

The Impact of Humble Behavior, Perceived Organizational Justice and Happiness on the Ethical Behavior of Employees

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to estimate the relationship of humble behavior, perceived organizational justice and happiness with the employee's ethical behavior. The research uses STATA and SPSS for data analysis, applying ANOVA to identify significant differences and regression to assess the impact of variables on ethical behavior. Open-ended survey questions provide deeper insights into how humble behavior, organizational justice, and happiness influence ethical behavior. Findings reveal that humble behavior and happiness positively influence ethical behavior, with distributive, procedural, and informational justice also showing positive links. However, interactional justice unexpectedly correlates negatively. Qualitative data supports these

results, highlighting the positive impact of humble behavior and happiness, and the negative effect of interactional justice on ethical behavior. By synthesizing these elements, the study offers a comprehensive understanding that transcends individual impacts, presenting a new perspective in workplace ethics research. The integrated model applies specifically to Kosovo's transitional economy. Examining how socio-psychological factors influence ethical behavior in a challenging economic context, the study provides actionable insights for businesses facing similar challenges. Additionally, it offers practical guidance to governments, policymakers, and businesses on incorporating these factors into ethical considerations.

Keywords: humble behavior, perceived organizational justice, happiness, ethical behavior, Kosovo

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1. Introduction

In today's ever more competitive business environment, the imperative for organizations to uphold ethical standards in the workplace is growing. Should we be ethical or not? These can only be resolved by having the capacity to perceive and feel the future (Virovere, Kooskora, & Valler, 2002). Ethics comprise a collection of principles and values that steer individuals or groups in discerning the moral correctness or incorrectness, in their behavior or choices. Businesses need to create an ethical workplace and implement formal organizational rules of conduct that staff members must adhere to (Tamunomiebi & Ehior, 2019). This approach enables businesses to build trust, foster a positive workplace atmosphere, reduce the likelihood of misconduct or legal complications, and preserve the organization's reputation and principles. Furthermore, it promotes equitable treatment of employees, encourages transparency, and serves as a cornerstone for long-term viability and growth. Based on the importance of ethics in the workplace, ethics have been analyzed in different dimensions in previous studies (Baker, Hunt, & Andrews, 2006; Wiernik & Ones, 2018; Remišová, Lašáková, & Kirchmayer, 2019; Mithulan & Opatha, 2023). Analysis of workplace ethics from diverse perspectives aids in comprehending their influence on organizational culture, decision-making, and overall business performance. This multifaceted examination facilitates the identification of areas needing improvement, the development of effective policies, and the promotion of ethical behavior among employees and leaders.

In promoting ethical behavior in the workplace, ethical codes have a fundamental role. According to (Stevens, 2008), ethics codes can be effective tools for shaping

ethical behavior and guiding employee decision-making since they are more likely to be successful if they are ingrained in the culture and adopted by the leaders. Moreover, the code of ethics should not be viewed as merely a document but rather as a vital tool for promoting moral conduct within a business (Lozano, 2001). Numerous aspects of workplace ethics have been studied in depth and in various contexts (Mussner, Strobl, Veider, & Matzler, 2017; Mohammad, *et al.*, 2018; Islam & Chaudhary, 2024; Maisonneuve, Patrick, Chênevert, Grady, & Coderre-Ball, 2024; Rabie & Malek, 2013; Rabie & Malek, 2020) but very little is known about the impact of socio-psychological factors on the ethical behavior of employees. Newer concepts that are close to ethics and may have interesting implications in the company such as humble behavior (Ye, Tung, Li, & Zhu, 2020; Smith & Kouchaki, 2018; Kelemen, Matthews, Matthews, & Henry, 2023), justice (Nabatchi, Bingham, & Good, 2007; Abbasi, F. Baradari, Shegharaji, & Shahraki, 2020) and happiness (Duari & Sia, 2013; Gavin & Mason, 2004; Awada & Ismail, 2019) have been analyzed also in various aspects but not all together on the ethical behavior of employees. This paper distinguishes itself from existing literature by taking a novel look at the ways in which employees' ethical behavior is influenced by humble behavior, perceived organizational justice, and happiness as a whole. There's a notable gap when taking these particular socio-psychological factors into account at the same time in analyzing the area of ethical behavior. Through its integration into a cohesive theoretical framework, this study provides a more profound comprehension of the complex systems that regulate ethical decisions in the workplace. By clarifying their conceptual complexities and their combined

impact on ethics, this investigation contributes to the field's scholarly discourse.

Our research is based on accepted theories in ethics and organizational psychology. This theoretical framework acts as a guide, allowing us to explore the complex interrelationships among various variables. The research questions aim to elucidate the subtleties of these relationships, as follows:

- *RQ1: What is the effect of humble behavior on an employee's ethical behavior?*
- *RQ2: What is the effect of perceived organizational justice on an employee's ethical behavior?*
- *RQ3: What is the effect of happiness on an employee's ethical behavior?*

This study examines unexplored areas of in Kosovo by concentrating on the impact of humble behavior, perceived organizational justice and happiness on employees' ethical behavior. Our goal in exploring this scenario is to provide useful insights for corporate ethics while also advancing academic understanding. Organizations can modify their policies and procedures to promote a culture of honesty and equity by taking these elements into account. Furthermore, by taking care of these issues, businesses can lessen the dangers connected to unethical behavior, which will ultimately improve their long-term viability and profitability.

The following part of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature review related to ethical behavior, organizational justice, humbleness, and happiness. The methodology is presented in section 3, while the findings and discussion in section 4. The final section contains conclusions, implications, and future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Ethical behavior

The modern business environment is very competitive and complex, and it can be difficult for businesses to navigate the ethical landscape. Being a business that always acts ethically is the easiest method to avoid problems in today's cutthroat business environment (Karaköse & Kocabaş, 2009). The long-term success of the business depends on the ability to create an ethically focused culture, which is not an easy task. Enhancing employee work ethic in an ethical workplace is advantageous for both individuals and organizations (Askew, 2022). Ethical leadership exerts a beneficial influence on the virtuous character of an organization, thereby exerting a substantial impact on the inclination towards whistleblowing (Mkheimer, Selem, Shehata, Hussain, & Perez, 2023). So, companies should strive to be seen as ethical and responsible, and this can be achieved by taking actions that demonstrate the company's commitment to ethical behavior.

According to (Treviño & Weaver, 2003) an organization's ethical culture is one element of its organizational environment, and it may be summed up as those aspects of the perceived organizational context that deter unethical behavior and encourage ethical behavior. But for a company that wants to generate money, be successful, and remain in business, there is always the issue of striking a balance between ethics and profit (Dyczek, Castillo-Picon, Vilchez-Carcamo, & Salazar-Gonzales, 2022). The problem of achieving this balance is a challenge for any company because it requires a business to consider the interests and concerns of different stakeholders, as well as the implications of different decisions for the company's

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reputation and long-term sustainability. It's not always simple to distinguish between right and wrong in commercial situations, particularly when the interests and concerns of numerous parties conflict (Boone, Kurtz, & Berston, 2019). Companies must be mindful of the potential for conflicts of interest and make sure to take appropriate steps to ensure ethical considerations.

Therefore, one of management's objectives should be to improve the perception of managers' ethical behavior (Kantor & Weisberg, 2002). Among the key forms of this communication is the code of ethics. A code of ethics is a document that transforms a statement of fundamental principles into a helpful manual for employees at all levels of a corporation (Sah, 2015). Communication between staff and management would be more effective if there was a well-developed code of ethics. Based on its importance, the code of ethics should not be viewed as only a document but as a vital tool for promoting moral conduct within a corporation (Lozano, 2001). Although there is a gap in the study of this area as mentioned before, some relationships of our analyzed variables have been previously studied (Treviño & Weaver, 2001; Smith & Kouchaki, 2018; Yang, 2014) in other contexts. For more, each variable will be explained separately.

2.2. Humble behavior

Humble behavior in the workplace is a field of study in various forms in academic circles (Ali et al., 2020; Kelemen et al., 2023; Naseer, et al., 2020;). Humble behavior is behavior that is modest, unassuming, and free from arrogance or pride. It is important to study because it is associated with many positive outcomes in general. Humble behavior boosts workplace satisfaction and

lessens narcissistic effects (Rego, Cunha, & Simpson, 2018). Moreover, such behavior is the display of a lack of arrogance or pride, and instead, the recognition and acceptance of one's faults or mistakes.

A constant virtue that does not change between episodes is humility (Kupfer, 2003). Humility can help us understand how to cultivate and nurture humility in ourselves and others so that we can become more emotionally and socially intelligent. The assumption is that the promotion of humility is dependent on the modesty of the highest-level team leader descending to the team leader of the lower-level team (Peng, Wang, & Schaubroeck, 2020). The followers of a leader who exhibits a high level of humility pick up on signs that increase perceptions of spirituality in the workplace, which fosters an atmosphere of ethical behavior, sensitivity, and thankfulness (Naseer, et al., 2019). Recognizing the accomplishments and talents of their followers, demonstrating teach ability, and admitting personal failings and limitations are all examples of humble leadership behavior (Liu, 2016). It also encourages a sense of accountability, as employees are more likely to take ownership of their work when they are humble and willing to admit their mistakes. According to (Zhang & Song, 2020), humble leadership at the team level was favorably related to work well-being, while (Lu, Chen, & Song, 2018) indicated that humble leadership had a favorable effect on employees' proactive behavior. Also, humble behavior exerts an inherent and partially indirect influence on innovation (Hadi Al-Abrow, Abdullah, Khaw, Alnoor, & Rexhepi, 2023).

Therefore, the importance of humble behavior should not be neglected. It is a valuable asset that can lead to greater

success in personal and professional life. Studying and practicing humble behavior can help us become more self-aware, and build empathy and respect. Based on all the above explanations, the proposed hypothesis is: **H1:** There is a positive relationship between humble behavior and employee ethical behavior.

2.3. Perceived organizational justice.

The understanding of organizational justice comes as a result of the combination of two concepts, justice and organization. Justice is the concept of fairness and equality in the workplace while an organization can refer to a variety of different entities, such as a business, non-profit, government agency, educational institution, or other groups of people who are working together for a common purpose. The concept of organizational justice is quite important; therefore, it has been studied in different dimensions (Jawahar, 2002; Peacock, Ivkovich, Borovec, & Mraovic, 2013; Suliman, 2013). Organizational justice can be included in different fields and can be analyzed in different contexts. According to (Yasir & Jan, 2023) there is an adverse connection between organizational justice and workplace deviance, with organizational justice serving as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and workplace deviance. Another interesting study shows that emotional intelligence (EI) has a significant direct impact on each sub-dimension of organizational justice, including distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, along with its impact on job satisfaction and employee goals change while it was observed that only distributive justice plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between EI, job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Mustafa, Vinsent, & Badri, 2022). Organizational justice is

widely considered to take many forms, but four main ones will be elaborated in this paper: distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, and informational justice. Explanations on the meaning of each of them will be given below.

Distributive justice is the belief that an employee feels their results are fair. The sense of justice among employees serves as a proxy for how they see the allocation and replenishment of resources (Pan et al., 2018). According to (Yean & Yusof, 2016) the fairness associated with decisions on resource distribution is known as distributive justice (financial-tangible or non-financial-intangible resources). If workers are only penalized or rewarded for their work and are treated equally for result allocation within the same firm, they can achieve distributive justice (Imamoglu et al., 2019).

The concept of procedural justice describes how employees become conscious of equity when analyzing data and making decisions (Jami & Agha, 2022). Procedural justice also describes how much a representative asks for and uses feedback from workers, participates in a two-way dialogue, enforces rules or norms, and gives workers the chance to appeal decisions (Farid et al., 2019). According to the principle that people are more inclined to follow organizational norms and regulations when they are satisfied with the procedures, procedural justice comprises the fairness of the processes employed to decide the outcomes they achieve (Tamunomiebi & Ehior, 2019). Procedural fairness can assist staff members in accepting changes to the organization's philosophies and objectives as well as coping with the difficulties of external change (Lee, Sharif, Scandura, & Kim, 2017).

Interactional justice is a concept that encompasses fairness, respect,

and trustworthiness in interpersonal and organizational interactions. The sensitivity with which employees are handled and how much they feel valued by their employers are both issues that interactional justice is concerned with (Landy & Conte, 2016). When interactional justice is applied, people are treated with respect and provided frank, courteous, and accurate information as well as thorough justifications for the decisions made (Jami & Agha, 2022). Employees' perceptions of interactional justice are dependent on how they have treated interpersonally and the information that is provided to them after resource allocation (Hadi, Tjahjono, & Palupi, 2020).

Justice that is based on the information or words of the decision-maker is known as informational justice (Nowakowski & Cordo, 2005). Informational justice is so named because it calls for sufficient information and justifications from decision-makers, such as by giving a detailed account of all choices taken at the end (Ellis, Reus, & Lamont, 2009). When people have access to information, which is defined as the justice of the information used as the basis for making judgments, they are more self-assured (Tamunomiebi & Ehior, 2019). Providing accurate and timely information also allows employees to develop a strong understanding of the organization's goals and objectives, ensuring that they are better equipped to contribute to organizational success. Organizational justice should not be neglected because it is the foundation of a healthy work environment. Furthermore, without organizational justice, employees may be more likely to experience instances of harassment and discrimination, which could create a hostile work environment and lead to legal action. Therefore, employers need to provide a workplace where organizational

justice is a priority. Based on all the above explanations, the proposed hypothesis is: **H2:** There is a positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and employee ethical behavior.

2.4. Happiness

One of the most essential considerations, especially at work, is happiness (Rahmi, 2019). Why? Because, keeping employees motivated and ambitious is one of the top concerns for businesses today, and creating a happy environment is undoubtedly the key to keeping staff members (Roy & Konwar, 2018). The present literature defines happiness as the extent to which an individual favorably assesses their overall life (Shiroka-Pula, Bartlett, & Krasniqi, 2023). By creating a positive work environment and taking steps to increase individual happiness, employers and employees alike can benefit from a happier workplace. It is therefore not by chance that happiness in the workplace remains one of the most interesting and well-studied areas (Awada & Ismail, 2020; Abdullah, Ling, & Peng, 2020; Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Employees are more likely to be happy when a workplace is designed and run in a way that gives its people significance (H.Gavin & O.Mason, 2004). But the workplace can be a difficult place to be happy. Several criteria influence how employees view happiness. Baranski et al (2023) highlight the importance of incorporating personality considerations into workspace design to enhance employee focus and well-being. Employee unhappiness is a crucial sign of an issue with their job responsibilities, pay, interpersonal relationships, or working environment (Joshi, 2010). Another factor that should be considered is stress at work. Job stress is inversely associated with the level of

employee happiness (Akgunduz, Bardakoglu, & Kizilcalioglu, 2023).

A happy employee is more likely to go the extra mile and put more effort into their work, resulting in higher quality output. Work will be completed with love and passion rather than under duress if employees are happy with their jobs and arrive at work on time because they value punctuality and enjoy accomplishing their daily tasks (Zani & Samanol, 2021). According to (Berdicchia, Fortezza, & Masino, 2023) a positive correlation exists between the cooperative atmosphere within co-working spaces and the level of happiness experienced by individuals in those environments. Based on all the above explanations, the proposed hypothesis is: **H3:** There is a positive relationship between happiness and employee ethical behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research model and methods.

Data gathered for this study evaluates how perceived organizational justice, humble behavior, and happiness affect employees' ethical behavior. The data were analyzed with STATA and SPSS programs. To analyze the data, ANOVA was used to determine statistically significant differences, while correlation and regression analyses were performed to evaluate relationships among variables and assess the influence of independent variables on ethical behavior. Cronbach's alpha test is assessed to establish the reliability of the research instrument. In order to measure the ratio of independent variables to the dependent variable, correlation and regression analyzes were used. Where the regression model used is presented in the equation below:

$$EB = \alpha + \beta_1(HB) + \beta_2(DJ) + \beta_3(PJ) + \beta_4(IJ) + \beta_5(INOFJ) + \beta_6(HA) + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Based on the equation above, the dependent variable of the study is Ethical behavior (EB), while the independent variables of the study are: Humble Behavior (HB), Distribution Justice (DJ), Procedural Justice (PJ), Interactive Justice (IJ), Informative Justice (INFOJ) and Happiness (HA). The coefficients of the independent variables and the regression constant are estimated as parameters β and α , respectively. Additionally, the error term (ϵ) represents other variables that may potentially affect the ethical behavior but are not included in this equation.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, **open-ended survey questions** were incorporated to gather qualitative data. These questions aimed to provide deeper insights into the employees' personal experiences regarding how humble behavior, organizational justice, and happiness influence their ethical behavior. Responses to these open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes that aligned with the quantitative results.

3.2. Research instrument.

The questionnaire was developed in Google Forms, which can be accessed through mobile devices or web browsers to create and analyze surveys. Our sample selection process was crafted to ensure an accurate representation of the business sector in Kosovo. We actively sought to gather a diverse range of businesses across various industries and sizes, aiming to capture the breadth and depth of the sector. We conducted a survey to gather detailed insights into the topic for businesses in Kosovo. A large portion of the survey questionnaire for this study adapted from earlier studies that had already reviewed

Table 1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Aspect	Description
Research Model and Methods	Data collected via surveys, combining quantitative (Likert scale) and qualitative (open-ended) questions. Quantitative data were analyzed using STATA and SPSS (ANOVA, correlation, and regression). Qualitative data from open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis to provide deeper insights into employees' ethical behavior.
Research Instrument	A mixed-methods questionnaire developed using quantitative (Likert scale) and qualitative (open-ended) questions. The open-ended questions provided space for employees to explain how humble behavior, organizational justice, and happiness impact their ethical behavior.
Open-Ended Questions Examples	1. How does your perception of leadership humble behavior influence your ethical decisions at work? 2. In your experience, how do justice in workplace interactions affect your ethical behavior? 3. How does happiness at work contribute to your ethical conduct?
Sample	The survey was distributed to 200 employees in private sector businesses in Kosovo. The sample was diverse in terms of gender, age, education, and enterprise size, capturing various perspectives on workplace ethics.
Analysis of Qualitative Data	Open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to how employees perceive humble behavior, organizational justice, and happiness, and how these perceptions influence their ethical behavior.
Reliability of Instrument	The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.980$) for the quantitative questions. For qualitative responses, consistency was assessed through thematic analysis and comparison of patterns across responses.

each of the dimensions in this research. The questionnaire was structured into multiple sections, encompassing general demographic information of the survey participants, and questions that elaborate each dimension of analysis. Respondents were not able to move on to the next section until all questions were answered and the required information was provided

To deepen the understanding of the relationships between the variables, **open-ended questions** were included in the survey. The responses were then analyzed for patterns and themes, providing context to the quantitative findings.

The questionnaire was distributed to 200 employees from private sector located throughout Kosovo, using multiple channels. The decision to collect data for this study from employees in the private sector was

well considered and influenced by a variety of considerations. Firstly, the private sector employs an important portion of the labor force in modern times and is crucial to both societal norm formation and economic growth. Ethical behavior is crucial in private sector firms because it has a direct impact on stakeholder trust, corporate reputation, and overall company sustainability. Furthermore, because the private sector is competitive, employees frequently face particular pressures. As for the questions, they were very concise, which is supposed to enable the respondents not to cause confusion or bewilderment. Respondents were asked to rate the dimensions on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements made for the individual dimensions in the proposed model. The subsequent table offers an outline

Table 2. Characteristics of variables

Variable	Type of variable	No. of items	Sources	Measurement scale
Humble Behavior	Independent variable	5	(Al-Abrow <i>et al.</i> , 2023)	Likert Scale
Justice	Independent variable	4 (DJ)	(Al-Zu'bi, 2010) and (Zhang & Jia, 2013)	Likert Scale
		3 (PJ)		
		3 (IJ)		
		4 (IJ)		
		Total Justice= 14		
Happiness	Independent variable	6	(Sonam & Vivek, 2019)	Likert Scale
Ethical Behavior	Dependent variable	5	(Valentine, Fleischman, & Godkin, 2015) and (Lu & Lin, 2014)	Likert Scale

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 3. Questionnaire reliability test results

		N	%
Cases	Valid	200mode	100
	Excluded ^a	0	0.0
	Total	200	100.0
Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items	
.980		30	

Source: Authors' own creation

of the study variables, detailing their nature, the number of items, their sources, and the scale of measurement.

The table above presents the results of the Cronbach's Alpha test, which was used to test consistency, where 30 questions of the questionnaire are included. In our sample, data manifested excellent internal consistency: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.980$ for the total sample $n = 200$.

3.3. Sample

For this study, a sample of 200 participants of private sector businesses in Kosovo was included. The participants were

asked to complete an online survey that was designed to measure the impact of perceived organizational justice, humble, and happiness on employees' ethical behavior. The purpose was to learn more about the actual practical situation by formulating surveys within the context of what had been conceptually developed. The respondents should have been only the employees of the businesses in the Republic of Kosovo examined and not the owners or managers.

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of respondents (N=200)

Variables	Option	N	%
Gender	Female	114	57.0
	Male	86	43.0
Highest academic degree	High school	21	10.5
	Bachelor	57	28.5
	Master	87	43.5
	PhD	35	17.5
Category of Enterprise	Microenterprise (0-9 employees)	25	12.5
	Small enterprise (10-49 employees)	39	19.5
	Medium enterprise (50-249 employees)	52	26.0
	Large enterprise (over 250 employees)	84	42.0
Family ties at workplace	Yes	81	40.5
	No	119	59.5

Source: Authors' own calculation

The presented data provides insights into the demographics and workplace characteristics of 200 respondents in sample. It appears that there is a near-balanced distribution in terms of gender, with females comprising 57% and males 43%. This gender distribution suggests a relatively diverse sample, which could have implications for workforce dynamics and organizational culture.

In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents have attained at least a bachelor's degree or higher, with 28.5% holding a bachelor's degree, 43.5% with a Master's degree, and 17.5% having achieved a PhD. This distribution indicates a highly educated sample, which may have implications for the skillset and knowledge base within the workforce.

The data on enterprise size reveals that a significant proportion of respondents work in large enterprises with over 250 employees (42.0%), followed by medium-sized enterprises (26.0%), small enterprises (19.5%),

and microenterprises (12.5%). This distribution may reflect the economic structure of the industry or region under consideration. Larger enterprises often offer more resources and opportunities for career advancement, while smaller enterprises may provide a more collaborative work environment.

Lastly, the data on family ties at the workplace indicates that 40.5% of respondents have family connections within their professional environment. This finding may have implications for workplace dynamics, communication, and potential conflicts of interest. Understanding the prevalence of family ties can be crucial for organizational management to address and manage potential challenges or leverage the positive aspects of familial relationships in the workplace. Overall, these insights provide a comprehensive view of the sample population, shedding light on gender representation, educational background, enterprise size, and the prevalence of family connections within the workplace.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Empirical results

Table IV presents the results of the correlation analysis for measuring the influence of independent variables on ethical behavior, while after the results of the presentation

of the reports between the variables, the significant statistical differences according to the demographic data are also presented using the ANOVA analysis. At the end, the chapter concludes with the presentation of the regression analysis.

Table 5. Correlation analysis results

		EB	HB	DJ	PJ	IJ	INFOJ	HA
EB	Correlation	1	.824**	.738**	.791**	.762**	.785**	.593**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
HB	Correlation	.824**	1	.783**	.800**	.824**	.788**	.660**
	Sig.	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
DJ	Correlation	.738**	.783**	1	.841**	.868**	.857**	.572**
	Sig.	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
PJ	Correlation	.791**	.800**	.841**	1	.891**	.899**	.611**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
IJ	Correlation	.762**	.824**	.868**	.891**	1	.896**	.612**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
INFOJ	Correlation	.785**	.788**	.857**	.899**	.896**	1	.615**
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
HA	Correlation	.593**	.660**	.572**	.611**	.612**	.615**	1
	Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200

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

Source: Authors' own creation

In the table above are the results of the correlation analysis, the reasons for the results of this coefficient, the dependent variable ethical behavior has a relationship with the variables; Humble behavior ($r=0.82$), Justice (Distributive Justice $r= 0.73$, Procedural

Justice $r=0.79$, Interactional Justice $r=0.76$ and Informational Justice $r=0.78$) and Happiness $r=0.59$. Where all the coefficients are statistically significant (**) at the 1% significance level. In addition, qualitative feedback from respondents emphasized that

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when leaders demonstrate humble behavior and justice, employees feel more ethically motivated. For example, one respondent

noted: "Humble behavior in leadership creates a sense of trust, which encourages me to act more ethically."

Table 6. Statistically significant differences based on demographic data.

Variables	Gender	Education	The size of the enterprise	Family Ties
EB	0.251	0.000	0.000	0.074
HB	0.212	0.000	0.000	0.058
DJ	0.278	0.000	0.000	0.748
PJ	0.701	0.000	0.000	0.324
IJ	0.367	0.000	0.000	0.398
INFOJ	0.594	0.000	0.000	0.147
HA	0.524	0.002	0.003	0.007

Note: Values shown represent P value

Source: Authors' own creation

The table above presents the results of the Anova analysis with the aim of presenting statistically significant differences in the research variables based on the four demographic questions. According to the Anova results, in none of the variables of the study are there statistically significant differences according to the gender of the respondents, where the P value is higher than 0.05 in all variables.

On the other hand, there are statistically significant differences according to education and the size of the surveyed companies in

all variables, even if the statistical difference is very high where the P value is lower than 0.01 (1%). Meanwhile, regarding family ties in the workplace, we have statistically significant differences only in the happiness variable (P=0.007), while in the other variables, there are no statistically significant differences based on family ties in the workplace. One participant shared, "Having family at work creates a more positive atmosphere, which contributes to my happiness and overall work behavior."

Table 7. Results of the regression analysis

EB	Coef.	St. Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
HB	.517	.073	7.05	.000	.372	.661	***
DJ	.021	.094	0.22	.823	-.165	.207	
PJ	.388	.151	2.57	.011	.091	.686	**
IJ	-.194	.158	-1.23	.221	-.505	.118	
INFOJ	.273	.111	2.45	.015	.053	.492	**
HA	.016	.036	0.44	.660	-.055	.086	
Constant	2.215	.749	2.96	.003	.738	3.693	***
Mean dependent var	18.580		SD dependent var		5.329		

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R-squared	0.737	Number of obs	200
F-test	90.282	Prob > F	0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)	982.467	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	1005.555
*** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1			

Source: Authors' own creation

The table above presents the results of the regression analysis, according to the results of the coefficient of determination (73.3%), the model achieves a high explain ability and is statistically significant based on the F-statistic 90.28 and $P=0.000$. So, the results of this regression are valid and the interpretations of the coefficients are presented below.

The impact of Humble behavior is positive on Ethical behavior with coefficient $B=0.51$ and statistically significant at the 1% level ($P=0.000$). So, for every 1 unit increase in humble behavior, ethical behavior will increase by 0.51 units on average. This is in line with the open-ended responses, where many respondents noted that humble leadership significantly motivates ethical behavior.

The influence of Distribution justice ($B=0.021$), Procedural Justice ($B=0.388$) and Informative justice ($B=0.273$) is positive in Ethical behavior, where Procedural and Informative justice are statistically significant at the 5% significance level. The qualitative responses emphasized that fairness in decision-making and transparent communication increase ethical behavior in the workplace.

Whereas the impact of Interactive justice is negative in Ethical behavior with coefficient $B=0.194$, but without significant impact. Interestingly, some participants noted that negative interactions with supervisors or peers can result in unethical behavior, aligning with the weak negative correlation between interactional justice and ethical behavior.

The last variable Happiness has a positive influence on Ethical behavior with a coefficient $B=0.016$. So, for every 1 increasing unit in the variable of Happiness ethical behavior will increase by 0.016 units on average.

4.2. Hypothesis testing

After the presentation of the empirical statistical results, the hypotheses based on these results were subsequently tested. The correlation coefficient between humbleness and ethical behavior is 0.82, indicating a strong positive relationship. The regression analysis further supports this hypothesis, with a positive coefficient ($B=0.51$) that is statistically significant at the 1% level. Therefore, H1 is supported by results.

For distributive justice, procedural justice, and informational justice, the correlation coefficients are 0.73, 0.79, and 0.78, respectively, all indicating positive relationships with ethical behavior. The regression analysis shows positive coefficients ($B=0.021$, $B=0.388$, and $B=0.273$), with procedural and informational justice being statistically significant at the 5% significance level. However, interactional justice has a negative coefficient ($B=0.194$) and is not statistically significant. Although the results show a negative relationship between interactional justice and ethical behavior ($B = -0.194$), the lack of statistical significance suggests that other factors may be at play. Ethical behavior is influenced by a range of variables, and this could overshadow the effects of interactional

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justice. Additionally, variability in perceptions of justice might not have been sufficient to detect a meaningful effect. While distributive, procedural, and informational justice support H2, the unexpected negative relationship for interactional justice requires further investigation.

The correlation coefficient between happiness and ethical behavior is 0.59, suggesting a positive relationship. The regression analysis confirms this hypothesis, with a positive coefficient ($B=0.016$) that is statistically significant at the 1% level. Therefore, H3 is supported by results.

So, the analysis supports H1 and H3, indicating positive relationships between humbleness, happiness, and employee ethical behavior. This aligns with the open-ended responses, where participants highlighted that a respectful, supportive environment fostered ethical actions. For H2, there is support for distributive, procedural, and informational justice, but the unexpected negative relationship with interactional justice requires further investigation and consideration of potential moderating factors. The open-ended responses suggest that the interactional justice effect could be nuanced, where the impact might vary based on other situational or contextual factors, such as the nature of the work or leadership style.

4.3. Discussion

The correlation analysis presented in the results section demonstrates the relationships between ethical behavior and the variables of humble behavior, perceived organizational justice (including distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice), and happiness. The findings support the notion that ethical behavior is positively correlated with humble behavior, as indicated by a

strong correlation coefficient of 0.82. These conclusions can be compared to previous studies that have analyzed humble behavior in different forms (Ali et al., 2020; Baker et al., 2006; Liu, 2016). Survey respondents highlighted that leadership displaying humility was central to fostering an ethical work culture. One participant shared, "When leaders show humble behavior, it sets the tone for ethical behavior, as it encourages openness and trust."

Furthermore, literature underscores the significance of organizational justice in fostering ethical behavior. The correlation analysis reveals positive relationships between ethical behavior and distributive, procedural, and informational justice. These findings are consistent with the literature's emphasis on the importance of creating a fair and just work environment to enhance ethical conduct. The positive impact of distributive justice ($r=0.73$), procedural justice ($r=0.79$), and informational justice ($r=0.78$) on ethical behavior aligns with the idea that employees perceive fairness in resource distribution, decision-making processes, and information sharing as crucial factors influencing their ethical judgments and behaviors. Respondents consistently cited justice in these areas as fundamental to their ethical decision-making process, with one noting, "When I see fair treatment in resource distribution, I'm more inclined to act ethically, knowing the organization values justice."

Interestingly, the regression analysis reveals a negative relationship between interactional justice and ethical behavior ($B=-0.19$). Interactional justice may have a weaker link to ethical behavior because it is more subjective, with some employees valuing other forms of justice more. In contexts where fairness in processes or outcomes is strong, individuals may act ethically even if

interpersonal treatment is lacking, leading to a weaker correlation. This aligns with feedback from survey respondents, with one stating, "While fair processes and decisions matter to me, it's the overall treatment of employees that has less of an impact on how I behave ethically." According to (Koksal & Mert, 2024) interactional justice was found to have a significant negative relationship with emotional exhaustion, while it was positively related to workplace social courage. Also, results showed by (Yasir & Jan, 2023) explained that there is an adverse connection between organizational justice and workplace deviance, with organizational justice serving as a mediator in the relationship between servant leadership and workplace deviance. Other research shows that emotional intelligence (EI) has a significant direct impact on each sub-dimension of organizational justice, including distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, along with its impact on job satisfaction and employee goals change while it was observed that only distributive justice plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between EI, job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Mustafa, Vinsent, & Badri, 2022). Previous studies related to our research commonly link positive interpersonal interactions and communication with ethical behavior (Abbasi et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2018; Peacock et al., 2013).

Moreover, the results indicate a positive correlation between happiness and ethical behavior ($r=0.59$). Similar analyses which had the focus in the emphasis on the value of creating a positive and happy workplace for employees is treated in different contexts (Gavin & Mason, 2004; Rahmi, 2019; Berdicchia, Fortezza, & Masino, 2023). Happy employees are more likely to be committed to their work, leading to a higher-quality output

and long-term loyalty to the organization. **Survey responses supported this idea, with one participant stating, "When I'm happy at work, I'm more motivated to do the right thing, as the positive environment influences my actions."**

The regression analysis further reinforces these relationships by providing insights into the strength and direction of the influences. The positive coefficient for humble behavior suggests a significant and positive impact on ethical behavior, supporting the literature's claims about the benefits of humility in leadership. Participants highlighted the importance of humble behavior in leadership, with one respondent commenting, "Humble behavior in leadership encourages me to be more ethical because it shows that ethics are valued above all."

5. Conclusions

This study aimed to examine the relationships between socio-psychological and employee ethical behavior. Findings robustly support the hypotheses positing positive associations between humbleness, happiness, and ethical behavior (H1 and H3). The strong correlation coefficients and statistically significant regression coefficients underscore the importance of these psychological states in fostering a culture of ethical conduct among employees. Additionally, the qualitative findings reinforced these results by providing deeper insights into how employees perceive and react to factors like humble behavior and organizational justice in their day-to-day work environments.

However, the exploration of justice dimensions revealed an unexpected result concerning interactional justice (H2). While distributive, procedural, and informational justice exhibited positive relationships with

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ethical behavior, interactional justice displayed a counterintuitive negative coefficient. This unanticipated finding prompts the need for further investigation into potential moderating factors that may influence the relationship between interactional justice and ethical behavior.

5.1 Theoretical Contribution

Through the integration of three important socio-psychological factors—humble behavior, perceived organizational justice, and happiness—the research offers several theoretical contributions. Firstly, by emphasizing the interdependence of various socio-psychological elements, it challenges traditional viewpoints by incorporating them into a complete framework. Second, it highlights the dynamic character of organizational dynamics by placing the study within the framework of Kosovo's transition economy, so broadening the applicability of current theoretical frameworks. Research also emphasizes the strategic value of ethical behavior, which adds to the growing body of knowledge regarding ethical leadership and the longevity of organizations. The qualitative data provided a deeper understanding of the nuances within organizational justice, particularly how employees interpret justice interactions and decision-making, which can sometimes differ from the more general perceptions captured by quantitative measures. Overall, by shedding light on the complex process of making ethical decisions at work, the study advances theoretical knowledge in organizational behavior.

5.2. Practical Contribution

In addition to advancing theoretical knowledge, our research provides HR professionals and organizational leaders with insightful practical advice. By prioritizing

these factors, organizations benefit from the promotion of an ethical culture, enhanced perceptions of fairness, a positive work environment, improved employee engagement, and reduced ethical risks. It is worth noting that in the postmodern world, companies have shown a growing interest in addressing individual needs, recognizing that organizational success stems from a well-organized work environment. Overall, the effects of humble behavior, perceived organizational justice, and happiness on organizational practice can lead to a workplace culture where ethical behavior is not only encouraged, but ingrained in the organizational fabric. The study highlights the tangible benefits of ethical behavior as a significant business asset, contributing to long-term organizational performance and sustainability, by highlighting the strategic value of retaining an ethical workforce.

5.3. Limitations and future research

To further explore and advance information on the subject of our research, future study directions should be suggested in this circumstance. So, the following suggested future study directions are: First of all, the study has limitations, including the specific context and sample characteristics, and was only looked at in the private sector. The addition of the public sector and comparison of the study between the two sectors, i.e., the public and private, would be really interesting. The study's narrow focus on the private sector excludes perspectives from other economic sectors (e.g., public sector, non-profits, international businesses), which could enrich the understanding of ethical behavior across varying organizational structures. Future research should aim to incorporate data from multiple sectors and regions to better assess

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the broader applicability and relevance of the findings, enhancing the comprehensiveness of ethical decision-making models. Also, the inclusion of moderated and controlled variables that might be a component of the organizational environment both inside and outside the company. Additionally, future research could further explore the qualitative aspects of socio-psychological factors by incorporating in-depth interviews or focus groups to capture richer insights into how employees experience and interpret humble behavior, justice, and happiness within their unique organizational contexts.

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