

Workplace ethics culture and work engagement: The mediating effect of ethical leadership in a developing world context

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Abstract

This study examined the mediating effect of ethical leadership on the relationship between workplace ethics culture and work engagement among employees in a railway transport organisation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The sample consisted of (n = 839: females = 32%) permanently employed staff in a railway organisation in the DRC. The employees were required to complete the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS), the Ethical Corporate Virtue model (ECV) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Mediating regression analyses were conducted to predict work engagement from workplace ethics culture partialling out ethical leadership. The results show that workplace ethics culture had a significantly positive effect on work engagement. The results further indicated that workplace ethics culture through the mediation of perceived ethical leadership had a significantly positive effect on the work engagement dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption. The findings provide evidence that ethical leadership plays a crucial role in shaping workplace ethics culture and employees' level of work engagement in an emerging country work setting.

Key words: ethical leadership; workplace ethics culture; work engagement; social learning theory; social exchange theory; Democratic Republic of the Congo

Résumé

Cette étude a examiné l'effet médiateur du leadership éthique sur la relation entre la culture éthique organisationnelle et la motivation professionnelle des employés d'une compagnie de chemins de fer en République Démocratique du Congo (RDC). L'échantillon consistait en un groupe d'employés permanents (n=839 ; femmes=32%) d'une compagnie de chemins de fer en République Démocratique du Congo (DRC). Ceux-ci ont complété l'Echelle du Leadership Éthique (ELS), le modèle des Vertus Éthiques Organisationnelles (ECV) et l'Echelle de Motivation Professionnelle d'Utrecht (UWES). On a utilisé des analyses de régression médiatrices pour déterminer la motivation professionnelle du point de vue de la culture éthique organisationnelle au moyen du leadership éthique. Les résultats ont indiqué que la culture éthique organisationnelle avait un effet positif sur la motivation professionnelle.

Les résultats ont aussi montré que la culture éthique organisationnelle par la médiation d'un leadership éthique avait un effet positif significatif sur des aspects de la motivation professionnelle, tels que l'énergie, le dévouement et l'absorption. Ces résultats montrent que le leadership éthique joue un rôle crucial dans la construction d'une culture éthique organisationnelle et dans le niveau de motivation professionnelle des employés dans le cadre de travail d'un pays émergent.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century world of work demands the highest ethical conduct among organisational leadership in the workplace because high-profile corporate scandals speedily unfold in social media's instantaneous global propagation (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). The cost of unethical conduct to organisations and their shareholders can be crippling. A case in point is the recent scandal involving the emissions regulations cheating by Volkswagen (Walter, Ruddick & Farrel, 2015). Unethical conduct by business leadership can undermine the commitment of workers (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015, in press) and seriously erode the customer base and future well-being of business entities (Giacalone & Promislo, 2014). However, studies on the relationship between workplace ethics culture and work engagement suggest that mechanisms of this influence have not been adequately studied in developing world work settings (Gom, Jiony, Tanakinjal, & Siganol, 2015; Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015; Yasin Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2013). For instance, evidence is needed on how perceived ethical leadership might mediate employee workplace ethics culture and the work engagement relationship. Such studies would be of critical importance, especially in developing countries with transitional or emerging business leadership. This study sought to investigate how perceived ethical leadership mediates workplace ethics culture and employees' work engagement in the DRC, a developing country with a high level of workplace corruption and patronage.

Ethical leadership

Ethical leadership refers to a 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, Treviño & Harrison, 2005, p. 120). It shares several important characteristics with transformational (Bass, 1985), charismatic (Conger & Kanungo, 1998), authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003). The characteristics of ethical leadership are honesty, integrity, concern for others, visible ethical actions, ethical standards and accountability. These traits are deemed essential in fostering and stimulating positive psychological outcomes in organisations (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012; Demirtas & Akdogan, 2014; Treviño, Brown & Hartman, 2003). Ethical leaders shape their followers' behaviours through both social learning and social exchange processes (Bandura, 1977; Blau, 1964; Gouldner,

1960). Social learning theory focuses on the antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership, and suggests that individuals learn the norms of appropriate conduct in two ways – through their own experience and by observing others (Bandura, 1986; Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2015). As a rule, in order to learn such norms, individuals focus on and emulate credible and attractive role models (Brown & Treviño, 2006). What remains for close study is how ethical leadership qualities influence workplace ethics and employees' levels of engagement in emerging country economy settings.

Workplace ethics culture

Workplace ethics culture comprises an informal control system of an organisation which encompasses the experiences, assumptions and expectations of managers/leaders and employees about how the organisation prevents them from behaving unethically and encourages them to behave ethically (Kaptein, 2009). It consists of the following eight virtues: (1) *clarity* – the extent to which an organisation creates a concrete and understandable expectation, which supports ethical decision making; (2) *congruency of management*; (3) *congruency of supervisor* – when managers behave unethically, the extent to which they contradict existing ethical expectations and set an example, signalling to employees that unethical behaviour is permissible, which could expose the organisation to wrongdoing; (4) *feasibility* – the opportunity to behave ethically while using organisational resources that are available for ethical actions, such as time, finances, equipment, information and personal authority, to act according to the set norms and values without being under pressure to break the rules; (5) *supportability* – the extent to which an organisation creates a shared commitment to ethical behaviours through fair treatment and a positive working environment characterised by mutual trust; (6) *transparency* – the extent to which employee conduct and its consequences are visible to those who can act upon it, that is, colleagues, supervisors, subordinates and employees; (7) *discussability* – the extent to which employees perceive that the organisation affords them opportunities to openly discuss ethical and unethical behaviours and issues; and (8) *sanctionability* – the extent to which employees are punished for unethical and rewarded for ethical behaviour. Ethical culture might be influenced by ethical leadership through modelling appropriate behaviours, supporting and encouraging the discussion of ethics throughout the organisation, promoting ethical standards and creating a work environment in which employees feel safe to raise ethical concerns (Eisenbeiß & Giessner, 2015).

Work engagement (WE)

Work engagement is a work-related state of mind that is characterized by a sense of complete involvement in and attention to one's work activities as well as a feeling of accomplishment when performing these types of activities (Zecca, Györkös, Becker, Massoudi, De Bruin, & Rossier, 2014). It comprises the following three dimensions

(Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002): (1) *vigour* – the extent to which employees demonstrate high levels of energy and mental resilience while working; (2) *dedication* – the extent to which employees are strongly involved in, proud of, inspired and enthusiastic about their work; and (3) *absorption* – the extent to which employees are engrossed and immersed in their work activities. Work engaged employees are a strategic asset to any business organization from ensuring positive outcomes such as job performance and with retention of critical skills staff (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). Although several studies have provided empirical support for the notion that a high level of organisational ethics relates positively to different individual psychological outcomes such as work engagement (Huhtala, Tolvanen, Muano & Feldt, 2014; Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015), the extent to which ethical leadership directly or indirectly influences these relationships in developing country settings (such as the DRC) is unclear.

The DRC work context

This study was conducted in a railway organisation in the DRC. The DRC is located in central Africa and has a population of 75+ million. The railway organization of study provides for the transportation needs of the vast majority of the country's population (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015). However, compared to other African railway organisations such as in Zambia (Jonga, 2011) and Tanzania (African Development Bank, 2013; Tanzania's \$14bn rail programme, 2015), the DRC transport sector experiences severe challenges such as dysfunctional equipment, the illegal and unethical use of organisational resources, poor working conditions, unfair remuneration, corruption, a dictatorial style of leadership and war instability (Mnimele, 2014). The DRC is ranked fifth out of 178 countries, according to the Fragile State Index (Fragile State Index, 2015), 228th in the world with a GDP per capita of 400 US\$, and 181st out of 185 countries in the World Bank Business Report in terms of work performance (Investment Climate Report, 2014). This situation underscores the need for workplace culture studies to inform the country's economic recovery agenda necessary sustained development and growth (African Development Bank Report, 2013a). The findings of this study could be instrumental in effecting the required changes in leadership and work vitality in the DRC's transportation system.

Goal of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate the mediating effect of ethical leadership on the relationship between workplace ethics culture and work engagement among employees in a railway transport organisation in the DRC. The research question formulated for the study was as follows: How does ethical leadership mediate the relationship between workplace ethics and work engagement?

Methods

Participants

A cross-sectional quantitative survey design was followed (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). Participants were a convenience sample of 839 workers from a railway transport organisation in the *DRC* (32% female). The participants were full-time employees and mostly married (47%), with a university degree (38%) and in the establishment stage of their careers (26–40 years). The majority of the participants had six to ten years' work experience in the organisation (31%).

Measures

The participants provided demographic information on their age, gender, educational level and job tenure. They also completed the measuring instruments on ethical leadership, work ethics culture, and work engagement. These instruments are described next:

Ethical leadership (mediating variable) was measured using the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) (Brown et al., 2005). This scale consists of ten items using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). It measures employees' perception of the ethical behaviour of their leader (e.g. "The supervisor disciplines employees who violate ethical standards" and "... sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics"). In previous research, the internal consistency reliability ranged between $< .92$, $N = 127$, $.91$, $N = 184$ and $< .89$, $N = 174$ (Ponnu & Tennakoom, 2006). In the present study, an internal consistency of $.91$ was observed for scores from the ELS.

Workplace ethics culture (independent/predictor variable) was measured using the Corporate Ethical Virtue Scale (CEVS) (Kaptein, 2008). This scale consists of 58 items using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), and measures the following: perception of clarity (10 items, e.g. "My organisation makes it sufficiently clear to me how I should conduct myself appropriately towards others within the organisation"); congruency of supervisor (6 items, e.g. "My supervisor sets a good example in terms of ethical behaviour"); congruency of management (4 items, e.g. "The board and senior management would never authorise unethical or illegal conduct to meet business goals"); feasibility (6 items, e.g. "In my job, I am sometimes put under pressure to break the rules"); supportability (6 items, e.g. "In my immediate working environment, everyone takes the existing norms and standards seriously"); transparency (7 items, e.g. "If a colleague does something which is not permitted, my manager will find out about it"); discussability (10 items, e.g. "In my immediate working environment, reports of unethical conduct are handled with caution"); and sanctionability (9 items, e.g. "In my immediate working environment employees will be disciplined if they behave unethically"). In previous research, the internal consistency

reliabilities ranged between $\alpha = .93$ and $.96$ (Kaptein, 2008). An internal consistency of $.96$ was observed for scores from the CEVS in the present study.

Work engagement (the dependent variable) was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This scale consists of nine items using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). It measures the following: vigour (3 items, e.g. "At my work, I am bursting with energy"); dedication (3 items, e.g. "I am proud of the work that I do"); and absorption (3 items, e.g. "It is difficult to detach myself from my job"). In previous research, the internal consistency reliabilities ranged between $\alpha .64$ and $.73$ (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Internal consistencies of $.92$ (vigour), $.88$ (dedication) and $.91$ (absorption) were observed for scores from the UWES in the present study.

Research procedure

Ethical clearance to conduct the research was obtained from both the research institution and the management of the railway organisation. Participants individually consented to the study. They were briefed in a covering letter with the surveys about the goals of the study, the data collection procedure, their voluntary participation and assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. The four data collection instruments were translated from English into French, and back into English (to ensure congruence) by a linguistic practitioner. The letter and instruments were printed in a booklet and distributed to the population of 1 500 employees over a three-week period of whom 839 returned, their completed surveys.

Data analyses

The following three simple mediational models using the stringent bootstrapping approach (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) were computed to achieve the aim of this study: (1) the three variables of workplace ethics culture (independent), ethical leadership (mediating) and vigour (dependent); (2) the three variables of workplace ethics culture (independent), ethical leadership (mediating) and dedication (dependent); and (3) the three variables of workplace ethics culture (independent), ethical leadership (mediating) and absorption (dependent). Correlational inferences (Hayes & Preacher, 2014) were used to identify the extent to which the mediator variable (ethical leadership) accounted for the direct and indirect effect relationship between the independent variable (workplace ethics culture) and the dependent variables (vigour, dedication and absorption). The focus of the analyses was therefore on the magnitude of the direct and indirect effects (standardised path coefficients) between variables. To establish the unique effect of the bootstrap confidence of the mediator (ethical leadership) on the dependent variables (vigour, dedication and absorption) and the independent variable (workplace ethics culture), the 95% confidence bias-corrected percentile method was controlled in each mediation model.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables. The correlations showed positive relationships between workplace ethics culture and ethical leadership ($r = .70$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect) and WE vigour ($r = .65$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect), WE dedication ($r = .68$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect) and WE absorption ($r = .72$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect). Ethical leadership showed a positive relationship with WE vigour ($r = .53$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect), WE dedication ($r = .64$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect) and WE absorption ($r = .60$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect). WE vigour showed a positive relationship with WE dedication ($r = .77$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect) and WE absorption ($r = .78$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect). WE dedication showed a positive relationship with WE absorption ($r = .82$; $p \leq .01$; large practical effect).

[Insert Table 1 here]

Ethical leadership in relation to workplace ethics culture and work engagement: Mediating effects

Table 2 and figure 1 show that workplace ethics culture had significant, direct paths to ethical leadership ($\beta = .79$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .76; .82) and WE vigour ($\beta = .39$; $p \leq .05$; 95% CI: .03; .05). Ethical leadership showed a significant direct path to WE vigour ($\beta = .32$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .03; .07).

Workplace Vigor. Workplace ethics culture showed a significant indirect effect on WE vigour as mediated through ethical leadership ($\beta = .03$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .02; .04). After accounting for ethical leadership, the strength of the relationship between workplace ethics culture and WE vigour was somewhat diminished. Table 2 shows that the more reliable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval did not include zero within the range of the lower and upper limits of the confidence intervals (Preacher, 2015), suggesting that the indirect pathway between workplace ethics culture and WE vigour via the mediating effect of ethical leadership was practically significant. The ratio of indirect (ab) to total effect (c) used for quantifying and reporting the effect size of indirect effects in mediation models (Preacher & Kelley, 2011) was small ($ab/c = .64$), indicating that ethical leadership explained only 64% of the mediating effect.

[Insert Table 2 and figure 1]

Workplace Dedication. Table 3 and figure 2 show that workplace ethics culture had significant, direct paths to ethical leadership ($\beta = .79$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .76; .82) and WE dedication ($\beta = .25$; $p \leq .05$; 95% CI: .02; .04). Ethical leadership showed a significant direct path to WE dedication ($\beta = .55$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .07; .09). Workplace ethics culture showed a significant indirect effect on WE dedication as mediated

through ethical leadership ($\beta = .43$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .04; .05). After accounting for ethical leadership, the strength of the relationship between workplace ethics culture and WE dedication was somewhat diminished. Table 2 shows that the more reliable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval did not include zero within the range of the lower and upper limits of the confidence intervals (Shrout & Bolger, 2002), suggesting that the indirect pathway between workplace ethics culture and dedication via the mediating effect of ethical leadership was practically significant. The ratio of indirect (ab) to total effect (c) used for quantifying and reporting the effect size of indirect effects in mediation models (Preacher & Kelley, 2011) was small ($ab/c = .14$), indicating that ethical leadership explained only 14% of the mediating effect.

[Insert Table 3 and figure 2]

Table 4 and figure 3 show that workplace ethics culture had significant, direct paths to ethical leadership ($\beta = .79$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .76; .82) and WE absorption ($\beta = .38$; $p \leq .05$; 95% CI: .05; .08). Ethical leadership had a significant direct path to WE absorption ($\beta = .43$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .08; .12). Workplace ethics culture showed a significant indirect effect on WE absorption as mediated through ethical leadership ($\beta = .34$; $p \leq .01$; 95% CI: .28; .40). After accounting for ethical leadership, the strength of the relationship between workplace ethics culture and WE absorption was somewhat diminished.

Workplace absorption. Table 2 shows that the more reliable bootstrapping bias-corrected 95% confidence interval did not include zero within the range of the lower and upper limits of the confidence intervals (Shrout & Bolger, 2002), suggesting that the indirect pathway between workplace ethics culture and WE absorption via the mediating effect of ethical leadership was practically significant. The ratio of indirect (ab) to total effect (c) used for quantifying and reporting the effect size of indirect effects in mediation models (Preacher & Kelley, 2011) was small ($ab/c = .89$), indicating that ethical leadership explained only 89% of the mediating effect.

[Insert Table 4 and figure 3]

DISCUSSION

The results indicated an indirect effect of workplace ethics culture on the work engagement dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption through the mediation of ethical leadership. Previous research has established the association between workplace ethics culture, and work engagement in a work setting (Huhtala et al., 2014; Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015). This implies that employees who leadership as acting ethically, and displaying and reinforcing normative appropriate conduct, were more likely to be work engaged as demonstrated positive attitudes in their work roles. These results can be linked to similar findings by Parverse-Kaplan (2013), who found ethical culture to be positively related to ethical leadership and employees' level of engagement. This implies that a positive perception of ethical leadership engenders

feelings of trust and fairness, care and among employees who believe their work-related well-being of importance to the employer organization.

Workplace ethics culture positively predicted employees' work engagement dimensions of vigor, dedication and absorption. This suggests that employees who perceive their leadership favourably are likely to demonstrate higher levels of energy, involvement, enthusiasm, pride, inspiration and being happily engrossed in their work (indicative of a higher level of engagement). Similarly, findings suggest that employees who perceive their leader to be ethical and honest and who treats them with respect and fairness are more likely to be psychologically, emotionally and cognitively connected to their work. These results are similar to those of previous studies (Brown et al., 2005; Huhtala et al., 2011; Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015).

The findings are likely explained by the fact that ethical leadership is characterized by an attitude to to strengthen and activate employees' personal resources for work productivity which in turn would contribute to optimal organisational performance (see also Blomme, Kodden, & Beasley-Suffolk, 2015).

Implication of the results

The results of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications. Organisations with high levels of work engagement seem to have more potential possibilities for employees' growth and ethical behaviour, as well as giving the organisation a competitive advantage in terms of productivity.

First, employees' positive perceptions of their workplace leadership (e.g. clear ethical standards, feasibility, visibility, discussability, support, transparency and sanctionability) would experience a positive ethical work environment (positive workplace ethics culture) and higher work engagement. Second, human resource practitioners seeking to promote higher levels of employee energy, involvement, emotional attachment, enthusiasm and performance should consider the importance of ethical leadership at the workplace as a strategic advantage to the organization. Because employees generally tend to perceive workplace ethics culture and positive ethical leadership as organisational resources (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2015), the existence of these resources could stimulate employees to reciprocate in the form of positive work and non-work consequences such as increased work engagement, job satisfaction, job performance and well-being (see also Bedi et al., 2015).

Limitations and future directions

This study had three methodological limitations. Firstly, the cross-sectional design of the study means the findings do not imply nature of the sample; it was difficult to infer or ascertain causality among the variables. Secondly, common method bias could explain the strong correlation between workplace ethics culture, ethical leadership and work engagement. Thirdly, the study examined the mediating effects of perceived

ethical leadership on the relationship between workplace ethics culture and work engagement in the context of only one developing country organisation so that the findings would not generalise to other organisations. Future studies should examine workplace ethics culture with work outcomes such as satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Conclusion

This research suggests that employees who perceived ethical work place leadership self-reported with high levels of energy, sense of significance, enthusiasm, pride and being engrossed in their work to the extent that they felt time flies. These effects are likely explained by positive perceptions of workplace leadership as respectful and fair. In other words, ethical leadership was perceived as fostering a positive and ethical work environment, which, in turn, influenced employees' level of engagement in the railway organisation in a developing country transport sector industry. The results of the research also emphasise that ethical leadership has a powerful influence over an organisation's culture, climate and ethics, shared values, norms and beliefs about ethics and its influence on employees' level of engagement and productivity. Lastly, the study contributes to work engagement theory by suggesting that the positive perception of an ethical work environment and ethical, honest and fair leadership stimulate high levels of employee energy, mental resilience, inspiration and concentration at work.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics: Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients and correlation coefficients

Variables	M	SD	α	Workplace ethics	Ethical leadership	WE vigour	WE dedication	WE absorption
Workplace ethics	4.08	.51	.96	-1				
Ethical leadership	3.95	.65	.91	.70***	1			
WE vigour	4.57	.99	.91	.65***	.53***	1		
WE dedication	4.45	.92	.88	.68***	.64***	.77***	1	
WE absorption	4.44	.90	.91	.72***	.60***	.78***	.82***	1

Notes: $n = 839$

*** $p \leq 0.001$. $r \geq 0.30 \leq 0.49$ (medium practical effect size)

+++ $r \geq 0.50$ (large practical effect size)

M = mean

SD = standard deviation

α = Cronbach alpha (internal consistency reliability) coefficient

Table 2

Standardised direct and indirect effects of workplace ethics culture on vigour through ethical leadership

Model 1 Workplace ethics culture – WE vigour			Bootstrapping BC 95% CI	
Mediator	Point estimate	SE	Lower	Upper
Workplace ethics culture	.57**	.02	.53	.60
Ethical leadership	.05*	.01	.03	.07
WE vigour	.04**	.01	.03	.05
Total effects				
Workplace ethics culture – ethical leadership	.79**	.02	.76	.82
Ethical leadership – WE vigour	.64*	.01	.22	.41
Workplace ethics culture – WE vigour	.32*	.01	.27	.49
Direct effects				
Workplace ethics culture – ethical leadership	.79*	.02	.53	.60
Ethical leadership – WE vigour	.32*	.05	.03	.07
Workplace ethics culture – WE vigour	.39*	.05	.03	.05
Indirect effects				
Workplace ethics culture – WE vigour	.03*	.04	.02	.04

Notes: N = 839

SE: standard error

** $p < .01$. 95% BC CI: 95% bias corrected confidence interval

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 3

Standardised direct and indirect effects of workplace ethics culture on dedication through ethical leadership

Model 2 Workplace ethics culture – dedication			Bootstrapping BC 95% CI	
Mediator	Point estimate	SE	Lower	Upper
Workplace ethics culture	.57**	.02	.53	.59
Ethical leadership	.08**	.01	.07	.09
WE dedication	.03*	.00	.02	.04
Total effects				
Workplace ethics culture – ethical leadership	.79**	.02	.76	.82
Ethical leadership – WE dedication	.55*	.04	.47	.62
Workplace ethics culture – WE dedication	.68	.05	.15	.34
Direct effects				
Workplace ethics culture – ethical leadership	.79*	.02	.53	.60
Ethical leadership – WE dedication	.55**	.01	.07	.09
Workplace ethics culture – WE dedication	.25*	.01	.02	.04
Indirect effects				
Workplace ethics culture –dedication	.43	.03	.04	.05

Notes: N = 839

SE: standard error

** $p < .01$. 95% BC CI: 95% bias corrected confidence interval

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Table 4

Standardised direct and indirect effects of workplace ethics culture on absorption through ethical leadership

Model 3 Workplace ethics culture – WE absorption			Bootstrapping BC 95% CI	
Mediator	Point estimate	SE	Lower	Upper
Workplace ethics culture	.57	.02	.53	.60
Ethical leadership	.10	.01	.08	.12
Absorption	.06	.01	.05	.08
Total effects				
Workplace ethics culture – ethical leadership	.79	.02	.76	.82
Ethical leadership – WE absorption	.43	.01	.35	.52
Workplace ethics culture – WE absorption	.38	.01	.28	.46
Direct effects				
Workplace ethics culture – ethical leadership	.79	.02	.53	.60
Ethical leadership – WE absorption	.43	.04	.08	.12
Workplace ethics culture – WE absorption	.38	.05	.05	.08
Indirect effects				
Workplace ethics culture – WE absorption	.34	.01	.28	.40

Notes: N = 839; SE: standard error; ** $p < .01$. 95% BC CI: 95% bias corrected confidence interval

*** $p \leq .001$; ** $p \leq .01$; * $p \leq .05$

Model 1

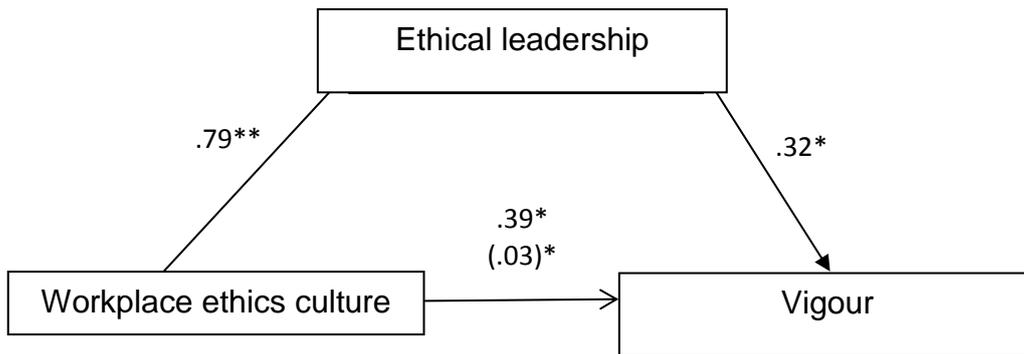


Figure 1. Mediating model examining the direct and indirect relationship between workplace ethics culture and vigour through the mediating effect of ethical leadership

Note: Values in parentheses represent the indirect effect of workplace ethics culture via ethical leadership (mediator) on WE vigour.

BC: Bias-corrected bootstrap approximation at the 95% corrected confidence interval (two-sided)

$n = 839$

**Standardised path coefficients are significant at $p \leq .001$.

*Standardised path coefficient is significant at $p \leq .05$.

Model 2

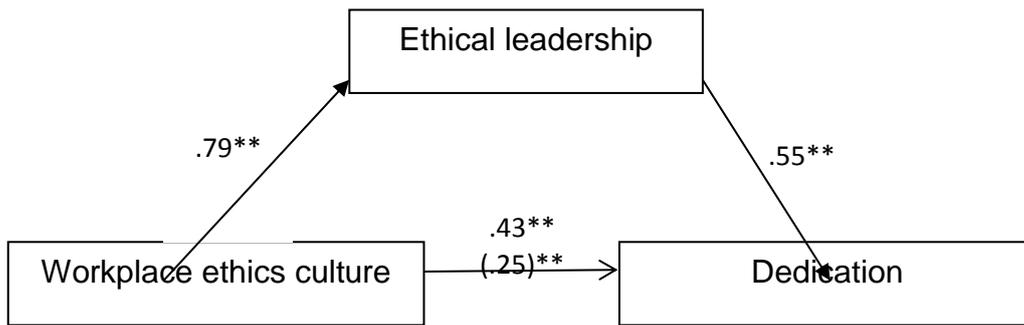


Figure 2. Mediating model examining the direct and indirect relationship between workplace ethics culture and dedication through the mediating effect of ethical leadership

Note: Values in parentheses represent the indirect effect of workplace ethics culture via ethical leadership (mediator) on dedication.

BC: Bias-corrected bootstrap approximation at the 95% corrected confidence interval (two-sided)

$n = 839$

**Standardised path coefficients are significant at $p \leq .001$.

*Standardised path coefficient is significant at $p \leq .05$.

Model 3

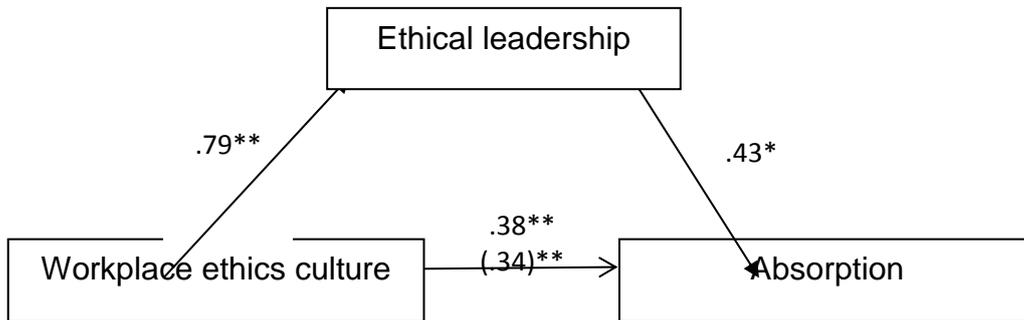


Figure 3. Mediating model examining the direct and indirect relationship between workplace ethics culture and absorption through the mediating effect of ethical leadership

Note: Values in parentheses represent the indirect effect of workplace ethics culture via ethical leadership (mediator) on absorption.

BC: Bias-corrected bootstrap approximation at the 95% corrected confidence interval (two-sided)

$n = 839$

**Standardised path coefficients are significant at $p \leq .001$.

*Standardised path coefficient is significant at $p \leq .05$.