Ethical leadership and organisational commitment as key determining factors of strategic objectives: A case study of a municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa

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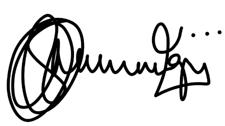

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“The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.”

‘Winston Churchill’

Abstract

Many organisations assert that ethical leadership is their only critical component. However, what is most important is its impact. Ethical leadership is achieved through ethical practices such as conforming and with-holding the rule of law. Different studies have found a positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment. Many studies still need to study the mediator role of organisational commitment in the relationship between ethical leadership and achieving strategic objectives. The study investigates the impact of ethical leadership and organisational commitment in achieving strategic objectives at a certain municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. Quantitative research methods adopted a survey and case study research designs to achieve this purpose. Data were collected from a convenience sampling of 217 participants. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse and test the seven hypotheses.

Several statistical methods were utilised to test the hypotheses. All measurement scales achieved good reliability. Skewness and Kurtosis also confirmed the normal distribution of data. Confirmatory factor and path analysis confirmed the items' moderate/partial fit. Consistent with previous research, ethical leadership correlates with organisational commitment and achieving strategic objectives. However, the relationship between organisational commitment and achieving strategic objectives was negatively associated. The positive effect indicates that ethical leadership augments employee commitment and, as a result, leads to achieving strategic objectives, while the negative effect indicates that employee commitment alone does not contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives. Therefore, the study recommends that municipal managers design robust ethical leadership interventions and practices to enhance employee commitment to improve organisational performance. This can be done by establishing a dedicated ethics office, which will be responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring ethics strategy. The office will further implement Continuous Employee Engagement in Ethics and its impact on Employee Commitment (CE^4C). This study will contribute to the existing literature on ethical leadership, organisational commitment and strategic objectives and further advance the knowledge in organisational behaviour and good governance. The study will further provide managerial insight.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, organisational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment, strategic objectives.

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Definition of Abbreviations

AC	: Affective Commitment
AG	: Auditor General
AMOS	: Analysis of Moment Structures
ANOVA	: Analysis of Variance
AVE	: Average
CE^4C	: Continuous Employee Engagement in Ethics and its impact on Employee Commitment
CFA	: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	: Comparative Fit Index
CMIN	: Chi-Square
CoGTA	: Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
DF	: Degree of Freedom
EL	: Ethical Leadership
EXCO	: Executive Committee
H1, 2, 3, 4	: Hypothesis 1, 2,3, 4
HBS	: Havard Business School
HPM	: Harvard Policy Model
HREC	: Human Research Ethics Council
IBM	: International Business Machine
IFI	: Incremental Fit Index
King IV	: King Four
LLCI	: Lower Limit Confidence Interval
MMS	: Middle Management Service
NPA	: National Prosecuting Authority
OC	: Organisational Commitment
PClose	: Test of Close fit
PESTEL	: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental & Legal
RMSEA	: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SDBIP	: Service Delivery & Budget Implementation Plan
SEM	: Structural Equation Modelling
SL	: Salary Level
SMART	: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic & Time bound
SMS	: Senior Management Service
SO	: Strategic Objectives
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRMR	: Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual.
TLI	: Tucker-Lewis Index
ULCI	: Upper Limit Confidence Interval

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Chapter 1
Background and Positioning of the Study

1.1 Introduction

The concept of ethical leadership and employee commitment is a fundamental issue in most public and private institutions, regardless of a country's status, whether developed or less developed (Tatar, 2020). According to Tatar (2020), employees committed to an organisation become gratified and work towards assisting the organisation to achieve its objectives (Tatar, 2020). Studies have indicated that committed employees are loyal, productive, and accountable (Tatar, 2020). In addition, employee commitment has been identified as an influential determinant of employee reliability, absence predictor, turnover, job satisfaction and organisational performance (Javed, Blouch, & Hassan, 2014). Work settings also play an important role in determining and shaping the behaviour of organisational members (Ahmad, 2018).

According to Demirtas, Hannah, Gok, Arslan and Capar (2017), effective organisational leaders create a sense of meaning for their employees. An organisational climate that meets employees' expectations and values contributes immensely to giving employees a sense of being desired in an organisation, and employees' job satisfaction has been proven to be influenced by organisational climate (Thi, Zong, Wu & Feng, 2021). Leadership qualities, especially ethical behaviour, are essential in fostering job satisfaction and workplace commitment. The most fundamental one is the way the leader displays his/her leadership qualities towards followers (Dedeoğlu, İnanır & Çelik, 2015). Unethical, dishonest, and unreliable leaders experience challenges in sustaining their employees because the leader's primary function is to influence and manage employees (Dedeoğlu et al., 2015). A study by İnanır (2015) indicates that vivid ethical conduct by leaders strongly influences employee job satisfaction, commitment, and achievement of strategic objectives (Dedeoğlu et al., 2015).

A well-defined organisational strategic plan should only have significant goals (Zeps & Ribickis, 2015). Authors such as Miller (2020) and Boyles (2022) have reflected on how an efficient strategy development process to attain enhanced results can be created. Elbanna, Andrews and Pollanen (2016) indicates the importance of systems, people, and the environment in developing strategic objectives to ensure its success. A carefully planned strategy implementation is a recipe for success in most organisations however, many still fail (Reddy, 2016). Involving employees during the strategy implementation phase and offering financial incentives can foster employee commitment and help the organisation achieve its objectives (Miller, 2020). Monitoring strategic performance is also an important factor in ensuring efficient strategy execution, and Elbanna et al. (2016) indicate that management should develop an appropriate communication channel to ensure each employee understands their own targets. Moreover, authors such as Miller (2020) and Boyles (2022) indicate that it is the executive management team that carries the responsibility to make a strong connection between themselves and employees to foster employee's commitment to ensure successful implementation and achievement of strategic objectives.

This study explores the relationship between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and achieving strategic objectives. The concept of ethical leadership has several different meanings and applications. Ethics in this study refer to moral standards and/or ethical conduct (Shava & Mazenda, 2021). Behaviour in society is directed by principles of morals, and although morals change over time, they still serve as a principle that is used to judge right and wrong conduct. Ethical conduct is a principle of fairness, good faith, and respect consistent with laws and regulations (Ethics unwrapped-The University of Texas, 2021).

1.2 Background

Literature indicates that it is unethical conduct that causes employees to display behaviour which is deemed morally wrong, such as dishonesty and nonconformity, which in turn influences others conduct significantly (Gerpott, Schlamp, Van Quaquebeke & Voelpel, 2019). Ethical conduct involves good behaviour based on norms and should be communicated and reinforced (Fuller, 2021). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the Public Service Act (1994) section 20 provide formal guidelines for employees of public institutions, such as municipal employees, to be truthful and honour the constitution. The Act further stipulates that employees must abide by this mandate and prioritise citizens and be unbiased and impartial (section 20 of the Public Service Act of 1994). According to King IV report (2016), municipalities across South Africa require capable and committed leaders to achieve strategic objectives. The strategic objective of the municipality is to withstand moral corporate governance through clean and accountable administration. The municipality received clean audits for nine years consecutively until 2015/16 and thereafter received unqualified audit findings with matters in 2016/2017, 2017/2018, and 2018/2019, clearly articulating underperformance and non-compliance with rules. A qualified audit means bad performance, an unqualified audit with matters means moderate performance, while unqualified audit without matters means clean performance. On the other hand, organisational performance in this research project refers to achieving strategic objectives. Therefore, managers should demonstrate responsibility by ensuring good judgement and respect for the rule of law and societal values (Ramalho, 2016). The leader's conduct, therefore, becomes a model for the follower (King IV, 2016). The leader should focus on maintaining a progressive work environment because a negative work environment will reduce followers' morale and other undesirable conduct (Ramalho, 2016). Research by Osabiya (2015) has stated that employees who are not satisfied in their roles produce results that are not satisfactory; it is, therefore, imperative for leaders to value employees to ensure employee commitment, thus achieving the objectives of the organisation.

1.3 Research Problem

A manager's lack of ethical leadership in municipalities results in poor service delivery (Mbandlwa, Dorasamy & Fagbadebo, 2020a). Therefore, unethical leadership and substandard service delivery negatively impact the poor majority (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). The current party system in South Africa is often not responsive to issues affecting the poor and marginalised and perpetuates unethical conduct (Wegner, 2018). Demonstrating good ethics progresses the delivery of service in an effective manner (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). Makwetu (2019) reported a regression in audit outcomes, indicating serious issues at the municipality; from 2017/2018 to 2018/2019, the municipality’s performance regressed tremendously to unqualified audit opinions with matters. Despite several support programmes, challenges of unethical conduct and poor service delivery persist. According to the Auditor General (AG), the municipality under study was known to be the best-performing municipality in Mpumalanga Province. The report indicates that the municipality had received a clean audit for nine (9) consecutive years from the 2007/2008 financial year until the 2015/2016 financial year. Ethical conduct is a widely discussed concept as a potential resolution to corruption, and in the absence of morality in the municipality, a comprehensively discussed concept is ethical leadership (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017).

Despite several support programs and Acts introduced in local government, to address unethical conduct and poor service delivery, challenges still prevail. These programmes and other strategies include; Project Consolidate, the five-year government strategic agenda, siyenza manje, Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA)'s Circular 88, Local Government Turn-around Strategy (Cogta, 2009a), Municipal Integrity Management Framework, National Framework towards Professionalising the Local Government, Local Government Anti-Corruption Strategy and Local Government Back to Basic Strategy (Cogta, 2014). Between 2019 and 2022, service delivery protests had occurred at the municipality. Reports suggest that malpractice, unethical conduct, and the inability to implement policies into practice contribute to the unrest. Therefore, the municipal manager is being investigated for corruption by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). This demonstrates that those who have been given the authority to lead do not execute their responsibilities effectively and efficiently (Mbandlwa et al., 2020b). Msenge and Nzewi (2021) and Nkadimeng (2019) postulate that while significant progress has been made in providing sustainable service delivery, vast backlogs remain a challenge in municipalities. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no studies have investigated the root cause of poor performance in the municipality.

Employee commitment is perceived as a fundamental element in determining organisational success. Commitment assists organisations to retain more employees to ensure continuity and augment employees' appetite to achieve the objectives (Alrowwad et al., 2019). Alrowwad et al. (2019) indicated that it is important to develop and encourage employee commitment among municipality staff as employees that are committed to their organisation, perform better, and fully participate in organisational citizenship behaviour. Yunus and Chien (2016) indicate that effective strategic planning improves organisational and economic advantage through its visualisation, principles, ethos, climate, leadership, configuration, and systems. Strategic objectives planning is a process embedded in strategic moral leadership. It is not confined to executive managers and is the responsibility of every manager in the organisation (Abdul et al., 2018). Ethical leadership requires aspiring leaders to behave in accordance with set principles and values, which include honesty, esteem, belief, and impartiality (Villirilli, 2021). Irwin (2018) indicated that bribery, corruption, and fraud emanate from unethical conduct by municipal leadership. According to Statistics South Africa (2017), 24% of people in South Africa have indicated that corruption has diminished, 14% indicated that there is no change, and 62% indicated that it has risen in local government. It is evident from the statistics that the South African public views municipal leaders as corrupt (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

This study will explore the following: (1) the relationship between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and achievement of strategic objectives in the municipality and (2) the mediator role of organisational commitment between ethical leadership and achievement of strategic objectives. In that regard, this study is fundamental to the existing literature. Furthermore, the outcome of this study will add to the literature on ethical leadership, organisational commitment and strategic objectives and further advance the body of knowledge in the field of organisational behaviour and good governance. The study will further provide managerial insight.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To explore the perception of ethical leadership influence on achievement of strategic objectives.
- To determine the perception of how ethical leadership influence organisational commitment.
- To discover the perception of organisational commitment on the achievement of strategic objectives.
- To determine the extent of mediation that organisational commitment has on ethical leadership and achieving strategic objectives.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework forms the foundation on which the research is based. In recent years, academics and scholars have had a significant interest in ethical leadership and organisational commitment. Several researchers have traditionally focused on the relationship between "ethical leadership and organisational commitment," often neglecting aspects such as outcome, quality, and theoretical perspective. Contemporary studies have concluded that several areas of ethical leadership, such as lack of definition, outcome, quality, theoretical perspective, and purpose, have been neglected (Lawton & Páez, 2015). Some authors have argued for more ethical theories (Ciulla, 2005; Rost, 1995). Eisenbeiss (2012) argues that its theoretical foundation must be advanced for ethical leadership to gain more acceptance. This study will use the most relevant constructs from previous researchers to evaluate the extent of the relationship between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and the achievement of strategic objectives. The framework will be based on previous studies by Garima et al. (2024), highlighting that factors such as lack of employee commitment and ethical leadership are major concerns in the literature for achieving strategic objectives.

The study will confirm the continued relevance of Kohlberg's three levels of moral development theories and the theory of virtue ethics. This study uses Kohlberg's three levels of moral development and virtue ethics theory to provide its theoretical perspective. Moreover, this study will adopt constructs from other current theories, models, and frameworks to develop the proposed model and formulate four hypotheses and three sub-hypotheses based on the relationship between independent, dependent and mediator variables.

Level 1: Pre-Conventional Morality is based on obedience and punishment, where employees adhere to moral conduct according to standards set by the municipality, which should be obeyed (Kohlberg, 1963). This level of morality indicates that it is unethical for employees to conduct themselves outside the confines of the law when executing official responsibilities (Colby et al., 1987c). Furthermore, pre-conventional morality prohibits conduct outside the confines of the law because it will lead to punishment and other negative consequences hindering the municipality's objectives (Kohlberg, 1963). Larry and Moore (2021) build on this theory, stating that a morally correct decision is embedded in the norm and the law governing the municipality. Such laws should be followed by every employee within the municipality who deems themselves to be moral and/or ethical. Furthermore, Alexander et al. (2021) add that a morally correct action supersedes a good outcome.

Level 2: Conventional Morality is based on interpersonal relationships, meaning that employees must view morality as more than simple ideals (Kohlberg, 1963). Employees must live up to the expectations of the leadership and the community to behave in good ways (Kohlberg, 1963). Maintaining social order involves a relationship between leadership and employees, where one tries to forge a relationship to enhance organisational commitment to achieve municipal objectives (Colby et al., 1987c). The employees then obey the law governing the municipality, respect authority, and perform their duties to achieve the common goal (Kohlberg, 1963). Van Zyl (2005) and Athanassoulis (2020) suggest that virtue ethics consider individual traits and interpersonal inclinations, indicating that virtuous individuals display kindness in all situations.

Level 3: Post-Conventional Morality which is based on social contracts and individual rights, with the community viewing the municipality as a social contract into which people freely enter and that all can benefit from through basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, waste, and refuse removal. Post-conventional morality does not support breaking the law because laws are social contracts agreed upon to be upheld unless changed by democratic means (Kohlberg, 1963). Zafirovski (2005) takes a slightly different view from Kohlberg's, "social exchange theory endeavours to clarify basic relationships which regulate the interchange of mutual social services, which ranges from simple matter to complex matters". Zafirovski (2005) emphasises that when employees feel their work is meaningful, with reasonable responsibility and autonomy, their commitment increases. However, Kohlberg's three levels of moral development and virtue theory are the most relevant to the study, given its emphasis on obedience and punishment, interpersonal feelings, and law-abidingness. Although Zafirovski (2005) and Kohlberg (1963) agree that social exchange increases commitment, there is no clear distinction as to whether it leads to achieving strategic objectives. The municipality claims that its strategic objective is to withstand moral corporate governance through clean and accountable administration; as a result, ethical leadership and employee commitment must lead to achieving strategic objectives.

1.6 Theory of Virtue of Ethics

Virtue ethics is a wide-ranging term of theories that put emphasis on the role of character and virtue in moral philosophy rather than either doing one's duty or acting in order to bring about good consequences (Johnson, 2017). This theory judges a person by his character rather than by actions that may swerve from his normal behaviour (Thagard, 2018). A virtuous person is someone who has superlative character traits. These traits are derived from natural internal tendencies but need to be nurtured once established to be stable (McManus & Butler, 2019). It takes the person's morals, reputation and motivation into account when rating an unusual and irregular behaviour that is considered ethical. Virtue ethics focuses on the individual's moral physique rather than the morality of the act itself. A moral actor will base his or her decisions on ingrained values rather than consequences or duties (Bennardo & Munck, 2017).

1.7 Significance of the Study

Municipal employees recognise their leaders as significant determinants of the success or failure of services in local communities (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). Effective local government results in effective service delivery in local government (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). Ethical leadership styles are an important predictor of job satisfaction and are central to local government and achieving strategic objectives (Almaaitah, Al-Maaitah, Majali, Alsoud & Maaitah, 2021). Ethical leadership is a motivator that can change basic human behaviour by implementing appropriate styles or practices (Almaaitah et al., 2021). The proposed study will contribute immensely to the public debate by producing informed outcomes that will help decision-makers regarding good governance. Apart from filling the gap in the literature, the proposed study will contribute significantly to existing academic literature in the subject area.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

This study is restricted to a municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa, focusing on performance regression compared to previous financial years.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Ethical Leadership: Mitonga-Monga et al. (2023) defines ethical leadership as guiding employees through values, principles, and beliefs that widely edge around established norms in organisational behaviours.

Organisational Commitment: The relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation (Qing, Asif, Hussain & Jameel, 2020).

Affective Commitment: An emotional attachment to the organisation such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, participates in, and enjoys membership within the organisation (Mitonga-Monga, Flotman & Cilliers, 2018).

Continuance Commitment: This is the cost-benefit analysis of an employee, for example, the cost associated with the loss of economic investments and difficulties in finding a new job (Imam & Kim, 2022).

Normative Commitment: This commitment is a societal expectation where an employee remains loyal to the organisation, which provides compensation for services rendered (Singh & Gupta, 2015).

Strategic Objectives: Strategic objectives are defined as a plan or act that defines the following concepts: position in the market, plan of operations, and absorbing new and current clients (Bora, Borah, & Chungyalpa, 2017).

1.10 Thesis Structure

This study is divided into seven chapters, as described below.

Chapter 1: Background and Positioning of the Study

Chapter One is divided into the introduction and the background, focusing on ethical leadership and organisational commitment as key determining factors for achieving strategic objectives in state institutions and local government. The research problem highlights the rationale of the topic with clearly defined research objectives. Chapter One explains the theoretical perspectives. In addition, the chapter provides delimitations of the study and definitions of terms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review [Ethical Leadership (EL)]

Chapter Two focuses on the theoretical perspective surrounding ethical leadership, the importance of employee commitment, and its significant contribution to achieving strategic objectives. It comprises ten elements: introduction, ethical leadership and employee performance, ethical leadership and service delivery, the requirement for effective service delivery in South Africa, ethical conduct in raising efficiency, workplace ethics, traits of a positive work ethic, understanding and maintaining ethical values, moral intelligence and ethical leadership and ethics and culture.

Chapter 3: Literature Review [Organisational Commitment (OC)]

This chapter focuses on the theoretical perspective surrounding organisational commitment and its positive effect as a mediator between ethical leadership and achieving strategic objectives. It comprises three elements: introduction, commitment, and behaviour at work, as well as the modes of organisational commitment.

Chapter 4: Literature Review [Strategic Objectives (SO)]

Chapter Four focuses on the theoretical perspective surrounding strategic objectives, which states that achieving strategic objectives is positively influenced by ethical leadership and organisational commitment. It comprises eight elements: introduction, Municipal strategic planning process, strategic planning phases, mission statement development, vision statement development, strategic objectives development, the impact of employee commitment on achievement of strategic objectives, the impact of ethical leadership on achievement of objectives, research objectives and conceptual model.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

Chapter Five highlights the location of the research site and the sample selection procedure. It further explains the research paradigm, design details, and the data collection instrument and validation. The chapter concludes with data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 6: Results and Discussions

This chapter represents the data analysis and discussion. It then concludes with a summary of the findings.

Chapter 7: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions, implications, and recommendations drawn from the study; recommendations arising from the findings are given.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the general background, research problem, questions and objectives, hypotheses, theoretical framework, significance, and delimitation of the study, and it also outlines the structure of the research paper. The following chapter will examine the literature on ethical leadership in this study.

Chapter 2
Literature Review [Ethical Leadership (EL)]

2.1 Introduction

Ethical leadership, if not carried out, has a negative impact on public services (Mbandlwa et al., 2020b). Decisions taken by municipal leaders play a significant role in establishing moral credibility and determining the extent of leadership qualities (Mbandlwa et al., 2020b). Leaders must be seen as genuine and consistent role models who participate in acceptable conduct and are in good standing to influence followers (Engelbrecht, Wolmarans & Mahembe, 2017). Leaders should not expect followers to conduct themselves morally if leaders themselves fail to display morally acceptable conduct. Since leaders have an influential role in their followers, they are seen as role models by their followers (Engelbrecht et al., 2017).

The ethical climate in organisations is based on the atmosphere of morality in the workplace and the amount of ethical confinement followed. Organisations have five climates: instrumental, caring, law and order, rules, and independence. The combination of discourtesy, irritation, hostility, and judgement leads to an unethical and hostile working environment, which results in dissatisfied personnel (Anrusha & Mohamed, 2020). Consequently, a good ethical environment creates more industrious and happier personnel (King IV, 2016). The King IV report offers guiding principles for municipal management (Dube, 2016). The municipal council should lead from the front and provide effective leadership, where good governance is built on accountability (Dube, 2016). In terms of the definition of ethical leadership, leaders are role models of ethical behaviour and must encourage the same behaviour in their followers by using mechanisms such as communication and reinforcement systems to communicate the required standard and behaviour, rewards, and disciplinary codes (Metwally, Ruiz-Palomino, Metwally & Gartzia, 2019). Ethics is a wide phenomenon; it hinders economic growth in developed and underdeveloped countries (Mbandlwa et al., 2020b). The absence of effective and efficient leadership brings questionable service delivery, as is evident in how municipalities are run across South Africa; therefore, unethical conduct has a detrimental effect on service delivery (Pillay & Kikasu, 2024).

According to the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), it envisions a vigorous municipal system that can serve as an autonomous and responsible regime for the citizens; it must strive to provide sustainable services to local communities, ensure the promotion of social and economic expansion and inspire the involvement of societies and its structures in the issues of municipalities. When the public lacks trust in their leaders and employees, unethical conduct becomes a widely discussed concept, and strategic planning in municipalities becomes a problem when employees' intentions are questioned (Kenton, 2023).

Municipal employees must demonstrate accountability when carrying out their responsibilities (Republic of South African Constitution, 1996). Mechanisms to ensure municipal employees account for their unethical conduct are inadequate; hence, achieving municipal strategic objectives is an inherent limitation (Mufamadi, 2018). The success of municipalities determines the quality of life of the marginalised and poor (Gordhan, 2012) therefore, ethical leadership is capacity building (Alshammari, Almutairi & Thuwaini, 2015). Ethical leadership is believed to be imperative because it is assumed to inspire (Radhika, 2018). The responsibility of an ethical leader is to build value standards that can positively influence followers (Alshammari et al., 2015). Learning from other ethical leaders is required to produce effective leadership outcomes (Radhika, 2018). The implication of the value ethics principles lies in the leader's ability to develop strategic mechanisms to ensure prompt moral development, influencing others to achieve success in municipalities. (Alshammari et al., 2015). Ethical leaders spread the importance of ethical conduct and use a performance management system to hold followers accountable for their actions (Radhika, 2018). Cheteni and Shindika (2017) defined ethical leadership as a weight on followers to choose the good from the bad and unselfish motives. Leaders use their behaviour to influence improved performance from their subordinates, e.g., leading by example (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017). For a leader to be viewed as highly ethical and have powerful outcomes closely aligned to ethics, they should be considered intelligent, resonance, and authentic (Kaptein, 2019).

For employees to view their leaders as credible, leaders must appear smart, sound, and legitimate. When leaders are perceived as ethical, it positively influences outcomes. This perception is achieved through behaviour that is appropriate and viewed as suitable, behaviour inspired by altruism, which is openness and honesty (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017). Leaders who believe in ethics are hands-on in the sense that they set ethical morals and encourage them to the followers: leaders who are ethical assume ‘‘proactive exertions to inspire employees’’ and are regarded as ‘‘pre-emptive role replicas for conduct deemed principled’’ (Kaptein, 2019). This requires carefully made decisions that are aligned with ethical values and should always be within the confines of the law (Cheteni & Shindika, 2017).

2.2 Ethical Leadership and Employee Performance

Employees are important assets in an organisation; without them, its goals will not be achieved (Obicci, 2015). Employee performance is important in achieving results from the organisation's strategic planning (Bushiri, 2014). Researchers such as Khuong and Nhu (2015) and Bussin and Geldenhuys (2017) have indicated that if organisations are led by capable and good leaders, employee performance can be improved. Ellahi, Rehman, Javed, Sultan and Rehman (2022) outlined effective leadership's effects, such as enabling employees to differentiate and enhance their contributions to ensure organisational success. Ellahi et al. (2022) have demonstrated that employees' performance can be strengthened by ensuring good leadership. According to Eva, Robinb, Sendjayac, Dierendonckd and Lidene (2019) ethical leadership intensifies collective values and integrity in employees when executing business transactions. The study further states that principled character from managers fosters intense pride and obligation to the organisation; it also assists in moulding how employees observe their work. Obicci (2015) discovered that the influence of managerial ethical leadership rolls down to lower-level employees through good conduct expressed by supervisors. According to Gomez (2022), good leadership behaviour inspires a lot of employee-related results. Obicci (2015) identified a strong correlation between ethical conduct and employee determination. Ethical leadership studies indicate that ethical conduct constructively impacts various important employee outcomes, such as mental well-being (Lituchy, Galperin & Punnett, 2017). However, pragmatic studies on the special effects of ethical leadership on employee performance are minimal (Anrusha & Mohamed, 2020).

2.3 Ethical Leadership and Service Delivery

Ethics in municipalities are an important aspect of clean governance, and ethical leaders add significantly to effective service delivery (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). South Africa has incredible policies; however, implementing and overseeing such policies is questionable, and certain policies do not reach the implementation stage (Reddy, 2016). Credibility in terms of the morals of individuals plays an important role in the ideas of municipal leaders; it also helps determine if the leader is ethical (Mbandlwa et al., 202a). Research by Joensuu and Niiranen (2016) has emphasised that political interference complicates local government affairs because politics and administration are two components of a different nature (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a).

Representation, equality, and individual rights are influenced by the involvement of political leadership in public administration matters. Representative democracy allows people to elect their preferred leaders to govern (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). Equity enforces a just distribution of resources and equality before the law; however, this value will be affected without ethical leadership in government (Pandey, Davis, Pandey & Peng, 2016). Without ethical behaviour from political leaders and managers, employees will be affected (Pandey et al., 2016).

The way decisions are made by the executive and municipal leaders affects public service delivery (Pandey et al., 2016). This issue requires serious attention because unethical conduct impacts the economy and the well-being of citizens (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). Therefore, poor ethics gives rise to poor service delivery (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). According to Lee (2018), 30% of state employees in the US could not report unethical conduct because of fear of further victimisation and job loss and a further 14% indicated that they were overworked. Employees who are deeply committed to their responsibilities and the organisation contribute to advanced productivity and reduce turnover. Organisations require employees who value the mission and vision, understand them, and are determined to accomplish them (Melinda, Antonio & Christina, 2019). Leaders' values contribute the most since they normally become organisational values from the perspective of effectiveness and ethics (Anrusha & Mohamed, 2020) and a manager’s influence is referred to as “the tone at the top”. Leadership cascades throughout the organisation since it is the most imperative component in forming and directing organisational strategy (Kauflin, 2017).

2.4 Requirements for Effective Service Delivery

Batho Pele Principles have been implemented to assist municipal employees in controlling the effective delivery of services in local communities (Local Government Action, 2016). The purpose of the government's introduction of Batho Pele Principles was to address the existing gap as far as the community's needs are concerned, as well as the way municipal employees provide these services. The purpose of these principles is to ensure that the public changes their attitude and perception on issues of municipal administration. It ensures that the public is treated as clients, not consumers. These principles are meant to provide a sense of self-respect to local communities through the provision of basic services. The principles are consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress, and value for money (Local Government Action, 2016).

These principles are fundamental in municipalities, contribute significantly to customer satisfaction, and are used as a yardstick to measure the achievement of strategic objectives in municipalities. As a result of these principles, municipalities have formed programs, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, to measure the quality of service they give to citizens and to improve service delivery. Many citizens do not report untoward activities because they believe they are reporting them to corrupt officials (Public Service Commission, 2015). This can be enhanced through customer evaluations on service quality dimensions, such as physical facilities, personnel appearance, and leadership reliability (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a). Ethics in municipalities build a good corporate image, which is fundamental in municipalities because it raises hope in the citizens, and the standard of service delivery is determined by employee conduct. These further increases investor cooperation in the local economy and maintains sustainability (Mbandlwa et al., 2020a; Hadi, Handajani & Putra, 2018). Standard management, supervisors' support, and co-workers' support are considered aspects of customer orientation at an organisational level, and culture influences performance conduct. This is influenced by municipal management, supervisors, and employees (Public Service Regulations, 2015).

2.5 Ethical Conduct in Raising Efficiency

In a municipal context, good ethical behaviour improves efficiency; employees are expected to identify and imitate their managers, as managers are perceived as models of conventional behaviour from a social learning perspective (Engelbrecht et al., 2017). Increasing employees' curiosity about their jobs prompts imaginative performance; employees with a higher level of freedom tend to contribute innovative ideas (Ayoub, Na'anah, Al-Madadha & Al-Akhras, 2018). When workers realise their work is meaningful through personal empowerment, their willingness to accomplish strategic objectives increases (Modise & Raga, 2023). Those who can perform their responsibilities effectively and efficiently become more "cognitively flexible" and open to new, innovative perspectives and resolutions (Ayoub et al., 2018). Ethical leaders are said to be role models, and managers cannot expect to receive moral conduct from followers if they do not act in a manner that inspires their followers (Engelbrecht et al., 2017). The followers' work-related needs are met if the leader is functioning in an effective and successful manner. This illustrates that good leaders help lead followers towards accountability (Berman, Bowman, West & Van Wart, 2016). As indicated by Engelbrecht et al. (2017), studies have indicated that employees become happy when they witness that their leaders discipline wrongdoers, treat all employees fairly, equally, and sympathetically, and are trustworthy.

Ethical leadership is reflected in the ability to make fair and principled decisions (Ringson & Matshabaphala, 2023). Leaders encourage prosocial behaviour and observe, prevent, and correct unethical behaviour in themselves and others. The ethics of a leader are associated with the moral identity and concern for their subordinates (Zhu, Treviño & Zheng, 2016). Ethical leaders have traits that determine an effective organisational culture, mutual norms, beliefs, and values that influence the attitude and behaviours of employees in a manner that determines efficiency (Metwally et al., 2019). According to Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn & Wu (2018), the influence on group efficacy stems from a servant leader who must form an acceptable form of leadership.

2.6 Workplace Ethics

Ethics in a workplace is based on diligent work and attentiveness. It is built on the belief that hard work develops character (Prachi, 2015). Work ethics contribute significantly to individuals' career progress; these ethics are characterised by traits such as attendance, character, teamwork, appearance, and attitude (Rajendranagar, 2016). Therefore, work ethics is crucial to success (Rizvi, 2022). Behaviours such as being assertive, sincere respect for others, and employees' appearance are crucial work ethics that show dedication to your work (Anrusha & Mohamed, 2020). Employees must pride themselves on how they are being perceived by people (Rajendranagar, 2016). Work ethic also includes communication abilities, attitude and behaviour towards subordinates, honesty, and accountability (Rizvi, 2022). Maintaining a professional attitude and skills is critical to a successful career (Prachi, 2015).

2.7 Understanding and Maintaining Ethical Values

Ethics and leadership are described as intertwined concepts. Leadership is actions that directly influence and guide subordinates' performance towards attaining organisational strategic objectives (Rajendranagar, 2016). On the other hand, ethics is defined as an intrinsic set of principles based on norms (Rizvi, 2022). Leaders in local government are expected to maintain differing and contradictory ranks of ethical responsibility (Sackey, 2021). Sawan, Suryadi and Nurhattati (2021) indicate that the responsibility for the moral values of democracy resides with local government managers and legislators of democratic systems. Furthermore, Stauffer and

Maxwell (2020) outline that local government obligations come from three dissimilar dominions, which include (1) valuing processes authenticating the actions of public employees, (2) serving the needs of the public, and (3) treating subordinates with dignity, honesty, respect, and fairness. Mbandlwa et al. (2020a) contend that municipal administration is an "ethical exertion" which needs distinct moral compulsions and exclusive moral charisma.

2.8 Moral Intelligence and Ethical Leadership

Chan (2023) has supported the belief that virtue and human contentment are similar in nature and virtues are strengths that we all possess and guide us morally regardless of situations and circumstance we come across. According to Chan (2023) moral intelligence is about exercising individual liberty, freedom of choice and natural intelligence, it is not about obeying rules dutifully. Amdurer, Boyatzis, Saatcioglu, Smity and Taylor (2014) claim that moral wisdom is to know-how practically which allows the individual possessing it to make correct choices embedded on ethics. This wisdom is acquired through learning from smart and good people as well as from mistakes of other people in their lifetimes. To acquire wisdom takes too much time, experience, failure and suffering for one to develop moral intelligence as the virtue of prudence. Many studies such as Bradshaw (2010) argued that all human beings are born with a congenital and simple moral intelligence that is refined throughout the development of virtues (Amdurer et al., 2014). Song (2019) defined moral intelligence as a mental ability to control how common human principles should be applicable to personal values, goals, and actions, and the study focused on forgiveness, compassion, responsibility and integrity as important components of moral intelligence and key factors for personal and organisational success.

2.9 Ethics and Culture

Ethics is an important element of creating exemplary leadership to influence the atmosphere of the organisation which they lead to improve the performance of their subordinates. This requires a leader with high levels of ethics, integrity, and morals to augment motivation for organisational performance and effectiveness (Muktamar, 2023). Organisational culture is defined by Na'im (2022) as behaviours, beliefs and values which differentiates an organisation among others. It is a phenomenon that always surrounds everyone, which is perpetuated and formed through interactions with one another, it is harnessed by leader's behaviour such as norms, rules, routines, and structures guiding behaviour. Organisational culture is represented by joint principles, beliefs, and values of the members of the organisation (Nikpour, 2017). If organisational culture is well implied, other than its impact on organisational performance, it bears indirect influence on organisational performance via employee commitment (Muktamar, 2023). The environment in which one works defines organisational culture, individual behaviours such as prejudices, habits, views, skills, attitudes appear in the environment. Most of these characters were shaped by past leaders through years of influence and dictatorship (Nikpour, 2017). Leaders should be responsible and accountable for the climate and culture they make in these organisations. Organisational culture consists of three levels, 1) behaviour and artefacts, is widely noticeable and an external factor of organisational culture. It reflects main values and norms of the organisation such as dressing codes, services, and communication style, 2) Attitude, values, and beliefs, these elements underlie behaviour, however, are not visible, but influence members' behaviour. Values relates to ethics and morals, they dictate what to be done, while beliefs relate ones' reasoning on what is right or wrong, 3) basic assumptions, is the earnest part, it lies beneath the beliefs, attitude, and values of organisational members (Na'im, 2022).

2.10 Conclusion

Moral theories and legislation serve as a source of values and affect local government ethics. This chapter highlights ethical governance. The discussions from this chapter conclude that every employee's responsibility is to ensure the achievement of strategic objectives, and the role of the leader is prominent in maintaining local government character. Therefore, it is paramount that the effectiveness of local government character is based on the leader's norms, ethical imitation, and moral competence.

Chapter 3

Literature Review [Organisational Commitment (OC)]

3.1 Introduction

Organisational commitment has been defined by Effiong (2017) as a state where employees align with the goals of an organisation and maintain membership in the organisation. Employee commitment should be evaluated based on the overall outcome of all organisational interactions, not just performance (Ahadiat & Dacko-Pikiewicz, 2020). Individuals become concerned with organisational interests once they identify with the organisation (Effiong, 2017). Organisations have used commitment to envision the required employee attitude regarding employee emotional attachment to the organisation, absenteeism, and performance (Chabib, 2016). Commitment in organisations has the following levels: active level, continuance level and normative level of commitment (Effiong, 2017). An employee's passionate attachment to the organisation is called an active level of commitment, continuance commitment is based on the economic value of continuing with the organisation, while normative commitment is based on being obliged to stay in the organisation because of ethical and moral motives (Effiong, 2017).

Effiong (2017) suggested that commitment is twofold: it affects the organisation and the individual. Organisational commitment refers to an individual's psychological and emotional attachment to the organisation; it measures the extent of identification with organisational goals and values and the extent of identification with the supervisor. The more an individual identifies with an organisation, the more it predicts the strength of their commitment to the organisation (Tuna, Ghazzawi, Tuna & Catir, 2016). Commitment to the organisation is associated with variation in anticipated job results, including job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, and has a negative relation to absenteeism and turnover. The commitment of individual employees is an individual employee’s psychological and emotional attachment to their work environment and supervisors (Effiong, 2017). Followers who feel committed to an organisation usually devise a logic of resolution to support them in advancing the goals and objectives of the organisation (Tuna et al., 2016). Followers who are deeply committed to the organisation exercise excessive energy, desire organisational membership, tend to safeguard the organisation's assets and are not ashamed to share the goals and values of the organisation with the public (Effiong, 2017).

Identifying with a group often involves adopting attitudes and commitment toward the group (Fanggidae, Nursiani & Bengngu 2019). Employees who benefit from the organisation remain with the organisation because of the good rewards within the relationship (Stinglhamber et al., 2015). Additionally, it has been identified that discretion and focal behaviour are forms of commitment relevant to behaviour (Baijnath, 2019). Focal behaviour is associated with job description and is said to be the behaviour on the job (Bottomley, Mostafa, Gould-Williams & León-Cázares, 2016). Focal behaviour is associated with using KPIs to stimulate the required outcomes; discretionary behaviour is using your own reasoning to decide which action is good. Bottomley et al. (2016) state that discretionary behaviour supersedes recognised job responsibilities. Therefore, there is a distinction between discretionary and focal behaviour; focal behaviour involves employees going above institutional interests (Elorza, Harris, Aritzeta & Balluerka, 2016).

Fanggidae et al. (2019) substantiated Buchanan's (1974) definition of commitment as a bond related to psychological effects on an organisation. Buchanan conducted a survey of 279 businesses and managers in government institutions, and specific activities were identified that organisations use to foster higher levels of commitment. Buchanan discovered that group cohesion toward the organisation increases commitment, especially with initial interaction and positive experience (Fanggidae et al., 2019).

3.2 Behaviour and Commitment in the Workplace

Social exchange theory is used in this context to explain the meaning of employees' commitment and to understand workplace behaviour (Chou, 2019). For decades, researchers have used the concept of social exchange to explain the motivation behind follower behaviour and the formulation of good follower attitudes (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels & Hall, 2017). According to Chou (2019), this theory uses a motivation foundation for the behaviour of employees and the construction of good attitudes on the part of employees. The theory alludes to work as a tool for determining socio-emotional welfare (Chou, 2019). The basic principle of the social exchange theory is that relationships change over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitment, and rules and/or norms of exchange serve as the "guidelines" of exchange processes (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The basic belief emanating from this theory is that relationships are dynamic; they change repeatedly from trust and shared commitment, and to do that, both exchanging parties should adhere to norms and the law of exchange (Chou, 2019). Social transactions such as status, loyalty and approval fall within the confines of material benefit and psychological reward. Organisational performance rests on a stable workforce; employees must rely on each other to perform assigned duties and be free to participate in activities beyond their roles (Bouarif, 2015). Therefore, employees' commitment will determine their willingness to contribute to organisational performance (Fayda-Kinik (2022). Fayda-Kinik (2022) model identified affective, normative, and continuance commitment as three degrees of organisational commitment.

3.3 The Three-Degree Modes of Organisational Commitment

Organisations are always facing increasing competition as they organise themselves for new challenges (Radosavljević, Ćilerdžić & Dragić, 2017). The most fundamental components of organisational existence are sustaining and advancing the probability of effective and efficient personnel utilisation. Hidayati, (2019) states that the employee attitudes below are important for organisational effectiveness as (1) secured work and survival, (2) the application of certain necessities, and (3) involvement in decision-making and activities that are more than core responsibilities. It is crucial to select certain employees for non-managerial positions in the workplace. Moreover, organisations must generate a devoted workforce. Therefore, managers must understand the concept of commitment - what it is, how it works, and which behaviours indicate a committed employee (Radosavljević et al., 2017).

Affective Commitment refers to a state where individual employees feel emotionally attached to the organisation in a way that they identify with, participate in, and have membership within the organisation (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). Affective commitment symbolises the significance of accepting how individuals’ attitudes affect their contributions and investments within the organisation (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018). Affective commitment has the following main aspects: (1) developed psychological attraction, (2) organisational association, and (3) the wish to be loyal to the organisation. Employees associate themselves with the organisation's strategic objectives and ensure support to achieve them through emotional attraction (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016).

Affective commitment helps organisations achieve positive results, which can be witnessed through diminished absenteeism rate, turnover, and good organisational behaviour (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). Commitment has been legitimised by prior social scientists as an imperative sociological and psychological variable in social organisations (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2018). An individual's attitude is associated with the values they bring to the organisation. The following variables precede affective commitment: work experiences and organisational and personal characteristics (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). Employees who display deficiencies of a constructive attitude towards the organisation during the first week of employment are highly associated with leaving the organisation and the relationship between demographic factors and affective commitment is inconsistent and unimportant (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). A workforce that shows increased confidence in executing their responsibilities possesses a high level of affective commitment (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). Fanggidae et al. (2019) indicates an essential distinction of affective commitment as a construct by describing commitment as an approach or alignment towards an organisation which associates or bestows a person's identity to the organisation. The ability to choose good organisations lies in employees with a high level of competence and contribute towards affective commitment (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016).

Continuance commitment is defined by Imam & Kim (2022) as an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. Perceived employee costs of leaving are evaluated by attachment to the organisation (Gilbert, Sukanebari & Konya, 2020). Employees who are deeply committed to their work are significant to the organisation because they may require less or no supervision to fulfil their responsibilities (Qureshi, 2020). Continuance commitment is simply an influential attachment to the organisation by employees; an employee's stay in the organisation is influenced by the monetary benefits gained by the employee (Gilbert et al., 2020). Continuance commitment is a vowed attachment to the organisation. All employees must be committed to the organisational goals and strategic objectives and ensure that they perform their responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as team members to realise the organisational strategic objectives (Imam & Kim, 2022). The continuation of an employee in an organisation is influenced by a continuous assessment made by the individual based on potential economic benefits that can be achieved over time (Gilbert et al., 2020). Qureshi (2020) proclaimed that no organisation can realise its strategic objectives in the contemporary business climate if it does not use its employees optimally. A factor influencing whether one stays at an organisation is the amount of time and effort acquiring skills that are not transferable, the fear of losing all benefits accumulated over this time, and losing seniority-based privileges (Gilbert et al., 2020). Continuance commitment cultivates a fear of not getting alternative employment opportunities due to the costs involved in leaving the organisation (Gilbert et al., 2020).

Normative commitment is an obligation to the organisation. Leadership and culture have a strong influence on how normative commitment is experienced (UGU & Tantua, 2021). This is perceived as a societal expectation, not a personal commitment, in which an employee chooses to be loyal because the employer pays remuneration for a service rendered by employees (AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). Leadership has a momentous role in persuading normative commitment by indicating a high level of ethical conduct, trustworthiness, and integrity (UGU & Tantua, 2021). AL-Jabari and Ghazzawi (2019) defined normative commitment as the behaviour of employees at work that is influenced by obligation, sense of duty, and loyalty to the organisation. Employees become committed to the organisation for moral reasons (AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). As far as culture is concerned, multiple factors affect how normative commitment is interpreted and implied (Chabib, 2016). For example, Fanggidae et al. (2019) found that normative commitment strongly relates to behaviours in collectivist cultures. Employees stay in an organisation because it is morally right to do as perceived by them, regardless of the extent of satisfaction they gain from the organisation over the years (AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019).

There are certain cultural factors, such as power distance and future orientation, amongst others, which influence normative commitment (Fanggidae et al. 2019). Normative commitment, together with the social exchange theory, share a strong relationship, which proposes that any employee receiving a form of assistance from the organisation is normatively obliged in some way to repay it (AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). Followers who possess normative commitment are seen to make meaningful contributions to the organisation (UGU & Tantua, 2021). It, therefore, implies that the motive for employees to continue to be committed to an organisation is because of the anticipated obligation to repay the organisation for investments that the organisation made in them, such as training and development (AL-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019).

3.4 Conclusion

The chapter shows that organisational commitment is important and should be highly regarded to achieve overall organisational success. An employee with greater organisational commitment has a greater chance of contributing to organisational success and will also experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Organisational commitment describes how much team members care about their place of work. High levels of commitment can increase workplace productivity, bolster team morale, and enhance a company's ability to reach its objectives.

Chapter 4

Literature Review [Strategic Objectives (SO)]

4.1 Introduction

A strategic objective is defined as a plan of action that includes the following concepts: position in the market, how operations are conducted, and recruiting new and maintaining current clients (Bora et al., 2017). The significance of strategic objectives should be balanced; organisations must select these carefully and should be able to translate the objectives into programs or projects (Robert, 2020). In instances of ambiguity in organisations, a strategy becomes an organisational compass (Jünger, Wittmann, Reuter & Alexy, 2024). Constructing and implementing an organisational strategy becomes the foundation of any organisation. According to Bora et al. (2017), strategy cannot be defined by a single definition; instead, it can be understood by determining its purpose and scope. Purpose is designed to achieve, while scope focuses on the extent or limitations of the strategy (Reddy, 2017).

The strategy is about incorporating organisational activities and utilising and allocating resources within the organisational environment to meet current strategic objectives (Jünger et al., 2024). Robert (2020) identified the following weaknesses as reasons for the non-realisation of strategic objectives: Not expressing the programs and projects sufficiently, inability to obtain buy-in from necessary shareholders and failure to communicate the strategic objectives continuously. Developing and managing strategic objectives are mandatory for success in various organisations (Reddy, 2017). Certain strategies, such as organisational strategy, are organisation-wide; they serve as a yardstick for the whole organisation. Therefore, functional areas such as communication, finance, human resources, information systems and customer care constitute operational strategies in the institution to upkeep the organisational strategy (Bora et al., 2017).

4.2 Municipal Strategic Planning

Municipalities worldwide have been reforming processes for a while now, and these efforts have included objectives and procedures (Hințea, Profiroiu & Țiclău, 2019). The main objectives of these transformations have been to make local government more capable, operative, and reactive (Blackerby, 2015). Competence has been a great concern for local governments due to demotivated government employees, exorbitant procurement processes, and corruption (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022). Local government is perceived as not responsive due to efficiency issues, lack of outputs, absence of strategic direction, ethical leadership, and lack of creativity (Blackerby, 2015). The simple approach to local government reform involves balancing technological planning with integrating market forces. Simultaneously, local governments should be empowered to set strategic goals to achieve public purposes and objectives (Reddy, 2017).

Contemporary strategic planning emanated from the Harvard Policy Model (HPM) established by the Harvard Business School (HBS) in the 1920s. The Harvard Policy Model is reflected as the first strategic planning methodologies for local government (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022). It states that the strategy is an organisation's set of commitments and procedures (Blackerby, 2015), which ties organisational goals, executive management, and market data (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022). Using strategic planning as a community-based planning mechanism and managing tool has gained predominance (Reddy, 2017). Strategic planning has developed popularity in local government jurisdictions, specifically for local communities facing fiscal challenges (Hinţea et al., 2019). Strategic planning is action-oriented, which combines four fundamental features of any problem-resolution situation: what needs to be done, how it must be done, what to do with it, and when to do it (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022). Strategic planning is a results-orientated procedure that involves creating a long-term plan for an organisation's anticipated growth (Blackerby, 2015). This vision is reflected in the Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan (SDBIP), a five-year program outlining the capital required to achieve that vision (Blackerby, 2015). The SDBIP is integral to strategic planning and management for communities. Strategic planning incorporates community priorities, clearly illustrating what the community aims to achieve (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022). In essence the strategic plan document doesn’t cause change rather facilitates change and brings priorities to life (Hinţea et al., 2019).

Strategic plans are created and evaluated by the community through public engagement and oversight. The community participates in the initial preparation of the plan, and after adoption, the community is further involved in prioritising objectives (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022; Blackerby, 2015). A strategic plan aims to achieve a definite objective (Hinţea et al., 2019). According to Hinţea et al. (2019), the execution sphere of the strategic plan must address the elements below: Precise metric: what is it that must be achieved?; the chores: What definite duty must be done and finalised; time-bound: times allocation per task; Implementers: Which set of relevant people will carry out the tasks and be held liable; budget: Amount of capital needed, the source and the time-frame; monitoring: What monitoring and evaluation will be vital, and by who. A feasible strategic plan must possess all these prerequisites, and attention must be paid to each element. A flawless, comprehensive, and well-constructed strategic plan assists in ensuring an efficacious outcome of achieving objectives and accountability (Reddy, 2017). Another factor of a strategic plan is the combination of actions with capital. A well-thought-out strategic plan will ensure the provision of excessive detail pertaining to the resources required and necessary to complete it successfully (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022).

4.3 The Strategic Planning Process

Hinţea et al. (2019) emphasise that strategic planning is not about envisaging the future but becoming ready for it and having steps at hand that the organisation is going to take to execute its plan and achieve a viable advantage; thus, identified the following phases:

Goal setting is the most fundamental piece of the strategic planning process, comprising a mission statement, values, and objectives. Managers make strategic decisions through goal setting, such as meeting targets and higher revenue generation, and it assists the organisation in planning how to compete in an increasingly competitive business arena (Hinţea et al., 2019).

Strengths and weaknesses analyses are an important model of strategic management. Besides internal analysis, an organisation should also analyse other external factors that directly impact strategy implementation, such as political, environmental, social, technological, economic, and legal factors. After conducting internal and external analysis, the organisation should create goals and objectives to turn weaknesses into strengths. These analyses also help strategise methods of adapting to the PESTEL factors (Blackerby, 2015).

Strategy formation requires the development of certain precise actions that will assist the organisation in meeting its goals. It requires using the information obtained from the analysis phase to prioritise and decide to address crucial issues engulfing the organisation. Furthermore, organisations seek ways to maximise profit and maintain competitive advantage through strategy formulation. This process seeks to effectively align resources with mission objectives (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022).

Strategy implementation is the daily execution of the actual strategy into reality to meet organisational goals. The impression is to collect all essential means to bring the strategic plan to life. Organisational strategy is implemented by allocating budgets for projects, programs, and policies to meet financial, management, human resources, and operational goals. Collaboration between management and other personnel is unequivocally necessary to ensure the effective execution of the organisational strategic plan. A resource-centred strategic plan requires people and capital; this method allows for determining appropriate personnel levels and funding for strategy implementation (Hamlin & Ravensway, 2015).

This is the final phase after strategy implementation, which is strategy monitoring. It evaluates and gauges the strategy to determine if it produces the projected results adopted in the organisational goals. However, it is within the organisation's sole discretion to determine which parts of the strategic plan they want to measure and which methods they want to use to measure these areas and then equate the projected results with the actual performance. An organisation can best understand when and how to amend the plan to adjust to changing factors through monitoring and evaluation. Strategy monitoring is an outstanding instrument that municipalities can or should adopt to deal with change efficiently and decisively (Blackerby, 2015).

4.4 Mission Statement Development

Setting the mission statement is considered the initial phase in strategy development, and it defines the organisation’s scope of function; it classifies ‘who the organisation is’ and ‘what the organisation is doing’ (Bora et al., 2017). The mission statement serves as an identification of the product and service that the organisation is offering, and again, it also serves to describe the existing line of business of the organisation; it also serves as a base for deciding the direction of the organisation’s future (Reddy, 2017). The below-mentioned elements define a well-structured mission statement: The needs of customers, such as what are we satisfying; the target market i.e., who are we satisfying; the activities, technologies, and competencies of the organisation, such as how the company satisfies the needs and wants of clients. Therefore, a mission statement that integrates all the elements mentioned is reflected as a comprehensive mission statement (Blackerby, 2015).

4.5 Vision Statement Development

Certain visions are convincing and capture people’s imagination and minds in just a few words (Hinţea et al., 2019). The vision statement stipulates where the organisation is headed; they are impressive in scale, extremely inspiring, and possess a sense of a slogan (Hinţea et al., 2019). It offers a long-term direction to the organisation (Hamlin & Ravensway, 2015). It serves as an imperative strategic tool, and it considers the organisation's position and situation in the next five years or more, starting from the present time (Reddy, 2017). The vision statement aims to answer the following key questions: Where do we want to see the organisation in five years? What are the new products and services to be offered? What business image is to be achieved? Any change in our target audience? The vision statement serves as a forerunner to setting objectives and goals of the organisation; it is the vision statement that commands the organisational strategic objectives and goals (Bora et al., 2017).

Visions are not crafted by the masses or a committee but by the leadership of an organisation (Reddy, 2017). Strategic vision is a consideration of leadership's plans and goals for the organisation's future, and it reflects how well the leadership has reflected on its future (Bora et al., 2017). Before setting a vision statement, internal and external business environment analyses must be undertaken. Its main purpose is to shape the organisation's direction and pathway for the next five years (Hinţea et al., 2019). It is also intended to understand how the current organisational desires will alter in the future (Bora et al., 2017). Once there is a visionary consensus by the executive management team, the second step is to develop core mechanisms to translate the vision into reality (Blackerby, 2015). The vision is transformed into precise goals, which are then classified into functional areas and assigned to all executive management team members for implementation (Hinţea et al., 2019).

4.6 Strategic Objectives Development

After developing the vision statement, the second phase defines the organisation's strategic objectives (Bora et al., 2017). The organisational vision statement is crucial to this process as it assists in defining the strategic objectives and goals of the organisation (Hamlin & Ravensway, 2015). Setting organisational strategic objectives helps transform the strategic vision into specific performance targets, and it also serves as a significant component of constructing a strategy and as an imperative exercise of ensuring that the organisation's long-term plans and goals are reached (Bora et al., 2017). It displays leadership's pledge to actions and outcomes (Hinţea et al., 2019). To be effective and efficient, all objectives, performance targets, and indicators must meet the

SMART principle. According to Reddy (2017), the SMART principle is widely used to structure meaningful objectives, targets, and indicators. SMART stands for:

Specific

Objectives, targets, and performance indicators should be clear and specific. If they are not, no one will be able to execute his/her effort or feel really inspired to attain it. Your goals must answer the following "W" questions: What will be accomplished? Why so? By whom and where is it situated? Which means?

Measurable

Goals should be able to be measured; it assists in tracking the milestone and keeping enthused. Measuring progress is important because it improves employees' dedication, keeps up with deadlines, and feels the enthusiasm of moving nearer to attaining the goal. A quantifiable target must talk to questions such as: How much? How many? How can I know if it is achieved?

Attainable

Objectives, targets, and performance indicators must be achievable. Setting objectives, targets, and performance indicators entails cautious evaluation and understanding the aptitudes of the organisational means of production. The resources mentioned are either tangible or intangible assets. Tangible assets are plants, equipment, machinery, tools, infrastructure, work environment, and human resources, and intangibles are knowledge, skills, adaptability, and supplier relations.

Relevant

Objectives, targets, and performance indicators must be aligned with the overall vision and mission of the organisation. Objectives, targets, and performance indicators that are not aligned with the vision and mission of the organisation will result in confusion and misdirection.

Time-bound

Objectives, targets, and performance indicators must possess a timeframe to which it is anticipated to be achieved. This is significant when the organisation is evaluated whether it has successfully achieved its objectives. The time limits are set considering the environment where the change is expected to be attained, the expected latitude, and how it fits into the overall work plan.

4.7 The Impact of Employee Commitment on the Achievement of Organisational Strategic Objectives

Organisations find it difficult to function optimally in the current fluctuating commercial atmosphere and universal competition (Gul, 2015). Employee commitment is currently classified as a usual procedure for effective organisational performance and achieving strategic objectives (Biljana, Maja, Vinko, 2020). Most organisations try hard to tempt commitment among their employees (Gul, 2015). Therefore, it is no surprise that employee commitment is important in achieving an organisation's strategic objectives (Bae & Yang, 2017). On that note, employees must be afforded fair prospects of improving their skills and abilities (Gul, 2015). Programs for employee development give individuals opportunities for advancement and career growth. Activities of this kind in organisations foster more commitment amongst employees, which, in turn, affect the operation of organisations and achievement of strategic objectives (Biljana et al., 2020). In the current uncertain environment, sustaining committed employees is very important for organisational development because committed employees work very hard and execute their responsibilities with high devotion and dedication to achieve the organisation's goals (Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017).

The objective of organisational development is to expand its capability to increase efficiency and achieve its strategic objectives (Zin & Talet, 2016). Constructing organisational capability is achievable, especially when all employees understand their responsibilities and are accountable for the results that emanate from their performance (Zin & Talet, 2016). Commitment is the psychosomatic response of individuals, and it is impossible to achieve an organisation's strategic objective without employee commitment (Paunescu, Popescu & Blid, 2018). Organisational commitment is the process whereby all employees participate and ensure their daily responsibilities are performed with dedication and professionalism (Bae & Yang, 2017), therefore achieving organisational strategic objectives is unswervingly linked to employees' commitment (Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017). Committed employees could execute their responsibilities far higher than management expectations and a higher commitment level is vital for growing productivity and gaining maintainable modest advantages (Paunescu et al., 2018).

4.8 Impact of Ethical Leadership on the Achievement of Organisational Strategic Objectives

Currently, organisations need to go far above their normal routines, such as starting corporate social responsibility events (CSR) to win a favourable public image that finally improves organisational performance (Butt & Ayaz, 2016). Organisations are trying harder to enforce ethical leadership programs as a strategic tool simply because they have a helpful impact on the organisation's performance and the achievement of organisational strategic objectives (Ronald, 2021). When employees from within the organisation participate in unethical behaviour, such as fraud, it obstructs the path to organisational advancement (Adeoye, 2021). According to Ronald (2021), ethical leadership forms the basis for effective organisational management and achievement of strategic objectives, and this becomes a reality in countries with high corruption rates. Ethical leaders do not just issue instructions to employees; they also take part in the achievement of the desired results (Butt & Ayaz, 2016). Adeoye (2021), while comparing ethical leadership styles with genuine leadership, divine leadership, and transformational leadership styles, discovered resemblance and dissimilarity among them. All of them illustrate worry for others, make moral verdicts, display reliability and portray as a role model. At the same time, ethical leaders emphasise moral values and management and the other's cognisance, while genuine leaders, Divine and transformational leaders emphasise realness and self-awareness, belief and intellectual inspiration, respectively. Still, they all contribute to effective organisational performance and achievement of organisational strategic objectives (Butt & Ayaz, 2016).

Moreover, some other researchers, Nauman and Qamar (2018), who found a strong relationship between leadership behaviour and achievement of organisational strategic objectives. Researchers like Steyrer, Schiffinger and Lang (2008) attempted to find the intervening role of some other elements in the relationship between leadership conduct and organisational performance. In the study, they conducted on the impact of ethical leadership on the achievement of organisational strategic objectives, Khadimfar and Amiri (2015) established that ethical leadership does not only bring a progressive impact on the attitudes and behaviours of employees but also influences the performance of the organisation and achievement of organisational strategic objectives.

4.9 Research Questions

- To what extent does ethical leadership influence the achievement of strategic objectives?

- How does ethical leadership influence organisational commitment?
- What impact does organisational commitment have on the achievement of strategic objectives?
- What extent of mediation does organisational commitment have on ethical leadership and achievement of strategic objectives?

4.10 Relationship Between Constructs and Hypothesis Development

H_1: Ethical leadership (EL) positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives (SO).

Ethical leadership positively influence an organisation's performance in more competitive environments, which then helps these organisations to achieve their strategic objectives better (Feng, Wang, Lawton & Luo, 2019). Osmonova, Tilekova, Duishonbaeva, Kydykeeva and Abdullaeva (2021) indicate that the prime persistence of ethical leadership is to regulate manners and to set moral standards and values, as these elements affect the achievement of strategic objectives in a positive way. Ethical behaviours of leaders' upsurge employee commitment and performance in achieving the organisation's desired objectives (Laverty, 2019).

H_2: Ethical leadership (EL) positively influences organisational commitment (OC).

Leaders' ethical behaviours contribute to positive outcomes for organisations such as improved performance (Rea, Carter, Parfitt, Wilkerson & Valesky, 2017). Ethical leadership demonstrated by managers reduces the frequent occurrence of unethical conduct and intensifies extra-role behaviours of the followers (Hyland, 2020). The study by Cherré, Lemieux and Volkov (2024) indicated that ethical behaviour from the managers' side constructively affects job fulfilment and organisational commitment. If leaders possess the influence and aptitude to control and influence followers, they control employees' morale, enthusiasm, performance, and behaviours (Geddes, 2017). Additionally, ethical leadership is considered an important facet of sound organisational culture (Lurie, 2016). A rise in ethical leadership actions confidently affects personnel's commitment, organisational self-assurance, and personal relationships (Hyland, 2020).

H_3: Organisational commitment (OC) will positively affect the achievement of strategic objectives (SO).

H_{3a}: Affective commitment (AC) positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives (SO).

H_{3b}: Continuance commitment (CC) positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives (SO).

H_{3c}: Normative commitment (NC) positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives (SO).

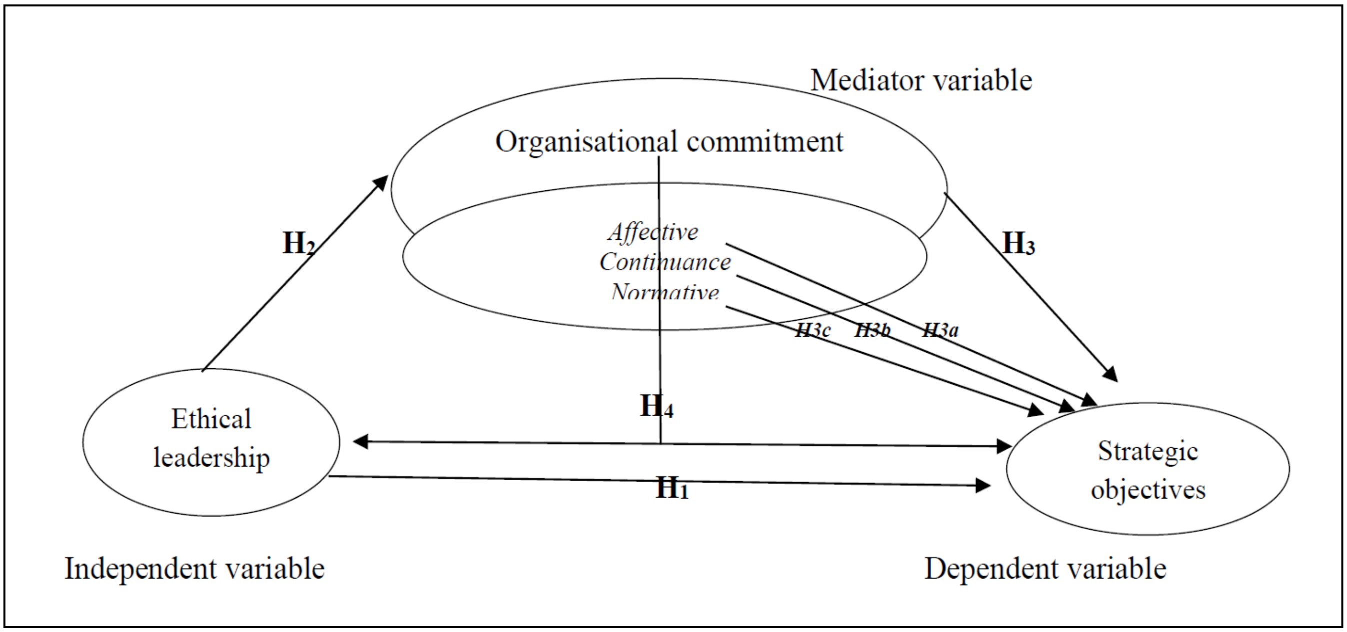
Organisational commitment results from ethical leadership (Michou, Mouratidis, Ersoy & Uğur, 2016). Oyewobi, Oke, Adeneye and Jimoh (2019) outline that to confirm organisational commitment, it is imperative to (i) acknowledge the standards and objectives of an organisation, (ii) to willingly give energy for the achievement of the interests of the organisation, and (iii) to have a desire to stay in the organisation. Likewise, Yue (2023) states that organisational identification, participation, devotion, and commitment are vital to achieving strategic objectives. Performance also rises with commitment in an organisation (Rong & Cao, 2015).

H_4: Organisational commitment (OC) has a mediator role in the relationship between ethical leadership (EL) and the achievement of strategic objectives (SO).

Ethical leadership has a significant effect on employees' commitment and performance. Furthermore, employee commitment positively influences the effect of ethical leadership on employees' job performance (Garima et al., 2024). Ethical leadership conducted by managers in the workplace increases employees' job satisfaction and performance and decreases the intention of employees to turn against the organisation (Shafique, Kalyar & Ahmad, 2018). Studies such as Yadav and Mizra (2015) investigated the facilitator liaison of organisational commitment between ethical leadership and organisational performance. These studies have concluded that organisational commitment efficiently facilitates the association between ethical leadership and organisational performance.

Figure 1

Research model (Author derived)



4.11 Conclusion

This chapter concludes by re-emphasizing that strategic planning is crucial for any organisation to achieve its short- and long-term goals. Especially with the fluctuations in the global economies, it has become even more important for companies to execute their strategies carefully. A significant aspect of strategic planning is to prepare for future challenges and be well-placed to accept the challenges brought by these changes. This is why a strategy should be more than capable of minimising the threats and maximising the opportunities brought about by the change. Furthermore, this chapter outline research objectives and hypotheses formulation.

Chapter 5
Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The focal point of the chapter is to describe the study setting, data collection procedures, measures of the variables in the conceptual model and the analytic procedures used to examine the strength of the hypotheses. The chapter further highlights the research paradigm, methodology, data instrument and analysis techniques. Following a review of the constructs in Chapter Two, relationships between ethical leadership and achieving strategic objectives, mediated by organisational commitment, were proposed for this research. A conceptual model with structural relations was deduced from the literature review to understand the nature of the relationship. Data was critically analysed, results were discussed, and conclusions and proposals for impending research were mentioned.

5.2 Research Design

The current study employed survey and case study research designs using a quantitative approach to analyse data and estimate results. Ponto (2015) has defined survey research as the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. Surveys produce solid quantities of people's opinions and behaviours used to make important decisions. Robert and Yin (2014) have defined a case study as an empirical research action whereby utilising multipurpose empirical material congregated in numerous diverse ways, scrutinises current events or actions in a restricted atmosphere and is anxious with defining real-life phenomena than creating normative statements and its focus is on individual’s behaviours, attributes, actions, and interactions. A case study is predominantly suitable for situations where it is dire to acquire a comprehensive understanding of a particular issue, incident, or interest phenomenon in its context and can be very useful in explaining, describing, or exploring events or phenomena (Hayden, 2022). Quantitative and correlation designs were also used to test hypotheses and the extent of the relationship between various variables. Furthermore, this study has utilised positivism as its philosophical approach. Positivism is based on experimental annotations which steer towards statistical scrutiny (Park, Konge & Artino, 2019). Positivism is characterised by the importance of observation and a belief in verification (Ayakpo, 2019), also known as logical positivism.

The rationale for using these methods aligns with Kohlberg's three levels of moral development underlying the study, which emphasises obedience and punishment; employees are obliged by moral conduct and must unquestionably be obeyed. It prohibits conduct outside the confines of the law because it will lead to punishment. It is grounded in social contracts and individual rights, and it does not support breaking the law because laws are social contracts that are agreed upon to be upheld until they can be changed by democratic means.

These methods, designs, and approaches are more flexible and relevant to this study's hypothetical and theoretical frameworks as they seek to test the extent of positive relationships between variables. The data collected was structured, described, interpreted, and analysed using descriptive design to establish the extent of correlation between variables. A descriptive layout has been utilised to summarise data in an organised manner in the study.

5.3 Research Approach

Understanding the strength of the relationship between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and achieving strategic objectives in the municipality was carried out by responding to a questionnaire. To obtain the relevant data, employees within the municipality with salary levels between 0 – 10 were targeted for the study. These participants were chosen because they are educationally qualified, report to senior personnel, and participate in policy reviews and strategic planning processes. The municipality was chosen as it was convenient for the researcher. The study was conducted during working hours as the employer approved to allocate 20 minutes of the municipality's time per participant. The appropriate research approach used in the study was quantitative.

5.4 Study Site

The study site was a municipality within the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa.

5.5 Target Population

Table 1

Population of the Study

Occupation	Salary level (SL)	Occupation category	Total number	Participation
Executive directors	0	Executive Committee	5	0
Directors	1	Senior Management Service	15	5
Deputy directors	2	Senior Management Service	9	11
Assistant directors	3	Middle Management Service	33	28
Coordinators	4	Skilled employees	30	27
Chief officers	5	Skilled employees	28	35
Senior officers	6	Skilled employees	36	32
Officers	7	Skilled employees	77	22
Chief clerk	8	Semi-skilled	28	25
Senior clerk/foreman	9	Semi-skilled	156	13
Clerk/Secretary	10	Semi-skilled	127	19
Total population			544	217

Population refers to an identifiable group of individuals the researcher may access easily (Michael, 2022). The target benefit population in this study is currently represented by educationally qualified employees who are between the range of salary levels 0 to 10. The total number of the target population is 544.

5.6 Sampling Strategy

A convenience sampling technique was adopted to derive the sample size. Showkat and Parveen (2017) emphasise that in convenience technique, the researcher uses participants that are convenient to him/her who fall within the population of the study.

5.7 Sampling Size

This study comprises of a sample size of 217 participants derived from a total population of 544 as per Sekaran's (2003) sample size table (Appendix 6). The sample size is a mathematical estimation of the number of subjects to participate in a study (Simarjeet, 2021). The sample of 217 excludes the unskilled occupational category of employees.

5.8 Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire was utilised to gather primary information directly from respondents identified using convenience sampling and was administered online. Other researchers have used this standardised measuring instrument in the past, but minor modifications have been made to suit the current research context. The questionnaire was administered online and included a participant information sheet (PIS) and consent form. Item EL6 has been reverse-coded. The high response rate was achieved because respondents widely knew the researcher through ethical conduct and good work behaviour. The study's objectives, questions and context advised the instruments' construction. A pre-test has been undertaken to determine the instrument's validity and reliability. Secondary data, such as books, journals, and articles, has also been utilised to collect the needed theoretical information. Secondary data has been defined by Kabir (2016) as data obtained from already published sources.

An indicator of a good survey instrument is its technical competence. Technical competence is an approach through which the instrument has been administered for such as a) it does not favour one participant over the other; b) it is cost-effective; c) it can be completed within a reasonable amount of time; d) and that all security and ethics matters have been properly implemented. The instrument is minimal risk and was adapted. It comprises four sections, namely:

Section A: Personal details, which include items of educational level, salary level of employee, salary level of manager/supervisor and job tenure. Section B: The ethical leadership scale has 23 items; it measures the degree of ethical behaviour. Participants must respond on a six-point scale, ranging from *strongly disagree (1)* to *strongly agree (6). "Defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained"* is an example of an item within the scale. Scores were summarised, and the highest scores demonstrated higher levels of ethical conduct. The 0.93 Cronbach's alpha reported was higher than the 0.6 recommended by Shazia and Uzma (2018), Kaiser, (1970, 1974). The ethical leadership items were adapted from Shazia and Uzma (2018) ‘Revision of Ethical Leadership Scale.’

Section C: The organisational commitment scale consists of three sub-scales: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment consists of 6 items and assesses affective commitment level. The responses are reported on a 4 point-scale which ranges from *not at all (1)* to *exactly (4).* An item example on the scale is *“I really feel as if this municipality’s problems are my own”.* Similarly, continuance commitment was assessed and consisted of 6 items. The responses are reported on a 4 point-scale which ranges from *not at all (1)* to *exactly (4).* An item example on the scale is *“Too much of my life would be disrupted if I leave my municipality”.* Lastly, normative commitment consisted of 6 items and assessed normative commitment. The responses are reported on a 4 point-scale which ranges from *not at all (1)* to *exactly (4)* as well. An item example on the scale is *“This municipality deserves my loyalty”.* The authors reported a reliability coefficient of 0.67, 0.53 & 0.67 respectively. These items were adopted from Alam (2011) ‘Evaluation of Allen and Meyer’s Organisational Commitment Scale: A Cross-Cultural Application in Pakistan’.

Section D: The strategic objectives scale has 27 items measuring the degree of setting and achieving strategic objectives. The responses are reported on a 5 point-scale which ranges from *strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).* An item example on the scale is *“The municipality has adopted itself a vision statement”*. A 0.97 Cronbach’s alpha was reported and provided validity within the ranges of 0.70 to 0.90 (Makalesi, 2022). The strategic objectives items were adapted from Makalesi's (2022) ‘Strategic plan perception scale; a scale development Study’.

Table 2

Demographic Values Used in the Study

Individual characteristics	Organisational characteristics
Educational level	Ethical leadership
Salary level of employees	Organisational commitment
	➢ Affective commitment
	➢ Continuance commitment
	➢ Normative commitment
Salary level of manager/supervisor	Strategic objectives
Tenure	

Demography in a study seek to determine the quantifiable data of certain population. This set of data is paramount important in a study and should be examined very prudently. The description of demographic variables is fundamental in establishing the relationship of variables and behaviour-analytic procedures (Jones, St Peter & Ruckle, 2020). The demographic variables of this study are indicated in table 2 above.

5.9 Data Quality Control

5.9.1 Data Cleaning and Screening

Table 3

Missing Data

Variables	Missing value count	Missing value %
EL1	1	0.5
EL9	1	0.5
AC1	1	0.5
AC2	1	0.5
AC4	1	0.5
CC3	1	0.5

The response to the questionnaire was 217 employees. The questionnaire was distributed online using Survey Monkey. An initial examination of the responses found no incomplete responses but a few missing data, therefore, no responses were excluded from the analysis. Data entry errors were avoided using SPSS's feature that defines acceptable values and labels for each variable. Missing data is when certain logical values are not offered to analyse certain variables (Mvula, 2018; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

5.9.2 Item Analysis

The reliability of the scales was determined through the calculation of Cronbach's alphas based on internal consistency and was calculated on both the standard correlation and the number of items (Nunnally, 1978). All items were subjected to item analysis using SPSS (V29) to classify and delete inadequate items. Furthermore, item sum correlations were also calculated to ensure the internal consistency of the measuring instruments. Item-sum correlations of > 0.20 were considered adequate, while those <0.20 were suitable for deletion (Mvula, 2018 & Nunnally, 1978).

5.9.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In this study, SPSS AMOS V29 has been utilised to conduct isolated confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) in the inner and outer models. The outcomes of this analysis are outlined per model in terms of significant fit indices, as elaborated in Chapter 6. The index of Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was observed as an initial test of model fit, and a partially acceptable (borderline) model fit (RMESA, 0.110) was obtained (See Table 7). This model was adopted, and more justification has been provided.

5.9.4 Path Analysis

Furthermore, a path analysis was undertaken through SPSS AMOS V29 to separate causal processes underlying a particular outcome. The overall analysis has shown moderate structural mode-fit; however, Hu and Bentler (1999) indicate that for model fit to be acceptable, it must be indicated by a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.90 and above; this study hoisted a CFI of 1.000. The model was therefore adopted (See Table 8).

5.10 Data Analysis

According to Thakur (2021), quantitative data is defined as analysing data based on numbers or can be converted into numbers without its meaning getting lost, and it informs decision-making. IBM SPSS Statistics version 29 for Windows was utilised to determine the intercorrelation between the variables of the study, descriptive statistics, and reliabilities, as well as SPSS AMOS V29 to determine model fit. The skewness and kurtosis indices have been used to measure the notion of normality (See Table 5). These values were within the acceptable range of -2 and +2 & -7 and +7, respectively, which indicates that the data is roughly normally dispersed (Hair et al., 2010). A mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro through a regression-based approach for SPSS by Hayes (2022) was also used.

5.11 Ethical Consideration

This research had abided by the rules set by the University of the Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Non-Medical. An ethical clearance certificate was acquired from the committee. Permission was also obtained from the municipality manager concerned to conduct the study in their organisation. The researcher had notified all participants about the implications of participating prior to participating, that their responses would be handled with strict anonymity, that under no circumstances would they be required to write their names anywhere on the questionnaire, and that participation is voluntary. The participants were also informed that participant information would be used for statistical purposes only. All respondents who participated had given consent.

5.12 Conclusion

The chapter depicts the design of the research, approaches, study site, population, and sampling strategy, including size, method of data collection, quality control of data, and analysis of data used in the construction of this paper. Quantitative and convenient research approaches were adopted to collect responses. 217 employees on salary levels (SL) 1 – 10 participated. Their responses were analysed quantitatively in response to questions about ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and strategic objectives. The description of the research design is in line with the reviewed literature and the background of the study.

Chapter 6
Results and Discussions

6.1 Introduction

To complete this study accurately, the collected data was analysed to ensure the research hypotheses and questions are answered. Therefore, data is interpreted in the descriptive format outlined in the previous chapter. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the findings. A single phase is used to analyse and interpret data based on the questionnaire responses and deals with quantitative analysis.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is defined as a brief graphic coefficient emanating from nominated data (Hayes, 2022), which can be clustered into measures of central tendency (such as the mode, median, and mean) and measures of validity and reliability. The statistics are summarised to clarify the data accumulated by reflecting the patterns that have emerged (Lund & Wang, 2021).

6.2.1 Demographic Statistics

Table 4

Demographic Frequency

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Senior certificate	7	3.2
Degree/Diploma	175	80.6
Honours	32	14.7
Masters	3	1.4
Salary level of employee	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Director	5	2.3
Deputy director	11	5.1
Assistant director	28	12.9
Coordinators	27	12.4
Chief officer	37	17.1
Senior officer	30	13.8
Officers	22	10.1

Chief clerk	25	11.5
Senior clerk/Foreman	13	6.0
Clerk/Secretary	19	8.8
Salary level of supervisor	Frequency	Percentage
Director	17	7.8
Deputy director	35	16.1
Assistant director	40	18.4
Coordinators	58	26.7
Chief officer	31	14.3
Senior officer	11	5.1
Officers	12	5.5
Chief clerk	8	3.7
Senior clerk/Foreman	1	0.5
Clerk/Secretary	4	1.8
Tenure	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	8	3.7
1 Year	6	2.8
2 Years	10	4.6
3 Years	12	5.5
4 Years	12	5.5
5 Years	26	12.0
6 Years	26	12.0
7 Years	18	8.3
8 Years	28	12.9
9 Years	18	8.3
More than 10 Years	53	24.4

The demographic profile consisted of four options: education, employee salary level, supervisor and tenure. The research consisted of 217 respondents. As indicated above, seven respondents, which represent 3.2%, have senior certificates; 175 respondents, which, represent 80.6%, have degrees/diplomas; 32 respondents, which represent 14.7%, have honours degrees, and three of the respondents, which represent 1.4%, have master’s degrees. The statistics above indicate that 210 out of 217 respondents (96.7%) are educationally qualified.

As depicted in table 4 above, all categories of employees participated fairly in the survey, and there was a high response rate in all categories of employees. The middle managers and skilled personnel category had the most participants because these categories of employees contribute a bigger percentage to the staff establishment of the municipality. Five respondents, representing 2.3% of the sampling size, are directors, and 11 respondents, representing 5.1% of the sampling size, are deputy directors which, in terms of the occupational category as indicated in Table 1, belong to senior management services (SMS) respectively, 28 respondents, which represents 12.9% of the sampling size are assistant directors, and fall within the middle management service (MMS), 27 respondents, which represents 12.4% of the sample size, are coordinators, 37 respondents, amounting to 17.1% are chief officers. In comparison, 30 respondents (13.8%) are senior officers, 22 respondents, representing 10.1%, are officers, 25 respondents, representing 11.5%, are chief clerks, 13 respondents, which represent 6% of the target population are senior clerks/foreman, and 19 of the respondents which represent 8.8% are clerks/secretaries. These fall within the skilled and semi-skilled occupational categories, as indicated in Table 1.

The table further shows the salary levels of supervisors in the municipality during the time of research. The scale had eleven items. 17 respondents have indicated that they report to executive directors (7.8%), 35 respondents have indicated that they report to directors (16.1%), 40 respondents report to deputy directors (18.4%), 58 respondents report to assistant directors, (26.7%), 31 respondents have indicated that they report to coordinators, (14.3%), 11 respondents report to chief officers, (5.1%), 12 respondents report to senior officers, (5.5%), eight respondents have indicated that they report to officers, (3.7%), one respondent has indicated to be reporting to a chief clerk, and four respondents have indicated that they report to senior clerks/foreman, which represents 0.8% of the sampling size. This category of employees participates in the municipality's strategic planning.

Most employees in the municipality have more than four years of tenure, which means that they have extensive experience in terms of understanding the different operating models of the municipality, 3.7% of the respondents have less than one year working for the municipality, 2.8% have one year, 4.6% have two years, 5.5% have three and four years working for the municipality respectively, 12% have five and six years respectively, 8.3% respondents have seven and nine years working for the municipality respectively, 12.9% have eight years, 8.3% have ten years, and

24.4% of respondents have indicated that they have more than ten years working for the municipality.

6.2.2 Variable Descriptive Statistics

Table 5

Variables Descriptive Statistics and Item Analysis

Scale	Sub-scale	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis		Cronbach's Alpha
				Stat	Std. Error	Stat	Std. Error	
EL		4.34	0.72	-0.936	0.165	2.101	0.329	0.964
OC	AC	1.86	0.49	-0.245	0.165	-0.150	0.329	0.687
	CC	1.98	0.63	0.775	0.165	1.035	0.329	0.811
	NC	2.04	0.57	0.722	0.165	0.781	0.329	0.756
SO		4.19	0.59	-0.201	0.165	-0.339	0.329	0.986

All scales were analysed to ensure internal consistency and SPSS (Version 29) was used. In terms of the analysis, the reliabilities of each scale were determined. To ensure reliability, Cronbach's alpha should be ≥ 0.55 (Hair et al, 1998; Hoe, 2008; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The Cronbach's Alphas above were deemed acceptable and used for further analysis in the study. The scales have confirmed that reliabilities are satisfactory (α and ω: .69 - .99) (See Table 5 above). Skewness (-0.936 to 0.775) and kurtosis (-0.339 to 2.101) values are also within an acceptable range (-2 and +2; -7 and +7) for all variables as per Hair et al. (2010), which means that the data is distributed correctly.

A corrected item-total correlation was an important consideration, as it indicates the degree of correlation between each item and the total score. Less than 0.20 values signify that the item may not measure the specific scale (Mvula, 2018 & Nunnally, 1978) and removing such an item was considered.

6.2.3 Reliability Results

Table 5 analyses the items for ethical leadership (EL). The scale has 23 items and shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.964. It shows that the scale is highly reliable. No items were below the

Cronbach's alpha of <0.70. The 23 items hoisted between (0.960 – 0.967) loaded above 0.70, indicating that no items were dumped for further analysis, that the data was reliable, and that results can be generalised.

Organisational commitment comprises three sub-scales: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Table 5 presents an item analysis for affective commitment (AC). The scale has six items and shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.687. This item signifies good reliability since no items have Cronbach's alpha of <0.55. All the six items (0.623 – 0.676) loaded above 0.55. This is good loading, as Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) indicated. The researcher has retained all six items for further analysis, which indicates that the data was reliable and that the results can be generalised.

Table 5 indicates item analysis for continuance commitment (CC). The scale comprises six items. It further shows a Cronbach's alpha of 0.811, which indicates excellent reliability. No items were below the Cronbach's alpha of <0.70. Every item (0.768 – 0.790) loaded above 0.70. This is excellent loading, as indicated by Hair et al. (1998) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). The researcher has retained all six items for further analysis, which indicates that the data was reliable and generalisable.

Table 5 presents item analysis results for the normative commitment (NC) sub-scale. The scale has six items with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.756. This shows very good reliability. All items were loaded (0.674 – 0.843), so no items were dropped for further analysis. Furthermore, this implies that the collected data was consistent and can be generalised to the entire population.

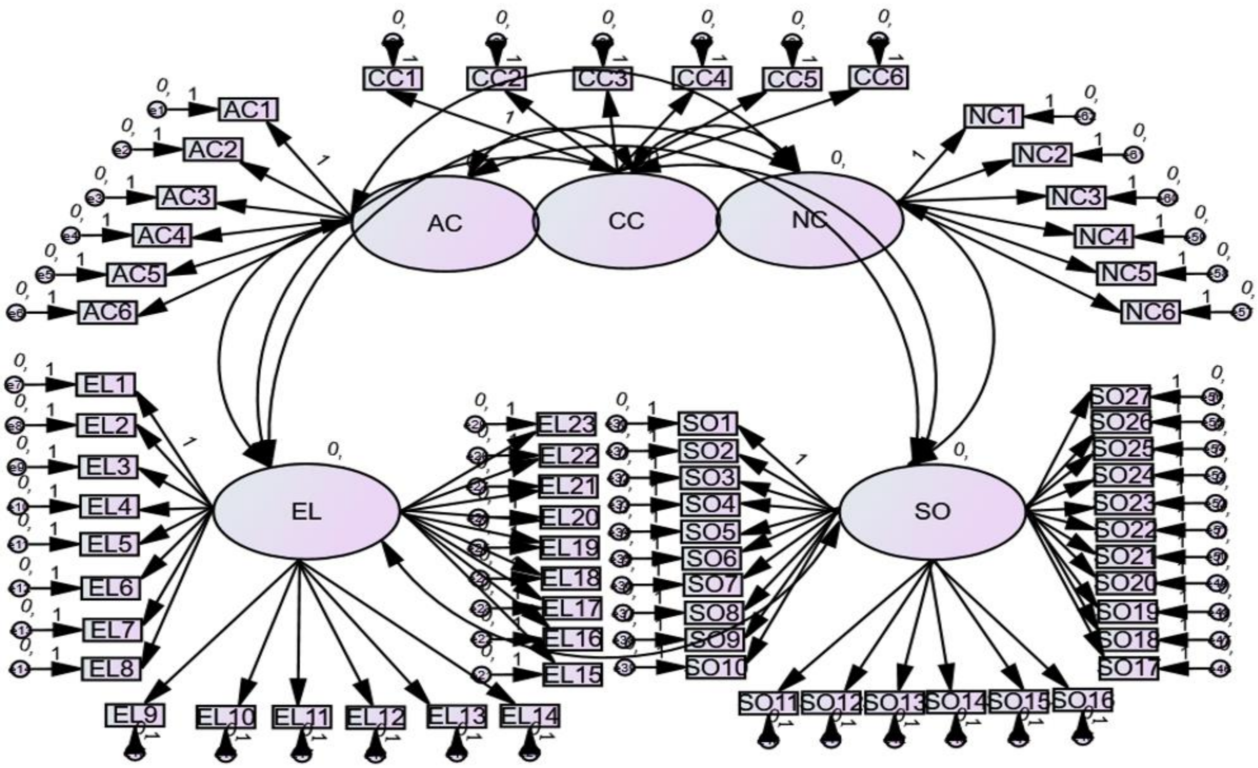
Table 5 shows Cronbach's alpha value of 0.986 for strategic objectives (SO). The scale consists of 27 items, showing excellent reliability, where all items are hoisted above 0.70. Therefore, all items were retained. Cronbach's alpha values imply that the collected data was reliable, and its results can be generalisable to the population.

6.2.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The study used a CFA to analyse latent variables, which do not have measurement errors, as required by the practice of standard academics (Kenny et al., 2016). CFA measures a huge amount of data to make it more controllable and logical (Rhoades et al., 2019). This analysis has also been used to create standard regression weights from the five constructs as per the conceptual model of this study. Convergent validity was also measured using the standardised regression weights (factor loadings). The confirmatory factor analysis results are indicated below from 217 respondents (See Appendix 9).

Figure 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model



Convergent validity was assessed using the standardised regression weights. Convergent validity refers to the closeness of the relation of the new scale to other variables and measures of a similar construct (Wenger, Luzi & Rafi, 2021). The results of the factor loadings acquired from the confirmatory factor analysis are expressed in appendix 9. Factor loadings greater than 0.5 signify significance or acceptability (Cho et al., 2015). Most factor loadings from this study are 0.5 or higher, meaning the items are within the required standard and are acceptable, supporting convergent validity (See Appendix 9).

Measuring the discriminant validity was the second phase. This method determines the exclusiveness of the constructs from other constructs by empirical standards (Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph & Chong, 2017). This study used the AVE to assess the discriminant validity implied by Ab Hamid, Sami and Sidek (2017) and correlations among latent variables were compared with square roots of average variance extricated (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Discriminant validity is determined when the AVE square root (1.000) from the construct is higher than the correlation assigned between the construct and other constructs (0.469 to -0.166) (Mvula, 2018). To attain discriminant validity, initial cross-loadings of items must match their constructs and be greater than the other constructs (Khan & Mohsin, 2017; Vigneron et al., 2017). Table 6 below indicates that the associations between latent constructs as compared with the AVE square root are all higher than the associations among latent constructs, suggesting adequate discriminant validity (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

Table 6

Discriminant Validity

	EL (Ave)	AC (Ave)	CC (Ave)	NC (Ave)	SO (Ave)
EL (Ave)	1.000				
AC (Ave)	.120	1.000			
CC (Ave)	.134	.461	1.000		
NC (Ave)	.242	.277	.469	1.000	
SO (Ave)	.208	-.080	-.166	.002	1.000

Table 7

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Fit

Indices of Model Fit	Target	Outcome of study	Description
CMIN	-	7931.239	-
DF	-	2200	-
CMI/DF	Between 1 - 4	3.6	Acceptable
IFI	Greater than 0.8	0.679	Partially acceptable
TLI	Greater than 0.8	0.654	Partially acceptable
CFI	Greater than 0.8	0.676	Partially acceptable
RMSEA	Between 0.08 & 0.1	0.110	Partially acceptable (Borderline)

CFA is used to confirm the measurement model, the first step in Sequential Equation Modelling (SEM). This study has used it to confirm or reject the measurement theory. After confirmation of the model, SEM was used to measure the goodness of fit, as well as Chi-Square, IFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA. CFA was performed on all six scales. The aim was to establish the fit between the measurement model and the obtained data. As indicated in table 7 above, the outcome confirmed a moderate/partial fit for the measurement model. However, the model has been adapted for use in this study.

Chi-square is a statistical component used to test relations amongst definite variables (Chen, 2022). A poor fit is demonstrated by a value <1, and >4 indicates that improvement is desired in the model (Mvula, 2018). The CFA model indicates a good fit at 3.6. IFI is a wide variety of indices that do not use chi-square in its direct model but compare the chi-square to a baseline model (Van Laar & Braeken, 2022). The mandatory threshold for IFI to ensure a good fit is 0.80 (Abedi, Jaberipur & Sangsefidi, 2015). This study hoisted an IFI of 0.679, which is too close to the threshold of 0.80, and it is within close fit considering that the constructs that have been measured displayed good reliability and validity results. The TLI is not sensitive to sampling size (Cangur & Ercan, 2015). A TLI of 0.80 and above indicate a good fit (Omprakash, 2021). The results of this study are 0.654, which is close to the threshold of 0.80. However, they meet the close fit as the constructs measured had already illustrated good reliability and validity. The CFI supposes that the dormant variables are unrelated and compares the sample covariance matrix with this null model (Fan et al., 2016). CFI figures between 0.95 and 1 depict a perfect fit; from 0.90 to 0.95 signifies a good fit (Finch, 2020), and 0.80 implies an acceptable fit (Abedi et al., 2015). The CFI of this study signifies a partial fit of 0.676, which is close to 0.80. The RMSEA is the "badness of fit" index quantifying the level of proximity fit (Hallquist, 2019). RMSEA values that are >0.01 reflect poor, 0.08 and 0,1 acceptable borderline, 0.05 to 0.07 are well-thought-out to be good, and 0.01 and 0.04 are counted as excellent (MacCallum et al., 1996). The RMSEA is 0.110 signifying a borderline model fit (See Table 7 above).

6.2.5 Path Analysis

Figure 3

Path Analysis Model

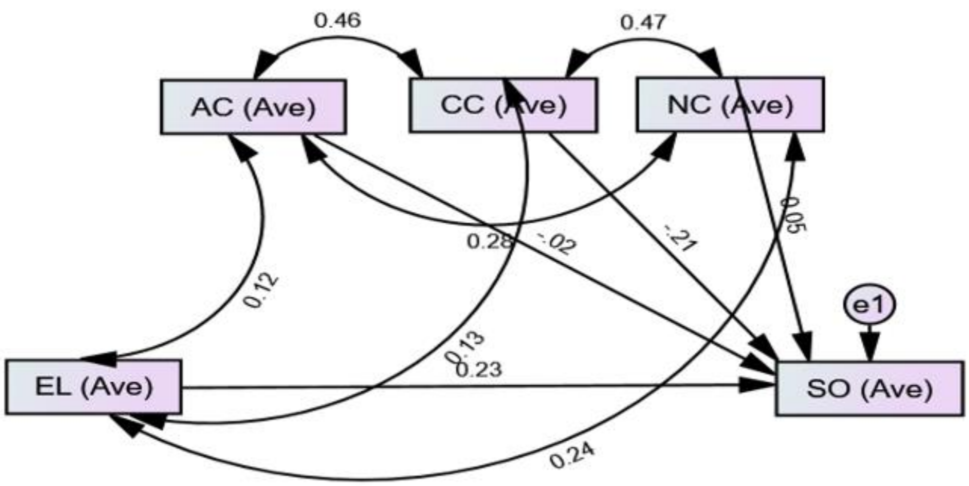


Table 8

Model Fit with Path Analysis

Measure	Estimate/outcome	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	0.000	-	-
DF	0	-	-
CMIN/DF	0.000	Between 1 & 4	Bad
CFI	1.000	Greater than 0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.000	Less than 0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.245	Less than 0.06	Poor
PClose	0.000	Greater than 0.05	Poor

Table 9

Standardised Regression Weights

Parameter	Estimate
SO <--- EL	0.226
SO <--- NC	0.052
SO <--- CC	-0.210
SO <--- AC	-0.024

The effects of a set of variables acting on a stated outcome past multiple causal pathways are evaluated through path analysis (Garbers et al., 2022). This study's hypotheses, path coefficients and p-values were verified per the best academic practice (Greenland et al., 2016; Meyer et al., 2017). The proposed hypotheses were tested using path analysis in AMOS 29, employing 2000 resample bootstrap at 95CIs as indicated in Tables 8 and 9. The analysis has shown moderate/partial structural model fit: X^2=0.000, df=0, X^2/df =0.000. CFI = 1.000, SRMR = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.245 and PClose = 0.000. The analysis has shown that ethical leadership is associated with strategic objectives (β=0.226). Hence, we accept hypothesis 1. Secondly, the analysis shows that organisational commitment represented by three sub-hypotheses has a strong negative relation to strategic objectives (β=0.052, β-0.210, & β-0.024). Hence, hypothesis 3, 3a, 3b and 3c was rejected.

Jöreskog (1969) indicated in the research paper that presented path analysis and chi-square that models must be given room to fail the chi-square test, especially if the models are nontrivial and with a large sample size, as is the case in this study *(*N=217). Cruddas (2013) indicated that there are severe limitations in the use of these models. First, these tests assume multivariate ordinariness and rigorous variations from normality may result in the rejection of the model even when correctly specified (McIntosh et al., 2014). The second one is based on the fact that, since the Chi-Square is a statistically significant trial, sometimes it is sensitive to the sampling size, which sometimes rejects the model when large sampling has been utilised (Hooper, 2008; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Conversely, when a small sample has been utilised, it often lacks capability and may not show good judgement among good or poor-fitting models (Kenny & McCoach, 2003).

6.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 10

Correlation Analysis Between All Variables

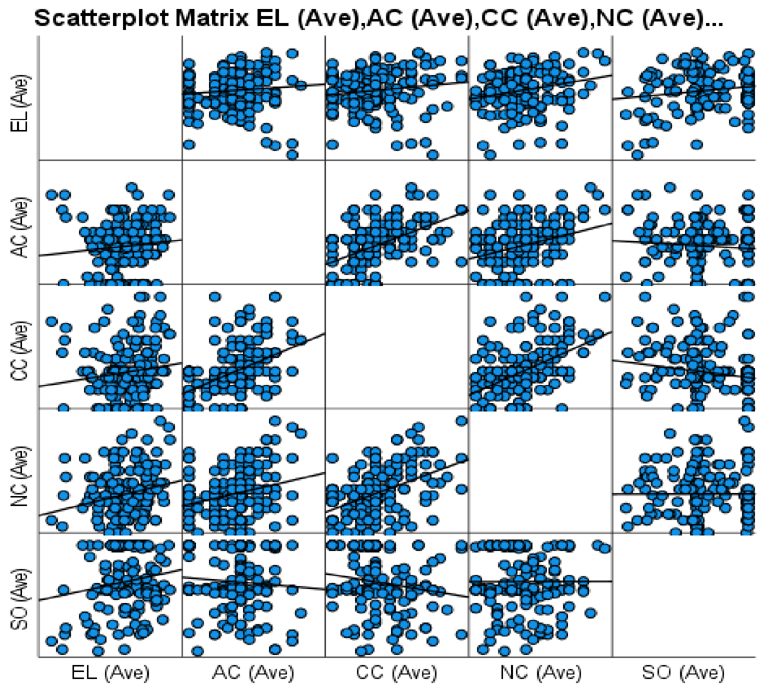
		EL	AC	CC	NC	SO
EL	*Pearson correlation*	1				
	Sig. (2 tailed)					
	N	217				
AC	*Pearson correlation*	.120	1			
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.077				
	N	217	217			
CC	*Pearson correlation*	.134*	.461**	1		
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.049	<.001			
	N	217	217	217		
NC	*Pearson correlation*	.242**	.277**	.469**	1	
	Sig. (2 tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		
	N	217	217	217	217	
SO	*Pearson correlation*	.208**	-.080	-.166*	.002	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.002	.244	.014	.976	
	N	217	217	217	217	217

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

A correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between all variables, as presented in table 10 above. The above table shows a weak positive association between ethical leadership and strategic objectives (r=0.208, p=0.002). The results further indicate a weak positive association between ethical leadership and affective commitment (r=0.120, p=0.077). Similarly, there was a weak positive relationship between ethical leadership and continuance commitment (r=0.134, p=0.049) and a weak positive correlation between ethical leadership and normative commitment (r=0.242, p<.001). Furthermore, affective commitment has a strong negative relation to strategic objectives (r= -0.080, p=0.244), and continuance commitment also had a weak negative association with strategic objectives (r= -0.166, p=0.014). Lastly, a weak association exists between normative commitment and strategic objectives (r=0.002, p=0.976).

Figure 4

Scatter Plot Matrix for All Variables



As indicated above, the figure demonstrates the scatter plot for all the variables. This illustrates how one variable is influenced by the other and how independent variables affect dependent variables. If the dots are scattered concurrently in the middle close to each other, this demonstrates that the two variables are weakly associated with one another. When the dots make an upward straight line when plotted, the correlation between these two variables is higher. These variables have a positive relationship when the dots start from the origin out to high on both the x and y axes. In this diagram, the dots go slightly upward, downward, and straightforward, meaning there is a weak positive and negative correlation. Therefore, the variables shown in Figure 4 above have weak positive and weak negative associations.

6.4 Regression Analysis

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to test the strength of the hypotheses. These hypotheses state that ethical leadership has a positive influence on the achievement of strategic objectives, ethical leadership has a positive influence on organisational commitment, organisational commitment has a positive influence on the achievement of strategic objectives, and organisational commitment has a mediator role in the relationship between ethical leadership and achievement of strategic objectives. This chapter has tested the correlation of these variables and determined that these variables are weakly positively related and weakly negatively related. This next section will determine the extent of association between these variables. Foley (2018) has indicated that to determine regression analysis, you must first define the dependent variable, which depends on one or several independent variables.

6.4.1 The Influence of Controls (Ethical Leadership, Organisational Commitment) on the Achievement of Strategic Objectives

Table 11

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.290[a]	.084	.067	.57401122703

a. *Predictors: (Constant), NC, EL, AC, CC.*

The model summary above indicated a coefficient of determination (R^2) under model one of 0.084, which means that this model explains 8% variation in achieving strategic objectives, with 92% remaining unexplained.

Table 12

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.399	4	1.600	4.855	<.001[b]
	Residual	69. 852	212	.329		
	Total	76.250	216			

a. *Dependent Variables: SO*
b. *Predictors: Constant, NC, EL, AC, CC*

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) has also been used to determine the significance level of the stepwise regression model (See table 12). In the model, the F-value (4,212) = 4.855, $P<0.001$ was acquired, accounting for 8% of the variation in achieving strategic objectives. This means the model is statistically significant at $P<0.001$.

Table 13

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.717	.273		13.625	<.001
	EL	.186	.056	.226	3.333	.001
	AC	-.029	.090	-.024	-.329	.742
	CC	-.199	.077	-.210	-2.594	.010
	NC	.054	.079	.052	.687	.493

a. Dependant Variable: SO

The study also examined how well each variable contributed to achieving strategic objectives (See Table 13). Ethical leadership demonstrated significant interactions with the achievement of strategic objectives. Ethical leadership obtained a positive beta value of 0.226, interacting with achieving strategic objectives. At the same time, organisational commitment hoisted a negative beta value of (-0.024, -0.210, 0.052), interacting with achieving strategic objectives. Therefore, hypotheses 3, 3_a, 3_b and 3_c are unsupported. The most important predictor of achievement of strategic objectives is ethical leadership, which hoisted a 22% variation in the dependent variable. Together, the three variables accounted for 8% variance in achieving strategic objectives.

6.5 Mediation

Table 14

Indirect Effect of EL on SO Through AC

	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.4999	.2034	7.3744	.0000	1.0990	1.9008
EL	.0820	.0462	1.7740	.0775	-.0091	.1732

	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.6372	.2689	13.5239	.0000	3.1071	4.1673
EL	.1813	.0550	3.2945	.0012	.0728	.2897
AC	-.1275	.0806	-1.5830	.1149	-2863	.0313

Ethical leadership and affective commitment represented by *(a)* are statistically insignificant at 0.077, which is greater than 0.000, with a 1% (R-sq=0.014) change in affective commitment being influenced by ethical leadership (b=0.082, t=1.774, p=0.077), while affective commitment and strategic objectives represented by *(b)* were also found to be statistically insignificant (b=-0.127, t=-1.583, p=0.114). Ethical leadership and strategic objectives represented by *(c)* are significant (b=0.181, t=3.294, p=0.001). Therefore, the indirect effect of ethical leadership on strategic objectives through affective commitment is not statistically significant at -0.191 (See table 14 above).

Table 15

Indirect Effect of EL on SO Through CC

	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.4728	.2573	5.7237	.0000	.9656	1.9800
EL	.1157	.0585	1.9782	.0492	.0004	.2310

	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.7221	.2542	14.6430	.0000	3.2210	4.2231
EL	.1925	.0543	3.5440	.0005	.0854	.2996
CC	-.1875	.0628	-2.9877	.0031	-.3112	-.0638

Ethical leadership and continuance commitment represented by *(a)* are statistically insignificant at 0.049, which is greater than 0.000, with a 2% (R-sq=0.017) change in continuance commitment being predisposed by ethical leadership (b=0.115, t=1.978, p=0.049), furthermore, continuance commitment and strategic objectives represented by *(b)* are also statistical insignificant as well (b=-0.187, t=-2.987, p=0.003), while ethical leadership and strategic objectives represented by *(c)* are statistically significant (b=0.192, t=3.544, p=0.000). Therefore, the indirect effect of ethical leadership on strategic objectives through continuance commitment is statistically insignificant at -0.213 (See table 15 above).

Table 16

Indirect Effect of EL on SO Through NC

	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.2099	.2300	5.2596	.0000	.7565	1.6633
EL	.1913	.0523	3.6576	.0003	.0882	.2944

	Coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.5104	.2564	13.6901	.0000	3.0050	4.0158
EL	.1810	.0566	3.2006	.0016	.0695	.2925
NC	-.0533	.0716	-.7449	.4572	-.1943	.0877

Ethical leadership and normative commitment denoted by *(a)* is statistically significant at 0.000, with 6% (R-sq=0.058) change in it being explained by ethical leadership (b=0.191, t=3.657, p=0.000), whilst again normative commitment and strategic objectives represented by *(b)* are as well not statistically significant (b=-0.053, t=-0.744, p=0.457), additionally, ethical leadership and strategic objectives represented by *(c)* are statistically significant at (b=0.181, t=3.200, p=0.001). Therefore, the indirect effect of ethical leadership on strategic objectives through normative commitment is not statistically significant at -0.191 (See table 16 above).

6.6 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Table 17

Results

No	Hypothesis	Results
H1	Ethical leadership positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives.	Accepted
H2	Ethical leadership positively influences organisational commitment.	Accepted
H3	Organisational commitment will have a positive effect on the achievement of strategic objectives.	Not accepted
	(H3a) Affective commitment positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives	Not accepted
	(H3b) Continuance commitment positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives	Not accepted
	(H3c) Normative commitment positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives.	Not accepted
H4	Organisational commitment has a mediator role in the relationship of ethical leadership and achievement of strategic objectives	Not accepted

Table 17 above indicate the summary of results of the study. Seven hypotheses were formulated as indicated in the above table, rigorous statistical analyses were conducted using stepwise multiple regression, pearson's correlation, path analysis and mediation analysis. The results indicated that H1 and H2 were accepted while H3, H_{3a}, H_{3b}, H_{3c} and H4 were not accepted.

Chapter 7
Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study aimed to research the strength of the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment and achievement of strategic objectives. With the findings presented in the previous chapter and the literature reviewed in the foreground, the following chapter will discuss insights into the key themes that emerged. The empirical findings emanating from the survey in the previous chapter will be linked with the objectives and hypotheses of the study to determine if the study has achieved its purpose. Furthermore, recommendations are presented to address the prevalent ethical dilemma in South African municipalities.

A detailed literature review was conducted to respond to the research questions; a comprehensive literature review was carried out in Chapters 2 - 4. The main purpose was to discuss ethical leadership's influence on achieving strategic objectives via organisational commitment and apply them to all municipalities across South Africa. The conceptual framework has been tested from pre-conventional, and post-conventional morality theories. In the conceptual framework, four hypotheses were formulated to directly or indirectly influence the achievement of the strategic objectives. A survey was performed using a questionnaire to respond to the questions. Therefore, four hypotheses and three sub-hypotheses were tested based on the conceptual model. The discussion will, therefore, focus on examining the outcome of these hypotheses in line with the research questions. The hypotheses were: H1, H2, H3, *H3a, H3b, H3c* and H4.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study's research objectives aimed at ensuring that the measurement scales used to assess the relationships were reliable, valid, and normally distributed. Confirmatory factor and path analysis were performed to assess whether the measurement and the overall structural model displayed acceptable model fit. Furthermore, skewness and kurtosis were used to determine the normal distribution of items. The key findings are discussed in the following section.

In terms of hypothesis 1, *"Ethical leadership (EL) positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives (SO)",* and objective 1*, "To explore the perception of ethical leadership* *influence on the achievement of strategic objectives*", stepwise multiple regression was used to investigate the effect. Ethical leadership obtained a positive beta value of 0.226 interacting effect with the achievement of strategic objectives, which indicates that the extent of influence of ethical leadership on achieving strategic objectives is 22% variation. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation analysis was also conducted, and there was a positive association between ethical leadership and strategic objectives (r=0.208, p=0.002). Lastly, PATH analysis was also conducted to determine the extent of the relationship, and a positive relationship was obtained (β=0.226). These findings indicate that ethical leadership positively influences the achievement of strategic objectives. These findings are consistent with Abun et al. (2023), who found a positive effect of ethical leadership on employees' work performance.

Furthermore, results show that managers follow procedures and rules when executing their responsibilities in the municipality and that their actions reflect their moral beliefs; they value the ethically valued behaviour of employees and set examples on how to do things the right way in terms of ethics. Ethics in municipalities are an important aspect of clean governance and significantly contribute to effective service delivery and achieving strategic objectives. Ethical leadership practice is required to alleviate protests, curb corruption, and ensure a clean audit outcome. According to Gomez (2022), good leadership behaviour inspires a lot of employee-related results. Many researchers, such as Khuong and Nhu (2015) and Coetzer, Bussin and Geldenhuys (2017), have indicated that employee performance can be improved if capable and good leaders lead organisations. Ellahi et al. (2022) outlined the effect of effective leadership, which helps employees differentiate and enhance their contributions to ensure organisational success. The research study by Ellahi et al. (2022) has further demonstrated that employees' performance can be strengthened by ensuring good leadership. Leaders use their behaviour to influence improved performance from their subordinates to achieve organisational objectives.

In terms of hypothesis 2, "*Ethical leadership (EL) positively influences organisational commitment (OC)*", and objective 2, *"To determine the perception of how ethical leadership influence organisational commitment".* Pearson's correlation analysis was used to investigate the effect. The results further indicate a weak positive association between ethical leadership and affective commitment (r=0.120, p=0.077). Similarly, there was a weak positive relationship between ethical leadership and continuance commitment (r=0.134, p=0.049) and a weak positive correlation between ethical leadership and normative commitment (r=0.242, p<.001). These results indicate that ethical leadership positively influences organisational commitment. These findings are consistent with Danish et al. (2020), who found a positive effect of ethical leadership on organisational commitment.

Furthermore, the results indicate that managers seek to create bonds and harmony in the municipality, protect everyone's dignity, and involve employees in decision-making. Leaders who believe in ethics are hands-on in the sense that they set ethical morals and encourage them to the followers: leaders who are ethical assume ‘‘proactive exertions to inspire employees’’ and are regarded as ‘‘pre-emptive role replicas for conduct deemed principled’’ (Kaptein, 2019). Eva et al. (2019) state that ethical leadership intensifies collective values and integrity in employees when executing business transactions. The study further states that principled character from managers fosters intense pride and obligation to the organisation; it also assists in moulding how employees observe their work.

In terms of hypothesis 3, "*Organisational commitment (OC) will have a positive effect on the achievement of strategic objectives (SO)"*, and objective 3, *"To discover the perception of organisational commitment on the achievement of strategic objectives".* Pearson's correlation analysis was used to investigate the effect. The results indicate that affective commitment has a strong negative relation to strategic objectives ($r= -0.080$, $p=0.244$), continuance commitment also had a weak negative association with strategic objectives ($r= -0.166$, $p=0.014$), and lastly, there is a poor association between normative commitment and strategic objectives ($r=0.002$, $p=0.976$). Furthermore, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect. Organisational commitment hoisted a negative beta value of -0.024, -0.210, 0.052 interacting effect with achieving strategic objectives.

Furthermore, PATH analyses indicated a negative relationship of organisational commitment on strategic objectives ($\beta=0.052$, β-0.210, & β-0.024). These results indicate that organisational commitment harms the achievement of strategic objectives. The lack of organisational commitment in the municipality has led to unqualified audit opinions in the 2016/2017, 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 financial years, respectively, leading to community protests and cases of unethical conduct with law enforcement agencies. These findings are consistent with those of Huey Yiing and Zaman Bin Ahmad (2009), who found no relationship between organisational commitment and organisational performance.

Results indicate that employees are not obligated to remain in the municipality, and they wouldn’t feel guilty if they left the municipality. Organisations use commitment to gauge employee attitudes regarding emotional attachment to the organisation, absenteeism, and performance. Commitment to the organisation is associated with variation in anticipated job results, including job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Followers who feel committed to an organisation usually devise a logic of resolution to support them in advancing the goals and objectives of the organisation (Tuna et al., 2016). Followers who are deeply committed to the organisation exercise excessive energy, desire organisational identity, tend to safeguard the organisation's assets and are not ashamed to share the goals and values of the organisation with the public (Effiong, 2017). Committed employees associate themselves with the organisation's strategic objectives and ensure support to achieve these objectives through emotional attraction. They have indicated that the main reason for not being committed is that managers do not acknowledge ethical valued behaviour (corruption), do not expect employees to make mistakes, and find it difficult to solve ethical problems when the leaders are away. Furthermore, they have indicated that they do not have any affective, continuance or normative commitment to the municipality.

In terms of hypothesis 4, “*Organisational commitment (OC) has a mediator role in the relationship of ethical leadership (EL) and achievement of strategic objectives (SO)”*, and objective 4, *“To determine the extent of mediation that organisational commitment has on ethical leadership and achievement of strategic objectives”.* Mediation analysis was conducted to determine the effect. Therefore, the indirect effect of ethical leadership on strategic objectives through affective, continuance and normative commitment were as follows -0.191, -0.214, and -0.191. These results indicate that organisational commitment has no mediator role in the relationship between ethical leadership and achieving strategic objectives.

Results indicate that employees do not feel like part of the municipality's family, and do not feel emotionally attached to the municipality. A workforce with increased confidence in executing their responsibilities possesses a high affective commitment (Noraazian & Khalip, 2016). Qureshi (2020) stated that no organisation can realise its strategic objectives in the contemporary business climate if it does not use its employees optimally. Employee commitment is currently classified as a procedure for effective organisational performance and achieving strategic objectives (Biljana et al., 2020). Commitment is the psychosomatic response of individuals, and it is only possible to achieve an organisation's strategic objective with employee commitment (Paunescu et al., 2018). Organisational commitment is the process whereby all employees participate and ensure their daily responsibilities are performed with dedication and professionalism (Bae & Yang, 2017), therefore achieving organisational strategic objectives is unswervingly linked to employees' commitment (Zefeiti & Mohamad, 2017). Committed employees could execute their responsibilities far higher than management expectations, and a higher commitment level is vital for growing productivity and gaining maintainable modest advantages (Paunescu et al., 2018).

7.3 Contribution of the Study

7.3.1 Theoretical Contribution

The current study contributes to the literature in several ways. Firstly, investigating the relationship between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and achievement of strategic objectives contributes to the literature on ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and strategic objectives. Secondly, these findings will assist leaders of institutions on the importance of a robust ethical leadership culture and practice in their institutions, as indicated by the results in the previous chapter, that ethical leadership has a positive effect on both organisational commitment and achievement of strategic objectives. Finally, regarding the theories, the study findings support all theoretical frameworks surrounding the study.

7.3.2 Overall Contribution

While offering appreciation for the significance of all theories of ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and strategic objectives, employee commitment is the most critical factor affecting the achievement of strategic objectives. The findings of this study will help municipal managers design robust ethical leadership interventions and practices to enhance employee commitment to improve organisational performance. This can be done by establishing a dedicated ethics office, which will be responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the ethics strategy. The office will further implement Continuous Employee Engagement on Ethics and its impact on Employee Commitment (CE^{4}C), incorporating Kohlberg’s three levels of moral development. Overall, these outcomes advance the knowledge of ethical leadership by testing theory and offering new observed evidence to explain the interactions between ethical leadership and organisational commitment and its direct effect on the municipality's performance. It is important to mention that most studies have focused on the traditional relationship between ethical leadership and organisational commitment. However, this study sought to determine the extent of influence these variables bear on achieving strategic objectives and, therefore, represents an important contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

This study provides insight into managing employees in a principled way. It offers insight into how employee commitment relates to achieving strategic objectives. Firstly, ethical leadership practices positively influence employee behaviour, which in turn affects the achievement of strategic objectives. In terms of the adverse mediation results, mechanisms, as suggested above, should be sought to find ways to influence employee commitment positively. Adverse employee behaviour has a negative effect on the achievement of strategic objectives; hence, managers should urgently affect the mechanism. The study has shown that ethical leadership and organisational commitment are not mutually independent, consistent with Kohlberg's three levels of moral development and the virtue theory. There are variations explained by each other; consequently, municipalities should develop and implement employee moral development initiatives contingent on ethical leadership. Pre-conventional morality requires leaders to ensure ethical conduct when they discharge their official responsibilities; they must always exercise their duties within the confines of the law. Conventional morality requires leaders to show good behaviour and decent intentions. On the other hand, post-conventional morality does not support breaking the law because laws are social contracts that are agreed upon to be upheld until they can be changed by democratic means. Virtue theory indicates that a moral actor will base his or her decisions on ingrained values. Therefore, displaying ethical behaviour, decent intentions and relational feelings towards subordinates, abiding by the law, and adhering to contracts are good determinants for effective and efficient organisational performance.

Leaders should give employees continuous feedback and appreciation for achieving strategic objectives. Employees' feedback on individual contributions to the broader organisational objectives positively influences their conduct. Furthermore, employee commitment may also be achieved through performance-related incentives.

7.4 Limitations

This study has been subject to a few limitations, such as employees' reluctance to complete the questionnaire, which made the researcher deviate from the original timeframes. It took four months to get all the responses. Employees might have also answered what they think will make them good; however, that will not significantly impact the conclusion as item analysis was extensively done. The other limitation is that the research site is an ex-employee of the researcher. Therefore, this might have response bias based on the researcher's relationship with the employees.

The survey was limited to semi-skilled to executive employees, and to get more insight into the subject matter, future studies should consider taking it further to unskilled categories of employees as these are the most long-serving employees. Therefore, further studies should be done considering such factors. However, the results of this study are still generalisable, and they can be good examples and lessons for all municipalities in South Africa. If ethical leadership positively affects organisational commitment and the achievement of strategic objectives in the municipality, it should, therefore, hold the same meaning as the rest of the municipalities. The other limitation is that model fit indices had a moderate fit.

7.5 Conclusion

The study has shown a meaningful relationship between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and the achievement of strategic objectives. These results make a meaningful contribution to the literature by providing more insights into the relationship's strengths among the studied latent variables. Practically, it presents valuable management insights on viable interventions to create and promote a good organisational climate.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Shabangu

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H22/11/79**
PROJECT TITLE	Ethical leadership and organisational commitment as key determining factors of strategic objectives: A case study of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr S Shabangu
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Business Sciences/
DATE CONSIDERED	25 November 2022
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	16 February 2026

DATE 17 Febraury 2023 **CHAIRPERSON** ____________________ (Professor J Watermeyer)

cc: Supervisor : Dr S Boodhoo

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **A SIGNED COPY** returned to the Secretary electronically. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. **I/we agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low Risk studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.**

____
Signature

17 / 02 / 2023
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix 2: Letter Granting Permission to Conduct Research

Steve Tshwete
Local Municipality

PO Box 14 | Middelburg | 1050
Cnr Walter Sisulu Str & Wanderers Ave
Middelburg | Mpumalanga
T: +27 (0)13 249 7000 | F: +27 (0)13 243 2550
council@stlm.gov.za

Your reference: **Our reference: (MM/nm)10/2/2/5**

Mr. S Shabangu
Student No. 1033800
Master of Commerce
School of Business Science
University of Witwatersrand

Dear Mr Shabangu

RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT A STUDY AT STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

1. The above-mentioned subject bears reference and your request dated 25 October 2022 refers.
2. On the 4th of November 2022, this office received a request from the above-mentioned student, to conduct a study on Ethical Leadership and Organisational Commitment as a key determining factors to the achievement of strategic objectives. .
3. Permission is therefore granted to Mr S. Shabangu as per the request, to conduct research as part of her studies for academic year 2023.
4. It will be appreciated if findings or conclusions of the research can be shared with this office after completion in order for us to improve our services.

Yours sincerely

Mr. S.M. Mnguni
Municipal Manager
Date: 23 December 2022

Appendix 3: Participant Sheet

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Sibusiso Shabangu, I am a master's student in the School of Business Sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. As part of my studies, I must undertake a research project, and I am investigating ethical leadership and organisational commitment as key determining factors of strategic objectives: A case study of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The aim of this research project is to explore the extent of the relation between ethical leadership, organisational commitment, and achievement of strategic objectives.

As part of this project, I would like to invite you to take part in a survey. This activity will require you to answer some questions about your feelings regarding ethical leadership, organisational commitment and strategic objectives within the municipality and will take approximately 20 minutes of your time.

There are not any direct benefits from participating in this survey, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to. The survey will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information, and the information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. Completing and submitting the survey is taken to mean consent to participate.

Please click on the link to start with the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FFYC68B

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Shabangu SM

Researcher: Shabangu Sibusiso Mancoba,
1033800@students.wits.ac.za,
072 406 4457.

Supervisor: Dr. Suvera Boodho,
suvera.boodhoo@wits.ac.za,
+27 11 717 8258.

Appendix 4: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

It is warranted that you provide informed consent to participate in the study. By clicking "Agree" bel

☐ The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about,

☐ I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study,

☐ I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter),

Agree ○

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SECTION A

PERSONAL DETAILS

Education:

Did not finish high school	○
Senior certificate	○
Degree/Diploma	○
Honours	○
Masters	○
Doctorate	○

Salary level of employee

Executive Director	SL0 ○
Director	SL1 ○
Deputy Director	SL2 ○
Assistant Director	SL3 ○
Coordinators	SL4 ○
Chief Officer	SL5 ○
Senior officer	SL6 ○
Officers	SL7 ○
Chief Clerk	SL8 ○
Senior Clerk/Foreman	SL9 ○
Clerk/Secretary	SL10 ○

Salary level of manager/supervisor

Executive Director	SL0 ○
Director	SL1 ○
Deputy Director	SL2 ○
Assistant Director	SL3 ○
Coordinators	SL4 ○
Chief Officer	SL5 ○
Senior officer	SL6 ○
Officers	SL7 ○
Chief Clerk	SL8 ○
Senior Clerk/Foreman	SL9 ○
Clerk/Secretary	SL10 ○

Now tell us about your job tenure:

Number of years with the municipality Drop down.

Less than 1
1 Year
2 Years
3 Years
4 Years
5 Years
6 Years
7 Years
8 Years
9 Years
More than 10 Years

SECTION B

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP SCALES (Measure the behavior of my manager)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Listen to what employees have to say.	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. Disciplines employees who violate ethical standards.	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Conducts himself/herself ethically in the workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. Has the best interests of employees in mind.	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Make fair and balanced decisions.	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. Cannot be trusted.	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. Discusses organisation ethics or values with employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. Sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics.	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. Defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained.	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. When making decisions, asks "what is the right thing to do?"	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. Acknowledges ethically valued behaviour of employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. Provides rewards to employees for ethically good behavior.	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. His/her decisions have a positive influence on the well-being of the municipality and other stakeholders.	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. Reprimands employees who show ethically flawed behavior.	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. The observation of his/her ethical behaviors inspires employees to resolve ethical problems in principled ways.	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. His/her actions reflect his/her moral beliefs.	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. Employees find it difficult to solve ethical problems when the leader is away.	○	○	○	○	○	○
18. Follow procedures and rules.	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. Promote dialogue about contentious issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. Seek to protect everyone's dignity.	○	○	○	○	○	○
21. Expect people to make mistakes (it's human nature).	○	○	○	○	○	○
22. Investigate on serious allegation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
23. Seek to preserve bonds and harmony within. the organisation.	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION C

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

(I) AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT SCALES (your affection to the municipality)

	Not at All	Somewhat	Very Much	Exactly
24. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this municipality	○	○	○	○

25. I really feel as if this municipality's problems are my own.	○	○	○	○
26. I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this municipality.	○	○	○	○
27. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this municipality	○	○	○	○
28. This municipality has a great deal of personal meaning for me	○	○	○	○
29. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this municipality.	○	○	○	○

(II) CONTINUANCE COMMITMENT SCALE (Belonging to the municipality for your longest time)

	Not at All	Somewhat	Very Much	Exactly
30. It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this municipality right now, even if I wanted to.	○	○	○	○
31. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I leave my municipality	○	○	○	○
32. Right now, staying with my job at this municipality is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	○	○	○	○
33. I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this municipality.	○	○	○	○
34. One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this municipality would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere.	○	○	○	○
35. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this municipality is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice.	○	○	○	○

(III) NORMATIVE COMMITMENT SCALES (how much do you feel you should stay in this municipality?)

	Not at All	Somewhat	Very Much	Exactly
36. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my municipality.	○	○	○	○
37. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave.	○	○	○	○
38. I would feel guilty if I left this municipality now.	○	○	○	○
39. This municipality deserves my loyalty.	○	○	○	○
40. I would not leave my municipality right now because of my sense of obligation to it.	○	○	○	○
41. I owe a great deal to this municipality.	○	○	○	○

SECTION D

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

(i) Strategy formulation

Vision Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
42. Steve Tshwete Local Municipality has adopted a vision statement.	○	○	○	○	○
43. The vision statement of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is updated annually.	○	○	○	○	○
44. The vision statement of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is relevant to its strategic objectives.	○	○	○	○	○
Mission Statement					
45. Steve Tshwete Local Municipality has adopted a mission statement.	○	○	○	○	○
46. The mission statement of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is updated annually.	○	○	○	○	○
47. The mission statement of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality is well-matched to its	○	○	○	○	○

strategic objectives.

48. In this municipality community, executive management and political office bearers participate in the development of the mission statement. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Strategic objectives development

49. In this municipality long-term strategic objectives are developed and reviewed annually. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

(ii) Strategy implementation

Policy Support

50. In this municipality a policy manual is maintained and adhered to. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

51. In this municipality policies are updated annually to support strategic objectives implementation. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

52. In this municipality policies are relevant to its strategic mandate and activities. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

53. The community, executive and political office bearers understand and support formal policy development for successful implementation of strategic objectives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Financial Capacity

54. The municipality is in good financial capacity to implement its strategic objectives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

55. The municipality is committed to providing financial resources to support the implementation of its strategic initiatives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Motivation and Ownership

56. The executive and staff are motivated to maintain and support the implementation of strategic objectives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

57. The community, executive and political office bearers take ownership of the implementation strategic objectives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Organisational Structure

58. The current structure of the municipality to support the implementation of strategic objectives is appropriate. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

59. The current governance model structure is effective as it relates to the implementation of the strategic objectives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Human Resources

60. In this municipality, human resource capability to manage and implement strategic direction is good. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

61. In this municipality, the staff have the competencies to plan, manage and implement strategic initiatives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

(ii) Strategy evaluation.

Assessment

62. The municipality has practices as they relate to the ongoing assessment of its strategic initiatives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

63. The municipality communicates assessment results to the community, executive and auditors. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Measure Performance

64. The municipality has developed a set of key performance indicators to track the success of its strategic initiatives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

65. The municipality has developed itself an ongoing evaluation practices as it relates to its strategic initiatives. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Identify Where Corrective Action is Necessary

66. The municipality has developed itself a corrective action mechanism when its strategic initiatives are failing or could be improved. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

67. The municipality has a response time, after they acknowledge that its strategic initiative is failing. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Strategy adjustment

68. In this municipality, attention is paid to abandoning, adjusting, or developing new strategies subsequent to evaluate the initial strategies. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

THE END

Appendix 6: Sekaran's Sample Size Table

Sample Size for a Given Population Size.*(Sekaran, 2003)*

N	S	N	S	N	S
30	28	280	162	1500	306
40	36	290	165	1600	310
50	44	300	169	1700	313
60	52	320	175	1800	317
70	59	340	181	1900	320
80	66	360	186	2000	322
90	73	400	196	2200	327
95	76	420	201	2400	331
100	80	440	205	2600	335
110	86	460	210	2800	338
120	92	480	214	3000	341
130	97	500	217	3500	346
140	103	550	226	4500	354
150	108	600	234	5000	357
160	113	650	242	6000	361
170	118	700	248	7000	364
180	123	750	254	8000	367
190	127	800	260	9000	368
200	132	850	265	10000	370
210	136	900	269	15000	375
220	140	950	274	20000	377
230	144	1000	278	30000	379
240	148	1100	285	40000	380
250	152	1200	291	50000	381
260	155	1300	297	75000	382
270	159	1400	302	1000000	384

Appendix 7: Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
EL (Ave)	217	1.6521739130	5.6956521739	4.3392925448	.72311152845	-.936	.165	2.101	.329
AC (Ave)	217	1.0000000000	3.1666666667	1.8558371736	.49383204700	-.245	.165	-.150	.329
CC (Ave)	217	1.0000000000	4.0000000000	1.9749615975	.62585974699	.775	.165	1.035	.329
NC (Ave)	217	1.0000000000	4.0000000000	2.0399385561	.57147775764	.722	.165	.781	.329
SO (Ave)	217	2.6296296296	5.0000000000	4.1870626387	.59414685146	-.201	.165	-.339	.329
Valid N (listwise)	217								

Table 2: Correlations

Correlations

		EL (Ave)	AC (Ave)	CC (Ave)	NC (Ave)	SO (Ave)
EL (Ave)	Pearson Correlation	1	.120	.134*	.242**	.208**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.077	.049	<.001	.002
	N	217	217	217	217	217
AC (Ave)	Pearson Correlation	.120	1	.461**	.277**	-.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077		<.001	<.001	.244
	N	217	217	217	217	217
CC (Ave)	Pearson Correlation	.134*	.461**	1	.469**	-.166*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	<.001		<.001	.014
	N	217	217	217	217	217
NC (Ave)	Pearson Correlation	.242**	.277**	.469**	1	.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		.976
	N	217	217	217	217	217
SO (Ave)	Pearson Correlation	.208**	-.080	-.166*	.002	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.244	.014	.976	
	N	217	217	217	217	217

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.290[a]	.084	.067	.57401122703

a. Predictors: (Constant), NC (Ave), EL (Ave), AC (Ave), CC (Ave)

Table 4: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.399	4	1.600	4.855	<.001[b]
	Residual	69.852	212	.329		
	Total	76.250	216			

a. Dependent Variable: SO (Ave)

b. Predictors: (Constant), NC (Ave), EL (Ave), AC (Ave), CC (Ave)

Table 5: Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.717	.273		13.625	<.001
	EL (Ave)	.186	.056	.226	3.333	.001
	AC (Ave)	-.029	.090	-.024	-.329	.742
	CC (Ave)	-.199	.077	-.210	-2.594	.010
	NC (Ave)	.054	.079	.052	.687	.493

a. Dependent Variable: SO (Ave)

Appendix 8: List of Tables (Reliability & Item Analysis)

Table 5: Reliability and item analysis for ethical leadership

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
EL1	95.42	254.693	.736	.699	.962
EL2	95.58	260.936	.568	.629	.963
EL3	95.33	259.570	.561	.651	.963
EL4	95.44	255.453	.722	.755	.962
EL5	95.43	253.554	.768	.847	.961
EL6	95.36	258.203	.422	.263	.966
EL7	95.32	256.787	.760	.700	.962
EL8	95.30	251.733	.853	.857	.961
EL9	95.27	251.649	.879	.864	.960
EL10	95.45	254.688	.729	.676	.962
EL11	95.33	252.865	.835	.805	.961
EL12	95.67	251.570	.690	.663	.962
EL13	95.33	250.504	.880	.872	.960
EL14	95.44	252.276	.801	.764	.961
EL15	95.40	250.296	.882	.863	.960
EL16	95.28	253.912	.839	.782	.961
EL17	95.78	267.585	.273	.414	.967
EL18	95.15	255.445	.784	.740	.961
EL19	95.37	254.328	.775	.741	.961
EL20	95.33	252.091	.858	.844	.961
EL21	95.39	258.931	.661	.638	.962
EL22	95.28	256.064	.723	.652	.962
EL23	95.32	253.434	.810	.807	.961

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.964	.966	23

Table 6: Reliability and item analysis for affective commitment

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
AC1	9.30	6.575	.391	.476	.654
AC2	9.27	6.373	.439	.454	.638
AC3	9.37	6.375	.488	.651	.623
AC4	9.30	6.500	.439	.618	.638
AC5	9.09	6.309	.426	.505	.643
AC6	9.37	7.095	.316	.458	.676

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.687	.687	6

Table 7: Reliability and item analysis for continuance commitment

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CC1	10.04	9.677	.628	.490	.768
CC2	9.96	10.142	.573	.481	.781
CC3	9.65	10.145	.538	.359	.789
CC4	9.99	10.991	.544	.329	.789
CC5	9.71	10.215	.533	.412	.790
CC6	9.84	9.957	.623	.452	.770

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.811	.812	6

Table 8: Reliability and item analysis for normative commitment

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
NC1	10.39	10.563	.045	.042	.843
NC2	10.23	7.641	.650	.620	.674
NC3	10.35	7.952	.661	.646	.675
NC4	9.81	8.842	.440	.241	.735
NC5	10.24	8.185	.658	.635	.679
NC6	10.17	8.198	.681	.611	.675

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.756	.772	6

Table 9: Reliability and item analysis for strategic objectives

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SO1	108.77	244.650	.657	.	.986
SO2	108.91	236.584	.781	.	.986
SO3	108.76	240.671	.820	.	.985
SO4	108.71	241.614	.798	.	.986
SO5	108.93	236.495	.830	.	.985
SO6	108.80	239.039	.873	.	.985
SO7	108.84	237.932	.866	.	.985
SO8	108.82	239.664	.845	.	.985
SO9	108.86	238.077	.844	.	.985
SO10	108.88	237.084	.899	.	.985
SO11	108.83	239.485	.897	.	.985
SO12	108.87	238.857	.820	.	.985
SO13	108.84	240.266	.779	.	.986
SO14	108.84	239.568	.892	.	.985
SO15	108.91	237.232	.850	.	.985
SO16	108.92	237.063	.873	.	.985
SO17	108.95	236.359	.873	.	.985
SO18	108.92	236.961	.886	.	.985
SO19	108.93	236.111	.849	.	.985
SO20	108.88	238.591	.864	.	.985
SO21	108.89	238.253	.913	.	.985
SO22	108.85	239.552	.848	.	.985
SO23	108.82	240.877	.876	.	.985
SO24	108.84	239.975	.870	.	.985
SO25	108.89	238.975	.857	.	.985
SO26	108.90	238.814	.859	.	.985
SO27	108.94	237.894	.836	.	.985

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.986	.986	27

Appendix 9: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Model Fit Summary

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	214	7931.239	2200	.000	3.605
Saturated model	2414	.000	0		
Independence model	68	20031.094	2346	.000	8.538

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.604	.578	.679	.654	.676
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Parsimony-Adjusted Measures

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	.938	.566	.634
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	1.000	.000	.000

NCP

Model	NCP	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	5731.239	5462.803	6006.580
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	17685.094	17236.613	18140.117

FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	36.719	26.534	25.291	27.808
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	92.737	81.875	79.799	83.982

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.110	.107	.112	.000
Independence model	.187	.184	.189	.000

AIC

Model	AIC	BCC	BIC	CAIC
Default model	8359.239	8560.137		
Saturated model	4828.000	7094.204		
Independence model	20167.094	20230.931		

ECVI

Model	ECVI	LO 90	HI 90	MECVI
Default model	38.700	37.457	39.975	39.630
Saturated model	22.352	22.352	22.352	32.844
Independence model	93.366	91.290	95.473	93.662

HOELTER

Model	HOELTER .05	HOELTER .01
Default model	63	65
Independence model	27	28

ESTIMATES

Scalar Estimates (Group number 1 - Default model)

Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
NC1	<---	NC	1.000				
NC2	<---	NC	28.797	88.298	.326	.744	
AC1	<---	AC	1.000				
AC2	<---	AC	.944	.087	10.856	***	
AC3	<---	AC	.023	.087	.259	.796	
AC4	<---	AC	-.001	.089	-.012	.991	
AC5	<---	AC	1.075	.091	11.817	***	
AC6	<---	AC	-.107	.083	-1.291	.197	
EL1	<---	EL	1.000				
EL2	<---	EL	.689	.086	8.007	***	
EL3	<---	EL	.771	.094	8.193	***	
EL4	<---	EL	.965	.090	10.774	***	
EL5	<---	EL	1.064	.092	11.619	***	
EL6	<---	EL	.798	.132	6.054	***	
EL7	<---	EL	.944	.079	11.926	***	
EL8	<---	EL	1.194	.087	13.681	***	
EL9	<---	EL	1.184	.085	13.996	***	
EL10	<---	EL	1.032	.091	11.373	***	

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
EL11	<---	EL	1.125	.086	13.055	***	
EL12	<---	EL	1.133	.109	10.360	***	
EL13	<---	EL	1.232	.089	13.921	***	
EL14	<---	EL	1.132	.093	12.203	***	
EL23	<---	EL	1.107	.086	12.823	***	
EL22	<---	EL	.932	.086	10.791	***	
EL21	<---	EL	.861	.082	10.506	***	
EL20	<---	EL	1.150	.085	13.493	***	
EL19	<---	EL	.989	.088	11.189	***	
EL18	<---	EL	1.012	.081	12.426	***	
EL17	<---	EL	.376	.106	3.549	***	
EL16	<---	EL	1.067	.082	13.062	***	
EL15	<---	EL	1.249	.089	14.026	***	
SO1	<---	SO	1.000				
SO2	<---	SO	1.636	.155	10.548	***	
SO3	<---	SO	1.316	.120	11.001	***	
SO4	<---	SO	1.240	.115	10.749	***	
SO5	<---	SO	1.644	.148	11.074	***	
SO6	<---	SO	1.447	.125	11.572	***	
SO7	<---	SO	1.547	.134	11.568	***	
SO8	<---	SO	1.401	.124	11.301	***	
SO9	<---	SO	1.542	.136	11.379	***	
SO10	<---	SO	1.619	.136	11.927	***	
SO11	<---	SO	1.429	.120	11.947	***	
SO12	<---	SO	1.483	.133	11.147	***	
SO13	<---	SO	1.369	.128	10.686	***	
SO14	<---	SO	1.423	.120	11.890	***	
SO15	<---	SO	1.607	.141	11.417	***	
SO16	<---	SO	1.624	.139	11.685	***	
SO27	<---	SO	1.556	.138	11.290	***	
SO26	<---	SO	1.477	.128	11.503	***	
SO25	<---	SO	1.465	.128	11.489	***	
SO24	<---	SO	1.391	.119	11.665	***	
SO23	<---	SO	1.315	.112	11.706	***	
SO22	<---	SO	1.420	.125	11.400	***	
SO21	<---	SO	1.528	.126	12.099	***	
SO20	<---	SO	1.500	.129	11.583	***	
SO19	<---	SO	1.707	.149	11.456	***	
SO18	<---	SO	1.634	.138	11.827	***	
SO17	<---	SO	1.688	.144	11.715	***	
NC3	<---	NC	27.546	84.458	.326	.744	

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
NC4	<---	NC	18.662	57.253	.326	.744	
NC5	<---	NC	29.968	91.873	.326	.744	
NC6	<---	NC	27.958	85.712	.326	.744	
CC1	<---	CC	1.000				
CC2	<---	CC	.915	.081	11.345	***	
CC3	<---	CC	.642	.087	7.346	***	
CC4	<---	CC	.536	.069	7.778	***	
CC5	<---	CC	.580	.088	6.617	***	
CC6	<---	CC	.736	.081	9.052	***	

Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
NC1	<---	NC	.023
NC2	<---	NC	.710
AC1	<---	AC	.795
AC2	<---	AC	.744
AC3	<---	AC	.019
AC4	<---	AC	-.001
AC5	<---	AC	.813
AC6	<---	AC	-.095
EL1	<---	EL	.734
EL2	<---	EL	.540
EL3	<---	EL	.552
EL4	<---	EL	.714
EL5	<---	EL	.766
EL6	<---	EL	.412
EL7	<---	EL	.784
EL8	<---	EL	.888
EL9	<---	EL	.906
EL10	<---	EL	.751
EL11	<---	EL	.851
EL12	<---	EL	.689
EL13	<---	EL	.901
EL14	<---	EL	.801
EL23	<---	EL	.838
EL22	<---	EL	.715
EL21	<---	EL	.698
EL20	<---	EL	.877
EL19	<---	EL	.740

			Estimate
EL18	<---	EL	.814
EL17	<---	EL	.243
EL16	<---	EL	.852
EL15	<---	EL	.907
SO1	<---	SO	.663
SO2	<---	SO	.780
SO3	<---	SO	.820
SO4	<---	SO	.797
SO5	<---	SO	.826
SO6	<---	SO	.871
SO7	<---	SO	.870
SO8	<---	SO	.846
SO9	<---	SO	.853
SO10	<---	SO	.903
SO11	<---	SO	.905
SO12	<---	SO	.832
SO13	<---	SO	.792
SO14	<---	SO	.900
SO15	<---	SO	.857
SO16	<---	SO	.881
SO27	<---	SO	.845
SO26	<---	SO	.864
SO25	<---	SO	.863
SO24	<---	SO	.879
SO23	<---	SO	.883
SO22	<---	SO	.855
SO21	<---	SO	.919
SO20	<---	SO	.872
SO19	<---	SO	.860
SO18	<---	SO	.894
SO17	<---	SO	.884
NC3	<---	NC	.743
NC4	<---	NC	.498
NC5	<---	NC	.859
NC6	<---	NC	.824
CC1	<---	CC	.804
CC2	<---	CC	.771
CC3	<---	CC	.519
CC4	<---	CC	.546
CC5	<---	CC	.470
CC6	<---	CC	.627

Intercepts: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
AC1	1.837	.055	33.361	***	
AC2	1.874	.056	33.753	***	
CC1	1.793	.063	28.637	***	
CC2	1.876	.060	31.361	***	
CC3	2.190	.062	35.099	***	
CC4	1.857	.049	37.563	***	
CC5	2.134	.062	34.323	***	
CC6	2.000	.059	33.811	***	
NC1	1.848	.065	28.421	***	
NC2	2.009	.062	32.430	***	
NC3	1.885	.057	33.311	***	
NC4	2.433	.057	42.553	***	
NC5	1.995	.053	37.470	***	
NC6	2.069	.052	39.924	***	
AC3	1.770	.052	34.066	***	
AC4	1.843	.053	34.740	***	
AC5	2.041	.058	35.315	***	
AC6	1.770	.049	35.807	***	
EL1	4.313	.065	65.919	***	
EL2	4.152	.061	67.762	***	
EL3	4.399	.067	65.540	***	
EL4	4.295	.065	66.228	***	
EL5	4.313	.067	64.643	***	
EL6	4.341	.093	46.599	***	
EL7	4.415	.058	76.360	***	
EL8	4.438	.065	68.730	***	
EL9	4.453	.063	70.949	***	
EL10	4.286	.066	64.917	***	
EL11	4.415	.063	69.583	***	
EL12	4.074	.079	51.540	***	
EL13	4.396	.066	66.982	***	
EL14	4.281	.068	63.086	***	
EL15	4.341	.066	65.678	***	
EL16	4.452	.060	73.974	***	
EL17	3.926	.074	52.837	***	
EL18	4.576	.060	76.664	***	
EL19	4.346	.064	67.708	***	
EL20	4.396	.063	69.805	***	
EL21	4.341	.059	73.217	***	

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
EL22	4.442	.063	70.994	***	
EL23	4.415	.063	69.583	***	
SO1	4.281	.041	105.045	***	
SO2	4.143	.057	73.095	***	
SO3	4.286	.043	98.749	***	
SO4	4.341	.042	103.306	***	
SO5	4.124	.054	76.670	***	
SO6	4.249	.045	94.595	***	
SO7	4.212	.048	87.646	***	
SO8	4.226	.045	94.396	***	
SO9	4.194	.049	85.838	***	
SO10	4.166	.048	85.983	***	
SO11	4.221	.043	98.903	***	
SO12	4.184	.048	86.919	***	
SO13	4.212	.047	90.181	***	
SO14	4.207	.043	98.414	***	
SO15	4.143	.051	81.684	***	
SO16	4.129	.050	82.861	***	
SO17	4.097	.052	79.341	***	
SO18	4.129	.049	83.583	***	
SO19	4.120	.054	76.799	***	
SO20	4.175	.046	89.789	***	
SO21	4.157	.045	92.489	***	
SO22	4.198	.045	93.508	***	
SO23	4.226	.040	104.989	***	
SO24	4.207	.043	98.414	***	
SO25	4.157	.046	90.595	***	
SO26	4.152	.046	89.900	***	
SO27	4.115	.050	82.679	***	

Covariances: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
NC	<-->	SO	.000	.001	.189	.850	
EL	<-->	SO	.052	.020	2.541	.011	
AC	<-->	EL	.191	.040	4.817	***	
NC	<-->	AC	.009	.028	.326	.745	
CC	<-->	AC	.319	.050	6.448	***	
CC	<-->	NC	.011	.033	.326	.745	
AC	<-->	SO	-.043	.020	-2.158	.031	
CC	<-->	SO	-.055	.023	-2.419	.016	
CC	<-->	EL	.103	.041	2.532	.011	

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
NC	<-->	EL	.005	.016	.325	.745	

Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
NC	<-->	SO	.017
EL	<-->	SO	.185
AC	<-->	EL	.422
NC	<-->	AC	.623
CC	<-->	AC	.672
CC	<-->	NC	.640
AC	<-->	SO	-.167
CC	<-->	SO	-.189
CC	<-->	EL	.198
NC	<-->	EL	.323

Variances: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
NC	.001	.003	.163	.870	
AC	.413	.063	6.544	***	
EL	.498	.080	6.262	***	
SO	.158	.029	5.493	***	
CC	.548	.082	6.669	***	
e1	.241	.033	7.303	***	
e2	.296	.036	8.180	***	
e3	.583	.056	10.392	***	
e4	.605	.058	10.368	***	
e5	.245	.036	6.895	***	
e6	.523	.050	10.377	***	
e7	.427	.042	10.116	***	
e8	.575	.056	10.295	***	
e9	.674	.066	10.265	***	
e10	.445	.044	10.146	***	
e11	.398	.040	10.057	***	
e12	1.557	.151	10.344	***	
e13	.278	.028	10.014	***	
e14	.191	.020	9.512	***	
e15	.152	.016	9.283	***	
e16	.411	.041	10.087	***	
e17	.239	.025	9.770	***	
e18	.710	.070	10.179	***	
e19	.174	.019	9.364	***	

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
e20	.357	.036	9.969	***	
e21	.167	.018	9.286	***	
e22	.215	.022	9.767	***	
e23	1.122	.108	10.377	***	
e24	.259	.026	9.927	***	
e25	.403	.040	10.107	***	
e26	.198	.021	9.605	***	
e27	.390	.038	10.168	***	
e28	.413	.041	10.145	***	
e29	.259	.026	9.836	***	
e30	.201	.020	10.291	***	
e31	.272	.027	10.191	***	
e32	.134	.013	10.127	***	
e33	.139	.014	10.166	***	
e34	.199	.020	10.114	***	
e35	.105	.011	9.987	***	
e36	.121	.012	9.988	***	
e37	.123	.012	10.066	***	
e38	.140	.014	10.046	***	
e39	.093	.010	9.818	***	
e40	.071	.007	9.805	***	
e41	.154	.015	10.100	***	
e42	.176	.017	10.174	***	
e43	.075	.008	9.841	***	
e44	.148	.015	10.035	***	
e45	.120	.012	9.943	***	
e46	.126	.013	9.930	***	
e47	.106	.011	9.876	***	
e48	.162	.016	10.024	***	
e49	.112	.011	9.982	***	
e50	.068	.007	9.685	***	
e51	.117	.012	10.040	***	
e52	.077	.008	9.935	***	
e53	.090	.009	9.951	***	
e54	.116	.012	10.014	***	
e55	.116	.012	10.009	***	
e56	.153	.015	10.068	***	
e57	.187	.024	7.632	***	
e58	.160	.024	6.730	***	
e59	.531	.053	9.978	***	
e60	.309	.035	8.808	***	

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
e61	.411	.045	9.098	***	
e62	.913	.088	10.392	***	
e63	.459	.050	9.257	***	
e64	.650	.066	9.899	***	
e65	.371	.038	9.651	***	
e66	.613	.063	9.728	***	
e67	.314	.040	7.771	***	
e68	.299	.042	7.120	***	

Squared Multiple Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate
CC1	.647
CC2	.594
CC3	.269
CC4	.298
CC5	.221
CC6	.393
NC1	.001
NC2	.504
NC3	.553
NC4	.248
NC5	.738
NC6	.678
SO27	.714
SO26	.747
SO25	.745
SO24	.773
SO23	.779
SO22	.731
SO21	.845
SO20	.760
SO19	.740
SO18	.799
SO17	.781
SO16	.776
SO15	.734
SO14	.810
SO13	.627
SO12	.693

	Estimate
SO11	.819
SO10	.816
SO9	.728
SO8	.716
SO7	.757
SO6	.758
SO5	.682
SO4	.636
SO3	.672
SO2	.608
SO1	.440
EL23	.702
EL22	.512
EL21	.487
EL20	.769
EL19	.547
EL18	.663
EL17	.059
EL16	.725
EL15	.824
EL14	.641
EL13	.813
EL12	.474
EL11	.725
EL10	.564
EL9	.821
EL8	.788
EL7	.615
EL6	.169
EL5	.586
EL4	.510
EL3	.305
EL2	.291
EL1	.539
AC6	.009
AC5	.661
AC4	.000
AC3	.000
AC2	.553
AC1	.632

Parameter Summary (Group number 1)

	Weights	Covariances	Variances	Means	Intercepts	Total
Fixed	73	0	0	73	0	146
Labeled	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unlabeled	63	10	73	0	68	214
Total	136	10	73	73	68	360

Appendix 10: Path Analysis

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	15	.000	0		
Saturated model	15	.000	0		
Independence model	5	139.213	10	.000	13.921

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.000	1.000		
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.074	.787	.680	.525

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Parsimony-Adjusted Measures

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	.000	.000	.000
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	1.000	.000	.000

NCP

Model	NCP	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	.000	.000	.000

Model	NCP	LO 90	HI 90
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	129.213	94.755	171.118

FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	.645	.598	.439	.792

FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	.645	.598	.439	.792

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Independence model	.245	.209	.281	.000

AIC

Model	AIC	BCC	BIC	CAIC
Default model	30.000	30.857	80.698	95.698
Saturated model	30.000	30.857	80.698	95.698
Independence model	149.213	149.499	166.113	171.113

ECVI

Model	ECVI	LO 90	HI 90	MECVI
Default model	.139	.139	.139	.143
Saturated model	.139	.139	.139	.143

Model	ECVI	LO 90	HI 90	MECVI
Independence model	.691	.531	.885	.692

HOELTER

Model	HOELTER .05	HOELTER .01
Default model		
Independence model	29	37

ESTIMATES

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
SOAve	<---	ELAve	.186	.055	3.364	***	
SOAve	<---	NCAve	.054	.078	.694	.488	
SOAve	<---	CCAve	-.199	.076	-2.619	.009	
SOAve	<---	ACAve	-.029	.089	-.332	.740	

Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
SOAve	<---	ELAve	.226
SOAve	<---	NCAve	.052
SOAve	<---	CCAve	-.210
SOAve	<---	ACAve	-.024

Covariances: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
ELAve	<-->	ACAve	.043	.024	1.753	.080	
ACAve	<-->	CCAve	.142	.023	6.155	***	
CCAve	<-->	NCAve	.167	.027	6.238	***	

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
ELAve	<-->	NCAve	.100	.029	3.457	***	
ELAve	<-->	CCAve	.060	.031	1.948	.051	
ACAve	<-->	NCAve	.078	.020	3.925	***	

Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
ELAve	<-->	ACAve	.120
ACAve	<-->	CCAve	.461
CCAve	<-->	NCAve	.469
ELAve	<-->	NCAve	.242
ELAve	<-->	CCAve	.134
ACAve	<-->	NCAve	.277

Variances: (Group number 1 - Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
ELAve	.520	.050	10.392	***	
ACAve	.243	.023	10.392	***	
CCAve	.390	.038	10.392	***	
NCAve	.325	.031	10.392	***	
e1	.322	.031	10.392	***	

Appendix 11: Mediation Analysis

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : SOAve
    X  : ELAve
    M  : ACAve

Sample
Size:  217

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 ACAve

Model Summary
R       R-sq        MSE         F        df1       df2         p
.1201   .0144      .2415     3.1470    1.0000   215.0000     .0775

Model
            coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant   1.4999      .2034     7.3744      .0000     1.0990     1.9008
ELAve       .0820      .0462     1.7740      .0775     -.0091      .1732

**************************************************************************

 OUTCOME VARIABLE:

 SOAve

 Model Summary

 R         R-sq        MSE         F        df1       df2         p
 .2330     .0543      .3370     6.1422    2.0000   214.0000     .0025

 Model
              coeff        se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
 constant    3.6372     .2689    13.5239      .0000     3.1071     4.1673
 ELAve        .1813     .0550     3.2945      .0012      .0728      .2897
 ACAve       -.1275     .0806    -1.5830      .1149     -.2863      .0313

 ************************ TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ***************************
 OUTCOME VARIABLE:
  SOAve

 Model Summary
 R         R-sq        MSE         F        df1       df2         p
 .2079     .0432      .3393     9.7103    1.0000   215.0000     .0021

 Model
              coeff        se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
 constant    3.4459     .2411    14.2918      .0000     2.9707     3.9211
 ELAve        .1708     .0548     3.1161      .0021      .0628      .2788

 ************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************
```

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.1708	.0548	3.1161	.0021	.0628	.2788

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.1813	.0550	3.2945	.0012	.0728	.2897

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
ACAve	-.0105	.0119	-.0371	.0106

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
5000

------ END MATRIX -----

Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

****

Model : 4
Y : SOAve
X : ELAve
M : CCAve

Sample
Size: 217

****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
CCAve

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.1337	.0179	.3865	3.9132	1.0000	215.0000	.0492

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.4728	.2573	5.7237	.0000	.9656	1.9800
ELAve	.1157	.0585	1.9782	.0492	.0004	.2310

****

```
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 SOAve

Model Summary
R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
.2855    .0815      .3273     9.4973     2.0000   214.0000      .0001

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.7221      .2542    14.6430      .0000     3.2210     4.2231
ELAve         .1925      .0543     3.5440      .0005      .0854      .2996
CCAve        -.1875      .0628    -2.9877      .0031     -.3112     -.0638

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ****************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 SOAve

Model Summary
R            R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
.2079       .0432      .3393     9.7103     1.0000   215.0000      .0021

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.4459      .2411    14.2918      .0000     2.9707     3.9211
ELAve         .1708      .0548     3.1161      .0021      .0628      .2788


************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************


Total effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .1708      .0548     3.1161      .0021      .0628      .2788


Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .1925      .0543     3.5440      .0005      .0854      .2996

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
          Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
CCAve     -.0217      .0155     -.0538      .0078

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

------ END MATRIX -----
```

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

***************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 *****************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : SOAve
    X  : ELAve
    M  : NCAve

Sample
Size:  217

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 NCAve

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .2420      .0586      .3089    13.3784     1.0000   215.0000      .0003

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     1.2099      .2300     5.2596      .0000      .7565     1.6633
ELAve         .1913      .0523     3.6576      .0003      .0882      .2944

**************************************************************************

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 SOAve

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .2137      .0457      .3400     5.1225     2.0000   214.0000      .0067

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.5104      .2564    13.6901      .0000     3.0050     4.0158
ELAve         .1810      .0566     3.2006      .0016      .0695      .2925
NCAve        -.0533      .0716     -.7449      .4572     -.1943      .0877

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ****************************

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 SOAve

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .2079      .0432      .3393     9.7103     1.0000   215.0000      .0021

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3.4459      .2411    14.2918      .0000     2.9707     3.9211
ELAve         .1708      .0548     3.1161      .0021      .0628      .2788

************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************
```

```
Total effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .1708      .0548     3.1161      .0021      .0628      .2788

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .1810      .0566     3.2006      .0016      .0695      .2925

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
          Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
NCAve     -.0102      .0150     -.0413      .0197

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

------ END MATRIX -----
```