leadership, 2020).

Future Directions

Although there are evident advantages of ethical leadership to organizational greatness within the hospitality sector, there are a number of challenges. Among them is the turnover rate that is quite common within the hospitality sector and causes challenges when ensuring that an organizational culture and ethical values are consistently upheld (Nicolaidis, 2019). As much as the competitiveness within the hospitality sector tends to push companies to cut corners and lower their ethical standards to stay ahead of the competition (Nicolaidis, 2019),

In order to overcome such challenges, there is a need for hospitality companies to invest in leadership development that focuses on ethical conduct and decision-making. Integrating ethical issues into leadership development programs will help ensure that leaders in the companies have the capability to manage the complexities of ethical issues and foster a culture of integrity and trust. Organizations should also have processes and policies in place to ensure ethical conduct, such as codes of conduct, ethics education, and processes of report and response concerning unethical conduct (Agag, 2020).

Future studies ought to further examine the nexus between ethical leadership and organizational excellence in the tourism sector, with emphasis placed upon what constitutes the best practices and strategies that will encourage ethical conduct and organizational greatness. Further research is, however, necessary to examine the effect of culture and context variables on the nexus between ethical leadership and organizational greatness, and the contributions of alternative styles and practices of leadership in enhancing organizational greatness (Nicolaidis, 2019; Agag, 2020).

Ethical leadership is essential in achieving organizational excellence in the hospitality sector. By promoting a culture of integrity and leading by example, ethical leaders help maintain a good reputation and ensure long-term achievement. Ethical leadership has been found to have a positive correlation with a range of organizational effects, such as a decrease in employee turnover intentions and improved job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Future studies should continue to discuss the best practices and strategies in the promotion of ethical

conduct and organizational excellence in this dynamic and multicultural sector (Nicolaidis, 2019; Agag, 2020).

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