ETHICAL LEADERSHIP VERSUS PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL POLITICS AND WORK NEGLECT: A TIME LAGGED MULTI-LEVEL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to uncover whether ethical leadership had a role in preventing perceived organisational politics and its undesired consequences, such as work neglect through employees' loyalty to the organisation. Data were collected from 418 employees who report to 52 supervisors and work at four different five-star hotels in Antalya, Turkey, using self-report questionnaires in three distinct periods. Because employees were nested in their leaders, data were analysed using Hierarchical Linear Modeling technique. Findings indicated that ethical leadership resulted in loyalty and perceived organisational politics resulted in work neglect. However, there were negative relationships between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and ethical leadership and work neglect. Perceived organisational politics mediated the relationship between ethical leadership and work neglect. Moreover, loyalty mediated the relationships between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and between ethical leadership and work neglect.

ETİK LİDERLİĞE KARŞI ÖRGÜTSEL POLİTİKA ALGISI VE İHMALKARLIK: ZAMAN GECİKMELİ VE ÇOK DÜZEYLİ BİR ARAŞTIRMA

ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı çalışanların örgütlerine olan sadakatları aracılığıyla etik liderliğin örgütsel politika algısının ve onun ihmalkarlık gibi arzu edilmeyen sonuçlarının önlenmesinde bir role sahip olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Araştırmanın verisi Antalya, Türkiye'de faaliyet gösteren dört farklı beş yıldızlı otelde çalışan 418 personelden ve bu çalışanların bağlı olduğu 52 yöneticiden anket tekniği ile üç farklı zaman diliminde toplanmıştır. Çalışanlar belirli bir yöneticiye bağlı olduklarından dolayı veri Hiyerarşik Doğrusal Modelleme tekniği ile analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre etik liderlik çalışanların sadakatini artırmaktadır ve örgütsel politika algısı çalışanların işlerini ihmal etmelerine yol açmaktadır. Etik liderlikle örgütsel politika algısı arasında ve etik liderlikle ihmalkarlık arasında ters yönlü ilişkiler vardır. Örgütsel politika algısı etik liderlikle ihmalkarlık arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık etmektedir. Ayrıca çalışanların sadakati etik liderlikle örgütsel polika algısı arasındaki ilişkiye ve etik liderlikle ihmalkarlık arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık etmektedir.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Would you like to work in an organisation in which some employees prioritise self-interests at the expense of others? Most likely, your answer will be "no", because despite its some debatable benefits, employees' political behaviours are perceived by their colleagues as a threat to their well being (Ferris, Russ & Fandt, 1989; Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999). Employees' political behaviors may also have some harmful consequences for organisations, such as employees' neglect of work (Vigoda, 2000, 2001; Atinga, Domfeh, Kayi, Abuosi & Dzansi, 2014; Basar & Basim, 2016). Work neglect is defined as an employee's specific attitute in which he or she lets circumstances to deteriorate by spending less effort while he or she fulfils the duties, paying less attention to the work, using an hour of work for private affairs (Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers & Mainous, 1988), being unable to concentrate on the duties, tending to leave early from and arrive late to the workplace and withdraw himself or herself psychologically from his or her work (Farrel, 1983). Work neglect may be one of the undesired phenomena in an organisational setting, because if employees neglect their duties, organisations can not fulfil their responsibilities. In such circumstances, organisations may go to the wall and experience financial troubles, which later on may lead to total bankruptcy. Therefore, any organisation needs proper leadership to overcome or avoid such crises and become durable. Indeed, previous organisational crises call attention to the ethical aspect of management and leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006a). Therefore, the ethical aspect of leadership has attracted considerable attention and has been studied by numerous researchers (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 2000; Trevino, Hartman & Brown, 2000; Trevino, Brown & Hartman, 2003; Reave, 2005; Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005).

Leadership involves the capacity to lead others beyond routine managerial procedures, such as planning, organising, coordinating, allocating resources, supervising, observing, directing, training subordinates and decision-making. Leaders, as distinct from ordinary managers, influence, incite, encourage and inspire their followers with their passion for a shared vision through which organisational values and an organisational climate are formed. The credibility of this vision and

the organisational values depend on the nature and the character of the leaders. The integrity and ethical demeanour of leaders strengthen their reliability in the eyes of their followers (Mendonca, 2001). Ethics refers to a set of characteristics that determines what is morally right, sound, or fair and what is morally wrong, evil, or unfair. In this sense, something that is ethical indicates that which is morally right, exemplary, or fair. (Maheshwari & Ganesh, 2006; Filizoz, 2011). Although they address ethics to some extent, leadership types, such as transformational, charismatic, authentic and spiritual leaders do not explain the ethical aspect of leadership in a specific construct. This gap was filled by Brown et al. (2005) who defined ethical leadership construct and developed an ethical leadership scale. So far, several studies on antecedents to and consequences of ethical leadership have helped to provide an understanding of the role and importance of ethical leadership in the permanency of organisations, as well as in the well-being of employees (Ma, Cheng, Ribbens & Zhou, 2013; Babalola, Stouten & Euwema, 2016; Basar & Filizoz, 2015; Celik, Dedeoglu & Inanir, 2015; Eisenbeiss, Van Knippenberg & Fahrbach, 2015; DeConinck, 2015; Basar, Sigri & Basim, 2018). However, neither of them addressed the role of the ethical leadership in overcoming unexpected and harmful consequences of perceived politics in organisations. Also, neither of the previous studies conducted in our country addressed the role of ethical leadership in preventing harmful and undesired outcomes of perceived organisational politics. Uncovering those relationships may be necessary, because when organisational politics is passivated, and employees are discouraged from engaging in politics, organisations may prosper, employees' ties with the organisation may strengthen and productivity may improve. Therefore, it is aimed to further the contributions of previous studies by uncovering the role of ethical leadership in overcoming employees' perceived organisational politics and its undesired consequences, such as work neglect. This study may contribute to the theory by explaining ethical leadership's role in preventing both organisational politics and its undesired consequences through employees' loyalty to the organisation. As far as it is known, this research is the first to investigate those relationships in a multi-level, time-lagged research model. Therefore, the design and methodology of this research may spark

researchers' interest.

Moreover, the findings may attract the attention of organisational leaders who are in search of improvement and excellence, as well as open up new avenues for future research by revealing the role of organisational politics in terms of its unexpected managerial consequences. In the following sections, the related literature was reviewed, and hypotheses were identified. Because employees are nested in their leaders, hypotheses were tested through hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) technique. Finally, findings and their theoretical and practical implications were discussed.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Organisational Politics

It is believed that to understand the social construct of organisations, and why employees engage in political behaviours, how employees perceive and react to organisational politics should be examined. Sometimes, some employees either achieve self-interests through the management of influence on others and the manager or achieve the organisation's objectives through informal influence processes in a way that benefits the individual as well. Mayes and Allen (1977, p. 675) identified those behaviours as organisational politics. Organisational politics is aimed at maximising the interests of oneself or a specific group through intentional influence management at the expense of others. Perceived organisational politics indicate the extent to which employees perceive that some of their colleagues engage in politics at the workplace, which promotes self-interests and results in inequality. Employees perceive organisational politics as self-serving, manipulative, immoral and unfair behaviours (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Therefore, it is in contrast with altruistic and fair behaviours. Organizationally political behaviours may be both reactive and proactive. The most commonly used tactics while engaging in organisational politics, ranging from the most frequently used to the least, are: "accusing others, casting aspersions on others, managing information, image-making, providing support for ideas, flattering others, building coalitions or alliances and close relations with important people" (Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick &

Mayes, 1979, pp. 79–80). Employees perceive organisational politics when there are much ambiguity and anxiety in the workplace. Further, employees who work at different levels of the organisation perceive organisational politics differently. A high degree of decentralisation, a wide span of control, less formalisation and a lack of leadership increase the perceived organisational politics (Basar & Basım, 2016). Employees generally react to organisational politics in one of three ways: (1) staying in the organisation but refraining from politics, (2) engaging in politics or (3) withdrawing from the organisation. When employees choose to stay in the organisation but avoid politics, they may become excessively involved in their work and improve their task efficiency. When employees choose to stay in the organisation and engage in political games, they may either succeed or fail; in that case, they can become dissatisfied with their jobs. When employees choose to withdraw but are unable to quit for economic or other reasons, they may prefer to engage in absenteeism or neglect their work (Ferris et al., 1989; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Parker, Dipboye & Jackson, 1995; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Basar & Basim, 2016; Basar & Varoglu, 2016).

2.2. Relationship Between Organizational Politics and Neglect of Work

In the organisational context, "neglect of work" refers to dissatisfied employees' passive allowance of deterioration in the organisation's condition (Rusbult et al., 1988). Neglect occurs due to employees' dissatisfaction with their work. Dissatisfaction with work may derive from factors such as mismanagement, an unethical organisational climate, organisational injustice, or inequality. When employees neglect their work, they are often late for or absent from work, reduce their effort and interest, are busy with matters unrelated to their work, make more errors and are psychologically inattentive (Farrell, 1983; Rusbult et al., 1988; Farrell & Rusbult, 1992).

How employees perceive organisational politics can determine whether it is advantageous or disadvantageous for the organisation. Employees' perceptions of organisational politics can also cause perceptions of procedural or distributional organisational injustice (Parker et al., 1995). Therefore, a high level of perceptions of

organisational politics may harm employees, who may perceive it as a threat to their well-being. When the organisation is highly political, some employees will attempt to achieve their objectives through the use of political tactics. In such a circumstance, the remaining employees will be out of the play, and will not be able to succeed unless they also take part in the political games. Unsuccess may lead employees to become dissatisfied because they will not be able to achieve their goals in these circumstances. Besides, ambiguity, lack of authority and unfair distribution of rewards and promotions may cause discomfort among employees. Eventually, the employees may lose their trust in managerial processes and the overall organisation.

Moreover, if the organisation's management allows politics, employees may even feel that they may lose what they currently have, such as their position or opportunities, because someone who lusts after their position can obtain it using political tactics. The risks presented by organisational politics may cause considerable stress and dissatisfaction among employees. Also, employees may perceive that their efforts are futile and that they will not receive the benefits they deserve due to the unjust promotions and awards. Therefore, employees may feel that the working atmosphere would be more favourable, if there was less organisational politics (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997; Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann & Birjulin, 1999; Vigoda, 2000; Karacaoğlu & Arat, 2019). Moreover, the organisation may also suffer from politics because organisational politics can threaten organisational effectiveness. As a result of organisational politics, incompetent employees may succeed and get promotions that require high levels of responsibility, knowledge, skill and ability. In this situation, personal inefficiency will likely be negatively reflected in overall organisational effectiveness (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson & Anthony, 1999). Therefore, it is anticipated that perceived organisational politics results in negative consequences for both employees and organisations. Likewise, the findings of Iscan (2005) and Miller and Nicols (2008) indicate that organisational politics cause employees to perceive organisational injustice. The findings of Huang, Chuang and Lin (2003) and Karatepe, Babakus and Yavas (2012) indicate that perceptions of organisational politics cause employee burnout. Further, Cropanzano et al. (1997) provided a

detailed explanation of why perceived organisational politics strengthens their feeling of psychological withdrawal and increases their turnover intention. The findings of Kacmar et al. (1999), Vigoda (2000), Huang et al. (2003), Iscan (2005), Miller, Rutherford and Kolodinsky (2008), Chang, Rosen and Levy (2009), Chinomona and Chinomona (2013), Yang, Treadway and Stepina (2013), Basar, Alan, Topcu, and Aksoy (2015), Basar and Basim (2016), Basar and Varoglu (2016) and Dirik and Yeloğlu (2020) indicate that perceived organisational politics results in employees' intention to quit. Moreover, it causes employees to neglect their work (Vigoda, 2000, 2001; Basar et al., 2015; Basar & Basim, 2016; Basar & Varoglu, 2016; Dirik & Yeloğlu, 2020). All of these empirical findings support the idea that employees evaluate politics in the workplace in a way that it disturbs their welfare. Thus, they react it negatively. Besides that, according to the equity theory (Adams, 1965), individuals want to be treated equally. In this regard, if individuals feel that they are paid less than their peers or if they feel that some of their peers are backed by the manager unjustly, they may feel unsatisfied. This time, individuals who perceive injustice may react negatively.

As noted earlier, employees perceive political tactics as a threat to the fairness of organisational processes and to their well-being, which harms the output/input ratio of employees in terms of the distribution of rewards and promotions, and the decision-making mechanism. Employees who engage in organisational politics can unfairly maximise their self-interest at the expense of either other employees or the entire organisation. So far, we have learned that employees react negatively when they perceive organisational politics. Therefore, depending on the findings mentioned above of empirical studies and theoretical arguments, it is anticipated that perceived organisational politics to relate to the neglect of work. Thus, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between perceived organisational politics and neglect of work.

2.3. The Role of Ethical Leadership

Studies and debates on the ethical aspect of leadership go back to the previous research on leadership and leader effectiveness. To date, many researchers have found that employees want leaders who possess moral traits, such as honesty, credibility and integrity, and can develop a code of ethics for their organisations. In the GLOBE research program, Den Hartog, House, Hanges and Ruiz-Quintanilla (1999) found that trustworthiness, honesty and integrity were among the characteristics displayed by universally endorsed outstanding leaders. On the other hand, being a loner, uncooperative, ruthless, irritable and dictatorial were attributes that were universally evaluated as impeding outstanding leadership. Further, according to Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), influential leaders should possess the qualities of honesty and integrity. They claim that leaders' words should correspond to their deeds and that they should never deceive anyone for any reason. Employees trust truthful, ethical and principled leaders. Posner and Schmidt (1992) compared the evaluations of managers from the 1980s and the 1990s on the most important values and traits of leaders. Honesty and competency were evaluated as the most highly regarded characteristics of influential leaders by both groups of managers.

Moreover, the behaviour of leaders was perceived as being the primary determinant of the ethical tone of the organisation. Dirks and Ferrin (2002) revealed that trust in the leader pays dividends in terms of both organisational and individual effectiveness. They determined several antecedents, such as organisational justice, participative decision-making and perceived organisational support, and several outcomes, such as job performance, organisational citizenship behaviours, organisational commitment and job satisfaction relating to trust in leadership. Moreover, they found that the ethical aspect of leadership was the most robust antecedent of trust in leadership.

The studies on the ethical aspect of leadership gave birth to the conceptualisation of ethical leadership. Thus, in the light of those studies, and drawing on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), Brown et al. (2005, p. 120) defined ethical leadership as a distinct construct from the leadership mentioned

above types, as the expression of normative ideal management by behaviours and social relations, and the encouragement of such management approach to individuals who follow through conversation, assistance, and deciding. Social learning theory suggests that people can learn anything by observing others' behaviours. Leaders are in a position to affect their followers. Thus, leaders may be perceived as a role model by their followers. In this respect, the social learning process can occur spontaneously. That is, employees can emulate their leaders. A reward and punishment mechanism can cause followers to realise how they should behave (Bandura, 1986). Followers perceive their leaders as reliable, as long as the leader lives and work altruistically and ethically. Ethical leaders intensify their reliability in the eyes of their followers by doing what they say and keeping their words. They attract their subordinates' attention and win their loyalty by acting and leading justly, openly, trustworthily, considerately and honestly. Thus, they constitute a model for emulation.

Moreover, they have planned and unplanned talks with their subordinates regarding workplace ethics. That way, they make their subordinates aware of ethical principles and encourage them to engage in ethical behaviours. Besides that, they determine the workplace ethical standards, award the ones who abide by them and charge the ones who do not. This also helps occur social learning. They consider the consequences of every decision that they make. Hence, they are mindful of taking just and equal decisions (Trevino et al., 2003; Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Trevino, 2006a). According to Trevino et al. (2000), ethical leaders should behave proactively by infusing their ethical principles into the organisation to create a reputation and a model for ethical conduct in the eyes of their followers, because many employees do not interact directly with their leaders. Leaders, who possess the necessary traits to be an ethical person, such as integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, do the morally right things, care for their followers and put ethical principles into action while making decisions, might assume that their followers are aware of their ethical aspect. However, many followers only know their leaders from a distance, and do not have much idea about them. Therefore, in order to provide social learning and to develop a reputation for ethical behavior, ethical leaders must act as role models for ethical

conduct. That is, leaders should inspire employees, be open to any ideas, allow employees to voice any problems unhesitatingly, set ethical standards through regular, persuasive, two-way communication, convince employees of the need for ethical values and principles, and use a reward and punishment system to hold employees responsible for the organisation's code of ethics. In this respect, it is thought that uncovering the relationships between ethical leadership, loyalty, organisational politics engaged in by employees and neglect of work may contribute to better understanding the role of ethical leaders in organisations, who are not expected to engage in and tolerate organisational politics due to their moral stance.

While loyalty is mentioned, it is meant employees' loyalty to their organisation. Therefore, loyalty refers to the extent to which employees are optimistic about organisational issues, they try to improve the conditions, hope for the continuous improvements, give support to the organisation voluntarily, engage in extra-role behaviours and encourage others for them (Rusbult et al., 1988; Farrell & Rusbult, 1992). From this point of view, it may be rational to propose that the greater the loyalty of its employees, the greater the gaining of an organisation. Today, this is in the limelight. So, what can be done to win the hearts and minds of employees? Without a doubt, loyalty is one of the consequences of discourses and deeds of leaders who possess ethical virtues and personal integrity (Reichheld, 2001). Ethical leaders impress their personnel and contribute to their loyalty to the organisation by setting an example through words and deeds, expressing normative ideal management and social relations and encouraging such management approach to individuals (Brown et al., 2005). Besides that, ethical leaders encourage followers to voice and participate in decision-making processes.

Employees can express their concerns, share their ideas and contribute to the well-being of the organisation by voicing. Thereby, they become more optimistic about their organisation through ethical conduct. In this way, they may better feel like part of the team, and so; their loyalty may improve (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Moreover, ethical leaders treat their employees fairly, impartially and in an unbiased manner. As a result of leaders' fair treatment, employees tend to engage in more extra-role behaviours and be more committed to their organisations (Dailey &

Kirk, 1992). In this way, ethical conduct results in superior employee loyalty (Tansky, Gallagher & Wetzel, 1997).

Furthermore, ethical leaders promote collective and organisational interests over self-serving ones, lead for both individual and organisational prosperity through a collective mind, value every contribution of employees and consider for their needs, wants and rights. A collective organisational mind formed by the guidance of leaders helps improve both individual and organisational welfare and strengthen employees' loyalty to the organisation (Resick et al., 2011). Because ethical leaders encourage junior managers and every employee for moral behaviours, a trickle-down effect occurs from top to bottom in a way that is adopted in all stages of the organisational hierarchy. As a consequence of this trickle-down effect, employees' loyalty to the organisation improves (Ruiz, Ruiz & Martinez, 2010).

According to Brown et al. (2005), Brown and Trevino (2006b), Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) and Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, and Salvador (2009) social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) also forms a basis to explain the outcomes of ethical leadership. Social exchange theory suggests that individuals expect the exchange of anything that they value. The exchanged goods may be either material or non-material. While tangible items, such as money, food, articles etc. constitute the material goods, intangible facts, such as prestige, esteem or acceptance, constitute the non-material goods. When individuals give something or do a favour to someone, they usually expect a favour in return intrinsically. Similarly, when they receive something or kindness, they want to repay a favour. Such expectations indicate an influence mechanism that operates between the giver and the receiver and results in changes in behaviours in proportion to the size of the profit gained. The profit equals the difference between the reward (i.e., received goods) and the cost (i.e., given goods). When the reward exceeds the cost, a profitable exchange occurs. Individuals consistently strive to increase their rewards and decrease their costs (Homans, 1958). As is seen, the social exchange theory operates on the reciprocity principle (Blau, 1964). Thus, it is expected from individuals, who are exposed to fair treatments, to reciprocate with favourable acts. Concerning this approach, researchers suggest that individuals may reciprocate with positive workplace behaviours and attitudes (i.e.,

commitment, voice, loyalty and citizenship) and avoid from harmful and/or destructive workplace behaviours (i.e., neglect of work, late or no arrivals to work, tardiness) in exchange for ethical management (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Results of empirical studies and theoretical suggestions support these approach. That is, ethical leadership produces several coveted acts and attitudes, such as employees' commitment to their organisations and trust in their managers (Zhu, May & Avolio, 2004), extra-role behaviours (Mayer et al., 2009), voice (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), job satisfaction (Brown & Trevino, 2006a) and intrinsic motivation (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog & Folger, 2010). Likewise, employees' loyalty is one of those desired outcomes of ethical leadership (Zhu et al., 2004; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Ruiz et al., 2010; Resick et al., 2011; Okan & Akyuz, 2015; Yamin & Mahasneh, 2018; Ghanbari & Abdolmaleki, 2020). Therefore, it is expected that ethical leadership to contribute to followers' loyalty to the organisation and hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between ethical leadership and employees' loyalty.

So far, ethical leadership and loyalty, as well as organisational politics and neglect of work have been defined, and their characteristics and relationships between them, have been explained. Now, it is sought to understand the importance of leadership in terms of winning the hearts and minds of employees through ethical conduct, because ethical leadership may be a cure for negativities to some extent and a source of loyalty. As a consequence of ethical leadership, employees may refrain from organisational politics because ethical leaders become an example and a role model for their followers. As employees take their leader an example, they may develop a new ethical way of working and living, because ethical leaders work and live by favouring the right and proper (Trevino et al., 2003; Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Trevino, 2006a). Moreover, as it can be remembered, ethical leaders encourage fair competition among employees (Trevione et al., 2000; Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, employees who strive for self-interests at the expense of his/her colleagues in unsavoury ways may fall from grace and lose the chance to gain the confidence of his/her leader. Thus, employees, who feel and comprehend ethical priorities of their leaders, may abstain from engaging in political games and try to get in their leader's

good books through doing a good job, as well as being diligent, fair, loyal and honest. Likewise, previous empirical findings provide support for this argument in a way that indicates the negative relationship between ethical leadership and organisational politics (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris & Zivnuska, 2011; Kacmar, Andrews, Harris & Tepper, 2013; Basar & Filizoz, 2015; Sigri & Basar, 2015; Basar, Sigri & Basim, 2018; Alam, 2019). That is why it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 3. There is a negative relationship between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics.

Similarly, ethical leaders may prevent employees' work neglect considerably too, because ethical leaders do not provide a basis for reasons of employees' work neglect, such as job dissatisfaction (Rusbult et al., 1988), psychological contract breach (Turnley & Feldman, 1999) and job burnout (Basar & Basim, 2016). Moreover, ethical leaders improve employees' well-being (Chughtai, Byrne & Flood, 2015). Because ethical leaders reward and favour employees, who succeed through a diligent, honest and fair competition, employees may not tend to neglect their work and try to excel in their expertise honestly. Besides that, ethical leaders impose a code of ethics throughout the organisation. In this way, employees who feel ethical priorities may try to internalise ethical values and try to reciprocate their leader's positive attitude with loyalty and a good job. Therefore, ethical leadership may result in work excellence but not work neglect. Only a few studies imply a negative relationship between ethical leadership and employees' work neglect (Sigri & Basar, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 4. There is a negative relationship between ethical leadership and employees' neglect of work.

Drawing on the theoretical arguments made so far on the relationships between perceived organisational politics and neglect of work, ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and ethical leadership and neglect of work, perceived organisational politics is expected to mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work. In other words, the more employees perceive ethical leadership, the less they may perceive organisational politics and the less they

may neglect their work. That is, the strength of the relationship between perceived organisational politics and neglect of work is expected to weaken due to ethical leadership. By this means, the role of ethical leadership in terms of preventing adverse consequences of organisational politics (i.e. neglect of work) may be indicated operationally. Therefore, despite the absence of previous findings, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 5. Perceived organisational politics mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work.

As discussed earlier, ethical leadership may result in loyal followers. As a consequence of their loyalty to the organisation, employees may refrain from engaging in organisational politics and neglecting their works. Loyal employees become optimistic about organisational issues, try to improve the conditions, hope for the continuous improvements, give support to the organisation voluntarily, engage in extra-role behaviours, encourage others for performing extra-role behaviours, place organisational interests before individual interests, try to improve performance, participate training activities voluntarily, invite others to work for the organisation and contribute to the formation of a collective mind (Rusbult et al., 1988; Martensen & Gronholdt, 2006; Costen & Salazar, 2011). There have been a few empirical findings or theoretical propositions that address a negative relationship between employees' loyalty and neglect of work (Rusbult et al., 1988; Turnley & Feldman 1999; Vigoda, 2001; Naus, Iterson & Roe, 2007; Si, Wei & Li, 2008) and loyalty and perceived organisational politics (Vigoda, 2001). Those findings provide support for the argument that the more ties between employees and the organisation are more robust, the fewer employees tend to engage in organisational politics and neglect their work, because loyal employees place organisation's interests before self-interests but not the adverse. Moreover, employees establish strong ties between themselves and the organisation in a way that they internalised values and characteristics of the organisation, and they feel "one" with the organisation (Van Knipenberg & Sleebos, 2006). However, employees who engage in organisational politics place individual interests before organisational interests and behave selfishly (Vigoda & Cohen, 2002). Loyal employees commit themselves to their organisations.

Employees who are highly committed to their organisations do not tend to engage in political games (Cropanzano et al., 1997; Hochwarter, Perrewe, Ferris & Guercio, 1999; Randall et al., 1999; Vigoda, 2000; Witt, Patti & Farmer, 2002; Miller et al., 2008; Chang et al., 2009; Vigoda-Gadot & Talmud, 2010) and neglect their work (Withey & Cooper, 1989; Mellahi, Budhwar & Li, 2010; Si & Li, 2012). Therefore, it is expected that ethical leadership to result in higher employee loyalty and then higher employee loyalty to prevent both organisational politics and work neglect to some extent. In line with this reasoning, it is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 6. Employees' loyalty mediates the relationships between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and ethical leadership and employees' neglect of work.

The theoretical model, which is formed in line with the hypotheses, is presented in Figure 1.
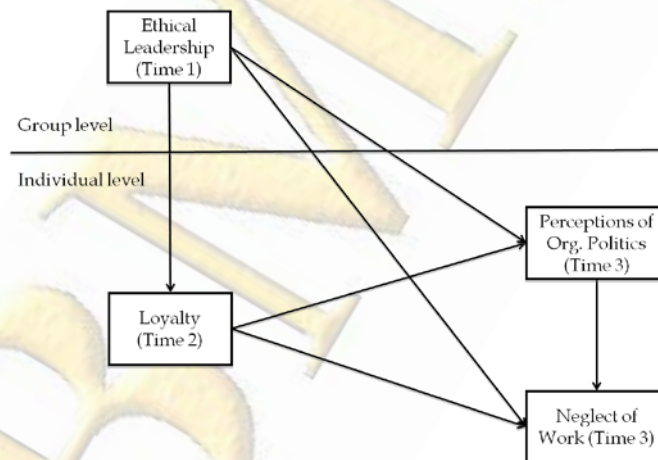
Figure 1. Theoretical Model

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design, Universe, Sample and Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted according to a time-lagged research design. The data were collected from employees of 4 different five-star hotels in Antalya, Turkey, in July 2019. Therefore, there was no need to take en ethical committee approval. This research was conducted on hotel employees because the researcher had a point of contact who had been administering tourism operations. First, permissions were obtained from hotel managers to undertake the survey. Then, electronic

questionnaire forms were delivered to each hotel's human resources department personnel, and they asked their employees through e-mails to fill them. Employees were informed beforehand about the survey by both human resources staff and the researcher, and they were asked to check their e-mail accounts frequently. For example, some posters about the survey were prepared by the researcher and posted on notice boards of employees. The data were collected in three separate periods to improve data precision and prevent problems associated with the same source response bias. At time one, only ethical leadership questionnaire, at time two, only loyalty questionnaire and at time three, only a questionnaire that consisted of mixed items of both perceptions of organisational politics and neglect of work scales were sent to employees. The objective of the survey and participants' confidentiality was addressed in the instructions section of the questionnaire forms. Two weeks time lags were determined between each data collection period.

Employees of five-star hotels in Antalya constituted the population of this research. That amount equals to a total of 124,895 employees approximately (Cetinoz & Akdag, 2015). Participation in this survey was voluntary. Participants were determined according to convenience sampling technique. Questionnaires were sent to a total of 649 employees of four different five-star hotels at time one. However, only 587 of them responded. At time two, questionnaires were sent to those who responded at time one, and 495 responses were received. At time three, questionnaires were sent to those who responded at time two, and only 431 of them returned. Finally, 13 questionnaires were eliminated due to some defects. Thus, data from a total of 418 participants were entered into the analyses. This sample size fits the criteria designated at 95% confidence level and ±5 confidence interval. On the questionnaire forms, each participant was asked to indicate the smallest work unit, of which they are a part and which was led by his/her immediate supervisor. By this means, a total of 52 workgroups, each of which was led by a specific supervisor, were identified.

Sample characteristics were as follows. One hundred and eighty of the participants (43.1%) were male, and 238 (56.9%) were female. The youngest of them was 21 years old, and the oldest was 57 (M=33.48, SD=7.10). Two hundred and thirty

of them (55%) were married, and 188 (45%) were single. Their length of tenure changed between 1 and 24 years (*M*=8.54, *SD*=4.90) and the lowest level of education was high school (*n* = 167, 40%), the highest level was postgraduate degree (n = 15, 3.6%) and the remainder of them have either an associate degree (n = 178, 42.6%) or a graduate degree (n = 58, 13.9%).

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

3.2.1. Ethical Leadership Scale

Each employee (direct report) was asked to evaluate his/her immediate supervisor in terms of ethical leadership. In other words, employees indicated the extent to which they perceived ethical leadership. Therefore, ethical leadership was measured at the group level. In this way, a total of 52 supervisors were evaluated by their direct reports. Measuring perceived ethical leadership at the group level is an appropriate method because in general, employees of the same work units share similar perceptions about leader attitudes and behaviours (Walumbwa et al., 2011). To that end, a scale created by Brown et al. (2005) and translated into Turkish by Tuna, Bircan and Yesiltas (2012) with ten items was used within one dimension. A sample item from the scale is, "He/She sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics".

3.2.2. Loyalty Scale

Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they were loyal to their organisation. For that purpose, a scale created by Rusbult et al. (1988) and translated into Turkish by Yasin (2013) with five items was used to measure participants' loyalty within one dimension. A sample item from the scale is "I generally say good things about my company even when other people criticise it."

3.2.3. Work Neglect Scale

Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they neglected their duties. Thus, a scale created by Rusbult et al. (1988) and translated into Turkish by Yaşın (2013) with six items was used to measure participants' neglect of work within

one dimension. A sample item from the scale is, "Sometimes when I do not feel like working, I will work slowly or make errors."

3.2.4. Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale

Participants' perceptions of organisational politics engaged in by their peers were measured. In this way, the extent to which employees perceived politics in the workplace was evaluated. For that purpose, a scale developed by Hochwarter, Kacmar, Perrewe, and Johnson (2003) and translated into Turkish by Akdogan and Demirtas (2014) with six items was used within one dimension. A sample item from the scale is "In my organisation, people are working behind the scenes to ensure that they get their piece of the pie".

In each data collection instrument, items were measured with a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Ascending points corresponded to the power of each item.

3.3. Data Analysis Strategy

Extant theory suggests that employees, who work in the same department or the same smallest work unit, share their leadership perceptions (Brown & Trevino, 2006b; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Thus, a high agreement may be expected between perceived ethical leadership scores of employees who work in the same unit. Indeed, each employee is nested within his/her manager (leader). This indicates the hierarchical nature of the collected data. That is why, HLM technique (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) was used to test the hypotheses.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Validity and Reliability

Because the data were collected from the employees (same source), to indicate each variable had a distinct construct, three different measurement models were created and compared in terms of model fit. Comparisons were made at the individual level. First, the original four-factor model (i.e., ethical leadership, loyalty, perceptions of organisational politics and neglect of work) was created. Second, items of ethical leadership and loyalty were mixed, and a three-factor measurement

model was created. Third, items of perceptions of organisational politics and neglect of work were mixed, and another three-factor measurement model was created. Finally, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted for each model and data collection instrument. Results of the confirmatory factor analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparisons of Measurement Models and CFA Results of Data Collection Instruments.[a]

Measurement models	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	*p*	GFI	RMSEA	RMR
1. Four factor (EL, LYL, POP, NGL)	612.77	298	-	.000	0.90	0.05	0.05
2. Three factor (EL+LYL, POP, NGL)	679.45	258	66.68	.000	0.90	0.06	0.26
3. Three factor (EL, LYL, POP+NGL)	614.75	287	1.98	.000	0.90	0.05	0.08
CFA results							
Ethical leadership	16.04	25	-	.914	0.99	0.00	0.01
Loyalty	6.46	3	-	.091	0.99	0.05	0.01
Perceptions of organizational politics	12.64	5	-	.027	0.99	0.06	0.01
Neglect of work	6.66	6	-	.353	0.99	0.01	0.01

[a] n=418, EL=Ethical leadership, LYL=Loyalty, POP=Perceptions of organizational politics, NGL=Neglect of work, CFA=Confirmatory factor analysis, $\Delta\chi^2$ values equal to the difference in comparison to the first model.

Results indicated that the first model had a better fit than the other models, which provided support for the discriminant validity of the data collection instruments. Results also indicated that conformity indices of each data collection instrument were in the acceptable range, which proved their construct validity. The Cronbach's coefficient α values were calculated to measure reliability. Results are presented in Table 2. Values proved the reliability for each measure (i.e., ethical leadership, loyalty, perceptions of organisational politics and neglect of work).

4.2. Aggregating Perceived Ethical Leadership

Perceived ethical leadership must be aggregated to analyse it at the group level. Thus, within-group agreement (James, Demaree & Wolf, 1984), ICC1 and ICC2 values were calculated. ICC1 is an intraclass correlation that shows the amount of variance in participants' ratings originating from membership to different groups. ICC2 is another intraclass correlation that shows the reliability of differences in average group scores (Bliese, 2000). For that purpose, first, a one way ANOVA test was conducted to indicate whether the average perceived ethical leadership scores

were different across groups. According to the results, mean perceived ethical leadership scores varied across groups significantly ($F(51,366) = 2.46$, $p<.001$). Then, ICC1 and ICC2 scores were calculated as 0.16 and 0.60, respectively by using the one way ANOVA results. Finally, the median within-group agreement value was calculated ($r_{wg} = 0.74$). Although ICC2 value is below acceptable cut off, which might have happened due to small group sizes with an average of 8, the grouping of perceived ethical leadership can be justified, because ICC1, ANOVA, and r_{wg} values are above acceptable thresholds (Bliese, 1998; Bliese, Halverson & Schriesheim, 2002). By this means, an aggregated perceived ethical leadership measure for 52 supervisors was created.

4.3. Test of Hypotheses

The internal consistency reliabilities, descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between each variable are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Coefficients.[a]

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Ethical leadership	3.47	1.02	(0.96)			
2. Loyalty	3.28	1.07	0.44**	(0.92)		
3. Perceptions of organizational politics	2.52	1.06	-0.48**	-0.36**	(0.95)	
4. Neglect of work	2.19	1.18	-0.53**	-0.45**	0.62**	(0.95)

[a] n=418. Values in parantheses are Cronbach's coefficient α., **$p<.01$ (2 tailed).

Significant correlation coefficients between each variable supported the rationale behind the theoretical model and hypotheses. However, they ignore the hierarchical structure of the data. Therefore, HLM was used to indicate whether hypotheses were supported. Results of HLM analyses are presented in Table 3.

Findings indicated that perceived organisational politics significantly relates to the neglect of work (γ=0.70, $p<.001$; Model 1). Also, ethical leadership significantly relates to loyalty (γ=0.58, $p<.001$; Model 2), perceived organisational politics (γ=-0.40, $p<.01$; Model 3) and neglect of work (γ=-0.35, $p<.01$; Model 4) respectively. Thus, Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 are supported. Besides, perceived organisational politics mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work (Model 5).

Table 3. HLM Results[a]

Independent variables	Dependent variables		
	LYL	**POP**	**NGL**
			Model 1
Intercept (γ_{00})			2.19 (0.05)***
POP (γ_{10})			0.70 (0.04)***
R^2			0.38***
	Model 2	*Model 3*	*Model 4*
Intercept (γ_{00})	3.26 (0.07)***	2.53 (0.06)***	2.20 (0.06)***
ETL (γ_{01})	0.58 (0.12)***	-0.40 (0.12)**	-0.35 (0.11)**
R^2	0.24***	0.17**	0.13*
			Model 5
Intercept (γ_{00})			2.19 (0.05)***
ETL (γ_{01})			-0.06 (0.10)
POP (γ_{10})			0.68 (0.07)***
R^2			0.65***
		Model 6	*Model 7*
Intercept (γ_{00})		2.51 (0.07)***	2.19 (0.06)***
LYL (γ_{10})		-0.42 (0.05)***	-0.51 (0.07)***
R^2		0.12***	0.20**
		Model 8	*Model 9*
Intercept (γ_{00})		2.52 (0.07)***	2.19 (0.06)***
ETL (γ_{01})		-0.16 (0.15)	-0.04 (0.12)
LYL (γ_{10})		-0.41 (0.06)***	-0.51 (0.07)***
R^2		0.03***	0.36**

[a]Ethical leadership is Level 2 variable (n=52) and the remaining are Level 1 variables (n=418).
EL=Ethical leadership, LYL=Loyalty, POP=Perceptions of organizational politics, NGL=Neglect of work, Values in parantheses are standard errors, *p<.05, **p<.01 , ***p<.001

Model 1= $NGL_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}*POP_{ij} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 2= $LYL_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*ETL_j + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 3= $POP_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*ETL_j + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 4= $NGL_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*ETL_j + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 5= $NGL_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*ETL_j + \gamma_{10}*POP_{ij} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 6= $POP_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}*LYL_{ij} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 7= $NGL_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{10}*LYL_{ij} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 8= $POP_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*ETL_j + \gamma_{10}*LYL_{ij} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$
Model 9= $NGL_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*ETL_j + \gamma_{10}*LYL_{ij} + u_{0j} + r_{ij}$

To be able to talk about a mediation, a process comprising four phases should be followed (Kenny, Kashy & Bolger, 1998). First, ethical leadership (independent variable) should be significantly related to neglect of work (dependent variable). As is shown in Model 4, this requirement was met. Second, ethical leadership should be significantly related to perceived organisational politics (mediating variable). As is shown in Model 3, this requirement was met as well. Third, perceived organisational

politics should be significantly related to neglect of work. As is shown in Model 1, this condition also supported. Eventually, when ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics were entered into the analysis together, the relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work should turn to insignificant or its strength should weaken. While the initial condition refers to a full mediation, the latter refers to a partial mediation. In the analysis, the relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work turned into insignificant, while the relationship between perceived organisational politics and neglect of work remained significant (γ=0.68, p<.001; Model 5). This indicates the mediating role of perceived organisational politics between ethical leadership and neglect of work. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is supported. Findings also revealed that loyalty mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics (Model 8) and ethical leadership and neglect of work (Model 9). When the results of the Models 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 examined, it can be seen that the requirements for mediation were met. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is also supported.

5. DISCUSSION

As far as it is known, this study is the first to identify and reveal the mediating roles of employees' loyalty and perceptions of organisational politics in ethical leadership process to enhance our insight in terms of how ethical leadership relates to perceived organisational politics and neglect of work. In this research, it was found that ethical leadership contributed to emloyees' loyalty. Perceived organisational politics resulted in neglect of work. Ethical leadership related negatively to organisational politics and its undesired consequences (i.e., neglect of work). Negative relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work occurred through loyalty and perceived organisational politics. Moreover, negative relationship between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics occurred through loyalty. Below, the implications of these findings were discussed.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

It is believed that the findings of this research contributed to the extant theory of leadership in four ways. First, the previously established relationships between

ethical leadership and loyalty perceived organisational politics, and neglect of work was confirmed through HLM analyses, which have better accuracy and reliability than previously conducted same level analyses, such as multiple linear regression and/or structural equational modelling because employees are nested in their leaders. It is believed that confirming those relationships through HLM analyses is vital because leadership perceptions are commonly formed in group level and employees, who constitute the same workgroup, generally share similar perceptions regarding their leader (Brown & Trevino, 2006b; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). If this fact is ignored and leadership perceptions scores of overall participants are averaged and analysed regardless of the group structure, researchers may reach misleading results. Second, by conducting such a research for the first time in Turkey, which comprises a mostly collectivist society (Hofstede, 1980), it was shown that those relationships could occur in organisations irrespective of individualist or collectivist tendencies of employees. Previously, a good number of research on the same topics were conducted in countries that comprise mostly individualist societies. Therefore, testing such relationships in a most collectivist society is essential in terms of adding more insight into the literature on leadership research to comprehend better the underlying mechanisms of ethical leadership and its consequences. Third, as far as it is known, this study is the first to identify the mediating role of employees' loyalty in the relationships between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and ethical leadership and neglect of work. These findings proved that the more employees perceive ethical leadership, the more they will be loyal, and as a consequence, the less they will engage in organisational politics and neglect their works. These results also gave more insight to understand how ethical leadership prevents organisational politics and work neglect. In other words, contributions are made to the theory by explaining the mediating mechanism between ethical leadership and its consequences, namely by showing how negative relationships between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and ethical leadership and neglect of work occurred through loyalty. Fourth, as far as it is known, this study is the first to reveal the mediating role of perceived organisational politics between ethical leadership and neglect of work. That is, it was identified that

the relationship between ethical leadership and neglect of work also occurred through perceived organisational politics, which might have helped us to understand better how ethical leadership related to neglect of work. This implies that the more employees perceive ethical leadership, the less they will engage in organisational politics and so, the less they will neglect their works. Besides, it was shown that the strength of the relationship between perceived organisational politics and neglect of work decreased slightly when ethical leadership was entered into the analysis (Model 5). This might have been an indication of the role of ethical leadership in preventing the adverse consequences of organisational politics. Identifying the mediating mechanisms in the relationships between ethical leadership and work neglect and organisational politics may pay dividends in terms of gaining more insight into the leadership phenomenon. Therefore, it is believed that this research may spark researchers' interest.

5.2. Practical Implications

It is believed that findings will help practitioners who are in search for improvement and excellence. That is, by showing the mediating role of employees' loyalty between ethical leadership and perceived organisational politics and ethical leadership and neglect of work, and proving the mediating role of perceived organisational politics between ethical leadership and neglect of work, the cruciality and the role of ethical leadership in organisations' compelling journey concerning adverse consequences of organisational politics and benefits of employees' loyalty were underlined. In this respect, findings may encourage managers to internalise ethical principals and to create an ethical culture for their organisations, because, no longer, managers will know that as long as they manage ethically, they will have loyal and fair employees who less or not intend to engage in political games and neglect their works. Besides that, based on the findings, while hiring manager candidates, organisations may prefer the ones who possess ethical virtues. Moreover, organisations may develop training programs to provide their managers and employees with ethical virtues, because findings implied that as long as organisations insist on and pay attention to ethical leadership, they may have a better functioning.

5.3. Limitations

Despite its essential findings, this study has some limitations. First, the data were collected through questionnaires, whereas interviews could have been done with participants to improve the validity of the findings. Thus, future research may involve qualitative analyses. Second, the data were collected from the same source, namely, employees. Although participants' perceptions of ethical leadership scores were aggregated to group level and time lags were determined while collecting the data, evaluations of participants may be biased. Thus, in the future, researchers may try to collect data from different sources. Third, because longitudinal research was not conducted, causal relationships could not be inferred between variables. However, there might have been causal relationships between ethical leadership and its consequences. Therefore, in the future, researchers may test the model of this study is a longitudinal research. In this way, they may reveal the potential impact of ethical leadership on loyalty, perceived organisational politics and neglect of work. Fourth, it is believed that there may be other variables that mediate and/or moderate the relationships between ethical leadership and its consequences. For that reason, in the future, researchers may enhance the research model by testing the mediating roles of other variables, such as psychological contract and psychological capital of employees and/or they may investigate the moderating role of idiosyncratic characteristics of employees, such as their core self-evaluations and/or personality types in this process. Nevertheless, it is believed that this study has some merits worth noting. For instance, hypothesized relationships were tested by using HLM, which is a more reliable technique when studying leadership. Besides, time lags were determined while collecting the data to reduce same-source bias. Moreover, the data were collected from employees of four different hotels which might have helped improve the representation of the population and the reliability of findings.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Despite growing interest in ethical leadership, research identifying the mediating mechanisms between ethical leadership and its consequences has been lacking. In this respect, it is believed that this research made significant contributions

by revealing the mechanisms that account for the effectiveness of ethical leadership in overcoming organisational politics and its undesired outcomes. That way, attention was tried to be attracted to how ethical leadership negatively relates to counterproductive employee behaviours, such as neglect of work. Thus, it is expected that findings will encourage researchers to provide more insight into the underlying mechanisms that explain how ethical leadership is effectual in preventing undesired employee behaviours and attitudes.

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