

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS'
ENGAGEMENT: A POST POSITIVIST RESEARCH AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN
BHAKTAPUR, NEPAL

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Chandni Kayastha* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Education (Development Studies)* presented on 8 December 2024 *Ethical Leadership and its Influence on Teachers' Engagement: A Post Positivist Research at Public Schools in Bhaktapur, Nepal*.

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Ethical leadership is presented as an important element in education, shaping school environments that meet diverse student and community needs. School leaders are expected to transcend mere operational management, embodying integrity and moral accountability in their roles. Concurrently, teacher engagement is recognized as critical, as the motivation and commitment of educators directly influence the quality of education. Despite growing research on school leadership in Nepal, there is a lack of empirical studies exploring how ethical leadership specifically influences teacher engagement in public schools. Existing literature focuses more on governance and administrative challenges, with limited attention to principals' roles in fostering ethical work environments.

This research aims to examine the influence of ethical leadership on teacher engagement within the context of public schools, with a specific focus on principals in the Bhaktapur district. This study adopted a quantitative approach employing a cross-sectional survey. The random sampling method was chosen to select a sample of 297 teachers from Bhaktapur district. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on validated research instruments and adapted to the Nepali education context. Ethical leadership was examined through three dimensions—care, critique, and justice, while teacher engagement was assessed across vigor, dedication, and absorption. Descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA, Welch and Brown Forsythe test

and multiple regression were applied for data analysis. Similarly, reliability, validity, and ethical considerations were ensured respectively.

The finding shows that justice is at the highest level among the ethical leadership dimensions, while dedication was the most prominent aspect of work engagement. While teachers' perceptions of care and justice showed no significant differences across background variables consisting of gender, age, working experience and qualification of teachers. Critique varied based on qualification levels, and post hoc analysis showed that the difference was between teachers with intermediate and master's degrees ($p = .022$), though the effect size was small ($d = 0.17$). Gender differences were noted only in absorption with moderate effect ($d = 0.28$). Regression analysis confirmed that ethical leadership significantly influences teacher engagement with 38% variation. The models explained 41.34% of the variance in vigor, 53.04% in dedication, and 65.85% in absorption. Ethics of care and justice had a positive effect on vigor and dedication, while the ethic of critique had no significant effect. The ethic of justice had the strongest effect on immersion in work, followed by critique.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into ethical leadership and teacher work engagement within the public school system in Nepal, offering potential reference points for future research. This research can contribute significantly to policy formulation concerning the leadership roles of school principals and human resource management in Nepal's public schools. Additionally, the results can guide future researchers interested in exploring ethical leadership and work engagement in education. Overall, this study highlights the importance of ethical leadership in enhancing teacher engagement, with variations based on teacher qualifications and gender, underscoring its pivotal role in fostering a motivated and committed workforce.

विकास अध्ययनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीमा चाँदनी कायस्थको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक "नैतिकतायुक्त नेतृत्व र शिक्षकको संलग्नतामा यसको प्रभाव: भक्तपुर, नेपालका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयमा गरिएको एक पोस्ट-पोजिटिभिष्ट (post-positivist) अध्ययन" २२ मङ्सिर २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो।

.....

प्रा .प्रकाश चन्द्र भट्टराई, पीएचडी
शोध निर्देशक

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अनुप भर्तेल
शोध निर्देशक

नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्वको शिक्षामा महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका हुन्छ र यसले विद्यालयको वातावरणलाई विद्यार्थीहरू र समुदायहरूको विविध आवश्यकता अनुसार ढाल्न मद्दत गर्छ। विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकले केवल प्रशासनिक काम मात्रै नभई नैतिक जिम्मेवारी र इमान्दारीका साथ नेतृत्वको भूमिका निभाउनु जरुरी देखिन्छ। त्यसै अन्तर्गत, शिक्षाको गुणस्तर निर्धारण गर्न शिक्षकहरूको सक्रिय संलग्नता पनि अत्यावश्यक देखिन्छ। नेपालमा विद्यालय नेतृत्व सम्बन्धी अनुसन्धान बढ्दो क्रममा भए पनि सार्वजनिक विद्यालयमा नैतिकतायुक्त नेतृत्वले शिक्षकहरूको संलग्नतामा कसरी प्रभाव पार्दछ भन्ने विषयमा तथ्यात्मक अध्ययन धेरै भएको देखिन्छ। हालसम्मको अनुसन्धानहरू प्रायः शासन र प्रशासनिक चुनौतीहरूमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ, र प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले नैतिक कार्य वातावरण विकास गर्न खेलेको भूमिकालाई सीमित मात्रामा सम्बोधन गरिएको छ।

यस अध्ययनमा भक्तपुर जिल्लाका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकहरूको नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्वको मापन र विस्लेषण गर्दै त्यसले शिक्षकको संलग्नतामा कस्तो प्रभाव पार्छ भन्ने विषयमा अनुसन्धान गरिएको हो। अध्ययनमा परिमाणात्मक पद्धति (quantitative approach) अपनाइएको छ, जसअन्तर्गत क्रस-सेक्सनल (cross-sectional) सर्वेक्षण विधि प्रयोग गरिएको हो। भक्तपुर जिल्लाका २९७ जना शिक्षकहरूलाई प्रमाणिकृत अनुसन्धान उपकरणमा आधारित प्रश्नावली प्रयोग गरेर जाँच गरिएको हो, जुन नेपाली शैक्षिक सन्दर्भअनुसार परिमार्जन गरिएको थियो।

नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्वका तीन आयामहरू: सहयोग (ethic of care), समालोचना (ethic of critique) and न्याय (ethic of justice) आधारित रहेर नेतृत्वको मूल्याङ्कन गरिएको थियो, भने शिक्षक संलग्नता तीन पक्षहरू: उत्साह (vigor) समर्पण (dedication) र तल्लीनता (Absorption) बाट मापन गरिएको हो। तथ्याङ्क विश्लेषणका लागि वर्णनात्मक तथ्याङ्क (descriptive statistics), t-test, ANOVA, Welch र Brown-Forsythe test, multiple regression प्रयोग गरियो। त्यस्तै, अध्ययनमा विश्वसनीयता, वैधता र नैतिक पक्षहरूको समेत ध्यान दिइएको थियो।

अध्ययनको नतिजा अनुसार नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्वका आयामहरूमध्ये न्याय सबैभन्दा उच्च स्तरमा देखिएको छ, भने शिक्षक संलग्नतामा समर्पण सबैभन्दा प्रमुख पक्षका रूपमा देखिएको छ। शिक्षकहरूका लिङ्ग, उमेर, अनुभव र शैक्षिक योग्यता जस्ता पृष्ठभूमिहरूको आधारमा सहयोग र न्याय सम्बन्धी धारणा फरक नरहेको पाइयो। तर समालोचना (critique) भने शिक्षकको शैक्षिक योग्यता अनुसार फरक देखियो जहाँ पोष्ट हक विश्लेषणले कक्षा १२ सम्मको पढाई भएका शिक्षकहरू र स्नातकोत्तरतहका शिक्षकहरूबीच महत्वपूर्ण फरक ($p = .022$) देखाएको छ, यद्यपि प्रभाव ($d = 0.17$) भने कम देखिएको थियो। शिक्षकहरूको तल्लीनता (absorption) भने लिङ्ग अनुसार फरक हुने पुष्टि अनुसन्धानबाट देखिएको छ जसमा तल्लीनताको मध्यम स्तरको प्रभाव ($d = 0.28$) देखिएको थियो। (Multiple Regression Analysis) अनुसार उत्साह (vigor) मा 41.34%, समर्पण (dedication) मा 53.04%, र अवशोषण (absorption) मा 65.85% भिन्नता देखियो। नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्वले शिक्षक संलग्नतामा महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव पार्दछ, जसमा अझै न्यायको प्रभाव सबैभन्दा बलियो रहेको पाइयो। जसमा सहयोग र न्यायले उत्साह र समर्पणमा सकारात्मक प्रभाव पार्दछ, जबकि समालोचना ले उल्लेखनीय प्रभाव देखाएन। तल्लीनतामा सबैभन्दा बलियो प्रभाव न्यायले परेको देखिन्छ।

यस अध्ययनका निष्कर्षहरूले नेपालका सार्वजनिक विद्यालय प्रणालीमा नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्व र शिक्षक कार्य संलग्नतासम्बन्धी महत्वपूर्ण बुझाइ प्रदान गर्दछ, जसले भविष्यका अनुसन्धानहरूको लागि सन्दर्भ बिन्दुको रूपमा काम गर्न सक्छ। यो अनुसन्धानले विद्यालय प्रमुखहरूको नेतृत्व भूमिकाका साथै सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूको मानव संसाधन व्यवस्थापनसँग सम्बन्धित नीतिहरू निर्माणमा महत्वपूर्ण योगदान पुऱ्याउन सक्छ। साथै, यसले शिक्षा क्षेत्रमा नैतिक नेतृत्व र कार्य संलग्नता विषयमा अनुसन्धान गर्न चाहने भविष्यका अनुसन्धानकर्ताहरूलाई मार्गदर्शन गर्न सक्छ। समग्रमा, यस अध्ययनले शिक्षक संलग्नता बढाउनमा नैतिक नेतृत्वको महत्वलाई उजागर गर्दै, शिक्षकको योग्यता र लिङ्गका आधारमा देखिने विभिन्नताहरूलाई पनि जोड दिएको छ, जसले प्रेरित र प्रतिबद्ध कार्यबल निर्माणमा यसको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको देखाउँछ।

.....

चाँदनी कायस्थ

उपाधि उम्मेदवार

२३ मङ्सिर २०८१

This dissertation entitled *Ethical Leadership and its Influence on Teachers' Engagement: A Post Positivist Research at Public Schools in Bhaktapur, Nepal*, presented by *Chandni Kayastha* on 08 December 2024.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear daughter, *Kathaa Kakshyapati*.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
ABBREVIATIONS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	2
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	4
Rationale of the Study.....	4
Delimitation of the Study.....	6
Organization of the Study	6
CHAPTER II.....	7
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	7
Ethical Leadership	7
Ethical Leadership and Development Studies	12
Work Engagement	13
Policy Review on Leadership.....	15
The Theoretical Connections: Ethical Leadership and Employee Engagement..	17
Empirical Review	19
Ethical Leadership in Public Schools	19
Challenges in Implementing Ethical Leadership	20
Ethical Leadership and Work Engagement.....	21
Research Gap.....	22
Ethical Leadership Scale and Typology	24
Work Engagement Scale	25
Chapter Summary	26
CHAPTER III	27
METHODOLOGY	27

Paradigm of the Study.....	27
Ontology	27
Epistemology	28
Axiology	28
Research Design.....	28
Study Area	29
Population and Sampling.....	29
Tools and Techniques of Data Collection	31
Validity	32
Reliability	33
Analysis of Data	33
Ethical Considerations	34
Concluding the Chapter	35
CHAPTER IV	36
RESULTS	36
Frequencies of Background Variables.....	36
Measuring Level of Ethical Leadership of Principal perceived by teachers	38
Measuring the Level of Work Engagement of Teachers.....	40
Differences in Perceived Ethical Leadership and its differences across Background Variables	41
Perceived Ethical Leadership and Gender	43
Age group and Perceived Ethical Leadership	44
Years of Working Experience and Perceived Ethical Leadership	45
Teachers' Qualification and Perceived Ethical Leadership of Principal	46
Differences in Teachers Work Engagement and the Background Variables	48
Gender and Work Engagement of Teachers	50
Age Group and Work Engagement of Teachers	51
Years of Working Experience and Work Engagement of Teachers	51
Teachers' Qualification and Work Engagement of Teachers	53
Effect of Ethical Leadership in Work Engagement	54
Summary of Hypothesis Test	60
Differences in Perceived Ethical Leadership and its differences across the Personal Characteristics and Academic and Career Profile of Teachers	61
Effect of Ethical Leadership in Work Engagement	62

CHAPTER V	63
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	63
Major Findings of the Study	63
Background Variables and Sample Representativeness in the Study	64
Ethical Leadership in the Principal	66
Ethic of Care	66
Ethic of Critique in Principal	68
Ethic of Justice in Principal	69
Perceived Ethical Leadership Across Personal, Academic and Career profile of Teachers	70
Teachers Work Engagement	71
Level of Vigor in Teachers	72
Level of Dedication in Teachers	73
Level of Absorption in Teacher	74
Work Engagement Across Personal, Academic and Career profile of teachers	75
Effect of Ethical Leadership on Work Engagement	76
CHAPTER VI	82
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION	82
Summary of the Study	82
Conclusion	83
Implication of the Study	85
Practical Implications	85
Policy Implications	86
Research Implications	87
REFERENCES	88
APPENDICES	103

ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CERID	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
ELQ	Ethical Leadership Questionnaire
GoN	Government of Nepal
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UWES	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
WCC	Writing and Communication Center

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework: Ethical Leadership and Its Effect on Teachers' Work Engagement	24
Figure 2 Linearity of Dependent Variable- Vigor – Normal P-P Plot.....	55
Figure 3 Histogram -Dependent Variable Vigor	55
Figure 4 Linearity of Dependent Variable- Dedication – Normal P-P Plot.....	56
Figure 5 Histogram -Dependent Variable Dedication	56
Figure 6 Linearity of Dependent Variable – Absorption – Normal P-P Plot.....	57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Ethical Competency -Typology	25
Table 2 Sampling Plan	30
Table 3 Cronbach's Alpha Test	33
Table 4 Related Statistical Tools	34
Table 5 Frequencies of Respondents' Profile	37
Table 6 Level of Ethical Leadership of Principals.....	38
Table 7 Ethical Leadership of Principals	39
Table 8 Level of Work Engagement of teachers	40
Table 9 Work Engagement of teachers	41
Table 10 Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test	42
Table 11 Normality Test through Skewness and Kurtosis.....	42
Table 12 Levene's Equal Variance Test for Background Variables.....	43
Table 13 Perceived Ethical Leadership and Gender	44
Table 14 Age group and Perceived Ethical Leadership.....	44
Table 15 Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Age group and Perceived Ethical Leadership.....	45
Table 16 Years of Working Experience and Perceived Ethical Leadership	45
Table 17 Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Years of Working Experience and Perceived Ethical Leadership.....	46
Table 18 Teachers' Qualification and Perceived Ethical Leadership of Principal	47
Table 19 Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Qualification and Perceived Ethical Leadership.....	47
Table 20 Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test for Work Engagement.....	49
Table 21 Normality Test of Work Engagement through Skewness and Kurtosis	49
Table 22 Levene's Equal Variance Test for Background Variables.....	49
Table 23 Gender and Work Engagement of Teachers	50
Table 24 Age group and Work Engagement of Teachers.....	51
Table 25 Years of Working Experience and Work Engagement of Teachers	52
Table 26 Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Working Experience and Work Engagement of Teachers.....	52
Table 27 Teachers' Qualification and Work Engagement of Teachers	53

Table 28	Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Qualification and Work Engagement	.53
Table 29	Durbin Watson Statistics and R Square	58
Table 30	Multi Collinearity Statistic	58
Table 31	Coefficients of Ethical Leadership on Work Engagement	59
Table 32	Summary of the Results	61

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing world, ethical leadership has become essential in the education sector to ensure schools thrive and reach the different needs of students and communities. School heads are now expected to go beyond routine management and embrace philosophies that uphold moral values and integrity. The best school leadership practices are supposed to be heavily influenced by factors like recruitment and retention of teachers, operational needs of schools, contemporary teaching methods and other creative initiations, academic achievements, government initiatives, innovative policies, educational advancements and many other hidden school needs (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to look into the need for a shift in school leadership practices.

Teachers' engagement, on the other hand, is the significant driving force that directly contributes to the quality of delivery of education. Employee engagement refers to the feeling of being positive, motivated, and genuinely connected to the work, and when employees are disengaged, it often leads to challenges like conflicts, high turnover, and frequent absences, which can disrupt an organization's overall productivity. Engaged teachers are likely to give their best effort needed to accomplish their jobs (Engelbrecht et al., 2014) and feel a sense of purpose and satisfaction in their roles, often becoming deeply absorbed, present, invested, and committed to achieving the result of the task. Marquardt et al. (2022) have explained the correlation between a principal's ethical leadership and teachers' turnover ratio. Their study discovered that when a person perceives a high level of ethical leadership, there is less of leaving the organization even though the work is stressful. This is so because principal maintains open communication with their staff, be clear about what they believe to be proper behavior, and build strong connections with them. Also, ethical leaders foster a workplace climate of safety and respect by engaging in "leader-holding behaviors" that shield workers from negative experiences. Employees who reciprocate these moral behaviors further strengthen these relationships as it indicates an alignment of values with the ethical leader, which lessens their likelihood of leaving. Therefore, it is important to build an organizational culture founded on

ethical values and behaviors from ground-level employees to leaders at the top to keep up engagement.

Background

Ethical leadership is established on the grounds of integrity, fairness, and accountability, with influence flowing from this set of attributes to define the overall ethical climate of the organization. In the educational context, ethical leadership becomes transparency, equity, and respect within the organization, thus encouraging a more positive school atmosphere (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Leaders who act ethically engender trust and cooperation, thereby cementing the foundation for professional relationships and organizational stability (Den Hartog, 2015). Ethical leaders go on to define clear expectations and role-model ethical behavior, thus supporting and nurturing an effective workplace and contributing to the general performance of institutions at all levels (Yukl et al., 2013).

Similarly, teacher engagement involves bringing a certain level of enthusiasm, dedication, and involvement into the work setting by teachers. It constitutes an important factor in ensuring effective teaching and, therefore, the success of students as engaged teachers is likely to be characterized by motivation, commitment, and self-willingness in going beyond minimal expectations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Engagement at the teacher level comes from many things like workplace support, leadership, and opportunities for staff development (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Furthermore, an attractive school environment which is promoting collaboration with recognition and growth leads to better engagement and, eventually, better teaching quality and overall institutional effectiveness (Kahn, 1990).

Ethical leadership is a crucial aspect of teacher engagement. It creates a work environment in which there is trust, fairness, and integrity, and ethical leaders have a history of creating a favorable organizational culture in which teachers feel that they are valued, respected, and empowered to do their jobs. School leaders uphold ethical standards, and these standards further reinforce open communication, professional development, and purpose, all of which improve commitment and zest toward work. Ethical leadership, on the contrary, may lead to job dissatisfaction, decreased motivation, and disengagement (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Ethical leadership is thus an important ingredient in improving teacher engagement as it creates a morally accountable and supportive environment, eventually resulting in more effective teaching and learner performance (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Statement of the Problem

In the case of Nepal, the question arises of who the leader of public schools is. The answer is controversial and confusing. Generally, the head teacher or a principal is the leader of a public school, and they are one among the government teachers, while superior to the head teacher is the chairperson of the school management committee, who is someone as visible as politicians (Ghimire, 2022). This overlapping leadership structure creates confusion, especially when it comes to ethical decision-making in schools. Ethical leadership as an axis of integrity, fairness, and participatory decision-making might enhance teacher motivation and engagement. But how often do Nepal's school principals practice ethical leadership? And how does this affect teachers' work engagement?

Principals are crucial to the culture and management of administrative issues by which quality education is ensured. However, the governance-related challenges faced by principals in Nepal are often political, which constrain the principals' power to make independent decisions on ethical grounds (Muktan & Bhattarai, 2023). Studies show that ethical leadership enables collaboration and enhances teacher performance (Chandra, 2018), whereas Bhattarai (2010) argues that ethical standards for principals need further refinement. Some teachers feel satisfaction in their jobs but are somewhat disappointed with the process of school supervision and promotion, which may indicate leadership-related issues (Chapagain, 2023).

It states that education policies in Nepal assign particular responsibilities to principals-from managing teachers, teaching programs, and finances to evaluating teachers. However, the country's shift to a federal system has changed how school leaders are held accountable. Now, local governments evaluate principals and can take disciplinary actions if they fail to meet expectations (Education Profiles, n.d.). This raises important questions: Are these oversight mechanisms fostering ethical leadership, or are they adding bureaucratic obstacles that hinder school progress? Despite the recognized importance of ethical leadership in enhancing teacher performance, limited research explores how school leaders influence teacher engagement and instructional consistency in Nepal. While studies highlight the role of school heads in inspiring educators (Ghimire, 2022) and fostering collaboration (Chandra, 2018), given the challenges of governance and a changing accountability structure, there is still a gap in understanding the mechanisms through which ethical leadership effects teacher engagement. This study, grounded in the conceptual

framework of ethical leadership and teacher engagement, this study aims to explore how ethical leadership practices among school principals' effects teachers' engagement. Understanding these dynamics can help shape policies that promote ethical leadership and create better learning environments for students and teachers alike.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of ethical leadership of principals perceived by teachers and their engagement in public schools and how this engagement is affected by the ethical leadership approach.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of perceived ethical leadership among teachers of public schools, and does it differ by the personal characteristics (gender, age) and academic and career profile of teachers (working experiences, level, qualification, academic stream)?
2. What is the level of teachers' work engagement in public schools, and does it differ by the personal characteristics (gender, age) and academic and career profile of teachers (working experiences, level, qualification, academic stream)?
3. To what extent does ethical leadership affect teachers' engagement?

Hypotheses

The research comprises the following hypothesis.

- There exists a significant difference across background variables (gender, age group, qualification and years of working experience) of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).
- There exists a significant difference across background variables (gender, age group, qualification and years of working experience) of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).
- There exists a significant effect of ethical leadership on teachers' work engagement.

Rationale of the Study

The study is based on the idea that leaders have a substantial impact on the ethical climate of an organization. Integrity, honesty, and fairness are characteristics that ethical leadership requires upholding and promoting throughout the organization (Yukl et al., 2013). The rationale for studying ethical leadership is multifaceted,

especially in the field of education, as education serves as the foundation for the development of any nation (King, 2011). Ethical leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the work environment in schools by fostering trust, transparency, and accountability. Given the significance of education in national development, understanding how ethical leadership influences teacher motivation, well-being, and retention is essential for improving school performance and student outcomes. Firstly, it has been demonstrated that ethical leadership enhances teacher well-being, motivation, retention, and, ultimately, student learning (Sabir, 2021). When school leaders prioritize ethics, they create a culture that supports the success of both teachers and students. Leaders who emphasize ethical values are more likely to cultivate a culture of cooperation and trust, leading to better outcomes for their organizations. Secondly, Sabir (2021) mentioned that ethical leadership is crucial for encouraging organizational citizenship behavior among teachers. Schools with morally upright leaders are more likely to prioritize their teachers' needs and take proactive measures to mitigate any negative impacts on students, the school environment, and society.

This study aims to bridge the gap by examining the relationship between ethical leadership and teacher engagement in Nepal's public schools. It contributes to both academic literature and practical policymaking by providing insights into how ethical leadership affects teacher engagement and school governance. The findings will help formulate policies regarding school leadership and human resource management, ensuring a more effective and supportive educational environment. The justification for this study also stems from the increasing challenges faced by teachers in Nepal's public education system, including limited resources, bureaucratic constraints, and lack of recognition. Ethical leadership can play a transformative role in addressing these issues by fostering a supportive work culture that values teachers' contributions and well-being. Research suggests that teachers who perceive their leaders as ethical are more likely to exhibit higher job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, which directly impacts student learning and institutional effectiveness. By exploring these dynamics, this study seeks to highlight the necessity of ethical leadership in creating sustainable and high-performing educational institutions. By integrating ethical leadership principles—care, justice, and critique—into school management frameworks, this research aims to support the creation of a more transparent and engaging educational system. Furthermore, it will serve as a reference

for future research on leadership and teacher engagement in Nepal, encouraging further exploration through diverse methodologies and geographic scopes. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to educational reforms that promote ethical leadership, enhance teacher engagement, and improve the overall quality of education.

This study will contribute to the field of ethical leadership by examining its role in engaging teachers. The findings will provide a broader understanding of how schools function with or without the rigorous engagement of teachers. The study of ethical leadership is critical for addressing ethical dilemmas and workplace challenges while achieving positive outcomes for the education sector.

Delimitation of the Study

In line to the research objective, the scope of the study has been delimited to teachers' perspective only.

Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into seven chapters. In Chapter I, it presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective, research questions, and study delimitation. Chapter II reviews the related literature, policies, empirical studies and research gap. It also frames the theoretical framework to integrate theory with dependent and independent variables. The research methodology section explains the philosophical underpinnings, details of the research design, sample framework, data analysis, reliability, validity, and ethical considerations. In Chapter IV, the study focuses on the background variables of the participants and determines the perceived level of ethical leadership, teachers' work engagement, their differences across the demographic factors and the effect of ethical leadership on work engagement. Chapter V discusses the major findings of the study, followed by a discussion that includes a literature review and theory. Finally, Chapter VI includes a summary, conclusion and implications.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter examines the relevant literature, thereby identifying a research gap. The review of selected resources was chosen to develop a logical argument to support the study. Ethical leadership of principals and teacher work engagement were considered as the indicators for variables employed in the study.

Ethical Leadership

Organizational success and failure are frequently attributed to leadership roles. As a result, leadership has been a subject of study for many centuries (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2014). Despite extensive research, there is a single leadership model that assesses all the numerous types of leadership tactics, as evidenced by the diverse factors and approaches identified in recent systematic reviews (Agazu & Debela, 2024). Although leadership was initially assumed to come from innate traits, this assumption was later recognized to have failed in the modern understanding of leadership when leadership was examined individually (Deshpande, 2018). This is where many value-based leadership approaches have become philosophically debated while social science research on these subjects is still in its infancy. In this regard, Engelbrecht et al. (2014) have mentioned several value-based leadership (VBL) strategies, including transformational, spiritual, and ethical leadership, which are particularly supposed to be effective in fostering trust in leaders. According to Copeland (2014), VBL behaviors are grounded in moral and ethical principles, are more people-oriented, and place a strong emphasis on moral sensitivity toward employees.

Ethical leadership as value-based leadership is brought into practice as the research in South Africa found that the positive relationship of ethical leadership and trust directly increases the employees' performance (Engelbrecht et al., 2014). It is explained as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision making" (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). Furthermore, Brown and Trevino (2006) mentioned that ethical leaders are not only sincere, compassionate, moral people who make fair and reasonable judgments, but they can also effectively convey ethical values to staff members and

establish unambiguous guidelines for organizational conduct. In fact, this leadership is not only about moral conduct. It also has a little-noticed transactional element that involves using rewards and communication to direct moral behavior. When a leader guides a group, they take their ethical principles and beliefs into account. Thus, ethical leadership is connected to concepts like charisma, justice, thoughtfulness, honesty, and trust. Furthermore, ethics is concerned with people's moral character and motivations.

In the continuous study process of how ethical leadership influences results, the most important process comes from the social learning theory, which states that if a leader models ethical choices and actions, followers are inclined to emulate them (Bandura, 1986). Leaders who guide their teams ethically are regarded as role models within the organization. They are responsible for emphasizing the value of ethical standards, holding their subordinates accountable for upholding them, and, most importantly, creating ethical workplaces (Schaubroeck et al., 2012). However, the assumption that employees will naturally emulate ethical leaders neglects the complexity of workplace dynamics, where structural barriers, conflicting interests, and external pressures may challenge the effectiveness of ethical leadership in fostering real behavioral change. Therefore, while ethical leadership provides a strong foundation for moral guidance, its effectiveness is contingent upon broader systemic and cultural conditions that shape organizational behavior.

Ethical Leadership in Public Schools

Ethical educational leadership means the exhibition of morally accepted behavior of an individual in interpersonal relationships, as well as the inciting of such behavior among the people or team through dual communication, encouragement, and decision-making within an educational organization (Brown et al., 2005). Since the early 1990s, numerous scholars have highlighted the importance of cultivating an ethical environment in schools through effective leadership. Starratt (1991) emphasized the significance of grounding school ethics in the paradigms of care, justice, and critique, which form the foundation of this study. Similarly, Campbell (1997) advanced the notion of viewing school administrators as ethical practitioners. Brown et al. (2005) later expanded on this concept with positive outcomes for staff and institutions. Consequently, an ethical educational leader can be understood as one who exemplifies appropriate actions individually and fosters meaningful relationships with students, families, faculty, staff, and other administrators.

The leaders of public schools are constantly challenged by the strain of globalization, volatility in the educational system and the shortage of competent human resources. Public school leaders, who are also known as principals, are demanded to be trustworthy, competent, intelligent, innovative and hold high ethical standards (Donaldson, 2006). In the process of establishing their roles and practices for the smooth operations of a school, situations arise when many times human relationships are ignored, for example, the well-being of teachers, non-participative decision-making making, and attitudes ruled by autocratic power of the principal, questioning the trust and ethical standard of the principal. In these circumstances, this leadership can play an important role in inspiring and motivating students, faculty, and staff, thereby promoting a culture characterized by trust, mutual respect and enhanced productivity (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

Although the concept of ethical leadership is spreading throughout commercial enterprises, it is complex and contentious in the education sector of Nepal, particularly in public schools. There, the school board chairperson, who is as visible as politicians, businesspeople, and community leaders, plays a more isolated and infrequently overlapping role than the head teacher (principal), who is regarded as a professional leader with direct contact with students, teachers, and parents (Ghimire, 2022). The chairperson is always above the head teacher, and he is the one who exercises decision-making authority linked to the school. However, the principal is also considered to be the decision-maker within the school. This situation makes it difficult for principals to demonstrate appropriate leadership styles, especially ethical leadership. This necessitates the government policy of providing specific autonomy to principals to improve leadership possibilities that are expected to boost competitiveness (Adhikari, 2022). Thus, this study employed Starratt's (1991) model of ethical leadership, which includes ethics of justice, care and critique to measure the ethical leadership of the principal.

The concept of care was first introduced in the book of Gilligan (1982), where he mentioned that care is more related to femininity, which was later asserted as the universal moral of human morality. Starratt (1991) states that the ethic of care relates to the fundamental requirements of interpersonal relations, not from a contractual or legal standpoint but in terms of absolute respect. Noddings (1992) mentioned that fostering a culture of care is important for achieving effective performance in the education sector, asserting that the primary responsibility of schools is to nurture a

caring environment (Bhattarai, 2019). This ethic reinforces the significance of interpersonal relationships, focusing not on contractual obligations but on a foundation of profound mutual respect (Langlois et al., 2014).

The ethic of critique, grounded in critical theory (Langlois, 2011), challenges societal norms and systemic inequities by interrogating power structures, amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, and encouraging educators to confront issues such as systemic bias and inequality (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001). Its primary focus is critically analyzing educational institutions to identify and address injustice and unfairness. When such inequities are present, the ethic of critique guides school leaders to foster a culture of trust where students, faculty, and staff feel safe and empowered to share their perspectives on areas requiring improvement. This inclusive approach facilitates meaningful dialogue in which all stakeholders feel heard, laying the foundation for transformative change in the school and education system. (Murdoch et al., 2020).

The focus of ethical justice is on the common good, individual rights, and the legal and political processes that the people follow. Starratt (1991) identified two schools of thinking on ethical justice. The first concept prioritizes individual needs over societal justice, and the second concept prioritizes the nation's role in teaching people how to behave in a community. Langlois (2011) supports these concepts by mentioning that workplaces have both individual and organizational perspectives on justice, as individual decisions are influenced by community consciousness, while organizational choices are a result of individual choices. In contrast to this, Kohlberg (1981) argues that justice is a moral principle rather than a norm and Sergiovanni (1992) emphasizes that justice extends beyond schools and impacts families and communities across the nation. Therefore, all the stakeholders of schools, including teachers, students, and staff, should be treated equally and fairly.

The concept of ethical leadership is well-established globally; however, limited research has been conducted in Nepal on the effectiveness of school leadership, particularly regarding its role in enhancing teacher performance and reducing disparities in teaching practices and classroom effectiveness (Poudel, 2021). To fully understand these concepts, it is crucial to explore their application within the South Asian and Nepalese contexts. Research in these regions reveals how cultural, social, and systemic factors uniquely shape educational leadership and teacher performance. For example, in India, leadership practices are often guided by

principles such as *dharma* (moral duty) and *karma* (action), which require leaders to balance traditional values with the demands of modern education systems (Sharma & Singh, 2018). In Pakistan, ethical leadership is frequently linked to Islamic values like justice (*Adl*) and compassion (*Rahma*), which indicate a significant role in how leaders promote inclusivity in schools (Ali & Ahmed, 2020). The cultural and religious influences highlight the importance of ethical leadership to the specific needs of South Asian society. In the case of Nepal, the existing study indicates that school leaders in Nepal face unique challenges, such as political instability, limited resources, and socio-cultural diversity, all of which affect their ability to implement ethical practices effectively (Bhatta, 2014). The study by Khadka (2017) on challenges of educational leadership in Nepal reveals that Nepali school leaders often find it difficult to match the demands of centralized educational policies with the needs of local communities, which affects the teachers' and students' performance. Furthermore, the bureaucratic culture of Nepal's education system makes it difficult for leaders to power disparities inside schools, making it difficult for leaders to cultivate an ethic of care and critique in school (Shrestha, 2019).

Despite the challenges, ethical leadership practices in Nepal do align with the principles of care, critique, and justice. There are school leaders who followed participatory decision-making, engaging teachers, students, and parents in discussions about school improvement (Bista, 2015). When principals involve teachers, students and parents in decision-making, it resonates with the ethic of critique, as it challenges traditional power dynamics and amplifies the voices of marginalized stakeholders. Likewise, fostering an ethic of care is evident in efforts aimed at building welcoming and supportive spaces for students from various backgrounds, including those from marginalized caste and ethnic groups (Gautam, 2020). These efforts demonstrate the potential of ethical leadership to address systemic inequities and enhance educational outcomes in Nepal.

Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in the literature regarding the effectiveness of ethical leadership in improving teacher performance and reducing disparities in Nepali schools. While international studies emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of care and critique, there is limited evidence on how these principles are applied in the Nepali context. Thus, this study aims to address these gaps by examining the level of ethical leadership in Nepali schools, with a particular focus on its effect on teacher engagement. This study, grounded in the conceptual

framework of ethical leadership and teacher engagement, aims to contribute to the development of schools and the advancement of educational leadership in the Nepali context.

Ethical Leadership and Development Studies

The relationship between leadership and development becomes more significant within the social and cultural dimensions. Leadership is the key factor for the country's developmental process concerning social structure, institutional effectiveness, and cultural transformation. The quality of leadership in any country will determine how it pursues the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because ethical and competent leadership is essential for inclusive governance, equitable policy-making, and effective public service delivery (Tolstoy, 2023). Traditionally, scholars have cited that leadership is no longer about decision-making but also about mobilizing human capital, nurturing institutional trust, and accounting in governance (Northouse, 2021). Good leadership leads to excellent policies and well-crafted mechanisms of their execution; it results in a responsive public service reflecting the aspirations of the population. On the other side, one attribute of ineffective leadership is failed policies that lack motivation from public sector employees and stagnation of institutional development (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

On the other hand, in addition to governance, leadership has a cross-cutting transformative role in all areas, including education. Ethical leadership thus becomes the basis for the success of an institution and the engagement of its teachers. The ethical leadership framework launched by the National Governance Association in the UK emphasized that integrity, fairness, and moral decision-making are not just nice things to have but conditions of effective governance and sustainable school leadership (Ethical Leadership Commission, 2019). In any given educational atmosphere, leadership will influence the types of policies that will exist within the institution, and this creates the psychosocial work context of educators (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Scholars in educational management and organizational behavior argue that the essence of leadership does not solely lie in managing in-role performance. Effective leaders encourage the institutionalization of ethical norms within the structures of an institution (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Although it can be defined more generally, ethical leadership most appropriately applies in the education sector, where it is expected from leaders that they will be fair, will not shy away from

making 'difficult' or 'unethical' decisions, and will not create a psychologically unsafe environment for teachers (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). According to Treviño et al. (2003), ethical leaders are people-oriented professionals who base their criteria on being even more just, more transparent and developing care for their subordinates, thus increasing commitment and engagement with employees. Independent studies have also shown that ethical leadership and teacher job satisfaction, psychological empowerment, and professional commitment are positively correlated and provide the much-required ingredients for quality education towards achieving SDG 4 (Quality Education) (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Ethical leadership contributes to teacher engagement and retention but also extends to student achievement, improved curricula, and institutional survivability (Bush, 2018). Leadership built upon moral courage, trustworthiness, and ethical responsibility constructs collective efficacy within schools, which translates into greater job performance, lower turnover rates, and a more conducive learning environment (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Thus, ethical leadership is not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic imperative to ensure that schools are functioning as developmental agents driving broader societal progress.

Work Engagement

Employee Engagement is the term used to describe an employee's favorable attitude about their work (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2018). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), "Engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state"(p.10). It is associated with work and is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Engagement in the workplace is all about being fully committed and productive while working to get the greatest results. Esty and Gewirtz (2008) described employee engagement as a feeling totally committed to and excited about one's work and organization. In contrast, disengagement is often linked to absenteeism, low morale, and high turnover rates, which negatively affect an organization's ability to function effectively (Popli & Rizvi, 2015). The three aspects of teacher work engagement examined in the study of Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) were vigor, dedication, and absorption.

The term "vigor" describes high drive, stamina, perseverance, readiness, and mental toughness when working. Employees with vigor approach their tasks with enthusiasm, persistence, and a willingness to invest effort, even when faced with challenges (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). vigor is strongly linked to job performance

and motivation, as employees who exhibit high energy levels are likelier to take the initiative and engage in problem-solving (Bakker et al., 2008). Furthermore, vigor is often the result of workplace resources such as social support, job autonomy, and opportunities for professional growth (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

Dedication is explained by the person's sense of involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm toward the work. Employees who feel dedicated are deeply committed to their jobs and often find the work essential and meaningful (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Being dedicated to work and feeling fulfilled, satisfied, and challenged are examples of dedication (Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Research says dedication is one factor that leads to job satisfaction as it builds up the emotional attachment toward work (Christian et al. 2011). Supportive organizational culture, good leadership, and recognition of contribution by employees are some of the vital factors which help in enhancing dedication (Rich et al., 2010).

Absorption refers to an employee's deep concentration and immersion in work, where they become so engrossed that they may lose track of time (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employees with high absorption experience a state of flow in which work becomes inherently rewarding and enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It is often linked to increased productivity and creativity, as absorbed employees are less likely to be distracted and more likely to produce high-quality work (Bakker, 2011). However, excessive absorption can sometimes lead to workaholism if not balanced with other priorities (Taris et al., 2010). Organizations can promote healthy absorption by ensuring that employees have engaging tasks, minimal interruptions, and autonomy in their work (Salanova et al., 2005).

Vigor, dedication, and absorption collectively contribute to an employee's ability to sustain high performance while experiencing psychological fulfillment. Organizations that foster employee engagement benefit from increased innovation, stronger team collaboration, and greater job satisfaction among their workforce (Rich et al., 2010). Moreover, employees who engage themselves are willing to exert extra effort and possibly do beyond their required duties. All these contribute to improved performance of organizations (Christian et al., 2011). Thus, employee engagement has become a key study area in organizational behavior, human resource management, and leadership research.

Teachers' Work Engagement in Public School

Workplace outcomes have been connected to employee engagement, including increased job performance, organizational commitment, and overall well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Highly engaged employees are more likely to exhibit discretionary effort, take initiative, and contribute to a positive work culture, which enhances organizational effectiveness (Saks, 2006), while low engagement is linked with workplace stress, burnout, and reduced productivity, ultimately affecting an organization's long-term success (Rich et al., 2010). In schools, teachers' engagement is related to students' success, as it is observed that engaged teachers perform with greater quality and with greater zeal and enthusiasm toward student learning (Hakanen et al., 2006). The level of job engagement among teachers affects not only their own professional development but also the academic achievement, physical development, and mental development of their students (Ruzek, 2012). Moreover, teachers' commitment to their jobs and eagerness to help the school reach its objectives are essential for ongoing school growth (Somech & Ron, 2007). However, according to Gallup (2018), just 30% of teachers reported being very engaged in their work, whereas the disengaged teachers of today may face difficulty in their teaching process that would affect the students from achieving any goals and the entire school as well (Perera et al., 2018).

On the contrary, high turnover and absenteeism rates are linked to teacher engagement. Disengaged teachers tend to be job dissatisfied, get more job separations, and hold higher rates of absenteeism, thus disrupting student learning and school operations (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teachers' disengagement may be caused by a number of factors, but leadership plays a crucial role in fostering employees' motivation for engagement and productivity (Anand, 2017). Schools demonstrating teacher engagement through professional development, supportive leadership, and recognition of teachers' efforts tend to retain teachers at a greater rate, leading to a more stable institution overall (Shuck et al., 2011). Effective school leaders recognize that fostering a culture of engagement is a never-ending journey that demands deliberate and consistent effort. This intention comes from different dimensions of leadership, with ethics becoming the most relevant one.

Policy Review on Leadership

After the federal system, when powers are devolved to local governments, local governance is certain to have the ability to carry out programs and gives local

leaders the chance to be accountable to their constituents. However, the role of leadership is still contradictory and overlaps between administrative, academic and political leadership. The headteacher is supposed to have more of an academic and administrative role. Nepal has implemented programs and policy changes to raise the educational standards of government schools by boosting local engagement in school administration, which inevitably calls for leadership with vision and dedication. However, the Education Regulation considers the principal to be more ‘an administrator than a visionary leader (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2004). Nepal’s Education Policy (MoEST, 2019) has addressed this claim and has created a provision to clarify and strengthen the role of school leadership of the principal and also the recruitment mechanism of the principal based on merit, competence and performance and making it transparent. It is also mentioned in the Education Policy (MoEST, 2019) that there is a legal provision to empower the educational leadership and management of public schools. This shows that the education policy is promoting ethical leadership by promoting accountability and transparency. The Education Rules, MoEST (2002) primarily addressed principals as administrators, which may limit their capacity for ethical leadership as this classification can indirectly affect ethical leadership by restricting the autonomy of principals in fostering ethical work environments. The established code of conduct of the same document for teachers outlines ethical principles that guide professional behavior. As part of their leadership role, headteachers are responsible for upholding discipline, moral character, and professionalism within schools. The Teacher Service Commission Rules (2009) further reinforce this by assigning headteachers the duty of monitoring and enforcing teacher conduct. These policies highlight the headteacher’s dual role as both an instructional leader and an ethical custodian within the school environment.

In practice, headteachers in many community schools extend their responsibilities beyond administrative duties by actively seeking additional financial resources to address budgetary shortfalls. Given that government funding is often insufficient, headteachers collaborate with local authorities, external organizations, and stakeholders to secure alternative funding. This proactive engagement helps schools cover unforeseen costs, such as employing additional teachers, improving infrastructure, and enhancing learning resources. By leveraging networks, strategic

planning, and financial oversight, headteachers play a critical role in ensuring the financial sustainability and operational efficiency of their schools.

Similarly, The Education Act (2016) assigns school management responsibility to the School Management Committee (SMC) and head teachers, highlighting accountability in school governance, yet it does not explicitly define ethical leadership principles like integrity, fairness, or moral decision-making. The School Sector Education Plan (MOEST, 2022) has prioritized a leadership development training program for the headteacher that will enhance their managerial efficiency, but no such written official documents were available that mentioned empowering ethical leadership in the education system as a whole. However, the qualitative study by Khanal and Ghimire (2022) explores the context wherein the dimensional controversies just arise from role conflict and role ambiguity among school leaders in Nepal, pointing at problematic power-sharing, limited job autonomy, dual role conflict, insufficient professional development training, and incapacity in leadership knowledge as major role-related challenges. The outcomes from all these cause uncertainty in decision-making and governance, affecting the effectiveness of school leadership.

The Theoretical Connections: Ethical Leadership and Employee Engagement

The connection between ethical leadership and employee engagement has been widely explored in both theory and real-world studies. Increasing evidence shows that ethical leadership plays a crucial role in boosting employee engagement and contributing to long-term organizational success. This relationship is further examined through various theories and empirical findings in the following reviews.

The theoretical connection between ethical leadership and work engagement is rooted in several well-established theories, including equity theory, the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, and self-determination theory. These frameworks provide a comprehensive understanding of how ethical leadership fosters work engagement.

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory highlights the significance of satisfying three fundamental psychological needs: the ability to make independent choices (autonomy), the sense of being capable and effective (competence), and the feeling of connection with others (relatedness). Ethical leaders support these needs by promoting an inclusive, transparent, and supportive workplace culture. The ethic of care focuses on empathy, relationships, and nurturing a sense of belonging (Gilligan, 1982). Ethical leaders practicing the ethic of care fulfill the psychological need for

relatedness, which aligns closely with the emotional dimension of work engagement, that is, dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2004). Dedication is characterized by being deeply involved in work and experiencing a sense of significance, pride, and challenge. When employees feel cared for by their leaders through open communication, individualized support, and recognition of their well-being, they develop a stronger emotional connection to their roles. The ethic of critique, on the other hand, emphasizes challenging systemic inequities and fostering a critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Ethical leaders who embody this ethic empower employees to question norms, contribute innovative ideas, and engage in meaningful dialogue. This fulfillment of autonomy directly connects to vigor, the physical and mental energy employees bring to their work (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Schaufeli et al., 2002). When leaders encourage employees to voice their opinions and critically evaluate processes, they foster a sense of autonomy and empowerment. This active engagement promotes enthusiasm and energy for work tasks (Freire, 1970; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model offers a valuable paradigm to understand the ethic of critique and its relationship with teachers' work engagement, that includes vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The ethic of critique, which emphasizes addressing inequities and advocating for social justice, creates unique challenges and opportunities in the workplace. Principals practicing ethical leadership can provide emotional support, encouragement, and clear guidance, enabling teachers to manage critique-oriented challenges effectively. (Shields, 2010). Furthermore, a culture of collaboration fosters shared responsibility for addressing inequities, alleviating the pressure on individual teachers (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). While critics may be perceived as disrespectful, leading to conflicts or negative repercussions (Bhattarai, 2020) that may diminish engagement sometimes, the JD-R model suggests that supportive resorts can mitigate these effects and foster greater vigor, dedication, and absorption. Schools must strive to create environments that balance these demands with sufficient resources to ensure that equity-focused efforts enhance rather than hinder teacher engagement.

Ethical justice resonates with the Equity Theory of Adams (1965), that suggests that when employees perceive that their inputs are rewarded fairly, they feel more motivated and engaged. For example, a study by Saks (2006) found that employees who perceived higher levels of fairness in their compensation were more engaged in their work. Also, when employees believe that promotions, evaluations, or

work assignments are made using fair procedures, they are more likely to feel motivated and invested in their roles (Colquitt et al., 2001).

In conclusion, the theoretical frameworks of Self-Determination Theory, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, and Equity Theory collectively offer a robust understanding of the relationship between ethical leadership and work engagement, which has been used in the discussion later. These theories highlight the importance of ethical leadership in fulfilling employees' psychological needs and fostering a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, all of which are integral to work engagement. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens for understanding how ethical leadership can effectively enhance teacher engagement and contribute to the overall success of educational institutions.

Empirical Review

Ethical leadership has been extensively studied in various organizational settings, including public administration, business, and education.

Ethical Leadership in Public Schools

Ethical leadership significantly influences the ethical climate of schools, although teacher-student interaction and institutional governance are also affected. A longitudinal study by Bavik et al. (2018) with 200 public school administrators found that schools led by ethical leaders reported fewer disciplinary issues, had higher teacher morale and retention, and fostered greater community trust in these institutions. Overall, this proves ethical leadership creates a positive culture and enhances the relationships among staff, students, and the community. In Nepal, Neupane et al. (2022) explored ethical leadership at public-sector schools in Kathmandu and found that teachers get engaged and committed to their work when principals demonstrate ethical leadership behavior. This study also indicates that political interference and bureaucratic constraints hinder the effective implementation of ethical leadership principles in the functioning of schools in Nepal, which in turn limits the chance of sustainable change.

In further support of these findings, Sherchan et al. (2024) investigated Nepal's public education landscape for ethical leadership practices via semi-structured interviews with 50 leaders and teachers in schools. This study pointed out that ethical leadership is of utmost importance in raising the morale of teachers, governance in institutions, and the performance of education. Findings emphasized that the school leaders who were upright and ethical in their day-to-day dealings created an inclusive,

collaborative, and more student-centered learning environment. Teachers felt more appreciated and supported, positively impacting their job satisfaction and engagement. Sherchan et al. (2024) agreed that ethical leadership is necessary for a good school climate but also for improved educational outcomes, especially in poorly funded and politically volatile settings.

Challenges in Implementing Ethical Leadership

While ethical leadership has numerous benefits, it faces several barriers that prevent it from being effective in public schools. One is the institutional and cultural context in which the school leader operates. According to Eisenbeiss (2012), cultural norms are often at odds with the ethical principles espoused by leaders, particularly in societies with deeply entrenched hierarchies and rigid power dynamics. Under such circumstances, ethical leaders may not enjoy the support of either staff or students, as traditional authority management upholds adherence to moral decision-making (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

Moreover, administrative policies and bureaucratic regulations can place limits on leaders' attempts to operationalize ethical principles in their decision-making processes. Many school leaders in former days had to juggle ethical leadership by national policies and requirements regarding standardized testing themselves (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia [UKM], 2022). They had to meet performance metric expectations, which then compromised their ethical commitments, whereby they would compromise internal aspects such as teacher welfare, student well-being, or even curriculum content.

Additionally, in Nepal, public schools are so politically interfered with and institutionally rigid that ethical leadership becomes nearly impossible. According to research by Bhattarai (2013), political instability and changes in educational policy often disrupt the continuing flow of leadership and create an environment of uncertainty, making it difficult for school leaders to abide by ethical practices. Moreover, Sherchan et al. (2024) added that lack of institutional support is a significant constraint. Many school leaders in Nepal are, to some extent, denied any type of training or resources on the meaningful application of ethical leadership. External political and bureaucratic forces thus influence decision-making with political affiliation or self-interests rather than ethical principles. Such negates any opportunity for ethical leadership to produce effects that lead to change in schools and the entire education system.

Finally, the absence of accountability mechanisms within some educational systems hampers the implementation of ethical leadership further. If leaders escape punishment for their unethical behavior or are protected by a strong political or administrative network, ethical leadership practices are more difficult to sustain. As Eisenbeiss (2012) states, leaders require a framework of accountability to make their ethical decisions throughout the culture and practices of an institution.

Ethical Leadership and Work Engagement

Empirical research has consistently highlighted the favorable relationship between ethical leadership and employee engagement. Ashfaq et al. (2021) study involving 211 employees from both public and private organizations in Pakistan revealed that ethical leadership plays a vital role in the workplace by inspiring employees to be more engaged in their work. The study also highlighted a strong link between ethical leadership and employee engagement, with self-efficacy and organizational commitment serving as key factors that help strengthen this connection. Similarly, while using the work engagement scale of Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), a study conducted by Hartog and Belschak (2012) among 167 supervisor-employee pairs and 200 employee-supervisor pairs resulted that the feeling of vigor, dedication and absorption at work is likely to increase when employees believed their leaders were performing ethically. In addition to this, there are several mediating factors that contribute to work engagement and ethical leadership. Zeng & Zu's (2019) research on the same with 205 youth teachers from 15 Chinese universities showed that organizational trust resulted as a medium between ethical leadership and the work engagement of aspiring teachers. Similarly, the study conducted by Mostafa & Motalib (2018) identified that a sense of meaningful work plays a dual role—it both influences and strengthens the connection between ethical leadership and employee engagement. Additionally, many quantitative research studies indicate that ethical leadership, which involves care, critique and justice-oriented attributes, positively affects work engagement. Caring leaders provide positive settings, resulting in increased employee vigor and employee dedication (Chughtai et al., 2015). When properly given, critiquing enables employees to speak up and participate in their jobs as it builds robust feedback culture and psychological safety (Edmondson & Lei, 2014).

Leadership which looks at fairness, equality and equity enhances subordinates' trust in the leaders and their sense of belongingness to the organization, and such

functions propel their degree of engagement (Walumbwa et al., 2011). Quantitative findings across the board indicate positive correlations between these two, with correlation coefficient values of between 0.4 and 0.7 (Bedi et al., 2016). Mediators like trust and organizational justice account for 20-40% of the variability in engagement outcomes, while ethical leadership accounts for 15-25%, reiterating how important it is (Mayer et al., 2012). Ethical leadership is one of the key determinants of work engagement as it nurtures and builds an environment that is supportive, just and built on trust. Operating effectively through care, constructive critique and justice, ethical leadership is also leveraged.

However, a critical examination of the case of ethical leadership shows that the existing literature, which mostly lauds its positive influence, does not tell the whole story. The degree to which it manifests itself often depends on contextual factors associated with organizational culture, employee values, and external job demands. For instance, Kalshoven & Boon (2012) showed that ethical leadership may be understood as a formality rather than a genuine driver of employee engagement in bureaucratic or hierarchical organizations. Similarly, Neubert et al. (2013) have noted that in highly pressurized working environments, the actions of the transformational or servant leader may influence engagement more.

Other than the above, there are cases in which employees' perceptions of some other workplace features, such as job autonomy, acknowledgment, and intrinsic motivation, that overpower ethical leadership in promoting engagement. For instance, Christian et al. (2011) have found that job design and task significance were stronger antecedents of engagement than the leader's style. In this way, although ethical leadership participates in job engagement, it is not always the most potent one, especially in an environment that makes employees draw their motivation from other sources. The most significant predictor of employee engagement is considered to be ethical leadership, which further requires other moderating and mediating variables concerning engagement outcomes. Future studies have to look further at these aspects in different cultural and organizational contexts for a deeper understanding of how ethical leadership plays its role in other workplace dynamics.

Research Gap

While the idea of ethical leadership is becoming increasingly common in private businesses, it is still complex and contentious in the education sector, particularly in public schools. In this context, the chairman of the school board—who

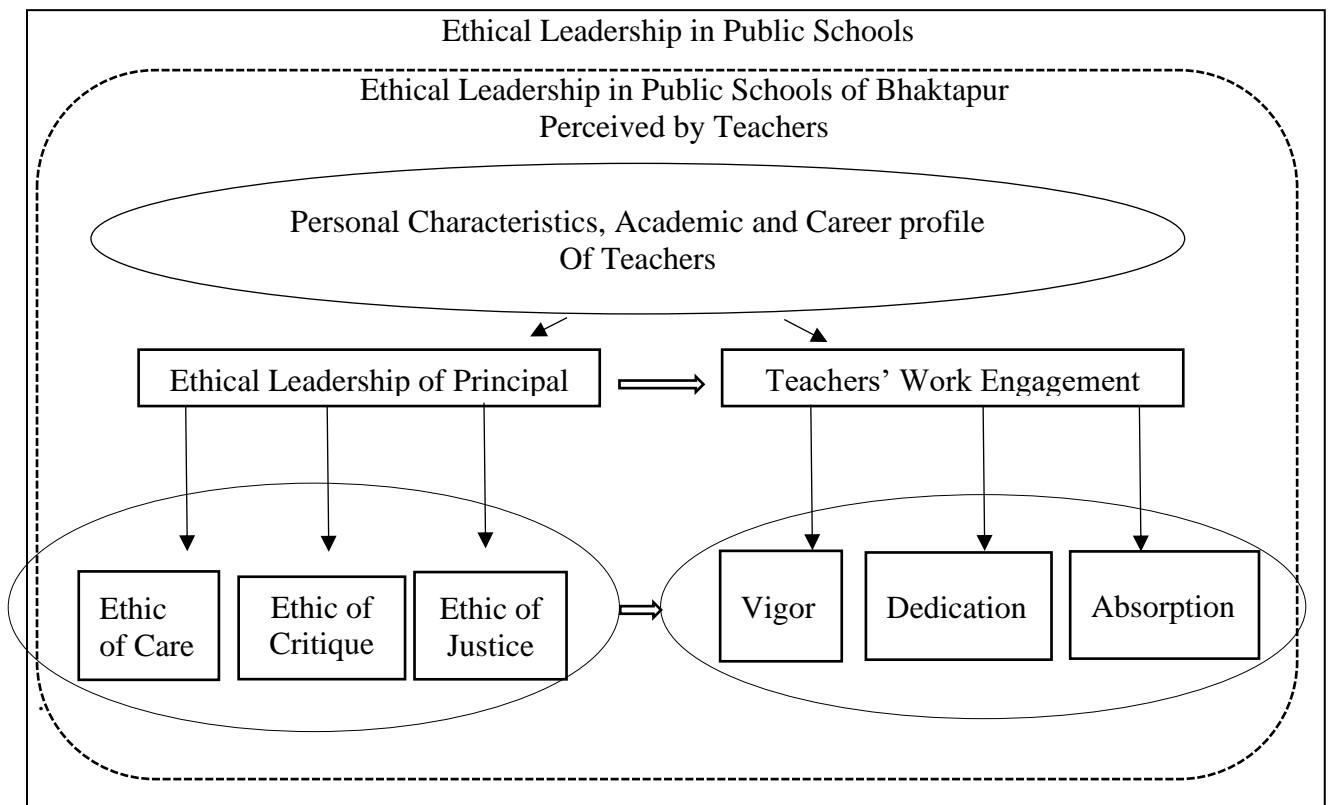
is as visible as politicians, business leaders, and community figures—plays a more isolated role with fewer overlaps compared to the head teacher (principal). The principal, recognized as a professional leader, has direct interactions with students, teachers, and parents (Ghimire, 2022). The chairperson, often representing the school board or management committee, holds significant decision-making authority, sometimes overshadowing the head teacher's leadership role. Research indicates that when school governance structures are overly hierarchical, head teachers may struggle to exercise autonomy in decision-making, which can hinder their ability to implement ethical leadership practices (Bush, 2018). Studies have also shown that conflicts between head teachers and governing bodies can create leadership challenges, reducing the effectiveness of school administration and ethical decision-making (Ng & Chan, 2019). Research indicates that head teachers in Nepal frequently face governance-related dilemmas influenced by political ideologies, which affect their ability to exercise ethical leadership and make independent decisions (Muktan & Bhattarai, 2023), hindering school development and reducing leadership effectiveness. This requires the government policy to provide specific autonomy to principals to improve leadership possibilities that are expected to boost competitiveness (Adhikari, 2022). While effective school leadership is recognized as crucial for enhancing teacher performance and student outcomes in Nepal, there is a scarcity of studies examining how school leaders influence teacher effectiveness and reduce variability in instructional quality across classrooms. A study by Ghimire (2022) emphasizes the pivotal role of school heads in inspiring and engaging educators and contributing to a thriving educational environment. Similarly, Chandra (2018) reported that effective school leadership, including providing feedback to teachers and promoting collaboration, positively influenced student outcomes. However, comprehensive research focusing specifically on the mechanisms through which school leaders impact teacher effectiveness and consistency in educational quality remains limited.

Despite increasing research on school leadership in Nepal, there are still significant gaps in understanding how ethical leadership shapes teacher engagement. The existing studies are more related to governance and administrative roles. Contextually, while leadership challenges in Nepal's public schools have been explored, the specific leadership role of school principals in fostering an ethical work environment has not been studied. Methodologically, most research relies on either

governance-focused case studies or broad policy analyses; few of the research has also been conducted in quantitative and mixed method approach to understand the leadership role, the particular study on ethical leadership and work engagement of teacher need for more comprehensive approach that capture the real experiences of principals and teachers. This study aims to fill these gaps by examining the influence of ethical leadership on teachers, work engagement in Nepal's public schools based on the conceptual framework of ethical leadership and how teachers' engagement is supposed to contribute to the field of educational leadership and school development.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Ethical Leadership and Its Effect on Teachers' Work Engagement



The above framework explains ethical leadership as the independent variable, and the study is centered on the state of ethical leadership in public schools in Nepal. As a dependent variable, teachers' work engagement is evaluated in coherence to the effect of ethical leadership in the teachers' engagement. The framework also explains that the overall study will be based on the perception of teachers.

Ethical Leadership Scale and Typology

After profoundly reviewing the literature on Ethical leadership, this study has adopted the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire developed by Langlois et al. (2014).

The ELQ models an ethical decision-making process, which was incorporated into the questionnaire through five components: identifying an ethical dilemma, resolving that dilemma, categorizing decisions made when facing an ethical dilemma, evaluating the impact of organizational culture on the process, and recognizing the pressures experienced while resolving those dilemmas. The developer suggests that the instrument can be applied in various cultural contexts and emphasizes that invariance across cultures is essential. The instrument is based on the three dimensions of ethical leadership (ethics of care, critique and justice. The instrument has altogether 23 items. The longer version of the same instrument has been used in Bhattarai's (2015) thesis report on "Ethical Leadership in Nepali Technical and vocational education and training schools: A convergent mixed methods study". Langlois and LaPointe (2010), as cited by Bhattarai (2015), have also developed a typology of ethical competency. The typology explained that in the 6-point Likert scale of ELQ, ethical leadership can be explained in 5 different levels, and they are traces, emergence, presence, consolidation and optimization. The details are explained in the table below.

Table 1

Ethical Competency -Typology

Competency	Scores	Interpretation
Traces	1.0 - 3.5	Attitude tend towards showing and following the ethical dimensions.
Emergence	3.6 – 4.4	Those ethical dimensions are gradually emerging.
Presence	4.5 – 4.8	Those ethical dimensions are geared and is capable of facing ethical challenges.
Consolidated	4.9 – 5.5	The ethical components are realized through both thought and in everyday practice and professional behavior.
Optimization	5.6 – 6.0	The ethical leadership is excellently displayed and professional judgment is fully utilized.

Work Engagement Scale

Similarly, for work engagement, three dimensions, that include vigor, dedication and absorption, are considered as mentioned above in the engagement section. These dimensions are adopted from Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) work engagement scale. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is a widely studied

tool designed to assess work engagement. It was developed based on the theoretical concept of work engagement, which consists of three key aspects: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The scale is available in a longer 17-item version and a more concise 9-item version. Panthee et al. (2014) conducted a validation study of the Nepalese Version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Their findings indicated that the UWES-N-9 demonstrates reliable psychometric properties, supporting its applicability for measuring work engagement in the Nepalese context. However, they have also stated the disclaimer that the study's results may not be generalized to other occupations. In case of work engagement of teacher, the study of Tomas et al. (2018) in Utrecht Work Engagement Scale in Dominican Teachers has demonstrated to this scale be a valid and reliable instrument for the measurement of engagement in a large and representative sample of teachers in a Central American country. In case of teachers work engagement of Nepal, the study itself is the first of its kind so the scale was scrutinized and translated in Nepali under the expert consultation before distributing the questionnaire. The typology of ethical leadership has been adopted for the work engagement as well to interpret the levels of work engagement after the consultation with the supervisor.

Chapter Summary

This chapter explored three fundamental ethical paradigms—care, justice, and critique—as a framework for understanding the ethical responsibilities of principal. The researcher suggests that the potential connection between ethical leadership of school principals and teacher work engagement remains largely unexplored. To address this, the study examined various aspects of ethical leadership and work engagement, supported them with empirical evidence, and developed a framework illustrating their relationship.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the methods by which the study is conducted to find out the influence of ethical leadership in teachers' engagement in public schools of Nepal. Philosophical considerations, sample size and population, data collection tools and techniques, analysis of collected data is discussed in detailed in this chapter. The chapter proceeds with research design focused on quantitative research followed by research paradigms guided by the philosophical assumptions.

Paradigm of the Study

This study follows post-positivist paradigm which identifies the research activity with its beliefs about the one's understanding of reality, the principles of knowledge, and the acquisition of knowledge. The positivist expects the given objective reality to be fully measurable, and the post-positivist takes a view that this reality is greatly influenced by the context, values, and beliefs of the people giving it meaning with respect to the given knowledge (Crescent & Clark 2011). The research methodology is shaped by one's understanding of reality, the principles of knowledge, and the process through which knowledge is acquired (Tuli, 2011). Since there is no universal truth, the researcher adopts the post-positivist paradigm, which employs various instruments and aims to explore phenomena as clearly and closely as possible (Panhwar et al., 2017). According to critical realism that address the independency of human cognition that can only be understood through interpretation and inquiry (Bhaskar, 1978). The philosophy is guided by theoretical framework, beliefs and underlying assumptions about the phenomena of ethical leadership, local administration and school governance and teachers' engagement. Three elements that composite research paradigms are discussed below.

Ontology

This research, guided by post-positivist research paradigm, has the ontological assumption that the understanding of reality is objective and independent of the researcher. One method to explain the distinctive theories of post-positivism is to refer to ontology, a philosophical examination of reality (Bisel & Adame, 2017). The study follows the framework that different leadership practices are applied in public schools of Nepal, and these practices may affect teachers' levels of work engagement;

however, instead of assuming a specific style, this study relies on the perceptions of participants and empirical data to examine these underlying dynamics. Furthermore, it is thought that an engaged workforce is the primary driver for improving academic quality in the institutions. Furthermore, the engaged workforce is the driving force of that contribute in the quality of academic institutions.

Epistemology

The distinctive presuppositions of post-positivism can also be explained as the philosophical study of knowledge and knowing, or epistemology. Research that is post-positivistic presumes that social reality can be measured and understood, yet difficult to explore (Bisel & Adame, 2017). Epistemological assumptions are the methods used to study and investigate the nature of reality and objects which gives rise to methodological considerations dealing with issues of instrumentation and data collection (Cohen et al., 2018). Hence, the epistemological position the study acquired knowledge objectively through survey method, using strong assessment tool referring to existing tools and making necessary modifications to contextualize in the research setting.

Axiology

Axiology is the role of values in research study (Creswell, 2012) and it holds importance in empirical research. It is thus imperative that the researcher maintain the value of this study. Since researcher ontological position is post-positivism, the researcher is unaffected by the information gathered from my responses. The researcher is separated from the study settings at all phases of the research process to ensure that the results are trustworthy. More significantly, the identification of the person presented is that of an academic researcher, not a trainer. For this, the research purpose is clarified in the questionnaire to gain the confidence of the respondents. The study employed a value-free approach, and researcher influenced neither the research process nor the results. The research questions in this study necessitated a survey approach, as surveys typically yield quantitative or numerical descriptions of the study population (Fowler, 2013). In this way, the researcher does not make any influence to the respondents and the research process.

Research Design

Researcher adopted quantitative method for this study following the post-positivist research paradigm as a guiding framework. Researcher frames this study into cross-sectional survey design by administering a survey questionnaire to a

sample later inferring it into population through data analysis. Since the study aims to examine significant difference and causal relationship, this cross-sectional survey design allows for the gathering of data at a single time. The survey method was specifically adopted because it allows a systematic data collection from a larger sample, ensuring generalizability and statistical reliability. The data answer the same questions through administering structured questionnaires to the respondents, who react to a predetermined set of statements. The methodology chosen will add objectivity to the study and minimize researcher bias while offering measurable insights regarding the effect of leadership on teacher engagement in public schools of Nepal.

Study Area

The concept of the study arises from the core area of leadership and employee engagement. Later it was delimited to the ethical leadership and teacher work engagement. As, it is significant for a researcher to minutely examine to what extent does ethical leadership exists in the education sectors specially in public schools, the study examine the perceived ethical leadership from the teachers' point of view. The level of work engagement teachers' also is measured. Later the effect of ethical leadership on teachers' work engagement is examined. The study population is the teachers of public school of Bhaktapur District.

Population and Sampling

The target population of the research is the teachers of public schools of Bhaktapur District. There are altogether 1293 teachers (primary, lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary) including permanent and temporary appointment in public schools of Bhaktapur Districts (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2020). To address the difficulty of acquiring data from the entire population within specified time period, this study be conducted on sample size rather than the population which is a small subset drawn from the total population, representative of the entire population (Creswell, 2012). The sample size is obtained through sampling which is the technique of collecting the true size of sample (Guthrie, 2007). Hence, to draw the sample size from the population of 1293 teacher, Cochran's (1977) formula was used. The calculations are as follows:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

where population size (N) = 1293, and n_0 = Cochran recommended sample size that is 384 and n = required return sample size which is 297 after the calculation. To select 297 respondents from the population, probability sampling is the best way of ensuring that sample selected is unbiased (Muijs, 2004) which is used in this research as well. In this regard, stratified random sampling is used. The questionnaire was print and the hardcopy was sent to all the selected sample with a periodic follow up. With this scientific technique of sampling, the findings based on the selected sample can be generalized to the whole population. Researcher have used Municipalities of the Bhaktapur as the base for the stratification.

Table 2

Sampling Plan

Municipality Name	Teachers (N)	Percentage of Total Population	Proportionate Sample Size (n)	Allocated Schools
Bhaktapur Urban Municipality	431	33%	99	5
Changunarayan Urban Municipality	351	27%	81	4
Madhyapur Thimi Urban Municipality	211	16%	48	3
Suryabinayak Urban Municipality	300	23%	69	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>1293</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>15</i>

In the above table, based on the percentage of total population the sample size of teacher for each municipality was calculated. The researcher also identified the number of public schools in each municipality. After identifying the number of schools in each municipality the schools were selected in proportionate basis as well as considering the proportionate sample size for each municipality that is presented in above table. Also to ensure that the sample represent the whole school we select 15 to 25 number of teachers randomly from each school based on the number of teachers available in that school. Since Bhaktapur district has highest number of teachers as well schools the proportionate sample and proportionate schools from this municipality was highest followed by Changunarayan, Madhyapur and Suryabinayak. Based on the sample size proportion for each municipality and also assuming not more than 25 teachers from one school, the random lottery has been used to select the school of different municipalities based on the number of schools

available in the municipality. The total number of public schools in the municipality was identified through the flash report of MOEST (2020). The flash reported suggested that Bhaktapur Municipality has highest number of public schools followed by Changunarayan and Suryabinayak and the lowest number of schools is in Madhyapur Thimi Municipality. After selecting the schools by lottery, I distributed the questionnaire to the teachers of those schools not exceeding 25 teachers from each school. The teachers of the selected schools were also chosen through random lottery.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

For data collection process, a formal, structured questionnaire was used using pre-validated scales. This tool address appropriate existing research tools from past literature and is finalized after contextualization in Nepali Education Scenario with the help previous literature, supervisor support and reviewing the questionnaire through Nepali translator. For each research question, variables have been set and finalized. To cover each variable, indicative questions were developed and for that, options of answers were set. These questions were prepared based on the adopted scales which are already content validate. For the ethical leadership, the 22 items Ethical leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) scale developed and validated by Langlois et al., (2014) was used. For measuring teachers' work engagement, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed and validated by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) was used. It is a 17- items scale that includes 6 items for vigor, 5 items for dedication and 6 items for absorptions. Both instruments are developed in 6-point Likert scale. Following the careful development of the tools, data collection became the next crucial step.

The data were collected from the sample through a cross-sectional questionnaire at one point of measurement for concrete observable insights and validation research study. Prior to the complete survey proper, a pilot test was executed to ascertain the reliability and effectiveness of the entire research instrument. 10% of sample has been used for the pilot survey to ensure feasibility, identify potential issues, and refine research instruments (Connelly, 2008). Piloting was done in Lalitpur Sub Metropolitan City as the study was primarily focused on Kathmandu Valley comprising of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur district. Later the study was delimited to Bhaktapur districts. Furthermore, pilot testing in a different but similar population is a common research practice as long as both groups share key

characteristics (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The goal is not to generalize findings but to ensure the questionnaire is clear, reliable, and suitable for the main study. In this study, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur were chosen because their public schools operate under similar government policies and leadership structures according to new federal structure (Government of Nepal, 2017). Their shared socio-economic and educational contexts make them comparable, ensuring the pilot test results remain relevant. To further validate the questionnaire, statistical techniques like Cronbach's alpha were used to check reliability and consistency across both districts. This ensures that despite being conducted in a different location, the pilot test remains applicable to the main study.

The researcher went to the schools to collect the data. For Bhaktapur Municipality, researcher also went to Municipality office to receive the recommendation letter to conduct the survey in the Bhaktapur Municipality. In schools, she met the principal and with the permission of principal the questionnaire were distributed randomly to the teachers based on the lottery method. While distributing questionnaire, respondents were explained about the confidentiality being strictly maintained and were informed that the information of the respondents would not be disclosed and the data would be used only for the purpose of this study.

Validity

Validity refers to how well an assessment instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, as well as the amount to which evidence supports the intended interpretation (Creswell, 2012). The validity of this study was thoroughly examined and confirmed. Langlois et al. (2014) designed a reliable instrument for assessing ethical leadership, grounded in three interrelated principles: justice, critique, and care. The factorial validity of the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) was confirmed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis, while convergent validity was ensured using Structural Equation Modeling. To adapt the questionnaire for the Nepali context, I used the Nepali version of the ELQ, previously translated and contextualized in Bhattarai (2015) dissertation. This version was refined with input from scholars and professors at Kathmandu University, who evaluated the relevance of the survey questions, the appropriateness of the approach to gather the required information, and the overall design of the questionnaire. Similarly, the scale of work engagement has been validated is through the validity study precisely considering work engagement as a collective phenomenon. Both content and factorial validity

has been considered while developing the work engagement scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Further the work engagement scale was also translated with the support of supervisor and expert.

Reliability

Reliability relates to the consistency of a measure of a concept (Bryman, 2012). Piloting was done to guarantee reliability by ensuring that the measures are standard, unambiguous, and that the responses to the measures from the piloted responder are comparable and not contradictory. After checking the internal consistency with help of Cronbach Alpha of pilot test with 25 teachers of Lalitpur Sub Metropolitan City the only the real time survey was conducted. Furthermore, the reliability of the data has been also checked through internal consistency which is presented in table below.

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha Test

Dimensions	Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Ethical Leadership		
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	10	0.763
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	7	0.724
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	6	0.772
Work Engagement		
<i>Vigor</i>	6	0.768
<i>Dedication</i>	5	0.752
<i>Absorption</i>	6	0.831

The above table explains that the internal consistency of both the scale is maintained as both of them are above 0.7 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Also, the Chronbach's alpha when any of the item is deleted was checked and the result was also above 0.7. Overall, the reliability has been tested and checked.

Analysis of Data

The collected data were processed into SPSS and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The researcher developed the database at first and coded and screened it to ensure the quality of the data. Similarly, missing values were checked but no such a case of missing value was found. Then the data were analyzed with the statistical process drawing the statistical inferences for each of the research question. Since there were our research questions in this study, data analysis tools were used

accordingly. With the proper guidance of the experts, the appropriate statistical tools have been used to analyze each research questions separately which has been presented in table 3.

Table 4

Related Statistical Tools

Q. No.	Research Questions	Statistical Tools
1	What is the level of perceived ethical leadership among teachers of public school?	Mean and Standard Deviation
2	What is the level of teachers' work engagement in public school?	Mean and Standard Deviation
3	To what extent do perceive ethical leadership of principals and work engagement of teachers differ by the personal characteristic (gender, age) academic and career profile of teachers (working experiences, level, qualification, academic stream)?	Inferential statistics — <i>t</i> -Test and ANOVA
4	To what extent ethical leadership affect teachers' engagement?	Multiple Regression

The table 3 explains that the first and second research question of the study was to find out the perceived level of ethical leadership of principal and work engagement of teachers for which Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated to measure the ethical leadership of principal and work engagement teachers at three levels: high medium and low. Then for research question three and four, to find out the extent of difference of perceived ethical leadership of principals across the personal, academic and career profile of teachers and the extent of difference of work engagement across the personal, academic and career profile of teachers the data were analyzed using t-test and ANOVA comparing the mean of sample (Kim, 2014) across the personal characteristics at 0.05 significance level. The researcher also performed test for examining attributes when the assumptions of equal variances were not supported for parametric test. After that, Cohen's effect size was calculated to find out the effect size.

Ethical Considerations

Issues in survey is that firstly, respondents lack confidence in providing correct data because of which they either fill the survey haphazardly or submit the incomplete survey and secondly respondent may get offended by the question asked

in the survey, especially in the demographic section or preliminary section. Therefore, it is important for a researcher to list out or predict the issues that might arise in survey and be preparing to address them. So, to avoid this, the study has adhered to the code of ethics by demonstrating social, professional, and scientific accountability, respect for respondents' rights and dignity, and preserving integrity (Guthrie, 2007), The survey used in this study ensured that the respondents have their consent in filling up the questionnaire and the collected information will be only used for academic purpose. The researcher also ensured them of the confidentiality in the survey and give them freedom to respond to the questionnaire and also the right to withdraw from participation without any explanation, The researcher also went ahead and took a recommendation letter of municipality wherever possible and needed.

Concluding the Chapter

Survey method was applied in this study for addressing all the research questions. The study was conducted taking the sample size of 297 respondents. For the questionnaire, the scales were adopted from Ethical Leadership Questionnaire and Work Engagement Scale using six points Likert scale. The data were collected from the teachers of public schools of Bhaktapur districts. Pilot test was administered which satisfied the reliability of scale. This study also followed the prescribed norms and values to maintain ethical standard.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The chapter includes: (1) the level of ethical leadership of principals perceived by teachers and to determine the level of work engagement of teachers, (2) the difference in perceived ethical leadership and teachers' work engagement across personal characteristics, including gender and age, as well as the academic and professional profiles of teachers, such as, work experience and education level effect the (3) the extent to which perceived ethical leadership influence teachers' work engagement.

Initially, descriptive statistics addressed the first and second research questions. For ethical leadership, descriptive statistics were calculated for three outcome variables: care, justice, and critique. In parallel, descriptive teacher work engagement statistics were computed across three outcome variables: vigor, dedication, and absorption. To analyze the third and fourth research questions, independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA were conducted to identify significant differences in ethical leadership and teachers' engagement based on various background variables, including gender, age group, teaching levels, years of experience, qualifications, and academic stream. Lastly, to examine the effect of perceived ethical leadership on teachers' work engagement, multiple regression analysis was employed, following the verification of all relevant assumptions. The alpha level was set at 0.05.

Frequencies of Background Variables

The background variable information collection from Survey Participants is presented as follows. For the survey a total of 297 teachers were selected through random sampling.

Table 5*Frequencies of Respondents' Profile*

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	<i>Male</i>	131	44.1
	<i>Female</i>	166	55.9
Age	<i>20 -30</i>	40	13.5
	<i>30-40</i>	99	33.3
	<i>40-50</i>	88	29.6
	<i>50 above</i>	70	23.6
Total Working Experience	<i>0 – 10</i>	97	32.7
	<i>10- 20</i>	111	37.4
	<i>20-30</i>	56	18.9
	<i>30 above</i>	33	11.1
Total Working Experience in the Current Post	<i>0 – 10</i>	139	46.8
	<i>10- 20</i>	84	28.3
	<i>20-30</i>	59	19.9
	<i>30 above</i>	15	5.1
Academic Qualification of Teachers	<i>Intermediate level</i>	56	18.9
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	18.5
	<i>Masters</i>	150	50.5
	<i>M. Phil and above</i>	36	12.1
Academic Stream	<i>Humanities</i>	50	16.8
	<i>Management</i>	50	16.8
	<i>Science</i>	48	16.2
	<i>Education</i>	126	42.4
	<i>Others</i>	23	7.7

The table 4 indicates that among 297 randomly selected teachers, 44.1 percent were male while rest of the respondents were female. The majority of the respondents (33.3%) age range from 30 to 40 while the second highest observations were of the respondents of the age group 40-50 years. Similarly, 37.4% of the respondents have working experience of 10 to 20 years while teachers working on the same post for 10 to 20 years is 28.3%. Further, 50.5% of the respondents holds a master degree indicating that more than half of the teachers who were surveyed are qualified with master degree. While respondent having bachelor degree were lesser than those having only intermediate level with 18.5% and 18.9% respectively % of the whole respondent' education level was below intermediate level. Majority of the respondents' academic stream was education with 42.4 % which is a stream highly

considered by the aspiring teachers. Rest of the respondents belong to the other common streams like humanities, management and science with 16.8%, 16.8% and 16.2 % observations respectively. 7.7% teachers were from nursing and Polytechnique (vocational education and applied sciences) stream who falls under the others category.

Measuring Level of Ethical Leadership of Principal perceived by teachers

In this section, the analysis of level of perceived ethical leadership of principal has been presented. The basis of the analysis of measuring level of perceived ethical leadership of principal was mean and standard deviation. The level ethical leadership are presented in three dimensions: care, critique and justice by using mean value. Then the mean score of each dimension was used ranging the extent of high, medium and low. At first, difference of mean score was calculated between the highest and the lowest mean score. The mean interval of 1.66 was calculated dividing by 3 based on internal categorization (Polit & Hungler, 1997, pp.305-330). From the calculation, three categories were obtained. The category of 1 to 2.66 was ranked as low, 2.66 to 4.32 as medium and 4.32 to 6 as high. Finally, output was presented in Table 5.

After outlining the different levels, the perceived ethical leadership of the principal was analyzed using the typology developed by Langlois and LaPointe (2010). According to this framework, a score between 1.0 and 3.5 represents the "traces" stage, while scores from 3.6 to 4.4 indicate "emergence." Similarly, a range of 4.5 to 4.8 signifies "presence," 4.9 to 5.5 reflects "consolidation," and 5.6 to 6.0 denotes the "optimization level" (Langlois & Lapointe, 2010, as cited in Bhattarai, 2015). The results are then summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Level of Ethical Leadership of Principals

Construct of Ethical Leadership of Principal (Perceived by Teachers)	High N (%)	Medium N (%)	Low N (%)
Ethic by Care	243(81.8%)	48(16.2)	6(2)
Ethic by Critique	219(73.7)	71(23.9)	7(2.4)
Ethic By Justice	254(85.5)	36(12.1)	7(2.4)

N = 297

Table 6 shows that in all three dimensions of ethical leadership the perceived level is high. 85.8%, of teachers think that the level of ethic of justice in principal is high followed by 81.8% and 73.7% and 85.5 in ethic of care and critique respectively.

Few teachers perceive that the ethical leadership in principal is low. 2% of teachers believe that the ethic of care is questionable in principal while in ethic of critique and justice the percentage is just a little bit more by 0.4%. The mean and standard deviation of all three constructs has been showed in table 7.

Table 7

Ethical Leadership of Principals

Construct of Ethical Leadership of Principals (Perceived by Teachers)	N	M	SD	Competency Scale
Ethic by Care	297	4.89	.84	Presence
Ethic by Critique	297	4.74	.91	Presence
Ethic by Justice	297	4.99	.91	Consolidation

N = 297

Table 7 depicts the perceived level of ethic of care and critique is 4.89 and 4.74 respectively in average which is moderately high and falls under the “presence” category which means that teacher think principal have well presented their care and empathy towards the teachers. The standard deviation also suggests that the variation is moderate with 0.84 and 0.91 respectively indicating general agreement among teachers regarding the presence of ethic of care and critique with moderate variation. Similarly, the mean value of ethic of justice is 4.99 and fall under consolidation category which means unfairness and justice has been implemented in both reflective processes and everyday professional behavior and practices by the principal. The standard deviation of ethic of justice shows slightly more variability, indicating differences in how teachers experience fairness and empowerment in decision-making compared to care-oriented leadership. In case of 23 items related to the 3 constructs, the item related to justice explaining tha ta principal follows procedures scored highest mean followed by an item in care that explains that a principal tries to ensure harmony while maintaining relationship in an organization.

With the above findings, we can depict that teachers perceive a high level of ethical leadership in their principals across all three dimensions—ethic of justice, care, and critique. The majority of teachers report positive perceptions, with 85.8% noting a high level of justice, 81.8% recognizing care, and 85.5% acknowledging critique in their principals' leadership. Only a small percentage of teachers view these ethical dimensions as lacking, indicating an overall positive view of the leadership style. Furthermore, the average ratings for the ethic of care and critique suggest that

these values are moderately well-presented, with care falling into the “presence” category and critique being firmly embedded in daily practices, as reflected in the “consolidation” category. This shows a substantial sense of ethical leadership within the school environment.

Measuring the Level of Work Engagement of Teachers

In this section, the analysis of level of work engagement of teachers has been presented. The basis of the analysis of measuring level of work engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) of teachers was mean and standard deviation. The mean average of individual construct was used to determine the range for the extent of high, medium and low and the scored determined for ethical leadership was applied here as well. The category of 1 to 2.66 was ranked as low, 2.66 to 4.32 as medium and 4.32 to 6 as high. Finally, output was presented in Table 7.

After presenting the levels, work engagement was also discussed following typology of Langlois and Lapointe (2010). The result is then presented in Table 8 and Table 9.

Table 8

Level of Work Engagement of teachers

Construct of Work Engagement	High N (%)	Medium N (%)	Low N (%)
Vigor	275 (92.6)	17(5.7)	5(1.7)
Dedication	272(91.6)	18(6.1)	7(2.4)
Absorption	254(85.5)	28(9.4)	10(3.4)

Table 8 shows that majority of all three dimensions of work engagement falls under the high category. 92.6% of teachers think that the level of their vigor (energy in their work) is high followed by 91.6% and 85.5% in dedication and absorption respectively. Few teachers perceived their work engagement level is low with only 1.7 % in vigor and 2.4% and 3.4% in dedication and absorption respectively. On the other hand, table 9 shows the mean and standard deviation of each construct of work engagement.

Table 9*Work Engagement of teachers*

Construct of Work Engagement	N	M	SD	Competency Scale
Vigor	297	5.22	0.81	Consolidation
Dedication	297	5.31	0.84	Consolidation
Absorption	297	5.15	0.91	Consolidation

Table 9 depicts that the engagement level of teachers is in consolidated level in all the three dimensions which means teacher reflects their engagement level in both reflective processes and everyday professional behavior and practices by the principal. The standard deviation values are all below 1 indicating that the data is not highly dispersed, and most teachers have similar engagement levels in their work. Absorption shows the most variability, suggesting the possibilities of many factors that may influence how deeply teachers immerse themselves in their work.

Differences in Perceived Ethical Leadership and its differences across Background Variables

Inferential analysis was performed to test the hypotheses of this study using an independent samples t-test at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The study tests the following null hypotheses:

H_{05} : There was no significant difference across gender and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).

H_{06} : There was no significant difference across age group of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).

H_{07} : There was no significant difference across years of working experience of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).

H_{08} : There was no significant difference across qualification of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).

To find out the differences, parametric tests (independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA) were performed. However, before using ANOVA, its assumptions were necessary to be examined. The ANOVA assumptions as mentioned by Weiss (1994) are: i) sample must be chosen randomly, ii) data must be continuous/quantitative, and iii) data should follow normal distribution, and iv) there should be equal variance. Among the assumptions, random sample selection was met in the study which is already discussion in chapter III. In this study six-point Likert scale

was used. Therefore, it was continuous and quantitative in nature (Weiss, 1994) which satisfies the second assumption. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test was employed to assess the third normality assumption.

Table 10

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Construct of Ethical Leadership	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
		Df	Sig.
Ethic of Care	.876	297	.000
Ethic of Critique	.925	297	.000
Ethic of Justice	.872	297	.000

The table 10 illustrates Shapiro- Wilk normality test which shows no indicators were above 0.000, so it was not normal distribution. However, the statistic values were close to one (1) and it could be considered as normal distribution. This researcher further adopted popular statistical measurement to re-ensure normal distribution of the data. For this purpose, Kurtosis and Skewness were used to test normality of data are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Normality Test through Skewness and Kurtosis

Construct of Ethical Leadership	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Ethic of Care	297	-1.647	4.052
Ethic of Critique	297	-1.136	2.237
Ethic of Justice	297	-1.496	3.059

According to Hair et al. (2010) and Byrne (2010), data is considered normally distributed if the skewness ranges between -2 and +2 and the kurtosis range between -7 and +7. Finally, to meet the assumption of variance, Levine's test was applied. For this, the variance of each of the three dimensions of ethical leadership (care, critique, justice) were examined as a function of background variables as gender, age, level of teachers, years of working experience, qualification and academic stream of teachers.

Table 12*Levene's Equal Variance Test for Background Variables*

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Gender				
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	0.809		295	.369
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	0.291	1	295	.590
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	0.300	1	295	.316
Age Group				
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	2.586	3	293	.053
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	3.656	3	293	.013*
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.298	3	293	.275
Years of Working Experience				
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	4.842	3	293	.003*
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	4.017	3	293	.007*
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.196	3	293	.312
Qualification				
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	1.796	3	292	.148
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	0.047	3	292	.987
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.657	3	292	.178

The result in Table 12 indicates that the assumption of equal variance was generally met. However, ethic of critique under age group and years of working experience were not satisfied. Yet, Ehiwario et al., (2015) suggested that the performance of ANOVA test does not affect the moderate violation in equality of variance. Furthermore, Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests were used to support the ANOVA results to prove the hypothesis as Welch's and Brown-Forsythe tests are used as alternatives to traditional ANOVA to ensure more robust results when the assumption of equal variances is not met (Brown & Forsythe 1974; Welch, 1951).

Perceived Ethical Leadership and Gender

To explore the potential difference across gender and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique and justice), the data concerning gender and perceived ethical leadership of the principal by teachers were analyzed by using t-test and has presented in Table 13.

Table 13*Perceived Ethical Leadership and Gender*

Constructs	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig
Ethic by Care	<i>Male</i>	131	4.83	.92	-1.18	.237
	<i>Female</i>	166	4.94	.77		
Ethic by Critique	<i>Male</i>	131	4.75	.94	0.98	.922
	<i>Female</i>	166	4.74	.87		
Ethic by Justice	<i>Male</i>	131	4.91	.96	-1.174	.241
	<i>Female</i>	166	5.03	.87		

a. Equal variances assumed

Table 13 shows that the mean value of females is better in case of ethic of care and incase of ethic of justice mean value of male are better which shows that female perceived their principal to have ethic by care more while male perceived that ethic of justice is more in principal. However, no significant difference was obtained with *p* value no less than 0.05. This indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in perceived ethical leadership across the gender of the teachers.

Age group and Perceived Ethical Leadership

To find out where the difference in the perceived ethical leadership exists withing the age group or not, ANOVA was tested between the constructs of ethical leadership and age group.

Table 14*Age group and Perceived Ethical Leadership*

Constructs	Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Ethic by Care	<i>20 -30</i>	40	4.97	0.62	.147	.931
	<i>30-40</i>	99	4.86	0.94		
	<i>40-50</i>	88	4.89	0.91		
	<i>50 above</i>	70	4.91	0.69		
Ethic by Critique	<i>20 -30</i>	40	4.77	0.57	.037	.991
	<i>30-40</i>	99	4.73	0.99		
	<i>40-50</i>	88	4.76	0.95		
	<i>50 above</i>	70	4.73	0.89		
Ethic by Justice	<i>20 -30</i>	40	4.77	0.57	1.614	.186
	<i>30-40</i>	99	4.73	0.99		
	<i>40-50</i>	88	4.76	0.95		
	<i>50 above</i>	70	4.73	0.89		

The Table 14 results show that there is not much different in the mean value of each group in all the three dimensions. The age group of 20-30 perceive the ethical leadership of principal better in compare to other age group with the highest mean

value in the column 4.96, 4.76 and 4.76 respectively in care, critique and justice. However, no significant difference in perceived ethical leadership across the age group of the teachers was obtained with p value no less than 0.05. However, this result cannot be concluded due to the violation of the homogeneity of variance assumption. Therefore, the table below presents further analysis using the Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests.

Table 15

Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Age group and Perceived Ethical Leadership

Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Statistics	Df	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe			
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	0.166	285.898	0.919
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	0.042	289.641	0.989
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.624	237.292	0.184
Welch			
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	0.196	142.118	0.899
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	0.044	147.341	0.988
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.764	131.955	0.157

The table 15 shows no drastic change in the significance level of Brown-Forsythe and Welch tests compared to ANOVA, and their significance level was higher than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Hence, it is confirmed that there is no statistical difference in the ethic of care, critique and justice across the teachers' age group. It shows that teachers from all level perceived the same level of ethic of care, critique and justice.

Years of Working Experience and Perceived Ethical Leadership

The total working experience of teachers were categorized into 4 groups as mentioned in the Table 16.

Table 16

Years of Working Experience and Perceived Ethical Leadership

Constructs	Years	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Ethic by Care	<i>0-10</i>	97	5.01	0.78	1.134	.335
	<i>10-20</i>	111	4.82	0.97		
	<i>20-30</i>	56	4.91	0.52		
	<i>30 above</i>	33	4.79	0.92		
Ethic by Critique	<i>0-10</i>	97	4.78	0.79	1.081	.357
	<i>10-20</i>	111	4.70	1.05		
	<i>20-30</i>	56	4.89	0.69		
	<i>30 above</i>	33	4.57	1.03		
Ethic by Justice	<i>0-10</i>	97	5.04	0.89	1.760	.155
	<i>10-20</i>	111	5.05	1.00		

20-30	56	4.92	0.73
30 above	33	4.67	0.94

Table 16 shows that there is little variation in the mean values across the different years of work experience for the three dimensions. Also, the table depicts that teacher having work experience of 10 to 20 years perceived better ethic by justice in principal while ethic by care in principal is perceived better by the teachers having work experience of less than 10 years. Despite the observable mean difference, there does not exist any significant difference in the perceived ethical leadership and years of working experience of teachers with *p-value* no less than 0.05. However, because of the violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance, the Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests were conducted to further test the hypothesis.

Table 17

Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Years of Working Experience and Perceived Ethical Leadership

Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Statistics	Df	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe			
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	1.203	166.433	0.310
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	1.096	162.951	0.352
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.852	194.346	0.139
Welch			
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	1.067	113.904	0.366
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	1.207	111.577	0.311
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	1.686	113.658	0.174

The table 17 shows no drastic change in the significance level of Brown-Forsythe and Welch tests compared to ANOVA, and their significance level was higher than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Hence, it is confirmed that there is no statistical difference in the ethic of care, critique and justice across the teachers' years of working experience.

Teachers' Qualification and Perceived Ethical Leadership of Principal

The teachers' qualification was categorized into 4 groups which is presented in the Table 18.

Table 18*Teachers' Qualification and Perceived Ethical Leadership of Principal*

Constructs	Qualification	N	M	SD	F	Sig
Ethic By Care	<i>Intermediate</i>	56	5.02	0.85	.713	.553
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	4.89	0.92		
	<i>Masters</i>	150	4.63	0.88		
	<i>M.Phil and Above</i>	36	4.58	0.98		
Ethic by Critique	<i>Intermediate</i>	56	4.75	0.91	2.650	.016
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	5.04	0.76		
	<i>Masters</i>	150	4.86	1.06		
	<i>M.Phil and Above</i>	36	4.99	0.89		
Ethic by Justice	<i>Intermediate</i>	56	5.05	1.01	1.568	.717
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	4.98	0.92		
	<i>Masters</i>	150	4.97	0.61		
	<i>M.Phil and Above</i>	36	4.91	0.77		

The table 18 shows that majority of the respondents were teachers holds master degree and the mean value suggest that they perceived the ethical leadership of principal in all three dimension is above average with mean no less than 4.5. The table also shows that there is minimal difference in the mean values across the teachers' qualifications. This is supported by the significant values of the ethics of care and justice, indicating that there is no substantial difference in the perception of ethical leadership based on teachers' qualifications. However, in case of ethic of critique the table suggests that there exists a significant difference in the perceived ethical leadership across the qualification of teachers with *p-value* 0.016. Since the group size was not equal, the Brown-Forsythe and Welch tests were run.

Table 19*Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Qualification and Perceived Ethical Leadership*

Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Statistics	Df	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe			
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	0.724	147.738	0.556
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	3.372	172.264	0.016
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	0.424	164.105	0.767
Welch			
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	0.698	106.634	0.539
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	3.588	102.562	0.020
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	0.380	102.228	0.767

The table 19 shows no drastic change in the significance level of Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests compared to ANOVA. Hence, it is confirmed that there is no statistical difference in the ethic of care, and justice across the qualification level of

teachers. In case of ethic of critique also both of the test supported ANOVA results showing a notable difference in the level of critique across the qualification.

In other to check the effect size, the effect size calculator of (Cohen, 1988) was consider which gave the effect size of 0.17. This means that even though there exists a difference the difference is relatively weak (Faul et al., 2007). Additionally, a Game Howell post hoc test was used to check within which group the difference exist as for Welch's ANOVA and Brown-Forsythe tests, Games-Howell is the most appropriate post hoc test. This is because both Welch's ANOVA and Brown-Forsythe adjust for unequal variances, and the Games-Howell test is designed to handle both unequal sample sizes and unequal variances effectively (Games & Howell, 1976). The test result indicated that that there exists a difference in perceiving ethic of critique within the teachers with master degree and teachers with intermediate level degree ($p = .022$). Beside this, no any statistically significant differences were observed in the post hoc test.

Differences in Teachers Work Engagement and the Background Variables

Inferential analysis was performed to test the hypothesis of this study using two-tailed test and alpha level of 0.05. This study encompasses the following null hypotheses:

H₀₅: There was no significant difference across gender and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).

H₀₆: There was no significant difference across age group of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).

H₀₇: There was no significant difference across years of working experience of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).

H₀₈: There was no significant difference across qualification of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).

The analysis starts with the independent samples t-test for gender and

One way ANOVA for age group, total working experiences and qualification. The assumptions for the ANOVA test have been tested and necessary treatment were used wherever possible. Among the assumptions, the study met the requirement of random sample selection, as previously discussed in Chapter III. The second assumption pertains to the use of continuous data. Since a six-point Likert scale was employed, the data were considered continuous and quantitative in nature (Weiss, 1994), thereby fulfilling this assumption. Similarly, to assess the third assumption

regarding normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted. The result of the test has been presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test for Work Engagement

Construct of Work Engagement	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
		Df	Sig.
Vigor	.796	297	.000
Dedication	.736	297	.000
Absorption	.804	297	.000

Based on the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, none of the indicators exceeded 0.000, indicating a deviation from a normal distribution. However, the statistic values were close to one (1) and it could be considered as normal distribution. This researcher further adopted popular statistical measurement to re-ensure normal distribution of the data. For this purpose, Kurtosis and Skewness were used to test normality of data are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Normality Test of Work Engagement through Skewness and Kurtosis

Construct of Work Engagement	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
Vigor	297	-2.258	5.926
Dedication	297	-2.546	6.101
Absorption	297	-1.988	5.145

Hair et al. (2010) and Bryne (2010) argued that data is considered to be normal if skewness is between -2 to +2 and kurtosis is between -7 to +7. Finally, to meet the assumption of variance, Levine's test was applied. For this, the variance of each of the three dimensions of ethical leadership (care, critique, justice) were examined as a function of background variables as gender, age, level of teachers, years of working experience, qualification and academic stream of teachers. The result is presented in below table.

Table 22

Levene's Equal Variance Test for Background Variables

Background Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Gender				
Vigor	5.935	1	295	.015*
Dedication	4.499	1	295	.035*
Absorption	2.614	1	295	.107

Age Group

<i>Vigor</i>	0.754	3	293	.521
<i>Dedication</i>	0.658	3	293	.908
<i>Absorption</i>	1.298	3	293	.094
Years of Working Experience				
<i>Vigor</i>	3.820	3	293	.010*
<i>Dedication</i>	1.640	3	293	.180
<i>Absorption</i>	1.333	3	293	.264
Qualification				
<i>Vigor</i>	2.581	4	292	.036*
<i>Dedication</i>	.510	4	292	.952
<i>Absorption</i>	.492	4	292	.722

As presented in Table 22, the researcher conducted 12 tests, rejecting the null hypothesis of equal variance in four cases. She found that variance was unequal for vigor and dedication based on gender, as well as for vigor alone for years of work experience and qualification. In contrast, the researchers did not reject the null hypothesis in the remaining eight tests, indicating that the ANOVA assumption of equal variance for those cases. To further validate their findings, the researcher utilized an independent sample *t*-test to assess significant differences based on gender. Additionally, Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests, for teacher levels to ensure the robustness of the results.

Gender and Work Engagement of Teachers

The gender of teachers and the differences were analyzed in the table 23.

Table 23

Gender and Work Engagement of Teachers

Constructs	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig
Vigor	<i>Male</i>	131	5.16	0.90	5.935	.297(b)
	<i>Female</i>	166	5.26	0.72		
Dedication	<i>Male</i>	131	5.21	0.92	4.499	.078(b)
	<i>Female</i>	166	5.39	0.77		
Absorption	<i>Male</i>	131	5.00	0.99	2.614	.013(a)
	<i>Female</i>	166	5.26	0.82		

a. Equal Variance Assumed

b. Equal Variance Not Assumed

The results show that the mean value of females is better in all the dimension of work engagement which shows that female is deeply engaged in their work in compare male. However, no significant difference was obtained with p value no less

than 0.05. This indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' vigor and dedication across the gender of the teachers. However significant differences are noticed in case of absorption across the gender. According to the Cohen's (1988) the effect size is 0.28 which indicates that the difference between the groups being compared is modest.

Age Group and Work Engagement of Teachers

The age group of teachers were categorized into 4 groups as mentioned in the Table 24. The differences were also analyzed in the same table 24.

Table 24

Age group and Work Engagement of Teachers

Constructs	Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Vigor	20 -30	40.00	5.23	0.60	.037	.990
	30-40	99.00	5.22	0.81		
	40-50	88.00	5.22	0.87		
	50 above	70.00	5.19	0.83		
Dedication	20 -30	40.00	5.25	0.73	.290	.833
	30-40	99.00	5.31	0.86		
	40-50	88.00	5.28	0.88		
	50 above	70.00	5.38	0.85		
Absorption	20 -30	40.00	4.94	1.03	2.492	.060
	30-40	99.00	5.30	0.81		
	40-50	88.00	5.19	0.94		
	50 above	70	4.73	0.89		

The results show that there is not much different in the mean value of each group in all the three dimensions. Majority of age group 20-30 thinks that they are energetic in their work with mean value of 5.23 while age group of 30-40 believes that they are fully absorbed and dedicated toward their work with mean value 5.30 and 5.31 respectively. Despite the mean value the finding suggests that there is no any significant difference in the work engagement across the age group.

Years of Working Experience and Work Engagement of Teachers

The total working experience of teachers were categorized into 4 groups as mentioned in the Table 24. The differences were also analyzed in the same Table 25.

Table 25*Years of Working Experience and Work Engagement of Teachers*

Constructs	Years	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Vigor	0-10	97	5.28	0.67	.409	.746
	10-20	111	5.16	0.93		
	20-30	56	5.19	0.62		
	30 above	33	5.24	1.01		
Dedication	0-10	97	5.34	0.75	.146	.932
	10-20	111	5.27	0.94		
	20-30	56	5.33	0.69		
	30 above	33	5.33	1.01		
Absorption	0-10	97	5.09	0.90	1.574	.196
	10-20	111	5.28	0.93		
	20-30	56	5.13	0.74		
	30 above	33	4.93	1.05		

The mean values across the three dimensions show little variation based on years of experience. However, teachers with less than 10 years of experience tend to score higher in vigor and dedication, while those with more than 10 years of experience demonstrate better absorption in their work. Despite these finding, there does not exist any significant difference in the work engagement and years of working experience of teachers. Since the homogeneity assumptions did not meet in Levene's test, Welch and Brown Forsythe test was done to ensure the result which is shown in table 26.

Table 26*Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Working Experience and Work Engagement of Teachers*

Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Statistics	Df	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe			
Vigor	0.389	136.034	0.761
Dedication	0.141	152.845	0.935
Absorption	1.527	159.235	0.210
Welch			
Vigor	0.458	109.368	0.712
Dedication	0.136	110.122	0.939
Absorption	1.348	110.781	0.262

The table 25 shows no drastic change in the significance level of Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests compared to ANOVA. Hence, it is confirmed that there is no

statistical difference in the constructs of work engagement across the years of working experience of teachers.

Teachers' Qualification and Work Engagement of Teachers

The teachers' qualification was categorized into 4 groups which is presented in the Table 27.

Table 27

Teachers' Qualification and Work Engagement of Teachers

Constructs	Qualification	N	M	SD	F	Sig
Vigor	<i>Intermediate</i>	56	5.27	0.57	2.177	.091
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	5.36	0.52		
	<i>Masters</i>	150	5.10	0.89		
	<i>M.Phil and Above</i>	36	5.37	1.01		
Dedication	<i>Intermediate</i>	51	5.46	0.77	2.317	.076
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	5.42	0.75		
	<i>Masters</i>	150	5.19	0.84		
	<i>M.Phil and Above</i>	36	5.34	1.05		
Absorption	<i>Intermediate</i>	51	5.02	0.76	.689	.559
	<i>Bachelor</i>	55	5.24	0.85		
	<i>Masters</i>	150	5.11	0.95		
	<i>M.Phil and Above</i>	36	5.29	1.02		

The above table shows that the respondents who holds master degree are less engaged at work in comparison to those teachers who has lower degree yet this finding cannot be generalized as there does not exist any significant difference in the work engagement and qualification of teachers.

Table 28

Welch and Brown-Forsythe test on Qualification and Work Engagement

Robust Tests of Equality of Means	Statistics	Df	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe			
<i>Vigor</i>	2.347	120.778	0.076
<i>Dedication</i>	2.187	141.645	0.092
<i>Absorption</i>	0.701	163.094	0.553
Welch			
<i>Vigor</i>	2.408	109.208	0.071
<i>Dedication</i>	2.567	103.281	0.059
<i>Absorption</i>	0.685	105.469	0.563

The table 28 shows no drastic change in the significance level of Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests compared to ANOVA. Hence, it is confirmed that there is no statistical difference in the vigor, dedication and absorption across the qualification level of teachers.

Effect of Ethical Leadership in Work Engagement

The research question three requires a hypothesis testing for which multiple regression was essential. The multiple regression model was used to measure the effect of ethical leadership in work engagement. The study comprises of following hypothesis and all the construct are measured from the perceived level of teachers.

H₉: There is a significant effect of ethic of care of principal in the vigor of teachers.

H₁₀: There is a significant effect of ethic of critique of principal in the vigor of teachers

H₁₁: There is a significant effect of ethic of justice of principal in the vigor of teachers.

H₁₂: There is a significant effect of ethic of care of principal in the dedication of teachers.

H₁₃: There is a significant effect of ethic of critique of principal in the dedication of teachers.

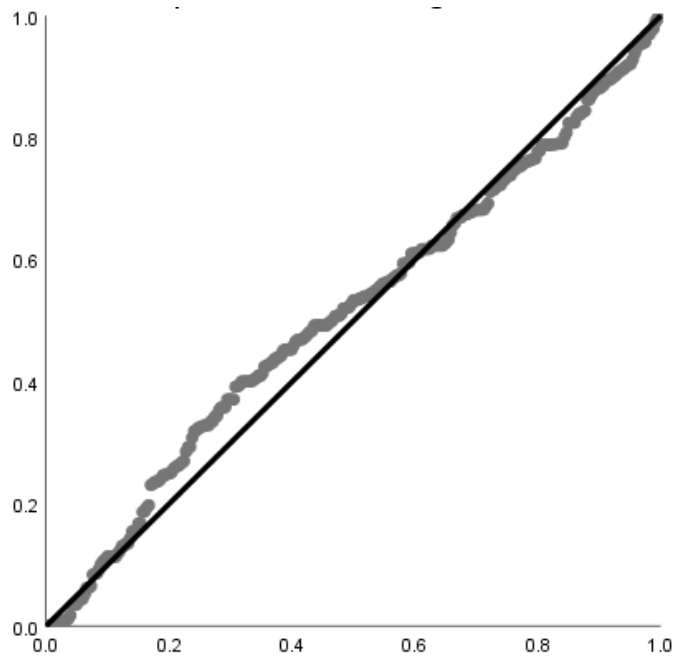
H₁₄: There is a significant effect of ethic of justice of principal in the dedication of teachers.

H₁₅: There is a significant effect of ethic of care of principal in the absorption of teachers.

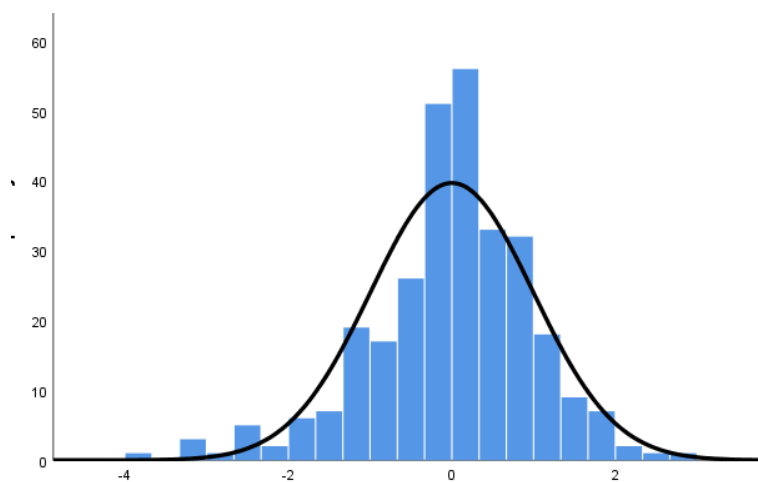
H₁₆: There is a significant effect of ethic of critique of principal in the absorption of teachers.

H₁₇: There is a significant effect of ethic of justice of principal in the absorption of teachers.

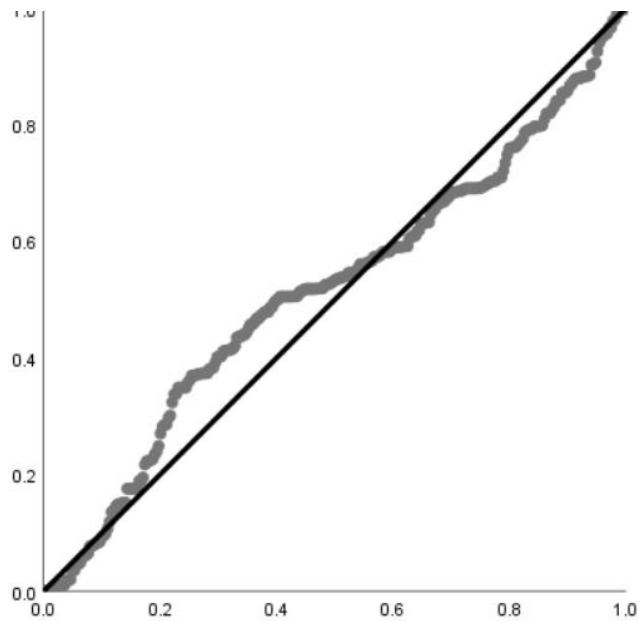
Before testing the hypothesis, the assumptions required for multiple regression model were tested. The background variables, data required for both the independent and dependent variables were collected through items in Likert scale. which fulfil our first assumption of multiple regression. To satisfy the second and third assumptions of normality, we examine linearity and identify any outliers.

Figure 2*Linearity of Dependent Variable- Vigor – Normal P-P Plot*

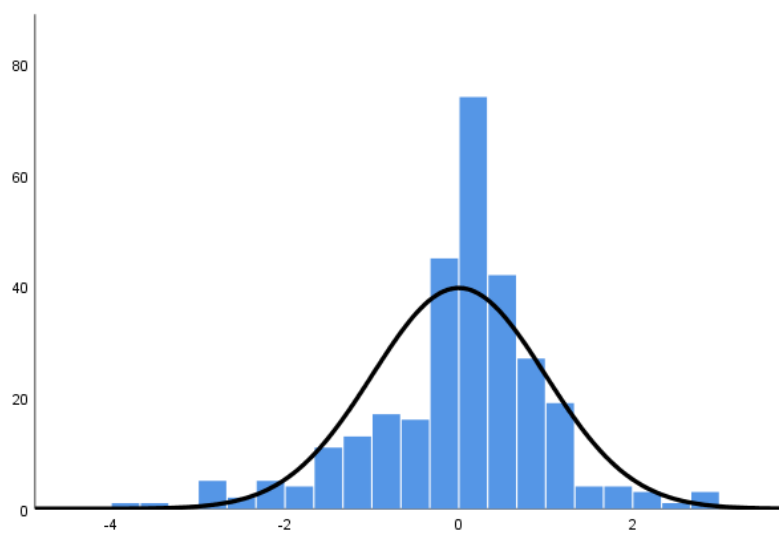
The figure 2 shows that the relationship between the dimensions of ethical leadership and vigor is linear for the model to be valid

Figure 3*Histogram -Dependent Variable Vigor*

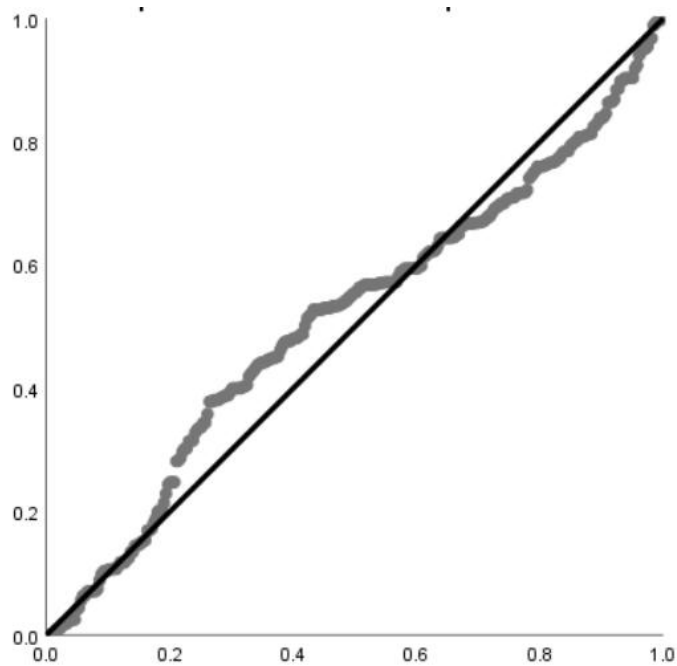
The figure 3 shows the histogram with a bell curve that shows that there are no any significant outliers.

Figure 4*Linearity of Dependent Variable- Dedication – Normal P-P Plot*

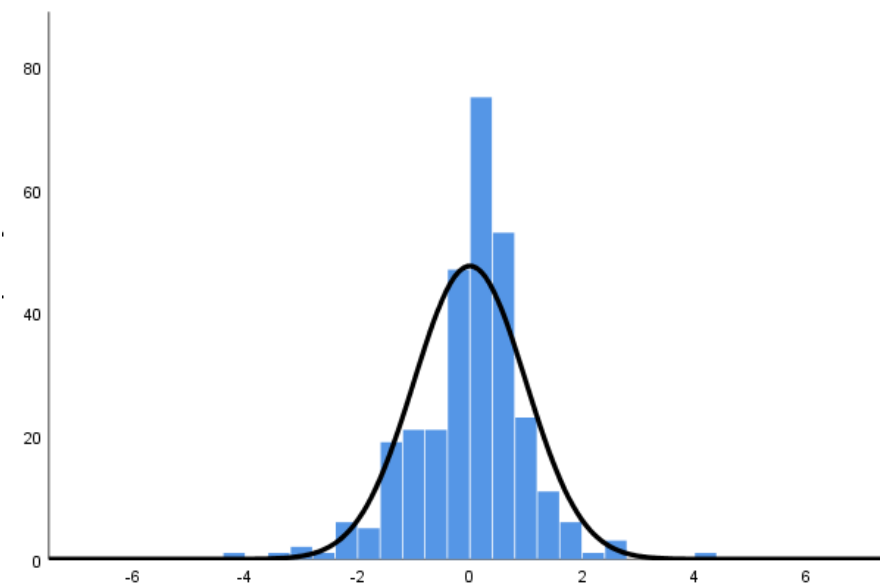
The figure 4 shows that the relationship between the dimensions of ethical leadership and dependent variables is linear for the model to be valid.

Figure 5*Histogram -Dependent Variable Dedication*

The figure 5 shows histogram with a bell curve that shows that outliers is not an issue in case of dedication.

Figure 6*Linearity of Dependent Variable – Absorption – Normal P-P Plot*

The figure 6 shows that the relationship between the independent variable ethic of care, critique and justice and dependent variable absorption is linear for the model to be valid

Figure 7*Histogram -Dependent Variable Absorption*

The figure 7 presents the histogram with a bell curve. Even though the tall peak of the figure indicates few outliers, the outlier is significant as the kurtosis and

skewness shows the normality in the range indicating moderate outlier which is not significant enough that fulfills our second and third assumption.

With all these 6 figures the second and third assumptions were fulfilled. For fourth assumption the Durbin Watson Statistics and R Square has been calculated to check the independent observations.

Table 29

Durbin Watson Statistics and R Square

Construct of Work Engagement	R Square	Durbin Watson
Vigor	.297	1.7
Dedication	.352	1.818
Absorption	.403	1.905

The table 28 shows the Durbin-Watson value for all dependent variables is between 1.5 and 2.5, indicating that the assumption of independent observations is likely met (Field, 2017).

The researcher also tested multicollinearity using tolerance and variance inflation factors (VIF).

Table 30

Multi Collinearity Statistic

	Tolerance	VIF
Vigor		
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	.379	2.641
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	.475	2.105
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	.417	2.400
Dedication		
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	.379	2.641
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	.475	2.105
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	.417	2.400
Absorption		
<i>Ethic of Care</i>	.379	2.641
<i>Ethic of Critique</i>	.475	2.105
<i>Ethic of Justice</i>	.417	2.400

In the table 29, all predictor variables have tolerance values in 0.4 range indicating that the issues with multicollinearity is minimal. Similarly, the VIF value of all predictor variables is less than 2.5, indicating that there is no multicollinearity. According to Field (2017) VIF should be substantially below 10 and tolerance level should not be below 0.2. VIF and tolerance statistical values meet this assumption as

shown in above table. Thus, we came to the conclusion that multicollinearity is not an issue for fitting the regression model.

Once all assumptions are met, we conduct multiple regression analysis to determine the impact of ethical leadership (care, critique, justice) on work engagement (vigor, dedication, absorption). The results are as follows:

Table 31

Coefficients of Ethical Leadership on Work Engagement

Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig	Regression Summary
<i>Model I – Vigor</i>			
Ethic of Care	.246	.002	Adjusted R ² = .290
Ethic of Critique	.040	.475	F = 41.340
Ethic of Justice	.307	.000	P<0.01
<i>Model II- Dedication</i>			
Ethic of Care	.291	.000	Adjusted R ² = 0.345
Ethic of Critique	.085	.215	F = 53.041
Ethic of Justice	.277	.000	P<0.01
<i>Model III -Absorption</i>			
Ethic of Care	.014	.851	Adjusted R ² = 0.397
Ethic of Critique	.166	.012	F = 65.850
Ethic of Justice	.502	.000	P<0.01
<i>Model IV – Ethical Leadership</i>			
Teachers' Work Engagement	.618	.000	Adjusted R ² = 0.380 F = 182.278 P<0.01

The table 30 shows the multiple regression analysis that examined the relationship between three independent variables—Ethic of Care, Ethic of Critique, and Ethic of Justice—and three aspects of engagement: Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption. The results, expressed through standardized Beta coefficients which express the effect of each independent variable in terms of standard deviation units, allowing direct comparison across variables measured on different scales (Field, 2017).

The Adjusted R-Square is the proportion of variance in the ethical leadership which can be predicted from the independent variables that are ethic of care, critique and justice (Hair et al. 2010). The adjusted R square value indicates that 41.34 % of the variance in vigor of teachers can be predicted from ethical leadership while the variance in dedication is 53.041 and the highest variance is seen in absorption of teacher which is 65.85%.

The Model I shows the effect of each independent variable in the vigor of teachers at work. With standardized beta coefficients we can observe that for every unit increment in standard deviation in ethic of care and ethics of justice there is an increase of 0.246 and 0.307 in the vigor of teachers while working. the effect of critique is insignificant in the vigor.

Similarly Model II represents the effects of individual variables in the dedication of teachers at work. The level of dedication in teachers increase by 0.291 and 0.277 due to the unit standard deviation change in ethic of care and ethic of justice respectively. The effect of ethic of critique is insignificant in dedication as well.

Model III represents the effects of the variables of ethical leadership in the absorption of teachers. While ethic of care does not have any significant effect in the amount of immersion that a teachers gave in the work, the ethic of justice has a huge significant effect as the table shows that a 1 standard deviation change in the ethic of justice increase the absorption of teachers by 0.5 which is the highest effect in the whole table. The ethic of critique also has a significant effect in the absorption level of teachers with an increment of 0.166 in every unit change of ethic of critique.

Overall, Ethic of Justice emerged as the most consistent and strongest predictor across all three models, particularly in relation to Absorption ($\beta=0.502$). Ethic of Care was influential for vigor and dedication but not absorption, while ethic of critique was only significant in predicting absorption.

Model IV shows the overall effect of ethical leadership on work engagement. The adjusted R square suggest that 38% of variation in work engagement is prediction due to the effect of ethical leadership. The standardized coefficient beta suggests that with every unit standard deviation increment in the ethical leadership there is change of 0.618 unit in overall work engagement of teachers which is in fact the highest unit change in the whole table indicating the combination of all construct of ethical leadership on the overall teacher work engagement is indeed influential.

Summary of Hypothesis Test

In this chapter, the researcher determined the perceived level of ethical leadership of principal and the level of teachers work engagement. The researcher also determined the extent of difference in perceived ethical leadership of principal and teachers work engagement across the background variables of teachers. Finally, the extend of effect of ethical leadership on teachers' work engagement were also

determined. The results were calculated using mean and standard deviation to find out the level of ethical leadership and work engagement, independent sample t-test for gender, one way ANOVA, Welch and Brown Forsythe test for other 3 background variables and multiple regression. The summary of the results are presented in the table below.

Table 32

Summary of the Results

S.N	Hypothesis	Remarks
Differences in Perceived Ethical Leadership and its differences across the Personal Characteristics and Academic and Career Profile of Teachers		
<i>H₀₁</i>	There was no significant difference across gender and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).	Rejected
<i>H₀₂</i>	There was no significant difference across age group of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).	Rejected
<i>H₀₃</i>	There was no significant difference across years of working experience of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).	Rejected
<i>H₀₄</i>	There was no significant difference across qualification of teachers and perceived ethical leadership (care, critique, justice).	Rejected (care and justice) Accepted (critique)
Differences in Teachers' Work Engagement and its differences across the Personal Characteristics and Academic and Career Profile of Teachers		
<i>H₀₅</i>	There was no significant difference across gender and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).	Rejected (vigor and dedication) Accepted (absorption)
<i>H₀₆</i>	There was no significant difference across age group of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).	Rejected
<i>H₀₇</i>	There was no significant difference across years of working experience of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).	Rejected
<i>H₀₈</i>	There was no significant difference across qualification of teachers and work engagement of teachers (vigor, dedication, absorption).	Rejected

Effect of Ethical Leadership in Work Engagement

<i>H₉</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of care of principal in the vigor of teachers.	Accepted
<i>H₁₀</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of critique of principal in the vigor of teachers	Rejected
<i>H₁₁</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of justice of principal in the vigor of teachers.	Accepted
<i>H₁₂</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of care of principal in the dedication of teachers.	Accepted
<i>H₁₃</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of critique of principal in the dedication of teachers.	Rejected
<i>H₁₄</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of justice of principal in the dedication of teachers.	Accepted
<i>H₁₅</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of care of principal in the absorption of teachers.	Rejected
<i>H₁₆</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of critique of principal in the absorption of teachers.	Accepted
<i>H₁₇</i>	There is a significant effect of ethic of justice of principal in the absorption of teachers.	Accepted
<i>H₁₈</i>	There is a significant effect of ethical leadership on teachers' work engagement.	Accepted

The table 32 shows that there is significant difference on the perceived ethic of critique across the qualification of teachers and significant difference on the absorption level of teachers across the gender. The multiple regression shows that ethic of care and justice has significant effect on vigor and dedication of teachers. While of ethic of critique has significant effect on the absorption level of teachers.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, the researcher presents the significant findings of this study research about the five research questions raised in the first chapter. The major essence of the findings has been discussed under ethical leadership and teacher engagement and the effect of first one on another. The findings have been portrayed by incorporating results from chapter IV.

This study highlights that public school principals demonstrate ethical leadership by prioritizing care, justice, and critique in their professional roles. It explores how these ethical dimensions shape their leadership approach and influence teachers' engagement at work. In particular, the study examines the extent to which principals uphold fairness, show empathy, and challenge injustices, and how these factors contribute to teachers' sense of energy, commitment, and focus in their roles.

Major Findings of the Study

The findings show the ethical leadership level of principal perceived by the teachers and the teachers' work engagement using descriptive statistics. The level of ethical leadership was presented in three dimensions as i) ethic of care, ii.) ethic of critique, and iii.) ethic of justice. The mean score of each dimension was used ranging the extent of high, medium, and low among which the ethic of justice scored high followed by the ethic of care and critique which were also in the same category. Under the presence category falls ethic of care and critique.

The perceived level of the ethic of care and critique were observed moderately high and falls under the "presence" category of the typology of ethical leadership. The mean values of items on care construct also support which is presented in the annex. This indicates that the teachers perceive principals have well presented their care and empathy towards them. Similarly, the ethic of critique was observed slightly higher than that of the ethic of care; and justice fell under the consolidation category as mentioned earlier that the item with the highest mean score falls under the justice category. It reveals that the principal actively addresses issues of unfairness and inequality, both in their reflections and in their daily professional actions and behavior. The study also examined the extent to which the perceived ethical leadership and teachers' work engagement differ across background variables. The

study employed independent samples *t*-tests for gender, and ANOVA tests for age group, level of teachers, working experience, academic qualification, and academic stream. The study also employed the Welch test and the Brown- Forsthye test wherever the homogeneity test failed in case of ANOVA tests. The study found no statistically significant difference in the perceived level of the ethic of care and justice across any background variables. However, the test showed statistically significant differences in the perceived level of critique across the qualification levels of the teachers. The Cohen's effect size suggested that the difference observed was relatively weak. Additionally, a Game Howell post hoc test result indicated that that there exists a difference in perceiving ethic of critique within the teachers with master degree and teachers with intermediate level degree. Beside this, no any statistically notable differences were observed in the post hoc test.

Similarly, in the case of work engagement, no statistically significant difference was observed across any background variables except for the level of absorption across the gender where it was found to have significant difference.

Finally, the study examined the effect of perceived ethical leadership on teachers' work engagement using multiple regression analysis. The study also examined how perceived ethical leadership influences teachers' work engagement. Findings revealed that ethical leadership plays a meaningful role in shaping teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption. The ethic of care and justice positively influenced teachers' enthusiasm and commitment, while the ethic of critique had no significant impact in these areas. However, when it came to deep immersion in work, the ethic of justice had the strongest effect, followed by the ethic of critique, demonstrating varying degrees of influence on teachers' engagement levels. Standard deviation values indicated a considerable spread in the relationship, reinforcing the nuanced nature of ethical leadership's impact on teachers' professional involvement.

Overall, the study highlights the level of ethical leadership and teachers' work engagement and its difference across the background variables. While differences in perception exist based on qualifications and gender, the overall findings emphasize the effect of ethical leadership in teachers' work engagement.

Background Variables and Sample Representativeness in the Study

It is important for the credibility of findings that a research sample is representative of the population from which the sample is drawn. The demographic

composition of teachers in Bhaktapur district indicates that the sample will be sufficiently valid for inferences from sample to population. The gender balance, along with the diversity of ages and levels of work experience, would also be in keeping with previous studies on the educational workforce showing how heterogeneous the teaching profession is (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The very high percentage of teachers with a master's degree denotes the growing demand of academic qualification in the education sector, mainly in urban districts where the professional development programs are easier to access (Bryman, 2012). This demographic factor increases the relevance of the study as it is assumed those teachers with graduate degrees would have better-formed ideas about ethical leadership and work engagement (Bass, 1990). The very high differences in the perception on ethic of critique as per qualification level again add to the very idea that academically more qualified individuals face a different approach while judging leadership, which is a matter seen across various studies on teacher professionalism (Northouse, 2021).

Similarly, the sample's distribution across academic streams ensures the inclusion of diverse teaching disciplines, making the findings applicable to the various academic streams. Prior studies have demonstrated that teachers of different subject backgrounds experience work engagement and leadership influences differently (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Given that many respondents belonged to the Education stream, the study then covers views of what pedagogical training entails; thus, it adds something valuable to the local educational context with the reliability of these findings.

This research also relies on a sample involving the work experience of teachers. Such a sample adds to the strength of conclusions drawn regarding the applicability of the conclusion to the overall teaching populace of Bhaktapur. Representative is the minimum in regard to the inclusion of the different range of experience that any sample may include, according to Fowler (2013). Inclusion in the study of teachers from different years of tenure allows a more subtle comprehension of how ethical leadership relates to work engagement at various points on a teacher's career ladder. This supports further the credibility of study conclusions as these patterns in demographics are consistent with created datasets (Neuman, 2014).

Overall, the demographic composition of the sample reflects closely that of the teaching workforce of Bhaktapur district, for which reason it is justifiable to assume

that the findings obtained with regard to ethical leadership and teacher engagement can be generalized to the broader population

Ethical Leadership in the Principal

The findings suggest that public school principals demonstrate a high level of ethical leadership across the three dimensions: ethic of justice, ethic of care, and ethic of critique. The majority of teachers perceive their principal as upholding a strong ethic of justice, ensuring fairness and impartiality in decision-making. These findings align with Starratt's (1991) framework of ethical leadership, which emphasizes justice, care, and critique as essential elements of school leadership. Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) developed by Langlois et al. (2014) which was used in this study does not rigorously examine the cultural context of principal leadership. In fact, the ELQ specifically focuses on measuring ethical leadership behaviors with respect to ethical decision-making, fairness, justice, and leader-follower relationships (Langlois et al., 2014).

While such cultural influencers must be regarded while employing the ELQ for various cultural settings, especially with respect to the role of principals in educational settings, Western leadership ethics frameworks emphasizing individual rights, fairness, transparency, and justice may have largely contributed to the development of the ELQ. On the other hand, leadership in non-Western contexts such as South Asia might favor collectivism, engagement in relationship-building with others, and promote community harmony (Khadka & Bhattarai, 2021). For example, an ethical leader in a Nepali school might focus more on community welfare, nurturing relationships, and respecting hierarchical authority than on issues such as procedural justice or individual empowerment (Bhattarai, 2015a). These divergences could shape the way principals view and enact ethical leadership in the educational context.

Ethic of Care

The principal's sense of care is often shaped by their experiences at home, their sense of justice develops through their time in educational settings and the workplace, and their ability to critique is influenced by external factors, like politics. According to Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development, individuals grow through distinct stages, starting with basic rules of obedience and punishment, and eventually reaching stages where they make decisions based on concepts of justice, rights, and law, aligning with the moral expectations of society.

The ethic of caring in leadership is firmly ingrained in South Asian beliefs, traditions, and socio-cultural practices (Sinha, 1995). The ethic of care stresses relational interdependence, empathy, and nurturing, which correspond with many features of leadership styles in Eastern philosophy (Gilligan, 1982). In the context of Nepal, among all three dimensions of ethical leadership, ethic of care is more relevant as the eastern philosophy believes that leader is a caretaker and protector of the family. A common Nepali family is run by a father and a mother and despite the gender difference, the commonality between father and mother are they are both mutually trying to figure out the best parenting for their children which includes respect, peace, safety, love and care. This can be related to the public schools in Nepal as well where the Principal is the care taker of teachers and students and also the stakeholder and is expected to maintain the peace and harmony, engaging all of them for the best of the schools. This argument has been made evident with the majority of respondents (81.8%) said the principal's leadership style at public schools in Bhaktapur demonstrated a high level of ethic of care. The finding shows the level of care is in the 'presence' level which means principals' level of care is widely recognized and actively incorporated into practices, though they may still lack full institutionalization (Langlois & LaPointe, 2010). The finding of this study also aligns with the study of Bhattarai (2015) where the perceived level of ethic of care of principal by teachers was found out to be in the presence level but yet to be institutionalized, though it was recognized and perceived by the teachers.

The ethic of care is an important element of ethical leadership that contributes to the overall development of school education, yet its association with empathy, emotional understanding, relationship dynamics, and femininity, the ethic of care, is often perceived as inefficient in formal systems (Held, 2006). Within the scope of care ethics in Nepal's public schools, it remains a crucial yet often undervalued dimension of ethical leadership. Recognizing and strengthening the ethic of care within educational leadership can contribute to a more inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment for teachers and students (Noddings, 2013). Rooted in deep cultural traditions and familial structures, this leadership approach fosters a sense of belonging, emotional security, and mutual respect within the school environment. The above-mentioned literatures suggest that care-driven leadership enhances engagement, equity, and overall school development.

Ethic of Critique in Principal

Critique is perceived in the level of ‘presence’ in the principal which suggests that the principal actively demonstrates critique but not necessarily in an advanced or highly effective way and also majority of the respondents (73.6%) thinks that the principal’s level of critique is high, though it remains the lowest when compared to care and justice. The findings of Bhattarai (2015) also showed that perceived ethic of critique of principal is in the presence level. The ethic of critique is often considered more challenging than the ethics of care and justice to come into practice because in contrast to the ethics of care and justice which frequently resonate with widely accepted moral principles, making them less likely to elicit resistance or discomfort, the ethic of critique requires critical reflection on one's own privilege, complicity, and the status quo, which can elicit defensive reactions (Brookfield, 2017). This seems need but not in practice in a country like Nepal because of its deep-seated traditional values derived from Hinduism and Buddhism (Bista, 2015) and Nepal’s social hierarchy, shaped by the caste system and feudal traditions and a top-down approach to decision-making (Subedi, 2011). After Nepal transitioned to a federal system, the management of public schools has become a significant challenge. Responsibility for schools has been transferred to local governments (MoEST, 2019), but school principals, who are primarily teachers promoted through competitive examinations, face limited authority (Koirala, 2020). Although principals are designated as school leaders, major decisions are made by school boards that include politically appointed members (Dahal & Nguyen, 2022). This type of governance makes it difficult to institutionalize the ethic of critique within the school, as most decision-making will still remain political and bureaucratic-driven rather than critically reflected with respect to equity and justice in education (Sharma & Thapa, 2021).

The ethic of critique involves addressing systemic issues such as inequality, racism, and other social injustices. However, in Nepal's context, where schools operate under community and local government oversight, these issues often become highly sensitive. Principals may hesitate to raise critical concerns, fearing misunderstandings or conflicts within their communities. As Apple (2004) highlights, educators who embrace the ethic of critique challenge discriminatory practices in curricula, but they frequently encounter institutional resistance, making it difficult to implement these principles effectively in such governance models. While addressing systemic inequalities is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable learning

environment, the sensitivity of these issues within community-governed schools can limit open discourse. As a result, fostering critical engagement in education necessitates strong leadership, community dialogue, and strategic advocacy to ensure that efforts toward justice and equity are both effective and sustainable.

The ethic of critique, while essential for fostering equity and justice in education, remains the least institutionalized dimension of ethical leadership in Nepal's public schools. Despite its recognized presence, its application is constrained by deep-rooted socio-cultural norms, hierarchical governance structures, and political influences that discourage open critique and transformative leadership. Unlike the ethics of care and justice, which align more seamlessly with Nepal's traditional values, the ethic of critique demands a fundamental shift in mindset—one that challenges existing power dynamics and questions entrenched inequalities. For principals to effectively incorporate this ethic, there must be structural reforms that empower them with greater decision-making authority and foster a culture of reflective practice. Without such systemic changes, critique will continue to be acknowledged in principle but remain difficult to institutionalize in practice.

Ethic of Justice in Principal

The result shows the level of justice is in a consolidation level which shows that head teachers is systematically embedded into the organizational culture, policies, and everyday practices. The local settings are complex (Bugg, 2013), as is the case in Nepal, the complexities of school leadership are influenced by both national education policies and local government directives. The National Education Policy of Nepal MoEST (2019) deals with quality and equitable education for all citizens in keeping with the constitutional mandate, which upholds the right to education. Principals have to ensure discipline is maintained, that rules are adhered to, that there is equity among the students, teachers, and other staff members, and that decisions are made accordingly. However, their dependence and autonomy are narrowed based on national policies and local government directives, occasionally limiting their free decisions. The decision-making power of principals is often constrained by school management committees (SMCs), which include political appointees. (Acharya & Sigdel, 2024). Local Government Operation Act, Government of Nepal (2017) empowered local governments through decentralization to legislate and formulate rules relevant to them perhaps affecting management in the school and possibly the principal's capacity to dispense justice fairly. Despite the challenges, standard norms

framed by laws, regulations, and policies set a background that supports principals to make just decisions by strengthening school education towards establishing the institutional capacity at all levels of government for implementation as mentioned in the School Education Sector Plan (MoEST, 2022). Unlike ethic of care and critique that is triggered by emotions and learnings, ethic of justice, though the mixed of both care and critique is also something that has been justified and approved which makes it easy for principal to follow. The leader who are considered to follow the written norms and regulations are often considered ethical and person with integrity in the bureaucratic system so principal who perform his given duty without any extra effort can often display the ethic of justice in the school.

Perceived Ethical Leadership Across Personal, Academic and Career profile of Teachers

The findings indicated that ethical leadership of the principals is merely affected by the personal characteristics of teachers as the difference was not observed in between the genders and age group. However, the difference was significantly notice in ethic of critique across the qualification level. This conclusion suggests a distinct point of view on perceiving ethical leadership since a teacher's qualification also demonstrates the knowledge and academic level of the instructor, which guides their learning and attitude. Education fosters a sense of ethical responsibility and challenges society's taken-for-granted assumptions (Freire, 1970). As individuals attain higher levels of education, their capacity for ethical critique evolves, as education enhances their awareness of hidden ideologies and inequalities embedded in curricula and policies. The researcher reflects on her personal experience of adhering to traditional practices, such as refraining from participating in family functions and cultural celebrations during menstruation. These practices, deeply rooted in Hindu households, have been passed down through generations, including her own family. Over time, however, the researcher abandoned these practices upon realizing that menstruation is a natural biological process rather than a cultural transgression. This shift in perspective led her to challenge menstrual taboos and advocate against such stigmas. Despite facing perceptions of being less culturally aligned, she views this as a misconception and emphasizes that questioning such traditions stems from an informed and critical understanding rather than a disregard for culture.

This experience highlights how education empowers individuals to unlearn ingrained traditions and challenge discriminatory practices, thereby enhancing their

capacity for ethical critique. Similarly, in the context of school education, principals with a deeper understanding of educational ethics and equity are more likely to address biases or injustices embedded in curricula or syllabi. This underscores the transformative role of education in fostering critical thinking and advocacy for social justice. The discussion was also supported in the mixed-methods study of teachers which reported that perceptions of principals' critique varied based on the alignment between teachers' educational background and their principal's leadership style. Teachers with advanced degrees expected principals to take stronger stances on equity, creating perception gaps (Theoharis, 2007).

This result concerning the ethic of care is at variance with the classical theories from which some contributors have even observed how such care ethics may nurture gender essentialism by fitting caring virtues within femininity and failing to recognize the male counterpart in giving care (Noddings, 2013). Traditionally male were viewed as a critical parent, a father figure who are more logical and rational while women were viewed as nurturing parents who are more protective and caring (Berne, 1957) but Bar-On (2006) suggests that emotional intelligence is not inherently tied to gender but is shaped by socialization and opportunity. Men can develop strong emotional bonds and caregiving skills when given the chance and the recent study of Kristof (2019) in The New York Times showed that men's participation in caregiving professions, such as social care, is on the rise, particularly in countries with supportive policies. Noddings (2013) have further argued that care is a fundamental aspect of human nature that would make ethical living possible; hence ethical actions ought to be based on principles of care, compassion, and empathy rather than universalistic rules, and again this position is proven wrong by the finding about the ethic of care, which did not create a gender difference.

Teachers Work Engagement

The most widely accepted view of work engagement describes it as having three key aspects: a behavioral-energetic part (vigor), an emotional part (dedication), and a cognitive part (absorption) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is a well-established questionnaire used to measure work engagement, which embodies the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. The scale was primarily developed in the West with an individualistic cultural perspective in mind. However, in the case of different cultural environments like Nepal, it necessitates certain local contextualization. The study of Shrestha et al.

(2014) carried out in Nepal studied the applicability of UWES scale among Nepali teachers. The study revealed that subtler cultural modifications were required, as it was not sufficiently capturing some Nepali values such as collectivism and respect for authority. In the Nepali context, collective success and group-based goals in connection with work engagement vis-a-vis individual achievement became predominant considerations. In the present study, Nepali teachers' engagement was largely determined by their relationship with the school leadership and sense of social cohesion in the school community - both of which are key cultural frameworks in the Nepali context. The high-power distance in Nepali institutions also contributed to this, with teacher engagement being shaped by interactions with senior-level leadership. The findings relating to the cultural adaptation of the UWES scale emphasize the importance of this adaptation to accurately cover the work engagement experiences of the Nepali educators in terms of their local considerations of community, hierarchical respect, and cooperation. The study also assessed the level of teachers' work engagement, categorizing it based on the typology developed by Langlois and LaPointe (2010). The findings indicate that all three aspects of work engagement among teachers fall within the consolidation level.

Level of Vigor in Teachers

Vigor represents a sense of enthusiasm and mental strength while performing job tasks. It reflects an individual's readiness to invest effort in their work and remain motivated, even when faced with challenges (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The majority of respondents (92.6%) believe that their level of vigor is high, which suggests that they are passionate, energetic, and proactive in their teaching obligations. The findings suggest that level of vigor is in the consolidation level which shows that teachers vigor tackle their assignments with inspiration, excitement, and resolve to overcome obstacles. Vigor encompasses not only physical energy but also emotional and cognitive strength, which drives commitment and productivity. For instance, during a period of intense project deadlines, maintaining a consistent exercise routine and prioritizing brief mindfulness or stress-relief practices each morning helped sustain energy and focus throughout the day.

Additionally, drawing motivation from the dedication of team members and fostering open communication created a positive feedback loop of inspiration. Even during moments of fatigue or setbacks, regularly revisiting the core purpose of the work, along with engaging in self-reflection and self-assessment, played a crucial role

in consolidating vigor, particularly in professional contexts. Self-reflection enhances an individual's autonomy and competence, while organizational and peer support strengthens the sense of relatedness to the work. The self-determination theory suggests that when basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are satisfied teachers feel competent and connected to their work are more energized and enthusiastic (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The finding of this study indicates that teachers in public schools in Bhaktapur perhaps experience employment autonomy, supportive work environments, and opportunities for professional development, factors that likely contribute to their increased work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). This is further emphasized by research of Tamang et al. (2024), which highlights the strong link between organizational support, teacher engagement, and personal development in Nepalese secondary schools, showing that organizational support significantly impacts personal development through teacher engagement. Thus, supportive work environment, autonomy, and opportunities for growth are key drivers of teacher vigor, fostering sustained engagement and productivity. When these factors align, teachers remain energized, motivated, and committed to overcoming challenges in their profession.

Level of Dedication in Teachers

The second component of job engagement, dedication, refers to the emotional involvement of teachers in their work including their feelings of purpose, excitement, and pride in their profession (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The findings of this study shows that the level of dedication among teachers in Nepal is notably high, with 91.6% of surveyed teachers expressing strong commitment to their profession and passion for teaching. This high level of enthusiasm and dedication is consolidated which means it can positively influence not only the teachers themselves but also their colleagues. The collaborative environment fostered by such dedication can contribute to the collective achievement of institutional goals (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). In contrast, several studies have found that, while devotion is important, it can lead to burnout if not accompanied by enough resources and a healthy work-life balance (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Therefore, while the strong dedication observed in Nepalese teachers is promising, it is essential to consider factors like organizational support and workload management to sustain this level of engagement without risking teacher burnout. The literature supports this view by stressing the importance of a balanced approach to engagement that incorporates both intrinsic motivation and external resources (Bakker

& Demerouti, 2008). Consequently, while dedication significantly contributes to teacher engagement, it should be complemented by supportive work environments to ensure long-term well-being and effectiveness. A holistic approach that integrates intrinsic motivation with external resources is essential to prevent burnout and ensure long-term effectiveness.

Level of Absorption in Teacher

Absorption emerges as the third element of job engagement, indicating that employees are deeply concentrated and immersed in their task (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In comparison to energy and devotion, the degree of absorption was slightly lower, with only 85.4% respondents of this study believed they were completely interested and absorbed in their job. The absorption level of teachers indicates that when teachers are deeply engaged in their work, it improves the school's performance and reputation by taking the initiative in extracurricular activities, community outreach, and professional development, thereby adding value to the institution (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). In order to be fully absorbed in their work, people need prolonged focus, which can be disrupted by external distractions or internal factors such as stress or fatigue. Absorption in deeper level many times might also disturbs work like balance because when people are fully immersed in the job, they might become workaholic resulting in the imbalance life and this might be reasoning that people still do not want to get fully engaged towards their jobs. However, researcher has tried to isolate absorption with workaholism because workaholic tendencies might initially exhibit absorption-like behaviors, such as intense concentration, but their motivation often shifts toward compulsive work habits. Studies suggest that work engagement (which includes absorption) and workaholism are weakly correlated. Absorption represents the healthy, enthusiastic side of work immersion, while workaholism reflects an unhealthy, compulsive relationship with work (Taris et al., 2010). Another reason for not having higher level of absorption in comparison to vigor and dedication are frequent interruptions, high administrative burden, or low autonomy (Sonnentag, 2003) which was supported another study of González-Romá et al. (2006) on engagement where they found that employees reported high vigor and dedication due to supportive team dynamics and clear goals, but absorption was less frequent due to a lack of uninterrupted focus. Taris et al. (2010) also found that interruptions and excessive multitasking hinder absorption.

Absorption in work is crucial for deep engagement, yet it remains slightly

lower compared to vigor and dedication due to various external and internal challenges. Researcher has witnessed, enthusiasm and commitment towards a profession coincide with greater lengths of time, and focus is often disrupted by administrative activities, efforts of multitasking, and interference from outside. The intensity with which research and teaching has been conducted by researcher sometimes makes blurring the line between being really dedicated and being probably over-committed. This accentuates again that these boundaries need to be drawn. Hence challenges are moot because true absorption is not in the number of hours worked but in the creation of an environment that allows deep meaningful engagement without making people feel drained. The more space and uninterrupted focus time teachers have, along with supportive structures, absorption can be enriched and sustained rather than stressful job engagement.

Work Engagement Across Personal, Academic and Career profile of teachers

The difference in the level of work engagement was not significantly observed in the academic and career profile of the teachers. In case of personal factors, the significant difference was observed only in the absorption level of the teachers across the gender. These differences might have occurred through the different emotional engagement (Bhattarai & Maharjan, 2018) and societal expectations that women and men have to experience in their life. From one point of view, female teachers frequently demonstrate higher levels of emotional involvement in their classrooms, which can improve their concentration on activities linked to student well-being and relationship-building. This is reinforced by research that shows women tend to score better on emotional intelligence, which may boost their concentration and participation in relationship elements of teaching activities (Pekrun et al., 2002). Female teachers are frequently engaged in social as well as emotionally charged duties, whereas male teachers may be more engaged in driven or specialized activities (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). These distinctions, however, are not universal and are heavily influenced by one's personality and the educational setting.

In contradict to this, women, especially in the context of south Asian culture, such as in Nepal, are expected to balance their professional and personal life being more family oriented than career oriented which does not give them a space to enjoy and get involved in their work fully resulting in their level of absorption different than men colleagues. A study of Gnawali (2017) on work-family balance among female teachers in Nepal. indicated that family responsibilities, coupled with professional

obligations, contribute to increased life stress, which can detract from teachers' capacity to engage deeply with their work. Factors such as role ambiguity and extensive household duties were highlighted as contributors to diminished work absorption.

Effect of Ethical Leadership on Work Engagement

Leaders can not only change work conditions for employee work engagement but can also engage them through inspiring, connecting, and empowering them (Schaufeli, 2015). Additionally, it is said that several other positive leadership styles, within the longitudinal studies, are associated with employee work engagement (Biggs et al., 2014). The findings of this study reveal that the perceived level of care demonstrated by principals significantly affect the teachers' energy and mental resilience, leading to better motivation, enthusiasm, and persistence amidst challenges. Teachers who exhibit high vigor approach their responsibilities with determination and willingness to put considerable effort. A study of Louis and Murphy (2017) found that principals demonstrating a high level of care which is measured by relational trust and supportive behaviors had a significant positive effect on teacher job satisfaction and this feeling of satisfaction has the ability to reduce burnout while improving overall work performance. Educational leaders who pursue the ethic of care demonstrate affective concern for others, balance open communication with students and the capacity to work collaboratively as key competencies, and they provide opportunities for affirmative support in the form of encouragement (Owens & Ennis, 2005). Of course, such model doesn't come without difficulties; an ideal reciprocal relationship is the premise on which care can be based, for example, between student and teacher, educational administrator and faculty and staff, and it is more realistically found between students and teachers than the other pairing.

Furthermore, the level of dedication among the teachers exhibit towards their work is notably influenced by the practice of care ethic which is also supported by the study of Yin (2015) which found out that emotionally supportive leadership significantly predicted teachers' dedication, as teachers felt valued and motivated to contribute meaningfully to their schools. The findings of this study shows that ethic of care has significant effect on dedication. Teachers who perceive their principals as caring reported a stronger sense of pride and enthusiasm in their teaching roles. Engaging in care ethics can boost professional happiness, since teachers who establish

excellent connections with both administrators and students generally find their jobs more important (Hargreaves, 2000). Absorption, on the other hand, was not significantly affected by care as it is characterized by deep cognitive engagement and immersion in tasks. Absorption is less about emotional support and more about intrinsic interest, task alignment, and the cognitive resources required to maintain focus. In an environment where the ethic of care dominates, teachers may prioritize maintaining harmonious relationships over fully immersing themselves in their professional responsibilities (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). When school leaders demonstrate care and relational trust, teachers experience higher levels of motivation, resilience, and dedication, ultimately fostering a more positive and committed teaching environment.

Schools that prioritize an ethic of care create spaces where teachers feel valued and empowered, reinforcing their sense of purpose and enthusiasm for their work. However, as indicated in the findings, care ethics primarily influence vigor and dedication, while absorption is shaped by cognitive engagement, task alignment, and focus. In educational settings where relational support is emphasized, maintaining harmonious relationships may take precedence over deep work immersion. This suggests that while emotionally supportive leadership is essential, it should be complemented by structured work environments that minimize distractions and encourage deep professional engagement. A balanced approach, integrating care ethics with opportunities for professional autonomy and cognitive focus, can sustain long-term teacher engagement and well-being.

In case of ethic of critique, the finding did not align with the literature that suggest that the ethics of critique of principal is equally important in the overall performance of the teacher (Murdoch et al., 2020). The very purpose of educational leaders is to go out there to exemplify and redress unfairness by pointing out social injustice. (Wood & Navarez, 2014) emphasizing on non-dominated discourse in education, advocating for democratized, inclusive schools where principals and teachers shift from authoritarian roles to leaders of collaborative group activities for better engagement of teachers and students. However, despite the high level of perceived ethic of critique in the principals of public schools, the study shows no significant effect of the ethic of critique on vigor and dedication. This may be because questioning authority and challenging established norms can create uncertainty or discomfort, making it difficult for teachers to fully invest their energy and

commitment. Challenging established norms may be viewed unfavorably, potentially leading to social or professional repercussions. This cultural context can deter individuals from expressing critical perspectives, thereby limiting the direct influence of the ethic of critique on enhancing work engagement. Also, work engagement is the result of trust of employee which is associated with ethic of care (Junaidi, 2023) and the research indicates that ethical leadership, which includes openness to critique might positively affects work engagement if there is supportive leadership otherwise it may not yield the same positive effects. This shows that ethic of critique needs to be combined ethic of care in order to affect the dedication and vigor of teachers.

The absorption level however though is significantly affected by ethic of critique which supported by a study of Sleeter (2017) where he found out that teachers given chance to involved in curricula designed to promote equity and critical thinking demonstrated higher absorption levels, as they felt their work was impactful and aligned with their values and this relationship was mediated by the level of administrative and principal's support. The ethic of critique complement absorption by ensuring that engagement is not only about productivity but also aligned with larger values of justice, equity, and transformative impact. The variable that significantly affects all of the job engagement variables is the ethic of justice, and its effect on absorption is the highest increment in the overall table. The principal's demonstration of justice is a set of rules that each person or group follows about what is right and wrong in accordance with the moral principles that govern the organization. It challenges how people should behave based on values and norms rather than the human condition. These norms and values help teachers feel respected and trusted, which creates a productive workplace that promotes engagement and professional commitment.

Research indicates a notable link between justice and employee engagement. Tschannen-Moran (2014) emphasized the importance of trust in fostering effective relationships between teachers and principals, with justice acting as a fundamental element. Additionally, findings in organizational psychology (Colquitt et al., 2001) demonstrate that perceptions of justice contribute to increased job satisfaction and engagement, a principle that is applicable within the context of the teaching profession. This suggests that when fairness and ethical leadership are embedded in school environments, teachers are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and commitment to their roles. In an environment where teachers are invited to engage

critically with the curriculum and challenge inequalities, a much deeper immersion into their work has been seen. However, while this critical engagement fosters intellectual stimulation and purpose, it is not without challenges. But it is observed professionally that breaking the set norms often comes at a cost, i.e., it might encounter resistance or skepticism which might dampen enthusiasm and zeal. On the other hand, the ethic of justice emerges as a powerful driver of engagement, as fairness, transparency, and trust create a psychologically safe environment where teachers feel respected and valued. In practice, when leadership upholds justice, teachers are more likely to commit fully to their roles, feeling both professionally supported and personally aligned with their institution's values. These insights highlight the importance of fostering an ethical and just leadership culture in schools to sustain long-term teacher engagement and institutional growth.

The examined relationship between ethical leadership and work engagement shows that ethical leadership significantly enhances employees' commitment, motivation, and engagement. The study of Schaufeli (2006) within the 300 teachers found that leaders exhibiting care-based practices significantly predicted higher vigor while the study of Shields (2010) observed that teachers in schools with critique-oriented leadership reported higher work engagement, particularly dedication due to alignment with personal values of social justice. The other study of Hakanen (2006) also revealed that perceptions of fairness and justice in leadership are positively correlated with vigor and absorption). The findings of the extant literature partially support this study, which demonstrates a strong and profound relationship between ethical leadership and work engagement. This connection arises because value-based leadership often involves aligning organizational values with those of employees, fostering a shared sense of purpose. Employees are more inclined to immerse themselves in their work when they believe that their contributions are directed toward meaningful goals (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Additionally, ethical leaders are attuned to the needs of their employees and promote a positive work environment, resulting in increased job satisfaction, which is strongly correlated with work high work engagement (Chughtai, 2015). Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that the effect of ethical leadership on work engagement is substantial, with the effects of the ethics of care and justice ranging from moderate to high in influencing teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work.

Ethical Leadership and Work Engagement

Ethical leadership practices rooted in care, critique, and justice significantly enhance work engagement by addressing teachers' emotional, motivational, and psychological needs. The effect of ethic of care on vigor and dedication is positive and significant in this study which is supported by the self-determination theory (SDT). According to SDT, when leaders address teachers' psychological needs for relatedness and emotional support, they enhance intrinsic motivation, leading to higher vigor, dedication, and absorption (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Ethic of care emphasizes relational and compassionate leadership, fostering a supportive and empathetic environment where individuals feel valued and understood (Gilligan, 1982) which eventually reduces stress, promotes energy, resilience sense of purpose and immersion in the duties of teachers contributing in the high level of vigor, dedication and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Ethic of critique and work engagement can be further explored and explained with the help of job demands-resources (JD-R) Model suggests that critique-oriented leadership can enhance work engagement by empowering teachers and providing resources to address structural inequities. Ethic of critique focuses on addressing power imbalances and promoting social justice in organizational structures. Leaders adopting this ethic inspire teachers to challenge systemic inequities and participate in transformative practices (Shields, 2010) which empowers and energize teachers and foster resilience contributing in the vigor of teachers. In addition to this, teachers who are part of meaningful, transformative initiatives are more likely to immerse themselves in their work and addressing broader social justice goals aligns with teachers' personal values, enhancing their commitment. However, in context of Nepal, ethic of critique is challenging because of the structured bureaucracy system that endorse hierarchy above anything which challenged the essence of JD-R model. Teachers face significant emotional demands when attempting to critique unjust practices or hierarchical decisions (Bhattarai, 2020) and as a result the finding shows that the effect of ethic of critique of principal is insignificant in the level of vigor and dedication. The level of absorption though is significantly affected by ethic of critique which shows that despite the structural obstacles teacher who are part of meaningful, transformative initiatives are more likely to immerse themselves in their work.

The findings indicate a significant relationship between the ethic of justice and work engagement. The relationship can be further explained through the Equity

Theory, which posits that when teachers perceive fairness in workload distribution, recognition, and decision-making, they exhibit higher level of engagement (Adams, 1965). Ethic of Justice emphasizes fairness, equity, and respect for rights, ensuring that organizational practices are inclusive and impartial (Starratt, 1991). Such practices mitigate stress and burnout, thereby boosting teachers' energy levels. (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Furthermore, Schaufeli asserts that ethical justice aligns with teachers' intrinsic values, fostering a sense of loyalty and purpose. When teachers perceive fairness in their environment, they experience greater security and focus, leading to deeper immersion in their tasks.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Summary of the Study

Ethical leadership, characterized by care, critique and justice enhances teacher engagement by building trust, reducing stress, and promoting collaboration. This engagement, reflected in teachers' vigor, dedication, and absorption, improves retention, performance, and student outcomes. Moreover, research in this relationship helps address context-specific challenges, such as systemic inequities, and guides the development of targeted interventions, including leadership training and engagement strategies, to improve the overall quality of education. This study primarily focused on the practice of ethical leadership in public schools of Nepal and its effect on work engagement of teachers.

The study was delimited to investigate ethical leadership with respect to care, justice and critique and work engagement concerning work engagement scale. This research was quantitative in nature. Quantitative data were collected via a contextualized questionnaire developed based on Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) developed by Langlois of Canada and Work Engagement scale developed by Schaufeli. A total of 297 teachers filled out the questionnaires that were sent to teachers of schools of Bhaktapur. Mean and standard deviation as a descriptive analysis was done for the first two research questions. Further, the typology developed by Laponte was used to determine the level of both variables. ANOVA and T-test analyses were applied for the third and fourth research questions while regression analysis was used to find the effect of ethical leadership in work engagement for the fifth question.

The results showed that the principals were perceived as practicing high ethical leadership across all three dimensions, though ethic of justice was rated the highest followed by ethic of care and critique. The ethics of care and critique were categorized under presence, suggesting that teachers perceived their principals cared deeply for them and also had empathy, while the ethic of justice fell under the consolidation category meaning that the principal addressed issues of fairness and inequality, both in reflection and daily practices.

Additionally, the study explored how teachers' perceptions of ethical leadership and their level of work engagement varied based on different background variables. While gender, age, teaching level, and years of experience did not show notable differences in the dimensions of ethical leadership, the study found a significant variation in the perception of critique. This difference was particularly evident between teachers holding a master's degree and those with an intermediate-level qualification. It was noted that there was also a significant difference in the level of absorption between gender categories.

The results of multiple regression analysis revealed that ethical leadership plays a significant role in influencing teachers' level of work engagement. It accounted for 41.34% of variance in teachers' vigor, 53.04% in their dedication, and 65.85% in their absorption that could be attributed to their perceived ethical leadership. Care ethic and justice ethic were found positively associated to vigor and dedication, whereas justice ethic was associated with high absorption. The care and justice were positively correlated with vigor and dedication. However, the ethic of justice had a much stronger positive relationship with absorption. The ethic of critique influenced absorption slightly but was not significant for vigor or dedication. Burnout had no impact on either bestowing or receiving. The study established that teachers' perception of ethical leadership varied based on qualification and gender, and declared the importance of ethical leadership in influencing not only the commitment levels but also the role absorption dimensions of teachers in their work.

Conclusion

This study was based on the concept of ethical leadership, which emphasizes the importance of care, justice, and critique in fostering trust and commitment among organizational members and work engagement constructs. The above study shows that by prioritizing fairness, empathy, and moral responsibility, ethical leadership aligns with definition of work engagement, which encompasses vigor, dedication, and absorption.

Furthermore, theories like self-determination theory, JD theory and equity theory shows the deeper connection between the constructs of ethical leadership and work engagement. For instance, a principal who exemplifies ethical values creates an environment where teachers feel supported and respected, thereby enhancing their dedication to their roles and encouraging them to exceed their basic responsibilities.

This alignment not only elevates individual job satisfaction but also contributes to overall organizational success by cultivating a culture of mutual respect and high performance.

In the public schools of Nepal, teachers perceive that the care they received for their head of the school is visible in practices yet is not institutionalized because there is no such provision or policy in maintaining relationship between teachers and principal and it is merely an emotional component. Justice becomes consolidated when fair execution of conduct codes and rules occur. Practice brought critique also via transparency and empowerment, yet that was not consolidated. In the context of public schools in Nepal, ethical leadership is shaped by three key ethical constructs: care, which emphasizes love and compassion; justice, which focuses on duties and rules; and critique, which highlights transparency and empowerment. Ethical leadership, therefore, can be understood as a blend of personal values and professional actions that intentionally integrate care, justice, and critique to foster the overall growth and development of an organization.

The ethic of critique has been a subject of concern in the whole finding as the study concluded that education fosters a sense of ethical responsibility and challenges society's taken-for-granted assumptions, which is why the higher the education level, the perceived ethic of critique changes, as engaging in education allows individuals to become more aware of the hidden ideologies and inequalities present in curricula and policies. Ethic of Critique was observed comparatively low in the teachers in comparison to care and critique and also its effect on vigor and dedication was not significantly noticed. Teachers' dedication and energy often come from feeling trusted and supported, which connects to a culture of care. The evidence suggests that, in an environment where school leaders display openness to feedback and hold on to ethical principles, teachers are more likely to experience engagement and motivation. However, this would only be so meaningful in a supportive environment. Without that, one cannot expect much from ethical leadership concepts. The research stresses that balance, where criticism is married with care, will be key to maintaining the commitment and enthusiasm of teachers in their jobs.

The way teachers perceive ethical leadership plays a crucial role in shaping not only their own engagement but also the overall development of a school. A teacher's commitment and motivation are deeply influenced by the care and support they receive from the headmaster. The principal's ability to balance fairness and

compassion in school management significantly impacts how teachers approach their work. As key contributors to a school's success, both teachers and principals bring unique perspectives and strategies to navigate challenges and foster meaningful interactions. Together, their collaboration and mutual understanding are essential for promoting ethical leadership and enhancing teachers' work engagement.

Implication of the Study

The research explores important findings related to ethical leadership and work engagement in education system of Nepal which will be a reference for further research on ethical leadership and work engagement precisely in the public schools of Nepal. This study can contribute to formulate policies regarding the leadership role of school principals and human resource management of the public schools of Nepal. It can also be helpful for future researchers who wants to further explore in the field of ethical leadership and work engagement.

Practical Implications

This study offers valuable insights for everyone involved in Nepal's education system, from public schools and teachers to principals and other key stakeholders, particularly those focused on technical education. The findings highlight the importance of care—love and compassion—in engaging teachers. However, the study also shows that critique, in the form of transparency and empowerment, is still underdeveloped. Schools need to create safer spaces where teachers feel comfortable voicing concerns and participating in decision-making.

Training institutions can explore how to strengthen school leadership programs and school board can encouraging constructive feedback between teachers and principals can increase transparency and accountability, which is essential for improving the education system as a whole.

The study reinforces the idea that ethical leadership is universal. However, the emphasis on care, justice, and critique may differ depending on cultural and institutional contexts. In hierarchical education systems, like Nepal's, it can be especially challenging to balance critique with care, and leadership training should reflect these socio-cultural realities.

Finally, this research aligns with global conversations about equity in education. Ethical leadership ensures fair treatment and empowers teachers, which leads to more inclusive, diverse, and supportive learning environments. Countries focused on improving teacher retention and job satisfaction can learn from these

findings, incorporating ethical leadership principles into their educational reforms for better outcomes.

Policy Implications

The results of this study demonstrate the importance of building strong, supportive relationships—not just between teachers and principals, but also with students, the school board, local governments, and the ministries that oversee education. In Nepal, where there are no formal policies that define or institutionalize the relationship between teachers and principals, policymakers have an opportunity to address this gap. By integrating ethical leadership principles—care, justice, and critique—into the school management framework, they can create a more connected, transparent, and accountable education system.

Policymakers can use the study’s findings to shape policies that encourage both ethical leadership and work engagement in schools. For example, the ethic of critique, which becomes more apparent with higher education, can be used as a foundation for developing teacher training programs and academic curriculums that promote self-reflection and constructive feedback. This approach will not only help teachers grow but also foster a more open and transparent school culture.

Although the ethic of care—the love and compassion shown by school leaders—is already present in many schools, it lacks official recognition in policies. To make this more effective, policymakers should create clear guidelines that encourage principals to lead with compassion while also ensuring accountability. Compassionate leadership should go hand in hand with structured accountability measures to make sure that all members of the school community feel supported, valued, and heard.

The study also points out that school leaders in Nepal would greatly benefit from further training in ethical decision-making, emotional intelligence, and fostering supportive environments. By implementing mandatory training programs, policymakers can equip principals with the tools they need to balance fairness with empathy in their leadership. This training would help them navigate the complexities of school management while keeping the well-being of teachers and students at the forefront.

Lastly, since critique is often underemphasized compared to care and justice, it’s important that policy reforms create spaces for open communication and constructive dialogue. Teachers should feel comfortable voicing their concerns and

sharing feedback, knowing that their input is valued and can lead to positive changes. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and reflection, schools can ensure that teachers and principals work together to create the best learning environment possible.

In short, policymakers have the opportunity to use the findings of this study to transform the education system by instilling ethical leadership and creating more inclusive, transparent, and engaging schools. By focusing on care, justice, and critique, they can make schools more supportive for teachers, leading to better outcomes for students and a stronger, more connected community.

Research Implications

This research has determined the state of ethical leadership of principal and its effect on work engagement of teachers of public schools of Nepal. Firstly, the study was delimited to Bhaktapur district only and which is likely the first academic study in Nepal that tried to find the influence of ethical leadership of principal on work engagement of teachers of public school. Thus, the future researchers can further explore the same topic on another geographic clusters to support this study itself.

Secondly, the study provides a scientifically processed insights on the effect of ethical leadership and work engagement of teachers which can be a significant be reference for researchers who are doing study on leadership and work engagement.

Similarly, further studies can use longitudinal survey designs for more insights and interesting findings. Moreover, this study has used simple random sampling with a proportionate technique; other sampling techniques, such as stratified, systematic, and cluster sampling, can be used for a more disaggregated result. Since this study was based on adopted scales for both the dependent and independent variables, the future researcher can also work upon constructing a new scale for ethical leadership and work scale contextualizing the scenario of Nepal.

Lastly, future research can adjust mixed methods approaches, involving multiple stakeholders such as instructors, parents, and employers, to improve results and explore other program choice phenomena. Based on the findings and conclusions, we can conduct numerous additional studies to gain a deeper understanding on ethical leadership and work engagement.

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APPENDICES

Annex I: Questionnaire for the survey

Ethical Leadership and Work Engagement Questionnaire

नैतिकयुक्त नेतृत्व र कार्य संलग्नता

2081

१. तपाईंको लिंग : ☐ महिला ☐ पुरुष ☐ अन्य

२. तपाईंको उमेर समूह :

☐ २०-२५ ☐ २६-३० ☐ ३१-३५ ☐ ३६-४०☐ ४१-४५ ☐ ४६-५० ☐ ५१-५५ ☐ ५६ माथि

३. तपाईं कार्यरत शिक्षण संस्थानको वर्गीकरण:

☐ माध्यमिक☐ निम्न माध्यमिक

४. हाल कार्यरत पद :

५. कति कक्षालाई पढाउनु हुन्छ :

६. तपाईंले यस पदमा काम गर्नुभएको कति वर्ष भयो ?

७. तपाईं कति वर्षदेखि सेवारत हुनुहुन्छ ?

८. तपाईंको योग्यता: ☐ विद्यालय शिक्षा☐ प्रवीणताप्रमाणपत्रतह ☐ स्नातक ☐ स्नातकोत्तर ☐ एम. फिल.☐ विद्यावारिधि☐ अन्य भए खुलाउनुहोस्:.....१०. तपाईंको योग्यताको बिषय वा संकाय: ☐ मानविकी☐ व्यवस्थापन ☐ विज्ञान☐ शिक्षा ☐ अन्य

९. तालिम लिएको भए:

तालिमको विषय	अवधि

शिक्षालय प्रमुखको नैतिकतायुक्त नेतृत्वको प्रश्रवावली

तल दिएको वाक्यहरूमा आफ्नो सोचसंग मिल्ने संकेत अंकमा चिनो लगाउनुहोला ।

संकेत अंकको निर्देशनः

१	२	३	४	५	६	७
कहिले पनि	विरलै	कहिलेकाहीँ	प्रायः	अक्सर	सधैँ	म संग असम्बन्धित

शिक्षकको कार्य संलग्नता सम्बन्धि अध्ययन प्रश्रवावली

तल दिएको वाक्यहरूमा तपाईंसंग मिल्ने संकेत अंकमा चिनो लगाउनुहोला ।

संकेत अंकको निर्देशनः

क्र. स.	मैले मेरो काम सम्पादन गर्दा निम्न कुराहरु देख्छु ।							
१.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापकले अरुसँग विश्वासिलो सम्बन्ध स्थापना गर्न चाहनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
२.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक हाम्रो संस्थामा सुमधुर सम्बन्ध कायम गर्न प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
३.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक कसैको अहंकार सहन सक्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
४.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक नियम र प्रक्रियाहरु पालना गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
५.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक सहकर्मीको सुरक्षा र भलाइका लागि कोशिस गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
६.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक कुनै-कुनै अवस्थाले निश्चित समूहलाई मात्र फाइदा पुर्‍याउँछ भन्नेमा सचेत हुनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
७.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक अन्यायपूर्ण क्रियाकलापको विरोधमा आवाज उठाउनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
८.	मेरो प्रधानाध्यापक प्रत्येक व्यक्तिको मर्यादा संरक्षणमा तत्पर रहनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
९.	मेरो प्रधानाध्यापकको विचारमा गल्ती मानवीय गुण हो ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१०.	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक अन्यायविरुद्ध आवाज उठाउनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
११.	कुनै निश्चित व्यक्ति वा समूहले मात्र बढी फाइदा लिँदा मेरा प्रधानाध्यापकको ध्यानाकर्षण हुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
क्र. स.	जब मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक नैतिकतायुक्त दुविधालाई समाधान गर्न चाहानुहुन्छ, तब..							
१२.	उहाँ मिल्ने कानून र नियमका प्रावधानहरूलाई ध्यान दिनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१३.	उहाँ संस्थाका अलिखित नियमहरूमा पनि ध्यान पुर्‍याउनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१४.	उहाँ जाँचपड्ताल गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१५.	उहाँ गल्तीहरूको गम्भीरता अनुसार कारबाही गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१६.	उहाँ अन्यायपूर्ण कार्य सच्याउन कोशिस गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१७.	कुनै परिस्थितिमा संलग्न व्यक्तिहरूको विचार सुन्नु उहाँ समय दिनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१८.	उहाँ संस्थाभित्र सु-सम्बन्ध र सुमधुरता जोगाइराख्न प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१९.	उहाँ अरुको सम्मानलाई कायम राख्न उनीहरूको भावनामा चोट पुग्ने अवस्थाबाट टाढै रहनुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
२०.	उहाँ समूहभन्दा व्यक्तिहरूप्रति ध्यान केन्द्रित गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
२१.	उहाँ संस्थाभित्र समसामयिक विषयको संवादका लागि प्रोत्साहित गर्नुहुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
	मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक निम्न कुराहरूमा आधारित रही नैतिकतायुक्त दुविधा निवारणका लागि प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ ।							
२२.	नियमले जे निर्देश गर्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
२३.	अरुको कल्याण जेले गर्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७

१	२	३	४	५	६	७
कहिले पनि	विरलै	कहिलेकाहीँ	प्रायः	अक्सर	सधैँ	म संग असम्बन्धित

क्र. स.	वाक्यहरु:							
१.	म बिद्यालयमा हुँदा एकदमै उर्जावान महसूस गर्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
२.	मैले गरेको कामले निश्चित अर्थ र उद्देश्य बोकेको हुन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
३.	मैले काम गर्दा समय बितेको थाहापाउँदिन ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
४.	म आफ्नो काममा गर्दा शाररिक र मानसिक दुवै रुपमा बलियो महसूस गर्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
५.	म आफ्नो कामप्रति उत्साहित छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
६.	म काममा हुँदा मेरो वरपरको सबै कुरा बिसिन्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
७.	मेरो कामले मलाई प्रेरणा दिन्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
८.	मलाई बिहान उठ्दा काममा जान मन लाग्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
९.	जब म दृढतापूर्वक काम गर्छु म खुशी महसुस गर्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१०.	मैले गरेको काममा मलाई गर्व छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
११.	म काम गर्दा काममै डुबेको महसूस गर्दछु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१२.	म एउटै काम धेरै लामो समयसम्म गर्नसक्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१३.	, मेरो काम चुनौतीपूर्ण भएको मलाई लाग्छ ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१४.	म काम गर्दा कामप्रति दत्तचित्त हुन्छु पर्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१५.	म काम गर्दा आत्मबल बलियो भएको ठान्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१६.	मलाई मेरो कामबाट अलग हुन गाह्रो लाग्छ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७
१७.	कार्यालयमा समय, परिस्थिति र अवस्था नराम्रो हुँदा पनि मा काम प्रति सधैं दृढ रहन्छु ।	१	२	३	४	५	६	७

Annex II: Descriptive Statistics of Each Item of Ethical Leadership and Work Engagement

मैले मेरो काम सम्पादन गर्दा निम्न कुराहरु देख्छु ।	N	Mean	SD
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापकले अरुसँग विश्वासिलो सम्बन्ध स्थापना गर्न चाहनुहुन्छ ।	297	5.02	1.53
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक हाम्रो संस्थामा सुमधुर सम्बन्ध कायम गर्ने प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	5.30	1.22
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक कसैको अहंकार सहन सक्नुहुन्न ।	297	3.84	1.79
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक नियम र प्रक्रियाहरु पालना गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	5.39	1.21
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक सहकर्मीको सुरक्षा र भलाइका लागि कोशिस गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	5.29	1.26
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक कुनै-कुनै अवस्थाले निश्चित समूहलाई मात्र फाइदा पुर्‍याउँछ भन्नेमा सचेत हुनुहुन्छ ।	297	4.48	1.65
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक अन्यायपूर्ण क्रियाकलापको विरोधमा आवाज उठाउनुहुन्छ ।	297	5.00	1.41
मेरो प्रधानाध्यापक प्रत्येक व्यक्तिको मर्यादा संरक्षणमा तत्पर रहनुहुन्छ ।	297	4.90	1.76
मेरो प्रधानाध्यापकको विचारमा गल्ती मानवीय गुण हो ।	297	4.48	1.60
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक अन्यायविरुद्ध आवाज उठाउनुहुन्छ ।	297	4.95	1.48
कुनै निश्चित व्यक्ति वा समूहले मात्र बढी फाइदा लिँदा मेरा प्रधानाध्यापकको ध्यानाकर्षण हुन्छ ।	297	4.88	1.33
जब मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक नैतिकतायुक्त दुविधालाई समाधान गर्न चाहानुहुन्छ, तब..			
उहाँ मिल्ने कानून र नियमका प्रावधानहरुलाई ध्यान दिनुहुन्छ ।	297	5.19	1.31
उहाँ संस्थाका अलिखित नियमहरुमा पनि ध्यान पुर्‍याउनुहुन्छ ।	297	4.88	1.35
उहाँ जौँचपड्ताल गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	4.65	1.44
उहाँ गल्तीहरुको गम्भीरता अनुसार कारबाही गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	4.64	1.41
उहाँ अन्यायपूर्ण कार्य सच्याउन कोशिस गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	5.13	1.20
कुनै परिस्थितिमा संलग्न व्यक्तिहरुको विचार सुन्न उहाँ समय दिनुहुन्छ ।	297	4.73	1.44
उहाँ संस्थाभित्र सु-सम्बन्ध र सुमधुरता जोगाइराख्न प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	5.23	1.31
उहाँ अरुको सम्मानलाई कायम राख्न उनीहरुको भावनामा चोट पुग्ने अवस्थाबाट टाढै रहनुहुन्छ ।	297	5.16	1.26
उहाँ समूहभन्दा व्यक्तिहरुप्रति ध्यान केन्द्रित गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	3.77	1.89
उहाँ संस्थाभित्र समसामयिक विषयको संवादका लागि प्रोत्साहित गर्नुहुन्छ ।	297	5.07	1.38
मेरा प्रधानाध्यापक निम्न कुराहरुमा आधारित रही नैतिकतायुक्त दुविधा निवारणका लागि प्रयास गर्नुहुन्छ ।			
नियमले जे निर्देश गर्छ ।	297	5.13	1.31
अरुको कल्याण जेले गर्छ ।	297	4.93	1.39
शिक्षकको कार्य संलग्नता सम्बन्धि अध्ययन प्रश्नावली			
म बिद्यालयमा हुँदा एकदमै उर्जवान महसूस गर्छु ।	297	5.47	1.12
मैले गरेको कामले निश्चित अर्थ र उद्देश्य बोकेको हुन्छ ।	297	5.41	1.13
मैले काम गर्दा समय बितेको थाहापाउँदैन ।	297	5.06	1.20
म आफ्नो काममा गर्दा शाररिक र मानसिक दुवै रूपमा बलियो महसूस गर्छु ।	297	5.23	1.14
म आफ्नो कामप्रति उत्साहित छु ।	297	5.45	1.11
म काममा हुँदा मेरो वरपरको सबै कुरा बिर्सन्छु ।	297	4.79	1.40
मेरो कामले मलाई प्रेरणा दिन्छ ।	297	5.46	1.04
मलाई बिहान उठ्दा काममा जान मन लाग्छ ।	297	5.37	1.01
जब म दृढतापूर्वक काम गर्छु म खुशी महसूस गर्छु ।	297	5.43	1.12
मैले गरेको काममा मलाई गर्व छ ।	297	5.51	1.05
म काम गर्दा काममै डुबेको महसूस गर्दछु ।	297	5.10	1.26
म एउटै काम धेरै लामो समयसम्म गर्नसक्छु ।	297	4.85	1.29
मेरो काम चुनौतीपूर्ण भएको मलाई लाग्छ ।	297	4.71	1.55
म काम गर्दा कामप्रति दत्तचित्त हुन्छु पर्छु ।	297	5.40	1.14
म काम गर्दा आत्मबल बलियो भएको ठान्छु ।	297	5.36	1.01
मलाई मेरो कामबाट अलग हुन गाह्रो लाग्छ ।	297	5.10	5.10
कार्यालयमा समय, परिस्थिति र अवस्था नराम्रो हुँदा पनि मा काम प्रति सधैं दृढ रहन्छु ।	297	5.01	1.47

Annex III Non-Parametric Krushal Wallis Test

Kruskal-Wallis	ELCare	ELCritique	ELJustice
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.826	0.002	0.906
Grouping Variable: Qualification			

Annex IV Non-Parametric Mann Whitney Test

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Vigor is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.561	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Dedication is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.133	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Absorption is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.009	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Annex V Post Hoc Games Howell Test

Construct	Qualification	Qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig
Ethic of Critique	Intermediate	Bachelor	0.13465	0.16832	0.854
		Masters	.39344*	0.13455	0.022
		M. Phil	0.44359	0.199	0.126
	Bachelor	Intermediate	-0.1347	0.16832	0.854
		Masters	0.25879	0.14334	0.277
		M. Phil	0.30895	0.20505	0.439
	Masters	Intermediate	-.39344*	0.13455	0.022
		Bachelor	-0.2588	0.14334	0.277
		M. Phil	0.05016	0.17838	0.992
	M. Phil	Intermediate	-0.4436	0.199	0.126
		Bachelor	-0.309	0.20505	0.439
		Masters	-0.0502	0.17838	0.992