University of Worcester

Ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman

**Thesis Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

University of Worcester

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2022

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ABSTRACT

The thesis offers a deeper understanding of ethical leadership from an indigenous lens to explain leadership ethics beyond Western contexts by exploring the various experiences and perceptions of Omani leaders and employees in the Omani oil sector. Although ethical leadership has become one of the most critical topics, there is a significant concern which has been highlighted by many researchers that the majority of ethical leadership literature mainly represents the Western view and fails to conceptualise and measure ethical leadership cross-culturally. Exploring ethical leadership through an indigenous perspective addresses a critical issue that is rarely examined throughout the leadership literature, which is the specification of the relevant norms for ethical leadership or identifying normative moral foundations underlying ethical leadership theories. From the normative cultural stance, the specialised studies which investigate the relationships among societal culture, leadership, and organisational practices, such as GLOBE Project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness project) (House et al., 2004) and Hofstede's framework (Hofstede, 1980) reveals different views on what is viewed as ethical leadership in different cultures. Hence, these residual concerns regarding deep differences in cultural outlooks have led to the emergence of interest in developing indigenous theories to explain the ethics of leadership beyond Western contexts. The imperative here is for a culturally coherent ethical discourse that is likely to be based on the local values and norms of each culture. Against this backdrop, this research has selected Oman as the context for the study due to its predominant cultural context. The Omani cultural context is influenced by two main forces: Islamic religion and social norms, including tribal traditions, customs, and values that affect perceptions of local contextual configurations on ethical leadership.

An exploratory qualitative study was undertaken using semi-structured interviews. Twenty-seven were conducted within three leading companies in the Omani oil sector with managers and employees from three leading companies in the Omani oil sector. These included nine interviewees at the top management level, nine at the middle management level, and nine employees. By utilising data

collected from participants, this study developed a conceptual model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. This model underlines the value of exploring ethical leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon from within the context of cultural and social conventions in Oman, emphasising the significance of understanding the culture and context of ethical leadership and acknowledging its standing within its environment. That is, understanding ethical leadership is incomplete without accounting for its social and local context because that local ethical assumptions, societal values, traditions and religious beliefs influence interpretations of ethical leadership. The study yields a number of contributions. This study emphasises the significance of understanding the culture and context of ethical leadership and acknowledging its standing within its environment by suggesting that local values affect perceptions of ethical leadership, and leaders' morality can influence their ethical leadership. It also demonstrates that by moving beyond Western cultures, in some contexts, local values related to religious beliefs work as normative ethical foundations.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Allah, the Almighty, for giving me the strength, patience and inspiration to complete this study.

A special word of thanks and sincere appreciation is extended to my supervisory team Dr Scott Andrews, Dr Catharine Ross, and Dr Sa'ad Ali, for their continuous guidance, valuable advice, support and valuable insights throughout the research and writing-up process of my PhD. I am deeply indebted for their genuine consideration, understanding and encouragement that have kept me positive, focused and motivated whenever I faced difficulties and hard times throughout this study. Without their guidance, encouragement and direction, this thesis could not have been completed.

My gratitude and thanks to the Twenty-seven participants of this study for providing their valuable time and honest input.

On a personal note, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my mother for her best wishes, prayers, and emotional support always staying with me. My lifelong indebtedness and deepest gratitude go to my beloved wife Buthaina, for her love, ultimate support and encouragement whenever things got tough for me. My deepest thanks to my two little angels Sjood and Trteel , whom I hope forgive me as I have been busy all the time working on this thesis.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my father's soul, who left this world and remained my role model in life.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Research Gap

Recently, the subject of ethical leadership has provoked the interest of both scholars and practitioners due to the growing number of scandals being attributed to misconduct among senior leaders in modern-day businesses (Suifan et al., 2020). Also, due to raising the interest in human-centric research in work environments such as ethics, value, social justice, and equality (Karaca, 2020). Over the last few years, leadership practices have shown different forms of unethical behaviour reflecting extreme images of ethical degeneration, such as selfishness, self-indulgence, megalomania, disturbed psyches and occasionally evil (Wart, 2014). It is not surprising to hear about ethical scandals topping newscasts causing global waves of dissatisfaction (DeConinck, 2015). Several well-known companies' reputations have recently been sullied, and their share prices have been affected due to their leaders' unethical behaviour. The examples of this are many, Samsung's bribery and Uber's harassment allegations, or Facebook's privacy breach; more often than not, the first accused of these scandalous headlines are leaders of these companies (Suifan et al., 2020). This supports what Ciulla (2005) claimed that the successes of the business and sustainable survival of the organisation require embedding ethics in the heart of the leadership.

Thereby, the concept of ethical leadership has captured the interest and attention of a wide range of scholars and professionals, generating multiple definitions, conceptualisations and empirical measurements of ethical leadership (Shakeel et al., 2020). This continued diversity ultimately resulted in several theories that are concerned with ethical leadership, such as transformational (Bass,1985; Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns 1978; Burns, 2003), authentic (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; George, 2003; Luthans and Avolio, 2003), servant (Greenleaf, 2002; Laub 1999; Liden et al.'s 2008), and ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005).

However, with the development of ethical leadership literature, the concept of ethical leadership has not been addressed clearly and has received some criticisms from scholars (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Wart, 2014). One of these criticisms that is research on ethical leadership has been largely based on Western philosophical traditions and has tended to focus on Western corporate experiences (Yuan et al., 2021). There is a significant concern which has been highlighted by many researchers that the majority of ethical leadership literature mainly represents the Western view and fails to conceptualize and measure ethical leadership cross-culturally (e.g., Brown and Treviño, 2006; Mihelič and Lipičnik, 2010; Resick et al., 2011). The specialised studies which investigate the relationships among societal culture, leadership, and organisational practices such as GLOBE Project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness project) reveals different views on what is viewed as ethical leadership in different cultures (Dorfman et al., 2012). Hence, these residual concerns regarding deep differences in cultural outlooks, have led to the emergence of interest in developing indigenous theories to explain the ethics of leadership beyond Western contexts. The imperative there, is for a culturally coherent ethical discourse that is likely to be based on local values and norms of each culture. This call has been raised by Sigurjonsson et al. (2022) and Yuan et al. (2022), aligning with several calls that have been raised previously for a deeper understanding of culturally-specific expectations for ethical leadership and behavioural ethics across culture (Brown and Mitchell, 2010; Ko et al., 2018; Resick et al., 2011; Zhu et al., 2019).

Exploring ethical leadership through an indigenous perspective addresses a critical issue that is rarely examined throughout the leadership literature, which is the specification of the relevant norms for ethical leadership or identifying normative moral foundations underlying ethical leadership theories (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2017; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). Flanigan (2018) and Price (2018) argue that ethical leadership theories neglect to actively engage with the moral foundations of ethical leadership, demonstrating that scholars do not develop ethical arguments to justify their assertions about ethical leadership. The lack of normative

approaches in ethical leadership literature makes ethical leadership theories as vague constructs as they do not specify any particular norms ethical leaders can refer to (Eisenbeiss, 2012). Ethics is bound up with the normative question of 'what ought one to do (Gibson, 2022). Therefore, anchoring ethical leadership to respective moral foundations affords opportunities to prevent ethical relativism and clarify inclusion and exclusion criteria for ethical leadership's constituent content (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Lemoine et al., 2019). Bellah (1983, p. 373) confirms that "Without a reference point in the tradition of ethical reflection, the very categories of social thought would be empty." Consequently, several calls have been raised for more collaboration between normative and descriptive approaches in ethics research and demanded specification of the relevant norms for ethical leadership (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2018; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019).

Moral normative foundations take many forms, such as religion, culturally-determined cultural norms and ethics theories, or moral philosophies. From a normative philosophical stance, scholars (e.g. Flanigan, 2018; Gibson, 2022; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019) assume that the moral contents of ethical leadership theories reflect the theoretical origins and moral foundations proposed by the moral philosophy literature (deontology, virtue ethics, and consequentialism). For example, the moral contents of authentic leadership, which emphasise self-awareness and moral courage (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), are consonant with the most critical elements of the virtue ethics approach. The moral contents of ethical leadership (Brown et al.'s Model), which focus on norms and standards, align with deontology's core precepts (compliance). The moral contents of servant leadership, which focus on stakeholder outcomes (Greenleaf, 2002), are congruent with consequentialist moral theory (proper ends). However, Flanigan (2018), Gibson (2022), Price (2018) and Lemoine et al. (2019) argue that social scientists in leadership studies use the tools of moral philosophy without engaging with relevant theoretical considerations or holding their arguments to standards of philosophical rigour and validity. The moral moorings (means, ends, virtues) or (deontology, virtue ethics, and consequentialism)

address and resolve issues in the empirical ethical leadership literature as well as introduce opportunities to examine the fit among moral approaches to ethical leadership theories and develop a more refined understanding of their joint impact on organisational and follower effectiveness (Lemoine et al., 2019). Nevertheless, even these moral foundations raise several tensions related to the essentialist concept of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership theories that embrace a specific ethical perspective might be seen as unethical based on another perspective. But also, even within one perspective, there may be differences, for example, as to which virtues are relevant; which rules should be applied. In addition, although the three moral moorings have implicitly existed in various forms across different cultures throughout history (Shafer-Landau, 2012), the implicit cultural system beliefs and assumptions in each culture (e.g., religious or social norms beliefs) around what is right and wrong represent a challenge or might diminish the effects of moral philosophy influence. Opposing moral cultural system beliefs and assumptions by adapting a certain form of moral philosophy may even lead to counterproductive effects, suggesting that an ethical leadership approach is undesirable.

From the normative cultural stance, it can be argued that ethical leadership is a universal phenomenon but one which is contingent upon cultural norms and religious values because the concept of "ethics" itself is shaped by societies, religions and cultures (Ko et al., 2018). Undoubtedly ethics is a universal phenomenon as ethical values such as integrity, honesty, fairness, justice, credibility, and truthfulness have existed in every society and civilisation. However, one should not overlook the fact that each society and civilisation have their ethics and beliefs, which correspond to the nature of the religious norms and its held culture and beliefs (Ali and Al- Owaihan 2008). For example, what is perceived as ethical in the one cultural context might be perceived as unethical elsewhere. This does not mean that some cultures are better or less ethical than others, but that each culture has its ethical norms and the characteristic way to perceive and judge the multiple dimensions of a particular issue (Hooker,2009). Culture represents the shared learned meanings, norms, common values, behaviours, and lifestyles of people that have transmitted and shared the collective experience across generations in a particular

society (Dwairy, 2019). Thus, it guides leaders on how to behave and manage their followers in an ethical way according to that culture. Moreover, at the same time, followers' responses to a particular leadership model are highly dependent on their values, which are basically rooted in religion and national culture (House et al. 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that culture enhances the perceptions of ethical leadership when they are matched with the default culturally-determined cultural norms and beliefs (Resick et al., 2011).

It is suggested that the solid cultural beliefs of leaders and employees in some cultural contexts seem to significantly impact shaping views of ethical leadership. For example, Schneider (2003) reveals that the perceptions of the ethical appropriateness of practices such as whistle-blowing are culturally bound and differ across cultures. Resick et al. (2006) find that the characteristics of ethical leadership are universally perceived as a facilitator of outstanding leadership across cultures; however, significant variation lies in the degree of endorsement and emphasis of specific attributes. In a follow-up study, Resick et al. (2009) reveal that specific societal values such as institutional collectivism tends to be an influential factor of people's endorsement of ethical leadership. The study by Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) points toward a value-based understanding of ethical leadership contrasting to previous studies on ethical leadership (e.g., Brown et al., 2005; Brown and Treviño, 2006), which place more emphasis on the importance of compliance with organisational rules and regulations (Lemoine et al., 2019). However, existing studies in ethical leadership across cultures, such as those explored by (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014; Resick et al., 2006, 2009; Zhu et al., 2019), are built on an understanding of ethical leadership from a Western perspective (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014; Resick et al., 2011). They primarily rest on general and classic arguments of cultural differences and tend to endorse ethical leadership universally, ignoring cultural and religious normative foundations in each culture.

The cultural and religious normative foundations in some cultures significantly influence what is perceived as ethical. Although cultural and religious values are implicitly embedded in ethical leadership literature and have shaped western thinking around ethical leadership, the degrees to which

such cultural and religious values impact ethics vary from culture to culture. For example, the idea that religion is a precondition for morality is emotively widespread and deeply ingrained (Tongerenet, al., 2021). In a Global survey conducted by Pew Research Centre (2020), nearly in every country surveyed, 45% of respondents say it is necessary to believe in God to be moral and have good values. This attitude is farther prevalent in Muslim countries as Muslims around the world overwhelmingly agree that in order for a person to be moral, he or she must believe in God (Pew Research Center, 2013). Muslims in Eastern societies consider religious, moral normative foundations as ideals about how societies could and should function (Ali, 2011). Islam for Muslims is not only a religion but a comprehensive ideology that provides the organising structure of meaning for all facets of human existence and life, including political, social and cultural (Al-Araimi, 2012). This significance of considering a religious perspective on leadership stems from the fact that religion in Eastern societies, particularly Muslim societies, is conceived as an "ultimate concern" and positioned above other values' systems, logic, or orders of worth (Ali, 2011; Gümüsay,2019, Tillich, 1957). In such societies, people prefer to hold onto their deeply seated religious values in their daily life, even at the workplace (Oplatka and Arar, 2016). Therefore, religion in Muslim culture specifically clearly is relevant to the study of leadership because religion highlights the shared ethical values that leaders could use them to motivate others toward collective goals and integrate them into their core identities.

Exploring ethical leadership in such culture provides a rich and unique research context; if adequately examined, it would profoundly offer fruitful insights for practitioners and ethical leadership literature alike. The current study offers a detailed examination of Omani culture and its broader implications for ethical leadership. The Omani cultural can provide an ethical normative basis for ethical leadership in the Omani context because Oman is an Arab and Muslim country as Islam is the state religion, and most Omani people are Muslims (Omanuona, 2022). The Omani cultural context has two main pillars: Islamic religion and social norms, including tribal traditions, customs, and values (Al-Araimi, 2012).

The present paper develops a conceptual model of Ethical leadership. This model provides a normative approach from an Omani perspective to ethical leadership and transfers it to the social sciences. The researcher does so by adopting the Social Constructionism research philosophy and qualitative approach. The researcher conducted twenty-seven interviews with managers and employees in three leading companies in the Omani oil sector. These included nine interviewees at the top management level, nine at the middle management level, and nine employees. The researcher uses the terms ''ethics'' and ''moral'' interchangeably (Miller et al., 2014; Rest,1994), and he adopted an inclusive approach to the definition of leadership, recognizing that leadership remains a contested, ambiguous, messy term (Einola and Alvesson, 2020). However, the researcher agrees that most leadership models can meaningfully contribute to our understanding of the general concept (Flanigan, 2018). And the researcher is also mindful that leadership is not a leader-centric approach as followership is a morally salient facet of leadership as well (Baker, 2007; Hollander, 1992; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

1.2 Research Significance

The thesis offers a deeper understanding of ethical leadership from an indigenous lens to explain leadership ethics beyond Western contexts by exploring the various experiences and perceptions of Omani leaders and employees in the Omani oil sector. It investigates ethical leadership from a cultural perspective in an under-studied and under-theorised context. In pursuing this perspective, this study challenges the Western perspective of ethical leadership, which is a descriptive -non-normative and leader-centric approach (Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2017; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). Therefore, this study emphasises the significance of understanding the culture and context of ethical leadership and acknowledging its standing within its environment by suggesting that local values affect perceptions of ethical leadership, and leaders' morality can influence their ethical leadership. It also demonstrates that by moving beyond Western cultures, in some contexts, local values related to religious beliefs work as normative ethical foundations.

On a regional contextual level, this research contributes to the growing body of research on leadership in the Middle East, Arab, Islamic and Omani contexts. Leadership and management research has not received significant research attention in this region (e.g. Aldulaimi, 2019; Algarni, 2018; Avolio et al., 2009; Zahra, 2011; Patel et al., 2019). Researchers have attributed the lack of research to explicit restrictions that directly restrict the diversity and quality of the research methods available in this region (Balakrishnan, 2013). The Arab world is overwhelmed with numerous leadership and organisational challenges and dilemmas that continue to exacerbate and warrant research inquiry (Zahra, 2011). Political and economic instability, authoritarian regimes, institutional voids at various levels, dependence on a potentially unsustainable oil-based economy, lower levels of GDP and high unemployment rates are fertile grounds for raising our understanding of theoretical assumptions of leadership in this region (Abdelzaher and Abdelzaher, 2017; Abumustafa, 2016; Elbanna et al., 2020; Kanbur, 2013; Narooz and Child, 2017; Zahra, 2011). The Arab world has witnessed significant changes and institutional transformations that are supported by aspiring young people who are pressing for political, economic and socio-cultural change, particularly after the Arab Spring events in 2011(Elbanna et al., 2020). However, these events are promoting varying degrees of reform and surfacing several organisational implications that need to be understood such as ethical leadership.

Consistently with the events in the Arab world, Oman's organisational situation is similar to a large extent to what has been witnessed in the Arab world as Omani share many commonalities with other Arab countries, including culture, religion, language, etc. (Common, 2011). Omani society has exerted social pressure through social media, criticising unethical leadership practices in Omani organisations, whether in the public or private sector and demanding that leaders behave more ethically and professionally, driven by their core values and with concern for people's real needs (Abouzzohour, 2021). However, similar to most research on this topic highlighted above, there is limited research on ethical leadership in Arabic cultures such as Omani culture and what is available is largely built on an understanding of ethical leadership from a Western perspective. For example, Al-Omari et al. (2020);

Tahir (2020) use the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) that was proposed by Brown et al. (2005) to investigate ethical leadership. In this respect, the study makes a valuable contribution to knowledge by developing a conceptual model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. This makes it especially significant since no previous study has shed light on ethical leadership in such a context from an indigenous lens. It also offers a comprehensive view of ethical leadership that combines the two influential sources (social norms and Islamic values) in which Islamic values and social norms work together in tension to produce ethical leadership. Unlike leadership research to date, which mainly focuses on one source and largely ignored the distinction between Islamic values and social norms and their influence in conceptualising leadership in the Arab World.

1.3 The Context of the Study

1.3.1 Background of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab and Muslim country as Islam is the state religion, and most Omani people are Muslims (Omanuona, 2022). It situated in the Middle East in the south-eastern region of the Arabian Peninsula (Al-Araimi, 2012). It is surrounded by the Indian Ocean to the southeast and the sea of Oman to the northeast; it has joint land borders with the United Arab Emirates to the north, Yemen to the south and Saudi Arabia to the west; it also shares marine borders with Iran and Pakistan. The area of Oman amounts to about 309,500 km2, with a coastline that stretches 3,165 kilometres (Al-Muqbali, 2017). Due to its geographic position and a long history, Oman was an influential seafaring state in the past with foreign relationships extending as far as China, the USA, Britain, and France for about 200 years. It was also a key trading state with interests stretching to both sides of the Arabian Gulf and the East African coast (MOFA, 2020). At the turn of the 1990s, Oman went through a recession period and it was beset with grinding poverty, the loss of basic infrastructure, and instability. It was dubbed the 'sleepy Sultanate' (Philips and Hunts, 2017). After the Oil discovery, at the end of

the 1960s, Oman became dependent on oil and gas resources as the major source of government revenue and has strikingly developed from what it was nearly five decades later.

1.3.2 Background of Omani Oil sector

The basis for rapid development in Oman is oil revenues which contributed significantly to funding both physical infrastructure and social welfare initiatives (Phillips and Hunt, 2017). Though a barrel cost just under $1.50 on the international market at the beginning of Oman's oil exports in 1967, it still represented a boon for the Omani economy, causing substantial growth in Oman's annual income (Valeri, 2009).

Since then, global oil prices nearly quadrupled and that was combined with a rapid increase in export oil volume. As a result, in 1974 the Omani government bought the majority stake in Petroleum Development Oman. Consequently, the government-owned 60% interest, Royal Dutch Shell 34%, Total 4% and Partex 2% (PDO, 2022). Recently, Oman has been re-structuring its oil and gas sector to raise output. In 2019, nine core organizations of the Oman Oil Refineries and Petroleum Industries Company (Orpic) Group and the Oman Oil Company (OOC) were integrated with the ultimate new business branded 'OQ' to increase oil production volume from 655,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 1 million bpd by 2030. Therefore, increasing the absolute contribution of the business to Oman's GDP (OQ, 2020).

With the rapid growth in the oil sector since the 1970s, leadership has become one critical factor in the success level that this sector demonstrates (Albusaidi, 2020). Therefore, the investigation into ethical leadership in this sector is an excellent example to understand ethical leadership in the Omani context for the following reasons. Firstly, Oman's economy is heavily dependent on the oil sector, which contributes 75% of the GDP of Oman. However, this sector has witnessed a series of corruption cases shaking Oman's oil sector (Albusaidi, 2020). In the last ten years, several senior oil and gas officials have been implicated in various bribery cases, including officials from state-owned firms Oman Oil

Co. and Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), which is majority government-owned. For example, in 2014, the CEO (Omani national) of state-owned Oman Oil Company (OOC) was sentenced to 23 years in prison for a string of offences, including taking bribes and money laundering (Energy Intelligence Group, 2014). Despite this, top officials at Oman's Ministry of Oil and Gas (MOG) are adamant that corruption is not endemic. Salim al-Aufi, Oman's oil ministry undersecretary, stated, "It's down to individuals for sure -- it's just individuals who decided to probably make a little extra money the wrong way" (as quoted in Energy Intelligence Group, 2014). Therefore, it is worth examining the ethical leadership phenomenon in this sector as it witnessed many ethical leadership dilemmas.

Secondly, while this research explores how Omani national culture influence perceptions of ethical leadership for Omani leaders and followers, Omani employees constitute a significant proportion of the Omani oil sector workforce despite the diversity of the workforce. The major oil companies have 81% of employees who are Omani. For example, PDO has a workforce of more than 8,500 employees, of which 81% are Omani (PDO, 2022). Thirdly, Oil companies have made efforts to build up local talent by training opportunities for Omani citizens and enabling them to undertake various leadership levels. Hence, Omani managers and employees are more involved in leadership roles than in other sectors (Almamri et al., 2019). Finally, as the Omani oil sector is considered the backbone of the Omani economy (Phillips and Hunt, 2017), and the Ministry of Oil and Gas govern this sector and accordingly introduces relevant regulations in addition to final approvals on investment and policy (Albusaidi, 2020), it can be argued that the Omani oil sector represents both Omani public-private sector.

1.3.3 Omani culture

Theoretically, researchers (e.g., Dorfman et al., 2012; House et al., 2004) tend to group all Arabic states in one attitudinal cluster based on unified assumptions about regional culture. To some extent, Oman relatively shares some superficial similarities of the cultural values with its Arab neighbours, given the geographical proximity and common religion and societal structure (Alhashemi, 2017; Neal,

2010). However, there is enough cultural diversity within its national boundaries that make Oman unique and culturally different from other Arab states (Common, 2011), for the following reasons. Firstly, given its historical expansion to the Indian Ocean and East Africa and the sea of Oman, Omani people are ethnically diverse as some of them originate from East Africa or Baluchistan or India (Al-Lamky, 2007). Secondly, Oman has been exposed to other cultures due to its geographical location, such as the Indian, sub-Indian, Persian and African cultures, which has made some Omanis speak the "Swaheeli" language as well as "Hindi", "Balouchi", and "Farsi" (Mujtaba et al., 2010). Thirdly, Oman is diversified in terms of Islamic sects as Omanis practise three forms of Islamic sects: The Alabadhi, the Sunni, and the Shiah (Al-Araimi, 2012). Unlike its neighbours, Ibadhism is regarded as the dominant sect (Almoharby, 2010). Therefore, Ibadism provides an additional distinction for Oman in contrast to other Arab states (Common, 2011). The Ibadhi religious ideology is a form of Islam that differs from other Islamic sects and is only located in Oman and a small number of locations in North Africa (Risso, 2016). Fourthly, in line with oil discoveries, Oman has witnessed rapid development in its organisational structures and quick economic progress since 1970 (Phillips and Hunt, 2017). Hence, it is worth exploring this unique cultural context further to glean an in-depth understanding of Omani Leadership and ethical Leadership in particular.

It is believed that Omani culture has two main pillars: Islamic religion and social norms, including tribal traditions, customs, and values (Al-Araimi, 2012). Omani culture is, therefore, a blend of both. Oman adopted Islam in the seventh century A.D., during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. Since then, Islam has had an enormous influence on the core belief system of the Omani people (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). Islamic religion influences the attitudes and behaviour of people in almost all aspects of life, including values, beliefs, behaviours, rules, and morals. In addition to Islamic values, social norms play a vital role in Omani people's daily lives (Al-Araimi, 2012). The centrality of tribalism in the social structure emphasises family networks, personal relationships and connections (Khan and Varshney, 2013). The status of the individual is determined by his/her tribal or group affiliation and

rarely by individual merits (Al-Araimi, 2012). the Omani social system is built on a tribal structure and family affiliation, which identify the social status of the individuals (Al-arimi,2012). Individuals are recognised by their tribal or family affiliation, and that is represented in the use of prefixes in their name, where 'Al' means 'family of'; 'Bin' or 'Ibn' means 'son of'; and 'bint' means 'daughter of' (Darke, 2010). The family extends to include parents and grandparents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles. These families, in turn, form the first building blocks of tribal structure as each family is attached and loyal to a particular large tribe which is led by a sheikh. Occasionally, members of the tribe and extended families gather on various occasions, such as marriage ceremonies, funerals, and tribal discussions (Al-Asmi, 2008). Therefore, each person is a member of an extended family or tribe and shares collective features such as ancestry. Consequently, he/she is obliged to take care of the other family and tribe members (Weir, 2007; Weir, 2000). Thus, individuals from all social positions develop network systems to ensure their needs are well served (Al-Arimi, 2012).

Based on Islamic values and social norms, it is believed that the Omani society is characterised by a number of distinctive ethical features such as cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others(Omanuona,2022). This is evident through the Omani customs and traditions that are demonstrated through daily life practices and varying social occasions. For example, more recently, when a tropical cyclone battered Oman, demolishing some parts of Oman, Omanis from the rest of other regions showed their cohesion and compassion and came to help and care for those who are in the affected areas (AL-Nassriya, 2021). Neal (2010) stated that the roots behind the distinctive Omani ethical features are based in three main areas. Firstly, customs and traditions urge Omanis towards cohesion, compassion, kindness, friendliness and tolerance. Secondly, Omanis have been exposed to other cultures by successive waves of trade which have contributed to the development of accepting others (Al-Lamky, 2007; Mujtaba et al., 2010). Thirdly, Ibadhi thought- the Islamic sect prevailing in Oman- encourages cultural tolerance and is against radicalism (Common,2011; Risso, 2016).

However, although Islamic values and social norms have many commonalities, they differ on some fundamental issues. For example, Arabic values that originated in Bedouin and tribal culture encourages a sense of pride to the tribe (Algarni, 2018). Since tribal ties are still significant in Omani society, those with tribal backgrounds still have a sense of pride about it, generating a sense of discrimination and superiority towards others who are not within these tribes (Al-Araimi, 2012). In contrast, Islamic values consider equality and human values central to Islamic culture and discourage discrimination based on tribes, class and socioeconomic status (Syed and Ali, 2010). Therefore, these cultural values, including Islamic values and social norms, are expected to affect how leadership is practised and also how ethical leadership is perceived.

1.4 Research Aim

This study aims to develop a conceptual theoretical model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. This aim is achieved by following objectives:

- To identify the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.

- To assess their influence on perceptions of ethical leadership in Oman.

- To critically assess the relationship between the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.

- To critically assess the concept of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective and identify the main characteristics and behaviours of ethical leadership in the Omani context by reflecting on how the Omani ethical leaders are perceived.

1.5 Overarching Research Question

The Overarching Research Question is how do Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context?

1.6 Structure of The Thesis

The thesis is organised into five chapters, including the current chapter:

Chapter One: presents a background to the research and identify the research gap. This is followed by a section of the context of the study, which gives a general introduction to Oman, an overview of leadership in the cultural Omani context and overview oil sector. Then, a section on the research aim and objectives, followed by research questions. Finally, a section outlines research significance.

Chapter Two: defines the essential theoretical foundation of the research by reviewing and critically evaluating the literature concerning culture, leadership, ethical leadership, leadership in the context of Arab, and Oman in particular.

Chapter Three: presents and justifies the research methodology, first beginning with an exploration of the research philosophy, which underlies the research. This is followed by a justification and explanation for the design of the study, which includes the sample, methods of data collection, and analysis—finally, a section examining the trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: presents the findings and discussion by providing a detailed discussion of the results and links them to the literature.

Chapter Five: concludes and summarises this thesis by providing a detailed explanation of how the research questions are answered. Then, presents the contribution to knowledge from theoretical, contextual and practical perspectives—finally, a section that highlights the limitations of the research and present recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a critical review of the relevant literature, which is divided into two main parts. The first part emphasises the literature on ethical leadership from the Western Perspective. This part commences by presenting the concept of leadership and outlining leadership theories. Then, it critically assesses ethical leadership theories from different approaches, emphasising the four main approaches of ethical leadership, namely transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical leadership. It navigates a route between the relevant debates, both within and across these areas, so highlighting the complexity, shortcomings and criticisms of these theories.

The second part of this chapter focuses on ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman. It commences by outlining the relationship between culture and leadership. Then, it provides an overview of Omani leadership. It then examines the existing two main theories that represent ethical leadership in the Omani context, namely paternalistic leadership and Islamic leadership.

Part 1 Ethical leadership from the Western perspective

2.1 Overview of Leadership

More than a century has elapsed since the subject of leadership provoked the interest of academic researchers. The literature has revealed more than 200 different definitions for leadership (Rost, 1991) and different perspectives of theories. Each one focuses on different aspects of leadership with relatively little integration across theories (Dinh et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2019), making this field of study ambiguous and messy (Einola and Alvesson, 2021). Therefore, it is a challenging and difficult endeavour for scholars and practitioners alike to finish the sentence "Leadership is . . ." (Northouse, 2019). Indeed, Ciulla (2009) asserts that reaching an agreement on the definition of leadership would not help understand it better. However, these claims are not negating the accumulated efforts made over a century concerning the field of study, resulting in evolved definitions and perspectives that can be reference points illuminating our understanding of such a complex concept (Yukl and Gardner, 2020).

By the beginning of the 20th century, leadership was viewed as control and domination. For example, Moore (1927, p. 124) defined leadership as "the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation". Then, the traits and behaviour perspectives emerged simultaneously with the view of leadership as influence rather than control or domination. For example, Seeman (1960) described leadership as "acts by persons which influence other persons in a shared direction" (p. 53). This was followed by the group perspective and organisational behaviour approach, in a sense is that "leadership is what leaders do in group" (Gipp, 1954, P. 882). After that, the focus of influence shifted towards mutual influence (i.e. leaders and followers influenced each other). Leadership is "an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes " (Rost 1991, p. 102). Alvesson (2019) go further and views leadership as a social influencing process by defining leadership as "a social influencing process based

on the convergence and alignment of meanings in terms of definition and assessment of a leader/follower relationship" (P.331).

However, Bass (2008) suggest that leadership definitions can be seen from different aspects: personality perspective, behaviours' perspective, skills perspective, power relationship, the focus of group processes, transformational process. Meanwhile, Northouse (2019) contend four main components as central pillars to conceptualise leadership: leadership is a process, leadership is influence, leadership is a relation between leader and follower, and leadership involves shared goals. Hence, he defines leadership as "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (P.43). Yukl and Gardner (2020) agree with Northouse (2019) definition in terms of process, influence, and shared objectives but he goes further in terms of a relation between leader and follower by defining leadership as the "process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (P.27). However, Martin et al. (2019) affirm that the indisputable fact of leadership is that leadership is a relationship between at least two people who each influence the other.

2.2 Overview of Leadership Theories

By reviewing the literature, it can be argued that there is an abundance of leadership theories that are well-supported with countless robust empirical studies that created vast and complex literature (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). The primary focus for these theories was explaining effective leadership, leader personality, behaviours, and aspects that influence the leadership process, such as followers, context and culture (Northouse, 2019). A brief of exploration of the key leadership theories, including the trait approach, the behaviour approach, the situational approach, and the values-based approach (Yukl and Gardner, 2020), are discussed below.

The first approach conceptualises leadership from the personality lens labelled by two theories "great man" and traits. The "great man" theory approach marks the beginning of the personality perspective. It stresses that leadership is primarily concerned with identifying a great leader's innate traits and characteristics and argues that leaders are born with specific traits that differentiate them from others (Bass, 2008; Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; Northouse, 2019). In contrast, although the trait theory bears a close resemblance to the great man theory in terms of emphasising the leaders' characteristics, it has a key difference in that it is not assumed that leadership traits are inherited. Instead, it emphasises that leaders have distinct characteristics traits comparing with non-leaders. Therefore, the trait theory suggests that traits could be gained and learned (Sivaruban,2021), putting it in a more systematised position and a sophisticated copy of its origin, represented by the great man theory (Wooi et al., 2017). Thus, it can be argued that the trait approach has shifted its emphasis from identifying the traits of great leaders to explain how traits such as intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability influence leadership (Bryman, 1992; Harrison, 2018; Stodgill, 1974). For example, with increasing interest given to visionary and charismatic leadership, the trait approach has shifted forward to highlight the significant role of effective leadership traits (Northouse, 2019). Charismatic leaders consistently possess certain traits compared with others (Jung and Sosik 2006). However, Although the trait approach has long been debated and provided an in-depth understanding of the leader component in leadership, it fails to consider the impact of situational and contextual factors on leadership. In addition, it has failed to empirically prove how the set of traits create an effective leadership (Northouse, 2019).

The second approach conceptualises leadership from the behaviour lens. While the trait approach emphasises the personality characteristics of the leader, the behavioural approach emphasises the behaviour of the leader (Northouse, 2019). The behavioural approach shifts the focus to broadened scope from the perspective of who leaders are to include what leaders do and how they act (Derue et al., 2011). The beginning of this trend of thought was focused on managers' leadership styles and

identified three leadership styles: autocratic leadership, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership (Harrison, 2018). In the advanced stage of this thought, researchers identified two main kinds of behaviours that form the core of the leadership process: task and relationship. Task behaviours are concerned with facilitating goals accomplishment. Relationship behaviours are concerned with followers' relationships (Northouse, 2019). Therefore, the key to being an effective leader often rests on the leader's ability to balance these two kinds of behaviours to influence followers to reach goals (Casimir and Ng, 2010). This school of thought was guided by work done by the Ohio State studies in the late 1940s, the University of Michigan studies (Katz and Kahn, 1951), and the work of Blake and Mouton (1964, 1978, 1985) on the Managerial Grid (Littrell, 2013). However, although the behavioural approach provides a proposed framework for assessing leadership, it failed to include all kinds of leadership behaviour. Still, basic behaviours such as leading by example are neglected (Gill 2011; Yukl 1999). In addition, it failed to take into account the situational factors in leadership (Harrison, 2018) and link leaders' behaviours with the outcomes such as job satisfaction, productivity, and morale (Northouse, 2019).

The third approach conceptualises leadership from the situational lens. Hersey and Blanchard introduced this perspective in 1969 by developing situational leadership I and situational leadership II models Hersey and Blanchard,1969). The situational perspective argues that different situations require a different leadership style and suggest two main styles: directive and supportive (telling, selling, participating, and delegating) (Ghazzawi et al., 2017). Therefore, the effective leader is determined by his/her ability to adapt to different situations' demands by adjusting his/her style to meet these demands (Hidayat et al., 2021). In this sense, the leaders change the degree to which they are supportive or directive based on the degree to which the followers demonstrate competence and commitment to performing a given goal (Lorinkova et al., 2013). Hence, it emphasises leader flexibility and, at the same time, underscores followers' readiness and maturity level (Yukl, 1989). However, although situational leadership has prescriptive value and overcame the descriptive nature

of other theories as is widely used for training leaders within organisations, it fails to explain the theoretical basis of its model in terms of why and how particular style is fitted in different situations (Northouse, 2019).

The fourth approach conceptualises leadership from a value lens. Values-based theories, including transformational (Bass,1985; Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns 1978; Burns, 2003), authentic (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; George, 2003; Luthans and Avolio, 2003), servant (Greenleaf, 2002; Laub 1999; Liden et al.'s 2008), and ethical (Brown et al., 2005), emphasise the importance of espoused values of the leader. These values make followers influence, admire, and emulate the leader's values and behaviour as they view the leader as a role model and share with him/ her the same expressed values (Yulk, 2020). Values-based theories describe behaviours that are rooted in ethical and moral foundations, resulting in more effective leadership (Copeland, 2014). Since these theories address ethical, moral, and humanistic aspects of leadership, they have been described as ethical leadership theories (Bedi et al., 2016; Downe et al., 2016; Kalshoven et al., 2011; Treviño and Brown, 2014). Therefore, the current review will provide more explanation of values-based theories, including transformational, authentic, servant and ethical leadership in the following sections.

2.3 Ethics and Leadership

Ethics and leadership are often inextricably tied to each other because the central theme of ethics and leadership is about human relationships (Ciulla, 2009). Alvesson (2019, p.331) defined leadership as "a social influencing process based on the convergence and alignment of meanings in terms of definition and assessment of a leader/follower relationship". Hence, leaders and followers are 'relational beings' who influence, interact and constitute each other in a group or organisation to accomplish shared objectives (Carsten and Uhl-Bien, 2012). In this sense and in line with ethics' definition "the moral principles, values, rules, or standards governing the conduct of the members of a

group" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 2008); ethics is considered as a guiding force of leaders and followers to be good people, choose appropriate actions, do the right thing, and get along with each other (Solomon, 2007).

Ethics and leadership are concerned about the moral commitment to justice, competence, duty and the greater good. They are also concerned with the personal challenges of self-interest and self-discipline (Ciulla, 2009). For centuries philosophers from the East and West such as Confucius, Lao-tzu, Buddha, Aristotle, and Plato have long discussed the relationship between leadership and ethics, highlighting the moral challenges that face leaders as they are not infallible and share the same human weaknesses of their followers (Karp, 2020). Therefore, they have argued about what leaders should do and what constitutes their ethical actions, emphasising the importance of virtues and self-discipline (Bazerman, 2020). Hence, the early research in ethical leadership was grounded in philosophical perspectives and is concerned with prescribing how leaders "ought to" or "should" behave in the workplace (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). However, in a later stage, the descriptive or social scientific approach to ethical leadership research has emerged (Sutamchai, 2021). This research is rooted in disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and organisation science and attempts to explore how ethical leadership is perceived and examine its antecedents and outcomes (Brown and Mitchell, 2010).

The interest in ethical leadership results in a significant number of studies that have raised different conceptualisations of ethical Leadership (Shakeel et al., 2020). However, although the interest in ethical leadership has recently increased, there is no consensus on the appropriate way to conceptualise and assess it (Northouse, 2019; Yukl and Gardner, 2020). The multiple theories concerning ethical leadership, such as transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical have produced very different perspectives. What makes it even more complicated is that each of those theories has no consensus definition in its concepts or constructs (Dorfman and Mittal 2012; Northouse, 2019; Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Hence, from a pessimistic view, it can be argued that the attempts conducted to conceptualise ethical leadership have raised a certain degree of complexity and ambiguity to this concept. This might

seem logical, especially with loose terms such as ethical leadership, as there are many significant aspects that identify this phenomenon, making it hard to find a specific theory and conceptualisation of ethical leadership.

2.4 Challenges of Conceptualizing Ethical Leadership

Many significant challenges make it hard to find a specific theory and conceptualisation of ethical leadership. One of these challenges is the nature of leadership represented in the influence aspect. The possible argument here is, are organisations looking for an ethical person or ethical leader? The leader's efforts to influence the ethical behaviour of followers play a significant role (Treviñoet al., 2003; Hassan et al., 2013). The influence process and lists of actions undertaken by leaders to promote ethical behaviours in followers, including role modelling, communication, and reinforcements, are the judging instrument of ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005). However, Heifetz (1994) argues that as long as leadership theories take into account the implicit assumptions about appropriate forms of influence, it is hard to find an ethical neutral ground for theories of leadership. Indeed, the influence forms the essence of most forms of effective leadership theories, but at the same time may be the source of ethical concerns and involves ethical dilemmas (Northouse, 2019; Yukl and Gardner, 2020). For example, the influence process of changing the underlying values of followers for implementing new vision or strategy might be unethical as there is a possibility of deceiving followers about likely outcomes, making false promises and falling under leaders' halo or charisma effect (Howell and Shamir, 2005; White and Wooten, 1986; Yukl and Gardner, 2020).

Assessing the effectiveness of ethical leadership is a complicated issue as there are three ethics-based approaches of Judging ethical conduct, including perspectives of teleological, deontological, and virtues (Beck-Dudly 1996; Ciulla 2014; Lemoine et al., 2019; Price, 2018; Wart, 2014). It can be argued that all these three pillars of conduct (means, ends, virtues) are functioning for good ethical leadership (Ciulla 1995). Briefly, the major concern or pillar of the deontological perspective is doing

things right or stressing proper means. That is, behaviours should follow laws, rules, and mores. In contrast, the teleological perspective stresses proper ends or doing the right thing. Its ethical criterion is the consequences. Meanwhile, the virtues perspective stresses the character of individuals. It focuses on what kind of person one should become, putting one's inner goodness rather than the consequences of actions or behavioural rules of obligation at the centre of its perspective (Yuan et al.,2021). However, ethical leadership theorists provide frameworks that accommodate specific ethical perspectives rather than providing a blended recipe of means, ends and virtues (Wart, 2014). For example, whereas transformational leadership and ethical leadership embrace the deontological perspective, servant leadership embraces the teleological perspective (Lemoine et al., 2019). In contrast, authentic leadership does not look at a leader's behaviour or conduct but stresses the leader's character (Lemoine et al., 2019). Hence, ethical leadership theories that embrace specific ethical perspective might be seen as unethical based on another perspective. But also, even within one perspective, there may be differences, for example, as to which virtues are relevant; which rules should be applied.

In addition to the previous challenge, another challenge emerges, representing the fact that leaders' ethical behaviours are strongly influenced by aspects of the situation because leaders' ethical behaviours occur in a social context (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Kish-Gephart et al., 2010). Thus, factors such as an uncertain environment, a lack of solid regulation, follower traits and beliefs, ethical culture, and the organisation's ethical climate play a fundamental role in identifying and evaluating ethical leadership (Yulk, 2020). For example, business environments have multiple stakeholders and competing values (Jones et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 2016; Yulk, 2020). This means multiple stakeholders have partially conflicting interests and incompatible preferences. What serves or benefit the interests of one party may harm the interests of another party. (Jones et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 2016; Yulk, 2020). Hence, leaders' ethical decision consequences have different interpretations based on different interests.

Nevertheless, leadership theories such as transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical have provided valuable thoughts to understand the concept of ethical leadership despite challenges (Copeland, 2014). Theories provide an analytic tool to understand phenomena. Thus, the more analytical work done on ethical leadership, the more logically accepted variation among schools of thought (Wart, 2014). It is not necessarily that ethical challenges and weaknesses in each ethical leadership construct means that they failed. Leaders' character, behaviours, values, and motives play a fundamental role in defining ethical leadership, and this is what leadership theories have attempted to offer. The following sections highlight the most cited ethical leadership theories, including transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical.

2.5 Ethical leadership theories

2.5.1 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is the most current and popular approach to leadership (Northouse, 2019), describing the leaders' ability to appeal to followers' emotions and ideals in order to inspire and transform them (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). It has shifted leadership research from traditional leadership approaches to a "New Leadership" paradigm, which gives more attention to the ethical and moral dimension in leaders' behaviour (Copeland, 2014) and the positive forms of leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Hoch et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be argued that transformational leadership is the first leadership approach that explicitly incorporates an ethical component to leadership (Copeland, 2014). The early conception of transformational leadership was introduced by Burns (1978), who describe transformational leadership as an ongoing process appealing to the moral values of followers to raise their consciousness about ethical issues to higher levels of morality and motivation beyond self-interest to mobilise their energy to serve collective interests and social reform (Hoch et al., 2018; Yukl and Gardner, 2020). For Burns, leadership is an ongoing process between leaders and followers that affects and raises one another motivation and morality in an attempt to serve the sake of the

organisation. In contrast to transactional leadership, which is motivating followers based upon contingent reinforcement by appealing to their self-interest and offering benefits, short-term goals, and the exchange relationship, transformational leadership highlighted leaders' ability to motivate followers based upon addressing followers' needs, ideals and emotions (Burns, 2003). Thus, it influences and transforms positive follower outcomes to their "better selves" through motivating followers to perform at higher levels, inspiring trust, instilling pride, communicating vision, whereby the research in this regard has proved a positive association between moral development and transformational leadership (Turner et al., 2002). More specifically, Burns viewed morality as an integral part of leadership in which the mutual stimulation and elevation relationship between leaders and followers converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents (Hoch et al., 2018), though this assertion has not been supported by transformational research. (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir, 2002).

In contrast to Burns, Bass (1985) developed and refined Burns' version of transformational leadership and gave more attention to achieving pragmatic task objectives to organisational contexts than the moral development of followers or social reform (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Bass's (1985) initial position of transformational leadership was not morally oriented, positing that transformational leaders could vary in terms of morality by stating that "transformational leaders could wear the black hats of villains or the white hats of heroes depending on their values,". (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 189). According to Bass, transformational leadership motivates followers' performance beyond ordinary limits by raising followers' awareness of the importance of task outcomes, inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organisation, and moving followers to the higher-order needs (Northouse, 2019). In comparison, Burns (1978) emphasises the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership; Bass (1985) argue that transformational and transactional leadership are a single continuum and not mutually independent processes. Based on this perspective, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) believed that transaction and transformational leadership have an ethical

dimension, but leaders' behaviours might be unethical. Bass and Steidlmeier (1999, p. 184) stated: "Each component of either transaction or transformational leadership has an ethical dimension. It is the behaviour of leaders—including their moral character, values and programs—that is authentic to less authentic rather than authentic or inauthentic". Bass and Avolio (1994) proposed the full range of leadership (transactional and transformational) which emphasises that leaders that use a combination of both behaviours (transactional and transformational) can increase their effectiveness in addition to the organisation's effectiveness.

However, in a later stage, the conceptualisation of transformational leadership has been criticised in terms of its morality approach (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Some leaders could be transformational such as Adolf Hitler but in an unethical way. Therefore, Bass's (1998) second position was more ethically oriented, coining the term pseudo transformational leadership. The term pseudo transformational distinguishes between authentic transformational leadership and pseudo transformational. Pseudo transformational leadership is a manipulative style of leadership in which leaders serve their own ends and ignore the common good (Christie, Barling, and Turner, 2011). Pseudo transformational leaders are exploitive, power-oriented, self-consumed, and have warped moral values (Bass and Riggio, 2006). In contrast, authentic transformational leaders transcend their own interests for the sake of the collective good and others (Howell and Avolio, 1993). In this regard, for further understanding and clarification to distinguish between pseudo transformational and authentic transformational leadership Avolio and his colleagues (1991) set a 4 I's model of authentic transformational leadership and provided more explanation of how to improve the performance of followers and to develop them to their fullest potential.

The 4 I's of transformational leadership consist of idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Idealised influence represents the emotional component of leadership (Antonakis, 2012) and describes leaders' ability to act as role models for their followers by showing a high level of standards of moral and ethical conduct, making them deeply

respected and trusted by followers. The idealised influence is measured by followers' observations of leader behaviour and their perceptions of their leaders. While Inspirational motivation is concerned with the leader's ability to communicate high expectations to followers and inspiring them to be part of the shared vision of the organisation through the motivation process, Intellectual Stimulation is concerned with the leader's ability to stimulate followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organisation. Finally, Individualised Consideration is concerned with the leader's ability to provide a supportive climate for the individual needs of followers. Thus, it can be argued that "the four Is" of behaviours has an ethical reference putting transformational leadership as values orientated (Hoch et al., 2018). For example, Hoch et al. (2018, p.521) stated that "the idealised influence factor includes items such as (Talks about most important values and beliefs) and (Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions)." Furthermore, Zhu et al. (2011) suggested a theoretical model addressing the complexities related to "moral uplifting" and examining how the ethics of individual followers and groups are influenced by authentic transformational leadership. Based on their argument, authentic transformational leadership positively impacts moral emotions (e.g., empathy and guilt) and the moral identities of the followers, which in turn results in the followers' moral actions and moral decision-making. That is, there is a positive link between authentic transformational leadership and group ethical climate, decision making, and moral action.

However, even in the revised version of transformational leadership, which put more effort to distinguish between pseudo and authentic transformational leadership, moral lapses still exist and presents significant risks for organisations (Conger, 1999; Howell and Avolio, 1993). In fact, history is full of examples of authentic transformational leaders in their dedicated pursuit of virtuous objectives causing much suffering and misery as well as using coercive power to lead people to evil ends (Price, 2003). The reasons behind that might be linked to several ethical challenges that put transformational leadership in an awkward moral position. Firstly, although transformational

leadership is concerned with uplifting followers' values and moving them to new directions, leader espoused values and beliefs are not explicitly specified. More precisely, the relation between leaders' actual values and beliefs and their actual behaviour is missing as no conditions determine this relation (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Therefore, it is not strange that transformational leaders can be abusive and manipulative to serve their end (Stephens et al., 1995; White and Wooten, 1986). According to Yukl and Gardner (2020), the 4 I's behaviours of transformational leadership can be manipulated and used to influence follower task commitment and loyalty to the leader. For example, transformational leaders can use individualised consideration behaviour in an inauthentic way to gain followers loyalty. Thus, it is easier for them to exploit their followers to achieve their purpose. The same is applied to Idealised influence behaviour, which can be used to influence follower impressions and gain their trust and admiration rather than to express a leader's genuine concern for the followers or mission. Furthermore, transformational leaders can use Inspirational motivation behaviour to increase followers' performance and commitment even if their genuine concern is about their career advancement. Even Intellectual stimulation behaviour, which is concerned with the encouragement of creative ideas of followers, transformational leaders can use this behaviour to enhance their reputation as they may claim credit for them (Yukl and Gardner, 2020).

Secondly, transformational leadership gives leaders the freedom to act independently of their followers and neglect their needs. Therefore, it fails to give attention to shared leadership or reciprocal influence (Northouse, 2019). Thirdly, there is no evidence that the leader's desired vision is good and more ethical. Still, the dynamics relation in how followers respond to their leaders' visions is missing (Northouse, 2019). That is, the followers can be influenced by the charismatic nature of transformational leaders even though the new direction can be used for destructive purposes (Conger, 1999; Howell and Avolio, 1993). Bailey and Axelrod (2001) argue that one of the central problems in leadership is understanding charisma and follower worship. Therefore, Christie et al. (2011) appeal to

followers to be aware and engaged in outlining a collective vision to mitigate the potential for abuse of transformational leadership.

Overall, it can be argued that in its present stage of development, transformational leadership presents a broad typical set of generalisations that help leaders change their followers and context. Hoch et al. (2018) suggested that by adding an explicit ethical dimension to transformational leadership, it would expect to shift its orientation to a more ethical position. In summary, this dimension "explicitly refers to setting a positive example for others to follow" and leading by "doing rather than by telling" (P.522).

2.5.2 Authentic leadership

Since the 2000s, leadership research attention has been directed to the idea of genuine leadership, which concentrates more on ethics and morality. Therefore, newer areas of leadership research have emerged under the name of authentic leadership inspired by authenticity. According to Harter (2002), authenticity is the extent to which an individual is aligning between his/her internal state (e.g., value, emotions, thoughts) and his/ her external expressions (e.g., actions, behaviours, words). Thus, the degree of authenticity defines positive leadership as it represents an underlying determinant or wellspring of authentic leader (Hoch et al., 2018). However, by using positive psychology, psychological theories of self-regulation and based on the principles of positive organisational behaviour, Luthans and Avolio (2003) and Avolio et al. (2005) developed the foundation of authentic leadership. Since its introduction, many leadership scholars have attempted to more fully explore this new theory, set out its parameters and provide clearer concepts (e.g., Avolio et al. 2004; Avolio and Walumbwa, 2014; Gardner et al., 2005; Gardner et al., 2011; Karam et al., 2017; Sidani and Rowe, 2018).

However, Walumbwa et al. (2008) conducted a comprehensive review of authentic leadership literature and provided the most cited definition and model of authentic leadership. Walumbwa et al. (2008) defined authentic leadership as "A pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes

both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalised moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development" (P. 94). Their key model suggested four core components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, an internalised moral perspective, and relational transparency and balanced-processing (Gardner et al., 2005). Self-awareness refers to understanding the personal insights of the leader. That is, that leaders should understand themselves, including their core values, beliefs, self-identities, abilities, emotions, and attitudes (Northouse, 2019; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Gardner et al. (2005b) argue that individuals who understand themselves are more likely to be more authentic and have a solid foundation for making ethical decisions and actions as they have a high degree of self-acceptance and emotional maturity (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). In addition, self-awareness led to a positive impact on organisational commitment, perceived team effectiveness and followers' satisfaction with leaders (Peus et al., 2012; Leroy et al., 2015). Internalised moral perspective refers to the extent to which leaders' internal moral standards and values guide their decisions and conduct, rather than complying with prevailing norms of the group organisation or social context (Tapara, 2011). It is a self-regulatory process in which leaders espouse values consistent with their actual values (Northouse, 2019). Thus, their actions go hand in hand with their expressed morals values. In other words, their actions and behaviours express their internal moral standards and values rather than the desire to gratify a need for power, esteem, and status (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Relational transparency refers to a leader's ability to express and present one's true self to others (Kernis, 2003; Walumbwa et al., 2008). It concerns being genuine, honest and open when communicating with others. In this sense, authentic leaders share their positive and negative aspects of themselves to others and disclose work-related information openly and transparently in an appropriate manner that does not expose the privacy or safety of others at risk (Kernis, 2003; Northouse, 2019). Hence, by doing so, followers are more likely to trust the leaders and understand the reasons for their decision as followers observe leaders' authenticity and

respond accordingly (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Balanced processing refers to a leader's ability to analyse information of ego-related or followers' viewpoints objectively and unbiasedly before making a decision (Northouse, 2019). Authentic leaders are open about their own perspectives and are also objective in considering others' perspectives, making them open to learning and self-development (Tapara, 2011). Hence, they are more likely to make ethical and informed decisions that they consider the best ones for their group, even if doing so gives little personal benefit (Yukl and Gardner, 2020).

These four components present a dynamic and developmental view of a leader's authenticity as their authenticity is co-constructed through interactions with one's self (self-awareness, internalised moral perspective), relationships (relational transparency) and external environment (balanced processing) (Gill et al., 2018). Avolio and Gardner (2005) argue that authentic leadership pay more attention to the leader's and followers moral development. In contrast, the classical static conceptualisation of authenticity presents self-referential and too-rigid notions and give more naïve idealism about the human psyche as it views acceptance of external influence as undermining authentic personality and contrary to its principles (Wart, 2014, Wood et al., 2008). Such understanding of authenticity opposes leaders' personal development and limits their capacity to transform and develop (Ibarra, (2015). Therefore, the surface understanding of authentic leadership based on the popular notion that effective leaders are those who are "true to themselves" or follow their "true north" (George and Sims, 2007) may lead to awkward lapses. For example, an authentic leader may be an authentic jerk as he/she embraces damaging personal views (Ladkin and Spiller, 2013) or break organisational values (Gill et al., 2018). Furthermore, authenticity may has inclined toward the egoistic and enhance narcissistic or other dysfunctional personalities (Hill, Stephens, and Pamplin 2005; Sinclair 2010; Ford and Harding 2011; Shaw 2010). Hence, authentic leadership requires two basic aspects: self-aware and self-regulating on the one hand and on the other, the authenticity attributed by followers (Goffee and Jones, 2005), especially with the leader who fails to evolve and adjust or those who are experiencing adverse effects of the uncensored and unadaptable self (Gill et al., 2018).

In this regard, in terms of authenticity attributed by followers, scholars (e.g. Cerne et al., 2014; Goffee and Jones, 2005; Harvey et al., 2006; Sidani and Rowe, 2018) contend that regardless of the level of internal authenticity of a leader, authenticity is attributed to a leader by followers. From this perspective, it can be argued that authentic leadership is a relational phenomenon that depends on follower perceptions. Hence, leaders do not label as authentic leaders unless they are perceived to be authentic by their followers. However, although the importance that is giving to followers in the conceptualisation of authentic leadership, still the main focus of authentic leadership resides in the internal authenticity of the leader (Sidani and Rowe, 2018). Larsson et al. (2021) challenge this view and assume that authentic leadership behaviours are produced collaboratively through interactional outcomes. Thus, they reformulated the term authentic leadership as" the interactional accomplishment of a leadership relationship characterised by a mutual affective and value-oriented stance. This mutual stance may be conceptualised by researchers and (co-)constructed among interlocutors as sincerity, transparency and value congruence" (Larsson et al., 2021, P.437).

On the other hand, in terms of self-awareness and self-regulating, the authentic leadership construct considers the leader's responsibility for being both self-aware and self-regulating. It emphasises the leader's role to enhance his/her moral awareness and emotions and his/her followers (Walumbwa et al.,2008). Therefore, authentic leaders who are experiencing adverse effects of self-dysfunction are not true authentic leaders as they cannot achieve the required degree of moral development to be sufficiently self-aware or self-regulating, which enables them to have transparent, authentic relationships with others (Hendrikz and Engelbrecht, 2019).

Overall, although authentic leadership is still in the formative stages, it superimposes a trustworthy ethical perspective in leadership research (Wart,2014). Scholars such as Avolio and Gardner (2005) and Hoch et al. (2018) view it as the foundational ethical root and an additional ethical component to all other positive leadership forms, including servant, transformational and ethical. As such, for example, leaders may be transformational but not authentic, and to be genuine transformational leaders

must be authentic. A leader's authenticity is not rather self-indulgent to the degree to which leads to enhanced narcissistic or other dysfunctional personalities, nor excessively optimistic subjective to the degree that opens up the possibility of breaching social or organisational values.

2.5.3 Servant leadership

Servant leadership is a relatively new ethical construct of leadership built on Greenleaf's (1970) assumption, but it has roots far earlier in quotations found in the New Testament (Northouse, 2019). However, Greenleaf (1970) coined the initial conception of servant leadership, proposing that the primary responsibility of leaders is to serve followers, stating that "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 4). As such, the main impulse of servant leadership is not the influence and practising power or even getting profits but it is the innate desire to serve others by placing first the good and welfare of followers, emphasising their development and empowerment, and sharing influence with them (Reed et al. 2011). From this perspective, it can be argued that servant leadership presents a unique ethical framework that differs from other forms of ethical leadership, outlining three core characteristics. The first is the only leadership form that puts the principle of caring for others at the essence of the leadership process (Northouse, 2019). Secondly, although all leadership forms view influence as a core factor in the leadership process, servant leadership emphasise the opposite. Servant leadership views that control and influence is a shared process and emphasises that leaders should not be dominant and directive. That is, leaders should give up influence rather than seek influence (Liu, 2019; Northouse, 2019; van Dierendonck, 2011). Thirdly, servant leadership prioritises the growth of those being served by focusing on empowering and developing them and creating value for the

community instead of the functionalist outcomes of organisational performance and profit (Dorfman and Mittal 2012; Liu, 2019).

However, the theoretical framework and precise definition of servant leadership still bear different views as scholars attach a wide range of behaviours to its construct (Dorfman and Mittal 2012). Since Greenleaf's assumptions, other scholars have extended the understanding of servant leadership to include an explicit authoritative theoretical framework comprised of measurable traits and behaviours (Liu, 2010). For example, Laub(1999) conducted the first empirical study in this field and identified six attributes of servant leadership: developing people, shared leadership, displaying authenticity, valuing people, providing leadership and building community. Dierendonck (2011) offered six dimensions for servant leadership: empowering and developing, showing humility, being authentic, accepting of people, providing direction, and stewarding for the good of all.

On the other hand, according to Yukl and Gardner (2020), the model presented by Liden et al. (2008) is considered the most cited and most substantial evidence of the theory's validity. Their model builds on three main aspects: servant leader behaviours, antecedent conditions, and outcomes. Servant leader behaviours consist of seven behaviours that collectively form the core of the servant leadership process. Each one makes a unique contribution to improve outcomes at the individual, organisational, and societal levels (Liden et al., 2008). These behaviours include: conceptualising (understanding purposes, complexities, and mission of the organisation), Emotional Healing(being concerned with the well-being of others), Putting Followers First(given a priority followers needs and concerns), Helping Followers Grow and Succeed (making make followers' career development apriority), Behaving Ethically(doing the right thing in the right way), Empowering (sharing power with followers by allowing them to have control) and Creating value for the community (giving back to the community) (Liden et al., 2008). However, the success of these behaviours depends on three conditions: context and culture, the leader's attributes, and the followers' receptivity (Northouse, 2019).

However, the above arguments demonstrate a lack of consensus on an authoritative theoretical framework of the theory. The major proponents devoted their efforts to test and refine their own models rather than developing the theoretical construct (Liu, 2019). This contributed to the emergence of weaknesses and challenges that might position servant leadership theory in an awkward stance. Eva et al. (2019, p.129), in their systematic review of servant leadership, concluded that there are " still lingering questions regarding the conceptual and empirical overlap between servant leadership and transformational, ethical and authentic leadership and there are criticisms about how much the existing research in this field can tell us as it is restricted by its own limitations in research design". In addition, Palumbo (2016), in his empirical study, found servant leadership may lead to strengthening the followers' dependency, as his observation revealed that followers have struggled to make decisions and take action in the absence of their servant leader. Thus, these insights hint at the complexity of the practice of servant leadership (Liu, 2019).

Furthermore, Wart (2014) argues that servant leadership lacks normal organisational authorisation functions and procedures. For example, the functions and procedures that enable leaders to be in a position to serve others effectively are not fully explicated in the approach. Finally, Northouse (2019) emphasises that the focus on altruistic behaviour forms the basis of servant leadership conflict with the individual's autonomy and other distinctive leadership features such as creating a vision, directing, and goal setting. However, despite these challenges, it can be argued that servant leadership has provided an additional understanding of ethical leadership theories and has demonstrated promising outcomes.

2.5.4 Ethical leadership Based on Brown et al.'s Mode (Ethical leadership theory)

At the turn of the twentieth century, there were attempts to establish what might be considered to be the first building blocks of ethical leadership through a series of descriptive studies of characteristics of ethical leaders (Treviño et al., 2003). Following these studies, by using social exchange perspectives, Brown et al. (2005, p.120) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making".

Based on Brown et al.'s definition of ethical leadership, the construct of ethical leadership rests on two main dimensions, the moral person and the moral manager. The moral person dimension refers to the personal virtues of the leader, such as integrity, fairness, honesty and consideration for ethical outcomes of decisions that can be emulated and observed by followers (Shakeel et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the moral manager dimension refers to lists of actions undertaken by leaders to promote such virtues in followers, including role modelling, communication, and reinforcements. Role modelling is achieved by making leader behaviours visible and salient to be imitated by followers (Heres and Lasthuizen, 2012). Communication refers to not only talking to followers about ethics but providing followers with an interpersonally fair process. The reinforcement refers to rewarding ethical conduct and disciplining wrongdoers based on ethical standards (Brown et al., 2005; Shakeel et al., 2020).

A significant number of studies have relied heavily on Brown et al.'s (2005) conceptualisation of ethical leadership; using their definition and adopting their developed scale of ethical leadership (e.g., Bhal and Dadhich, 2011; Danish et al., 2020; Demirtas and Akdogan, 2015; Hu et al., 2018; Kim and Vandenberghe, 2020; McKenna and Jeske, 2020; Mostafa and Abed El-Motalib, 2020; Piccolo et al., 2010; Qing et al., 2020; Suifan et al., 2020; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009). These studies have

confirmed the significant role of ethical leadership on organisational outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Qing et al., 2020); work engagement (Mostafa and Abed El-Motalib, 2020); organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour (Danish et al., 2020). McKenna and Jeske (2020) confirm that ethical leadership positively predicted decision authority. Demirtas and Akdogan (2015) confirm its impacts on lower turnover intention of employees. Bhal and Dadhich (2011) reveal its effect on higher motivation for whistleblowing.

However, Brown et al.'s conceptualisation of ethical leadership has been criticised as it has some shortcomings (Downe et al., 2016). Eisenbeiss (2012, p.793) criticise vagueness of the ethical leadership construct, stating that "it does not seem to be sufficient to define ethical leadership as "normatively appropriate" conduct without having a minimum set of normative reference points that help evaluate the ethicality of conduct and its underlying values". Paterson and Huang (2019) indicate that the use of social learning theory for explaining the relationship between ethical leadership and follower behaviour within organisations is not enough and suggests using role expectations theory for solidifying and routinising changes in behaviour as it is relevant to ethics. Lemoine et al. (2019) assert that there is an overlap between the construct of ethical leadership and other Ethic-related leadership theories, including authentic leadership, which focuses on self-concordance and servant leadership which focuses on benefiting multiple stakeholders. Hence, Downe et al. (2016) wondered whether ethical leadership is an independent conceptual construct from other leadership theories. Magalhães et al. (2019) raised other concerns indicating that most of the ethical leadership studies focus on consequences and researchers are less engaged in studying its causes which, in turn, needs more research. However, the different schools of thought of ethical leadership raise a broader view of ethical leadership, including shifting the role of leaders from a mentor to inspirational and taking responsibility for external aspects such as the environment and society (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Voegtlin, 2016; Wart, 2014).

2.6 A comprehensive view of the ethical theories

The review of ethical leadership theories (transformational, authentic, servant and ethical) revealed some criticisms, including a lack of theoretical development, an abundance of miniature subdivisions of leadership components, overlapping constructs, questionable measurement, redundant outcomes, and a lack of comprehensive view (Lemoine et al., 2019; Mango, 2018; Rost, 1991). Lemoine et al. (2019, p. 149) argue that the reason behind these criticisms is that "the majority of the empirical work treats them much more generally and homogeneously in terms of their moral content, obscuring important theoretical distinctions". However, empirical literature simultaneously reveals differences among ethical leadership theories in their respective foundational theoretical constructs. For example, authentic leadership focuses on a leader's self-awareness (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; George, 2003; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). Ethical leadership focuses on compliance with normative standards (Brown et al., 2005). Servant leadership pay more attention to the common good (Greenleaf, 1970; Laub 1999; Liden et al.'s 2008). Transformational leadership focuses on raising followers' morality and context (Bass,1985; Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns 1978; Burns, 2003).

It can be argued that the attempts to focus on one ethical content in each ethical leadership theory make the total view of the ethical theory incomplete. Ethical leadership is broader than each conceptualisation represented by a sole theory. Wart (2014) argues that the different distinctions in the emphasis of ethical leadership theories are nontrivial, calling for a comprehensive perspective on ethical leadership. According to Wart (2014) and Shakeel et al. (2020), ethical leadership is a broader perspective that incorporates all elements of ethical leadership theories. In this sense, the ethical leader is the one who is transformational, authentic servant, and ethical (Copeland,2016). Hence, the with possible argument here is it is worthy of consolidating all ethical leadership theories into a single "moral leadership" theory (Mango, 2018). Such argument, however, collapses in front of the meaningful distinctions of foundational theoretical construct in each theory (Lemoine et al., 2019). In

reality, the needs of the ethical landscape vary significantly as leaders, followers, and contexts have different ethical preferences (Yulk, 2020). Hence, distinctions in the various ethical leadership theories are helpful for practical and analytic purposes (Lemoine et al., 2019, Wart 2014).

However, it can be argued that ethical leadership is a paradox issue, and the attempts to solve its paradox are difficult. It is better to accommodate it by accepting the reality of a variety of ideas and viewpoints. Interestingly, like the broader domain of leadership theories, ethical leadership theories complement each other and share a plethora of commonalities (Glynn and Raffaelli, 2010; Lemoine et al., 2019; Mango, 2018; Silva, 2015). Hence, it can be useful to look at the commonalities that empirical literature of ethical leadership theories revealed. Through this review, the researcher identified four aspects that all ethical leadership theories covered with a variation of the degree of details in each aspect. The three main aspects are Value-based approach, Influence–based approach and Leader- centric approach and are illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2. 1 The comprehensive view of ethical leadership theories from Western perspective

Value-based approach
- Integrity
- Self awareness

Influence–based approach
- Role modelling
- A compliance-oriented vs a value-oriented

Leader- centric approach

An empirical-descriptive Western-based approach
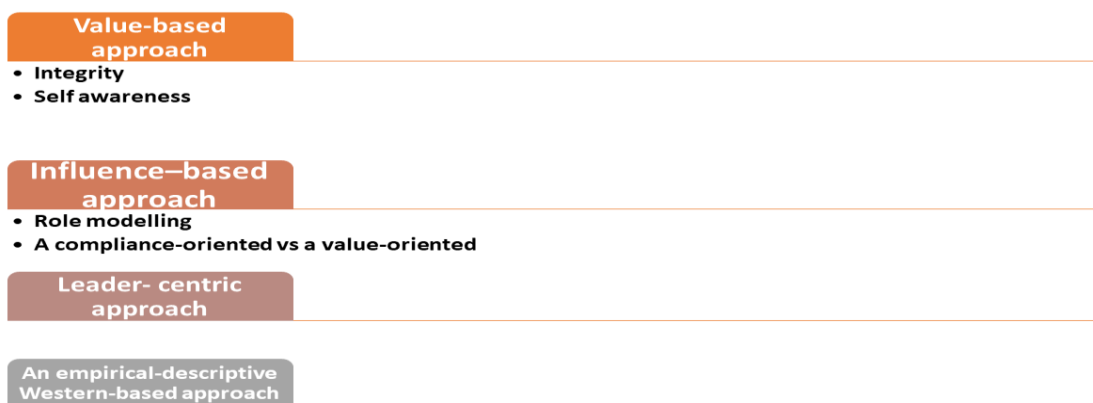
Source: The Author

2.6.1 Value-based approach

The value-based approach is known as 'the integrity-oriented or self-regulatory approach, given that this approach emphasises individual awareness, personal ethical responsibilities, self-governance and

self-control' (Sutamchai, 2021, p.52). All ethical leadership theories include the concept of personal integrity at the core of their construct. Brown et al. (2005) argue that integrity is the primary component of ethical leadership as there is a positive correlation between integrity and ethical leadership (Kalshoven et al., 2011). The basic meaning of integrity is consistency between one's espoused values and behaviour or actions (Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2009). The most important thing in this meaning is that the value itself must be moral, and the behaviour must be consistent with a set of justifiable and valid moral principles (Becker, 1998, Yulk, 2020). It is expected that what comes first when answering the question of defining a leader's ethical characteristics is highlighting integrity values which are frequently emphasised even more highly than competence (Posner and Kouzes, 1993). These values include honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and altruism. A leader of good integrity is perceived as truthful rather than deceptive, knowing and following rules and making sure that they apply to all, and acting consistently with own principles. These values of integrity are a significant driver for the leader to engage in ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005). When leaders embody such values, they not only gain the respect of followers or gain support and cooperation from them but also gain their trust and trustworthiness. Trust is one of the most frequently examined constructs and one of the determinants of organisational success and leadership effectiveness (Burke et al., 2007). Furthermore, integrity helps the leader have the moral authority to demand the same from their followers and show them how to practice those values (Mango, 2018).

In addition, authentic transformational leadership and authentic leadership provide more insight for defending ethical character by concerning leader authenticity. According to Harter (2002), authenticity is the extent to which an individual is aligning between his/her internal state (e.g., value, emotions, thoughts) and his/ her external expressions (e.g., actions, behaviours, words). Thus, the degree of authenticity defines the leader's ethical character as it represents the underlying determinant of an authentic leader (Hoch et al., 2018). From this perspective, there are two main determinants of ethical leader: self-awareness and internalised moral perspective. Self-awareness enables leaders to

understand themselves including core values, beliefs, self-identities, abilities, emotions and attitudes (Northouse, 2019; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Hence, by doing so, the leader is more authentic and has a solid foundation for making ethical decisions and actions as he/she has a high degree of self-acceptance and emotional maturity (Gardner et al., 2005b). Meanwhile, internalised moral perspective works as a self-regulatory process (Northouse, 2019) that guides the authentic leader to follow his/ her ethical standards and values to guide his/her decisions and conducts. Instead of complying with prevailing norms of the group organisation or social context (Tapara, 2011) or the desire to gratify a need for power, esteem, and status (Yukl and Gardner, 2020), internalised moral values works as a controller.

2.6.2 Influence–based approach

Generally, the influence is emphasised and highlighted in most effective leadership theories (Northouse, 2019; Yukl and Gardner, 2020). For example, based on Brown et al. (2005), ethical leadership considers the leader's efforts to influence followers' ethical behaviour as a key aspect (Treviñoet al., 2003; Hassan et al., 2013). The influence process to promote ethical behaviours in followers include role modelling, communication, and reinforcements (Brown et al., 2005). Transformational leadership propose the component of idealised influence as an influential component. Idealised influence describes leaders' ability to act as role models for their followers by showing a high level of standards of moral and ethical conduct, making them deeply respected and trusted by followers. The idealised influence is measured by followers' observations of leader behaviour and their perceptions towards their leaders (Avolio et al., 1991). Finally, Authentic leadership emphasises self-awareness and genuine communication based on transparency, which in turn influences followers' self-awareness and enables them to interact and behave authentically (Walumbwaet al., 2008). Therefore, it can be seen that all ethical leadership theories emphasise the importance of role models in the influence processes.

2.6.2.1 Role modelling

Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) assert that role modelling ethical behaviour is the fundamental pillar in being an ethical leader, as it directly reflects leaders' credibility and their attempt to enhance ethics among employees. Hence, individuals who have been influenced by an ethical role model or have had an ethical mentor in work are positively related to ethical leadership (Treviño et al., 2000; Treviño and Agle, 2005; Brown and Treviño, 2006b). Role model or exemplary leadership means that leaders influence their followers' ethical behaviours by showing sufficiently visible and salient behaviours (Brown and Trevin˜o, 2006). This term follows the social learning perspective, based on observational learning, imitation, and identification (Brown et al., 2005). This means leaders ostensibly enforce and shape the ethical climate by framing codes of conduct designed to influence their followers positively. This then allows them to reproduce ethical behaviours relatively efficiently and effectively throughout their organisations (Mayer et al., 2010). Hence, followers can learn what conduct is expected via role modelling and act in ways that are influenced by the ethical behaviours they observe in their leaders (Shakeel et al., 2020).

To date, these mainstream studies appear to have relied on simplifying the notion of being 'the influencer model', and imply that followers should 'imitate' and learn ethical standards through observing their leaders. These 'influencers models,' or what the literature proposes as principled leaders, who employ appropriate conduct, use rewards and punishment to reinforce their opinions about ethical behaviour to their followers (Tervino et al., 2003). However, basically, the tactic that leaders pursue to exercise influence and change others' behaviours to attain specific purposes is also perceived as toxic rather than ethical. Leaders are perceived as toxic when they employ influencing ways that harm their employees, even when they are confident that they behave appropriately or do the right things (Lipman-Blumen, 2005). This, in turn, exposes role modelling as a problematic approach to some extent.

2.6.2.2 A compliance-oriented vs a value-oriented

There are some aspects of influence which some but not all ethical leadership theoretical approaches share. One of these is whether their influence is compliance or value oriented. The compliance-oriented perspective refers to "leaders' adherence to of law or other externally determined formal rules and regulations, i.e., professional policies or organizational codes of conduct" (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014, p 553). In this case, what is considered right and wrong in a particular situation depends on the standards and codes found outside of oneself and presents rather tangible and clear directives for leaders. The compliance-oriented perspective is adopted by ethical leadership theory as it proposes transactional aspects in the influence process. Thus, ethical leaders influence followers' ethical behaviours not only by role-model but also by explicitly setting normative ethical standards and holding followers' accountable to those standards by using rewards and punishment (Brown et al., 2005).

On the other hand, the value-oriented perspective refers to that "ethical leaders have a coherent set of moral values—a sort of "navigation system"— serving as their steering compass for their personal conduct and management choices" (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014, p 553). Hence, this internal value compass determines the standards against ethical or unethical leadership. This approach is used by rest of ethical leadership theories such as transformational, authentic and servant leadership.

The transactional influence (compliance-oriented) might be logical to influence ethical behaviour, but some logical arguments also make other ethical leadership theories not focus on this kind of influence. Wart (2014) criticised the focus on compliance and called it the "low road" approach as the sole focus depends on excessive prohibition and excessive negativism. The compliance approach provides a "technical" solution to deal with the complexity of the problem of wrong-doing (Rohr 1989), neglecting higher stages of morality that focus on principle-centred behaviour and are not only founded on avoidance behaviour (Downe et al., 2016; Kohlberg 1981).

Kohlberg (1981) proposed a stages theory of cognitive moral development, describing how people think about moral issues and interact with their social environment. With each successive stage, the person progresses through these reasoning stages and moves from a particular level of moral thinking to a broader level of moral reasoning. At the lowest level of moral reasoning, "preconventional", the person judges the morality of an action by its direct consequences. The primary motivation of his/her action is escaping punishment and satisfying personal needs (exchange favours). At a middle level of moral reasoning, "Conventional", the person judges the morality of actions by comparing them to social norms and rules determined by groups, organisations, and society. Therefore, the primary motivation of his/her action is to satisfy and match these norms or rules. At the highest level of moral "Postconventionalists", the person develops his/her own set of ethics principles and fights for them. The primary motivation of his/her is to fulfil and achieve these principles. A person at this level uses universal principles, including human rights as life, liberty, and justice of reasoning in making life's decisions (Northouse,2019; Turner et al., 2002; Yulk 2020).

Therefore, it can be argued leaders who have higher stages of moral development are more likely to show ethical behaviours, serve the collective good, and value goals that go beyond immediate self-interest (Turner et al., 2012). Plaisance (2014) found " an overarching emphasis on notions of care and respect for others, professional duty, concern for harm, and proactive social engagement—all of which characterise higher stages of moral development" (p. 308). In this sense, ethical leadership demands a value-oriented perspective rather compliance-oriented perspective. That is because ethical leadership is more than complying with rules (Downe et al., 2016; Eisenbeiss and Brodbeck, 2014; Wart, 2014) or merely following formal procedural regulations; instead, it goes beyond that to include the leader's ethical values in setting an ethical tone demonstrated in interpersonal dealings (Eisenbeiss and Brodbeck, 2014; Downe et al., 2016). Making judgments about behaviours and wrong-doing is an integral part of the day-to-day tasks of the ethical leader (Lawton and Macaulay, 2014). Hence, following a hands-off approach under the pretext of deference to formal procedures is not enough to

deal with the ambiguity of the complexities of administrative situations (Chandler, 1994; Downe et al., 2016). The ethical ambiguity that is the nature of administrative life demands a perception that leaders act informally, proactively intervening and exercising practical judgment, rather than just escalating wrong-doing to the point that formal regulation might come into play (Chandler, 1994). Rules and codes always have loopholes, even if they look perfect. Therefore, the compliance model hardly can sustainably address unethical behaviours. What is missing here is the balance between compliance with codes and regulations and the value-oriented perspective (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014).

2.6.3 Leader- centric approach

All ethical leadership theories tend to perpetuate the traditional leader-centric image by specifying a number of perceived ethical traits that followers tend to see as attractive and motivational. That is, these theories are concerned with a leader's personality traits as many of the traits linked to effective leadership are also linked to ethical leadership theories (Brown and Treviño, 2006b; Treviño and Brown, 2014). Northouse (2019) argue that leaders differ in their personal traits, and these traits interact with their ability to engage in ethical leadership. Therefore, ethical leadership theories have attempted to link ethical leadership with the phenotypic traits of personality (Big Five model) (Harms el, 2011). Brown et al. (2005) propose that the leader's traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism are related and strongly influence ethical leadership. For example, agreeableness helps an ethical leader to serve and care for others as it emphasises the individuals' tendency to be altruistic and cooperative (Treviño et al., 2003). Furthermore, highly conscientious individuals are self-controlled and apply principles and standards to themselves. Therefore, high conscientiousness helps leaders to be true with themselves rather than seen as a hypocritical calling for ethical standards but failing to apply them consistently (Brown et al., 2005). In contrast, neuroticism is negatively related to ethical leadership as it emphasises the individual tendency to experience negative emotions such as

anger, anxiety, and fear (Brown et al., 2005). Hence, a leader with low conscientiousness, high neuroticism, high narcissism, and a personalised power orientation is more likely to lead in an unethical way. Meanwhile, a leader with a high level of cognitive moral development, a socialised power orientation, and a solid moral identity is more likely to lead ethically and resist the desire to use his/her power to exploit others (Yulk,2020).

2.6.4 An empirical-descriptive Western-based approach.

Drawing from a discussion of the existing literature reviewed in this chapter, it could be argued that current research on ethical leadership focuses on an empirical-descriptive Western-based perspective. (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2018; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). Flanigan (2018) and Price (2018) argue that ethical leadership theories neglect to actively engage with the moral foundations of ethical leadership, demonstrating that scholars do not develop ethical arguments to justify their assertions about ethical leadership. The lack of normative approaches in ethical leadership literature makes ethical leadership theories vague constructs as they do not specify any particular norms ethical leaders can refer to (Eisenbeiss, 2012). Ethics is bound up with the normative question of 'what ought one to do (Gibson, 2022). Therefore, anchoring ethical leadership to respective moral foundations affords opportunities to prevent ethical relativism and clarify inclusion and exclusion criteria for ethical leadership's constituent content (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Lemoine et al., 2019). Bellah (1983, p. 373) confirms that "Without a reference point in the tradition of ethical reflection, the very categories of social thought would be empty."

In summary, although ethical leadership theories are concerned about followers, they still reflect a leader-centric view and neglect relational views of leadership. For example, transformational leadership gives leaders the freedom to act independently of their followers and neglect their needs. Therefore, it fails to give attention to shared leadership or reciprocal influence (Northouse, 2019). In this regard as well, although the importance that giving to followers in the conceptualisation of

authentic leadership, still the main focus of authentic leadership resides in the internal authenticity of the leader (Sidani and Rowe, 2018). However, the leader-centric view assumes that leaders consistently demonstrate proper and ethical behaviour, which in turn mirrors the overconfidence of equating a leader's behaviour with ethical conduct. Hence, these theories contribute to perpetuating a heroic-centric image of leadership and representing a leader as an individual who possesses core ethical integrity and a capacity to resolve moral dilemmas, set the prevailing standards of ethical behaviour, and decide what amounts to immorality (Lawler and Ashman, 2012). They reproduce images of a superior and top-driven shaping of organisational values, highlighting those in leadership roles and neglecting any potential breaching of ethical standards at this position (Knights and O'Leary, 2006). It is therefore important to examine ethical leadership from leaders'- followers' point of view, although this also raises issues concerning power and struggle concerning leadership behaviours.

Part 2: Ethical leadership in the Omani cultural context

2.7 National culture and leadership

It could be argued that contemporary researchers agree that culture is a shared phenomenon among group members in a particular geographic region who share the same values, norms, lifestyle and collective experience across generations (Dwairy, 2019; Triandis, 1996). Hofstede (1994, 2001, p. 99) conceptualised culture as "collective mental programming". Meanwhile, Javidan and House (2004, p. 293) defined culture as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations". Consistent with the GLOBE definition, Marcella (2013, p. 6) defined culture as "Shared learned meanings and behaviors transmitted across generations within social activity contexts for purposes of promoting individual/societal adaptation, adjustment, growth, and development". Thus, societal culture is reflected in social norms and values, which determine how people relate to one another and appropriate behaviours in various situations (House et al., 2004; Schwartz,1999). These values work as implicit social law, influencing leaders' attitudes and behaviour in several different ways and determining acceptable forms of leadership behaviour (Adler and Gunderson, 2008; House et al., 2004). The behaviours and attitudes of leaders who grow up in a particular culture are likely to conform with their social norms about acceptable behaviours as If they do not conform to acceptable behaviours, they will face increased social pressure from other members, which might undermine their effectiveness and their respect (Yulk, 2020). This line of thinking upholds the fundamental presumption of implicit leadership theory (ILT). According to implicit leadership theory, people have implicit and shared beliefs, assumptions and motives that lead to familiar patterns and expectations of the attributes of effective leaders (Karacay et al., 2019). This

suggests that leaders' qualities that are viewed as prototypical or characteristic are varying strongly from one to the culture (Yulk, 2020).

Therefore, several critics of current issues in leadership studies have revealed that mainstream studies tend to be Western-centric (Yuan et al., 2022). As a counterweight to this, with the increasing number of global organisations and international commerce, it has become more critical to understand how cultural values influence leader behaviour and beliefs about effective Leadership (Den Hartog and Dickson, 2018). Furthermore, there is a need to understand if leadership theories can be generalised to different cultures and how to lead people with different cultural backgrounds (Bass, 2008). Researchers paid strong interest in studying values, beliefs, and expectations of different cultures and their impact on leadership (Bass, 2008; Brodbeck and Eisenbeiss, 2014; Den Hartog and Dickson, 2018; Smith, Peterson, and Thomas, 2008). Two main approaches have appeared in the literature when it comes to studying leadership and culture: the etic approach and the emic approach (Schedlizki, 2021). The etic approach is concerned with the generic analyses of cultural/regional bloc (e.g. the Arab world) (Neal et al., 2005). Etic researchers exerted a considerable influence during the late 20th century, using cross-culture models of leadership and organisational behaviour, with larger variables employed in relation to categories and differentiated cultures, countries and communities (Almarshd, 2021). One of the most widely cited work done in this field is the work done by Hofstede (1980), who informed numerous accounts of differences between cultures and effective styles of contextual leadership (Guthey and Jackson, 2011). Hofstede's framework included eight key cultural dimensions (i.e. power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term/short-term orientation). However, although Hofstede's framework has been widely used, it is extensively critiqued (Jones, 2007; Osland et al., 2004). According to Osland et al. (2000:86), Hofstede's framework is viewed as 'sophisticated stereotyping'. That is because mainly as it is "based on theoretical concepts and lacks the negative attributions often associated with its lower-level

counterpart. Nevertheless, it is limiting in the way it constrains perceptions of behaviour in another culture".

Similarly, to Hofstede's framework, the GLOBE project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness), which was conducted in more than 60 different countries representing all major clusters of the world, provide a detailed description and explanation of the impact of culture on leadership effectiveness and how leadership behaviours and beliefs are influenced by cultural values (House et al., 2004). The GLOBE project developed nine cultural dimensions based on other works conducted in the same field (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; McClelland, 1961; Triandis, 2001). These cultural dimensions include power distance, uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, egalitarianism, assertiveness, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, performance orientation, future orientation, and humane orientation. However, although the GLOBE study represents a major contribution to the field of cross-cultural leadership, scholars have criticised this study. For example, Schedlizki (2017) argues that the GLOBE study relies upon simplistic measures of culture. Graen (2006, p.95) described the results of GLOBE's study as a large number of one-shot, self-reported, culturally biased survey studies" and further concluded that "the approach over determines the results by ignoring the variation within countries" (P, 96).

On the other hand, as a reaction to the limitations of etic studies, the Emic research explores and examines leadership from the perspective of natives of the local culture (Schedlizki and Edwards, 2021). Scholars argue the study of leadership requires a detailed exploration of local cultural understandings, including the forms of values and belief norms (Alvesson, 2001). Hence, Emic research provides a greater understanding of leadership in specific cultures as it examines culture from anthropological and sociological perspectives and recognises individual interpretations of its meaning (Schedlizki, 2017). Cultural interpretations reveal valuable means of positioning and understanding the complexity of ethical behaviours and how they are justified as ethical or unethical. Hence, "ethical meaning making can be considered to be embedded in the contextual and historical roots that engender

differing forms of leaders' behaviour, which are rationalised within its common collective sense-making" (Almarshd, 2021, p.49). However, although the appreciation of social and cultural constructions of ethical leadership behaviour based on Emic research remains in its infancy, Emic research has provided significant insights into the indigenous leadership theories from the Eastern perspective (Almarshd, 2021) (e.g. Islamic leadership and Paternalistic leadership).

2.8 Overview of Leadership in the Omani cultural context

The scope of practising leadership in Omani organisations is tightly constrained by centralised power as the economy is primarily driven by the rigid hierarchical structures of the government (Al-Araimi, 2012). This leadership style links back to the centralised scope of the country, which gives the full authority to the Sultan, rather than organisational or business leaders who are basically supported by the government (Common, 2011). By the beginning of the rise of modern Oman in the early 1970s, Sultan Qaboos supported tribal leaders giving them privileges such as place them in key positions (Phillips and Hunt, 2017). At that stage, such action was justified to secure the loyalty of the tribes. However, the implications of supporting tribal leaders led to the emergence of a powerful elite that ruled and dominated society, which boosted social networking to get things done (Common, 2011).

In addition, leadership in Oman is influenced by culture and traditional beliefs on leadership that accords leaders heroic status. This leadership is relational-based and concordant with the characteristics of Arabic and Omani cultures, which centred on group orientation, hierarchy and submission to authority, and low adherence to formal regulations and rules (Al-Khatib et al., 2004; Common, 2011; Kabasakal and Bodur, 2002; Obeidat et al., 2012; Ralston et al., 2012). In such a collectivist society, people prefer to hold onto their deeply seated customs and values in their daily life even at the workplace (Oplatka and Arar, 2016). For example, social relations are considered a positive force to get things done and solve problems (Megheirkouni and Weir, 2019). Hence, holding onto such values is preferred and tends to have a strong personal and emotional basis (Oplatka and Arar, 2016).

This makes leaders and employees pay more attention to maintaining interpersonal relationships, even at the expense of law or other externally determined formal rules and regulations (Gelbrich et al., 2016). Management scholars have long debated the role of relationships and their influence in management or leadership practices, identifying that using social networks in business is culturally rooted in the countries in which they are practised (Weir and Ali, 2020). However, although the concept of using social networks is used universally as each culture embrace different forms such as Guanxi in China, Wasta in the Arab Middle East, Blat in former Soviet countries, Compadrazgo in Latin American countries, Yongo, Yonjul and Inmaek in South Korea, 'pulling strings' in the UK; and Yruzki in Bulgaria, each culture differs in the degree to which practised (Weir and Ali, 2020). For example, in collectivist cultures such as Arabic culture, group interests generally take precedence over individual interests. Thus, people in such societies are more likely to use networks in the business as they are obliged to fulfil group interests (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004; Schwartz, 1992).

Hence, it is not strange that daily transactions in the Omani organisations are affected by nepotism practices, with personal visits or telephone calls from family members, friends and acquaintances, to ask for help directly or on behalf of relatives or someone from their social networks (Al-Araimi, 2012). The use of relationships for selection, recruitment, training and promotion still exist in Omani organisations even though there are also attempts to operate new management practices (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). Therefore, it can be said that there are two systems that work in parallel inside Omani organisations. The first one is resting on social norms, which are determined by social affiliation rather than merit, especially when making decisions about promotion, selection and recruitment. At the same time, the other system is based on work regulations and standards, which are mostly imported from developed countries (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007; Common, 2011).

Furthermore, leadership in Oman is influenced by the hierarchical nature of Omani culture. Omani culture pays more attention to social status, which considers a number of factors such as age, seniority, tribal relations, and wealth as the basis of social structure (At-Twaijri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996, Al-arimi,

2012). According to the class system, hierarchical culture demonstrates the disparity between people and their roles (Schwartz,1992). Therefore, people are unequal with power distribution, welfare and responsibilities.

It can be argued, Omani leaders' ethical behaviours and the attitude of their employees are a reflection of their culture and beliefs (Al-Asmi and Caldwell, 2018). Omani leaders have consciously and unconsciously utilised cultural values to be seen as ethical leaders. The pertinent question to ask is whether such practices are perceived as ethical or unethical in the Omani context. Recent studies in the Arabic context (e.g., Alsuood and Youde, 2018) have revealed tensions between perceived traditional negative practices of leadership and the desire to change and indicates dissatisfaction with the societal culture and the negative impact is perceived to have on leadership practices. In contrast, Dwairy (2019) emphasises that the Arabic culture contains many values that advocate ethics. Hence, implementing these values in leadership has an implicit reward on promoting ethical behaviours as they are linked with an individual's beliefs. However, Swailes and Fahdi (2011) believe that the rate of change to leadership practice in Omani organisations looks slow, given the relative constancy of societal values that legitimate prevailing cultures.

This overview reveals that it is possible to emphasise that features of Omani leadership are influenced by cultural values, which are centred on group orientation, hierarchy and submission to authority, and low adherence to formal regulations and rules. These features of leadership are congruent with Paternalistic leadership features. Hence, the following section will discuss Paternalistic leadership as one of an underlying theory of Omani leadership.

2.9 Paternalistic leadership

Paternalistic leadership is a relatively new ethical construct of leadership built on the notion of paternalism which can be traced back to Max Weber (1968), who conceptualised paternalism as a form of traditional legitimated authority (O'Sullivan, 2016). In a simplistic way, paternalism refers to acting

similarly to how a father behaves toward his children (Aycan, 2006; Okten and Cenkci, 2012). However, this simplicity is covered by complexity, making it a challenging term to precisely define. This complexity is identified by Jackman (1994, p. 10) when he asserts that "paternalism is a time-worn term that has had indefinite meaning in common usage". Yet almost every investigation about paternalism is loaded with controversial ideological and moral overtones. For example, whilst Northouse (2021, p.39) describe it as a "benevolent dictatorship", Jackman (1994, p.9) portray it as "the sweetest persuasion", and Padavic and Earnest (1994, p.397) define it as "strategic flexibility". These controversies, metaphors and descriptions make paternalism awkward in terms of whether it is moral or immoral, exploitative or benevolent, something to endorse or avoid?

Although the complexity attached to Paternalism, it is one of the most salient cultural characteristics of the Middle East (Ali, 1993; Ayman and Chemers, 1991; Bedi, 2020). The literature also suggests that Paternalism is prevalent in countries of Pacific Asian and Latin-American cultures (Aycan, 2006; Bedi, 2020; Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008; Rawat and Lyndon, 2016). The underpinning of Paternalism in these cultures is the traditional value of familism. That is, these cultures have strong beliefs on patriarchal and patrilineal relationships within the family unit (Aycan, 2006). In contrast to Western cultures, Paternalism may contradict the Western beliefs of individualism and equal treatment (Bedi, 2020). Hence, in such cultures, Paternalism may evoke unfavourable perceptions. This is asserted by Mansur et al. (2017), who found that Paternalistic leadership is not universally nor homogeneously endorsed, but that different patterns of endorsement give rise to idiosyncratic shades of Paternalistic leadership across cultures.

In an attempt to delineate the domain of paternalistic leadership and determine the theory's validity, scholars have used both uni-dimensional (e.g. Wagstaff et al. 2015) and multi-dimensional (e.g. Aycan, 2006; Aycan et al., 2013; Cheng et al., 2000) measurement instruments to capture the features of paternalistic leadership. Farh and Cheng (2000) coined the initial conception of paternalistic leadership and defined it as a "style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and

moral integrity" (Farh and Cheng, 2000, p, 91). Based on their seminal framework, paternalistic leadership involves three essential leadership styles: authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership. In this sense, paternalistic leaders meet the 'twin requirements' of compliance and harmony (Sinha,1990). whilst they show consideration and care, at the same time, they act as authoritative, controlling, demanding, and disciplinarian figures (Martinez, 2003). Hence, the combination of benevolence and authority mean control and care must coexist (Mansur et al., 2017). In light of this coexistence, Aycan (2006) extended seminal frameworks of paternalistic leadership based on role theories of leadership, discussing the duality between control and benevolence in paternalistic leadership and defining it as a hierarchical relationship. In this relationship, leaders provide care and protection to followers, who in turn are expected to be loyal and deferent to the leader. Aycan (2006) identified four distinct leadership styles: benevolent paternalism, exploitative paternalism, authoritarian approach, and authoritative approach. Hence, he argues that paternalistic leadership is not a unified construct, and the style of leadership depends on the role expectations in the leader-follower relationship (Bedi, 2020). In benevolent paternalism, leaders show genuine concern for the follower's care. In the exploitative paternalism style, leaders are concerned with organisational goals. In the authoritarian leadership style, leaders use control and exploitation, and followers comply with receiving rewards and/or avoid punishment. Yet, authoritative leaders exercise control for the benefit of their followers. From this point of view, Aycan et al. (2013, p, 977) identified the main aspects of paternalistic leadership, including 'creating a family environment in the workplace', 'establishing close personalised relationships with subordinates', 'getting involved in employees' non-work lives', 'expecting loyalty and deference from subordinates (leader considers loyalty more important than performance)' and 'maintaining authority and status hierarchy'.

2.9.1 The paradoxical nature of Paternalistic leadership

Paternalistic leadership embraces paradoxical aspects (Mansur et al., 2017). For example, dominant authority coupled with individualized care (Bedi, 2020). Therefore, to explain this paradox in

paternalistic leadership, some scholars have used the eastern philosophy of Yin-Yang (Zhang et al., 2015b). The Yin-Yang philosophy adapts dialectical, holistic and dynamic views, affirming the interdependence and coexistence of two opposing cosmic energies, including Yin and Yang (Fang, 2012). According to Yin-Yang philosophy, Yang represents the "male" energy, and Yin represents the "female" energy. Hence, these two forces complement and combine each other to form a unified whole, although they may seem paradoxical (Fang, 2012). Similarly, scholars have applied this concept to paternalistic leadership and suggested that although components of paternalistic leadership are seemingly paradoxical, they can coexist like Yin and Yang (Bedi, 2020). That is, although components of paternalistic leadership (authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership) have an opposing impact, they interact and complement each other to form a holistic component of paternalistic leadership (Wu et al., 2012b). However, although studies have revealed paternalistic leadership is an effective style, especially in the collectivist culture (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008), studies still have not provided sufficient explanations for its paradoxical nature.

2.9.2 Theoretical foundation of Paternalistic leadership

To gain a better understanding of "paternalistic leadership," it is necessary to place it in the context of different theoretical foundations. Hence, scholars have used social dominance theory and social exchange theory (Bedi, 2020). From social dominance perspective, societies are categorised on group-based social hierarchies (Sidanius and Pratto, 2001). Hence, unequal distribution of power between groups is expected to be ranked based on several factors such as age systems, gender systems, and arbitrarily set systems. For example, adults are given more power than children, males have more power than females, and a particular class are given a higher status over another class based on social hierarchies such as ethnicity, race, social class, etc. (Levin, 2004). In this sense, Paternalistic leaders are expected to dominate their followers due to their higher status attached to them based on unequal arbitrary-set systems. Therefore, Paternalistic leaders exercise dominance over their followers and control the decision-making process (Tsui et al., 2004); in turn, followers respect the leaders' decisions

and comply preferably with their authority (Aycan, 2006). From a social exchange perspective, the norms of reciprocity determine social interactions and relationships (Bedi et al., 2016; Brown et al., 2005). That is, social exchange theory focuses on reciprocal principles within social interactions and relationships. Therefore, if one group engages in a transaction or does a favour that benefits or helps the other group, the other group feels subsequently obligated to reciprocate in kind (Bedi, 2020). In this sense, Paternalistic leaders use their authority to care for and enhance the well-being and protection of their followers. Therefore, when followers perceive their leader as caring, they repay the leader's support with trust and loyalty (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008).

Paternalistic leadership can be seen from the social capital lens. Social capital is conceptualised as "the sum of the resources embedded in the networks of relationships between individuals, communities, networks, or societies" (Shao and Pan, 2019, p. 110). While there are different views of social capital, most researchers assumed that social capital resides in the fabric of relationships between individuals, groups, and individuals' connections with their communities (Shiau et al., 2017). Hence, as the sources of social capital lie in social relations and Paternalistic leadership is manifested in social relations, group social capital can pose ethical challenges. One of these challenges is leader favouritism. Yang, Horak and Kakabadse (2021, p,2) define leader favouritism as "particularistic treatment that results in an individual attaining both intangible and tangible resources as well as more favorable working conditions than others, owing to the individual's personal ties, irrespective of his or her knowledge, abilities, and skills". Indeed, one of the fundamental survival strategies characterising the human species is group living (Abbink and Harris, 2019). Hence, as a result of people's interactions from different groups, it is empirically proven by vast and multiple experiments by various researchers around the world that in-group favouritism and/or out-group discrimination often exist (Everett, Faber and Crockett, 2015). According to Abbink and Harris (2019), in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination have a number of important economic and social implications. These include worsening income inequality and social segregation, distorting access to jobs and hiring practices, corruption, and

abusing power in order to distribute positions and/or resources to in-groups at the expense of the out-group (Hruschka and Henrich, 2013; Kaufmann, 2004).

However, paternalistic leadership cannot be understood without considering its cultural context (Aycan, 2006). Given the paradoxical and complex construct of paternalistic leadership, different cultures may endorse paternalistic leadership in different ways. For example, researchers argue that paternalistic leadership are more appropriate in collectivistic and high power distance socio-cultural contexts (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008). The following section sheds light on paternalistic leadership from the lens of The GLOBE study and partially links it to the Omani context.

2.9.3 Paternalistic leadership from The GLOBE project lens

As discussed previously in section (2.7), the GLOBE study is One of the most well-known cross-cultural. The GLOBE project developed nine cultural dimensions based on other works conducted in the same field (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; McClelland, 1961; Triandis, 2001). These cultural dimensions include power distance, uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, egalitarianism, assertiveness, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, performance orientation, future orientation, and humane orientation. Therefore, this review will consider the relationship between paternalistic leadership and cultural values of power distance, collectivism, assertiveness, and humane orientation in the following sections.

2.9.3.1 Power distance

Paternalistic leadership is built on a hierarchical relationship as the father takes the leading role in the family (Okten and Cenkci, 2012). Hence, the leader maintains authority and status hierarchy by showing a genuine concern for the subordinates' care, protection and welfare. The followers, in exchange, show loyalty and respect for their leaders, insofar as the leader is capable of fulfilling the needs of the employees (Mansur et al., 2017). These thoughts align with the high Power distance of the GLOBE study. Power distance based on the GLOBE study refers to "the extent to which a

community accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges. In high power distance countries, power, authority, and information are unequally distributed" (House et al., 2004, p. 536). Therefore, in high power distance cultures such as Omani culture (Al-Araimi, 2012), levels between people vary based on their level of authority, power, prestige, wealth, and status (Northouse, 2019). Hence, as paternalism is one of the most salient cultural characteristics of the Middle East (Ali, 1993; Ayman and Chemers, 1991; Bedi, 2020), the centralized use of the authority of paternalistic leaders is naturally accepted and legitimized by subordinates. This is because followers accept the superiority of their leaders and are less willing to oppose them nor doubt their appropriateness of actions (Al-Araimi, 2012, Yulk,2020).

However, hierarchical nature of paternalistic leadership might enable paternalistic leaders to follow their own interests as they have loyal employees who are not questioning or challenging them (Gelbrich et al., 2016; Carl, Gupta, and Javidan, 2004; Karacay et al., 2019). Hence, under the authoritarianism-dominant role of paternalistic leadership there is a possibility of unfair reward allocation as it is based on other criteria such as social considerations than performance (Aycan, 2006).

2.9.3.2 Collectivism

The value of maintaining personal relationships is one of the distinctive features of paternalistic leadership (Qian and Walker, 2021). This value is culturally rooted in the countries in which they are practised (Weir and Ali, 2020). According to the GLOBE study, In-group collectivism describes the degree to which culture encourages institutional or societal collective action (Yulk, 2020). In high in-group collectivistic cultures such as Omani culture (Al-Araimi, 2012), individuals are integrated into groups and "express pride, loyalty, and interdependence in their families" (House et al., 2004). Hence, individuals regard family ties, ethnic background, tribe, circles of close friends and religious affiliation as valuable things and above all else (Ye, Ng, and Lian, 2015). Paternalistic leadership strongly emphasises human integration, fostering the maintenance of affective bonds between group members

in a trustworthy environment, which implies that the interest and well-being of group members prevail over individuals' goals, triggering collaboration and social integration to benefit social entities (Mansur et al., 2017).

However, paternalistic leadership, which always value personal relationships is frequently engaged in behaviours that imply favouritism (Almarshd, 2021). This, in turn, influences decisions such as selection, promotion, rewards and training inside organisations, as they are often based on personal connections, social obligations and in-group status (Li et al., 2020). Therefore, it is not strange that daily transactions in the Omani organisations are affected by nepotism practices, with personal visits or telephone calls from family members, friends and acquaintances, to ask for help directly or on behalf of relatives or someone from their social networks (Al-Araimi, 2012). The use of social criteria for selection, recruitment, training and promotion is a key in Omani organisations, even though there are also attempts to operate new management practices (Al-Hamadi et al., 2007). From a social exchange perspective, the norms of reciprocity determine social interactions and relationships (Bedi et al., 2016; Brown et al., 2005). Followers expect care from their leaders, and in return, if leaders do so, followers will have high degrees of loyalty to them (Aycan, 2006). Thus, leaders are more likely to need to look out for loyal employees' interests in their social network, even at the expense of rules or codes of conduct, to gain their trust and respect (Chandler and Graham, 2010), which in turn challenge the ethical position of paternalistic leadership.

2.9.3.3 Humane Orientation

According to the GLOBE study, humane orientation refers to the degree to which a culture encourages and rewards individuals for being altruistic, benevolent, kind, sympathetic, love, caring and generous (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004; Li et al., 2020). The humane values are concerned with the welfare of others, social support, and community values that are not limited to one's family or individualistic interest but instead include a humanitarian concern for everyone within society. These values are

influenced by religious teaching, family experiences, parenting, and cultural norms (House et al., 2004). Cultures with high humane orientation encourage a sense of affiliation and belongingness based on sensitivity to others and a strong concern for their needs rather than achievement, authority and power.   Leaders in such societies are most likely to show supportive leadership behaviours. Hence, leaders are expected to consider followers' needs and feelings, provide caring when needed, act in a friendly and accepting manner, show sympathy and compassion and provide mentoring and coaching when appropriate (Yulk, 2020).

As such, it is expected that the fatherly motives in paternalistic leadership would be enhanced by humane orientation and good relationships (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004). Benevolent behaviours such as kindness, tolerance, and concern for others are behaviours closely aligned with benevolent paternalism since it embodies a sensitive, compassionate, and supportive leadership approach. Therefore, as Omani society is characterised by a number of distinctive ethical features such as cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others(Omanuona,2022), Omani leaders are expected to show humane values such as altruism, benevolence, kindness, compassion and generosity (Neal, 2010). These values encourage Omani leaders to build and maintain friendly, harmonious and cooperative relationships with their followers and satisfy each party's important needs, whether within or outside organisations (Al-Araimi, 2012). Therefore, Omani leaders are more likely to develop a network with followers informally, act with them in a paternalistic manner regarding their career and social welfare and tolerate their mistakes (Al-Araimi, 2012; Abdalla and Homoud, 2001; Al-Khatib et al.,2004; Neal et al., 2005). In addition, the humane orientation of leaders is not restricted to people inside the organisation but extend to people outside the organisation. Hence, Omani leaders always develop friendly networks of external people by socialising and doing favours for them (Alhashemi, 2017).

2.9.3.4 Assertiveness

Paternalistic leadership is a benevolent style, as paternalistic leaders prefer to show tolerance and kindness (Jiang,2021; Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, assertive and authoritarian styles are more congruent with exploitative paternalism (Mansur et al., 2017), which consider a toxic style as it has a negative impact (Ren et al., 2021). Whilst exploitative paternalism demands unquestioned obedience and authoritarian and strict discipline in work assignments, benevolent paternalism focuses on "tender" practices and behaviours (Wu and Xu, 2012). Therefore, exploitative paternalism is more strongly attached with the aggressive style endorsed by highly assertive cultures. Conversely, benevolent paternalism is more endorsed in low assertive cultures (Mansur et al., 2017). According to the GLOBE study, assertiveness refers to "beliefs as to whether people are or should be encouraged to be assertive, aggressive, and tough or non-assertive, nonaggressive, and tender in social relationships" (House et al., 2004, p.395). High assertiveness cultures adopt a forceful, aggressive, and tough culture in relationships. Leaders in such a culture hold on to global justice beliefs and demand challenging targets. In contrast, leaders in low assertiveness cultures are submissive and tender in social relationships (Li et al., 2020; Northouse, 2019).

Hence, Hence, as the Arab cluster is categorised as having a low assertive culture (House et al., 2004), Omanis pay more attention to maintaining warm relationships and reputation. Hence, it is expected that Omani leaders are less aggressive and tough with their followers to gain employees loyalty, love and maintain their prestige and a remarkable social rank (AldulaImi, 2021; House et al., 2004).

Overall, paternalistic leadership aligns with the features of Omani culture. Omani leaders reproduce institutional patriarchal practices (i.e. paternalism), which contribute to behaving like father figures in organisations and having the authority to 'create' a collective culture within an organisation similar to that of a family (Almarshd, 2021). However, paternalistic practices might produce unethical practices such as control that could be justified as ethical acts to care for or protect subordinates. In addition to paternalistic leadership, since Islamic religion influences the attitudes and behaviour of people in

almost all aspects of life, including values, beliefs, behaviours, rules, and morals, Islamic leadership will be highlighted in the following section.

2.10 Omani Ethical leadership from an Islamic lens

2.10.1 Islamic religion

Religion is part of the social reality of current societies and influences daily social life, organisational settings, and leadership behaviour (Gümüsay,2019). Ali (2011) argues that religion is most likely a dominant component in Eastern societies, particularly Muslim societies. However, according to Pew Research Centre (2021), 84% of the world population is religiously affiliated, and it is expected this percentage will increase to reach 87% by 2050. For example, Judaism, Christianity and Islam encompass around 54% of the world population (31.5% Christians, 23.2% Muslims and 0.2% Jews). However, this does not mean that religion is predominant in practice, but it shows, in fact, religion has extensive reach, and people, in general, identify with religious tenets and aspire toward achieving the ideals prescribed in the holy books (Ali, 2011; Gümüsay,2019). Hence, while people currently live in what is called a "post-secular society" (Gümüsay,2019), there still "affords a place for religious voices in academic discourse" (Miller, 2018, p. 2). This significance of considering a religious perspective on leadership stems from the fact of that Eastern societies, particularly Muslim societies, is conceived as an "ultimate concern" and positioned above other values' systems, logic, or orders of worth (Ali, 2011; Gümüsay,2019, Tillich, 1957). In such societies, people prefer to hold onto their deeply seated religious values in their daily life even at the workplace (Oplatka and Arar, 2016).

Islam constitutes a major influence of Omani culture as it is the state religion, and most Omani people are Muslims (Omanuona, 2022). The word Islam means to accept, surrender, submit. Literally, a Muslim is an individual who is submitted to the will of God (Mir, 2010). This submission is not forcibly; instead, it is voluntarily based on the love for the creator and the connected relationship, which give tranquillity to the human soul (Draz, 2008). Hence, Islam for Muslims is not only a religion

but a comprehensive ideology that provides the organising structure of meaning for all facets of human existence and life, including political, social and cultural. Indeed, the vision of Islam is to establish an ethical civilisation in which all of the people can live in wellbeing, peace and harmony. This vision guides and control both spiritual and material aspects of the everyday life of Muslims and is achieved by following the Islamic codes of ethics (Esposito, 2005). As such, it can be argued that Islam is the main component to the ethical and moral formation of state and people (Beekun, 1997; Esposito 2005).

2.10.2 Islamic ethical leadership

There is a broad consensus among Muslim scholars and experts that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the primary sources of Islamic ethical leadership (Ali,2011; Almoharby and Neal 2013 Gümüsay,2019; Asfiah, 2021, Yulianti al., 2021). Indeed, The Prophet Mohammed urged people to hold to them by saying "I have left you with two matters which will never lead you astray, as long as you hold to them: The Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet." (Sunan Abi Dawud, n.d). The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam and the word of God (Mohiuddin and Bhuiyan, 2013; Yulianti al., 2021). The Sunnah refers to the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad and is represented by "hadiths" (Duderija, 2012; Yulianti al., 2021). Hence, all attempts that have been made to understand ethical leadership from an Islamic lens are basically guided by Islamic ethics extracted from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the prescriptions of the Prophet Muhammad (e.g. Ahmad and Ogunsola 2011; Ali,2011; Ali, 2009; Almoharby and Neal 2013; Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Jamil,2015; Marbun, 2013; Yulianti al., 2021). Also, scholars have tried to examine the sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad's immediate four successors (Ali,2011; Jamil,2015). Thus, to understand the nature and practice of ethical leadership requires one to look at Islamic symbols, slogans and ideology as it forms the foundational constitution of Muslims around the world (Egel, 2014; Egel and Fry, 2017; Faris and Parry, 2011; Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011). This logic is affirmed by Lewis: 'The idea that any group of persons, any kind of activities, any part of human life, is in any sense outside the scope of religious law and jurisdiction is alien to Muslim thought' (2002, p. 11).

Islam appeared around 610 C.E., in the Arabian Peninsula (Egel and Fry, 2017). Before the birth of Islam, the Arabian Peninsula was inhabited by Bedouins who were living a harsh desert life enduring severe environmental conditions, in tribes unified by blood relationships and ancestry (Olson, 2020). The desert life has impacted the Arabian Peninsula and influenced it's the people (Salzman, 2008; Rogan, 2012). Conflict between tribes and groups was unavoidable in such harsh desert life as the only way of surviving or thriving were dependent on controlling and possessing of limited resources and trade routes (Rogan, 2012). Hence, the way to secure these resources was by taking from others tribes through raiding and, occasionally, expulsion (Greaves, 2012; Salzman, 2008). This way of resource and territory control persisted for centuries on end and, in many forms, played a significant role in forming leadership in the Arabian Peninsula (Rogan, 2012; Salzman, 2008).

As a result of conflicts and desert context, it appeared form of the distinction between those who are in-group and those who are excluded from the group (Greaves, 2012; Ali 1990). As, tribes consist from sets of familial (the nuclear families), subtribes or very big (tribal networks) (Mansfield, 2013), therefore, when confrontations happened "families faced families, lineage faced lineage, clan faced clan, tribe faced tribe" (Salzman, 2008, p. 23). In this sense, each group stood with each other to protect themselves from other groups (Olson, 2020; Sarayrah, 2004). Sometimes, some groups attempted to be connected or related to bigger groups. Hence, those who are in-groups are aware that they should favour people within their groups and exclude others who are out of the group (Salzman, 2008; Mansfield, 2019).

One significant consequence of the in-group/out-group paradigm of conflict was tribal leadership that were simultaneously authoritarian and consultative (Mir, 2010). The practice of consultative style was one of the tribal leadership characteristics. Still, it was restricted for dealing with those in-group (Olson, 2020) as tribal tradition necessitates dialogue in all aspects of life. Therefore, to maintain their position, leaders must consult with members of their group on all matters that concern collective welfare (Olson, 2020). While consultative style is practised within in-group members, out-groups often

experience tribal leaders as authoritarian (Olson, 2020). The authoritarian style has its roots directly from the competition over resources. That is, showing a strong face to rivals (Greaves, 2012).

Islam came to emphasise the concept of Umma (the unity of humanity), which in turn conflicts with a tribal mentality (Almoharby and Neal, 2013; Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011; Moses, 2006; Naazer, 2018). Islam does not recognise castes, races, or the colour of the people and rejects divisions in the name of the race, tribe, and geography (Naazer, 2018). Although Islam assimilated the good desert Bedouin values such as simplicity, generosity, and protection of the weak (Egel and Fry, 2017), some of the localised values and customs have been challenged in favour of the unifying society (Almoharby and Neal, 2013). Islam fought and opposed the prevailing traditions and customs of the Arabic tribe, which was considered a radical change and unprecedented rejection of tribalism towards a unified conception of the Islamic system (Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011). For example, Islamic values fight against tribal bigotry, emphasising the concept of Ummah (Unified human community) instead. Contrary to social norms, which consider blood connections above anything else (Ibrahim, 2020). Moreover, Islam fights against hierarchical culture and call for equity (Nisar and Rashisd, 2021). From an Islamic perspective, justice focuses on the equitable distribution of opportunities, and privilege throughout an organisation or society, irrespective of differences in religion, ethnicity, language, class, or gender (Brooksa and Ezzani, 2021).

Prophet Muhammad was the first acknowledged Islamic leader and stood as the best role model in Islam. He gained the trust of his followers simply because of his ability to incorporate and embody Islamic ethical values in the practice of his worldly affairs, both in the private sector as a merchant and as a public administrator as the leader of the Muslim society (Egel and Fry, 2017). Muhammad's leadership style not only sprang from his qualities of the "perfected character", but also his transformational vision and care for his followers (Beekun, 2006). Therefore, in a short period, "Prophet (SAW) patiently transformed a desperate group of unimportant communities who were rivals by raising the level of their spiritual being and higher level of thinking on their mutual awareness of

selflessness, helping them understand the need for a social change, enable them to transform and move beyond their self-interests, modelling for them the way, and developing a climate of trust, which become the basis for managing a desired change" (Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2020, p. 306). Thus, Islamic leadership is a triangular relationship among God, the leader, and the followers (Egel, 2014). Pleasing God is the ultimate aim of the leadership process. The followers, like the leaders, are answerable to God for their deeds and share the responsibility of the leader (Egel and Fry, 2017). These factors clearly defined Islamic leadership as consultative, participative, and servanthood style.

However, although empirical research on Islamic ethical leadership is limited, previous scholarly work has explored key features of this emerging Leadership (Faris and Parry, 2011). Over the past decades, scholars have conducted many studies on Islamic leadership to conceptualise its constructs and propose its model, resulting in varying views, conceptualisations, and models about this emerging leadership. By reviewing the literature, it seems most studies have identified Islamic leadership as a value-based approach (e.g. Aldulaimi, 2019; Beekun, 2012; Al Arkoubi, 2013).

2.10.2.1 Value – based approach

Islamic leadership is a value and virtue-centric approach, given that this approach emphasises commitment to values and virtues (Aldulaimi, 2019). For example, Beekun (2012) describes Islamic leadership as a value and virtue-centric model, clarifying the significance of values and virtues to ensure leadership ethicality. From an Islamic perspective, the ethical values of individuals are principally guided by a spiritual belief in God that boosts one's spirit to embrace benevolent deeds and build empathic relationships with other people (Othman, Hamzah, and Ridzuan, 2018). Islam views humans as dignified creatures. Therefore, Islam provides an ethical system that safeguards peoples' dignity and the right to a good life. Muslim scholar Imam Hamid al-Ghazali summarised the main objectives of Islamic ethics: self-purification and wellbeing for people and ensured the safeguard of their faith, self, intellect, posterity and wealth (AI-Ghazali, in Helfaya et al., 2018). That is Islamic

ethics keep individuals' rights and the rights of others. At the individual level, Muslims are instructed to fulfil self- ethical obligation and Self-purification from all unethical forms by committing to Islamic rituals and practices. All Islamic rituals such as prayers and fasting are fundamentally aimed to establish a good individual by keeping one's desires and instincts in check (Mir, 2010). For example, Muslims perform prayers five times a day to stay connected to God. By doing so, a Muslim develops inner consciousness of his/her duty toward God and is aware of this ethical accountability (Draz, 2008). At the relational level, Islam urges people to care for and look after the interest of families, neighbours, relatives, co-workers, friends, animals and the surrounding environment (Draz, 2008).

Thereby, Islamic ethical leadership values include two main aspects: values related to self-awareness and values related to others. Firstly, self-awareness values encourage self-governance and responsibility, such as piety and ethical discipline. Piety is an inner faith and consciousness of the duty toward God and an awareness of one's responsibility and accountability (Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Khaliq and Fontaine, 2011). Ethical discipline is concerned with the struggle within oneself for high self-control, high self-respect and self-reflection (Ang, Low and Al-Harran, 2012; Elkaleh and Samier, 2013). Secondly, values related to others are concerned with being benevolent and helpful to others (Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011). They include values such as giving, compassion, tolerance, humility, Kindness and empathy (Elkaleh and Samier, 2013).

2.10.2.2 Monotheistic mind set (Self-awareness and self-regulatory)

Ethical leadership from an Islamic lens is rooted in the belief in God, which emphasises that the oneness of God and all deeds are done for God's sake (Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011), and a desire for paradise in the hereafter(Gümüsay,2019). This monotheistic mindset forms the core of the moral character of an ethical leader in an Islamic context and represents a psychological contract in which the leader has an inner faith and consciousness of his/her duty toward God and is aware that he/ she is accountable to God for their actions (Beekun and Badawi, 1999, Gümüsay,2019). This is a connected

and additional relationship based on love between God and leader outside formal organisational boundaries, and it works as a guide of the leader's actions and activities. I.e., the leader below God's authority and the God above the leader, informed of all his/her intents and actions(Gümüsay,2019). According to al-Ghazālī, "the ultimate pleasure of Muslim is the God. In order to attain God, one must love God, and in order to love God, one must purify his heart. To purify one's heart, one must strengthen his devotion towards God (quoted in Masri 2012, p.3). This understanding is based on spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence refers to" the ability to give the meaning of worship to every behavior and activity" (Kessi et al., 2022, p.16). That is, every act that leaders do is considered worship for the benefit of humanity and Allah SWT (Khalid et al., 2017). Hence, from an Islamic perspective, ethical responsibility is a kind of worship and is linked to God-pleasing by considering leadership as a 'trust' to be performed or preserved, and that leaders will be held responsible or accountable for failure to perform it (Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999, Gümüsay,2019; Shuhari et al., 2020). This psychological commitment (ethical responsibility) works as a self-regulator to increase one's self-awareness capacity. Self-awareness has the leading role in making self-regulation achievable because failure to monitor one's acts can undermine one's self-control, thereby resulting in unethical consequences (Baumeister and Alghamdi, 2015). Hence, when self-awareness is high, this contributes to the self-control needed to enact behaviours compatible with one's ethical values and avoid engaging in behaviours driven by selfish or short-term motives (Gino et al., 2011).

2.10.3 Islamic ethical leadership principles

2.10.3.1 Mutual Consultation (Participative leadership)

Islamic ethical leadership is a "social process" (Toor 2008, p. 26) and 'a dynamic relationship based on mutual influence and common purpose between leaders and followers in which both are moved to higher levels of motivation and moral development as they affect real intended change" (Ahmad and Ogunsola, 2020, p.294), while fully complying to Islamic teachings and principles" (Toor 2008, p. 26).

As is apparent from the preceding definitions, the relationship between leader and followers is reciprocal, and the process of influence is shared, whereby both leader and followers influence each other to achieve mutual goals and the establishment of God's low (Ali, 2011). In this sense, leadership is a participative process between leaders and followers, and once leadership is authorised, both leaders and followers have mutual responsibilities and obligations (Makruf, 2017). Ahmad and Ogunsola (2020) argue that leadership is not merely a transactional relationship based on mutual interest between the leader and his followers but is also an unconditional moral relationship enhancing the spiritual and material development of followers and the society at large. Trust is the basic building of relationship between leaders and followers in Islam (Ivan, 2016). That is, the leader takes all accountability to conduct affairs on behalf of and for the benefit of the followers (Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011). Hence, leaders are accountable to God and followers for this trust (Beekun and Badawi, 1999). Trust in Islam refers to the feeling of security. Therefore, if followers do not feel secure, they have the right to replace their leaders (Shuhari et al., 2020). Concurrently, followers must provide leaders with sincere and impartial feedback. They should support and help their leaders towards good acts.

The practice of leadership exemplified these insights during the Prophet Muhammad and his successors' era. For example, the first Caliph, Abu Baker, when he was appointed a leader, declared that: "I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me, and if I do ill, then put me right...The weak among you shall be strong in my eyes until I secure his right if God wills, and the strong among you shall be weak in my eyes until I wrest the right from him..Obey me as long as I obey God and his apostle, and if I disobey them you owe me no obedience" (quoted in Ali, 2011).

Therefore, decision making in Islamic ethical leadership is based on the principle of consultation (Brooks and Mutohar, 2018). It is stated in the Quran that Prophet Muhammad has been instructed to consult with his followers "...and take counsel with them in the affairs (of public concern) (Qur'an, 2:159). Almoharby (2010, p.6) define consultation (shura) in Islam as "participation in the form of consultation in discussions leading to the making of decisions". Therefore, decision making requires

leaders to consult with followers mutually and critically examining all viewpoints and evidence to reach a consensus and participative decision (Brooks and Mutohar, 2018). Based on this belief, any leader cannot decide arbitrarily and independently on a matter that concerns others without consultation with followers (Qureshi, 2016). Rauf (2004) argue that consultation works as the basis of democratic leadership, as it fosters participation, a spirit of collectivism, shared responsibility and accommodates dissent (Mir, 2010). Hence, ethical leaders can purposefully decide the best interests of followers or the community they serve (Brooks and Normore 2018).

2.10.3.2 Moral and Social justice

Ethical leadership from an Islamic perspective provides the moral base for leaders to promote and encourage moral justice (Gazi, 2020). Justice focuses on the equitable distribution of opportunities, and privilege throughout an organisation or society, irrespective of differences in religion, ethnicity, language, class, or gender (Ezzani et al., 2021). It is not only affording every individual equality in rights and obligations without discrimination, it requires individuals to actively protect and uphold those who need special care in society (Khan, 2020). The Qur'an and the prescriptions of the Prophet Muhammad are full of moral principles that urge the principle of justice, and all people must observe that—leaders and followers alike (Shuvro et al., 2020). For example, in the Quran God ordered- "O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is informed of what ye do (Qur'an, 7:29)". Furthermore, The Quran affirms acting justly in any circumstances and not allowing their personal feelings to hinder justice even if the verdict goes against themselves or their relatives. In the Quran, God ordered, "O you, who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witness to Allah, even as against yourselves or your parents or your kin and whether it be against rich or poor, for Allah protects both" (Qur'an, 4:135).   This also emphasised by the prescriptions of the Prophet Muhammad that justice is never to be compromised by personal affiliations or other considerations (Beekun and Badawi, 1999).

2.10.3.3 Social welfare

In Islam, ethical leaders are responsible for accomplishing the social welfare of followers and society by acting as servant leaders (Metcalfe and Mimouni, 2011). Prophet Muhammad stated, "A ruler who has been entrusted with the affair of people, but makes no endeavour for their material and moral uplift and is not merely concerned of their welfare will not enter paradise" (reported by Abo Malik in Sahih Muslim 1:82, Chapter 44, Hadith no 264). As such, servant leaders have a solid commitment to the service of others. They strive to engender care and ethics to prosper the community by building alliances between individuals, organisations, and public and international institutions and listening receptively to all followers to identify different points of view and determine their needs (Sarayrah, 2004). According to the Islamic view of leadership the main impulse of ethical leadership is not the influence and practising power or even getting profits but it is the innate desire to serve others by placing the good and welfare of followers, emphasising their development and empowerment, and sharing influence with them (Fozia et al., 2016). Furthermore, ethical leaders prioritise the growth of those being served by focusing on empowering and developing them and creating value for the community instead of just focusing on the functionalist outcomes of organisational performance and profit (Sarayrah, 2004).

2.10.3.4 Humanitarian

Islamic teachings support humane orientation by associating duties and behaviours with humanitarianism and goodness, and serving God (Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999, Gümüsay,2019; Shuhari et al., 2020). The Prophet Muhammad said "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, n.d.). Hence, the Islamic view of ethical leadership is concerned with the welfare of others, social support and compassionate and

humanitarian behaviours that are not limited to one's family or individualistic interest but instead include a humanitarian concern for everyone within society (Ali, 2011).

2.10.3.5 Role Modelling

The Arabic terminology 'Qudwah' is commonly used when referring to ethical leadership (Almarshd, 2021). It means an ideal or a model to be followed. In Islamic leadership, the Prophet Mohammed represents the ideal leader who most closely embodies the role model of leadership (Jamil, 2015). The Qur'anic guidance always urges people and any leader to follow his example and summarised the importance of the role model in the following line: "Surely there was an excellent example for you in the Messenger of Allah, for all those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much" (Qur'an, 33:22). That is, leaders should act as a role models for their followers by following Mohammed as a role model (El Syam, 2017). Hence, by doing so, they can show a high level of standards of moral and ethical conduct, making them deeply respected and trusted by followers. The 4th Kalifah Imam' Ali ibn Abi Talib asserted the importance of a role model: "with respect to their morals, people resemble their rulers more than they resemble their fathers" (Ali ibn Abi Talib as cited in Zhao, 2008 P. 296).

Overall, Islamic leadership is a value and virtue-centric approach, given that this approach emphasises commitment to values and virtues. The monotheistic mind-set forms the core of the moral character of an ethical leader and represents a psychological contract in which the leader has an inner faith and consciousness of his/her duty toward God and is aware that he/ she is accountable to God for their actions. However Islamic ethical leadership principles are based on mutual consultation, moral and social justice, social welfare, humanitarian and role Modelling

2.11 The comprehensive view of ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman

Since Omani culture has two main influences: Islamic religion and social norms, including tribal traditions, customs, and values (Al-Araimi, 2012), therefore, Omani leadership is a product of these

two main sources. By far most leadership research related to Arabic culture to date tends to ignore the distinction between social norms and Islamic values and their influence in conceptualising leadership in the Arab World. The majority of current literature has addressed the cultural influence of Arabic culture either by focusing on Islamic values as a conceptualising of Islamic leadership (e.g. Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Egel and Fry, 2016; Faris and Parry, 2011; Shuhari et al., 2020), or further focusing on generic analyses of culture without highlighting the distinction such as GLOBE study and other "meta-" research that concerns with the influence of culture in the Middle East(e.g. Alsuood and Youde, 2018; Common, 2011; Dwairy, 2019; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980; Karacay et al., 2019; Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011).

Therefore, the current research pursues an integrative approach to Omani ethical leadership and synthesises paternalistic leadership and Islamic leadership, which are the two dominant leadership styles in various ethical leadership literature in Arab culture. Drawing from a discussion of the existing literature reviewed in this chapter, it can be seen that the paternalistic leadership style aligns with the Omani social norms, which are centred on in-group orientation, hierarchy and submission to authority, and low adherence to formal regulations and rules as illustrated in figure 2.2.

Figure 2. 2 Paternalistic leadership

Source: the author

Meanwhile, Islamic leadership cannot be ignored since Islamic religion influences the attitudes and behaviour of Omani people in almost all aspects of life, including values, beliefs, behaviours, rules, and morals. The monotheistic mind-set forms the core of the moral character of an ethical leader and represents a psychological contract in which the leader has an inner faith and consciousness of his/her duty toward God and is aware that he/ she is accountable to God for their actions. Islamic ethical leadership is illustrated in figure 2.3. While paternalistic leadership focus on personal relationships, the hierarchical culture and excessive low assertiveness, Islamic leadership is built on a monotheistic mind-set that enhances one's self-awareness and self-control. Therefore, based on one's internal values, which are guided by Islamic values, individuals can overcome the negative side of paternalistic leadership, i.e. the negative side of personal relationships, the hierarchical culture and excessive low assertiveness.

Figure 2. 3 Islamic leadership
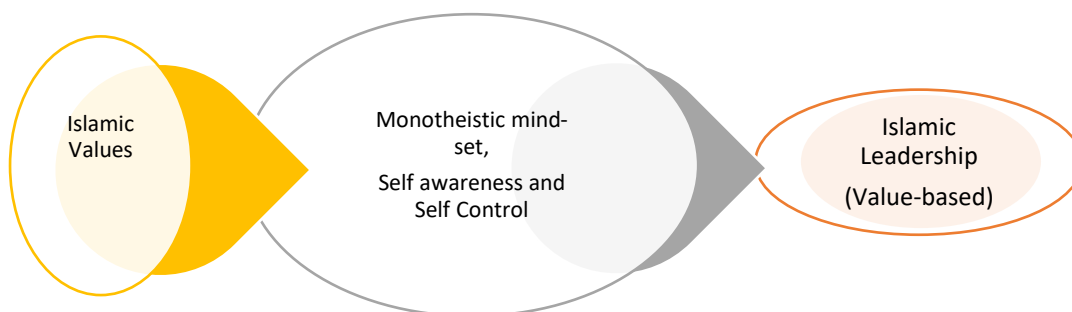
Source: the author

Therefore, these two identified ethical leadership theories contribute to the development of the conceptual framework of the research and serve as the framework to discuss the research findings and compare them with ethical leadership from the Western perspective whenever is needed. However, the current review of ethical leadership from a Western perspective and ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman in this chapter revealed that both perspectives intersect and overlap somewhat. These overlapping parts represent the main aspect of ethical leadership, namely: Value-based approach

(Integrity- Self-awareness), role modelling, care for others, humanitarian and participative or leader-centric. The key distinction between the two models is that the Western models are leader-centric, whereas the Omani culture emphasises relationships and participation. This is why it is important that followership is considered in the Omani context (and also why the perceptions of followers are important). Table 2.1. illustrated synthesis of ethical leadership from an Omani and a Western perspective.

Table 2. 1 Synthesis of ethical leadership from an Omani and Western perspectives

Synthesis of attributes	Ethical leadership from an Omani Perspective	Ethical leadership from Western Perspective
Value-based approach Integrity (Self-awareness)	X	X
Participative (consultation)	X	-
Leader-centric	-	x
Humanitarian	X	X
Care for others	X	X
Role model	X	X

Source: the author

2.12 A Summary of Gaps in the Literature

An initial review of the literature in the previous sections which related to the two streams of the research, namely ethical leadership from a western perspective and ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman, has revealed and highlighted a number of gaps in that literature. In terms of the

ethical leadership from a western perspective literature, three main gaps are found. Firstly, ethical leadership has been largely based on Western philosophical traditions and has tended to focus on Western corporate experiences. There is a significant concern which has been highlighted by many researchers that the majority of ethical leadership literature mainly represents the Western view and fails to conceptualize and measure ethical leadership cross-culturally (e.g., Brown and Treviño, 2006; Mihelič and Lipičnik, 2010; Resick et al., 2011; Yuan et al., 2021). Hence, these residual concerns regarding deep differences in cultural outlooks, have led to the emergence of interest in developing indigenous theories to explain the ethics of leadership beyond Western contexts. The imperative here, is for a culturally coherent ethical discourse that is likely to be based on local values and norms of each culture. This call has been raised by Sigurjonsson et al., 2022 and Yuan et al., 2021, aligning with several calls that have been raised previously for a deeper understanding of culturally-specific expectations for ethical leadership and behavioural ethics across culture (Brown and Mitchell, 2010; Ko et al., 2018; Resick et al., 2011; Zhu et al., 2019).

Secondly, drawing from a discussion of the existing literature reviewed in this chapter, it could be argued that current research on ethical leadership focuses on an empirical-descriptive Western-based perspective. (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2017; Price, 2017; Lemoine et al., 2019). Flanigan (2018) and Price (2018) argue that ethical leadership theories neglect to actively engage with the moral foundations of ethical leadership, demonstrating that scholars do not develop ethical arguments to justify their assertions about ethical leadership. The lack of normative approaches in ethical leadership literature makes ethical leadership theories vague constructs as they do not specify any particular norms ethical leaders can refer to (Eisenbeiss, 2012). Ethics is bound up with the normative question of 'what ought one to do' (Gibson, 2022). Therefore, anchoring ethical leadership to respective moral foundations affords opportunities to prevent ethical relativism and clarify inclusion and exclusion criteria for ethical leadership's constituent content (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Lemoine et al., 2019). Bellah (1983, p. 373) confirm that "Without a reference point

in the tradition of ethical reflection, the very categories of social thought would be empty." Consequently, several call has been raised for more collaboration between normative and descriptive approaches in ethics research and demanded specification of the relevant norms for ethical leadership (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2018; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019).

Thirdly, ethical leadership theories, including transformational (Bass,1985; Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns 1978; Burns, 2004), authentic (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; George, 2003; Luthans and Avolio, 2003), servant (Greenleaf, 1977; Laub 1999; Liden et al.'s 2008), and ethical (Brown et al., 2005), offer leader-centric approach. However, scholars criticize mainstream ethical leadership research for its abstract view, which focuses on what makes a leader act in ethical ways and ignores the role of followers. Followership is a morally salient facet of leadership as well (Baker, 2007; Hollander, 1992; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

As for the literature regarding ethical leadership in the Omani cultural context, there are two important gaps found in the current literature. Firstly, there is limited research on ethical leadership in Arabic cultures such as Omani culture and what is available is largely built on an understanding of ethical leadership from a Western perspective. For example, Al-Omari et al. (2020); Tahir (2020) use the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) that was proposed by Brown et al. (2005).

Secondly, most leadership research related to Arabic culture to date tends to ignore the distinction and relationship between social norms and Islamic values and their influence in conceptualising leadership in the Arab World. The majority of current literature has addressed the cultural influence of Arabic culture either by focusing on Islamic values as a conceptualising of Islamic leadership (e.g. Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Egel and Fry, 2016; Faris and Parry, 2011; Shuhari et al., 2020), or further focusing on generic analyses of culture without highlighting the distinction such as the GLOBE study and other "meta-" research that concerns with the influence of culture in the Middle East(e.g. Alsuood

and Youde, 2018; Common, 2011; Dwairy, 2019; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980; Karacay et al., 2019; Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011).

Drawing from the gaps in the literature, this thesis seeks to address these gaps by empirically studying ethical leadership in the Omani cultural context. The aim of this current research is to develop a conceptual theoretical model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. This a conceptual theoretical model seeks to address the normative gap in ethical leadership literature by specifically examining how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context. A review of the pertinent literature reveals that the Omani cultural context has two main influences: Islamic religion and social norms, including tribal traditions, customs, and values (Al-Araimi, 2012). These two forces works as a source of ethics in the Omani society. Therefore, the conceptual theoretical model form an Omani lens provides a normative approach from an Omani perspective to ethical leadership and transfers it to the social sciences.

2.13 Chapter Summary

The first part of the chapter begins with a review of literature relating to ethical leadership from a western perspective, including transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical leadership. It has been concluded that ethical leadership is a paradoxical issue, and the attempts to solve its paradox are difficult. It is better to accommodate it is better to acknowledge the competing tensions of a variety of ideas and viewpoints. Interestingly, like the broader domain of leadership theories, ethical leadership theories complement each other and share a plethora of commonalities. Three main commonalities have been highlighted, namely: Value-based approach (integrity and self-awareness), Influence–based approach (role modelling) and Leader- centric approach.

The chapter then reviews the relationship between culture and leadership. A review of literature has found that scholars have raised concerns regarding reliance on Western perspectives in conceptualising ethical leadership. These residual concerns regarding deep differences in cultural outlooks, have led to

the emergence of interest in developing indigenous theories to explain the ethics of leadership beyond Western contexts. The imperative here is for a culturally coherent ethical discourse that is likely to be based on each culture's local values and norms. Drawing from this critical issue, the second part of this chapter moves on to review relevant literature on ethical leadership in the Omani cultural context.

The chapter then extensively reviews the concept of ethical leadership in the Omani context, emphasising the two main approaches to it, namely paternalistic leadership and Islamic leadership approaches. The relevant literature on both approaches is reviewed. It has been concluded that the paternalistic leadership style aligns with the Omani social norms, which are centred on in-group orientation, hierarchy and submission to authority, and low adherence to formal regulations and rules. On the other hand, Islamic leadership cannot be ignored since Islamic religion influences the attitudes and behaviour of Omani people in almost all aspects of life, including values, beliefs, behaviours, rules, and morals.

Based on this review, the current research proposes an integrative approach to Omani ethical leadership which synthesises paternalistic leadership and Islamic leadership, which are the two dominant leadership styles in various ethical leadership literature in Arab culture. Therefore, these two identified ethical leadership theories contribute to the development of the conceptual framework of the research and serve as the framework to discuss the research findings and compare them with ethical leadership from the Western perspective. However, the current review of ethical leadership from a Western perspective and ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman in this chapter revealed that both perspectives intersect and overlap somewhat.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the research philosophy which underpins the research and discusses the research process in order to guide the investigation into the exploration of how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context. The chapter will begin with an exploration of the research philosophy which underlies the research. This is followed by a justification and explanation for the design of the research, which includes the sample, methods of data collection, and analysis. Finally, a section examining the trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations. Figure 3.1 shows the research design framework which is informed by the framework of (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Figure 3. 1 Research design framework

Social Constructionism philosophy

Inductive Approach to Theory Development

Qualitative Methodical Choice

Semi- structured Interviews

Thematic analysis
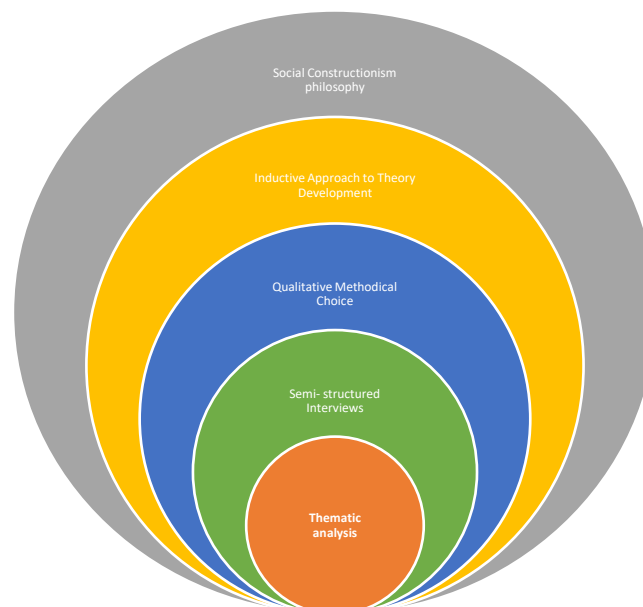
Source: Author based on Saunders et al. (2019)

3.2. Research philosophy

The philosophical stance embodies the system of assumptions and beliefs which underlie the researcher's view of the development of knowledge at every stage in research (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). It is precisely what the researcher is doing, whether consciously aware or not, when embarking on research. He /she makes a number of different assumptions to develop knowledge in a particular field, which in turn has significant impact on what the researcher does and how to understand what it is he/she is investigating (Burrell et al., 2016; Johnson and Clark, 2014). This includes ontological assumptions (the nature of reality), epistemological assumptions (how to know reality), and axiological assumptions (the extent and ways the researcher's values influence the research process). Thus, these consistent sets of assumptions will allow the researcher to design credible and coherent research, in which the methodological choice, data collection method, and analysis processes all fit together (Saunders et al., 2019).

However, adopting a particular philosophical paradigm according to a particular set of established assumptions in any study or research is considered as a lens through which the fieldwork and analysis are seen (Burke, 2007). Therefore, with philosophical paradigms that are common used in social science research in mind, the researcher adopts the social constructivist paradigm for this study.

3.2.1 Social Constructionism

In this research, the researcher adopted Social Constructionism over other paradigms for three main reasons. Firstly, it emphasizes that the concept of ethical leadership is a co-constructed reality as a result of the processes and outcomes of interaction among and between social actors (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). Culture, communicative practices, and other symbols occasioned by the Omani context are an integral part of the processes by which the concept of ethical leadership is constructed in the specific context of Oman (Fairhurst, 2009; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). In this sense, ethical leadership is not a leader-centric approach only, as social constructionism endorses the influences of followers'

thoughts and actions and their ability to make sense of and evaluate their organizational experiences (Gronn, 2002), and it emphasizes that ethical leadership is constructed by the shared meaning of humans in a specific context (Klenke, 2016).

Secondly, Social Constructionism reflects the researcher's view of the world. In this research, the researcher endorses the social view of ethical leadership because it is a controversial issue subject to the effect of social interaction and consensus interpretations in a specific context, not an issue that can be settled or decided by objective criteria. As an insider researcher, the researcher already has some understanding of ethical leadership, a "pre-understanding" (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2022, p. 2). This pre-understanding comes from human social interactions that produce and reproduce the social structures and actions people know as reality (Luckmann, 1966). The researcher has been brought up with Islamic values and Omani social norms. Statements such as "I feel this is right" or "I think this is unethical" already have been formed since childhood. As a social constructivist researcher, the researcher considers himself a part of what is being researched and values views and opinions through personal interaction with participants more highly than data collected expressly through an anonymous questionnaire (Flick, 2009). From this perspective, the researcher and participants interact and influence each other in meaningful ways to construct the meaning of ethical leadership in their context.

Thirdly, as the aim of this research is to explore how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context, Social Constructionism is an appropriate philosophical paradigm as it supports the exploratory nature of this research. To understand this paradigm, it important to see this paradigm through the lens of ontology, epistemology, and axiology, a discussion of which follows.

3.2.2 Ontology

Ontology is the term for assumptions concerning the nature of reality or social entities, which is aimed at finding explanations of what is true about the phenomenon that is under exploration, whether by

seeking an understanding of ideas or by linking cause with effect (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). These assumptions take the form of either objective views in describing reality or subjective views in which the reality is realized and constructed from psychological processes, such as beliefs and memories, and social factors, experiences, and interactions (Smith *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, these assumptions determine the entire pathway of the research from introduction to conclusion.

Social Constructionist researchers assume that realities or social entities are multiple (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Thus, the ultimate truth is regarded as not existing and reality is changing and subjective (Kamal *et al.*, 2019). In the current research, which aims to explore how Omani leaders and their employees construct the meaning of ethical leadership, the researcher sees that reality is socially constructed within the Omani context, relative to Omani culture and produced from interactions between social agents. Social reality is not separate from individuals, both are inextricably interwoven and shaped by each other; i.e. ethical leadership becomes socially meaningful when it is socially constructed by shared meaning (Endres and Weibler, 2017). Thus, the meaning of the ethical leadership concept is not a universal reality but can be understood by Omani people within their social, historical and cultural context (Carsten *et al.*, 2010). It is subjectively constructed through consensus formed by the actors within the research process (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). Therefore, it is the aim of the researcher in this research to understand such interpretations in the specific context of Oman.

3.2.3 Epistemology

6Epistemology is the term for assumptions concerning the study of knowledge: i.e. what constitutes valid and acceptable knowledge (Burrell et al., 2016). These assumptions underpin the most effective methods of inquiring into the nature of the world and give a large choice of methods (Smith et al., 2002). However, epistemology consists of two main paradigms: the interpretive and the positivist (Bryman, 2015). The Positivist researcher tends to be termed objectivist and offers the best scientific evidence to be considered objective and generalizable. Meanwhile, the Interpretivist tends to be termed

subjectivist and offers a new understanding of the world and a rich and complex view of organizational realities based on the contexts and experiences of different social entities (Bryman, 2015).

In this research, the researcher is following the interpretive logic of inquiry. The researcher's authority of knowledge is produced from a knowledge community of Omani people who negotiate, draw a consensus, and contest about the truth of ethical leadership (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Therefore, the researcher assumes meaning-making is a relational process. Continuous interaction and communication create ethical leadership knowledge that Omanis share in their context (Resnick et al., 2001). This does not imply that Omani individuals do not have their own perspectives, but that perspectives ultimately create meaning by their social context (Endres and Weibler, 2017).

As a social constructionist researcher, the researcher assumes knowledge can be developed through the interpretation of what is socially constructed within the Omani context. The multiple interpretations and realities are constructed between researcher and participants (Grey, 2014). Thus the epistemological stance of this study is subjectivist and humanistic in nature, and the researcher and the participants interact meaningfully and affect each other to construct a shared meaning of ethical leadership influenced by the cultural values of the Omani context (Creswell, 2017; Lincoln, 2016).

3.4 Axiology

Axiology refers to the impact of the researcher's values, ethics, and beliefs on the research (Saunders et al., 2019). In this research, the researcher is an insider-researcher. An insider-researcher may be defined as" a scholar who is native to the research setting and who conducts research involving populations of which s/he is also a member" (Chammas, 2020, p.537). With regards to the social background from which the researcher dwells, the researcher is a Muslim, Arabic-Omani man, born and raised in Oman. The researcher has worked for the Omani government for 15 years at a mid-managerial level. For fifteen years, the researcher has been involved in leadership roles and experienced the influence of culture on the daily transactions in Omani organisations. Through this

work, I had exposed to personal visits or telephone calls from family members, friends and acquaintances to ask for selection, recruitment, training and promotion. The researcher had become acutely aware of cultural influence that could impact leadership. The researcher's fifteen years of experience in the field served as a solid backdrop to the research and meant that the researcher's experience of ethical leadership is constituted from this background, from which he primordially grasped experiences of ethical leadership. Therefore, the researcher is researching a topic he/she is familiar with and had has already exposed to ethical dilemmas during his work, provoking his interest and a passion for investigating ethical leadership.

Scholars have pointed out that a researcher's involvement in the dynamic interplay of research can be extremely valuable (Unluer, 2012). Being an insider researcher has various positive impacts on the current study. Firstly, the researcher's familiarity with the Omani cultural context helps him to better understand the influence of culture in ethical leadership as he already has live experience and knowledge regarding the issue. The researcher shared many subjective positions with participants, including race, class, gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin. Therefore, the researcher and the participants understand the local Islamic values and social norms and speak the same language, thus enabling a deeper understanding the ethical leadership. Secondly, being an "insider" helped the researcher to carry out his research as his status enables him to have an advantage in a few aspects of the research, such as having easy access to participants and getting permission to conduct the research and to interview the participants.

The researcher conducted this study on how Omani leaders and followers conceptualise ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context in their work with participants from Omani organisations while myself was working in similar institutions. However, the researcher was seeking a balance between two roles, as researcher and practitioner. Chammas (2020, p.539) argues that " the insider-researcher must be careful and to walk the tightrope which is constituted by the hyphen in the term insider-outsider". During the period of doing the current research, the researcher

had undertaken much research-intensive training course from the University of Worcester focused on the related issues of research method. This facilitates and bridges the gap between my role as a practitioner and my role as a researcher.

3.2.5 Methodology

The methodological standpoint refers to how should the world be studied (Johnson and Clark, 2014). The research method chosen in this research is qualitative. This method shapes the basis of this subjective and social constructivist research and is considered sufficient to serve the purpose of this exploratory research. There were a number of reasons why a qualitative method was selected for the purpose of this research.

Firstly, Qualitative research is interested in the interpretation of social phenomena in its natural setting to make sense of this phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to the setting (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). This is precisely what the current study sought to achieve. The current research research aims to explore how Omani leaders and followers conceptualise ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context. The researcher perceives ethical leadership needs to be explored in the specific context of Oman. That is because the researcher seeks to understand and explore the meaning that Omanis ascribe to ethical leadership (Creswell, 2014). In other words, the researcher attempts to capture the richness of Omanis' meaning of ethical leadership (Klenke, 2016).

 Secondly, the researcher, by adopting this approach, sought extrapolation, clarification and understanding of the ethical leadership phenomenon (Hoepfl, 1997). Therefore, the researcher, by using one of the qualitative approach tools, which is semi-structured interviews, seeks a detailed and complex understanding of ethical leadership by empowering participants to share their perceptions to understand the context in which participants perceive the issue of ethical leadership. Interviews, therefore, provided participants with the opportunity to fully elaborate on their responses to questions while also choosing which aspects of their responses to focus on. Because of the researcher's status as

an insider researcher, interviewees were, therefore, willing to share information because they were aware that ethical leadership topic is a hot topic, and they expected research results to convey their views and contribute to highlighting this issue. As discussed in the introduction chapter, Omani society has exerted social pressure through social media, criticising unethical leadership practices in Omani organisations, whether in the public or private sector and demanding that leaders behave more ethically and professionally, driven by their core values and with concern for people's real needs (Reuters, 2021). This societal interest demonstrated a willingness among participants to share views openly.

Thirdly, Qualitative research design is not rigid; it is flexible and can be changed to align with the developing research processes. This involves that the data typically is collected in the participant's setting, the data is analysed inductively building from particulars to general themes and the data is interpreted based on the meaning of participants (Creswell, 2014). As such, qualitative research helped the researcher to develop a conceptual theoretical model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. That is because the qualitative approach is primarily inductive as it is concerned with developing and generating a new theory emerging from data (Klenke, 2016), and it produces a different kind of knowledge than the knowledge produced from the quantitative approach (Creswell, 2014).

3.3. Research design

A research design provides a structure that guides the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2015). Thus, it provides a specific direction for the research procedures and processes at each stage of the research in a way that reflects the research aim and answers the research question (Grey, 2014). According to Robson (2002) there are three research types that shape research design in terms of the purpose of research, as each type serves a different end purpose.

The first type is a descriptive research which is aimed at presenting accurate data concerning the phenomenon by a description of the nature of the research's variables and components. (Robson, 2002). The second type is explanatory research, which focuses on understanding and explaining the

relationship between the variables and components of the research by finding a cause-effect link. The third type is exploratory research: typically exploring the new insights and the emergent patterns of phenomenon to acquire a deep understanding of the phenomena under-researched (Robson, 2002).

Exploratory research is adopted when there is little or no previous research that has been done and there is not enough known about a specific phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2019). Hence, this type of research is ideally suited to this research, as the purpose of the research is to explore ethical leadership in the Omani context. As highlighted in Chapter one, however, ethical leadership in the Omani context has not been clearly defined or studied. In fact, there is limited research on ethical leadership in collectivist cultures such as Omani culture and they were built on an understanding of ethical leadership from a Western perspective. For example, Al-Omari *et al.* (2020); Tahir (2020) use the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) that proposed by Brown *et al.* (2005) to investigate ethical leadership. Therefore, the research does not aim to just provide conclusive answers to the research questions; instead, it explores ethical leadership in the Omani context in-depth, and ultimately develops a conceptual theoretical model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective

3.3.1 The relationship between theory and research

Social science recognises three main approaches that represent the relationship between theory and research which are deductive, inductive and abductive approaches (Saunders et al., 2019). A deductive approach is concerned with developing hypotheses based upon existing theory and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis (Wilson, 2010). It moves from theory to data and is concerned with developing a theory by testing a set of theory-derived hypotheses. Therefore, the researcher begins to highlight the related theory of the topic of interest and then derives logically specific hypotheses that can be tested by assuming the relationship between them or empirical observations (Wilson, 2010). The data are analysed statistically to accept or reject premises. This approach is most likely to be informed by the positivist research philosophy as it emphasises testable hypotheses,

structure, quantification and generalisability (Saunders et al., 2019). However, social sciences scholars criticise this reasoning approach which relies on finding a cause-effect link and ignores humans' interpretation of their social world (Saunders et al., 2019). Thus, they adopt an inductive approach.

The inductive approach usually begins with specific observations, which are constructed to create general theories, from the particular to the general (Babbie, 2013). It moves from data to theory. Research following this approach starts with a set of observations leading to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all given events (Babbie, 2013). The inductive approach is often used in qualitative research methods (Bryman and Bell, 2007). However, as it is difficult to achieve pure deduction or pure induction research, as most management research has elements of both approaches (Saunders et al., 2019), abductive approach is adopted. The abductive approach is a combination of deduction and induction. It moves back and forth using both approaches (Suddaby, 2006).

In this research, the researcher firstly used some elements of the deductive approach. The researcher depended on the literature to build the interview questions and pursued a conceptual research framework that synthesised paternalistic leadership and Islamic leadership, the two dominant leadership styles in various ethical leadership literature in Arab culture. Secondly, the present research depended significantly on participants' interpretation of their social world and making sense of their views, perceptions and experiences. Hence, this study also is inductive as data collection is used to explore ethical leadership in the Omani context, identify themes and patterns, and develop a conceptual understanding from the collected data. The data collected are categorised into themes to be compared with the existing literature and theories related to ethical leadership. Finally, an abductive approach is taken to integrate the empirical data collected using both the inductive and deductive approaches for critical analysis in accordance with the research objectives and to propose a prospective model for ethical leadership in the Omani context, as well as recommendations for future research.

3.3.2 Selecting The Omani Oil sector

The selection of the Omani Oil sector for the purpose of this study was due to a number of reasons highlighted in the introduction chapter in section (1.3.2 Background of Omani Oil sector). The researcher selected three of the largest companies in the Omani Oil sector to form a setting to explore the perceptions of senior managers, middle managers and employees regarding the influence of Omani culture on ethical leadership. Since the aim of this study is to explore how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a specific cultural context of Oman, these companies were selected for the following reasons. Firstly, they are the major companies in the Omani oil sector. Secondly, the majority of the workforce is Omanis. 70% of the workforce in these companies is Omani. Thirdly, these companies totally or partly are owned by the Omani government.

3.3.3 The research sample

Sampling requires choosing units of analysis (e.g. groups or people) in a way that reinforces the researcher's capability and ability to achieve the study aims by answering the study questions (Saunders et al., 2019). The unit of the analysis indicates the group of cases or individual cases that the researcher seeks to express or deliver something about when the study is done. In general, sampling methods can be divided into two main techniques: probability sampling and non- probability (Taherdoost, 2016). Figure 3.2 presents the different types of sampling methods.

Figure 3 2 Sampling methods
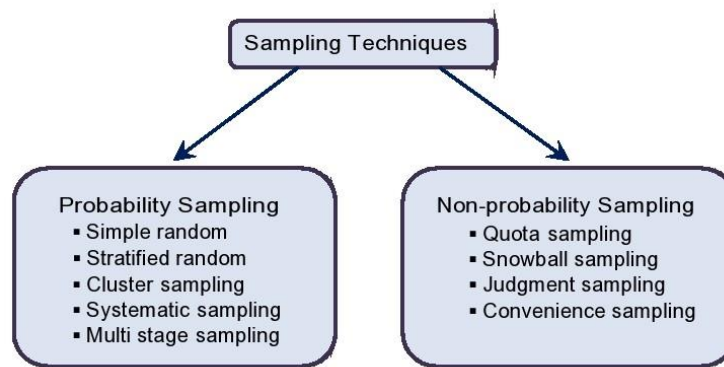
Source: Taherdoost (2016).

Qualitative researchers commonly use purposive, convenience, snowball, and theoretical sampling methods (Gill, 2020). The choice of one of these methods is dependent on the philosophical underpinnings and purpose of the study. This study adopts a social constructionist ontology and social constructionist interpretivist epistemology. Thus, a big sample size is not necessary, as the purpose is to generate in-depth data by investigating a small sample. In addition, the aims of the study further specify the need for deeper data in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the influence of culture on ethical leadership in the Omani context. Therefore, this requires deeper data from a small sample. In the present research, the researcher used a combination of Snowballing and Judgment sampling methods. The justification behind using these sampling is selecting information-rich cases that provide insight into the phenomenon being explored.

3.3.3.1 Snowballing sampling

Snowballing sampling as adopted for this research to identify participants who could elaborate their perceptions on ethical leadership. In this technique, participants are identified by other participants who may be included in the research (Robinson, 2014). It is regarded as an effective method for this research because it helps to identify and select the participant who cannot be identified easily or are

hard to reach (Mweshi and Sakyi, 2020). However, as this study targeted participants at various leadership levels from the Oman oil sector including, senior-level managers, middle-level managers, and employees, it was difficult to identify and reach individual on these positions. Therefore, the snowballing method enabled the researcher to access them.

In the Omani context, social networks play a fundamental role and are considered as a facilitating factor to get things done (Albusaidi, 2020; Al-Ghailani, 2005; Swailes and Fahdi, 2011). Hence, the researcher used his social network to get the contact details of participants and identify possible cases to participate in the research study (e.g. Ali, 2016). This included contacting friends, colleagues, acquaintances and family members to help build up the required sample of individuals working in the Omani Oil sector. Moreover, at the end of each interview, the researcher asked each interviewee to provide recommendations for other possible participants. This approach is particularly useful to identify people and secure the interviews for two reasons. The first reason is in the middle east, social networks are the mechanisms by which research access is obtained because organizational research is relatively uncommon in Oman and employees may be hesitant to talk about their workplace (Albusaidi, 2020; Common, 2011). The second reason is the sensitive nature of the topic of ethical leadership. Omani society has exerted social pressure through social media, criticizing unethical leadership practices in Omani organizations, whether in the public or private sector and demanded that leaders behave more ethically and professionally, driven by their core values and with concern for people's real needs. Therefore, using the social network to reach the participants gave them a feeling of peace of mind and encouraged them to speak freely about ethical leadership as they considered the researcher as being trustworthy, since the researcher was introduced by someone known by them (Ali, 2016).

3.3.3.2 Judgment sample

A judgment sample is one of the most widely used sampling methods, especially in the context of qualitative research (Oppong, 2013). Basically, it is a method of sampling in which the researcher selects units to be sampled based on his own existing knowledge or his professional judgment (Taherdoost, 2016). As van Manen (2016, p. 92) notes, "we tend to learn more about life from some people than from others". That is, some people are able to draw on a deeper pool of experiences and to provide a richer description. Although the researcher used his social networks and recommendations from other participants to identify research participants, the most appropriate participants from different departments and levels were identified based on particular knowledge already held about the population (Knox and Burkard, 2009). The researcher is an Omani and has work experience at Omani organizations for 15 years. By tapping into this practical experience, the researcher was able to evaluate potential participants based on the following considerations:

- The depth and breadth of their professional experience, on the basis that this was expected to yield exciting and insightful examples of ethical leadership, especially compared to individuals earlier in their profession. Researchers acknowledge that authentic leadership skills are gained from naturally occurring experiences in the workplace (Brown and Posner, 2001). Therefore, participants' actual practice, relevant experience, views and cultural background enable the researcher to conceptualize ethical leadership in the Omani context and understand the influence of national culture on ethical leadership, which in turn constitutes the aim of the research.

- All participants are Omani nationals: This study aims to explore how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a specific cultural context of Oman. Therefore, the selected samples represent Omani culture.

- The researcher's pre-interview understanding of the participants, or those that recommended them, suggested that ethical leadership was essential to them. The use of social networks helped

the researcher to achieve that as a discussion between the researcher and mediator was to identify participants who care about ethical leadership through their lived experiences during their work.

- Both managers and employees are included: The samples include three groups. This includes senior-level managers, middle-level managers, and employees. The first group includes top-level roles such as Vice CEO, general manager, managing director, and executive manager. The second group consists of those who are working in leadership positions reporting to the top level, such as assistant directors, heads of departments, and team leaders. Meanwhile, the third group includes employees from different departments in the selected organizations. Although leadership theories recognize the importance of followership, the current literature is leader-centric and gives far less attention to employees (Gardner et al., 2011; Leroy et al., 2015). The researcher has had a list of potential participants with their positions based on the recommendations from others. This was done through informal conversations with the mediators regarding the positions, attitudes, interests, and educational levels of potential participants. This helped the researcher to select the most appropriate participants from different levels of management equally. Therefore, to answer the research question and yield richer and more comprehensive research, the three groups were studied as the researcher believes that all of them are key participants in leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Also, the researcher adopts social constructionism, which emphasizes that the concept of ethical leadership is a co-constructed reality as a result of the processes and outcomes of interaction among and between social actors. Therefore, the concept is constructed by the shared meaning of leaders and employees in a specific context (Klenke, 2016).

The snowballing and judgment techniques secured twenty-seven interviews with managers and employees in three leading companies in the Omani oil sector. These included nine interviewees at the top management level, nine at the middle management level, and nine employees. Table 3.1 below

highlights the organization codes and the variety of positions of the interviewed individuals' codes in each organization. However, to make sure their participation is voluntary, the researcher sent an email for all participants attaching the Participant Information Sheet and Privacy Statement, Consent Form, and interview Question Guide to be carefully read. These documents clearly explain the purpose of the research, participants' rights, the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' information and data. Through reading these documents, all participants were aware that participation was voluntary, and thus they could withdraw from the interview process without any negative consequences.

Table 3. 1 Interviews

Organizations Code	Participants levels and code		
	Top management level	Med management Level	employees
Organization No 1 (Q)	3 Participants: Q3 (T) Q4 (T) Q8(T	3 Participants: Q2 (M) Q6(M) Q10 (M)	3 Participants: Q1 (E) Q5 (E) Q7 (E)
Organization No 2 (P)	3 Participants: P2 (T) P5 (T) P8(T)	3 Participants P3(M) P6(M) P9(M)	3 Participants: P1 (E) P4 (E) P7(E)
Organization No 3 (X)	3 Participants: X1 (T) X5(T) X8(T)	3 Participants: X4 (M) X3 (M) X9(M)	3 Participants: X2(E) X6(E) X7(E)

Source: The Author

2.3.5 Data collection methods

The required data for this research was provided by interviews. Interviews are considered as a primary source and means for data collection in social constructivism (Turner, 2010). This method was adopted because it allows gathering in-depth information and obtaining the story behind a participant's perceptions and experiences of ethical leadership (Algarni, 2018). Therefore, it is an effective way to

assist the exploration of the constructing of the meaning of ethical leadership in the Omani context (Lewis-Beck et al., 2012).

In general, there are three main methods of interviews. The first method is the structured interview in which an identical structured sequence of questions is used to be asked to interviewees (Klenke, 2016). The second method is the unstructured interview. It is an open style of the interview as there are no pre-determined questions and interviewees are given the chance to speak in an open way (Rubin and Rubin, 2012). The third method is the semi-structured interview in which a list of questions and themes are used to be covered during the interview and the researcher is flexible about the number of questions and the order (Whiting, 2008).

Semi-structured interviews were employed for this study based on the following considerations. First, this type of interview allows exploring the perceptions of respondents concerning sensitive and complex issues (ethical leadership) and serves the exploratory nature of this study (Barriball and Rgn, 1994; Rapley, 2001). That is because the semi-structured interview enables probing for more detailed information and clarification of answers (Sivaji and Tzuaan, 2012) and allowing some exploration when new issues or topics emerge in addition to central topics (Klenke, 2016). Second, semi-structured interviews help the varied participants in terms of communication capabilities, personal histories, and educational levels to better understand the questions and encourage them to answer freely using their terminology. This is because semi-structured interviewing allows for flexibility in question formulation and word choice while retaining meaning (Treece and Treece, 1977), acknowledging that not every word has the same meaning to every participant, and not every participant uses the same terminology (Klenke, 2016). Finally, it allows the researcher to abbreviate the research themes into questions that enable the interviewees to discuss them (Madill et al., 2001).

Therefore, in this study, a semi-structured interviewing protocol was employed and interviews have lasted between approximately forty-five to sixty minutes. The researcher encouraged interviewees to

talk informally, freely and in a friendly manner to build trust, as trust is a fundamental demand for gleaning information in a personal discussion (Smith, 2011). All interviews were conducted online due to coronavirus considerations that require work from home to contain the increasing spread of coronavirus at that time. These conditions created an environment where respondents could talk freely about their opinions and perceptions (Smith, 2011). Before each interview, the researcher emailed all participants and asked them to read the Participant Information Sheet and The Privacy Notice and complete the Worcester University Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 1 and 2).

3.3.6 Interview schedule

The interview schedule was divided into two main sections. The focus of the first section was understanding ethical leadership and that of the second was understanding the influence of culture. This was done to ease good communication flow to produce richness and depth of data from which themes could be extracted (Myers and Newman, 2007). The schedule of the interview was designed in line with Leech (2002) suggestions to begin with general questions and then continues to more direct, probing questions. Table 3.2 below presents a guide to the development of the interview questions, providing clarification into the underlying thoughts that informed the questions.

Table 3. 2 The Source of Interviews Questions

No	Interview Questions	Source of questions
	Understanding ethical leadership	
1	How would you describe a successful leader or leadership? (Prompts: in general, in terms of ethics)	Introductory questions and highlight the importance of ethics in leadership
2	From your perspective as a leader/ an employee, do you think being ethical is important in leadership? Can you please explain your answer?	
3	From your point of view could you please describe ethical leadership as you understand it?	These questions have been designed to glean out perceptions and opinions on How do Omani leaders and employees conceptualize ethical leadership. These questions allow participants to talk about the real practices occurring in their organizations 'the real world'.
Therefore, they address the following objective:

-Critically assess the concept of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective and identify the main characteristics and behaviours of ethical leadership in the Omani context by reflecting on how the Omani ethical leaders are perceived. |
4	What processes does your organization have to report any unethical practices?	
5	From your experience, could you please provide general examples of what you think constitutes ethical/ unethical leadership in Omani organizations?	
6	As a leader/ an employee, how do you consider ethical issues when using your power in your work? (How, examples)	
7	Think about a specific situation where you consider that you demonstrated ethical leadership. Describe this situation and explain why you consider your leadership was ethical?	
8	From your perspective as a leader/ an employee, if you face an ethical dilemma, will comply with codes of conduct or will you behave more flexibly, taking into consideration the personal circumstances of an offender? (Prompts: why, examples)? (Prompts: why, examples)	
9	What would you do if you realized you would have to do something you considered unethical in order to get a vital transaction/ process done?	
10	What do you consider to be ethical when leading others?	
11	What personal characteristics and behaviours do you think an ethical leader needs to exhibit?	
	Understanding the influence of Omani culture	
12	From your point of view, what is the source of ethics in Oman? Does this source encourage and emphasize the characteristics and behaviours of ethical leaders that you have mentioned previously (in part 1)? If culture is mentioned here, ask to elaborate / give examples? if not ask:	These questions have been designed to glean out perceptions and opinions on how Omani culture influences ethical leadership.
By asking these questions, the researcher aims to answer one of the second main research questions: How does Omani national culture influence perceptions of ethical leadership in the Omani Oil sector? And to address the following objectives:
-To identify the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.
-To assess their influence on perceptions of ethical leadership in Oman.
-To critically assess the relationship between the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.
13	Do you think Omani national culture affects ethical leadership in your organization? How? (examples, positive or negative affect)	
14	What aspects of Omani culture do you think influence ethical leadership? (Prompts: social and personal relations, religion, tribal system, hierarchy, etc.)	
15	Based on your rank and position in the hierarchy, if you take into consideration cultural aspects what do you think are the implications of that?	
16	From your point of view, why do you think we sometimes hear about unethical leaders in Omani organizations? Why do you think that happens (based on what has been published on official media)?	

Source: The Author

3.3.7 The permission to conduct the interviews

The permission to conduct the interviews and access to participants was complicated as there was no specific authorized person who could give the researcher such permission in the selected organizations. Omani organizations are usually hesitant to participate in research and studies (Al Busaidi, 2020). Therefore, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Energy and Minerals instead, as the chosen companies are owned by the Government of Oman and come under the ministry umbrella. The researcher sent a letter to the ministry, indicating the significance of the research and seeking organizations' collaboration to gain access and facilitate the field research process. The letter has achieved its purpose and was welcomed by the undersecretary who sent a letter to the selected companies informing them to facilitate the field research process. Then, the researcher got a response from each company. An authorized person from each company contacted the researcher to discuss the requirements. Herein, both the researcher and the contact person agreed that the selection of participants is under the researcher's responsibility to assure the confidentiality of participants.

3.3.8 Pilot Study

The implementation of a pilot study is considered an important part of the interview preparation processes as it allows the researcher to make revisions before the main study, and highlights flaws and other weaknesses within the interview design (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2018). In this study, the researcher conducted three pilot interviews with three participants who were included in the main study, including one from the top management level, one from the middle management level, and one employee (Turner, 2010). As a result of the pilot interviews and after discussion with the pilot interviewees who were native Arabic speakers, the researcher deleted two questions because their answers were the same as other questions. In addition, some Arabic wording was changed to make it less sensitive and some questions were modified to make them clearer in terms of the Arabic language. For example, in question 16 in section 3 of ''Interview questions guide'': From your point of view, why

sometimes we hear about unethical leaders in Omani organizations? why do you think that happens (based on what has been published on official media)? The researcher changed the word of "unethical leaders" to " unethical practices". The second is that since the term of culture in Arabic might bear multiple-meaning, the participants of the pilot study suggested to brief participants of what I mean by the word 'culture', so participants can get the required meaning of the term "culture" easily in this context.

3.4 Data Analysis

After collecting and generating the required data, data analysis becomes the next crucial step as it aims to give meaning to the collected data (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). It is an ongoing process that allows the researcher to become immersed in the data by moving back and forth between the mass of collected data in order to bring interpretation and structure to it (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016). In this research, the researcher used thematic analysis as a way to analyse collected data from the interviews. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". This method helps the researcher to identify and describe the explicit and implicit ideas, and code them into themes and patterns for analysis purposes. These themes are data-driven and are identified as deductive or inductive (Flick, 2014). A deductive way tends to identify pre-existing coding themes from existing theories. Meanwhile inductive themes are identified and discovered from the data itself, not by a pre-existing coding framework (Patton, 2002).

As there is not enough known about ethical leadership in the Omani context, thematic analysis allows extracting patterns and themes of the interviewer's views to provide specific details and interpretations about ethical leadership in an Omani context. The interviewer's views provide specific details about ethical leadership in an Omani context because they are practicing it in real life.

3.4.1 Language issues

Researchers have long acknowledged the significance of language in constructing and describing our social world (Temple and Young, 2004). Therefore, as the current research seeks to understand experiences, opinions, attitudes, values and processes related to the informants' ethical leadership, language is used to express meaning and influences how meaning is constructed (Nes et al., 2010). The interviews with the participants were carried out using the Arabic language. This was done to ensure that all participants could express themselves comfortably and communicate what they want to say, as the Arabic language was their mother language. On this basis, all the interviews were transcribed into written Arabic format. The researcher, taking care to ensure that all the points had been documented, did the interview transcriptions. In order to ensure that the transcription of the data was done correctly and in a manner that conserved the intended meaning of this data, the researcher listened again to the interview to check that all responses had been written. After this, all transcripts were read again to develop a more thorough understanding of them. This helped the researcher begin to actively engage with, and make sense of the data, a process that would be beneficial for the researcher when having to code and categorise the data at a later stage (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Since the researcher is fluent in the language of the community, he was aware of the set of assumptions, feelings, and values that language carried. Therefore, the researcher chose to keep all transcripts in Arabic format for analysis purposes. The researcher did not fully translate all of the transcripts, but only the data that was selected based on the thematic analysis. The rationale for using the Arabic transcripts is that the researcher is Arabic, and hence the Arabic transcripts help the researcher to become familiarized with the data as well as to understand the data deeply and easily. This was helpful to capture the richness of the words and stories of individuals, which in turn enabled the researcher to interpret the context and meaning of those words, and stories.

The selected data from the transcripts were translated from Arabic to English by the researcher. This could potentially have been a complex process, including a focus on the interpretation of words, as well as the provision of an intelligible translation in the light of contextual meaning (Esposito, 2001). Also, to ensure that "identity/culture" of language was not omitted (Temple and Young 2004, p.174), involving the use of narratives, metaphors and Omani slang. Therefore, to address such concerns about the validity of the translation, the researcher adopted an approach highlighted by Esposito (2001, p. 572) which emphasises that "to translate according to a 'meaning-based, rather than word-forword interpretation". In order to ensure that, the researcher went through the interview recordings to verify that the translation was sufficient in a manner that conserved the intended meaning of this data and preserved the original meaning of what the interviewee said. In addition, the review was done with the assistance of my sister who is an English teacher (she obtained her certificate at a university that uses English as a medium of teaching). Reviewing by myself and with the assistance of my sister was important to ensure accuracy and agreement, particularly as both of us being that Arabic is our mother tongue and English is our second language.

3.4.2 Data Analysis Steps

For analysing collected data, the researcher followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis due to its simplicity and clarity. This model involves several stages and is discussed below.

- **Familiarisation with the Data**: All the interviews were transcribed into written Arabic format (See Appendix C as it shows pictures of an example of an interview transcript). The interview transcriptions were done by the researcher, taking care to ensure that all the points had been documented as discussed in section 3.4.1. For accuracy, the researcher listened again to the interview to check that all responses had been written. After that, the transcripts were read and re-read in order to enhance familiarity with the data and develop a more thorough understanding of them. This helped the researcher begin to actively engage with, and make

sense of the data, a process that would be beneficial for the researcher when having to code and categorise the data at the next stage (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Then transcripts were uploaded in MaxQDA and were organized by participants' and organizations' codes and numbers, as the next picture illustrates.

Picture 1: transcripts that uploaded in MaxQDA
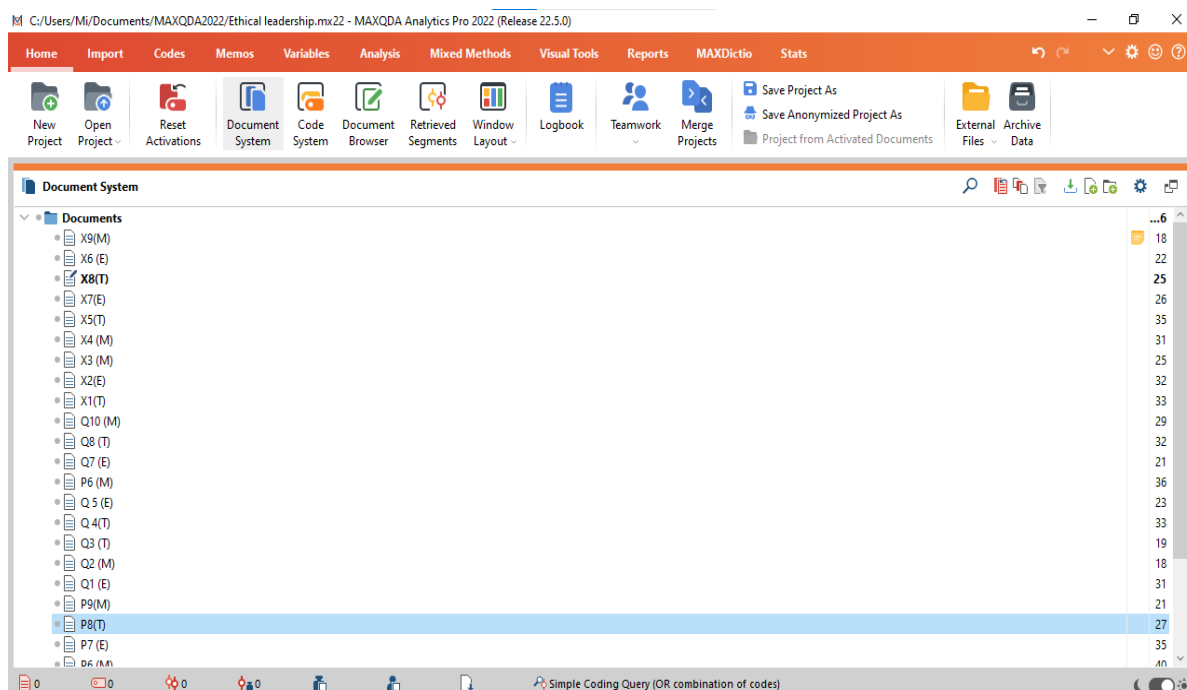
- **Generating Initial Codes**: Codes refer to labels or sub-themes attached to identified themes and this has been guided by the literature that helped to shape the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This step started with the careful reading of the transcripts to generate ideas, make sense of data and in order to gain familiarity with the main issues and significant data. Vaismoradi et al. (2015:103) argued that "the ability to generate ideas and make sense of data depends on researchers' closeness to data through immersion". However, this step involves the generation of initial codes, where meaningful units of the data are highlighted by the researcher. Each unit refers to a phrase, a sentence, or a series of sentences that convey one idea. Hence, the researcher assigned codes to sentences, paragraphs or sections, making sure each of these codes represented one idea about the data (See Appendix D as it shows an example Sample of the coded text of one participant's transcript). This step helped

the researcher to make links between different parts of the data and to identify the most important information (Leavy, 2014). The next picture shows the list of codes.

Picture 2: the list of codes
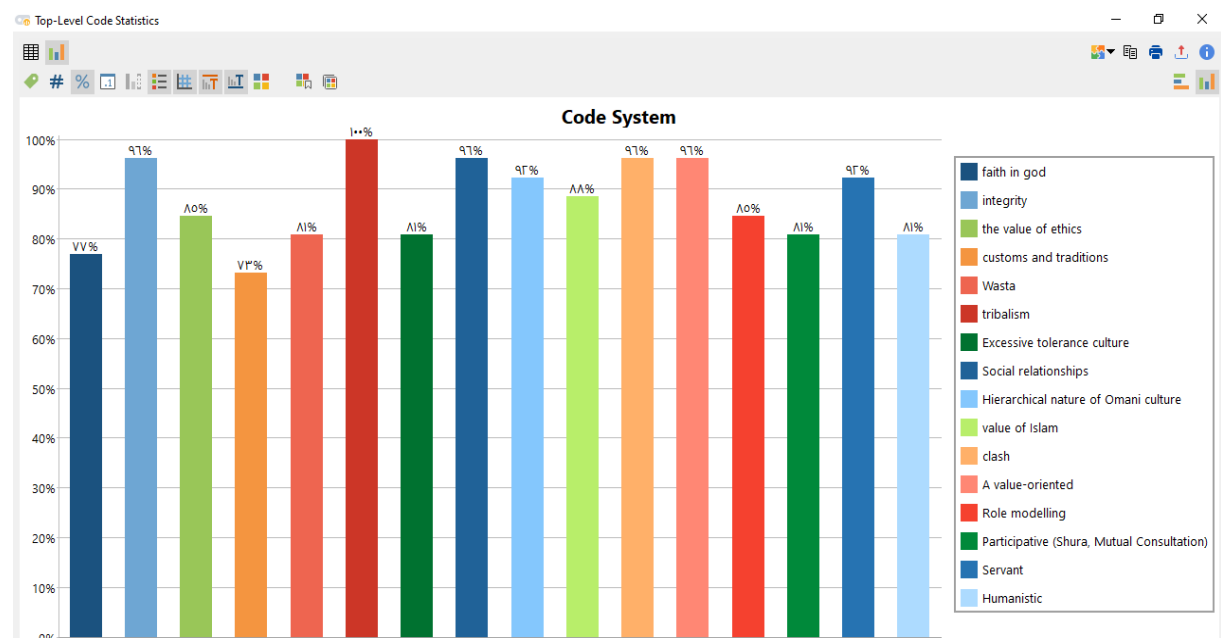
- **Searching for Themes**: It is argued that for a qualitative researcher identifying themes is the primary task in the analysis of data. Braun and Clark (2006) referred to themes as meaningful patterns in the data which the researcher has identified as important for the interpretation and relevant to the research question. Accordingly, the codes identified in the previous stage were then organised and sorted into potential subthemes based on their similarities and differences. The codes were reduced in this phase to sub-theme and then to four main themes that addressed the research questions. The process of this stage is similar to that of code identification in that they both look for the commonality in the data. At this stage, the researcher drew a mind map to represent visually the interrelationships between codes, sub-themes and categories visually. As a result, four initial themes emerged:

  - From social norms to Paternalistic leadership.

  - From Islamic values to Value-based leadership.

  - Tension between Islamic values and social norms

- Hybrid ethical leadership

The following picture images how all the themes were stated by all participants and the size of the circle represents the frequency of how much this theme was mentioned by a participant:

Picture 3: the themes matrix
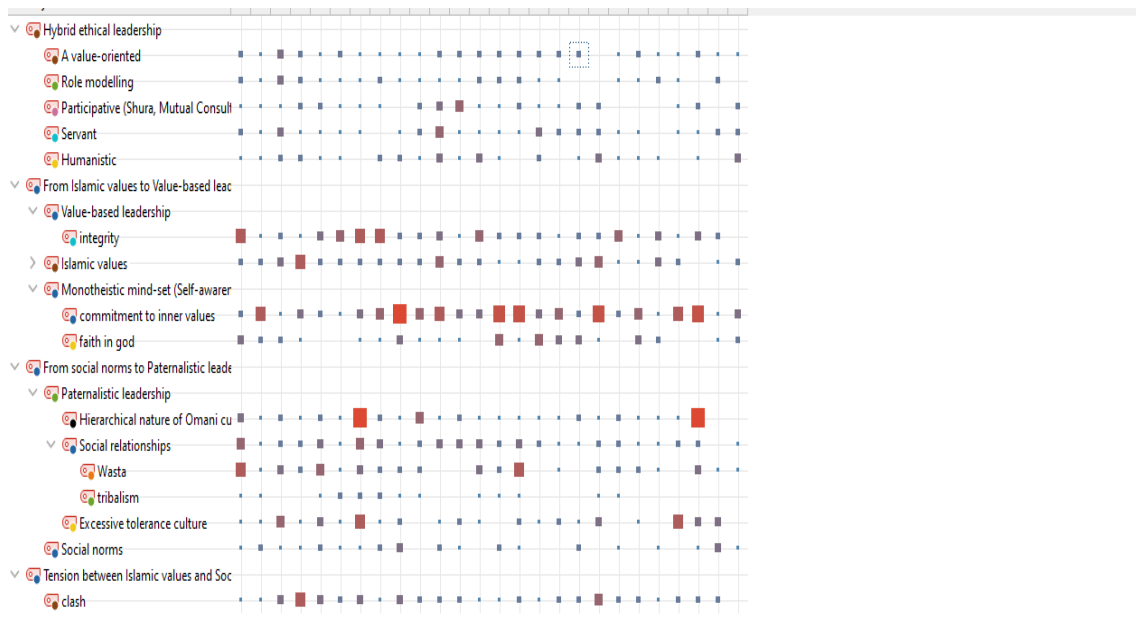
- **Reviewing and Defining Themes**: After the four themes were identified, the researcher checked them in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher went through the entire data set, codes, sub-themes and main themes multiple times until he felt that no further amendment was needed. By doing this the researcher aimed to ensure that codes were connected to the data and there was coherence in the themes. Then the researcher defined each theme by identifying the essence of each theme and determining the different aspects of data captured by each theme

- **Producing the Report:** After the themes were defined, the researcher started reporting and the writing-up stage of the research to deliver a clear and concise representation of the data across

the themes involved (Braun and Clarke, 2016). This involved describing the key elements of the data in terms of the defined themes. Themes were described and illustrated using direct quotations from the participants' responses as evidence for the ideas and concepts within the themes and to exemplify the different perspectives. The researcher encompassed extensive passages of quotations to give readers a flavour of the original texts. Then the researcher engaged with and developed the analytical process informed by continuous discussing with his supervisory team and revisiting relevant theories presented in the literature review chapter to offer an interpretation of the data together with its implications and their broader meanings.

3.5 Trustworthiness of research

As social science qualitative researchers endeavour to address the issues of meaning, understanding, and experiences of a phenomenon that requires human interpretation and reasoning to help make sense of the data, there is likely to be a level of subjectivity. Therefore, the demands of seeking trustworthiness are required to minimize the subjective nature of qualitative research. Trustworthiness in qualitative research represents the systematic rigor, the credibility of the researcher, the research design, applicability of the research methods and the believability of the findings (Rose and Johnson, 2020) To achieve this, Lincoln and Guba (1985) created four tools as a means to assess qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Therefore, to emphasize the trustworthiness of this research, the researcher used the four tools of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and discussed how they were used in this research. The table 3.3 below illustrates the qualitative criteria for assessing trustworthiness:

Table 3. 3 Criteria for assessing trustworthiness

Truth Value	Credibility
Consistency	Dependability
Applicability	Transferability
Neutrality	Confirmability

Source: Lincoln and Guba (1985)

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility replaces the concept of internal validity, which is represented by the truth value. The truth value derives from the participants' lived experiences, which lead to an in-depth understanding of that participants' unique reality, rather than universal truths (Rose and Johnson, 2020). Thus, credibility is concerned with the extent to which the researcher articulates a certain level of confidence in the results based on the phenomenon under investigation. However, to ensure credibility, there are various techniques that can be used, such as triangulation, member check, peer debriefing and extreme cases (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this research, the researcher used triangulation, member checking, critical reflexivity and subjective positionality to enhance the credibility of the research.

Triangulation allows the researcher to address a social phenomenon from multiple directions to best ensure accurate description and presentation of it (Rose and Johnson, 2020). Denzin (2017) identifies a plurality of triangulation techniques that help the researcher to be clearer, more accurate and to increase credibility. This includes the use of different data collection methods, different data sources within the same method, multiple analysts and multiple theories or paradigms employed to interpret the data.

In this research, the researcher adopted three case studies. The adoption of three case studies enabled the credibility of the current research, allowing an in-depth understanding of ethical leadership and the influence of Omani culture on it. Bryman (2016) notes that the case study strategy generally enables the researcher to capture the participants' perceptions of real-life experiences and their values, unlike studies employing a survey and experiment strategies that fail to capture the real-life experience of participants.

Moreover, the researcher used a wide range of informants from different departments and different levels (senior and middle level, employees). That enabled the researcher to capture a rich picture of the attitudes or behaviour of those under investigation as they have more diverse experiences, opinions,

and reactions. Patton (2002) asserts that capturing multiple perspectives regarded as essential components of quality in social constructionist research.

Member checking technique is based upon traditionally constructivist views of validity as it is concerned with sharing a draft report of the research interpretations and explanations with some study participants or others within the same culture who were not involved in the original data collection process to receive their feedback and explore other aspects of the inquiry. Thus, it allows the researcher to produce more representative analyses of social phenomena (Rose and Johnson, 2020). In this research, the researcher discussed the research interpretations and explanations with one of the supervisory team who shares the same culture as the researcher.

3.5.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to reliability and asserts that findings can change based on time and conditions (Rose and Johnson, 2020). However, the nature of qualitative research and the changing nature of the phenomena examined by qualitative researchers makes such provisions problematic in practice (Shenton, 2004). Indeed, the naturalistic paradigm recognizes that the social world is constantly changing. Therefore, researchers need to demonstrate that the results are reliable when the research is repeated again (Crotty, 1998). This research addresses ethical leadership in terms of cultural influence on the perceptions of participants. Perhaps the ongoing processes of modernization might change the culture over time but the processes of change take a long time because change is a selective process affected by acceptations and rejections of people in the society (Karacay *et al.*, 2019). The researcher realizes that changes in perceptions, behaviours, perspectives, practices, and policy take time to emerge (Shannon and Hambacher, 2014). Besides, Morrow (2005) confirms that in constructionist research, it is essential to understand participant constructions of meanings in-depth to make the results more reliable and this understanding depends on some factors, including understanding context, culture, and rapport. In this research, the researcher investigated participants within their cultural framework field

and shared their cultural values. Therefore, it can be argued that the findings of this research demonstrate confidence and can be repeatable.

3.5.3 Transferability

Transferability is another word for external validity and generalizability; i.e.: to what extent the result from the research could apply to other contexts (Rose and Johnson, 2020). According to Algumzi (2017) generalization can be statistical or analytic. Statistical generalization is common in methods that employ surveys, including statistical empirical data collected from a specific sample and the analysis of archive data. On the other hand, analytical generalization is common when researchers attempt to generalize specific findings to broader theories of the context using conceptualizing or developing theoretical propositions.

In the conventional sense, qualitative data has limited generalisability due to the absence of statistical analyses and the use of small scale. Hence, the qualitative researcher's responsibility represented in providing adequate information about the research context, processes, participants (Tynan *et al.*, 2017) and maximise the diversity within the study setting to ensure as "rich" a picture of the setting as possible (Lincoln, 2016; Shenton, 2004). This, in turn, would enable the reader to decide how the results may transfer.

However, in this research, the researcher acts as an explorer to ensure "sending Omani context" of ethical leadership and provide a full description of all the contextual factors impinging on the inquiry. The researcher's responsibility is to transfer the reader to the boundaries of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Shenton, 2004). Establishing and developing a new perspective to gain a profound understanding of the influence of Omani culture on ethical leadership which has the potential to inform further discussions concerning ethical leadership in a different culture, using similar methods. Despite the current research concentrating on a single phenomenon (i.e. exploring ethical leadership), within a specific context (i.e. Omani oil sector) and using multiple cases (i.e. three organisations), the finding

could be generalised to other cultures that share similar cultural values and beliefs as Omani culture, such as GCC ((The Gulf Cooperation Council, is a regional, intergovernmental, political, and economic union that consists of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates)cultures (Shenton, 2004). But moreover surely could be analytically generalisable as its aim to develop a conceptual understanding about cross-cultural ethical leadership.

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity in the research, which asks whether the findings include the researcher's biases (Rose and Johnson, 2020). The interference of the researcher's biases is inevitable even in quantitative research as tests and questionnaires are designed by humans (Mathers *et al.*, 2002). Arguably, in qualitative analysis, researchers have their own values and assumptions, and they cannot entirely avoid allowing these to colour the way data is interpreted (Mathers et al., 2002). Therefore, being critically reflexive enables researchers to identify the biases that they bring to the study, particularly those that play out in the research process. Thus, the validity of the overall research can be enhanced with a clear articulation of how researchers' subjective positionalities affect all parts of the research process, from topic to selection of the method of analysis, to interpretation of the findings (Rose and Johnson, 2020). In this research, the researcher shares many of these subjective positions, including race, class, gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin with participants (Silverman, 2013). The researcher and participants in this research interact and influence each other in meaningful ways. They bring their values, ethics, and beliefs to the research. Hence, the researcher serves as co-constructor of the meaning of ethical leadership in the Omani context and considers himself as integral to the interpretation of the data.

However, the researcher uses a number of strategies to make sure that the researcher's interpretations represent the interviewees' meanings and minimize the researcher's biases. Firstly, the researcher has expanded his understanding of multiple ways of conceptualizing ethical leadership by digging deeply

into the relevant literature. Secondly, during the interviews and by using a semi-structured interviewing protocol, the researcher was able to ask for more detailed information and clarification of answers. Therefore, the researcher has delved more deeply into the implicit and overt meanings of participants. Thirdly, the researcher consulted with his research team to reflect the research's responses to the researcher's interpretations.

3.5.5 Critical reflexivity

Reflexivity is commonly viewed as a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality towards what is being researched, the nature of their relationship with those who participate in the research and how data is interpreted to construct knowledge (Pillow, 2003; Saunders et al., 2012). In this sense, reflexivity makes researchers recognise and take responsibility for their situatedness within the research and for the effect that it may have on the setting, participants, questions asked, data collected, and data interpretations. Hence, it is essential when conducting research of a qualitative nature that the researcher acknowledges their presence and characterises their role in the formation of knowledge (Creswell, 2014). This could be achieved by reflexively identifying personal biases, values, beliefs, experiences and background, including history and culture, which may affect the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2009) .

To that end, the researcher acknowledges that the researcher is a Muslim, Arabic-Omani man, born and raised in Oman. The researcher has worked for the Omani government for 15 years at a mid-managerial level. The issues related to ethical leadership have always been a keen interest for the researcher. Given the researcher's fifteen-year experience as a practitioner in the field of management, human resource and leadership, he has faced some ethical dilemmas. He has been involved in leadership roles and experienced the influence of culture on daily transactions in Omani organisations. Through this work, he had been exposed to personal visits or telephone calls from

family members, friends and acquaintances to ask for selection, recruitment, training and promotion. These practices have provoked his interest and passion for investigating ethical leadership. He was always asking himself, are such practices ethical?! Is "Wasta" ethical? When is the use of social networks in the workplace seen as ethical? Is the hierarchical culture ethical?

The researcher presumed this as a starting point that started by asking what ethical leadership 'is'. That seems a logical and usual place to start. Is it just moving beyond avoiding unethical practices or seeking a 'higher standard' by striving towards ethical leadership?

The researcher already has some expectations about ethical practices, a "pre-understanding" (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2022, p. 2). This pre-understanding comes from human social interactions that produce and reproduce the social structures and actions people know as reality (Gibson, 2022). The researcher has been brought up with Islamic values and Omani social norms. Statements such as "I feel this is right" or "I think this is unethical" already have been formed since childhood. Nevertheless, despite this pre-understanding about ethical practices, the researcher acknowledges that at this stage he was not aware of the meaning of ethical leadership. As a practitioner in the public sector, the researcher was simply not aware of the latest ethical leadership theories including transformational, authentic, servant, and ethical. The researcher was not aware of the subtle nuances between them, and what behaviours or traits one consisted of compared to the other. However, the researcher was to some extent aware of cultural influence that could impact leadership—the researcher's fifteen years of experience in the field served as a backdrop to the research.

This brief description does not attempt to capture the researcher's assumptions or background understanding. Nevertheless, it is intended to indicate the social context that the researcher comes from. It is a 'world' that the researcher either shares or has shared. This study is an attempt of the

researcher's understanding of a participant's interpretation. Therefore, it is important that the researcher acknowledge how his interpretation of the participants' interpretations is informed by his perspective as an Arabic-Omani man, as distinct from, for instance, a British man in the UK.

Before conducting this study on how Omani leaders and followers conceptualise ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context in their work with participants from Omani organisations, the researcher did not have any prior relationship with any of the investigated organisations. In this sense, the researcher does not consider himself an insider researcher, as he did not conduct the research in his workplace. The insider-researcher is " a scholar who is native to the research setting and who conducts research involving populations of which she/he is also a member" (Chammas, 2020, p.537). The fact that the research was conducted at organisations where the researcher had not worked helped them to recognise new insights, knowledge and experience.

Regarding reflexivity in data collection, the researcher shared many subjective positions with participants, including race, class, gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin. Therefore, the researcher and the participants understand the local Islamic values and social norms and speak the same language. This enabled a more profound understanding of the impact of the Omani cultural context on themes related to ethical leadership as they spoke frankly without hesitation, compared with the case of a foreign researcher (Davis, 2020). The commonality between the researcher and the participants enabled an easy familiarity and facilitated rapport, yielding rich data. When the researcher conducted the interviews, he felt like one of them and part of the milieu. However, on the other hand, his presence was felt like a researcher, asking questions and probing. The researcher was aware of the need of the voluntary status of participants. Given this and building on his knowledge of the context, the researcher listened, being sensitive and compassionate, to the information shared and tried not to influence the interviewees' responses. Some of the techniques

used are not being dominant in the interview and keeping some space for the interviewees to control the interview. Also, the researcher tried to bear in mind that allowing interviewees to speak without influence would provide more accurate information which in turn enhanced the validity of their research. Therefore, the researcher believes it would be wise to privilege these qualities in the interviewing process above any other forms of ethnic matching. Furthermore, given the sensitivity of participants' positions in their organisations, the researcher emphasised the confidentiality of their identities (see section 2.3.5).

Regarding reflexivity in data analysis, analysis is the naming and labelling of data segments. It begins with the transcription of the interview data, and this interview data is then coded (Charmaz, 2006). Hence, the problem at this stage arises by recognising that social researchers are integral to the social world they study. Therefore, as qualitative researchers must stay true to the research data to best reproduce the embodied experience (Pink, 2015). Hence, in this research, the researcher is concerned with ethical leadership because he has been involved in leadership roles and has experienced the influence of culture on daily transactions in Omani organisations. Arguably, the contextualisation of research in this fashion requires researchers to have a deep knowledge of the local context (Tsui, 2004). From a theoretical perspective, understanding the study context is fundamental. The researcher's interest in understanding how culture influences the perception of ethical leadership provided the impetus for inquiry. However, this academic interest is not different from other researchers interested in a particular phenomenon in any country, i.e., their country of nationality.

Nevertheless, being a national of the country where this research was conducted may raise questions about biases. Therefore, the researcher consciously decided to engage in an analytical process that would reflect the meaning behind the data. The researcher used the MAXQDA software to code the

data. This software tool allowed for easy sorting, structuring, and analysing of data, and facilitated the management of the resulting interpretations and evaluations. Additionally, the researcher explored the data through the conscious understanding of multiple ways of conceptualising ethical leadership by examining the relevant literature, whether from a Western perspective or an Eastern perspective. This was noted through the emerging themes from data as the alignment between the data and literature was clear, specifically in the two first themes.

Yet, upon further pondering, the researcher realised that the analysis is not a mechanical stage within research but a creative process that allows engagement with and in the data and participants' stories. As Gabriel (2015) observed, the consciously reflexive social science researcher cannot deal with their empirical material as something separate from themselves – as something stored in a computer file to be processed, squeezed or distilled to generate knowledge at a later date. Data is not facts or representations of facts but records of particular social encounters. Therefore, the significant relationship between the data, the researcher and the participants is now more emphatic in the analysis process. The researcher acknowledges that data is not just language but is indeed beyond, above and in between language. It requires a consideration of stories told by the research participants and includes the exploring of discrepancies, discontinuities or contradictions (Chadwick, 2017). As such, the analysis becomes a more truthful and accurate representation of the research participants' stories. The relationship between the data, the researcher and the participants provides considerable insights. Arguably, the themes of tension between Islamic values and social norms and hybrid ethical leadership result from the visual re-organising and re-arranging of the stories told by the research participants. To achieve that, the researcher built moments of self-awareness and reflection, which helped him reflect on his work experiences, participants' stories, and continued feedback from his supervisory team. Hence, the researcher developed a more comprehensive

interpretation of the data by questioning his interpretations and engaging the research team in the interrogation.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are regarded as a core component of the trustworthiness and integrity of research (Gibson and Brown, 2009). As this study involved the collection of data from living humans, the first step was getting approval from The Research Ethics Panel at University of Worcester. To achieve this approval, the researcher submitted an ethics application form including Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Privacy Statement (University of Worcester Template), Consent Form (University of Worcester Template), and interview Question Guide. After obtaining ethical approval, the researcher started pilot interviewing process. Creswell (2014) outlined four core ethical concerns in qualitative research involving: Informed consent, Confidentiality, Avoiding harm and integrity and professionalism. The researcher dealt with these concerns in this study as follow:

Informed consent: before the interviews commenced, the researcher sent an email for all participants attaching the Participant Information Sheet and Privacy Statement, Consent Form, and interview Question Guide to be carefully read. These documents clearly explain the purpose of the research, participants' rights, the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' information and data. Through reading these documents, all participants were aware that participation was voluntary, and thus they could withdraw from the interview process without any negative consequences (Giordano *et al.*, 2007). The participants had adequate time to read the documents before any interview. Their concerns and questions were addressed and answered before engaging in the interview process. Therefore, attaining informed consent from participants regarded as an acknowledgement of their participation in the study by their personal free will.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: maintaining confidentiality is an essential aspect of ethical considerations for any study (Unluer, 2012). For this study, the researcher used the following procedures to ensure anonymity and confidentiality:

Consent forms: only the researcher had access to consent forms. After data collection, consent forms digitized and stored securely in the personal laptop of the researcher with password access; paper originals securely shredded.

Collected data: all the data collected during the process of this study were kept strictly confidential and private. Electronic data were securely stored in the personal laptop of the researcher with password access. All recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after the successful completion of the PhD course.

Anonymity: the identity of participants will be kept confidential, and they will be given a pseudonym for the purpose of the study.

Avoiding harm: this was dealt with by submitting application for ethical approval by the Research Ethics Panel at Worcester University. A risk assessment was set out clearly and was approved as there is no potential risks of participants.

Integrity and professionalism: the researcher is an Omani national who is aware of Omani cultural norms and is considered an insider which implies that the researcher is a member of the community where the research was conducted. Being an insider-researcher helped the researcher to build a trusting relationship with participants. Besides, using the social network to reach the participants gave them a feeling of peace of mind. It encouraged them to speak freely about ethical leadership as they considered the researcher as being trustworthy since the researcher was introduced by someone known by them (Ali, 2016).

All data collected from participants used only for the purpose of research. The researcher made every effort was to ensure that the participants' responses were transcribed accurately. After transcription, the researcher listened again to the interview to check that all responses had been written. However, the integrity and quality of this research have been dealt with in section 2.5.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter primarily explored the research methodologies and methods employed in this research. The chapter discussed an overview of research philosophy, followed by justified the choice of the social constructionist paradigm used for the study, explaining the nature of its philosophical approach and the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. Following that, the chapter discussed, along with the rationales, the research method employed for the study, namely a qualitative exploratory approach, and the method of research samples employed, namely snowballing and judgment sampling, and data collection employed, namely interviews. This was followed by an explanation of the use of thematic analysis to analyse the data from the interviews. Finally, the trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations are addressed.

Chapter four: Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of data collected from the participants. This chapter will critically discuss the results from the research in conjunction and contrast with the current relevant literature. It connects the empirical data with theories relating to ethical leadership from Western and Eastern perspectives reviewed in the second chapter of this thesis. The arguments set out in this chapter emphasise the significance of adopting an understanding of ethical leadership from a non-Western perspective. This is crucial as exploring ethical leadership through indigenous perspective address a critical issue that is rarely examined throughout the leadership literature which is specification of the relevant norms for ethical leadership or identifying moral normative foundations underlying ethical leadership theories (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2018; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). The chapter will analyse the findings and the emergent themes from participants' interviews. A substantial part of participants' responses was related to how they perceive ethical leadership and cultural influence. The participants have openly articulated and shared their perceptions about their understanding of ethical leadership and Omani national culture and its influence on ethical leadership. Interestingly participants shared their views and opinions about the source of ethics and ethical leadership in Omani society. They gave their views on how ethics are instilled and deeply rooted in their personalities since their childhood stage. Repeatedly, the participants mentioned two key sources affecting the level of ethics and ethical leadership in Omani society. The first is traditions and customs (social norms), and the second is Islam values which in turn confirms what the literature revealed in the literature review chapter. Therefore, it can be argued that the Omani context and its social dynamics provide a unique understanding of perceptions about ethical leadership. Unlike Trevino et al. (1998), who claims that 'ethical culture' can be limited by its

organisational context, the current study affirms the opposite. That is, ethical leadership goes beyond the fixed and bounded understanding of a prescriptive organisational culture to include the external cultural effects, which in turn aligns with and affirms social constructionist studies claims (e.g. Fairhurst, 2009; Carroll et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2014). Thus, it can be argued that ethical leadership in the Omani context is an integral part and intertwined with the sociocultural context (Shotter and Cunliffe, 2003; Fairhurst and UhlBien, 2012; Liu, 2017). The evidence of such a claim is highly supported by participants' views when highlighting two key sources affecting ethical leadership in Omani society. The first is Social norms, and the second is Islamic values. Both of these sources clearly reflect the interconnection and overlap between ethical leadership and the Omani sociocultural context from one hand. And on the other, they provide intersecting and opposing perceptions of ethical leadership. Four themes were uncovered as a result of analysing these interviews. These themes are:

• From social norms to Paternalistic leadership

• From Islamic values to Value-based leadership

• Tension between Islamic values and social norms

• Hybrid ethical leadership

The body of the chapter will be structured around these themes. Each theme includes a sub-section exploring the influence of Omani culture and addresses each of the research objectives in turn. These objectives are:

- To identify the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.

- To assess their influence on perceptions of ethical leadership in Oman.

- To critically assess the relationship between the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.

- To critically assess the concept of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective and identify the main characteristics and behaviours of ethical leadership in the Omani context by reflecting on how the Omani ethical leaders are perceived.

Figure 4.1 shows the sequence in which this discussion follows to present the findings.

Figure 4. 1 Research themes

From social norms to Paternalistic leadership

From Islamic values to Value-based leadership

Tension between Islamic values and Social norms

Hybrid ethical leadership
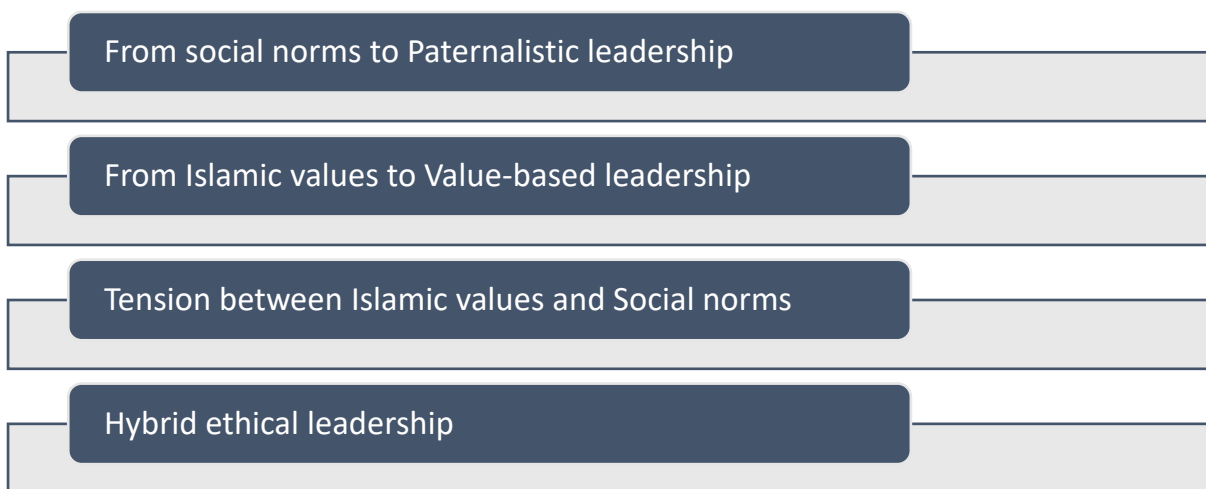
Source: The Author

4.2 Research objectives and themes

4.2.1 Research Objective (1,2)

- **To identify the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.**

- **To assess their influence on perceptions of ethical leadership in Oman.**

The Omani cultural normative ethical foundations and their influence on ethical leadership appear in the data to be a significant subject that covers participants' perceptions of local contextual configurations on ethical leadership. Throughout the interviews, it appeared that the participants' perceptions are fundamentally associated with the broader society and how this affects the meaning-

constructing of ethical leadership. Below are the discussions of the two themes that emerged in the data in response to this. The two themes are:

- From social norms to Paternalistic leadership.

- From Islamic values to Value-based leadership.

4.3 First theme: From social norms to Paternalistic leadership

This theme covers participants' responses regarding the influence of Omani social norms on ethical leadership. The participants have openly articulated and shared their perceptions about social norms and their influence on ethical leadership. These perceptions can be divided into two subthemes namely, social norms and paternalistic leadership as illustrated in figure 4.1.

Figure 4. 2 From social norms to Paternalistic leadership
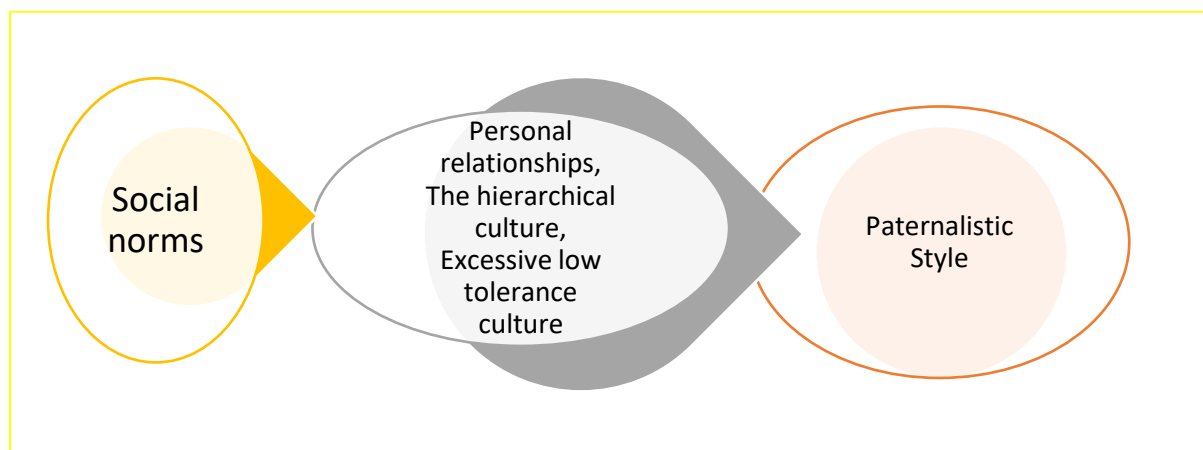
Source: The Author

4.3.1 Social norms

All participants believe local customs and traditions inform the practice of ethical leadership. Based on their perceptions, they believed customs and traditions play a major role in shaping the ethical behaviours of Omanis and encourage ethical behaviours. For example, Participant X3 (M) affirmed that by saying:

I see that the customs and traditions that I grew up on have positively shaped my personality. Respecting and appreciating others are ethical values, and these values are inherited from our customs and traditions.

Hence, the majority of participants highlighted the role of the family in holding on to customs and traditions. Participants hinted that Omani families hold on customs and traditions of the Omani society and are keen to raise their children on these customs. For example, Participant Q8 (T) argued that:

Omani society is conservative. Thus, customs and traditions play a major role in shaping the ethical behaviours of the individual since childhood. Families are keen to raise their children on these customs.

In addition, participants highlighted some of the distinctive features of Omani traditions and customs which contributes positively to ethical leadership such as values of respect, helping others and tolerance. Most participants pointed out these features as positive features that coloured the Omani society. For example, Participant P7 (E) claimed confidently that:

Since ancient times, the Omanis have been known for their tolerance, respect and helping others. Omani society is built on a set of values and ethics, and people are committed to these values.

Hence, it can be argued that Omani customs and traditions provide a solid foundation for leaders to lead ethically as it is based on distinctive features such as kindness, tolerance, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others. Participants repeatedly mentioned these values and considered them key distinctive features of the Omani society, especially values of respect, helping others and tolerance. Therefore, these perceptions affirmed what previous studies asserted and which stated that Omani society is ethical by nature (e.g. Al-Lamky, 2007; Alhashemi, 2017; Common, 2011; Mujtaba et al., 2010; Neal 2010; Risso, 2016). This is evident through the Omani customs and traditions that are demonstrated through social systems, daily life practices and varying social occasions (Alhashemi, 2017).

However, participants highlighted three distinctive characteristics of Omani social norms, namely: social relationships, hierarchical nature of Omani culture and excessive tolerance culture (low assertiveness) and will be discussed below.

4.3.1.1 Social relationships

All Participants highlighted that building and maintaining social relationships is a key feature of Omani custom and tradition. For example, Participant X6 (E) stated that Omanis have a strong sense of social relationships and that the Omanis' belief in the relationships encourages people to be kind and help those who know them,

> *Building good relations is one of our customs and traditions. Therefore, relationships facilitate and speed up the work procedures in the company.*

Participant X7 (E) added,

> *Omanis are cooperative and interdependent with each other. The reason for this is the diversity of social events that require a person to attend and participate.*

It can be seen from the above perceptions that the use of social networks, whether at the organisational level or social level, is a part of the Omani culture. Such norms originate from and are shaped by socio-cultural values, norms and have their roots in a long history of tradition and popular belief systems. Hence, it is worth looking through the lens of the Omani social system to understand how social relationships work. The Omani social system is built on a tribal structure and family affiliation, which identify the social status of the individuals and encourage family role and tribal loyalty, whether at the organisational level or social level (Al-arimi,2012; Alhashemi, 2017; Common, 2011).

Based on the previous argument, participants endorsed the role the tribal and families structure plays in the lives of Omani people and its effect on the organisational level. During the interviews, the participants discussed Omani socio-cultural backgrounds associated with family and tribalism. For example, participant P3(M) clearly admitted the existence of tribalism in the company she works in,

Tribalism still exists. For example, you can be recognised easily that a large percentage of managers from a certain tribe in the company. This is evidence that social relations have a direct impact on decision-making in the company. I remember in a period of time, the saying "If you are not of this tribe, you will not be promoted" has been spread in the company.

Participant X4(M) highlighted the implications of tribalism by saying:

I was working in a governmental organisation. I can say that tribalism played a significant role. If a person is a son of a sheikh or from the ruling family, he is treated differently. So that they are supported, promoted and developed more than others

In addition, participant Q10(M) illustrated the influence of tribalism not only on the organisational level but rather political level,

Tribalism influences a lot. For example, in the Shura Council elections, whoever wins the elections whoever has strong tribal support.

These perceptions reflect the influence of the In-group collectivism dimension in the GLOBE study, which describes the degree to which culture encourages institutional or societal collective action (Yulk, 2020). As such it can be argued that, Omanis are integrated into groups and "express pride, loyalty, and interdependence in their families" (House et al., 2004). Hence, individuals regard family ties, ethnic background, tribe and circles of close friends as valuable things and above all else (Ye, Ng, and Lian, 2015). This originates from and is shaped by socio-cultural values norms and has its roots in a long history of tradition and popular social systems.

4.3.1.2 Hierarchical nature of Omani culture

One of the significant features of social norms mentioned by the participants is the hierarchical nature of Omani culture. The majority of participants believed that Omani people pay more attention to social status based on several factors such as age, seniority, tribal relations, and wealth as the basis of social structure. For example, X1(T) pointed out that,

Hierarchical culture exists. It is noticeable not only in Oman but in the Arab region in general. Everyone gives more respect to people in higher positions.

Participant P3(M) believed that the hierarchical culture is embedded in that Omani society and is practised at all levels,

> *We have been raised to respect seniority in our society, whether by age or position. On the other hand, those in higher positions do not accept the employees who oppose their opinions. For example, when a junior employee opposes his manager, the manager considers this employee overconfident. The prevailing belief is that whoever is in a leadership position does not want to be seen as weak or his orders being broken.*

The previous quotations show that hierarchical culture exists. This does not mean there is a kind of class discrimination; rather, it is exaggerating of respect. Participant X2(E) affirmed this understanding by saying: *"As Omanis, our culture is hierarchical in the sense of exaggerating respect for those who are higher than us in age, position or social level." Participant Q1(E) added, "...We consider that as an expression of respect!".* This kind of expression of respect is rooted from childhood as families raise their children to respect older family members. Participant X2(E) affirmed this by saying: *'This culture was inculcated from childhood. For example, if your father, mother and uncle or an older member of your family is sitting with you, you have to show your respect and do not oppose their opinion."*

These findings are consistent with the literature on cultural dimensions of the GLOBE study that classify Oman as a hierarchical culture or high power distance culture. Power distance refers to "the extent to which a community accepts and endorses authority, power differences, and status privileges. In high power distance countries, power, authority, and information are unequally distributed" (House et al., 2004, p. 536). Therefore, in high power distance cultures, levels between people vary based on their level of authority, power, prestige, wealth, and status (Karacay et al., 2019).

4.3.1.3 Excessive tolerance culture

A significant number of participants reported that excessive tolerance culture is one of the distinctive features of Omani social norms. According to House et al. (2004, p.30), assertiveness refers to "the degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with

others". Participants believe that the nature of Omani culture represented in excessive low assertiveness culture is widely practised even in the workplace. For example, participant Q8 (T) describe Omanis as excessively tolerant even at the expense of work,

> *Omanis are excessively tolerant, even at the expense of work. A business demands us to be aggressive to some extent because mistakes sometimes are costable. I always urge my employees to get rid of such practices.*

Participant Q5 (E) added:

> *We are much more tolerant. To be honest with you, sometimes I fall into such matters, and I consider this negative!*

These perceptions reflect the influence of the assertiveness dimension in the GLOBE study, which refers to which extent people in their relationships with others are assertive and aggressive (Li et al., 2020). As Oman is categorised as having a low assertive culture, Omanis pay more attention to maintaining warm relationships and reputation. Hence, Omani leaders are expected to be less aggressive and tough with their followers to gain employees' loyalty, love and maintain their prestige and a remarkable social rank (AldulaImi, 2019; House et al., 2004). A possible explanation of why such a culture exists in Oman can be illustrated through the lens of Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2011) cultural model. According to this model, the Arab countries, such as Oman, embrace an 'affective' culture. Therefore, people in this culture tend to express their emotions in all formal and informal contexts, including the workplace (Morden, 1999). Thus, according to this culture, leaders are more likely not to harm their employees' feelings and keep them contented. Moreover, leaders are more likely to avoid taking disciplinary actions and not confronting their employees with their mistakes or poor performance.

4.3.2 Paternalistic leadership

This tribal structure and family affiliation, which are coloured by characteristics mentioned by the participants, which are represented in personal relationships, the hierarchical nature and excessive

tolerance, can be linked to the characteristics of the paternalistic leadership framework, which are a common practice in Eastern cultures (Erben and Gu¨nes¸er 2008; Aycan 2006). It can be argued that the Omani social norms lead to paternalistic leadership. This means in the Omani context, the tribal mentality of leadership reproduces paternalistic behaviour patterns towards followers within the organisations. I.e. leaders reproduce the father role and paternalistic behaviour, as it is associated with their knowledge of what leadership roles involve and demand. Participant Q 12 (T) asserted this argument and described the work environment as a family environment,

> *I see the work environment as a family outside the family that I live with, outside my real family. They are my family at work.*

From this point of view, participants believed being in a leadership position requires that the leader imitate the way fathers behave in the family setting and cultivate a feeling of a family to create a collective culture that resembles the family structure. Therefore, in line with the main aspects of paternalistic leadership identified by Aycan et al. (2013, p, 977) including, 'creating a family environment in the workplace', 'establishing close personalised relationships with subordinates', 'getting involved in employees' non-work lives', 'expecting loyalty and deference from subordinates (leader considers loyalty more important than performance)' and 'maintaining authority and status hierarchy', it can be argued the Omani social system forms the foundation of these aspects. That is, paternalistic leadership reflects the Omani tribal structure and family affiliation, which emphasise maintaining personal relationships and endorsing the hierarchical nature, and excessive low assertiveness. To demonstrate this and explore paternalistic leadership in the Omani context, this will be developed through the lens of Omani culture characteristics identified by participants, which are hierarchical nature, personal relationships, and excessive tolerance.

4.3.2.1 Paternalistic leadership from hierarchical nature of Omani culture lens

Paternalistic leadership is built on a hierarchical relationship as the father takes the leading role in the family (Okten and Cenkci, 2012). Hence, the leader maintains authority and status hierarchy by

showing a genuine concern for the subordinates' care, protection and welfare. The followers, in exchange, show loyalty and respect for their leaders, insofar as the leader is capable of fulfilling the needs of the follower. These insights clearly reflect participants' perceptions as they expect ethical leaders to take care of followers and protect them, even from their own weaknesses. In this sense, to ethically rationalise the hierarchical relationship of paternalistic leadership, it can be argued the emic values that underlie the hierarchical relationship are locally ethically accepted. The value of care has been identified as one of the key distinctive features of ethical leadership by participants. For example, participant X2(E) affirmed the value of care is historically rooted in the traditional understanding of leadership by saying:

> *In the past, we had a so-called 'Sheikh' who is a person who cares about the matters of his tribe and serves all people under his command. At that time, the prevailing concept was 'The master of a people is the one who serves them'. And this is one of our well-known proverbs.*

On the other hand, followers show loyalty and deference towards the leader out of respect and appreciation of his care and protection, which in turn is ethical value and locally accepted. Participant P6(M) highlighted the value of respect from down to the top; reflecting the extent to which they should repay the value of care by the value of respect,

> *My family is everything to me, especially my father and mother. I can't imagine one day rejecting their request. They will always be role models for me. Respecting them is a duty.*

These insights reflected some very traditional understandings of ethical leadership. Hence, participants spoke at length about the leaders' dominant parental behaviour under the hierarchical relationship. Although parental behaviour of the leader gives a sense of protection and care, it contributes to followers' marginalisation. Participants revealed the imbalanced relationships between leaders and followers, revealing these to have been perpetuated through the hierarchal nature of the paternalistic style. For example, Participant P3(M) affirmed this by saying,

…those in higher positions do not accept the employees who oppose their opinions. For example, when a junior employee opposes his manager, the manager considers this employee overconfident. The prevailing belief is that whoever is in a leadership position does not want to be seen as weak or his orders being broken.

Participant X6(E) added,

Many employees who said 'No' or did not comply with their leaders, their career path has ruined to some extent. In some cases, were fired! or sometimes they have been marginalised and not given value. For example, one day, I conflicted with my line manager. I objected to an unethical practice he had done. This manager broke the company's procedures by disclosing a specific tender for another company. When I objected, this leader disagreed with me and uttered inappropriate words.

Hence, similar to Arab countries, in Omani society in general, the role within the family, the father, has the final say, which in theory gives him ultimate power (Almarshd, 2021). Similar to the family structure, those in a leading position reincarnate the father's role and have ultimate power. This is evident by participants who believed that hierarchical culture is deeply rooted in the Omani culture and practised at all levels as people pay more attention to social position, seniority, age, and wealth and organisational level. Participant X2(E) emphasised this argument by saying:

As Omanis, our culture is hierarchical in the sense of exaggerating respect for those who are higher than us in age, position or social level. We deal with each other based on these principles. This culture was inculcated from childhood. For example, if your father, mother and uncle or an older member of your family is sitting with you, you have to show your respect and do not oppose their opinion. At the organisational level, we do the same as we often tend not to conflict with our leaders. We find that it is hard to say no to people higher than us in the hierarchy. I do not know, is it kind of respect or something else.

Therefore, based on the majority of participants' perceptions the hierarchical nature of Omani culture might encourage unethical behaviours because the levels between people vary based on their level of authority, power, prestige, wealth, and status. Thus, the top-down structure of paternalistic leadership reflects high power distance behaviours of the GLOBE study, which in turn give leaders greater authority (Smith et al., 2002). As a result, the superior positions enable leaders to follow their own interests as they have loyal employees who are not questioning or challenging them (Gelbrich et al., 2016; Carl, Gupta, and Javidan, 2004; Karacay et al., 2019). In addition, there is a possibility of unfair

reward allocation as it is based on other criteria such as social considerations rather than performance (Aycan, 2006). These views are particularly reflective on participants' perceptions; for example, Participant X2 (E) argued that:

> *Whenever employees follow their leaders blindly, of course, leaders might follow their own interests. The example of unethical practices is many. Based on what I believe, the reason behind that is excessive respect given to their status. Therefore, opposing and questioning the leaders' actions will enhance the ethical practices of leaders.*

Hence, it can be argued that paternalistic leadership that is based on hierarchical relationships are perceived as being induced by bureaucratic authority and formality. In fact, these top-down relations comprise "social and cultural barriers between dominant elites and subordinates" (Scott, 1990:132) and work as 'boundaries', protecting superiors' social role and outlining what is 'allowed' or 'appropriate' (Diefenbach and Sillince 2012). Therefore, the majority of participants believed that ethical leadership should work against the hierarchical nature of the relation between leaders and followers. The majority of participants emphasised the importance of interaction based on equal power distribution and conflicting with leaders whenever unethical practices are seen. In addition, the participants have clearly differentiated between respect and compliance to top-down relations. That is, respecting individuals in leading positions does not means accepting their control. As Participant X6(E) suggested:

> *Our traditions and customs demand us to respect the elderly, and this is a moral value, and I completely agree with that. However, at the same time, saying 'No' to wrong actions even it was done by someone in a higher position is a moral value as well. In a work environment, we always avoid conflict with our leaders, and the reason is that we do not want to be seen as unethical. Respect doesn't mean that I don't disagree with people in a higher position or say "No" to them. I think it is a misunderstanding of the concepts.*

Participant Q4 (T) added,

> *It is time to get rid of such a culture; hence, our society would become more homogeneous if we do so. Based on this understanding, if we interact based on roles rather than status, our ethical leadership will definitely be better positioned than what we do now.*

As such, it can be deduced that participants challenge the dominant role of paternalistic leadership. However, whenever the motive of care is to promote the employees' welfare without demanding respect in return and imposing authority, undoubtedly paternalistic leadership will be perceived as an ethical leadership style. That is, paternalistic leadership is ethical when it is built on the same level of relation, not based on a top-down structure. This is because whenever followers feel they are treated based on mutual respect; the value of respect will be in its right place. Participant P8 (T) emphasised that by saying,

> *Leaders are looking for respect from their team members. 'Respect is earned, not imposed ' so that you earn people's respect by your ethics.*

4.3.2.2 Paternalistic leadership from Social relationships lens

One of the distinctive features of paternalistic leadership is its dedication to the commitment to personal relationships (Qian and Walker, 2021). Such commitment to relationships is culturally rooted in the countries in which they are practised (Weir and Ali, 2020). As discussed, the Omani social system is built on a tribal structure and family affiliation. This, in turn, encourages people to use networks in the business as they are obliged to fulfil their group interests (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2006; Schwartz, 1992). Therefore, based on these arguments and coupled with participants' perceptions as illustrated in section 4.3.1.1 (Social relationships), it can be argued that maintaining and building relationships are an influential factor in perceiving leadership in the Omani context. For example, Participant X6 (E) stated that,

> *Building good relations is one of our customs and traditions. Therefore, I think relationships facilitate and speed up the work procedures in the company.*

The same Participant added,

> *I find myself forced to build good relationships within the organisation. For example, if a colleague in another department with whom I have a good relationship called me*

to expedite completing a task related to their department, I would implement the task quickly, so that person is not upset and will do the same whenever asked for the same. Such things make the work easier and make things done through relationships but not based on what should be done!

However, all Participants clarified that paternalistic leadership which always values personal relationships is frequently engaged in behaviours that imply favouritism. Favouritism is defined as "particularistic treatment that results in an individual attaining both intangible and tangible resources as well as more favorable working conditions than others, owing to the individual's personal ties, irrespective of his or her knowledge, abilities, and skills" (Yang, Horak and Kakabadse, 2021, p,2). Hence, Participants affirm that social relationships influence practices in the work environment, such as promotion and evaluation as employees who have a good relationship with their leaders receive special care and gain more privileges without necessarily deserving it. This is because the relationship between leaders and followers reflects group solidarity by exchanging benefits and providing all kinds of support for group members. For example, participant P3 (M) acknowledged that,

I think that sometimes social relationships have a negative effect. Those who are good at building social relationships in the workplace have a greater chance of promotion. I noticed that employees who have a good relationship with managers and go out with them to drink coffee outside working hours get more opportunities than us. For example, sometimes their evaluation is better than ours. They get advantages that we do not.

Participant X4 (M) added,

In our work, the more you have good relationships, the more your things are done... I think relationships at the workplace make managers naturally inclined to their friendship and prefer one group over another.

Participant P7(E) pointed out the impact of favouritism and nepotism,

Relationships are a form of favouritism and nepotism. Unfortunately, these practices are still practised by Omani leaders. These practices kill creativity and the spirit of competition. The employee who is not within the circle of favouritism believes that there is no room for creativity and dedication to work, as the matter is settled in favour of the people who are within the circle of favouritism. Favouritism or nepotism is one of the unethical practices that we frequently have seen practised by some leaders.

This reflects the influence of the in-group collectivism dimension in the GLOBE study. That is, in high in-group collectivistic cultures, individuals are integrated into groups and "express pride, loyalty, and interdependence in their families" (House et al., 2004, Li et al., 2020). Hence, individuals regard family ties, ethnic background, tribe, circles of close friends as valuable things and above all else (Ye, Ng, and Lian, 2015). This, in turn, influences decisions such as selection, promotion, rewards and training inside organisations, as they are often based on personal connections, social obligations and in-group status (Li et al., 2020).

Moreover, participants claimed that relationships at the workplace could be misused to gain personal benefits, whether by leaders or employees. That is, building relationships is used as a means of gain, not for good or the harmony between the team. For example, employees try to develop relations with leaders to get a benefit through them or even get promoted to a higher position. At the same time, leaders might use it to maintain relationships with the employees. This argument was affirmed by Participant P5 (T), who highlighted the misuse of relationships by saying:

> *Building relationships has become a means of gain, not for good or the harmony between the society. For example, if there is a senior leader, employees try to develop relations with him to get a benefit through him or even get promoted to a higher position. I do not generalise, but unfortunately, these things exist now.*

Hence, it can be argued, relationships are a good value ostensibly. However, at the same time is always connected to the reciprocity value that imposes individuals to repay what others have done for them to be seen as ethical (Gelbrich et al., 2016). Thus, leaders are more likely to need to look out for loyal employees' interests in their social network, even at the expense of rules or codes of conduct, to gain their trust and respect (Chandler and Graham, 2010). Therefore, based on these arguments and coupled with participants' perceptions, it can be argued that relationships are an influential factor in organisational decision-making and are practised at all levels, whether at the organisational level or social level. This study shows that using networks or what is known in the local term "wasta", which is defined as the ability to use social networks to get things (Hutchings and Weir, 2006), is an unethical

leadership approach.   Based on the evidence of participant's responses, for example, Participant P7(E) emphasised that "Wasta" is not an ethical practice. by saying:

> *When you do Wasta for someone who is incompetent just because you know that person. Yes, the social system forces you to help this person and stand with him, and if you do not help him, the social system may consider you as uncooperative. However, this matter is wrong and unethical because there may be people who are more efficient and better than this person, and therefore if you help this person, you will be unfair to other people.*

The reason behind their view is that the participants believe there are negative outcomes of Wasta on the organisational, societal and individual levels according to their experience.   Participant P8(T) emphasised these negatives by saying:

> *It is no secret that some selections are done based on relationships (Wasta), so what are the implications of such actions on our organisations today? In fact, the person who was appointed through an intermediary is often not qualified to hold this position, or he is not qualified as a leader. So how the situation will become? You can imagine how this person can lead?! How do you expect this person to deal with people under his command? From my long experience, I can tell you the consequences. Definitely, many ethical problems will arise, such as administrative corruption. Unfortunately, we know the consequences, and we still practice it. Administrative corruption exists a lot, and the reason is due to these random selections based on Wasta.*

These viewpoints are consistent with other studies which highlighted the negative side of Wasta and viewed it as a corrupted or unjust act (Mohamed and Mohamad, 2011). It increases inequality and leads to a lack of productivity (Loewe et al., 2008). It also restricts the advantages to in-groups' beneficiaries and excludes others (Sidani and Thornberry, 2013). However, although management scholars have long debated the role of relationships and their influence in management or leadership practices (Weir and Ali, 2020), existing studies still fail to determine which kind of use of relationships can be judged as ethical.

As such, it can be argued that   the use of networks is consistent with the concept of "Shafaa" from the Islamic perspective, which means good intercession. The concept of "Shafaa", although similar to the concept of "Wasta" in terms of the benefits they bring to their members, has a key difference in that it is not causing harm or taking away the rights of others (Algarni,2018). The difference lies in the idea

that every use of networks that harms someone or the public interests or breaches the justice system is a bad intercession because it is an injustice and breaks the principle of justice and equality among citizens. Therefore, based on this understanding, participants expressed their rejection of using relationships or Wasta at the workplace. Participant P5 (T) illustrated this argument by saying:

> *When we are talking about the unethical side of social relationships, I mean when you mediate to one of your relatives or friends ... and give him something not deserve it, or you know that thing might harm someone else who is more deserving. In this case, of course, this is unethical behaviour. So you should not give him the right of others. We have to know that It is not a relationship of interests, but a relationship of affection and solidarity, so it is very important to distinguish between the two.*

Hence, it can be deduced that paternalistic leadership can lead to nepotism under the common use of Wasta. The word Wasta carries negative connotations in itself and is sometimes used as a synonym for corruption since participants generally speak about it in negative terms and think largely of its corrupt side effects. However, this does not mean that personal relationships are unethical in themselves but needs additional ethical attention from Omani leaders when being used at a workplace. Certainly, the use of social relationships is ethical when are used in an appropriate way. This means the use of personal relationships can refer to help, support, or the act of doing something for the benefit of somebody in need, therefore it is considered a positive (ethical) act. Alternatively, it can also refer to unjustified partiality and unfair preferential treatment.

4.3.2.3 Paternalistic leadership from excessive tolerance culture lens

Paternalistic leadership is a benevolent style, as paternalistic leaders prefer to show tolerance and kindness (Jiang,2021; Wang et al., 2021). This is supported by socio-cultural values norms which encourage people to be tolerant with each other. As discussed in section 4.3.1.3 (Excessive tolerance culture), the value of tolerance is one of the main values in Omani society. Participant Q7 (E) proudly affirmed that,

> *Omani society has a distinct feature over other societies. It is known for its kindness, tolerance and non-interference in the affairs of others.*

This tolerance culture then reflects participants' perception regarding flexibility in compliance with regulations and rules. All Participants argue that ethical leadership demands flexibility in compliance with regulations and rules and believe the relationship between leaders and employees is not one of compliance (this will be discussed in detail in section 5.6.5 A value-oriented). This is supported by benevolent paternalism behaviours, which focus on "tender" practices and behaviours (Wu and Xu, 2012). Participant Q5 (E) argued that,

> *Excessive tolerance and indulgence are widely practised in our society, and this may be wrong.*

However, although tolerance behaviour puts paternalistic leadership in a benevolent position, this study argued that the excessive tolerance culture might negatively impact the workplace. For example, Participants stated that Omani leaders do not face their employees with their mistakes. Participant Q3 (T) affirmed this by saying,

> *Unfortunately, some leaders prefer to praise their employees even if they make mistakes. They do not confront their employees with their mistakes. I think this is a common habit in our society! Indeed, it is a leader's ethical responsibility to alert the employees directly whenever they do mistakes.*

Hence, they argued such practice have a negative impact on organisations as it makes leaders avoid taking disciplinary actions and not confront their employees with their mistakes. Therefore, this might lead to a lack of discipline and indifference to laws and regulations as the employees know that their leader will not take action against them. Participant P6(M) highlighted this negative impact,

> *Excessive tolerance sometimes leads to a lack of fear of punishment and indifference to laws and regulations as the employee knows that his leader will not take action against him.*

Based on participants' responses, the reasons behind this practice can be broken down into three main reasons. Firstly, Omani society is linked by a solid relationship that extends even within the work environment, forcing leaders to maintain friendly relations with their employees. For example,

participant Q 11 (E) believed Omani leaders are low assertive because they want to maintain good relationships with their employees,

> *We, as Omanis, are tolerant a lot. For example, you do not want to punish an employee even though the right decision is to punish this employee. Tolerance is a good ethical value, but with limits. For example, when a person commits a deliberate mistake, tolerance, in this case, is an unethical value. What always happens is that due to the relationship you have with this employee, you prefer to be tolerant so as not to lose the relationship with this employee.*

Secondly, ensuring employees loyalties and enhancing their popularity. Participant Q2 (M) argued that: 'I think leaders sometimes are more tolerant because they want to gain their employees' loyalty'. Thirdly, maintaining their good reputation within organisation and society. Participant X1 (T) affirmed this argument by saying,

> *Unfortunately, many leaders are not assertive whenever assertiveness is required. I think the reason is they believe if they take a firm stand with someone, that person may denigrate their reputation. So, they say, why don't we avoid these things. Of course, this is not right thinking, and it means that the leader avoids dealing with a problematic situation and avoids taking responsibility.*

However, this study revealed that ethical leadership should work against excessive low assertiveness culture as it might lead to unethical practices. This does not mean that the logical level of tolerance is seen as unethical; indeed, participants are highly proud of the tolerance value and other distinctive features of Omani culture. What they meant here is being assertive whenever the situation demands such assertiveness. Participant Q 11 (E) affirmed this argument by saying: 'Tolerance is a good ethical value, but with limits'. These views are consistent with Islamic ethical leadership behaviours, which aim to suppress the desires of personal interests and urge leaders to be assertive whenever the situation demands such assertiveness (Othman, Hamzah, and Ridzuan, 2018).

Overall, the value of explaining how paternalism is associated with the current understanding of ethics in the Omani context reveals that there are contradictory results and under-explored issues at the crux of ethical behaviours of leaders. Although participants might recognise that a paternalistic framework

in leadership is pivotal to maintaining an ethical relationship with followers from a local perspective, they revealed how destructive and dominant figures are concealed behind these moral protective behaviours. The paternalistic view typically constructs ideologies of certain behaviours that could be unethical at the workplace and are practised as ethical behaviours. As such, it can be argued that Paternalistic leadership is paradoxical with lots of contradictory traits. For example, it might be a dictatorship style (Adžić and Almutairi, 2021), and at the same time, it might be a lenient and benevolent style (Aycan et al., 2013). It is a relational style of leadership (Jackson, 2016), but it is a hidden form of partiality (Colella et al., 2005). However, it is an ethical leadership style whenever it is benevolent, free of partiality, and built on the same level of relation, not based on a top-down structure.

4.4 Second theme: From Islamic values to Value-based leadership

This theme covers participants' responses regarding the influence of Omani Islamic values on ethical leadership. The participants have openly articulated and shared their perceptions about Islam and its influence on ethical leadership. These perceptions can be divided into three subthemes; namely, Islamic values (Self-awareness and self-control), and value-based leadership, as illustrated in figure 4.3.

Figure 4. 3 From Islamic values to value-based leadership
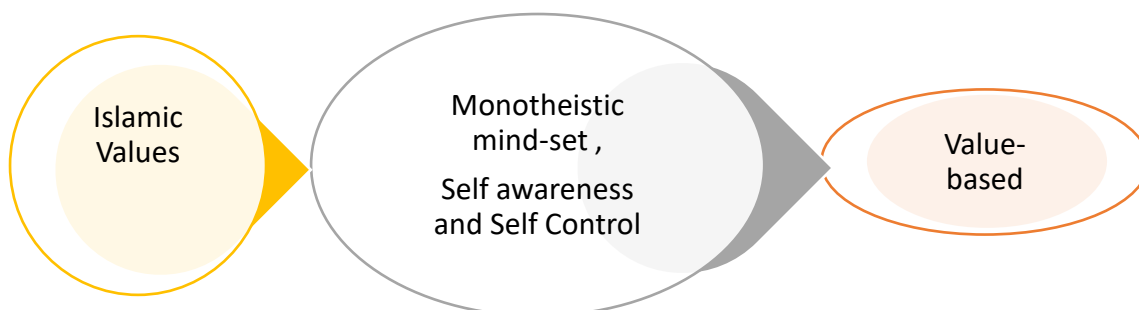
4.4.1 Islamic values

Islam is the state religion in Oman, and most Omani people are Muslims (Omanuona ,2022). Religion is part of the social reality of current Omani societies and influences daily social life, organisational settings, and leadership behaviour (Gümüsay,2019). Ali (2011) argues that religion is most likely a dominant component in Eastern societies, particularly Muslim societies. This is what the current study has emphasised, as the finding revealed a robust link between Islamic religious values and beliefs and the perceptions of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. This has been identified by participants' perceptions. Based on participants' perceptions, the Islamic religion is considered the first source of ethical leadership in Omani society. This is because, in Muslim societies such as Oman, families are keen to raise up their children on Islamic norms and values from an early stage. Hence, people's ethics are shaped since their childhood by this ethical source. For example, Participant Q7(E) claimed that,

> *We were taught Islamic values from a young age. Islam has made clear to us what is wrong and what is right.*

Participant X1(T) added,

> *The Islamic religion urges us to have good morals. Praise be to God, Omanis since childhood, go to mosques and learn good morals from mosques as well as their parents.*

This significance of considering a religious perspective on leadership stems from the fact that Eastern societies, particularly in Muslim societies perceive religion as an "ultimate concern" and positioned it above other values' systems, logics, or orders of worth (Ali, 2011; Gümüsay,2019, Tillich, 1957). Hence, as ethics represent the spirit of the Islamic religion, people highly value them and consider them as worship (Draz, 2008). Participant P4 (E) pointed out that,

Islam encourages morals, ethical practices and values and one's will be rewarded for doing so.

This explains why Omani leaders and employees (research participants) believed that ethics is the "essence of leadership". Participants in this study highlighted the importance of ethics in leadership and some of them described it as an "essence of leadership". They articulated that ethics helps leaders distinguish between right and wrong, choose appropriate actions, and guide them in dealing with their followers. For example, Participant Q8 (T) stated that,

Ethics is the essence of leadership, and it is an integral part of it as it guides the leader to do the right thing.

Participant X2(E) believed that ethics distinguish between the leader and position holder or a manager:

Ethics is the foundation upon which leadership is built. A leader without ethics is not a leader but may only be a position holder or a manager.

Similarly, participant P3(M) added,

Ethics is the mainstay that distinguishes one leader from another.

Participant X5(T) went further and claimed that it is difficult for businesses to stay a long-term without ethics:

Ethics is a way of life, as it is essential to all people, not just leaders. Without morals, nations would not survive, and there are many examples of that throughout history. The same thing can be compared to organisations!

Therefore, it can be argued, their interest in ethical leadership springs from religious motives as they perceive ethical leadership as an act of worship. As such it can be argued that Islamic religious values and beliefs are an integral part of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. The influence of Islamic norms and value were deeply obvious on participants' perceptions as they believe that Islamic values encourage people to be ethical and that by acting upon Islamic values and teachings, people will be ethical in their behaviours and actions. The participants' responses revealed this kind of implicit impact as a number of participants quoted verses from the Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Prophet

Mohammad to support their perceptions of ethical leadership. Indeed, there is a broad consensus among Muslim scholars and experts that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the primary sources of Islamic ethical leadership (Ali,2011; Almoharby and Neal 2013; Gümüsay,2019; Yulianti al., 2020). Islamic values cannot be ignored when examining ethical leadership.

4.4.1.1 Monotheistic mind-set (Self-awareness and self-control)

It seems reasonable to begin by discussing the participants' perceptions with regard to their understanding of the concept of ethical leadership from their basic beliefs, assumptions and motives. According to the participants, ethical leadership appears to be intertwined with individuals' religious beliefs and views that direct their approach to and understanding of ethical leadership. Participants perceive religious morality as proceeding from an individual awareness of Allah's – God's - presence and it is rooted in the belief in God, which emphasises that the oneness of God and all deeds are done for God sake and a desire for paradise in the hereafter. This was highlighted in participants' responses as they expressed a clear link between practising ethical leadership and God-pleasing and fearing. Participants clearly articulated that their conscience plays a fundamental role in preventing unethical behaviours. Based on their perceptions, conscience is linked to God-pleasing and fearing. Participant X3 (M) argued that,

> *Wrong is wrong. I cannot do it; my conscience and self-censorship do not allow me to do this. Fear of God also prevents me from doing this, as I work to please God, not my leader. A person who takes the principle of fear of God before anyone else will not do unethical behaviours or actions.*

Similarly, Participant X2 (E) asserted:

> *Leadership is trust; you are not working only to satisfy your manager. God is watching you and even yourself as well. Of course, these actions and behaviours do not represent me. My conscience and fear of God prevent me from doing this. Indeed, through my experience, I found that whenever you follow your conscience, your credibility rises in the eyes of others.*

Participant P5 (T) added:

> *There are clear unethical behaviours or actions, for example, theft. In this case, no I will not do that. My conscience and God's monitoring prevent me from accepting such an act.*

Participant P3 (M) provide a good example affirming these claims by saying,

> *For example, my manager asked me to give one of the contractors a copy of the report, and this report is classified. I refused to do so. Yes, a slight disagreement occurred between him and me, but I told him that these are the company's procedures. In this case, my conscience was present and I put God first. Indeed, your personality defines how others treat you. If your conscience is always present, the others will know that and will not ask you to do unethical actions or behaviours again.*

Interestingly, the opinions given are very similar to the images presented in the Islamic ethical leadership literature, as discussed in chapter two (e.g. Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999, Gümüsay,2019). Hence, it can be argued that participants view ethical leadership as an ethical responsibility. That is, the ethical responsibility is a kind of worship and is linked to God-pleasing by considering leadership as a 'trust' to be performed or preserved, and that leaders will be held responsible or accountable for failure to perform it (Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999, Gümüsay,2019; Shuhari et al., 2020). This monotheistic mind-set forms the core of the moral character and identity of an ethical leader and represents a psychological contract in which the leader has an inner faith and consciousness of his/her duty toward God and is aware that he/ she is accountable to God for their actions. This is a connected and additional relationship between God and leader outside formal organisational boundaries, and it works as a guide to the leader's actions and activities. I.e., the leader below God's authority and the God above the leader, informed of all his/her intents and actions. Therefore, participants understand this ethical responsibility which entails any leader at any position, whatever the size of responsibility, is accountable to God and the people who are under his/her command. Therefore, understanding leadership as an ethical responsibility exemplifies a psychological commitment in which the leaders does their best to work duly. Participant X2 (E) summarised this by saying:

> *Leadership is a trust; therefore, it is necessary to fulfil this trust to the fullest. Every leader is accountable to God for his actions. Every leader has to hold himself responsible and judge his deeds through his conscience.*

Participant X6 (E) added,

If the leader minds God in his actions, his behaviour will be moral.

Therefore, it can be argued that this psychological commitment (ethical responsibility) works as a self-regulator to increase one's self-awareness capacity. Similar to ethical leadership theories from the Western perspective and particularly authentic leadership theory, self-awareness and self-regulation are the underlying factors of ethical personality and behaviour. Based on their main assumption, self-awareness has the leading role in making self-regulation achievable because failure to monitor one's acts can undermine one's self-control, thereby resulting in unethical consequences (Baumeister and Alghamdi, 2015). Hence, when self-awareness is high, this contributes to the self-control needed to enact behaviours compatible with one's ethical values and avoid engaging in behaviours driven by selfish or short-term motives (Gino et al., 2011). However, although ethical leadership theories highly emphasise self-awareness and self-regulation from the Western perspective, this does not this address whether self-awareness and self-regulation is sufficient. It seems that self-awareness and self-regulation are restricted to codes of conduct within professional context (ethical leadership) or are given extreme freedom to self-reference (authentic and transformational leadership). Moreover, they ignore the external context in which individuals comes from. Therefore, providing alternative ways to explain self-awareness and self-control, from spiritual and religious practices lens can contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of ethical leadership, as this study highlighted (Martineau et al., 2017). Whereas Western models depend on self-reference, the Omani Islamic model depends on God's observance.

As the data shows, participants perceive their inner beliefs prevent unethical behaviours. Thus their ethical responsibility and inner faith help them to understand and control themselves, including their core values, beliefs, self-identities, abilities, emotions, and attitudes. That is because their ethical responsibility represented in their internal beliefs demands them to do so. For example, when the

researcher asked all participants the following question: "What would you do if you realized you would have to do something you considered unethical to get a vital transaction/ process done?" All answers were simply "No", and the reason behind that is conscience and God pleasing. This might be a theoretical view as this is not always what happened in practice, but at the same time, it might be a logical view if we take into consideration that in the Omani society, moral self-awareness for people is shaped since childhood as families are expected to raise up their children on Islamic values which are subsequently is developed with age by performing Islamic practices such as performing five times prayers a day. For example, participant P5(T) asserted this,

> *As Muslim people, we brought up with Islamic values. Islam is a source of our knowledge of good, evil and good morals. The Islamic teachings explains to you what morals are and what are values...What you should do and should not. Goodness is the result of good moral behaviours. Therefore, the acts of worship that we do, such as prayer and fasting, are intended to promote good behaviours.*

Participant Q5(E) highlighted that Islam shapes one's values and helps him/her to be ethical,

> *Raising a child on the values and principles of the Islamic religion is considered as a safety valve for a person and helps him to be ethical in the work environment.*

Participant Q1 (E) pointed out that one of the reasons for unethical practices of ethical leadership in an individual could be traced back to the lack of religious faith,

> *From my perspective, unethical practices are not performed by a religious person, as religious texts forbid him from doing that, and he will be punished for doing that in the Hereafter. So I think it might be that these people who are doing significant unethical practices such as embezzlement are not religiously observant. Yes, they are Muslims, but without application of Islamic values.*

Participant Q1 (E) added,

> *Islamic teachings prevent us from doing unethical practices. For example, stealing is forbidden in Islam; therefore, a person knows that, if he does so, the God Almighty will punish him.*

From an Islamic perspective, people are instructed to fulfil self- ethical obligation and Self-purification from all unethical forms by committing to Islamic values and teachings. All Islamic rituals such as prayers and fasting are fundamentally aimed to establish a good individual by keeping one's desires

and instincts in check (Mir, 2010). For example, when Muslims perform prayers five times a day it is perceived that they will stay connected to God. By doing so, a Muslim believes they develop inner consciousness of his/her duty toward God and is aware of this ethical accountability (Draz, 2008). This moral self-awareness is shaped since their childhood as families are normally expected to raise up their children on Islamic norms and values which are subsequently developed with age, as participants' data have shown. This means that participants suggest that ethical identity and behaviours proceed from the capacity of individuals to be aware of Allah, God, which in turn guide them to be aware of themselves and self-regulate. Participant X1 (T) affirmed that by saying:

> *When you get a high position such as CEO or general manager, many advantages come with this position. Therefore, it is easy for a leader to take advantage of them for his personal interests. The temptations are many! However, the role of ethics and faith emerges here against self-interest. In fact, ethics enhance the self-discipline for the leader.*

As such, it can be deduced that self-awareness and self-regulation go beyond simply professional context to include individuals' basic beliefs, assumptions and motives. It seems that Omani leaders and followers consider religious beliefs to work as a key factor to contribute to the self-control needed to enact behaviours compatible with one's ethical values and avoid engaging in unethical behaviours. Hence, this tendency of thinking presents ethical leadership as a value-based approach; i.e. ethical leaders and followers are theoretically believed to be capable of determining appropriate ethical standards—this is what the next section will highlight.

4.4.3 Value-based leadership

The data collected for this study affirms that a localised understanding of ethical leadership is a value-based approach, i.e. ethical leaders are capable of determining appropriate ethical standards. The value-based approach is known as the integrity-oriented or self-regulatory approach (Tanner et al., 2019), given that this approach emphasises individual awareness, personal ethical responsibilities, self-governance and self-control (Brewer et al., 2015). Hence, the participants perceived that the Islamic

values inform value-based leadership as participants have clearly articulated that whenever social norms clash with their inner values and beliefs, they choose their inner values, which in turn are guided by Islamic values. The participants perceived ethical leaders as genuine leaders driven by internal values and their moral virtue compass. In this sense, the importance of religious nature, as discussed in the previous section, to establish an ethical basis for individuals principally focused on identifying the main personal values. Thus, participants highlighted a set of Islamic values that they perceived as fundamental values of ethical leadership, including honesty, fairness, kindness, trustworthiness, compassion, tolerance, humility, empathy, and altruism. They believed that these values are a significant driver for the leader to engage in ethical leadership. When leaders embody such values, they not only gain the respect of followers or gain support and cooperation from them but also gain their trust and trustworthiness.

Thereby, these inner values shape leader integrity. Participants in this study emphasised integrity as the main value that an ethical leader must have. Participants here place more emphasis on the notion of "Walk the talk", i.e., the importance of consistency between one's espoused values and behaviour or actions (Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2009). For example, participant P2 (T) said, *"The ethical leader should ensure his words match his deeds. In other words, 'walk the talk'".* Participant Q10 (M) outlined this argument by quoting verses of the Quran *"O you who believe! Why do you say what you do not do? It is most hateful to God that you say what you do not do"* (Qur'an, 28:2). Hence, leaders' internal moral integrity and values guide their decisions and conduct, even if their decisions do not meet with prevailing norms of the group organisation or social context (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Tapara, 2011). In other words, their actions and behaviours express their internal moral standards and values rather than external expectations. From an Islamic perspective, people are instructed to act according to Islamic values and uphold these values even if others do the opposite. The Qur'an and Sunnah are full of directions that urge people to commit to their inner values as the accountability are individualistic, which means that Islam holds every individual to be responsible and accountable for

his or her actions (Musah, 2011). Therefore, Islam warns against submitting to prevailing practices if they contradict Islamic values and principles. Thus, participants have clearly articulated that whenever social norms clash with their inner values and beliefs, they choose their inner values, which in turn are guided by Islamic norms. This is supported by their perceptions about rejection to act following negative cultural pressure. As has been highlighted in sections (4.3.2.1, 4.3.2.2, 4.3.2.3) participants highlighted the negative impact of social norms (traditions and customs). For example, participants in section 4.3.2.2 (Paternalistic leadership from Social relationships lens) pointed out that social relationships influence practices in the workplace, such as promotion and evaluation, and employees who have a good relationship with their leaders receive special care and gain more privileges without necessarily deserving it. Furthermore, it illustrated that the hierarchical nature of Omani culture and excessive tolerance culture might encourage unethical behaviours (see sections 4.3.2.1 Paternalistic leadership from hierarchical nature of Omani culture lens and 4.3.2.3 Paternalistic leadership from excessive tolerance culture lens).

Therefore, all participants expressed their rejection of such practices as they contrast with their inner values, which are basically guided by Islamic norms. For example, Participant P3 (M) expressed her feeling towards the negatives of cultural influence and her rejection of such power:

> *I am social by nature, but my inner values force me to refuse to comply with social relationships at the expense of work. Sometimes I am accused of not being helpful as I am not responding to personal requests. Some social relations with some colleagues were affected because I refused to fulfil their requests. However, I feel I am right and happy with myself.*

Participant X7 (E) added:

> As a result of social relationships, I always find myself embarrassed for not *fulfilling requests that are not within the scope of the procedures. But in the* end, the business is a business, and I will not do something against my values.

In addition, the common practices that are influenced by social norms, such as wasta and nepotism, have been seen as unethical and rejected by participants because they conflict with

Islamic values. For example, Participant Q7 (E) affirmed that, *"Personally, I do not like the so-called 'Wasta', and I do not accept to do this even for the people closest to me".*

Similarly, Participant P5 (T) said,

> *When you mediate to one of your relatives or friends ... and give him something not deserve it, or you know that thing might harm someone else who is more deserving. In this case, of course, this is unethical behaviour.*

Participant X5 (T) summarized the above perceptions by saying:

> *In the work environment, the leader should separate his social commitments and job commitments. A job is a sacred responsibility. The leader must abide by it; otherwise, he will lose the trust of his team. Some practices that are motivated by fulfilling social relations, such as favouritism, may be seen as unethical practices. Therefore, the leader must determine the red lines and commit to his inner values, so that the interest of work is not compromised at the expense of fulfilling social relations.*

Hence it can be argued that when Islamic and social values compete, the dominant values are those that are congruent with Islamic values and norms. For example, when the value of help from a social norms lens competes with the value of justice from an Islamic lens, the ethical stance based on participants' perception is to favour the value of justice, i.e. when a leader helps someone who has a relationship with him and provides a favour for him and at the same time does not help others who do not have this kind of relationship, the ethical choice is to condemn that practice. This is because providing a favour for someone at the expense of others conflicts with the value of justice, which is basically guided by Islamic values. As such, it can be argued that the commitment to inner values is restricted to those congruent with Islamic values as a determinant criterion. That is, it is not an absolute unrestricted choice that depends on leader's desire; rather, it is restricted and guided by Islamic values and norms to determine priorities when Islamic and social values compete.

It can be argued that the values should be "normatively appropriate", as Brown et al.'s (2005) conceptualisation of ethical leadership suggested. However, Brown et al.'s (2005) conceptualisation did not provide "a minimum set of normative reference points that help

evaluate the ethicality of conduct and its underlying values" (Eisenbeiss, 2012, p.793), making the ethical leadership vague construct (Downe et al., 2016). Hence, in contrast to that, the findings of this study clearly emphasised Islamic values as normative reference points. Participant Q8 (T) confirmed this argument by saying:

> *There is no legislator to encourage morals like the Islamic religion. Therefore, if one's follows Islamic values, undoubtedly, he will lead ethically.*

In the same vein, these findings contrast the notion of authentic leadership as well, which emphasis self-referential (Walumbwaet al., 2008). Self-referential and commitment to internal values without normative reference points as a determinants criterion is not enough to provide adequate explanations of the complexity of ethical personality as it is a highly optimistic view that ignores the imperfections of the human psyche and given it the naïve idealism (Hill, Stephens, and Pamplin 2005; Sinclair 2010; Ford and Harding 2011; Shaw 2010; Wart, 2014). For example, an authentic leader may be an authentic reckless as he/she embraces damaging personal views (Ladkin and Spiller, 2013) or break organisational values (Gill et al., 2018). Furthermore, self-referential encourages inclination toward the egoistic and enhance narcissistically or other dysfunctional personalities (Hill, Stephens, and Pamplin 2005; Sinclair 2010; Ford and Harding 2011; Shaw 2010). In fact, history is full of examples of authentic transformational leaders in their dedicated pursuit of virtuous objectives caused much suffering and misery as well as using coercive power to lead people to evil ends (Price, 2003).

Similar to transformational leadership, although transformational leadership is concerned with uplifting followers' values and moving them to new directions, leader espoused values and beliefs are not explicitly specified. More precisely, the relation between leaders' actual values and beliefs and their actual behaviour is missing as no conditions determine this relation (Yukl and Gardner, 2020). Therefore, it is not strange that transformational leaders can be abusive and manipulative to serve their end (Stephens et al., 1995; White and Wooten, 1986). Relative to servant leadership, the values and procedures that enable leaders to be in a position to serve

others effectively are not fully explicated in the approach (Wart,2014). Therefore, the current findings confirm that the commitment to inner values in the Omani oil sector is not represented by pure self but is an informed commitment guided by positive Islamic teachings and values where duties and values are sufficiently specified and arranged.

4.5 Research objective (3)

Critically assess the relationship between the Omani national cultural normative ethical foundations.

4.5.1 Third theme: Tension between Islamic values and Social norms

This theme covers participants' responses regarding the relationship between Islamic values and Social norms, as both of them are identified as culturally normative ethical foundations of ethical leadership. The participants have openly articulated and shared their perceptions about the relationship between them and their implications for ethical leadership. Below is a discussion of this theme that emerged in the data in response to this.

As discussed in the literature review (see section 2.10.2 Islamic ethical leadership), the tension between Islamic values and social norms lies in the tension of the ethical obligation towards people within the in-group and people who are out of the group. While social norms focus on people who are within an in-group, Islam extends the scope to include both of them. As discussed in the literature review, the

concept of in-group and out-group, which persisted to date, resulted from tribal conflicts, social systems and desert context (Olson, 2020). Hence, it has appeared as a form of the distinction between those who are in-group and those who are excluded from the group (Ali 1990; Greaves, 2012; Olson, 2020). Those who are in-group are aware that they should favour people within their groups and exclude others who are out of the group (Salzman, 2008; Mansfield, 213). This, in turn, creates a kind of collectivist thinking toward what is considered the in-group (family, tribe and friends) and individualist thinking towards the out-group (others) (Langthaler et al., 2022).

This is an important issue to understand the paradoxical nature of Paternalistic leadership. As data shows in section 4.3 (Paternalistic leadership), participants endorsed the contradictory traits of Paternalistic leadership and recognised it as an ethical and unethical leadership style at the same time. For example, it might be a dictatorship style and at the same time, it might be a lenient and benevolent style. It is a benevolent relational style of leadership, but it is a hidden form of partiality. Therefore, based on the above arguments it could be argued that this paradoxical nature of Paternalistic is historically rooted in its bias toward in-group members at the expense of out-group members. That is, a benevolent side of a paternalistic relationship may only exist between in-group members, whereas out-group members may be treated in a completely different way. This, in turn, reflects the root of the tension between Islamic values and social norms. The evidence of the bias of Paternalistic leadership toward in-group members can be deduced from participant X4 (M) when acknowledged that,

> *In our work, the more you have good relationships, the more your things are done. Employees who develop good relationships with their leaders by hanging out outside working hours, having coffee or playing football are more likely to have a chance to get special treatment. Normally, managers consider their relations when they make any decisions. It a human nature! I think relationships at the workplace make managers naturally inclined to their friendship and prefer one group over another.*

Similarly, Participant P3 (M) claimed that,

> *I think that sometimes social relationships have a negative effect. Those who are good at building social relationships in the workplace have a greater chance of promotion. I noticed that employees who have a good relationship with managers and go out with*

them to drink coffee outside working hours get more opportunities than us. For example, sometimes their evaluation is better than ours. They get advantages that we do not.

From these quotations, it is clear that the relationship between the leader and followers within his preferred group is not hierarchical but a friendship relationship. Hence, it can be argued that Paternalistic leadership, when applied to in-group members (preferred members), is a benevolent style because the relation between leaders and followers within the in-group is not built on a hierarchical relationship; rather, it is a participative relationship where each one help, support and care for the other. Participant QM (12) affirmed this,

If someone faces a problem, directly will call his leader to take him out of this issue. I am talking here if that one has a good relationship with his leader. The leader, in this case, will do his best to protect him. They protect each other!

This indicates that Paternalistic leadership is open to interpretation due to its paradoxical nature as the out-group members might be treated in a different way. In this regard, participants are aware of this kind of bias as there is another ethical determinant represented in Islamic values, which ultimately influences their perceptions. Hence, their perceptions were a reflection of their rejection of the negatives associated with Paternalistic leadership, as discussed previously. However, they acknowledged that some leaders still practised it under the obligation to social norms. For example, participant P7(E) argued:

In our society, there are contradictions. The leader may be forced to do something immoral despite knowing that this is immoral and maybe religiously forbidden in order to please others. Since he takes care of his reputation, he does not want others to say that he is unhelpful.

participant Q8(T) added:

The contradiction in the value system in our culture is clearly seen on a daily basis through practices and behaviours.

Participant X7(E) provided a good example of such contradictions by saying:

> *When a leader assists someone who has a relationship with him and provides a favour for him and at the same time does not assist others who do not have this kind of relationship, the value of justice, in this case, is completely missing!*

However, participant X1(T) provided a good explanation of how the normalisation of doing particular behaviour give that a sense of legitimacy even though it contradicts one's internal values,

> *I don't know if we have a contradiction in our values or not. I think people used to do these things and see the majority of people do the same. Therefore, a person looks at these things, such as Wasta, as legal and does not do anything unethical. He thinks it is his right as a manager to hire his friend or his cousin, for example. He believes this is a common practice, and all people do it. Day by day, he does not see that it is something unethical, but rather he believes that it is a legitimate thing, even though he knows such practices might be unethical. As Moslem, we know Islam urges morality more than prayer and fasting. I think we do not understand the basic meaning of moral value.*

Therefore, Participant (M) went further and affirmed that,

> *Theoretically, yes, some leaders talk about ethics, but their actions show the opposite. For example, they say that the Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, is our role model, but their practices contradict the principles and values that the Messenger urged.*

This suggests that although Islam is rooted in Omani culture and people's way of life, not all Omanis deeds and behaviours are a complete reflection of its ideal message and, in some cases, contravene real Islamic teachings. This claim is consistent with previous studies (e.g. Ali,2011; Ali, 2009; Almoharby and Neal 2013; Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Jamil,2015; Marbun, 2013; Noor, 1999; Obeidat et al., 2012; Ogunsola 2011; Rehman and Askari, 2010; Yulianti al., 2020) that argued, Islamic values are not included in practice in the Arabic world and always repeated in theory, although the Islamic leadership view is the ideal complete view.

However, such claims are not an accurate reflection of what is always seen in practice as the evidence from participants' responses revealed that they are not practising the negatives associated with paternalistic leadership as discussed previously as discussed in section 4.4.3 (Value-based leadership). For example, Participant Q10 (M) asserted that,

> *I always receive requests from people I know and friends, but for me, the moral virtue is at the forefront.*

Participant X7 (E) stated similarly:

> *As a result of social relationships, I always find myself embarrassed for not fulfilling requests that are not within the scope of the procedures. But in the end, the business is a business, and I will not do something against my values.*

As such, it can be deduced that, based on participants' perceptions, the value-based approach is considered regulator and complementary to paternalistic leadership. This means participants believe that internal moral integrity and values, which are basically guided by Islamic norms, guide their decisions and actions, even if their decisions do not meet with external expectations such as prevailing norms or social context associated with paternalistic leadership. This significant finding emerged from the direct statements of the research participants. Therefore, this finding suggests that, in general, ethical leadership from the Omani perspective is not mainly encompassing solely one influential source of domestic culture and ignore the other, i.e. social norms and Islamic values; rather, it is a comprehensive view that combines the two influential sources (social norms and Islamic values) in which Islamic values complement and guide social norms. Unlike leadership research to date which mainly focuses on one source and largely ignored the distinction between Islamic values and social norms and their influence in conceptualising leadership in the Arab World, the current study combines them both and clearly differentiates between them. The majority of current literature has addressed the cultural influence of Arabic culture either by focusing on Islamic values as a conceptualising of Islamic leadership (e.g. Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Egel and Fry, 2016; Faris and Parry, 2011; Shuhari et al., 2020), or further focusing on generic analyses of culture without highlighting the distinction such as GLOBE study and other "meta-" research that concerns with the influence of culture in the Middle East(e.g. Alsuood and Youde, 2018; Common, 2011; Dwairy, 2019; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980; Karacay et al., 2019; Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011). Therefore, this study revealed as a result of the tension between Islamic values and social norms, some challenges might

remain to the desired ethical leadership. The hierarchical authority, an emphasis on interpersonal relations, and low observance of formal rules and regulations are obstacles identified by participants which put paternalistic leadership in awkward contradictions. Hence, the role of value-based leadership based on participants' perceptions is to manage and complement such contradictions. This does not mean then that paternalistic leadership is not an ethical style of leadership. It is ethical as it is benevolent in its nature, but when the out-group members are treated the same as in-group members. Thereby, ethical leadership goes beyond individualism to include the whole group of organising.

4.6 Research objective (4)

Critically assess the concept of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective and identify the main characteristics and behaviours of ethical leadership in the Omani context by reflecting on how the Omani ethical leaders are perceived.

This objective is achieved by theme that emerged in the data in response to this. This theme is Hybrid ethical leadership.

4.6.1 Fourth theme Hybrid ethical leadership

This theme reflects participants' perceptions of ethical leadership and the characteristics and behaviours which make leaders ethical. The theme provides a hybrid ethical leadership style in the Omani context as a result of the influence of Islamic values and social norms. This hybrid style includes five main characteristics, namely: Humanistic, Servant, Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation), Role modelling and value-oriented, as shown in Figure 4.4. The findings relating to each of the perceptions are set out below and are discussed with reference to the literature.

Figure 4. 4 Hybrid ethical leadership
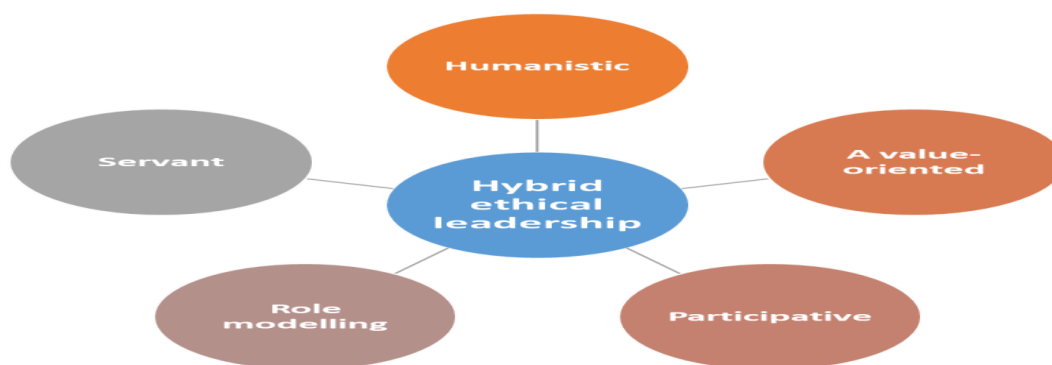
Source: The Author

4.6.1.1 Humanistic

Omani society is characterised by many distinctive ethical features such as cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others, which in turn reflect human-social dimension in the Omani socity (Al-Lamky, 2007; Alhashemi, 2017; Common, 2011; Mujtaba et al., 2010; Neal 2009; Risso, 2016). This is evident through the Omani customs and traditions that are demonstrated through daily life practices and varying social occasions (Omanona, 2021). Therefore, participants' perceptions of ethical leadership were a reflection of human-collective dimension which affirm the humane traits such as cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others. This what previous studies asserted and which stated that Omani society is ethical by nature (e.g.Al-Lamky, 2007; Alhashemi, 2017; Common, 2011; Mujtaba et al., 2010; Neal 2009; Risso, 2016). Based on these studies, the reasons behind the distinctive Omani ethical features are: Firstly, customs and traditions urge Omanis to cohesion, compassion, kindness, friendliness and tolerance. Secondly, Omanis have been exposed to other cultures by successive waves of trade which have contributed to the development of accepting others. Thirdly, the influence of Islamic thought which encourages tolerance, cohesion, compassion

and unity between people. Therefore, participants' perceptions of ethical leadership were consistent

with putting followers first and taking care of them by serving, supporting, treating them humanely

and offering them all forms of assistance. That is, followers are given the highest priority compared to

other competing relative priorities in the organisation. In this sense, followers are an end in itself, not

a means to an end (Eva et al., 2019). I.e., considering followers' needs is not to enable them to achieve

organisational goals better, but to better deal with them because they are human. Such arguments are

affirmed by participant X5 (T) by saying,

> *The ethical leader deals with the employees on the basis that they are human beings.*
> *Employees are not mechanical machines; they have feelings and emotions. Many things*
> *can affect them, for example, psychological, social and other factors. Therefore, the*
> *ethical leader should take these things into account and deal with them as a fellow*
> *human.*

Participant P2 (T) provide an example to reflect his view,

> *I remember that one of the employees was not under my direct command. He was good,*
> *reliable and you can rely on him. Over time, we noted that this employee had changed*
> *for the worse. He started to not be on time, his performance was poor, and then he*
> *repeated absences more than the specified legal period. However, we followed gradual*
> *legal procedures against him, but to no avail. So we agreed to fire him. I was the person*
> *who is responsible for signing the fir decision. The expected decision was clear for all*
> *of us: firing him. But really, it was not easy at all for me. You know, when you are in*
> *the poison of taking a decision related to the fate of a person, a lot of things should be*
> *considered. His kids, family etc. As well his record, he was an excellent employee. A lot*
> *of things came to cross my mind. So I called him into my office and told him that he had*
> *to tell me the truth and what was wrong with him; otherwise, he would be fired. When*
> *he felt safe, he finally spoke. He told me about his circumstances, it was something quite*
> *embarrassing and related to his wife. So I had to come up with another decision. And*
> *that is what I did: I sympathized with him, and I gave him the last chance. I asked my*
> *team to put him on observation for two months. He was happy and promised me to*
> *change. Ever since, he has shown his excellent performance again. If I fired him at that*
> *time, of course, his life would be devastated worse than ever.*

As such, the participants in this research understand ethical leadership from this humanistic view which

entails that ethical leader takes all accountability and responsibility to treat followers in the best way,

safeguards their dignity and secure their right to live a good life. Based on participants' perceptions,

the human side in ethical leadership is not a written policy, but it is an ethical obligation by an ethical

leader towards his/her followers. Hence, ethical leaders are expected to treat their subordinates

humanely by helping, supporting and offering them all forms of assistance. For example, it is a leader's

ethical responsibility to be humane when treating his/her employees, even with those who perform

poorly or have special circumstances. Participant P5 (T) argued that,

> *It might be there are some employees who are poor performers. In this case, it is the responsibility of the ethical leader to consider their circumstances. They may be going through personal difficulties or obstacles. Therefore, the leader should help them to overcome these circumstances and obstacles.*

Thereby, to better understand such humane motives of participants it is worth looking through the

Islamic perspective, which highly values humanity. According to the Islamic view, the human is seen

as a dignified creature should be treated in the best way and given the highest priority (Williams and

Zinkin 2010). Thus everyone has the right to live a life worthy of dignity and respect simply by virtue

of being human; regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, age or economic status (Kamali, 2002).

Therefore, leadership is responsible to safeguard peoples' dignity and secure their right to live a good

life (Anadol and Behery, 2020; Samier, 2019). Participant P7 (E) claimed that,

> *The leader deals with humans. It is difficult to enforce the rules and regulations towards him strictly. The ultimate aim of the leader is to build a lasting relationship with members of their team based on mutual respect. The foundation of this relationship is not merely built on the compliance with rules!*

Therefore, humanistic traits such as ihsan (goodness, kindness), rahmah (compassion), Adl (justice),

forgiveness and care represent the soft power of the ethical leadership from Omani lens. Asking the

participants respondents for their opinions regarding ethical leadership revealed a sense of the extent

to which they highly appreciate humanistic traits, which in turn showed ethical leadership as

humanistic leadership style. A majority of participants appeared to be highly proud of their humanistic

style of leadership, offering examples of how such traits play a significant role in fuelling ethical

climate within an organisation. For example, Participant X4 (M) described his humanistic leadership

style as an ethical style:

During my work, I noticed a change in the performance of one of my employees. By the way, this employee usually performed well. So straight away, I communicated with this employee, and I discovered that she has a health issue. Ethically, I felt that it was my duty to support her not only within the company's official framework of codes, but I took extra steps. I tried to support her morally and raise her spirit. Sometimes I covered her absence. I stood by her side for the whole period, which was nearly a year. Then, she recovered. However, this behaviour is not written in the company policy, but it is my ethical obligation as a leader. I feel that I have been ethical. I have added one more loyal employee to the company's roll. There is a deficiency in any company's policy regarding human issues, and here is the role of the ethical leader to make up for this deficiency.

The indicator of this leader's humanistic view appears in the way he aligned his leadership with his own individualistic value and moved it to collectivist scope to give a sense of cohesion and compassion between the group for which he was responsible. According to his statement, "all employees in his section were highly grateful for such action". This, in turn, reflects the sense of cohesion between the group's members and their leader. Although such action might increase their workload, they did not feel upset with such action; instead, they were supportive. Most of the participants provided similar examples, reflecting a robust tendency towards a humanistic orientation in leadership. For example, Participant X3(M) describe himself as an ethical leader when he helped an employee develop himself:

When I was appointed as manager, I reviewed the annual performance appraisals of my employees. I found one of my employees' appraisal was not good. Here, I decided to discuss this issue with him to figure out how he could improve. We agreed to set a practical plan for him to develop and rehabilitate for an entire year. Through follow-up and encouragement during the year, this employee was able to improve his level. In the following year, he achieved the best score among his colleagues. I am proud of myself for doing that. This was an ethical thing for me as I turned one of my employees from a weak level to an outstanding level.

Hence, it can be argued ethical leadership is a humanistic style of leadership in which leaders and followers play a significant role in fuelling ethical climate within an organisation by exemplifying cohesion and compassion between them. This is supported by the nature of Omani society, which emphasises cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others (Al-Lamky, 2007; Alhashemi, 2017; Common, 2011; Mujtaba et al., 2010; Neal 2009; Risso, 2016). Therefore, ethical leadership here goes beyond ethical leaders or followers; instead, it reflects cohesion and compassion between leaders and followers as both form one body.

This is consistent with Islamic teaching which states: "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, n.d.).

These findings support humanistic leadership, which has recently received scholars' attention, especially after COVID-19 Pandemic (e.g. Lehr and Vaughan, 2021; Pounder, 2021). According to the GLOBE study, humane orientation refers to the degree to which a culture encourages and rewards individuals for being altruistic, benevolent, kind, sympathetic, love, caring and generous (Kabasakal and Bodur, 2004; Li et al., 2020; Schlösser et al., 2013). Therefore, cultures with high humane orientation encourage a sense of responsibility to others and a strong concern for their needs rather than achievement, authority and power. Leaders in such societies are most likely to show supportive leadership behaviours. Hence, leaders are expected to consider followers' needs and feelings, provide care when needed, act in a friendly and accepting manner, show sympathy and compassion and provide mentoring and coaching when appropriate (Yulk, 2020). Therefore, as Oman culture is categorised as high humane orientation, Omani ethical leaders are expected to show humane solid orientation values such as cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others. This is what the current study affirmed and added that ethical leadership with its humanistic view goes beyond ethical leaders; instead, it reflects cohesion and compassion between leaders and followers as both form one body.

5.6.1.2 Servant

One of the most humanistic views of leadership repeated by participants was serving followers. That is, putting followers first. The data of this research found that ethical leaders are 'servants' to their followers. This means that ethical leaders serve, help, and care about their followers' needs, development, well-being and welfare. Hence, the ethical leader should always be on the employees' side, take their followers' weaknesses and individual differences into consideration, and develop them

to be leaders in the future. For example, Participant X5(T) explained why the leader should serve his followers by saying,

> *The ethical leader believes that the employees are the most important thing in the company. Therefore, he/she should serve them and give their needs the highest priority. Yes, the leader can force his/her employees to do the tasks, but in the long term, he/she will lose that team.*

Participant Q1(E) highlighted that ethical leaders should balance between the needs of company and employees:

> *The balance between the needs of the company and the needs of the employees is something significant. What always happens is that some leaders tend to achieve the organisation's goals at the expense of the team. They do not care about the team and do not take into account their needs, well-being and welfare.*

Therefore, Participant X2 (E) described his manager as an ethical leader because he always tries to create a better future for them: "My manager always keeps us informed about the company's opportunities and encourages us to compete to seize these opportunities". On the other hand, Participant X5(T) went further and considered the leader who does not develop his/ her followers an unethical leader:

> *A leader who does not seek to develop his/her employees is not considered an ethical leader. In short, he is selfish! Leadership is leading others for the better, developing a good future for them, and moving them from one point to another. Each leader in his position should engage with his/her team to advance their ability.*

In addition, Participants highlighted the importance of developing followers. Participants believe that developing followers is considered as one of their significant needs. Thus, the ethical leader cares about their followers' development. An example of this is mentioned by X1(T):

> *I think one of the main missions of the leader is the development of his employees. I have to develop my employees, and I have to make sure they are developed.*

Participants P6(M), Q8(T), Q2(M) also believe that an ethical leader should be always on the side of the employees. For example, participant Q2(M) stated: *"An ethical leader is always on the side of the employees, whether in terms of development or qualification"*.

Participant P3(M) added that ethical leaders take their followers' weaknesses and individual differences into consideration: *"Ethical leaders respect the weaknesses of the employees and individual differences. They find themselves ethically responsible for supporting their followers to tackle their weaknesses so they can develop themselves"*.

Participants Q1(E), Q3(T), Q6(M), X7(E) went further and believe that the ethical leader is the one who creates other leaders. For instance, Participants Q3 (T) said:

> *I am a leader now, but who will be a leader after five or ten years? So an ethical leader should put in his mind that he is responsible for creating other leaders... By helping his employees improve their qualifications, motivating them, and allowing them to shine.*

These insights can be illustrated by understanding the Islamic social view, which suggests that in order to attain organisational goals, individuals' physiological needs must be satisfied (Abdalla and Homoud, 2001). As such, the main impulse of ethical leadership is not the influence and practising power or even generating profits, but it is the innate desire to serve others by placing the good and welfare for all people, emphasising their development and empowerment, and sharing influence with them. Furthermore, ethical leadership prioritise the growth of those being served by focusing on empowering and developing them and creating value for the community instead of just focusing on the functionalist outcomes of organisational performance and profit. Hence, the ethical leader in Oman is the leader who "considers all employees' personal welfare" (Neal et al., 2005, p. 489). Indeed, viewpoints of serving followers are deeply rooted in Arab culture as in early Arab culture, the primary duties of a tribal 'Sheikh' were how to serve the tribe (Sarayrah 2004; Weir, 2007). The Islamic Arabic Thinker Ibn' Arabi wrote about this view, rather presciently, over 800 years ago. In his discussion, he illustrated that followers bestow the leader the power and the right to lead; therefore, leaders should realise followers' needs and act as the servant of their followers (Kriger and Seng, 2005). Participant X2(E) affirmed that by saying,

> *In the past, we had a so-called 'Sheikh' who is a person who cares about the matters of his tribe and serves all people under his command. At that time, the prevailing*

concept was 'The master of a people is the one who serves them'. And this is one of our well-known proverbs.

However, the finding of this study presents a qualitative difference in terms of why serving followers is exemplified and where it stands relative to other competing priorities in the organisation. This study revealed that followers are given the highest priority compared to other competing relative priorities in the organisation. That is because they are human. As such, the humanistic view requires that ethical leader takes all accountability and responsibility to treat followers in the best way, safeguards their dignity and secure their right to live a good life. I.e. serving others springs from a humanistic and/or religious motive, both of which are absent in the ethical leadership theories from Western perspective. That is, the motive of concern of followers is not for the sake of achieving organisational goals as transformational leadership suggested or for following the authenticity call as authentic leadership emphasised, or complying with rules as ethical leadership outlined, or for making a positive difference for others as servant leadership claimed, but because it is an inner conviction to serve driven by a sense of higher calling of humanity.

5.6.1.3 Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation)

All participants clearly identified that ethical leaders should consult with their followers before taking any decision. Based on participants' perception, mutual consultation is an ethical obligation from the leaders towards their followers as the leader is not entitled to take any decision without consulting his followers, especially decisions that have a long-term impact. For example, Participant X8(T) argued that,

> *Leadership is not leader-centric; rather, it is participative. Leaders should consult with their followers before taking any decision. At the same time, followers should provide good opinions and views to achieve mutual goals.*

Similarly, Participant P9(M) stated that:

> *Leadership now is not about the leaders only; it involves followers. Both of them interact with each other on a daily basis to move their organisation to a better place. It is teamwork, and each one has a responsibility.*

Participant X9(M)added,

> *It is a leader's ethical responsibility to consult with his followers. Diversity of opinions makes decisions more credible.*

Thus, it can be argued that the ethical decision from an Omani perspective is the decision based on mutual consultation with followers to reach a consensus and participative decision. From the basic understanding of the meaning of Shura, which is "participation in the form of consultation in discussions leading to the making of decisions" (Almoharby, 2010, p.6), decision making requires leaders to consult with followers mutually and critically examine all viewpoints and evidence to reach a consensus and participative decision (Brooks and Agus Mutohar, 2018). Based on this belief, any leader cannot decide arbitrarily and independently on a matter that concerns others without consultation with followers (Qureshi, 2016).

The Shuratic approach (Mutual Consultation) springs from an Islamic perspective in leadership. It is clearly stated in the Quran that Prophet Muhammad has been instructed to consult with his followers "...and take counsel with them in the affairs (of public concern) (Qur'an, 2:159). Furthermore, it is deeply rooted in Arab culture, especially Gulf countries, as people used to gather in Majles (A public place of tribes gathering) and consult with each other regarding matters of common interest (Almoharby, 2010). Hence, participants perceived consultation works as the basis of ethical leadership, as it fosters participation, a spirit of collectivism, shared responsibility. As such, it can be deduced; Shura behaviour reflects that ethical leadership is a relational phenomenon. That is, followers are participating in the leadership process. Thus, leaders are not labelled as ethical leaders unless they consult and share responsibility with their followers. However, although the importance that is given to followers is represented in employing shuratic principle as this study revealed, the conceptualisation of ethical leadership theories from a Western perspective, still the main focus of ethical leadership theories resides in the leader (Sidani and Rowe, 2018).

4.6.1.4 Role modelling

The majority of participants described ethical leadership by saying: "Ethical leadership is being a role modelling." This idea was presented as something of a default definition reflecting the concept of ethical leadership in its simplistic way. Participants used the Arabic terminology 'Qudwah' which means an ideal or a model to be followed. It seems this terminology is commonly used in the Omani context when referring to ethical leadership. Based on participants'' perceptions, ethical leaders show exemplary behaviour in their daily behaviours and interactions. They model ethical leadership with the way they behave and the way they treat followers. They argued that the role model reflects leaders' ability to act as role models for their followers by showing a high level of standards of moral and ethical conduct, making them deeply respected and trusted by followers. For example, Participant X5(T) affirmed this by saying:

> *Leading by example can be achieved through a leader's ethical obligation, whether on a personal level or when interacting with others, and his ability to reflect these ethics on his behaviour and actions so that the employees see him as a role model.*

Participant Q8(T) added:

> *Being a role model is not easy. Your behaviours, actions and speech should reflect your ethics.*

Similarly, Participant P3 (M) stated that:

> *Role model is a reflection of leaders' ethical character and behaviours.*

In addition, participants highlighted role model as a crucial factor of ethical leadership and considered the Prophet Muhammad as the best role model of ethical leadership. For example, Participant P7(E) states that:

> *Our example as Muslims is the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, and he is an example to follow.*

Similarly, participant X5(T) mentioned:

> *For us as Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace, is the best example as a leader.*

These quotes reflect that participants are affected by the Islamic perspective of ethical leadership, which emphasises the importance of role models in ethical leadership. In Islamic leadership, the Prophet Mohammed represents the ideal leader who most closely embodies the role model of leadership (Jamil, 2015). Therefore, the Qur'anic guidance always urges people to follow his example and summarised the importance of the role model in the following line: "Surely there was an excellent example for you in the Messenger of Allah, for all those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much" (Qur'an, 33:22). That is, leaders should act as a role models for their followers by following Mohammed as a role model (El Syam, 2017). Hence, by doing so, they can show a high level of standards of moral and ethical conduct, making them deeply respected and trusted by followers. The 4th Kalifah Imam' Ali ibn Abi Talib asserted the importance of a role model: "with respect to their morals, people resemble their rulers more than they resemble their fathers" (Ali ibn Abi Talib as cited in Haron et al., 2014, P. 202).

However, the idea of being a role model appears to be closely associated with the ethical leadership literature from a Western perspective. Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) assert that role modelling ethical behaviour is the fundamental pillar in being an ethical leader, as it directly reflects leaders' credibility and their attempt to enhance ethics among employees. Hence, Individuals who had been influenced by an ethical role model or having had an ethical mentor in work are positively related to ethical leadership (Treviño et al.'s, 2000; Treviño and Agle, 2005; Brown and Treviño, 2006b). Role model or exemplary leadership means that leaders influence their followers' ethical behaviours by showing sufficiently visible and salient behaviours (Brown and Trevin˜o, 2006). This term follows the social learning perspective, based on observational learning, imitation, and identification (Brown et al., 2005). This means leaders ostensibly enforce and shape the ethical climate by framing codes of conduct designed to positively influence their followers. This then allows them to reproduce ethical behaviours relatively efficiently and effectively throughout their organisations (Mayer et al., 2010). Hence, followers can learn what conduct is expected via role modelling and act in ways that are influenced by the ethical

behaviours they observe in their leaders (Shakeel et al., 2020). Participant X4(M) asserted this by saying:

> *People learn more by what they see than what they hear. The leader has to be a role model; then, he can easily influence his employees. If the leader acts as a role model, there is no need to spend much time in establishing ethical climate inside the organisation. Indeed, the team automatically will imitate the leader.*

To date, these mainstream studies appear to have relied on simplifying the notion of being 'the influencer model', and implies that followers should 'imitate' and learn ethical standards through observing their leaders. These 'influencers models,' or what the literature proposes as principled leaders, who employ appropriate conduct, use rewards and punishment to reinforce their opinions about ethical behaviour to their followers (Tervino et al., 2003). However, basically, the tactic that leaders pursue to exercise influence and change others' behaviours to attain specific purposes is also perceived as toxic rather than ethical. Leaders are perceived as toxic when they employ influencing ways that harm their employees, even when they are confident that they behave appropriately or do the right things (Lipman-Blumen, 2005). This in turn expose role modelling as a problematic approach to some extent.

4.6.1.5 A value-oriented

The value-oriented perspective refers to that "ethical leaders have a coherent set of moral values—a sort of "navigation system"— serving as their steering compass for their personal conduct and management choices" (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014, p 553). Hence, this internal value compass determines the standards against ethical or unethical leadership. On the other hand, the compliance-oriented perspective refers to "leaders' adherence to law or other externally determined formal rules and regulations, i.e., professional policies or organizational codes of conduct" (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014, p 553). In this case, what has considered right and wrong in a particular situation depends on the standards and codes found outside of oneself and presents rather tangible and clear directives for leaders. The majority of participants appeared to be highly critical of a compliance

approach offering an alternative way of influencing through a value-oriented perspective rather than the compliance-oriented perspective. Participants perceived that judging on what is considered right and wrong in a particular situation is measured inside the leader's oneself as his/her internal value compass presents relatively clear directives to the standards against ethical or unethical leadership. That is, ethical leaders have a coherent set of ethical values that serve as a steering compass for their ethical choices in leadership that may transcend a purely compliance-oriented perspective.

All Participants argue that ethical leadership demands flexibility in compliance with regulations and rules and believe the relationship between leaders and employees is not one of compliance. Based on their perceptions, When the leader formally deals with his employees and applies the rules strictly, his relationship with his employees will be affected. Therefore, the participants' view is that the first thing an ethical leader must do when faced an ethical dilemma is to analyse the situation. All participants believe that minor mistakes or unethical behaviours at the individual level can be ignored or tolerated. However, rules must be followed when behaviours and practices harm the firm's reputation. In all cases, the ethical leader should have a reformist view that goes beyond compliance principles. For example, participant P7 (E) stated:

> *Sometimes it is possible to tolerate the perpetrator, especially concerning things that are not explicit and bear different interpretations. On the other hand, there are some mistakes in which the rules must be followed, such as accepting bribes.*

The same participant added,

> *Yes, following the rules is important, but here is an important point that the rules have been made by humans and are subject to modification. The leader deals with humans. It is difficult to enforce the rules and regulations towards him strictly. The ultimate aim of the leader is to build a lasting relationship with members of their team based on mutual respect. The foundation of this relationship is not merely built on the compliance with rules!*

Similarly, participant P2 (T) argued that,

> *The leader should judge the situation. Each case demands a specific kind of dealing. Here, the leader's ethical role emerges*

Participants also believe that it is the job of an ethical leader to correct unethical behaviours. For example, participant P2 (T) argued: "The leaders' task is not to jump to punishment rather they should correct unethical behaviours and convert these behaviours into its right path".

Participant P5 (T) stated that ethical leader should have reformist view:

> *If an employee commits unethical behaviour, he must first realize that his action is unethical because he may be unaware that his behaviour is unethical. This is the reformist view; in a sense, reforming is the first step.*

Participant X3 (M) argued that *"Some unethical issues can be solved merely by sitting with the person"*. While, participant X6 (E) asserted that following the rules should be the last step when dealing with unethical behaviours: *"Taking legal procedures is a later stage after advice, correction and finding that the employee is deliberately repeating the same mistake"*.

These perceptions contrast ethical leadership theory based on Brown et al.'s Model (2005). Brown and colleagues (2005) built their ethical leadership concept on the compliance model to ensure that organisational expectations are enforced (Brown and Treviño 2006). However, Wart (2014) criticised the focus on compliance and called it the "low road" approach as the sole focus depends on excessive prohibition and excessive negativism. The compliance approach provides a "technical" solution to deal with the complexity of the problem of wrong-doing (Rohr, 1989), neglecting higher stages of morality which focus on principle-centred behaviour and are not only founded on avoidance behaviour (Kohlberg 1981). Ethical leadership demands being an active leader, doing things right and doing the right thing, not merely doing passive pursuits or escalating things to the formal regulation point (Thoms, 2008). This views are particularly reflective of the participants'' perception, highlighting that it is the job of an ethical leader to correct unethical behaviours. For example, participant P2 (T) argued: *"The leaders' task is not to jump to punishment rather they should correct unethical behaviours and convert these behaviours into its right path"*.

Therefore, it can be argued, the findings of this research open up a broader horizon on the nature of ethical leadership and support previous studies that have emphasized that ethical leadership is more than complying with rules (e.g. Downe et al., 2016; Eisenbeiss and Brodbeck, 2014; Wart, 2014). Ethical leadership is not merely following formal procedural regulation; instead, it goes beyond that to include the leader's ethical interventions in setting an ethical tone demonstrated in interpersonal dealings. Making judgments about behaviours and wrong-doing is an integral part of the day-to-day tasks of the ethical leader (Lawton and Macaulay, 2014). Participant P5(T) affirmed this argument by saying:

> *Workplaces are often complex, and therefore, one cannot judge every issue by looking through rules and regulations. As leaders, many of the issues we deal with are not all clear and an indisputable fact. Most of our judgments bear an appreciative aspect. So the determinant here is ethics. Regulations can solve not all issues in work environments. In fact, even when rules are being implemented, the leader's discretionary aspect, which is determined by leader ethics, is inevitable.*

Hence, codes and rules cannot be viewed in isolation, they must be implemented in complex situations. The ethical ambiguity that is the nature of administrative life demands a perception that leaders act informally, proactively intervening and exercising practical judgment, rather than just escalating wrong-doing to the point that formal regulation might come into play (Downe et al., 2016). Following a hands-off approach under the pretext of deference to formal procedures is not enough to deal with the ambiguity of the complexities of administrative situations (Chandler, 1994; Downe et al., 2016). Rules and codes always have loopholes, even if they look perfect. The compliance approach can hardly address unethical behaviours sustainably. This is what Participant P1 (E) emphasis by saying:

> *Following rules strictly against employees does not always work and may create a backlash. Yes, that person may temporarily commit himself under the influence of punishment, but his behaviour may still not change.*

As such, it can be deduced that Participants perceived that judging on what is considered right and wrong in a particular situation is measured inside the leader's oneself as his/her internal value compass

presents relatively clear directives to the standards against ethical or unethical leadership. That is, ethical leaders have a coherent set of ethical values that serve as a steering compass for their ethical choices in leadership that may transcend a purely compliance-oriented perspective. This does not mean a compliance-oriented perspective should not be applied; rather, a value-oriented perspective should be considered as complementary rather than as an exclusive element. Following a purely compliance-oriented perspective may sometimes not be the most ethical choice. Hence, ethical leaders allow themselves to transcend rules and regulations for the sake of the ideal of humanity. For example, when mistakes happen, the ethical leader's task is not to jump to punishment but rather to address unethical behaviours. When a follower faces special circumstances, the ethical leader's task is to consider his/her circumstances, even bypassing rules and regulations if the situation demand (These views has been discussed previously in this chapter). Hence, Participant Q8(T) argued that:

> *Ethical leadership is an endless journey of commitment to values and principles and the ability to reflect these values in behaviours. So we can judge that a leader can be a role model.*

Overall, hybrid ethical leadership that includes Islamic values and social norms is humanistic, servant, participative, and value-oriented. It starts from individualistic moral virtue and moves to the relational level to foster participation, a spirit of collectivism, shared responsibility, and harmonious group relationships to achieve the idea of the one ethical body.

4.7 Summary

In summary, the previous sections presented the analysis and discussion of the data. The study proposed that Omanis are embracing two normative foundations that underlie their ethical behaviours: Islamic values and social norms. Both of them are determined as the source of ethical behaviours by participants. Participants believed that social norms inform the practice of ethical leadership. Based on their perceptions, they believed customs and traditions play a major role in shaping the ethical behaviours of Omanis and encouraging ethical behaviours. On the other hand, participants generally

believed that the Islamic religion is a source of their ethics. Islam encourages people to be ethical and that by acting upon Islamic values and teachings, people will be ethical in their behaviours and actions. Therefore, from the social norms lens, the current study presented the Paternalistic leadership approach as a reflective leadership style of participants' perceptions as it reflects the Omani tribal structure and family affiliation, which emphasises maintaining personal relationships and endorsing the hierarchical nature, and excessive low assertiveness. However, this study challenged the Paternalistic leadership approach as the participants revealed how destructive and dominant figures are concealed behind these moral protective behaviours. Based on participants' perceptions, the paternalistic view typically constructs ideologies of certain behaviours that could be unethical at the workplace and are practised as ethical behaviours such as personal relationships, the hierarchical nature, and excessive tolerance culture.

On the other hand, based on participants' perceptions, from an Islamic value lens, the current study revealed that a localised understanding of ethical leadership is a value-based approach, i.e. ethical leaders are capable of determining appropriate ethical standards. This is illustrated through participants' rejection of negatives associated with paternalistic leadership as they contrast with their inner values, which are basically guided by Islamic norms. The common practices that are influenced by social norms, such as wasta and nepotism, have been seen as unethical and rejected by participants. That is, when values compete, the winner is the values that are congruent with Islamic values and norms. As such, it can be argued that the value-based approach is restricted to those congruent with Islamic values as a determinant criterion. That is, it is not an absolute unrestricted choice that depends on leader's desire; rather, it is restricted and guided by Islamic values and norms to determine priorities when values compete.

The findings also highlighted that Islamic values and social norms work together in tension; however, from an idealistic view, Islamic values complement and guide social norms. That is, the value-based approach is considered regulator and complementary to paternalistic leadership. Finally, the findings

present a hybrid ethical leadership style in the Omani context as a result of the influence of Islamic values and social norms. This hybrid style includes five main characteristics, namely: Humanistic, Servant, Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation), Role modelling and value-oriented.

4.8 Attaining the overarching research aim

This study aims to develop a conceptual theoretical model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. Drawing from the critical analysis of the findings discussed in this chapter, the researcher has developed a theoretical conceptual model of ethical leadership from an Omani perspective to reflect all discussions that have been highlighted in this chapter. Figure 4.5 shows this conceptual model and will be illustrated below.

Figure 4. 5 Theoretical conceptual model of the Omani ethical leadership from an Omni perspective
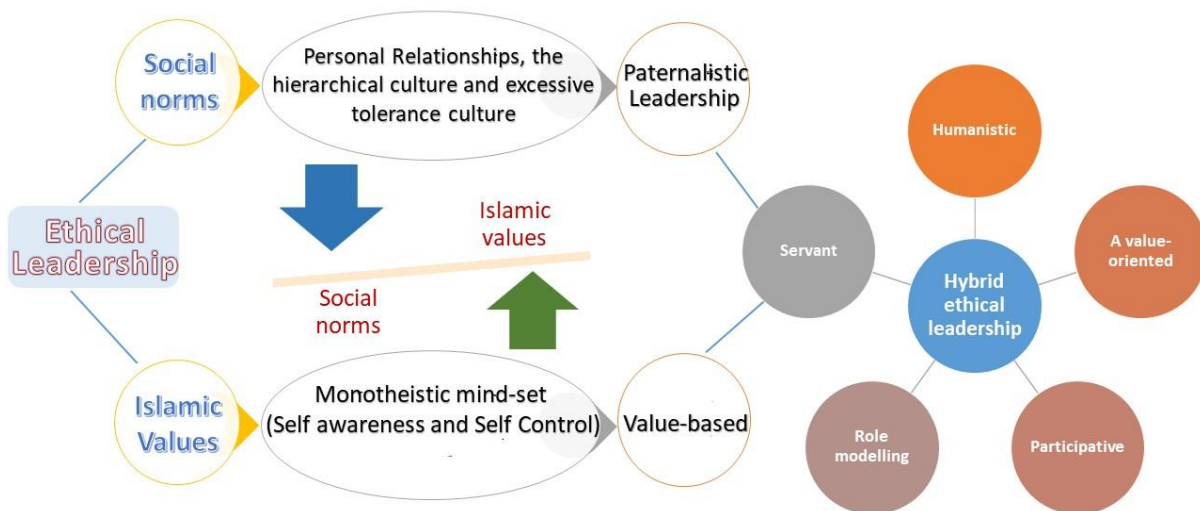

Source: The Author

4.8.1 Overview

This model underlines the value of exploring ethical leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon from within the context of cultural and social conventions in Oman, emphasising the significance of understanding the culture and context of ethical leadership and acknowledging its standing within its environment. That is, understanding of ethical leadership is incomplete without accounting for its social and local context because that local ethical assumptions, societal values, traditions and religious beliefs influence interpretations of ethical leadership. The evidence of such a claim is highly supported by participants' views when highlighting two key sources affecting ethical leadership in Omani society. The first is Islamic values and the second is Social norms. Both of these sources clearly reflects the interconnection and overlap between ethical leadership and the Omani sociocultural context.

However, these two forces (i.e. Islamic values and social norms) work together in tension. As a result of this tension, a hybrid ethical leadership style has emerged. This hybrid style includes five main characteristics, namely: Humanistic, Servant, Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation), Role modelling and value-oriented. All of them together constitute ethical leadership from an Omani perspective.

### 4.8.2 From social norms to Paternalistic Leadership
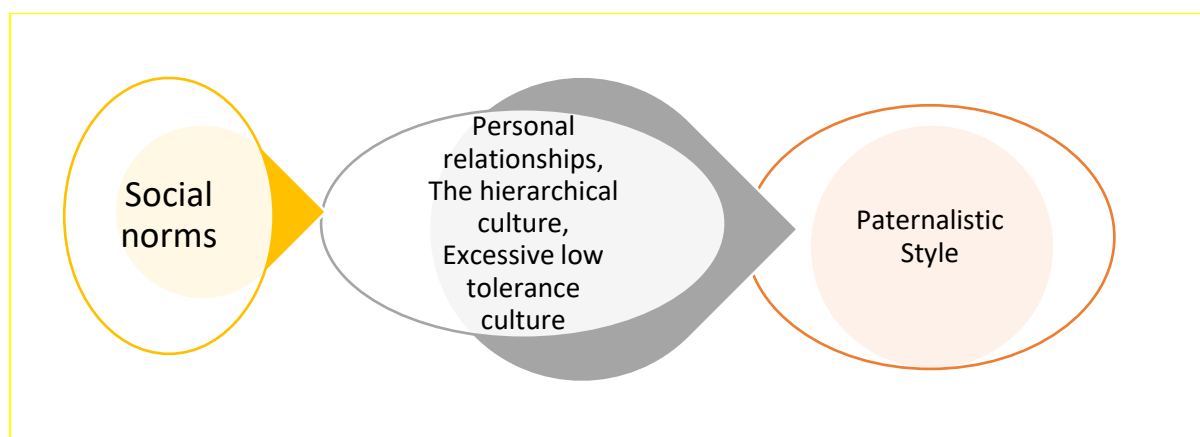
From the social norms lens, the current study presented the Paternalistic leadership approach as a reflective leadership style of participants' perceptions as it reflects the Omani tribal structure and family affiliation, which emphasise maintaining personal relationships and endorsing the hierarchical nature, and excessive low assertiveness. Based on this leadership style, leaders reproduce the father role and paternalistic behaviour towards followers within the organisations, as it is associated with their knowledge of what leadership roles involve and demand. Hence it can be argued that Paternalistic leadership is traditional and socially accepted way of engaging in ethical leadership as it is built on authentic Omani values such as caring for others, respect, care and tolerance. The Omani national culture provides a fertile environment for such an approach to be ethically accepted. From these points of view, participants believed being in a leadership position requires that the leader imitate the way fathers behave in the family setting, cultivate a feeling of a family while also wielding the authority to create a collective culture that resembles the family structure. This includes extending good relations with followers, helping and taking care of them, and being flexible with them. These behaviours are considered as requirements for reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers to facilitate ethical leadership. Hence, leaders are expected to care about followers and show good traits, such as helpings others, respect, care, and tolerance. Participants affirm these behaviours and consider them as the main behaviours of ethical leadership.

However, the value of explaining how paternalism is associated with the current understanding of ethics in the Omani context reveals that there are contradictory results and under-explored issues at the crux of ethical behaviours of leaders. Although participants might recognise that a paternalistic framework in leadership is pivotal to maintaining an ethical relationship with followers, they revealed how destructive and dominant figures are concealed behind these moral protective behaviours. The paternalistic view typically constructs ideologies of certain behaviours that could be unethical at the workplace and are practised as ethical behaviours. As such, this study challenges the negative roles associated with paternalistic leadership, and proposed that Paternalistic leadership is paradoxical with

lots of contradictory traits. For example, it might be a dictatorship style, and at the same time, it might be a lenient and benevolent style. It is a relational style of leadership, but it is a hidden form of partiality.

4.8.3 From Islamic Values to Value-based Leadership

Islamic Values → Monotheistic mind-set, Self awareness and Self Control → Value-based
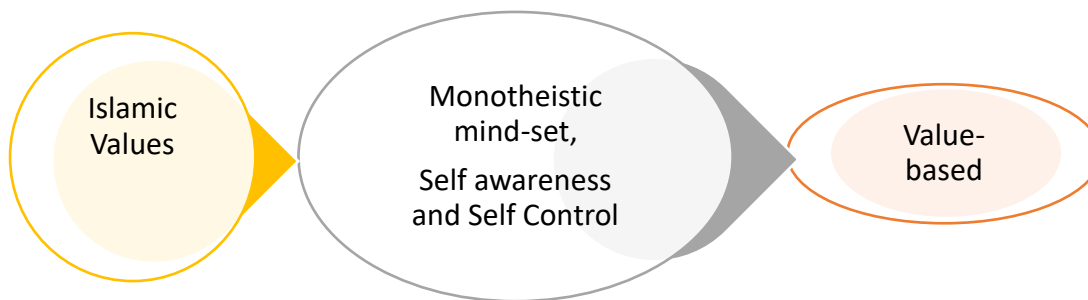
From the lens of Islamic values, the current study presented the Value-based leadership approach as a reflective leadership style of participants' perceptions. These findings suggest that, in general, a localised understanding of ethical leadership is a value-based approach, given that this approach emphasises individual awareness, personal ethical responsibilities, self-governance and self-control. That is, ethical leaders are capable of determining appropriate ethical standards through reference to Islam. This tendency of thinking shows that ethical leadership is intertwined with individuals' religious beliefs and views that direct their approach to and understanding of ethical leadership. Their ethical responsibility and inner faith help them to understand and control themselves, including their core values, beliefs, self-identities, abilities, emotions, and attitudes. That is, because their ethical responsibility represented in their internal beliefs demands them to do so. This moral self-awareness is shaped since their childhood as families are normally expected to raise up their children on Islamic norms and values, which are subsequently developed with age. As such, the present study suggests that leaders' ethical identity and behaviours proceed from their capacity to be aware of Allah, God, which in turn guides them to be aware of themselves and self-regulate. Therefore, the current study

proposed that self-awareness and self-regulation go beyond simply professional context to include individuals' basic beliefs, assumptions and motives.

4.8.4 Tension between Islamic values and social norms
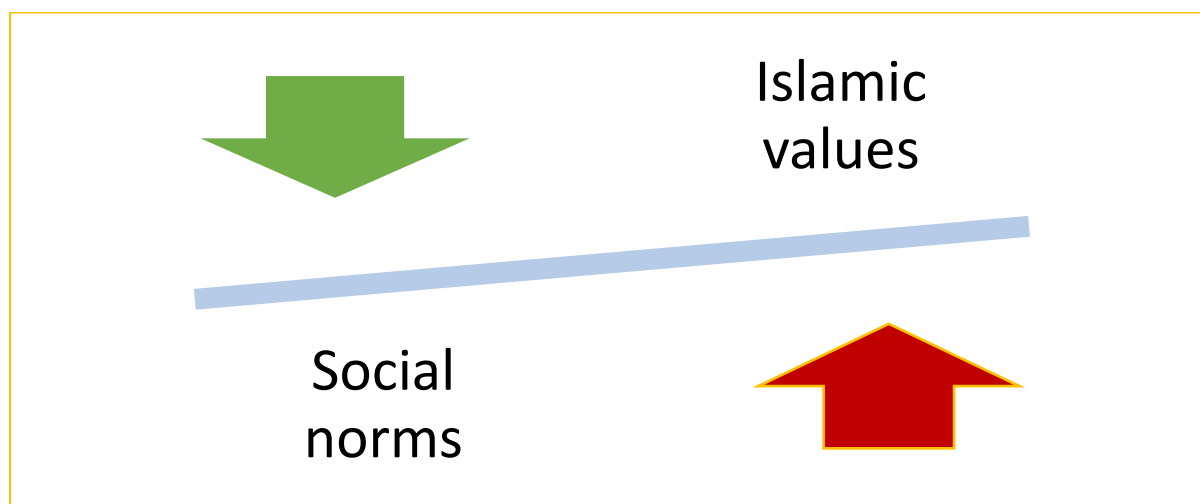
The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that there is tension between Islamic values and social norms. Hence, the evidence from this study suggests that this kind of tension lies in the tension in ethical obligation towards people within the in-group or people who are out of the group. While social norms focus on people who are within an in-group, Islam extends the scope to include both of them. An implication of this result has contributed significantly to understanding the paradoxical nature of Paternalistic leadership. A reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be that the paradoxical nature of Paternalistic is historically rooted in its bias toward in-group members at the expense of out-group members. That is, a benevolent side of a paternalistic relationship may only exist between in-group members, whereas out-group members may be treated in a completely different way. This, in turn, reflects the root of the tension between Islamic values and social norms. As such, the findings of this study highlighted this kind of bias and contradictions in the nature of Paternalistic leadership, indicating another ethical determinant represented in Islamic values, which ultimately addressed these contradictions. As the research data shows, the presented perceptions were a reflection of the rejection of the negatives associated with Paternalistic leadership. These results, therefore, led

to conclude that when Islamic and social values compete, the dominant values are those that are congruent with Islamic values and norms. For example, when the value of help from a social norms lens competes with the value of justice from an Islamic lens, the ethical stance is to favour the value of justice, i.e. when a leader helps someone who has a relationship with him and provides a favour for him and at the same time does not help others who do not have this kind of relationship, the ethical choice is to condemn that practice. This is because providing a favour for someone at the expense of others conflicts with the value of justice, which is basically guided by Islamic values. As such, the findings suggest that the commitment to inner values is restricted to those congruent with Islamic values as a determinant criterion. That is, it is not an absolute unrestricted choice that depends on the leader's desire; rather, it is restricted and guided by Islamic values and norms to determine priorities when Islamic and social values compete.

However, this study proposed that as a result of the tension between Islamic values and social norms, some challenges might remain to the desired ethical leadership. The hierarchical authority, an emphasis on interpersonal relations, and low observance of formal rules and regulations are obstacles that put paternalistic leadership in awkward contradictions. Hence, the role of value-based leadership, which is grounded in Islam, is to manage and complement such contradictions. As such, this study presents a value-based approach as a regulator and complementary to paternalistic leadership. This means that internal moral integrity and values, which are basically guided by Islamic norms, should guide leaders' decisions and actions, even if their decisions do not meet with external expectations such as prevailing norms or the social context associated with paternalistic leadership. This significant finding emerged from the direct statements of the research participants.

4.8.5 Hybrid ethical leadership

The findings proposed a hybrid ethical leadership style in the Omani context as a result of the influence of Islamic values and social norms. This hybrid style includes five main characteristics, namely: Humanistic, Servant, Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation), Role modelling and value-oriented.

4.8.5.1 Humanistic

The findings of this study suggest that ethical leadership revolved around putting followers first and taking care of them by serving, supporting, treating them humanely and offering them all forms of assistance. That is, followers are given the highest priority compared to other competing relative priorities in the organisation. In this sense, followers are an end in itself, not a means to an end. I.e., considering followers' needs is not to enable them to achieve organisational goals better, but to better deal with them because they are human. Taken together, these results suggest that ethical leadership is a humanistic style of leadership in which leaders and followers play a significant role in fuelling ethical climate within an organisation by exemplifying cohesion and compassion between them. This is supported by the nature of Omani society, which emphasises cohesion, compassion, kindness, tolerance, friendliness, respect for others, good treatment, and helping others. The following

conclusion can be drawn from these findings that ethical leadership in the Omani context goes beyond ethical leaders or followers; instead, it reflects cohesion and compassion between leaders and followers as both form one body.

4.8.5.2 Participative (Shuratic)

This study has shown that ethical leadership is a participative leadership style. That is, the ethical decision from an Omani perspective is the decision based on mutual consultation with followers to reach a consensus and participative decision. Based on this belief, any leader cannot decide arbitrarily and independently on a matter that concerns others without consultation with followers. The findings confirm that mutual consultation is an ethical obligation from the leaders towards their followers as the leader is not entitled to take any decision without consulting his followers, especially decisions that have a long-term impact.

4.8.5.3 Servant

This study has shown that the behaviour of serving followers was one of the most humanistic views of leadership. That is, putting followers first. As such, the data of this research found that ethical leaders are 'servants' to their followers. This means that ethical leaders serve, help, and care about their followers' needs, development, well-being and welfare. Hence, the ethical leader should always be on the employees' side, take their followers' weaknesses and individual differences into consideration, and develop them to be leaders in the future.

However, this study presents a qualitative difference in terms of why serving followers is exemplified and where it stands relative to other competing priorities in the organization. In this regard, this study suggested that followers are given the highest priority compared to other competing relative priorities in the organization. That is because they are human. As such, the humanistic view requires that an ethical leader takes all accountability and responsibility to treat followers in the best way, safeguards

their dignity and secure their right to live a good life. I.e. serving others springs from a humanistic and/or religious motive.

4.8.5.4 Role modeling

This study has shown that a role model is one of the most distinctive characteristics of ethical leaders. It is a default definition reflecting the view toward ethical leaders in its simplistic way. Participants used the Arabic terminology 'Qudwah' which means an ideal or a model to be followed. However, the study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the negative side of the role model approach. The issue of simplifying the notion of being 'the influencer model' and assuming that followers should 'imitate' and learn ethical standards through observing their leaders is sometimes perceived as toxic rather than ethical. Leaders are perceived as toxic when they employ influencing ways that harm their employees, even when they are confident that they behave appropriately or do the right things. The tactic that leaders pursue to exercise influence and change others' behaviours to attain specific purposes exposes role modelling as a problematic approach to some extent.

4.8.5.5 A value-oriented

The results of this research support the idea that ethical leadership is a value-oriented perspective. That is, judging what is considered right and wrong in a particular situation is measured inside the leader's oneself as his/her internal value compass presents relatively clear directives to the standards against ethical or unethical leadership. Leaders have a coherent set of ethical values that serve as a steering compass for their ethical choices in leadership that may transcend a purely compliance-oriented perspective. Hence, this study has shown following a purely compliance-oriented perspective may sometimes not be the most ethical choice. Instead, this study suggested that ethical leaders may allow themselves to transcend rules and regulations for the sake of the ideal of humanity. For example, when mistakes happen, the ethical leader's task is not to jump to punishment but rather to mend unethical

behaviours. When a follower faces special circumstances, the ethical leader's task is to consider his/her circumstances, even bypassing rules and regulations if the situation demand.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Overview

This chapter aims to present the main conclusions of this study. The chapter will begin by answering the overarching research question. It then will discuss the key findings of the investigation and outline the research contributions to the current body of knowledge. In addition, this closing chapter offers the study's limitations and give suggestions for future research.

5.2 Answering the overarching research question

The Overarching Research Question is **how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context?**

The current research found a collectively shared core understanding of ethical leadership. This was clearly noticed through participants' responses which shared the same perceptions of ethical leadership. Although the samples of this study included three groups (senior-level managers, middle-level managers, and employees), participants shared the same perceptions of ethical leadership. This can be linked to the fact that the notion of ethics itself is a product of "the moral principles, values, rules, or standards governing the conduct of the members of a group" (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 2008). Hence, as all participants in this study share the same moral principles, values, rules, or standards, they shared the same ideas and co-constructed a collectively shared meaning. As such, it can be argued, from an Omani perspective, ethical leadership is not an issue of individual sentiment or rationality. Rather, it is collectively constructed through consensus participation that leads to shared meaning and understanding within the social, historical and cultural context. That is, ethical leadership is shaped by moral principles, values, rules, or standards of Omani culture. These values work as implicit social law, influencing leaders' attitudes and behaviour in several different ways and determining acceptable forms of leadership behaviour (Adler and Gunderson, 2008; House et al., 2004). Cultural interpretations of Omani culture revealed valuable means of positioning and

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understanding the complexity of ethical behaviours and how they are justified as ethical or unethical. It can be argued that Omani ethical leadership can be considered to be embedded in the historical and cultural roots that engender differing forms of leaders' behaviour, which are justified within its common collective sense-making.

The shared beliefs, assumptions and motives helped participants to clearly identify what ethical leadership is. Based on participants' understanding of ethical leadership, it can be argued that ethical leadership is self and collectivist responsibility. It starts from individualistic moral virtue, which is basically guided by Islamic norms and moves to the relational level to foster participation, a spirit of collectivism, shared responsibility, and harmonious group relationships to achieve the idea of the one ethical body. It is a humanistic, servant, participative, role modelling and value-oriented leadership style. In this sense, ethical leadership is not individualist; rather, it collectivist, where leaders and followers work together as one ethical body.

As such, it can be argued that, the Omani context and its social dynamics provide a unique understanding of perceptions about ethical leadership. Unlike Trevino et al. (1998), who claims that 'ethical culture' can be limited by its organisational context, the current study affirms the opposite. That is, ethical leadership goes beyond the fixed and bounded understanding of a prescriptive organisational culture to include the external culture effects, which in turn goes along with and affirms social constructionist studies claims (e.g. Fairhurst, 2009; Carroll et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2014). Thus, it can be argued that ethical leadership in the Omani context is an integral part and intertwined with the sociocultural context (Shotter and Cunliffe, 2003; Fairhurst and UhlBien, 2012; Liu, 2019). The evidence of such a claim is highly supported by participants' views when highlighting two key sources affecting ethical leadership in Omani society. The first is Islamic values and the second is Social norms. Both of these sources clearly reflects the interconnection and overlap between ethical leadership and the Omani sociocultural context from one hand. And on the other, they provide intersecting and opposing perceptions of ethical leadership, leading to a different school of thought of ethical leadership

that goes beyond the findings of leadership research in the Arab world that often ignores the distinction between them. From this view, the current study's findings present paternalistic leadership and value-based leadership as two ethical styles of leadership. While social norms lead to paternalistic leadership, Islamic values inform value-based leadership. Islamic values and social norms work together in tension; however, from an idealistic view, Islamic values complement and guide social norms. That is, the value-based approach is considered regulator and complementary to paternalistic leadership when values compete.

However, the current study acknowledges that as a result of the tension between Islamic values and social norms, some challenges might remain to the desired ethical leadership. The hierarchical authority, an emphasis on interpersonal relations, and low observance of formal rules and regulations are obstacles identified by participants which put paternalistic leadership in awkward contradictions. Hence, the role of value-based leadership based on participants' perceptions is to manage and complement such contradictions. This does not mean then that paternalistic leadership is not an ethical style of leadership. It is ethical as it is benevolent in its nature, but when the out-group members are treated the same as in-group members. Thereby, ethical leadership goes beyond individualism to include the whole group of organising.

5.3 Key findings and contribution to knowledge

This research is considered a significant contribution to the body of knowledge from the theoretical perspective in several ways. As discussed in the introduction chapter, this thesis addresses literature gaps in two main streams of knowledge, namely ethical leadership from a western perspective and ethical leadership in the cultural context of Oman.

5.3.1 Contribution to ethical leadership theories

In terms of the contribution to the body of knowledge of ethical leadership theories, the present study made three contributions to the literature.

Firstly, the current literature on ethical leadership has predominantly been built on an understanding of ethical leadership from a Western perspective (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014; Resick et al., 2011; Yuan et al., 2021). The current study, therefore, contributes to the knowledge by suggesting that local values affect perceptions of ethical leadership, and leaders' morality can influence their ethical leadership. It emphasises the significance of understanding the culture and context of ethical leadership and acknowledging its standing within its environment. That is, understanding of ethical leadership is incomplete without accounting for its social and local context because local ethical assumptions, societal values, traditions and religious beliefs influence interpretations of ethical leadership.

Secondly, ethical leadership theories neglect to actively engage with the normative moral foundations of ethical leadership (Eisenbeiss, 2012; Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010; Gibson, 2022; Flanigan, 2018; Price, 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). The lack of normative approaches in ethical leadership literature makes ethical leadership theories vague constructs as they do not specify any particular norms ethical leaders can refer to or justify their assertions about ethical leadership (Eisenbeiss, 2012). The present study demonstrates that by moving beyond Western cultures, in some contexts, local values related to religious beliefs work as normative ethical foundations. Therefore, besides moral philosophies (deontology, virtue ethics, and consequentialism) that have been suggested to work as normative foundations of ethical leadership theories (e.g. Flanigan, 2017; Gibson, 2022; Price, 2017; Lemoine et al., 2019), the current study added by looking outside the West, in some contexts, religious beliefs give a normative ethical foundation.

Thirdly, the present study challenges dominant leader-centric mainstream theories of ethical leadership. This study suggests that in some contexts, ethical leadership is participative leadership in which ethical leadership starts from individualistic moral virtue and moves to the relational level to foster participation, a spirit of collectivism, shared responsibility, and harmonious group relationships to achieve the idea of the one ethical body. In this sense, ethical leadership is not an individualist

approach; rather, it is a collectivist approach, where leaders and followers work together as one ethical body.

5.3.2 Contribution to mid-level theory

5.3.2.1 Contribution to paternalistic leadership theory

The current study offers a theoretical contribution to paternalistic leadership literature by challenging the negative roles associated with paternalistic leadership and suggesting that paternalistic leadership is paradoxical with lots of contradictory traits. It also contributes to the theory by illustrating the reason behind the paradoxical nature of paternalistic leadership. This study suggested that the paradoxical nature of Paternalistic is historically rooted in its bias toward in-group members at the expense of out-group members. That is, a benevolent side of a paternalistic relationship may only exist between in-group members, whereas out-group members may be treated in a completely different way. This, in turn, reflects the root of the tension between Islamic values and social norms.

5.3.2.2 Contribution to ethical leadership research related to Arabic culture

In the extant literature, most leadership research related to Arabic culture to date tends to ignore the distinction and relationship between social norms and Islamic values and their influence in conceptualising leadership in the Arab World. The majority of current literature has addressed the cultural influence of Arabic culture either by focusing on Islamic values as a conceptualising of Islamic leadership (e.g. Ali, 2011; Beekun and Badawi, 1999; Egel and Fry, 2016; Faris and Parry, 2011; Shuhari et al., 2020), or further focusing on generic analyses of culture without highlighting the distinction such as the GLOBE study and other "meta-" research that concerns with the influence of culture in the Middle East(e.g. Alsuood and Youde, 2018; Common, 2011; Dwairy, 2019; House et al., 2004; Hofstede, 1980; Karacay et al., 2019; Metcalfe and Murfin, 2011). This study makes a valuable contribution to knowledge by revealing that ethical leadership in Arabic culture is not mainly encompassing solely one influential source of domestic culture and ignoring the other, i.e. social norms

and Islamic values; rather, it is a comprehensive view that combines the two influential sources (social norms and Islamic values) in which Islamic values and social norms work together in tension. Unlike leadership research to date, which mainly focuses on one source and largely ignored the distinction between Islamic values and social norms and their influence in conceptualising leadership in the Arab World.

It also contributes to knowledge by combining two styles of leadership Influencing ethical leadership in the Omani context: value-based approach and paternalistic leadership. It proposed that the value-based approach is considered regulator and complementary to paternalistic leadership. This means that internal moral integrity and values, which are basically guided by Islamic norms, guide leaders' decisions and actions, even if their decisions do not meet external expectations such as prevailing norms or social context associated with paternalistic leadership. That is, when values compete, the dominant form is the values that are congruent with Islamic values and norms. In addition, this study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating the tension between Islamic values and social norms, proposing that the tension lies in the tension in ethical obligation towards people within the in-group or people who are out of the group.

5.3.2.3 Contribution to the Omani context

This study makes a valuable contribution to knowledge by developing a conceptual model of Ethical leadership from an Omani perspective. This makes it especially significant since, according to the researcher's best knowledge, no previous study has shed light on ethical leadership in such a context from an indigenous lens.

It also contributes to the knowledge by presenting a hybrid ethical leadership style in the Omani context as a result of the influence of Islamic values and social norms. This hybrid style includes five main characteristics, namely: Humanistic, Servant, Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation), Role modelling and value-oriented.

5.4 Implications for future research

5.4.1 Implications for Policymakers

This research offers implications for policymakers. As the current study highlighted the tension between Islamic values and social norms, it would undoubtedly be useful for policymakers to acknowledge and then seriously strive to address these tensions. The researcher suggests that such tension could be discussed through educational programmes, TV programmes, social media channels and Friday sermons. Ideally, it would be useful to start by the unification of concepts of what is perceived as ethical or unethical. For example, Is "Wasta" ethical? When is the use of social networks in the workplace seen as ethical? Is the hierarchical culture ethical? Hence, policymakers could support the launch of a wide-ranging relational cultural dialogue between scholars and researchers from interdisciplinary fields to work together, e.g. politics, education, business and management, human resource development, and religious scholars, in order to reach unified concepts.

In addition, the findings of this study may be useful to raise awareness of the negative side of cultural influence and its implications on the organisational level. The research participants agreed that the practice of leadership in the Omani context is currently suffering from the dubious but culturally 'accepted' practices from social norms perspectives, such as the use of social relationships (Wasta) and hierarchical culture. However, the current study suggested that the practice of using social networks and hierarchical culture is perceived as unethical leadership and suggested that Islamic values are considered as regulator and complementary to such practices. Therefore, policymakers should openly acknowledge that Islamic values work as an approved nexus of ethical leadership and efficient management. Then, policymakers should seriously strive to updating policies that would ensure the inclusion of Islamic values in the workplace policies. The current study generated and can provide valuable reference data to help policymakers do so. This aligns with the national transformational plan

of Oman (Oman 2040 vison), which strives to achieve and promote ethical work environments and effective governance.

5.4.2 Implications for Practitioners

The findings of the present research provide further insights into the perceptions of ethical leadership in the Omani context. Thereby, the findings of the current study have practical implications for organisational leaders and their followers. One prescriptive implication of this research is that organisations, particularly human resource development or training and development practitioners, might be able to use the proposed model presented in Figure 4.8 as the basis of a practical model of ethical leadership in the Omani context. This could be used in training and development programmes for executives and employees. In this regard also, the five distinct components of hybrid ethical leadership could be developed quantitatively into a formal method of assessing ethical leadership; this might be a helpful tool for leadership development.

Additionally, as the findings revealed, there is a tendency to adopt the value-oriented perspective over the compliance-oriented perspective. This provides implications for organisations, especially business leaders should be aware of such tendency as they seek to establish an organisational culture. This research suggests that organisational culture should be built based on a value-oriented perspective. That is because ethical leadership is more than complying with rules or merely following formal procedural regulations; instead, it goes beyond that to include the leader's ethical values in setting an ethical culture demonstrated in interpersonal dealings. This does not reflect the compliance-oriented approach as an undesired approach; rather, a value-oriented perspective should be considered as complementary rather than as an exclusive element.

Regarding the critical analysis of the findings on the influence of Omani culture, this study has revealed three major cultural challenges to ethical leadership, namely: social relationships (Wasta), hierarchical nature, and excessive tolerance culture, which might be consider to help to raise awareness for

organisational leaders and followers about the negativity of these practices. This will help leaders and employees recognise and possibly manage the sort of everyday social tensions they may encounter, such as Wasta's requests. It may also enable them to consider ways of addressing institutional pressure in hierarchical work cultures and develop confidence as they try to find ways of resisting or dealing with managerial practices. Training courses should also highlight issues of negative cultural influence in the workplace and introduce anti policies that can inform leadership in practice.

5.4.3 Implications for global business

The present study demonstrates that by moving beyond research focused on Western cultures, local values related to religious beliefs work as normative ethical foundations in some contexts. Therefore, besides moral philosophies (deontology, virtue ethics, and consequentialism) that have been suggested to work as normative foundations of ethical leadership theories (e.g. Flanigan, 2017; Gibson, 2022; Price, 2017; Lemoine et al., 2019), the current study added to knowledge by looking outside the West, in some contexts specifically in Oman/ Arab countries, religious beliefs give a normative ethical foundation. This is an important point as the embeddedness of religious beliefs can provide a firm ethical basis for the conduct of business leadership in religious societies that can counter ethical leadership scandals that have taken place in the contemporary World. The process of globalisation and rapid trading development has exposed people to unprecedented access to pluralistic values and a dynamically evolving and competitive global business environment, resulting in an alarming rise in unethical business practices (Weir,2010; Yuan et al., 2022). Hence, ethical leadership does not necessarily come from the thought expansion of the Western model but may depend on certain commonalities and similarities in other cultural traditions, which allow a funnelling into a unique approach towards ethical leadership (Weir, 2012). Based on the findings of current research, religious beliefs offer an alternative foundation to the primarily Western models of ethical leadership that have dominated research in this field hitherto and have neglected to engage with the

moral foundations of ethical leadership actively. The lack of normative approaches in ethical leadership literature makes ethical leadership theories vague, as they need to specify any particular norms to which ethical leaders can refer. Ethics is bound by the normative question of 'what one ought to do'. Therefore, anchoring ethical leadership to respective moral foundations affords opportunities to prevent ethical relativism and clarify inclusion and exclusion criteria for ethical leadership's constituent content. It may make more sense now to look forward to enlarging the discourse of ethical leadership by drawing attention to religious foundations specific to ethical leadership's relevant norms. Therefore, the need to establish and reassert a more religious and cultural ethical approach to organisational leadership has never been more pressing precisely because of these scandals (Weir,2010).

However, at the same time, religious internal moral standards in each religion significantly challenge moral approaches to leadership (Hooker,2009; Lemoine et al., 2019). One should pay attention to the fact that each religion has its ethics and beliefs corresponding to its sacred scriptures (Ali and Al-Owaihan 2008). For example, what is perceived as ethical in the one religion context might be perceived as unethical elsewhere. This does not mean that some religions are more ethical ethical than others, but that each religion has its ethical norms and usual way of perceiving and judging a particular issue's multiple dimensions. This provides implications for global business, especially those in non-Monotheistic contexts. Introducing religious belief concepts and implementing ethical leadership practices must be done with sensitivity to the religious beliefs of each religion context and conceptual differences. As the current study suggested, it is significant to understand the culture and context of ethical leadership and acknowledge its standing within its environment. That is, understanding ethical leadership is incomplete without accounting for its social and local context because local ethical assumptions, societal values, traditions and religious beliefs influence

interpretations of ethical leadership. These values work as implicit social law, influencing leaders' attitudes and behaviour in several ways and determining acceptable forms of leadership behaviour (Adler and Gunderson, 2008; House et al., 2004). Therefore, ethical leadership is bound by religious beliefs and implicit agreement with what values and standards constitute moral behaviour in each religion. In summary, depending on the belief system of each religion, the attempt to apply ethical leadership based on a particular belief system in another context may fail.

Nevertheless, this does not mean there are not some opportunities for some religious beliefs to be applied from one context to another. To appreciate the applicability of religious beliefs as a basis for ethical leadership, it is necessary to distinguish two types of religious beliefs: Monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and polytheistic religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism). Monotheism refers to religions that confess to and worship only one God, "One God!" or "No other gods!" these are the central mottos of monotheism(MacDonald, 2012). Meanwhile, Polytheism refers to religions that confess to and worship a plethora of gods while including a concept of divine unity. In a sense, unity does not mean the exclusive worship of one God but the structure and coherence of the divine World, which is not just an accumulation of deities but a structured whole (Assmann, 2007). Monotheistic and polytheistic religions have certain distinct commonalities and similarities; specifically, all of them espouse the idea of trust in an ultimate supreme reality, whatever name this may be given(God, El, Allah, Bhagavan), at the core of their belief systems. Hence, despite the varied references to God and the differences in practice and terminology in each religion, an underlying concept is the same when terminology is analysed for its deeper semantic meaning (Kriger and Seng, 2005). Based on that and as the current study suggested, the belief in this ultimate supreme reality (God) can be helpful to ethical leadership as it forms the core of the moral character of an ethical leader and represents a psychological contract in which the leader has an inner faith and

consciousness of their duty toward this ultimate supreme reality and is aware that they are accountable to him for their actions. This is a connected and additional relationship between God and the leader outside formal organisational boundaries, and it works as a guide for the leader's actions and activities.

In addition, the findings of this study may be helpful to raise awareness of the negative side of cultural influence and its implications on the business context, as the current study has revealed some significant cultural challenges to ethical leadership, namely: social relationships (Wasta) and hierarchical nature, which might be considered a common practices in the countries that embrace polytheistic religions, such as China, India, and Thailand. The GLOBE project revealed that countries such as China, India, and Thailand scored high in the cultural dimensions of power distance and in-group collectivism (House et al., 2004). For example, leadership practice in the Chinese context currently suffers from dubious but culturally 'accepted' practices from social norms perspectives, such as using social relationships (Guanxi) and hierarchical culture (Lin and Sun, 2018). Using social networks 'Guanxi' in business practices is common in China (Chen et al., 2009; Weir and Ali, 2020). However, although guanxi practices have a positive side and can benefit individual recipients of favours, at a broader level, guanxi practices involve a social dilemma (Chen and Chen, 2009) and can be associated with corruption and can lead to dangerous reciprocal obligations and collective blindness. It also can be detrimental to the interest of groups, organisations, and society (e.g., Dunfee et al., 2004; Fan, 2002). Hence, it can be argued that the current study provides further insights into how to address such practices as it suggested that internal moral integrity and values, which are guided by Islamic norms, guide leaders' decisions and actions, even if their decisions do not meet with external expectations such as prevailing norms or social context.

From an Islamic perspective, people are instructed to act according to Islamic values and uphold these values even if others do the opposite. The Qur'an and Sunnah are full of directions that urge people to commit to their inner values. Accountability is individualistic, meaning Islam holds everyone responsible and accountable for their actions (Musah, 2011). Therefore, Islam warns against submitting to prevailing practices if they contradict Islamic values and principles. The Islamic religion's moral principles, ethical directives, and values are fundamental in polytheistic religions. All sacred scriptures (Vedas And Upanishads, Tripitaka, Confucianism) seek to work out irrevocable and unconditional moral principles such as Integrity, Honesty, Truthfulness, Fairness; and Sincerity, Charity, Kindness, Caring, Goodwill, Tolerance, Compassion, mercy, and stimulate people to put them into practice (Küng and Kuschel, 1993).

Hence, it can be argued that any business context which embraces a particular type of polytheistic religion should has its own principles and moral values through the scriptures that guide people in behaviour, conduct, and deeds. Scriptures thus offer a framework for action, both somewhat divinely binding to the leader and transparent for the followers. The current study highlighted that the commitment to values is restricted to those congruent with Islamic values as a determinant criterion. Therefore, it would undoubtedly be helpful for leaders who aspire to their scriptures to regulate their behaviour through adherence to the virtues of scriptures. Commitment to values is not an absolute unrestricted choice that depends on the leader's desire; somewhat, it is restricted and guided by scriptures, values and norms to determine priorities when values compete. This does not mean that religion is predominant in practice in the business context. However, it shows, in fact, people, in general, identify with religious tenets and aspire toward achieving the ideals prescribed in the holy books.

Furthermore, the current study suggested Islamic understanding of ethical leadership is a value-based approach, i.e. ethical leaders can determine appropriate ethical standards. The value-based approach is the integrity-oriented or self-regulatory approach (Tanner et al., 2019), given that this approach emphasises individual awareness, personal ethical responsibilities, self-governance and self-control (Brewer et al., 2015). This proposed approach, i.e. value-based approach, may be one of the possible ways to apply ethical leadership in business contexts that embrace polytheistic religions. That is because all religions emphasise individual awareness, personal ethical responsibilities, self-governance and self-control. For example, Buddhism believes that desire is the source of all pain and that self-control can overcome pain (Gellner and Gombrich, 2015). Self-regulation in Confucianism is the foremost important focus and refers to regulating one's behaviour towards the self-cultivation and refinement of one's character (Woods and Lamond, 2010). Hindu philosophy emphasises commitment to "dharma", which means proper conduct and unwavering morality are cornerstones of a leader (Lépineux and Rosé, 2010). Therefore, in terms of self-awareness or self-governance, organisations in polytheistic religions may choose the value-based approach for ethical development purposes. As the current study suggested, self-awareness makes self-regulation achievable because failure to monitor one's acts can undermine self-control, resulting in unethical consequences. Hence, high self-awareness contributes to the self-control needed to enact behaviours compatible with one's ethical values and avoid engaging in behaviours driven by selfish or short-term motives. However, one can argue from this evidence that those who exercise leadership roles in organisations and believe in spiritual or religious belief systems will have their leadership behaviour shaped by those worldview's underlying values and attitudes. In addition, as the current study suggested, the value-based approach may be useful in addressing the negative roles associated with paternalistic leadership. Paternalistic leadership is a shared leadership style in countries that embrace polytheistic religions, such as China, India Thailand (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008).

Finally, it can be argued with the increasing number of global organisations and international commerce, it has become more critical to understand how cultural and religious values influence leaders' behaviours and beliefs about effective Leadership (Den Hartog and Dickson, 2018). The current study, however, offers valuable insights for international companies aiming to start their business in Oman or those already existing. It also offers valuable insights to be applied to the contexts of other religions beyond monotheistic religions.

5.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the strengths and contributions that are provided by this study on building on existing knowledge, it has some limitations to be considered. Firstly, as this thesis is an exploratory qualitative study, it is limited due to the use of a small sample. This means that the extent to which the findings of this study can be generalised is difficult to determine. However, the researcher was conscious of this fact and has attempted to minimise this limitation as far as possible by the selection of the Omani Oil sector. The Omani oil sector is considered the backbone of the Omani economy (Phillips and Hunt, 2017), and the Ministry of Oil and Gas govern this sector and accordingly introduces relevant regulations in addition to final approvals on investment and policy (MOF, 2015), it can be argued that the Omani oil sector represents both Omani public-private sector. Moreover, Omani employees constitute a significant proportion of the Omani oil sector workforce. Hence, given this study examined the influence of Omani culture, current research findings can be applied to other sectors. It may also be generalised to other cultures that share similar cultural values and beliefs as Omani culture, such as GCC cultures (Shenton, 2004).

However, although the Omani oil sector represents the both Omani public-private sector, the other sectors might also provide other perceptions related to culture that influence leaders' inclinations to engage in ethical or unethical behaviour. Therefore, future scholars may explore ethical leadership in the Omani public sector. Public sector research into ethical leadership would yield promising findings

due to the potentially different perceptions of ethical leadership in a strict governmental hierarchical context. It is worth mentioning that some participants recommended conducting such research in the public sector as they believe the influence of Omani culture could be seen clearly, such as hierarchical culture and the use of social networks. This could be achieved by including a larger sample size involving both leaders and employees. It would be insightful to compare different sectors to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of culture and ethical, social constructions within Omani organisations. It would also be interesting to replicate this research using other companies from the private sector as case studies in order to shed light and investigate both leaders' and followers' perceptions of ethical leadership.

Another limitation of this study is the possibility of bias on the part of the researcher affecting and influencing the results. Therefore, it is important to note that the researcher is fully aware that being an Omani with an Islamic background necessarily influenced the research, data collection and analysis due to the researcher's pre-conceived assumptions and interpretations. However, through the researcher's understanding of his role as a researcher engaged in qualitative research, he has used mechanisms to decrease his personal biases and to counterbalance his idealistic thought about the Omani culture. In this regard, self-critical reflexive methods helped clarify the researcher's approach when assessing the data and analysing the text, as discussed in the methodology chapter. Furthermore, conducting the research under the supervision of non-Muslim supervisors who are embracing different culture has significantly helped the researcher gain a broader and balanced view in dealing with such bias.

In terms of the proposed framework (Figure 8.3), this has initially been developed based on the research findings, but it has not been pilot tested. Therefore, the model needs to be further validated using rigorously designed methods through empirical studies. Moreover, this research identified a hybrid style of ethical leadership that includes five main characteristics, namely: Humanistic, Servant, Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation), Role modelling and value-oriented. Therefore, these

characteristics and behaviours can be investigated quantitatively to create an assessment the relative level of influence of these characteristics and behaviours to measure ethical leadership. It would undoubtedly be interesting and useful for another study to explore perceptions of ethical leadership in other Islamic and Arab countries and compare the findings with this study. However, the proposed framework can be used as the basis for some cross-cultural studies to explore concepts of ethical leadership.

5.6 Personal Reflection

The issues related to ethical leadership have always been a keen interest for me. Given my fifteen-year experience as a practitioner in the field of management, human resource and leadership, I have faced some ethical dilemmas. I have been involved in leadership roles and experienced the influence of culture on the daily transactions in Omani organisations. Through this work, I had exposed to personal visits or telephone calls from family members, friends and acquaintances to ask for selection, recruitment, training and promotion. These practices have provoked my interest and a passion for investigating ethical leadership. I was always asking myself, are such practices ethical?!

MY fifteen years of experience in the field served as a solid backdrop to the research and meant that my experience of ethical leadership is constituted from this background, from which he primordially grasped experiences of ethical leadership.

When I embarked on my PhD journey, I chose to do research on ethical leadership. After delving into the extant literature, I found there is limited research on ethical leadership in Arabic cultures such as Omani culture and what is available is largely built on an understanding of ethical leadership from a Western perspective. I soon realised that a study of this topic in the Omani context it is not an easy task.

However, I started my journey, which has been entirely one of learning. The PhD programme was a continual process of learning and development. Since I commenced my programme, I have been

engaged with the University of Worcester's core models (e.g. Dissemination, Impact & Engagement, Developing and Managing Your Research methods) and many workshops that aim to develop me as a researcher. I developed my academic skills from the very basics of learning, such as how to access the most relevant peer-reviewed journals and then critically review this literature. I became familiar with highly theoretical aspects, such as the applicable philosophical concepts, and I developed my practical skills in designing and organising the data collection.

Also, I have had great opportunities on many occasions to enhance my academic and presentations skills through presentations at conferences as follows:

- The British Academy of Management Conference and Doctoral Symposium 2nd-4th September 2020, BAM2020 Conference in The Cloud.

- Doctoral Colloquium 2022 at the University of Gloucestershire and University of Worcester 26-27 May 2022.

- FPO seminar at Worcester business school, 2 February 2022

Moreover, I am working on publishing two articles for academic journals (Ethical leadership in the Omani cultural context and paternalistic leadership in the Omani context) under progress.

Finally, I can say doing a PhD was a demanding, valuable, exciting, and rewarding journey. It advanced my knowledge and understanding of this world.

I only intend to reform to the best of my ability. My success comes only through Allah. In Him I trust, and to Him, I turn. (Qur'an, 11:88)

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND PRIVACY NOTICE

TITLE OF PROJECT: Ethical Leadership in the Cultural Context of Oman.

Invitation

The University of Worcester engages in a wide range of research which seeks to provide greater understanding of the world around us, to contribute to improved human health and well-being and to provide answers to social, economic and environmental problems.

We would like to invite you to take part in one of our research projects. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done, what it will involve for you, what information we will ask from you, and what we will do with that information.

We will in the course of this project be collecting personal information. Under General Data Protection Regulation 2016, we are required to provide a justification (what is called a "legal basis") in order to collect such information. The legal basis for this project is "**task carried out in the public interest**".

Please take time to read this document carefully. Feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have and to talk to others about it if you wish. You will have at least 10 days to decide if you want to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

This research is being conducted by me (Musab AL Hinai, a Ph.D. candidate at (Worcester University) as an integral part of my Ph.D. program. This research aims to explore how Omani leaders and followers conceptualize ethical leadership and how their perceptions are shaped by a cultural context. To achieve this aim, I need your valuable time and experience to conduct an interview with you to answer some questions. The questions overall will highlight your knowledge, perceptions about ethical leadership in Oman and how Omani culture impacts on it.

Who is undertaking the research?

Musab AL Hinai
Worcester University
alhm1_19@uni.worc.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

Self funding

Who has oversight of the research?

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Panel for the College of business in line with the University's Research Ethics Policy. The University of Worcester acts as the "Data Controller" for personal data collected through its research projects & is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation 2016. We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and our Data Protection Officer is Helen Johnstone (infoassurance@worc.ac.uk). For more on our approach to Information Assurance and Security visit: https://www.worcester.ac.uk/informationassurance/index.html.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have received this invitation because the researcher believes you are a valuable information source for my research. Your position, relevant experience, views and your cultural background will make a remarkable contribution to the research will enable me to get a rich-understanding of my research topic.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to take part in this study. Please take your time to decide; we will wait for at least 10 days before asking for your decision. You can decide not to take part or to withdraw from the study until 10 days following data collection. If you wish to have your data withdrawn, please contact the researcher with your participant number and your data will then not be used. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What will happen if I agree to take part?

If you agree to take part, I will arrange a time and a suitable place to conduct an interview. The Interview will be conducted for approximately 1 hour. I will need you consent to tape-record the interview so I can transcribe it later for the purpose of analysing the data. Your identity will be kept confidential and you will be assigned a pseudonym for the purpose of the dissertation. Noted results will be destroyed by shredding after completion of the research degree.

What are the benefits for me in taking part?

You will contribute in adding new knowledge to the ethical leadership field, especially to the literature of the Omani context.

Are there any risks for me if I take part?

Due to the anonymity of participants and recruitment strategy of using networks rather than the employer there are no perceived risks.

What will you do with my information?

Your personal data / information will be treated confidentially at all times; that is, it will not be shared with anyone outside the research team or any third parties specified in the consent form unless it has been fully anonymised. The exception to this is where you tell us something that indicates that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In this instance, we may need to share this information with a relevant authority; however, we would inform you of this before doing so.

During the project, all data / information will be kept securely in line with the University's Policy for the Effective Management of Research Data and its Information Security Policy.

We will process your personal information for a range of purposes associated with the project primary of which are:

- To use your information along with information gathered from other participants in the research project to seek new knowledge and understanding that can be derived from the information we have gathered.

- To summarise this information in written form for the purposes of dissemination (through research reports, a thesis / dissertation, conference papers, journal articles or other publications). Any information disseminated / published will be at a summary level and will be fully anonymised and there will be no way of identifying your individual personal information within the published results.

- To use the summary and conclusions arising from the research project for teaching and further research purposes. Any information used in this way will be at a summary level and will be fully anonymised. There will be no way of identifying your individual personal information from the summary information used in this way.

If you wish to receive a summary of the research findings or to be given access to any of the publications arising from the research, please contact the researcher.

How long will you keep my data for?
Your personal data will be retained until the project (including the dissemination period) has been completed. At the completion of the research degree, we will destroy all data relating to the research.

How can I find out what information you hold about me?
You have certain rights in respect of the personal information the University holds about you. For more information about Individual Rights under GDPR and how you

exercise   them   please   visit:
https://www.worcester.ac.uk/informationassurance/requests-for-personal-data.html.

What happens next?
Please keep this information sheet. If you do decide to take part, please either contact the researcher using the details below.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.
If you decide you want to take part in our project, and we hope you do, or if you have any further questions then please contact:
Musab AL Hinai
Worcester University
Email: alhm1_19@uni.worc.ac.uk
Mobil:0096896998188

If you have any concerns about the project at this point or at any later date you may contact the researcher (contact as above) or you may contact the Supervisor research lead:
Dr Scott Andrews
Principal Lecturer in Leadership and Business
University of Worcester
Worcester Business School, University of Worcester
Castle Street, Worcester WR1 3AS
01905 54 3336
S.andrews@worc.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to an independent person who is not a member of the research team, please contact Research & Knowledge Exchange Facilitator (CBPS) at the University of Worcester, using the following details:

Research & Knowledge Exchange Facilitator (CBPS)
Secretary to Research Ethics Panel for College of Business, Psychology and Sport
University of Worcester
Henwick Grove
Worcester WR2 6AJ
ethics@worc.ac.uk

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form (Non-NHS Research)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (NON-NHS RESEARCH)

Title of Project: **Ethical Leadership in the Cultural Context of Oman**

Participant identification number for this study:

Name of Researcher: Musab AL Hinai

I, the undersigned, confirm that (**please initial boxes as appropriate**):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____ or it has been read to me.	
2.	I have been able to ask questions about the project and my participation and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	
3.	**I understand that taking part in this study involves data collection through interviews. The interviews will be recorded by using an audio recorder and then will be transcribed as text. All recordings and transcripts will be destroyed after the successful completion of the PhD course.**	
4.	I understand that there is no risk by taking part in the study.	
5.	I understand I can withdraw from the study until 10 days following data collection without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	
6.	I understand that the information I provide will be used for academic purposes only, including writing: a thesis, conference papers and journal articles.	
7.	I agree that my information can be quoted anonymously in research outputs.	
8.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.	
9.	I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name, or where I live, will not be shared beyond the study team.	
10.	I consent to the audio recording.	
11.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	
12.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	
13.	I know who to contact if I have any concerns about this research	

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

Appendix C: Pictures of an example of an interview transcript

س: من وجهة نظرك كقائد ، هل تعتقد أن الأخلاق مهمة في القيادة؟ هل يمكنك شرح إجابتك من فضلك؟

الأخلاق مهمة في القيادة وكل شيء، الأخلاق هي البوصلة بمعنى أنه لا يمكن قياس كل شيء بأمور حسية. نحن كبشر هناك الكثير من الأمور التي نتعامل معها جميعها ليست واضحة وحقيقة لا جدال فيها، أكثر أعمالنا هي جانب تقديري أو تقيمي بمعنى آخر، فبالتالي يكون الضابط هنا هو الأخلاق، فقضية الأخلاق تعتبر شيء أساسي لأنها البوصلة الموجهة التي تميز بين الصواب والخطأ، فلا يمكن أن يكون كل شيء مكتوب في بيئات العمل وحتى الأشياء المكتوبة والموضحة أثناء التعامل والتنفيذ سيصبح في المسألة جانب تقديري وبالتالي فأن الاخلاق هي الضابط و المقياس الحقيقي.

س: ما هي الخصائص والسلوكيات الشخصية التي تعتقد أن القائد الأخلاقي يحتاج إلى إظهارها؟

أولاً أن يكون القائد واضح، وهناك أيضاً عدة قيم في الأخلاق من ضمنها الصدق، والصدق شيء أساسي فالإنسان لا يظهر خلاف ما يبطن أو يكون له أكثر من وجه. يمكن تميز الأخلاق صاحب الأخلاق الرفيعة فلا يفاجئك، بمعنى آخر يكون سلوكه متوقع لأن الأخلاق عبارة عن سلوك، فالقائد الاخلاقي عنده التزام بالمعايير الأخلاقية والمبادئ الأخلاقية وبالتالي لا يتغير ويثابرون دائماً على حسب الوضع.

الأمر الآخر القائد الاخلاقي يبدي احترام وتقدير للآخر ولو اختلف معه، بمعنى آخر أن القائد الاخلاقي يكون حازم وله موقف لكن في نفس الوقت يبدي تقدير وعدم استهانة مع الآخر، مثلاً يكون له موقف صلب بدون إهانة الآخر

س: كيف تصف القائد أو القيادة الناجحة؟ (بشكل عام ، من حيث الأخلاق)

القيادة هي التأثير الإيجابي في المحيط والقيادة ليست سلطة إنما هي تأثير والتأثير يكون من خلال القدوة، وفي المصطلح العربي القيادة إمامة، والإمامة ليس بمعناها السياسي إنما الإمام في كل شيء يكون قدوة، أيضاً تعرف على أنها القيادة بالمثل ، أيضاً تعني القدرة على اتخاذ القرار في المواقف الصعبة و الشائكة، فهناك فرق بين الشخص الذي يستخدم السلطة سواء سلطة اجتماعية، او سياسية، أو مؤسسية وغيرها، بينما القيادة ليست كذلك إنما جزء منها تحمل المسؤولية، فإذا كان الشخص في موقع سيطرة وتحكم، فالقائد الناجح لن يقول إنه لن يتحمل المسؤولية إنما يبادر في تحمل المسؤولية، ومواجهة التحديات والصعاب، في الواقع يختبر القائد في الشداد، فتعرف صفات الشخص القيادية عادةً في أوقات الأزمات والصعوبات والوقت الذي يطلع فيه الجميع إلى هذا القائد كيف سيتعامل معهم، فهم بحاجة للتوجيه والقدوة.

نحن نمر بهذه الأمور حقيقة فنواجه تحديات معينة أو مشاكل عملية في الفريق ويوجد هناك أهل خبرة في الشركة لكن هناك الكثير ممن يتوقعون منك أن تسلهم توجيهات، وأن تكون لديك القدرة لاتخاذ قرارات صعبة بمعنى أنك قيمت الأمور عن معرفة وليس بطريقة ارتجالية و بحكمة وتروي وتقدير المواقف، عند اتخاذ أي قرار لا بد أن تنظر لتأثيرات القرار على الآخرين، وأن يكون القرار مبني على المعرفة، فلا يمكن أن يأتي شخص لا يملك المعرفة بشيء ويصدر أمر.

القيادة أيضاً جانب منها أن يكون الشخص لديه خبرة وصاحب معرفة، كما يقولون ويبذل الجهد الكافي. ذُكر في الدراسات أن ، جزء من مهام القائد الإدارة، إدارة الموارد، إدارة المهام، التخطيط، المتابعة وهناك مهام كثيرة أخرى، فالقائد يجب أن يكون قدوة، وله تأثير، صاحب علاقات متوازنة وقوية، ولا يجب (يرتبك) في أوقات الشدائد.
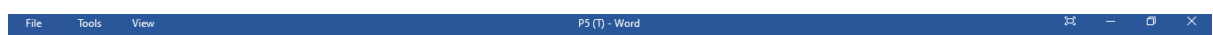
يُمدح. لكن مثلما قلنا سابقاً أنه يجب أن تتبع الخطوات بالتدريج فتبدأ بإعطائه العذر لأنه قد يكون مدرك لخطأه وتأثيره ومن ثم الإصلاح، والإصلاح يحتاج موقف حازم وقوة وموقف عقوبة. لذلك على القائد الأخلاقي ألا يتجنب هذه الأمور، قد يكون هناك بعض الموظفين ذوي الأداء الضعيف، في هذه الحالة ، تقع على عاتق القائد الأخلاقي مسؤولية مراعاة ظروفهم، قد يمرون بصعوبات أو عقبات شخصية. لذلك يجب على القائد أن يساعدهم في التغلب على هذه الظروف والعقبات، لكن إذا كان الموظف غير مبالي لا بد أن يأخذ القائد موقف حازم أو تأديبي. لذلك كثير من القادة يتجنبون أن يقومون بعمل تأديبي لهذا الشخص لأنه لا يريد أن يزعج نفسه، و يتجنب آثار وعواقب هذا الأمر حيث أن هذا الموظف سوف يذمهم و يخبر المحيط الخارجي بذلك، فيقول أنه يريد السلامة[؟؟]، وهذا سلوك غير أخلاقي لأي كسمؤول لم أقم بمسؤولياتي التي هي تصحيح العمل الغير جيد أو الشخص المهمل ، فيجب على القائد معالجة وتصحيح هذا السلوك بغض النظر عن الثمن الذي يحتاج أن يدفعه، للأسف كثير من القادة لا يهتمون لأنهم مثلاً إذا اتخذوا موقف حازم مع شخص من الممكن أن ذلك الشخص سوف يشوه سمعة ذلك القائد أو أو (يزعل) منه , فالمسؤول يقول لماذا لا أتجنب هذه الأمور، بطبيعة الحال هذا خطأ ويعني أن القائد يتجنب التعامل مع الموقف الصعب ويتجنب تحمل المسؤولية، بالنسبة لي أعتبر هذا السلوك غير أخلاقي، لأنه ليس من الأخلاق و الشخص المهمل. فالشخص المجيد يجب أن يكافئ والمهمل يُحاول إصلاحه فإذا كان غير متجاوب مع الإصلاح والتغيير فإنه يعاقب، بالتالي هذا الأمر جزء من البوصلة الأخلاقية .

س: من واقع خبرتك ، هل يمكنك تقديم أمثلة عامة أو تعتقد أنه يمثل قيادة غير أخلاقية في المنظمات العمالية؟

بعض الطرف عن المهمل، فهذا ليس من العدالة، يجب أن يكافئ المجد ويعاقب المهمل، فهذا من المواقف التي يمكن أن يقع فيها كثير من القادة وقد يكونون غير مدركين ويحدثون ان هذه الأمور عادية بعد فترة من الزمن تصبح هذه الأمور عادية. لماذا؟ لأن من يقوم بها ستكون عواقبها على الشخص نفسه وغيرها صعوبة. كل القادة يحبون إبلاغ الموظفين عن الأخبار الجيدة والحسنة ولا يحبون الابلاغ بالأخبار السيئة لذلك هم يتجنبون هذا الشيء.

أو التقليل من شأنه، فمن شأنه، فتعلن موقفك وتكن الاحترام والتقدير للآخرين. فهو جانب الاحترام مع الآخر في الاتفاق والاختلاف.

أهم شيء في الجانب الأخلاقي أن تصرفات القائد يجب أن لا تؤذي الموظف بأي طريقة أو أن كان هذا الشخص عليه عقوبة أو قام بفعل خاطئ، و أن أي عمل أو مهمة يقوم بها القائد او أي كلمة يقولها عليه أن يدرك أثرها، بمعنى آخر لا يكون عدد عدم مبالاة بآثر أفعاله وأقواله السلبية على الآخرين. وهذا لا يعني أنك اذا رأيت شخص مخطئ أن تسكت بل من الأخلاق أن أحمل ذلك الشخص عواقب أخطائه فليس من الاخلاق أن أساويه بشخص مجد في عمله وسلوكه حسن، فمن ضمن الأخلاق للقائد أن يعامل الموظفين حسب المعطيات والأحوال وهذا من العدالة. تجد أن بعض التصرفات التي يقوم بها الناس من الممكن أن تؤذي حياة أو طفل أو إنسان عاجز، وهذا غير مبرر لأنه ليست هناك عقوبة لأخطائه أو الأخر قد يكون ضعيف، لذلك الأخلاق تمنع هذا الشيء.

س: من وجهة نظرك ، هل يمكنك من فضلك وصف القيادة الأخلاقية كما تفهمها؟

القيادة الأخلاقية يمكن أن أعرفها في كلمة واحدة هي "القدوة".

س: ما هي الإجراءات التي يتعين على مؤسستك الإبلاغ عنها عن أي ممارسات غير أخلاقية؟

هناك مجموعة من الاجراءات وبالإمكان الرجوع إلى قسم الموارد البشرية.

س: من وجهة نظرك كقائد / موظف ، إذا واجهت معضلة أخلاقية ، فهل ستمتثل لقواعد السلوك أم ستتصرف بمزيد من المرونة ، مع مراعاة الظروف الشخصية للجاني؟ (لماذا ، أمثلة)؟ (الموجهات: لماذا ، أمثلة)

إذا ارتكب الموظف سلوكًا غير أخلاقي ، فعليه أولاً أن يدرك أن تصرفه غير أخلاقي لأنه قد يكون غير مدرك أن سلوكه غير أخلاقي. هذه هي النظرة الإصلاحية. بمعنى ما ، الإصلاح هو الخطوة الأولى، ومع ذلك إن من مسؤوليات القائد الأخلاقي أن يكون حازم، فهنا يظهر دور القائد في المواقف الصعبة. الخطأ يجب أن يُوقف والأذى يجب أن

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الأمر الآخر في كثير من الأوقات الإنسان في موقع المسؤولية تدخل فيه الاعتبارات السياسية فلا بد أن يتحلى القائد بالذكاء السياسي فليس كل شيء فيه صح وخطأ وهناك الكثير من الأمور فيها جانب تقديري. ولكن هذا لا يعني أن هذا الشخص يكون blank ولكن يعرف كيف يوازن بدون أن يؤذي أحد، بمعنى آخر أني ممكن أن أذهب لمسؤولي في موضوع أو أتحدث عن مشكلة حصلت، أواجه الموقف ولكن لا أحاول أن أبرر له مثلاً أن فلان وفلان هم المسببين، لأن من طبيعة البشر في كثير من الأوقات أني يحاول تحسين صورته وتغطية أخطائه. لكن من الجانب الأخلاقي ممكن أن يحاول الشخص أن يوضح الأخطاء التي أرتكبت مثلاً وحتى من الممكن أن يعتذر عنها. لكن في كثير من الأوقات الأخطاء التي يرتكبها المسؤولين والتي تعتبر غير أخلاقية أن يرمي المسؤولية على الآخرين، بمعنى أنه لا يتحمل المسؤولية التامة عن هذا الأمر. فعليه تحمل المسؤولية وتحمل تبعاتها، سواء هذا العمل والخطأ الحاصل كان مقصود أم غير مقصود ففي النهاية أنا المسؤول عنه وأتحمل مسؤوليته الكاملة وبالتالي تحمل المواقف. هناك الكثير من القادة كنوع من التبرير يلقون المسؤولية على الآخرين أو أدهم يبررون بدائر غير حقيقي. أو بمعنى آخر أن يكذب حتى ينطلي على خطأه فيختلق أعذار غير حقيقية فهذه من الأخطاء التي يرتكبها المسؤولين. أيضاً من الأخطاء الغير أخلاقية من الممكن أن المسؤول يدعي عمل أو ينسب إنجاز لنفسه وفي الواقع ليس هو من قام به بل أحد أفراد فريقه مثلاً، قد يكون مساهم ولكن الجزء الأكبر والنجاح من المفترض أن يحسب لمن يعملون معه. فهو مثلا يريد تلميع صورته فيدعي أو يتجاهل الجهود التي بذلها الآخرون في هذا المشروع على أساس أنه صاحب الفكرة والذي ساعد على إنجازها. هذه الأمور تحدث كثيراً. أيضاً من الأخطاء التي يرتكبها القائد أن يدفع برأيه دون إعطاء فرصة للآخرين. هناك كثير من القادة يركز كثيراً كيف أستفيد وكيف ألمع صورتي الشخصية وأوضح أن لدي القدرة وأنسب هذا العمل لنفسي. أو أنه لا ينسب العمل لنفسه لكنه يتصدر الموضوع بينما في واقع الحال ذلك الجهد يخص غيره من أعضاء فريقه فبالتالي لا يشركهم في العمل أو لا يقدرهم، لأن عنده أهداف شخصية أو قد تكون قضية تسلط وهذا سلوك غير أخلاقي. هناك فرق بين أن يتحمل الشخص المسؤولية وأن يقول لا أريكم إلا ما أرى، يعني أنا في موقع المسؤولية وأنا صاحب الشأن فبالتالي يجب أن تسير الأمور بطريقتي. في الأخير هناك أوقات تحتاج أن يكون القائد حازم، ففي أوقات وأحوال معينة يكون عدد الفريق آراء معينة لكهم ينتظرون القائد من

واقع خبرته ومعرفته وربما قدراته أكثر يتنظرون منه التعليمات والتوجيه واتخاذ القرار خصوصاً إذا كانت الأمور معقدة وفيها صعوبة في اتخاذ القرار. ولكن هناك أوقات أخرى يكون للفريق آراء جيدة وأفكار ذات قيمة كبيرة لا يلقى لها بال ويرفض ما يفكر فيه فقط وهنا أعتبره جانب غير أخلاقي حيث أنك لا تقدر ولا تسمح للآخر الذي يعتبر شريك معك في المهمة أن يناقش رأيه، فهناك مشاريع يكون فيها قضية تتوصل فيها إلى قناعات أو ربما اتفاق بدل أن يستغل القائد سلطته ويفرض على الفريق آراء وطرق معينة. فهذه أيضا من الأخطاء التي يمكن أن يرتكبها القادة.

س: فكر في موقف معين حيث ترى أنك أظهرت القيادة الأخلاقية. صف هذا الموقف واشرح لماذا تعتبر قيادتك أخلاقية؟

ما ذكرته سابقاً من أمثلة أرى أنها تمثلني. في حال كان هناك مشروع أو عمل معين فإن قائد العمل هو من يقدم المشروع بحيث أنا أكون داعم ولا أقول إن هذا العمل أنا من قمت به. هناك مواقف ربما فيها صعوبة وحقيقةً ما زالت فيها صعوبة لكن التعود على التجاوزها، وهي كيف تتعامل مع الأشخاص المهملين خصوصاً في حال كانت بينكم علاقة معرفة وصداقة ويهمولني، زملاء دراسة أو زملاء عمل وبدأنا مع بعضنا رئيسهم فيكون هناك حرج نوعاً ما خصوصاً إذا أهمل أو إذا جاءت ترقية فيأتي لك ويقول أني أريد أن أكون consider فهذه الأمور فيها صعوبة. لكن طريقتي أنا في العمل أتبع processes وإجراءات معينة. هذه الإجراءات تضمن نوع من العدالة في مهام أعلى ومناسب ، أعتمد على هذه النقطة. هناك إجراءات معينة تقيم الأداء وتنظر لمؤشرات معينة وعندي قائمة بالمتاقين على هذا المنصب وعندي لجنة على أساس استخدام أدوات تساعد على الشفافية و العدالة. بينما أنا عندي السلطة من الممكن أن أقول أني أريد فلان و فلان ، أقول له أنه لا يصلح، بدل أن أتخذ هذا الأمر من الممكن أن يفسد العلاقة، فمثلما أخبرتك لدينا إجراءات وأنظمة معينة المقصد منها أن تضمن العدالة. فأستخدم هذه الوسائل على أساس أن لا أتشخصن الأمور وأحاول أن أبعد هذه الأشياء عن الشخصنة، في نفس الوقت لا أريد

أن أفقد علاقة الصداقة ولا أريد أن أنحاز، لأن التحيز سلوك غير أخلاقي. فأوجد الوسائل التي توضح أن المسألة فيها عدالة وليس بها محاباة.

س: ماذا ستفعل إذا أدركت أنه سيتعين عليك القيام بشيء تعتبره غير أخلاقي من أجل إنجاز معاملة / عملية حيوية؟

إذا قلت إني لن أقوم بهذا العمل لن أكون مسايراً، لكن عادةً أنظر الى اعتبار مبدئي، الاعتبارات بأقل الأضرار، قد يكون هذا العمل في ظاهره غير أخلاقي لكن إذا توجه تكتشف العكس. هناك سلوكيات أو أعمال غير أخلاقية واضحة ، مثل السرقة. في هذه الحالة ، لا أن أفعل ذلك، إن ضميري ومراقبة الله يمنعني من قبول مثل هذا الفعل، لكن في جانب مثلا تقديم فلان على فلان فيها ضرر لكن أنت تنظر الى الوضع هذا، ففي حال أنا قلت لا ولم أطع هذا التوجيه، قد يكون من طلب مني هذا الأمر صاحب سلطة وبالتالي إذا لم أتخذ القرار فإنه فالنهاية سيقوم هو باتخاذ القرار. الاعتبار الآخر أنظر للخيارين، في الموقف هذا أيما يأتي بضرر أكبر وبالتالي أذهب للضرر الأقل.

قد يكون مثلا أنه وصلني أمر من رئيسي وأنا عندي السلطة أنه أعين فلان مكان فلان أو أعين فلان في المنصب الفلاني ربما هناك من هو أفضل منه. ففي هذه الحالة أنا أناقش المسؤول وعلى حسب التقييمات أوضح أن فلان أفضل وأقدر في أداء المهمة. لكن هذه إذا دخلت اعتبارات أخرى مصلحية بل اعتبارات أخرى. وبالفعل قد يكون هناك بالفعل ضرر و من الممكن أن يدفع ثمن أكبر لأنه مناقض ويمكن أن ينقل في مكان على الرغم أن هذا الشخص من وجهة نظري أنسب ، وهذا ما يحصل أحيانا للأسف.

على العموم، كل حالة يجب أن نقيمها ونتظر لها من ناحية المنافع والضرر والمدافع. قد يكون فلان متضرر لكن الشركة بالفعل تستفيد، قد تكون المصلحة العامة أكبر من الضرر الخاص، بالتالي الضرر الخاص الذي سيقع على الشخص نحاول أن نعوض عنه إذا استطعنا، لأن المصلحة الأكبر أن نتفادى ضرر أكبر مقابل ضرر

أصغر. وهذا جانب تقديري. لذلك أقول إن الأخلاق هي نوع من البوصلة يجب على الإنسان أن يدركها أو يؤمن فيها، فليس دائما هناك خياران "أ" و "ب" أو أبيض وأسود، لها جانب تقديري وجوانب متشابكة.

س: من وجهة نظرك ما هو مصدر الأخلاق في عمان؟ هل يشجع هذا المصدر ويؤكد سمات وسلوكيات القادة الأخلاقيات التي ذكرتها سابقاً (في الجزء الأول)؟ إذا تم ذكر الثقافة هنا ، اسأل بالتفصيل / إعطاء أمثلة؟

أول شيء الفطرة كبشر، فالإنسان ربي أعطاه العقل وحب الخير، هذا بالنسبة للإنسان السوي. ثانياً الدين والشرع الإسلامي هو المرجع وما يتربى الإنسان عليه، مثلا لا ضرر ولا ضرار والحسنة تدفع السيئة. يعني من جانب التشريعات الإسلامية كل المبادئ والأعمال التي نقوم بها تحكي الأخلاق، فهنا هو المصدر ولكن نحن كثير من الأساس فطرتنا أن يكون سلوكنا أخلاقي. الخير موجود في البشر والخير هو نتيجة الأخلاق والسلوك. الدين مرجع يعني مصدر معرفة الخير والشر والأخلاق الحسنة، الأمر بالمعروف، الأوامر الإلهية والهي وغيرها. هذه المنظومة كلها توضح لك ما هي الأخلاق وما هي القيم. أما الثالث فهو المجتمع، طبعاً المجتمع العماني مجتمع مترابط وشُهد له بالأخلاق من عهد الرسول عليه الصلاة والسلام. أيضاً المعرفة خصوصاً أن الناس الذين على علم واطلاع ومعرفة وممارسة بتجارب الآخرين أقدر على التمييز بين الخطأ و الصواب.

س: هل تعتقد أن الثقافة الوطنية العمانية تؤثر على أخلاقيات القيادة في مؤسستك؟ كيف؟ (أمثلة ، تأثير إيجابي أو سلبي)

هو التأثير إيجابي في الغالب، ربما الحياة المعاصرة بدأت تغير في السلوك. أنا أدرس علم الاجتماع وهذا الكلام لا أقوله عن معرفة عميقة ولكن حدث تغير في سلوك المجتمع، قل التعاون عن ما كان عليه سابقاً وزاد السلوك الفردي والمصلحة الشخصية، تغير توجه الناس بحث عن كل شخص يريد أن يحسن من مستواه، زادت التكاليف وأصبح الناس يعيشون في رفاهية المتطلبات وقل التعاون، لكنه موجود، لكن التكافل الاجتماعي الذي كان موجوداً في المجتمع سابقاً لم يعد مثل السابق، الآن أصبح الشخص مسؤول بنفسه، حتى أن الترابط الأسري والزيارات

لم تعد كالسابق رغم سهولة التواصل بسبب كثرة الأعمال والمشاغل. سابقاً في القرية كما نحدد يوم في الأسبوع ويجتمع أهل البلد يتساعدون في بناء البيوت مثلاً، أيضاً هذه الأعمال كانت لكنها ما زالت موجودة. أظن أن طريقة الحياة المعاصرة عيرت كثير من الأمور، قضية التعاون والتكاتف ضعفت عما كانت عليه في السابق، كانت مقومات التعاون في المجتمع القروي الصغير أكثر.

قضية تعظيم المنافع الشخصية، حتى في بعض الأعمال التي يقوم بها الآخرون أولاً يحصبون ما سيستفيدون من هذا الأمر، لقد أصبح بناء العلاقات وسيلة للربح لا للخير أو للانسجام بين المجتمع. على سبيل المثال، إذا كان هناك قائد كبير، يحاول الموظفون تطوير العلاقات معه للحصول على فائدة من خلاله أو حتى الترقية إلى منصب أعلى. أنا لا أعمم، لكن للأسف هذه الأشياء موجودة الآن، لكن مع الوقت أصبحت عادية كما نقول بالإنجليزية normalized. حصل تغير نعم لكن الشيء الجيد أن الناس شهداء الله في الأرض، والناس من خلال تعاملهم ما زال عندهم البوصلة الأخلاقية ولديهم القدرة على أن يقولون ان المسؤول الفلاني (يحابي) ولا يساعد الجميع، فالمراقبة المجتمعية تمنع الانحدار في هذا الجانب، و ما زالت المعايير الأخلاقية عند الناس موجودة ولذلك تجدهم ينتقدون أي سلوك غير أخلاقي، لدرجة أن طريقة انتقادهم أحيانا تكون غير أخلاقية خصوصا في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي فترمي التهم جزافا والناس بطبيعتها تصدق كل ما يقال ولكن الاولى التحقق.على العموم جوانب الأخلاق للمجتمع نفسه لم تزل موجودة، و لو أن الرقابة المجتمعية فيها نوع من السذاجة في بعض الاحيان، لكن في حال أنه ظهر أي شيء فيه ضرر في سلوك واكتساب منفعة وعيره فبالتالي لا زالت عندهم البوصلة الأخلاقية .

س: ما هي جوانب الثقافة العمانية التي تعتقد أنها تؤثر على القيادة الأخلاقية؟

العلاقات الاجتماعية لا شك انها موجودة لكن هل تأثر؟ تكلمنا سابقاً أنه لو كان عندك زميل دراسة او عمل فعلبد ان تكون بينكم علاقة قوة ويعتمد على المكان وعلى الشخص نفسه، فالشخص يمكن أن يتبع أساليب وأدوات تفصل بين

الإثنين، في ما معناه اني سأحافظ على الصداقة و الأخوة و العلاقة بحيث أفصل بين دوري في المؤسسة و السلطة التي أمتلكها وبين الصداقة، أعتقد بأن الناس بدوا بإدراك هذا الشيء حتى في المجتمع العماني، بعض الأحيان من الممكن الشخص القريب منك أو صاحبك قد يتأثر سلباً، كمثال شخص قريب مني يناقش منصب أكون صاحب قرار فيه علما بأنه قد يكون الأحقاً، فإذا قمت بتعيينه سيقول على الناس أنني منحاز لأن الرقابة المجتمعية موجودة وهذا تأثير سلبي.

العلاقات الاجتماعية موجودة بلا شكك، لكن أي محاباة أو بمعنى آخر تقديم منفعة للقريب هي محل تشكيك، والآن كل شيء واضح ولا يمكن إخفائه لذلك صاحب القرار لن يقدم عليه حتى لا يتهم، عندما نتحدث عن الجانب عير الأخلاقي من العلاقات الاجتماعية، أعني عندما تتوسط لأحد أقاربك أو أصدقائك ... وتعطيه شيئاً لا يستحقه، أو تعلم أن هذا الشيء قد يضر بشخص آخر أكثر استحقاقاً، في هذه الحالة، بالطبع، هذا سلوك غير أخلاقي. فلا يجب أن تعطيه حق الآخرين. علينا أن نعلم أنها ليست علاقة مصالح، بل علاقة مودة وتضامن ، لذلك من المهم للغاية التمييز بين الاثنين.

أيضا عدم الاستعداد أن تقول لا في حال طلب منك شخص أكبر منك سناً أو رتبة، الاحترام مهم لكن يجب أن نفرق بين الاحترام والحزم في هذه المسألة. أن أحترم شخص لا يعني أن أعطيه حق غيره. والحديث الشريف يقول لعمر أخاك ظالماً و مظلوما، ضالما أن تمنعه من ارتكاب الخطأ،إذا كان قول "لا" يوقف مصرة فأخلاقياً يجب أن نقوم به وهنا يمكن أن نفرق بين القادة والآخرين، حيث أن القائد صاحب موقف ولديه القدرة أن يتخذ موقف أما الآخر فيقول لك أنه يريد السلام ويمكن أن يتصرف بمحاباة ويمدح شخص ويزين له الأمور حتى يكسب ود. عندما تعارض شخص يجب أن تعارضه باحترام وتقدير، نحن كمحابين أعتقد أن واحدة من هذه الأشياء التي اقتدناها أو ضعفت بعض الشيء، مثل ما أسلف سابقاً أن التعاون والتكاتف سابقاً كان أقوى بكثير. نفس الشيء قول "لا" أيضاً ضعف كثيراً، الآن عددها المجاملات أكثر من اللازم، سابقاً أنا أتذكر أن كبار السن يتجادلون ويتعارضون في كثير من المسائل، وأيضاً كانوا أصحاب مواقف. من عاشرناهم من كبار السن لا يهمهم قول كلمة "لا" حتى لأكبر

مسؤول، الآن كثرت قضية المجاملات كثيراً. لكني أقدر أن أقول لك أن المجاملات ليست على جميع المستويات، أي شخص استطاع أن يصل إلى مسؤولية كبرى لن يستطيع إلا إذا أثبت قدرته على الحزم وقول لاء، قضية المجاملات والتفضيل تعبر صفات عير جيدة ولا تدفع الإنسان إلى موقع المسؤوليه. حدث تغير في المجتمع لكن يجب الإدراك الآن أن هذا التغير يجب أن يرجع الى سابق عهده. كقول "لا" والممارسة مع احترام الكبير والأقم سلطة ليس بالشيء السيء ولا يجب للناس أن تنظره له أنه تقليل للاحترام لشخص معين.

القبلية أيضا، يعني الجانب القبلي كمثال في مؤسستنا الحالية عير موجود، قد يكون هناك نوع من الميول من الجماعة الفلانية وهذا موجود حتى عند الأجانب موجود، فمثلاً أصحاب الجنسية الهولندية مع بعضهم وكذلك الجنسية الإنجليزية، نفس الحال عندما قد تكون بين المناطق الشرقية انا من المنطقة الشرقية وأعرف أحد من المنطقة الشرقية تكون عندي ميول أقرب إليه، لكن هذا الأمر ليس محدد رئيسي. انا في التقييم واختيار الناس للمهام والمناصب والأعمال والترقيات لا تدخل الآن من الواضح انه بدأ يضمحل بدرجة كبيرة جداً، حتى اني كنت أتحدث مع زميلي يوم أمس أن التشكيلة الوزارية الجديدة لا يوجد بها شيوخ سوى اثنان، سابقاً كان الأعلبية العظمى شيوخ باعتبار أن القبلية مشترطة وكان لها ميزة إضافية على الآخرين. في عمان أعتقد أن هناك توجه ونحن مجتمع متجانس والشخص أقرب له أهل بيته ومن له جماعته

س: من وجهة نظرك ، لماذا نعتقد أننا نسمع أحيانا عن قادة غير أخلاقيين في المنظمات العمانية؟ لماذا يحدث ذلك برأيك (بناء على ما تم نشره في وسائل الإعلام الرسمية)؟

حدث توجه للفردية والمصالح الشخصية سواءً لكسب مال أو ثروة أو سلطة أو حتى وجاهة، فهنا التوجه والتغير الحاصل جعل بعض الناس يتبعون مبدأ " الغاية تبرر الوسيلة" وفي هذه الحالة هذا الشخص ينظر للنتيجة التي سيحصل عليها سواءً منصب أو سلطة أو مال وعيرها فبالتالي سيتجاوز عن هذه الأمور، حتى أنه أيضا حصل نوع

من normalization فأصبحت الأمور عادية إلى حد ما والجميع يقوم بها بحرفية، وأنا ليس لدي القدرة على مساعدة الجميع ولست مثال أخلاقي. بعض السلوكيات للأسف يتساهل الناس وأصبحت عادية. هناك بعض الأشخاص على مختلف المستويات أنا أعتبر سلوكهم غير أخلاقي لأنه يطبق مبدأ الغاية تبرر الوسيلة، مثلا يكسب ماله بشتى الطرق ولا يهمه إن كانت هذه الطرق صحيحة وهذا لا يتمائى مع الفلسفة الإسلامية. هذا الأمر موجود ولا أقول إنه غير موجود.

■ End of document

Appendix D: An example sample of the coded segments of one participant's transcript

MAXQDA 2022

القائد الناجح هو من يستمع للأراء الأخرين و يبني قراراته بناءا على التشاور مع الأخرين.

Code: ● Hybrid ethical leadership > Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation)   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 8

بالاضافة الى العمل بروح الفريق و اعداد و تأهيل الفريق ليكونو قادة في المستقبل.

Code: ● Hybrid ethical leadership > Servant   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 8

نعم الأخلاق مهمة جدا في كل المجتمعات. الاخلاق هي الاساس الذي يبني شخصية القائد. عندما يكون القائد ذو خلق سوف يسهل ذلك مهمته و يكون عند حسن ظن موظفيه. ويحضى باحترام و محبة موظفيه حتى و ان لم يكن ملم بالعمل من الناحية العملية.

Code: ● From Islamic values to Value-based leadership > Islamic values   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 10

الخلق الذاتي و أن يكون صادقا مع نفسه ، عندما يكون القائد صادقا مع نفسه سيكون صادقا مع الاخرين. حيث يتعامل مع الأخرين بوجه واحد وليس بوجهين.

Code: ● Value-based leadership > integrity   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 12

حسن الاستماع للأخرين خصوصا مع التقدم التكنولوجي. الموظفين في الوقت الحالي على اطلاع جيد. ينبغي على القائد أن يستمع لهم لتحقيق الاستفادة العامه.

Code: ● Hybrid ethical leadership > Participative (Shura, Mutual Consultation)   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 13

القيادة الاخلاقية هي حسن التعامل مع الأخرين و معاملتهم كما تحب أن يعاملوك والالتزام بالقيم الأخلاقية ومراقبة الله في السر والعلن.

Code: ● Monotheistic mind-set (Self-awareness and self-control) > commitment to inner values   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 15

يعتمد على درجة الخطأ. يمكن حل بعض المشكلات غير الأخلاقية بمجرد الجلوس مع الشخص أما اذا كانت درجة الخطأ كبيره و فيها ضرر بالمؤسسه يجب اتخاذ الاجراءات القانونية. اتباع القوانين المحدده من المؤسسة التي تعمل بها هو الاسلم و الأفضل حيث بأتباع ذلك تحمي نفسك و مؤسستك و الموظفين الأخرين. بشكل عام لم أواجه خلال فترة عملي أنه تم اتخاذ اجراءات تأديبيه ضد أحد الموظفين.

Code: ● Hybrid ethical leadership > A value-oriented   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 17

كنت جديدا في أحد الاقسام وطلب مني اعداد التقارير السنوية للموظفين، عند الأطلاع على التقارير السابقة وجدت أن أحد التقارير لأحد الموظفين معي ليس جيدا. هنا قررت الجلوس مع الشخص ووضع خطه عملية له لتطويره و تأهيله لمدة سنه كامله. من خلال المتابعه خلال السنه و التشجيع استطاع هذا الشخص من النهوض بمستواه، و في العام التالي حصل على افضل تقرير. تمكنت تحويله من موظف ضعيف المستوى الى موظف ممتاز.

Code: ● Hybrid ethical leadership > Humanistic   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 21

المرونه ومراعاة الظروف الشخصيه . كما ذكرت سابقا الى الان لم أقم باتخاذ الاجراءات القانونيه ضد اي موظف . جميع الاشكاليات تم حلها بالتفاهم و النصح و التوجيه. لكن اذا كان هناك ضرر لمصلحة الشركة و السلوك يتكرر باستمرار ولم يجدي النصح و التوجيه عندها اللجوء للاجراءات القانونية.

Code: ● Hybrid ethical leadership > A value-oriented   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 23

الخطأ هو خطأ. لا أستطيع أن أفعل ذلك؛ لا يسمح لي ضميري ورقابتي الذاتية بفعل ذلك. الخوف من الله يمنعني أيضًا من القيام بذلك ، فأنا أعمل على إرضاء الله وليس قائدي. الشخص الذي يأخذ مبدأ مخافة الله قبل أي شخص آخر لن يقوم بأفعال أو تصرفات غير أخلاقية.

Code: ● Islamic values > value of Islam   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 25

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Code: ● Monotheistic mind-set (Self-awareness and self-control) > commitment to inner values   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 25

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Code: ● Monotheistic mind-set (Self-awareness and self-control) > faith in god   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 25

بناء الثقه مع الموظفين. بالاضافة الى توفير البيئه المناسبة للموظفين للعمل بأريحية . عند توفير ذلك سيقدم الموظفين افضل ما لديهم حيث أنهم يشعرون أنهم محل ثقه.

Code: ● Value-based leadership > integrity   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 27

بالاضافة الى تقدير ظروف الموظفين و تلمس حاجاتهم. بمعنى ليس الاهتمام فقط بانجاز المهام المطلوبه ولكن النظر الى ظروف الموظفين و الاستماع لهم ومساعدتهم في انجاز مهامهم. عندما يشعر الموظف بأن القاده يشعرون بهم و يقفون الى جانبهم وبالتالي ينعكس ذلك الى زيادة الانتاجية و الالتزام بالعمل.

العادات والتقاليد. أرى أن العادات والتقاليد التي نشأت عليها شكلت شخصيتي بشكل إيجابي. احترام الآخرين وتقديرهم قيم أخلاقية ، وهذه القيم موروثة من عاداتنا وتقاليدنا.التربيه ايضا . نحن كعمانيين معروفين بالاخلاق. البيئه العمانية تساعد على أن يكون الفرد صاحب خلق. العماني يجد نفسه مجبرا للظهور بالشكل الأخلاقي الجيد و يكون سفيرا لتمثيل مجتمعه خير تمثيل

أرى ان العادات و التقاليد التي نشأت عليها قد شكلت شخصيتي بالشكل الايجابي. لا شك الخطأ وارد ولكن الألتزام بالقيم المستقاه من الدين و العادات و التقاليد و عكسها على التعامل مع الموظفين بلا شك سيكون مردودها ايجابي و سترضي شريحة كبيره من موظفينك و ستكون مثال يحتذى. اضافة الى انك ستنال رضى الله حيث أن ديننا الحنيف يحض على الالتزام بالأخلاق و القيم.

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المجتمع العماني متسامح بطبيعته و متساعد، ولكن للتسامح و التساعد حدود. يقول الله تعالى"""" وقل اعملو و سيرى الله عملكم ورسوله و المؤمنون"""" فالقائد لا بد أن يكون صاحب مبدأ لأنه يدرك في قرارة نفسه أن الله سبحانه و تعالي يرى عمله. فاذا كان هذا التسامح و التساعد يضر بمصلحة الشركة و الموظفين الأخرين يجب على القائد أن يكون صاحب قرار ويراعي الله في قراراته. فمثلا اذا طلب منك أحد معارفك للقيام بشئ يضر بمصلحة الشركة.

المجتمع العماني متسامح بطبيعته و متساعد، ولكن للتسامح و التساعد حدود. يقول الله تعالى"""" وقل اعملو و سيرى الله عملكم ورسوله و المؤمنون"""" فالقائد لا بد أن يكون صاحب مبدأ لأنه يدرك في قرارة نفسه أن الله سبحانه و تعالي يرى عمله. فاذا كان هذا التسامح و التساعد يضر بمصلحة الشركة و الموظفين الأخرين يجب على القائد أن يكون صاحب قرار ويراعي الله في قراراته

ولكن للتسامح و التساعد حدود. يقول الله تعالى"""" وقل اعملو و سيرى الله عملكم ورسوله و المؤمنون"

مثلا اذا طلب منك أحد معارفك للقيام بشئ يضر بمصلحة الشركة. على القائد توضيح الأمر للشخص الذي قام بالطلب بان هناك اجراءات متبعه و يحاول اقناعه بكل أحترام. في حالة انه اقتنع كان بها واذا لم يقتنع الامر متروك له، في بيئة العمل ، يجب على القائد الفصل بين التزاماته الاجتماعية والتزاماته الوظيفية. الوظيفة هي مسؤولية مقدسة. يجب على القائد الالتزام بها ؛ خلاف ذلك ، سيفقد ثقة فريقه. قد يُنظر إلى بعض الممارسات التي يحفزها تحقيق العلاقات الاجتماعية ، مثل المحسوبية ، على أنها ممارسات غير أخلاقية. لذلك ، يجب على القائد تحديد الخطوط الحمراء والالتزام بقيمه الداخلية ، حتى لا يتم المساس بمصلحة العمل على حساب تحقيق العلاقات الاجتماعية.

Code: ● Tension between Islamic values and Social norms > clash   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 33

الأجيال تتغير، الموظفين حاليا على اطلاع وبالتالي لا بد على القائد من الاستماع لهم. على سبيل المثال تم توظيف موظف جديد معي بالقسم. رأيت أن هذا الموظف لديه امكانيات جيده تختلف عن الامكانيات التي كنت امتلكها قبل 13 سنه وقت التحاقي بالعمل . بناء على ذلك اخذت بأراء هذا الموظف من تطوير ألية العمل . النهج القيادي القديم القائم على التسلسل الهرمي لا يصلح حاليا . فلا بد من التحاور مع الموظفين و الاستفادة منهم، وهذا يساعد ايضا على خلق الثقه في بيئة العمل.

Code: ● Paternalistic leadership > Hierarchical nature of Omani culture   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 35

في بعض الاحيان اجد نفسي محرجا. ولكن وجب التفريق بين مصلحة العمل و بين العلاقات الاجتماعية. المرونه مطلوبة في الأمور التي لا تضر بمصلحة العمل.

Code: ● Paternalistic leadership > Social relationships   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 37

في بعض الاحيان اجد نفسي محرجا. ولكن وجب التفريق بين مصلحة العمل و بين العلاقات الاجتماعية. المرونه مطلوبة في الأمور التي لا تضر بمصلحة العمل.

Code: ● Tension between Islamic values and Social norms > clash   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 37

القوانين موجوده ولكن اتباع القوانين مطلب اساسي خصوصا من القادة الذين هم في موضع مسؤوليه لأنهم قدوة. بعض القادة يضن أن القوانين لا تنطبق عليه. و على الموظفين ايضا ابداء الأراء و التنبيه عندما يروا أن هناك خطأ و أن لا يلتزموا الصمت.

Code: ● Paternalistic leadership > Hierarchical nature of Omani culture   Weight score: 0
X3 (M), Pos. 39