The Consequences of Ethical Values of Administrative Leaders on the Creative Behavior of Subordinates

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A B S T R A C T

Creative behavior is considered the most essential tool for an organization's success. Therefore, organizations should pay a great attention to such a behavior in order to contribute to achieving the organization's goals efficiently and effectively. This study aimed to identify the impact of administrative leaders' ethical values on subordinates' creative behavior. The problem statement focused on the following question: To what extent do the ethical values of administrative leaders affect the creative behavior of subordinates? The study followed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey of employees in the Libyana Mobile Phone Company in the City of Sebha. The questionnaire was distributed to all 104 employees. However, only 74 questionnaires were valid with a response rate of 71%. Using SPSS program to analyze the data, the results revealed that there is a significant positive effect of the ethical values of administrative leaders on the creative behavior of subordinates. It was also shown that justice or fairness is among the most critical factors affecting the development of the creative behavior of subordinates. Furthermore, trust or credibility has a huge role in developing the creative behavior of subordinates. The study recommends the need to pay attention to the ethical values of administrative leaders, as they represent a model for the rest of the employees, which contributes to the development and improvement of all creative behavior in organizations.

Keywords: values, moral values, ethical leadership, creativity, subordinates

أثر القيم الأخلاقية للقادة الإداريين على السلوك الإبداعي للمرؤوسين

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الملخص

يعتبر السلوك الإبداعي هو الأداة الأكثر أهمية لنجاح المنظمة. ولذلك يجب على المنظمات أن تولي اهتماماً كبيراً لمثل هذا السلوك ليساهم في تحقيق أهداف المنظمة بكفاءة وفعالية. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أثر القيم الأخلاقية للقادة الإداريين على السلوك الإبداعي لمرؤوسيهم. وتمت صياغة مشكلة البحث في التساؤل التالي: إلى أي مدى تؤثر القيم الأخلاقية للقادة الإداريين على السلوك الإبداعي لمرؤوسيهم؟ اختارت الدراسة المنهج الكمي باستخدام مسح مقطعي للموظفين في شركة ليبيانا للهاتف المحمول في مدينة سبها. تم توزيع الاستبيان على جميع الموظفين البالغ عددهم 104 موظفًا. ومع ذلك، كان 74 استبيانًا فقط صالحًا بمعدل استجابة 71%. وباستخدام برنامج SPSS لتحليل البيانات، أظهرت النتائج أن هناك تأثيراً إيجابياً معنوياً للقيم الأخلاقية للقادة الإداريين على السلوك الإبداعي للمرؤوسين. كما تبين أن العدالة والإنصاف من أهم العوامل المؤثرة في تنمية السلوك الإبداعي لدى المرؤوسين. علاوة على ذلك، فإن الثقة والمصداقية لها دور كبير في تطوير السلوك الإبداعي لدى المرؤوسين. وتوصي الدراسة بضرورة الاهتمام بالقيم الأخلاقية للقادة الإداريين، لكونهم يمثلون نموذجاً يحتذى به لبقية الموظفين، مما يساهم في تطوير وتنمية وتحسين كافة السلوكيات الابداعية للمرؤوسين في المنظمات

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيم، القيم الاخلاقية ، القيادة الاخلاقية ، الابداع ، السلوك الابداعي .

1. Introduction:

Leadership ethics is a subject that has been studied from different aspects. The current study focuses on the role of ethical values of administrative leaders in developing innovative behavior among subordinates. The study's main objective is to identify the most critical ethical values of administrative leadership through which the innovative behavior of subordinates can be.

Ethical leadership has recently become of great importance in business organizations, as organizational leaders must be the moral guide for the organization's members. Simms emphasized that the highest organizational support for managing ethical issues would significantly reduce unethical behaviors. Brown showed the executives use of ethical standards in performance appraisal, rewards and punishments are used to question ethical behavior.

Ethical leadership is defined as "typically demonstrating appropriate behavior through interpersonal actions, interpersonal relationships, and encouraging this behavior through reinforcement, two-way communication, and decision-making. (Brown et al , 2005).

Trevino defines the ethical leadership as "manifestations of normative and appropriate behavior that are trusted by followers, through which just actions are taken, promotion of such behavior to followers through two-way communication, and promotion of this behavior by providing ethical standards as a reward for behavior. It is also defined as "Ethical discipline and decision-making by understanding its importance and making fair and ethical decisions" (Woo & Robert, 2011)

Butcher points out that ethical leadership requires not investing in young trees but nurturing the soil that will allow us to produce. Ethical leadership must create the appropriate conditions and organizational culture to develop and enhance ethical behavior. (Weichun, 2004)

Ethical leadership includes integrity, trustworthiness, fairness, caring for others, and ethical behavior. However, Trevino believes that, the so-called qualities describe only a part of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership should incorporate the moral and the use of rewards and punishments to consolidate the desired behavior. (David, 2009).

Ethical leaders develop a positive and a high-quality relationship with their followers by respecting, caring for, valuing their followers' beliefs and making decisions with their followers' wellbeing in mind; this encourages their followers to behave ethically in the workplace. (Fengrui, et al, 2023)

2. Previous Studies:

The results claimed by (Amineh, et al ,2023) indicated that the workplace climate mediates the link between spiritual leadership and creative behavior. Specifically, greater levels of creative behavior among employees related to spiritual leadership, as it is a favorable working environment. The results of (Husam, 2023) showed that both transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style have an effective role in job succession and creative behavior, the results also revealed that the presence of transformational leadership enhances the confidence of workers and motivates them. In addition to that, the results of (Emran and Elhony, 2023) showed a statistically significant relationship between leadership and achieving strategic success. The results of (Ucar , et al , 2021) revealed that the employee's creative behavior in organizations had increased even more, especially with servant and transformational leaders armed with authentic leadership traits. All this strengthened the relationship of the other two leaderships with creative behavior and creates more conducive environment for creativity. The followers also feel like honest, self-confident and transparent leaders, making it easier for them to take risks and generate and implement new ideas. The results of (Michel , Ouakouak , 2018) exposed that both leadership and coworker support exert positive influences on employee creativity, moderated by several additional variables. Specifically, employee engagement and tenure, both strengthen the relationship of leadership support with employee creativity. Furthermore, individual creativity has a positive impact on the job performance.

3. Ethical Values of Administrative Leaders:

As mentioned earlier, several components may reflect the ethical values of administrative leaders. These components are:

 A - **Justice or Fairness**: Ethical leaders are concerned with issues of justice or fairness, as they make it a top priority to deal with all their subordinates in an equal manner. Justice demands that leaders place fairness issues at the heart of the decision-making process as a general rule, and no one should

receive special treatment or consideration except when his particular condition requires. However, when individuals are treated differently, the reasons for the different treatment must be obvious and reasonable, and must be based on moral values. (Rawls, 1971).

B - **Integrity or Transparency:** it refers to the degree to which it is easy to understand and realize the behaviors of managers and workers. Transparency is a set of principles that allow the dissemination of facts and aims to improve working environment (Paul et al , 2007).

C - **Credibility or Trust**: Trust or credibility revolves around the worker's feeling of freedom in discussing work problems. The worker believes that his boss will treat him fairly without discrimination. Additionally, he might rely on him in order to obtain any assistance that the subordinate may need during work. (Yang , 2005). Consequently, this is what is meant by leadership trust as positive expectations trusted by the worker, regarding the behavior of the direct supervisor or the senior management and the confidence rate in their words and actions (Ellis ,2001)

D - **Respect for Others:** It means including the basic principle or general wisdom. In other words, "Treat people as you would like them to treat you", and attention must be paid to what is believed to be fair and equal treatment for all those parties affected by the decision that has been taken, as the core idea of the concept of respecting others have to be taken into account in the decision-making process. (Anne, 2003).

E - **Act Ethically**: Leaders can take action to establish ethical practices within organizations. Apart from developing formal documents on ethical behavior or otherwise, leaders need to demonstrate ethical leadership in their daily range of behaviors, decisions, and actions by sending out strong messages about ethics, establishing transparent systems of rewards and punishments in an ethical organizational context. (Shames et al , 2009).

4. Creative Behavior of Employees:

Although there is a link between the behaviors of individual creativity and organizational innovation, the two concepts are different from each other. Individual creativity involves generating new and valuable innovation, while behavior involves transforming these creative ideas into tangible products including the promotion and implementation of the idea. Thus, employee creativity is just a starting point for a broader organizational innovation. Moving from creative thinking to innovation effectively is critical to producing innovative products. Many studies have examined the factors affecting the transmission of creativity and innovation. For example, teamwork is essential to transform creative ideas into actual innovations. In addition, it is believed that a regulatory environment can enable an innovation allows for autonomy, and tolerates ambiguity and acceptance of risk. Threats and uncertainty also hinder transforming creative ideas into innovations. In short, transitioning to creativity and innovation primarily requires defending ideas persuasively, resisting opposition, and not giving in to others easily (Kremer et al 2019), (Melissa et al , 2008), (Xiang , et al , 2010). Creativity is the basis of the ability to innovate. The ability to innovate in an organization depends on the individual creativity. However, it is necessary to consider whether any organization can provide a suitable environment for individuals who develop

creativity. Accordingly, caring for the human element is one of the critical things organizations must do. This is due to its impact on the development and improvement of organizational performance.

5. Methodology:

The present research was carried out in 2022 on a sample of workers at the Libyana Mobile Phone Company in Sebha. The questionnaire was sent to 104 employees. The response rate was 79%. Participants were asked, through a questionnaire, to clarify their perceptions about how critical ethical values are in the company and their relationship to the creative behavior of employees. Participants were informed that their responses would be anonymous and that this research data would be for research purposes only. Hence, they are free to decide whether they want to participate in the survey or not. Participants are employees of the company at different educational levels. The questionnaire consists of 30 items. There were 20 items on the dimensions of moral values and 10 items on the creative behavior.

Moreover, all dimensions have been checked to ensure their reliability. Interestingly, the reliability coefficient for all dimensions of moral values was higher than 0.7, confirming the reliability of the instrument. In particular, the alpha coefficient for moral values was 0.783, and 0.847 for creative behavior. Statistical analysis included descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation tests, and linear regression models.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion:

This section discusses the outputs of data analysis. It includes the descriptive statistics of the variables, their correlations, and their consequences.

6.1 Descriptive Statistics:

The first part shows the importance given by the study sample to the different dimensions of both the ethical values of the administrative leaders and the creative behavior of subordinates.

Table No. (1)

	The Importance of the Dimensions of the Ethical Values of the Administrative Leaders			
	Dimensions	coefficient of difference	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	The importance
1	Fairness and justice	19.17	0.604	3.150	First
2	respecting others	22.79	0.712	3.122	Third
3	Credibility and trust	19.77	0.622	3.145	Second
4	moral behavior	25.07	0.784	3.124	Fourth
5	Integrity and transparency	29.66	0.928	3.127	Fifth
		23.30	0.730	3.133	

The source: Prepared by researchers based on SPSS.V25

The table shows the order of the level of interest in the dimensions of the five moral values. According to the coefficient of difference values. Fairness or justice came in the first order of importance from the point of view of the study sample, then the second arrangement (credibility and trust), the third arrangement (respect for others), the fourth arrangement (ethical behavior), and finally (integrity and transparency).

Table No. (2)

	The Importance of the Dimensions of the Creative Behavior of Subordinates				
	Dimensions	coefficient of difference	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	The importance
1	idea creation	21.06	0.970	3.204	Third
2	Support the idea	22.31	0.615	3.150	Fourth
3	Implementation of the idea	20.12	0.712	3.122	Second
4	Creative self-efficacy	18.01	0.827	3.209	First
		18.50	0.781	3.171	

The source: Prepared by researchers

The table shows the order of the level of interest in the four dimensions of creative behavior according to the values of the coefficient of difference, creative self-efficacy came in the first order after the second order (implementation of the idea), and the third order (idea creation), while the fourth order occupied by idea support dimension.

6.2 Correlations Analysis

The following table elaborates the correlations between the different dimensions of the study.

Correlation of Study Variables.

Table No. (3)

Correlations						
		Idea creation	Support the idea	Implementation of the idea	Creative self-efficacy	Ethical Values of Leadership
Idea creation	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	74				

Support the idea	Pearson Correlation	.762**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	74	74			
Implementation of the idea	Pearson Correlation	.674**	.806**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	74	74	74		
Creative self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.710**	.751**	.698**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	74	74	74	74	
Ethical Values of leadership	Pearson Correlation	.705**	.797**	.767**	.677**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	74	74	74	74	74
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

The source: Prepared by researchers

The table shows that there are strong correlations between moral values in their various dimensions and dimensions of creative behavior of subordinates. The correlation between the moral values of the leaders and the creation of the idea scored (0.705) indicates a positive and robust correlation between moral values and the creation of creative idea among subordinates. As shown in the above table, there is also strong correlations between the ethical values of administrative leadership in its various dimensions and support for the idea as it scored (0.797).   This indicates a positive and strong correlation between moral values and support for the creative idea of subordinates. It is also clear from the table that there is a strong correlation between moral values in their various dimensions and the implementation of the idea as it scored (0.767), which indicates that there is a positive and strong correlation between moral values and the implementation of the creative idea among subordinates. Additionally, the table shows that there is a strong correlation between ethical values in their various dimensions and creative self-efficacy, which amounted to (0.677), moral between the ethical values of leadership and the creative behavior of subordinates.

6.3 Regression Analysis:

The regression test aims to investigate (if any) the impacts of the leaders' moral values on the subordinates' innovative behavior. In other words, the variation in the subordinates' innovative behavior might occur due to the leaders' moral values.

Table No. (4)

Linear Regression Analysis Results

Statistical decision	B	R2	R	Df	T Tabular	T Calculated	P value Sig
Reject the null hypothesis and accept	0.680	0.459	0.677	36	1.690	5.526	0.000

the alternative hypothesis.							

The source: Prepared by researchers.

The above table shows that there is a significant effect of the leaders' moral values on the subordinates' innovative behavior. This is based on the rule of testing the null hypothesis, which stipulates the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) if the value of P (Sig) is less than (α = 0.05), and the calculated value of t is greater than the tabular one. The calculated (t) reached 5.526, while (t) (Tabular 1.690. Also, from the results, we see a strong correlation, as the correlation coefficient reached (0.677). It is also noted that the explanatory ability of the independent variable amounted to (0.459), which means that more than 45% of the change in the creative behavior of subordinates is attributed to the change in moral values for administrative leaders.

7. Conclusion

The creative behavior of subordinators is one of the important aspects of organizational success. Many studies have discussed this phenomenon. However, few of them have linked this concept to the moral values for administrative leaders, particularly in developing countries. This study responds to the need of studying this concept in Libya. Adopting a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey of the employees of Libyana Mobile Phone Company. The results indicated that:
 1- The ethical values of managerial leaders are positively related to the creative behavior of subordinates.
2- Each of the fairness, justice, trust, or credibility dimensions contributes significantly to enhancing the creative behavior of subordinates.
3- The moral values of the administrative leaders at the upper and middle levels have high statistical significance for promoting creative behavior. However, in the case of executive managers, it shows a weak significance. This might be due to the experience of situations involving morality varies from person to person.
4- The results observed improvements in the creative behavior of employees when leaders are armed with true moral values.
 5. It is clear from the results of the current study that there is an agreement with previous studies regarding the importance of leadership in stimulating the creative behavior of subordinates.

Although the contribution of this study in the field of human resources management, it has some limitations. First, there are other predictor variables of employees' creative behavior in the organization, which have not been included in this study. Therefore, further studies should include other variables such as working environment. Second, this study relied on data from 74 employees, which might affect the generalizability of the results. Therefore, future studies should conduct similar study with a larger sample size.

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