Connecting the dots of Ethical Leadership and Job Satisfaction: Moderated Mediation Effect of Co-Worker Undermining and Employee Engagement.

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Abstract

　　In the past studies, numerous scholars have given their focus to examining the impact of ethical leadership on the organization's work outcomes. This study investigates the influence of coworker undermining between ethical leadership and employees' engagement and draws the Social Rule Theory in a broader perspective for reducing the negative social interaction in the workplace. The purpose of this study is to check the effect of social undermining on the work outcomes of the organization by analyzing the job satisfaction of employees. We suggested that ethical leadership would be more influential on the employees' engagement (cognitive, affective, and emotional) by using another theory, Social Learning Theory, which will engage the employees with their organization and promote a high level of satisfaction the employees with their jobs. Coworker undermining is assessed as a moderator between ethical leadership and employees' engagement it is highly problematic for leaders when it will exist in their workplace. For analysis of the model, administrated 515 questionnaires were used which were collected from the employees working in educational institutions. Cross-sectional and non-Probability Convenience sampling technique was used for the data collection. The finding of our study has a fruitful effect on enhancing the employees' engagement by using effective ethical leadership and reducing the effect of coworker undermining. However, employees' engagement has a significant relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction but another hand positive effects will be disappeared in these relations due to the existence of coworker undermining between mediators and ethical leadership.
Keyword: Ethical Leadership, Coworker Undermining, Employees' Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Social Rule Theory, Social Learning Theory.

1. Introduction

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Educational institutions are the main hub for transferring the cultures, norms, and values from one generation to another. These institutions are essential for a country's social and economic growth. The economy's growth and development are intertwined with educational institutions. Educational institutions play a vital role in transmitting cultural values and norms, crucial for a nation's social and economic development (Ishchy, 2020). Stevens and Weale (2003) underscores the positive relationship between education, economic growth, and societal prosperity and the current study delves into the intricate dynamics of ethical leadership, coworker undermining, employee engagement, and job satisfaction within educational institutions. The future aim of education is to bring the climate change and give awareness related to education for creativity and sustainable development (Verčič, 2021). To meet goals for enhancing employee performance, leaders must be aware of the diverse strengths and shortcomings of their team members. Consequently, businesses need to be able to develop and enhance performance in their communities (Susanto et al., 2023). Employee engagement can only be achieved by employee satisfaction, fair behavior, and an appraisal, all of which will increase the employee's performance (Riyanto et al., 2021). Due to the high challenges and quickly changing environments, educational institutes are facing high provocations for improving their working quality (Ngoc et al., 2021). When an organization's academic staff perceives a lack of support by their leaders then their motivation level will drop, and they would become less engaged at their work which leads to dissatisfaction. By this, employees ultimately go for leaving the job or changing positions (Seyfang & Smith, 2007).

At this stage, the behavior of ethical leaders can help to attain this high level of organizational commitment by encouraging employees' identification, loyalty, and engagement in behavior (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016). Khasawneh et al. (2016) stated that future studies should concentrate on the connection between ethical leadership and employee outcomes including loyalty to the organization, fulfillment at work, and workplace misbehavior. The social learning concept explains why various leadership attributes and cultural factors are linked to followers' views of a leader as ethical. Learning theory determined the outcomes and results of ethical leadership (Bandura, 1986). Social Learning theory helps to clarify how it would be more effective and credible for getting more attention (Trevino, 1986). According to Guo et al. (2023), ethical leadership plays an important role in employee engagement and employee ethical work behavior. It provides a source of instruction and support for enhancing the leaders' attractiveness (Bandura, 1986). Ethical leadership is linked to developing the employees' attitudes by using "Social Rule Theory". Also provide clear direction related to successfully managing tasks, acting fairly, and connecting with followers and examined that both ethical culture and climate were significantly correlated with the employee's attitudes (Treviño et al., 1998). Wang and Xu (2019) indicated the relationship between ethical leadership and employee attitudes is much more needed for the completion.

This study contributes in several ways to existing research on EL by examining the mediating role of employees' engagement with three different dimensions (cognitive, behavior, and emotion) which will identify; how employees' engagement will be related to job satisfaction (Ng & Feldman, 2015). Firstly, this study will examine employees'

engagement in three different dimensions (Cognitive, Behavior, and Emotional) between ethical leadership and job satisfaction in employees working in the educational sector. Secondly, this study will also examine the effect of coworkers undermining on ethical leadership and employees' engagement which actually creates a negative influence and ethical leadership will not be effective as it should be (Stouten et al., 2013). Employee's health is also disturbed due to the high influence of coworker undermining because it does not create a good impact on the employee's work and performance. Limited attention has been directed towards ethical leadership and job satisfaction with three different prospective of employees' engagement related to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional with the existence of coworker undermining on employees working in the educational sector which is specifically the gap of this research because previous studies do not have much research related to this issue.

According to scholars, the organization and its supervisors are largely to blame for giving less focus on the employees' engagement with different prospective (Parkinson & McBain, 2013). According to Joo et al. (2022), there is a dearth of research on the relationship between leadership and job engagement, therefore this study attempts to shed light on how moral leadership might assist workers increase their level of engagement at work. So, this study shed the light on the employee's engagement in three different dimensions for more effective work of the employees which is the main motto of every organization. Employees' engagement will be diminished because of not being fair to their employees, not acknowledging them as an individual, not addressing their contributions towards the success of the organization, and not giving them positive feedback for encouraging and supporting them (Parkinson & McBain, 2013). This study aims to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the relationships between ethical leadership, coworker undermining, employee engagement, and job satisfaction within educational institutions.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Ethical Leadership, Employee's Engagement (Cognitive, Emotional and Behavior), Coworker Undermining and Job Satisfaction

Ethical leadership differs from other types of positive leadership, such as transformative and genuine leadership, in terms of theory. Leaders that uphold ethics provide a solid example for their followers and treat them with dignity. Numerous academics characterize them as sincere, compassionate, and impartial decision-makers who are also engaged in moral matters that support subordinates' ethics and engagement by offering incentives, recognition, and sanctions based on their actions (Guo et al., 2023; Idrees et al., 2022). Unlike transformational leadership, which focuses primarily on role modeling, ethical leadership has a transactional component, which includes the application of retribution or discipline for unethical behavior or conduct (Stouten et al., 2013). Ethical leaders have a significant impact on their subordinates' behavior. Ethical leadership has been shown to result in a variety of favorable results for followers, including supervisor satisfaction (Brown et al., 2005). According to social learning theory, a cognitive process in which the leader's behavior offers information to help make sense of the social context is one way that the leader's behavior helps people

understand the social environment (Dust et al., 2018). The psychological well-being of those who are the direct targets of rude coworkers is reported to be poorer (Lim et al., 2008). Research has proven that targets of workplace incivility have higher levels of anxiety and sadness, where experiencing unfavorable interactions among coworkers causes emotional exhaustion (Totterdell et al., 2012). In moral leadership, we claim that specific elements of the moral person and moral manager explain the impacts of ethical leadership, based on social learning theory (Brown et al., 2005). Social learning theory, in particular, demonstrates how ethical leadership changes employee roles and elicits ethical conduct from them (Kirkman et al., 2009). The most important impact of ethical leadership is that it gives followers a voice (Brown et al., 2005). From the standpoint of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), leaders that actively establish equitable workplaces serve as role models for their subordinates. There is a positive link between ethical leadership and job happiness in the employee's work (Mostafa et al., 2021). An employee's effective evaluation of their working conditions and environment is referred to as job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a complicated issue that is seen differently by each individual. Although it is distinct from motivation, it is connected to it. It affects internal feelings and influences attitude (Iram et al., 2020). According to research, higher levels of job satisfaction are linked to job performance outcomes such as customer orientation (Judge & Bono, 2001).

H1: Ethical leadership is positively associated with Job Satisfaction.

2.2. Relationships between Ethical leadership and Employee Engagement (Cognitive, Emotional, and behavior).

Employee engagement is a broad term that refers to workers' absolute commitment to completing a given task. Consequently, a firm should promote employee engagement if it hopes to maintain growth and boost its credibility (Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2023). Taking on an ethical leadership role is one approach to get an employee interested in their work. Ethical leadership shows a positive effect on employee engagement, second by (Islam et al., 2023). When employees will be fully satisfied with their working expectations and positively engaged with their job then automatically it will create a significant connection of the employees with their organizations (Rich et al., 2010). Through equality, justice, faith, reassurance, communication, and involvement in decision-making, ethical leaders exhibit ethical ideals and behaviors and are seen as role models by their subordinates (Ahmer, 2020).

All kinds of motivations, appraisals, rewards, and autonomy powers related to their job requirements are engaged with the employee's behavior and employee's engagement that is in three different dimensions (cognitive, affective, and emotional) involvements (Rich et al., 2010). An effective ethical leadership style will manage the employee's entitlement in a way that will more likely to get the employee's engagement 'cognitive, physical and emotional resources with the job. Brown et al. (2005) determined that there is a positive connection between ethical leadership and employee engagement related to their working performance and their job satisfaction which indicates effective leadership style which is also strongly connected with the employee's working and their commitments with the organization. Employees will be extremely focused, attentive, and

concentrated when they arrive at their workplace during the performance, they need some support and care from their leaders in the form of appreciation and also need guidance for more effectiveness that would automatically lead to motivation level and self-satisfaction in their mind. It is determined by Kahn (1992), if the employees would be satisfied with their job then automatically it would create a significant impact on the employee's working but for satisfaction need to check the engagement level of the employees in different dimensions. Employees who are physically engaged with their work positively will more willing to contribute their physical resources toward the organization's goal but for that employee's engagement and satisfaction require some rewards, recognition, and a strong relationship with their higher management (Kahn, 1992). Due to the vigor, absorption, and devotion of the following three qualities, engagement at work is a good attitude towards the work (Klasson & Rehman, 2021).

H2a: Affective Engagement positively mediates the relationship between Ethical leadership and Job Satisfaction.

H2b: Cognitive Engagement positively mediates the Association between Ethical Leadership and Job Satisfaction.

H2c: Behavior Engagement positively mediates the Correlation between Ethical Leadership and Job Satisfaction.

2.3. The Moderating Role of Coworker Undermining

Undermining activities such as gossiping, ignoring, or purposefully delaying others' work are misinterpreted as a lack of respect and concern, and hence violate social standards (Miller, 2001). Positive encounters tend to have less influence than negative ones. Consequently, an employee is more likely to have a negative impact from misbehaving coworkers than from well-behaved ones. Coworker undermining behaviors include things like being silent while someone is hurting, causing hurt sentiments, failing to aid when required, and providing false information. Such actions not only put victimized individuals at risk by going against their expectations of acceptable workplace behavior, but they also pose a threat to the company as a whole (Mostafa et al., 2023). As a result, disgruntled employees believe they are victims of interpersonal unfairness (Duffy et al., 2006). One technique to alleviate the cognitive dissonance that comes with being treated unfairly is to practice mindfulness (Stone & Cooper, 2001). While keeping morality, is to rewire their brains and rationalize continuing to engage in the same bad behaviors (Zitek et al., 2010). According to Social Rule Theory Henderson and Argyle (1986), ethical leaders achieve this through caring for their subordinates, treating them fairly, and adhering to the social rules that are particular to the leader-follower relationship. Disengagement is defined as a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral separation from work due to the coworker undermining. Based on the social rule theory, suggest that coworker social undermining is a type of rule-breaking behavior that undermines ethical leadership effectiveness (Mostafa et al., 2021). Negative relations of coworkers will be weaker between the Ethical Leadership and Employee's Engagement (Cognitive, Emotional, and behavior). Social Rule Theory, guide the relationships between the subordinates and leader.

H3a: Coworker undermining moderates the indirect relationship between Ethical Leadership and job satisfaction via affective engagement such that mediating relationship of affective engagement will be weaker under high than low Coworker undermining.

H3b: Coworker undermining moderates the indirect relationship between Ethical Leadership and job satisfaction via cognitive engagement, such that mediating relationship of cognitive engagement relationship will be weaker under high than low Coworker undermining.

H3c: Coworker undermining moderates the indirect relationship between Ethical Leadership and job satisfaction via behavioral engagement such that the mediating relationship of behavioral engagement will be weaker under high than low Coworker undermining.
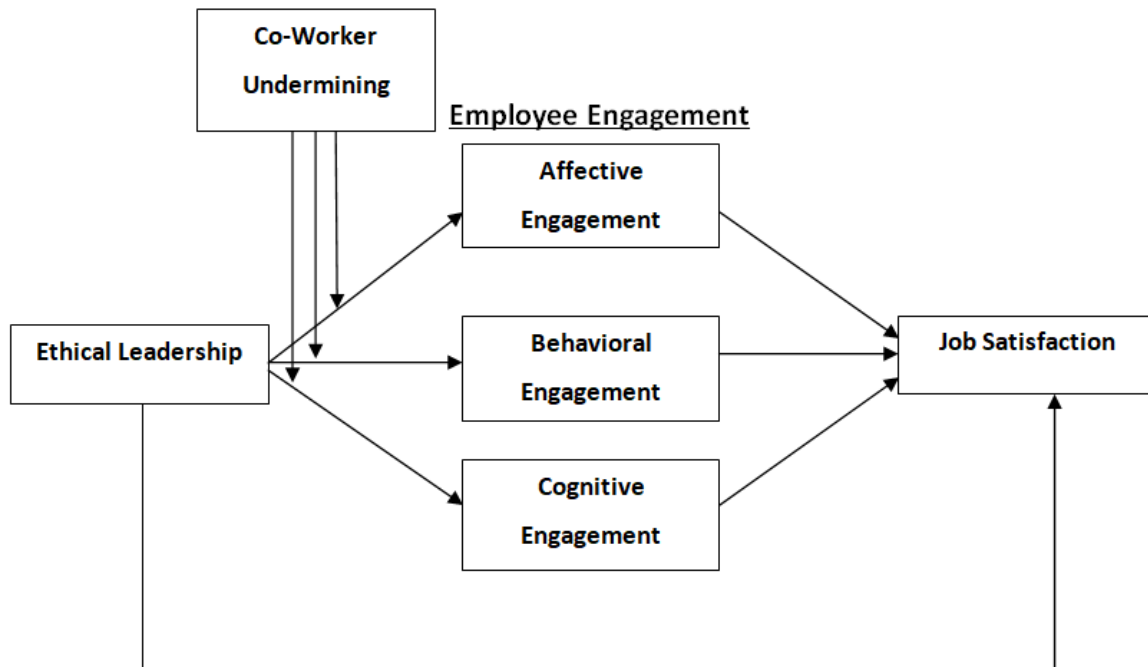

Figure 1: Research Model

3. Methodology

It is based on a descriptive study for explaining the relationship between the variables that are used in this research as independent variables (Ethical Leadership), Dependents (Job Satisfaction), mediators (Employee Engagement in three different dimensions such as Cognitive, Affective, and Behavior) and moderator (Coworker Undermining). A quantitative approach was used for this research. The purpose of this survey is to obtain the research objectives and questions. Research strategies provide the guidelines that how we can collect the data from the desired participants. It compares and contrasts the participants' behaviors and attitudes related to our research. Researchers' interferences were very minimal and the data was collected naturally and neutrally. The interference was only limited to the distribution of the questionnaire to

concerned participants. Primary data source and Cross-sectional study used for this research. It is determined by Dormann and Griffin (2015), that short periods are more methodologically beneficial than a long period and also helped us for reducing the impact of contaminated elements that may cause of negative relationship with the variables (Kovjanic et al., 2012). The sample population of our study is the employees of educational institutions in Pakistan. Data is collected from the employees working in educational institutions of the Gujranwala Division. Access to educational institutions is obtained by personal contacts and references. Heads of educational institutions took the responsibility for floating the questionnaires into their relevant departments. The non-Probability Convenience sampling technique was used for the data collection. The questionnaire was answered by 540 respondents out of 700 distributed questionnaires which were delivered through Google Form from the different educational employees but due to some missing information, 25 were eliminated and 515 were selected and finalized after scrutinizing for result analysis. For this process-wee keek extension was given to respondents for the questionnaire, and reminders were also given at the end day of that week. The rate of the response to the questionnaire was (74%) which is considered accurate and suitable for the data analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Primary data source and Cross-sectional study used for this research. It is determined by Dormann and Griffin (2015), that short periods are more methodologically beneficial than a long period and also helped us for reducing the impact of contaminated elements that may cause of negative relationship with the variables (Kovjanic et al., 2012). The questionnaire used for the data collection helps to measure respondents' attitudes and tendencies (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2016). It saves time and permits the respondents to fill it out without any researchers' interference (Babbie, 2013). The questionnaire was developed in two different sections: Section A and Section B.

4. Analysis and Results

The study utilized Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for testing the consistency of the model and employed regression analysis and mediation analysis to assess the relationships between variables. The following sections detail the outcomes based on the designed statistical methods.

4.1. Measurement

The questionnaire was conducted in English. A pilot study was also administrated to 20 employees (who were working in educational institutions) to test the questionnaire and identify no major issues. Ordinal category (Five Likert) scales were used from strongly disagree to strongly agree, ranging from 1 to 5. All measurements are based on developed prior research and adaptive for analyzing the item scales. The perception of the employees related to the ethical behavior of their leaders was measured by the ethical leadership scale that consists of 5 items (Brown et al., 2005). Following examples of items are; My Boss disciplines employees who violate ethical standards and My Boss actively listens to what employees have to say. Ethical Leadership (Cronbach's a=0.817) shows a sufficient level of reliability Perception of the employees related to their job satisfaction was measured by job satisfaction developed by (Lawler et al., 1979) which consists of three items scale. Following examples of an item are; All in all, I am satisfied with my job and overall, I am satisfied with my current job. Job Satisfaction (Cronbach's a= 0.824)

demonstrated the effective reliability. The perception of the employees related to their coworkers was measured by the coworker undermining scale that is consist of 5 items (Duffy et al., 2002). Following examples of an item are; do your co-workers delay work to make you look bad or slow you down? and do your co-workers talk bad about you behind your back?. Coworker Undermining (Cronbach's a = 0.867) shows acceptable reliability. Employee Engagement was measured in three different dimensions (cognitive, affective, and behavior) by a cognitive engagement scale that is consist of 5 items scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Following examples of an item are; I concentrate on my job when I am at my work. Similarly effective and behavior engagements were measured by these questions like I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job and I do more than is expected by me at my job. Cognitive Engagement (Cronbach's a =0.841), Affective Engagement (Cronbach's a= 0.839) and Behavior Engagement (Cronbach's a= 0.827) dimensions signified the acceptable reliability.

4.2. Common Bias Method

For this study, the following recommended measures are used for overcoming common bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). First, for a clear understanding, avoid using complicated language. Items were examined, revised, and pretested for avoiding confusion. Second, Requested respondents to fill out the survey with their honesty and informed them there is no wrong or right answer (Lindell & Whitney, 2001).

4.3. Data Analysis

We conducted the cleaning of data for unengaged responses and missing values which were filtered after collecting. 25 respondents out of 540 were having some missing data and unengaged responses which were more than 15% because these were reducing the validity of the data and standard deviation was also used for determining the missing values and after scrutinizing 515 responses were selected for analysis.

4.4. Participants and Procedures

Demographic data is a significant part of every research that helps for getting the awareness of employees' perceptions (Alamelu et al., 2014). The collected data identify the individual characteristics of each respondent because it is related to different demographic features such as age, gender, qualification, and service length (McIntyre, 2005).

4.5. Results

Six latent factors (Ethical Leadership, Coworker Undermining, Job Satisfaction, Cognitive Engagement, Affective Engagement, and Behavioral Engagement) with 18 items were included for analysis of this study. Results indicate that 51% of the 515 respondents were males and around 75% of respondent's a higher education in the survey. The majority of the respondents (52%) worked in the public sector. Table 1 shows the detailed and complete information of the respondents.

Table 1: The demographic profile

Profile	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	51.%
	Female	49%
Education	Bachelor and below	25%
	Masters	25%
	MPhil	33%
	PhD and Above	14%
Sector	Public	52%
	Private	26%
	Semi-Government	22%

4.6. Normality Test

Before moving on to data analysis, the foremost thing is that we have to check the data normality and equal distribution. Skewness and kurtosis were used for checking the normality. The data of this study is observed that the values of Skewness and kurtosis are between -2 and +2 which is acceptable (Kline, 2023) which is given below in table 2.

Table 2: Skewness and Kurtosis of Data

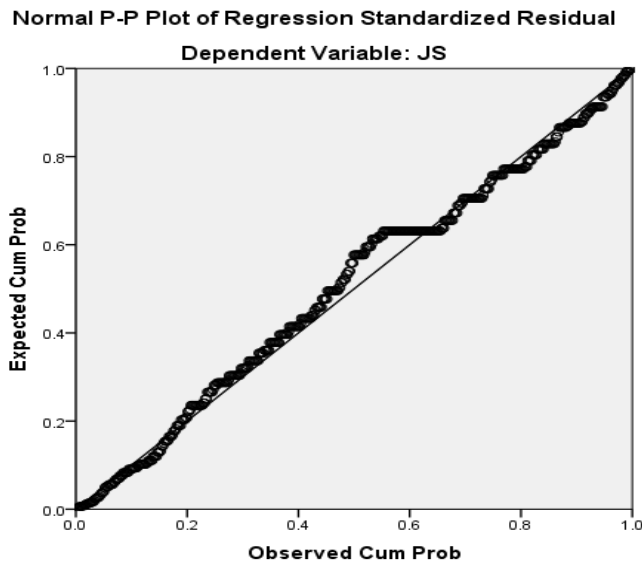|	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	**Std. Error**	**Statistic**	**Std. Error**
EL	-.642	.108	-.107	.216
Co_Udm	.082	.108	-1.073	.216
JS	-.685	.108	-.104	.216
Cog_Eng	-1.051	.108	.576	.216
Aff_Eng	-.977	.108	.396	.216
Beh_Eng	-1.171	.108	1.060	.216

Figure 2

After checking the normality of data, we draw the P-P Plot for examining the equal distribution of the data. As we can see that there is equally distributed.

4.7. Measurement Model

For evaluating the reliability of the instruments, Cronbach's alphas were proposed to measure by (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) and composite reliability was intended to calculate by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For checking the validity, Standard Factor Loading (SFL) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used. All the measurements were calculated by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for testing the consistency of the model for the suggested hypothesis. Six latent measurements variables were used in this research for correlation analysis (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Alpha values of all variables dropped in the range of (0.810 to 0. 860) which is more than the minimum requirement that is 0.7 and also checked the latent variables through the Composite Reliability. Standardized Factor loading dropped in the range from (0.719 to 0.889) of all items which are acceptable and significant at the level of 0.01. Only one item value of (SFL=0.6hat is also acceptable. Overall, SFL items value have acceptable validity. All item's values of Average Variance Extracted dropped in the range of (0.579 to 0.759) which is acceptable and satisfactory because all values of AVE are greater than the minimum range which is 0.5 that shows the extreme variation in the latent construct variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3: Internal Consistency, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Ethical Leadership	EL1	0.719	0.872	0.579
	EL2	0.672		
	EL3	0.794		
	EL4	0.805		
	EL5	0.807		
Coworker Undermining	CU1	0.811	0.898	0.637
	CU2	0.800		
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.863	0.897	0.743
	JS2	0.840		
	JS3	0.876		
Cognitive Engagement	CE1	0.876	0.904	0.756
	CE2	0.854		
	CE3	0.881		
Affective Engagement	EE1	0.877	0.903	0.752
	EE2	0.849		
	EE3	0.883		
Behavior Engagement	BE1	0.865	0.897	0.742
	BE2	0.855		
	BE3	0.873		

Note: *CR =Composite reliability, AVE =Average variance extracted*

Table 4: Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	p	LLCI	ULCI
.4732	.000	.394	.553

Table 4 is based on the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction which indicated that Ethical leadership has a strong significant relationship with job satisfaction (Coefficient=.473 and P=0.000) which is strongly associated with hypothesis 1 and is satisfactory for study purposes. Table 4 indicate that ethical leadership is more likely to persuade toward job satisfaction positively.

H1: Ethical leadership is positively linked with Job Satisfaction **is accepted.**

Table 5: Outcome Variable - Affective Engagement

Model Summary

R	R-sq	F	df1	df2	p
0.558	0.311	76.068	3.000	505.000	0.000

Model					
	Co-eff	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Constant	0.627	1.657	0.098	-0.116	1.371
EL	0.8945	9.871	0.000	0.716	1.072

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):					
Co_Udm	**Effect**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
1.000	0.776	12.061	0.000	0.649	0.902
3.000	0.540	12.912	0.000	0.458	0. 622
4.000	0.422	7.215	0.000	0.307	0.537

Table 5 is based on the relationship between ethical leadership and affective engagement which indicates that Ethical leadership has a significant relation with affective engagement (Coefficient=.895, P=0.000, and R square=.311) which is positively associated with hypothesis 2a which indicates that ethical leadership is more likely inclined toward affective engagement.

H2a: Affective Engagement positively mediates the relationship between Ethical leadership and Job Satisfaction **is accepted**.

Table 6 is based on the relationship between ethical leadership and cognitive engagement which indicates that Ethical leadership has a significant relation with cognitive engagement (Coefficient= .797, P=0.000, and R square=.309) that is positively associated with hypothesis 2b. This table indicates that ethical leadership is more likely persuaded toward cognitive which is accepted.

H2b: Cognitive Engagement positively mediates the Association between Ethical Leadership and Job Satisfaction **is accepted.**

Table 7 is based on the relationship between ethical leadership and behavioral engagement, shows the insignificant relation with behavioral engagement (Coefficient=0.855, P=0.000, and R square=0.261) that is not positively associated with hypothesis 2c.

H2c: Behavior Engagement positively mediates the Correlation between Ethical Leadership and Job Satisfaction **is accepted.**

Table 6: Outcome Variable - Cognitive Engagement

Model Summary					
R	**R-sq**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
0.563	0.309	75.446	3.000	505.000	0.000
Model					
	Co-eff	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Constant	1.195	3.137	0.018	0.446	1. 943
EL	0.796	8.732	0.000	0. 617	1. 975
Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):					
Co_Udm	**Effect**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
1.000	0.715	11.041	0.000	0.587	0.842
3.000	0.553	13.140	0.000	0.470	0. 635
4.000	0.472	8.020	0.000	0.356	0.587

Table 7: Outcome Variable: Cognitive Engagement

Model Summary					
R	**R-sq**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
0.5113	0.261	59.577	3.000	505.000	0.000
Model					
	Co-eff	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
Constant	0.735	1. 859	0.636	-0.417	1.512
EL	0.855	9.040	0.000	0. 669	1.041
Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):					
Co_Udm	**Effect**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
1.000	0.734	10. 927	0.000	0. 602	0.867
3.000	0.492	11.275	0.000	0.407	0. 578
4.000	0.371	6.083	0.000	0.251	0.492

Hypothesis 3a, 3b, and 3c all are accepted, this hypothesis was related to examining the relationship between ethical leadership and employees' engagement (Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral) under the coworker undermining. Tables 5, 6, and 7 show that the effect of ethical leadership will be reduced with increasing the impact of coworker undermining.

Table 8: Report Accepted and Rejected Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Result
Hypothesis 1	Accepted
Hypothesis 2a	Accepted
Hypothesis 2b	Accepted
Hypothesis 2c	Accepted
Hypothesis 3a	Accepted
Hypothesis 3b	Accepted
Hypothesis 3c	Accepted

5. Discussion

The study effectively interprets the results, emphasizing the role of employee engagement as a mediating factor between ethical leadership and job satisfaction. To enhance practical applicability, further discussions on specific strategies for organizations to foster employee engagement in the context of ethical leadership would be beneficial. The first and foremost purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of employees' engagement which is playing the role of mediating with three dimensions for checking the connection between ethical leadership and job satisfaction. Moreover, we found that ethical leadership positively relates to job satisfaction. This study found that was not a strong relationship of the employees' engagement between ethical leadership and job satisfaction because of social undermining. Due to these reasons, disengagement will exist and job satisfaction will be reduced (Rathi & Lee, 2016) and tested the employees' engagement relationships with different three dimensions cognitive, behavioral and emotions (Den Hartog, 2015).

The second purpose of this study was to observe the coworker undermining constraints that reduce the effectiveness of ethical leadership. This study found that employees' engagement will be disappeared when the coworker undermining factor will be higher in the working place because undermining basically breaks the rules in the form of misbehavior and biased which is negatively influenced employees' engagement. People give greater focus on negative circumstances instead of on positive things. So, at this stage leader have to give greater focus on employees' requirements and provide care whenever they need it (Carter et al., 2013; Palanski et al., 2014) because high-level of undermining causes health issues that do not create a positive impact on employees' work (Carter et al., 2013). The finding of this research enhances our knowledge and awareness related to the negative interaction of the coworker undermining on the employees working. This study indicated that employee engagement was composed of three different factors (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) which were significantly mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and job satisfaction but due to coworker undermining, the relationship of employee engagement will weaker and less effective as a mediator between the ethical leadership and job satisfaction. We provided the shreds of evidence of reliability, normality, and validity. Asif et al. (2019), in his study found that Ethical Leadership is a pertinent style to make employees more engaged and creative. In another similar study done by Chan (2019), direct and indirect impact of participative leadership on employees' work engagement and job satisfaction was tested. The role of ethical leadership is very much important for promoting positive working environment. According to Shafique et al. (2018), it combines the inspiring nature of job satisfaction with an ethical leadership style, a study indicating that workers' perceptions of ethical leadership are positively connected with their contentment is both unique and theoretically compelling. The finding shows that ethical leadership has a great role in creating fairness, equal distribution, and credibility among the employees (Khasawneh et al., 2016). These outcomes of this research are also determined by (Khalid et al., 2012) who examined the impact the ethical leadership in the educational sectors of Pakistan and same research was also studied in the Indian educational sectors where the authors

investigated that ethical leadership has a positive role in shaping the employee's emotions and behaviors related to their work (Singh & Rathore, 2014).

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the mediating role of employees' engagement (Cognitive, Affective, and Behavior) between ethical leadership and job satisfaction. In addition, the moderating role of coworkers undermining the mediators that are employees' engagement in three different dimensions. All hypotheses of our research were supported and accepted. Also checked the indirect relation of ethical leadership on the job satisfaction via mediator (employees' engagement) and also elicits the hidden hindrances that create via coworker undermining on the employees' services. The findings of our study extend our awareness related to employees' engagement that is strongly connected to ethical leadership and evince that it would be less effective with the existence of coworker undermining. This study is based on two theories (Social Rule Theory and Social Learning Theory) for reducing the impact of coworkers undermining employees' services. Every organization must shape an ethical infrastructure to steer clear of social undermining.

7. Managerial Implication

The article touches upon the positive impact of effective ethical leadership on employee engagement and the mitigating role it plays against co-workers' undermining. Ethical leadership will reduce co-workers undermining by motivating and eliminating malpractices from them, and ethical leaders also spread the climate of ethics throughout the environment, this attitude of ethical leadership will increase employee engagement and it will increase the job satisfaction of the employees. So, by offering practical suggestions for organizations to cultivate ethical leadership practices and foster a positive work environment can enhance the applicability of the study's findings.

8. Limitations and Future Recommendations

Our research has various shortcomings that should be explored further, but three major limitations will be highlighted in this research. The first limitation is that our study is based on educational employees and is limited to a specific group of employees which can be explored in a broader way for more generalizing the findings. Secondly, mono methods and cross-sectional study have been used for the data collection which is particularly based on a quantitative approach with a specific period that may not be sufficient for analyzing the employees' perception in-depth. Future researchers can go for time series and qualitative approaches for examining the relationship of employees' engagement as a mediator between ethical leadership and job satisfaction. Thirdly, our research is specifically focused on ethical leadership and checked the relationship of this leadership style on employees' engagement but the future researchers can also use another leadership style with employees' engagement under the coworker undermining. Lastly, Future researchers can check the effect of "Perceived Organizational Support" as a moderator between ethical leadership and employee engagement.

Ethical Consideration

The authors affirm that this submission complies with the AJSS policies as stated in the Ethical Statement and the Guidelines for Authors. Prior to the study, the

authors gave their full consent, and all procedures followed established ethical guidelines.

Informed Consent

Authors were given the opportunity to make a fully informed, thoughtful, and voluntary decision on their participation in the study without being subjected to any type of force or pressure.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors state that we have not found any competing financial or personal ties that could appear to have influenced the work described in this study.

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9. Reference

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