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(Original Article)

The Effect of Professional Ethics on the Organizational Culture

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Abstract

Background: Organizational culture is the social identity of any organization. Professional ethics can be an effective indicator and an important motivational tool in the organizations to create excellence, sustainable development, and desirable competition, reduce conflicts, increase commitment and social responsibility and pave the path for having a desired organizational culture. In this regard, the present study was conducted to investigate the effect of professional ethics on organizational culture.
Method: The present applied research uses descriptive-survey method and the correlation approach. The statistical population of this study is 5000 employees from Mashhad Municipality and based on Morgan's table, 357 employees were selected as the sample size by stratified random sampling. The data collection instruments of the present study are questionnaires of organizational culture and professional ethics and their validity was of the content type approved by the experts. To test the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha coefficient test was used. In order to analyze the data, inferential analysis methods of nonlinear regression test using SPSS and structural model method using LISREL were used.
Results: The findings show that there is a positive and significant relationship between the independent variable of professional ethics and the dependent variable of organizational culture.
Conclusion: The results indicate that the growth of the organization as a planned process is equal to the transformation of organizational culture and professional ethics and attention to ethical indicators as a tool affecting organizational culture create a strategic advantage in identifying and creating new opportunities and achieving organizational goals.

Keywords: Management, Organizational culture, Professional ethics

Introduction

One of the most important concerns of efficient managers at different levels is how to create suitable platforms for human factors working in all professions so that they can address their professional issues with a full sense of responsibility and commitment and observe the ethical principles governing their job (1). Today, paying attention to ethics and

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moralities has become one of the accepted subjects in organizations and societies, which is discussed under the titles of work ethics, professional ethics and business ethics (2). On the other hand, professional ethics is the most important cultural factor in the development of any country and has a significant impact on activities, individual and group performance, and organizational outcomes (3) and as one of the most important issues of all human societies, it is considered the most important variable in the success of organizations (4). Ethics is defined as a system of values, beliefs, principles, fundamentals, do's don'ts based on which the good and bad aspects of organizations are determined and bad actions are distinguished from good ones (5). Ethics means trust, honesty, righteousness, justice, citizenship virtues and serving the society which has entered the organization in the form of ethical codes and rules of professional behavior (6). The concept of professional ethics is derived from the science of ethics and is a set of ethical rules that are first derived from the nature of the profession or occupation (7). In this context, the characteristics of people with professional ethics is that they are responsible, accept the consequences of their decisions, care about honesty in their job, perform the assigned tasks with all their might (8) and have a kind of moral commitment and work conscience to any kind of task and responsibility (9). It is also a set of principles and standards of human behavior that determine the behavior of individuals and groups. In fact, professional ethics is a process of rational thinking that aims to realize what values should be preserved and developed in the organization (10). Professional Ethics is one of the new subdivisions of ethics that tries to address the ethical issues of various professions and considers special principles for it (11). Professional Ethics as a new sub-branch of ethics knowledge investigates the ethical tasks and the related ethical issues in a profession (12) and provides the underlying moral values on which a civilized and transcendent cultural society is built (13). The scope of ethics is in the territory of individual behaviors, but when individual behaviors are spread at the level of society or social institutions, they turn into collective ethics that are rooted in the culture of the society, become dominant, and can be associated with the society (14). Managing moral values in the workplace strengthens the integrity and balance of organizational culture, improves trust in relationships between individuals and groups, and, by following standards, improves product quality and ultimately, increases the profits (15). From an organizational point of view, culture has been interpreted as a strong chain that ensures the sustainability of an organization (16). The most successful organizations have a culture that is in line with strong moral values (17). Culture is defined as the spirit of an organization and the culture that governs the organization and forms the organizational personality (18). If culture is in line with the organizational goals in the organization, efficiency and effectiveness will increase (19) and developing an ethical code for employees that includes the cultural values of the community and the ethics of the organization is one of the issues raised in this regard, according to which, members of the organization follow a general example and ethical and value guidelines and a integrated and strong culture will be created in the organization. Managing ethical values in the workplace legitimizes managerial actions, strengthens the coherence and balance of organizational culture, improves trust in relationships between individuals and groups, and, by following more standards, improves product quality and ultimately increases productivity (20). In this regard, there is a positive relationship between organizational culture and professional ethics (21). A researcher believes that there is a positive and significant relationship between collaborative culture and ethics. Organizations with high professional ethics and collaborative culture have high employee loyalty and customer loyalty (22). In a study, Sinclair confirms the relationship between organizational culture and ethics (23). According to a study, there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational ethics culture and employee ethical behavior. Also an organization's ethical culture has a positive effect on employees' ethical decisions (24). A researcher reports in the study of university employees that there is a relationship between work ethic and organizational commitment (25) others state that there is a positive relationship between organizational culture and professional ethics and that

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they have a positive effect on each other (26). Furthermore, organizations will take steps to create, maintain, and improve organizational accountability by increasing attention to ethical issues that will lead to the promotion of social accountability (27). In this regard, professional ethics directly increases accountability. Moreover, professional ethics strengthens the culture of service (28). In the previous studies, the culture of service has been confirmed as one of the consequences of professional ethics (29). Finally, since organizations are created based on social needs and, as powerful phenomena, have a great impact on society and its foundations, activities, and processes, it is essential that they be responsible and respect ethical considerations. Therefore, according to the above, it can be expected that professional ethics strengthens organizational culture. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of professional ethics on organizational culture, and accordingly, after studying and reviewing the research literature, the conceptual model of research has been designed as graph (1).



Fig 1: Conceptual research model

Material and Methods

The present study is a descriptive-survey research in terms of practical purpose and data collection which has been conducted using correlation approach. The statistical population of the study consists of Mashhad Municipality employees and according to Morgan's table, out of the 5000 employees of all Mashhad Municipality employees, 357 were selected as the sample size by stratified random sampling. A study of demographic characteristics revealed that 52.6% of the respondents were male and 47.4% were female. Also, the highest frequency of respondents was 51%. The respondents were in the age group of 31 to 41 years. Regarding the education status of the respondents, the highest frequency is related to the employees with a bachelor's degree in the amount of 51%, and the lowest frequency is 2.63% belonging to the employees holding a Ph.D. Regarding the distribution of work experience in the respondents, the people with a work experience of less than 10 years were at the highest level being 57.89%. Also, information collection methods are a combination of library and field methods. To measure the variable of professional ethics, a professional ethics questionnaire with 16 questions and components (responsibility, honesty, and justice and fairness) was used and in order to measure the variable of organizational culture, the organizational culture questionnaire with

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31 questions and 4 variables (involvement in work, compatibility, adaptability, and mission) was used. The type of scale used in them is classified as a Likert scale, which is shown in Table (1) of the reliability of the mentioned questionnaires.

Table 1: Reliability of research questionnaires

Questionnaire	Number of Questions	Cronbach's α Coefficient
Professional Behavior	16	0.849
Organizational Culture	31	0.813

In order to analyze the data, inferential analysis methods of nonlinear regression analysis were used using SPSS and structural model method was used using LISREL. Also, descriptive indicators, correlation matrix, and structural equation modeling (standardized values and T-test) were used to analyze the research data.

Results

The findings showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the independent variable of professional ethics and its dimensions (accountability, honesty, justice and fairness) with the dependent variable of organizational culture (0.54, 0.59 and 0.66, respectively). Also, for data analysis, assuming that the data were normal, Pearson correlation coefficient test with SPSS and structural equation technique using LISREL were used. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the independent variable of professional ethics and its dimensions and the dependent variable of organizational culture as mentioned in tables (2) and (3).

Table 2: Standard coefficients and number of significance of the model and test hypotheses of the research

Path	Standard Coefficient	Numbers of Significance	P-Value	Result
There is a relationship between professional ethics (responsibility) and organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees.	0.54	5.51	P>0.05	Approved
There is a relationship between professional ethics (honesty) and organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees.	0.59	6.22	P>0.05	Approved
There is a relationship between professional ethics (justice and fairness) and organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees.	0.66	7.45	P>0.05	Approved

Table 3: a Summary of the results of the research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path	Result
The first main hypothesis	There is a relationship between professional ethics (responsibility) and organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees.	Approved
The first sub-hypothesis	There is a relationship between professional ethics (honesty) and organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees.	Approved
The second sub-hypothesis	There is a relationship between professional ethics (justice and fairness) and organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees.	Approved

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Table 4: The Results of the study of total mediations

Type of Relationship	Direct Relationship	Indirect Relationship	Total
The impact of professional ethics on the organizational culture of Mashhad Municipality employees	0.59	0.54×-0.66=0.26	0.20

As it can be seen in Table (4), the total relationship value of the above hypothesis is 0.20, so H1 hypothesis is approved and this coefficient is significant at the confidence level of %95. Therefore, the result of the hypothesis is as follows:
Professional Ethics Affects the Organizational Culture of Mashhad Municipality Employees.
Goodness of Fit: The overall validity of the conceptual model is systematically tested using multiple goodness-of-fit criteria. Suitable indicators for ensuring the goodness of fit include X2 to df (chi-square to the degree of freedom), RMSEA (mean square error of the model), and AGFI (adjusted fitness index). A model is well-fitting when its X2 / df is less than 3. The closer the CFI and AGFI are to 1, the better fits the data model, and ultimately the RMSEA should be less than 0.08 for well-fitting models. The presented indicators and their comparison with the desired value for a fitted model indicate the appropriate fit of the research model. According to table (5), the fit of the structural research model is approved.

Table (5) Goodness of Fit of the Model

Fit Index	Acceptance Criteria	Statistics of the Main Hypothesis Model
(Chi square) χ^2	$\chi^2/df \leq 3$	2.79
RMSEA	RMSEA<0/08	0.071
NFI	NFI>0/90	0.97
CFI	CFI>0/95	0.95

Discussion

In the present study sought to investigate the effect of professional ethics components on the dimensions of organizational culture among the employees of Mashhad Municipality. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between professional ethics and organizational culture in the work environment and the study of the correlations of variables shows that all components of professional ethics (responsibility, honesty, justice and fairness) have a positive and significant relationship with the dimensions of organizational culture (engagement in work, compatibility, adaptability, and mission). In this regard, to fulfill their organizational affairs, directors and employees of organizations, besides organizational and legal criteria, need a set of ethical and value guidelines that strengthens organizational culture, helps them in organizational behaviors and practices, and provides them with coordination and unity of procedure in moving towards the desired method; because one of the most important criteria for evaluating organizations and one of the major factors for the success of organizations is a strong organizational culture. The results of the research convey that there is a positive and significant relationship between professional ethics and organizational culture that agree with the results of the research (32, 26, 30, and 31) because these researchers have reached similar results in their research. The results are also similar to the results of the research (33, 34, 35, and 27) and are in line with the general results of the research (36) and (37).
The research is limited to Mashhad Municipality which makes it possible to generalize the research results to other provinces of the country with caution because organizational conditions and culture are different. The researcher's time constraints

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cause the generalization of results to other times in the same organization to be done with caution. Given that there is a positive relationship between professional ethics and organizational culture, all socio-economic and cultural sectors should be coordinated to improve work ethic and move towards sustainable development. Employee value creation plan should be described and designed to ensure that employees have the ability to perform the activities. Creating ability in employees is also important to demonstrate the competence of human resources.

Conclusion

Today's society is an organizational society and most of individuals' lives are spent in or in connection with various organizations. In this case, the study of organizations, in addition to its social significance, also helps us to understand social issues. New organizational challenges have turned the stable environment of the past into a changing system, the criteria for progress and development have changed, and the evolution of culture and knowledge has begun. We can say that in order to make a change, one of the concepts that needs to be considered is the attitude towards values, ideals and ideas. Evaluating the performance of an organization is a continuous and extensive activity. Organizations are engaged in various activities and their success depends on their performance in various fields. Obviously, in this regard, it is necessary to learn how to handle and manage organizations based on values, which is also an important aspect of professional ethics. Recognizing and observing ethical principles is very important in an organization. Moral principles make the identity of the organization known and are used as a guide for a successful future. It is now widely accepted that the success of winning organizations lies not only in their physical dimensions and technology but also in their intangible factors such as organizational culture and the values and beliefs of their employees. Therefore, due to the importance of effectiveness and the impact of professional ethics on various organizational areas, especially organizational culture, it should be noted that the organizations that have appropriate ethical behavior have a better chance of success compared to those that have immoral and unfair behaviors. The most successful organizations have cultures that are in line with moral values. As a result, observance of professional ethics leads to a better feeling, promotion of organizational culture for employees, and a better task completion. Moreover, adherence to professional ethics in the organization increases the level of organizational culture and individuals' commitment to the organization and creates alignment between employee goals and organizational goals, thus providing the ground for the productivity of the organization.

Ethical Consideration

In order to comply with ethical principles, to keep information confidential, and to ensure the trust of the respondents, the principle of confidentiality was implemented and the respondents were asked not to include their names on the distributed questionnaires to ensure that their answers remain confidential.

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