The Relationship Between Ethical Leadership with the Organizational Citizenship Behavior and the School Principals' Performance

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Abstract

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the ethical leadership with organizational citizenship behavior and the school principals' performance (Case study: elementary schools in Tehran) in the academic year of 2017-2018. **Methodology:** The research method was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlation in terms of the data collection. The population consisted of all 1353 elementary school principals in Tehran; 298 people (159 female principals and 139 male principals), were used as sample size using Morgan table and a stratified random sampling. The method of data collection was based on three questionnaires: Ethical Leadership Standard Questionnaire by De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2008), Organizational Citizenship Behavior Standard Questionnaire by Podsakoff et al. (1990), and Principals' Performance Questionnaire by Patterson (1992; translated by Shekarshekan & Arshadi, 2007). The reliability of this questionnaire was calculated more than 0.7 using Cronbach's alpha method for all dimensions of the questionnaire, which indicates the reliability of the research instrument. Content validity and construct validity were used to calculate the validity. The results indicated the validity of the research instrument. The data analysis was performed using SPSS-22 software in a significant level of 0.05 and in two descriptive and inferential parts (Pearson correlation coefficient test and single-variable and multiple-variable regression analysis). **Findings:** The results of data analysis showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership with the organizational citizenship behavior and principals' performance; in other words, the principals' performance increased with the increase of organizational citizenship behavior; also, the principals' performance increased with the increase of ethical leadership. **Conclusion:** The predictive components of "fairness", "transparency of role" and "power sharing" have the potential to predict the organizational citizenship behavior and the principals' performance.

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1. Introduction

Leadership and educational management are recognized as one of the important factors in the improvement and effectiveness of schools. Researches have indicated that successful schools are ones where are led by successful leaders (Pourkarimi et al., 2016, p. 64). Education is the key to the development of societies and its principals are the main factors of the educational organizations and their performance affects the entire education system (Rajaipour and Ebrahimi, 2007, p. 91).

Undoubtedly, the performance and efficiency of any educational system depends on the performance of its human resources, in particular, the managers of the organization. In the meantime, the study organization is influenced more by the managers' decision due to the circumstances and the sensitivity of the educational environment; the management performance is important in this regard. Today, speaking of the success and failure of an educational organization, at first, the attention is drawn to the managers' management and function. Managers' performance is the organization's expected value of behavioral events that individuals perform over a given period (Paterson, 1992, p. 256).

On the other hand, one of the skills that can help people in this way, is the organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior is defined as a set of individual and voluntary behaviors that is not directly designed by formal reward systems in the organization, nevertheless it increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the performance (Organ, 1997: 88), and plays a key role for success of organizations (Murtaza et al., 2016: 327).

Podsakoff et al. (1990: 112), describe the organizational citizenship behaviors in the form of five types of altruism (i.e. assisting colleagues in completing tasks in unusual conditions), accounting (i.e. the behavior that a person performs a job more than a duty), the virtue of citizenship (i.e. polite behaviors that prevent the creation of a problem in the workplace), chivalry (i.e. a tendency toward patience against harassment), and respect (how people behave with colleagues, supervisors, and audiences of the organization). In this regard, Leo (2014), in a research entitled "Ethical Leadership and Organizational Citizen's Behavior, Mediating the Role Effective and Cognitive Confidence in Chinese Government Organizations", found that the ethical leadership play an important and significant role in improving organizational citizenship behaviors in Chinese government agencies.

One of the important factors influencing the organizational citizenship behavior and the performance of school principals is, moral leadership. Ethical leadership is the display of appropriate normative behavior through individual actions and interpersonal communication, and promoting such behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making (Walumbwa et al., 2012, p. 957). The brief definitions of ethical leadership components include:

Fairness: ethical leaders are honest, trustworthy, fair and altruistic; Role Clarification: ethical leaders act clearly, and promote ethical behavior among their followers with promoting, encouraging and rewarding, and engage in open communication; Power Sharing: the ethical leaders give their subordinates the right to make decisions and listen to their ideas and mindset (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008, p. 301). In this regard, Soleimani (2011), during a research entitled "Investigating the Relationship Between the Principals' Ethical Behavior and Organizational Citizen Behavior in Teachers and Staff in Garmsar City Schools", found that 1) there is a positive and significant relationship between the principals' ethical behavior and organizational citizenship behavior of teachers and staff, 2) There is a positive and significant relationship between each dimension of ethical behavior with organizational citizenship behavior and its dimensions, 3) The results of regression analysis have indicated that the variables of usefulness morality and legal morality are significant predictors of organizational citizenship behavior. Also, Khokhar & Zia-ur-Rehman (2017), in a research entitled "The Connection Between Ethical Leadership with Staff's Performance: The Role of Mediating of Organizational Citizenship Behavior and The Efficient Staff's Behavior" found that indirect work behavior partially manages the relationship between the ethical leadership behavior and staff's performance.

Interestingly, organizational citizenship behavior does not ignore the relationship between ethical leadership and staff's performance.

The necessity of the attention of the organizations to the ethical leadership comes from the fact that the positive results of the moral leader have been proven to the organizations, and this type of leadership has led to the desire of followers to report problems to management (Brown, M. E., Treviño, L. K., Harrison, D. A, 2005, p. 119). The final performance of the organization depends on the performance of each individual within the organization, especially the school principals and the surrounding environment. In order to increase the productivity of staff, it has always been necessary to analyze many aspects affecting the performance of principals. Therefore, studying the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational citizenship behavior and the performance of principals in schools as the most important institution that the societies need it to develop and compete (Moshabaki, Andalib Ardakani, 2011, p. 48).

Finally, since the schools' principals play a very important role in planning, leadership, coordination of monitoring and evaluation, and establishing the effective relationships with students and school staff, they have a positive impact on staffing, physical and mental health, and academic progress of students; care should be taken in choosing and appointing them, and this role should be given to those who are experienced, and have the science of management and education. In this regard, we should not ignore the role of school principals as the most important determinant in the correct use of available resources and facilities for achieving the goals of the organization. (Abbaszadegan, 2015, p. 128). Also, the achievements of this study, in recognition of the relationship between the ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors of managers, can lead to major reforms in school management policies. Therefore, in this research, it is attempted to answer the question of "What Is the Relationship Between the Ethical Leadership with The Organizational Citizenship Behavior and The Performance of School Principals? (Case Study: Elementary Schools in Tehran City)".
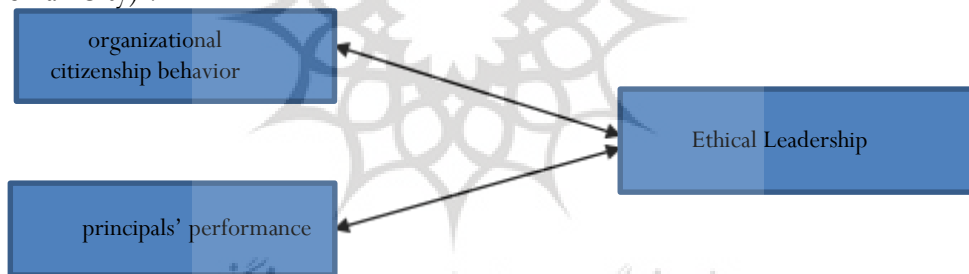

Fig. 1. The Conceptual Model of Research (De Hoogh A.H.B. den Hartog D.N, 2008; Podsakoff et al. 1990; Translated by Shekarshekan & Arshadi, 2007)

2. Methodology

The method of this study was applied in terms of purpose and a descriptive-correlational one in terms of data collection. The population of the study consisted of all principals of elementary schools in Tehran during the academic year of 2017-2018 (1353 ones). The sample (298 ones) was selected by stratified random sampling (159 female principals and 139 male principals). The method of data collection was based on three questionnaires: Ethical Leadership Standard Questionnaire by De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2008), Organizational Citizenship Behavior Standard Questionnaire by Podsakoff et al. (1990), and Principals' Performance Questionnaire by Patterson (1992; translated by Shekarshekan & Arshadi, 2007). De Hoogh & Den Hartog Standard Questionnaire (2008), was used for assessing the ethical leadership variable. The questionnaire consists of 12 questions that measures three dimensions of fairness (1-5), transparency of role (6-8), and power sharing (9-12). The method of scoring it based on the 5-option Likert Spectrum, very high (5), high (4), average (3), low (2) and very low (1). The reliability of this questionnaire was reported 0.84

by Nasr Esfahani et al. (2013) during a research entitled "The Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and the Staff Empowerment" through Cronbach's alpha. Podsakoff et al. standard questionnaire (1990), was used to assess the organizational citizenship behavior. They introduced the organizational citizen's behavior in five aspects of altruism, accounting, chivalry, the virtue of citizenship and respect; and each one was assessed by some questions, as altruism was assessed using four questions, accounting by four questions, chivalry by four questions, the virtue of citizenship by four questions, and respect by four questions. The method of scoring was based on 5-option Likert spectrum, very high (5), high (4), average (3), low (2) and very low (1). The reliability of this questionnaire was reported 0.89 by Amani et al. (2015) during a research entitled "Investigating the Status of Organizational Citizen's Behavior and Its Dimensions in the Staff of the Vice-Admiral Command Office in Bushehr Province" through Cronbach's Alpha. Paterson Questionnaire (1992; Translated by Shekarshekan & Arshadi, 2007) was used to measure the variables of the performance of school principals. The questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions, each question was composed of a 5-option scale as very high (5), high (4), average (3), low (2) and very low (1). The maximum score in this questionnaire was 60 and the minimum score was 15. The reliability of principals' performance test in the research done by Mirrab, Azizi and Moradi (2014), was obtained 0.80 through Cronbach's alpha and 0.87 through retest. Finally, the analysis of information obtained from the implementation of questionnaire was performed using SPSS software at a significance level of 0.05, in two descriptive and inferential parts (Pearson correlation coefficient and univariate and multivariate regression analysis).

3. Findings

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used in order to check the normality of the data; for all variables, at confidence level of 95%, it can be said that the zero hypothesis i.e. the distribution of research data is normal, is confirmed, due to increasing the significance level of 0.05. The relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior of elementary schools in Tehran city was tested by multivariable regression, the results are reflected as follows. Before the calculations, the hypotheses of this test were examined. Also the hypotheses of regression test, such as the linear relationship between variables (distribution diagram), the study of the normality of the error statement, the independence of the error statement, and the study of coherence, were examined. The results indicated that this test could be used. Table 1 summarizes the regression test to examine the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational citizenship behavior of principals in elementary schools of Tehran City.

Table 1. Regression test summary to investigate the relationship between ethical leadership with the organizational citizenship behavior of principals

Predictive variable	R	R2	R2 Changed
Components of ethical leadership	0.755	0.570	0.557

Criterion variable: Organizational citizenship behavior of principals

Table 1 shows that the relationship between the components of "ethical leadership" and "organizational citizenship behavior", is equal to 0.755; in other words, the components of "ethical leadership" accounted for about 57 percent of the changes related to the organizational citizenship behavior of principals "(R2= 0.570). Also, the calculations related to F statistics showed that the correlation square was significant at the level of 0.01 (Sig. = 0.000 and df = 307, and F= 46.885).

Table 2. The coefficients of "ethical leadership" components in predicting the organizational citizenship behavior of principals

The variable entered in the model	model	B	SE	)Beta(	t	P
	y-intercept	0.561	0.202		2.773	0.000
fairness	Variable coefficient	0.147	0.055	0.174	2.665	0.008
transparency od role	Variable coefficient	0.116	0.051	0.138	2.26	0.000
Share of power	Variable coefficient	0.231	0.047	0.314	4.87	0.000

Criterion variable: Organizational citizenship behavior of principals

The results of table 2 indicate that the components of "ethical leadership" were significant predictors of organizational citizenship behavior of principals. Therefore, according to the data in the table, the regression equation can be written as follows:

(Power sharing) 0.231 + (transparency of role) 0.116+ (fairness) 0.147 + 0.561 ＝ Organizational citizenship behavior of principals

The study of ethical leadership with the performance of principals in elementary schools in Tehran was tested by multivariable regression; the results are reflected as follows. Before the calculations, the hypotheses of this test were examined; the results indicated that this test could be used. The table below summarizes the regression test to examine the relationship between ethical leadership with the performance of principals in elementary schools of Tehran.

Table 3. Regression test summary to examine the relationship between ethical leadership with the performance of principals

Predictive variable	Correlation Coefficient	Square of correlation coefficient	Modified correlation
Components of ethical leadership	0.726	0.527	0.522

Criterion variable: principals' performance

Table 3 shows that the relationship between the components of "ethical leadership" and "principals' performance", is equal to 0.726; in other words, the components of "ethical leadership" accounted for about 53 percent of the changes related to the principals' performance (R2= 0.527). Also, the calculations to related F statistics showed that the correlation square was significant at the level of 0.01 (Sig. = 0.000 and df = 294, and F= 108.977).

Table 4. The coefficients of "ethical leadership" components in predicting the principals' performance

The variable entered in the model	model	B	SE	(Beta)	t	Significance level
	y-intercept	1.253	0.136		9.232	0.000
fairness	Variable coefficient	0.172	0.027	0.276	6.451	0.000
transparency od role	Variable coefficient	0.114	0.042	0.149	2.704	0.007
Share of power	Variable coefficient	0.374	0.045	0.471	8.255	0.000

Criterion variable: principals' performance

The results of table 4 indicate that the components of "ethical leadership" were significant predictors of principals' performance. Therefore, according to the data in the table, the regression equation can be written as follows:

(Power sharing) 0.374 + (transparency of role) 0.114+ (fairness) 0.172 + 1.253 = principals' performance

4. Discussion

The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior of principals in elementary schools of Tehran City. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of the researches done by Walmbo et al. (2017), Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers (2016), Choi et al. (2015), Lu (2014), Newman et al. (2014), Behrouzi and Samimi (2016), Abbaspour et al. (2015), Va'azi and Rahmani (2012).

In explaining this result, it can be said that the ethical leadership reflects the appropriate normative behavior of leaders through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and promotes such behavior to followers through bilateral communication, empowerment and decision-making. What is certain in confirming this hypothesis is that the type of the manager's behavior of the organization plays a very important role in the staff's behaviors, and can affect the way staff relate to each other and their commitment to the organization. As Steinbauer et al. (2014) also state, the ethical leadership is responsible for influencing the behavior of corporate ethical leaders on staff's ethical decisions and actions. In addition, Newman et al. (2014), believe that the ethical leaders provide a platform for individuals to flourish and have higher organizational citizenship behaviors by demonstrating appropriate ethical behaviors and two-way communication. Picola et al. (2010) also believe that the ethical leaders, with an emphasis on fair dealing, shared values, honesty in relation to staff, and business engagements, inspire decent behaviors among the staff and create a higher level of commitment to the organization. Such leaders attempt to achieve collective benefits and increase citizenship behaviors of staff using characteristics such as ethics and fairness, transparency of role and power sharing (De Hoogh, A.H.B., Den Hartog, D.N., 2008).

Also, the results of this study are similar to the results of the study done by Choi et al. (2015), which stated that ethical leadership has a significant effect on organizational effectiveness, social accountability, and staff perception of organizational support behaviors, and Lu (2014), and Newman et al. (2014), who believe that ethical leadership influences the organizational trust mechanisms and it improves the organizational citizenship behaviors in the organization; Abbaspour et al. (2015), who believed that ethical leaders with their attractive personal behaviors such as honesty, trustworthiness and validity of ethical behavior are a remarkable source for observation and imitation, and can have a significant impact on the behavior of individuals in the organizations; and Va'aezi and Rahmani (2012), who believe that the ethical environment of organizational laws, professional rules and attitudes have a negative impact on organizational anti-corporate behaviors and reduces the occurrence of these behaviors in the organization, and the instrumental ethical atmosphere, impact Has a positive effect on organizational anti-citizenship behaviors and increases the incidence of these behaviors in the organization.

The second finding showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between ethical leadership with the performance of principals in elementary schools of Tehran City. This result is consistent with the results of the researches done by Khokhar and Zia-e-Rahman (2017), Kelidbari (2016), Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, P., & Guerra-Baez, R. (2016), Zhu et al (2015), Gadampour et al (2017), Mirkmali and Karami (2016), Heydari and Chaboksavar (2015). Today, observance of ethics and the preservation of moral values is one of the most important phenomena that is considered in the most organizations (especially educational centers). The observance of the ethical behavior of principals in schools is necessary so that schools and educational organizations do not conflict with society on one hand, and on the other hand, by ensuring reasonable and wise decisions, they guarantee their long-term interests. According to Zhou et al. (2015, p. 716), the ethical leadership has a positive effect on communication recognition and organizational recognition, and ethical beliefs modulate these effects positively.

The performance of managers, based on the theoretical basis in this field, points to the way in which the duties and responsibilities are assigned, and in general, the behaviors that individuals show in the field of occupation, that is, the amount efficiency generated by the occupation of a person (including services,

education, etc.) (Sajjadi and Omidi, 2008, p. 82). Therefore, the hypothesis can be explained in such a way that the educational leaders and educators are as likely to be exposed to unethical decisions as ordinary people. Regarding the sensitivity of the work of school principals and many problems of school management, school principals need to pay more attention to ethical issues in their area of management (Matlabifard et al., 2012, p. 131). As Assari et al. (2012, p. 89) also emphasized, the ethical leadership in educational environments is necessary, because the principals who behave ethically, can have a positive impact on their performance in schools, and as a result, these schools can successfully fulfill their missions. They conduct behaviors through a series of ethical codes and play the role of a director and guide in empowering the staff. In fact, when staff perceive that their leader's behaviors are ethical, their performance as well as their job satisfaction rises, and these actions will increase the performance of school principals.

According to the research findings, the following suggestions are presented below: 1) It is suggested to be held workshops for principals in order to get acquainted with the ethical leadership and its benefits, and the ways of appropriate influence on teachers and encouraging them to succeed. 2) principals must strive to make the school atmosphere as a supportive and flexible atmosphere, in which the communication of individuals with each other and with the principal be based on mutual respect and trust. 3) It is suggested to principals to provide teachers working groups for more co-operation solve the school problems. 4) School management should provide conditions that enable teachers to express the problems at school easily and without fear by utilizing supportive style and establishing a sincere relationship with teachers. 5) School principals increase their performance in school activities by transferring their job information to the others. 6) It is suggested to the education authorities to promote the teachers' performance with explaining their tasks, and clarifying the goals and plans of the schools. 7) In the meetings that teachers attend, the management allows the topic of the sessions to be determined by the teachers themselves, in which case the teachers will be willing to attend the sessions, they will increase their studies according to the subject of each session, and they pay more attention to the issues and changes that are being made in the school.

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