

Ethical Leadership and Ethical Decision Making: A Study at Secondary Schools in Lahore

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Abstract:

This research study was intended to find out the association between ethical leadership and ethical decision making. Variables were measured using a cross-sectional survey that included a numerical description of each variable. Population of this study was consisted of all high school head teachers working in government high schools of Lahore. Random sampling technique was employed to select the desired sample. Then by using the table of random number, the researcher selected 290 schools, out of which 121 were boys' schools and 169 were girls' schools. Instrument of the study was comprised of demographic data sheet related to demographic attributes of respondents ethical leadership questionnaire. The instrument was pilot tested to ensure the validity and reliability. Data were collected personally by the researcher and was analyzed using statistics (descriptive and inferential). Prior to analysis, data were cleaned and assumptions were tested. Strong positive association between the variables (Ethical Leadership and Ethical Decision Making) was observed. Ethical decision making should be improved by focusing on awareness about ethical leadership in school leaders and they should conscious about importance of making right decisions in school context.

Keywords: Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Decision Making, Ethical Decision Making

I. Introduction

Ethics focuses on ethical principles, which are concerned with differentiating between good and evil thinking and behaviors. It is about ethically inspiring folks by allowing them to distinguish between what is good and what is harmful. Because educational leadership is incomplete without an ethical component, it focuses on morality; it is also defined as a value-oriented activity focusing on an ethical aim (Chikeleze & Baehrend, 2017). Morality is an important aspect of ethical leadership since it stresses a moral person and their ethical actions. Being trustworthy as well as a real role model who exhibits appropriate behavior is an important aspect of ethical leadership (Brown & Mitchell, 2010).

More importantly, not only does leadership affect people's perception of ethical behavior, but ethical identities are also highly important. A strong moral identity, according to several researches, leads to ethical behavior (Leavitt et al., 2015). Ethical personality is a self-regulating system that motivates moral action. Nonetheless, ethical personality is a beginning point for ethical derives (Aquino & Reed II, 2002; Reed II et al., 2016).

Governmental institutions and their leaders have experienced scandals, public corruption, and ethical quandaries during the previous six decades, all of which have had an impact on their long-term success or failure (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Schools, communities, and families are today confronted with a changing world of complex and puzzling ideals. School leadership studies have highlighted the importance of ethical leaders in educational institutions by emphasizing the significance of ethical leadership within the context of a school institution (Sockett, 2012; Winston, 2007; Yukl et al., 2013).

Under the context of the school, ethics had a special purpose for educational leaders since it linked one's ideas and goals to daily decision-making (Yukl et al., 2013). When ethics is recognized as a crucial duty in the decision-making process, ethical leadership is recognized as an institutional norm. According to Mouradian (2007), ethical leadership is defined as one's conduct and how others regard one another. Ethical leadership is considered behaviors and interactions between employees, followers, and peripheral clienteles (Brown & Mitchell, 2010).

The idea of ethics is commonly regarded in two ways. One viewpoint focuses on how we should live and act. On the other side, it is the study and theory of moral rules (Mendonca & Kanungo, 2007). This concern manifests itself in a school environment as the behavior, which specifies how stakeholders behave in accordance with prescribed values and standards. As the concept pertains to behavior created by stakeholders' values, it becomes a focal point for schools' healthy growth and development (Cranston et al., 2006).

Ethical considerations are emphasized in educational contexts because a morally rich education system is essential to care for a society's foundations with integrity, fairness, and peace. That is also crucial for educators to foster ethical acts in order to sustain an ethically healthy environment in educational institutions (Starratt, 2012; Vogel, 2012). This is especially important for school principals who seek to lead all school

stakeholders. Various studies have used the term ethical leadership to reflect school leaders' ethical concerns (Begley, 2006; Isaacson, 2007; Langlois, 2011).

Like instructional leadership, the purpose of ethical leadership is to persuade subordinates to act morally. Because educational leaders create a work environment and establish behavioral standards, the application of ethical leadership styles is becoming more common in school settings. And evaluate subordinate performance based on many elements of ethical behavior. To investigate the ethics (or lack thereof) of schools, the basic concept of ethical leadership stays within three ethical paradigms: care, justice, and critique. In the educational area, study on ethical leadership characteristics has increased significantly over the last thirty years, beginning with Kohlberg's (1981) landmark study on moral evolution of fairness and Gilligan's (1982) and Noddings' (1984) work on caring.

An ethic of care relates to the fundamental demands of interpersonal relationships from a perspective of unconditional respect, rather than from a contractual or legal one (Starratt, 1991). An ethic of care approaches the basic needs of interpersonal interactions from the standpoint of unconditional respect, rather than contractual or legal obligations. When the caring ethic is valued, school leaders foster the creation of an atmosphere in which each member is included in all activities and choices. The justice ethic generates a foundation for thought based on legal principles and values. School leaders who embrace the justice ethic may help to shape educational policies and practices that promote equity, and justice. The third paradigm, a criticism ethic, is based on critical philosophy and seeks to challenge the present system while providing a voice for all students. Under the ethic of critique paradigm, school administrators critically analyze the position of rule creators and followers, as well as the nature of rule fulfillment and school culture (Robinson & Garratt, 2004; Marshall, 2004).

The question now is whether these three ethical perspectives complement one other. Caring, justice, and criticism perspectives, according to Starratt (1994), are not mutually incompatible, but rather complimentary, because the combination of these attributes leads in whole ethical leadership. Nevertheless, according to Langlois (2011), for these three ethical leadership paradigms to be effective, administrators must be ethically sensitive in order to analyse the school's ethical position and reflect on their own conduct. According to the findings of Langlois and Lapointe's (2010) action study, developing ethical leadership necessitates the activation of ethical consciousness.

After that, various researchers addressed the question of ethical leadership in educational settings (Aksu & Kasalak 2014; Beck, 1994; Bezzina, 1999; Crowson, 1992; Langlois, 2004; Maxcy, 2002; Norberg & Johansson 2014; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 2004). Many studies (Arar, 2015; Bezzina & Bufalino 2014; Duignan, 2012; Oplatka & Arar 2016; Shapiro & Stepkovich, 2001; Starratt et al., 2010) laid the groundwork for investigating the characteristics of morality-based educational leadership, such as directing someone's behaviors while making a big judgment, constructing a behavior, or partnering with persons who are firmly ingrained in morals, auto monitored, and competent judgments (Langlois, 2010; Langlois & Lapointe, 2010).

The leader is the highest-ranking administrator at the institution. They have authority, respect, credibility, and, most importantly, accountability over him or her,

recognizing him or her for both public and self-exploration. Since the principal is recognized as the leader of the school and the school's primary role is ethical practice. The principal is responsible for the organizational policies that govern employee behavior. They face several ethical dilemmas and make numerous judgments on a regular basis. The decision-making process of a school administrator is difficult because sensitive problems such as racial and ethnic disparities, school safety, and proper school finance can lead to arguments and difficulties. Principals might base their decisions on their own principles and professional ethical standards, or they can rely on local norms or guidelines, as well as provincial and national legislation. The presence of these obstacles results in disagreements or dilemmas for leaders as they seek a proper response to a situation. The current study looked on EL and EDM at high school head teachers in Lahore. This study investigated how principals regard themselves as ethical leaders.

A. Research Objectives and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to look at the relationship between EL and EDM. It also investigated the perceptions of EL and EDM in Lahore's Government High Schools. The following research questions were developed to determine the responses to the stated objectives of this study:

- What is the perception regarding ethical leadership and ethical decision making in Government High Schools of Lahore?
- What is the relationship between ethical leadership and ethical decision making at secondary schools in Lahore?

II. Research Design and Methodology

Because the link between the constructs was investigated, a quantitative research strategy was chosen as the method of inquiry. The investigation was descriptive in character. A cross-sectional survey was carried out to collect data. Cross sectional survey was conducted to collect the data through questionnaires. The population of the current study included all government secondary school head teachers in the Lahore district. Lahore district has a total of 412 government high schools (228 girls and 184 boys). A simple random sampling approach was used to choose the suitable sample from the population. The sample was drawn from government secondary schools located around the Lahore area. There are 121 (41.72%) boys' and 169 (58.27%) girls' schools that were chosen as the sample for this study using a table of random numbers.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Demographics | N | F | CF |
|----------------|-----|--------|------|
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 97 | 39.4 % | 39.4 |
| Female | 149 | 60.6 % | 100 |
| Age (in years) | | | |
| Below 35 | 38 | 15.4 % | 15.4 |
| 36-45 | 74 | 30.1 % | 45.5 |
| 46-55 | 124 | 50.4 % | 95.9 |
| Above 55 | 10 | 4.1 % | 100 |
| Qualification | | | |
| BS/MA/MSc | 118 | 48.0 % | 48.0 |
| MPhil | 103 | 10.2 % | 58.1 |
| PhD | 25 | 41.9 % | 100 |
| Experience | | | |
| 1-10 | 73 | 29.7 % | 29.7 |

| | | | |
|-------|----|--------|------|
| 11-20 | 98 | 39.8 % | 69.5 |
| 21-30 | 68 | 27.6 % | 97.2 |
| 31-40 | 7 | 2.8 % | 100 |

Table 1 presents the demographic attributed of the respondents on the basis of gender, age, qualification and experience.

III. Instrumentation

The first portion collected data on participants' personal information, which included gender, age, highest degree and working experience. The second portion of the instrument was comprised of a closed-ended questionnaire having Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) developed by Langlois (2005). It was modified with permission. ELQ has 30 items. It measured EL and EDM. It was divided into four subscales: the ethic of care, the ethic of justice, the ethic of critique, and the ethic of sensitivity. It was comprised of 26 items. It used six-point Likert-type rating scale. The scale ranged from Never to Always. Additionally, the elements connected to ethical decision making were measured in the second portion (EDM). It had four items and was rated on a six-point Likert scale ranging from Never to Always.

Table 2 : Sub Scales of ELQ

| Scale | Items |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ethics of Care | 1, 6, 11, 16, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 |
| Ethics of Justice | 2, 7, 12, 17, 21, 25 |
| Ethics of Critique | 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 27, 29 |
| Ethical Sensitivity | 4, 9, 14 |
| Ethical Decision Making | 5, 10, 15, 19 |

As a result, the instrument was pilot tested by a group of professionals and specialists to guarantee its validity. It discussed the instrument with four experienced high school head teachers and three university lecturers in order to validate it. The pilot research verified both validity and reliability.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis by Scale

| Scale | N | Items | α |
|-------------------------|----|-------|----------|
| Ethical Leadership | 89 | 26 | .83 |
| Ethical Decision Making | 89 | 4 | .85 |

IV. Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher personally collected the data by visiting each public secondary school. Permission to gather data was received from the respective organization's administration as well as the participants. Following data collection, the researcher entered the data into SPSS for analysis. The data was then thoroughly cleansed. The data was examined in two ways (descriptive statistics and inferential statistics). Throughout the data analysis, ethical issues were also taken into account. The investigated data results are provided precisely as they were, with no changes made in the analysis. The findings have been correctly reported by the researcher. There has been no attempt to tamper with the data or the findings.

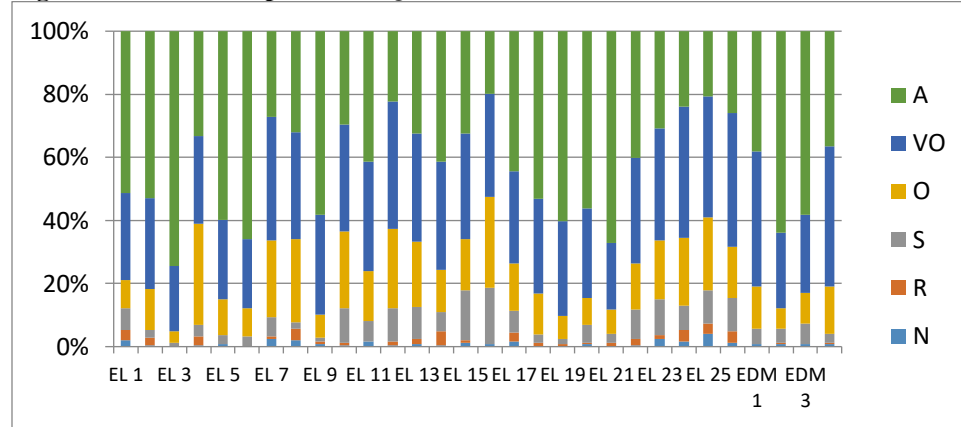
A. Ethical Considerations

One of a researcher's key obligations is to guarantee that ethical issues are taken into account throughout the investigation. The data, conclusions, techniques, and processes were all correctly presented by the researcher. Data should not be altered or misrepresented, it was stressed. The individual's integrity and right to privacy were upheld. Informed consent was requested. The confidentiality of the information and responders' identities were both protected. The study's participation was entirely voluntary. The obtained data was kept in a secure location that was never disclosed to the public.

B. Data Analysis and Interpretation**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of ELQ**

| Scale | N | M | SD | N | R | S | O | VO | A |
|---|-----|------|---------|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| Ethics of Care | | | | | | | | | |
| ELQ 1 | 246 | 5.09 | 1.25 | 5 | 8 | 17 | 22 | 68 | 126 |
| ELQ 6 | 246 | 5.26 | .98 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 32 | 71 | 130 |
| ELQ 11 | 246 | 5.68 | .60 | - | - | 3 | 9 | 51 | 183 |
| ELQ 16 | 246 | 4.84 | 1.04 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 79 | 68 | 82 |
| ELQ 20 | 246 | 5.39 | .89 | 2 | - | 7 | 28 | 62 | 147 |
| ELQ 22 | 246 | 5.50 | .79 | - | - | 8 | 22 | 54 | 162 |
| ELQ 24 | 246 | 4.78 | 1.08 | 6 | 2 | 15 | 60 | 96 | 67 |
| ELQ 26 | 246 | 4.83 | 1.13 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 65 | 83 | 79 |
| ELQ 28 | 246 | 5.43 | .85 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 18 | 78 | 143 |
| ELQ 30 | 246 | 4.79 | 1.03 | 1 | 2 | 27 | 60 | 83 | 73 |
| Ethics of Justice | | | | | | | | | |
| ELQ 2 | 246 | 5.06 | 1.04 | 4 | 3 | 16 | 39 | 85 | 102 |
| ELQ 7 | 246 | 4.71 | .99 | 1 | 3 | 26 | 62 | 99 | 55 |
| ELQ 12 | 246 | 4.83 | 1.09 | 2 | 4 | 25 | 51 | 84 | 80 |
| ELQ 17 | 246 | 5.01 | 1.12 | 1 | 11 | 15 | 33 | 84 | 102 |
| ELQ 21 | 246 | 4.77 | 1.15 | 3 | 2 | 39 | 40 | 82 | 80 |
| ELQ 25 | 246 | 4.52 | 1.05250 | 2 | - | 44 | 71 | 80 | 49 |
| Ethics of Critique | | | | | | | | | |
| ELQ 3 | 246 | 5.00 | 1.17975 | 4 | 7 | 17 | 37 | 72 | 109 |
| ELQ 8 | 246 | 5.37 | .85969 | - | 3 | 7 | 33 | 77 | 136 |
| ELQ 13 | 246 | 5.47 | .77011 | - | 2 | 4 | 18 | 74 | 148 |
| ELQ 18 | 246 | 5.32 | .97157 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 21 | 70 | 138 |
| ELQ 23 | 246 | 5.50 | .85117 | - | 3 | 7 | 19 | 52 | 165 |
| ELQ 27 | 246 | 4.99 | 1.08418 | 1 | 5 | 23 | 36 | 82 | 99 |
| ELQ 29 | 246 | 4.76 | 1.18296 | 6 | 3 | 28 | 46 | 87 | 76 |
| Ethical Sensitivity | | | | | | | | | |
| ELQ 4 | 246 | 4.70 | 1.12510 | 4 | 9 | 19 | 53 | 102 | 59 |
| ELQ 9 | 246 | 4.50 | 1.25112 | 10 | 8 | 26 | 57 | 94 | 51 |
| ELQ 14 | 246 | 4.73 | 1.14063 | 3 | 9 | 26 | 40 | 104 | 64 |
| Ethical Decision Making. 5, 10, 15, 19 | | | | | | | | | |
| ELQ 5 | 246 | 5.12 | .91156 | 2 | - | 12 | 33 | 105 | 94 |
| ELQ 10 | 246 | 5.44 | .92711 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 16 | 59 | 157 |
| ELQ 15 | 246 | 5.32 | .98484 | 2 | - | 16 | 24 | 61 | 143 |
| ELQ 19 | 246 | 5.11 | .88713 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 37 | 109 | 90 |

Table 4 presents item wise descriptive statistics of ELQ. It also presents items responses of respondents on six point Likert type rating scale. The scale ranged from Never to Always.

Figure 1: Mode of Responses ELQ

C. Overview of EL and EDM Sub Factors

Table 5: Psychometric Properties of ELQ

| Scale | N | M | SD | MPI | Range | | Skew. | Kurt. |
|----------------|-----|--------|-------|------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | | | | Potential | Actual | | |
| E. Care | 246 | 57.31 | 5.37 | 5.73 | 10-60 | 17-65 | -.23 | 8.35 |
| E. Justice | 246 | 30.21 | 3.33 | 5.04 | 6-36 | 11-36 | -.08 | 9.71 |
| E. Critique | 246 | 34.21 | 4.60 | 4.89 | 7-42 | 13-42 | -.20 | 8.27 |
| E. Sensitivity | 246 | 13.92 | 2.84 | 4.64 | 3-18 | 4-18 | -.48 | 7.46 |
| EL | 246 | 156.66 | 2.72 | 5.25 | 26-156 | 50-178 | -.14 | 8.29 |
| EDM | 246 | 20.99 | 14.62 | 5.22 | 4-24 | 4-24 | -.53 | 8.56 |

Table 5 presents the psychometric properties of ELQ. Responses on EL ranged from 50 to 178. Perceptions of respondents regarding EL fall above scale median near the scale point Agree (M=156.66, MPI=5.25, SD=2.72). Moreover, the perceptions of respondents regarding EDM fall also fall above the scale median near the scale point Agree (M=20.99, MPI=5.22, SD=14.62).

D. Correlational Analysis

Table 6: Relationship between EL and EDM

| Variable | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Ethic of Care | 57.32 | 5.37 | - | | | | |
| Ethic of Justice | 30.21 | 3.32 | .55** | - | | | |
| Ethic of Critique | 34.21 | 4.59 | .57** | .58** | - | | |
| Ethical Sensitivity | 13.93 | 2.84 | .35** | .35** | .36** | - | |
| Ethical Leadership | 156.66 | 14.62 | .86** | .77** | .82** | .58** | - |
| Ethical Decision-making | 20.99 | 2.71 | .63** | .49** | .52** | .35** | .76** |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

Table 6 presents the results of correlation analysis. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was used to investigate the association between EL and EDM. Strong positive relationship between EL and EDM was found ($r=.76$, $p<.05$) as per the guidelines suggested by Cohen (1988). , all variables were found to be significantly correlated. Fifteen pairs of variables were found to be positively correlated.

V. Conclusions and Discussion

Head teachers' perceptions of EL and its sub factors are higher than the scale median. The current study's findings corroborate the construct ELQ. It was comprised of four sub scales. Several components of EL are linked to many facets of workplace leadership. The findings are consistent with the findings in the literature (Langlois et al., 2014). In the literature similar findings are reported (Arar et al., 2016). Many other researches also reported similar results regarding EL within school context (Begley & Johnsson, 2003; Langlois, 2004). There are similarities between the current study's findings and previous studies on EL (Arar, 2015; Duignan, 2012; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2003; Starratt, 2012). Same results are reported by many other researchers (Oplatka & Arar, 2016; Starratt, 2004). The mean score of respondents regarding EDM also falls above the scale median that can confer that they agreed regarding EDM is prevalent in their classrooms, which assists students in decision making. Many earlier studies have shown similar results (Cranston et al., 2014; Langlois & Lapointe, 2010). The results are in line with the results reported in the literature (Brown & Mitchel, 2010; Eyal et al., 2011; Trevino et al., 2000). Similar findings are disclosed by many other researchers in their researches (Brown et al., 2005; Dempster et al., 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich 2011). Contrary to the findings researchers (Rus., et al, 2010) found decisions need to certain resources for the execution of decisions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Strong positive relationship was explored between EL and EDM by the researcher. The sub scales were also positively correlated. It indicates that higher score on EL is interlinked with higher EDM score. Moreover, similar relationship between the variables was explored by the researchers (Langlois et al., 2014). The findings are consistent with the findings reported in the literature (Arar et al., 2016; Dempster et al., 2004).

VI. Implications and Suggestions

This study was analyzed via the theoretical framework for educational leadership offered by Robert Starratt (1991). This study added to Starratt's framework by revealing that all framework components were visible in the ethical leadership practices of participating secondary school leaders. These themes have previously been explored statistically and subjectively. This study quantitatively examines ethical leadership themes. It backs up Starratt's strategy of combining all of these ethical topics in order to foster ethical leadership in schools (Simois, 2009; Arar et al., 2016; Bhattarai, 2018). The study went on to investigate the link between ethical leadership and ethical choice making, discovering a substantial positive association between ELQs and EDM, as earlier research has shown the unequivocal relationship between EL and EDM (Dempster et al., 2004; Langlois et al., 2014; Arar et al., 2016).

The current study demonstrated the importance of EL and EDM in developing an efficient educational system. Furthermore, the current study demonstrated a strong relationship between EL and EDM. It is critical to create an educational environment in which school leaders exercise and absorb ethical ideas on a daily basis, and training teaches school administrators how to be moral in terms of expressing their judgments and detecting ethical challenges in their institution. This study can assist educational leaders with information about ethical leadership and ethical decision making. This enables CEOs to assess contemporary socio-cultural knowledge through the lens of critique and ethical awareness in order to deal with ethical quandaries in their firm's shifting dynamics.

It is advocated that ethical frameworks be expanded to include school administrators and teachers at all levels of education. Given the research findings and literature show that EL and EDM are critical for school leaders, it is proposed that more research is needed to validate the findings of this study and identify reliable predictors of ethical judgments. Ethical decision making should be improved by increasing leaders' understanding of ethics and increasing school leaders' awareness of the importance of their decisions. School head teachers might provide an environment in which school leaders and teachers may discuss issues that impact the entire school, as well as reflect on objectives and efforts.

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