

Influence of Ethical Leadership towards Organizational Commitment in Schools

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Abstract- Effective leadership is one of the important indicators to determine the successful of organizational commitment in schools. This study aimed to identify the influence of ethical leadership towards the organizational commitment in schools. This cross-sectional survey involved 324 secondary school teachers in Kedah (state of peninsular Malaysia). The instrument included Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW) and Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (TCM-ECS). Results showed that ethical leadership influence the organizational commitment in schools. Implication of this study is ethical leadership contributed to the organizational commitment in schools. Thus, ethical leadership should be applied and practiced by school leaders to improve the success of organizational commitment, thereby improving school performance .

Keywords- ethical leadership, organizational commitment, secondary school.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play important roles towards the students achievement. Teaching profession requires commitment and passion in order to produce human capital that are useful to the society and country. Through the report, released in the year 2012 during the National Dialogue Education as mentioned in the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM 2013 - 2025) shows a finding of permanent and often voiced the concerns of teachers to administrative work increasingly reducing their ability to provide a strong commitment to the school. In fact, there are also among the new teachers five years of service have left the profession for reasons of low pay factors and working conditions that are not suitable (Anari 2012; Rusmini, 2006).

To achieve success in organizational commitment, every organization needs effective leadership with strong soft skills competencies to move teachers in the front line as an effort to achieve excellence in education . Therefore, the school organization must have an effective leader so that changes can be implemented at the school level good governance.

Commitment and efforts to enhance the quality of education is a major aspiration Ministry of Education (MOE) to Malaysia as a developed country in the future (Abd Ghafar, 2010 as cited in PPPM 2012-2025). Factors over time, and the era of globalization has brought changes and challenges of the teaching profession, including modification of the function and role of teachers that affect the level of their commitment to the school (PPPM 2013-2025). Thus, it is the responsibility of each school leaders to strive in order to improve performance, implement continuous improvement while managing the school effectively, particularly in the aspect of teachers commitment to meet the rapid developments. In addition, teachers also need to move fast and dynamic towards the new educational challenges to put the status of the first world-class education.

1.1 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is one of the most fundamental concepts in relation to workforce motivation and productivity (Tolentino, 2013). Mowday et al. (1982) pointed out that the work is a commitment of loyalty and acceptance subordinated to the goals and values of the organization. A person who has been committed to a task will continue its commitment to the end even though he had a barrier during the process (Tolentino, 2013). Organizational commitment is defined as a strong belief against accepting the goals and values of the organization, willingness to exert energy and effort on behalf of the organization and a definite desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Organization will give more priority to those working with a high level of commitment to the organization because of the belief of the administration that the challenge to achieve organizational goals can be overcome by higher employee commitment (Uygun & Kilic, 2009). Meyer and Allen have built and formulate organizational

commitment constructs comprising the affective dimension, continuous dimension and normative dimensions. These three dimensions are more accurately described as components or dimensions of organizational commitment.

According to Allen and Meyer (1990) there are three dimensions of organizational commitment. First, the affective component, refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization. Second, the continuance component refers to commitment based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organization. Finally, the normative component refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain with the organization.

1.2 Ethical Leadership

In the discussion on the quality and outcomes of education, one important component that often gets attention is the question of leadership (Tengku Ahmad Badrul Shah & Nik Azida, 2010). The role of school leaders is very important to focus specifically on strategies to increase the level of teachers' commitment in order to ensure the quality and educational outcomes of school is always at a high level (Anderman, Belzer, & Smith, 1991). Ethical leadership is a means to improve themselves as followers will see and evaluate what is seen in a leader (Mohammed Faizal, Shahril, & Maszuria, 2009). Reviews by Handford and Leithwood (2013) found teachers trust to principals most influenced by practices such as effective leadership, consistency, reliability, openness, respect and integrity. These practices are likely to encourage teachers to be more committed to their careers.

Starting early 1990, the reform leadership and insistence on the need for ethical leadership became more apparent when the researchers began to pay more attention to the needs of this particularly in the public and private sector organizations (Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan, & Prussia, 2011). This is because ethical leader behaviour identified can be a role model for their followers to follow and emulate (White & Lean, 2008).

Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, (2005) define the ethical leadership as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. According to Brown and Trevino (2006), ethical leadership is composed of two main aspects of individual moral and moral manager. Individual moral aspect refers to the personality characteristics of the leader as seen, the behaviour and decision-making process. The moral aspect of the manager refers to deliberate efforts by a leader to influence others (role models), guiding the ethical behaviour of followers such as communicating about ethical standards and discipline employees who demonstrate unethical behaviour. Thus, the combination of the individual aspects of moral and moral managers make ethical leadership style is seen in contrast to the style of leadership of others. This is because ethical leaders although become role models who exhibit personality and appropriate behaviour, also uses aspects of reward and punishment to stimulate ethical conduct among followers (Brown et al, 2005; Trevino, Brown, & Hartman, 2003).

1.3 Dimensions of Ethical Leadership

There are seven dimensions of ethical leadership (Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh, 2011). First, fairness is seen as an important form of ethical leader behavior. Ethical leaders act with integrity and treat others fairly. They make principle and fair choices, are trustworthy and honest, do not practice favoritism, and take responsibility for their own actions (Brown et al., 2005; De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008; Treviño et al., 2003). Second, power sharing. Ethical leaders allow subordinates a say in decision making and listen to their ideas and concerns and also provide followers with voice (Brown et al, 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2009). Sharing power also allows subordinates more control and makes them less dependent on their leaders (Yukl, 2006). Third, ethical leaders are transparent and engage in open communication which known as role clarification (Brown et al., 2005). Ethical leaders clarify responsibilities, expectations, and performance goals, so that subordinates' know what is expected from them and understand when their performance is up to par. Subordinates do not worry unnecessarily about unclear expectations and know how they can meaningfully contribute to meeting the unit's or organization's goals. An important one is people orientation or having a true concern for people (Trevino et al, 2003). The people orientation component in ethical leadership reflects genuinely caring about, respecting and supporting subordinates and where possible ensuring that their needs are met (Kanungo & Conger, 1993; Treviño et al., 2003).

Next, ethical guidance that ethical leader conveys standards regarding ethical conduct. Organizations and top management set rules, standards and codes of conduct, which provide guidelines for ethical behaviour and leaders can raise subordinates awareness of such guidelines, use rewards and punishments to hold subordinates responsible for their actions (Treviño et al., 2003). Next, ethical leaders concern for sustainability of stakeholders and society. In line with this, Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) argue that ethical leaders take the effects of their behavior on the surroundings into account, including the society and environment. Ferdig (2007) takes a responsibility point of view and argues that sustainable leaders act beyond their self-interests. Finally, integrity based on the behavioral integrity literature. Integrity behaviors are described as word-deed alignment or the extent to which what one says is in line with what one does.

1.4 Relationship between Ethical leadership and Organizational Commitment

Kim, Tavitiyaman, and Kim (2009) conducted their study on hotel employees in Thailand and found the hotel manager who practice power sharing with employees are likely to encourage their employees to provide better service to the organization. Leaders who practice behavioral ethos of trust, distribute the power and the importance of leadership responsibilities with members also found has significant relationship with organizational commitment (Ghamrawi, 2011). In the school context, the study by Abg Hut (2005) and Zulkafli (2008) found that the level of power sharing between the leaders of the school with teachers remained at a low level and have an impact on the decline in the level of commitment of teachers.

Zhu, Norman, Peng, Riggio, & Sosik, (2012) in their study found that ethical leadership has a positive effect on increasing the organization's commitment to a higher level, especially in terms of perception of the sense of security among workers due to environmental disturbances. Moreover, ethical leadership is concerned with the work load, role conflict and employee stress, is significantly associated with retention of members in the organization (Malik, Waheed, & Khalil-ur-Rehman, 2010; Yousef, 2002). The findings by Alhyasat (2012) on workers in Jordan Press Foundation also shown that individuals who are in a climate of positive work ethic will lead to an increase in the level of individual commitment to the organization. In contrast, a study conducted by Putranta (2008) found that organizational climate encrusted ego significantly related to the difficulty of retaining staff who are committed to the organization.

II. RESEARCHQUESTION

The purpose of this paper is to identify the influence of ethical leadership towards organizational commitment in schools. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to identify the aspects of ethical leadership as a major contributor to the organizational commitment in schools.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by survey method using a questionnaire to collect information required from teachers of secondary schools Kedah state (peninsular Malaysia). Using of the questionnaire is a data collection tool that is used in a lot of school management and leadership studies. Questionnaires were able to collect detailed data, structured and standards. Measuring instrument is easily administered, saving time, energy, mind and money at the time of the data collection process is done (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

Sample consisted of 324 secondary school teachers in the Kedah state. Samples were selected by using random sampling technique. Only teachers who served two years and only taken into account as the sample for a period of two years is sufficient for a person to draw conclusions about the characteristics of the school to which he belongs (Sala, 2002) .

Ethical leadership is measured by using instrument Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW) developed by Kalshoven et al. (2011) and instrument and Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (TCM-ECS) by Meyer and Allen (2004) was used to measure organizational commitment in schools. Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW) consists of 38 items and 18 items contained of TCM-ECS. It is divided into three parts, Part A (8 items) to obtain background information on teachers, Part B (38 items) to measure the ethical leadership and Section C (18 items) was designed to test the organizational commitment.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 19. Descriptive statistics using percentage, mean and standard deviation. Multiple regression analysis is used to identify the aspects of ethical leadership as predictors of the organizational commitment in schools.

Now it is the time to articulate the research work with ideas gathered in above steps by adopting any of below suitable approaches:

IV. FINDINGS

Influence of Ethical Leadership On TheOrganizational Commitment in Schools

Table 1 summarizes the results of multiple regression analysis used stepwise. R square is not statistically different from zero ($R = 0.423$; $F = 9.032$; $p < .05$) This finding suggests that ethical leadership positively and significantly influenced organizational commitment in school.

Based on Table 1, there are two dimensions of ethical leadership that become predictors for organizational commitment in schools, which is people orientation ($t = 2.477$, $p < .05$) and ethical guidance ($t = 2.169$, $p < .05$). The combination of predictor variables contributed 15.9 percent to the variance of organization commitment in school.

People orientation is the most significant dimension influencing organizational commitment ($B = .202$, $t = 2.477$) compared with the dimension of ethical guidance ($B = .210$, $t = 2.169$).

Table 1

A summary of the results of multiple regression analysis dimensions Ethical Leadership on The Organizational Commitment

Predictors	B	Beta	t	P
People orientation	.128	.202	2.477	.014
Fairness	.009	.013	.201	.841
Power sharing	.033	.037	.590	.556
Concern for sustainability	-.053	-.078	-.841	.401
Ethical guidance	.170	.210	2.169	.031
Role clarification	.066	.083	.888	.375
Integrity	.029	.038	.415	.679
R= 0.423	R Square = 0.179	Adjusted R Square = 0.159		
F = 9.032	P = .000			

V. DISCUSSION

Ethical Leadership Aspects To Predictors Organizational Commitment in Schools

The results showed two dimensions of ethical leadership has a significant influence toward organizational commitment in schools, where the prioritize people orientation and ethical guidance. Predictor variables combined contribution of 15.9% to the variance of organizational commitment in schools. Thus, the results of this study could expand the ideas about the influence of ethical leadership as presented by Brown et al. (2005) and Knipper, (2012). With this, the aspects of ethical leadership are the influence on organizational commitment in the school.

These findings are consistent with studies conducted by Becerra (2010), Fu and Deshpande (2011), Handford and Leithwood (2013). These findings are also in line with studies by Klein (2012), Neubert et al. (2013), Neubert et al. (2009), Tengku Ahmad Badrul Shah and Nik Azida (2010) who found that ethical leadership contributed greatly to the organizational commitment. Dimensions of people-oriented are most significantly influenced by organizational commitment in school. This dimension explains that ethical leaders that is sincere in maintaining the well-being of teachers, welfare caring and considerate, will encourage teachers to feel more committed to the organization and feel the values of togetherness with their employer (Becerra, 2010; Othman & Wanlabe, 2012; Vogel, 2012).

But when leaders do not behave professionally, unethical, incompetent, failing in social interaction and do not preserve the organization it will create the impression that the leaders do not give support to the teachers (Klein, 2012; Othman & Wanlabe, 2012). A failure of ethical leadership in providing this support will cause the teachers in difficulties to get recognition or they cannot challenge themselves to do more difficult tasks and fail in giving commitment in schools.

People orientation aspects shown by ethical leaders not only influence the teachers to be more committed to the organization but also to nourish the cultural autonomy of the teachers themselves. Teachers also can develop their own ethical standards without being influenced by others, confident acting on moral beliefs and the courage to defend their confidence (Becerra, 2010; Bogler & Nir, 2012).

Ethical leaders will always promote ethical policies, procedures, reporting processes and decisions making before implementing policies. This is in line with the concept of ethics proposed by Brown et al. (2005) in which the leader is responsible for setting the agenda ethical organization, show the influence of the top and act as role models who adhere to ethical standards in an effort to improve corporate governance practices in an ethical (Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes, & Bombie, 2009). Thus, in the end will be able to create the foundation of confidence among teachers and can guide and encourage them to follow the leaders and eventually led to the success of organizational commitment.

VI. CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings demonstrate that ethical leadership plays an important role in improving the organizational commitment in schools. Therefore, school leaders in Malaysia should be given adequate exposure and training to improve their ethical leadership in order to implement more effective management toward organizational commitment in schools. To achieve the transformation agenda of education, aspects of ethical leadership and organizational commitment should be given due attention.

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