

ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM AS A MODERATOR VARIABLE BETWEEN ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND COUNTERWORK PRODUCTIVE BEHAVIORS

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Abstract

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Ethical leadership (EL) aims to improve the positive behaviors of workers and achieve common goals between leaders and their subordinates by directing and nurturing from leaders to their subordinates, this is accomplished by establishing ethical standards in the workplace that clarify the relationship between them (Ng & Feldman, 2015; Hussain & Attiq, 2017; Qian & Jian, 2020). Therefore, this paper aimed to test the impact of ethical leadership on counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) and test organizational cynicism's (OC) moderating role between them. We applied in the study a stratified random sample of faculty members working in Egypt's Sohag University. The researchers relied on the survey and analyzed the results using simple regression, hierarchical regression moderated analysis and simple slope analysis. The paper's findings show that EL has a negative effect on CWBs and that OC modifies the negative relationship between EL and CWBs. Consequently, when compared to those workers who realize a low level of cynicism, there is a weaker relationship in respect of workers who realize a higher level of cynicism. Our findings help university officials to improve the faculty members' perceptions of EL. In detailing this study's findings, we discuss several conclusions regarding EL, CWBs and OC.

Keywords: Egypt's Sohag University, Ethical Leadership (EL), Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWBs), Organizational Cynicism (OC)

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world of organizational behavior, scholars are interested in leadership styles because these relate to perceptions of supervisory

skills in terms of the existence of retention processes within the organizational framework (Puaschunder, 2018; Sun, 2018; Mrwebi, 2019; Yahiaoui & Ezzine, 2020). The findings of previous studies show that leadership styles influence also

internal relationships, social performance and interdependence between members of the same organization (Kinyuira, 2019; Obalade & Arogundade, 2019).

On February 5, 2005, the Dean of the Texas School of Law and leader of the Enron investigation team was called to testify in front of the US Congress. In W. C. Powers' testimony, he attributed the tragic consequences of the Enron collapse to many factors. The most important factor was unethical leadership (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Powers' testimony reflects what employees expect from leaders' behavior in terms of ethics and their role in emphasizing the preservation of the organization's ethical climate (Goodenough, 2008). Therefore, the ethical dimension of leadership is critical because the organization's leaders influence the workers' attitudes and behaviors (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005).

The researchers reviewed the previous studies (Khuntia & Suar, 2004; Brown et al., 2005; Ogunfowora, 2009; Ponnu & Tennakoon, 2009; Toor & Ofori, 2009; Neubert, Carlson, Kacmar, Roberts, & Chonko, 2009; Sutherland, 2010; Ruiz, Ruiz, & Martínez, 2011) that examined the consequences of workers' perceptions of EL. Most of these papers focused on the positive attitudinal outcomes that resulted from the workers' perceptions of EL. These included satisfaction with the leader, work satisfaction, and job commitment. These studies' findings demonstrate a positive relationship between workers' perceptions of EL and the positive directional consequences mentioned above. On the other hand, few studies' findings (Brown et al., 2005; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Salvador, 2009; Avey, Palanski, & Walumbwa, 2011; Nemr & Liu, 2021) have discussed the behavioral consequences of employee awareness of EL and instead focused primarily on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) and, more specifically, on counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) (Mayer et al., 2009; Avey et al., 2011). These studies' findings reveal a significant correlation between workers' perceptions of EL and previous behaviors where there is a positive correlation in the case of OCBs and there is a negative correlation in the case of CWBs.

On the one hand, these studies' findings recognize the need to study the direct relationship between EL and the attitudes and behavioral consequences resulting from them. On the other hand, it can be said that there may be limited theoretical and practical implications of analyzing such a relationship if they don't consider moderating variables (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Moreover, the moderators and mediators of this relationship often reflect the actual reality.

A limited number of studies (i.e., Mayer et al., 2009; Ruiz et al., 2011) have tested this hypothesis. Ruiz et al.'s (2011) findings explain ethical leadership's impact (for senior management) on workers' satisfaction and commitment. Mayer et al.'s (2009) findings deal with supervisory ethical leadership plays a mediator role in the relationship between ethical leadership (for senior management) and workers' satisfaction, commitment and CWB.

Avey et al.'s (2011) study tested the moderating role of self-esteem between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors and

counterproductive work behaviors. Their findings reveal that the workers' self-esteem illustrates the positive relationship between EL and OCBs and demonstrates the negative relationship between EL and CWB. The positive and negative relationships between EL and these two behavioral consequences are greater among workers with low-level self-esteem when compared to workers with high-level self-esteem. As stated, a limited number of previous studies have tested the effect of moderator variables in the relationship between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behaviors (Avey et al., 2011). Thus, this paper seeks to bridge this gap by testing organizational cynicism's moderating role between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behaviors among Sohag University's faculty members. This is because the necessary attention has to be paid to higher education institutions that represent a vital and important part of society (Assan, Mulaba, & Mpundu, 2020). In this context, we attempt to 1) overcome the lack of knowledge regarding the modified conditions of the relationship between EL and CWB; and 2) to shed light on some of the factors, such as OC, that hinder universities' performance and, more specifically, that of their employees.

The structure of this study is as follows. Section 2 explains the relevant literature relating to ethical leadership, counterproductive work behaviors and organizational cynicism. Also, in this section, we develop the study's hypotheses. Section 3 analyses the methodology, including the measures and statistical methods that we used in this study, and explains this study's population and sample. Section 4 illustrates this study's results. Section 5 explains and discusses the study's findings. Finally, Section 6 details the conclusions, the implications, the limitations and makes recommendations for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership works to achieve common goals between leaders and their subordinates through the agreed behavior between them, as leaders work to direct and unleash their energies and ambitions strongly to create an atmosphere of happiness in the workplace (Qian & Jian, 2020). Previous papers have focused little on the ethical aspect of leadership and instead have emphasized the ideal effect of ethical leadership. It is noteworthy that this dimension includes a moral component by showing ethical leaders as role models who, due to a high level of ethical behavior, are trusted to do what is right and, therefore, their actions are imitated by their subordinates (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). Based on the limited available knowledge of the concept of EL, Treviño et al. (2003) did their groundbreaking research using a semi-structured interview method on a sample of 40 American senior managers who displayed varying abilities in relation to key leadership characteristics.

Therefore, ethical leadership's general characteristics (Treviño et al., 2003) are represented as follows: 1) people-orientation whereby ethical leaders focus on individuals, care about and treat

them fairly, and show respect to those who work with them; 2) visible ethical actions and traits whereby the moral leaders' actions correspond to their words and they act as role models and lead by example; 3) the establishment of ethical standards and accountability whereby ethical leaders set expectations (moral rules) and give their subordinates the authority to promote behavior through either giving rewards or penalties; 4) broad ethical awareness whereby ethical leaders take care of everyone's interests and focus on the integrity of the means and ends in relation to the work of the organization's lower-level workers.

2.2. Counterproductive work behaviors

Counterproductive work behaviors are an issue that organizations face and that has serious repercussions for organizational performance. Recent findings show that at least 30% of businesses fail because of these behaviors (Instone, 2014). Due to the presence of CWBs, the annual losses suffered by American organizations have amounted to more than \$50 billion (Anjum & Parvez, 2013).

Kelloway, Loughlin, Barling, and Nault (2002) define CWBs as intentional work behaviors that conflict with the organization's interests, it is harmful to the organization, to its employees or to both. Accordingly, the researchers used Kelloway et al.'s (2002) definition for this study. CWBs have two dimensions. The first dimension is deviations at the individual level: harassment of colleagues while working and gossiping and fighting with colleagues. The second dimension is deviations at the organizational level: property deviance, such as theft, sabotage, and deviation in the production process, such as poor work performance, substance abuse and absence from work.

2.3. The relationship between EL and CWBs

Based on the nature of EL and CWBs, ethical leadership has a negative impact on CWBs. (Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000). Goodenough (2008) justifies this expectation by giving the following rationalizations: 1) EL represents the organization's ethical values and these instill in workers a positive attitude toward the institution that they are less motivated to harm; 2) by its authentic transformational leadership, EL motivates workers to give up personal interests and inconsistent harmful behaviors for the organization's benefit; 3) EL serves as an attractive, honest and acceptable role model. Also, according to the social learning theory (SLT) and to the social exchange theory (SET), findings show that emerging moral behaviors are the strongest bases from which workers learn social behaviors. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders to develop and strengthen these behaviors by using all possible forms, such as either rewards or punishments. Such actions direct workers towards ethical behaviors and correct any existing moral deviations. Hence, when workers become more aware of ethical leadership, there is a reduction in counterproductive work behaviors decrease.

Similarly, the findings of other studies (Ng & Feldman, 2015; Hussain & Attiq, 2017; Khokhar & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2017; Rao, 2018; Nawaz, Zia-ud-Din,

Nadeem, & du Din, 2018) confirm a negative relationship between EL and CWBs. While the results of Palmer's (2016) study are relatively different from those of some other studies, this study explored also perceptions of EL's moderating role between dark traits of narcissism and Machiavellian and counterproductive work behaviors. The results suggest that, when engaging in CWBs, perceptions of EL have no effect on the frequency of workers' narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Therefore, there is no direct or strong correlation between EL and CWBs. As pointed out in several previous studies, there is a negative correlation between EL and CWBs (Ng & Feldman, 2015; Khokhar & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2017). Consequently, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Ethical leadership has a negative correlation with counterproductive work behaviors.

2.4. Organizational cynicism's moderating role

OC is a negative trend that workers exhibit towards their affiliated organization and leadership. This includes their changing evaluations over time as their conditions change. Some researchers (Andersson, 1996; Andersson & Bateman, 1997; Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998; Akar, 2019; Yang, Chen, Roy, & Mattila, 2020; Lapointe, Vandenberghe, & Fan, 2020) regard OC as a specific attitude which includes frustration, loss of hope, insight and falsification of reality. They think leaders do not have integrity, any merit and idealism. This OC has the following negative directional and behavioral results: loss of job satisfaction, deterioration of emotional commitment, reduced in-role behavior, reduced OCBs and increased CWBs (Griffin & Lopez, 2005). The findings of some studies (Metz, 2013; Zhang, Sun, Zheng, & Liu, 2019) show that the officials' positive demonstration of EL behaviors is effective in reducing workers' OC. Consequently, this leads to a reduction in the workers' cynical behaviors and attitudes.

There is a valid presumption that EL reduces CWBs. However, OC's presence as a directional circumstance in this relationship may reduce the prevalence of EL and prompt workers to refrain from CWBs. Therefore, it can be said that OC may modify the relationship between EL and CWBs. Workers who perceive a high level of cynicism have an imbalanced state of social exchange between themselves and the organization. This is because they suspect their employers' moral uprightness and consider that they are exploiting and falsifying their reality (Dean et al., 1998). As shown in previous studies (Andersson, 1996; Abraham, 2000; Griffin & Lopez, 2005), counterproductive work behaviors are some of those negative behaviors which result from organizational cynicism. On the one hand, CWBs may represent critical behaviors that stem from negative emotions, such as anger, frustration and pessimism regarding the workplace (Anjum & Parvez, 2013). Despite ethical leadership's existence and their feeling of integrity is being questioned, these feelings may be strong enough to push workers towards counterproductive work behaviors. On the other hand, workers who are aware of the low level of cynicism fall also into a state of imbalance in terms of the social exchange between

themselves and the organizations. This is because of their belief in their integrity and having no wish to either exploit or falsify their reality (Dean et al., 1998).

Also, previous studies' findings (Mousa, Abdelgaffer, Aboramadan, & Chaouali, 2020; Manzoor, Manzoor, & Khan, 2020; Tamer & Ozkan, 2020) reflect the importance of studying the phenomenon of organizational cynicism in the Egyptian environment, limiting its spread and the need to reduce its negative effects on workers. Therefore, in this paper, the researchers used Egyptian universities where, compared to other groups, faculty members suffer from many obstacles, such as low wages and poor standard of living. Also, they feel that there is sometimes an injustice in holding either some administrative positions or managing some units of a special nature in the university and its faculties. They are concerned about possible unfairness to them in accordance with either the interests or personal identities of the presidents without clear criteria for selection. This always causes a state of grumbling and anger and, consequently, the university is a fertile ground for the emergence of cynicism.

As confirmed by several previous studies, there is a positive correlation between OC and CWBs (Spector & Fox, 2002; Nair & Kamalanbhan, 2010; Shahzad & Mahmood, 2012; Li & Chen, 2018). Also, this relationship is based on SET and the criterion of exchange (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). This suggests that social behavior is a product of exchange that aims to maximize profits and reduce costs. In other words, SET and psychological contract theory hold that we see what we will benefit from after subtracting essential costs to determine how much a relationship is worth (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). This expresses the unwritten agreements between the organization and its workers. It represents what the workers expect to gain from the organization, such as job security, in exchange for providing something like hard work. Therefore, according to the SLT and the SET, workers who believe that the organization is dishonest and unfair generate frustration, lack of confidence and a feeling of depression. These push them all towards CWBs as a response. Consequently, these behaviors are consistent with the organizational cynicism that has formed a negative attitude among workers.

Also, Hartog's (2015) theoretical model emphasizes individual personal characteristics and circumstances surrounding workers, such as the organizational climate. These represent the main factors that build moral behaviors among leaders, reduce negative behaviors, such as CWBs, support positive behaviors, and increase employees' commitment to the organization both emotionally and functionally. Therefore, this limits the presence of OC among workers. According to previous discussions, the researchers propose the following second hypothesis:

H2: OC modifies the negative relationship between EL and CWBs so that the relationship is weaker for workers who recognize a higher level of cynicism than for those who perceive a lower level of cynicism.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Previous studies used many approaches, such as path analysis and the causal model, to test hypotheses. Accordingly, path analysis enables the examination of the causal relationships between the variables and the identification of the significance of indirect effects on the variables (Qian & Jian, 2020). Also, previous studies used sub-group analysis to confirm the results of multiple hierarchical regression. In this paper, simple regression analysis was used to test the first hypothesis. This helped to determine more clearly the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Also, we used hierarchical regression moderated analysis to illustrate the moderator variable's role in the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, we used simple slope analysis to confirm the results of the hierarchical regression moderated analysis and to clarify in an illustrative manner the moderator variable's role at the upper and lower levels. This supports the results of the hierarchical regression moderated analysis. We used SPSS 20 statistical software to tabulate and analyze the data.

3.1. Sample of the study

The researchers collected data from faculty members employed in Egypt's Sohag University. To generalize the results, we collected data from the faculty members of various job grades (Professor, Assistant Professor, Teacher, Teaching Assistant, and Demonstrators). We collected 407 completed questionnaires from them and this represented an 86.46% response rate. We excluded 7 questionnaires, which were incomplete, and, therefore, we analyzed 400 questionnaires in the total analysis. Table 1 illustrates the results of the sample description.

Table 1. 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 Table 1, it is clear that the average age of the participants was 42 years (SD = 1.33, range = 21-60 years); 61% were men and 39% were women. Also, 42.5% of the sample had an experience level of between 5 to 10 years and 25.25% had less than 5 years' experience and 32.25% had more than 10 years' experience. Turning to job type, 20.25% were Demonstrators, 23.26% worked as Teaching Assistants, 24% were Teachers, 15.5% were Assistant Professors and, finally, 17% were Professors.

3.2. Measures

The researchers used scales with high confidence and validity ratings. We constructed a Likert scale to measure the responses. For this paper, we constructed hypotheses that consisted of the following three types of variables:

Ethical leadership (EL): To measure EL, the researchers used a 14-item scale developed by Brown et al. (2005). It consists of six dimensions, namely: justice, role clarification, power sharing, integrity, ethical orientation, and, finally, heading towards subordinates. Cronbach's alpha was 0.90 for this paper. A sample item is "Managers make fair and balanced decisions".

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs): The researchers measured CWBs by using the 7-item scale developed by Kelloway et al. (2002). The scale consists of two basic dimensions, namely: deviation at the organizational level and deviation at the individual level. Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 for this paper. A sample item is "Sabotaging, abusing or damaging the use of the university's properties and causing conflict and conflict with others".

Organizational cynicism (OC): The researchers measured OC by using an 8-item scale developed by Brandes, Dharwadkar, and Dean (1999). It consists of three main dimensions, namely: belief, passion, and behavior. Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 for this study. A sample item is "I see a gap between what the university says and what it does on the fact".

4. RESULTS OF STUDY

4.1. Characterization of study variables

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and correlation matrix. It illustrates that the variable mean arithmetic of ethical leadership recorded a value less than 3 which represents the middle of the scale. This demonstrates a low level of awareness among workers of the leaders' ethical behaviors and the methods of strengthening and instilling such behaviors. The arithmetic mean of the organizational cynicism variable is slightly more than 3 which represents the middle of the scale. This indicates that workers are aware of their leaders' aggressive behaviors directed towards them and the leaders' negative attitudes to their regular work.

Table 2. Metadata, stability coefficients and linear correlation coefficients and of the study

	M	St.D	Correlation coefficients		
			1	2	3
EL	2.321	0.649	0.90		
CWBs	4.591	1.521	-0.539	0.82	
OC	3.412	1.245	-0.487	0.312	0.82

Notes: N = 400, p < 0.001. The diagonal represents Cronbach's alpha. M = mean, St.D = standard deviation, EL = ethical leadership, CWBs = counterproductive work behaviors, OC = organizational cynicism.

Consequently, this leads the workers to believe that such attitudes are wrong and leads to a tendency to criticize and disregard behavior. The recorded variable mean in respect of CWBs is greater than 3 which is the middle of the scale. This indicates the prevalence of the leaders' negative behaviors that harm either the organization or its

workers or both. On the one hand, the correlation coefficients indicate a negative correlation between EL and CWBs (R = -0.539) and a negative correlation between ethical leadership and organizational cynicism (R = -0.487). There is, also, a positive correlation between CWBs and OC (R = 0.312).

4.2. Results of testing H1

The researchers used simple regression analysis to test the first hypothesis. Results presented in Table 3 illustrate that the parameter signals confirm the intrinsic negative correlation between ethical leadership and counterproductive work behaviors (R = -0.539). The modified determining coefficient, referred to as Adj. R², indicates that EL accounts for 29% of the variation in CWBs. The coefficient of the model intensity, referred to as Sig. F, shows the intensity of the model in its entirety at p < 0.001.

Table 3. The simple regression analysis's results of counterproductive work behaviors on ethical leadership

Predictor	Beta	B	R	R ²	T value	F
EL	-0.596	-0.865	-0.539	0.29	11.241	0.00
Constant					-1.212	
The coefficient of determination (Adj. R ²)				0.29		
F value					130.51	
Sig. F					0.00	

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

Therefore, since the results show a significant negative relationship between EL and CWBs, hypothesis H1 is accepted.

4.3. Results of testing H2

Results indicated in Table 4 show that after the moderator variable has been subtracted, the two variables together contribute to explaining 39% of the variance. This indicates that the moderator variable itself contributes to about 10% of the variance. Thus, the regression results show that OC has a moderating impact on the relationship between EL and CWBs. Also, the coefficient of the model intensity, referred to as Sig. F, shows the intensity of the model as a whole at p < 0.001.

Table 4. The results of hierarchical regression moderated analysis for the relationship between ethical leadership, organizational cynicism and counterproductive work behaviors

Predictors variables	The dependent variable (CWBs)		
	R ²	Δ R ²	F
EL	0.29	0.29	130.51
OC	0.39	0.10	114.239
The interaction of EL with OC	0.42	0.03	76.497
Sig. F			78.415

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

In order to further validate hypothesis H2, (see Figure 1) the researchers used simple slopes at low and high levels of organizational cynicism. With regard to CWBs, results show that the relationship between EL and CWBs is weaker (R = -0.25) for workers who perceive a higher level of cynicism than for workers who recognize a low level of cynicism

($R = -0.341$). Finally, we used the Z-test to determine the significance of the differences between the correlation coefficients of the two moderator groups. Results ($Z = 4.6$) indicate significant differences between the correlation coefficients of the moderator variable groups. Therefore, based on these results, hypothesis *H2* is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

This paper examined the impact of ethical leadership on counterproductive work behaviors and, in addition, tested organizational cynicism's moderating role in this relationship. The first hypothesis proposed a significant negative correlation between EL and CWBs which we tested using simple regression analysis. SLT can be used to interpret this study's results since they show that workers' social behavior is generated by observing EL. Therefore, it is imperative to reinforce these behaviors among leaders by using all forms, such as either rewards to support these moral behaviors or punishments to correct any deviations and redirect them in an ethical manner.

Therefore, when workers become more aware of EL, they demonstrate fewer CWBs and are more willing to distance themselves from these behaviors. Also, this is the case when workers see leaders display honesty, fairness and demonstrate the ability to guide them ethically. Hence, the faculty members within the university regard CWBs as a negative behavioral option and they try to avoid and reduce it in the university. Such actions support this study's results that hypothesis *H1* should be accepted. This is because these negative and destructive behaviors are incompatible with what EL attempts to instill and nurture. This finding is consistent also with those of other studies (Goodenough, 2008; Mayer et al., 2009; Ogunfowora, 2009; Avey et al., 2011). This demonstrates EL's role in shaping the workers' attitudes and behaviors and emphasizes EL's ability to resist and improve negative behaviors, such as CWBs, that appear within the organization.

The second hypothesis proposes that OC modifies the negative relationship between EL and CWBs whereby the relationship is weaker with workers who show a high level of cynicism as compared to workers who show a low level of cynicism. SET can explain OC's moderating role between EL and CWBs along with the criterion of exchange, Hartog's (2015)'s theoretical model and psychological contract theory (Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Robinson et al., 1994). Workers who have a high level of cynicism, believe that the organization lacks integrity and seeks to exploit them and to falsify their reality (Dean et al., 1998). This leads to the deterioration of the social exchange relationship and generates a breach of the psychological contract between workers and institutions. This exposes workers to frustration, loss of hope and distrust in everything determined by the organization. Accordingly, the previous factors push workers to engage in negative counterproductive work behaviors as a behavioral result consistent with OC and as an indication of their negative response to the organization (Abraham, 2000). Notwithstanding EL's existence, it is difficult to control the negative reactions of

workers who have a high level of cynicism and vice versa in the case of workers who have a low level of cynicism.

These results are a modest addition to the few papers on the behavioral outcomes of EL (Brown & Treviño, 2006). These studies' results show that in the case of EL CWBs are not a behavioral option. However, this study's findings show that these negative behaviors occur under such leadership when the workers show an increasing level of OC towards the organization.

6. CONCLUSION

This study offers important practical insights into the regulatory efforts to reduce negative business behaviors within Egypt's Sohag University. The University's officials must work to improve the faculty members' and their assistants' perceptions of EL. This change in perception will be achieved only by ensuring that the University's mission statement is written in unequivocal terms. More specifically, the University should ensure that leaders are required to include EL as the principal criterion when making decisions regarding the selection and appointment of staff and when evaluating their performance and promotion prospects. Based on this study's results, we recommend also that organizations develop a range of training programs and workshops that show EL's importance.

This study monitored the moderating role of organizational cynicism between EL and CWBs. The results show that in order to reduce the negative relationship between them organizations need to consider the practical effects of regulatory efforts to reduce CWBs. More specifically, through observing procedural, distributive and transactional justice, University officials should make earnest efforts to minimize the sense of OC. In addition, they need to develop their awareness of organizational support and not allow violations of the workers' psychological contracts to reduce the workers' OC towards the organization.

In conducting this cross-sectional study, the researchers experienced the limitations. Although we collected the data timeously, it did not help us to trace the cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. This can be done only through studies that have long intervals. The researchers conducted this study only in respect of Sohag University's faculty members in the colleges and took no account of the University's administrative staff.

This study's findings can be generalized to all public universities as the similarities between them go beyond the differences. Also, since public universities have the same characteristics, burdens and problems, the researchers expect that studies of such institutions will produce similar results. However, such results cannot be generalized to private universities due to the differences in the EL and the workers' wages and conditions. Consequently, the researchers would expect that such studies would produce different results. With regard to universities outside Egypt, researchers believe that the same hypotheses can be applied and will give different results due to the different environment and nature of work in

other countries than in Egypt. Finally, the researchers chose Sohag University for this paper because of the lack of previous papers in this area and the need to provide solutions to the many problems.

In view of the discussion of this study's results and their implications, we consider that there are numerous areas that may become a basis for future research. First, EL's growing importance in the workplace indicates that further research studies should investigate what can be done to change workers' perceptions from their current low level of OC. In addition, in this regard, we recommend that future research studies investigate what changes are required to bring about a change in the workers' attitudes so that they look more positively on EL (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004; Aryee,

Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007). Second, if OC plays a moderating role between EL and CWBs, the authors recommend that future research studies test the same role for positive work behaviors such as in-role behaviors and OCBs. Such studies would expand the current knowledge on organizational behavior. In this context, we recommend that, in the relationship between EL and CWBs, future research studies test many moderator variables, such as abusive supervision, bullying at the workplace, self-esteem and mid-level managers' EL (Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006). Additionally, we recommend that future research studies re-examine this study's hypotheses by using service, public and private institutions in Egypt to compare the similarities and differences in their results.

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APPENDIX

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

