



Research Paper

Investigating the mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior and creative performance

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of this study was to investigate the mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior and creative performance. The study population was all 735 employees of Bu Ali Sina University of Hamadan, from which a sample of 252 people was selected by simple random sampling method based on Cochran's formula. The research method was quantitative, descriptive and of correlation studies and structural equation modeling. For data collection from ethical leadership questionnaires, psychological contract fulfillment and creative performance, and for data analysis from descriptive (frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential techniques (confirmatory factor analysis and confirmatory path analysis) It was used using Spss and Lisrel software. The results showed that ethical leadership has a direct, positive and significant relationship with organizational citizenship behavior, psychological contract fulfillment and creative performance. It was also found that psychological contract fulfillment plays a mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior and performance creatively.

Keywords: *Ethical leadership, Psychological contract fulfillment, Organizational Citizenship behavior, Creative performance*

Introduction

In what is called the "post-reality" era, in which moral behavior does not seem necessary for leadership success, the concept of moral leadership may seem old-fashioned or even disturbing to some (Ahmad & et al, 2019: 98). Such social realities are in contrast to research in areas such as organizational behavior and organizational psychology that link ethical leaders to reducing widespread scandals in organizations (Smith, 2016). In fact, scholars specifically agree on the importance of work ethic and ethical leadership (Ilyas, Abi & Ashfaq, 2020; Fu & et al, 2020; Javed & et al, 2017; Badleh, Nemati & Hosseini, 2020). Because leaders are the main representatives of the organization, their behaviors, actions, and thoughts influence followers' beliefs about their organizations. Therefore, leaders, as representatives of the organization, play a key role in influencing and shaping various strategies, including selection and recruitment, reward management, fair behavior, ethical standards, health, safety, and career advancement (Ahmad & et al, 2019: 100). Ethical leaders allow their employees to express their opinions and participate in decisions, listen to their thoughts and ideas, and instill in them a sense of trust (Zarei Matin & et al, 2016). Employees try to compensate for the ethical behaviors of their leaders in a similar way and with different results (van Prooijen & Ellemers, 2015). One of the most important ways that subordinates may compensate for the behavior of moral leaders is through their performance in extra-task behaviors such as organizational citizenship and creative performance (Ahmad & et al, 2019: 98). Organizational citizenship behaviors are extra-role behaviors that are not recognized by the formal reward system of the organization (directly or explicitly) but help the organization to achieve the goals of sustainable development by (Ardalan, Taajobi & majooni, 2020) enhancing effective performance in the workplace (Zhao & Zhou, 2019). Creative performance is also associated with new and unique ideas and processes (Oldham & Cummings, 1996) that are necessary to solve problems and meet the basic needs of the organization and force organizations to use the creative abilities of their employees (Chen & Hou, 2016).

The main asset of any organization, especially service organizations such as universities, are its employees. By creating a spiritual atmosphere and ethical leadership and adhering to formal and informal contracts, officials and faculty heads at Bu Ali Sina University can enhance staff role-playing behaviors, including organizational citizen behavior and creative performance.

Methodology

The present study according to the research philosophy, quantitative research, according to the purpose of the type of applied studies and in terms of data collection and analysis; The method used is a descriptive method of correlation studies and especially structural equation modeling. The study population of all employees of Bu Ali Sina University was 735 people. To estimate the sample size, Cochran's formula with an error of 0.05 and a confidence level of 1.96 was used, which was determined to be 252 people. To collect data from the standard questionnaire of 24 questions of moral leadership of Kalshon et al. (2011) in the form of five dimensions (fairness, ethical guidelines, personal orientation, power sharing and role transparency) based on a 5-point Likert scale; Questionnaire of 24 questions of organizational citizenship behavior of Padaskov, Mackenzie-Moran and Fetter (1990) in five dimensions (conscience, chivalry, civic virtue, humility and altruism) in the 5-point Likert scale; Questionnaire for 10 questions of Rousseau (1995) psychological contract fulfillment in three dimensions (career path development, job content and job reward) in 5 Likert scale; The 20-item Creative Performance Questionnaire by Aldham and Cummings (1996) was used in three dimensions (personal characteristics, job complexity, and job reward) in a 5-point Likert scale.

Results

Test of research hypotheses showed that: the variable of ethical leadership has a direct, positive and significant effect at the level of 0.05 on organizational citizenship behavior, creative performance and psychological contract fulfillment; Psychological contract fulfillment variable has a direct, positive and significant effect at the level of 0.05 on organizational citizenship behavior and creative performance; Ethical leadership has an indirect, positive and significant effect on organizational citizenship behavior through the realization of psychological contract at the level of 0.05; Ethical leadership also has an indirect, positive and significant effect on creative performance through psychological contract fulfillment at the level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be said that psychological contract fulfillment a mediating role in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior and creative performance.

The results of the fit indices in the confirmatory path analysis model indicated an appropriate and acceptable fit of the structural model of the research.

Discussion and conclusion

Given the impact of leaders' thoughts, ideas and behaviors on employees, their existence as a harbinger of ethics and ethical values in organizations is undeniable. Today's managers have come to the conclusion that in order to better manage organizations, in addition to emphasizing and paying attention to laws and regulations, they must also promote adherence to ethics and ethical behavior in their organizations.

University leaders can influence employee behavior through fairness, ethical guidance, employee involvement in decisions, and the creation and development of an appropriate ethical environment on campus. In this way, if employees find that leaders treat them fairly, respect their opinions, clearly articulate job expectations and organizational responsibilities, and be sensitive to their family and professional issues and problems. They show that they have acquired positive attitudes about their job and organization and seek to compensate for these services by accepting additional roles and activities such as organizational citizenship behavior and creative performance.

Finally, according to the findings of the current research, the deans of the faculties and the officials of Bu Ali Sina University are recommended to encourage the staff to discuss various issues of the university and to respect their opinions; Fairness and justice in dealing with employees; Paying attention to the personal and family needs of employees; Observance of etiquette and preservation of human dignity of employees; Adherence to informal and unwritten agreements between university officials and staff and institutionalizing ethical behaviors in the university environment through: honesty, trust, role transparency and kindness, provide the necessary ground for staff role-playing behaviors including organizational citizenship behavior and creative performance.

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