



Original Article

Correlation between Development of Ethical Behavior and its Consequences in Workplace Environment, and Organizational Health

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ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: This research has been done to determine the correlation between the development of ethical behavior and its consequences in a workplace environment, and the health of an organization.

Materials and Methods: This research is theoretically correlative descriptive and benefits a practical purpose. The research population included 5083 people from the staff of Azad and state universities in Mazandaran, among them, based on Kerjey and Morgan table via simple random sampling 346 people were selected as the sample of research. The instruments included two questionnaires, standard health of organization questionnaire with 21 questions, and a researcher-made questionnaire of development of ethical behavior in a workplace environment with 35 questions which by applying the preliminary design on a sample of 30 people the reliability was reported 0.94. The data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially by using mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient, fisher, and Regression statistics.

Ethical Considerations: Before the distribution of the questionnaires, the objectives and method of implementation of the study were explained to the participants. In addition, written informed consents were obtained from the subjects before the study, and they were assured of the confidentiality terms regarding their personal information. The participants were also allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.

Findings: The results show a linear relationship between teaching ethical principles, selection of the staff with ethical potentiality, propagation of ethical rules and codes, degree of managers' commitment to ethical standards, and eventually the development of ethical behavior and the health of the organization.

Conclusion: Considering the results and to have a healthy organization founded on a healthy basis it is recommended that officials and authorities at high levels of the organizational hierarchy have a special attitude towards selecting managers with good ethical manners, and diligently try to adopt policies to draft an ethical charter in the organization.

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Introduction

Ethics is one of the most important and controversial issues of third-millennium organizations. Ethics safeguards adherence to moral principles and the values prevailing human behaviors; it is closely associated with

values and distinguishes between right and wrong (1).

The growing complexity of organizations and increased immoral and irresponsible acts in a work environment have brought the attention of experts to the concept of ethics, its management, and fostering ethical behavior. Work ethics refers to the

moral principles and values of a professional system, monitoring the voluntary actions of individuals in the realm of their professional activities (2). The existence of ethics in the workplace provides room for the growth and prosperity of employees and boosts productivity (3). In addition, the development of ethical behaviors is associated with direct intra-organizational results such as committed and high-spirited employees, who are conscientious and eager to work, and consequently, organizational success (4).

In addition to organizational and legal criteria, managers and employees of organizations require a set of ethical guidelines to perform their organizational tasks, which is a precondition for the success of management and the health of organizations. In a healthy organization, honesty, respect, trust, sense of belonging, freedom, and accountability are evident, and organizational affairs are performed quickly due to not having a cumbersome bureaucracy (5). Moreover, ethical principles are the precondition for organizational health and an initiative for organizational development since they lead to the legitimacy of management measures, coherence and balance of organizational culture, and increased organizational benefits (6).

Realization of organizational health requires training ethical principles, improvement of ethical behaviors, and promotion of ethical codes. In other words, the development of ethical behaviors occurs through the implementation and management of ethical behaviors, training of policies and ethical approaches, and solving ethical problems in an organization. Ethics is necessary for the proper functioning and commitment of employees in the work environment (7).

Therefore, managers and executive committees of organizations must be well aware of this issue, so that there are no impediments to ethics and ethical behaviors in the organization (8). One of the milestones of the post-industrial age has been solving the conundrum of progress in various cultural, social, economic, political, and scientific fields. However, developing ethical behaviors remains an unresolved problem in organizations. Today, there is a growing trend of non-adherence to the rules, promotion of sycophancy, backbiting, non-compliance with organizational aspirations, and other issues including not delivering promises and bribery, which threaten the health of

organizations and could undermine productivity and efficiency.

In a study by Mazloui (9), a significant relationship was observed between all indicators of organizational health (organizational integrity, the influence of manager, consideration, structuring, support of resources, spirit, and scientific emphasis) and transformational leadership style of managers. Ansari (10) also confirmed the relationship between organizational health and positive work attitudes of employees, such as performing high-quality work and accountability. Tavallaei (11) pointed out that focusing on decision-making leads to the emergence of unethical behaviors and financial abuse while having clear and long-term goals and a reward system can improve administrative health. In the study by Khosravi (12), a significant association was found between work ethics and organizational commitment and its dimensions, while it was not associated with job satisfaction. Furthermore, there was a link between organizational commitment and job satisfaction dimensions.

Chih Liao (13) also demonstrated a significant relationship between the extent of training work ethics to employees and their level of job satisfaction, which was greater, compared to the relationship between demographic characteristics and job satisfaction. Sabanci (14) affirmed that variables associated with organizational health, such as leadership, climate, culture, and integration of organization, had an impact on burnout. Performing a longitudinal evaluation in United States organizations, Kaptein decided that the level of work ethics was above average during 1999-2004, and higher than the period of 1999-2008.

In the current era, when organizations are faced with a variety of values in the workplace, one of the most important concerns of managers is creating a suitable platform for all professionals to exhibit ethical behavior.

Adherence to the ethical principles dominating the profession, especially in the realm of higher education, as the custodian of ethical behavior development at the macro-level of society is of paramount importance. This study can be valuable for the management of organizations in general and higher education in particular. The purpose of this study was to determine the correlation of organizational health with the development of ethical behavior.

Ethical Considerations

Before the distribution of the questionnaires, the objectives and method of implementation of the study were explained to the participants. In addition, written informed consents were obtained from the subjects before the study, and they were assured of the confidentiality terms regarding their personal information. The participants were also allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive, correlational study was conducted on all employees (N=5083) of Islamic Azad University branches and public universities of Mazandaran, Iran. Using Krejcie & Morgan's table, the standard sample size was determined to be 346 subjects, who were selected through simple random sampling.

The data collection tools consisted of a 21-item questionnaire of organizational health standards and a 35-item researcher-made questionnaire on the development of ethical behaviors, both scored on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., extremely high [5], high [4], moderate [3], low [2], extremely low [1]). The reliability of the researcher-made questionnaire of ethical development was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.94$). Data analysis was performed in SPSS using descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential (Pearson correlation coefficient, Fisher's exact test, and regression) statistics.

Findings

The regression analysis reflected a significant linear correlation between organizational health and training ethical principles ($P=0.05$, $r=0.264$). In addition, the value of the correlation coefficient between organization health and the estimated value of organization health under a regression model based on the selection of employees with potential ethical capacity was equal to 0.210. Consequently, a significant linear correlation was observed between organizational health and the selection of employees with potential ethical capacity ($P=0.05$).

Furthermore, the value of the correlation coefficient between organizational health and the estimated value of organizational health under a regression model based on the promotion of ethical codes and principles was equal to 0.223. Therefore, there is a significant linear correlation between organizational health and the promotion of ethical codes and principles ($P=0.05$). The value of the correlation coefficient between organizational

health and the estimated value of organizational health under a regression model based on the improvement of ethical behaviors was equal to 0.227. As a result, a significant linear correlation was found between organizational health and the improvement of ethical behaviors.

Moreover, the value of correlation coefficient between organizational health and the estimated value of organizational health under a regression model based on the commitment of managers to ethical principles was equal to 0.285, indicating a significant linear correlation between organizational health and the commitment of managers to ethical principles.

In this study, multiple regression analysis was applied to evaluate the relationship between ethical behavior development by managers in the workplace and organizational health. Value of the coefficient of multiple correlations between organizational health and the estimated value of organizational health under the regression model based on a linear combination of variables in each model is presented .

On the other hand, the value of the coefficient of multiple determination is a percentage of changes in the dependent variable, which is expressed by a linear regression model including the variables in the model. In the final model, the value of the confidence of multiple determination was equal to 0.1, and the value of the coefficient of the multiple correlations was 0.317. It should be noted that the value of both coefficients of multiple regression and determination increased after performing several stages of regression analysis .

Therefore, at the significance level of 0.05, it could be concluded that there is a significant linear correlation between organizational health and variables of development of ethical behaviors by managers in the workplace.

Conclusions

We found a significant relationship between training ethical principles by managers in the workplace and organizational health, no comparable results were found in the literature. Other results were indicative of a significant linear correlation between the selection of employees with potential ethical capacity and organization health, regarding which no similar studies were found.

Other results indicated a significant linear correlation between the promotion of ethical codes and principles by managers and organizational

health. In this regard, we did not find any similar studies. In addition, the results were indicative of a significant linear correlation between the improvement of ethical behaviors by managers in the workplace and organizational health.

In this respect, Tavallaei and Kalavani (11) obtained similar results. Another study demonstrated a significant linear correlation between the level of commitment of managers to workplace ethical principles and organizational health. These results were in line with those obtained by Rokhman (15) and Tavallaei (11). Finally, a significant relationship was found between the development of ethical behaviors by managers in the workplace and organizational health.

Morality and ethical principles, which are regarded as a set of values and dos and don'ts, can play a significant role in the creation of a healthy environment in an organization and improve the efficacy and productivity of organizations. Ethics and its dimensions, especially for managers of organizations, are essential keys that must be taken into account.

Therefore, managers and the executive committees of organizations must adhere to ethical principles, so that the moralities and behaviors of employees are not impaired. Prevailing professional ethics and ethical development in the workplace can significantly make organizations responsive to environmental variables. On the other hand, ethical development is regarded as a competitive advantage in any organization since appropriate ethical principles are the precondition for a healthy and productive organization.

Thus, an ethical chart should be developed based on ethical codes to determine the expectations of managers of organizations from employees. In addition, holding educational workshops on training professional ethical principles can be beneficial. Furthermore, ethical performance should be considered another important factor in the evaluation of the performance of employees, and job interviews should be held by experienced psychologists and experts.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest.

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