Teacher’s Job Satisfaction as a Mediator of the Relationship between Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School

Authors

Ilham binti Ismail¹, Yaakob bin Daud²
Educational Leadership and Management Department
Institut Aminuddin Baki (North Branch)
06000 Jitra
Kedah, Malaysia
ilham@iab.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This article identifies the potential of teacher’s job satisfaction site as mediator of the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment. Cross-sectional survey involving 324 secondary school teachers in Kedah state (Peninsular Malaysia). Instruments include the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW) and the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (TCM-ECS). The results of correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis found a significant relationship between teacher’s job satisfaction, organizational commitment and ethical leadership. In addition, teacher’s job satisfaction was also found to act as mediator of the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in the form of partial mediation. The implications of this study are teacher’s job satisfaction contribute as a mediator that strengthen the relationship between ethical leadership and the success of the organizational commitment. Thus, ethical leaders must take serious and identify factors that may contribute to teachers’ job satisfaction and organizational commitment to improve the school’s performance towards excellence.

Keywords- Teacher’s job satisfaction, Ethical leadership, Organizational commitment, Secondary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play important roles towards the student’s achievement. Teaching is a profession that require commitment and passion in order to produce human capital which is 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 [1] 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 (see [2], [3]).
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 [1]. 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 [1]. 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 [4]. 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 [5]. Mowday et al [5] 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 [4]. 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 [6].

Meyer and Allen [7] 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 [7] the first dimensions of organizational commitment which is 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 Teacher’s Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction has been seriously discussed by many researchers and the concept evolving from time to time (see [8], [9]). Job satisfaction is the scope of most research conducted on attitudes associated with job performance [10]. In Malaysia, although the level of concern for employee satisfaction is high, it still lacks empirical research about it [11]. In education, measuring job satisfaction has been a key
focus and attention of the researchers in the improvement efforts to strengthen human resources in a more dynamic and efficient [12]. Teachers work with the administration, management, curriculum and teaching hours are taking their toll on the crisis facing the increasingly critical job satisfaction [1]. Thus, school leaders need to play a more proactive role to overcome the obstacles and complexities that are taking place in order to ensure job satisfaction always at a high level of satisfaction. This is because school have teachers with higher levels of job satisfaction are able to provide quality education and lead students to success [13]. Locke [14] defines job satisfaction as the positive or pleasant emotions generated either through appreciation of others on the work of a person or the person's own experience in the execution of the work. According to Spector [10] job satisfaction is defined as an assessment of the overall quality of his work and the assessment measures whether in connection with the work itself, the position held or attitudes toward work. Robbins [15] stipulates that the definition of job satisfaction as a collection of feelings felt by an individual for employment. According to Haroon, Fakhar Zaman, & Rehman [16] job satisfaction means how an individual is motivated to work.

In talking about the aspects of job satisfaction, the most important is the role of the leader himself. Leaders need to be aware of the challenges and obstacles that may affect the performance of the employee, always attentive and know their job satisfaction because employees are important assets of the organization and resources to achieve organizational goals. If these factors are ignored and not given enough attention by the leaders, the negative possibilities may arise on the part of employees. This is proven through studies that have been done before. (See [17], [18]).

In this study, the focus of the study is on the nine dimensions of job satisfaction, namely, pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work and communication as proposed by Spector [9].

1.3 Ethical Leadership

In the discussion on the quality and outcomes of education, one important component that often gets attention is the question of leadership [19]. 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 [20]. Ethical leadership is a means to improve oneself as followers will see and evaluate what is seen in a leader [21]. Reviews by Handford and Leithwood [22] 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 [23]. This is due to ethical leader behaviour identified can be a role model for their followers to follow and emulate [24].

Brown, Treviño, & Harrison [25] 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 [26], 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 (see [25], [27]).

1.4 The Relationship between Teacher’s Job Satisfaction, Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School

Studies on the relationship between teacher’s job satisfaction and ethical leadership are still debated ([26], [28]) especially in the scope of the study school in Malaysia [19]. In addition, the study by Klein [29] and Koh and Boo[17] showed increasing levels of integrity of leaders can improve teacher’s job satisfaction. Hwa [30] found that principals who practice power sharing also increasing teacher’s job satisfaction. The study by Kelly, Ang, Chong, & Hu [31] for primary school teachers in Singapore found that only 45.9 percent of teachers are satisfied with their current evaluation system. This is due to lack of school leaders to pay attention to aspects of the operation of the justice system assessment and less sensitive to the clarity of evaluation criteria. Bogler and Nir [32] found that leaders who have good social relationships with teachers, always concerned with the welfare and safety of their guests' professional development opportunities for teachers and arrange them in a fair promotion will influence the improvement of job satisfaction of teachers in school.

Previous studies have shown that job satisfaction has a significant relationship with organizational commitment. (See [2], [33]). Other examples, such as the support of top management, career development, job security and benefits of the employees were also seen in relation to significantly increase employee commitment to the organization [34]. Employees who are happy and satisfied with their jobs are actually more willing to keep working with existing organizations. Lumley, Coetze, Tladinyane and Ferreira [35] in their study for the 86 employees of IT companies in South Africa, found a significant positive correlation
between the nine dimensions of job satisfaction with organizational commitment. While Malik, Waheed, & Khalil-ur-Rehman [36] found that job satisfaction dimensions that contribute predominantly to the commitment of the organization are as scope of work, pay and quality leadership.

Zhu, Norman, Peng, Riggio, & Sosik [37] 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 leaders who are concerned with the work load, role conflict and employee stress, is significantly associated with retention of members in the organization [36]. Kim, Tavitiyaman, and Kim [38] 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 an ethos of trust, to distribute the power and importance of leadership responsibility also significantly correlated with organizational commitment [39]. However, in the school context, the study by Abg Hut [40] and Zulkafli [41] 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. The findings by Alhyasat [42] on workers in Jordan Press Foundation 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 [43] found that organizational climate encrusted ego significantly related to the difficulty of retaining staff who are committed to the organization.

## 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The first objective of this study was to determine the relationship between teacher’s job satisfaction, ethical leadership and organizational commitment in school. The second objective was to identify teachers' job satisfaction as a mediator variable in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational commitment toward school.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by survey method using a questionnaire to collect information required from teachers in secondary school 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 [44]. 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 [45].
Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) by Spector [46] was used to measure job satisfaction. Ethical leadership is measured using instruments Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW) developed by Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & De Hoogh [47] and Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (TCM-ECS) by Meyer and Allen [48] was used to measure organizational commitment in school. JSS consists of 36 items, ELW consists of 38 items, and 18 items contained in the TCM-ECS. It is divided into four parts, Part A (8 items) to obtain background information on teachers; Part B (36 items) to measure job satisfaction, Section C (38 items) to measure ethical leadership, and Part D (18 items) was designed to test the commitment of the organization.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 19 using descriptive statistics, mean, and standard deviation. Pearson correlation analysis was used to identify the relationship between job satisfaction, ethical leadership and organizational commitment in school. To determine the effect of job satisfaction as mediators, Hierarchical regression analysis based on Baron and Kenny model was used.

4. FINDINGS

1) The Relationship between Teacher’s Job Satisfaction, Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School.

Table 1 shows a summary of the results of Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between teacher’s job satisfaction, ethical leadership and organizational commitment. Overall it can be concluded that there are significant moderate relationship between job satisfaction with organizational commitment with r = .46 (p < .05). In addition there is a strong significant relationship between ethical leadership with job satisfaction with r = .65 (p < .05). While there are significant moderate relationship between ethical leadership to the organization’s commitment to the value of r = .40 (p < .05).

Table 1 A summary of the results of Pearson correlation analysis of teachers’ job satisfaction, ethical leadership and organizational comitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Teachers' Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' Job Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Leadership</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Role of Teacher’s Job Satisfaction as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School

Table 2 shows the four basic steps in the hierarchical regression analysis was used as recommended by Baron and Kenny. (1986)
Table 2 Results of regression analysis of hierarchical role of Teacher’s Job Satisfaction as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Beta (β)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ethical leadership and organizational commitment)</td>
<td>.400</td>
<td>7.509</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ethical leadership and teacher’s job satisfaction)</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>14.745</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ethical leadership, teacher’s job satisfaction and organizational commitment)</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td>5.048</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( β value for ethical leadership)</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>2.648</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the significance level p<.05

The first step show ethical leadership has a significant relationship with organizational commitment (β = .400 p <.05). The second step also showed a significant relationship between ethical leadership with job satisfaction (mediator) that (β = .651 p <.05). For the third step, multiple regression analysis performed on the teacher’s job satisfaction put together with ethical leadership to see the effect on organizational commitment. The results show the teacher’s job satisfaction has a significant relationship on organizational commitment (β = .340 p <.05). The next four steps to determine whether mediator fully supports mediation or partial mediation. It found that ethical leadership is still significant, but the value of β was reduced from (β = .400 p <.05) to (β = .179 p <.05) and this confirmed that teacher’s job satisfaction was a mediator between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in form of partial mediation.

Table 3 Summary of Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable and mediator</th>
<th>Dependent variable (organizational commitment)</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without mediator</td>
<td>With mediator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical leadership</td>
<td>.400</td>
<td>.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>.340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows a summary of the regression analysis of the role of teachers' job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational commitment in school. B value of the ethical leadership $t$ fell from .400 to .179 indicates the occurrence of partial mediation by teachers' job satisfaction on organizational commitment in the school.

5. DISCUSSION

1) The Relationship between Teacher’s Job Satisfaction, Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School.

Based on correlation analysis to test the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers in the school, as a whole it can be concluded that there is a significant moderate relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers in school with $r = .46$ (p < .05). This means that the secondary school in Kedah that teacher’s job satisfaction is medium level, the organizational commitment in school are also in the medium level. This finding is consistent with studies of ([2], [8], [36], [49], [9], [50]) who found that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teachers in school. However, this study only showed a moderate significant relationship between job’s satisfaction of organizational commitment. This means that the teachers in this study are still not satisfied with their careers that they are distracted cause commitment. This may be due to several deficiencies and shortcomings on the part of leaders in the management of teachers' job satisfaction.

Based on correlation analysis to test the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in the school, as a whole it can be concluded that there is a significant moderate relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in school with $r = .40$ (p < .05). This means that the secondary school in the state of Kedah, which has a simple ethical leadership, the commitment of the organization at the school were also at a moderate level. The finding is consistent with studies ([33], [51], [52],[37]) which found that there was a significant relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in school. However, this study only showed a moderate significant relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment. This means that the teachers in this study are still not satisfied with the behavior of their principals perhaps there are some deficiencies and shortcomings on the part of the leader in ethical practices, especially in terms of understanding. There may also be organizational leaders involved in misconduct such as corruption and fraud that could have a negative impact on organizational commitment.

Based on correlation analysis to test the relationship between ethical leadership with teacher’s job satisfaction, overall it can be concluded that there is a strong significant relationship between ethical leadership with job satisfaction with $r = .65$ (p < .05). This means that the secondary school in the state of Kedah, which have high ethical leadership, the job satisfaction of teachers in the school are also at a high
level. This finding is consistent with the findings by ([25], [53], [54]) which found that ethical leadership has a significant relationship with job satisfaction. This shows that there is a strong relationship between the two variables ethical leadership with job satisfaction. This may be because some of the characteristics of happiness and satisfaction is related to subordinate perceptions of leaders who exhibited either through expression, behavior prudence, justice or humanity.

2) Role of Teacher’s Job Satisfaction as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Ethical Leadership and Organizational Commitment in School

This study is empirical evidence about the role of teachers’ job satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in school. This study found that teacher’s job satisfaction serves as a partial mediation of the relationship between ethical leadership with organizational commitment in school. With the findings of a survey that showed teacher’s job satisfaction as a partial mediation role to influence ethical leadership on organizational commitment, it has confirmed the theory that suggests that job satisfaction acts as a mediator for the influence of leaders on employee commitment ([49], [55]) and may be extended up to the influence of ethical leadership.

Although the findings of a study on the role of teacher’s job satisfaction as a mediator to the leadership style has been around ([50], [56]) but no findings of ethical leadership with teacher’s job satisfaction and organizational commitment conducted simultaneously. Consistent with the theory that ethical leaders are able to influence followers through role modeling behavior (see [26], the findings of this study indicate that ethical leadership behavior can indeed be associated with job satisfaction among teachers who act as mediator on organizational commitment.

This study also shows that leaders who practice ethical behavior and at the same time concerned about teacher’s job satisfaction is positively influence organizational commitment in school. These results can also further develop ideas related to job satisfaction as presented by [36] and [29]. Following this decision, the theory of job satisfaction has the potential to explain how ethical leadership can influence behavior and the teacher’s discretion for them to get involved, take responsibility and to remain committed to the organization. Thus, these findings are very useful and help the leadership of the organization, especially school leaders in Malaysia to practice ethical behavior and increase their knowledge related to teacher’s job satisfaction while managing organizational commitment in their respective schools.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between teacher’s job satisfaction, ethical leadership and organizational commitment in school. Factor of teacher’s job satisfaction is also an important intermediary or mediator and should be performed by ethical leaders for strengthening organizational commitment in school. Thus, school leaders in Malaysia should be given adequate exposure and training to improve the knowledge of teachers' job satisfaction and ethical leadership.
in order to implement more effective management of the organization's commitment towards fulfilling the transformation agenda of the next school education.

REFERENCES


