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### ROLE OF BEHAVIORAL INTEGRITY AMONG THE MORALITY OF LEADER AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL ETHICS

Waqas Zaki<sup>1\*</sup> Dr. Rubeena Tashfeen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD. Scholar University of Central Punjab Lahore

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor University of Central Punjab

\*Corresponding Author (Email: zaki@ucp.edu.pk, rubeena.tashfeen@ucp.edu.pk)

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**Abstract**

This study is about role of behavioral integrity among the morality of leader and institutionalization of organizational ethics. This study is based on directed content analysis technique, which encompasses collection of diverse concepts related to construct from different literature and interview guide is prepared and semi-structured interview technique is used for data collection. The study belongs to qualitative area of study and it also account for associations, feelings and emotions a respondent can have with the leader. Non-contrived setting is used for data collection in which data collection is done in natural environment in which event normally occurred. Significant role of morality/ ethical integrity of leader is found on institutionalized organizational ethics if the leader has behavioral integrity. It is concluded that organization should focus on leaders' ethics despite focusing on employees' ethics because if leaders do right then followers get psychological contracts and bound to behave in ethical manner.

## **1. Introduction**

High level of morality is the essence leaders' expected to act. Philosophers since the ancient era, recognized the need for morality of leader. Plato had a vision of an ethical philosopher king to lead a republic state. Aristotle also emphasized that leader demonstrate high moral character and be virtuous (Fehr, Yam, & Dang, 2015). Many researches in organizational sciences have incorporated ethical components in leadership theories. Researchers argued that followers' moral consciousness is raised by transformational leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Zhu, Avolio, Riggio, & Sosik, 2011). Transactional and transformational leader as ethical leaders influence their followers to act ethically by leaders' own ethical behavior and also implements punishment and reward system (Trevino, Hartman, & Brown, 2000).

Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) put emphasis on abilities of leaders to act ethically and interpreted the authentic leadership as "pattern of transparent and ethical behavior". As paternalistic leadership treat the followers as a part of a family and represents the morality as a core component, furthermore this kind of leadership remoralize the workplace to highlight the importance of morality (Erben & Güneşer, 2008). Spiritual leadership also focus on moral character and ethical climate (Reave, 2005). Brown, Trevino, and Harrison, (2005) defined ethical leadership as appropriate conduct for normative demonstration by the personal actions and influence to follower for such conduct through reinforcement, two-way communication and decision making. Researchers also put focus on ethical leadership by adapting qualitative patterns of research, as scholars shifted the focus on leadership styles to be ethical and highlighted ethical behavior as a component of their style of leadership.

Fehr, *et. al.*, (2015) discussed that research of ethical leadership has significant advancements in recent years, the main focus remain what ethical leadership can have the consequences on employees rather than what ethical leadership requires from itself. Most of the times ethical leadership research has narrow approach towards outcome of employee and organizational levels. Brown and Treviño (2006) presented the characteristics and traits for ethical leadership. They have highlighted "honesty and trustworthy", "fair and principles decision-makers" and "altruistic" characteristics as motivation. Ethical leadership is majorly based on the characteristics they demonstrate, the set of characteristics encapsulate the morality as a desirable behavior which cover honest, trustworthy, justice, openness and absence of

unethical behavior in the personality of a leader (Epitropaki, Sy, Martin, Tram-Quon, & Topakas, 2013).

Today the most faced challenge by almost every leader is to keep in existence ethical conduct within an organization, that's why the successful leader these days is the one who is able to keep in existence the organizational ethics. Leader must himself be following the ethics if he is intends to execute organizational ethics which is a big attainment. If leader himself does not follow the ethics or break the ethical rules then nobody is going to follow the organizational ethics (OE). Here we need to describe the term leaders' need ethics. Leaders can be defined by the term honesty which is also a difficult term, which is one of the many features which are related to leadership (Kottke & Pelletier, 2013). We must understand the idea of honesty in a leadership. Honesty has been defined by many researchers in many ways thus there is not a single definition, however Palanski and Yammarino, (2007) took the initiative and defined five perspectives of morality / ethical integrity (generally ethical, justice, consistency of words and actions, consistency in adversity and being true to oneself). Bauman, (2013) defined the wholeness as a feature, Palanski defined morality as overall continuity in leader's behavior, utilization of emotions and thoughts according to the situations. The second variable is consistency between words and actions also called Behavioral Integrity (BI). It related to "sense of consistency with regards to social behavior" recognized as match between words and actions (Palanski, Cullen, Gentry, & Nichols, 2015). Honesty as consistency to adversity is described a circumstance where a leader is standing firm with his beliefs and he has to offer up something for his stance (Grover, 2014). Honesty as being true to oneself defined as to be a man of words and actions (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Moreover, morality, Ethical Honesty (MEI) points out features in a leader like, ethical conduct, general sense of morality/ethics, honesty, a man of words and actions, equity, originality, sympathy/ understanding of fellow's feelings (Lawton & Paez, 2015).

The focal lens of this study revolves around the combination of two constructs (ethics and moral/ethical integrity) of a leader. Both of these constructs are of key importance in depicting the ethical behavior of a leader. The study revolves around the impact organization has due to the morality/ethical integrity of leader. They key focus of morality and moral disciplines of any individual lies in 'ethics'. Ethics has been the focal concept in research stream of morality and

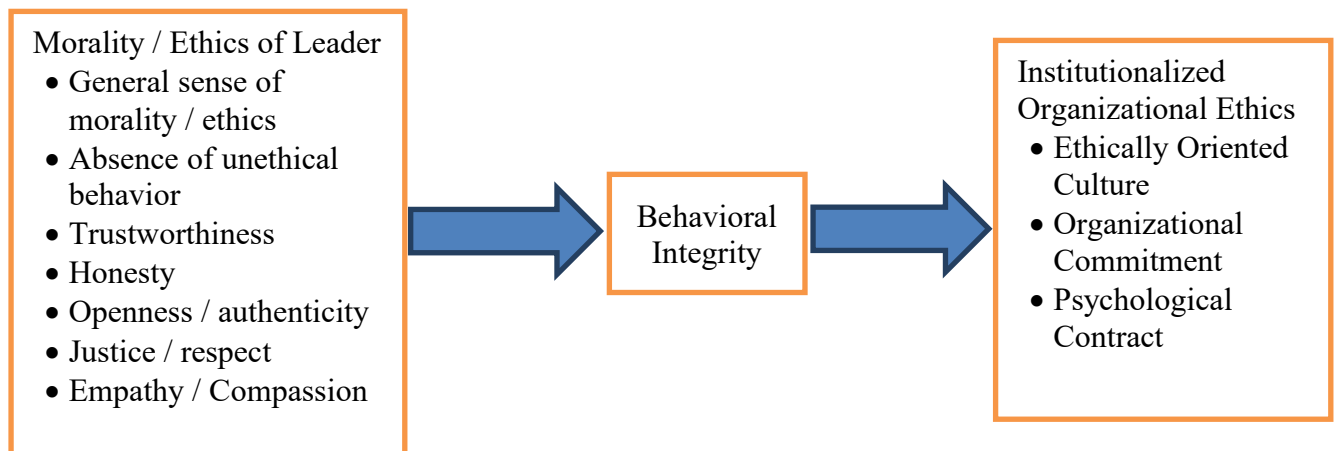
integrity. Ethics has been used in the extant literature of organizational culture (Hanson, 2015) and transformational leadership (Carlson & Perrewe, 1995) as an effective mean to enhance the ethical standard of the organization. However this study suggests another ethical route when the organization ethics gets affected from the moral/ethical integrity of the leader through the perception of his follower about leader.

The study aims to serve the purpose of being pioneer in encompassing a theory on organizational ethics regarding the moral/ethical integrity including organizational commitment, ethically oriented culture and psychological contract (Carlson & Perrewe, 1995). To the best of my research and investigation there is no study before this that deals with the parameters of moral/ethical integrity of the leader. However there are broadly many on organizational ethics and moral/ethical integrity (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman , 1995; Becker, 1998; Craig & Gustafson, 1998; Baccili, 2001; Posner, 2001; Koehn, 2005; Palanski & Yammarino, 2007).

**Literature Review**

The conceptualization of this idea was difficult as the extant literature covers the construct of leadership, its characteristics, types and impacts in a separate stream mostly with only one type i.e. transformational leadership’s ethical impacts on organization (Sekerka, Comer, & Godwin, 2014; Kotter, 2001; Zhu, et. al., 2011; Palanski & Yammarino, 2007; 2009; 2011). Ethics has been the critical area for leaders as losing it can account for much trouble and chaos by the followers in the organization (Chua, 2011; Zhu et. al., 2011).

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**



**2.Morality/ Ethical Integrity**

Ethics/ morality is the focal element that has to be sought in a leader as it is responsible for the right decision making of the leader. A leader that pursues ethics make decisions with keeping the interest and betterment of followers in mind. The distinction between the two terms ethics and integrity has been discussed; and it is suggested that the morality is very vast is scope and it has been used many times in replacement of integrity (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). The construct i.e. morality includes various concepts such as ‘absence of unethical behavior, justice/respect, empathy/compassion, general sense of morality, authenticity, trustworthiness, and honesty’.

**Table 1: Summary of Morality/Ethics in Scholarly Literature**

<b>Morality / Ethics</b>	<u>General sense of morality/</u>	<u>Trustworthiness</u>
<u>Absence of unethical behavior</u>	<u>ethics</u>	Baccili (2001)
Craig and Gustafson (1998)	Baccili (2001)	Den Hertog and Koopman
Mumford <i>et. al.</i> (2003)	Badaracco and Ellsworth (1992)	(2002)
Posner (2001)	Batson <i>et. al.</i> (1999)	Paine (2005)
	Becker (1998)	Trevino <i>et. al.</i> (2000)
<u>Justice/respect</u>	Mayer <i>et. al.</i> (1995)	
Baccili (2001)	Newman (2003)	<u>Honesty</u>
Bews and Rossouw (2002)		Den Hertog and Koopman
Den Hertog and Koopman	<u>Openness / authenticity</u>	(2002)
(2002)	Baccili (2001)	Peterson and Seligman (2004)
	Peterson and Seligman (2004)	Newman (2003)
<u>Empathy/Compassion</u>	Koehn (2005)	
Koehn (2005)	Paine (2005)	
Lowe <i>et. al.</i> (2004)	Rawls (1971)	

Source: Palanski and Yammarino, (2007)

**2.1 Absence of unethical behavior**

The ‘absence’ of unethical behavior refers to the leader’s ability to always be ethical in his conduct and decision making. It has been defined as “doing the right thing when no one is watching” (Posner, 2001). This implies that the leader is ethical when he is not surrounded by his

followers. Better than expected ethical and moral behavior, rather than lack of unethical or immoral actions, is often linked to integrity. Veríssimo, and Lacerda, (2015) in a study about manager and company responsibilities to employees observed that most wanted from them was integrity whose main components were having a moral and ethical standard. In an evaluation of the effects of integrity on job performance for U.S. presidents, Newman (2003) found that evaluation about presidential integrity have contained a word in it that is “moral”. Badaracco and Ellsworth (1992) found that integrity consider “a sense of moral soundness”. He also said that showing moral integrity is “to act in accord with moral principles as an ultimate goal”.

## **2.2 Justice**

The study of justice in organizations engages to the study of exchange relationship by Homans (1961) as well as Adam’s (1965) development of equity theory. In addition to He, & Long, (2014), this work in the start formed the foundation of modern concept of equal justice. Equal justice addresses the issue of perceived fairness of outcome. In the same way, to present procedural justice in organizations settings. Cole, Carter, and Zhang, (2013) relied on the earlier works of (Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Procedural justice is defined as “the perceived fairness of the policies and procedures used to make decisions”. New work on organizational justice shows justice rules can be formed about many assignments in an organization (Koivisto, & Lipponen, 2015). Like, if an employee is treated equally by his seniors but unequally by his co-workers he will think differently about the justice linked to each party. According to multifoci perspective, different treatment of justice in an organization by different people leads to differential perception of justice about each source.

## **2.3 Empathy/ compassion**

The empathetic quality in a leader refers to his capability of acknowledge, estimate, perceive and experience the emotions of his followers. So that he can act in accordance with his follower’s expectations (Olsson, *et. al.*, 2016). Empathy is considered to be a key ingredient in a successful leader (Bass, 1999; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). Leaders with more empathy are said to alter their behavior in reference to the needs of their followers (De Zulueta, 2016). When leaders are very awakened and enlightened of their follower’s needs, they make sure their needs are fulfilled through procedural fairness. Resultantly those leaders will be fairer in catering their follower’s needs.

Another element that has been of consideration in literature was raised and termed by Goleman, (2013) as empathic concern of the leader. Empathic concern is defined as ‘variations in vicarious other-oriented emotions, “feeling for” the other person and understanding the needs of others which has been linked to an increased motivation to take actions in response to these needs’ (Batson, Thompson, Seufferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999). The relationship between pro social behavior and empathic concern has been established (Singer, & Klimecki, 2014).

#### **2.4 General sense of morality/ethics**

Ancient moral philosophers translated the word ‘ethics (morality)’ into “moral principles that govern a person’s behavior or character. Thus, the first ethical and moral question which arose in mind of most of the philosophers including, Socrates and Plato, was “Which moral values make a good character?” and not “What is the right thing to do?” The important point is that first attention is on character not on behavior and is proper for understanding the honesty. According to some authors to act morally is an internal element of individual. Lowe, Cordery, & Morrison, (2004) observed that morality plays a role in honesty qualities for leaders, but it depends on local cultures and situations that in what moral manner does an individual acts. Similarly Ghare, (2015) said that the trust based qualities of honesty are based on the actions of trustees, whether these actions are acceptable to trust or not.

#### **2.5 Openness/ Authenticity**

The level of honesty at individual level is to be true to oneself, according to the meaning of honesty described in the above paragraph. Thus, like courage, this is also studied under the control of honesty; however, in relating to Frederick, Wood Jr, West, & Winston, (2016) advise where it is suitable aspects of honesty should relate to virtues and being true to oneself is left to the state of veracity. The quality of being true to oneself is to fulfill all the promises made to oneself and performing actions which are according to one’s own values. Authenticity is closely related to validity and transparency, not hidden actions (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Thus, the actions with internal values in a clear way are very important for an authentic leadership. Words, Actions and Internal Values are the three words on which structure of authenticity is based. However honesty which is explained here depends only on two words which are ‘action and words’(Lawton, & Páez, 2015).

**2.6 Trustworthiness**

The essential factors for flexible and adaptive work environment are creativity and critical thinking which can be achieved by higher level of trusts in an organization. When trusted work environment is given to employees they feel safe to challenge the system and perform more than anticipation. Employees feel ease to convey their creative ideas. They take risks, confess errors and learn from those errors. Chen, Jing, and Lee, (2014) indicate that the higher the level of trust in employees the more they capable to focus on their work and this in turn would lead to enhanced work outcomes. Capability to focus on work is described as “one’s capability to concentrate on activities which are more productive despite of concern over the use of power by others in one’s organization” (Vugt, & Grabo, 2015). Mayer and Gavin suggested that if trust is not found in between the employees and authority then the employees would be more focused on protecting themselves first rather to focus on productive activities. Like, if an employee trusts his senior he will be more focused on productive works and activities which in turn lead to enhanced work outcomes. The connection between trustworthiness, trust, and performance output has received a bit attention in literature, (Colquitt, Scott, & Pine, 2007).

**2.7 Honesty**

Honesty can be explained in many manners which mean it may overlap with other terms as well. In contrast to integrity, honesty is strongly based on virtue (Grover, 2014). In depth the honesty means being faithful and not to deceive either by lying or excluding. Term honesty is mostly mixed with integrity, in case of honesty evidence can be provided, e.g. the promise was true. As in the case of authenticity, though, the deficiency of honesty is a bad character, which may cancel the positive effects of integrity (Bendahan, Zehnder, Pralong, & Antonakis, 2015).

**Table 2: Summary of Institutionalized Organizational Ethics in Scholarly Literature**

<b>Institutionalized</b>	<u>Organizational Commitment</u>
<b>organizational Ethics</b>	Angle and Perry (1981)
<u>Ethically Oriented Culture</u>	Top, Akdere, & Tarcan, (2015)
Carlson and Perrewe (1995)	John, (2017)
Hanson, (2015)	Carlson and Perrewe (1995)



Psychological Contract

Kotter (2001)

Carlson and Perrewe (1995)

Griep, Vantilborgh, Baillien, &amp;

Pepermans, (2016)

**2.8 Institutionalized organizational Ethics**

Integrating ethics into the organizational system, processes and procedures is termed as institutionalization of ethics. Ethics assimilated into an organization explicitly and formally was termed as Institutionalize Organizational Ethics (IOE). Key factors needed to achieve these are ethically oriented culture, organizational commitment and psychological contract (Sekerka, Comer, & Godwin, 2014)

**2.9 Ethically Oriented Culture**

In institutionalization of organizational ethics, ethically oriented culture is another main component of discussion. Organizational culture has considered the essence of ethics and need to be focused (Kangas, Muotka, Huhtala, Mäkikangas, & Feldt, 2017). Culture provides the directions to the followers and generate acceptability for change among the followers. Carlson and Perrewe (1995) explains the corporate structure as a base in a merit system. Moreover, he said that corporate value which is set by the leadership, has impact on all aspect of organization. Leadership predicts the important areas to employees, which encouraged them to stay and increase social stability also. Here Hanson, (2015) identified important point that in institutionalization of organizational ethics the leader produce the sense of psychological contract, increase the organizational commitment between employees which in turn create an ethical based culture. To do all these, the leader first of all must have morality, ethical honesty to himself then he can take bold decision regarding unethical conduct. Then he can provide a right way to organization and a perfect shape to corporate structure.

**2.9 Psychological Contract**

A psychological contract refers to an informal, unwritten contractual expectation between the organizations and individual, that guides the individual to how to perform in a said organization (Kotter, 2001). There exist a significant gap in the extant research literature regarding the psychological contract between the follower and his leader. The leader-follower

psychological contract is the basis of this relationship navigating the duties and rights for both. The ethical behavior of leader influences the follower to bind a strong psychological contract with him (Griep, Vantilborgh, Baillien, & Pepermans, 2016). Leader is then subjected to provide moral support, motivational support and recognition for those followers that remain ethical following the psychological contract.

**2.9 Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment (OC) can be described to measure the performance of work in relate to organizational goals. There are many components which raise organizational commitment, such as ethical behavior has a huge contribution in such regard (John, 2017). To enhance the commitment of organization among the followers, a leader can use honesty and equity as a characteristics of ethical behavior: even if the leader treat the followers and judge them equally it encourages the followers to act ethically based on honesty and justice (Top, Akdere, & Tarcan, 2015).

**Table 3: Summary of Behavioral Integrity in Scholarly Literature**

<b>Behavioral Integrity</b> Tracey and Hinkin (1994) Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) Simons (2002, 1999) Bews and Rossouw (2002) Worden (2003) Paine (2005)
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**2.10 Behavioral Integrity**

It is the third main thing which means regularity in words and actions. So this is the main feature which links the earlier discussed two features. Palanski and Yammarino, (2007) described sense of uniformity as a behavioral integrity in context of social behavior. This feature has different concepts as explained by (Simons, 2002). Behavioral integrity is the promise keeping and it is thought to be constant link between adopted values and values practiced in real. Garzia, (2011) identified that the feature is most important as in morality/ethics leader has a strong atmosphere of ethics, if he is strong is this only then he can say what is wrong and right, judge the actions

and decisions, only then he will be honest to himself and others. So being a leader he will have to show ethics by his conduct then he can impose it in an organization.

Behavioral Integrity creates link between morality/ethical integrity and institutionalize organizational ethics in a way that the leader does possess the strong beliefs in morality/ethics and possess these qualities, he can pick what is wrong and what is right? But if he does not follow these beliefs or act ethically and try to implement these in the corporate culture in such situation his followers will never accept these values rather they will follow his actions preferably, thus in this case the leader will not gain what he wants. Same in the psychological contract if leader does not act like ethically followers will never accept the unwritten contract. Because the ethical conduct of the organization depends on the behavior of leader in what way he behaves as followers behave in the way his leader acts.

### **3. Research Methodology**

Research methodology provides the outline for research process and describes research philosophy, approach, strategy, choice and technique applied in this study. So, research methodology describe all methods and techniques along with the philosophical justifications. Methods include type of data, data collection, sampling technique and data analysis techniques. Analyzing ethics of organizational leader and its role in institutionalization of organizational ethics is a complex process. To analyze the situation directed content analysis technique is used and concepts of construct collected from the literature and interview guide is prepared and semi-structured interview technique is used for data collection. The study belongs to qualitative area of study and it also account for associations, feelings and emotions a follower can have with the leader. Sample size of four has been taken for interview as after first interview data saturation point meets but still interview conducted by three more respondents for verification of saturation point as mentioned by Onwuegbuzie and Daniel, (2003). So observation during the interview is an important aspect to identify the validity of collected data. Non-contrived setting is used for data collection in which data collection is done in natural environment in which event normally occurred. Researcher has no or minimal interference at the time of data collection and interview is based on open ended questions, also respondents were assured regarding anonymity and confidentiality to make ease during the interview process.

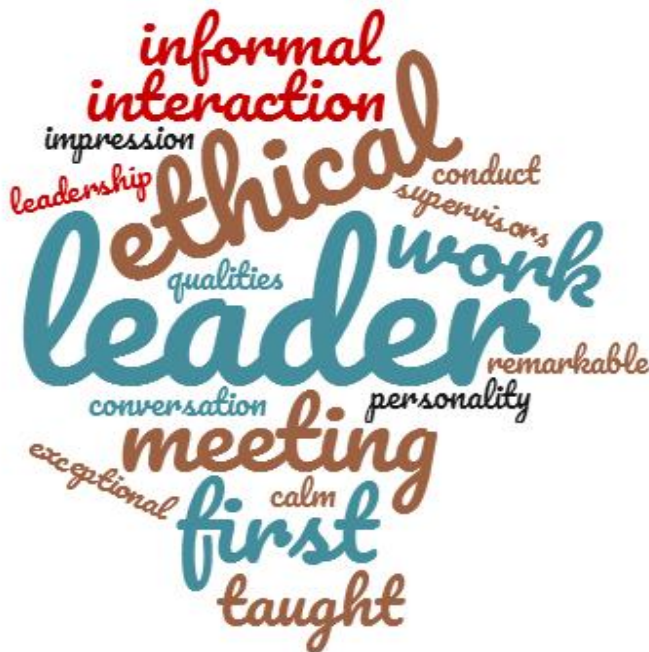
### 3.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis has been performed by multistage analysis. Interviews recorded in audio form and transcription performed by typing them into Word Software. As data was not so lengthy, so further analysis is performed through online text cloud web sites and manually coding and extraction has been performed. After that four different aspects were identified from the interview. Which are going to be discussed further.

### 3.2 Followership

In interviews different respondents were asked about on what basis they idealized any person as a leader. Respondents have given different scenario in which they met and get inspired from their leaders as well the reasons they found to be a follower. As Figure 2 shows the cloud generated on the basis of frequency of words used by respondents. The cloud represent the keyword like meeting, conversation, taught, interaction, etc. which represents different touch points where follower and leader have their first interaction.

**Figure 2: Followership Cloud**



Furthermore cloud of Figure 2 also highlighted the keyword like trust, calm, ethical, personality, remarkable, conduct, exceptional etc. which represents the qualities of leaders or the reason of followership. One of the respondent quoted about the leader as *“He is an exceptional leader with qualities that you cannot see in this time and age.* Another respondent said *“His*

personality is very calm and when it comes to the ethical part he is probably most ethical person that I really know”. Another respondent talk about a leader in this way:

*“He has different attributes in his personality as he is extremely work orientated everything has to be official furthermore the person I am talking about is an extremely trust worthy and dependable person. As many people from organization, his family and many other people used to come to him and discuss their issues regarding their job and personal matters as well”*

So different respondent highlighted the qualities of their leaders and their acceptance by their followers in different ways.

### 3.3 Morality Ethical Integrity of Leader

Different respondents have identified different ethics characteristics they found in their leaders for example respondents talk about behavior, personality, feels, conduct, performance, humanity etc. these keywords highlighted where follower found some specific characteristics. Follower can found some good characteristics in personality, can feel, in conduct, behavior and performance. On the other side respondent talk about equality, ethics, respect, fair, honest, justice, trust etc. the mentioned keywords identified the characteristics follower found in their leaders.

Figure 3: Cloud of Morality Ethical Integrity of Leader



One respondent said about the leader *“when he has to make certain decision he is extremely fair and always consider justice and equality”*. Another respondent discussed the characteristics of leader as *“an extremely trust worthy and dependable person”*. Another respondent said *“the equality and justice my leader used while taking decision is the most important characteristics in my view point”*.

### 3.4 Match between Words and Action (Behavioral Integrity)

Cloud of Figure 4 shows the high frequency words used by respondents in interview regarding the match between words and actions of their leader. Mainly keywords like demonstrate, conduct, behavior, ethical, justice, equally, image, motivated, impressive etc. were used to show the words and action match. One respondent said *“he used to say he use to demonstrate with his behavior”*. Another said *“he always demonstrated his words in his self-behavior”*. One another said *“he is a very attractive personality just because of his ethical conducts”*.

**Figure 4: Cloud of Match between Words and Action (Behavioral Integrity)**



Followers idealize when their leader demonstrate through their actions what they say and also they observe such phenomena. But to demonstrate they must have the understanding of ethics or they have morality as a part of their personality. Having ethical integrity and following those ethics are the strong elements of leadership.



#### **4. Conclusion**

Ethical conduct by the members of the organization is the need of the day, also the most difficult task for managers as well. To achieve the objective manager must act as an ethical leader and create psychological contract with the followers to bind them, so they act in ethical way. But to implement the ethical climate leader should be high in morality/ ethical integrity along with the behavior integrity. This phenomena can institutionalize the ethics into organizational climate. According to the research objectives, this study has the focus to evaluate the role of leaders' ethical and behavioral integrity on institutionalization of organizational ethics. For the purpose open-ended semi-structured interview questions designed for evaluating how followers perceive the morality/ ethical integrity of leader, level of behavioral integrity of leader and how much leaders gets successful in institutionalizing the organizational ethics through their own conducts. During interviews, respondents highlighted the major ethical characteristics of their leaders, the match they found in their words and actions. Most importantly they talked about the influence of their leaders' behavior onto them, they responded in a way that the feel a psychological contract with their leaders and also talked about their enhanced commitment towards organization which in result create ethically oriented culture in organization.



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