

THE EFFECT OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AT SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEVELS ON IN-ROLE WORK BEHAVIORS

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Abstract

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Higher education institutions and most contemporary organizations face behavioral issues often related to the leaders' skills and styles of leadership. Ethical leadership is one of those methods that helps to improve the workers' behaviors within the workplace (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Kia, Halvorsen, & Bartram, 2019; Qian & Jian, 2020). This study aims to test ethical leadership's (EL) impact on in-role work behaviors (IWBs) and to test the moderating role of organizational cynicism (OC) between them. The authors conducted this study using a stratified random sample consisting of 400 faculty members working in Egypt's Sohag University. For this analysis, we used simple regression, hierarchical regression moderated analysis (HRMA) and simple slope analysis. Our paper findings reveal that EL had a positive effect on IWBs and that OC modified the positive correlation between them. This meant that the relationship was stronger for workers, who perceived a low level of cynicism, and was weaker for workers who perceived a high level of cynicism. These findings resulted in our conclusions about the respective relationships between EL, IWBs and OC concerning ethical leadership.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership (EL), In-Role Work Behaviors (IWBs), Organizational Cynicism (OC)

Authors' individual contributions: Conceptualization — M.A.A.N.; Methodology — M.A.A.N.; Formal Analysis — M.A.A.N.; Investigation — M.A.A.N.; Writing — Y.L.; Supervision — Y.L.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations including higher education institutions (i.e., universities) face numerous employee and faculty member behavioral problems related to all aspects of organizational performance (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Consequently, the leaders' ability to inspire their colleagues has become an essential part of their roles in ethical leadership (EL). The evolving role of leaders' ethical leadership has forced forward-thinking organizations to focus on developing these skills among their current leaders. It is one of the methods used to increase

the organizations' development and success (Puaschunder, 2018; Sun, 2018; Mrwebi, 2019; Yahiaoui & Ezzine, 2020). Therefore, in this study, the authors try to highlight the effective role of EL and to explain its effects in developing positive behaviors and reducing the presence of negative behaviors, directing officials to pay more attention to this type of leadership and trying to reduce the obstacles that limit its presence.

On the other hand, a review of previous studies on the resulting outcomes of ethical leadership and its impact on providing the management with progressive guidance (Khuntia & Suar, 2004; Brown et al., 2005; Toor & Ofori, 2009; Ogunfowora, 2009;

Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009; Sutherland, 2010) indicate that they focused on the positive outcomes on workers' perceptions of EL that had an impact on job satisfaction and integration in the workplace. Therefore, the findings of studies (Shafique, Kalyar, & Ahmad, 2018; Bello, 2012; Malik, Awais, Timsal, & Qureshi, 2016; Lu, 2014; Yang & Wei, 2018), which deal with the behaviors resulting from ethical leadership, reveal a positive correlation between workers' perceptions of ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and in-role work behaviors (IWBs) as well as the negative consequences of counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Avey, Palanski, & Walumbwa, 2011).

Similarly, when workers are more aware of ethical leadership, they are more likely to perform positive behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behaviors and in-role work behaviors, and are less likely to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. However, the theoretical and practical implications of analyzing those relationships may be deficient due to the moderator variables being overlooked. This is because, actually, this relationship's moderators and mediators often reflect the reality (Brown et al., 2005). As shown in previous studies (Bello, 2012; Malik et al., 2016), the mediator and moderator variables, such as organizational commitment and organizational values, have a noticeable impact on the relationship between EL and IWBs. In practice, this reflects the importance of such variables. If these variables are disregarded, it affects these studies' actual results. Few previous papers have illustrated the effect of moderator factors between EL and IWBs and, more especially, with regard to higher education institutions. Therefore, by testing organizational cynicism's moderating role between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors, this paper seeks to bridge the gap and contribute to the literature.

This paper adds also to the literature by shedding light on EL as an important source of inspiration in helping to improve behaviors in the workplace. More particularly, this study aims to clarify why IC has a negative effect on ethical leadership's role in developing positive behaviors and reducing negative behaviors. Secondly, this paper works to provide concrete theoretical and practical guidance to help organizations generally and, more particularly, universities and higher education institutions to mitigate OC's negative impact since this causes many problems within organizations. Against this background, this study tested organizational cynicism's moderating role on the relationship between EL and IWBs among Sohag University's faculty members. This is because it is necessary to pay attention to higher education institutions that represent a vital and important part of society (Assan, Mulaba, & Mpundu, 2020).

In this context, we attempt to fill the lack of knowledge about the modified conditions of the relationship between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors and shed light on some factors that hinder performance within universities, such as OC that hinders the performance of its employees.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature relating to EL, IWBs and OC. In addition, this section develops the study hypotheses also. Section 3 analyses the used methodology, explains the population and the study sample, and the adopted measures and statistical methods used in this study. Section 4 illustrates this study's results. Section 5 explains and discusses this study's findings. Finally, Section 6 sets out the conclusions, the implications, the recommendations for future research and the limitations of this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership represents the agreed behavior between the leader and the workers towards the achievement of the organization's common goals. Ethical leadership is based on a leader directing and nurturing the subordinates to their benefit (Liu, Kwan, Fu, & Mao, 2013). Additionally, ethical leadership helps to create a healthy atmosphere for workers in the workplace (Kia et al., 2019) and helps also to unleash the workers' enthusiasm and ambitions to achieve all possible goals (Lu, 2014). Brown et al. (2005) defined ethical leadership as "demonstrating the appropriate behavior that provides scientific evidence through interpersonal relationships, to reinforce this behavior among followers through two-way communication and promote this behavior and decision-making process" (p. 120).

The authors fully agree with this definition because it establishes ethical standards for leaders' behaviors that are accepted by employees and explains that leaders should communicate with employees and provide them with justifications for their behaviors. The previous definition clarifies also that ethical standards must be set to work in organizations and that ethical behaviors must be rewarded. It stresses also that the leaders' primary goal in organizations must be to make fair decisions (Nemr & Liu, 2021).

2.2. In-role work behaviors

Once the authors had reviewed previous definitions, it became clear that the earliest definition of in-role work behaviors was appropriate for this study. Williams and Anderson (1991) define IWBs as "the attitudes and attributes assigned to the worker by the organization in which he works, which are stated in the job description card, which is evaluated and rewarded through the official system of rewards" (p. 603).

The several basic dimensions of in-role work behaviors can be identified as: 1) knowledge of job requirements, which includes knowledge, vocational skills, general background information about the work and related fields; 2) quality of work, which includes accuracy, proficiency, desire and skills to do the work; 3) the amount of work, which includes the quantity of work an individual can reasonably accomplish under normal working conditions as well as the speed at which this work can be accomplished; 4) perseverance and reliability, which includes seriousness, the ability of the employee to

take responsibility for work, and the completion of work on time; and 5) the employee, this includes the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and motivations (Soriano, Kozuszniak, Peiró, & Mateo, 2020; Nisar & Rasheed, 2020; Yang & Wei, 2018).

As demonstrated by the authors, the in-role work behaviors describe the regulatory environment. This includes 1) business climate; 2) supervision; 3) abundance of resources; 4) administrative systems; and 5) organizational structure.

2.3. The relationship between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors

Bello's (2012) study is one of the earliest papers that identified ethical leadership, the characteristics of an ethical leader and EL's impact on IWBs as well as the impact of trust mediation and commitment between them. The findings of Bello's study show that there is a positive relationship between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors. They illustrate also that trust and commitment help to improve and strengthen this relationship.

In the same context, several studies (Malik et al., 2016; Kelidbari, Fadaei, & Ebrahimi, 2016; Nawaz, Zia-ud-Din, Nadeem, & du Din, 2018; Kia et al., 2019) have examined EL's impact on IWBs and their findings show EL's positive impact on IWBs. In addition, their findings show that organizational values help to improve and strengthen this relationship and that EL is considered participative where a leader shares authority with the subordinates. Other previous studies (Madanchian, Hussein, Noordin, & Taherdoost, 2016; Yang & Wei, 2018; Shafique et al., 2018; Peng & Kim, 2020) have attempted to identify the relationship between transformational leadership and ethical leadership with in-role work behaviors, since, in this regard, it is emphasized also that there is a positive relationship between EL and IWBs.

Social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977) explains that workers learn social behaviors through their leaders' ethical behaviors. When workers regard leaders as being fair and showing sincerity and competence in guiding work ethically without either compromising their interests or harming them, they engage in positive behaviors such as OCBs and IWBs and reduce their engagement in CWBs. Therefore, it is imperative to develop and strengthen those ethical behaviors among leaders through using all forms of rewards to support positive behaviors and all forms of punishment to correct any behavioral deviations and redirect them to the correct behaviors. Hence, when EL is applied within the university, in-role work behaviors are an expected behavioral consequence.

The discussion and the results of previous papers (Bello, 2012; Madanchian et al., 2016; Kelidbari et al., 2016; Malik et al., 2016; Shafique et al., 2018; Yang & Wei, 2018), which were concerned with the relationship between EL and IWBs, confirm that there is a positive correlation between EL and IWBs. Therefore, the authors propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Ethical leadership has a positive correlation with in-role work behaviors.

2.4. The moderating role of organizational cynicism

Organizational cynicism is the workers' negative assessment of the organization and its leadership. This trend involves changing the evaluation of the organization by its workers over time and as circumstances change (Abraham, 2000). Organizational cynicism, which has many negative directional and behavioral outcomes, leads to a loss of organizational commitment as individuals feel less loyalty to the organization, reduced job satisfaction, and increased turnover intentions (Chiaburu, Peng, Oh, Banks, & Lomeli, 2013). As for behavioral consequences, OC reduces the presence of OCBs and weakens IWBs (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998). Additionally, OC creates an imbalance in the social exchange relationship which prompts individuals to engage in counterproductive work behaviors. Organizational cynicism's negative consequences are evident also in the increase of psychological alienation of employees (Abraham, 2000).

On the one hand, the antecedents of OC (Yang, Chen, Roy, & Mattila, 2020; Chiaburu et al., 2013) consist of demographic factors, such as the level of education level, and personal factors, such as negative conscience and personality traits. They include also negative organizational factors, such as breach of psychological contract, perceptions of political behavior and stress. On the other hand, the consequences of OC include attitudinal effects, such as low regulatory commitment, higher turnover intention, and low job satisfaction. In addition, the negative behavioral consequences of organizational cynicism include poor performance and reduced organizational citizenship behaviors.

The presumption that ethical leadership strengthens in-role work behaviors is valid. However, EL's influence can be limited by the presence of OC as one of the factors within the work environment. Therefore, organizational cynicism pushes workers towards engaging in CWBs and refusing to perform IWBs. Consequently, we can say that OC may modify the positive relationship between EL and IWBs. In addition to previous explanations, social exchange theory (SET) and the criterion of exchange propose that the process of exchanging benefits between workers and leaders determines social behaviors and determines individuals' behaviors. From the workers' point of view, the main objective of the exchange process is to maximize profits and reduce costs (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). In other words, SET suggests that the relationship between individuals is based on the benefits that they receive and the costs that they bear. Consequently, when workers feel organizational cynicism and lack of sincerity from leaders towards them, they are more likely to engage in negative rather than positive behaviors.

In the same context, psychological alienation, which expresses a set of unwritten mutual expectations, perceptions and beliefs between workers and leaders, explains what an individual gains from the organization, such as advancement opportunities and a sense of job security, in exchange for what he/she provides to the organization in terms of loyalty, belonging and serious work (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). Thus, workers, who feel that their organizations lack fairness, honesty and integrity and seek to exploit

them, are more inclined towards feelings of frustration, feelings of pessimism and loss of confidence in their leaders. This drives them to refrain from managing their main roles and in-role work behaviors and to respond with behaviors consistent with organizational cynicism as a negative trend that they have toward the organization.

In the same context, Hartog's (2015) theoretical model confirms that the workers' personal characteristics and the organizational factors surrounding them, such as organizational culture, represent the determinants that generate ethics among leaders. In turn, this develops the workers' positive behaviors, such as OCBs, improves the performance of their basic roles, reduces their anger and their sense of OC, and increases their organizational commitment. The discussions and results of previous studies (Seifert, 1995; FitzGerald, 2002; Byrne & Hochwarter, 2008; Neves, 2012; Chiaburu et al., 2013; Zhang, Sun, Zheng, & Liu, 2019) confirm the existence of a negative correlation between OC and IWBs. Accordingly, the authors have formulated the second hypothesis as follows:

H2: Organizational cynicism modifies the positive correlation between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors so that the relationship is stronger among workers, who have a low level of organizational cynicism, and the relationship is weaker among workers who have a high level of organizational cynicism.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Many previous studies tested their hypotheses by using a lot of statistical methods such as the causal

model and path analysis. These methods helped them to study the indirect effects of variables and to examine the causal relationships between the variables (Qian & Jian, 2020). In the same context, many papers used sub-group analysis to confirm the results of multiple hierarchical regressions. In this paper, the authors relied on simple regression analysis to test the first hypothesis which helped to determine the impact of EL (independent variable) on IWBs (dependent variable). Also, we used hierarchical regression moderated analysis to explain OC's moderating role (moderator variable) in the relationship between EL and IWBs. Finally, we used simple slope analysis to confirm in an illustrative manner the results of the hierarchical regression moderated analysis and to clarify the role of the moderator variables at the upper and lower levels which supports the results of hierarchical regression moderated analysis. We used SPSS 20 statistical software to tabulate and analyze the data.

3.1. Study sample

The study community consists of all faculty members with different degrees and their assistants in all faculties affiliated with the University of Sohag. The authors conducted a comprehensive inventory of them and, due to the difficulty of relying on the method of comprehensive inventory, we relied on the sampling method to determine the sample of the study from which we collected the data. Table 1 below shows the size of the community and the sample of the paper.

Table 1. Community size and study sample

	<i>Professor</i>	<i>Assistant Professor</i>	<i>Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Demonstrators</i>	<i>Total</i>
Community size	295	254	522	492	359	1922
Percentage to total, %	15%	13%	27%	26%	19%	100%
The study sample	48	42	86	83	61	320

The sample size was determined from the sampling units at the University of Sohag, based on the following formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times N \times P(1 - P)}{(\Delta^2 \times N) + (Z^2 \times P(1 - P))} \quad (1)$$

where,

- N is the community size;
- n is the size of the sample;
- Z is the number of modules, it is 1.96 for 95% confidence level;
- P is the percentage of members with 50% characteristics;
- $1-P$ is the error or failure rate, it is a complement to P ;
- Δ is the error limit, it is 5% for 95% confidence level.

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 1922 \times 0.50(1 - 0.50)}{(0.05^2 \times 1922) + (1.96^2 \times 0.50(1 - 0.50))} = 320$$

The authors increased it to 400 items to deal with cases of acceptance and rejection and to increase the level of confidence in the results so that

they could be generalized. In using the stratified random sample method, we depended on the selection of the sample items from the study population. Turning to the Sohag University faculty members' scientific degrees explained in this part of the paper, we illustrate the results of the description of the study sample.

Table 2. Description of the study sample

<i>Characteristics of the sample</i>	<i>Iterations</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	244	61%
Female	156	39%
<i>Age</i>		
Less than 30 years old	135	33.75%
From 30 to less than 40 years old	146	36.5%
More than 40 years old	119	29.75%
<i>Experience</i>		
Less than 5 years	101	25.25%
From 5 years to less than 10 years	170	42.5%
More than 10 years.	129	32.25%
<i>Degree</i>		
Demonstrator	81	20.25%
Teaching Assistant	93	23.26%
Teacher	96	24%
Assistant Professor	62	15.5%
Professor	68	17%

From the above table, it is clear that:

- the average age of the individuals was 42 years (SD = 1.33, range = 21-60 years);
- 61% were men and 39% were women;
- the experience level of 42.5% of the sample was from 5 to less than 10 years;
- the experience level of 25.25% of the sample was less than 5 years;
- the experience level of 32.25% of the sample was from 10 years or more;
- with regard to the job type of the sample of all groups within Sohag University, 20.25% of the sample were Demonstrators, 23.26% worked as Teaching Assistants, 24% were Teachers, 15.5% were Assistant Professors, and 17% were Professors.

3.2. Measures

The authors used scales that had high confidence and validity ratings. We constructed a Likert scale and put the responses within it. Now, we illustrate the scales for the three types of variables which are used in this paper, as follows:

Ethical leadership (EL): The authors used a 14-item scale, developed by Brown et al. (2005), to measure EL. This scale consists of the following six dimensions, namely: justice, role clarification, power sharing, integrity, moral orientation, and, finally, heading towards subordinates. Cronbach's alpha was 0.90 for this study. A sample item is "Manager promotes successful work and rewards hardworking".

In-role work behaviors (IWBs): The authors used a 6-item scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991). This scale includes four dimensions, namely: knowledge of job requirements, quality of work, amount of work done; and perseverance and reliability. Cronbach's alpha was 0.93 for this paper. A sample item is "Performing expected tasks with a clear conscience".

Organizational cynicism (OC): The researchers measured OC by using an 8-item scale developed made by Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999). The scale consists of three main dimensions, namely: belief, passion, and behavior. Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 for this study. A sample item is "I think the university administration is saying one thing and doing something else".

4. RESULTS OF STUDY

4.1. Study variables characteristics

Table 3 below shows that EL's mean value is less than 3 which represents the middle of the scale. This demonstrates the low level of awareness among workers of the leaders' ethical behaviors and the methods of instilling and strengthening such behaviors. The mean value of the OC variable is slightly more than 3. This indicates that workers are aware of their leaders' aggressive behaviors directed towards them, the negative trend that they have about the regularity, the belief that they are incorrect and the tendency to criticize and disregard such behaviors. The mean value of the IWBs variable is slightly lower than 3. This indicates the relative

weakness of the presence of those behaviors among Sohag University's faculty members and the unwillingness of staff to sacrifice themselves for the University. It shows also their weak attitudes towards positive behaviors. These results show a divergence of views between the sample members on the variables of Sohag University's ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors. From the authors' point of view, this is due to these controversial variables.

Table 3. Metadata of the study variables: The simple linear correlation coefficients between them and stability coefficients of the measures

Variables	M	St.D	Correlation coefficients		
			1	2	3
EL	2.321	0.649	0.90		
IWBs	2.876	1.13	0.941	0.748	
OC	3.412	1.245	-0.487	-0.827	0.82

Notes: $N = 400$, $p \leq 0.001$. The diagonal represents Cronbach's alpha. $M = \text{mean}$, $St. D = \text{standard deviation}$, $EL = \text{ethical leadership}$, $IWBs = \text{in-role work behaviors}$, $OC = \text{organizational cynicism}$.

Turning to the correlation between this study's variables, correlation coefficients indicate a significant correlation between variables. While there are variations in their positive and negative trends, this indicates that there is no problem in the linear correlation between independent, dependent and moderator variables that can affect the accuracy of the results (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The correlation coefficients show a positive correlation between EL and IWBs. The correlation coefficient was 0.941. For the correlation between the independent variable (EL) and the moderator variable (OC), the correlation coefficients indicate a significant negative correlation between them, where the correlation coefficient is valued as -0.487. As regards the correlation between the moderator variable (OC) and the dependent variables, the correlation coefficients indicate a negative correlation between OC and IWBs where the correlation coefficient was -0.827.

Therefore, from the above, the researchers conclude that, while the correlations exist between this study's variables, the previous correlations do not serve to judge the validity of this study's hypotheses. This is because correlation assumes the stability of the other variables, and this does not happen usually in scientific terms. This is because, when it is alone, the independent variable affects the dependent variable in the presence of other independent variables in a different way from its effect. Consequently, it was necessary for the researchers to use more advanced appropriate statistical methods, like simple regression analysis, hierarchical regression moderated analysis (HRMA) and simple slope analysis to test the hypotheses more clearly.

4.2. Results of $H1$ testing

The authors used simple regression analysis to test $H1$. Table 4 below illustrates the results.

Table 4. Results of simple regression analysis of IWBs on EL

Predictor	Beta	B	R	R ²	T value	F
EL	0.941	0.936	0.941	0.886	2.684	0.00
Constant					0.148	
The coefficient of determination (Adj. R ²)				0.868		
F value					2805.65	
Sig. F					0.00	

Notes: N = 400, p < 0.001, EL = ethical leadership.

The parameter signals in the above table emphasize the existence of a positive intrinsic correlation between EL and IWBs which is R = 0.941. The modified determining coefficient refers to Adj. R² and indicates that EL interprets 86.8% of the variation in IWBs. The coefficient of the model intensity (Sig. F) shows the intensity of the model in its entirety at p ≤ 0.001. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors. This means that *H1* is accepted.

4.3. Results of *H2* testing

Results presented in Table 5 show that after organizational cynicism, which represents the moderator variable, has been subtracted from ethical leadership, which represents the dependent variable, the two variables combined contribute to 91.3% of the variance of in-role work behaviors which indicates that in the interpretation the moderator variable alone contributed to about 2.7 % of the variance. Accordingly, the results of the regression analysis illustrate that OC has had a moderating impact on the relationship between EL and IWBs. This means that *H2* is accepted. Also, the coefficient of the model intensity (Sig. F) refers to the intensity of the model in its entirety at p ≤ 0.001.

Table 5. Results of hierarchical regression moderated analysis to show the relationship between EL, OC and IWBs

Predictors variables	The dependent variable (in-role behaviors)		
	R ²	ΔR ²	F
EL	0.886	0.000	2805.654
OC	0.913	0.027	4.877
EL's interaction with OC	0.965	0.052	9.389
Sig. F		33.414	

Notes: N = 400, p < 0.001, EL = ethical leadership, OC = organizational cynicism.

Also, with regard to IWBs, the authors used simple slopes at low and high levels of OC to validate *H2* (see Figure 1). The results show that the relationship between EL and IWBs is stronger for individuals who recognize a low level of cynicism (R = 0.661, p ≤ 0.001) and is weaker for individuals who have a high level of cynicism (R = 0.309, p ≤ 0.001). Finally, we used Z-test to show the significance of the differences between the correlation coefficients of the two moderator variable groups (high level of cynicism & low level of cynicism). The results indicate that there are significant differences between the two variable groups (Z = 12.81). This means that *H2* is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

This paper tested the impact of ethical leadership on in-role work behaviors and, in addition, tested the moderating role of organizational cynicism between them. This study's first hypothesis proposes that there is a positive correlation between EL and IWBs. Based on SET, the authors can explain this study's results that, through observing workers for the ethical behaviors of their leaders, they learn social behaviors. Therefore, leaders must support those behaviors of workers in all forms, such as rewarding positive behaviors and punishing behavioral deviations to correct and redirect them to the ethical framework.

Thus, EL helps to generate ethics and values that play a main role in the workers' performance. Also, EL helps to raise rates of performance and works to create an ethical climate which, in turn, contributes to organizational effectiveness and encourages workers to fulfill their roles with great positivity (Leung, 2008). These findings are consistent also with those of other studies (Bello, 2012; Madanchian et al., 2016; Kelidbari et al., 2016; Malik et al., 2016; Shafique et al., 2018; Yang & Wei, 2018) in that this study's findings have demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between EL and IWBs.

This paper's second hypothesis proposes that organizational cynicism modifies the positive correlation between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors whereby the relationship is stronger with workers, who show a low level of cynicism, and is weaker with workers, who show a high level of cynicism. The moderating role of this relationship can be explained by SET and the criterion of exchange (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986) and by Hartog's (2015) theoretical model study and the psychological contract theory (Robinson et al., 1994). Workers, who perceive a high level of cynicism, believe that organizations lack sincerity, honesty and seek to exploit them and deliberately harm their interests (Dean et al., 1998). This leads to the deterioration of the social exchange relationship between them and indicates a breach of the psychological contract held by them. In addition, this leads workers to pessimism, frustration, loss of hope and distrust of their leaders. Consequently, this makes them more likely to engage in negative behaviors and to poorly fulfill their official roles. Also, it pushes workers away from IWBs as a behavioral response consistent with OC and is indicative of their negative response to the organization (Abraham, 2000).

A cynical employee manifests passivity, feelings of frustration and indifference to work. Therefore, this affects his/her ability to work, leads to poor performance and results in the disintegration of relationships with colleagues and, in the case of this study, with Sohag University (Chiaburu et al., 2013). As demonstrated by Byrne and Hochwarter's (2008) study findings, OC's presence among employees weakens the constructive impact of positive trends, such as the perception of organizational support of IWBs.

6. CONCLUSION

Our study offers important practical insights into the regulatory efforts required to reduce negative business behaviors in Egypt's Sohag University. This study's results have revealed that Sohag University's sampled workers have a low level of ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors and the results affirm also the positive relationship between ethical leadership and in-role work behaviors. Therefore, Sohag University officials must pay attention to the development of styles of EL at all levels and in all faculties. In addition, the University's officials must pay attention to ethical training in view of the importance of ethics and values to the University's workers. This encourages faculty members to uphold ethical values. Also, the University's officials should explore and address the reasons leading to the weakness of IWBs. Against this background, it would be fitting to consider appropriate recommendations and to make suggestions to overcome the deficiencies of negative IWBs and to facilitate the development of constructive behaviors among those employed by the University. In addition, such actions will motivate employees to perform additional roles and to strengthen their affiliation and loyalty to the University.

This study's findings show that the level of OC among faculty members is somewhat high. Therefore, it is imperative that the University's officials adhere to organizational justice by clarifying the regulations that allow the workers to participate in the University's decision-making process. Such actions would prevent the occurrence of psychological violations and, ultimately, would lead to a reduction in OC within Sohag University.

In conducting this cross-sectional study, the authors faced the following limitations. Although the authors collected the data timeously, it did not help them to trace the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables since this can be carried out only through studies with long intervals. The authors conducted this study only with Sohag University's faculty members and their assistants and did not include the administrative staff in the University's colleges. However, this study's

results can be generalized to all Egyptian public universities since the similarities and agreement between them go beyond the differences. Also, Egypt's public universities have the same characteristics, burdens and problems. However, this study's results cannot be generalized to Egypt's private universities because of the difference in the leadership's wages and conditions. Consequently, the authors would expect different results from studying private universities. With regard to universities outside Egypt, the authors believe that the same hypotheses can be applied and that the results will be different in view of the different environments and the nature of work in other countries. Finally, the authors chose to study Sohag University because of the lack of previous papers in this area and bearing in mind the need for more studies to solve many problems.

In view of this paper's results, implications and limitations, there are several areas that may serve as a nucleus for future research. In noting the employees' poor perception of EL within Sohag University, the authors recommend that further specific research studies be conducted to explore the growing importance of EL in the workplace and the positive returns that this can bring to workers and organizations (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mayer et al., 2009; Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog, & Folger, 2010). In noting also the high level of OC that Sohag University employees have towards the organization, the authors recommend that further studies be conducted to identify the causes of OC towards EL and what can be done to reduce the negative trends (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004; Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007).

If OC plays the moderating role between EL and IWBs, we recommend also testing this role for negative CWB, this would expand the field of important organizational behavior research. It may prove also beneficial in this context to introduce other moderators into the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational behaviors, such as self-esteem, bullying at the workplace and the organizational perception of silence in providing workers with organizational support (Pierce & Gardner, 2004; Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006).

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APPENDIX

Figure 1. The moderating effect of OC on the relationship between EL and IWB

