

ENHANCING CREATIVE PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, WORK ENGAGEMENT, AND POSITIVE EMOTIONS

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ABSTRACT

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The pharmaceutical industry is undergoing fast change, and one key factor influencing organizational success and salesperson performance is the leadership style of field managers. This study assesses how ethical leadership style affects central salespersons' outcomes like positive emotions, work engagement, and creative performance. This study focused on the theoretical and conceptual literature on focal variables. Seven hypotheses were developed to explain how ethical leadership style drives salesperson outcomes in Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry. A sample of 350 pharmaceutical medical representatives from 30 national and multinational firms was used to evaluate the relationships between the selected variables using SPSS-25.00 and AMOS-22.0. Pharmaceutical companies can benefit from the study's findings in various ways like establishing ethical leadership standards among field managers to enhance creative performance. Investing in programs that foster ethical leadership skills can result in more engaged salespeople with higher creative performance. Limitations and future directions are also discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceutical industry has shown massive growth in the last two decades owing to unrelenting demand for novel remedies from the market; this growth has led the industry into a highly competitive situation (Khan et al., 2024). Inside this competitive pharmaceutical industry, the appropriate leadership style of field managers has become a critical factor in determining both salespersons' well-being and overall organizational performance (Khan et al., n.d.). Previous studies demonstrate the importance of different leadership styles of

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field managers in the pharmaceutical context (Sharma et al., 2023). However, there hasn't been any empirical study conducted in this sector on the complex interactions between Ethical Leadership (E_{Ld}) style, Work Engagement (W_{En}), Salesperson's Positive Emotions (P_{Em}), and Creative Performance (C_{Pr}) (Saddique et al., 2023). Buonomo et al. (2021) asserted that salespeople play a key role in organizational success. Keeping this view, an effective leadership style that promotes a positive working atmosphere for salespeople is indispensable. The importance of the E_{Ld} style is becoming more well-acknowledged and recognized at large, but there are still considerable voids in the literature, which calls for a comprehensive examination (Saddique et al., 2023). The problem statement in this research pertains to the lack of understanding regarding how E_{Ld} style influences W_{En} , salespersons' P_{Em} , and salespersons' C_{Pr} in the pharmaceutical context, which hinders the optimization of salespeople performance and well-being in this industry (Ali & Ullah, 2023). E_{Ld} style has gained significance in recent years. Still, its sector-specific impact on salespersons' related outcomes remains largely unexplored, especially within Pakistan's complex and highly regulated pharmaceutical environment (Khan et al., 2024).

We posed the following questions for this study: Does the E_{Ld} style of field managers influence the C_{Pr} of salespeople? Does the E_{Ld} style impact the W_{En} of salespeople? Does the E_{Ld} style impact the P_{Em} experienced by the salespeople? And do W_{En} and P_{Em} mediate the relationship between E_{Ld} style and the C_{Pr} of salespeople? Based on the above questions, our objectives are to investigate the link between E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} , to investigate the link between E_{Ld} style and W_{En} , to investigate the link between E_{Ld} style and salesperson's P_{Em} , and to investigate the mediating effect of W_{En} and P_{Em} between E_{Ld} style and salespersons' C_{Pr} .

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical Leadership Style

The E_{Ld} style allows employees to pour their energy and skills into their performance (Yun et al., 2019). When managers are seen as fair, workers are more willing to cooperate. Explicit behavior by Ethical Leaders (EL) can attract followers' attention to make socially acceptable behavior. E_{Ld} style encompasses the proactive measures taken by a leader to exert influence over the ethical and unethical conduct of their followers. By communicating an ideals and principles message, visibly and deliberately demonstrating ethical behavior, and employing the reward system (i.e., reward and discipline) to hold followers accountable for ethical conduct, moral managers make ethics an explicit component of their leadership agenda. Furthermore, ethical leaders foster honesty, trust, virtuousness, compassion, and justice among their coworkers (Buonomo et al., 2021) and develop a culture that values employees to boost creativity (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2020; Asif et al., 2019). According to many studies, the E_{Ld} style inspires their subordinates to take risks and be inventive, and unique. By exhibiting moral and ethical conduct and influencing others to adopt positive attitudes and behaviors, an ethical leader serves as a model for followers. The E_{Ld} style motivates employees to make choices and think independently, and they give meaning to their followers' roles within their organization and help them make their work more meaningful. They also inspire their adherents to be more innovative at work and flexible when circumstances change (Chen & Hou, 2016). E_{Ld} style is supposed to improve employee results. Leaders must remain abreast of the evolving requirements of the changing working environment, which encompass creativity and innovation. For the benefit of groups and organizations, the E_{Ld} style addresses issues that drive

personnel to be creative to attain goals. Creativity results when employees are motivated to invest their energy and abilities in their work. Employees display more creativity as they believe their managers are goal-oriented (Sarwar et al., 2020). When managers and organizations are seen as fair, workers are more willing to cooperate and display their creativity at work. The leader's proactive efforts to shape followers' moral and immoral behaviors are referred to as this aspect of the E_{Ld} style. By communicating a message of ethics and values, openly and deliberately modeling ethical behavior, and using the reward system (i.e., rewards and punishment) to hold followers accountable for ethical behavior, managers purposefully include ethics into their leadership agenda.

Previous studies support the link between E_{Ld} style, creativity, and innovation. According to Social Exchange Theory (SET), EL serves as role models for their followers, influencing their conduct through observation and imitation. When employees perceive their leaders behaving ethically, they are more inclined to follow ethics and promote an organizational culture of integrity and ethical decision-making. In contrast, Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) highlights the significance of E_{Ld} style as a component of transformational leadership that inspires and encourages followers to attain higher performance (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2020). An alternative perspective is offered by SET, which contends that moral leadership encourages positive relationships between leaders and followers, which boost trust, commitment, and individual effort. Employees are bound to step up and participate in deliberate activities that advance the organization's success, such as concocting new ideas and arrangements when they see their leaders have moral values. To be more successful in empowering imagination and development, EL ought to have specific characteristics like trustworthiness, uprightness, and empathy. In a working environment where managers adopt the E_{Ld} style, employees are bound to have a good sense of safety and are allowed to take risks and express their viewpoints. In the same way, managers who invigorate participation and consideration might utilize the scope of abilities and perspectives among their followers (Fuller, 2021). A steady and enabling workplace is a vital part of moral initiative, as it permits people to understand their full potential and add to the outcome of the business. Also, research has shown that the E_{Ld} style fosters a creative culture. Past research has shown that EL who focus on fairness, straightforwardness, and open communication are bound to encourage a climate where individuals feel comfortable by sharing his/her thoughts (Buonomo et al., 2021).

Work Engagement

According to Nandini et al. (2022), W_{En} refers to the intentional energy and effectiveness that employees contribute above and beyond what is demanded of them in their jobs. In W_{En} , people who are committed to their work appear more motivated, participate in organizational events, and make a greater effort to meet organizational objectives (Wibawa & Takahashi, 2021). W_{En} is critical since it is linked to organizational transformation. It offers fresh perspectives and original methods for understanding change phenomena that promote organizational effectiveness and survival (Asif et al., 2019). Secondly, W_{En} encourages employees to be optimistic about their aspirations (Khan et al., 2023). Highly engaged salespersons may deal with hurdles easily, which allows them to be more focused and creative. Upholding their roles within the company contributes to increased productivity (Neuber et al., 2022). According to Neuber et al. (2022), salespersons who are highly engaged in the work, generate innovative ideas and solutions (Sharif et al., 2022). These

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concepts lead individuals to be deeply committed, positive, self-assured, and effective in accomplishing objectives and addressing challenges. Salespersons who are highly engaged are adept at managing stress, resulting in increased focus and creativity (Asif et al., 2019). Salespersons who are more engaged receive recognition and appreciation for their innovative work from their superiors, co-workers, and customers (Khan et al., 2023). As a result, their engaged behavior is propitious, making them more devoted and productive (Quddoos et al., n.d.).

Recently researchers have investigated the concept of W_{En} , which is relatively a new concept in academic circles (Bouckennooghe et al., 2022). An employee's connection to and absorption in the tasks they are assigned while doing their work is characterized by the researchers as W_{En} . Consequently, this mental state encourages workers to perform to the best of their abilities, whether in terms of mental, physical, or cognitive ability depending on the resources available. According to Bouckennooghe et al. (2022), W_{En} adjusts and synchronizes a person's physical, mental, and cognitive capacities with tasks. Quite a few investigations have concluded that to explore and test this construct more scientifically, further research is preferred to explore the concept of W_{En} . Positive or negative relationships between managers and subordinates may generally affect how engaged employees perform. Nandini et al. (2022) presented the case for W_{En} and underlined how the concept is essential for individuals' performance. As a result, experts believe that careful consideration is necessary to determine if absorption is a primary dimension or a consequence of W_{En} . The concept of W_{En} has been the subject of research because those who are active make more contributions to their overall success and exhibit higher levels of satisfaction and creativity (Khan et al., 2023; Panda et al., 2022).

According to SET, W_{En} addresses a helpful discourse among employees and the working environment (Harter et al., 2002). This theory holds that workers are more disposed to offer their positions more noteworthy commitment and exertion as a trade-off if they feel that their organization supports and recognizes them. Previous studies have exhibited that work settings that are fair and dependable can cultivate better degrees of engagement among employees (Ganzach & Yaor, 2019). As per the Goal Setting Theory (GST), setting exclusive requirements and giving guidance to employees can help in increasing W_{En} (Buonomo et al., 2021). Research on the concept of W_{En} examined a range of variables, like work traits, organizational culture, and leadership styles, that impact workers' degree of W_{En} (Nandini et al., 2022). Higher W_{En} , at work from employees translates into better organizational results like reduced attrition and increased profitability. Generally, W_{En} has two primary dimensions: energy and engrossment. Scholars investigated and agreed that W_{En} is about people's attitudes at work. The studies on W_{En} present a challenging avenue for researchers because there is no commonly accepted explanation and description for the notion. Saks (2006) contented that there are numerous perspectives on W_{En} . The concept is characterized by three elements i.e. vigor (increased energy), absorption (high degree of immersion and focus), and devotion (a sense of meaningfulness and satisfaction in one's efforts). Another version of W_{En} was advocated by Harter et al. (2002), this viewpoint defines W_{En} as an individual's affiliation, satisfaction, and willingness to work. Another explanation of the W_{En} was provided by Neuber et al. (2022), according to the authors, W_{En} is made up of behavioral, emotional, and mental elements associated with personal achievement. W_{En} has been the subject of extensive research by researchers; however, there are still some important questions that need to be addressed.

Salespersons' Positive Emotions

Emotions are a necessary part of life, it is often believed that leadership styles may influence salespeople's emotions and behavior (Ganzach & Yaor, 2019). P_{Em} can establish persistent unique reservoirs, enabling increased W_{En} (Diener et al., 2019). Developing an individual's resources which include psychological resources like optimism and resilience, cognitive resources like expertise and cognitive complexity, and physical resources like health and physical skills and P_{Em} are important in revealing novel and creative methods and ideas. Recent reviews have emphasized the effect of positive feelings on sales representatives' adequacy, particularly in the pharmaceutical context. A few parts of selling e.g. consideration, comprehension, and critical thinking are associated with P_{Em} (Diener et al., 2019). Furthermore, P_{Em} might affect sales representatives' viability (Neuber et al., 2022). In the pharmaceutical context, P_{Em} affects sales representatives' sales executions and improves results (Willroth et al., 2023). There is a possibility that P_{Em} might uphold individuals' self-conviction and, thus, affect the selling process (Sok et al., 2022). Salespeople P_{Em} is frequently analyzed through the lens of Affective Event Theory (AET). According to AET, sales representatives' P_{Em} can bring higher work fulfillment, more significant levels of commitment, and better execution (Nandini et al., 2022). Additionally, P_{Em} develops execution, inventiveness, and creative abilities. P_{Em} are associated with a higher likelihood of proactive approaches in selling, including building up relationships with customers (Nandini et al., 2022; Wibawa & Takahashi, 2021). Prior research underlines the meaning of P_{Em} in addition to thriving and work joy. As indicated by Wibawa and Takahashi (2021), sales representatives who experience continuous P_{Em} , report more elevated levels of work fulfillment, diminished degree of stress, and better general prosperity. P_{Em} likewise is linked with better customer relations (Chen & Hou, 2016). AET and the Broad and Built theory offer significant experiences into the effect of P_{Em} on salespersons' prosperity.

Generally, research on salespersons' P_{Em} explored its impact on different aspects e.g. job satisfaction, work execution, and consumer loyalty. Salespeople who feel elevated degrees of P_{Em} are more cheerful and keen on their morals (Chen & Hou, 2016). Besides, research has also shown that salespeople who experience P_{Em} are bound to display proactive behaviors, like searching out new opportunities to open doors and building more lasting relations with customers (Wibawa & Takahashi, 2021). These proactive behaviors add more noteworthy levels of sales execution (Bidisha Banerjee & Sudin Bag, 2022; Sarwar et al., 2020). Moreover, salespersons' PEM is an important ingredient for empowering creativity. Yun et al. (2019) observed that salespeople who experience P_{Em} undoubtedly deliver excellent customers' service.

Creative Performance

Creativity can be expressed in several ways. Like the presentation of novel ideas, new practical techniques, and new ways of working. According to previous research, creativity is defined by two aspects: originality (i.e., new concepts and approaches) and quality (i.e., development of relevant goods and services) (Saddique et al., 2023). According to Khan et al. (2024), personal attributes, including intelligence, particularly emotional intelligence, creative disposition, divergent thinking, cognitive preferences, self-confidence, receptiveness to new experiences, and motivation are important factors in C_{Pr} . Learning and innovation are important antecedents of C_{Pr} . Learning improves an individual's ability to develop the necessary, unique response to the

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requirements and problems of the customers. Innovative salespeople are highly valued in today's businesses because they help to create a competitive edge for the firms that ultimately help with growth. Researchers are now more interested in the C_{Pr} of salespeople; yet, there are indications that this is a topic that is often overlooked when discussing salespeople, and the theories behind the C_{Pr} have not yet been proven (Hu et al., 2024). According to Khan et al. (2023) various aspects of a salesperson's C_{Pr} , such as presenting novel approaches to solve customer problems, executing various selling tasks in an inventive manner, presenting fresh concepts for resolving issues with customers, adopting unbiased viewpoints on problems and issues, enhancing problem-solving strategies, and coming up with innovative selling concepts. C_{Pr} has been identified as a key driver of sales effectiveness (Khan et al., 2024). C_{Pr} is an emerging area of investigation that has been examined from different schools of thought, including social cognitive theory, investment theory, and social exchange theory.

Theoretical Bones of the Research Model

Social Exchange Theory

SET is used to construct the theoretical foundation of the current study. In the context of this study, which looks at the influence of E_{Ld} style on C_{Pr} through the mediating roles of W_{En} and salespeople's P_{Em} , SET provides a useful lens through which to analyze these relationships. SET theory is considered a complete framework for analyzing the dynamics of social interactions, reciprocity, and resource exchange within relationships. According to SET, people participate in social interactions to earn benefits while limiting expenditures (Ali & Ullah, 2023). E_{Ld} style is the conduct of leaders who prioritize justice, honesty, and moral standards (Brown et al., 2005). Leaders who practice ethical behaviors are likely to foster a favorable social exchange environment by building trust and reciprocity standards. W_{En} is the psychological condition of being completely immersed, passionate, and committed to one's work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). E_{Ld} style might further develop W_{En} by establishing a supportive and reliable workplace. P_{Em} incorporates feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and energy (Fredrickson, 2004). As indicated by Brown et al. (2005), The E_{Ld} style can prompt positive feelings among sales representatives because of its reasonableness and ethical heading. W_{En} and P_{Em} as encouraged by E_{Ld} style, can add to improved C_{Pr} . SET provides strength for the structure to understand how E_{Ld} style impacts W_{En} , salespersons' P_{Em} , and, ultimately C_{Pr} .

Hypotheses Development

EL increases a culture of value and commitment among employees (Brown & Treviño, 2006). E_{Ld} style instills a feeling of purpose and belonging in workers via their behaviors and communication, which fosters intrinsic motivation and W_{En} (Buonomo et al., 2021). As indicated by Harter et al. (2002), E_{Ld} style further develops critical factors for salespersons including motivation and commitment, which are all parts of W_{En} . By supporting equity, transparency, and responsibility, ethical leaders give mental well-being that assists individuals with putting resources into their work and deploying better results.

H₁: Ethical leadership has a positive relationship with work engagement

W_{En} plays a basic part in encouraging workers' imagination and creativity. Workers who are engaged are more likely to show proactive ways of behaving, e.g. creating new thoughts, attempting new ways, and seeking

imaginative ideas (Asif et al., 2019). Besides, W_{En} adds the feeling of responsibility and independence among representatives, permitting them to step up and explore the pathways, consequently expanding their C_{Pr} (Saks, 2006).

H₂: Work Engagement has a positive effect on employee creativity

Between E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} , W_{En} plays a mediating role because fairness, trustworthiness, and empathy are ethical leaders' main concerns since they provide a supporting environment where employees feel genuinely dedicated (Brown & Treviño, 2006). More elevated levels of C_{Pr} result from this feeling of responsibility and commitment, as individuals are motivated to exceed everyone's expectations to give creative thoughts (Saddique et al., 2023). EL motivates individuals to utilize their innovativeness to take care of hierarchical issues by developing a culture of trust, independence, and participation (Brown et al., 2005). Consequently, W_{En} turns into an essential channel by which E_{Ld} style influences C_{Pr} .

H₃: Work Engagement mediates the relationship between ethical leadership style and creative performance

Salespersons' C_{Pr} in the pharmaceutical industry is influenced by E_{Ld} style (Neuber et al., 2022). A climate that is stable with imagination and creativity is delivered by ethical leaders, who impart to their employees a feeling of direction, independence, and trust (Bouckennooghe et al., 2022). Ethical leaders push individuals for novel thoughts by cultivating a culture of receptiveness, decency, and obligation (Aqif & Mumtaz, 2023). The E_{Ld} style influences innovativeness and creative critical thinking, which deliver better sales results (Bidisha Banerjee & Sudin Bag, 2022).

H₄: Ethical leadership style has a positive effect on creative performance

Salespersons' success at work is formed by E_{Ld} style, which usefully affects their P_{Em} (Asif et al., 2019). Compassion produces a useful and positive climate that upholds salespersons' emotional states (Ganzach & Yaor, 2019). Previous research indicates that employees under ethical leaders experience energy, trust, and satisfaction, which improves the work environment (Diener et al., 2020). Ethical Leaders encourage a culture of recognition and affirmation by putting a high need on emotions and ethical direction. This, thus, assists salespeople to feel satisfaction and versatility (Harter et al., 2002).

H₅: Ethical leadership style has a positive effect on salespersons' positive emotions

In the pharmaceutical sector, salespersons' P_{Em} are basic ingredients to work in the field (Fredrickson, 2004). Joy and excitement are positive feelings that extend individuals' social and mental strength, empowering innovative and creative thinking. According to Zhang et al. (2023), salespersons who feel emotionally strong about themselves handle customers with confidence and in creative ways. Besides, having P_{Em} , salespersons are propelled to try different things with novelty to meet their sales objectives (Willroth et al., 2023).

H₆: Salespersons' positive emotions have a positive effect on creative performance

Sales representatives experience idealism, enthusiasm, and peacefulness when they work with ethical leaders who value equity, genuineness, and uprightness (Brown & Treviño, 2006). These profound experiences help to make a distinct perspective, which influences their ability for creative thinking and troubleshooting (Willroth et al., 2023). Through the development of an environment of mutual respect, trust, and appreciation, ethical leaders empower salespeople to involve and use their joy as a source of creativity and superior yield (Khan et al., 2023).

H₇: Salespersons' positive emotions mediate the relationship between ethical leadership style and creative performance

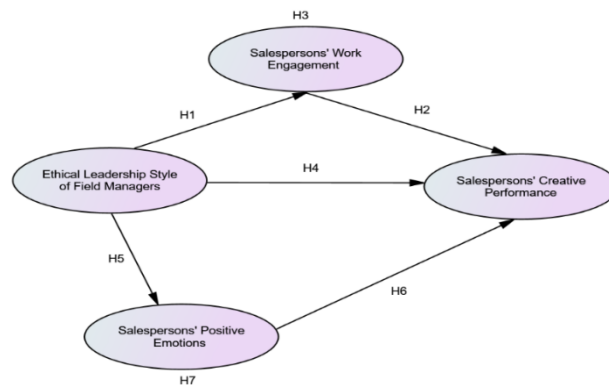


Figure-1 Research Model of Study

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A population is a set of people from which statistical conclusions are to be drawn. The sample represents the population. The research focuses on salespersons/medical representatives within the pharmaceutical industry as the target population. Since the sample is representative of the entire population, sample selection is important. There are two categories of sampling techniques: non-probability and probability. In this investigation, non-probability sampling was employed. Data has been collected through a structured questionnaire from 350 respondents. E_{Ld} style has been operationalized as the extent to which leaders in the pharmaceutical industry demonstrate fairness, integrity, and responsibility in their behavior, as perceived by salespersons. The E_{Ld} style scale with 10 items was adopted by the study of Saddique et al. (2023). W_{En} is operationalized as the level of enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption that salespersons exhibit in their work. W_{En} was measured using the scale from the study conducted by Schaufeli et al. (2002). The scale for salespersons' P_{Em} was adopted from the study of Diener et al. (2020). P_{Em} was operationalized with 10 items as the extent to which salespersons experience positive emotional states such as happiness, interest, and enthusiasm at work. Lastly, 6 items for C_{Pr} were adopted from the study of Saddique et al. (2023). Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the unidimensionality. We used a two-stage procedure to assess the model. Data normality was checked before proceeding to further analyses. The legitimacy of the scales used was checked through individual and nested CFA. We also checked the discriminant and convergent validities. Hypotheses were testing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Several goodness-of-fit indices, such as GFI, χ^2/df , CFI, NFL, and RMSEA, are used to determine the structural model.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Data Normality

Table 1 Data Normality Statistics (N=291)

Constructs	Min	Max	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE	Tolerance	VIF
E_{Ld}	6.00	30.00	-0.46	0.14	-0.19	0.28	0.44	2.22
W_{En}	14.00	65.00	-0.34	0.14	-0.44	0.28	0.41	2.41
P_{Em}	5.00	25.00	-0.20	0.14	-0.47	0.28	.36	2.73
C_{Pr}	4.00	20.00	-0.69	0.14	-0.09	0.28	Constant	

Source: Authors' work

The numeric values in Table 1 provide the data normality details. E_{Ld} style has a Min=6.00, Max =30.00, skewness=-0.462 with S. E=0.14, kurtosis=-0.19 and S. E=0.28. Similarly, W_{En} has a Min=14.00, Max=65.00, skewness=-0.34, S. E=0.14, kurtosis=-0.44 and S. E=0.28. P_{Em} has a Min=5.00, Max=25.00, skewness=-0.20, S. E=0.14, kurtosis=-0.47 and S. E=0.28. C_{Pr} has a Min=4.00, Max=20.00, skewness=-0.69, S. E=0.14, kurtosis=-0.22 and S. E=0.28. Based on the statistics, it is concluded that data is normally distributed. Durbin-Watson's Value was 2.09. The tolerance value for the E_{Ld} style is 0.44 and VIF= 2.22. The tolerance value for W_{En} is 0.41 and VIF is 2.41. The tolerance value for P_{Em} = 0.36 and VIF=2.73.

Measurement Model (Measure Validation)

Reliability and Unidimensionality

The validity of the items for each latent variable in the study must be examined before a hypotheses test can be performed. Items should have a single principal construct and be unidimensional. Item reliability shows that the variables' items are error-free, whereas validity shows that each item measures precisely what it was meant to measure. After that, the unidimensionality of the scale was evaluated using individual CFAs. This statistical approach is mostly used to determine how much and how well the number of concepts is represented by the measured variable. The Cronbach's Alfa values given in Table 2 showed adequate indication of reliability, which are ≥ 0.70 , confirming the validity and error-free nature of the items. As required by SEM literature, the GFI, CFI, and NFI values were within acceptable limits. For E_{Ld} style with 6 items $\chi^2/df=2.02$, GFI=0.98, CFI=0.99, RMR=0.29, RMSEA=0.05, NFI=0.98 and lastly the FL ranges 0.61 to 0.89. A value of χ^2/df for W_{En} with 8 items was 2.66, GFI=0.95, CFI= 0.97, RMR=0.05, RMSEA=0.07, NFI=0.96 and FL ranges 0.51 to 0.78. Moreover, for P_{Em} with 5 items $\chi^2/df =2.37$, GFI=0.98, CFI=0.98, RMR=0.03, RMSEA=0.06, NFI=0.98 and the FL varying from 0.63 to 0.70. For C_{Pr} with 6 items χ^2/df was 0.08, GFI=1.00, CFI=1.00, RMR=0.00, RMSEA=0.00 NFI=1.00, and the FL altering from 0.58 to 0.69.

Table 2 Results of Individual and Nested CFA's (N=291)

Constructs	Items	Unidimensionality					Convergent Validity		Reliability
		χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA	NFI	FL (min-max)	α
E_{Ld}	6	2.02	0.98	0.99	0.29	0.05	0.98	[0.61-0.89]	0.81
W_{En}	8	2.66	0.95	0.97	0.05	0.07	0.96	[0.51-0.78]	0.92
P_{Em}	5	2.37	0.98	0.98	0.03	0.06	0.98	[0.63-0.70]	0.86
C_{Pr}	6	0.08	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	[0.58-0.69]	0.83
Nested CFA 25									
		19.3	0.88	0.90	0.06	0.05	-	[0.56-0.80]	0.95

Source: Authors' work

Discriminant and Convergent Validity Testing

Construct validity estimates a test's ability to catch the concept it intended to assess. Convergent and discriminant validity are the two essential classes of concept validity. The expression 'convergence validity' depicts how many indicators of a specific construct share a measure of change Ping (2004). The essential techniques for evaluating merged legitimacy are Factor Loading (FL) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

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As per discriminant validity, the validity indicators should put a more prominent accentuation on their construct than another construct in the model. It exhibits how the construct is unique. It very well may be tracked down utilizing the Fornell and Larcker (1981) approach and the cross-loading of the indicators. To achieve cross-loading, the indicator's loading on the chosen latent variable must be greater than its loadings on each latent variable. Cross-loading is measured using a benchmark of 0.50 or higher. The criterion is one of the methods for assessing discriminant validity. The ability of the latent constructs to elucidate their indicators is more important than the variance of other latent variables. For the confirmation of convergent validity, the FL estimation should be >0.50 , as suggested by the second technique. Table 3 indicates that the NFI value is 0.85. Additionally, Table 3 displays the results indicating that the values in the diagonal are smaller than the square root of AVE. The model fit was determined using the first technique, which was fulfilled by the NFI value. The NFI value of 0.94 in Table 3 and the second method's recommendation that factor loading estimates be >0.5 corroborate the SEM literature's convergent validity criteria.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity (Covariance among Latent Variables) (N=291)

Constructs	E _{Ld}	W _{En}	P _{Em}	C _{Pr}	Mean	SD
E _{Ld}	0.72†	0.66**	0.71**	0.67**	21.27	5.44
W _{En}		0.75†	0.74**	0.67**	42.25	11.17
P _{Em}			0.75†	0.58**	16.37	4.70
C _{Pr}				0.68†	14.54	3.78

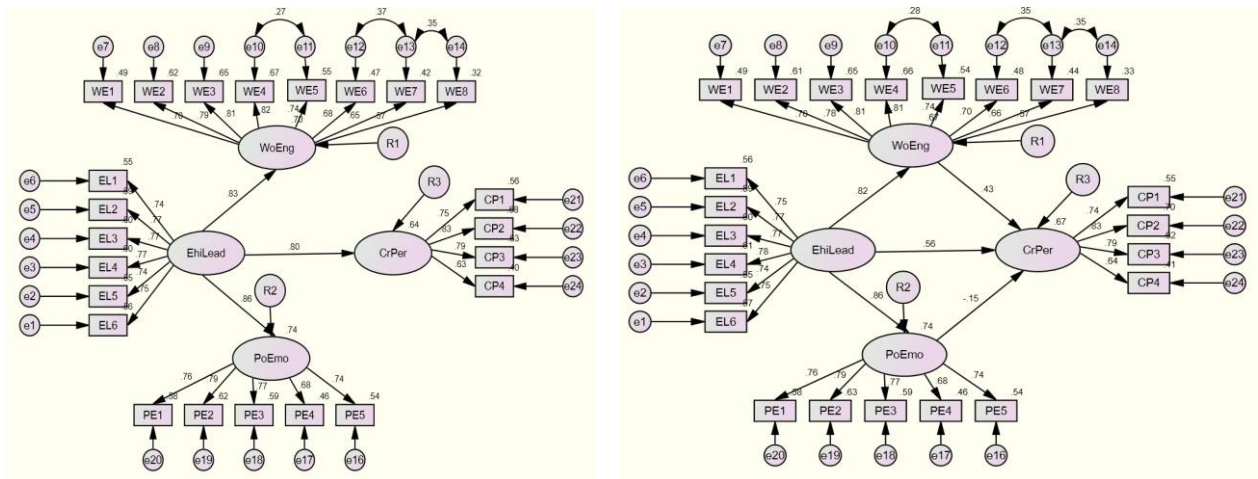
Source: Authors' work

In Table 3, E_{Ld} style and W_{En} have a positive correlation ($r=0.66^{**}$), whereas E_{Ld} style has a positive correlation with P_{Em} ($r=0.71^{**}$), with C_{Pr} ($r=0.67^{**}$). Moreover, W_{En} also has satisfactory correlations with P_{Em} ($r = 0.74^{**}$) and C_{Pr} ($r = 0.67$) respectively. P_{Em} and C_{Pr} have a positive correlation ($r=0.58^{**}$). The values in the diagonal are the square root of AVE's values which are greater than the correlation values. Asif et al. (2019) contented those contextual factors i.e. incentives, the complexity of the work, and relationships with superiors are crucial for C_{Pr} because they help employees feel supported and encouraged.

Hypotheses Testing

Direct and Indirect Effects

Direct impact and indirect impact models were developed to test the proposed hypotheses. A variety of the goodness of fit lists has been utilized to decide how well the two underlying models fit, including χ^2/df , GFI, NFI, CFI, and RMSEA. We assessed the direct impact model (without the path between W_{En} to C_{Pr} and between P_{Em} to C_{Pr}) with the indirect impact model, which included the path from W_{En} to C_{Pr} and from P_{Em} to C_{Pr}. The fit indices for the direct effect model are χ^2/df ratio=2.26; GFI=0.86, NFI=0.88, CFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.06 and R^2 C_{Pr} =0.63. The indirect effect model showed fit indices of χ^2/df ratio=2.20, GFI=0.86, NFI=0.88, CFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.06 and R^2 C_{Pr}=0.67, which suggests a refinement in fit indices over the direct effect model. We followed the guidelines from Shrout and Bolgers (2002) to test the mediation between the proposed constructs.

**Figure-2** Direct and Indirect Effects Model**Table 4** Results from Two Competing Models' Structural Equation Analysis (N=291)

The relationships between constructs	Direct effect model		Indirect effect model	
	β	S. E	β	S. E
H ₁ : E _{Ld} → W _{En}	0.83**	0.07	Significant	
	*			
H ₄ : E _{Ld} → C _{Pr}	0.80**	0.07	Significant	
	*			
H ₅ : E _{Ls} → P _{Em}	0.86**	0.07	Significant	
	*			
H ₂ : W _{En} → C _{Pr}	0.45**	0.24	Significant	0.06 Significant
	*		0.42***	
H ₆ : P _{Em} → C _{Pr}			-0.14	0.12 Insignificant
Hypotheses for Mediation Analysis				
H ₃ : E _{Ld} → W _{En} → C _{Pr}	χ^2/df ratio=2.26, GFI=0.86,		χ^2/df ratio=2.20; GFI=0.86;	
H ₇ : E _{Ld} → P _{Em} → C _{Pr}	NFI=0.88; CFI= 0.93,		NFI=0.88; CFI=0.93,	
	RMSEA=0.06, R ² C _{Pr} = 0.63		RMSEA=0.06, R ² C _{Pr} = 0.67	

Source: Authors' work

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to H₁, results show that E_{Ld} style has a positive impact on W_{En} (H₁: $\beta=0.83$, $p>0.001$), hence H₁ is accepted. H₂ is accepted since the results in Table 4 show that W_{En} has a positive influence on C_{Pr} (H₂: $\beta=0.45$, $p>0.001$). According to H₄, E_{Ld} style influences C_{Pr} (H₄: $\beta=0.80$, $p<0.001$). According to H₅, E_{Ld} style has a positive influence on P_{Em}. H₅ is likewise accepted because of the findings in Table 4, which again supports (H₅: $\beta=0.86$, $p>0.001$). H₆ is rejected (H₆: $\beta= -0.14$, $p < 0.001$) since it indicated that salespersons' P_{Em} has an insignificant effect on C_{Pr}. Furthermore, H₃ and H₇ describe the mediation of W_{En} and salespersons' P_{Em} among the relationship of E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} respectively. The fit indices of the direct effect model are $\chi^2/df=2.26$, GFI=0.86, NFI=0.88, CFI=0.93, and RMSEA=0.06 while, in the Indirect effect model explained fit indices i.e. $\chi^2/df=2.20$, GFI=0.86, NFI=0.88, CFI=0.94 and RMSEA=0.06. As can be observed in these figures, the

fit indices have increased compared to the direct effect model. The indirect impact model's hypothesized linkages were improved when the mediating variables W_{En} and P_{Em} were entered into the equation. The key findings of the study show that E_{Ld} style has a favorable impact on salespeople's P_{Em} , C_{Pr} , and W_{En} in the pharmaceutical industry. It was discovered that the E_{Ld} style increases W_{En} and P_{Em} , which improves C_{Pr} . W_{En} was found to be a strong mediator between E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} , highlighting the significance of an engaged W_{En} for better creative outputs. The study has discovered, however, that the mediating effect of salespeople's P_{Em} was trivial, indicating that although positive feelings are important, they might not have a major influence on how well salespeople translate E_{Ld} style into C_{Pr} .

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The analysis offers various theoretical implications. For instance, it proposes expanding the mediation model to include additional potential mediators and moderators in the link between E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} . This has provided a more comprehensive picture of the underlying mechanisms at work. Second, the study emphasizes the importance of considering the context of the study when examining the relationship between E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} . Generalizability should be handled cautiously because results may differ in other industries or organizational environments. Finally, the study adds to the literature by illustrating the practical use of theoretical concepts like E_{Ld} style, W_{En} , and C_{Pr} in pharmaceutical sales contexts. This can help to close the gap between theory and practice in the field of salesforce management. Pharmaceutical companies can benefit from the study's findings in various ways. Firstly, investing in programs that foster E_{Ld} skills can result in a more engaged salesperson with higher C_{Pr} . Second, it's critical to induce W_{En} among salespeople. Enhancing salespersons' W_{En} via E_{Ld} style, skill development opportunities, and a supportive work environment can lead to better levels of C_{Pr} . Thirdly, despite the lack of a considerable mediation function for salespersons' P_{Em} seen in the study, managers should nonetheless be aware of and vulnerable to the emotions within their sales teams.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Even with these findings, research lacks in some respects which might not be a flaw, but an opportunity for future research work. Focusing on the pharmaceutical sector may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries with different cultural and operational dynamics. Secondly, the study of E_{Ld} style and C_{Pr} could involve looking into additional mediating variables besides W_{En} and salespeople's P_{Em} , such as affective commitment, job satisfaction, competency, and innovations. The sample size of 291 pharmaceutical sales representatives, while substantial, may not capture the full diversity of the broader sales workforce, potentially limiting the applicability of the results to other settings. Comparative industry studies might also be carried out to examine if the findings are applicable in other industries, potentially revealing industry-specific variation. Longitudinal studies might put a glow to the long-term effects of E_{Ld} style on C_{Pr} , as well as the stability of mediator variables throughout time. Furthermore, cross-cultural research could investigate the impact of E_{Ld} style on C_{Pr} in various cultural contexts, potentially leading to the development of culturally adapted leadership approaches to promote creativity.

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