CORRELATION RESEARCH ON THE PRACTICE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ETHICS AND TEACHERS' JOB MORALE AND JOB INVOLVEMENT

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Correlation Research on the Practice of School Administrative Ethics and Teachers' Job Morale and Job Involvement

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Abstract

Being in such a highly competitive knowledge economic era with changing social value and fast information spread, the relationship between school teachers and staff is different from it in the past and the dilemmas and difficulties encountered by schools are increasing. School administrators have to face problems and accept challenges on policy promotion and work execution and even have to immediately make decisions on certain issues. School administrators' decisions mostly involve in people that the considerations are broad, e.g. conforming to education objectives, taking care of different learners' needs, and satisfying various stakeholders. Aiming at university teachers in Shandong Province as the empirical objects, total 360 copies of questionnaire are distributed for this study. 254 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 71%. According to the research results, suggestions are proposed, expecting to help domestic universities and colleges enhance the practice of administrative ethics, stimulate and promote the administrative effectiveness of schools, and enhance the overall effectiveness.

Keywords: school administration, practice of administrative ethics, job morale, job involvement, social value, school performance.

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Introduction

Along with the prevalence of free atmosphere and freedom of opinion, teachers emphasize more on individual rights and opinion expression to result in discordant interaction between teachers and administrators and even appear conflict. Teachers with administrative duties start to express personal rights and individual opinions to cause the disappearing administrative ethics. In this case, the necessity to shape good educational work environment through code of ethics is deeply perceived. For teachers with administrative duties, they could reflect themselves through administrative ethics to regulate themselves with ethics and present good work motive. In current education system, the development of decision system of administrative ethics could facilitate organizational harmony, enhance work effectiveness, and further achieve organizational goals of schools. Being in the highly competitive knowledge economic era, the changing social value and rapid information spread result in the relationship between school teachers and staff being different from it in the past, and the dilemmas and difficulties encountered by schools are increasing. School administrators have to face problems and accept challenges on policy promotion and work execution; sometimes, they have to immediately make decisions on certain issues. Since the decisions on administration involve in facts and value, administrators have to choose the most reasonable value from distinct value for making decisions. Nevertheless, more ethical issues than education should be taken into account for the judgment and selection of value that administrators have to encounter ethical dilemmas just about every day.

School administrators' decisions mostly involve in people that the considerations are broad, e.g. conforming to educational objectives, taking care of different learners' needs, and satisfying various stakeholders. A school is an ethical institution as it takes major responsibilities tasks and involves in the moral character cultivation of served objects (learners). School leaders (even any school members) are responsible for leading the school to the goal of learning communities that the conduct and deeds present moral or ethical meanings. Teachers are major instructors in schools; teachers' job morale would directly affect students' learning performance, and the practice of school administrative ethics is related to the organizational effectiveness; both would directly affect school performance. A school is a work team. The promotion of empowerment and the advocacy of school-community partnership, which used to be determined by the principal, are gradually replaced by the participation and decision-making of teachers, parents, and school administrators. School administrators and teachers become partners in school power reconstruction. In this case, when engaging in administrative decisions and actions, school administrators have to implement the practice of ethics, positively support teachers' teaching, pay attention to teachers' job morale, concern about the interaction with teachers, and take relative coping measures in the dynamic process. Furthermore, under moral corruption and confusing value

in current society, it becomes the social expectation that school administrators and teachers could "make themselves an example" to become good "model". The requirement for school administrators' ethics becomes more important. With the understanding of the importance and positive function of school administrative ethics, current practice of elementary school administrative ethics should be understood through research. As a result, the correlations between the practice of school administrative ethics and teachers' job morale and job involvement are discussed in this study, expecting to help domestic universities and colleges enhance the practice of administrative ethics, encourage and promote the administrative effectiveness of schools, and enhance the overall effectiveness.

Literature review and hypothesis

Ting (2018) explained administrative ethics including the ideas of "administration" and "ethics". Administration referred to managing or guiding affairs; in an organization, it could be defined as "the process of an institution effectively managing people, affairs, property, and objects with proper methods to achieve the goal". Mills (2018) regarded administrative ethics as a type of professional ethics and ethics in administrative life that administrative ethics referred to a normative order of right relationship and right behavior between bodies (administration and administrators). Sewpaul & Henrickson (2019) pointed out education administrative ethics as administrators' psychological attitudes towards students, school, professional groups, local communities, and the entire society, after entering education administration institutions, or administrators' role and responsibilities for supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates. Buhlmann & van de Geer (2018) regarded school administrative ethics as the combination of ethics and school administration, referring to school administrators integrating the consideration of ethics into the administration operation process to have the administrative actions or decisions follow ethical regulations and principles and perform correct and right behaviors. Addai *et al.* (2018) mentioned that school educators, either administrators or teachers, perceived the importance of integrating public expected code of ethics into the duty execution process and reflected the normative order of individual selection of inner value and behavior identity to fully make the maximal profits for students and facilitate job morale to achieve educational goal. Holland & Taylor (2018) stated that junior high school principals' administrative ethics, including "ethical practice", "fairness and justice", and "professional excellence" presented predictability on teachers' job morale; especially, professional excellence showed the maximal predictability. Secchi (2018) explained the correlations between principals' administrative ethics and teachers' job morale and the predictability of principals' "ethical practice" and "fairness and justice", in administrative ethics, to teachers' job morale. The practice of school administrative ethics therefore revealed correlations with teachers' job

morale in elementary schools. Erdogan & Cavli (2019) pointed out moderately and highly positive correlations between the practice of school administrative ethics and teachers' job morale in elementary schools as well as the predictability of the practice of school administrative ethics on teachers' job morale. Gupta *et al.* (2018) regarded subjective responsibility as the responsibility in individual value and objective responsibility as the responsibility regulated in law or delivered from superior orders. When individual value appeared conflict with regulations or superior orders, ethical dilemmas between subjective responsibility and objective responsibility would appear. Torrecilla & Romo (2018) mentioned that inconsistent regulations or administrative orders and inconsistent superior orders would result in ethical dilemmas in administrators' objective responsibility. For instance, a principal's order conflicted with the philosophy of teachers with administrative duties or the comprehension of duties, teachers with administrative duties would face the ethical dilemma to obey the principal's order or insist on the philosophy. In this case, the practice of school administrative ethics would affect teachers' job morale. From above literatures, the following hypothesis is inferred.

H1: Administrative ethics reveals positive relations with job morale.

From the definitions of morale in past research, Niu & Haugen (2019) considered morale being dynamic, rather than static. For the convenience of statistical analyses, researchers often measured group morale with the morale in an organization; morale referred to group members full of passion and devoting to team work. Maugis (2018) indicated that competitors could copy many material assets of a company, while the employees voluntarily making efforts, investing time in finding out more effective ways to solve customer problems, satisfying customer needs, and keeping mutual trust with customers could not be copied. Palta (2019) regarded the characteristics of a high-morale group as team spirit, firm spirit, enthusiasm, and facing frustration, but being cold to each other, frequently arguing and doubting each other, and being pessimistic of low-morale groups. In sum, Warmling & Souza (2018) regarded morale as the overall performance, intangible force, and not being independently measured from the group, but being realized from the group members' behavioral performance. Akar (2018) pointed out the importance of morale that, from individual or group perspectives, morale was the spirit and strength performed by organizational members' enthusiasm, vitality, and positive insistence to achieve certain common goals; it was similar to the impulsive force of a slingshot towards individual or group goals. Ferguson & Clark (2018) considered that organizational employees' low morale would affect the job involvement. Dağli & Akyol (2019) indicated that employees' high job morale would affect organizational employees' job involvement. Moke *et al.* (2018) mentioned that organizational employees doubting about the management and fearing for the future would reduce employee morale and job involvement. Tolukan & Akyel (2019) regarded job morale as employees' psychological state

about work and the performance of group spirit; high job morale would have employees appear high willingness to job involvement and be more willing to work for the organization to achieve organizational goals. According to above literatures, the following hypothesis is inferred.

H2: Job morale shows positive relations with job involvement.

Yang *et al.* (2018) regarded job involvement as the inner psychological state and the explicit behavior and attitudes of individuals facing and engaging in work; it was not simply the psychologically perceived work value and importance, but also the behavior. Meanwhile, job involvement was not simply personal quality, but the interaction between personal qualities and organizational situations. Simonsen & Sugai (2019) defined job involvement as individual belief in cognition, behavior, and affection, which were largely affected by personal qualities and individual value to psychologically perceive work value and importance, actively participate in the engaged education, and evaluate self-value and self-esteem with individual work performance. Accordingly, job involvement was the interaction between personal qualities and cognition, emotion, will. Dunson (2018) pointed it out as teachers' psychological identity to school education and integration of personal belief and attitudes into school education as well as teachers being glad to pay attention and effort for school education and positively participating in school education to acquire work fun. Larkin, Lokey-Vega, & Brantley-Dias (2018) pointed out significantly positive correlations between school administrative ethics and teachers' job satisfaction as well as the predictability of school administrative ethics to teachers' job satisfaction in junior high schools. Barsky (2018) stated that, being in the postmodern pluralistic society, administrators revealed personal value and work value and frequently played different roles. When the roles were different from the expectation of administrators, supervisors, subordinates, colleagues, parents, and students, intra-role conflict would be formed; on the contrary, inter-role conflict would then be formed when the roles met the expected behavior of administrators' friends. For instance, most administrators in schools were taken the duties by teachers that they were teachers as well as administrators. When facing different expectations between supervisors and colleagues in the execution of administrative affairs, it would form the ethical dilemma of value conflict. The practice of school administrative ethics therefore would affect teachers' job involvement. Olhede & Wolfe (2018) pointed out education as an ethical business and a school as an ethical institution. Researchers considered that virtue contained the contents of justice, courage, and honest, schools bore the ethical mission, and the society revealed high expectation of school administrators to show extremely high character standards. Windon *et al.* (2019) mentioned that school administrators had to realize the roles and presented high character and virtue; meanwhile, they should show moral courage, insist on the place, and make just and reasonable judgment and decisions without against the conscience when facing value or profit conflict, and honestly treat supervisors, subordinates, and colleagues. Nonetheless, conflict

would affect school administrators' job morale and involvement. According to above literatures, the following hypothesis is inferred.

H3: Administrative ethics presents positive relations with job involvement.

Methodology

Discussion of Research Variables

a) *Administrative ethics.* Referring to Ting (2019), integrity, effectiveness, and concern, as the core value of civil servants aiming to understanding the line, the code of conduct, and the cognition of administrative ethics of accountants in current administrative systems, are applied to this study: (1) *Administrative integrity*: being honest, actively avoiding benefits, executing public affairs with honest and fairness, balancing the interests among various parties, and creating benign survival and development environment; (2) *Administrative effectiveness*: simplifying administration programs with effective methods and developing executive power to enhance administrative efficiency and work performance; (3) *Administrative concern*: presenting empathy, kindly providing service, cultivating humanistic care, and respecting diverse culture.

b) *Job morale.* Referring to the explanation of Herzog & Yang (2018) about job morale as the sum of attitudes beneficial to work, three dimensions are utilized in this study for defining job morale: (1) *Willingness to Work*: employees with interests in work, will to work, and job involvement; (2) *Organizational Commitment*: organizational identity and willingness to make efforts; (3) *Group Spirit*: employees with status cognition, group service, social culture, and pride of group relationship.

c) *Job involvement.* Referring to Li *et al.* (2018), "delight in work", "job evaluation", and "work focus" are regarded as the dimensions of job involvement in this study: (1) *Delight in work*: referring to employees favoring the work in the enterprise, being able to develop the specialty, and being able to acquire fun at work; (2) *Job evaluation*: referring to employees' value about the engaged work to evaluate self-achievement and value judgment according to work performance; (3) *Work focus*: referring to employees' enthusiastic, concentrated, serious, and responsible attitudes toward the engaged work.

Research sample and object

High-quality higher education is developed in Shandong. The starting of "double high" construction, the cultivation of innovative applied talents, deepening integration between industry and education, and school-enterprise cooperation guide the connotative development of universities and crack the dilemma of "more

mountains but few peaks". It requires the support of more innovation power, innovation outcomes, and innovative talents to hasten the power conversion in Shandong. The reinforcement of "double high" construction could benefit the construction of innovation ability and the cultivation of innovative talents to support the development of economic society in Shandong through the integration of science and education, the integration between industry and education, and the integration of schools and enterprises. Aiming at university teachers in Shandong Province, total 360 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 254 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 71%.

Reliability and validity test

Dimensions of administrative ethics, job morale, and job involvement in this study are tested the overall structural cause and effect with linear structural relations model. The data entry is based on the correlation coefficient matrix of above observation variables. The linear structural relations model analysis results reveal the overall model fit reaching reasonable range that it presents favorable convergent validity and predictive validity. Item-to-total correlation coefficients are utilized in this study for testing the construct validity of the questionnaire content, i.e. reliability analysis. The calculated item-to-total correlation coefficients are used for judging the questionnaire content. The item-to-total correlation coefficients of the dimensions are higher than 0.7, showing certain construct validity of the dimensions.

Reliability and validity analyses are further applied to understand the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The higher Cronbach's α reveals the better reliability. According to the standard to develop the formal questionnaire, the measured Cronbach's α appears in 0.75~0.90, apparently conforming to the reliability range.

Results and discussion

LISREL (linear structural relation) model combines factor analysis and path analysis in traditional statistics and adds simultaneous equations in econometrics to simultaneously calculate multiple factors and multiple paths. The goodness-of-fit of the model could be evaluated from preliminary fit criteria, overall model fit, and fit of internal structural of model.

The research results are organized in *Table 1*. The preliminary fit criteria, internal fit, and overall fit of the model are explained as below. The complete model analysis results (*Table 1*), show that three dimensions of administrative ethics (administrative integrity, administrative effectiveness, administrative concern) could remarkably explain administrative ethics (t>1.96, p<0.05), three dimensions of job morale (willingness to work, organizational commitment, group spirit) could notably explain job morale (t>1.96, p<0.05), and three dimensions of job

involvement (delight in work, job evaluation, work focus) could remarkably explain job involvement (t>1.96, p<0.05). Apparently, the overall model in this study presents favorable preliminary fit criteria.

In terms of internal fit, administrative ethics shows positive and remarkable correlations with job morale (0.847, p <0.01), job morale reveals positive and notable correlations with job involvement (0.833, p <0.01), and administrative ethics appears positive and remarkable correlations with job involvement (0.868, p <0.01) that H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Regarding overall model fit, the overall model fit standards present χ2/Df=1.675, smaller than the standard 3, and RMR=0.005, showing the proper results of χ2/DF and RMR. Chi-square is sensitive to sample size that it is not suitable for directly judging the fit. However, the overall model fit standards GFI=0.962 and AGFI=0.917 achieve the standard 0.9 (the closer GFI and AGFI to 1 revealing the better model fit). This model therefore presents better goodness-of-fit.

Table 1. Overall linear structural model analysis result

Evaluation item	Parameter/evaluation standard		Result	t
preliminary fit	administrative ethics	administrative integrity	0.766	15.22**
		administrative effectiveness	0.751	13.98**
		administrative concern	0.725	10.83**
	job morale	willingness to work	0.746	13.15**
		organizational commitment	0.717	10.16**
		group spirit	0.738	12.33**
	job involvement	delight in work	0.728	11.26**
		job evaluation	0.757	14.45**
		work focus	0.773	16.29**
internal fit	administrative ethics→job morale		0.847	31.58**
	job morale→job involvement		0.833	27.16**
	administrative ethics→job involvement		0.868	39.27**
overall fit	X2/Df		1.675	
	GFI		0.962	
	AGFI		0.917	
	RMR		0.005	

*Note: * stands for p<0.05, ** for p<0.01, and *** for p<0.001.*

Table 2. Hypothesis test

Research hypothesis	Correlation	Empirical result	P	Result
H1	+	0.847	P<0.01	supported
H2	+	0.833	P<0.01	supported
H3	+	0.868	P<0.01	supported

Conclusion

The research results reveal significant correlations between administrative ethics and job morale, involvement. Although there are remarkable correlations, the changing education environment and education policies result in increasing administrative businesses on teachers with administrative duties that general teachers not interested in education administration reduce the age of teachers with administrative duties. The businesses of education administration should be reduced or integrated, as teachers with administrative duties cannot bear the huge workload, schools are lack of administrators, and no one would like to take administrative duties. Above situations are getting serious to reduce the cognition of administrative ethics, indirectly affect job involvement, and result in not identifying and appearing fun on the education work. It is expected that education administration authority could reduce or combine school administration businesses to provide more flexible space for school teachers with administrative duties to further enhance perceived administrative ethics and effectively enhance job morale and involvement.

Recommendations

From the important research results and findings, following practical suggestions are proposed in this study.

1) Education administration authority is suggested to conduct personal quality related inspiration courses or seminars for teachers further understanding personal work and environment, and even self-understanding, and really integrating into personal life. Moreover, under the trend of education reform, current teachers with administrative duties need the guide of relevant business promotion seminars and practical administration workshops for inter-school exchange as well as the arrangement of work sharing with senior teachers with administrative duties for passing down administrative ethics and establishing the organization ability. Education authority is suggested to perfect school administration teams through personality trait cultivation courses and administrative business workshops to develop toward organizational goals.

2) Job rotation systems should be established in schools. People are not good at every position or understand the philosophy and business of each position. The rotation mechanism could insert new blood into each position so that people could better respect others, calmly deal with each affair, actively think of others, and treat each other with empathy. Old customs in administrative duties could be constantly updated and improved, and sound administrative ethics knowledge and skills could be established through rotation. The constant touch and implantation could establish more complete administrative ethics and well pass down ethics, in which each school staff's personality traits are observed for human resource management.

3) Teachers with administrative duties should frequently listen to others' opinions, often concern, respect, and serve others, and comprehend others' needs with empathy to properly respond to and assist in general teachers. A little more concern would reduce misunderstanding and argument, and a little more concern about others allows a person involving more, concentrating more, and identifying more of the administrative work to further present good evaluation and create personal delight to work as well as facilitate personal and others' identity to school goals, involve more in school education, stimulate and enhance the administrative effectiveness of the school, and eventually promote the overall effectiveness of the school.

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