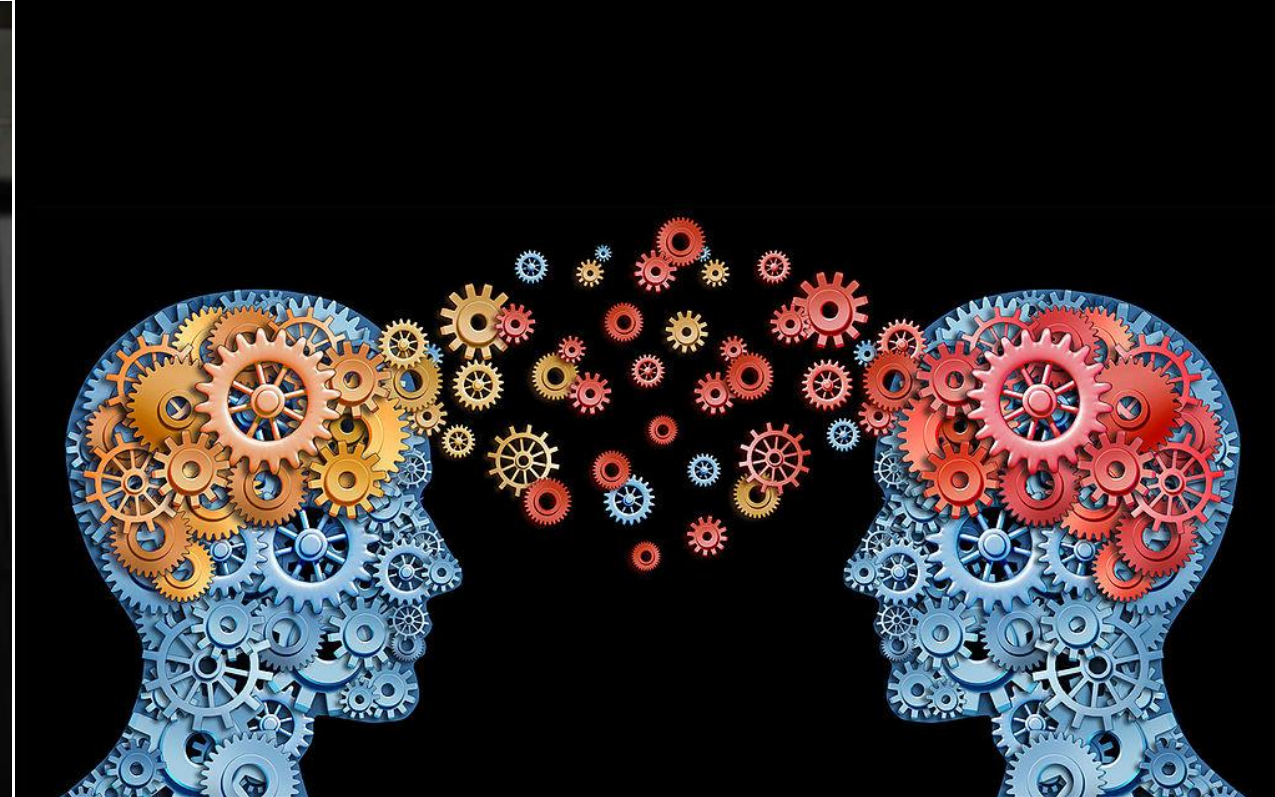# Background

Background

- Problems facing private higher education (HE) in Lebanon

Background

Background

- Lack of systematic research on leadership in HE and the dearth of publications examining leadership effectiveness in this context. (Bryman and Lilly, 2009)

- Available literature on leadership in HE addresses senior levels of the organization while much less is known at other levels (Spendlove, 2007).

- Most often leaders in HE are appointed with limited professional development or leadership training, and they are expected to learn on the job. (Fielden, 2009)

- Research on knowledge sharing in HE focuses primarily on faculty and students' perspectives.

- This research focuses on an essential yet unexplored constituent of universities, that of professional staff (directors, managers, department heads, supervisors, librarians, etc.)

Ethical Leadership:

The most widely used conceptualization is the one which has two distinct components: "moral person" and "moral manager". *Treviño, Hartman and Brown (2000)*

Moral Person:	**Moral Manager:**
(leader's behavior)	(directs followers' behavior)
- Traits	- Role Modeling
honesty, integrity, trust	visible ethical action
- Behaviors	- Rewards/Discipline
openness, concern for people, personal morality	holds people accountable for ethical conduct
- Decision-making	- Communicating
values-based, fair	conveys an "ethics/values" message

Ethical Climate

Organizational climate: 'a set of characteristics that:

(a) describe the organization and distinguish it from other organizations

(b) are relatively enduring over time

(c) influence the behaviour of people in the organization' (Forehand and Von Haller, 1964).

It forms the atmosphere in which members help, reward, restrain, and perceive each other.

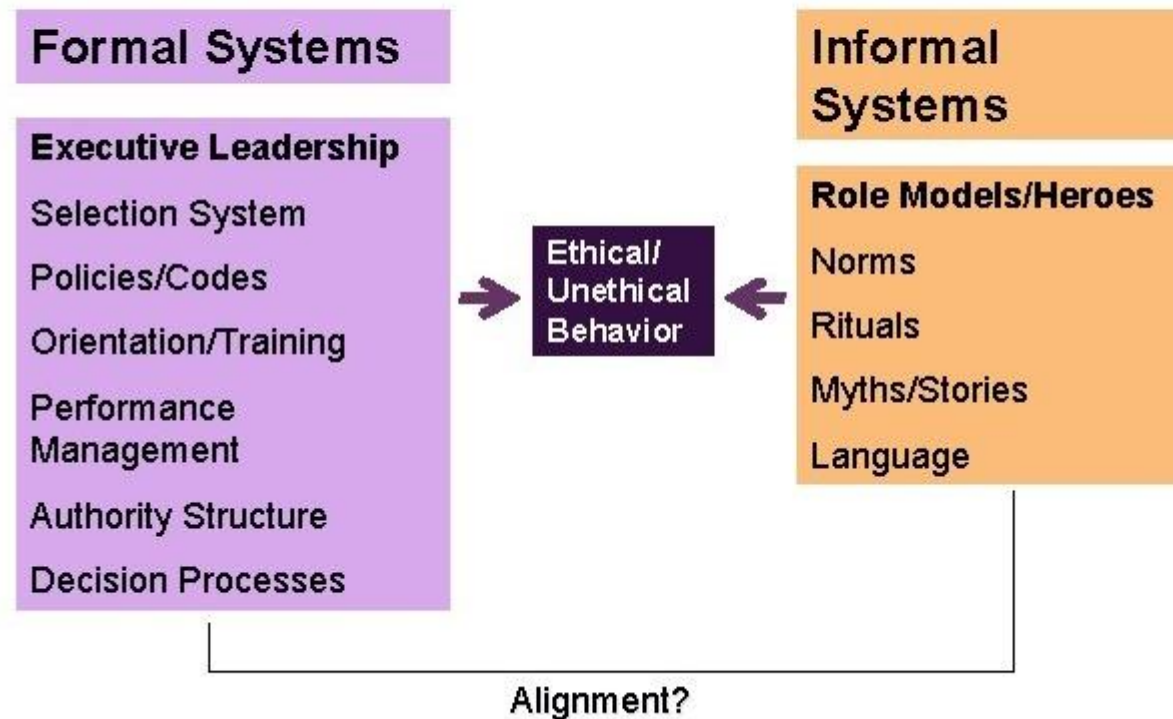An *ethical* climate, on the other hand, refers to a subset of the broader organizational climate.

A widely accepted definition of an ethical climate is 'the prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have an ethical content'. Victor and Cullen (1988, p.101)

Ethical Climate:

A new conceptualization of the ethical climate based on Treviño and Nelson's (2017) Multisystem Ethical Culture Framework and covers the six formal systems.
*(Kuenzi, Mayer and Greenbaum, 2020)*

Ethical Culture: A Multisystem Approach

Formal Systems

Executive Leadership

Selection System

Policies/Codes

Orientation/Training

Performance Management

Authority Structure

Decision Processes

Ethical/Unethical Behavior

Informal Systems

Role Models/Heroes

Norms

Rituals
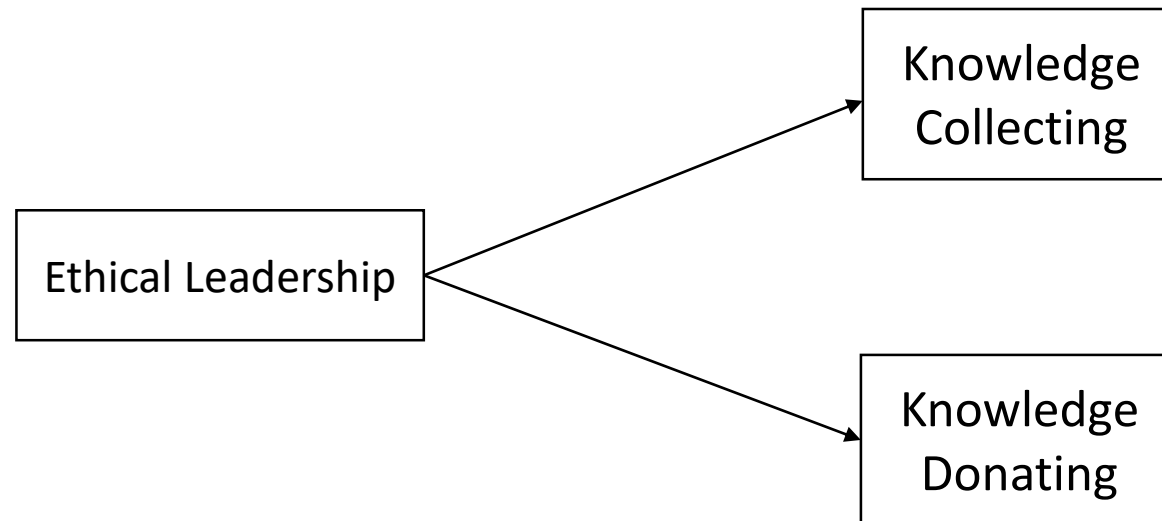
Myths/Stories

Language

Alignment?

Knowledge Sharing

- Every act of knowledge sharing is made up of both donating (providing) knowledge and collecting (obtaining) knowledge *(Van Den Hoof and De Ridder, 2004).*

- Consistent with this distinction, this paper labels the bidirectional process of knowledge sharing as:

  - Knowledge donating, actively providing others with one's personal knowledge and skills.
  - Knowledge collecting, actively consulting others to obtain from them the knowledge and skills they have.
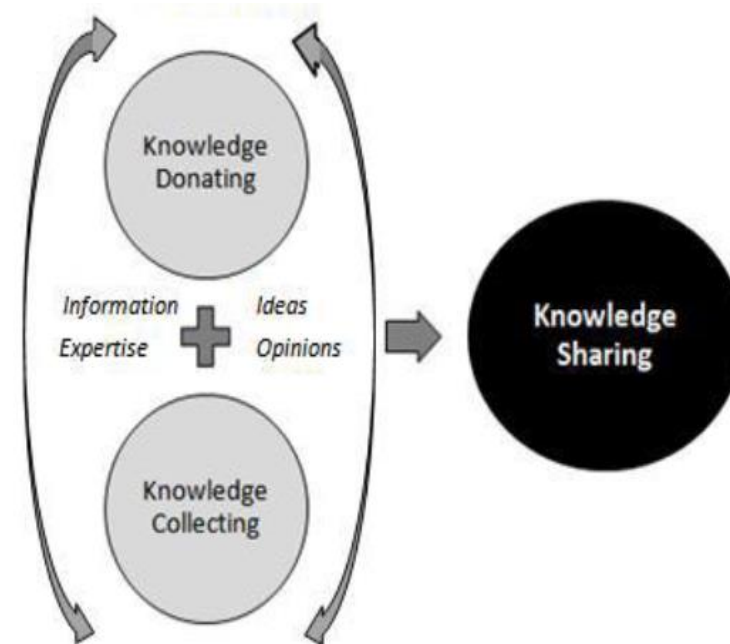
Ethical Leadership and Employee Knowledge Sharing

- Ethical leadership is strongly represented by morality and desirable behaviours including fair treatment and building trust among exchange parties (Le and Lei, 2018) which evidently promote knowledge sharing and provide the motivation and opportunities to do so.

- Ethical leaders facilitate knowledge sharing through enforcing policies that underscore morality in the workplace including fair rewards, ethical decision-making practices, and applicable codes of ethics (Bock et al., 2005).

```
                                        ┌─────────────┐
                                        │  Knowledge  │
                                   ┌───▶ │ Collecting  │
                                   │    └─────────────┘
┌──────────────────┐              │
│ Ethical Leadership│─────────────┤
└──────────────────┘              │
                                   │    ┌─────────────┐
                                   └───▶ │  Knowledge  │
                                        │  Donating   │
                                        └─────────────┘
```

Hypotheses

H1. Ethical leadership has a positive association with employee knowledge collecting in higher education institutions.

H2. Ethical leadership has a positive association with employee knowledge donating in higher education institutions.

Ethical Leadership and Ethical Climate

Employees learn what behaviour is expected of them through their leaders' enforcement of ethical standards and discipline. Top managers set the strategic goals while ethical leaders interpret and implement them (Zohar & Luria, 2005).

Ethical leaders influence several areas that make up the ethical climate. For example:

-They look for high moral standards when recruiting new employees
-Establish ethics training and clarify what behaviours are acceptable (Brown & Mitchell, 2010)
-Discuss policies and codes pertaining to organizational ethics with their employees and emphasize the ethical means to reach goals over end results (Brown et al., 2005).

Ethical Leadership → Ethical Climate
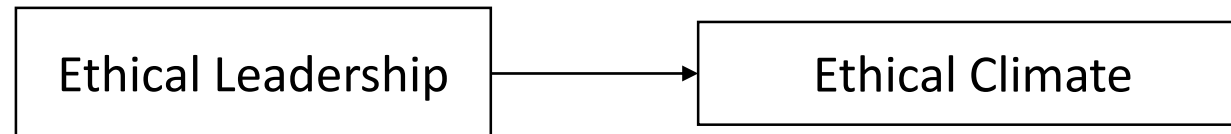
Ethical Climate and Employee Knowledge Sharing Behaviour

- Ethical climates significantly reduce employees' self-interest and build cooperation, compassion, and trust (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Victor & Cullen, 1988).

- Ethical climates can induce ethical behaviour (Deshpande & Joseph, 2009; Lu & Lin, 2014).

- Employees interpret their observations of the ethical climate as the distinctive way ethics operate 'around here' and shape their behaviour respectively.
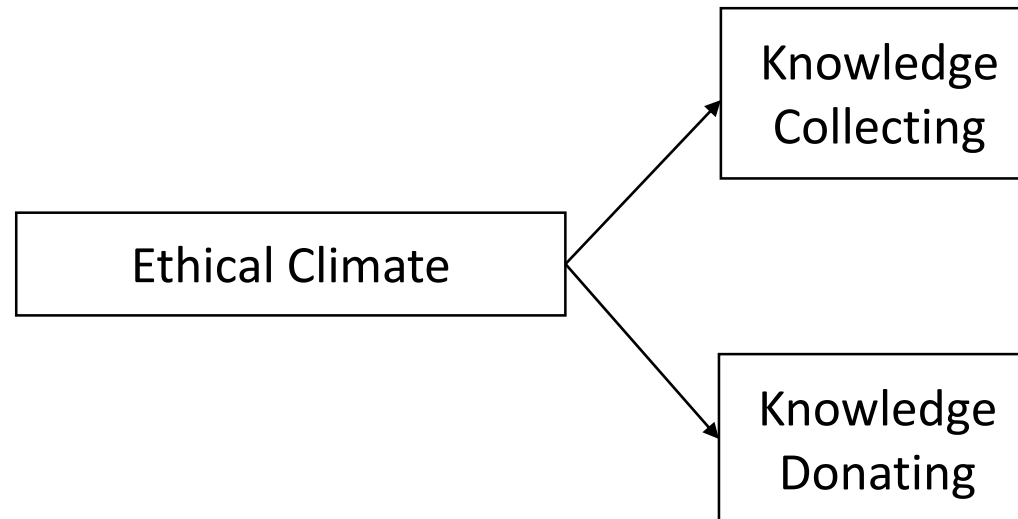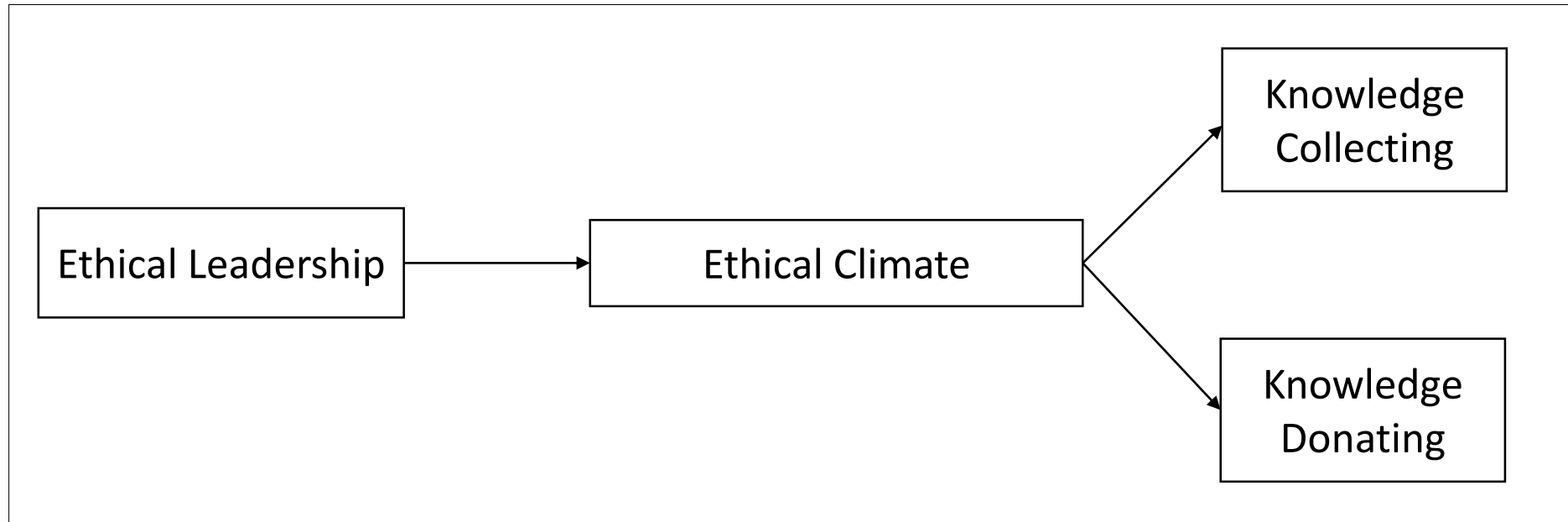
Hypotheses

H3. The ethical climate mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee knowledge collecting in higher education institutions.

H4. The ethical climate mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and employee knowledge donating in higher education institutions.

Conceptual Model

Methods

N= 585 academic and professional staff working in 9 private HEIs in Lebanon.

The questionnaire included demographic questions (age, gender, education, position (academic, non-academic/professional, both) and items from the verified measurement scales: **Ethical Leadership Scale**, **Ethical Organizational Climate**, **Knowledge Sharing.**

Control variables: age, gender, education and university ID. The university ID was included in the control variables to account for the university-specific context.

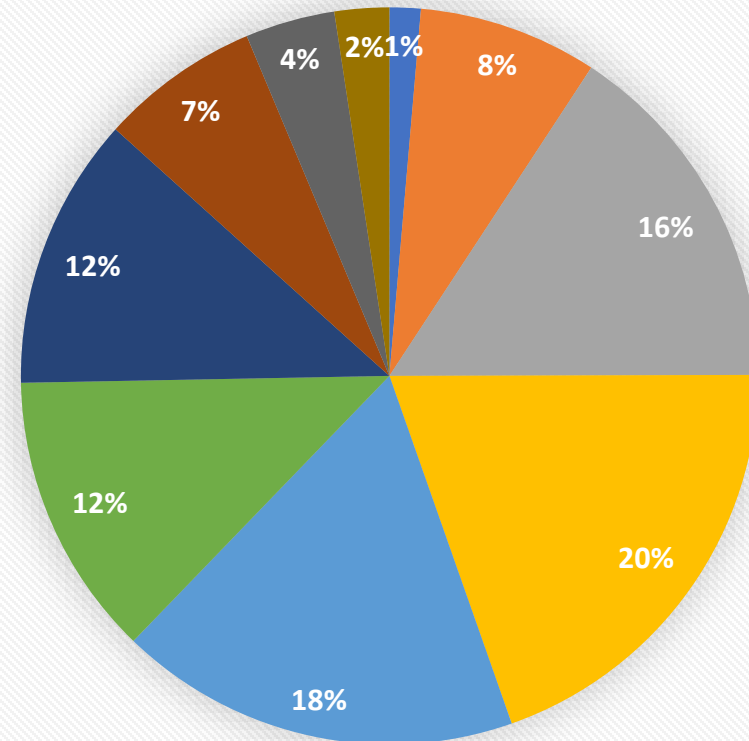Hypotheses were tested using hierarchical multiple regression and Hayes Process Macro.

Respondents' Profile
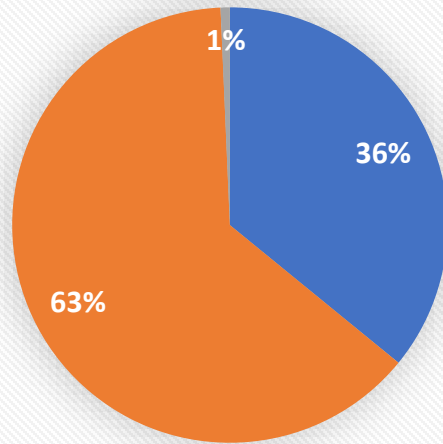
Respondents' Profile

Education
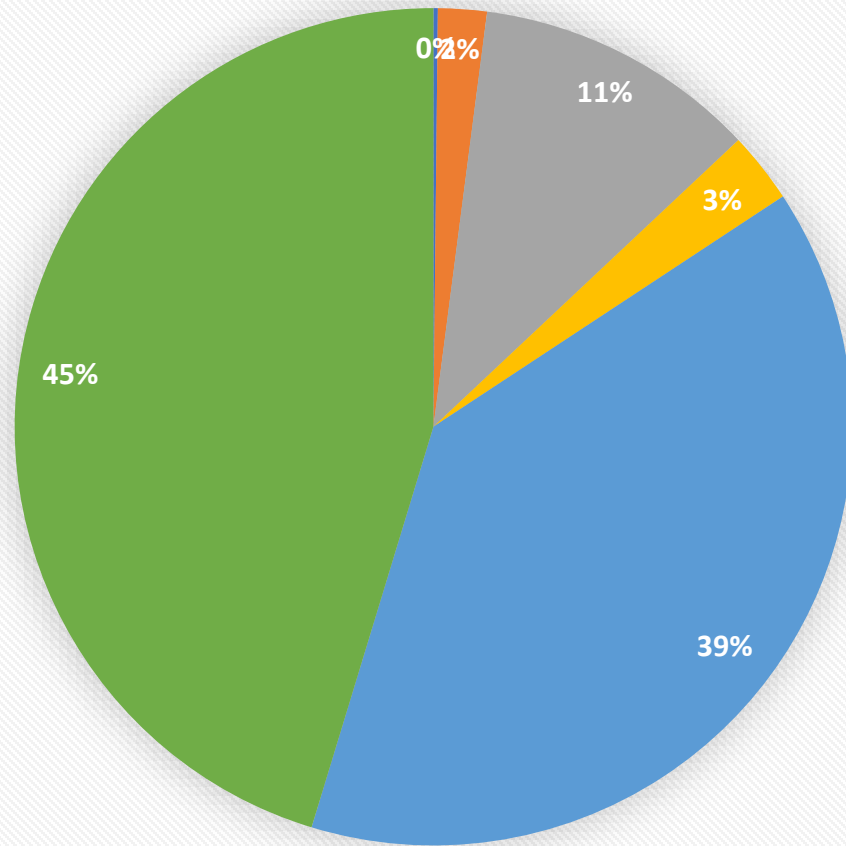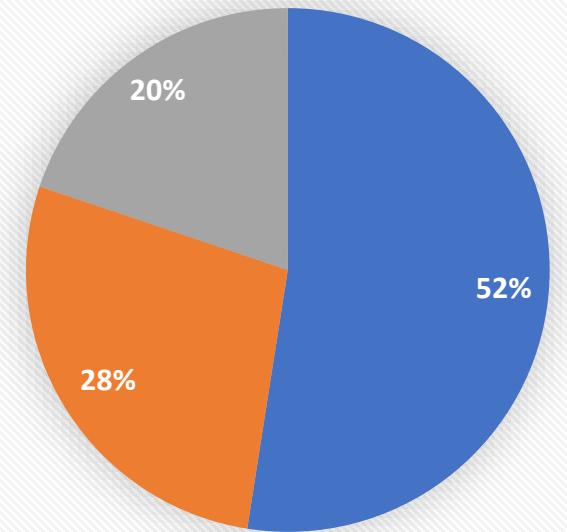
- High School
- Technical/Vocational Degree
- Bachelor's
- Postgraduate (Non-Master's)
- Master's
- Doctorate

0% 2% 11% 3% 39% 45%

Position

- Academic — 52%
- Non-academic — 28%
- Both — 20%

Respondents' Profile

Hypotheses Testing: H1

Hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge collecting.

Control variables were included in step I of the analyses and explained 0.18% of the total variance in knowledge collecting. The model was found to be statistically insignificant with $F_{(12,572)} = 0.873$, $p = .574$.

Ethical leadership was entered in step II and the total variance explained was 11.1% with $F_{(13,571)} = 5.506$, $p = .000$.

Ethical leadership thus explained an additional 9.3% of the variance (ΔR^2) in knowledge collecting after controlling for age, gender, education, and university.

The analysis indicated that ethical leadership is a statistically significant predictor (**β = .311, p = .000**) of knowledge collecting. Therefore, *hypothesis H1 was supported*.

Hypotheses Testing: H2

Hierarchical multiple regression was also conducted to examine the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge donating.

Control variables were included in step I of the analyses and explained 0.28% of the total variance in knowledge donating. The model was found to be statistically insignificant with $F_{(12,572)} = 1.380$, $p = .171$.

Ethical leadership was entered in step II and the total variance explained was 7.0% with $F_{(13,571)} = 3.324$, $p = .000$.

Ethical leadership thus explained an additional 4.2% of the variance ($\Delta R2$) in knowledge donating after controlling for age, gender, education, and university.

The analysis indicated that ethical leadership is a statistically significant predictor (**β = .209, p = .000**) of knowledge donating. Therefore, *hypothesis H2 was supported*.

Hypotheses Testing: H1 and H2
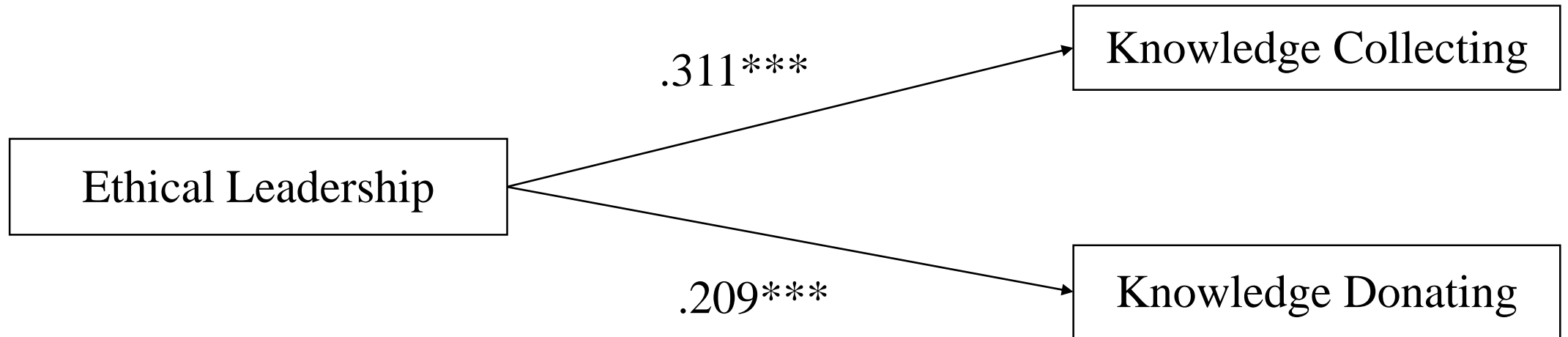
Hypotheses Testing: H3

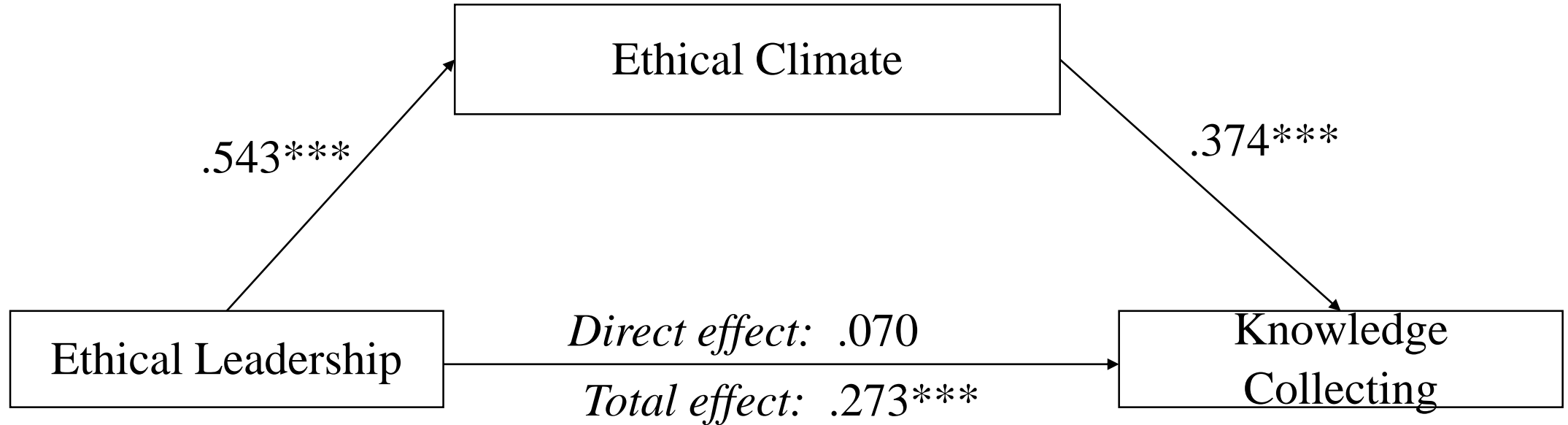Comparing the total effect of EL on KC (B = .273, p < .001) with the direct effect (B = .070, p > .05), it is clear that the direct effect of EL has become lower and insignificant 95% CI [-.0135, .1535] after controlling for the effect of EC which suggests full mediation.

Besides, the bootstrapping analyses showed that the indirect effect of EL on KC via EC was significant **.20**, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero (CI = [.1369, .2701]). Thus, *hypothesis H3 was supported*.

Mediation results	B	SE B	t	Sig.	LLCI 95%	ULCI 95%
EL → EC → KC						
Total Effect	.2728	.0352	7.7467	.000	.2036	.3419
Direct Effect	.0700	.0425	1.6457	.1004	-.0135	.1535
	B	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Indirect Effect	.2028	.0340	.1369	.2701		

Hypothesis Testing: H3

Ethical Climate

.543***

.374***

Ethical Leadership

Direct effect: .070
Total effect: .273***

Knowledge Collecting

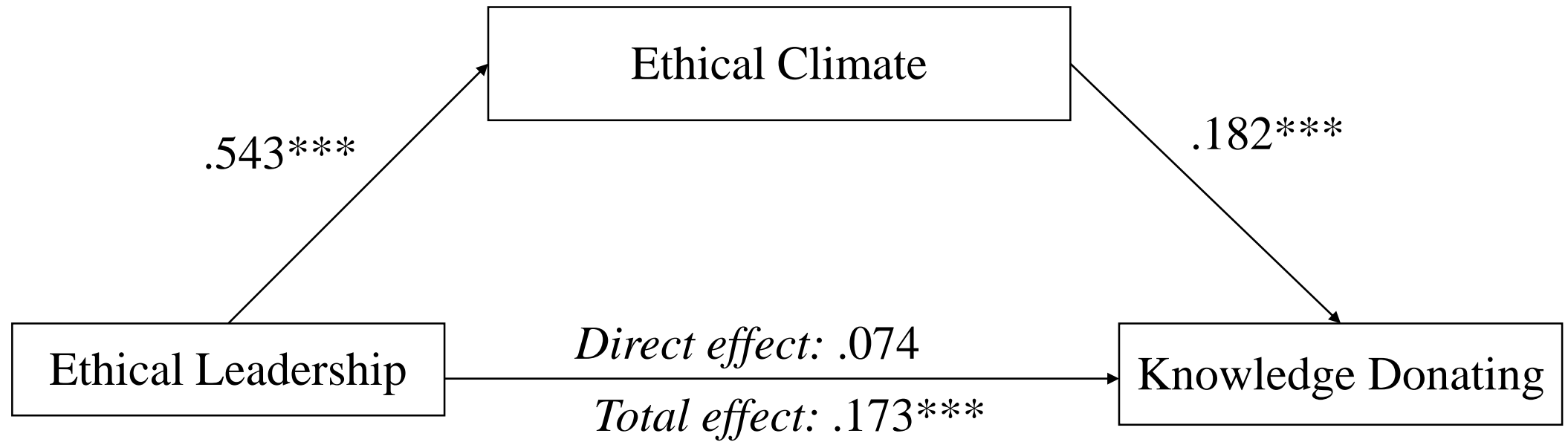| Mediation results	B	SE B	t	Sig.	LLCI 95%	ULCI 95%
EL → EC → KC						
Total Effect	.2728	.0352	7.7467	.000	.2036	.3419
Direct Effect	.0700	.0425	1.6457	.1004	-.0135	.1535
	B	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Indirect Effect	**.2028**	.0340	.1369	.2701		

Hypotheses Testing: H4

Comparing the total effect of EL on KD (B = .173, p < .001) with the direct effect (B = .074, p > .05), we find that the direct effect of EL has become lower and insignificant 95% CI [-.0095, .1583] after controlling for the effect of the EC which suggests full mediation.

Besides, the bootstrapping analyses showed that the indirect effect of EL on KD via EC was significant **.099**, and the 95% confidence interval did not contain zero (CI = [.0421, .1576]). Thus, *hypothesis H4 was supported.*

Mediation results	B	SE B	t	Sig.	LLCI 95%	ULCI 95%
EL → EC → KD						
Total Effect	.1734	.0340	5.0921	.000	.1065	.2403
Direct Effect	.0744	.0427	1.7415	.0821	-.0095	.1583
	B	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Indirect Effect	.0990	.0296	.0421	.1576		

Hypotheses Testing: H4

Mediation results	B	SE B	t	Sig.	LLCI 95%	ULCI 95%
EL → EC → KD						
Total Effect	.1734	.0340	5.0921	.000	.1065	.2403
Direct Effect	.0744	.0427	1.7415	.0821	-.0095	.1583
	B	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Indirect Effect	**.0990**	.0296	.0421	.1576		

Results

-Statistical analysis supported the proposed hypotheses.

-Ethical Leadership was found to positively influence knowledge collecting

-Ethical Leadership was found to positively influence knowledge donating.

-Ethical Climate was found to fully mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge collecting.

-Ethical Climate was found to fully mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and knowledge donating.

Discussion

Managerial Implications

Ethical Leadership

- Under ethical leadership, employees overcome their fear of losing proprietorship to their knowledge and are motivated to take what otherwise would be considered risky steps.

- Ethical leadership in HEIs not only promotes employee knowledge sharing directly, but also indirectly through the mediating effect of the ethical climate which has direct implications for policies that govern the sharing of knowledge in the institution.

- HEIs should allocate considerable effort to developing ethical leaders as well as constructing and maintaining an unchanging ethical climate.

Discussion

Managerial Implications

Recruitment

- HEIs should strive to hire ethical leaders who, as the findings imply, have a big role in promoting knowledge sharing behaviour.

- Tools that assess integrity, morality, and empathy can be integrated in the hiring process. Examples include:
  - Tests of integrity in the form of case studies where a given department is assumed to undoubtedly fail unless urgent, yet unethical actions are taken. How this dilemma is addressed by the candidates can raise many flags.
  - Structured interviews that tap into the moral person and moral manager aspects of the interviewee.

Discussion

Managerial Implications

Training

- Training and mentorship which can be addressed to different employees in the institution according to their unique needs.

- Training should target:
  - The moral manager aspect through raising awareness on the importance of ethical practices communicating values to subordinates thus indirectly serving as ethical role models to others.
  - The moral person of the ethical leader through highlighting the implications of justice when using reward and punishment as well as the importance of trustworthiness, honesty, and employee voice.

- Training needs to be integrated in all performance reviews which should also document any instances of malpractice that are normally overlooked as time passes.

Discussion

Managerial Implications

Policies

- Policies that relate to recruitment and promotion should clearly state that ethical characteristics must take priority when hiring leaders thus preventing decisions that are biased towards skills and experience.

- Policies and procedures that emphasize the value of being an ethical employee can then be devised and enforced, ultimately producing a highly transparent system.

- These policies should also clarify the course of action in case of employee misconduct such that the values of the institution and those of the candidate are always aligned.

Discussion

Managerial Implications

Ethical Climate

- HEIs need to regularly incorporate ethical values in their culture through providing the necessary conditions that establish a strong ethical climate.

- Institutions can erect a dedicated office that focuses on this undertaking, thereby sending a clear message to leaders and followers alike about the seriousness of ethics.

- Moreover, such a tangible office strengthens perceptions of the ethical climate which is more effective than sponsoring an idea that, at best, remains abstract.

Originality

- The study explored the direct relationship between ethical leadership and employee knowledge sharing processes (knowledge collecting and knowledge donating) in the context of higher education institutions.

- The study emphasized the importance of having leaders at all levels of the organization who are highly ethical and can influence employee outcomes.

- The study also investigated knowledge sharing from a novel perspective, distinguishing between its two processes of knowledge donating and knowledge collecting.

- The research highlighted the significant function that the ethical climate plays in mediating the relationship.

- It subsequently underscored the role of the institution in maintaining the appropriate climate for leaders to influence the knowledge sharing behaviour of employees, besides the leaders' long-held responsibility in producing the desired change.

Research Limitations

- Although the data was collected from a wide number of HEIs in Lebanon, the study is still cross-sectional. The author strongly encourages future researchers to adopt a longitudinal design that can better estimate causal relationships in the research model.

- The survey was administered to HEIs in Lebanon, limiting the applicability of the findings in other research contexts.

- The survey used close ended questions which cannot reveal the motivations behind the answers. Future research should consider investigating the motivations behind the respondents' answers.

- The survey method might be subject to common method bias resulting from self-report questions (knowledge sharing questions).

Thank you

Questions?