



The impact of ethical leadership on employee engagement: Mediate of corporate social responsibility

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine not only how ethical leadership (EL) directly affects EE but also how it improves EE through the mediation of genuine and well-thought-out CSR efforts, with the goal of creating a more sustainable and value-driven workplace. The research is based on the Social Learning Theory, Corporate Social Responsibility Theory, and the Self-Determination Theory. A quantitative method was employed to gather data from local employees working in industrial businesses located within Al-Hassan Industrial Estate, Irbid, Jordan. A sample size of 335 individuals was selected. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that EE is significantly increased by ethical leadership, with CSR serving as a key mediator in this relationship. The study contributes to the existing literature on CSR and EL by providing useful implications for companies seeking to enhance employee commitment through ethical conduct and social responsibility programs. The results highlight the importance of EL and CSR in fostering an engaged and motivated workforce. The study offers practical advice for executives aiming to improve employee engagement, emphasizing ethical behavior and socially conscious strategies that are genuinely effective. Additionally, it explores how organizational ethics and CSR influence employee outcomes.

Contribution/Originality: This study adds to the body of literature by proposing a novel conceptual model of how EL affects EE in Jordanian industrial enterprises. It demonstrates how EL, combined with CSR, the primary mediator, may produce a motivated and engaged workforce.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on how EL affects EE is incredibly important as it shows the role that leadership philosophies have in creating a dedicated and driven workforce. Past studies have shown that EL has a major impact on EE (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Adding CSR to the mix takes this even further. It connects EL with larger business ideals.

According to the study, EL has a direct impact on EE by creating a supportive workplace. This means that workplace staff members feel appreciated and are treated with respect. Ali, Shehzadi, and Mirza (2023), for example, highlights that EL encourages innovation and engagement from workers. This implies that ethical leaders can develop a more involved workforce. In a comparable manner, (Widowati & Satrya, 2023) revealed that emotional intelligence and EL improve work engagement as they encourage open communication and equitable treatment, which motivate staff members to participate actively in their responsibilities.

El directly impacts EE through several factors. Ahmad and Gao (2018) show that employees engage more when they see their leaders as ethical. Neves and Story (2015) argue that El shapes how employees view their organization. This drives both their engagement and commitment. Mitonga-Monga, Flotman, and Cilliers (2016) focus on workplace ethics culture and explain that El creates a supportive culture, which in turn increases engagement.

Programs further improve EE as they coordinate business objectives with societal values that are frequently supported by ethical leaders. For example, Nejati, Salamzadeh, and Loke (2020) discuss how ethical leaders can encourage employees to participate in CSR initiatives, which helps them feel a sense of belonging. However, some research shows differences in the strength of this association, indicating that contextual factors may influence how El affects CSR involvement (Nejati et al., 2020).

El is additionally linked to better employee well-being. Fu, Long, He, and Liu (2020), for example, found that ethical leaders create an ethical culture that boosts engagement, reduces stress, and increases job satisfaction. Ramlawati, Serlin, Arminas, Junaidi, and Ready (2023) support this, showing a strong connection between job satisfaction, engagement, and EL. This suggests that ethical leaders help build a workplace that encourages high levels of commitment and dedication.

Like in many other Middle Eastern nations, organizations in Jordan are coming to understand the importance of CSR and ethical behavior. In these organizations, El fosters social contributions as well as commercial success, both of which are critical to preserving social harmony. Additionally, Middle Eastern values are a powerful tool for raising EE. This is because El aligns with values like respect for authority, strong family orientation, and robust social networks. El can significantly boost EE through CSR programs that reflect local cultural norms (Al-Ma'ani, Al-Qudah, & Shrouf, 2019).

It is clear that there is a lack of studies conducted on the relationship among EL, EE, and CSR in Jordan. As such, the study addresses this by asking the following question: Is there a connection between EL, EE, and CSR in Jordan? Much research indicates that CSR is not managed adequately in Jordan. Albdour and Altarawneh (2012) study demonstrates this extensively. Just one of the four internal dimensions of CSR, work-life balance, is being used as much as the others.

The study is based on multiple theories: the “*Social Learning Theory*” (Bandura, 1977), moral behavior is modeled by ethical leaders, which affects employee engagement. According to “social learning theory”, employees can pick up skills by observing and copying the actions, attitudes, and results of others in addition to directly experiencing things themselves. This idea has had a major impact on fields such as psychology, education, criminology, and organizational behavior. The “*theory of corporate social responsibility*” (CSR) (Carroll, 1999) examines how CSR promotes constructive organizational conduct. The “theory of corporate social responsibility”, or CSR, examines how companies can solve social, environmental, and economic concerns while also playing a beneficial role in society. CSR theories seek to identify, clarify, and direct the social obligations that businesses have outside of their pursuit of financial gain. This study is also based on the “*Self-Determination Theory*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000). CSR programs increase EE by giving them an intrinsic incentive. “Self-Determination Theory” highlights the psychological needs for intrinsic motivation as well as relatedness, competence, and autonomy. These psychological demands can be met by CSR and EL, which will increase participation. Therefore, as seen in Figure 1, the goal of this work is to examine potential El effects on EE as well as additional underlying processes between El and EE with mediating roles of CSR in Jordanian industrial organizations.

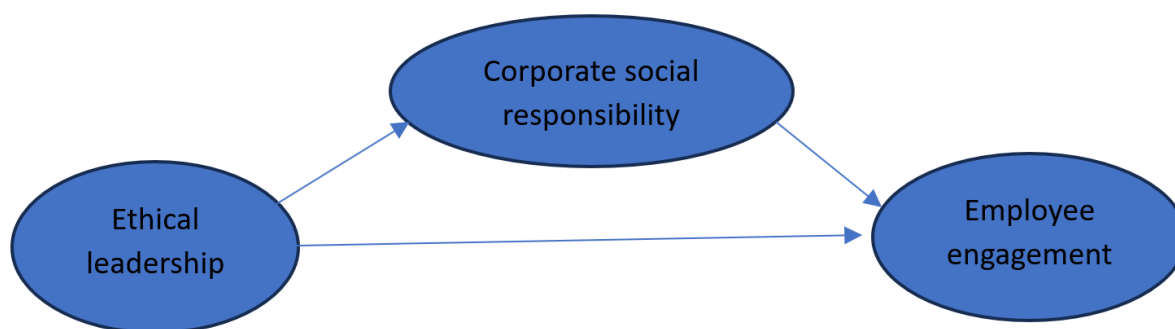


Figure 1. Research conceptual model.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. *El and EE*

Leadership studies now heavily emphasize EI because of its significant influence on decision-making, organizational behavior, and societal results. EI is fundamentally about guiding with honesty, fairness, and integrity, with a focus on encouraging moral behavior and ideals in the leader's own behaviors as well as the culture of the company they oversee. Making good decisions is not the only thing that ethical leaders do; they also encourage their followers to act decently in their positions (Altahat & Atan, 2018).

Several essential characteristics are frequently used to describe ethical leadership: *Integrity*: ethical leaders act in a manner that aligns with their principles and moral principles. Honesty, Openness, and responsibility in all dealings are components of integrity (Brown & Treviño, 2006). *Fairness*: Leaders who uphold moral standards encourage justice and equity, guaranteeing that everyone is treated equally and refraining from partiality or prejudice (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). *Respect for Others*: Morally upright leaders treat their followers with dignity, compassion, and understanding, which promotes a positive workplace culture (Northouse, 2021). *Accountability*: Leaders who uphold ethics are accountable for their own and other people's conduct. When something goes wrong, they are prepared to own up to their mistakes, ask for criticism, and make the required adjustments (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). *Commitment to the Common Good*: EL prioritizes advancing the community's welfare over focusing solely on individual or organizational objectives (Ciulla, 2014).

Study has indicated that EI is essential to achieving favorable organizational results. High levels of trust, cooperation, and employee happiness are more likely to be fostered within firms by ethical leaders (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Moreover, unethical behavior is linked to ethical leadership, which lowers the likelihood of corporate wrongdoing and controversies (Brown & Treviño, 2006).

An organization's ethical environment can also be influenced by its EL. When leaders serve as moral role models and establish ethical standards, their followers are likely to follow suit, raising the organization's moral and ethical standards as a whole (Mayer, Kuenzi, & Greenbaum, 2010). Employee well-being, organizational performance, and work satisfaction all improve as a result (Muhammad, Suleiman, Mamun, Jewel, & Mozumder, 2025).

Engagement is the phrase used to characterize an individual's interest, dedication, or investment in a certain task, relationship, or activity. It has been examined in a variety of fields, such as psychology, business, education, and the social sciences, and it is known to have behavioral, cognitive, and emotional components. The theoretical underpinnings, important models, and empirical findings from several disciplines are combined in this review to give a thorough overview of engagement. The idea of EE in the work environment is frequently attributed to William Kahn. Kahn defines engagement as a person's ability to fully commit to their professional function. He suggested that three psychological factors influence EE: Meaningfulness, Availability, and Safety. According to Kahn's idea, EE is a dynamic, unique experience that is influenced by how each person views their workplace (Kahn, 1990).

A well-known framework for comprehending workplace engagement was created by Schaufeli & Bakker (2004). According to their "Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model", the harmony between job resources like autonomy and support and workplace demands like workload and pressure is what drives EE. According to Schaufeli and Bakker

(2004), engagement consists of three essential elements: Dedication, Energy, and Absorption. The JD-R model states that employees are more engaged when job resources exceed job demands, which improves performance, well-being, and lowers burnout (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Many studies have examined the connection between EI and EE. Some aspects of this relationship are *Trust and Respect*: By setting an example of moral behavior, ethical leaders foster trust and respect within the company. Employees are more inclined to respond with high levels of engagement when they believe their leaders are acting morally. Employee commitment to their jobs is increased when there is trust in the leadership, which improves job satisfaction and organizational loyalty (Treviño & Brown, 2014). Additionally, trust reduces ambiguity at work, which increases psychological safety and enables workers to focus more intently on their work.

Supportive Organizational Culture: A supportive organizational culture results from ethical leadership. Ethical leaders foster an atmosphere where workers feel appreciated and respected, which boosts their intrinsic motivation to perform well (Brown & Treviño, 2006). By encouraging a sense of direction in their work and aligning corporate objectives with employees' values, this supportive culture enhances engagement.

The role of EI in motivation: By inspiring workers to strive for objectives that are consistent with their personal and company values, EI affects employee engagement. Concern for workers' welfare is a common trait of ethical leaders, which increases motivation by giving workers a stronger connection to the company's mission and objectives, which in turn improves EE (Avolio et al., 2009).

Positive Psychological States: Higher stages of EE are related to positive psychological states that are fostered by ethical leadership, including self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. As stated by Walumbwa et al. (2011), workers who perceive that their moral leaders support them are more likely to be motivated, feel more capable in their positions, and be happier in their jobs.

Employee Empowerment: Participating in decision-making procedures, granting employees autonomy, and promoting their freedom of speech are all components of ethical leadership. Because it enables workers to believe that their contributions are significant and appreciated, empowerment is a major factor in EE (Kark & Shamir, 2013).

2.2. CSR

A breakthrough in CSR definitions occurred in the 1980s. "The focus on developing new or refined definitions of CSR gave way to research on CSR and a splintering of writings into alternative concepts and themes such as CSR, public policy, business ethics, and stakeholder theory/management" (Carroll, 1999).

CSR is the term used to describe company operations that incorporate efforts to improve the environment and society, such as fair labor practices, ethical sourcing, sustainable practices, and community involvement. As businesses try to maintain their competitiveness while having a beneficial social impact, CSR has become a critical component of corporate strategy. Employees, clients, and other stakeholders find that companies with robust CSR programs are more trustworthy and that their values are relatable (Carroll, 1999; Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

From its early beginnings, the idea of CSR has undergone tremendous change. Early corporate social responsibility (CSR) models were mostly philanthropic, emphasizing corporate donations and charity (Carroll, 1999; Porter & Kramer, 2006). CSR awareness evolved along with society's expectations. Although CSR was once seen by businesses as a means of enhancing their public image, it eventually found its way into corporate plans in response to more general social and environmental concerns (Bowen, 1953). It is frequently believed that Howard Bowen's groundbreaking work in his 1953 book "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" served as the basis for the academic discipline of CSR. Bowen (1953) believed that companies had an obligation that went beyond maximizing profits, emphasizing the moral ramifications of their decisions. Later research that positioned CSR as a critical element of company ethics and governance was made possible by this idea.

Carroll (1991) Pyramid, one of the most frequently used models, divides CSR into four main categories: philanthropic, legal, ethical, and economic duties. With an emphasis on profit-making, economic responsibility is

viewed as the cornerstone of CSR. Companies are legally obligated to abide by the law. Beyond legal requirements, ethical responsibilities focus on what is just and moral. Additionally, philanthropic duties, though optional, are pursuits that advance the welfare of society (Carroll, 1991).

Porter and Kramer (2006) In order to provide both social and commercial benefits, this paradigm recommends that CSR be incorporated into business strategy. They highlighted that companies might increase a competitive advantage by tackling societal issues and coordinating their activities with the demands of society. According to this perspective, corporate success and social good can reinforce one another, challenging conventional CSR.

When workers believe their workplace is socially conscious, they are more inclined to act creatively since this creates a favorable social exchange relationship between the workplace and its employees (Gaudêncio, Coelho, & Ribeiro, 2019). Additionally, CSR programs help to enhance a company's reputation, which raises employee commitment and engagement (Ali & Ali, 2024).

El also supports CSR initiatives as it integrates environmental and social concerns into the structure of the company, which in turn strengthens stakeholder connections and improves the company's brand (Ainsbury, Roberts, & Smith, 2014).

The ability to promote EE is largely dependent on the incorporation of CSR into organizational procedures, especially when it aligns with ethical leadership. Companies that successfully communicate their CSR initiatives foster a sense of fitting among their workforce, as indicated by previous research that shows a strong correlation between perceived CSR and positive employee outcomes, such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Strawder, 2024).

Workers are more likely to experience a sense of community when they believe that the company's CSR initiatives reflect their own values. This has a significant impact on how engaged they are. Past research has also determined that one of the most important elements in CSR frameworks for encouraging employee innovation is job satisfaction (Beglari, 2022).

2.3. Mediating Role of CSR

Study shows that CSR plays a vital role in linking El to EE. In fact, many studies have examined how CSR strengthens this connection. For example, Avolio et al. (2009) found that El improves employees' sense of fairness within the company, which then leads to higher levels of engagement. This means that ethical leaders help create a culture of fairness, which not only supports CSR initiatives but also increases employee commitment and engagement as a result. Isa and Loke (2019) examined the effects of CSR and EI on employee sentiments and discovered that work satisfaction and EI are mediated by CSR. Workers who believe that their leaders are ethical and community-conscious are more likely to be content with their current positions, which increases employee engagement. Ferreira and De Oliveira (2014) investigated how CSR affects EE and discovered that CSR programs strengthen workers' emotional bonds with their employers through building trust.

CSR practices also operate as a mediator in the link between El and EE, according to Nguyen, Nguyen, and Hoai (2021). They concluded that CSR programs have a favorable impact on workers' dedication and sense of organizational pride, which raises engagement levels. According to the report, CSR is a key factor that links EL to positive EE rather than merely being a side issue.

As stated by Rupp, Shao, Thornton, and Skarlicki (2013), employees view CSR initiatives as a reflection of the ethical standards and values of the business they work for. The study explains that workers are more likely to see CSR as an accurate representation of the company's values when they trust their leaders to act morally. This trust makes employees feel that their efforts support a socially responsible business, which increases their trust and engagement.

There are various ways to explain how CSR functions as a mediator in the link between EE and EL. Ethical leaders who support CSR programs foster an atmosphere where employees believe their personal beliefs complement

the organization's goals. Because workers are more inclined to connect emotionally with a business that upholds ethical and social responsibility standards, this alignment leads to a boost of EE (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009). Employees feel more motivated and have greater concentration levels when ethical leaders encourage CSR.

Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, and Salvador (2009) Claim that EI fosters a culture of justice and trust that is critical to EE. This confidence is further strengthened when staff members believe their bosses are morally upright and actively engaged in CSR. CSR initiatives can enhance employees' perceptions of organizational fairness by demonstrating to them that the company values more than just profit. Employees' emotional dedication to their work and engagement are increased when they believe the company is fair and just. Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004).

Since they feel that they are part of a company that improves society, CSR efforts help employees feel proud of their work. By displaying responsible conduct and involving staff members in CSR initiatives, EI strengthens this sense of pride. Seeing their company's social contributions likewise has the same effect and increases EE as it fosters a sense of pride in the company (Turker, 2009).

Because workers who believe their company is dedicated to social and environmental problems tend to view their employment as having greater purpose, CSR can increase the meaningfulness of work. Employees have the chance to take part in projects that align with their interests and values when EI places a high priority on CSR. EE is strongly influenced by this sense of purposeful work, since motivated workers are not only driven by financial compensation (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

The following hypotheses will be examined in the study in light of the corpus of current literature:

H₁: EI has a "positive effect" on EE.

H₂: EI has a positive effect on CSR.

H₃: CSR has a "positive effect" on EE.

H₄: CSR mediates the relationship between EI and EE.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With the use of survey questionnaires and a quantitative technique approach, this study offered a thorough examination of these problems in Jordan.

3.1. Sample

The target population for the study was local employees of industrial businesses located within Al-Hassan Industrial Estate, Irbid, Jordan. They were chosen to make up the research sample based on their demonstrated participation in CSR activities. There are 136 industrial businesses functioning in six different industries, including the food, engineering, textile and cotton, manufacturing chemical, printing, and paper sectors, according to the Jordan Industrial Estates Company's (JIEC) report (JIEC, 2023).

The study distributed questionnaires to participants to systematically collect samples using a probability sampling design. 355 employees made up the study sample. 344 were returned. Of these, 335 were accepted for analysis, yielding a 97% response rate, which was concluded to be sufficient for this research.

3.2. Variables and Measurements

The "Structural equation modeling" (SEM) was used to examine and investigate the connections among the study variables. The "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) version 23 and the "Analysis of Moment Structures" (AMOS) version 23 were used to perform the statistical analysis for this study.

The EI "Scale" (Brown et al., 2005) (10 items) was also used to measure EE. It evaluates traits like transparency, role modeling, and fairness. "The five-point.

Likert scale was applied in this study, varying from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree for workers' self-ratings of their manager's ethical performance.

Example: "My leader listens to what employees have to say."

Turker (2009) CSR scale (24 items): (Environmental Responsibility, 6 items), (Ethical Responsibility, 6 items), (Philanthropic Responsibility, 6 items), and (Economic Responsibility, 6 items): is used to measure corporate social responsibility (CSR), which evaluates both external (community/environment) and internal (employee) CSR practices.

Example: "Our company provides competitive compensation and benefits to employees."

The "Utrecht Work Engagement" (UWES) Scale (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) consists of 17 items divided into three subscales: Vigor (6 items), Dedication (5 items), and Absorption (6 items). It is used to measure employee engagement by evaluating these three factors: dedication, vigor, and absorption.

Example: "I am enthusiastic about my job."

3.3. Data Collection Methods

The instrument was originally assessed and refined after using a pilot survey that was given to 15 respondents. A total of 355 surveys were given out to staff members across several departments after the pilot survey. The questionnaires were personally delivered to the workers in each department of each company or business in the Al-Hassan Industrial Estate. A sufficient amount of time was allotted to finish each section. Due to some employees' preoccupations, some surveys were collected the day after they were distributed, while others were collected the same day. After completing the survey in Arabic, the responses were translated into English and input into the SPSS and AMOS programs.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The survey's obtained data was examined. First, the researcher examined demographic data using frequency descriptive analysis. The researcher then used SEM to jointly assess related hypotheses by evaluating the relationships between several dependent and independent factors in a structural model (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). The structural and measurement models in this study were examined using AMOS.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Every employee received a survey package that included the ethical approval obtained for the study from the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Supply's approval committee center with reference No 1/213-2024, a cover letter inviting participation, and a brief explanation of the study's goals. Due to the low risk of the study and the use of non-invasive, self-reported questionnaires for data collection, participants gave their verbal consent (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). Verbal consent is more culturally acceptable in Jordan, where informal consent procedures are frequently more widely accepted and successful in guaranteeing participant privacy and comfort.

The researcher insured participant confidentiality, as recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) which decreased the probability of "common method bias" (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4. RESULTS

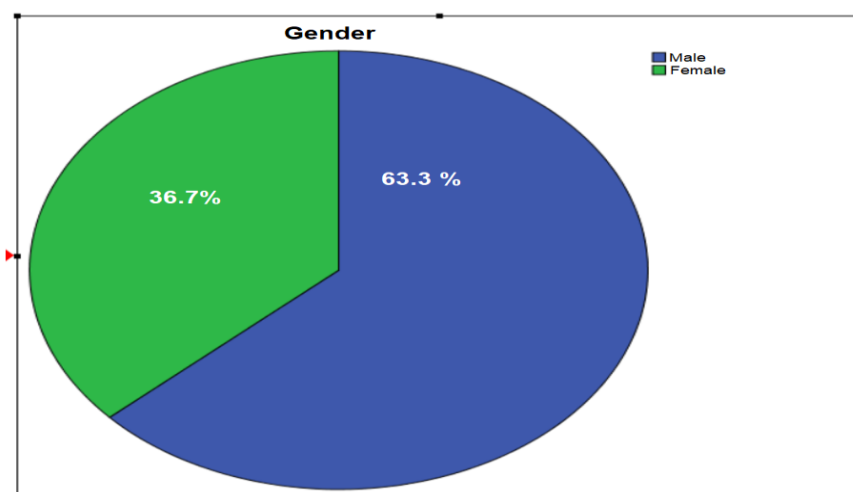
4.1. Descriptive Analysis

From Figure 2, Gender, we can observe that there are more males (63.3%) than females (36.7%). From Figure 3, Age demographic feature, 51.1% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 40, followed by 38.5% who were under 25, and 10.4% who were over 40. This may improve productivity for the majority of responders, who are in the youth to middle age range. The majority of workers in this age range are eager to learn new skills, gain experience, and apply them in the workplace.

Table 1. Gender Descriptive Analysis.

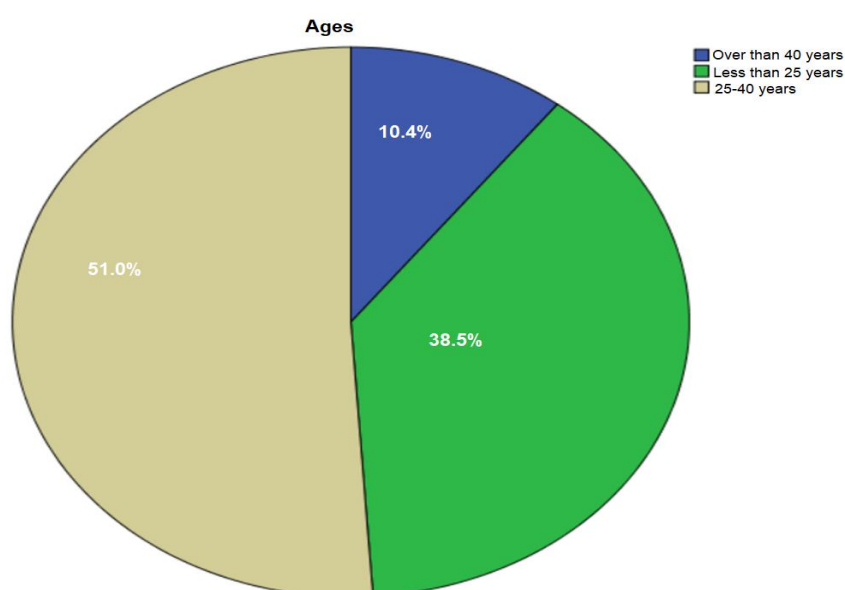
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Male	212	63.3	63.3	63.3
Female	123	36.7	36.7	100.0
Total	335	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 presents the distribution of participants by gender.

**Figure 2.** Gender Pie chart analysis.**Table 2.** Ages descriptive analysis.

Age group	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Over 40 years	35	10.4	10.4	10.4
Between 40 years and 25 years	171	51.0	51.0	61.4
Below 25 years	129	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	335	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 presents the distribution of participants by age group.

**Figure 3.** Age Pie chart analysis.

According to Figure 4's education demographic characteristic: 17% have a university degree, 36.1% have a high school diploma, and 46.9% have a diploma. This shows that a significant portion of respondents hold a diploma.

According to Figure 5, 15.5% of respondents had less than five years of experience, 26.9% had five to ten years, and 57.6% had more than ten years. Given that most respondents had more than ten years of job experience, this suggests that they had a positive experience.

Table 3. Education level distribution.

Education level	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
High school	121	36.1	36.1	36.1
Diploma	157	46.9	46.9	83
University	57	17	17	100.0
Total	335	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 presents the education level amongst the participants.

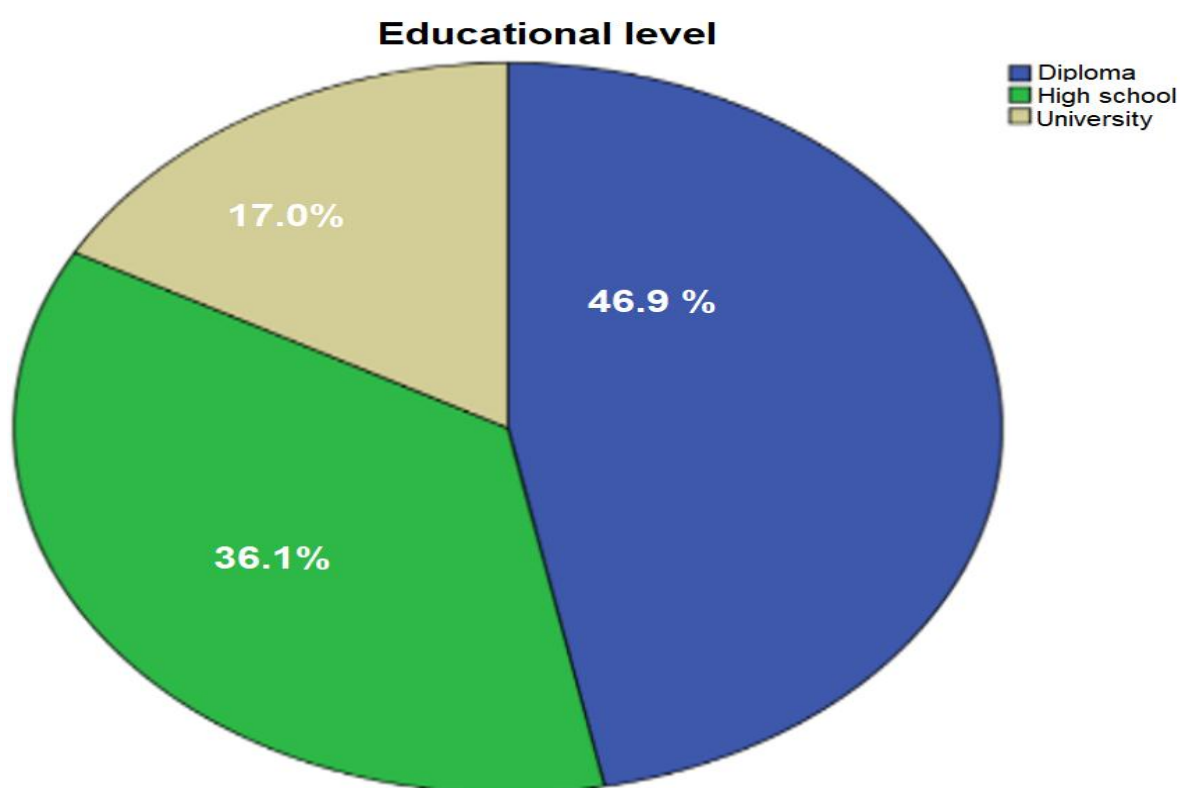


Figure 4. Education level pie chart analysis.

Table 4. Work experience descriptive analysis.

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Less than 5 years	52	15.5	15.5	15.5
Between 5 and 10 years	90	26.9	26.9	42.4
Over 10 years	193	57.6	57.6	100.0
Total	335	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 presents the years of work experience of the participants.

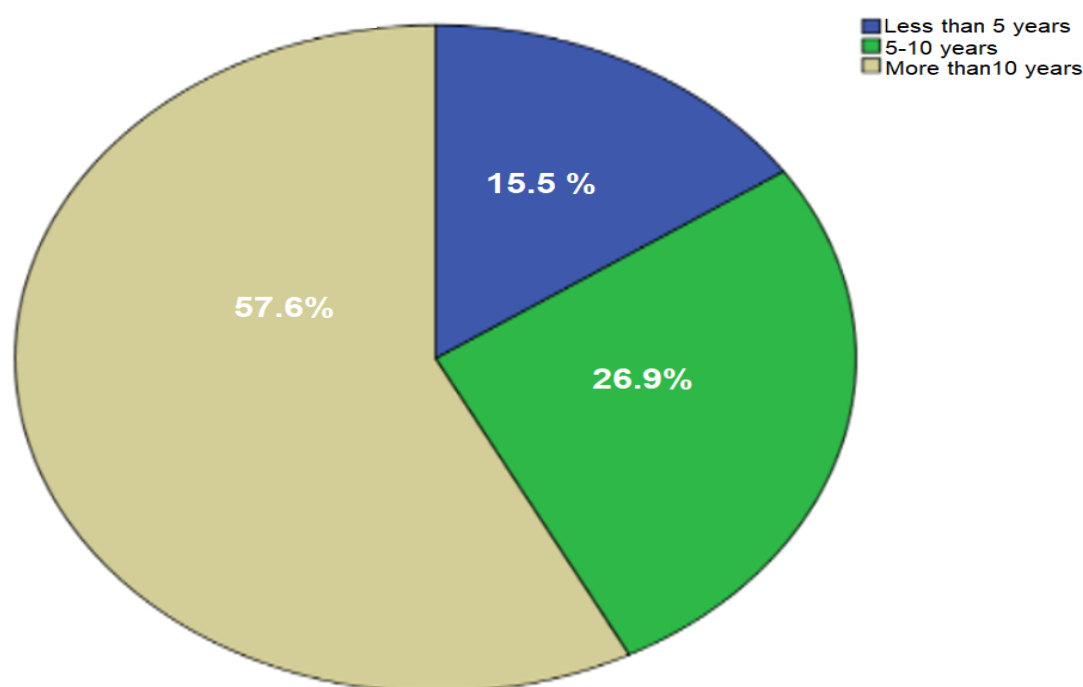


Figure 5. Working experience pie chart analysis.

Table 5. "Standard deviation" (SD), "Pearson correlations," and "means" (M).

Variables	1	2	3	M	SD
1. EI	1.00	0.264**	0.448 **	4.1525	0.579
2. EE	0.264**	1.00	0.298**	3.4428	0.415
3. CSR	0.448 **	0.298**	1.00	3.4428	0.533

Note: N = 335, ** correlations are "significant" at $p < 0.001$.

Table 5 shows M, SD, and Pearson correlations between the variables that were employed. As expected, there was a favorable correlation between EI and both EE ($r = 0.264$) and CSR ($r = 0.448$). Additionally, there was a favorable correlation ($r = 0.298$) between CSR and EE. These findings thus provided preliminary support for H1, H2, and H3.

4.2. Model Activity

A multivariate statistical technique named confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is applied to assess the degree to which the number of constructs is reflected in the measured variables. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), CFA enables the scholar to examine the hypothesis that claims the "observable" variables and their underlying latent components are related. Convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity are examples of unique and decisive construct validity that CFA helps researchers with. CFA was applied in the proposed model. See Table 6.

Table 6 shows Factor loadings (FL), which were examined using CFA (Brown & Treviño, 2006). All FL were found to be satisfactory and significant. The FL varied between 0.53 and 0.94; see Figure 6 for further information.

"Composite reliability" (CR), which gauges total scale reliability and is favored with CFA, is checked by the researcher; for large internal dependability, in SEM analysis, the minimum CR value ought to be higher than 0.7. Since every variable was higher than 0.7, our model satisfies the standards for reliability and validity. Additionally, the measurement model's convergent validity, as determined by CR, was higher than the scale items' 0.70 criterion, and the threshold of 0.50 was exceeded by the "average variance extracted" (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010).

Table 6. Loading factor analysis.

V	N	Q	Loading	AVE	CR
Ethical leadership	1.	"My leader sets an example of how to do things the right way".	0.939	0.66	0.98
	2.	"My leader defines success not just by results but also by the way they are obtained".	0.935		
	3.	"My leader models ethical behavior".	0.845		
	4.	"My leader listens to what employees have to say".	0.705		
	5.	"My leader is honest and truthful".	0.863		
	6.	"My leader conducts his or her personal life in an ethical manner".	0.753		
	7.	"My leader makes fair and balanced decisions".	0.701		
	8.	"My leader can be trusted".	0.625		
	9.	"My leader considers the ethical implications of decisions".	0.872		
	10.	My leader stands up for what is right, even when it is difficult.	0.893		
Work engagement	1.	"At my work, I feel bursting with energy".	0.666	0.50	0.90
Vigor (6 items):	2.	"At my job, I feel strong and vigorous".	0.616		
	3.	"When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work".	0.78		
	4.	"I am enthusiastic about my job".	0.68		
	5.	"I feel happy when I am working intensely".	0.635		
	6.	"I am proud of the work that I do."	0.63		
	7.	"I am enthusiastic about my job".	0.641	0.51	0.88
Work engagement	8.	"My job inspires me".	0.774		
Dedication (5 items):	9.	"I am deeply involved in my work".	0.775		
	10.	"I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose".	0.606		
	11.	"I am proud of the work that I do."	0.631		
	12.	"I get carried away when I'm working".	0.724	0.50	0.89
Work engagement	13.	"I feel happy when I am working intensely".	0.526		
Absorption (6 items):	14.	"I am immersed in my work".	0.659		
	15.	"I get so absorbed in my work that I forget everything else".	0.663		
	16.	"Time flies when I am working".	0.735		
	17.	"I feel like I am in a "flow" state when working."	0.651		
Corporate social responsibility (Environmental responsibility) (6 items)	1.	Our company reduces its environmental impact by using sustainable resources.	0.928	0.63	0.93
	2.	Our company minimizes waste and reduces pollution.	0.839		
	3.	Our company uses renewable energy sources to decrease environmental harm.	0.74		
	4.	Our company develops and adopts environmentally friendly technologies.	0.673		
	5.	Our company encourages employees to adopt environmentally friendly practices.	0.771		
	6.	Our company considers environmental issues in its decision-making processes	0.746		
Corporate social responsibility	7.	Our company conducts its business in an ethical and honest way.	0.76	0.64	0.87
(Ethical responsibility (6 items)	8.	Our company ensures fair and equitable treatment of all employees.	0.86		
	9.	Our company complies with laws and regulations regarding ethical behavior.	0.78		
	10.	Our company is transparent in its practices and business decisions.	0.91		
	11.	Our company behaves responsibly in dealing with all stakeholders.	0.72		

V	N	Q	Loading	AVE	CR
	12.	Our company respects the rights of employees, customers, and other stakeholders.	0.78		
Corporate social responsibility	13.	Our company supports charitable causes through donations and sponsorships.	0.65	0.53	0.92
	14.	Our company encourages workers to contribute in volunteer programs.	0.768		
	15.	Our company engages in programs that help the welfare of society.	0.588		
	16.	Our company takes action to improve the well-being of the communities where it works.	0.914		
	17.	Our company supports education, cultural, and health-related initiatives.	0.705		
	18.	Our company contributes to disaster relief efforts and emergency assistance.	0.639		
Philanthropic responsibility (6 items)	19.	Our company ensures long-term profitability for its shareholders.	0.847	0.62	0.94
	20.	Our company delivers value to its stakeholders (e.g., customers, investors, employees).	0.586		
	21.	Our company competes fairly in the marketplace.	0.76		
	22.	Our company maintains financial transparency in its operations.	0.736		
	23.	Our company implements policies to ensure the financial sustainability of the business.	0.875		
	24.	Our company provides competitive compensation and benefits to employees.	0.876		

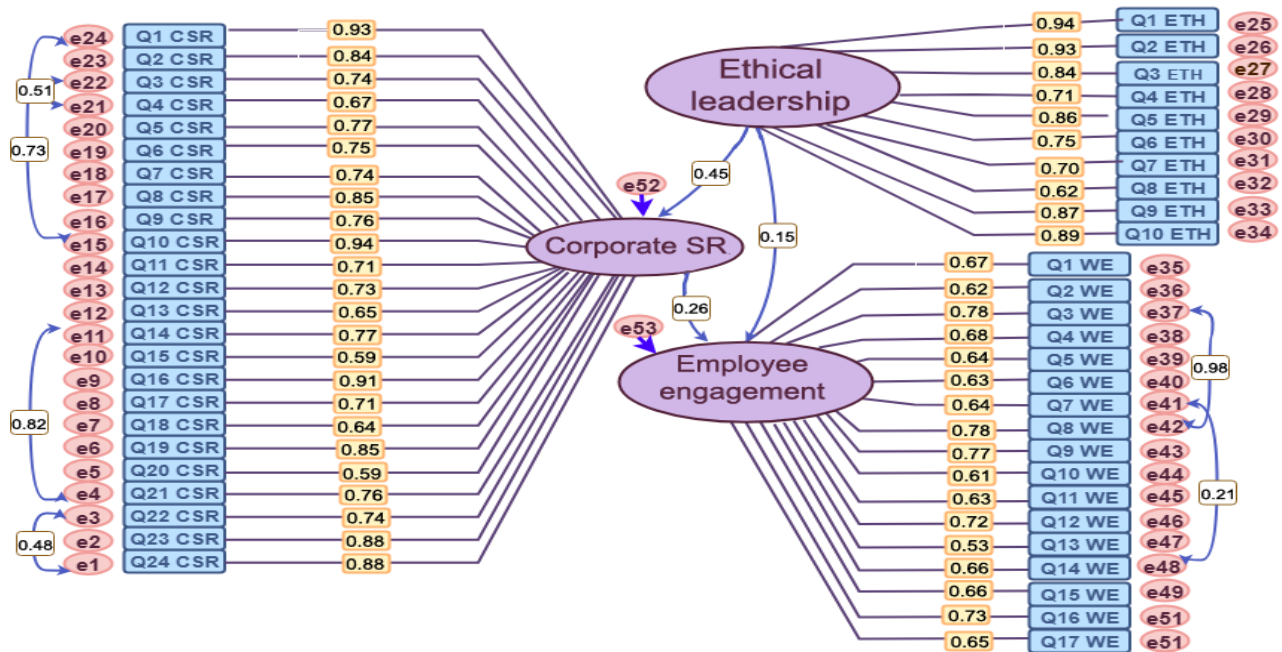


Figure 6. Structural model (Regression weights and loading factors).

4.3. Measurement Model and Structural Model

The suggested hypotheses were tested, and the suggested model's goodness of fit was confirmed, using the SEM and CFA with the AMOS program. As indicated in Table 7, the measurement model and structural model were evaluated using the goodness of fit in relation to Anderson and Gerbing (1988). As shown in Figure 7, the measuring model had three latent variables (EL, CSR, and EE) and 51 indicators (10 items for EL, 24 items for CSR, and 17 items for EE). The following outcomes were produced by the measurement and structural model's good fit.

Table 7. “Goodness of fit” for the model.

“Measurement model”	“Structural model”	“Cut-off points”
“Chi-square” = 2363.453	“Chi-square” = 2363.453	
“Degrees of freedom” = 1215 p = 0.00	“Degrees of freedom” = 1215 p = 0.00	
“Goodness of fit” GFI = 0.80	“Goodness of fit” GFI = 0.80	“1 = perfect fit (Tanaka & Huba, 1985)”
“Normed fit index NFI” = 0.87	“Normed fit index” NFI = 0.87	“1 = perfect fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)”
“Tucker-Lewis coefficient” TLI = 0.920	“Tucker-Lewis coefficient” TLI = 0.920	“1 = perfect fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)”
“Comparative fit index” CFI = 0.924	“Comparative fit index” CFI = 0.924	“1 = perfect fit (McDonald & Marsh, 1990)”
“Root mean square error of approximation” RMSEA = 0.053	“Root mean square error of approximation” RMSEA = 0.053	“Good fit < 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993)”
“Relative χ^2 ” (=CMIN/df) CMIN/df = 1.945	“Relative χ^2 ” (=CMIN/df) CMIN/df = 1.945	“Good fit between 1 and 5 (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985)”
“Standardized root mean square residual” SRMR = 0.0485	“Standardized Root Mean Square Residual” SRMR = 0.0485	“Good fit < 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)”
“Common method bias” CMP = 0.36		“Does not affect study’s data < 0.50 (Podsakoff et al., 2003)”

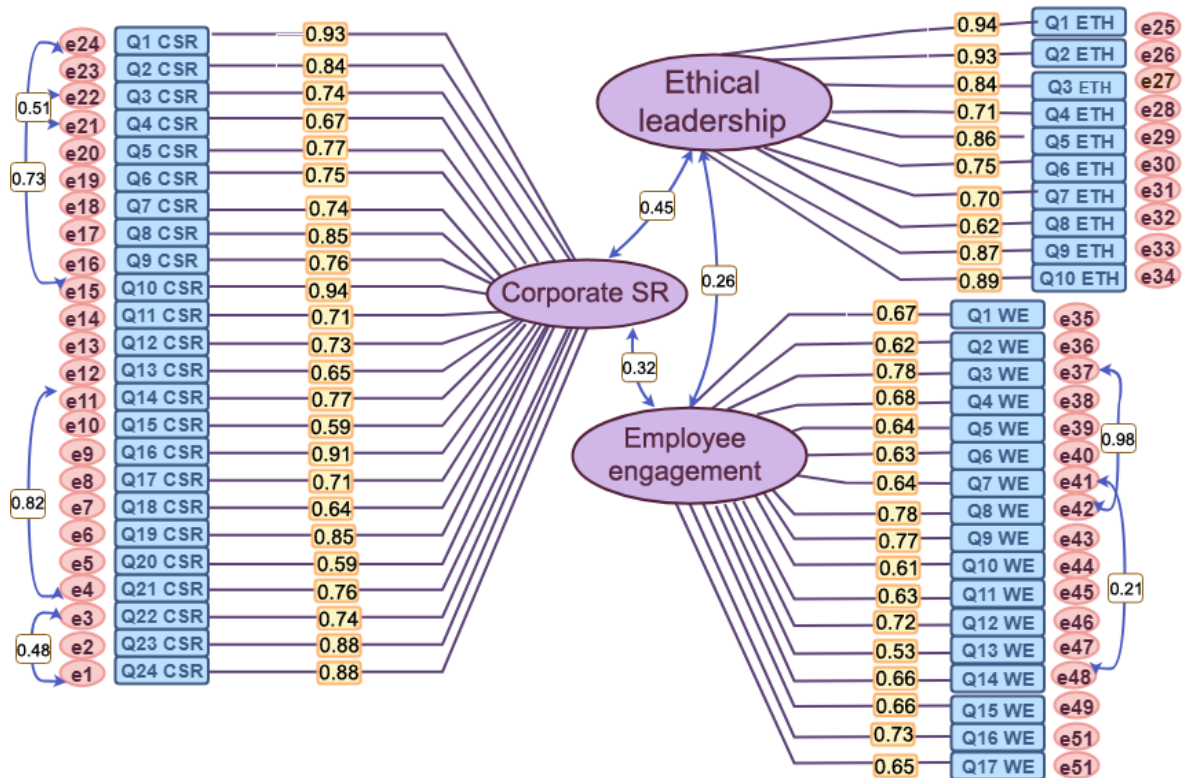


Figure 7. Measurement model.

4.4. Hypothesized Model

Following confirmation that the “measurement model” fit well, examination of the suggested “structural model” revealed that it did as well (see Table 6). A completely mediated model was then contrasted with the “partially mediated model” and the “completely mediated” model offered a good fit. However, when evaluating the “partially

mediated” model, as will be explained later, this suggested model does not show any discernible advance in fit over the “partially mediated” model, indicating that EI has a real and significant direct effect on employee engagement. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) methodology, the “partially mediated” model is therefore a more appropriate model for analyzing this data.

Table 8. “Total, direct, and indirect” effects of the model.

“Exogenous variables”	“Endogenous variables”	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
EI	EE	0.265	0.150	0.115
EI	CSR	0.447	0.447	0.000
CSR	EE	0.257	0.257	0.000

The findings in Table 8 demonstrated that the relationship between EI and EE had a positive and significant path coefficient ($b = 0.265$, $p = 0.001$), explaining R^2 (employee engagement) = 7% of the variance, indicating that H1 was supported. Also, the results demonstrated that EI affected CSR ($b = 0.447$, $p < 0.001$) and explained R^2 (CSR) = 20% of the variance, supporting Hypothesis 2. The impact of CRS on EE was projected to be positive and significant by H 3 ($b = 0.298$, $p = 0.001$), which also explains R^2 (EE) = 9% of the variance (which mean that H3 received support).

5. DISCUSSION

Each of the four hypotheses received support. EE and CSR were positively correlated with EL. Additionally, EE and CSR were positively correlated. Furthermore, the results indicate that CSR functioned as a partial mediator in the relationship between EI and EE.

The first finding, which is in line with earlier research and the social learning theory previously addressed such as Brown and Treviño (2006) and Mayer et al. (2009) demonstrated that EI significantly and positively affects EE which agree with Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2007) and Sarwar, Ishaq, Amin, and Ahmed (2020). This is also backed up by Asif, Qing, Hwang, and Shi (2019), who discovered that an effective way to increase EE and creativity is through the use of EL. It also coincided with a related study by Chan (2019), who examined the direct and indirect effects of participative leadership on workers' job satisfaction and EE. Encouraging a positive work environment greatly depends on EI as demonstrated in a study in Jordan of Banyhamdan, Alnajdaw, Hanandeh, Al-Ghalabi, and Khaddam (2020). According to the study, ethical behavior greatly improves employee performance and engagement. This suggests that the impact of ethics in business is far-reaching and more complex than was previously understood.

Moreover, this study reveals that EL has a "positive and significant" impact on CSR, which is consistent with Karina (2024), who describes how ethical leaders create a culture that appreciates CSR and motivates the company to prioritize social and environmental responsibilities. This result is supported by CSR Theory and aligns with Brown and Treviño (2006), which describes how CSR initiatives and other organizational outcomes are positively impacted by EL.

Additionally, the findings related to the third hypothesis demonstrated that CSR positively and significantly affects EE. This aligns with the theory of self-determination and previous research such as the research of Chaudhary (2017), who stated that EE is positively impacted by CSR initiatives because when workers believe their company is socially conscious, they become more engaged and driven. It also agrees with Albdour and Altarawneh (2012) that state that an effective CSR program would boost EE at Jordanian companies. The results align with the “Self-Determination Theory” (SDT). It asserts that when people's psychological demands for relatedness, competence, and autonomy are satisfied, they become more involved and intrinsically driven.

Regarding H4: CSR mediates the link between EI and EE. The study results support this hypothesis. This aligns with the study of Aftab, Sarwar, Amin, and Kiran (2022), which indicates that the link between EI and employee

outcomes is mediated by CSR. It reveals that CSR initiatives led by ethical leaders boost EE within companies. It also aligns with the work of Hamdani, Sule, Soemaryani, and Yunizar (2024), which states that the link between creative and engaged employees and EI is mediated by CSR. EE and creative actions are also positively impacted by the CSR-driven environment.

Previous studies have shown that EI has a greater impact on organizational behavior for employees with higher engagement levels (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000). The study recommends that engaged workers are more likely to react positively to EL, leading to improved behaviors. Additionally, the idea that the effect of EL depends on both the leader and the followers is supported by findings from Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, van Knippenberg, van Dijke, and De Cremer (2015). They found that followers tend to respond more strongly to ethical leaders.

6. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the impact of EI on EE in Jordan by examining the mediating roles of CSR, and it concludes that employees are more likely to feel appreciated, enthused, and dedicated to their work when leaders act ethically. Ethical leaders raise EE levels consequently. Additionally, employees are more likely to feel proud of their company and its societal impact when it adopts socially responsible practices. This, in turn, strengthens their feeling of purpose and loyalty to the company. Therefore, by encouraging CSR initiatives, EI indirectly increases EE by fostering a climate where workers believe their efforts are actually making a difference.

6.1. Implications

Businesses looking to boost EE should consider incorporating CSR into their leadership approach. Important suggestions for practical application include promoting EL. Companies should focus on cultivating leaders who uphold moral principles and encourage social responsibility, as this can improve EE through CSR.

Organizations should make CSR a part of their operations. This helps ensure that staff are actively involved in socially conscious projects. Workers feel a sense of purpose and satisfaction in their jobs when they participate in these initiatives. As a result, EE increases. Open and honest communication about CSR is exceedingly important. It helps employees feel aligned with the organization's values as it creates pride in the company's social contributions.

6.2. Future Research Directions

There is still much to learn about the processes at work in CSR. This includes understanding the cultural settings and the particular theories of leadership that promote ethical conduct and involvement through CSR. Future research in these areas is essential. It will offer insights into how businesses can create more engaged and socially conscious workplaces.

Future studies may expand on these results and examine EL and EE through their cultural and contextual differences. As the majority of research on this subject is grounded in Western cultures, its results may not always be applicable elsewhere. The West's attitudes toward EE, EL, and CSR may vary from those in other regions.

Future studies might also examine the effects of digital CSR initiatives on EE, given the growth of technology, especially in the fields of social media, digital platforms, and data analytics. For instance, what effects do gamified CSR initiatives, virtual community participation, and online transparency have on employees' opinions of their company's social responsibility and their own levels of engagement?

6.3. Limitations

This research model was conducted in Jordan, and it is noteworthy to mention that the research design is most likely inapplicable to other countries as it was tailored to Jordan's cultural environment, and the results may not transfer well. The research also only focused on the EL style and did not include data for other styles. Including

different leadership styles within the research could provide better context. Future studies that incorporate this data and EE might yield more accurate results and additional insights.

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Transparency: The author states that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The author declares that there are no conflicts of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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