ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERS' WORKPLACE INCIVILITY: ANALYZING MEDIATING ROLE OF WORKGROUP NORMS AND MODERATING ROLE OF MORAL ATTENTIVENESS

AQSA JALIL

Riphah School of Leadership, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

MUHAMMAD SARMAD

Riphah School of Leadership, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

MUHAMMAD ZAHID ABBAS

Faculty of Management Sciences, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

LARAIB SADIQ

Riphah School of Leadership, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Abstract

The social learning theory was used to analyze the interrelationships between ethical leadership and followers' workplace incivility. The mediating role of workgroup norms for civility was examined in the said relationship and boundary condition of followers' moral attentiveness was also investigated between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility. We obtained the responses from 238 middle tier officers working in reputed banks across major cities of Punjab, Pakistan. Data was analyzed in SPSS through advanced statistical techniques. The results revealed that (1) there is a negative relationship between ethical leadership and followers' workplace incivility, (2) workgroup norms for civility mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility, and (3) the followers' moral attentiveness moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility such that if moral attentiveness is high than it strengthens the relationship between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility, hence the boundary condition would be stronger. The theoretical implications of these findings are also discussed.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Followers' Moral Attentiveness, Followers' Workplace Incivility, Workgroup Norms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace negativity has appeared as an important research area in organizational behavior literature during the last two decades. Workplace incivility is a comparatively new addition to this domain which emerged as a full discipline within the existing research on negative workplace behaviors. Andersson and Pearson (1999) contended that workers' uncivil behaviors among ongoing coworkers' communications would reciprocate as negative behavior at the workplace. As a basic perception of their incivility model, Andersson and his colleagues (1999) anticipated that incivility incites reciprocity and negative overcompensation due to instigative by nature. Which ultimately leads toward an increasing negativity spiral in the behaviors of the organizational workplace. Cortina et al. (2001) contended that uncivil exchanges among organizational employees lead to workplace incivility, which breaches norms of mutual respect. Such behaviors can employ gossiping and exclusionary behavior, expression of hostility, privacy, and invasion (Martin

& Hine 2005). The targets of uncivil behavior show less satisfaction toward their coworkers and supervisors, reduced level of well-being, and avoidance of responsibilities at their workplace. Many workers regularly feel themselves being the targets of incivility at their workplace (Cortina et al., 2001; Cortina et al., 2004).

Experience of discourteous behaviors can negatively affect workers' cognitive distraction, anger, mood, fear, and social identity (Walsh et al., 2012). The reactions of targets of incivility can also negatively affect their psychological as well as physical and occupational health (Lim et al., 2008). Empirical research in the incivility domain shows that the occurrence of incivility at the workplace rises with every passing day (Walsh et al., 2012; Cortina & Magley, 2009). Literature shows that incivility in the workplace is a worldwide phenomenon. Meier and Spector (2013) found that 98 workers out of each 100 were experiencing incivility at the workplace, whereas 50 out of these 98 were experiencing incivility once a week. Their study also found that due to cognitive disruption from their work, the estimated cost in terms of money due to incivility came to $14,000 per annum for each employee. These estimates are shocking as they point out that incivility at the workplace affects a number of individuals, ultimately leading to a huge impact on organizational financial resources. Furthermore, workplace incivility causes quite severe human costs borne by employees. Such fee includes; getting worried, avoiding the instigator, keeping them away from work, and even exhibiting their frustrations at the workplace.

The alarming rate in terms of money and human costs associated with incivility at the workplace directed the researchers to identify factors that help reduce workplace incivility. Leadership has been found as a driving and transforming force for follower behaviors (Van Gils et al., 2015). Particularly, ethical leadership has been identified as instrumental in following positive work behaviors (Toor & Ofori, 2009; Brown & Trevino 2006) whereas deviant workplace behavior is found to be predicted by low ethical leadership (van Gils et al., 2015; Thau et al., 2009). The literature suggested that the employees using the mechanism of social learning and social exchange are influenced by the ethical behavior of a leader (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011).

They always lead their followers by setting the example of ethical behavior, i.e., treating them fairly, and managing strong morality, which helps to put forth an idealized influence on them (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Social learning mostly depends on motivation, paid attention, and the capability to retain such information and reproduce this behavior. The capability through which ethical leaders exhibit normatively appropriate behavior is due to the power of position, e.g., rewarding and punishing the ethical and unethical behavior of their followers. This behavior motivates the followers to pay attention to ethical behavior through social learning. Ethical leaders emphasize their followers' growth and provide training opportunities to improve their capabilities to make decisions with the elements of ethics and avoid unethical conduct (Zhu, 2008).

Literature has shown a negative relationship between ethical leadership and workplace incivility (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). However, there is a need to identify the mechanism through which ethical leadership affects workplace incivility. The literature acknowledges

that workplace norms are innermost to incivility (Pearson et al., 2000; Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Workgroup norms for civility have been identified as key antecedents of incivility, which helps to reduce follower workplace incivility (Namin et al., 2021). Ethical leadership contains characteristics like temperance, justice, love, fairly treatment of others, and caring concern for others (Neubert et al., 2009; Trevino et al., 2000). These characteristics help develop the followers' ethical behavior (Peterson, 2004). Thus, ethical leadership helps to create civility norms within that particular work group, consequently affecting follower workplace incivility.

Therefore, the workgroup norms for civility seem entirely appropriate mediating mechanisms between the relationship of ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility. There is a strong reason to examine workgroup norms for civility as a mediating mechanism between ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility here in a collectivist society. A collectivist culture is based on a normative relationship resulting from shared values and norms among individuals bound together by common goals, interests, and mutual commitments (Etzioni, 1968). The temptation to defect and pursue self-interests over those of the collective is minimal (Earley, 1989). In line with this reasoning, it is argued that an ethical leader is always keen to transform his ethical conduct, including civility, into his group of followers. That will emerge as a norm of that particular workgroup with time. This workgroup norm for civility reduces incivility among that group.

The literature suggests that employees differ in their attention towards moral issues (Reynolds &Ceranic, 2009; Hannah et al., 2011), which are differentiated by moral attentiveness, i.e., how an employee considers moral values and morality at his workplace (Reynolds, 2008). Since communication of moral values is regarded as the main characteristic of ethical leadership, it seems that follower moral attentiveness is essential to buffer the effect of ethical leaders on their followers. Therefore, a follower's moral attentiveness is also proposed as a moderator between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility in fig 1.

Fig 1: Theoretical Model
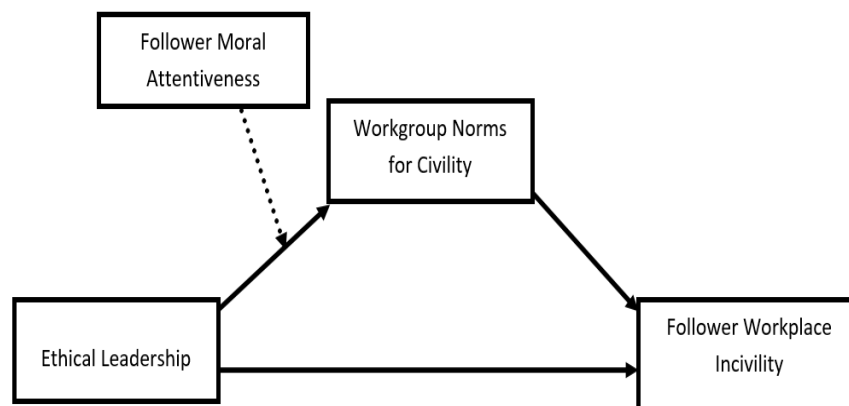
2 THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Linking Ethical Leadership and Followers' Workplace Incivility

Incivility is defined as "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). On account of two components: "low intensity of behavior" and "ambiguous intent to harm others," incivility at the workplace seems different from other types of deviant employee behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Ignoring or giving no respect to others at the workplace is an example of low-intensity behavior, while bystanders are an example of ambiguous intent (Pearson et al., 2000 ;). Cortina et al. (2004) stated that incivility consists of behaviors like; discourteous, disrespectful, and rude treatment of others at the workplace.

Workplace incivility might be a routine irritation relatively than a stressor (Kern & Grandey, 2009; Cortina et al., 2001). The research found that the occurrence of incivility in the workplace is 71% to 100 % (Kern & Grandey, 2009). Compared to clear ill-treatment, an event of incivility at the workplace won't be considered distressing. However, incivility accrual may lead to a few negative results (Sliter et al., 2010). The research studies indicate that incivility in the workplace is not an issue of one region or profession rather, it is a worldwide issue that has negative outcomes through a variety of professions in different geographic areas. Porath and Pearson (2013) show that managers of 1000 fortune companies intimate that 13% of their organizational time is spent addressing incivility issues, which takes approximately seven working weeks each year. These growing negative impacts caused by workplace incivility are considered to lose organizations a huge amount of money annually (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Due to such severe outcomes of workplace incivility, it becomes quite essential for organizations to identify those factors that cause incivility at workplace and those factors that reduce it.

Ethical leadership is one such factor that reduces workplace incivility (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). Brown et al. (2005) defined ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and, decision-making." Brown et al. (2005) proposed a social learning viewpoint to characterize ethical leadership and contended that the adequacy of ethical leadership is an errand of observational learning, i.e., the extent to which leaders (or the models) affect the ethical conduct of followers (or the observers) through observational learning and role modeling. Brown et al. (2005) idealization of ethical leadership have two noteworthy components: (1) the moral person component (e.g., honesty, justice and care for others, being credible), (2) the moral manager component (e.g., emphasizing ethical standards, communicating, rewarding and punishing, role modeling and ethical behavior). An ethical leader has several characteristics and influences his followers by shaping their ethical behavior (Mayer et al., 2010). High ethical leadership leads followers to respond to their moral conduct, whereas low ethical leadership leads the followers to react to non-moral conduct (Kacmar et al., 2011). Any non-moral conduct exhibited by followers is a reaction

to the unethical behavior of a leader in the workplace (Bies & Tripp, 1998; Robinson & Bennett, 1997).

Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986) contends that people get to be ready to learn distinctive conduct by watching a man who is around them, and their actions are perceived as legitimate, so in line with the argument, this theory seems quite suitable to clarify the relationship of ethical leadership with its indicators and outcomes. On their work floor, employees intently watch the practices of their leaders and take it as a kind of perspective (Stouten et al., 2013). This theory clarifies how ethical leaders display their moral conduct and how they make sense of the roles of their subordinates (Kirkman et al., 2009; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Ardichvili et al., 2009), and also how leaders ensure through value-based systems that their followers connect with themselves in moral conduct (Brown &Treviño 2006). From a social learning perspective (Bandura, 1977), leaders can be good examples by creating a reasonable working environment and imparting moral principles (Brown et al., 2005). In this way, their followers are encouraged to raise their opinions and ideas about ethics and improve working procedures and the environment (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009).

Numerous researchers depended on the theory of social learning (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986) to clarify the effect of ethical learning on different working environment outcomes (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Social learning theory is comparably pertinent for comprehending adverse outcomes of ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño 2006). Taking after past exploration concentrating on the impacts of ethical leadership on subordinates' distinctive wrong doings (Mayer et al., 2010) and workplace incivility, we hypothesized that:

> *H1: Ethical leadership is negatively related with followers' workplace incivility.*

2.2 Mediating role of Workgroup Norms for Civility between Ethical Leadership and Followers' Workplace Incivility

Fiske (2004) defined social norms as "behaviors of group members that act as implicit rules, considered to be both descriptive of what group members are and prescriptive of how they should be". Social norms informally provide a guideline for the behaviors of individuals within the organizational boundaries as well as outside these boundaries (Prentice & Paluck, 2020; Morrison, 2006 ;). Norms of any organization or a group are not formally written or documented as the other organizational rules, regulations, and policies are written (Morrison, 2006). Despite being informal norms, they deeply affect the behavior of individuals across contexts (Fiske, 2004). Empirical research in this domain identified that social norms have a considerable potential to influence the behaviors of employees at their workplace, e.g. those who might be more prone to uncivil behavior when working with uncivil employees (Namin et al., 2021).

In the social sciences, workplace incivility has been focused on by numerous researchers (Namin et al., 2021), and it appears an assertion among these researchers that civility incorporates more than simply great traditions and behavior (Gill & Sypher 2009). Civility presumes an awareness beyond one's self and includes passing on admiration, respect,

and worry about other's prosperity (Peck, 2002). Pearson et al. (Pearson et al., 2000) defined workplace civility as "behavior that helps to preserve the norms for mutual respect at work; it comprises behaviors that are fundamental to positively connecting with another, building relationships, and empathizing." Civility being a directing conduct for shared appreciation, Pearson et al. (Pearson et al., 2000) recommend that discourteous conduct, or workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), needs to keep at least a level inside the workplace having civility.

Social norms are crucial for workplace civility and incivility (Pearson et al., 2000). Pearson et al. (2000) posited that leaders must include particular explanations relating to acknowledged behavior among their employees into their organizational values as it leads the organizations to create atmospheres with solid norms for civility. Porath and Pearson 2009 argued that leaders in organizations must exhibit behaviors consistent with their values statements, as actions speak louder than statements.

The association between ethical leadership and different positive outcomes is well documented in the literature. The extending research in the area of ethical leadership clarifies it as a general procedure of leadership that change ethical leaders' conduct, e.g., inextricable virtuousness (Ciulla, 2004) with character virtues such as love, temperance, faithfulness, justice (Neubert et al., 2009), fair treatment of others or altruism, caring-concern for others, (Trevino et al., 2000) and behave ethically (Peterson, 2004) to followers' behavior (Walumbwa et al., 2011). This transformational role of ethical leadership is instrumental in developing the workgroup norms for civility within that particular workgroup. Workgroup norms for civility are among the strongest predictors of follower workplace incivility (Namin et al., 2021). The strong workgroup norms for civility among the members of that group are likely to reduce uncivil behaviors in the workplace (Namin et al., 2021). So in the light of arguments and theoretical support, we hypothesized as follows:

> *H2: Workgroup norms for civility mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and followers' workplace incivility.*

2.3 Moderating role of Followers' Moral Attentiveness between Ethical Leadership and Workgroup Norms for Civility

Reynolds (2008) has defined FMA as "the extent to which an individual chronically perceives and considers morality and moral elements in his or her experiences," This definition of moral attentiveness clarifies the distinctions in how people consider ethical values and profound ethics-related matters. It is contended that the consideration paid to morality and its related issues is built up by three elements: (1) saliency, (2) vividness, and (3) accessibility [59]. Saliency is referred to as the contextual significance of stimuli. In contrast, vividness is referred as how inherently interesting the stimuli are, and accessibility is referred as the cognitive frameworks of an individual and their capacity to identify or recognize such stimuli.

Compared to moral frameworks of specific types like formalism or utilitarianism, moral attentiveness is considered among moral concepts of the general type, differentiating

what is moral, non-moral, or amoral (Weaver et al., 1999; Agle et al., 1999). Reynolds (2008) contended that the people who constantly get to this ethical class see incoming stimuli through a perspective of morality and depend on that lens to understand the experience. He further contended that the ideas connected with morality could give a mental framework reliably accessible by people with high moral attentiveness. Consistent accessibility of this framework consequently leads individuals to high moral attentiveness toward the moral judgment of incoming information, which reflects upon their morality-related experiences (Reynolds, 2008).

Two components of moral attentiveness: (1) perceptual moral attentiveness (refers to the recognition of moral facets in everyday experiences); and (2) reflective moral attentiveness (the point to which the individuals regularly judge moral matters) has been identified by previous research (Reynolds, 2008). Perceptual moral attentiveness is mainly focused on the coding of incoming information, and reflective moral attentiveness is focused on action based on incoming information. These two components of moral attentiveness act jointly to help the constant attention of individuals for moral content (Reynolds, 2008). People get to be mindful of the aspects of morality in both components of moral attentiveness because of the tirelessly accessible framework of morality (Reynolds, 2008).

People high in moral attentiveness are prone to see the ethical signs to the degree that highly morally attentive people lean toward risk over the estimation of the recurrence of moral or immoral conduct (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). Thus, the reactions of those people who are high in moral attentiveness will base on the observed morality (e.g., ethical leadership) of a circumstance (van Gils et al., 2015). Although moral attentiveness normally persuades moral awareness and conduct (Reynolds, 2008), it is a bit likely that such an individual will dependably act ethically. Rather, it has any effect in seeing incoming information that makes those high in moral attentiveness more aware of incoming information's outcomes and, in this way, impacts their particular conduct or the conduct of others (Reynolds, 2008).

Moral identity is essential for the change of the impression of good signs into genuine good behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002), moral development (Kohlberg, 1981), workgroup norms for civility (Namin et al., 2021), or situational signs (Giessner & Van Quaquebeke, 2010). Highly moral attentive subordinates normally pick conduct with a component of morality as it matches their view of the proper thing to do (Reynolds, 2008). Under the above arguments, it is contended that ethical signs from an ethical leader will be more salient, vivid, and accessible to those followers who are high in moral attentiveness (Reynolds, 2008). The followers high in moral attentiveness will see an infringement of an ethical norm as an infringement of the relationship with the leader (van Gils et al., 2015). So in the light of arguments and theoretical support, we hypothesized:

> ***H3: Followers' moral attentiveness moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility in such a way that if moral attentiveness is high, then it strengthens the said relationship.***

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants and Procedures

The participants of this study were middle tier officers, serving in reputed private banks, across major cities of Punjab, Pakistan. This was a field study, as the questionnaires were filled out during working hours in their natural work environment and settings. The non-probability sample type was applied through convenient sampling technique. The data was collected from 340 respondents, who were contacted and requested to complete the questionnaires with requisite confidentiality, anonymity, volunteer participation and unbiased feedback. After deducting the incomplete responses, the 238 questionnaires were included in the analysis, the response rate was 70%. Out of 238 respondents, 76.5% (182 n) were male, while 23.5% (56 n) were female. The respondents were a blend of different age groups; however, the majority of the population was young, within the age range of 26 – 33 years. The sample includes respondents having an education from Metric to MS/Ph.D. However, the majority of the respondents had a master's degree. The sample was also varied regarding job experience; however, 1-5 years' experience was found to be more frequent in the sample.

3.2 Measures

The scales used for measurement in the study were 'Likert' scales which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for ethical leadership, workgroup norms for civility, and follower moral attentiveness, whereas from1 (never) to 5 (always) for follower workplace incivility.

Ethical Leadership. EL was reported by the employees using the 10-items (ELS) scale developed by Brown et al., (2005). Item examples include "My leader listens to what employees have to say." The value of Cronbach alpha for this scale was .935.

Workgroup Norms for Civility. Workgroup norms for civility were reported by employees using a 4-items scale developed by Namin et al. (2021). We exchanged "Your" with "My." Item examples include "Respectful treatment is the norm in my unit/workgroup." The Cronbach alpha value for scale was .905.

Followers' Moral Attentiveness. Follower moral attentiveness was also reported by employees, using the 12-item scale developed by Reynolds (2008). Item examples include "I like to think about ethics." The value of Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .912.

Followers' Workplace Incivility. Follower workplace incivility was reported by employees using a 7-item scale developed by Cortina et al. (2001). Item examples include "Paid little attention to your statement or showed little interest in your opinion." The value of Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .872.

Control Variables. Gender, age, qualification, and experience affect follower workplace incivility (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). Therefore, these demographic variables were included in the study. However, it was found that no demographic variable had a significant effect

on follower workplace incivility. Thus, we did not control these variables during the regression analysis.

4. RESULTS

To test our hypothesis, we employed the process method of Preacher and Hayes (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) as this method allowed us to test the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through mediating variable even if the independent variable has no direct effect on a dependent variable. We also bootstrapped with 5000 iterations to construct bias-corrected confidence intervals for the significance tests of the indirect effects.

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As per the suggestions of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we inspected the construct validity of the variables before testing the proposed hypothesis of our study. We carried out CFA to look at the distinctiveness of variables in our study in the light of Chi-square measurements and fit indices of RMSEA, TLI, and CFI (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). These values of the fit indices yielded a better fit to the data.

Table 1: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

		Chi-square/df	RMSEA	TLI	CFI
1.	4 Factor Model	1.737	.056	.924	.932
2.	3 Factor Model: EL-FMA	3.415	.101	.753	.775
3.	3 Factor Model: EL-WNC	2.223	.072	.875	.886
4.	3 Factor Model: EL-FWI	2.897	.089	.806	.823
5.	3 Factor Model: FMA-WNC	3.178	.096	.777	.797
6.	3 Factor Model: FMA-FWI	3.228	.097	.772	.792
7.	3 Factor Model: WNC-FWI	2.837	.088	.812	.829
8.	2 Factor Model: EL-FMA & WNC-FWI	4.503	.122	.641	.672
9.	2 Factor Model: EL-WNC & FMA-FWI	3.708	.107	.722	.747
10.	2 Factor Model: EL-FWI & FMA-WNC	4.333	.119	.658	.688
11.	1 Factor Model	4.973	.129	.593	.628

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables used in the study. Ethical leadership is positively and significantly correlated to the workgroup norms for civility and follower moral attentiveness, while it is negatively and significantly correlated with follower workplace incivility. Workgroup norms for civility are positively and significantly correlated with follower moral attentiveness, while it is negatively and significantly correlated with follower workplace incivility. Whereas follower moral attentiveness is negatively and insignificantly correlated with follower workplace.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Main Variables

		Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Ethical Leadership	3.5824	.83324	1			
2	Workgroup Norms for Civility	3.6176	.86348	.710**	1		
3	Followers' Moral Attentiveness	3.0574	.80905	.137*	.282**	1	
4	Followers' Workplace Incivility	2.3511	.80133	-.370**	-.372**	-.050	1
	**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
	*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 shows the result of the regression analysis. Ethical leadership has a negative and significant effect on follower workplace incivility (B = -.205, t = -2.52, p < .05), accepting the first hypothesis. The indirect effect of ethical leadership on follower workplace incivility through mediating workgroup norms for civility is also significant. The bootstrapping values for indirect effect are .0022 to .0996 with a 95 % confidence interval excluding zero. These results suggest sufficient support for the acceptance of the second hypothesis, i.e., workgroup norms for civility mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility. Finally, the results also indicate the acceptance of the third hypothesis i.e. follower moral attentiveness moderates the relationship between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility in such a way that higher the follower moral attentiveness, the stronger the relationship (B = -.163, t = -3.17, p <.05).

Table 3: Mediation Analysis

Variables	B	SE	T	P
Ethical leadership ⟶ Followers' Workplace Incivility	- .401	.061	1.82	.01
Ethical leadership ⟶ Workgroup Norms for Civility	.305	.063	1.73	.02
Workgroup Norms for Civility ⟶ Followers' Workplace Incivility	-.163	.071	2.17	.00
Ethical leadership ⟶ Workgroup Norms for Civility ⟶ Followers' Workplace Incivility	- .232	.043	1.82	.01
Bootstrap results for indirect effect		LL 95% CI .0031	UL 95% CI .0876	

Note. Un-standardized regression coefficients reported. Bootstrap sample size 5000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit

Table 4: Moderation Analysis

Variables	B	SE	T	P
Ethical leadership ⟶ Workgroup Norms for Civility	.305	.081	-2.52	.01
Ethical leadership× Followers' Moral Attentiveness ⟶ Workgroup Norms for Civility	-.163	.051	-3.17	.00
Bootstrap results for indirect effect		LL 95% CI .0022	UL 95% CI .0996	

Note. Un-standardized regression coefficients reported. Bootstrap sample size 5000. LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit

The result of third hypothesis is also supported through moderation graph as under:
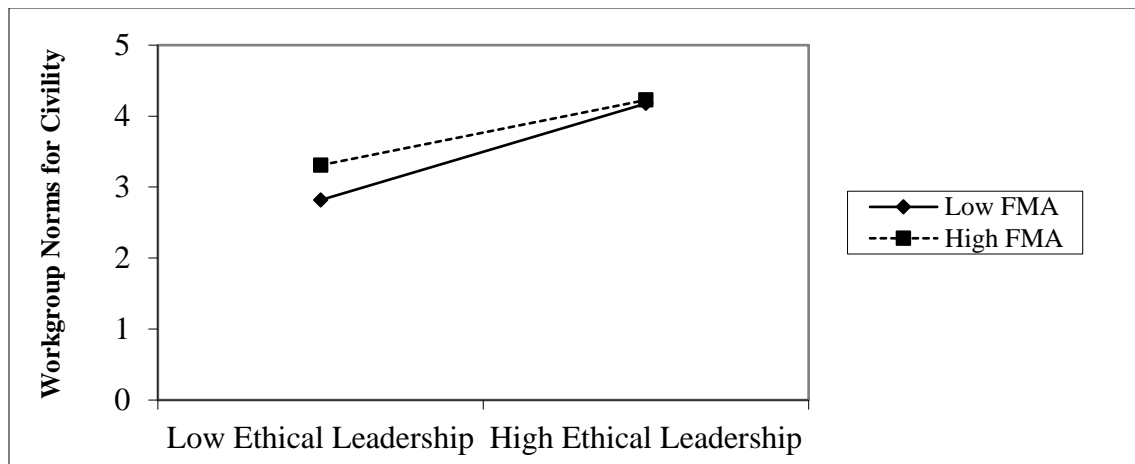

Fig 2: Moderation Graphs

5. DISCUSSION

This study was meant to investigate the negative relationship between ethical leadership and followers' workplace incivility, especially the mechanism through which ethical leadership influences followers' workplace incivility. The effect of followers' moral attentiveness with the interaction of ethical leadership on workgroup norms for civility was also proposed. It was found through empirical evidence that ethical leadership significantly and negatively affects followers' workplace incivility, which supported the previous study's findings (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). It is also found that workgroup norms for civility mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility. These findings are aligned with the arguments that organizational norms are an important function of the behavior of leaders in the organizations (Pearson & Porath, 2009) as when a leader exhibits civil behavior at the workplace, positive norms for civility are more likely occurred among his/her followers, which reduces follower workplace incivility (Namin et al., 2021). The results indicated that high followers' moral attentiveness strengthens the positive relationship between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility. This moderating role of moral attentiveness is aligned with a previous study by van Gils et al. (2015) wherein the same role between EL and follower workplace deviance was identified. This reflects that more moral attentiveness stimulates the civil work norms in targeted private banks and generates positive evidence for peer banks as well.

6. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study's findings have made three important theoretical contributions to the expanding body of literature. Firstly, it provides empirical support for the negative relationship between EL and FWI in an eastern setting for the first time. These findings are aligned with the findings of the previous study (Taylor & Pattie, 2014). Secondly, this study identified workgroup norms for civility as a mediating mechanism between the relationship of ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility. Thirdly, it identified moderating role

of follower moral attentiveness between ethical leadership and workgroup norms for civility. This shows that when the leader's conduct is moral, the follower's moral attentiveness may prompt an ethically engaged exchange relationship between a leader and his followers. The findings of this study also suggest that organizations should invest in ethical leadership to reduce the monetary and human costs associated with workplace incivility.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study has identified fundamental mediating mechanisms, i.e., workgroup norms for civility between the association of ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility. Yet further empirical research is required to identify more mediating variables between ethical leadership and follower workplace incivility. The focus of the study was the Pakistani banking sector, a collectivist society with greater power distance leaving more space for incivility. The scope of the investigation should be extended to other service sectors organizations like hospitals and manufacturing industries like automobiles which possibly have higher rates of workplace incivility. Moreover, cross-cultural analysis of individualist societies would also increase the generalizability of the results.

8. LIMITATIONS

Our study offered some useful theoretical and practical implications, yet this study also has some limitations that can be addressed in future research. We approached the employees of banks only for the collection of data which might be a hurdle for the generalizability of the results across various industries. In future research, data may also be collected from other sectors. Secondly, due to time and resource constraints, we only collected data at once. So it is logical to consider that some of the situational factors during data collection may bias the responses. Thus in the future, data should also be collected in different time lags.

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