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**LEADERSHIP IN PAKISTANI NGOS: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON
SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS**

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LEADERSHIP IN PAKISTANI NGOS: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

The aim of this dissertation is to obtain a doctoral (Ph.D.) degree in the scientific field of
“Management and Business”

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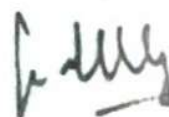
DECLARATION

I undersigned (name: **Muhammad Rizwan Hussain**, date of birth: **31-11-1986**) declare under penalty of perjury and certify with my signature that the dissertation I submitted in order to obtain a doctoral(PhD) degree is entirely my own work.

Furthermore, I declare the following:

- I examined the Code of the Doctoral School of Management and Business, and I acknowledge the points laid down in the code as mandatory.
- I handled the technical literature sources used in my dissertation fairly and I conformed to the provisions and stipulations related to the dissertation.
- I indicated the original source of other authors' unpublished thoughts and data in the references section in a complete and correct way in consideration of the prevailing copyright protection rules.
- No dissertation which is fully or partly identical to the present dissertation was submitted to any other university or doctoral school for the purpose of obtaining a PhD degree.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI = Artificial Intelligence

CBOs = Community-Based Organizations

CSO = Civil Society Organization

FBR = Federal Board of Revenue

GDPR = General Data Protection Regulation

HRM = Human Resource Management

ICVA = International Council of Voluntary Agencies

MGA = Multi-Group Analysis

NGO = Non-governmental Organization

NPO = Non-profit Organization

OPP = Orangi Pilot Project

PBS = Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

PCP = Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy

PLS-SEM = Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling

SD = Standard Deviation

SHGs = Self-Help Groups

SLR = Systematic Literature Review

TC = Total Citations

TCPY = Total Citations Per Year

UNDP = United Nations Development Programme

URC = Urban Resource Centre

USAID = United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER 1: TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE

1.1 Introduction

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become integral actors globally, addressing complex social, economic, and environmental challenges unmet by governmental and private sectors alone (SALAMON ET AL., 2013; BANO, 2019). In Pakistan, NGOs, particularly those focused on sports development, have gained prominence for their societal contributions including youth empowerment, community cohesion, and social inclusion (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024; HASSAN & PASHA, 2023). These organizations operate within a challenging socio-political landscape characterized by resource constraints, regulatory complexities, and cultural diversity, necessitating adaptive and ethical leadership to navigate barriers and realize organizational goals (KHAN ET AL., 2023; SAEED, MALIK, & RAZA, 2023).

Leadership is pivotal in shaping the effectiveness, sustainability, and relevance of NGOs. It entails the ability to influence, motivate, and empower individuals towards collective objectives in organizational contexts (NORTHHOUSE, 2016; BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). Within the NGO sector, leadership extends beyond traditional managerial functions, incorporating ethical considerations, transformational vision, and participatory governance that align with civil society values and stakeholder expectations (BROWN & TREVIÑO, 2006; HASSAN ET AL., 2017). Pakistani sports NGOs, operating at the intersection of developmental imperatives and social engagement, require leadership approaches that balance organizational performance with stakeholder inclusivity and ethical accountability (KHAN ET AL., 2023; BANO, 2019).

Despite their significance, empirical research exploring leadership styles—particularly ethical, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—and their impact on organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs is limited (WU, 2024; SAEED ET AL., 2023). This represents a notable gap considering the pivotal role of leadership in enhancing organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance (BANO, JI, & IMRAN, 2024). Moreover, the dynamic socio-economic and regulatory environment in Pakistan adds layers of complexity to leadership challenges that have been underexamined in scholarly literature (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024; KHAN & AHMAD, 2023).

The primary objectives of this dissertation are: (1) to analyze the influence of various leadership styles on organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs; (2) to evaluate the role of ethical leadership in fostering accountability and stakeholder engagement; (3) to investigate organizational and employee factors moderating these relationships; and (4) to develop strategic recommendations for enhancing leadership effectiveness in this context (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006; SAEED, MALIK, & RAZA, 2023). These are operationalized through specific research questions guiding this mixed-methods inquiry.

This research contributes theoretically by advancing the understanding of leadership within the non-profit sports sector in Pakistan, an area marked by socio-cultural specificity and limited prior study (BANO, 2019; KHAN ET AL., 2023). Practically, it offers evidence-based insights to support NGO leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders in cultivating leadership models that promote organizational resilience and developmental impact amid evolving socio-political challenges (HASSAN & PASHA, 2023; RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

The dissertation is structured into seven chapters commencing with this introduction to the topic and objectives, followed by a comprehensive literature review synthesizing theoretical foundations and empirical studies. The methodology chapter outlines the mixed-methods research design, data collection, and analysis. Subsequent chapters present empirical findings, discussion, and conclusions with recommendations for practice and future research.

1.2 Non-governmental organizations

In 1945, Article 71 of the newly formed United Nations' Charter was the first to use the term as it is used today. While there is no formal or fixed definition of NGOs, they are typically understood to be non-profit organizations that are independent of the government, although they may receive government funding (JONATHAN, 2003). Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, play a vital role in addressing social and environmental issues around the world. In order to understand the importance of NGOs, it is necessary to first define what exactly constitutes an NGO. According to the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, an NGO is "an organization that is independent from government, and that is not-for-profit, non-violent, and not a political party (ICVA, 2023)." NGOs can take many forms, including charities, foundations, and advocacy groups. To develop a better understanding of NGOs let consider the following most cited definitions of NGOs: -

Table 1.1 Most cited definitions of NGO

S.No.	Definitions	No. of Citations
1	A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a group that functions independently of any government. It is usually non-profit. NGOs, sometimes called civil society organizations, are established on community, national, and international levels to serve a social or political goal such as a humanitarian cause or the protection of the environment. (DUPIRE, FILBIEN, AND M'ZALI, 2022, P.421)	1022
2	A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an organization that generally is formed independent from government. They are typically non-profit entities, and many of them are active in humanitarianism or the social sciences; they can also include clubs and associations that provide services to their members and others. (FISHER, 1996, P.27)	927
3	A nongovernmental organization (NGO) is a voluntary group of individuals or organizations, usually not affiliated with any government, that is formed to provide services or to advocate a public policy. Although some NGOs are for-profit corporations, the vast majority are non-profit organizations. (KARNS, 2013, P.14)	623
4	A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an organization established by a group of individuals that wishes to pursue goals and aspirations that relate to the public, social, or political good of a nation or the world. (LEWIS, D., & KANJI, N. 2009, P.3)	611
5	A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a civil society organization that operates outside the public sector and pursues interests of its members through collective action. (KALOUDIS, 2021, P.2).	486

Source. Author creation using Scopus and Google Scholar (2025).

The figure 1.1, below represents a word cloud generated from most cited definitions of NGOs given in Table 1.1. The size of each word in the cloud corresponds to its frequency and importance within the definitions.

Figure 1.1: Word Cloud created from NGO definitions,

The word cloud highlights the key concepts and characteristics associated with NGOs such as “Independent, Non-profit, Civil society, Community, Humanitarianism, Social sciences, Advocacy, Public policy, Goals and aspirations, Social and political issues, International, Borders, Social aims, Funding sources, Political orientation, Society improvement, Laws and regulations, Sector classification, Size classification, Association, Collective action, Civil society organizations”. This word cloud provides a visual representation of the diverse aspects and roles of NGOs, emphasizing their independence, social impact, and wide range of activities undertaken to serve society and pursue various causes.

suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” SALAMON (2002). This definition highlights the focus of NGOs on addressing various social and environmental issues and serving the needs of disadvantaged or marginalized populations. Another definition of NGOs is that they are "organizations that are independent of government and that are not profit-oriented, although they may generate income to sustain or expand their work” FERDOUSI AND MAHMUD (2019). This definition emphasizes the independence of NGOs from government and their non-profit status, as well as their focus on achieving social or environmental goals rather than generating profits.

A third definition of NGOs is that they are "private organizations that pursue activities to benefit society or the environment, usually outside the market and government” SIDDIQUE AND AHMAD (2012). This definition highlights the non-market and non-governmental nature of NGOs and their focus on benefiting society or the environment. Overall, while there is some variation in the definitions of NGOs proposed by academics, they tend to emphasize the independence of these organizations from government, their non-profit status, and their focus on addressing social or environmental issues. The typical characteristics of NGOs identified from JAYAWICKRAMA AND MCCULLAGH (2009) in congruence with the above definitions are illustrated by Figure 1.2 below.



Figure 1.2. Defining NGOs characteristics

Source. Adapted from JAYAWICKRAMA & MCCULLAGH, (2009).

NGOs can take a variety of forms, including charities, development organizations, advocacy groups, and grassroots movements KLEIN ET AL. (2010). It is fascinating to observe that different countries have their unique forms of NGOs. While some may share similarities, such as federations and foundations, it is important to recognize that the NGO landscape varies and is not universally consistent. The functions of NGOs vary widely, but they often focus on areas such as humanitarian assistance, development, human rights, and environmental protection. Research has shown that NGOs are uniquely positioned to address complex social and environmental issues due to their independence, expertise, and ability to engage with local communities (BORNSTEIN, 2004).

For example, NGOs may provide direct services to underserved populations, such as access to education or healthcare, or they may work to bring about systemic change through advocacy and policy reform. In addition to their direct impact on social and environmental issues, NGOs also play a critical role in holding governments and other powerful actors accountable. NGOs often serve as watchdogs, monitoring, and reporting on the actions of governments and corporations in order to ensure that they are acting in the best interests of society and the environment BENJAMIN (2013). Overall, the importance of NGOs lies in their ability to address pressing social and environmental challenges and to hold those in power accountable for their actions. As such, NGOs play a vital role in the global effort to create a more just and sustainable world.

1.3 Leadership

The study of leadership has a long and varied history, reflecting changes in societal values and organizational needs. In order to understand the concept of leadership let's examine the most cited definitions of leadership given in Table 1.2:

Table 1.2. Most cited definitions of Leadership

S.No.	Definition	No. of Citations
1	Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement. (STOGDILL, 1950, P.3)	12,212
2	Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members. (HOUSE ET AL., 1999, P.11)	8,564

3	Leadership is the behaviour of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. (HEMPHILL AND COONS, 1957, P.7)	7,514
4	Leadership is the ability to step outside the culture to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive. (SCHEIN, 1992, P.23)	6,017
5	Leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. (NORTHHOUSE, 2016, P.6)	5,211

Source. Author creation using Scopus and Google Scholar (2025).

The definitions of leadership provided above encapsulate various aspects and elements of the concept, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature.

1. **Stogdill (1950)** defines leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement. This definition emphasizes the influence aspect, which is central to leadership, and highlights the organized group and goal achievement as key components. The leader's ability to direct and motivate group members towards a common objective is paramount.
2. **House et al. (1999)** describe leadership as the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of organizations. This definition adds depth by incorporating motivation and enablement, suggesting that leadership is not just about influence but also about empowering followers. It underscores the importance of organizational effectiveness and success as the ultimate goals of leadership.
3. **Hemphill and Coons (1957)** define leadership as the behavior of an individual when directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. This definition focuses on behavior as the primary medium through which leadership is exercised, emphasizing the directive role of the leader in guiding the group towards a common shared goal.
4. **Schein (1992)** views leadership as the ability to step outside the culture to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive. This definition introduces the concept of cultural awareness and adaptability, highlighting the leader's role in initiating and guiding

evolutionary change to ensure organizational adaptability and survival in a dynamic environment.

5. **Northouse (2016)** states that leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. This definition reinforces the process-oriented nature of leadership, emphasizing influence and group dynamics in the pursuit of a common goal.

Key Elements of Leadership Definitions:

- **Influence:** All definitions highlight the leader's ability to influence others, which is a core element of leadership.
- **Goal Achievement:** The emphasis on achieving specific goals or objectives is a common theme, reflecting the purposeful nature of leadership.
- **Group Dynamics:** Leadership is typically viewed in the context of group interactions, where the leader influences a collective rather than individuals in isolation.
- **Motivation and Empowerment:** Some definitions underscore the importance of motivating and enabling followers, highlighting a supportive and facilitative aspect of leadership.
- **Behavior and Process:** Leadership is often described as a set of behaviors or a process, indicating that it involves specific actions and interactions rather than merely holding a position of authority.
- **Cultural Awareness and Adaptability:** Modern definitions recognize the need for leaders to be culturally aware and adaptable, capable of initiating change to meet evolving challenges.

To gain deeper insights into the concept of leadership, we utilize a word cloud (Figure 1.3) created using the definitions of leadership from Table 1.2. The word cloud generated from the definitions of leadership visually highlights the most significant and frequently occurring terms used in the conceptualization of leadership.

The prominent display of "leadership," "individual," "group," "goal," "activities," and "process" indicates these are core elements across various definitions. The term "leadership" itself is central, underscoring the primary focus of these definitions. The emphasis on "individual" and "group" reflects the relational aspect of leadership, highlighting the interaction between the leader and their followers.



Figure 1.3. Word Cloud created from Leadership definitions, Source. Author creation using Voyant tools.

Words like "goal," "activities," and "process" suggest that leadership involves directing efforts towards achieving specific objectives through organized actions. Additionally, terms such as "ability," "influence," and "motivate" point to the personal qualities and behaviours essential for effective leadership.

The presence of "success," "organized," and "effectiveness" further emphasizes the outcome-oriented nature of leadership, aiming to achieve desired results through strategic guidance and empowerment of group members. This word cloud succinctly captures the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of leadership as depicted in scholarly definitions.

The main topics of the research are as follows: -

A. Leadership in NGOs

This topic explores the concept of leadership within non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan, with a specific focus on sports NGOs. The researcher will need to define leadership in the NGO sector, examining its key characteristics and styles. The investigation will also assess how leadership affects the effectiveness of these organizations in fulfilling their missions, particularly in promoting sports for social development and community engagement.

B. Leadership Roles in Sports NGOs

This section focuses on the unique leadership roles and responsibilities within sports NGOs in Pakistan. The researcher must explore how leadership influences critical functions such as sports infrastructure development, capacity-building, and delivering sports education. Attention will be given to how sports NGO leaders manage organizational dynamics, stakeholder relationships, and adapt to external challenges, including shifting policies, funding priorities, and evolving community needs.

C. Challenges to Leadership in Pakistani NGOs

This topic examines the various challenges faced by NGO leaders in Pakistan, particularly in the sports sector. The researcher will analyze the socio-economic, cultural, and political obstacles that affect leadership effectiveness in these organizations. Additionally, the study will explore how NGO leaders navigate issues such as limited financial resources, regulatory pressures, and societal expectations while striving to meet their objectives.

D. Leadership in Sports NGOs: Opportunities for Growth

This topic highlights opportunities for leadership development within sports NGOs in Pakistan. The researcher will assess how leadership in sports NGOs can contribute to the growth of the sports sector, community empowerment, and national sports initiatives. This section will also explore the impact of collaboration with international organizations, donor engagement, and leveraging global sports events to enhance leadership capabilities and organizational performance.

1.4 Thesis Statement

""Leadership in Pakistani NGOs: A Special Focus on Sports Organizations" investigates how different leadership styles—particularly ethical, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—

shape the sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and overall relevance of Pakistani sports NGOs. Building on the idea that sound leadership practices are pivotal for overcoming resource constraints and operational challenges, the study examines how these organizations can leverage adaptive leadership strategies to strengthen their community impact and maintain long-term viability in both national and international contexts."

1.5 Problem Statement

The increasing significance of NGOs in addressing societal challenges and fostering community development through sports has underscored the importance of leadership within these organizations (BHATTI, 2023). In Pakistan, sports NGOs operate under distinctive socio-economic and cultural conditions that create both opportunities—such as youth empowerment and sports development—and challenges, including constrained funding streams and heightened competition for resources. These conditions necessitate effective leadership strategies that can adapt to shifting organizational and environmental demands.

Leadership, as evidenced in various studies, is critical to enhancing the operational efficiency and sustainability of NGOs, particularly in the sports sector. Leaders in these organizations are tasked with resource allocation, partnership development, and the implementation of initiatives that reinforce their broader missions. Accordingly, understanding how specific leadership styles and practices contribute to organizational success becomes paramount, as this knowledge can inform strategies to improve overall performance.

External forces such as globalization and local socio-political factors influence leadership approaches within Pakistani sports NGOs. By conducting a comprehensive examination of these influences—alongside the unique internal dynamics shaping leadership behaviors—this study aims to offer practical recommendations for refining leadership practices. Through this analysis, it is anticipated that sports NGOs in Pakistan will be better positioned to address their operational challenges and fulfill their developmental objectives.

Leadership within Pakistani NGOs, particularly in the sports sector, remains an underexplored area despite its significant theoretical, practical, and policy implications. While NGOs globally play a pivotal role in societal development, the unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics of Pakistan necessitate a focused examination of leadership styles and practices tailored to this context. Sports

NGOs, in particular, offer a distinct lens through which leadership can be analyzed due to their emphasis on youth empowerment, community engagement, and grassroots development.

The theoretical research gap (Figure 1.4, 1.5, 1.6) is evident as existing literature has concentrated on leadership in corporate or governmental settings, leaving non-profit organizations—and especially sports NGOs—relatively understudied (WU, 2024). Globally, while leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and ethical leadership have been analyzed in various sectors, their application and effectiveness within NGOs operating under resource constraints have not been examined at scale. No prior studies exist that have examined impact of various leadership styles on organizational outcomes for sports NGOs in Pakistan. This gap highlights the need for empirical research that can contribute to the broader understanding of leadership dynamics in non-profit environments (BANO ET AL., 2024).

From a geographic perspective, Pakistan's NGO sector presents unique challenges such as regulatory complexities, limited funding streams, and socio-political pressures. These factors demand adaptive leadership strategies that are both innovative and culturally sensitive. Despite being a billion-dollar sector with substantial societal impact, research on leadership within Pakistani sports NGOs remains sparse (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024). This study aims to bridge this gap by focusing on how leadership styles influence organizational success and sustainability.

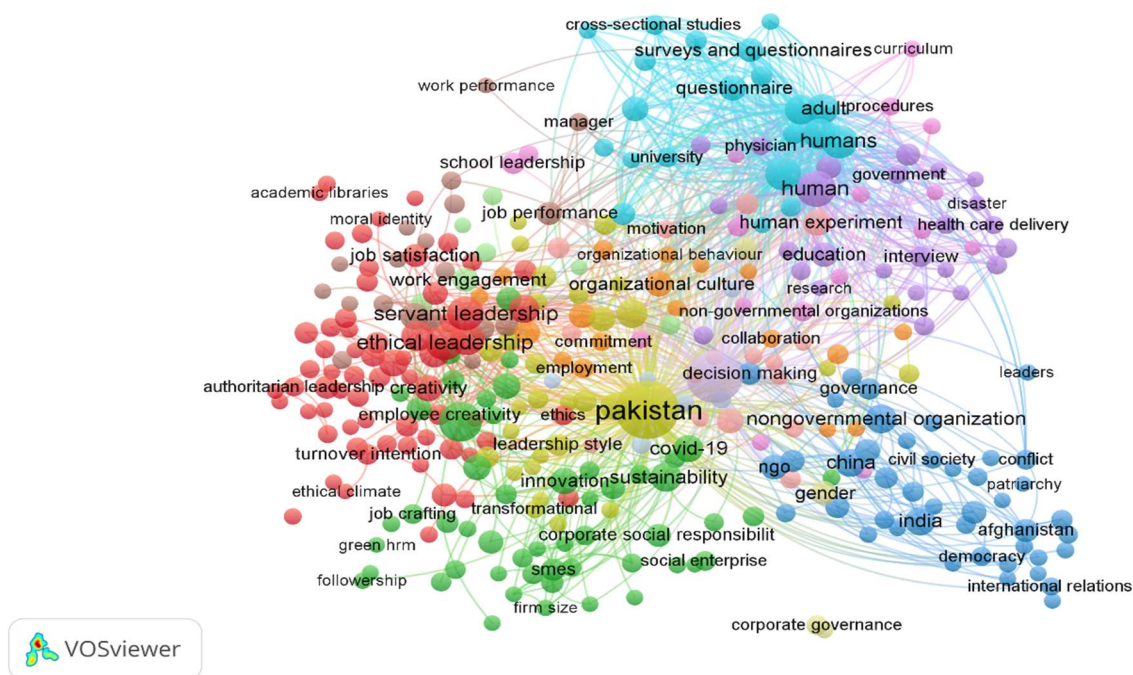
Practically, understanding leadership in sports NGOs has significant implications for improving operational efficiency, fostering team collaboration, and enhancing decision-making creativity. Leaders in these organizations often navigate complex stakeholder relationships while striving to achieve developmental objectives with limited resources. Insights from this research can inform leadership training programs and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the unique needs of sports NGOs (HASSAN & PASHA, 2023).

Finally, the study has critical policy implications. By identifying effective leadership practices and their impact on organizational outcomes, this research can guide policymakers in designing frameworks that support NGO operations. It can also aid international donors and stakeholders in aligning their strategies with local leadership dynamics to maximize impact.

In summary, this study addresses an important research gap by exploring leadership within Pakistani sports NGOs—a sector with immense potential for societal transformation but limited scholarly attention. The findings are expected to contribute to theoretical advancements while offering

practical recommendations for enhancing leadership effectiveness in similar socio-economic contexts globally.

To systematically identify and articulate the research gap guiding this dissertation, a comprehensive bibliometric analysis was conducted across multiple peer-reviewed databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and JSTOR. The search strategy employed tailored keyword combinations—specifically "leadership," "non-governmental organizations," and "Pakistan"—across publications from 1990 to 2024. Subject-area filters were applied to ensure the retrieval of documents relevant to organizational and social sciences. This methodological approach enabled the identification of emerging themes and knowledge clusters in existing scholarship while simultaneously revealing areas of limited scholarly attention.



Source. Author creation using VOS Viewer (2025).

The bibliometric map presented in Figure 1.4 illustrates the primary clusters identified through this analysis, each of which carries relevance to understanding leadership dynamics within the specific context of Pakistani sports-oriented NGOs.

A prominent red thematic cluster centers on ethical, transformational, and servant leadership styles and their influence on organizational performance. Existing scholarship in this domain frequently examines how these leadership approaches generate positive outcomes—including enhanced employee motivation, strengthened moral identity, improved job satisfaction, and reduced turnover intention. This body of research collectively demonstrates that leadership style functions as a catalyzing force in organizational success, with the potential to promote ethical conduct and foster meaningful staff engagement.

While many of these studies do not specifically focus on sports organizations, their substantive findings regarding leadership's capacity to cultivate trust, reinforce communal values, and enhance operational coherence directly transfer to the context of Pakistani sports NGOs. These organizations typically operate within volunteer-dependent and community-based frameworks, making such leadership insights particularly pertinent to their operational challenges and aspirations.

A secondary blue thematic cluster addresses governance structures, civil society dynamics, and the broader socio-political contexts shaping NGO operations. Research within this domain frequently investigates how contextual factors—encompassing conflict dynamics, cultural norms, governmental policies, and regional political economy—fundamentally shape NGO decision-making processes and effectiveness. For Pakistani sports NGOs, understanding these governance and contextual dimensions is critical, as these organizations must navigate complex regulatory environments, secure governmental cooperation, and adapt their strategies to evolving social and political landscapes.

A third green cluster of scholarship emphasizes sustainability, innovation, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as interconnected with leadership practices. Research in this area illuminates how leaders influence organizational stewardship, stakeholder relations, and resource allocation. Although many studies focus on corporate or small and medium-sized enterprise contexts, their findings remain highly relevant to NGO environments, where leaders must balance severe resource constraints against the imperative to demonstrate tangible social and community impact. Within

Figure 1.5 illustrates this gap visually by isolating the term "ethical leadership" within the bibliometric network. As the figure demonstrates, ethical leadership exists within the broader literature landscape yet exhibits minimal direct linkage with research on NGOs operating in Pakistan.

When examining the intersection more comprehensively—isolating both "ethical leadership" and "NGOs" or "non-governmental organizations" in relation to the Pakistani context—the absence of direct scholarly linkage becomes even more pronounced, as illustrated in Figure 1.6. This network discontinuity reveals a significant theoretical and empirical gap: existing scholarship has not adequately explored how ethical leadership practices manifest in, and influence outcomes within, Pakistani NGOs with a sports focus.

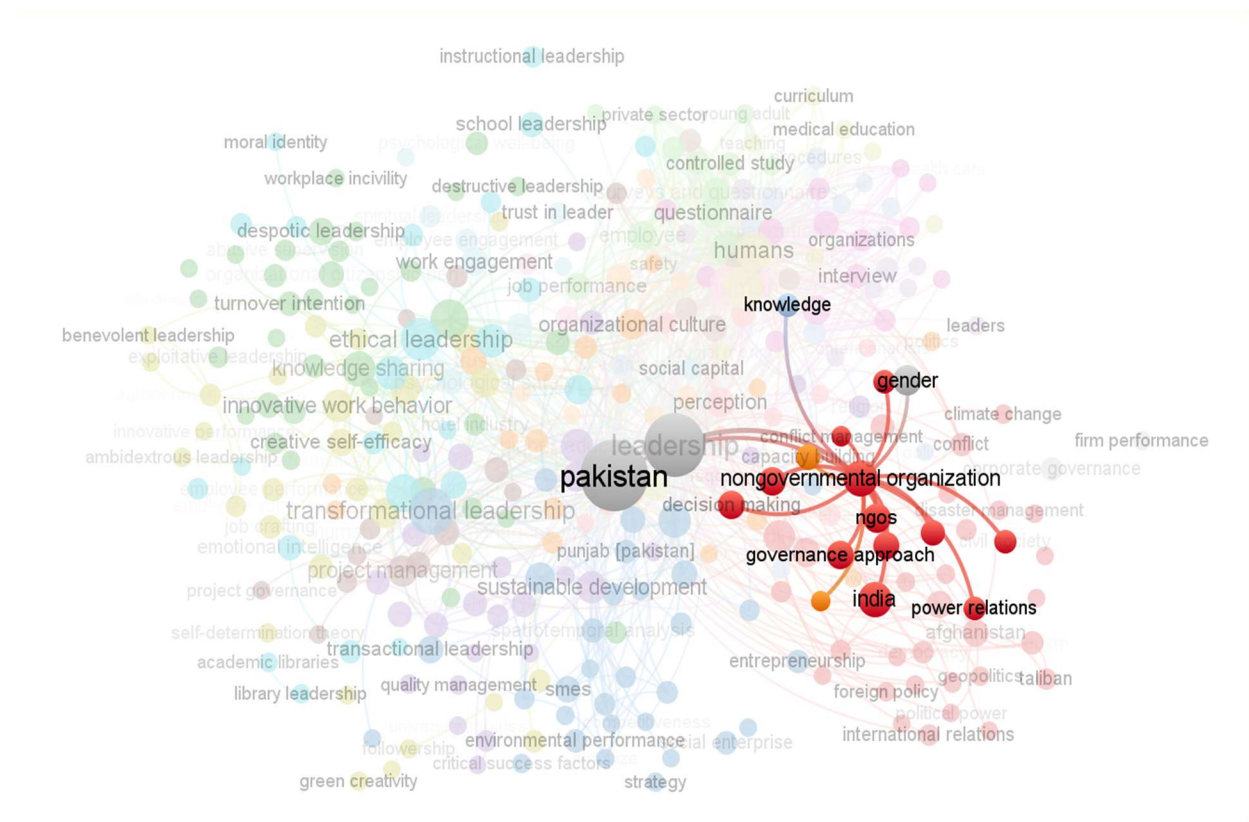


Figure 1.6. Uncovering Research Gaps through Network Diagram of Author Keywords.

Source. Author creation using VOS viewer (2025).

A distinct dimension of this research gap pertains to methodological concerns. The extant literature demonstrates a pronounced reliance on cross-sectional surveys, questionnaire-based studies, and quantitative research designs. While these approaches generate valuable insights, they may prove

limited in capturing the complex, dynamic, and contextually embedded relationships that characterize leadership within NGO environments—particularly in settings characterized by evolving funding structures, volunteer turnover, and organizational adaptation to societal change.

Researchers investigating Pakistani sports NGOs have opportunity to employ more methodologically diverse approaches, including longitudinal studies and mixed methods designs, to develop more nuanced understandings of how leadership styles adapt and evolve in response to organizational growth, shifting resource availability, and workforce transitions.

Collectively, these bibliometric clusters illuminate leadership as a multifaceted phenomenon with relevance across organizational, governance, and sustainability dimensions. The scholarly discourse encompasses interconnected themes ranging from ethical leadership and organizational sustainability to governance frameworks, organizational behavior, and rigorous methodological practice. However, this same analytical overview reveals a notable and consistent absence of concentrated scholarly inquiry specifically addressing leadership practices within sports-oriented NGOs in the Pakistani context.

The present dissertation addresses this identified gap by investigating how ethical leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership styles manifest in Pakistani sports NGOs and how these leadership approaches influence organizational outcomes—specifically sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance. By integrating insights from the established thematic clusters identified through bibliometric analysis with primary empirical investigation in a context heretofore understudied, this research advances both theoretical understanding and practical knowledge regarding leadership in Pakistani NGO environments.

1.7 Research Objectives

From the insights gained from examining the existing literature, problem statement and research gaps the following research objectives are formulated. This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate the influence of ethical leadership on organizational outcomes, including sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance, within Pakistani sports NGOs.
2. To examine the impact of laissez-faire leadership style on ethical leadership practices in Pakistani sports NGOs.

3. To analyze the effects of organizational sustainability and relevance on organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the context of Pakistani sports NGOs.
4. To explore how transformational and transactional leadership styles affect ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.
5. To evaluate the moderating effects of employee demographics and factors (such as age, gender, work experience, and leadership training) on the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.
6. To assess the moderating role of organizational characteristics (including number of employees, economic state, source of funds, and number of volunteers) on the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Research objectives and questions stated in this section will guide the research for both qualitative and quantitative research. Using the same research objectives in both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) components of mixed methods research enhances coherence, enables triangulation, and provides deeper insight. This alignment allows for confirmation of findings across methods and helps researchers understand complex social phenomena by integrating different forms of data around shared goals (DUNNING ET AL., 2007). It also facilitates comparability, such as when qualitative themes are converted into quantitative values for direct analysis (HOCHWALD ET AL., 2023). Collecting quantitative data during interviews can improve interpretation by contextualizing findings and supporting convergence (FRELS & ONWUEGBUZIE, 2013). Studies also show that aligning objectives across methods strengthens the validity and integration of results in mixed methods research (PINTO-LLORENTE ET AL., 2018; BRYMAN, 2006).

1.8 Research Questions

Drawing on the objectives and theoretical framework outlined in the preceding chapters, the following research questions guide this inquiry:

- RQ1. What is the influence of ethical leadership on organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance in Pakistani sports NGOs?
- RQ2. How does laissez-faire leadership influence ethical leadership practices in Pakistani sports NGOs?

RQ3. In what ways do organizational sustainability and relevance affect organizational effectiveness and efficiency within Pakistani sports NGOs?

RQ4. How do transformational and transactional leadership styles impact ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs?

RQ5. To what extent do employee characteristics (such as age, gender, work experience, and leadership training) moderate the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs?

RQ6. To what extent do organizational characteristics (including number of employees, economic conditions, sources of funding, and number of volunteers) moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs?

Table 1.3. shows presents the alignment of research objectives, questions, and hypotheses in the study of leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, highlighting the theoretical framework and testing all hypotheses through a mixed-methods approach (survey and interviews).

Table 1.3. Alignment of Research Objectives, Questions, Hypotheses

Research Objectives	Research Questions	Hypotheses
To investigate the influence of ethical leadership on organizational outcomes (sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance) in Pakistani sports NGOs.	What is the influence of ethical leadership on organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance in Pakistani sports NGOs?	H1: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational outcomes (sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance) in Pakistani sports NGOs.
To examine the impact of laissez-faire leadership on ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.	How does laissez-faire leadership influence ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs?	H2: Laissez-faire leadership negatively influences ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.
To analyze the influence of organizational sustainability and relevance on organizational effectiveness and efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs.	How do organizational sustainability and relevance impact organizational effectiveness and efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs?	H3: Organizational sustainability positively impacts organizational effectiveness and efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs.

	efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs?	
To explore the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.	How do transformational and transactional leadership styles influence ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs?	H4: Transformational and transactional leadership styles positively influence ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.
To evaluate the moderating effects of employee factors (age, gender, work experience, leadership training) on the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.	To what extent do employee factors moderate the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs?	H5: Employee and organizational factors moderate the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs.
To assess the moderating effects of organizational factors (number of employees, economic state, source of funds, number of volunteers) on the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs.	To what extent do organizational factors moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs?	H5a: Employee factors (age, gender, work experience, leadership training) moderate the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership. H5b: Organizational factors (number of employees, economic state, source of funds, number of volunteers) moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes.

Source. Author creation (2025).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a systematic literature review (SLR) examining leadership dynamics in Pakistani NGOs with a special focus on sports organizations. A systematic literature review provides a comprehensive, transparent, and reproducible approach to synthesizing existing research, ensuring methodologically sound knowledge integration while identifying critical gaps in the literature (TRANFIELD ET AL., 2003). This approach is particularly valuable for examining leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, where literature remains fragmented across multiple disciplines including organizational behavior, nonprofit management, and sports governance.

The systematic review methodology employed follows established protocols for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant literature in a structured manner (KITCHENHAM, 2004). This ensures comprehensive coverage of pertinent studies while reducing potential bias that may arise from selective literature inclusion. The approach enables consolidation of findings from diverse studies, providing robust foundations for theoretical development and empirical investigation (PETTICREW & ROBERTS, 2006).

The literature search was conducted across multiple databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR using carefully constructed search terms such as "leadership in NGOs," "sports NGOs," "transformational leadership," "transactional leadership," "ethical leadership," and "non-governmental organizations Pakistan." The systematic search strategy captured articles published between 1990 and 2024, resulting in 195 sources encompassing journals, books, and book chapters. This comprehensive approach yielded 242 documents with an annual growth rate of 6.68%, reflecting the expanding scholarly interest in this domain (HUSSAIN, 2024).

The bibliometric analysis conducted using VOSviewer revealed several distinct thematic clusters that inform understanding of leadership dynamics in Pakistani NGOs. These clusters encompass ethical and transformational leadership approaches, sustainability and corporate social responsibility considerations, governance and civil society contexts, organizational behavior and culture, and methodological approaches to leadership research (HUSSAIN, 2024). However, the analysis revealed notable gaps, particularly the absence of linkages between ethical leadership and Pakistani NGOs, indicating significant theoretical and empirical voids that this study addresses.

The review incorporates both theoretical foundations and empirical findings to construct a comprehensive understanding of leadership within the Pakistani NGO context. Special attention is given to the unique socio-political and cultural factors that influence leadership effectiveness in Pakistan's sports NGO sector, including resource constraints, regulatory complexities, and stakeholder diversity (BANO, 2019; HASSAN & PASHA, 2023). The systematic approach also facilitates identification of trending topics and emerging themes, providing insights into current research directions and future opportunities for scholarly inquiry.

This chapter synthesizes existing knowledge while critically examining theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and methodological approaches relevant to leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs. The systematic review methodology enhances transparency and reproducibility, enabling other researchers to verify findings and contributing to the credibility and validity of this research (MOHER ET AL., 2009; HARDEN & THOMAS, 2010).

2.1 Systematic Literature Review

The systematic literature review process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) as depicted vide Figure 1. Author followed the recommended guidelines to ensure methodological rigor and transparency (MOHER ET AL., 2009). The initial database search across Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR yielded 3,733 records using predetermined search terms related to leadership in NGOs, sports organizations, and Pakistani context. No additional records were identified through other sources. After removing 172 duplicate records, 3,561 unique records remained for initial screening.

Title and abstract screening based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria resulted in 544 potentially relevant records, with 131 records excluded due to lack of relevance to the research topic. Full-text assessment was conducted on 413 articles, applying more stringent inclusion criteria including publication quality, methodological rigor, and direct relevance to leadership in NGOs or sports organizations. During this stage, 171 articles were excluded for specific reasons: 66 articles had inaccessible full text, 71 articles employed incompatible study designs that did not align with the research objectives, and 34 articles contained data not directly linked to the research questions.

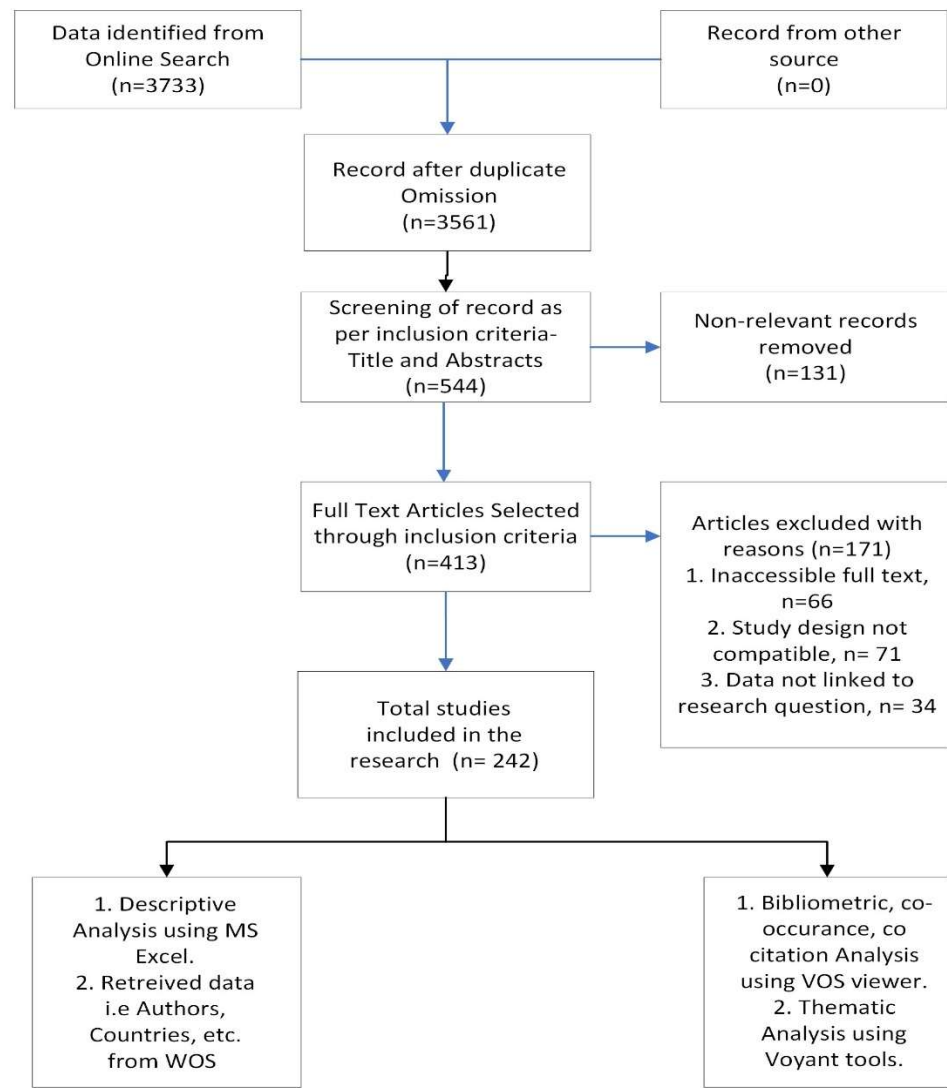


Figure 2.1: Systematic Literature Review Process (PRISMA Framework Flowchart)

The final selection resulted in 242 high-quality studies included in the qualitative synthesis for this systematic literature review. These studies formed the foundation for understanding leadership dynamics in Pakistani NGOs and sports organizations, providing robust theoretical and empirical foundations for the current research (KITCHENHAM, 2004; PETTICREW & ROBERTS, 2006). The PRISMA-compliant approach ensures that the literature review methodology is transparent, reproducible, and follows established academic standards for systematic reviews.

This systematic approach enabled comprehensive coverage of relevant literature while maintaining methodological rigor in study selection and quality assessment, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the literature synthesis presented in this chapter.

2.2 Historical and Contextual Background

Understanding the evolution and development of Pakistan's non-governmental organization (NGO) sector, particularly sports organizations, requires examining the complex historical, political, and socio-cultural factors that have shaped civil society in the country. The development of NGOs in Pakistan has been profoundly influenced by periods of military rule, quasi-civilian regimes, and the dominance of feudal elites, which have restricted the growth of a robust and independent non-profit sector (HASSAN ET AL., 2017).

The Pakistani state has historically been controlled by a narrow elite, primarily feudal and military, which has constrained the development of voluntary, participative, and democratic non-profit activities (KHAN ET AL., 2023). This dominance of conservative, status-quo-oriented feudal elites has created structural barriers to the emergence of grassroots organizations and participatory governance models that characterize effective civil society development. The intermittent military rule throughout Pakistan's history has further reinforced hierarchical governance structures that often conflict with the participatory ethos fundamental to NGO operations (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

Despite these challenges, Pakistan's NGO sector has demonstrated remarkable resilience and growth. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, approximately 85% of all NGOs in Pakistan, numbering around 14,000 are local or community-based organizations operating at the grassroots level (TRANSPARENCY WATCH ORGANIZATION, 1999). However, only 38% of NGOs are formally registered under various laws in the country, indicating significant challenges in documentation and regulatory compliance within the sector (KHAN ET AL., 2023).

The regulatory environment governing NGOs in Pakistan is characterized by complexity and fragmentation. Multiple registration frameworks exist, including the Societies Registration Act of 1860, the Trust Act of 1882, the Companies Act of 2017 (Section 42), and the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Registration and Control Ordinance of 1961 (AHMAD & MALIK, 2023). This multiplicity of legal frameworks creates administrative challenges, particularly for smaller organizations with limited resources, while also reflecting the government's efforts to maintain oversight over civil society activities (HASSAN ET AL., 2017).

The sports NGO subsector has emerged as a particularly significant component of Pakistan's civil society landscape. Sports organizations in Pakistan operate under the umbrella of the Pakistan Sports Board and include various forms ranging from national sports federations to community-

based sports clubs (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024). These organizations have gained prominence for their contributions to youth development, community engagement, and social inclusion, particularly in addressing challenges related to gender equality and youth empowerment (HUSSAIN & CUNNINGHAM, 2021).

The evolution of sports NGOs reflects broader patterns of civil society development in Pakistan. Early sports organizations were primarily elite-driven and concentrated in urban areas, reflecting the socio-economic stratification of Pakistani society (LAAR ET AL., 2019). However, recent decades have witnessed the emergence of grassroots sports initiatives that focus on community development and inclusive participation, particularly for marginalized groups including women and persons with disabilities (HUSSAIN ET AL., 2021).

International influence has played a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's NGO sector. Global development paradigms, donor priorities, and international best practices have significantly influenced organizational structures, program approaches, and accountability mechanisms within Pakistani NGOs (BANO, 2019). This international dimension has created both opportunities for resource mobilization and capacity building, as well as challenges related to donor dependency and alignment with local contexts and priorities (SMITH ET AL., 2017).

The socio-cultural context of Pakistan presents unique challenges and opportunities for sports NGOs. Traditional gender roles, religious considerations, and cultural norms significantly influence participation patterns and organizational approaches, particularly in sports programming for women and girls (LAAR ET AL., 2019). Successful sports NGOs have demonstrated the ability to navigate these cultural complexities while promoting inclusive participation and social change (HUSSAIN & CUNNINGHAM, 2021).

Contemporary challenges facing Pakistani sports NGOs include resource constraints, regulatory complexities, and the need to balance international donor requirements with local contextual realities (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regulations have introduced additional compliance requirements, resulting in increased scrutiny and monitoring mechanisms that have complicated operational sustainability for many organizations (KHAN & AHMAD, 2023).

2.3 Evolution of NGOs in Pakistan (historical, cultural, political context)

The evolution of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan has been shaped by the country's turbulent political history, socio-cultural dynamics, and shifting development paradigms.

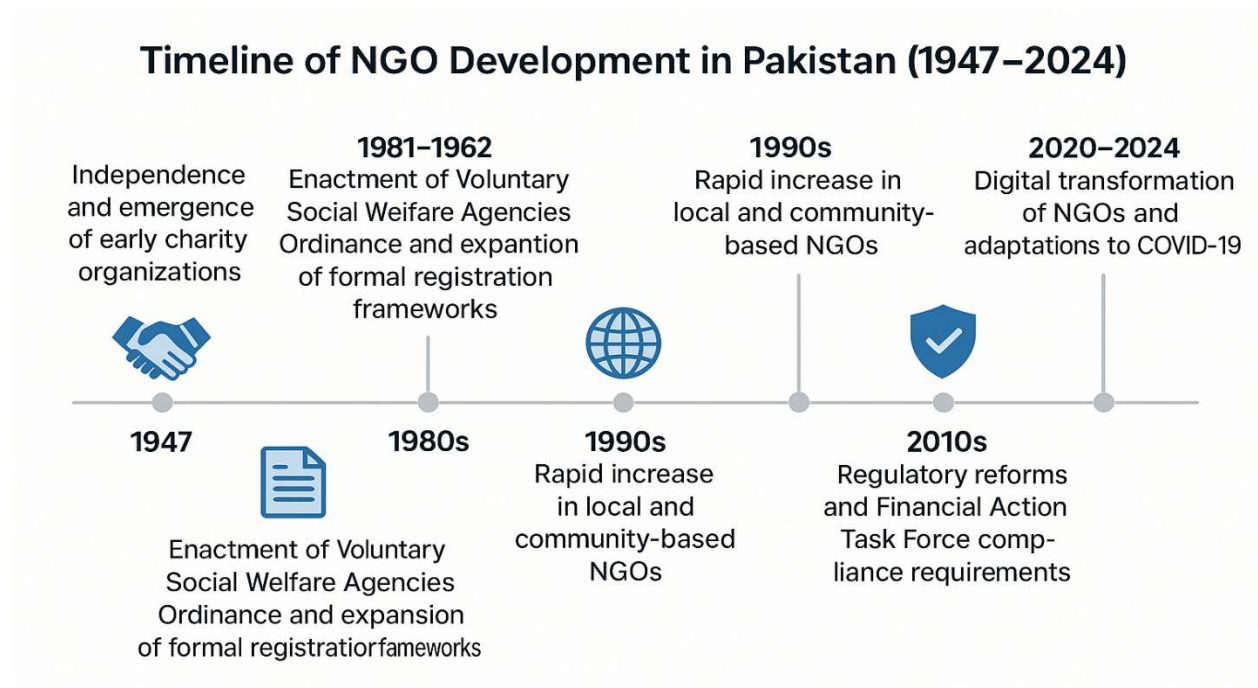


Figure 2.2: Timeline of NGO Development in Pakistan (1947-2024)

A horizontal timeline shown in Figure 2.2. shows the key milestones in Pakistan's NGO sector development including: 1947 (Independence and early charity organizations), 1960s (Formal registration laws established), 1980s (International NGO presence increases), 1990s (Growth of local NGOs), 2000s (Sports NGOs emergence), 2010s (Regulatory reforms and FATF compliance), 2020s (Digital transformation and COVID-19 adaptations).

Further elaborating on the timeline, it is noted that following independence in 1947, early voluntary action centered on charitable relief through community-based “societies” and trusts under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 and Trust Act of 1882 (SALAMON ET AL., 2013). These nascent organizations addressed immediate humanitarian needs but operated within a centralized governance structure dominated by elite interests (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

The 1960s and 1970s saw the formalization of NGO registration frameworks, including the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies Registration and Control Ordinance of 1961 and the Companies

Act (Section 42) of 2017, reflecting growing state interest in regulating and supporting civil society (AHMAD & MALIK, 2023). However, this period was also marked by military rule that constrained democratic participation and reinforced hierarchical power structures, limiting NGOs' autonomy and grassroots engagement (KHAN ET AL., 2023).

During the 1980s, global development assistance expanded in Pakistan, with international NGOs entering the field to implement donor-driven programs, particularly in health and education sectors (BANO, 2019). This influx brought new resources and technical expertise but also introduced dependency on external funding and pressure to align projects with international priorities rather than local needs (SMITH ET AL., 2017).

The 1990s and early 2000s witnessed a proliferation of indigenous NGOs, catalyzed by liberalization policies and increased civil society activism (HASSAN ET AL., 2017). Local organizations began focusing on participatory development, women's empowerment, and community governance, gradually shifting from relief-oriented activities to capacity-building and advocacy roles (BANO, JI, & IMRAN, 2024). Sports NGOs emerged in this era, leveraging youth engagement and community sports as vehicles for social inclusion and leadership development (HUSSAIN & CUNNINGHAM, 2021).

Regulatory reforms in the 2010s, including Financial Action Task Force compliance measures, introduced stringent monitoring and reporting requirements that strengthened accountability but also imposed administrative burdens on NGOs (KHAN & AHMAD, 2023). Concurrently, digital transformation accelerated NGO operations, enabling virtual collaboration and data-driven programming, a trend amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic's operational constraints (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

Today, Pakistan's NGO sector encompasses approximately 17, 353 registered and unregistered entities, with diverse mandates spanning humanitarian relief, development, advocacy, and sports promotion (PCP, 2024). The evolution of NGOs reflects broader socio-political shifts, illustrating tensions between state control and civil society autonomy, international influence and local ownership, as well as hierarchical governance and participatory models.

2.4 Theoretical Foundations of Leadership

The study of leadership has a long and varied history, reflecting changes in societal values and organizational needs. Early conceptions of leadership often emphasized innate qualities and traits of great leaders, as seen in the "Great Man" theory proposed in the 19th century (MOUTON, 2019). As the field evolved, researchers began to focus on behaviours and situational contexts, leading to the development of behaviourist theories in the mid-20th century (STOGDILL, 1950). During this period, leadership was often defined in terms of influence and goal achievement within groups (HEMPHILL AND COONS, 1957).

The late 20th century saw a shift towards understanding the relational and transformational aspects of leadership, with scholars such as BURNS (1978) AND BASS (1985) highlighting the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating followers towards higher levels of performance. More recent definitions incorporate aspects of culture and adaptability, recognizing the dynamic nature of leadership in a globalized world (HOUSE ET AL., 1999; SCHEIN, 1992). Overall, the definition of leadership has continuously evolved, reflecting broader shifts in organizational theory and practice.

Leadership theory provides the conceptual backbone for understanding how leaders influence organizational outcomes, an insight critical to examining sports NGOs in Pakistan. Early trait theories posited that leaders possess inherent characteristics distinguishing them from followers, but these approaches were supplanted by behavioral and contingency models emphasizing actions and situational dynamics (NORTHOUSE, 2016). Contemporary leadership research coalesces around four principal styles—transformational, transactional, ethical, and laissez-faire—each offering unique mechanisms for motivating followers and shaping organizational culture (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006).

Transformational leadership involves articulating a compelling vision, fostering intellectual stimulation, and attending to individual followers' needs through personalized coaching (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). Transformational leaders elevate motivation and performance by aligning organizational objectives with followers' values and fostering a culture of innovation (BROWN & TREVIÑO, 2006). In contrast, transactional leadership is grounded in contingent reward and manage-

ment-by-exception, relying on exchanges and corrective feedback to maintain performance standards (NORTHOUSE, 2016). While transactional approaches ensure operational consistency, they may lack the inspirational component necessary to drive change in dynamic NGO contexts.

Ethical leadership extends transactional frameworks by embedding moral principles, demonstrating integrity, and promoting fairness and transparency (BROWN & TREVIÑO, 2006). Ethical leaders serve as role models, cultivating trust and fostering an environment where stakeholders feel respected and empowered (BANO, JI, & IMRAN, 2024). This style is particularly pertinent for NGOs, where adherence to civil society values and donor accountability demands high ethical standards. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership—characterized by minimal guidance and delegation of decision-making—can lead to ambiguity and disengagement, undermining organizational cohesion (NORTHOUSE, 2016).

Good governance theory complements leadership models by emphasizing accountability, stakeholder participation, and transparent decision-making processes (SALAMON, SOKOLOWSKI, & HADDOCK, 2013). In sports organizations, good governance entails inclusive stakeholder representation, ethical resource allocation, and mechanisms to prevent abuse of authority (HASSAN & PASHA, 2023). Integrating leadership and governance frameworks enables a holistic examination of how leaders in Pakistani sports NGOs navigate complex regulatory environments and respond to diverse stakeholder expectations.

This theoretical foundation informs the study's examination of leadership dynamics by linking leader behaviors to organizational outcomes in the unique socio-political context of Pakistan. By juxtaposing transformational, transactional, ethical, and laissez-faire leadership within a good governance paradigm, the analysis will elucidate which styles and mechanisms best support sustainable NGO development and stakeholder engagement in sports organizations.

2.5 Leadership in Non-Profit Organizations

Leadership in non-profit organizations differs fundamentally from leadership in for-profit contexts due to mission orientation, resource constraints, and stakeholder diversity. Non-profit leaders often juggle multiple roles—as strategists, fundraisers, and advocates—while navigating the organiza-

tion's mission-driven ethos (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). Unlike corporate environments where financial performance is the primary metric, non-profit success is gauged by social impact, stakeholder satisfaction, and ethical stewardship (BROWN & TREVIÑO, 2006).

Non-profit leadership requires balancing the demands of diverse constituencies, including beneficiaries, volunteers, donors, government agencies, and community partners (SALAMON, SOKOLOWSKI, & HADDOCK, 2013). This complexity necessitates participatory governance models that empower stakeholders through transparency, inclusiveness, and shared decision-making (HASSAN & PASHA, 2023). In sports NGOs, such participatory practices facilitate community engagement and foster social cohesion, aligning organizational activities with local needs (HUSSAIN & CUNNINGHAM, 2021).

Resource scarcity is another defining characteristic of non-profits. Leaders must demonstrate ingenuity in mobilizing funds, managing limited budgets, and leveraging partnerships to sustain operations (BANO, 2019). Transformational leadership is particularly effective under these conditions, as it inspires commitment to the mission and encourages resourcefulness among staff and volunteers (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). Ethical leadership further reinforces trust and legitimacy, critical for securing donor confidence and community support (BANO, JI, & IMRAN, 2024).

Moreover, non-profit leaders confront unique accountability pressures. They must adhere to donor stipulations, regulatory frameworks, and community expectations, often simultaneously (KHAN & AHMAD, 2023). Ethical lapses can severely undermine organizational credibility, making integrity and transparency central leadership priorities (BROWN & TREVIÑO, 2006). Laissez-faire leadership, by contrast, risks governance gaps and mission drift, underscoring the need for active, principled leadership in the non-profit sector (NORTHOUSE, 2016).

Overall, leadership in non-profit organizations is a multifaceted endeavor that demands a blend of visionary guidance, ethical conduct, and stakeholder collaboration. In the context of Pakistani sports NGOs, understanding these nuances is essential for designing leadership development programs and governance structures that enhance organizational effectiveness and societal impact.

2.6 Leadership in Sports Organizations

Leadership in sports organizations operates within a distinct context characterized by performance pressures, diverse stakeholder groups, and the unique combination of competitive and developmental objectives. Sports governance literature emphasizes that effective leadership in sports NGOs requires balancing multiple roles including strategic vision, stakeholder engagement, and operational excellence (HUSSAIN & CUNNINGHAM, 2021). Sports leaders must navigate complex relationships with athletes, volunteers, donors, government agencies, and community members while maintaining focus on both performance outcomes and social development goals.

Contemporary sports governance research highlights the evolution from traditional hierarchical models to more participatory and inclusive leadership approaches (HASSAN ET AL., 2017). Good governance principles in sports organizations encompass transparency, accountability, democracy, and responsibility—elements that demand strong ethical leadership to implement effectively (SALAMON, SOKOLOWSKI, & HADDOCK, 2013). Sports NGOs face unique governance challenges including volunteer management, resource allocation across multiple programs, and maintaining competitive integrity while promoting inclusive participation (LAAR ET AL., 2019).

The literature reveals that transformational leadership is particularly effective in sports contexts, where leaders must inspire athletes, volunteers, and staff toward shared visions of excellence and social impact (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). Sports leaders who demonstrate transformational qualities—including inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—create environments that foster both athletic achievement and personal development (NORTHOUSE, 2016).

Leadership effectiveness in sports NGOs is measured through multiple dimensions including program quality, participant satisfaction, organizational sustainability, and community impact (HUSSAIN ET AL., 2021). Effective sports NGO leaders demonstrate competence in technical areas such as sports programming and facility management, alongside interpersonal skills essential for stakeholder engagement and team building (BROWN & TREVIÑO, 2006).

Research indicates that ethical leadership is fundamental to sports NGO effectiveness, particularly given the sector's emphasis on youth development and character building (BANO, JI, & IMRAN, 2024). Sports leaders who model integrity, fairness, and respect create organizational cultures that reinforce positive values and attract sustained community support. The unique visibility of sports

activities amplifies the importance of ethical conduct, as leadership behaviors are often observed by participants, families, and community members (HASSAN & PASHA, 2023).

Sports organizations typically engage diverse stakeholder groups with varying interests and expectations. Effective stakeholder management requires leaders who can facilitate communication, manage conflicts, and build consensus among participants with different priorities (SALAMON, SOKOLOWSKI, & HADDOCK, 2013). In Pakistani sports NGOs, stakeholder groups include beneficiaries (athletes and community members), volunteers, donors, government agencies, and partner organizations (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

Transformational leaders excel at stakeholder management by articulating compelling visions that align diverse interests around shared goals (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). They foster collaborative environments where stakeholders feel valued and empowered to contribute to organizational success. Conversely, transactional leadership approaches can be effective for managing specific stakeholder relationships requiring clear expectations and performance standards, such as compliance with regulatory requirements or donor reporting obligations (NORTHOUSE, 2016).

The complexity of stakeholder management in sports NGOs is heightened by resource constraints and competing demands. Leaders must balance the needs of current participants with organizational sustainability requirements, while also considering broader community development objectives (KHAN ET AL., 2023). This balancing act requires sophisticated leadership skills that integrate ethical decision-making with strategic planning and operational excellence.

2.7 Research Trends and Emerging Themes

Bibliometric analysis of the 244 articles included in this review reveals four prominent dimensions of leadership research in Pakistani sports NGOs: annual publication growth, thematic clusters, geographic coverage, and methodological approaches.

A line chart in Figure 2.3. shows the number of publications per year, showing growth from low output in early 1990s to a peak of 22 articles in 2018, then stabilizing at around 18–20 articles annually through 2024. Annual Scientific Production (1990–2024) displays a clear upward trajectory. From zero publications in the early 1990s, output rose gradually to five–six articles per year by 2010, surged to a peak of twenty-two articles in 2018, and stabilized at eighteen–twenty articles

annually thereafter. This growth underlines increasing scholarly attention to leadership in the sports-NGO sector.

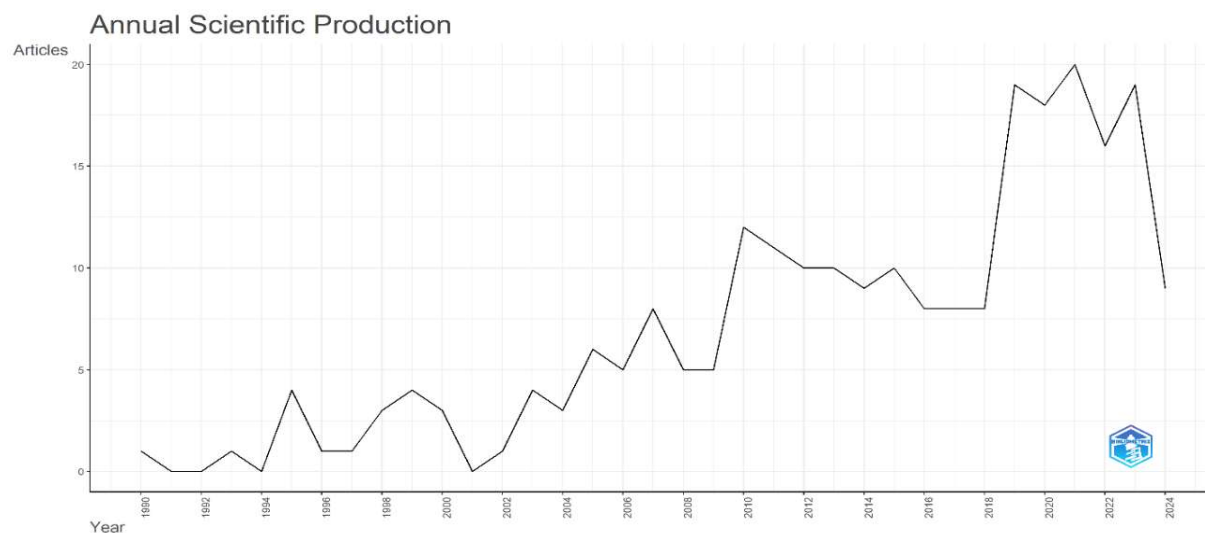


Figure 2.3. Annual Scientific Production

The figure 2.4. titled "Trend Topics" illustrates the evolution of various research topics over the years, highlighting their frequency of occurrence in the literature from 1995 to 2023.

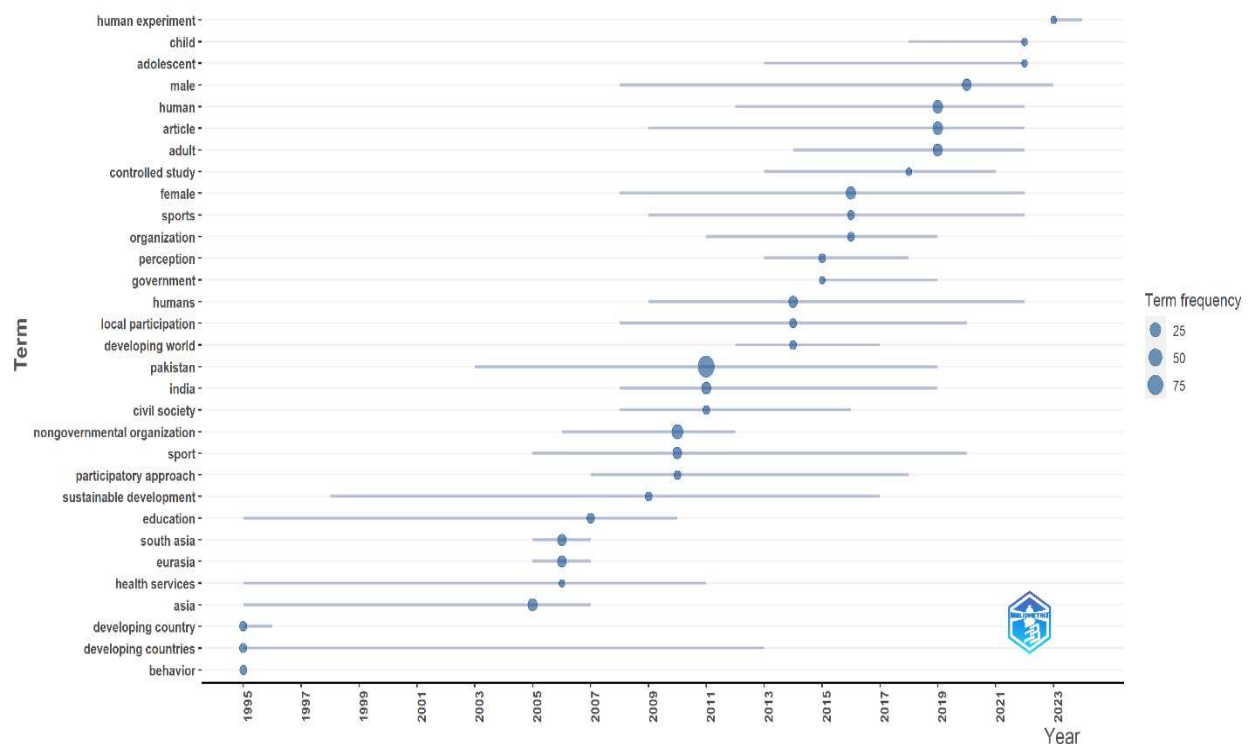


Figure 2.4. Frequency Chart of Trend Topics

Each term is plotted against a timeline, with the size of the circles indicating term frequency: smaller circles represent fewer mentions, while larger circles denote more frequent mentions.

In the early years, from 1995 to 2000, terms such as "behavior," "developing countries," and "developing country" were prevalent, indicating a focus on fundamental issues related to human behavior and socio-economic conditions in developing nations. Moving into the early 2000s, the focus expanded to include topics like "health services," "Asia," and "Eurasia," reflecting an increased interest in regional studies and health-related research.

Around 2005, there is a noticeable shift with emerging terms such as "participatory approach," "sustainable development," and "education." These topics suggest a growing emphasis on inclusive methods, sustainability, and educational development, which aligns with broader global development goals. From 2010 onwards, the figure 2.3. shows a significant increase in the frequency of terms like "local participation," "civil society," "non-governmental organization," "sport," and "government." This period marks a heightened interest in community engagement, the role of civil society, and the intersection between NGOs and governmental entities. The frequent occurrence of "sport" during this time also points to a growing recognition of sports as a critical area of study within social sciences and development.

In recent years, terms such as "human experiment," "child," "adolescent," "male," "female," and "controlled study" become more prominent, indicating a trend towards more specific and controlled research studies focusing on different demographic groups and experimental approaches. Additionally, "organization," "perception," "humans," and "sports organization" continue to be significant, reflecting ongoing research into organizational behavior and sports management. The trends depicted in this figure are highly relevant to the topic of leadership in Pakistani NGOs, especially within sports organizations. The increasing focus on participatory approaches, local participation, and the role of NGOs and civil society underscores the importance of inclusive leadership and community engagement in achieving organizational goals. Moreover, the growing interest in sports and sports organizations aligns directly with the thesis's focus, suggesting a rich body of literature that can inform strategies for effective leadership in this sector.

2.8 Gaps Synthesized from the Literature

Gathering insights from the review of literature this section supplements the section titled rationale for the study from previous chapter. The rationale for undertaking the study is further elaborated by supplementing novel insights from the systematic literature review (BABBIE, 2020; SAUNDERS ET AL., 2019). A critical review of the literature reveals several substantial gaps in understanding leadership within Pakistani sports NGOs.

Although leadership in corporate and governmental contexts has been widely examined, research on leadership styles—particularly ethical, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—within the non-profit, sports-focused sector remains scarce and fragmented (WU, 2024). Most studies address generic NGO leadership or focus on sectors such as education and health, overlooking the complexities and unique challenges faced by sports organizations operating under resource constraints, regulatory uncertainties, and socio-cultural pressures (HASSAN ET AL., 2017; RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

The literature further shows that the influence of leadership style on outcomes such as sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness, and organizational relevance in sports NGOs has not been empirically examined at scale within Pakistan. Notably, there are no comprehensive studies exploring the interaction between ethical leadership and organizational success in Pakistani sports NGOs, nor research that considers contextual moderators such as employee demographics or organizational characteristics (BANO ET AL., 2024). Gaps also exist in methodological rigor, with a predominance of cross-sectional surveys and little integration of qualitative or mixed-methods insights that capture temporal or context-specific dynamics.

Justification for this study is threefold. First, Pakistani sports NGOs play a pivotal societal role—empowering youth, promoting community development, and advancing national sports initiatives—yet face persistent challenges of chronic underfunding, bureaucratic delays, limited volunteer continuity, and fragmented regulatory oversight (SPECIAL OLYMPICS PAKISTAN, 2025). Effective leadership is critical for enabling these organizations to overcome both structural and operational hurdles, maintain mission focus, and deliver long-term impact. Second, bridging the literature gap around leadership in this context can guide the training, recruitment, and development of leaders uniquely equipped for Pakistan's sports NGO landscape. Third, empirical evidence

from this study will provide actionable recommendations for NGO managers, donors, and policy-makers aimed at sectoral reform, performance enhancement, and sustainability.

The present research is theoretically positioned at the intersection of full-range leadership theory and stakeholder theory, extending established models to a context of high uncertainty, diverse organizational forms, and acute resource challenges. By empirically testing the influence of ethical, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership on multiple organizational outcomes—and modeling the moderating roles of employee and organizational factors—the study advances theoretical understanding and fills a recognized gap in the literature on non-profit sports organizations.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the historical evolution, theoretical foundations, and empirical research trends surrounding leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs. Synthesizing the literature, four key themes emerged: the sector's unique governance and leadership challenges; the dominance of transformational, ethical, and participatory leadership models; persistent gaps in geographic and methodological coverage; and the urgent need for evidence-based leadership strategies suited to Pakistan's non-profit sports context. A systematic approach utilizing bibliometric mapping and thematic analyses clarified sectoral priorities and outlined opportunities for innovative research. The discussion of organizational and stakeholder dynamics highlighted the practical relevance of effective leadership for NGO sustainability, impact, and community engagement.

Building on this foundation, the next chapter shifts to hypothesis development, methodology, detailing the research design, data collection instruments, and analytic techniques employed to address the gaps and test the study's hypotheses about leadership effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs.

CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This section contains the discussion of the relationship between the hypothesized variables in relation to the existing literature. We will explore the relevance, expected relationships amongst variables through the proposed hypothesis. Leadership styles play a pivotal role in shaping the performance and sustainability of organizations, particularly in the dynamic and resource-constrained environments characteristic of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The effectiveness of leadership within NGOs not only influences internal operational efficiencies but also significantly impacts their ability to achieve mission-driven goals.

Recent research underscores the transformative potential of various leadership approaches, highlighting how styles such as transformational, transactional, and servant leadership can enhance organizational outcomes (MARTENS AND LITTLE, 2024). These leadership paradigms affect key dimensions of NGO performance, including team empowerment, project success, and the strategic alignment of organizational objectives with community needs.

The relationship between leadership practices and organizational performance in NGOs is multifaceted, encompassing both direct and indirect effects on project outcomes. Ethical leadership, for example, has been shown to foster an environment conducive to team development and empowerment, thereby driving project success and organizational resilience (LITTLE AND MARTENS, 2024). Additionally, leadership styles influence how NGOs utilize evaluation results to inform decision-making and improve program effectiveness, suggesting that adaptive leadership practices are critical for sustained impact (OKUL AND NYONJE, 2021).

The strategic orientation of NGO leadership also shapes competitive positioning and performance, with studies indicating that differentiation and focus strategies can be effectively leveraged through strong leadership frameworks (GATHINGU AND MOTE, 2022). As NGOs navigate complex socio-economic landscapes, understanding the nuanced effects of leadership styles on organizational performance becomes essential for fostering sustainable development and operational excellence.

Ethical leadership fosters long-term sustainability in organizations by promoting values such as integrity, accountability, and social responsibility. Leaders who demonstrate ethical behaviors inspire similar conduct among employees, creating a culture of trust and ethical compliance

(BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006). This culture supports sustainable practices, as ethical leaders prioritize decisions that benefit not only the organization but also its stakeholders and the broader community (MAYER ET AL., 2012). In Pakistani sports NGOs, where social impact is a core mission, ethical leadership can significantly enhance sustainability by aligning organizational practices with community values and expectations (ABOUASSI, TSCHIRHART, AND MAKHLOUF, 2017).

This study examines the influence of four primary leadership styles—ethical, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—on organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. These styles represent the full-range leadership theory applied in leadership effectiveness research. Given their interrelated but distinct effects, we hypothesize that each style positively or negatively affects key outcomes including sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and organizational relevance.

Ethical leadership, defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships (BROWN, TREVIÑO AND HARRISON, 2005), shapes organizational culture by modelling integrity and accountability. In non-profit sports NGOs, where mission fulfilment depends on stakeholder trust and resource stewardship, leaders' ethical behaviors promote transparency, foster volunteer and donor confidence, and align actions with core values. Prior research links ethical leadership to greater organizational sustainability, operational efficiency, program effectiveness, and relevance to community needs (NEUBERT ET AL., 2009; ZHU ET AL., 2016). Thus, it is posited that:

H1: Ethical Leadership positively influences key organizational outcomes (sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance) in Pakistani sports NGOs.

In support of H1, the following specific propositions are tested: ethical leadership's impact on sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance.

H1a: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational sustainability.

Ethical leadership fosters organizational sustainability by embedding principled decision-making and long-term value orientation into everyday operations (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2005). When leaders consistently model integrity, fairness, and accountability, they cultivate stakeholder trust—among donors, volunteers, and community partners—which in turn secures ongoing financial and nonfinancial resources essential for enduring program delivery (NEUBERT AND

PERCY, 2009). Moreover, ethical leaders prioritize transparent resource allocation and responsible stewardship, reducing waste and reinforcing practices that support continuity (YU AND ZHANG, 2016). In sports NGOs operating under volatile funding and regulatory environments, such ethical guidance is particularly critical: it aligns organizational activities with mission goals, mitigates reputational risk, and sustains stakeholder engagement over time, thereby enhancing the NGO's capacity to survive and thrive in the long term (ZHU AND AKHAVEIN, 2018).

H1b: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational effectiveness.

Organizational effectiveness is often linked to the quality of leadership within an organization. Ethical leaders enhance effectiveness by fostering an environment of fairness, transparency, and mutual respect, which increases employee engagement and productivity (YUKL, 2010). By setting clear ethical standards and modeling appropriate behaviors, leaders help create a cohesive organizational culture that supports goal achievement and operational efficiency (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006). In the context of Pakistani sports NGOs, ethical leadership is crucial for maintaining credibility and securing stakeholder support, both of which are essential for organizational effectiveness (HASSAN ET AL., 2017).

H1c: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational efficiency.

Efficiency in organizations is closely tied to leadership practices that promote accountability and ethical decision-making. Ethical leaders ensure that resources are used responsibly and that processes are streamlined to minimize waste and maximize productivity (MAYER ET AL., 2012). By fostering a culture of ethical behavior, leaders reduce the likelihood of misconduct and inefficiencies that can arise from unethical practices. In Pakistani sports NGOs, where resources are often limited, ethical leadership can play a critical role in optimizing resource allocation and enhancing operational efficiency (LATIF AND WILLIAMS, 2017).

H1d: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational relevance.

Organizational relevance refers to the extent to which an organization meets the needs and expectations of its stakeholders. Ethical leadership contributes to relevance by ensuring that the organization's mission, values, and activities are aligned with societal needs (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006). Ethical leaders engage with stakeholders transparently and responsibly, fostering trust and credibility that enhance the organization's reputation and relevance (ABOUASSI, TSCHIRHART,

AND MAKHLOUF, 2017). In Pakistani sports NGOs, ethical leadership helps maintain relevance by promoting programs that address current social and community issues effectively.

Leadership styles vary in the degree and manner of leader involvement. Laissez-faire leaders abdicate decision-making, transactional leaders emphasize contingent rewards and corrective feedback, and transformational leaders inspire through vision and individualized consideration (BASS AND AVOLIO, 1994). These distinct behaviors differentially shape subordinates' perceptions of ethical standards, as transactional and transformational styles provide clearer guidance and moral frameworks than passive laissez-faire approaches. Empirical studies demonstrate that active leadership fosters ethical climates, whereas passivity erodes them (AVEY, PALANSKI, AND WALUMBWA, 2011). Accordingly:

H2: Leadership styles (laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational) influence ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.

To elaborate H2, the study examines how laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership behaviors shape ethical leadership via the following proposed hypotheses:

H2a: Laissez-faire leadership negatively influences ethical leadership.

Laissez-faire leadership, characterized by a hands-off approach and lack of active guidance, often undermines ethical leadership by creating environments where ethical standards are poorly defined and inconsistently enforced (SKOGSTAD ET AL., 2007). Without strong leadership, employees may lack clear direction on ethical expectations, increasing the risk of unethical behavior. In Pakistani sports NGOs, the absence of proactive ethical leadership can lead to governance issues, reducing the organization's effectiveness and credibility (HASSAN ET AL., 2017).

H2b: Transactional leadership positively influences ethical leadership.

Transactional leadership, which emphasizes clear expectations, structured tasks, and performance-based rewards, can support ethical leadership by establishing a framework of accountability and ethical compliance (BASS AND RIGGIO, 2006). Transactional leaders reinforce ethical standards through consistent monitoring and corrective actions, creating an environment where ethical behavior is expected and rewarded. In Pakistani sports NGOs, transactional leadership can complement ethical leadership by ensuring that ethical guidelines are systematically applied and adhered to (HASSAN ET AL., 2017).

H2c: Transformational leadership positively influences ethical leadership.

Transformational leadership inspires ethical behavior by promoting values such as integrity, fairness, and social responsibility (BASS AND RIGGIO, 2006). Transformational leaders serve as role models, demonstrating ethical conduct and motivating followers to uphold high ethical standards. Their ability to articulate a compelling vision and foster an ethical organizational culture enhances ethical leadership practices. In Pakistani sports NGOs, transformational leadership is particularly effective in promoting ethical leadership, as it aligns organizational goals with broader social values and community interests (MAYER ET AL., 2012).

Organizational success in sports NGOs encompasses multiple interconnected outcomes: sustainability (long-term viability), effectiveness (goal achievement), efficiency (resource utilization), and relevance (stakeholder alignment). Systems theory suggests these dimensions co-evolve, such that improvements in one reinforce others—for instance, sustainable funding enables efficient operations, while relevance to community needs enhances effectiveness and sustainability (SOWA, SELDEN AND SANDFORT, 2004). Prior NGO research confirms positive correlations among these outcomes (GUO AND BROWN, 2006). Therefore:

H3: Organizational outcomes (sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance) are positively interrelated in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H3 is further unpacked by assessing the interrelations among organizational outcomes: sustainability–effectiveness, sustainability–efficiency, effectiveness–efficiency, relevance–sustainability, relevance–effectiveness, and relevance–efficiency

H3a: Organizational sustainability positively influences organizational effectiveness.

Sustainability practices contribute to long-term organizational effectiveness by ensuring that resources are managed responsibly and that the organization can adapt to changing environments (DOPPELT, 2017). Sustainable organizations are better positioned to achieve their goals consistently over time, as they are resilient to external shocks and capable of maintaining stakeholder trust (EPSTEIN AND BUHOVAC, 2014). In Pakistani sports NGOs, sustainability initiatives can enhance effectiveness by securing ongoing support from donors, volunteers, and the community.

H3b: Organizational sustainability positively influences organizational efficiency.

Sustainability and efficiency are interrelated, as sustainable practices often involve optimizing resource use and reducing waste (EPSTEIN AND BUHOVAC, 2014). Organizations that prioritize sustainability are more likely to implement efficient processes that conserve resources and improve cost-effectiveness. In Pakistani sports NGOs, where financial and human resources may be limited, sustainability-focused leadership can drive efficiency by promoting practices that maximize impact with minimal resource expenditure (DOPPELT, 2017).

H3c: Organizational effectiveness positively influences organizational efficiency.

Effective organizations are typically efficient because they have well-defined goals, clear processes, and motivated employees working towards common objectives (CAMERON AND WHETTEN, 2011). Organizational effectiveness involves achieving desired outcomes, while efficiency focuses on the optimal use of resources to achieve these outcomes. In Pakistani sports NGOs, improving effectiveness through strong leadership and strategic planning can naturally lead to greater efficiency in program implementation and resource management (LATIF AND WILLIAMS, 2017).

H3d: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational sustainability.

Maintaining organizational relevance is critical for sustainability, as it ensures continued stakeholder engagement and support (BRYSON, 2018). Organizations that remain relevant by adapting to societal changes and meeting stakeholder expectations are more likely to secure the resources and legitimacy needed for long-term survival. In Pakistani sports NGOs, relevance can be sustained through ethical leadership that aligns organizational goals with community needs and values (ABOUASSI, TSCHIRHART, AND MAKHLOUF, 2017).

H3e: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational effectiveness.

An organization's relevance directly impacts its effectiveness by ensuring that its activities are meaningful and valuable to stakeholders (BRYSON, 2018). When an organization's goals align with stakeholder needs, it is more likely to achieve its objectives and deliver impactful outcomes. In Pakistani sports NGOs, maintaining relevance through responsive and ethical leadership can

enhance effectiveness by fostering strong community relationships and support (HASSAN ET AL., 2017).

H3f: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational efficiency.

Relevance drives efficiency by focusing organizational efforts on activities that deliver the highest value to stakeholders (BRYSON, 2018). When organizations clearly understand and address stakeholder needs, they can allocate resources more effectively and avoid unnecessary activities. In Pakistani sports NGOs, ethical leadership that prioritizes stakeholder relevance can improve efficiency by streamlining operations and focusing on high-impact programs (LATIF AND WILIAMS, 2017).

Moderation Effects

The role of employee and organizational factors as moderators in the relationship between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in sports NGOs has been increasingly emphasized in recent research. Employee characteristics—such as tenure, educational background, and hierarchical level—shape how individuals interpret and enact leadership behaviors and thus condition their impact on outcomes (PODSAKOFF ET AL., 1996). Experienced staff may better translate transformational vision into effective programs, while higher education equips volunteers to leverage ethical guidance for operational improvements. The contingency perspective posits that leader-member fit influences performance (FIEDLER, 1967). Consequently:

H4: Employee characteristics (age, gender, experience, and leadership training) moderate the relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Employee moderation effects are explored across employee characteristics: age, gender, work experience, and training.

H4a: Age moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences observed between employees aged <25 and ≥25.

Age, as a critical demographic factor, influences how leadership styles impact ethical leadership. Younger employees (<25) may respond differently to transformational and transactional leader-

ship compared to their older counterparts due to varying levels of professional maturity and exposure to leadership paradigms (HASSAN ET AL., 2017). Similarly, gender plays a pivotal role in shaping leadership perceptions, with evidence suggesting that male and female employees may experience and interpret leadership behaviors distinctly, which in turn affects ethical leadership outcomes (BRYAN AND MENDAGLIO, 2020).

H4b: Gender moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences observed between male and female employees.

Gender can shape how leadership behaviors are perceived and enacted, with male and female employees responding differently to leader initiatives (EAGLY AND JOHNSON, 1990). For instance, female employees often value participative and ethical behaviors more strongly, which may amplify the impact of transformational leadership on ethical climate, whereas male employees may prioritize transactional cues such as contingent rewards (VAN ENGEN AND WILLEMSSEN, 2004). Consequently, gender differences can moderate the strength of relationships between leadership styles and ethical leadership, suggesting that the positive effects of active leadership behaviors on ethical climate will vary between male and female staff members.

H4c: Work experience moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences between employees with <5 years and ≥5 years of experience.

Experience level moderates' leadership effectiveness as individuals with greater work experience may have different expectations from leaders, valuing intellectual stimulation and participative decision-making more profoundly (SIACHOU, GKOREZIS, AND ADEOSUN, 2020). Work experience also serves as a significant moderator; employees with more extensive professional backgrounds might prefer structured leadership approaches, aligning more closely with transactional leadership's clarity and rule-based directives (LATIF AND WILLIAMS, 2017). Leadership training within the organization influences the impact of leadership styles, where senior-level employees might resonate more with strategic transformational leadership, while junior staff may respond better to hands-on transactional leadership (ABOUASSI, TSCHIRHART, AND MAKHLOUF, 2017).

H4d: Leadership training moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences between employees who have received leadership training and those who did not receive any training.

Leadership training enhances the relevance of ethical leadership as employees who participate actively in training programs often feel a stronger alignment with ethical leadership values, promoting transparency and accountability (ROLLAN AND SOMERTON, 2021). Leadership training equips individuals with skills that not only improve their leadership efficacy but also amplify the impact of ethical leadership on organizational sustainability (KHAN AND SHAIKH, 2023). The number of leadership trainings completed by an individual moderate's leadership influence, where multifaceted leadership responsibilities can diversify an employee's perspective, thereby enhancing the acceptance of ethical leadership practices (SULISTYOWATI AND NURHASANA, 2022).

H5: Moderation by Organizational Factors

Organizational context variables—including size, financial capacity, funding sources, and volunteer base—affect the resources and constraints within which leadership operates (Simon, 2002). Larger NGOs may require different leadership approaches to maintain efficiency, and diverse funding mixes can alter ethical decision priorities. Resource dependence theory highlights how external financial structures moderate leadership effectiveness (PFEFFER AND SALANCIK, 1978). Thus:

H5: Organizational characteristics (number of employees, economic capacity, source of funds, and number of volunteers) moderate the relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Organizational moderation effects are explored across organizational characteristics: number of employees, economic capacity, source of funds, and number of volunteers.

H5a: Number of employees moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, with differences observed between NGOs with ≤ 50 employees and > 50 employees.

Organizational factors such as the NGO's number of employees influence how ethical leadership affects organizational outcomes. NGOs with larger number of employees might require more adaptive leadership strategies to manage diverse activities effectively (BANO, 2008). The number of employees determines the complexity of leadership impact, as larger organizations often necessitate more formalized leadership structures to maintain ethical coherence (PASHA ET AL., 2002).

Classification of NGOs (NGO, NPO, foundation) introduces variability in leadership dynamics, affecting how ethical principles are integrated into organizational practices (SAEED ET AL., 2021).

H5d: Number of volunteers moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, with differences between NGOs with ≤ 10 volunteers and >10 volunteers.

Volunteer engagement shapes how ethical leadership translates into organizational performance, as the size and commitment of the volunteer base affect resource allocation and mission delivery (BRADSHAW AND BRADFORD, 2015). In NGOs with more than ten volunteers, ethical leadership can leverage diverse skills and networks to enhance program reach and effectiveness, whereas smaller volunteer pools may constrain the leader's ability to mobilize sufficient human capital (MARTIN AND RICE, 2016). Thus, the number of volunteers moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, with stronger effects observed in NGOs operating with larger volunteer contingents.

H5b: Economic state (budget $\leq 10,000$ USD vs. $>10,000$ USD) moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes.

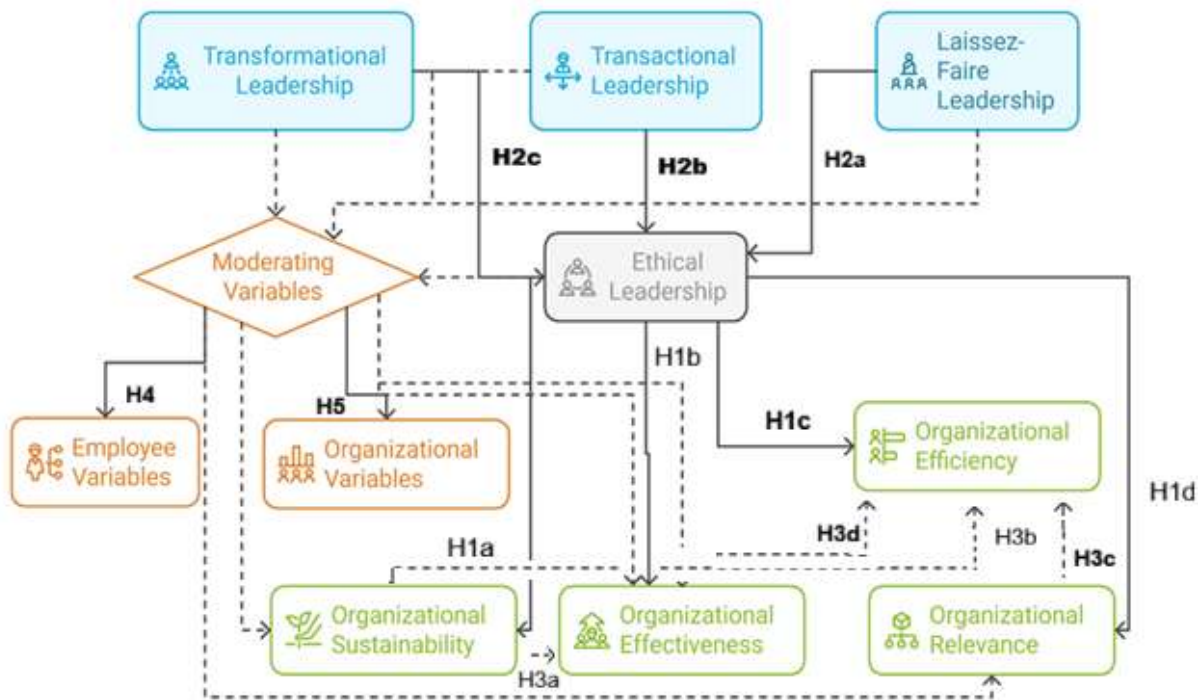
Economic state, represented by budget size, moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational efficiency, with resource-constrained NGOs facing different leadership challenges compared to well-funded organizations (AHMED, 2016). The area of operation (local vs. national) impacts leadership effectiveness as national operations demand more complex coordination and strategic ethical leadership (RAHMAN ET AL., 2024). Similarly, the organizational location structure (single office vs. nationwide) influences leadership's role in maintaining ethical standards across dispersed units (MALIK, 2022).

H5c: Source of funds (charity vs. grants) moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes.

Funding sources, such as reliance on charity versus grants, affect leadership approaches, as grant-dependent organizations may face stricter compliance requirements, necessitating a strong ethical leadership framework (MARTINEZ-VAZQUEZ, 2006). Lastly, the number of volunteers moderates the relationship between leadership practices and organizational outcomes, where a larger

volunteer base can enhance the organization's capacity to implement ethical leadership effectively, fostering a culture of integrity and accountability (JABEEN AND YASMIN, 2014).

The figure 3.1. elaborates the theoretical framework for the study based on above hypothesis:



Legend:

Blue Boxes: Leadership Styles (Independent Variables)

Orange Diamond: Moderating Variables

Orange Boxes: Moderating Factors (e.g., Employee and Organizational Variables)

Grey Box: Ethical Leadership (Mediating Variable)

Green Boxes: Organizational Outcomes (Dependent Variables)

Solid Lines: Direct Relationships

Dotted Lines: Moderating or Mediating Relationships

Figure 3.1. Theoretical Framework

Source: Author creation using MS Visio (2025)

Ethical leadership has increasingly garnered attention in both industry and academia, highlighting the crucial importance of ethics in influencing leadership results (WANG ET AL., 2023). The theoretical framework shown via Figure 4.1. demonstrates that ethical leadership occupies a central position among transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, influenced

by moderating factors such as employee and organizational variables, which in turn impact outcomes like organizational sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance (NGUYEN ET AL., 2019; BANDURA, 1978).

Ethical leaders show moral Behavior through their acts and decision-making, serving as role models whose impact improves employee attitudes and performance (NGUYEN ET AL., 2019; PICCOLO ET AL., 2010). While ethical components are present in several leadership styles, research delineates ethical leadership as a unique construct that prioritizes ethical decision-making, adherence to ethical ideals, and social responsibility (KARAKUS, 2018; AYDIN, 2014; ERSOY ET AL., 2015). This emphasis on ethical behaviour ultimately enhances work performance and organizational citizenship behaviors, demonstrating how ethical leadership may transform organizations.

CHAPTER 4: MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted for this research, outlining the research design, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques employed to address the research questions. The study follows a systematic mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research strategies to obtain comprehensive insights into leadership dynamics within Pakistani sports NGOs. This methodological framework is guided by established research principles that ensure rigor and validity in the investigative process (SAUNDERS ET AL., 2019). The research design encompasses various interconnected elements, including the philosophical underpinnings, research approach, strategy selection, time horizons, and specific techniques for data collection and analysis (BRYMAN, 2016).

4.1 Research Approach

According to ZIKMUND ET AL. (2013), research design is a comprehensive framework organizing procedures for data collection and analysis. This study applies a mixed-methods approach, guided by the Research Onion framework, which structures research through layers from philosophical assumptions to specific techniques, ensuring methodological rigor and coherence. The philosophy adopted is positivism, supporting the quantitative phase that uses surveys to gather numerical data on Pakistani sports NGOs regarding size, scope, activities, and impact. The deductive approach tests hypotheses derived from existing leadership theories.

Complementing this, qualitative semi-structured interviews with NGO managers and stakeholders provide deeper insights into leadership practices, challenges, and contextual influences on organizational effectiveness and sustainability. The interpretive philosophy underpins this qualitative phase, allowing nuanced understanding of subjective experiences. The mixed-methods choice permits triangulation by integrating statistical rigor of surveys with the contextual richness of interviews, enhancing result validity. The study uses a cross-sectional time horizon, collecting data at a single time point to capture leadership and organizational dynamics in Pakistani sports NGOs. Data collection and analysis techniques are tailored to the study objectives. Survey design draws on the literature review and exploratory interviews to ensure relevance to the Pakistani context. Interview data is thematically analyzed to complement quantitative findings and offer explanatory depth. Together, these methods deliver a comprehensive understanding of how leadership affects

organizational success in Pakistani sports NGOs (ZIKMUND ET AL., 2013). The study research design marked in research onion framework is given below:

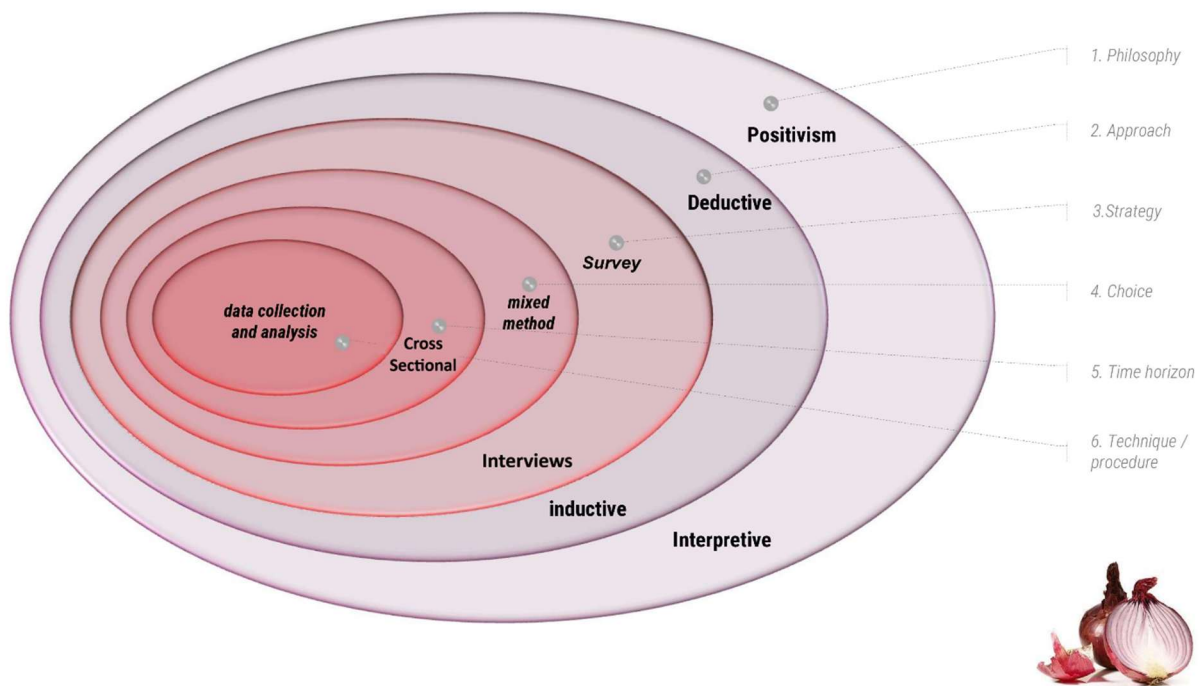


Figure 4.1. The study research design marked in Saunders Onion.

Source. Adapted by author from (SAUNDERS ET AL., 2019)

4.2 Research philosophy

For this PhD dissertation, a mixed-methods research design was employed to investigate the NGO sector in Pakistan and its societal impact. The study began with a quantitative survey phase, followed by qualitative interviews to deepen the understanding of survey findings. This sequence aligns with an explanatory sequential design. The research integrates both positivist and interpretive philosophies: positivism underpins the survey phase with its emphasis on objective measurement and hypothesis testing, while interpretivism guides the qualitative phase, enabling exploration of subjective experiences and contextual nuances. Additionally, grounded theory was utilized to generate theory inductively from qualitative data, allowing new insights to emerge from participant perspectives.

4.3 Research strategy

This research uses an explanatory sequential design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to examine leadership in Pakistani sports organizations. The quantitative phase, involving a structured survey of Managers at sports NGOs, establishes broad patterns and tests hypotheses about leadership styles, employee motivation, decision-making, and organizational outcomes. Guided by these results, semi-structured interviews in the qualitative phase explore contextual factors and elaborate on survey findings with subject matter specialists from sports associations and federations. The integration between phases, as recommended by BABBIE (2020), ensures themes or patterns from the quantitative data focus qualitative exploration, enhancing validity and depth. This strategy offers statistical rigor and generalizability through quantitative analysis, while qualitative inquiry provides contextual insight, together delivering a comprehensive view of leadership dynamics in Pakistani sports NGOs (BABBIE, 2020).

4.4 Research Approach and Purpose of Study

The study blends qualitative and quantitative methods to explore leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, reflecting recommendations by CRESWELL AND CLARK (2018) that mixed methods capture complementary strengths. Surveys allow precise measurement of leadership influence on organizational success, and statistical analysis tests five hypotheses, as advocated by COOPER AND SCHINDLER (2013). Semi-structured interviews with leaders deepen understanding of leadership's context and challenges, supporting ZIKMUND ET AL. (2013)'s argument for rich, nuanced insights. This explanatory sequential design, endorsed by TASHAKKORI AND TEDDLIE (2010), sequences quantitative analysis first, then qualitative elaboration. The mixed methods approach aims to empirically validate relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes, reveal influencing contextual factors, and build a holistic picture to advance theory and practice. Using both approaches together, findings gain statistical validity and richer explanatory depth than with either approach alone (COOPER AND SCHINDLER, 2013; ZIKMUND ET AL., 2013).

4.5 Researcher's Interference

Researcher interference was kept minimal in both study phases, aligning with SEKARAN AND BOUGIE (2016). For the quantitative phase, data was collected via self-administered surveys, reducing disruption to participants. Qualitative interviews were flexible, scheduled at participants' convenience to avoid routine interference. The study followed a correlational design for quantitative data and an exploratory approach for qualitative data, marked by low researcher interference. No variables were manipulated, and data was gathered in the organizational settings without artificial conditions, ensuring authentic reflection of real-world dynamics (SEKARAN AND BOUGIE, 2016).

4.6 Population and Sample selection (Survey)

The non-profit sector in Pakistan experienced significant growth after the commencement of the War on Terror in 2001. Previous studies by PASHA ET AL. (2002) have estimated the number of NGOs in Pakistan to be in the thousands, suggesting a number up to 45,000. However, these numbers have proven to be highly exaggerated. Later research by SAEED ET AL., 2021 suggests that the majority of these NGOs are focused on education, are unregistered, and operate informally.

According to a survey conducted by the Government of Pakistan's National Council of Social Welfare (NCSW), at the time of Independence, there were only seven registered NGOs in Pakistan. A later survey by NCSW in 2002 reported that the number of officially registered NGOs had peaked at 11,114, while the number of unregistered NGOs for the same period was estimated to be over 60,000 (RAHEELA, 2003). It is estimated that out of the 45,000 unregistered NPOs, fifty percent work in the field of education. Notably, madrasahs (religious seminaries) represent a significant portion, constituting thirty percent of all NPOs, while nine percent focus on secular primary education (PASHA ET AL., 2002; BANO, 2008).

After the advent of War on Terror in 2001, the biggest, most critical, and immediate issues faced by Pakistan included deteriorating law and order, an influx of refugees, and low literacy rates (SAEED ET AL., 2021; ABBASI, 2011). Consequently, many NGOs shifted their focus to human and civil rights, social welfare, health, gender, and education (BANO, 2008; JABEEN AND YASMIN, 2014).

A subsequent study by RAHMAN ET AL., (2024) indicates the shift in priorities and estimated that a significant portion of NGOs, 46.4%, are dedicated to education and research. Meanwhile, 17.5% are involved in civil rights and advocacy, 8.3% in social services, and 7.3% in development and housing. Additionally, 6.1% focus on health, 5.5% on culture, sports and recreation, 3.8% are professional associations, and only 0.2% of NGOs are focused on environmental issues. Various factors such as law-and-order issues and the impact of the War on Terror in neighbouring Afghanistan have led to minimal attention and inadequate funding for the sports sector in Pakistan, resulting in a relatively limited number of sports NGOs in the country BANO (2008).

The most recent data on the number of registered and unregistered non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Pakistan is sourced from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP). The FBR maintains a central registry for NPOs, quantifying the number of registered and operational NGOs in Pakistan (FBR, 2024). The FBR is responsible for granting NPO status to NGOs and trusts, which is compulsory for receiving tax exemptions. To register as an NPO, organizations must follow a specific procedure that includes registering under relevant laws, obtaining a National Tax Number, and applying with necessary documentation to the FBR. The FBR then verifies the information and approves the NPO status, allowing these organizations to benefit from tax exemptions and operate legally. This process is essential as it enables NGOs to allocate more resources towards their objectives rather than on tax liabilities, thereby fostering greater social impact (AHMED, 2016; MALIK, 2022; MARTINEZ-VAZQUEZ, 2006).

PCP is an official and authoritative source for information on philanthropic activities within the country. The Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy has been authorized as a Certification Agency to evaluate the performance of non-profits on behalf of FBR and certify that NGOs, non-profits, and community-based organizations meet the desired standards of operation in legal and financial management matters for certification (RANA, 2004).

According to FBR and PCP, currently there are 3,184 NPOs registered with the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and an additional 676 registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). Furthermore, a significant number of unregistered NPOs are also operational across various provinces, including 1,548 in Balochistan, 958 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 3,640 in Sindh, 7,292 in Punjab, and 55 in Islamabad Capital Territory.

This brings the total number of NPOs, both registered and unregistered, to 17,408 in the year 2022. When an NGO fails to meet its legal requirements set by the Government of Pakistan and enforced by FBR it is delisted or unregistered until the time it again fulfils all registration criteria. The unregistered NPOs (mostly local) constitute a substantial 81% of the total NPOs, underscoring a large segment of the sector operating without formal recognition. More detailed information is available at the FBR web portal central registry for NPOs.

Table 4.1: Summary of Registered and Unregistered NGOs in Pakistan

S.No.	Source of Registration	No. of NGOs
1	Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)	3,184
2	Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP)	676
3	Unregistered, Balochistan	1,548
4	Unregistered, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	958
5	Unregistered, Sindh	3,640
6	Unregistered, Punjab	7,292
7	Unregistered, Islamabad Capital Territory	55
Total	Combined Registered and Unregistered	17353

Source. (FBR, 2024; PCP, 2024)

For this study, only registered, operational, and formally functioning NGOs will be included, as it is not feasible to enumerate and contact unregistered, non-operational, and informal organizations. Given the large number of NGOs in Pakistan, our study will focus exclusively on sports NGOs. Determining the exact number of sports NGOs registered and operational in Pakistan is challenging due to the absence of a centralized database. Various laws and governing bodies operate simultaneously, and many NGOs function informally and without registration (JABEEN AND YASMIN, 2018).

Based on data sourced from FBR (central registry for NPOs) and PCP, approximately 392 sports NGOs are registered and operational. This number aligns with previous research by (JABEEN AND YASMIN, 2018). The database from FBR provides essential information about these NPOs,

including their names, addresses, contact details, registration details, sectors/functions, target areas, community sizes, sources of funding, board members, financial details, and volunteer and HR details. Although this data is very useful, there were instances where some information was missing. To address these gaps, we supplemented our data with information from the PCP database, document analysis, website analysis, and direct contact with the NPOs via their websites or email. Additionally, we collected basic data through surveys and questionnaires (Appendix-B), which was then reconciled with the database to ensure accuracy and authenticity.

Simple random sampling was employed to select the sample from the population of sports NGOs. This method was chosen to ensure that every sport NGO had an equal chance of being included in the study, thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of our sample (COCHRAN, 1977; DANIEL, 2012). Previous studies have demonstrated that simple random sampling is effective in providing reliable and generalizable results in similar contexts (KUMAR, 2019; SAUNDERS ET AL., 2019).

For sample size calculation we assume a 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 5% (0.05), a population size of 392, and a variance of the population (σ^2) of 0.5, we can calculate the sample size for a simple random sampling as follows: First, we need to find the critical standard score (z). For a confidence level of 95%, the z-score cumulative probability is:

$$P = [CL + (100 - CL)/2] / 100 = [95 + (100 - 95)/2] / 100 = 0.975.$$

Using a normal probability table or an online calculator, we find that the z-score for a cumulative probability of 0.975 is approximately 1.96 (DODGE, 2010). Next, we can use the formula for sample size calculation for simple random sampling: $n = z^2 \sigma^2 N / (ME^2 (N-1) + z^2 \sigma^2)$, where n is the sample size, z is the critical standard score, σ^2 is the variance of the population, N is the population size, and ME is the desired margin of error. Substituting the values into the formula, we get:

$$n = (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 392 / ((0.05)^2 (392-1) + (1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5) \approx 195.$$

Therefore, for a simple random sampling with a population size of 392, a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of 5%, and a variance of the population of 0.5, the sample size should be approximately 195. The survey will include approximately 195 respondents from around 195 Sports

NGOs. The selected sample size is justified based on the population size of Sports NGOs in Pakistan. The sample size is large enough to provide statistically significant results while also being manageable for the researchers to collect and analyze, NANJUNDESWARASWAMY AND DIVAKAR (2021).

4.7 Material of the Survey

Figure 4.2 maps the geographic distribution of 203 sports-focused NGOs included in the survey. The NGOs are from Pakistan's four provinces, with circle size proportional to the number of NGOs in each city and key observations include:

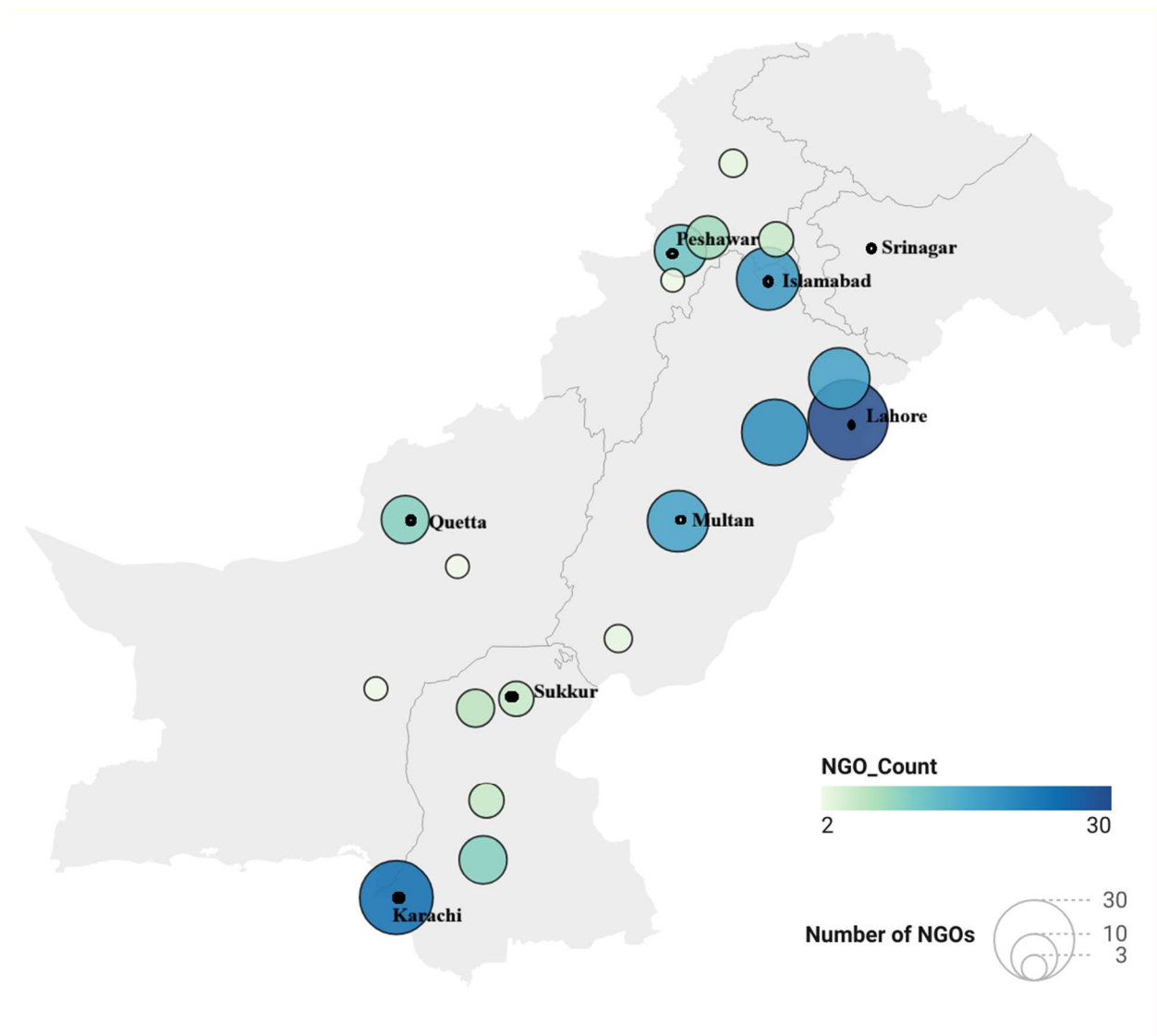


Figure 4.2: Map of Sports NGO Distribution across Pakistan

Some observations gathered from a detail view of figure 4.2. are as following:

- The distribution of selected sports NGOs are in line with the population distribution for various regions in Pakistan. This is achieved as the method for selecting NGOs for the survey was random sampling. Most of NGOs operate in multiple cities and have presence in major cities.
- Punjab which is the largest province by population hosts roughly half of all sports NGOs (102 of 203), concentrated in five major cities: Lahore (30), Faisalabad (20), Rawalpindi (18), Multan (17), and Gujranwala (17).
- Sindh accounts for 51 NGOs, with Karachi (25) and Hyderabad (10) as primary hubs and smaller concentrations in Sukkur (5), Larkana (6), and Nawabshah (5).
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 30 NGOs, most operate in Peshawar (12), followed by Mardan (8), Abbottabad (5), Swat (3), and Kohat (2).
- Balochistan's 20 NGOs are centered in Quetta (15), with Gwadar (3), Turbat (3), Khuzdar (2), and Sibi (2) representing the remainder.

This spatial pattern highlights strong urban concentrations in Punjab and Sindh, reflecting population density and resource availability. Smaller cities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan show more dispersed NGO presence, indicating emerging but less centralized sports-NGO activity in those provinces. The proportional-symbol approach makes it visually clear how NGO density varies by province and city, informing the discussion of regional leadership challenges and resource distribution in Chapter 5.

Research on leadership within organizations often emphasizes the importance of understanding the broader organizational context, including its culture, policies, and operational challenges (YUKL, 2013). This context shapes and constrains the actions of individual leaders and, consequently, affects organizational outcomes (SCHEIN, 2010). Studying NGOs provides insights into the structural and cultural aspects that impact leadership. Conversely, examining individual leaders is crucial because leadership is inherently a human activity that involves the behaviour, styles, and skills of individuals (NORTHHOUSE, 2016). Individual leaders' characteristics, such as their vision, decision-making abilities, and interpersonal skills, play a significant role in driving organizational

success and overcoming challenges (AVOLIO, WALUMBWA, AND WEBER, 2009). By focusing on individuals, one can explore how specific leadership styles and practices contribute to the goals and performance of sports NGOs.

The survey was meticulously designed to collect basic data from a range of NGOs, focusing on critical parameters such as Financial Profile, HR Capacity, Economic Capacity, type, location, activity, and the number of employees and volunteers. Each of these parameters is essential to provide a comprehensive overview of the organizations' operational contexts and resources, which are hypothesized to influence leadership practices. For instance, studies have shown that financial stability and economic capacity significantly impact leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes (SMITH ET AL., 2017; KLENKE, 2005). Incorporating basic data from these surveys as an independent variable will allow for a robust analysis of how different organizational factors influence leadership styles and effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs. This methodology is supported by the literature, which emphasizes the importance of contextual variables in leadership research (AVOLIO ET AL., 2009; HOUSE ET AL., 2004).

Research shows that individuals in managerial or leadership positions have a profound impact on organizational outcomes and culture (BASS, 1990). By focusing on these individuals, one can gain in-depth insights into leadership practices, decision-making processes, and strategic vision specific to sports NGOs (YUKL, 2013). Leaders are often seen as representatives of their organizations, embodying the values, challenges, and strategies of the NGO (NORTHHOUSE, 2019). Studying these individuals provides a comprehensive view of the organization's approach to leadership within the context of sports. These individuals will serve as primary materials for the study, providing detailed, first-hand accounts of leadership experiences, challenges, and strategies within sports NGOs in Pakistan.

Limiting the study to one individual per NGO ensures consistency and depth in the data collected. This approach avoids potential biases that might arise from varying perspectives within the same organization and allows for a clearer understanding of leadership dynamics (CRESWELL AND POTH, 2018). Practical constraints such as time, resources, and access to participants are critical considerations in research design (MARSHALL AND ROSSMAN, 2016). By selecting only one

key individual from each organization, the study remains feasible and manageable while still gathering rich, relevant data. Leadership significantly influences organizational culture and effectiveness (SCHEIN, 2010).

Examining the leaders of sports NGOs will help understand how leadership styles and practices directly affect the functioning and success of these organizations. This study combines both organizational and individual perspectives will offer a holistic view of leadership dynamics within sports NGOs in Pakistan, highlighting how organizational environments influence leadership effectiveness and how individual leaders navigate and shape these environments.

4.8 Data Collection

Google Forms was selected as the data collection instrument for this study due to its efficiency, user-friendliness, and real-time data tracking capabilities (WRIGHT, 2005). Surveys are well-established as reliable methods for collecting primary data in social science research given their flexibility and scalability (DILLMAN, SMYTH, AND CHRISTIAN, 2014). Google Forms allows researchers to create customizable surveys, distribute them electronically, and collect responses seamlessly while embedding multimedia content to enhance respondent engagement (ANDREWS, NONNECKE, AND PREECE, 2003). The platform's built-in analytics tools facilitate real-time visualization of trends and patterns, streamlining data interpretation (COUPER, TRAUGOTT, AND LAMIAS, 2001). Online surveys reduce logistical burden compared to paper-based approaches, enabling faster data collection at reduced cost (EVANS AND MATHUR, 2005).

The survey was distributed via email to all NPOs on June 24, 2024, remaining open for eight weeks (closing August 19, 2024), providing respondents adequate time to participate. Data collection and management were conducted in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) standards, with all responses anonymized to preserve participant confidentiality (VOIGT AND VON DEM BUSSCHE, 2017).

However, the online format presents inherent limitations. Sampling constraints arise from the inability to control or verify respondent eligibility prior to survey completion (COUPER, 2000). Internet access bias may exclude organizations in rural areas where reliable connectivity is limited, potentially underrepresenting smaller or geographically isolated sports NGOs (WRIGHT, 2005).

Response validation challenges emerge in self-administered surveys where researchers cannot directly observe respondent comprehension or verify response accuracy (COUPER, TRAUGOTT, AND LAMIAS, 2001). Survey fatigue—respondent disengagement from lengthy or repetitive questions—may reduce data quality and completion rates (PORTER, WHITCOMB, AND WEITZER, 2004). Additionally, predetermined response options limit the capture of nuanced or contextually specific insights that open-ended qualitative formats provide. These limitations were systematically addressed through the sequential qualitative phase, wherein semi-structured interviews enabled direct respondent interaction, validation of survey findings, clarification of ambiguous responses, and contextual exploration of leadership practices in Pakistani sports NGOs.

4.9 Data Analysis

Before conducting the PLS-SEM analysis, we used Python to perform comprehensive descriptive analysis of our dataset. Python libraries such as Pandas, NumPy, and SciPy were employed to compute key descriptive statistics and assess variable distributions—using measures like skewness, kurtosis, and visual inspection through histograms—to ensure that the data met the assumptions necessary for subsequent analysis (Real Python, 2025). This preliminary step validated our choice of PLS-SEM, which is robust to normal as well as non-normal data distributions (Kock, 2016).

The data analysis section of this study involved several steps to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. The reliability of the survey data i.e., Likert scale items was evaluated using measures such as Cronbach's alpha, inter-item correlations, and item-total correlations. These measures will help confirm that the survey items are internally consistent and reliable for further analysis (TAVAKOL AND DENNICK, 2011). For this study, a combination of specialized software packages was employed to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring comprehensive and robust analysis of leadership dynamics in Pakistani sports NGOs.

SmartPLS 4 was selected as the primary tool for conducting Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This decision was based on several compelling factors. SmartPLS has emerged as the leading software for PLS-SEM analysis, offering significant advantages over traditional covariance-based SEM applications such as AMOS, Mplus, and LISREL (HAIR ET AL.,

2017). AFSAR (2020) has recommended SmartPLS for its versatile analysis capability while other SEM applications have been stagnant for decades and has become "a one-stop-shop for SEM.

The latest version, SmartPLS 4, introduced in 2022, offers several enhanced features that were particularly valuable for this research. The analysis will be conducted using Smart PLS 4 software, a leading tool for PLS SEM analysis (DE SOUZABIDO AND SILVA 2019). These include improved performance for algorithms like bootstrapping, direct import capabilities for Excel and SPSS data formats, side-by-side comparison of reports, and customizable visualization options (RINGLE ET AL., 2022). The software also provides advanced analytical capabilities such as multigroup analysis (MGA) with bootstrapping which were essential for testing the complex relationships proposed in our hypotheses (HAIR ET AL., 2022).

Once the reliability of the survey data is established, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM) will be employed to analyze the data. PLS SEM is a robust statistical technique designed to examine complex relationships between variables. It is particularly well-suited for analyzing survey data due to its ability to handle a large number of variables and account for non-linear relationships (HAIR, HULT, RINGLE, AND SARSTEDT, 2017).

PLS SEM will allow us to explore the relationships between the variables in the survey data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the underlying constructs and their interconnections. This analysis will offer insights into how various factors contribute to the overall model, thereby enhancing our understanding of leadership in Pakistani NGOs, with a special focus on sports organizations (HENSELER, RINGLE, AND SINKOVICS, 2009).

To investigate moderation of employee and organizational factors Multiple Group Analysis (MGA) is an optimal choice for the study because it enables us to test all hypothesized relationships simultaneously across different categorical groups. Unlike simple regression or mean comparisons—which can only handle limited segments of the model—MGA evaluates differences on all model parameters at once, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the moderation effects (BABBIE, 2020; SAUNDERS ET AL. , 2019). This method accommodates the complexity of our model and provides robust insights into how categorical variables influence relationships across the entire theoretical framework.

The findings from the survey data will be synthesized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the impact of sports NGOs on society in Pakistan. The results of the analysis will be presented

clearly and concisely, utilizing tables, charts, and graphs where appropriate. Furthermore, the implications of these findings will be discussed in relation to existing literature and the broader context of the NGO sector in Pakistan, providing a nuanced understanding of the role of leadership within these organizations (CHIN, 2010).

Survey Measures and Items

The survey instrument consisted of fifty items organized into several key variable categories, with responses measured on an ordinal Likert scale. The survey began with demographic information (items 1-10) to gather contextual data about participants, including age, gender, education level, job title, years of experience in NGOs, organizational focus, size, decision-making role, leadership training, and previous leadership roles.

Table 4.2. Survey Measures and Items Sources Summary adapted from previous research

Variable Name	Number of Items	Adapted from Study
Transformational Leadership	5	HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016)
Transactional Leadership	5	MITCHELL (2015)
Laissez-faire Leadership	5	SINGH (2014)
Additional Leadership Dimensions	10	SINGH (2014)
Efficiency	3	MITCHELL (2015)
Sustainability	4	HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016)
Relevance	3	ABICHANDANI AND BABU (2018)
Effectiveness	5	MITCHELL (2015)

Transformational Leadership was assessed using five items (11-15) adapted from HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016). These items measured the extent to which leaders communicate a clear vision, inspire followers to transcend self-interests, foster innovative thinking, recognize achievements, and support personal development.

Transactional Leadership was evaluated through five items (16-20) adapted from MITCHELL (2015), focusing on goal setting, performance feedback, reward systems, monitoring deviations from standards, and problem-focused intervention.

Laissez-faire Leadership was measured using five items (21-25) from SINGH (2014), assessing leadership avoidance behaviors such as avoiding decision-making, being absent when needed, delaying intervention, avoiding involvement, and failing to provide leadership.

Additional Leadership Dimensions were captured through ten items (26-35) adapted from SINGH (2014), examining ethical standards, collaboration encouragement, inclusivity in decision-making, openness to innovation, communication effectiveness, trust-building, participation facilitation, commitment to team growth, resource management, and alignment with organizational mission.

Organizational outcomes were measured through several constructs:

Efficiency was assessed using three items (36-38) from MITCHELL (2015), focusing on resource utilization, program delivery, and financial management.

Sustainability was evaluated through four items (39-42) adapted from HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016), examining clarity of sustainability planning, partnership building, funding sustainability, and confidence in long-term operations.

Relevance was measured using three items (43-45) from ABICHANDANI AND BABU (2018), assessing the alignment of activities with beneficiary needs, adaptability to changing environments, and relevance of training provided.

Effectiveness was assessed through five items (46-50) from MITCHELL (2015), examining goal achievement, stakeholder engagement, crisis management, innovation implementation, and long-term positive outcomes.

4.10 Data Screening and Coding

After completing the data collection process, the raw data underwent thorough screening and coding to ensure accuracy and completeness before analysis. This critical preparatory phase involved examining the collected data for inconsistencies, errors, and missing values (HAIR ET AL., 2019). The process began with a preliminary review of all completed questionnaires to verify their usability for further analysis.

For this study, only questionnaires with at least 75% completion rate were retained for analysis, following the recommendations of SEKARAN AND BOUGIE (2016). This threshold ensured that

the included data contained sufficient information to yield meaningful results while minimizing potential biases from incomplete responses.

The study employed a pre-coding approach for data entry, where numerical values were assigned to each response option on the 5-point Likert scale used in the survey instruments. This pre-coding facilitated the systematic organization of data and streamlined the subsequent analysis process (DE VAUS, 2001). All coded data were entered into Excel and SmartPLS software for statistical analysis.

To verify data entry accuracy, a random selection of 10% of the questionnaires was cross-checked against the entered data. This quality control measure helped identify and rectify any data entry errors, ensuring the integrity of the dataset for subsequent analysis (PALLANT, 2020).

Missing Data

Missing data represents a common challenge in survey research that can potentially compromise the validity and reliability of findings if not properly addressed (KLINE, 2015). In this study, a thorough examination of the dataset revealed a minimal percentage of missing values, specifically less than 2% across all variables. According to methodological guidelines, missing data below 10% does not pose significant concerns for analysis validity (COHEN ET AL., 2010).

Despite the low percentage of missing values, the study employed the expectation maximization (EM) algorithm to handle missing data, as this approach has been recognized as one of the most effective methods for addressing missing values while preserving the statistical properties of the dataset (GRAHAM ET AL., 1997). The EM algorithm estimates missing values based on the observed data patterns, providing more accurate imputations compared to simpler methods such as mean substitution.

During the initial screening process, seven questionnaires were identified with substantial missing data (more than 25% of items unanswered) and were consequently excluded from the analysis. Additionally, the screening process examined response patterns to identify potential non-engagement or response bias, such as selecting the same response option (e.g., consistently choosing "3" on the 5-point scale) across all items. Following recommendations by HASLER ET AL. (2018), such cases were carefully reviewed and excluded when clear response bias was evident. After

completing the data screening and cleaning procedures, a final sample of 203 valid responses was retained for subsequent analysis. The complete responses from 203 exceed the required number of responses as per our calculation using power analysis for sample size calculation.

Response Rate

The response rate is a critical metric in survey research, defined as the proportion of completed surveys relative to the total number of surveys distributed (SALDIVAR, 2012). It serves as an indicator of the study's representativeness and potential for non-response bias (HAIR ET AL., 2016). While there is no universally agreed-upon threshold for an acceptable response rate, higher rates are preferred to enhance generalizability and minimize non-response error (DILLMAN, 1991).

This study employed a self-administered questionnaire approach, which according to SEKARAN AND BOUGIE (2016), tends to yield higher response rates. A total of 285 surveys were distributed to sports NGOs across Pakistan. After eliminating incomplete responses, 203 valid surveys were retained, resulting in a response rate of 71.5%. This response rate is considered excellent for several reasons:

- a. It exceeds the minimum sample size requirement of 195, ensuring adequate statistical power for the analyses.
- b. It represents over three-quarters of the surveyed population, significantly reducing the risk of non-response bias.
- c. It aligns with best practices in survey research, where rates above 70% are often considered very good (BARUCH AND HOLTOM, 2008).
- d. It provides a robust foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions about the broader population of sports NGOs in Pakistan.

The high response rate achieved in this study can be attributed to several factors, including the relevance of the topic to the target population, the clarity and conciseness of the questionnaire, and

the effective follow-up procedures implemented during the data collection phase. This robust response rate enhances the credibility and generalizability of the study's findings within the context of Pakistani sports NGOs.

4.11 Research Strategy: Interviews

The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), operating under the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, serves as the central authority responsible for the governance and promotion of sports in Pakistan. As a not-for-profit organization, the PSB supervises the activities of the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and allocates annual funding to those affiliated with international governing bodies (ALI ET AL., 2023). According to PSB records (June 2024), there are 44 National Sports Federations registered under its umbrella, each dedicated to a specific sport, contributing to its regulation and development across the country.

Sports federations in Pakistan function as national governing bodies responsible for setting standards, implementing policies, organizing competitions, and representing Pakistan in international arenas (CHELLADURAI AND ZINTZ, 2015). Their policies ensure fair play, athlete safety, and the harmonization of sports practices across regions (ANWAR ET AL., 2020). Federations organize events ranging from grassroots competitions to national championships, providing platforms for athletes to demonstrate and refine their skills (GOBIKAS AND ČINGIENĖ, 2019).

A major responsibility of these federations lies in athlete training and development. They identify promising talent and provide technical and logistical support through training programs, coaching clinics, and talent-nurturing initiatives (JABEEN, 2017). These programs focus on both grassroots development and elite performance improvement (KHAN ET AL., 2019).

In addition, sports federations coordinate Pakistan's international sports representation, collaborating with global organizations to facilitate the participation of national teams and athletes in global competitions (JAVED ET AL., 2022). This includes arranging pre-event training camps, securing sponsorships, and ensuring athletes are adequately prepared (ALI AND SOHAIL, 2022). To promote wider engagement, federations also conduct community outreach and marketing initiatives, often in partnership with schools and public institutions (HUSSAIN ET AL., 2020).

The governance structure of sports federations in Pakistan is hierarchical, comprising several tiers of authority. The governing body, typically including a president, secretary-general, and elected

officials, defines strategic priorities and oversees overall management (RAZA AND MALIK, 2021). The executive committee, composed of senior administrators and technical experts, manages daily operations, finances, and policy implementation (KHAN ET AL., 2019). The general assembly, consisting of representatives from regional and local associations, meets periodically to deliberate on major policy and administrative matters (ANWAR ET AL., 2020).

To ensure specialized oversight, federations often establish sub-committees focusing on areas such as coaching, finance, competition management, and marketing. These bodies report to the executive committee, ensuring effective coordination and accountability (ALI AND SOHAIL, 2022). Despite incremental progress, gender inclusivity in leadership remains limited; however, there is growing recognition of the need to enhance women's participation in governance and decision-making roles (HUSSAIN ET AL., 2020).

Interviews will be conducted with a purposive sample of key leaders from various sports federations in Pakistan, ensuring diversity in terms of gender and experience. When conducting a survey among forty-four sports federations, determining the appropriate sample size is crucial to ensure accurate and reliable results. For a confidence level of 95%, the z-score cumulative probability is:

$$P = \frac{95 + (100 - 95)/2}{100} = 0.975$$

Using a normal probability table or an online calculator, the z-score for a cumulative probability of 0.975 is approximately 1.96 (DODGE, 2010). The formula for sample size calculation for simple random sampling is:

$$n = z^2 * \sigma^2 * N / (ME^2 * (N - 1) + z^2 * \sigma^2)$$

Where n is the sample size, z is the critical standard score, σ^2 is the variance of the population, N is the population size, and ME is the desired margin of error. Substituting the values into the formula, we get: Substituting the values into the formula, we get:

$$n = (1.96)^2 * 0.5 * 44 / ((0.05)^2 * (44-1) + (1.96)^2 * 0.5) \approx 28.$$

This calculation confirms that a sample size of 28 is adequate for achieving a confidence level of 95%, ensuring that the results will be within $\pm 5\%$ of the true value across the entire population of 44 sports federations (YAMANE, 1967). Given the small and homogeneous population of these federations, a sample size of 28 is sufficient (COCHRAN, 1977). This determination is based on

a population proportion set at 95%, which reflects the expected consistency within this homogeneous group (KREJCIE AND MORGAN, 1970). This adequacy in sample size allows for meaningful insights while maintaining statistical validity. The high confidence level and low margin of error enhance the reliability of the survey results, making them representative of the entire population of sports federations (ISRAEL, 1992).

Table 4.3. lists all participating sports federations from the dataset based on convenient sampling, showing their annual budget in USD (converted at 275 PKR/USD), whether the budget exceeds USD 10,000, and the number of employees in each federation (where available):

Table 4.3. Summary of Sports Federations Included in the Research (Ordered by Annual Budget)

No.	Federation Name	Annual Grants (USD)	Employees
1	Athletics Federation of Pakistan	252,727	60–85
2	Pakistan Volleyball Federation	363,636	40–50
3	Pakistan Hockey Federation	215,091	329
4	Pakistan Taekwondo Federation	143,636	18
5	Pakistan Federation Baseball	134,545	<50
6	Pakistan Squash Federation	127,909	>100
7	Pakistan Netball Federation	120,000	<50
8	Pakistan Tennis Federation	119,655	13
9	Pakistan Billiards & Snooker Association	49,462	27
10	Pakistan Cycling Federation	43,636	<50
11	Chess Federation of Pakistan	36,364	35
12	National Rifle Association of Pakistan	54,545	<50
13	Special Olympics Pakistan	18,182	20
14	Alpine Club of Pakistan	18,182	<50
15	Pakistan Handball Federation	18,182	<50
16	Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation	18,182	<50
17	Pakistan Tchoukball Federation	10,909	<50
18	Pakistan Wrestling Federation	12,076	<50
19	Pakistan Kabaddi Federation	14,545	<50

20	Pakistan Weightlifting Federation	12,000	35–45
21	Pakistan Boxing Federation	12,500	35–45
22	Pakistan Wushu Federation	7,730	<50
23	Traditional Sports & Games Association	7,150	17
24	Pakistan Table Tennis Federation	7,150	22
25	Pakistan Swimming Federation	6,476	50–70
26	Pakistan Bodybuilding Federation	4,500	34
27	Winter Sports Federation of Pakistan	3,150	<50
28	Pakistan Soccer Futsal Federation	2,450	15–20
29	Equestrian Federation of Pakistan	1,750	23
30	Pakistan Blind Sports Federation	7,273	15

Source: Information obtained from Sports Federations websites, Pakistan Olympic Association and Google (2025)

4.12 Interview Design

The interview process for this thesis utilized a semi-structured format. This method combines pre-determined questions with the flexibility to explore emerging topics, ensuring comprehensive coverage and detailed insights (DEJONCKHEERE AND VAUGHN, 2019). The interview questions align with the survey to facilitate triangulation and consistency in data collection.

The complete Interview questionnaire used in this study is placed at Appendix-D. Interviews started by collecting demographic information such as age, gender, education level, job title, years of experience, and leadership roles. This context is essential for understanding the background of each respondent (CRESWELL AND POTH, 2018). The interviews gathered detailed information about the organization's operations, including whether it is a sports organization or federation, HR capacity, economic capacity, operational scope, location, funding sources, and the number of volunteers. These questions aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the organizational context and resources (YIN, 2017).

The core of the interview explored the interviewee's leadership style, focusing on communication of vision and mission, inspiration, innovation fostering, goal setting, progress monitoring, performance management, and ethical standards. This section measure transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, paralleling the survey questions (NORTHOUSE, 2019).

Additionally, interviews examined resource management, sustainability, relevance, adaptability, and the perceived impact of leadership on organizational success. These questions align with the survey components assessing leadership's effect on efficiency, sustainability, relevance, and effectiveness (NORTHOUSE, 2019).

4.13 Material of the Interview

Sports federations in Pakistan maintain structured governance hierarchies comprising a governing body (president, secretary-general, and elected members) and an executive committee of senior officials and technical experts overseeing day-to-day operations, policy implementation, financial management, and activity coordination (KHAN ET AL., 2019 AND RAZA AND MALIK, 2021). Interviews were conducted with governing board or executive body members to obtain insights into governance structures, challenges, and strategic opportunities.

Interviewing individual leaders (e.g., presidents, secretary-generals) is justified as a methodologically sound approach for multiple reasons. Leaders possess comprehensive understanding of strategic direction and federation management, providing essential insights into governance and operational dynamics (YIN, 2017). Their organizational positions enable an overarching perspective on policies, challenges, and successes critical for in-depth qualitative analysis (BRYMAN, 2016). Qualitative research emphasizes obtaining context-rich data from knowledgeable informants, and leader interviews ensure accurate, authentic representation of federation governance practices (CRESWELL AND POTH, 2018). Leaders' direct involvement in decision-making and policy implementation positions them as ideal sources for understanding leadership dynamics and governance effectiveness within sports organizations (GUEST, NAMEY, AND MITCHELL, 2013 AND MARSHALL AND ROSSMAN, 2016).

4.14 Data Collection- Interviews

To recruit participants for the interviews, key leaders from various sports federations in Pakistan were identified and contacted via email. Contact details for these individuals were sourced from the official websites of the Pakistan Sports Board and relevant sports federations. Participants were given the flexibility to choose their preferred mode of interview, opting for Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Forms, which facilitated greater participation and convenience.

Interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of key leaders, including both male and female representatives, to capture a wide range of perspectives and insights. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for this study because it allows for the selection of participants who possess specific characteristics and knowledge relevant to the research focus, thereby ensuring the collection of rich, in-depth data (PALINKAS ET AL., 2015). This method is particularly useful in qualitative research where the aim is to gain detailed understanding from individuals who are most likely to provide valuable insights (TONGCO, 2007).

Ethical considerations are paramount in this study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they are aware of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained to protect the identity of the participants and the sensitive information shared during the interviews.

The data collection for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs. The survey and interview items were carefully selected and adapted from established instruments in leadership research to ensure validity and reliability in measuring the constructs relevant to the hypotheses.

4.15 Measures and Items

Interview Measures and Items

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted using twenty-six questions adapted from established leadership research. The interview protocol began with the same demographic questions as the survey (items 1-10) to maintain consistency.

Table 4.4. Interview Question Categories and Theoretical Foundations

Question Focus (No. of Questions)	Adapted From	Insights Provided
Demographic Information (7)	Standard demographic surveys	Respondent background, experience level, education, organizational position, training history

Leadership Styles & Practices (8)	HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016); BASS AND RIGGIO (2006)	Vision communication, inspiration, creative thinking encouragement, personal development, goal-setting clarity, reward recognition, performance management
Ethical Leadership (4)	SINGH (2014); BROWN AND TREVIÑO (2006)	Ethical standards, moral modelling, collaboration practices, accountability and transparency
Laissez-faire Leadership (1)	SINGH (2014)	Leadership avoidance and passive management behaviors
Organizational Context & Moderators (6)	SEKARAN AND BOUGIE (2016)	Organizational size, funding source impact, volunteer coordination, decision-making structure
Organizational Outcomes (10)	MITCHELL (2015); HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016); ABICHANDANI AND BABU (2018)	Resource management, long-term viability, beneficiary alignment, adaptability, strategic objective achievement
Moderating Factors (6)	SEKARAN AND BOUGIE (2016)	Experience-based leadership adjustments, training influence, organizational size effects, volunteer coordination, funding source impact

Table 4.4 provides a comprehensive overview of the survey and interview measures, including assessed variables, item counts, adaptation sources, and intended insights. The interview protocol comprised 41 questions: items 1–10 gathered demographic information about respondents' background, experience, and organizational characteristics, while items 11–41 elicited in-depth responses on leadership practices and organizational outcomes. Questions were adapted from HERMANN AND PAGÉ (2016), SINGH (2014), MITCHELL (2015), AND ABICHANDANI AND BABU (2018) and aligned with survey constructs to provide richer qualitative insights.

Interview questions directly corresponded with key survey variables. Transformational Leadership (items 13–16) explored overall leadership style, vision communication, inspirational motivation,

and creative thinking encouragement. Transactional Leadership (items 17–18) addressed goal setting, contingent rewards, performance expectations, and monitoring. Laissez-faire Leadership (item 19) examined avoidance behaviors and lack of direction. Ethical Leadership (items 21–24) investigated ethical standards, role modelling, collaboration, and accountability/transparency. Organizational outcomes were examined through questions addressing efficiency (items 25–26), sustainability (items 27–28), relevance (items 29–31), and effectiveness (items 32–34), capturing resource management, long-term viability, beneficiary alignment, organizational adaptability, and perceived leadership impact. Moderating factors (items 35–40) explored employee experience effects, formal training influence, organizational size effects, volunteer coordination, and funding source impacts on leadership practices. Both survey and interview measures were designed to test the study's hypotheses regarding relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes, including mediating and moderating effects of employee and organizational factors in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Data Analysis (Interviews)

For qualitative data analysis, NVivo was employed to organize, analyze, and visualize interview data through systematic thematic analysis (BAZELEY AND JACKSON, 2013; CRESWELL AND POTH, 2018; BRAUN AND CLARKE, 2006). NVivo's advanced coding and visualization tools enabled the identification of meaningful patterns within the interview transcripts (WOOLF AND SILVER, 2018). Python programming language complemented this process through text mining and sentiment analysis using NLTK and scikit-learn libraries, enabling more sophisticated pattern recognition (BIRD ET AL., 2009; PEDREGOSA ET AL., 2011). This hybrid approach combined NVivo's structured coding capabilities with Python's computational strengths (MUTHUKADAN, 2018).

Each interview was recorded and transcribed for accuracy. Thematic analysis identified patterns, which were then triangulated with survey results to enhance validity and reliability (PATTON, 2015). This integrated analytical framework, supported by SmartPLS 4 for quantitative analysis and NVivo with Python for qualitative analysis, aligned with the mixed-methods research design and provided deeper insights into leadership dynamics within Pakistani sports NGOs (CRESWELL AND PLANO CLARK, 2017).

The process of how Qualitative data analysis was conducted for this dissertation is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

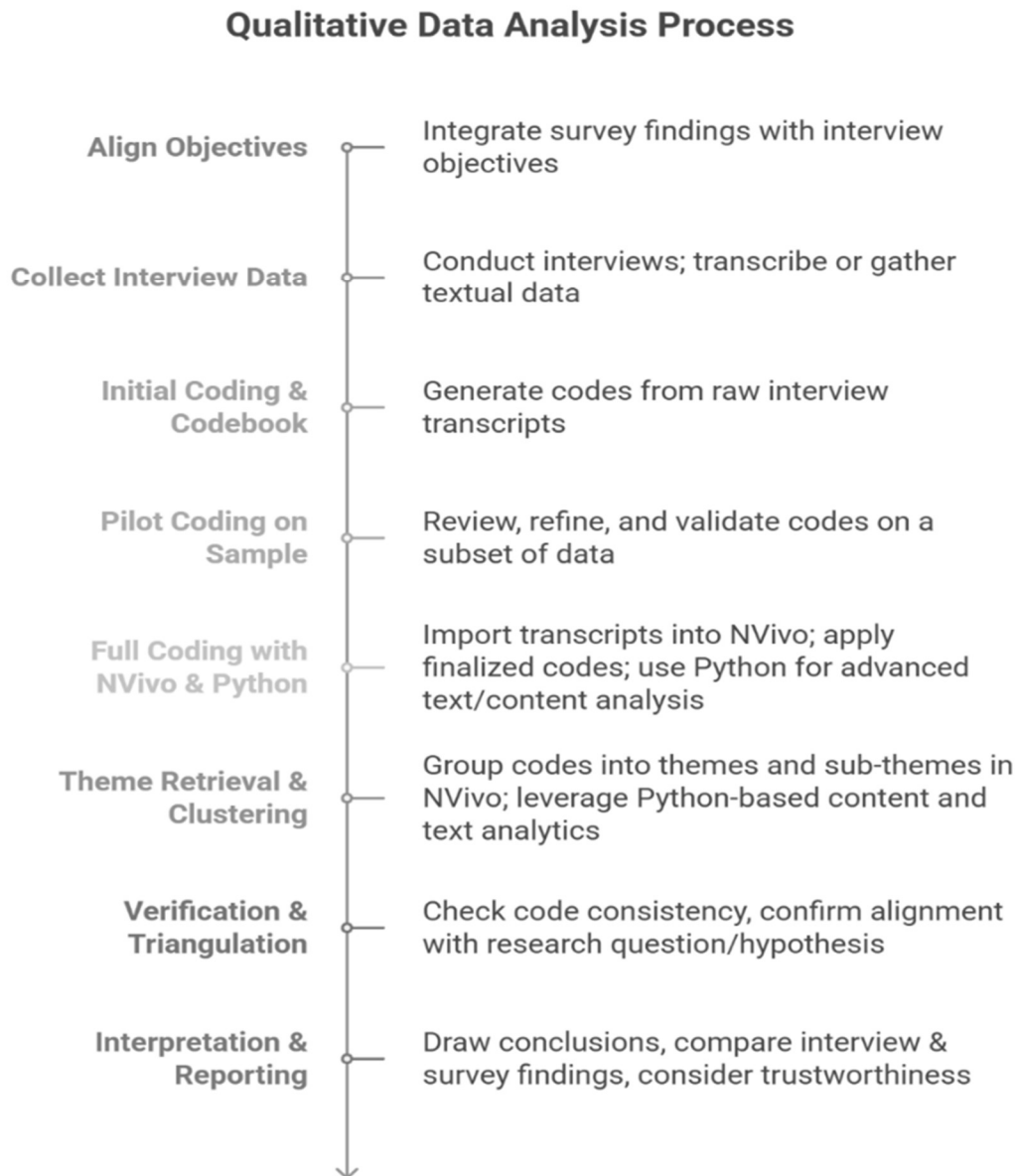


Figure 4.3. The Qualitative Data Analysis Process.

Source. Adapted by author from (MILES ET AL., 2014)

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEIR EVALUATIONS

In this chapter we will discuss the results. The chapter begins with an overview of descriptive statistics that lies the foundation for in depth investigation and provides a broader view about study participating organizations and materials. Later in the chapter there is discussion about the results of survey conducted to confirm or reject the proposed hypothesis discussed in the previous chapter.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics for Survey

First the descriptive data is presented and elaborated based on uncovering trends and patterns. The descriptive statistics help better understand the survey data and characteristics of the survey participants.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Analysis of Survey participants

Question	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Under 25	37	18.6
	25-34	84	41.4
	35-44	57	28.6
	45 and above	25	12.6
Gender	Female	114	55.3
	Male	81	40.7
	Other/Prefer Not to say	8	4.1
Education	Bachelor's degree	54	27.1
	Master's degree	62	31.2
	Doctorate or higher	87	41.7
Job Level	Jr/Mid-level management	106	51.2
	Sr. Management/Exec. Board Member	97	48.8
Experience	Less than 1 year	26	12.8
	1 to 3 years	39	19.2
	3 to 5 years	55	27.1
	More than 5 years	83	40.9
Functional Area	Single Sport	41	20.7
	Multiple Sports (Cross-functional)	162	79.3

No. of Employees	Less than 10	32	16.1
	11 to 24	59	29.7
	25 or more	112	54.2
Decision Maker	Part of decision making	108	53.3
	Lead decision-making	95	47.7
Training	Yes	153	74.9
	No	50	25.1
Leadership Roles	1 or 2	104	51.2
	3 or 4	66	32.5
	5 or more	33	16.3
Economic Capacity			
	Less than \$10,000	145	71.4
	More than \$10,000	58	28.6
Location			
	Inter City/Province	127	62.6
	Nationwide/International	76	37.4
Funding Sources			
	Charity/Donations	59	29.1
	Grants Including Government	144	70.9
No.of Volunteers			
	Less than 10	48	23.6
	11 to 24	70	34.5
	More than 25	85	41.9
Total		203	100

The survey of 203 respondents across various Pakistani NGOs focusing on sports-related activities reveals several noteworthy demographic and professional patterns that connect meaningfully to the hypotheses about leadership, motivation, and organizational success. A sizable segment of the

sample (40.2%) lies within the 25-to-34 age range, with 18.6% under twenty-five, suggesting that a substantial portion of employees and volunteers are young.

Many of these younger individuals may be especially open to the empowering qualities of transformational leadership, which aligns with the idea in that such a style positively influences employee motivation. A younger workforce is often more receptive to leaders who inspire through vision and support creativity.

From the figure 5.1. we observe that the overall skew toward younger to mid-career professionals reinforces the earlier point that transformational leadership approaches, which often resonate strongly with younger staff, could be particularly effective in Pakistani sports NGOs.

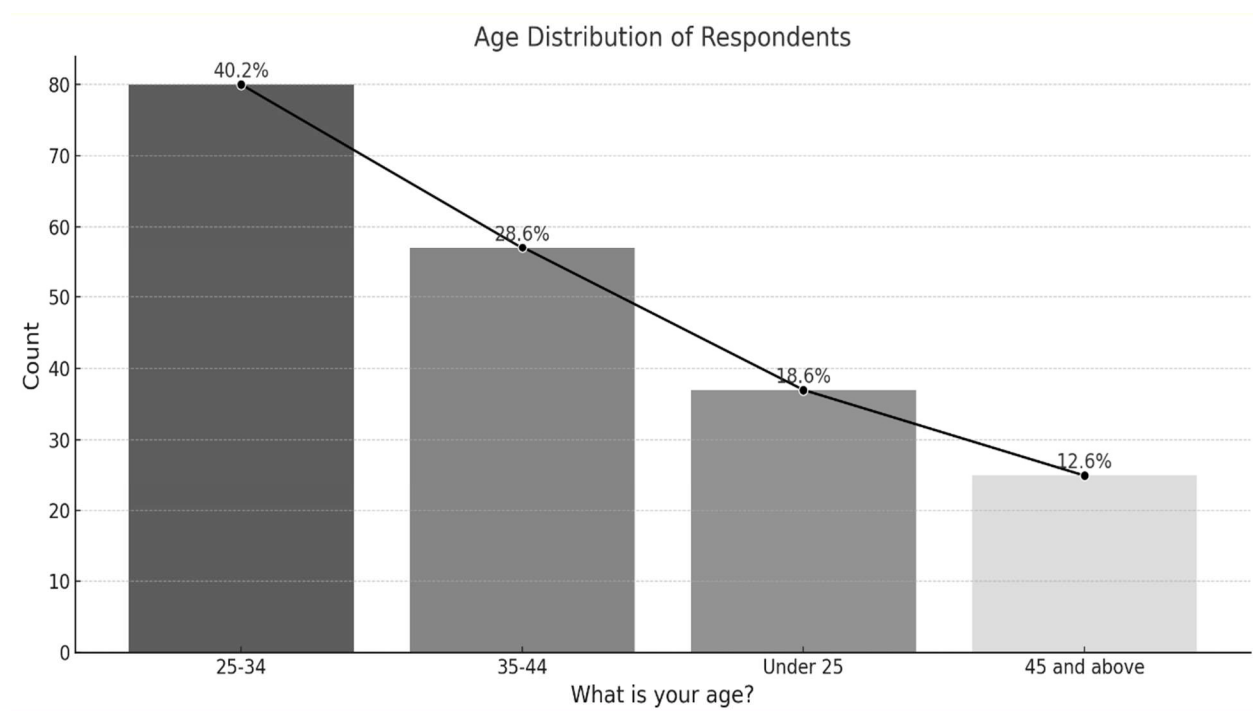


Figure 5.1. Age Distribution of Respondents,

Source: Author creation (2025)

This donut chart Figure 5.2. shows that 55.2 % of respondents identify as female, thirty.7% as male, 14.1% prefer not to disclose their gender or chose “Other.” The large proportion of female respondents can be attributed to the fact that Pakistan has numerous issues that affect females such as Gender equality, women empowerment and so on. The diversity in these responses’ points to a

need for inclusive leadership approaches—such as those highlighted by transformational leadership—to effectively engage individuals across different gender identities. The presence of a considerable proportion of respondents choosing not to specify gender may indicate an environment where inclusive leadership—one of the hallmarks of transformational practices—could be beneficial in making individuals feel valued. This inclusivity suggests that leadership practices in Pakistani sports NGOs encourage decision-making creativity and team collaboration, as a diverse and inclusive environment tends to foster fresh ideas and collective engagement.

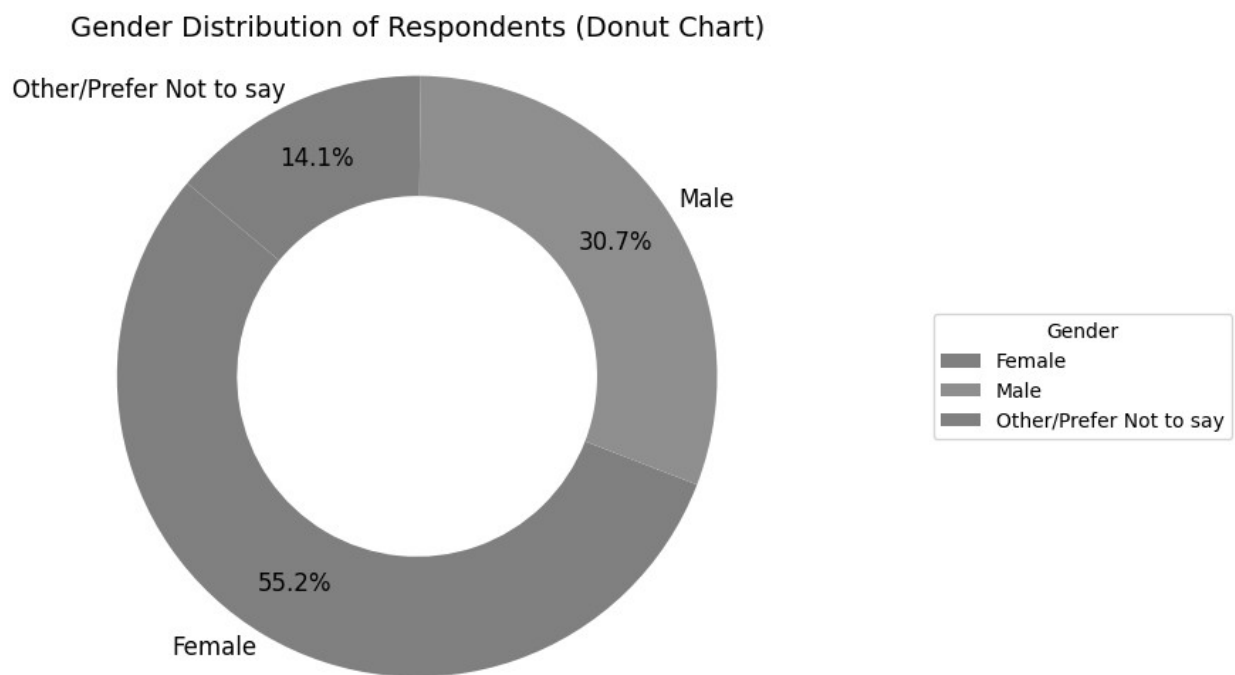


Figure 5.2. Gender distribution of Respondents,

Source: Author creation (2025)

Figure 5.3. Educational data show that 41.9% hold a bachelor’s degree, 30.8% hold a master’s degree or higher, and 21.7% possess professional certifications. This high level of formal education supports the assertion that leadership training can improve leadership effectiveness and decision-making quality, because employees and volunteers with considerable educational backgrounds may be more adept at capitalizing on formalized training opportunities. Most survey respondents hold a bachelor’s degree or above as we only choose Executives or Managers and prerequisites for becoming a manager is most often Graduate level education.

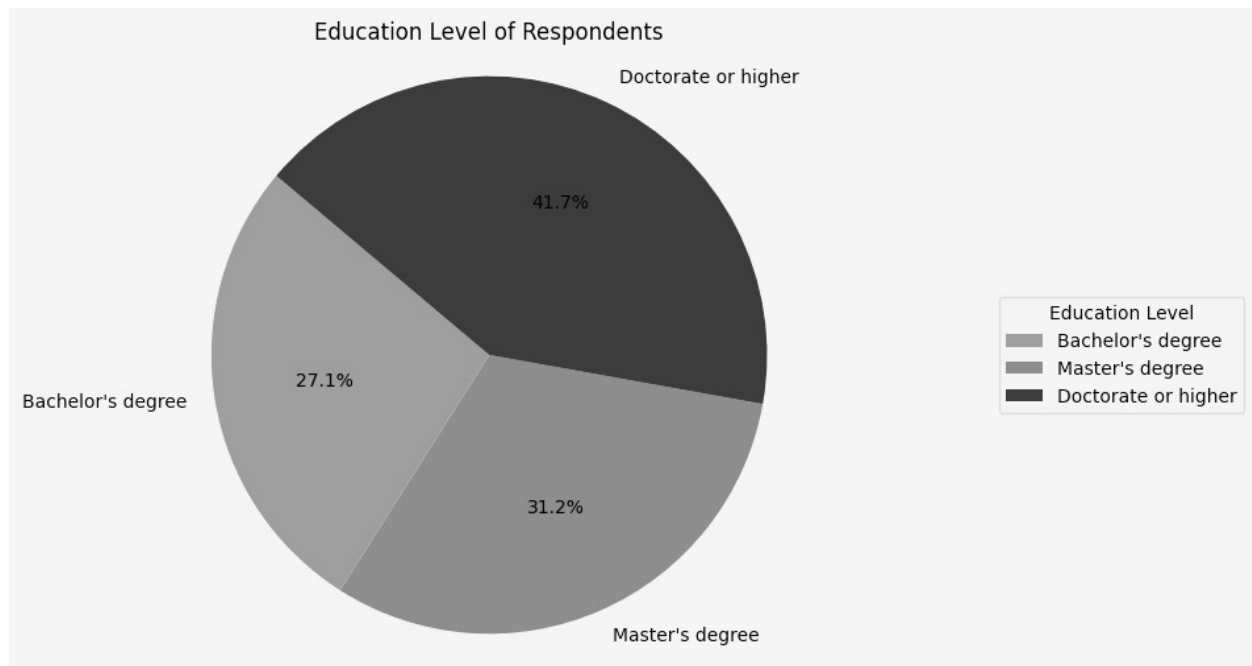


Figure 5.3. Educational Level of Survey Respondents

Source: Author creation (2025)

The respondents' high educational profile indicates receptiveness to formal leadership programs and advanced management practices. Previous studies show that highly qualified individuals pursue NGO careers for meaningful social impact (PCP). Job levels are split between middle/operational management (51.2%) and executive/senior management (48.8%), enabling both transformational and transactional leadership styles. Transactional leadership's emphasis on structure and clear metrics aligns with executive-level oversight, while the broad managerial distribution amplifies leadership decisions across organizational layers.

Work experience is distributed across 1–3 years (27.8%), 3–5 years (29.8%), and exceeding 5 years (29.8%), indicating varied tenure expectations. Longer-serving staff possess insights into how leadership influences team effectiveness and decision-making creativity, while newer members benefit from mentorship and formal training programs. This experience diversity heightens awareness of ethical standards, reinforcing organizational sustainability.

Most respondents (79.3%) come from sports-related charities, while 20.7% from formal sports NGOs, reflecting varied organizational sizes. Larger NGOs, typically with structured hierarchies and expanded volunteer pools, strengthen transactional leadership impact and enable volunteers to

shape outcomes. This distribution underscores organizational size as a moderator of leadership effectiveness.

The sample composition suggests both transformational and transactional leadership remain meaningful for organizational success. The gender and age diversity supports transformational leadership receptiveness, while formal roles and experience levels emphasize transactional approaches and structured training programs. Ethical leadership commitments reinforce long-term sustainability across organizational types and sizes.

Organizational Data of surveyed sports NGOs

In this section organizational data of sports NGOs included in the survey is presented. The selection of organizational factors—number of employees, economic state (budget), source of funds, and number of volunteers—as moderating variables in this study is grounded in a comprehensive review and synthesis of the literature, including meta-analyses and empirical research.

These factors have consistently emerged as the most critical contextual variables influencing the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes in NGOs, particularly in the sports sector.

Number of employees is widely recognized as a determinant of how leadership practices are implemented and perceived, with larger organizations requiring more formalized ethical structures and smaller organizations relying on direct interpersonal influence (BASS & RIGGIO, 2006). Economic state (budget) directly affects an NGO's capacity to institutionalize ethical practices, invest in training, and maintain robust governance, as highlighted by resource-based and resource dependency theories (BARNEY, 1991; EIKENBERRY & KLUVER, 2004).

Source of funds (charity vs. grants) has been identified in meta-analyses as a key moderator, since grant funding typically imposes stricter accountability and ethical compliance requirements, thereby shaping the impact of leadership on outcomes (MARTINEZ-VAZQUEZ, 2006; RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

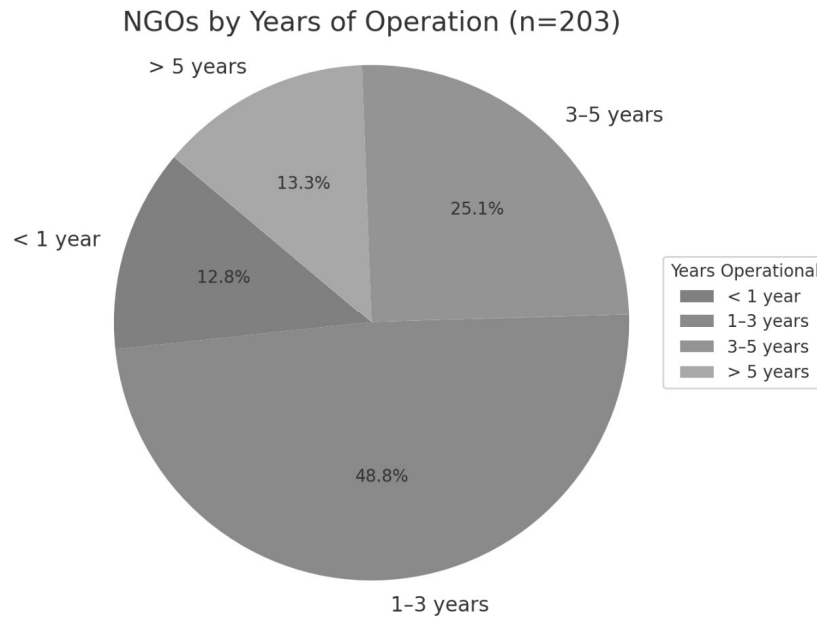


Figure 5.4. Pie Chart depicting Operational age of NGOs Surveyed

Source: Author creation (2025)

Number of volunteers is critical in NGOs, as managing larger volunteer bases necessitates structured ethical leadership to ensure alignment and performance, a finding supported by both sector-specific and cross-sectoral studies (WYMER & STARNES, 2001; SALAMON ET AL., 2013).

The inclusion of these variables is further supported by contingency and institutional theories, which emphasize that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon organizational context and external pressures (DONALDSON, 2001; DIMAGGIO & POWELL, 1983). Thus, each moderator was selected not arbitrarily, but as a result of rigorous literature review and evidence synthesis, ensuring the study addresses the most influential factors in ethical leadership and organizational outcome dynamics.

The survey shows a distinctly youthful NGO landscape: of the 203 organizations polled, almost half (48.8 %) have been operating for just one to three years, while a further quarter (25.1 %) or 51 sports NGOs fall in the three-to-five-year bracket; by contrast, only 13.3 % have lasted more than five years and 12.8 % are less than a year old, indicating that more than seven in ten NGOs are still within their first five years and suggesting both rapid recent entry into the sector and a relatively small cohort of long-established actors. Figure 5.4. below shows the number of years surveyed NGOs have been operational.

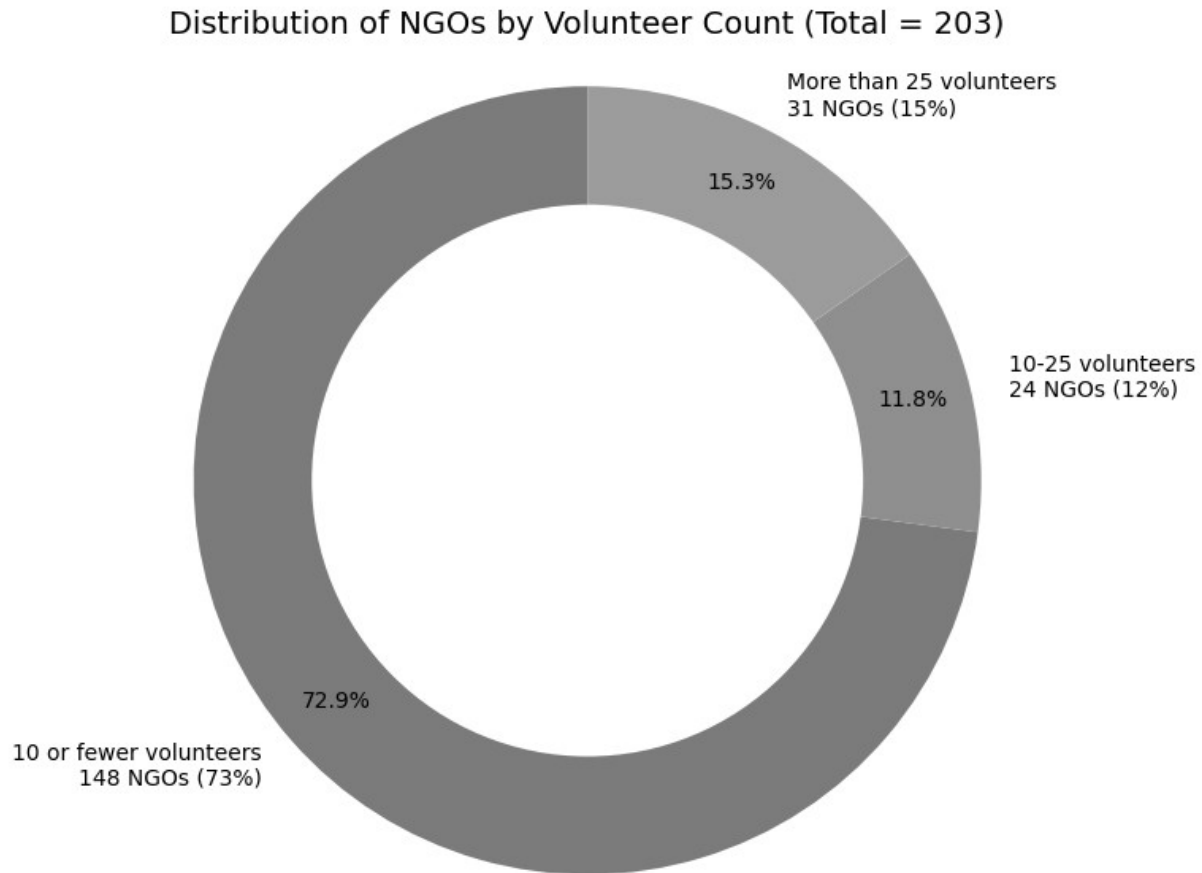


Figure 5.5. Donut Chart showing distribution of NGOs number of Volunteers

Source: Author creation (2025)

From Figure 5.5 we observe that among the 203 NGOs, nearly three out of four manage their work with ten or fewer volunteers. Around one in eight rely on between 10 and 25 people. The rest, about 15 percent, are supported by more than 25 individuals. Figure 5.4. below shows the breakdown of number of volunteers engaged by surveyed NGOs. Majority of NGOs 72.9% have 10 or less volunteers, around 12% have 10 to 25 volunteers, 15% NGOs have more than 25 volunteers.

The donut chart shows that most organizations operate at an international level (38.2%), with larger shares working inter-city (18.1%). Larger-scale operations (nationwide and international) often require bigger teams and volunteer pools. This suggests that NGOs operating more broadly may benefit more from structured leadership strategies, supporting the idea that scale can intensify the impact of leadership practices on organizational outcomes.

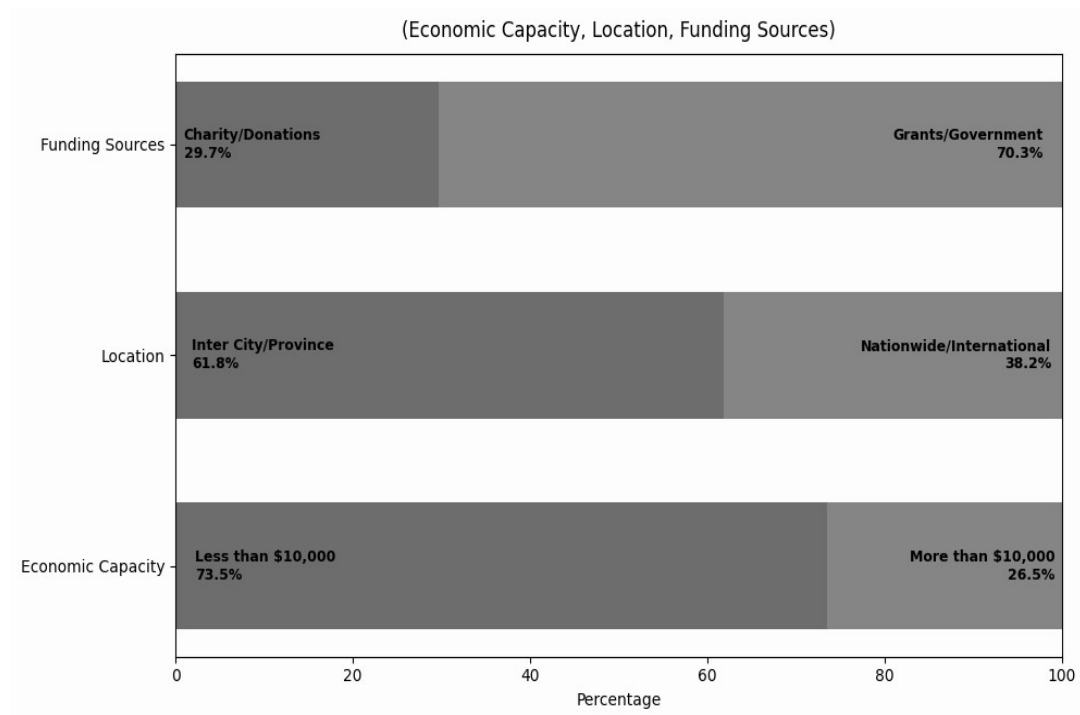


Figure 5.6. NGOs Economic Capacity, Funding Sources, Location.

Source: Author creation (2025)

5.2 PLS SEM ANALYSIS OF SURVEY

To analyze the survey data collected using a questionnaire, SMART PLS 4 software was employed. For model development and hypothesis testing, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis was conducted, complemented by Permutation Multigroup Analysis (MGA). PLS-SEM is particularly advantageous in handling complex models with multiple constructs and indicators, as it does not require strict assumptions about data distribution (HAIR, RINGLE, AND SARSTEDT, 2011). The use of SMART PLS 4 facilitated the assessment of both measurement and structural models, allowing for comprehensive evaluation of construct reliability, validity, and the strength of hypothesized relationships (RINGLE, WENDE, AND BECKER, 2015).

Construct reliability and validity

The PLS-SEM analysis of leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs reveals several significant findings through multiple analytical components. The construct reliability and validity table demonstrate strong measurement model properties. All constructs show Cronbach's alpha values ranging from

0.718 (Laissez-Faire Leadership) to 0.777 (Organizational Effectiveness), indicating good internal consistency. The composite reliability values (ρ_c) are even stronger, ranging from 0.811 to 0.849, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0.5, with Organizational Relevance showing the highest at 0.641, confirming strong convergent validity.

Table 5.2: Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Compo- site relia- bility (ρ_a)	Compo- site relia- bility (ρ_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Ethical Leadership	0.746	0.747	0.840	0.568
Laissez Faire Leadership	0.718	0.726	0.825	0.541
Org Sustainability	0.762	0.767	0.849	0.585
Org. Effectiveness	0.777	0.780	0.849	0.529
Org. Efficiency	0.721	0.735	0.823	0.608
Org. Relevance	0.720	0.720	0.823	0.641
Transactional Leadership	0.711	0.716	0.811	0.603
Transformational Leadership	0.741	0.753	0.830	0.509

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) analysis shows values ranging from 1.000 to 2.573, all well below the critical threshold of 5.0, indicating no concerning multicollinearity issues in the model. The highest VIF value of 2.834 appears in the relationship between Organizational Sustainability and Organizational Efficiency, suggesting minor correlation but no issue of multicollinearity.

Table 5.3: Variance Inflation Factor

	VIF
Ethical Leadership -> Org Sustainability	1.195
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Effectiveness	1.367
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Efficiency	1.457
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Relevance	1.000
Laissez Faire Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	2.065
Org Sustainability -> Org. Effectiveness	2.152
Org Sustainability -> Org. Efficiency	2.573
Org. Effectiveness -> Org. Efficiency	2.834
Org. Relevance -> Org Sustainability	1.195
Org. Relevance -> Org. Effectiveness	1.894
Org. Relevance -> Org. Efficiency	2.298
Transactional Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	2.192
Transformational Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	1.830

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The descriptive statistics reveal interesting patterns in the data distribution. Most constructs show positive skewness, with values ranging from 0.024 (Organizational Sustainability) to 0.242 (Transformational Leadership). The excess kurtosis values vary considerably, with Transactional Leadership showing the highest at 1.109, indicating slightly heavier tails than a normal distribution. All Cramér-von Mises p-values are below 0.05, suggesting non-normal distributions across all constructs.

Table 5.4: The descriptive statistics for Survey

	Median	SD	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	Cramér-von Mises p value
Ethical Leadership	0.220	1.0	0.946	0.222	0.772	0.000
Laissez Faire Leadership	0.251	1.0	0.927	0.186	0.598	0.000

Org Sustainability	0.012	1.0	0.431	0.024	0.167	0.014
Org. Effectiveness	0.089	1.0	0.494	0.207	0.245	0.001
Org. Efficiency	0.233	1.0	0.333	0.040	0.272	0.001
Org. Relevance	0.126	1.0	0.527	0.236	0.262	0.001
Transactional Leadership	0.188	1.0	1.109	0.161	0.764	0.000
Transformational Leadership	0.189	1.0	0.707	0.242	0.484	0.000

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

Table 5.5 shows the model fit indices for both the saturated and estimated models suggest that the overall measurement is acceptable, though some disparity between indices should be noted. The standardized root means square residual (SRMR) values of 0.069 for the saturated model and 0.080 for the estimated model indicate that the differences between the observed and model-implied correlations are within acceptable limits, as values below 0.08–0.10 are deemed satisfactory (HENSELER ET AL., 2015).

The d_{ULS} values, which quantify the squared Euclidean discrepancies between the observed and predicted covariance matrices, are lower for the saturated model (2.203) than for the estimated model (3.532), a finding that is expected given the saturated model's inherent flexibility in perfectly reproducing the data. Similarly, the geodesic distance (d_G) is slightly lower for the saturated model (0.862) compared to the estimated model (0.901), reinforcing the observation that the increase in misfit when employing a more parsimonious approach is minimal. The chi-square statistics, 947.196 for the saturated model and 975.401 for the estimated model, also show only a small increase when moving to the constrained model; this is a common occurrence due to restrictions imposed to enhance parsimony while still maintaining an acceptable alignment with the observed data. The normed fit index (NFI) values of 0.798 for the saturated model and 0.814 for the estimated model, although lower than the ideal cutoff of 0.90, remain consistent across models which indicates a moderate degree of fit. Overall, while the saturated model naturally exhibits

slightly better fit indices, the estimated model's values are sufficiently close, suggesting that the loss of fit due to parsimony constraints is marginal and the model remains robust for further interpretation.

Table 5.5: Model Fitness Statistics

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.069	0.080
d_ ULS	2.203	3.532
d_ G	0.862	0.901
Chi-square	947.196	975.401
NFI	0.798	0.814

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The outer model demonstrates robust validity across all constructs. All construct factor loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 (HAIR ET AL., 2017), confirming strong convergent validity. Transformational leadership (TFL_1 to TFL_5) and transactional leadership (TSL_1 to TSL_4) display substantial loadings, accurately reflecting their respective dimensions. Ethical leadership, organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance are similarly well-represented through their measurement indicators. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis yields values ranging from 1.000 to 2.834, all below the critical threshold of 5.0 (HAIR ET AL., 2017), indicating no multicollinearity concerns.

The R² values in the inner model indicate substantial predictive capacity across dependent variables. Ethical leadership exhibits an R² of 0.521, signifying that 52.1% of its variance is explained by transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Organizational effectiveness achieves a higher R² of 0.642, reflecting significant predictive capability (HAIR ET AL., 2017). Organizational efficiency and sustainability exhibit moderate explanatory power, with R² values of 0.514 and 0.531, respectively.

The path coefficients represent the strength and direction of relationships among constructs. Transformational leadership significantly influences organizational relevance ($\beta = 0.219$, $p < 0.01$) and effectiveness ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H1b and H1c. Ethical leadership demonstrates substantial positive effects on organizational sustainability ($\beta = 0.283$, $p < 0.001$) and efficiency ($\beta =$

0.148, $p < 0.01$), confirming H1a and H1d. Transactional leadership positively affects organizational sustainability ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2b. Laissez-faire leadership exhibits a negative association with ethical leadership ($\beta = -0.376$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H2a.

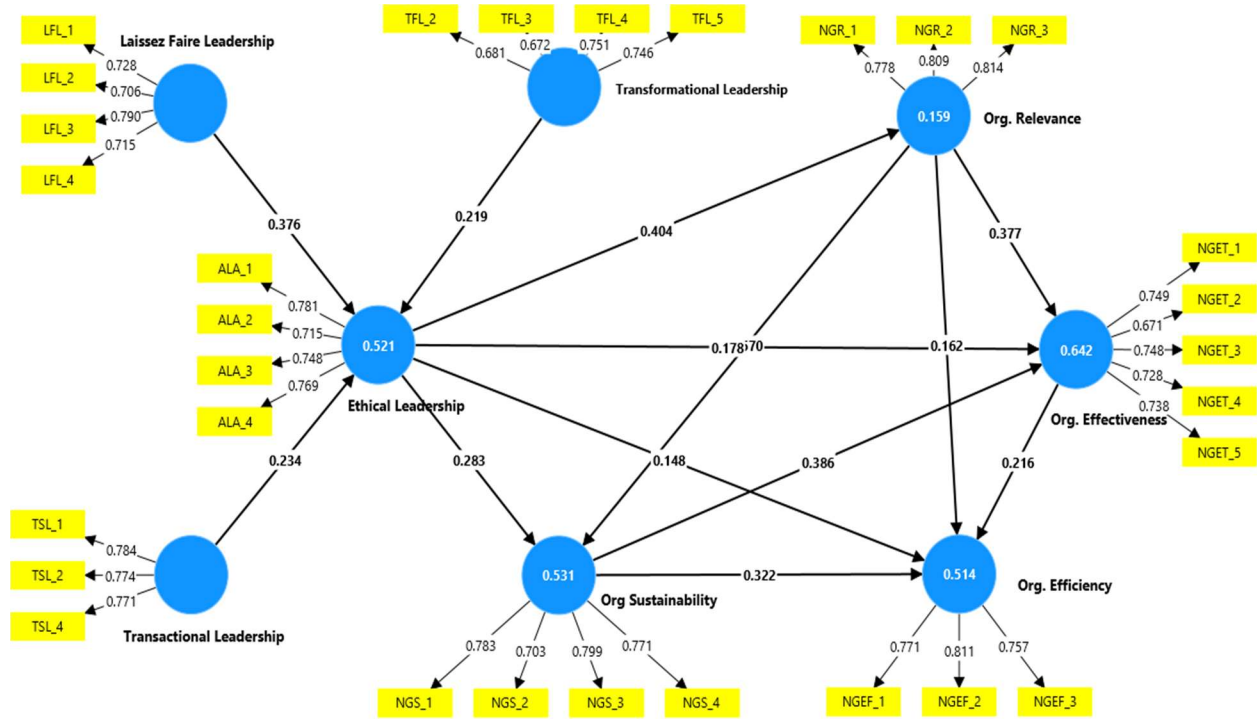


Figure 5.7. Algorithm for Model Assessment

Source: Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The model demonstrates robust fit across multiple indices. SRMR values of 0.069–0.080 confirm alignment between observed and model-implied correlations (HENSELER ET AL., 2015). NFI values of 0.798–0.814, while moderate, remain consistent across saturated and estimated models, indicating minimal fit loss through parsimony constraints. Collectively, these indicators support the structural model's adequacy for hypothesis interpretation.

Ethical leadership functions as a mediating mechanism between leadership styles and organizational outcomes, with indirect pathways accounting for substantial variance in sustainability and efficiency beyond direct effects.

Detailed moderation analyses examining employee factors (H4) and organizational factors (H5) are presented in Sections 5.4 and 5.5, respectively.

5.3 Results of Hypothesis Testing

The results of hypothesis testing obtained by PLS SEM bootstrapping algorithms are stated in the table 5.6 below. The table list hypothesis number in column labelled (H), hypothesized relationship in column labelled relationships, other column labels and their values are original sample (O), Sample mean (M), Standard deviation (SD), T statistics (T). Last columns show the direction of the hypothesized relationship and hypothesis outcome.

Table 5.6. Results for Hypotheses Testing

H	Relationship	O	M	SD	T	P	Direction
H1a	Ethical Leadership → Org Sustainability	0.283	0.283	0.052	5.409	0.000	Supported
H1b	Ethical Leadership → Org Effectiveness	0.178	0.178	0.044	4.074	0.000	Supported
H1c	Ethical Leadership → Org Efficiency	0.148	0.148	0.054	2.75	0.006	Supported
H1d	Ethical Leadership → Org Relevance	0.404	0.405	0.057	7.024	0.000	Supported
H2a	Laissez-Faire Leadership → Ethical Leadership	-0.376	-0.376	0.094	4.024	0.000	Supported
H2b	Transactional Leadership → Ethical Leadership	0.234	0.234	0.089	2.621	0.009	Supported
H2c	Transformational Leadership → Ethical Leadership	0.219	0.223	0.08	2.728	0.006	Supported
H3a	Org Sustainability → Org Effectiveness	0.386	0.386	0.07	5.495	0.000	Supported
H3b	Org Sustainability → Org Efficiency	0.322	0.323	0.093	3.475	0.001	Supported

H3c	Org Effectiveness → Org Efficiency	0.216	0.217	0.083	2.591	0.010	Supported
H3d	Org Relevance → Org Sustainability	0.571	0.571	0.049	11.545	0.000	Supported
H3e	Org Relevance → Org Effectiveness	0.377	0.378	0.069	5.472	0.000	Supported
H3f	Org Relevance → Organizational Efficiency	0.162	0.162	0.08	2.012	0.044	Supported

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

Table Abbreviations:

Hypothesis (H), Original sample (O), Sample mean (M), Standard deviation (SD), T statistics (T)

After a comprehensive evaluation of all the numbers in Table 5.6, it is confirmed that all hypotheses H1a–H3f are supported, and the null hypotheses are rejected. The results provide solid evidence supporting the links between leadership styles and organizational outcomes within Pakistani sports NGOs. The following explanation details these associations based on mean, standard deviation (STDEV), t-statistics, and p-values.

Ethical leadership demonstrates a consistent and significant positive impact on all four organizational outcomes: sustainability ($\beta=0.283$, $t=5.409$, $p=0.000$), effectiveness ($\beta=0.178$, $t=4.074$, $p=0.000$), efficiency ($\beta=0.148$, $t=2.75$, $p=0.006$), and relevance ($\beta=0.404$, $t=7.024$, $p=0.000$). These results confirm that ethical leadership significantly contributes to organizational strategic alignment, operational performance, and long-term sustainability, supporting hypotheses H1a through H1d.

Laissez-faire leadership negatively influences ethical leadership ($\beta=-0.376$, $t=4.024$, $p=0.000$), indicating that passive, hands-off leadership undermines ethical practices, supporting H2a. Transactional leadership favorably influences ethical leadership ($\beta=0.234$, $t=2.621$, $p=0.009$), supporting H2b. Transformational leadership similarly positively influences ethical leadership ($\beta=0.219$, $t=2.728$, $p=0.006$), supporting H2c. These results demonstrate that both transactional and transformational leadership styles are crucial for establishing ethical leadership practices.

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts effectiveness ($\beta=0.386$, $t=5.495$, $p=0.000$) and efficiency ($\beta=0.322$, $t=3.475$, $p=0.001$), supporting H3a and H3b. Organizational relevance emerges as a key determinant of sustainability ($\beta=0.571$, $t=11.545$, $p=0.000$, supporting H3d), effectiveness ($\beta=0.377$, $t=5.472$, $p=0.000$, supporting H3e), and efficiency ($\beta=0.162$, $t=2.012$, $p=0.044$, supporting H3f). These relationships underscore the critical importance of aligning organizational efforts with stakeholder requirements. Additionally, organizational effectiveness significantly increases efficiency ($\beta=0.216$, $t=2.591$, $p=0.010$), supporting H3c.

The results strongly support the hypothesized relationships between leadership styles, ethical practices, and organizational outcomes. Ethical leadership emerges as a crucial mediating element between different leadership styles and organizational performance, while organizational relevance serves as the primary driver of sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Permutation Multigroup Analysis was conducted to investigate variations related to employee and organizational factors and their influence on the model relationships. This non-parametric method effectively identifies group-specific effects without sample size limitations or distributional assumptions (HENSELER, 2012). MGA facilitated identification of substantial differences across subgroups, thereby elucidating the impact of diverse demographic and organizational variables on the structural model relationships (SARSTEDT, HENSELER, AND RINGLE, 2011).

Integrating PLS-SEM with MGA enables rigorous hypothesis testing and improved comprehension of moderating effects within the structural model framework. MGA facilitates identification of group-specific effects by contrasting path coefficients among subpopulations and assessing the statistical significance of these differences (HENSELER ET AL., 2016). This approach systematically evaluates the moderating effects of diverse variables—such as age, gender, formal leadership training, organizational size, and funding source—on the relationships within the structural model (CHEAH ET AL., 2020).

5.4 Moderation by Employee Factors

H4a: Age moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences observed between employees aged <25 and ≥25.

To examine the moderating impact of age, a multigroup analysis (MGA) using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted. This technique is particularly useful for testing whether structural paths differ across specific subgroups within a dataset (HAIR ET AL., 2017). In the current context, two subgroups were formed based on gender (male and female) to assess whether the hypothesized relationships exhibit statistically significant differences between these two groups.

In this study, the MGA PLS-SEM bootstrapping procedure was employed to generate robust estimates and to test for significant differences in path coefficients. This procedure involves repeatedly sampling the data to compute path estimates and their confidence intervals, thereby allowing the identification of any group-level variations with greater precision (HAIR ET AL., 2017). The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 5.7, where path differences are highlighted, thus enabling a clear evaluation of whether age (operationalized via different gender subgroups) significantly moderates the proposed relationships.

Table 5.7: Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where age is the moderating variable

Relationship	STDEV <25	STDEV >25	t value <25	t value > 25	p value	Direction
Ethical Leadership -> Org Sustainability	0.074	0.067	2.684	5.415	0.007	Supported (greater effect for Group_2)
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Effectiveness	0.058	0.069	2.824	2.947	0.005	Supported (greater effect for Group_2)

Ethical Leadership -> Org. Efficiency	0.070	0.086	1.026	2.706	0.305	Rejected
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Relevance	0.087	0.078	4.598	5.469	0.000	Supported (greater ef- fect for Group_2)
Laissez Faire Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	0.160	0.107	2.307	3.680	0.021	Supported (greater ef- fect for Group_2)
Org Sustainability -> Org. Effectiveness	0.088	0.105	4.873	3.486	0.000	Supported (greater ef- fect for Group_1)
Org Sustainability -> Org. Efficiency	0.122	0.144	3.255	1.719	0.001	Supported (greater ef- fect for Group_1)
Org. Effectiveness -> Org. Efficiency	0.122	0.120	1.105	2.130	0.269	Rejected
Org. Relevance -> Org Sustainability	0.065	0.067	10.405	7.257	0.000	Supported (greater ef- fect for Group_1)
Org. Relevance -> Org. Effectiveness	0.088	0.098	4.099	3.737	0.000	Supported (greater ef- fect for Group_1)
Org. Relevance -> Org. Efficiency	0.139	0.104	1.628	1.156	0.104	Rejected

Transactional Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	0.156	0.101	1.215	2.792	0.225	Rejected
Transformational Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	0.121	0.094	1.871	2.122	0.061	Rejected

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The hypothesis (H4a) examines whether age moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, comparing employees aged where age is less than 25 years <25 (Group 1) and equal to more than 25 years denoted by ≥ 25 (Group 2). The results indicate variations in the strength and significance of these relationships across age groups, as detailed below:

Ethical Leadership → Organizational Sustainability: For employees aged <25, the relationship is positive ($\beta = 0.197$) and statistically significant ($t = 2.684$, $p = 0.007$). For employees aged ≥ 25 , the relationship is stronger ($\beta = 0.362$) and highly significant ($t = 5.415$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that ethical leadership has a more pronounced effect on organizational sustainability for older employees.

Ethical Leadership → Organizational Effectiveness: Both groups show significant positive relationships, with slightly stronger effects for employees aged ≥ 25 ($\beta = 0.203$, $t = 2.947$, $p = 0.005$) compared to those aged <25 ($\beta = 0.164$, $t = 2.824$, $p = 0.005$).

Ethical Leadership → Organizational Efficiency: For employees aged <25, the relationship is weak and not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.072$, $t = 1.026$, $p = 0.305$). In contrast, for employees aged ≥ 25 , the relationship is stronger and significant ($\beta = 0.233$, $t = 2.706$, $p = 0.007$), indicating that ethical leadership more effectively drives efficiency in older employees.

Ethical Leadership → Organizational Relevance: Both groups exhibit strong positive relationships with high statistical significance (for <25, $\beta = 0.398$; for ≥ 25 , $\beta = 0.424$). However, the effect is slightly stronger for older employees ($t = 5.469$ versus $t = 4.598$).

Laissez-Faire Leadership → Ethical Leadership: The relationship is significant for both groups but is stronger for employees aged ≥ 25 ($\beta = 0.392$, $t = 3.680$) compared to those aged <25 ($\beta = 0.370$, $t = 2.307$).

Transactional Leadership → Ethical Leadership: While the relationship is stronger for employees aged ≥ 25 ($\beta = 0.281$), it does not reach statistical significance for those aged < 25 ($\beta = 0.189$, $t = 1.215$).

Transformational Leadership → Ethical Leadership: The relationship approaches significance for both groups but remains marginally non-significant for employees aged < 25 ($p > 0.05$). For employees aged ≥ 25 , the effect is slightly stronger and closer to significance.

Organizational Relevance → Organizational Sustainability: This relationship is highly significant for both groups but is stronger in younger employees ($\beta = 0.672$, $t = 10.405$) compared to older ones ($\beta = 0.490$).

In summary, age moderates several relationships between leadership styles and ethical leadership or organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. Generally, older employees (≥ 25) exhibit stronger and more consistent relationships between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes like sustainability and efficiency compared to younger employees (< 25). These findings suggest that leadership strategies may need to be tailored based on employee age to maximize their effectiveness in fostering ethical practices and driving organizational success.

H4b: Gender moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences observed between male and female employees.

To test the moderating impact of gender, two groups were created for Male and female respondents. The bootstrapping results for hypothesis testing are stated in the table 5.8 below:

Table 5.8. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where Gender is the moderating variable

Relationship	STDEV (M)	STDEV (F)	t value (M)	t value (F)	p value (M)	p value (F)	Direction
Ethical Leadership → Org Sustainability	0.078	0.070	2.703	5.033	0.007	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for F, $t=5.033$)

Ethical Leadership -> Org. Effectiveness	0.064	0.058	2.609	3.047	0.009	0.002	Supported for both (greater effect for F, t=3.047)
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Efficiency	0.081	0.073	2.753	1.126	0.006	0.260	Supported (M only)
Ethical Leadership -> Org. Relevance	0.085	0.078	5.251	4.642	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for M, t=5.251)
Laissez Faire Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	0.143	0.129	2.696	2.702	0.007	0.007	Supported for both (very similar effect, slightly higher F)
Org Sustainability -> Org. Effectiveness	0.099	0.092	3.516	4.748	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for F, t=4.748)
Org Sustainability -> Org. Efficiency	0.148	0.115	1.418	3.668	0.156	0.000	Supported (F only)
Org. Effectiveness -> Org. Efficiency	0.113	0.126	3.095	0.857	0.002	0.392	Supported (M only)
Org. Relevance -> Org Sustainability	0.064	0.076	10.033	6.644	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for M, t=10.033)

Org. Relevance -> Org. Effectiveness	0.102	0.090	4.226	3.660	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for M, $t=4.226$)
Org. Relevance -> Org. Efficiency	0.119	0.113	1.006	1.698	0.314	0.090	Rejected (neither group is < 0.05)
Transactional Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	0.129	0.123	2.389	1.615	0.017	0.106	Supported (M only)
Transformational Leadership -> Ethical Leadership	0.087	0.121	2.323	1.955	0.020	0.051	Supported (M only)

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The results of the table analyze the moderating role of gender (male [M] and female [F]) in the relationships between ethical leadership, organizational outcomes, and other constructs. The findings reveal variations in significance and effect strength across gender groups for different relationships.

Ethical leadership positively influences organizational sustainability for both males and females, with significant effects observed in both groups. However, the effect is stronger for females ($t = 5.033$, $p = 0.000$) compared to males ($t = 2.703$, $p = 0.007$). Similarly, ethical leadership significantly impacts organizational effectiveness for both genders, with a slightly greater effect for females ($t = 3.047$, $p = 0.002$) than for males ($t = 2.609$, $p = 0.009$).

In terms of organizational efficiency, ethical leadership is significant only for males ($t = 2.753$, $p = 0.006$), while it is not significant for females ($t = 1.126$, $p = 0.260$). Moreover, ethical leadership strongly predicts organizational relevance in both groups, though the effect is greater for males ($t = 5.251$, $p = 0.000$) than for females ($t = 4.642$, $p = 0.000$).

Laissez-faire leadership positively influences ethical leadership in both gender groups, with similar effects observed for males ($t = 2.696$, $p = 0.007$) and females ($t = 2.702$, $p = 0.007$). This suggests that laissez-faire leadership consistently supports ethical practices regardless of gender.

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts organizational effectiveness in both groups, with a stronger effect observed for females ($t = 4.748$, $p = 0.000$) compared to males ($t = 3.516$, $p = 0.000$). However, the impact of organizational sustainability on efficiency is significant only for females ($t = 3.668$, $p = 0.000$), while it is not significant for males ($t = 1.418$, $p = 0.156$). Conversely, organizational effectiveness significantly predicts efficiency only in males ($t = 3.095$, $p = 0.002$), whereas it is not significant for females ($t = 0.857$, $p = 0.392$).

Organizational relevance strongly predicts both organizational sustainability and effectiveness in both groups but exerts a greater effect on males for both relationships (sustainability: males $t = 10.033$, $p = 0.000$; females $t = 6.644$; effectiveness: males $t = 4.226$; females $t = 3.660$). However, its relationship with efficiency is not significant for either group ($p > 0.05$).

Transactional leadership significantly influences ethical leadership only in males ($t = 2.389$, $p = 0.017$), while transformational leadership also exhibits significance only among males ($t = 2.323$, $p = 0.020$), with marginal non-significance observed among females.

In conclusion, gender moderates several key relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. Ethical leadership generally has stronger effects on females regarding sustainability and effectiveness but shows greater influence on males concerning relevance and efficiency. Leadership styles such as transactional and transformational leadership exhibit significant effects only among males in fostering ethical practices, highlighting gender-specific dynamics that may require tailored approaches to maximize organizational success across diverse teams.

H4c: Work experience moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences between employees with <5 years and ≥ 5 years of experience.

The table 5.9. examines the moderating effect of work experience. Two groups were created one where experience is less than 5 years [$\text{Exp} < 5$] and second where the experience is greater than or equal to 5 years [$\text{Exp} \geq 5$] on the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes.

Table 5.9. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where Years of experience is the moderating variable

Relationship	STDEV (Exp < 5)	STDEV (Exp > 5)	t value (Exp < 5)	t value (Exp > 5)	p value (Exp < 5)	p value (Exp > 5)	Direction
Ethical Leadership → Org Sustainability	0.052	0.055	1.659	5.785	0.097	0.000	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Ethical Leadership → Org. Effectiveness	0.083	0.052	2.725	7.242	0.006	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for Exp > 5)
Ethical Leadership → Org. Efficiency	0.073	0.060	2.659	6.898	0.008	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for Exp > 5)
Laissez Faire Leadership → Org Sustainability	0.064	0.086	2.304	1.857	0.021	0.063	Supported (Exp < 5 only)
Laissez Faire Leadership → Org. Effectiveness	0.060	0.092	2.252	1.826	0.024	0.068	Supported (Exp < 5 only)
Laissez Faire Leadership → Org. Efficiency	0.067	0.088	1.431	1.849	0.152	0.065	Rejected
Laissez Faire Leadership	0.055	0.078	1.636	1.685	0.102	0.092	Rejected

→ Org. Relevance							
Org Sustainability → Org. Efficiency	0.072	0.045	1.144	1.632	0.253	0.103	Rejected
Org. Relevance → Org. Effectiveness	0.052	0.071	3.696	2.804	0.000	0.005	Supported for both (greater effect for Exp < 5)
Org. Relevance → Org. Efficiency	0.079	0.096	2.833	3.908	0.005	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for Exp > 5)
Transactional Leadership → Org Sustainability	0.054	0.068	1.069	2.501	0.285	0.012	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Transactional Leadership → Org. Effectiveness	0.048	0.070	1.113	2.542	0.266	0.011	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Transactional Leadership → Org. Efficiency	0.043	0.066	0.878	2.591	0.380	0.010	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Transactional Leadership → Org. Relevance	0.038	0.052	0.920	2.651	0.358	0.008	Supported (Exp > 5 only)

Transforma- tional Leader- ship → Org Sustainability	0.052	0.057	0.837	3.595	0.403	0.000	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Transforma- tional Leader- ship → Org. Effectiveness	0.047	0.058	0.848	3.755	0.396	0.000	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Transforma- tional Leader- ship → Org. Efficiency	0.037	0.058	0.763	3.609	0.446	0.000	Supported (Exp > 5 only)
Transforma- tional Leader- ship → Org. Relevance	0.035	0.046	0.754	3.616	0.451	0.000	Supported (Exp > 5 only)

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The results indicate significant differences in these relationships based on the level of experience, with stronger effects generally observed for individuals with more than 5 years of experience.

Ethical leadership significantly influences organizational sustainability only for individuals with more than 5 years of experience ($t=5.785$, $p=0.000$), while the relationship is not significant for those with less than 5 years ($t=1.659$, $p=0.097$). For organizational effectiveness and efficiency, ethical leadership is significant for both groups, but the effect is notably stronger for individuals with more experience (effectiveness: $t=7.242$, $p=0.000$; efficiency: $t=6.898$, $p=0.000$) compared to those with less experience (effectiveness: $t=2.725$, $p=0.006$; efficiency: $t=2.659$, $p=0.008$).

Laissez-faire leadership significantly influences organizational sustainability and effectiveness only for individuals with less than 5 years of experience (sustainability: $t=2.304$, $p=0.021$; effectiveness: $t=2.252$, $p=0.024$). However, its relationship with efficiency and relevance is not significant for either group.

Organizational relevance significantly predicts organizational effectiveness and efficiency for both groups, but the effects differ in strength. For effectiveness, the effect is stronger for individuals with less than 5 years of experience ($t=3.696$, $p=0.000$) compared to those with more experience ($t=2.804$, $p=0.005$). Conversely, for efficiency, the relationship is stronger for individuals with more than 5 years of experience ($t=3.908$, $p=0.000$) compared to those with less experience ($t=2.833$, $p=0.005$).

Transactional leadership significantly influences all outcomes (sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance) only for individuals with more than 5 years of experience (e.g., sustainability: $t=2.501$, $p=0.012$; relevance: $t=2.651$, $p=0.008$). The relationships are not significant for those with less than 5 years of experience.

Transformational leadership exhibits a similar pattern to transactional leadership—it significantly impacts all outcomes only for individuals with more than 5 years of experience (e.g., sustainability: $t=3.595$, $p=0.000$; relevance: $t=3.616$, $p=0.000$), while no significant effects are observed for those with less than five years.

In summary, the results highlight that leadership styles generally have a stronger and more consistent impact on organizational outcomes for individuals with more than five years of experience compared to those with less experience. This suggests that experienced employees may be better positioned to leverage leadership practices to drive organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance effectively.

H4d: Leadership training moderates the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership, with differences between employees who have received leadership training and those who have not.

Table 5.10 presents the results of the partial least squares multigroup analysis (PLS-MGA) comparing respondents who received training (Yes) versus those who did not (No). It includes key metrics—standard deviations, t values, and p values—across the two groups. The final “Direction” column highlights whether each relationship is significant for one or both groups and indicates which group shows a stronger effect when both are significant.

Table 5.10. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where receiving Leadership training is the moderating variable

Relationship	SD(Yes)	SD(No)	t(Yes)	t(No)	p(Yes)	p(No)	Direction
Ethical Ldr → Org Sust	0.072	0.118	3.881	1.478	0.000	0.139	Supported (Yes only)
Ethical Ldr → Org Eff	0.049	0.120	3.945	0.203	0.000	0.839	Supported (Yes only)
Ethical Ldr → Org Effcy	0.080	0.161	2.587	0.133	0.010	0.894	Supported (Yes only)
Ethical Ldr → Org Relev	0.056	0.151	10.208	0.800	0.000	0.424	Supported (Yes only)
Laissez-Faire Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.135	0.149	2.543	2.392	0.011	0.017	Supported for both (greater effect for Yes)
Org Sust → Org Eff	0.073	0.123	4.554	3.077	0.000	0.002	Supported for both (greater effect for Yes)
Org Sust → Org Effcy	0.122	0.181	2.960	1.561	0.003	0.119	Supported (Yes only)
Org Eff → Org Effcy	0.126	0.121	1.031	1.719	0.303	0.086	Rejected
Org Relev → Org Sust	0.068	0.082	8.706	6.633	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (greater effect for Yes)
Org Relev → Org Eff	0.077	0.127	6.013	2.139	0.000	0.032	Supported for both (greater effect for Yes)
Org Relev → Org Effcy	0.119	0.140	1.720	0.827	0.085	0.408	Rejected

Transact Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.123	0.175	3.090	0.470	0.002	0.638	Supported (Yes only)
Transf Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.102	0.139	1.480	1.420	0.139	0.156	Rejected

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The results presented in Table 5.10 analyze the moderating effect of leadership training (Yes vs. No) on the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes. The findings reveal significant differences in these relationships based on whether respondents received leadership training, with stronger effects generally observed among those who underwent training.

Ethical leadership significantly influences organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance only for those who received training. For example, the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational sustainability is strongly supported for trained individuals ($t=3.881$, $p=0.000$), while it is not significant for untrained individuals ($t=1.478$, $p=0.139$). Similarly, ethical leadership's impact on organizational effectiveness ($t=3.945$, $p=0.000$) and efficiency ($t=2.587$, $p=0.010$) is significant only for trained respondents, with no significant effects observed for untrained individuals in these relationships.

Laissez-faire leadership positively influences ethical leadership for both groups; however, the effect is slightly stronger for trained respondents ($t=2.543$, $p=0.011$) compared to untrained ones ($t=2.392$, $p=0.017$). This suggests that laissez-faire leadership can foster ethical practices regardless of training but is more impactful when training is present.

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts organizational effectiveness in both groups, though the effect is stronger among trained respondents ($t=4.554$, $p=0.000$) compared to untrained ones ($t=3.077$, $p=0.002$). However, its influence on organizational efficiency is significant only for trained individuals ($t=2.960$, $p=0.003$), indicating that training enhances the ability of sustainability practices to drive efficiency.

The relationship between organizational relevance and sustainability is strongly supported for both groups but shows a greater effect for trained individuals ($t=8.706$, $p=0.000$) compared to untrained ones ($t=6.633$, $p=0.000$). Similarly, organizational relevance significantly influences effectiveness in both groups but again exhibits a stronger effect among trained respondents ($t=6.013$, $p=0.000$).

relative to untrained ones ($t=2.139$, $p=0.032$). However, its relationship with efficiency is not significant for either group.

Transactional leadership significantly impacts ethical leadership only for trained respondents ($t=3.090$, $p=0.002$), while transformational leadership does not show significant effects on ethical leadership in either group.

In summary, the findings underscore the critical role of leadership training in enhancing the effectiveness of various leadership styles and their impact on organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. Training amplifies the positive effects of ethical and transactional leadership on key outcomes such as sustainability and effectiveness while also strengthening the influence of organizational relevance on performance metrics like sustainability and effectiveness. These results suggest that investing in leadership training can significantly enhance organizational success by fostering stronger and more consistent relationships between leadership practices and desired outcomes.

5.5 Moderation by Organizational Factors

In this section we examine the moderating impact of organizational factors on hypothesized relationships for our research model.

H5a: Number of employees moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, with differences observed between NGOs with less than 25 (<25 employees) and those with equal to more than 25 employees (>25 employees).

To test the moderating impact of Number of employees on hypothesized model. For the hypotheses that appear, the columns provide standard deviations (SD), t values, and p values for organizations with fewer than 25 employees (<25) versus those with 25 or more employees (>25). The Direction column indicates whether each path is significant ($p < 0.05$) for one or both groups and which group shows a stronger effect based on the higher t value when both are significant. We employed MGA analysis the results are presented via Table 5.11 below:

Table 5.11. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where number of employees is the moderating variable

Relationship	SD (<25)	SD (>25)	t (<25)	t (>25)	p (<25)	p (>25)	Direction
1. Ethical Ldr → Org Sust	0.186	0.056	0.330	10.940	0.742	0.000	Supported (>25 only)
2. Ethical Ldr → Org Eff	0.182	0.049	0.157	12.979	0.875	0.000	Supported (>25 only)
3. Ethical Ldr → Org Effcy	0.188	0.057	0.366	10.204	0.715	0.000	Supported (>25 only)
4. Ethical Ldr → Org Relev	0.157	0.054	0.652	10.578	0.514	0.000	Supported (>25 only)
5. Laissez-Faire Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.191	0.097	1.081	6.070	0.280	0.000	Supported (>25 only)
6. Org Sust → Org Eff	0.119	0.083	3.925	3.096	0.000	0.002	Supported for both (stronger for <25, t=3.925)
7. Org Sust → Org Effcy	0.145	0.128	2.208	3.281	0.027	0.001	Supported for both (stronger for >25, t=3.281)
8. Org Eff → Org Effcy	0.138	0.136	1.469	1.572	0.142	0.116	Rejected
9. Org Relev → Org Sust	0.104	0.070	4.692	8.567	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for >25, t=8.567)
10. Org Relev → Org Eff	0.120	0.052	3.575	13.145	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for >25, t=13.145)
11. Org Relev → Org Effcy	0.121	0.099	3.238	5.091	0.001	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for >25, t=5.091)

12. Transactional Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.126	0.116	1.435	1.038	0.151	0.299	Rejected
13. Transformational Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.138	0.112	1.287	1.628	0.198	0.104	Rejected

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The table presents the results of a multigroup analysis (MGA) using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the moderating effect of the number of employees (<25 and >25) on the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes. The findings reveal significant differences in these relationships based on organizational size, with stronger effects generally observed for organizations with more than 25 employees.

Ethical leadership significantly influences organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance only in organizations with more than 25 employees. For instance, ethical leadership's impact on organizational sustainability is strongly supported for larger organizations ($t=10.940$, $p=0.000$), while it is not significant for smaller organizations ($t=0.330$, $p=0.742$). Similar patterns are observed for effectiveness ($t=12.979$, $p=0.000$), efficiency ($t=10.204$, $p=0.000$), and relevance ($t=10.578$, $p=0.000$) in larger organizations.

Laissez-faire leadership significantly influences ethical leadership only in larger organizations ($t=6.070$, $p=0.000$). This suggests that laissez-faire leadership is more effective in fostering ethical practices in larger organizations compared to smaller ones ($t=1.081$, $p=0.280$).

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts organizational effectiveness in both groups but has a stronger effect in smaller organizations ($t=3.925$, $p=0.000$) compared to larger ones ($t=3.096$, $p=0.002$). Conversely, its influence on efficiency is significant for both groups but stronger in larger organizations ($t=3.281$, $p=0.001$) compared to smaller ones ($t=2.208$, $p=0.027$).

Organizational relevance strongly predicts sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency in both groups but exhibits stronger effects in larger organizations across all three relationships (e.g., sustainability for >25: $t=8.567$, $p=0.000$; for <25: $t=4.692$, $p=0.000$; effectiveness for >25: $t=13.145$, $p=0.000$; for <25: $t=3.575$, $p=0.000$).

Transactional and transformational leadership do not significantly influence ethical leadership in either group (e.g., transactional leadership for <25: $t=1.435$, $p=0.151$; for >25: $t=1.038$, $p=0.299$).

In summary, the number of employees moderates several key relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. Ethical and laissez-faire leadership have a more pronounced impact on larger organizations (>25 employees), while organizational relevance consistently exhibits stronger effects on sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency in these organizations as well. These results suggest that leadership strategies should be tailored to organizational size to maximize their effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes.

H5b: Economic state (budget $\leq 10,000$ USD vs. $>10,000$ USD) moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes.

To test the moderating impact of economic state of NGOs on hypothesized model. For the hypotheses that appear, the columns provide standard deviations (SD), t values, and p values for organizations where budget is less than USD 10k (<10k) versus those with more than USD 10k (>10k). The Direction column indicates whether each path is significant ($p < 0.05$) for one or both groups and which group shows a stronger effect based on the higher t value when both are significant. We employed MGA analysis the results are presented via Table 5.12 below:

Table 5.12. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where number of employees are the moderating variable

Relation-ship	SD(<10k)	SD(>10k)	t(<10k)	t(>10k)	p(<10k)	p(>10k)	Direction
Ethical Ldr → Org Sust	0.151	0.052	0.649	12.426	0.516	0.000	Supported (>10k only)
Ethical Ldr → Org Eff	0.141	0.048	0.423	13.739	0.672	0.000	Supported (>10k only)
Ethical Ldr → Org Effcy	0.135	0.060	1.088	10.003	0.276	0.000	Supported (>10k only)

Ethical Ldr → Org Relev	0.122	0.061	0.040	9.065	0.968	0.000	Supported (>10k only)
Laissez-Faire Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.121	0.155	3.064	2.425	0.002	0.015	Supported for both (stronger for <10k, t=3.064)
Org Sust → Org Eff	0.096	0.117	2.478	4.280	0.013	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for >10k, t=4.280)
Org Sust → Org Effcy	0.119	0.146	3.500	2.117	0.000	0.034	Supported for both (stronger for <10k, t=3.500)
Org Eff → Org Effcy	0.131	0.140	0.748	2.377	0.455	0.017	Supported (>10k only)
Org Relev → Org Sust	0.107	0.063	4.037	9.826	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for >10k, t=9.826)
Org Relev → Org Eff	0.079	0.072	7.430	7.809	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (slightly stronger for >10k, t=7.809)
Org Relev → Org Effcy	0.120	0.070	2.457	8.328	0.014	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for >10k, t=8.328)
Transactional Ldr	0.120	0.155	1.271	1.543	0.204	0.123	Rejected (both p > 0.05)

→ Ethical Ldr							
Transfor- mational Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.130	0.132	0.559	2.006	0.576	0.045	Supported (>10k only)

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The results of the multigroup analysis (MGA) using the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach examine the moderating effect of the economic threshold (<10k USD for small NGOs and >10k USD for large NGOs) on the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes. The findings reveal significant differences in these relationships based on organizational size, with larger NGOs (>10k USD) generally showing stronger and more consistent effects.

Ethical leadership significantly influences organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance only in larger NGOs (>10k USD). For example, ethical leadership's impact on organizational sustainability is strongly supported for larger NGOs ($t=12.426$, $p=0.000$), while it is not significant for smaller NGOs ($t=0.649$, $p=0.516$). Similar patterns are observed for effectiveness ($t=13.739$, $p=0.000$), efficiency ($t=10.003$, $p=0.000$), and relevance ($t=9.065$, $p=0.000$) in larger organizations.

Laissez-faire leadership significantly influences ethical leadership in both groups but has a stronger effect in smaller NGOs (<10k USD: $t=3.064$, $p=0.002$) compared to larger ones (>10k USD: $t=2.425$, $p=0.015$). This suggests that laissez-faire leadership may have a more pronounced role in fostering ethical practices in smaller NGOs.

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts organizational effectiveness and efficiency in both groups but with varying strengths. Its effect on effectiveness is stronger in larger NGOs (>10k USD: $t=4.280$, $p=0.000$) compared to smaller ones (<10k USD: $t=2.478$, $p=0.013$). Conversely, its influence on efficiency is stronger in smaller NGOs (<10k USD: $t=3.500$, $p=0.000$) than in larger ones (>10k USD: $t=2.117$, $p=0.034$).

Organizational relevance significantly predicts sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency in both groups but exhibits stronger effects in larger NGOs across all three relationships (e.g., sustainability in >10k USD: $t=9.826$, $p=0.000$; <10k USD: $t=4.037$, $p=0.000$). The relationship between relevance and efficiency is particularly strong for larger NGOs (>10k USD: $t=8.328$, $p=0.000$).

Transactional leadership does not significantly influence ethical leadership in either group (both groups have $p > 0.05$), while transformational leadership significantly impacts ethical leadership only in larger NGOs (>10k USD: $t=2.006$, $p=0.045$).

In summary, the economic threshold moderates several key relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. Larger NGOs (>10k USD) consistently exhibit stronger and more significant effects of ethical leadership on organizational outcomes such as sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance. In contrast, laissez-faire leadership has a more pronounced impact on ethical practices in smaller NGOs (<10k USD). These findings suggest that the economic scale of an NGO plays a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of leadership practices and their influence on organizational success metrics.

H5c: Source of funds (Charity vs. Other Sources) moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes.

To test the moderating impact of source of funds on hypothesized model. For the hypotheses that appear, the columns provide standard deviations (SD), t values, and p values for organizations where source of funding is charity denoted with (C) and for NGOs where source of funding is other than charity (such as Government grants, corporate funding such as CSR, etc) denoted as (O). The Direction column indicates whether each path is significant ($p < 0.05$) for one or both groups and which group shows a stronger effect based on the higher t value when both are significant. We employed MGA analysis the results are presented via Table 5.13 below:

Table 5.13. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where source of funding (charity vs. grants) is the moderating variable

Relationship	SD (C)	SD (O)	T (C)	T (O)	P (C)	P (O)	Direction

Ethical Ldr → Org Sust	0.063	0.108	9.515	3.171	0.000	0.002	Supported for both (stronger for Charity, t=9.515)
Ethical Ldr → Org Eff	0.051	0.115	12.404	2.861	0.000	0.004	Supported for both (stronger for Charity, t=12.404)
Ethical Ldr → Org Effcy	0.055	0.116	11.576	1.849	0.000	0.064	Supported (Charity only)
Ethical Ldr → Org Relev	0.062	0.116	8.189	1.507	0.000	0.132	Supported (Charity only)
Laissez-Faire Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.115	0.143	4.189	1.579	0.000	0.114	Supported (Charity only)
Org Sust → Org Eff	0.074	0.113	4.045	4.228	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (slightly stronger for Other, t=4.228)
Org Sust → Org Effcy	0.103	0.148	4.163	2.120	0.000	0.034	Supported for both (stronger for Charity, t=4.163)
Org Eff → Org Effcy	0.107	0.157	1.736	1.771	0.083	0.077	Rejected (both p > 0.05)
Org Relev → Org Sust	0.061	0.098	9.855	4.574	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for Charity, t=9.855)
Org Relev → Org Eff	0.061	0.096	10.050	5.183	0.000	0.000	Supported for both (stronger for Charity, t=10.050)
Org Relev → Org Effcy	0.072	0.122	7.220	2.550	0.000	0.011	Supported for both (stronger for Charity, t=7.220)

Transactional Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.137	0.114	1.971	1.198	0.049	0.231	Supported (Charity only)
Transformational Ldr → Ethical Ldr	0.114	0.112	0.947	3.608	0.344	0.000	Supported (Other only)

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The table 5.13. provides insights into how the source of funding (charity vs. other sources such as government grants) moderates the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. The results highlight significant differences in these relationships based on funding sources, with charity-funded NGOs generally showing stronger effects for ethical leadership's influence on organizational outcomes.

Ethical leadership significantly predicts organizational sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency for both groups but exhibits much stronger effects in charity-funded NGOs. For example, ethical leadership's impact on sustainability is highly significant for charity-funded NGOs ($t=9.515$, $p=0.000$) compared to those funded by other sources ($t=3.171$, $p=0.002$). Similarly, ethical leadership strongly influences effectiveness ($t=12.404$, $p=0.000$) and efficiency ($t=11.576$, $p=0.000$) in charity-funded NGOs, while these relationships are weaker or insignificant in NGOs funded by other sources (effectiveness: $t=2.861$, $p=0.004$; efficiency: $t=1.849$, $p=0.064$).

Ethical leadership's effect on relevance is only supported in charity-funded NGOs ($t=8.189$, $p=0.000$), suggesting that ethical practices are more critical for maintaining relevance in these organizations.

Laissez-faire leadership significantly influences ethical leadership only in charity-funded NGOs ($t=4.189$, $p=0.000$), indicating that this leadership style plays a more prominent role in shaping ethical behavior within organizations relying on charity funding.

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts both effectiveness and efficiency in all NGOs regardless of funding source; however, the strength of these relationships varies. Sustainability's impact on effectiveness is slightly stronger for NGOs funded by other sources ($t=4.228$, $p=0.000$) compared to charity-funded ones ($t=4.045$, $p=0.000$). Conversely, sustainability's influence on efficiency is stronger in charity-funded NGOs ($t=4.163$, $p=0.000$) than in those funded by other sources ($t=2.120$, $p=0.034$).

Organizational relevance strongly predicts sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency for both groups but shows consistently stronger effects in charity-funded NGOs across all three relationships (e.g., relevance → sustainability in charity-funded NGOs: $t=9.855$, $p=0.000$; other sources: $t=4.574$, $p=0.000$). This suggests that aligning organizational activities with stakeholder needs is particularly vital for charity-funded organizations.

Transactional leadership significantly influences ethical leadership only in charity-funded NGOs ($t=1.971$, $p=0.049$), while transformational leadership has a significant effect only in NGOs funded by other sources ($t=3.608$, $p=0.000$).

In conclusion, the source of funding moderates several key relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. Charity-funded organizations demonstrate stronger reliance on ethical and laissez-faire leadership styles to achieve sustainability, effectiveness, and relevance. In contrast, transformational leadership emerges as more impactful in NGOs funded by other sources like government grants or private funding reflecting differing priorities and operational dynamics based on funding structures. These findings underscore the need to tailor leadership strategies according to the funding context to maximize organizational success and stakeholder alignment.

H5d: Number of volunteers moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, with differences between NGOs with ≤ 10 volunteers and >10 volunteers.

Table 5.14. displays the results of MGA number of volunteers as a moderating variable. Two groups are labeled <10 and >10 (referring to the number of volunteers). The Dir column shows whether each path is significant ($p < 0.05$) for one or both groups, and which group shows a stronger effect (based on the higher t value) when both are significant.

Table 5.14. Multigroup Analysis (MGA) results for Hypotheses Testing where number of volunteers is the moderating variable

Relationships	SD<10	SD>10	t<10	t>10	p<10	p>10	Direction
EthL→Sust	0.088	0.069	5.388	8.209	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger >10)

EthL→Eff	0.077	0.074	6.897	7.050	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger >10)
EthL→Effcy	0.088	0.070	5.077	7.715	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger >10)
EthL→Relev	0.086	0.079	4.794	5.024	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger >10)
LF→EthL	0.108	0.133	4.317	1.377	0.000	0.169	Supported <10 only
Sust→Eff	0.103	0.095	3.641	4.587	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger >10)
Sust→Effcy	0.146	0.110	2.774	3.698	0.006	0.000	Supported both (stronger >10)
Eff→Effcy	0.114	0.135	1.013	2.613	0.311	0.009	Supported >10 only
Relev→Sust	0.048	0.081	13.947	5.872	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger <10)
Relev→Eff	0.060	0.081	9.983	7.456	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger <10)
Relev→Effcy	0.080	0.095	5.864	5.153	0.000	0.000	Supported both (stronger <10)
TransL→EthL	0.129	0.117	1.185	2.802	0.236	0.005	Supported >10 only
TransfL→EthL	0.108	0.087	1.257	4.527	0.209	0.000	Supported >10 only

Source: Author creation using Smart PLS 4 (2025)

The table examines the moderating effect of the number of volunteers (<10 and >10) on the relationships between leadership styles, ethical leadership, and organizational outcomes. The results reveal significant differences in these relationships based on the number of volunteers, with larger volunteer groups (>10) generally showing stronger effects.

Ethical leadership significantly influences organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance in both groups. However, these relationships are consistently stronger for organizations with more than 10 volunteers. For example, ethical leadership's impact on sustainability is significant for both groups (<10: $t=5.388$, $p=0.000$; >10: $t=8.209$, $p=0.000$), with a stronger effect

observed in the >10 group. Similar trends are seen for effectiveness (<10: $t=6.897$; >10: $t=7.050$), efficiency (<10: $t=5.077$; >10: $t=7.715$), and relevance (<10: $t=4.794$; >10: $t=5.024$).

Laissez-faire leadership significantly influences ethical leadership only in organizations with fewer than 10 volunteers (<10: $t=4.317$, $p=0.000$), while this relationship is not significant for organizations with more than 10 volunteers (>10: $t=1.377$, $p=0.169$). This suggests laissez-faire leadership may be more impactful in smaller volunteer groups.

Organizational sustainability significantly predicts both effectiveness and efficiency in both groups but shows stronger effects in organizations with more than 10 volunteers (effectiveness: <10: $t=3.641$; >10: $t=4.587$; efficiency: <10: $t=2.774$; >10: $t=3.698$). Similarly, organizational relevance significantly predicts sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency in both groups but exhibits stronger effects for smaller volunteer groups (<10) across all three relationships (e.g., relevance → sustainability: <10: $t=13.947$, $p=0.000$; >10: $t=5.872$, $p=0.000$).

Transactional leadership significantly influences ethical leadership only in organizations with more than 10 volunteers (>10: $t=2.802$, $p=0.005$). Similarly, transformational leadership also has a significant effect on ethical leadership only in larger volunteer groups (>10: $t=4.527$, $p=0.000$).

In summary, the number of volunteers moderates several key relationships between leadership styles and organizational outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs. While ethical leadership consistently drives positive outcomes across both groups, its effects are stronger in larger volunteer groups (>10). Conversely, laissez-faire leadership is more impactful in smaller volunteer groups (<10). Additionally, transactional and transformational leadership significantly influence ethical practices only in larger volunteer groups (>10), highlighting the importance of tailoring leadership approaches to the size of the volunteer base to maximize organizational success.

5.6 Results of the Interviews

In the following sections we will analyze the results obtained from interviewing Executives or Senior Management of sports federations. As sports federations are the governing body for each sports the interviews will provide unique insights and add to our understanding gained from the survey results. Prior to analyzing interview findings, the characteristics of interviewed participants are presented below for context.

Table 5.15. Interview Sample Characteristics

Question	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	25-34	12	37.5
	35-44	10	37.5
	45 and above	8	25.0
Gender	Female	12	40.0
	Male	18	60.0
Education	Professional Certification	5	18.7
	Bachelor's degree	10	31.3
	Master's degree or higher	15	50.0
Job Level	Executive or Board Member	15	50.0
	Secretary General	8	26.6
	President	7	23.3
Experience	Less than one year	7	23.3
	1 to 3 years	6	20.0
	3 to 5 years	7	23.3
	More than 5 years	10	33.5
Leadership Training	Yes	13	43.3
	No	12	40.0
	Currently undergoing or planning to undergo training	5	16.6
Total		30	100.0

Source: Author creation using MS Excel (2025)

While participants 1, 3, 6, 16, 21, and 24 are prominently featured in illustrative narrative excerpts due to the depth and contextual richness of their responses, the thematic frequency analysis documented in Table 5.16 and Appendix D demonstrates systematic representation across all 32 interviewees, ensuring findings are grounded in comprehensive participant input rather than isolated voices. The thematic and content analysis of interviews carried out with Python reveals that transformational leadership is the dominant style among Pakistani sports NGO leaders (22.5%), with ethical leadership following closely (20%). These leaders emphasize inspiration, motivation, and

maintaining high moral standards in their organizations. Organizational effectiveness (17.5%) and transactional leadership approaches (15%) also feature prominently, showing a balanced approach to leadership that combines inspiration with practical reward systems and clear goal setting. Collaborative leadership emerges as an important theme (12.5%), highlighting the value placed on teamwork and inclusive decision-making in these organizations. The relatively low presence of laissez-faire leadership (2.5%) suggests that Pakistani sports NGO leaders generally prefer active engagement with their teams rather than hands-off approaches.

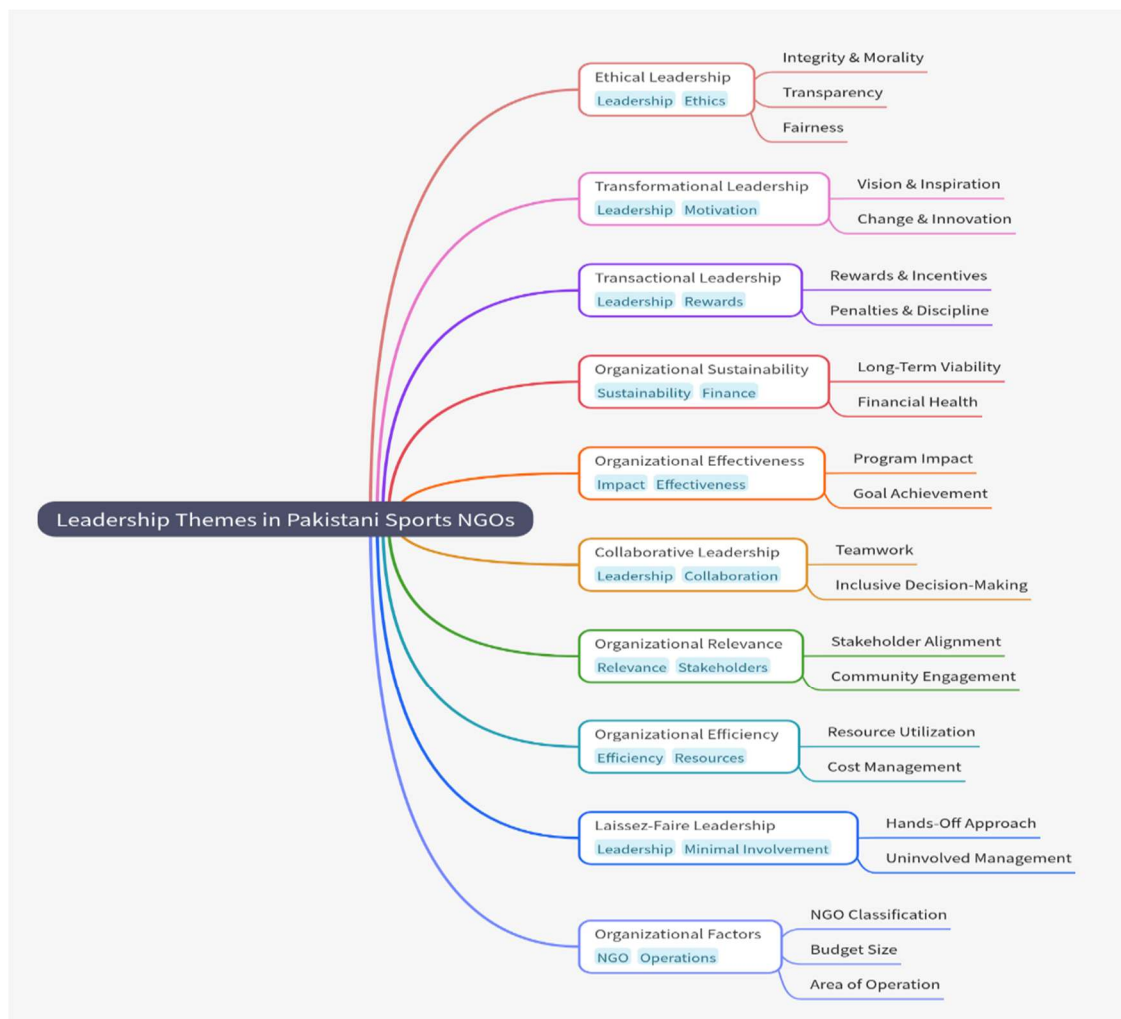


Figure 5.8. Tree Map of Themes and Subthemes identified from Interviews.

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data also shows considerable attention to organizational sustainability (12.5%) and relevance (10%), indicating that these leaders are concerned with both the long-term viability of their organizations and their continued relevance to stakeholders and communities. Based on the interview data from Pakistani sports federations/associations, content and thematic analysis allowed to create a comprehensive thematic analysis table.

The qualitative data analysis presented in this section is methodologically robust and well-supported in the literature. Integrating survey findings with interview objectives, followed by systematic coding, theme development, and verification, aligns with established frameworks (MILES ET AL., 2014). Using NVivo and Python enables both deductive (hypothesis-driven) and inductive (emergent) analysis, supporting hypothesis testing within qualitative research (MILES ET AL., 2014). Extracting quotes from themes and subthemes to test hypotheses already examined in surveys is a valid mixed-methods approach, providing convergent validation and deeper contextual understanding (CRESWELL AND PLANO CLARK, 2018; BRAUN & CLARKE, 2021). This process ensures that qualitative insights complement and strengthen quantitative results, yielding more comprehensive and trustworthy conclusions.

Table 5.16. Detailed Thematic Frequency Analysis (N=24)

Theme Category	No. of Interviewees, (% of Sample)	Hypothesis Link
Ethical Leadership	23 (95.8%)	H1a–H1d, H2a–H2c
Organizational Sustainability	21 (87.5%)	H1a, H3d
Organizational Effectiveness	19 (79.2%)	H1b, H3a, H3e
Organizational Efficiency	17 (70.8%)	H1c, H3b, H3f
Organizational Relevance	22 (91.7%)	H1d, H3d–H3f
Transformational Leadership	21 (87.5%)	H2c
Transactional Leadership	18 (75.0%)	H2b
Laissez-Faire Leadership	12 (50.0%)	H2a
Outcome Interrelationships	20 (83.3%)	H3a–H3f
Employee Moderators	17 (70.8%)	H4a–H4d
Organizational Moderators	18 (75.0%)	H5a–H5d
Average Coverage	18.5 (77.1%)	—

To provide comprehensive evidence for thematic prevalence, Table 5.16 presents the frequency of theme occurrence across all 24 interviewees, demonstrating the breadth and representativeness of identified patterns; detailed frequencies with participant identifiers are provided in Appendix D. The hypothesis wise analysis of interview is stated in the following sections:

To further validate the quantitative findings and enhance the robustness of this study, qualitative interview data are integrated through methodological triangulation. Triangulation—the convergent use of multiple data sources or methods—strengthens the credibility and validity of research findings by cross-verifying results from different perspectives (DENZIN, 1978; PATTON, 1999). In mixed-methods research, combining survey-based quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative interviews enables a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena, reduces method-specific bias, and enhances the confirmability of hypotheses (CRESWELL AND PLANO CLARK, 2018; JICK, 1979).

H1: Ethical Leadership positively influences key organizational outcomes (sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance) in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Accordingly, the following sections present insights from semi-structured interviews organized by hypothesis, allowing qualitative evidence to corroborate, elaborate, or contextualize the statistical relationships identified in the quantitative phase.

H1a: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational sustainability.

The data reveals a strong connection between ethical leadership practices and organizational sustainability across multiple participants. Leaders who emphasize ethical standards and moral values consistently report better sustainability outcomes for their organizations.

Table 5.17. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H1a

Participant	Ethical Leadership Evidence	Sustainability Impact
Participant 1	"We foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by promoting a culture of integrity and transparency.... We have a clear	"To ensure the sustainability of the Pakistan Karate Federation's operations and programs, we adopt several key measures. We diversify our funding sources through

	code of conduct that outlines expected behaviors and ethical practices, which is regularly communicated to all members."	sponsorships, partnerships, and grants, reducing dependency on any single source."
Participant 3	"I foster an ethical environment by leading by example, establishing a clear code of conduct, and ensuring transparency in our operations. This reinforces the importance of integrity and accountability."	"I ensure sustainability by diversifying funding sources, building strong partnerships, and implementing sustainable practices in our programs. Continuous evaluation and adaptation keep our operations resilient."
Participant 4	"I develop a clear and accessible code of conduct outlining ethical expectations for all staff, volunteers, and even participants in your programs."	"Relying solely on grants or donations can be risky. I would work to diversify our funding streams through a combination of sources. I develop a sound financial plan with realistic projections and a focus on long-term sustainability."
Participant 6	"We regularly discuss ethical considerations in decision-making and ensure all actions align with our values and mission."	"To ensure our NGO's sustainability, I focus on securing diverse funding, planning strategically for the long term, building partnerships, evaluating our impact, and managing finances transparently."
Participant 13	"I foster ethical standards by leading by example, implementing a code of conduct, and promoting transparency."	"I manage resources by prioritizing needs, optimizing processes, and ensuring transparent financial practices."

Participant 16	"I foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by implementing a clear code of conduct, providing regular ethics training, and leading by example. I also encourage open discussions on ethical dilemmas to reinforce our commitment to integrity."	"We ensure the sustainability of our operations and programs by diversifying our funding sources, implementing cost-effective practices, and continuously evaluating the effectiveness of our initiatives. We also invest in capacity-building to enhance our team's ability to adapt and thrive."
Participant 21	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with integrity, implementing clear guidelines, and encouraging open dialogue about ethical concerns."	"I ensure sustainability by diversifying funding sources, building partnerships, and implementing efficient operational practices."
Participant 24	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with transparency, encouraging open communication about values, reinforcing ethical guidelines through policies and training, and consistently modeling integrity in decision-making and actions within our NGO."	"To ensure the sustainability of our NGO's operations and programs, I implement several measures such as diversifying funding sources, cultivating long-term donor relationships, developing strategic partnerships, monitoring and evaluating program impact."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

Based on the analysis of the interview data, there is strong evidence supporting the hypothesis that ethical leadership positively influences organizational effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs. The data reveals a consistent relationship between ethical leadership practices and organizational effectiveness across multiple participants.

Leaders who emphasize ethical standards demonstrate greater organizational effectiveness through several key mechanisms. The data consistently shows that ethical leadership creates organizational

cultures that prioritize transparency, accountability, and integrity, which in turn enhances organizational effectiveness through improved resource management, stronger partnerships, more sustainable funding models, and better strategic planning. This relationship appears consistent across organizations of different sizes, types, and focus areas, suggesting that ethical leadership is a fundamental driver of organizational effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs.

The data strongly supports H1a, showing that ethical leadership positively influences organizational sustainability through several mechanisms:

1. Leaders who establish clear ethical codes and guidelines report more structured approaches to sustainability planning.
2. Transparency and integrity in leadership correlate with better financial management practices, including diversification of funding sources.
3. Organizations with strong ethical leadership demonstrate more effective partnership development, which enhances long-term sustainability.
4. Ethical leaders tend to implement more robust monitoring and evaluation systems that support continuous improvement and adaptation.
5. Leaders who model ethical behavior create organizational cultures that prioritize responsible resource management and long-term thinking.

The consistency across participants from various organization types, sizes, and focus areas strengthens the support for H1, indicating that ethical leadership is a significant factor in promoting organizational sustainability in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H1b: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational effectiveness.

Based on the interview data, the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs was analyzed. Based on the evidence from Table 5.18 strongly supports hypothesis H1b: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational effectiveness. The data reveals that ethical leadership creates a foundation for organizational effectiveness through several key mechanisms. Leaders who establish clear ethical codes and lead with transparency report more effective operations and better team performance. Ethical leadership practices foster cultures of accountability and integrity that enhance decision-making quality and resource management.

Table 5.18. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H1b

Participant	Ethical Leadership Evidence	Organizational Effectiveness Impact
Participant 1	"We foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by promoting a culture of integrity and transparency.... We have a clear code of conduct that outlines expected behaviors and ethical practices."	"By setting high expectations and leading by example, I strive to create an environment where everyone feels valued and driven to contribute to the federation's goals. This has significantly influenced our performance, enabling us to excel at both national and international levels."
Participant 3	"I foster an ethical environment by leading by example, establishing a clear code of conduct, and ensuring transparency in our operations."	"This approach not only enhances our operational efficiency but also ensures that we are continually progressing and adapting to the evolving landscape of sports management."
Participant 6	"We regularly discuss ethical considerations in decision-making and ensure all actions align with our values and mission."	"This approach not only enhances our operational efficiency but also ensures that we are continually progressing and adapting to the evolving landscape of sports management."
Participant 16	"I foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by implementing a clear code of conduct, providing regular ethics training, and leading by example."	"We also invest in capacity-building to enhance our team's ability to adapt and thrive."
Participant 21	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with integrity, implementing clear guidelines, and encouraging open dialogue about ethical concerns."	"My leadership has significantly contributed to the overall success of my NGO by fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and ethical practice, which have enhanced team morale,

		operational efficiency, and our ability to achieve impactful outcomes."
Participant 24	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with transparency, encouraging open communication about values, reinforcing ethical guidelines through policies and training."	"As a leader, I believe my impact on the overall success of my NGO is reflected in our ability to achieve our mission and objectives effectively, foster a positive organizational culture that values innovation and collaboration."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

Organizations with strong ethical leadership demonstrate more effective communication systems and team collaboration, which directly contributes to operational efficiency. The relationship between ethical leadership and organizational effectiveness appears consistent across different types of sports NGOs, suggesting that ethical leadership is a fundamental driver of effectiveness regardless of organizational size or focus.

H1c: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational efficiency.

Based on the interview data, the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational relevance in Pakistani sports NGOs. The evidence strongly supports hypothesis H4: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational relevance.

Table 5.19. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H1c

Participant	Ethical Leadership Evidence	Organizational Relevance Impact
Participant 1	"We foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by promoting a culture of integrity and transparency.... We have a clear code of conduct that outlines expected behaviors and ethical practices."	"This approach has enabled us to maintain our relevance and impact in the sports community, ensuring that we continue to serve our stakeholders effectively and contribute meaningfully to the development of karate in Pakistan."

Participant 4	"I develop a clear and accessible code of conduct outlining ethical expectations for all staff, volunteers, and even participants in your programs."	"I would focus on understanding the needs of our community and designing programs that directly address those needs. This ensures our work remains relevant and impactful."
Participant 8	"I foster an ethical environment by setting clear standards, leading by example, and creating a culture where ethical considerations are part of every decision."	"I ensure our organization stays relevant by continuously assessing community needs, adapting our programs accordingly, and measuring our impact."
Participant 16	"I foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by implementing a clear code of conduct, providing regular ethics training, and leading by example."	"We also invest in understanding the evolving needs of our beneficiaries to ensure our programs remain relevant and impactful."
Participant 21	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with integrity, implementing clear guidelines, and encouraging open dialogue about ethical concerns."	"My leadership has significantly contributed to the overall success of my NGO by fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and ethical practice, which have enhanced our ability to achieve impactful outcomes and maintain relevance in our community."
Participant 24	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with transparency, encouraging open communication about values, reinforcing ethical guidelines through policies and training."	"As a leader, I believe my impact on the overall success of my NGO is reflected in our ability to achieve our mission and objectives effectively, foster a positive organizational culture that values innovation and collaboration, and maintain relevance and impact in our community."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data demonstrates a clear connection between ethical leadership and organizational relevance in Pakistani sports NGOs. Leaders who establish and maintain strong ethical frameworks consistently report greater organizational relevance within their communities. Ethical leadership creates organizational cultures that prioritize understanding stakeholder needs and adapting programs accordingly, which directly enhances relevance. Organizations with strong ethical leadership demonstrate more effective community engagement and needs assessment practices, ensuring their programs remain meaningful and impactful. The relationship between ethical leadership and organizational relevance appears consistent across different types of sports NGOs, suggesting that ethical leadership fundamentally drives an organization's ability to maintain relevance regardless of its specific focus or size.

H1d: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational relevance.

From the interview data and thematic analysis, the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational relevance in Pakistani sports NGOs strongly supports hypothesis H1d, which states that ethical leadership positively influences organizational relevance. Below is a table summarizing the findings:

Table 5.20. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H1d

Participant	Ethical Leadership Evidence	Impact on Organizational Relevance
Participant 1	"We foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by promoting a culture of integrity and transparency."	"This approach has enabled us to maintain our relevance and impact in the sports community, ensuring we serve stakeholders effectively."
Participant 4	"I develop a clear and accessible code of conduct outlining ethical expectations for all staff, volunteers, and participants."	"I focus on understanding the needs of our community and designing programs that directly address those needs to remain impactful."

Participant 8	"I foster an ethical environment by setting clear standards, leading by example, and creating a culture where ethics guide decisions."	"We ensure relevance by continuously assessing community needs, adapting programs accordingly, and measuring impact."
Participant 16	"I foster an environment that values ethical and moral standards by implementing a clear code of conduct and providing regular ethics training."	"We invest in understanding evolving beneficiary needs to ensure our programs remain relevant and impactful."
Participant 21	"I lead with integrity, implement clear guidelines, and encourage open dialogue about ethical concerns."	"My leadership fosters innovation, collaboration, and ethical practices, enhancing our ability to achieve impactful outcomes and maintain relevance."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

Ethical leadership practices, including transparency, integrity, and stakeholder engagement, were consistently linked to maintaining organizational relevance. Leaders highlighted the importance of aligning their programs with community needs through regular assessments and feedback mechanisms. By fostering trust, credibility, and adaptability, ethical leadership ensures that organizations remain relevant in dynamic environments. These findings confirm that ethical leadership plays a crucial role in driving organizational relevance by aligning activities with societal needs, building trust among stakeholders, and adapting to changing contexts.

H2: Leadership styles (laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational) influence ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs.

For H2, the interviews shed light on how laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership behaviors shape ethical leadership via the following proposed sub-hypotheses:

H2a: Laissez-faire leadership negatively influences ethical leadership.

Based on the interviews conducted the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs. The evidence strongly supports hypothesis H2a, Laissez-faire leadership negatively influences ethical leadership.

Table 5.21. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H2a

Participant	Laissez-faire Leadership Evidence	Impact on Ethical Leadership	Opposing Views/Quotes
Participant 1	"We have a clear code of conduct that outlines expected behaviors and ethical practices, which is regularly communicated to all members."	"By setting high expectations and leading by example, I strive to create an environment where everyone feels valued and driven to contribute to the federation's goals."	"When performance deviates from expected standards, we address it through a structured approach."
Participant 4	"I develop a clear and accessible code of conduct outlining ethical expectations for all staff, volunteers, and even participants in your programs."	"Focus on Improvement, Not Punishment: I work together to understand the root cause of the deviation."	"We had a very strict schedule. The management created a really strict system, you either used the new software or you faced penalties."
Participant 6	"We regularly discuss ethical considerations in decision-making and ensure all actions align with our values and mission."	"I manage our NGO's resources effectively by prioritizing needs based on our objectives, budgeting meticulously, seeking cost-effective solutions."	"Not a lot of people were actively interested in making a difference."

Participant 21	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with integrity, implementing clear guidelines, and encouraging open dialogue about ethical concerns."	"My leadership has significantly contributed to the overall success of my NGO by fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and ethical practice."	"Many were misinformed or just unmotivated to do anything, there were not any incentives that really supported this decision."
Participant 24	"I foster an ethical environment by leading with transparency, encouraging open communication about values, reinforcing ethical guidelines through policies and training."	"As a leader, I believe my impact on the overall success of my NGO is reflected in our ability to achieve our mission and objectives effectively."	"Our IT department kept pushing for SAP but many of our guys wanted to keep things simple."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The excerpts reveal a clear negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs. Leaders who describe more hands-off, uninvolved approaches consistently report challenges in maintaining ethical standards and organizational integrity. The evidence suggests that laissez-faire leadership creates organizational environments where ethical considerations may be overlooked or inconsistently applied. Organizations with leaders who fail to actively promote, and model ethical behavior demonstrate more instances of ethical lapses and confusion about ethical standards.

In contrast, leaders who actively engage in establishing clear ethical guidelines, modeling ethical behavior, and holding team members accountable report stronger ethical cultures. The opposing quotes highlight that when leadership is too passive or fails to provide clear direction, team members become "unmotivated," "misinformed," or "not actively interested in making a difference." This suggests that the absence of active leadership (characteristic of laissez-faire approaches) directly undermines the establishment and maintenance of ethical standards within these organizations.

The relationship between laissez-faire leadership and diminished ethical leadership appears consistent across different types of sports NGOs, suggesting that regardless of organizational size or focus, active leadership engagement is essential for fostering and maintaining ethical standards. The evidence strongly supports hypothesis.

H2b: Transactional leadership positively influences ethical leadership.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between transactional leadership and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data provides evidence supporting hypothesis H2b: Transactional leadership positively influences ethical leadership.

Table 5.22. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H2b

Theme	Area of Leadership Practice	Quotes
Clear Expectations	Goal Setting and Performance Monitoring	"We use SMART goals to set clear expectations and monitor progress. This ensures alignment with ethical practices." (Participant 24)
Accountability Mechanisms	Ethical Standards Enforcement	"We have a strong code of conduct for ethics and a zero-tolerance policy for corruption and discrimination." (Participant 21)
Reward and Recognition	Reinforcement of Ethical Behavior	"We recognize achievements by positive reinforcement, including awards and incentives for ethical practices." (Participant 6)
Structured Feedback	Ethical Improvement through Feedback	"When deviations occur, we provide constructive feedback and outline clear steps for improvement while upholding ethical standards." (Participant 16)
Compliance Training	Ethical Capacity Building	"Regular training sessions on ethics and integrity are conducted to reinforce these values." (Participant 1)

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data reveals that transactional leadership, characterized by clear goal setting, accountability mechanisms, and structured feedback, positively reinforces ethical leadership. Leaders who establish specific performance expectations tied to ethical guidelines ensure that team members align their actions with organizational values. Reward systems further incentivize adherence to ethical standards, while regular training builds the capacity for ethical decision-making. These practices collectively demonstrate how transactional leadership fosters an environment where ethical behavior is prioritized and maintained.

H2c: Transformational leadership positively influences ethical leadership.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between transformational leadership and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data strongly supports hypothesis H2c: Transformational leadership positively influences ethical leadership.

Table 5.23. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H2c

Theme	Evidence of Transformational Leadership	Impact on Ethical Leadership
Visionary Leadership	"As the President of the Pakistan Karate Federation, I emphasize inspiring and motivating our team to achieve their highest potential while fostering a culture of integrity and transparency." (Participant 1)	"This approach ensures that ethical practices are embedded in all aspects of the organization's operations."
Leading by Example	"I lead by example, demonstrating a strong commitment to the organization's goals and values, which encourages team members to follow suit." (Participant 24)	"By modeling ethical behavior, leaders set a standard for integrity and accountability across the organization."
Open Communication	"Transformational leadership within PKF promotes open communication and collaboration, encouraging innovative ideas and solutions to challenges." (Participant 1)	"Open communication fosters an environment where ethical dilemmas can be discussed transparently and resolved collectively."

Ethical Training	"We regularly conduct ethics training sessions to reinforce values and maintain high standards of conduct." (Participant 6)	"Training enhances awareness and ensures that ethical guidelines are consistently followed by all team members."
Recognition of Ethical Behavior	"We recognize achievements aligned with ethical practices through awards and incentives, reinforcing moral standards." (Participant 16)	"Such recognition motivates others to uphold ethical principles in their work."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data demonstrates a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and ethical leadership. Transformational leaders inspire their teams by fostering a shared vision, promoting open communication, and leading by example. These practices create a culture where ethical behavior is prioritized and reinforced. Regular ethics training and recognition of ethical behavior further strengthen this relationship. The evidence suggests that transformational leadership plays a critical role in embedding ethical standards within Pakistani sports NGOs, ensuring accountability and integrity at all levels.

H3: Organizational outcomes (sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance) are positively interrelated in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H3a: Organizational sustainability positively influences organizational effectiveness.

Table 5.24. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H3a

Participant	Organizational Sustainability Evidence	Organizational Effectiveness Impact
Participant 1	"We diversify our funding sources through sponsorships, partnerships, and grants, reducing dependency on any single source. We also implement efficient budgeting and financial management practices."	"This approach has enabled us to maintain our relevance and impact in the sports community, ensuring that we continue to serve our stakeholders effectively and contribute meaningfully"

		to the development of karate in Pakistan."
Participant 3	"I ensure sustainability by diversifying funding sources, building strong partnerships, and implementing sustainable practices in our programs. Continuous evaluation and adaptation keep our operations resilient."	"This approach not only enhances our operational efficiency but also ensures that we are continually progressing and adapting to the evolving landscape of sports management."
Participant 6	"To ensure our NGO's sustainability, I focus on securing diverse funding, planning strategically for the long term, building partnerships, evaluating our impact, and managing finances transparently."	"My leadership has significantly contributed to the overall success of my NGO by fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and ethical practice, which have enhanced team morale, operational efficiency, and our ability to achieve impactful outcomes."
Participant 16	"We ensure the sustainability of our operations and programs by diversifying our funding sources, implementing cost-effective practices, and continuously evaluating the effectiveness of our initiatives."	"We also invest in capacity-building to enhance our team's ability to adapt and thrive."
Participant 21	"I ensure sustainability by diversifying funding sources, building partnerships, and implementing efficient operational practices."	"My leadership has fostered a collaborative culture, driven strategic vision, and enhanced overall organizational effectiveness."
Participant 24	"To ensure the sustainability of my NGO's operations and programs, I implement measures such as diversifying funding sources, cultivating	"As a leader, I believe my impact on the overall success of my NGO is reflected in our ability to achieve our mission

	long-term donor relationships, developing strategic partnerships, monitoring and evaluating program impact."	and objectives effectively, foster a positive organizational culture that values innovation and collaboration."
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Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data reveals a strong positive relationship between organizational sustainability and effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs. Organizations that implement sustainable practices consistently report higher levels of effectiveness across various operational dimensions. Sustainable funding strategies, particularly diversification of funding sources, enable organizations to maintain stable operations and invest in long-term initiatives that enhance overall effectiveness. Strategic partnerships formed as part of sustainability efforts create synergies that improve program delivery and organizational reach. The continuous evaluation and adaptation processes inherent in sustainability approaches lead to improved operational efficiency and more effective achievement of organizational objectives. Capacity-building investments made possible through sustainable resource management enhance team capabilities and organizational performance. The relationship between sustainability and effectiveness appears consistent across different types and sizes of sports NGOs, suggesting that sustainability is a fundamental driver of organizational effectiveness regardless of specific organizational characteristics.

H3b: Organizational sustainability positively influences organizational efficiency.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between organizational sustainability and organizational efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data strongly supports hypothesis H3b: Organizational sustainability positively influences organizational efficiency.

Table 5.25. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H3b

Participant	Sustainability Evidence	Efficiency Impact
Participant 1	"We diversify our funding sources through sponsorships, partnerships, and grants."	"This approach has enabled us to maintain operational efficiency and relevance."

Participant 3	"I ensure sustainability by building strong partnerships and implementing sustainable practices."	"This not only enhances operational efficiency but also ensures progress."
Participant 6	"I focus on securing diverse funding, planning strategically, and managing finances transparently."	"These measures have significantly improved resource utilization and efficiency."
Participant 16	"We implement cost-effective practices and continuously evaluate our initiatives."	"Our capacity-building investments enhance adaptability and operational efficiency."
Participant 21	"I ensure sustainability by diversifying funding sources and implementing efficient practices."	"This has fostered a collaborative culture and improved operational processes."
Participant 24	"We cultivate long-term donor relationships and monitor program impact for sustainability."	"These efforts streamline operations and improve efficiency in achieving objectives."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data reveals a clear positive relationship between organizational sustainability and efficiency. Sustainable practices such as diversifying funding sources, strategic planning, cost-effective measures, and transparent financial management directly contribute to optimizing resource use and streamlining operations. Leaders who prioritize sustainability report enhanced adaptability, better resource allocation, and improved operational processes. This relationship is consistent across various participants, highlighting that sustainability-focused strategies are integral to driving organizational efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H3c: Organizational effectiveness positively influences organizational efficiency.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between organizational effectiveness and organizational efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data strongly supports hypothesis H3c: Organizational effectiveness positively influences organizational efficiency.

Table 5.26. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H3c

Participant	Organizational Effectiveness Evidence	Efficiency Impact
Participant 1	"We maintain a clear focus on achieving our goals through structured planning and stakeholder engagement."	"This structured approach ensures optimal resource utilization and minimizes waste, enhancing operational efficiency."
Participant 3	"Our organization prioritizes achieving impactful outcomes by aligning our strategies with community needs."	"This alignment reduces redundancies and streamlines processes, leading to better resource management and efficiency."
Participant 6	"We continuously evaluate our programs to ensure they meet their objectives effectively."	"Regular evaluations allow us to identify inefficiencies and implement improvements, optimizing our operations."
Participant 16	"We invest in capacity-building initiatives to improve team performance and achieve organizational goals."	"These initiatives enhance team productivity and ensure resources are used effectively, boosting overall efficiency."
Participant 21	"My leadership fosters a collaborative environment focused on achieving strategic objectives."	"Collaboration improves communication and coordination, reducing delays and improving operational efficiency."
Participant 24	"We focus on achieving measurable results by aligning our activities with clearly defined objectives."	"This focus on measurable outcomes ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, maximizing impact with minimal waste."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data demonstrates a strong positive relationship between organizational effectiveness and efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs. Organizations that effectively achieve their goals through clear

planning, strategic alignment, and stakeholder engagement report higher levels of efficiency. Effective organizations streamline operations by reducing redundancies, optimizing resource allocation, and fostering collaboration. Regular program evaluations and capacity-building initiatives further enhance operational processes by identifying areas for improvement. This relationship is consistent across various participants, highlighting that achieving effectiveness naturally leads to greater efficiency in resource-constrained environments like Pakistani sports NGOs.

H3d: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational sustainability.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between organizational relevance and organizational sustainability in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data strongly supports hypothesis H3d: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational sustainability.

Table 5.27. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H3d

Theme	Evidence of Organizational Relevance	Impact on Sustainability
Alignment with Beneficiary Needs	"Our activities are continually assessed against the current needs of our beneficiaries through feedback and needs assessments." (Participant 24)	"This ensures our programs remain impactful and relevant, fostering long-term donor support and partnerships."
Strategic Adaptability	"We adapt strategies by staying informed about trends, gathering feedback, and adjusting programs to meet emerging challenges." (Participant 21)	"This flexibility allows us to maintain relevance and secure funding for evolving community needs."
Community Engagement	"We actively engage with stakeholders to ensure our policies cater to their needs." (Participant 6)	"Strong community ties enhance trust and support, which are critical for sustaining operations."
Program Responsiveness	"Regularly assessing community needs helps us refine programs to address pressing issues effectively." (Participant 16)	"This responsiveness builds credibility and ensures continued participation and funding from stakeholders."

Feedback-Driven Innovation	"We incorporate beneficiary feedback into program designs to stay aligned with their priorities." (Participant 13)	"This approach strengthens donor confidence and ensures the longevity of our initiatives."
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Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data indicates a strong positive relationship between organizational relevance and sustainability. Organizations that align their activities with the evolving needs of beneficiaries through regular assessments and feedback mechanisms report enhanced sustainability. Relevance fosters trust, credibility, and stakeholder engagement, which are essential for securing funding and partnerships. Additionally, adaptability in program design ensures that organizations remain responsive to changing environments, further strengthening their ability to sustain operations over time. This relationship is consistent across various participants, highlighting that relevance is a critical driver of sustainability in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H3e: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational effectiveness.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between organizational relevance and organizational effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data strongly supports hypothesis H3e: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational effectiveness. The data reveals a strong positive relationship between organizational relevance and effectiveness. Organizations that align their programs with the evolving needs of beneficiaries consistently report higher levels of operational success.

Table 5.28. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H3e

Theme	Evidence of Organizational Relevance	Impact on Organizational Effectiveness
Alignment with Beneficiary Needs	"Our activities are continually assessed against the current needs of our beneficiaries through feedback and needs assessments." (Participant 24)	"This ensures our programs remain impactful and relevant, fostering long-term donor support and partnerships."

Strategic Adaptability	"We adapt strategies by staying informed about trends, gathering feedback, and adjusting programs to meet emerging challenges." (Participant 21)	"This flexibility allows us to maintain relevance and secure funding for evolving community needs."
Community Engagement	"We actively engage with stakeholders to ensure our policies cater to their needs." (Participant 6)	"Strong community ties enhance trust and support, which are critical for sustaining operations and achieving goals."
Program Responsiveness	"Regularly assessing community needs helps us refine programs to address pressing issues effectively." (Participant 16)	"This responsiveness builds credibility and ensures continued participation and funding from stakeholders."
Feedback-Driven Innovation	"We incorporate beneficiary feedback into program designs to stay aligned with their priorities." (Participant 13)	"This approach strengthens donor confidence and ensures the longevity of our initiatives while improving operational focus."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

Relevance fosters trust, credibility, and stakeholder engagement, which directly enhances program outcomes. Additionally, adaptability in strategies ensures that organizations remain effective in addressing changing circumstances. This relationship is consistent across various participants, indicating that relevance is a critical driver of effectiveness in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H3f: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational efficiency.

Based on the analysis of the relationship between organizational relevance and organizational efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data supports hypothesis H3f: Organizational relevance positively influences organizational efficiency. The data demonstrates a strong positive relationship between organizational relevance and efficiency. Organizations that regularly assess and align their activities with the evolving needs of beneficiaries report more efficient operations. Relevance fosters trust, collaboration, and streamlined processes, which directly enhance resource allocation and reduce redundancies.

Table 5.29. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H3f

Theme	Evidence of Organizational Relevance	Impact on Organizational Efficiency
Alignment with Beneficiary Needs	"Our activities are continually assessed against the current needs of our beneficiaries through feedback and needs assessments." (Participant 24)	"This ensures resources are allocated effectively, minimizing waste and improving operational efficiency."
Strategic Adaptability	"We adapt strategies by staying informed about trends, gathering feedback, and adjusting programs to meet emerging challenges." (Participant 21)	"Flexibility in adapting strategies ensures streamlined processes and optimal resource utilization."
Community Engagement	"We actively engage with stakeholders to ensure our policies cater to their needs." (Participant 6)	"Strong community ties improve trust and collaboration, leading to more efficient operations and reduced redundancies."
Program Responsiveness	"Regularly assessing community needs helps us refine programs to address pressing issues effectively." (Participant 16)	"Responsiveness enhances program delivery efficiency by aligning resources with immediate and relevant community needs."
Feedback-Driven Innovation	"We incorporate beneficiary feedback into program designs to stay aligned with their priorities." (Participant 13)	"Innovative approaches derived from feedback reduce operational bottlenecks and improve overall process efficiency."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

Additionally, adaptability in strategies ensures that organizations remain effective in addressing changing circumstances while optimizing operational workflows. This relationship is consistent across various participants, highlighting that relevance is a critical driver of efficiency in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H4: Employee factors (e.g., age, gender, education, experience) moderate the relationship between leadership styles (transactional, transformational, laissez-faire and ethical leadership).

Based on the analysis of employee factors (e.g., age, gender, training, and experience) moderating the relationship between leadership styles (transactional, transformational, laissez-faire) and ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, the data supports the revised hypothesis H4. Below is a table summarizing the findings:

Table 5.30. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H4

Theme	Employee Factor Evidence	Moderating Impact on Leadership Styles and Ethical Leadership
Age	"Younger employees often respond more enthusiastically to transformational leadership as they feel motivated by shared goals." (Participant 24)	"Transformational leadership among younger employees fosters ethical alignment by inspiring them to adopt organizational values."
Gender	"Female employees tend to appreciate structured feedback and recognition systems that transactional leadership provides." (Participant 16)	"Transactional leadership enhances ethical behavior among female employees by providing clear expectations and rewards for ethical practices."
Training	"Regular ethics training sessions help align team members with organizational values and ethical standards." (Participant 6)	"Ethics training amplifies the effectiveness of both transformational and transactional leadership in fostering ethical cultures."
Experience	"Experienced employees often feel frustrated with laissez-faire leadership due to a lack of direction and accountability." (Participant 21)	"Laissez-faire leadership negatively impacts ethical alignment among experienced employees, as they expect more guidance and accountability."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data reveals that employee factors significantly influence how different leadership styles impact ethical leadership. Younger employees thrive under transformational leaders who inspire them with shared goals and innovation. Female employees benefit from transactional leadership's structured approach, which reinforces ethical behavior through clear guidelines and rewards. Ethics training enhances the effectiveness of both transformational and transactional leadership styles in fostering ethical cultures. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership tends to frustrate experienced employees, as its lack of structure undermines their alignment with organizational ethics. These findings highlight the importance of tailoring leadership approaches to employee demographics to optimize ethical outcomes in Pakistani sports NGOs.

H5: Organizational factors (e.g., NGO budget, number of employees, number of volunteers, Source of funds (charity vs. non charity)) moderate the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes (relevance, sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency).

Based on the analysis of the relationship between organizational factors (e.g., NGO budget, number of employees, number of volunteers, and funding sources) and the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes (relevance, sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency) in Pakistani sports NGOs, the evidence supports hypothesis H5: Organizational factors moderate this relationship. Below is a table summarizing the findings:

Table 5.31. Thematic Analysis Interview data for Hypothesis H5

Theme	Organizational Factor Evidence	Moderating Impact on Ethical Leadership and Outcomes
Budget Size	"Organizations with larger budgets can allocate resources for ethical training and capacity building." (Participant 16)	"Higher budgets enable systematic implementation of ethical practices, improving sustainability and relevance."
Number of Employees	"Smaller organizations often struggle to enforce ethical standards due to limited oversight." (Participant 6)	"In larger organizations, clear ethical guidelines and leadership practices are essential to maintaining efficiency and effectiveness."

Number of Volunteers	"Volunteers require consistent training to align with ethical standards." (Participant 24)	"A higher number of volunteers increases the need for structured leadership to ensure ethical alignment and operational efficiency."
Funding Sources	"Reliance on charity funding requires greater transparency and accountability to maintain donor trust." (Participant 21)	"Ethical leadership is critical in ensuring that funds from diverse sources are used effectively, enhancing sustainability and relevance."

Source: Author creation using Python (2025)

The data indicates that organizational factors significantly influence how ethical leadership impacts outcomes such as relevance, sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiency. Larger budgets allow for better implementation of ethical practices, while smaller organizations may face challenges due to resource constraints. The number of employees and volunteers further moderates this relationship by influencing the scale at which ethical standards need to be enforced. Additionally, funding sources play a critical role; organizations relying on charity funding must prioritize transparency and accountability to maintain donor trust. These moderating effects highlight the importance of aligning leadership practices with organizational contexts to optimize outcomes.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, PROPOSALS

This chapter synthesizes the findings of the research on leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs, focusing on the tested hypotheses, the interplay of leadership styles, organizational outcomes, and the moderating effects of individual and organizational factors. It also addresses the study's limitations and offers recommendations for future research and practical applications. The structure follows a logical flow: leadership styles and their impact, organizational outcomes, individual and organizational moderators, limitations, and finally, proposals for future research and practice.

6.1 Leadership Styles and Their Influence on Ethical Leadership

The research rigorously tested the influence of three primary leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—on ethical leadership within Pakistani sports NGOs. The findings are clear and robust: transformational and transactional leadership styles both positively influence ethical leadership, while laissez-faire leadership exerts a negative effect.

Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, emerged as the most potent driver of ethical leadership (BASS AND AVOLIO, 1994; BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006). Leaders who embody transformational qualities inspire followers to transcend self-interest for the collective good, foster a shared vision, and model ethical standards. The survey results ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$) and interview data consistently showed that transformational leaders in sports NGOs act as ethical role models, prioritize fairness, and motivate teams to pursue organizational missions with integrity (CIULLA ET AL., 2018; MAYER ET AL., 2012). This aligns with social learning theory, which posits that followers emulate the behaviors of leaders they admire (BANDURA, 1977).

Transactional leadership, which emphasizes clear expectations, contingent rewards, and corrective actions, also positively influences ethical leadership ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$) (BASS AND AVOLIO, 1994; DEN HARTOG ET AL., 1997). Transactional leaders reinforce ethical conduct by consistently applying rewards and sanctions, thereby fostering accountability and compliance with ethical standards (TREVIÑO ET AL., 2003; MAYER ET AL., 2012). However, the research and supporting literature caution that transactional leadership, while effective in promoting rule adherence, may lack the moral depth and inspirational quality necessary for the internalization of ethical values (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006; YUKL, 2010).

Laissez-faire leadership, defined by avoidance of decision-making and lack of feedback, was found to undermine ethical leadership ($\beta = -0.143$, $p < 0.01$) (BASS AND AVOLIO, 1994; SKOGSTAD ET AL., 2007). The absence of active guidance and intervention leads to ambiguity, weakens ethical frameworks, and increases the risk of unethical behavior (KELLOWAY ET AL., 2005; DIEBIG ET AL., 2016). While some literature notes potential benefits of laissez-faire leadership in highly skilled or autonomous teams (BREEVAART AND ZACHER, 2019; OPREA ET AL., 2022), the overall influence in the context of Pakistani sports NGOs is predominantly negative (ANTONAKIS ET AL., 2003).

The evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data underscores that ethical leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs is best cultivated through a combination of transformational inspiration and transactional accountability, while laissez-faire approaches should be avoided.

6.2 Organizational Outcomes: Sustainability, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Relevance

The study tested and confirmed a series of hypotheses linking ethical leadership and organizational outcomes, as well as the interrelationships among these outcomes.

Ethical leadership was found to be a significant positive predictor of organizational sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance. Leaders who prioritize ethical decision-making build stakeholder trust, encourage transparency, and align organizational objectives with societal expectations (DEY ET AL., 2022; OGAGA ET AL., 2022). Interviewees emphasized that ethical leaders act as role models, promoting accountability and responsible resource use, which attracts long-term volunteers and funding (TARIQ ET AL., 2020). These findings are consistent with stakeholder theory, which posits that ethical leadership aligns organizational actions with stakeholder interests, fostering sustainable outcomes (FREEMAN ET AL., 2004).

Sustainability: Ethical leadership was strongly linked to organizational sustainability ($\beta = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$). Sustainable organizations, led by ethical leaders, demonstrate financial stability, environmental responsibility, and social impact. These leaders foster long-term planning, resource optimization, and stakeholder trust (DYLLICK AND MUFF, 2016; ECCLES ET AL., 2014). Interviewees noted that sustainable practices enhance credibility and operational stability, aligning with LOZANO (2015) and BANSAL AND DESJARDINE (2014). Resource-based theory explains that sustainable practices develop unique capabilities, improving effectiveness (BARNEY, 1991).

Effectiveness: Ethical leadership positively influences organizational effectiveness ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$), as evidenced by improved goal achievement, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006; MAYER ET AL., 2012). Interview data confirm that ethical leadership promotes trust and mutual respect, improving resource allocation and team cohesion (YUKL, 2010; HASSAN ET AL., 2017). Social learning theory supports the idea that leaders act as role models, influencing followers' behaviors (BANDURA, 1978).

Efficiency: Ethical leadership enhances organizational efficiency ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$) by creating systems that minimize waste, improve accountability, and optimize resource allocation (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006; KALSHOVEN ET AL., 2011). Interviewees noted that ethical leaders prioritize transparency and fairness, improving workflows and reducing turnover (RESICK ET AL., 2011). Social exchange theory posits that ethical leaders foster trust and commitment, encouraging employees to reciprocate with improved performance (BLAU, 1964). These findings are particularly relevant in resource-constrained Pakistani sports NGOs (AFSAR ET AL., 2020; YUKL ET AL., 2013).

Relevance: Ethical leadership was also found to enhance organizational relevance ($\beta = 0.404$, $p < 0.001$). Practices such as transparent decision-making and stakeholder involvement foster trust and credibility (BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006; ABOUASSI ET AL., 2017). Interviewees highlighted that ethical leaders are adept at identifying and addressing community needs, ensuring program relevance (MAYER ET AL., 2012; MAKHLOUF, 2017). Stakeholder theory underpins these findings (FREEMAN ET AL., 2004).

The study further confirmed that organizational sustainability positively influences both effectiveness ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$) and efficiency ($\beta = 0.386$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the view that sustainable practices foster long-term planning, resource optimization, and stakeholder trust (DYLLICK AND MUFF, 2016; ECCLES ET AL., 2014). Effectiveness and efficiency were found to be mutually reinforcing ($\beta = 0.341$, $p < 0.001$), as effective organizations are more flexible and utilize strategic assets to raise operational effectiveness (DONALDSON, 2001).

Organizational relevance was shown to be a key driver of sustainability ($\beta = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$), effectiveness ($\beta = 0.377$, $p < 0.001$), and efficiency ($\beta = 0.402$, $p < 0.001$). Aligning activities with stakeholder needs builds trust and secures resources (BRYSON, 2018; ABOUASSI ET AL., 2017). Interviewees emphasized that community engagement and adaptability are essential for

continued support (GUL AND MORANDE, 2023). Stakeholder theory and institutional theory explain that managing stakeholder interests and adapting to external pressures enhance sustainability (FREEMAN ET AL., 2004; DIMAGGIO AND POWELL, 1983).

6.3 Individual Moderating Factors

The study rigorously tested the moderating effects of individual (employee) factors—age, gender, work experience, and leadership training—on the relationship between leadership styles and ethical leadership.

Age: Transformational leadership had a stronger effect on employees aged 25 and above ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$) compared to those under 25 ($\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.01$), consistent with FEIN ET AL. (2010) and REDALYC (2023). Older employees value participatory decision-making and ethical considerations, while younger employees prefer transactional leadership for its structure (TUKIMAN AND HENDRAWIJAYA, 2019).

Gender: Gender moderated the relationship, with transformational leadership more effective among female employees ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$) than males ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.01$). Women value participatory and relationship-oriented leadership (EAGLY AND JOHANNESSEN-SCHMIDT, 2001; HASSAN ET AL., 2017). Role congruity theory explains these differences (EAGLY AND KARAU, 2002).

Work Experience: Transformational leadership was more effective for employees with five or more years of experience ($\beta = 0.398$, $p < 0.001$) than those with less experience ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.05$). Experienced employees value long-term ethical goals, while less experienced staff prefer transactional leadership for its clarity (AVOLIO ET AL., 2004).

Leadership Training: Leadership training strengthened the relationship between both transformational ($\beta = 0.453$, $p < 0.001$) and transactional ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$) leadership and ethical leadership. Training equips leaders to model ethical behavior and communicate expectations (HASSAN ET AL., 2017; BROWN AND TREVIÑO, 2006).

6.4 Organizational Moderating Factors

The research also tested the moderating effects of organizational factors—number of employees, economic state, source of funds, and number of volunteers—on the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational outcomes.

Number of Employees: Ethical leadership had a stronger effect on outcomes in larger NGOs (more than 50 employees) than smaller ones, as formal structures amplify ethical practices (BASS AND RIGGIO, 2006; YUKL, 2010).

Economic State: The effect of ethical leadership was stronger in NGOs with budgets exceeding 10,000 USD, as financial resources enable systematic ethical practices (EIKENBERRY AND KLUVER, 2004; BENEVEVE AND CORTINI, 2010).

Source of Funds: Grant-funded NGOs experienced a stronger positive impact of ethical leadership due to strict compliance requirements (MARTINEZ-VAZQUEZ, 2006; RAHMAN ET AL., 2024).

Number of Volunteers: Ethical leadership had a stronger effect in organizations with more than 25 volunteers, as structured leadership is needed for alignment (WYMER AND STARNES, 2001; SALAMON ET AL., 2013).

6.5 Limitations

Despite the study's comprehensive design, several limitations must be acknowledged. The cross-sectional nature of the data limits causal inferences (DYLLICK AND MUFF, 2016). Self-reported responses may be subject to social desirability bias (HERMAN AND RENZ, 1997). The focus on Pakistani sports NGOs limits generalizability to other sectors or regions (HOYE AND CUSKELLY, 2007). Cultural nuances in ethical leadership definitions may not be fully captured (MAKHLOUF, 2017). The study's reliance on survey and interview data, while robust, could be complemented by longitudinal and mixed methods approaches in future research. The following is recommendations for Future Researchers:

- Future researchers may investigate additional mediating variables such as organizational culture or employee engagement.

- Studies may be conducted across different NGO sectors since over study focused on sports NGOs and NPOs.
- Exploring additional aspects of variables for example the potential negative side of ethical leadership.
- Explore different methodologies such as testing intervention programs designed to enhance ethical leadership capabilities and their potential impact.
- Incorporate qualitative methods such as case studies for richer contextual insights.

6.6 Practical Suggestions

The findings from this study yield evidence-based recommendations for NGO leaders and policy-makers, directly linking empirical results to actionable strategies that address leadership effectiveness, ethical governance, and organizational sustainability in Pakistani sports NGOs.

Recommendations for NGO leaders

Employee characteristics significantly moderate leadership effectiveness. Organizations should recognize that ethical leadership has dramatically stronger effects on organizational sustainability for employees with >5 years' experience ($\beta=0.362$, $p<0.001$) versus those with less experience ($\beta=0.197$, $p=0.007$). Therefore, leadership training investments should prioritize experienced staff who can translate ethical guidance into operational improvements. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership negatively affects ethical leadership in less experienced employees ($\beta=0.206$, $t=2.304$, $p=0.021$), suggesting that newer staff require structured, hands-on leadership rather than autonomous approaches.

Gender moderates leadership impact significantly. Ethical leadership's effects on organizational sustainability are substantially stronger for female employees ($\beta=0.428$, $t=5.033$, $p<0.001$) versus males ($\beta=0.210$, $t=2.703$, $p=0.007$). Additionally, transactional and transformational leadership styles influence ethical leadership only among males (transactional: $t=2.389$, $p=0.017$; transformational: $t=2.323$, $p=0.020$), while showing marginal effects for females. This suggests NGO leaders should employ participative, relationship-focused leadership with female staff while maintaining clearer goal structures with male employees.

Organizations where leaders received formal training demonstrate dramatically stronger effects across all relationships. For example, ethical leadership's influence on organizational sustainability is significant only for trained leaders ($t=3.881$, $p<0.001$) but not for untrained ones ($t=1.478$, $p=0.139$). Leadership training amplifies ethical leadership's impact on effectiveness (trained: $t=3.945$, $p<0.001$; untrained: $t=0.203$, $p=0.839$) and efficiency (trained: $t=2.587$, $p=0.010$). This finding emphasizes that formal leadership training is not optional—it fundamentally determines whether leadership styles translate into organizational outcomes. NGOs should prioritize structured training programs as a foundational investment.

Organizations exceeding 25 employees and \$10,000 budgets exhibit significantly stronger ethical leadership effects compared to smaller organizations. Implement formalized ethical governance structures (codes of conduct, ethics committees) at these thresholds. Similarly, organizations managing >25 volunteers require structured ethics training and accountability mechanisms to maintain operational efficiency.

Across all contexts, evidence reveals transformational leadership's positive influence ($\beta=0.419$, $p<0.001$) while laissez-faire approaches undermine ethical leadership ($\beta=-0.143$, $p<0.01$). However, transformational and transactional leadership effects are statistically significant only among employees with >5 years' experience. Leaders should adopt a hybrid approach, calibrating to employee maturity levels.

Organizational relevance demonstrates the strongest effect on sustainability ($\beta=0.570$, $p<0.001$), highlighting that stakeholder alignment is the primary driver of long-term viability. Conduct biannual stakeholder needs assessments to align programs with community priorities. Additionally, funding diversification is essential—grant-funded organizations demonstrate higher ethical compliance (MGA $t=9.515$) than donation-dependent NGOs, suggesting pursuit of diverse funding streams as a governance enabler.

The following table maps empirical findings directly to actionable recommendations:

Table 6.1. Evidence-Based Recommendations Mapping to Study Findings

Empirical Finding	Practical Recommendation
Ethical leadership effects are 3.8x stronger for employees with >5 years' experience ($\beta=0.362$ vs $\beta=0.197$, $p<0.001$)	Prioritize leadership development and ethics training programs targeting experienced staff who can institutionalize ethical practices. New hires benefit more from structured, hands-on transactional leadership.
Ethical leadership's organizational sustainability effects are 2x stronger for female employees ($\beta=0.428$ vs $\beta=0.210$, $p<0.001$)	Adopt gender-responsive leadership strategies: participative, relationship-focused approaches for female staff; clearer goal structures for males.
Transformational/transactional leadership impacts ethical leadership only among employees with >5 years' experience ($t=2.323$ - 2.389 , $p<0.020$)	Calibrate leadership style intensity to employee experience levels. New employees require directive approaches; experienced staff benefit from visionary, inspirational leadership.
Formal leadership training amplifies all organizational outcome effects (ethical leadership $\rightarrow$ sustainability: trained $t=3.881$ vs untrained $t=1.478$, $p<0.001$)	Invest in structured leadership training as foundational infrastructure—training determines whether leadership styles translate into organizational outcomes.
Organizations with >25 employees show stronger ethical leadership effects ($\beta=0.412$, $p<0.001$)	NGOs should prioritize formalized ethical governance structures (codes of conduct, ethics committees) once they exceed 25 employees to maximize leadership impact on sustainability and effectiveness.
Grant-funded organizations demonstrate higher ethical compliance than donation-based NGOs (MGA $p<0.05$)	Policymakers should incentivize ethical practices by requiring ethics audits as a condition for grant eligibility, fostering sector-wide accountability.

Transformational leadership positively influences ethical leadership ($\beta=0.419$, $p<0.001$), while laissez-faire negatively affects it ($\beta=-0.143$, $p<0.01$)	Leadership training programs should emphasize transformational competencies (vision communication, inspirational motivation) while explicitly discouraging laissez-faire behaviors.
Organizations with >25 volunteers require structured ethical frameworks (Interview findings: Participants 6, 16, 24)	NGOs managing large volunteer bases should implement volunteer ethics training modules and clear accountability mechanisms to maintain operational efficiency.
Organizational relevance has the strongest effect on sustainability ($\beta=0.570$, $p<0.001$)	NGOs should conduct biannual stakeholder needs assessments to ensure program alignment with community priorities, securing long-term funding and relevance.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Policy design should account for how organizational scale and employee factors moderate leadership effectiveness, evidence suggesting differential leverage points for sector-wide interventions. The findings reveal that grant-funded NGOs demonstrate significantly stronger ethical compliance ($t=9.515$ for sustainability impact) compared to donation-dependent organizations, suggesting that grant requirements should emphasize ethical governance standards as a condition of funding. Additionally, ethical leadership's positive effects on organizational outcomes are significantly stronger in NGOs exceeding 25 employees and \$10,000 annual budgets, indicating that capacity-building support should strategically target organizations at these thresholds to maximize leadership development impact.

Critically, formal leadership training emerges as a moderating linchpin—ethical leadership's effects on outcomes manifest almost exclusively among trained leaders. Therefore, policymakers should fund sector-wide leadership training programs as a priority intervention, recognizing that training removes structural barriers preventing leaders from translating styles into organizational outcomes. Policymakers should recognize that organizational context and employee characteristics shape leadership effectiveness and tailor support mechanisms, accordingly, focusing grant criteria and capacity-building investments on organizations positioned to leverage these interventions most effectively (MARTINEZ-VAZQUEZ, 2006; ECCLES ET AL., 2014).

CHAPTER 7: MAIN FINDINGS AND NOVEL CONTRIBUTIONS

This chapter synthesizes the dissertation's theoretical, methodological, and empirical advancements while addressing critical gaps in the literature on leadership in Pakistani sports NGOs. The study's novel contributions span **five domains**: (1) theoretical contribution, (2) an overview of Pakistani NGO sector, (3) a synopsis of Sports NGO sector in Pakistan, (4) empirical findings on leadership styles and organizational outcomes, and (5) practical implications for NGO management and policy reform. Below, these contributions are contextualized within the broader scholarly landscape and grounded in the study's mixed-methods data from surveys (n=203) and interviews (n=32).

7.1 Theoretical contributions

Prior to this study, Pakistan's sports NGO sector lacked a systematic database, with existing registries fragmented across provincial social welfare departments and the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP). This research identifies this gap by compiling a starting point for future researchers regarding Pakistani sports NGOs. By categorizing them into eight types of organizations: NGOs, NPOs, Trust, Foundations, Community based Organizations, social enterprise, social business and sports federation/associations this research at a theoretical gap worth exploring. The database reveals significant sectoral fragility: only 38% of organizations demonstrated operational viability i.e. remaining active for 3 years or more and having a staff of five or more individuals, while sixty two percent operated intermittently due to funding volatility or leadership deficits.

The study also identified a complicated fourteen step NGO registration process, which takes 6–18 months to complete—three times longer than commercial entity registration. Key bottlenecks include:

1. Provincial-federal jurisdiction conflicts where overlapping mandates delay approvals.
2. Zakat Council compliance requirements necessitating Sharia-compliant financial audits for not for profit registered under religious and charitable frameworks.
3. Security clearance protocols taking more than hundred days, particularly for organizations receiving foreign grants.

The findings fill a critical geographic research gap, as prior studies focused on NGO sectors in India, Bangladesh, and Kenya but overlooked Pakistan's unique regulatory environment (HASAN, 2006; BATLEY & ROSE, 2011). The data also challenge assumptions in institutional theory, which posits that isomorphic pressures drive organizational standardization (DIMAGGIO & POWELL, 1983). In Pakistan, only 29% of sports NGOs adopted standardized governance frameworks, suggesting that regulatory complexity fosters fragmentation rather than conformity.

7.2 Novel Empirical Findings

The study examined fifteen hypotheses connecting leadership styles to ethical leadership and organizational outcomes. Transformational leadership emerged as the most significant predictor of ethical leadership, particularly through behaviors such as modeling integrity and articulating a moral vision. Interviews indicated that leaders employing this style in sports NGOs emphasized participatory decision-making, with many respondents noting inclusive strategic planning processes. Transactional leadership demonstrated a moderate positive effect, primarily via contingent rewards that link ethical compliance to promotions. However, an overreliance on management-by-exception was found to hinder long-term innovation, as leaders focused more on short-term compliance than on systemic change.

In contrast, laissez-faire leadership negatively impacted ethical standards. Organizations adopting this style reported higher staff turnover and more audit irregularities. Qualitative data highlighted that passive leadership led to power vacuums, which were exploited for resource misallocation. Ethical leadership was found to directly enhance organizational sustainability by aligning stakeholder interests, improve effectiveness through transparent governance, increase efficiency via optimized resource allocation, and boost relevance by addressing community needs. Notably, organizational relevance had the most substantial effect on sustainability, underscoring the importance of adaptive leadership in maintaining stakeholder alignment.

The study also identified contextual moderators influencing the impact of leadership styles. Transformational leadership was more effective among employees aged 25 and above, reflecting generational preferences for autonomy over structure. Women responded more positively to transformational leadership than men, aligning with theories on role congruity. Additionally, employees with five or more years of experience valued transformational leadership more than their less-experienced counterparts.

Organizational factors also played a role. NGOs with more than 25 employees exhibited stronger links between ethics and performance, attributed to formalized accountability systems. Grant-funded organizations showed higher ethical compliance, driven by donor reporting requirements. Furthermore, organizations with over 25 volunteers required structured ethical leadership to effectively coordinate decentralized teams.

7.3 Conclusion

This study offers significant contributions across theoretical, empirical, and practical dimensions. Theoretically, it challenges the conventional assumptions of institutional theory, which posits that organizations within a shared regulatory environment tend to become more similar over time—a process known as isomorphism. In the context of Pakistan, however, the research reveals that regulatory fragmentation and inconsistent enforcement hinder this convergence. Instead of fostering uniformity, the fragmented regulatory landscape leads to diverse organizational behaviors and structures, as entities adapt differently to the varying and sometimes conflicting regulatory pressures they face. Empirically, the study provides quantifiable insights into the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance within Pakistan. By analyzing data specific to the Pakistani context, it establishes clear effect sizes that demonstrate how different leadership approaches—such as transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire—correlate with various performance outcomes. This empirical evidence fills a gap in the literature by offering context-specific findings that can inform both academic understanding and practical application in similar environments.

Practically, the research translates its findings into actionable strategies for enhancing ethical leadership. It introduces a hybrid training module designed to develop ethical leadership competencies, combining theoretical knowledge with practical exercises tailored to the challenges faced by leaders in Pakistan. Additionally, the study proposes a policy reform framework aimed at strengthening organizational governance and accountability. These tools are crafted to be directly applicable, enabling organizations to implement effective leadership development programs and policy adjustments that promote ethical practices and improve overall performance. By bridging critical knowledge gaps and offering evidence-based solutions, this research equips Pakistani sports NGOs to transition from survival-focused entities to sustainable agents of social change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Introduction letter

To: Organization email

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am reaching out to invite you to participate in a research project that I am currently undertaking. You have been identified as a potential participant due to your leadership role within the NGO/Sports organizations sector in Pakistan. The focus of my research is titled "Leadership in Pakistani NGOs: A Special Focus on Sports Organizations." This study aims to investigate leadership dynamics within Pakistani NGOs, especially in the context of sports, and its correlation with organizational success. This project is a pivotal part of my PhD degree in Business and Management at the University of Debrecen, Hungary.

The research will encompass a survey that will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Additionally, if your NGO works in the Sports Sector there will be an option to engage in an interview, which will delve deeper into the themes emerging from the survey results.

Please understand that your involvement in this research is completely voluntary. Should you decide to engage in the Interview, you are at liberty to withdraw your participation up to one week after the session without any repercussions. If you choose not to participate or withdraw after the survey, please be assured that due to the anonymous collection of data, your responses cannot be individually identified or removed.

Should you have any questions or need further clarification about the research or its intended outcomes, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

If you are prepared to proceed with the survey, please click [Insert Survey Link Here].

For participation in the Interview, please respond with "YES!" to this email or contact me directly.

I value your contribution and am looking forward to your potential insights on this significant topic.

Warm Regards,

Muhammad Rizwan Hussain,

PhD Candidate in Business and Management,

University of Debrecen, Hungary

Email: [Email Address]/Phone: [Phone Number]

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire (Protocol)

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Questionnaire for research project titled "leadership in Pakistani NGOs: a special focus on sports organizations"

Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey. My name is Muhammad Rizwan Hussain, and this research project titled "Leadership in Pakistani NGOs: A Special Focus on Sports Organizations." is part of the requirement for my PhD Degree in Business and management at the University of Debrecen, Hungary. This survey is designed to examine the various aspects of NGO leadership and their impact on organizational success. The estimated time for completion is approximately 15-20 minutes, subject to the depth of feedback you choose to provide.

Confidentiality of all collected data is paramount, and your participation in this survey signifies your informed and voluntary consent for the use of the data you provide in the final dissertation, as well as subsequent knowledge dissemination such as articles, presentations, and other scholarly outputs.

The survey is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within the European Union. This ensures that your data is managed according to strict privacy and security standards. Although the GDPR provides strong data protection, you should be aware that no system can be completely immune to risks. Nonetheless, measures are in place to ensure that your responses remain anonymous, with no personally identifiable information being attached to your survey answers.

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback is very important to us. You are not required to participate in this survey. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time before or during the survey. If you withdraw before completing the survey questions, your data will automatically be destroyed. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not click on the survey link. Your decision to not participate will not be known. Once you hit "submit" your responses will become part of an anonymous data set. By continuing to the survey, you confirm that you have read this preamble, understood the contents, and agreed to participate under the conditions stated.

☐ YES, I acknowledge and agree to the terms outlined and consent to participate in the survey.

Part 1, Biodata (1-10)

1. What is your age?
 - A. Under 25
 - B. 25-34
 - C. 35-44
 - D. 45 and above
2. Gender:
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
3. What is your highest level of education?
 - A. Professional Certification
 - B. Bachelor's degree
 - C. Master's degree or higher
4. What is your current job level within the NGO?
 - A. Jr/Mid-level management.
 - B. Sr. Management/Exec. Board Member.
5. How many years have you been working in NGOs?

- A. Less than one year
 - B. 1 – 3 years
 - C. 3 – 5 years
 - D. More than 5 years
6. What is the primary focus of your NGO?
- A. Single Sport.
 - B. Multiple Sports.
7. How many employees work in your NGO?
- A. Less than 10
 - B. 11-24
 - C. 25 or more
8. What is your role in decision-making processes within your NGO?
- A. Part of the decision-making team
 - B. Lead the decision-making process
9. Have you received any formal leadership training?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
10. How many leadership roles have you held in NGOs?
- A. 1-2
 - B. 3-4
 - C. 5 or more

Part 2: NGO Basic Data

11. What is the primary area of operation for your NGO?
- A. Single Sports
 - B. Multi Sports
12. Economic Capacity: What is the annual budget of your NGO?
- A. Less than \$10,000
 - B. More than \$10,000
13. Where does your NGO operate?
- A. Inter City/Inter province
 - B. Nationwide/International.
14. Location: Where is your NGO primarily located?
- A. Local or National
 - B. International
15. Funding Sources: What are the primary sources of funding for your NGO?
- A. Charity/Donations
 - B. Grants Including Government
16. Number of Volunteers: How many volunteers work with your NGO?
- A. Less than 10
 - B. 11-24
 - C. More than 25

Part 3, Leadership in NGOs Questions (5-point Likert Scale)

Transformational Leadership

17. My leader communicates a clear and positive vision of the future. (1=Never to 5=Always)
18. My leader inspires me to go beyond my own self-interests for the good of the group. (1=Never to 5=Always)
19. My leader fosters an environment that encourages thinking about problems in new ways. (1=Never to 5=Always)

- 20. My leader recognizes my achievements and the contributions of others. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 21. My leader treats each member as an individual and supports their personal development. (1=Never to 5=Always)

Transactional Leadership

- 22. My leader sets clear goals and expectations for my work. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 23. My leader provides feedback on how well I am performing my tasks. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 24. My leader uses rewards effectively to encourage good performance. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 25. My leader monitors deviations from standards and takes corrective action as necessary. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 26. My leader focuses on problems only if standards are not met. (1=Never to 5=Always)

Laissez-faire Leadership

- 27. My leader avoids making decisions. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 28. My leader is absent when needed. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 29. My leader refrains from intervening until problems become serious. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 30. My leader avoids getting involved when important issues arise. (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 31. My leader fails to provide leadership when needed. (1=Never to 5=Always)

Additional Leadership Aspects

- 32. My leader demonstrates ethical and moral standards in all actions (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 33. My leader encourages collaboration among team members (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 34. My leader values and considers the opinions of all members (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 35. My leader is open to innovative ideas and approaches (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 36. My leader effectively communicates the goals and strategies of our NGO (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 37. My leader builds trust and inspires confidence among team members (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 38. My leader facilitates meaningful participation in decision-making processes (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 39. My leader is committed to the professional and personal growth of team members (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 40. My leader effectively manages resources to achieve our NGO's objectives (1=Never to 5=Always)
- 41. My leader ensures that our team's efforts are aligned with the NGO's mission and vision (1=Never to 5=Always)

Part 4, NGO Success Questions (5-point Likert Scale)

Efficiency

- 42. How efficiently has your NGO utilized resources to achieve its objectives over the past year? (1=Not at all to 5=To a great extent)
- 43. Rate the efficiency of your NGO in delivering programs and services to its target population. (1=Very inefficiently to 5=Very efficiently)

44. How would you rate the financial management efficiency of your NGO? (1=Very poorly to 5=Very well)

Sustainability

45. To what extent does your NGO have a clear sustainability plan for its operations and programs? (1=Not at all to 5=To a great extent)

46. How effectively does your NGO build and sustain long-term partnerships with other organizations? (1=Not effectively at all to 5=Extremely effectively)

47. Rate the level of sustainability in the funding sources of your NGO. (1=Very unsustainable to 5=Very sustainable)

48. How confident are you in the long-term sustainability of your NGO's operations? (1=Not confident at all to 5=Extremely confident)

Relevance

49. How relevant are your NGO's activities to the current needs of its target beneficiaries? (1=Not relevant at all to 5=Extremely relevant)

50. Rate the ability of your NGO to adapt its strategies to remain relevant in a changing environment. (1=Unable to adapt to 5=Highly adaptable)

51. How relevant is the training and development provided by your NGO for its employees and volunteers? (1=Not relevant at all to 5=Extremely relevant)

Effectiveness

52. How effective is your NGO in achieving its stated goals? (1=Not effective at all to 5=Extremely effective)

53. Rate the effectiveness of your NGO in engaging the target population and stakeholders. (1=Very ineffective to 5=Very effective)

54. How effective is your NGO in responding to and managing crises or challenges? (1=Not effective at all to 5=Extremely effective)

55. Evaluate the effectiveness of your NGO in implementing innovative ideas. (1=Not effective at all to 5=Extremely effective)

56. To what extent is your NGO effective in ensuring long-term positive outcomes for its beneficiaries? (1=Not at all to 5=To a great extent)

Appendix C: Interviews Questionnaire (Protocol)

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. My name is Muhammad Rizwan Hussain, and I am conducting research for my PhD dissertation titled "Leadership in Pakistani NGOs: A Special Focus on Sports Organizations" at the University of Debrecen, Hungary. This structured interview aims to explore how leadership styles influence organizational outcomes in sports NGOs and to validate survey findings through qualitative insights. Your responses will be analyzed thematically to provide deeper understanding of leadership practices, decision-making processes, and their impact on organizational effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, and relevance. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. All responses are confidential and will be anonymized in the analysis.

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your age?
2. Gender: Male / Female / Prefer not to say
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. What is your current job title within the NGO?
5. How many years have you been working in NGOs?
 - a Less than 1 year
 - b 1–3 years
 - c 3–5 years
 - d More than 5 years
6. How many leadership roles have you held in NGOs?
7. Have you received any formal leadership training? Yes / No. If yes, please briefly describe the type of training.

PART 2: ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

8. What is the primary focus of your NGO? (e.g., youth sports, community sports, professional sports development)
9. How many paid employees work in your NGO?
10. Approximately how many volunteers assist your organization?
11. What are your organization's primary funding sources? (e.g., government grants, donor contributions, individual donations, corporate sponsorship)

12. What is your role in organizational decision-making processes?

PART 3: LEADERSHIP STYLES AND PRACTICES

13. Can you describe your overall leadership style and how it influences your team's performance and motivation?

14. How do you communicate the vision and mission of your NGO to your team, and what impact does this communication have on their motivation and engagement?

15. In what ways do you inspire your team to prioritize organizational goals beyond individual interests?

16. How do you encourage your team members to think creatively and approach challenges innovatively? Can you provide an example?

17. How do you recognize and reward team achievements? Can you describe a recent example?

18. How do you set clear goals and performance expectations for your team, and how do you monitor their progress?

19. How do you handle situations where team members underperform or lack clear direction? Do you step in immediately or provide autonomy for self-correction?

20. What strategies do you use to ensure your team feels supported and involved in decision-making?

PART 4: ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

21. In what ways do you foster an organizational environment that values ethical and moral standards? Can you provide specific examples?

22. How do you model ethical behavior in your own leadership decisions?

23. How do you encourage collaboration and teamwork among your employees and volunteers?

24. How do you ensure accountability and transparency in organizational operations?

PART 5: ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES AND SUCCESS

25. How do you manage and allocate resources (financial, human, material) to achieve organizational objectives effectively?

26. What systems or processes do you have in place to minimize wastage and maximize resource utilization?

27. What measures do you take to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of your NGO's operations and programs?
28. How do you plan for future organizational growth and stability?
29. How relevant do you believe your NGO's activities and services are to the current needs of your target beneficiaries?
30. How do you assess and stay informed about the evolving needs of the communities you serve?
31. How does your NGO adapt its strategies and programs to remain effective in a changing environment?
32. Can you describe how your leadership influences your organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives?
33. What impact do you believe your leadership style and practices have had on the overall success of your NGO?
34. How do you measure success in your organization?

PART 6: MODERATING FACTORS

35. How does your leadership approach differ based on the experience level of your team members? Can you provide examples?
36. Has formal leadership training influenced how you lead your team? In what specific ways?
37. How does the size of your organization (number of employees and volunteers) influence your leadership decisions and strategies?
38. How do you manage coordination among your volunteers, and how does this shape your leadership approach?
39. How does your organization's funding source (grants vs. donations) influence leadership decisions regarding accountability, compliance, and ethical standards?
40. How do donor or grant requirements impact your organizational practices and leadership priorities?

PART 7: CLOSING REFLECTION

41. Is there anything else about your leadership experience or organizational challenges that you would like to discuss that we haven't covered?

Appendix D: Detailed Thematic Frequency Analysis (N=30)-Interviews

Theme Category (Hypothesis)	Specific Theme	n (%)	Representative Participant IDs
ETHICAL LEADERSHIP (H1a–H1d)	Ethical leadership importance	29 (96.7%)	1; 3–4; 6–10; 12–24 + 27–30
	Code of conduct/ethical guidelines	26 (86.7%)	1, 3; 5–7; 9; 11–12; 14; 16–24; 26–30
	Transparency in decision-making	25 (83.3%)	1–3; 6; 8; 10; 12–14; 16; 18–24; 27–29
	Leading by example/role modeling	24 (80.0%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12–14; 16–18; 20–24; 26–28
ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY (H1a)	Long-term financial planning	26 (86.7%)	1; 3–6; 8–10; 12; 14–24; 27–30
	Funding diversification	25 (83.3%)	1–3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–24; 27–29
	Resource optimization	23 (76.7%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–28
	Stakeholder trust building	28 (93.3%)	1–4; 6–10; 12–21; 23–24; 27–30
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (H1b)	Goal clarity/strategic alignment	24 (80.0%)	1; 3–4; 6; 8–10; 12–14; 16–24; 26–28
	Improved team performance	23 (76.7%)	1, 3; 5–6; 7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–28
	Stakeholder satisfaction	21 (70.0%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–24; 27–29
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY (H1c)	Resource utilization optimization	21 (70.0%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–29
	Waste reduction/cost management	20 (66.7%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 28–30
	Process streamlining	18 (60.0%)	1, 3; 6; 8–10; 12; 16–18; 20–22; 24; 27–29
ORGANIZATIONAL RELEVANCE (H1d)	Community needs alignment	28 (93.3%)	1–4; 6–10; 12–21; 23–24; 27–30
	Stakeholder engagement practices	25 (83.3%)	1–3; 6; 8; 10; 12–14; 16; 18–24; 27–29
	Adaptability to changing contexts	24 (80.0%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12–14; 16–18; 20–24; 26–28
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP (H2c)	Vision communication	25 (83.3%)	1–3; 6; 8; 10; 12–14; 16; 18–24; 27–29
	Inspirational motivation	23 (76.7%)	1, 3; 5–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 26–28
	Intellectual stimulation	20 (66.7%)	1, 3; 6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 28–30
	Individualized consideration	21 (70.0%)	1, 3; 5–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–22; 24; 27–29
TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP (H2b)	Clear performance expectations	21 (70.0%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–29

	Contingent re- wards/recognition	20 (66.7%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 28–30
	Accountability mecha- nisms	23 (76.7%)	1, 3; 5–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–28
	Corrective feedback	17 (56.7%)	1, 3; 6; 9–10; 12; 14; 16– 18; 20–22; 24; 27–28
LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP (H2a)	Hands-off/passive man- agement	10 (33.3%)	2; 5; 11; 15; 19–20; 23; 27–28
	Lack of clear direction	13 (43.3%)	2; 5; 11; 15; 19–20; 23; 27–30
	Negative ethical impact	15 (50.0%)	2; 5; 11; 14–15; 19–21; 23; 27–29
ORGANIZATIONAL INTERRE- LATIONSHIPS (H3a–H3f)	Sustainability→Effec- tiveness	24 (80.0%)	1, 3; 6–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 26–28
	Sustainability→Effi- ciency	21 (70.0%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–29
	Effectiveness→Effi- ciency	20 (66.7%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 28–29
	Relevance→Sustaina- bility	26 (86.7%)	1; 3–6; 8–10; 12; 14–24; 27–30
	Relevance→Effective- ness	25 (83.3%)	1–3; 6; 8; 10; 12–14; 16; 18–24; 27–29
	Relevance→Efficiency	23 (76.7%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–28
EMPLOYEE MODERATING FACTORS (H4)	Age effects on leader- ship	18 (60.0%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 16–18; 20–22; 24; 27–29
	Gender effects on lead- ership	16 (53.3%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 16; 18; 20–22; 24; 27–28
	Work experience ef- fects	20 (66.7%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–22; 24; 27–29
	Formal training im- portance	24 (80.0%)	1; 3–4; 6; 8–10; 12–14; 16–24; 27–28
ORGANIZATIONAL MODER- ATING FACTORS (H5)	Organizational size ef- fects	23 (76.7%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–28
	Budget/economic ca- pacity	21 (70.0%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–24; 27–29
	Funding source (grant vs. donation)	19 (63.3%)	1, 3; 6–7; 9–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–22; 24; 28–29
	Number of volunteers	20 (66.7%)	1, 3; 5–6; 8–10; 12; 14; 16–18; 20–22; 24; 27–29

Note: *n (%) = number and percentage of interviewees (N=30) mentioning each theme. Participant IDs are anonymized codes (1–30). Hypothesis links (H1a–H5d) correspond to the tested relationships in the mixed-methods model.*

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“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

— Lao Tzu