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Study of Ethics Based On Ethical Work Climate Model with the Emphasis on Gender and Marital Status (Case Study: Agriculture Jihad Organization of Qom)

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ABSTRACT

Ethics and ethical behaviors are the ancient concepts which their history goes back to human's life; and minds of many researchers have been involved in. In this regard, various theories have been proposed. In the field of ethics, one of the theories has been considered by masters is Ethical Work Climate Model presented by Victor & Cullen (1987). This model is the basis of our study. We aim to clarify the influence of gender and marital status on ethical work climate. So we studied ethical work climate in Agriculture Jihad Organization of Qom among men and women and also married and unmarried persons. Findings show there is no significant difference among men and women in ethical work climate. But one of the components of this model has a significant difference among men and women; this component is Independence Ethical Culture. It means in comparison with women, men are more independent in decision making about what is right and what is wrong. Also we found that there is no significant difference in ethical work climate among married and unmarried persons.

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Introduction

Management Scientists "Klein" and "Rita" have pointed to the importance of organizational commitment in their book entitled "Understanding Organizational Behavior". They said: lack of organizational commitment is very dangerous because it may encompass all over the organization and then reduces organizational effectiveness in all activities (Jyue, 1984). But the truth is that the lack of ethics is much more important than the lack of organizational commitment. Lack of commitment will decline the organizations, but lack of ethics cause individuals, organizations and even the community to inefficiency and instability. Jacques Genereux "French economist" believes that we were never such empowerment like today in terms of wealth and technology creation. However, we could not able to get this period of economic boom in favor of human welfare. The reason is that in organizations there is less attention to, or lack of some components like ethical standards, professional work criteria and ethic indicators which help people in the obtaining ethics. Accordingly, the communities in general and organizations in particular, need to be committed to establishing and maintaining an ethical organizational culture. This kind of organizational culture has been labeled as Social Glue because the entire of organization has been built on values, beliefs and the ways on which operations are implemented (Wood & Rentschler, 2003, pp530-531).

Statement of Problem

Organizational ethics as a scientific concept in the West has emerged from the second half of the twentieth century (Wood & Rentschler, 2003: Pp187-191). On the other hand ethics both in individual level and organizational level has attracted

researchers' trend in the past four decades. And it is remembered as a basic challenge for organizations.

Bum Hart (1961) believes that organizations are faced with eight major problems in unethical behavior. Problems such as boodles, price discrimination and unfair pricing, non-honest unethical advertising, unfair competitive practices, client temptation, competitors collusion on prices of goods, dishonesty and forcing employees to accept false contracts and lack of fairness and impartiality in hiring staff. Pointed out these problems by him, indicates a lack of ethical organization and lack of rule of ethics in the organization.

So activities and ethical behavior in organizations is a major concern for researchers. People are concerned about inappropriate behavior in organizations and managers are concerned about ethical activities of employees (Kincaid and et al, 2008). This issue has caused researchers and managers to understand organizational unethical behavior and conduct activities to eliminate them. This led to the emergence of some issues such as organizational commitment, ethical leadership, value-based leadership and above all ethical work climate.

Ethical work climate as a new concept was introduced by Victor and Cullen. They have said ethical work climate has six dimensions include: Professional ethical culture, Caring ethical culture, Rules ethical culture, Instrumental ethical culture, Efficiency ethical culture and Independence ethical culture (Weber and et al, 2003: P363; Victor & Cullen, 1988, P112;; Okpara and et al, 2002: P5). The amount of this dimensions can be differ among persons and genders. For example Steven et al (2005) believe that four factors influence ethical behavior in organization. These are Gender, Tenure, Education and Age. They believe that women are more ethics and their unethical

behaviors are less than men. In this study we aim to appraise the ethical work climate among men and women and married and unmarried people in Agriculture Jahad Organization of Qom. Based on this the main research questions are:

1. What are the ethical work climate status and its dimensions men and women?
2. Is there a significant difference among married and unmarried in ethical work climate?
3. Is there a significant difference among men and women in ethical work climate?

Literature review

The necessity and importance of ethics and ethical behaviors in organizations:

During the years ethics were the topic which discussed and scrutinized by philosophers, scientists, professionals, religious scholars etc. In the world of philosophy, many philosophers such as Epicurus, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and John Stuart Mill used some concepts and fundamental criteria like Joy, Justice, Virtue, Conscience, Interest and Benefit for their proposed ethical theory and built huge concepts on it. All these discussions show that ethics and ethical behavior are important issues that must be considered by organizations. Josephson considers ethical behavior as a proper functioning in a society. According to him, ethical principles keep the community together. Ethics is the main capital of nations and civilizations and the backbone of a healthy social life. Ethics is the best way and the best tool for trending toward God. Therefore, no problem will be solved in human societies unless people solve the ethical issues (Makarem shirazi, 1998, p.7). Unethical behavior in organizations has become an important issue for all community members. Ethical behavior and activities in organizations are important concern among researchers. People are concerned with inappropriate behavior in organizations and managers are concerned with ethical activities of employees (Kincaid and et al, 2008). Ethical behaviors refer to good work habits, positive work attitude, coordination with other people and the skills needed for maintaining jobs (Kegans, 2009). Generally ethics comes from an inner commitment to a good and righteously life rather than commitment to the implementing of laws and principles (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005).

The concept of ethics:

During the past four decades, the ethics have attracted the attention of researchers both in individual and organizational levels (Brief, Dukerick, Brown, & Brett, 1996). Understanding the values of ethics has direct impact on different areas such as human life, what decision should be taken, comments and judgments, performance and dealing with people. Ashton and Orme describe the ethics as "being ethics and having ethical action need some measurements in order to ensure that ethical behavior will be applied consistently in all circumstances" (Ashton and Orme, 2003, P185).

Ethics are fundamental factors in the nature of every person and strongly associated with the concept of values. Orwig (2002) believes that traditional values and religious requirements can create a deep insurance to act ethically. These values and requirements encompass not only the job activities but all aspects of a person life. Buchholz and Rosenthal believe that "Ethics come from an internal commitment to a good life and righteousness rather than a commitment to implement a set of rules and principles" (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). Ethics as a science are associated with value -based behavior principles. It refers to knowing that which action is valuable and which is not,

which is good and which is bad. The following questions can be raised about the ethics: (Dika & Hamiti, 2011, P.1110)

1. What are the ethics?
2. What are the amounts of ethics?
3. Whether there are any comprehensive ethical rules which we can impose to anyone?
4. What is the level of ethics acceptance in different cultures and countries?
5. Whether it is applied similar ethics principles in different human activities?

The concept of ethical work climate:

Definitions provided, describe different concepts of ethics from different perspectives which contain both social and individual aspects. But today people live in organizations more than ever. The question is "if we want to enter ethics into the working life of individuals and organizations what program or pattern will needed? One of the concepts which guide us largely in responding to this question is the ethical climate models in organizations. These models will help researchers in understanding the state of corporate ethics and will help them in future actions. We will describe the concept of ethical work climate and then discuss a model which is similar to our research model and also other models presented in this context.

Sims believes that ethical climate is a set of perceptions about right behaviors and how to processing ethical issues. It will determine the tenor of decision making at all levels and in all conditions (Sims, 1992, P509). Some experts like Victor & Cullen (1987) and Vidaver Cohen (1998) have said ethical climate in organization affect ethical behavior of members especially board members (Laratta, 2009, P.359). Victor & Cullen believe that ethical climate refers to shared perceptions of organizational members about norms and exercises on right behavior in organizations (Victor & Cullen, 1987).

One of the best definitions of ethical climate is provided by Malloy & Agarwal (2003) that is "informal interpretation and judgment about organizational behavior as a catalyst or at least a potential high power mediator" (Malloy & Agarwal, 2003, P.39).

Work climate is defined as the interpretations which are psychologically meaningful and show that people can agree with the methods and procedures. Common perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures which have ethical content form the ethical work climate. For example when a person faced with a decision that may affects other people, how can he find a suitable alternative at least from the view of organization? An important source of such information is those aspects of work climate which determine ethical behavior at work (Victor and Cullen, 1988: P.101). Ethical climate refers to how people usually make decision in an organization. For example is paying commission true? But ethical climate refers not to how one determines whether a buyer has expected for commission (a Question of Fact) or the commission must be paid in cash or goods (a Question of Convention).

The ethical work climate models:

Kohlberg model:

The expression of individual ethics is decisions and actions that demonstrate their commitment to personal values. Values permeate people's life and impact on their actions. Management decisions and actions reflect their ethics and show their values and beliefs (Baglione & Zimmener, 2007: P111). The most accepted theory of ethical reasoning is the Kohlberg model which is about Cognitive Moral Development (CMD). This

model assumes that ethical judgments of people come from their attitudes about how to organize social cooperation (Kohlberg et al, 1983). In this model, organizations operate at a certain level of ethics and top managers are the most effective in creating ethical climate in organization (Fisher & Bonn, 2007: P1561). This model propose three level of ethics which are Reconvension, Conventional and Post-Conventional.

Rest model:

James Rest is Kohlberg's student and developed his model to cover other aspects of ethical behavior. This model has four elements:

- Interpreting status: determining who will be affected by alternative measures and how everyone can understand its impact on social welfare.
- Selecting the appropriate ethical actions from the alternatives
- Prioritize the ethical values over other personal values
- Following selected ethical practices regardless of obstacles.

These four elements are not sequential but are linked (Rest, 1979; Thoma, Rest, & Davison, 1991; Brower & Shrader, 2000). Rest (1983) believes that an action is ethic when it makes and maintains the welfare of others. Accordingly, he has identified four components of ethical behavior which are:

- Moral Sensitivity
- Moral Reasoning
- Moral Motivation
- Moral Character

Victor & Cullen model:

The first empirical and theoretical study on ethical work climate was conducted by Victor & Cullen. The vast majority of researches conducted in the context of ethical climate are based on a theoretical framework which Victor and Cullen presented in the late 1980 in order to studying the concept of ethics in profit organizations.

Victor & Cullen describe ethical work climate as "prevailing perceptions of typical organizational methods and procedures that have ethical content". They argue that individual characteristics are inadequate to explain or predict ethical behavior. The study uses two dimensional ethical climate of typology.

The first dimension is associated with Kohlberg & Rest models which is about ethical criteria and also estimates the characteristics of organizational decision making. These criteria are included of Egoistic to Benevolence and ethical Principles (Victor & Cullen, 1988, P105; Stone & Henry, 2003; Maesschalck, 2005; Laratta, 2009, P360).

The second dimension is about Locus of Analysis which is used for Generalizing ethical criteria to individual locus, local locus (organization, department, workgroup) and cosmopolitan locus (external) (Stone & Henry, 2003). Individual level of analysis defines sources of ethical reasoning among individuals; local level of analysis defines sources of ethical reasoning among organization and cosmopolitan level of analysis deals with ethical reasoning outside of organizations (Maesschalck, 2005).

Generally, Locus of Analysis refers to the reference group which identifies applications of ethical criteria in decision making and also the obstacles which should be considers in ethical analysis of organization (Victor & Cullen, 1988, P105; Laratta, 2009, P360). So the individual locus, local locus and the cosmopolitan locus were identified. In the matrix presented below, each locus will be combined with an ethical criterion to forming a kind of ethical room. Overall, 9 kind of ethical room

was identified which is showed in table 2. Also table 3 shows the ethical work climate which are formed from the combination of those ethical rooms.

Table 2: ethical rooms (Victor & Cullen, 1988, P104)

Locus of Analysis Ethical criteria	individual	local	Cosmopolitan
Egoism	Personal interest	Organizational interest	Efficiency
Benevolence	Friendship	Team benefits	Social responsibility
Principle	Personal ethics (autonomy)	Organizational principles	Law and the Public Interest

Table 3: Five kind of ethical climate (Weber and et al, 2003: P363; Victor & Cullen, 1988, P112)

Locus of Analysis Ethical criteria	individual	local	Cosmopolitan
Egoism	Instrumental		Efficiency
Benevolence	Caring		
Principle	Independence	Rules	Professional (Law & Code)

Professional ethical culture:

Employees follow the regulations or set of instructions communicated by governmental laws or relevant professional groups. In such circumstances, employees look outside of the organization to know how to behave ethically (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). If such ethical culture exists in an organization, people and employees are expected to behave in accordance with the law and professional standards (Jaffe and Tsimmerman, 2010: P4).

Caring ethical culture:

In this kind of ethical climate, employees actually pay attention to the welfare of others both inside and outside of the organization. The actions of such group should be toward all those who have been affected by their decisions (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). In this kind of ethical culture, much attention is to the issue that what is suitable for all (Jaffe and Tsimmerman, 2010: P4).

Rules ethical culture:

In the rules ethical climate employees are expected to obey the laws of their department or organization (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). In this kind of ethical culture, employees obey the rules of their unit or their organization.

Instrumental ethical culture:

In this kind of ethical culture, organization members are just careful about their own interests and trying to benefit from others (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). This kind of ethical culture actually pointed to maximizing personal benefits both in individual or organizational level (Smith and et al, 2007: P5). It means that employees pay attention to personal interests rather than to the interests of employees, organizational and community. Or at the best, personal interests have priority over organizational interests.

Efficiency ethical culture:

In this kind of ethical culture the best way of doing things in the organization is the way in which efficiency is most affected (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). In fact it argues that the most efficient way is the best way (Jaffe and Tsimmerman, 2010: P4).

Independence ethical culture:

In this kind of ethical culture, employee's performance is influenced by his feelings and perceptions about right or wrong works (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). In fact, each individual decides

independently that what is true and what is false (Jaffe and Tsimerman, 2010: P4) and it expresses personal values are used in decision making (Smith and et al, 2007: P5).

Case studies: ethical status in different situations

Posner & Schmidt concluded that there is not a significant difference between top level managers and lower level managers in work ethic (Posner & Schmidt, 1987; Andrisani, 1978; Anderson, 1995). And also no difference has been discovered between poor and non-poor people in work ethics (Bullock, 1999). Hegerty & Sims (1979) have expressed that when the organization has developed formal and informal policies to support ethical behavior, the ethics will increase in the organization (Hegarty, Sims, & Henry, 1979) but Cressey & Moor (1983) stated that ethical codes are not enough alone for enhancing ethical behavior in organizations (Cressey & Moore, 1983). But little research has been conducted on the ethical status among men and women.

Methodology

Statistical Population and Sample:

The Statistical Population in this research is all employees in Agriculture Jihad Organization of Qom which are 285 persons. To estimate the sample size Morgan table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970: 608) was used and sample size was extracted 165 persons. In order to prevent loss of subjects, 200 questionnaires were distributed which 170 questionnaires was fully completed and we have used them in the analysis.

Sampling method:

Regarding to the point that employees in Agriculture Jihad organization of Qom were divided in two categories (male and female), we used Stratified Sampling. Table 4 shows number of individuals, percentage of individuals and the number of individual in each stratum.

Table 4: number of sample in each stratum

stratum	Female	Male	Total
number of individuals in Statistical Population	30	255	285
percentage	10	90	100
number of individuals in sample	18	152	170

Data collection tools, its validity and reliability:

In this research we used some tools such as library studies and questionnaire. Library studies were used to collect literature on ethics and ethical work climate and questionnaire to measuring the ethical climate. This questionnaire has 26 questions which presented by Victor & Cullen (1988). After distributing questionnaire we should determine its reliability and validity. So we send our questionnaire to a number of university professors and heads of Agricultural Jihad organizations to measure their comments about the quality and quantity of questions and also the conceptual model. After collecting the comments of experts, necessary reforms were applied in the questionnaire. When 30 questionnaires were collected, its reliability was 0.775. Table 5 shows the reliability of each component.

Data analysis methods:

For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics used for mean, variance and the number of respondent, and inferential statistics for Independent Samples T-Test. So table 6 shows demographic variables and table 7 shows descriptive statistics of ethical work climate.

Table 5: the reliability of each component

Questionnaire	components	Number of questions	Reliability	Questionnaire Reliability
Ethical work climate	Caring ethical culture	5	0.871	0.775
	Professional ethical culture	4	0.768	
	Rules ethical culture	4	0.751	
	Instrumental ethical culture	6	0.593	
	Efficiency ethical culture	3	0.703	
	Independence ethical culture	4	0.611	

Findings

The results of descriptive statistics:

The sample were made of 152 males and 18 females and also from the view of marital status, it contains 151 marrieds and 19 singles.

Table 6: descriptive statistics of demographic variables

demographic variables Statistical variables	Gender		Marital status		Age				Degree			
	Male	Female	Married	Single	Age <30	40<age<30	50<age<40	Age>50	Diploma	Associate Degree	BA	MA
Frequency	152	18	151	19	17	63	72	18	13	34	104	19
percent age	89.4	10.6	88.8	11.2	10	37.1	42.4	10.6	7.6	20	61.2	11.2

Table 7: descriptive statistics of ethical work climate

Statistical parameters Research variables	numbers		mean		standard deviation	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
ethical work climate	18	152	4.13	4.11	0.629	0.489
Caring ethical culture	18	152	4.73	4.37	1.04	1.09
Professional ethical culture	18	152	4.27	4.38	1.23	0.954
Rules ethical culture	18	152	4.70	4.51	1.06	0.887
Instrumental ethical culture	18	152	3.879	3.87	0.733	0.812
Efficiency ethical culture	18	152	4.48	4.41	1.29	1.02
Independence ethical culture	18	152	2.80	3.26	0.85	0.759

Based on descriptive statistics of ethical work climate the lowest mean is related to "independence ethical culture" among both male and female, the highest mean among male is related to "rules ethical culture" and among female is related to "caring ethical culture".

The results of inferential statistics:

A) Appraising the mean of ethical work climate among male and female

For this purpose we use Independent Samples T-Test.

The test hypothesis is:

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$	There is no significant difference among male and female in ethical work climate.
$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$	There is a significant difference among male and female in ethical work climate.

For doing this test, first we must appraise the equality of variance hypothesis which is:

$H_0: (\delta_1)^2 = (\delta_2)^2$	The variances of two groups are equal.
$H_1: (\delta_1)^2 \neq (\delta_2)^2$	The variances of two groups are not equal.

The first part of table 8 refers to variances. As it is clear, in all cases the significance is more than 0.05 so H_0 is accepted. It means the variances of two groups in all cases are equal. Based on this, we must use the first row which refers to equality of variances.

The second part of table 8 refers to independent sample t-test. In the case of ethical work climate, the significance is 0.875. It means the H_0 is accepted so there is no significance difference among male and female in ethical work climate. Also in other cases H_0 is accepted except the component of independence ethical culture in which H_1 is accepted and it means there is a significant difference among male and female in independence ethical culture.

B) Appraising the mean of ethical work climate among married and singles

For this purpose we use Independent Samples T-Test.

The test hypothesis is:

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$	There is no significant difference among married and singles in ethical work climate.
$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$	There is a significant difference among married and singles in ethical work climate.

For doing this test, first we must appraise the equality of variance hypothesis which is:

$H_0: (\delta_1)^2 = (\delta_2)^2$	The variances of two groups are equal.
$H_1: (\delta_1)^2 \neq (\delta_2)^2$	The variances of two groups are not equal.

Table 9: descriptive statistics of ethical work climate among married and singles

Variable	Marital status	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
Ethical work climate	Married	151	4.13	0.496
	Single	19	4.01	0.558

The first part of table 10 is about variances. As it is clear the significance is more than 0.05 so H_0 is accepted. It means the variances of two groups are equal. Based on this, we must use the first row which refers to equality of variances.

The second part of table 10 refers to independent sample t-test. The significance is 0.328. It means the H_0 is accepted so there is no significance difference in ethical work climate among married and singles.

Discussion

Social Development process at home, media, schools, universities and organizations, makes the attitudes of men and women in community. However, researches show that men have a passion for technology and women have better performance in focusing on customer, but women do not complain about boring

tasks (Panteli, 1999). However we cannot definitively answer this question "whether men or women are ethical".

In this study we use Victor & Cullen ethical work climate model. 200 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of Agriculture Jihad organization of Qom. 170 questionnaires were returned which we used them in the analyses. The sample contains 152 male and 18 female and also 151 married and 19 singles.

The results show there is no significance difference among male and female in ethical work climate. The lowest mean among men and women is related to independence ethical culture. Independence ethical culture refers to the extent to which the employees are committed to personal ethical values in decision making (Smith and et al, 2007: P5). Accordingly, we can conclude that personal ethical values are less involved in decision making among men and women.

Caring ethical culture has the highest mean among women. This kind of culture refers to what is suitable for all? And do employees actually pay attention to the welfare of others both inside and outside of the organization? (Appelbaum, 2005: P45). Therefore in this study it was found that women are greatly concerned about suitability of their actions for others.

Rules ethical culture has the highest mean among men. This culture argues that the employees obey the rules and regulations of their organization (Appelbaum, 2005: P45).

The results of inferential statistics show that there is no significant difference among men and women in ethical work climate, Caring ethical culture, Professional ethical culture, Rules ethical culture, Instrumental ethical culture and Efficiency ethical culture. But there is a significant difference among men and women in Independence ethical culture. In this case the mean of men is more than women so we can conclude that men are more independence in decision making (Jaffe & Tsimmerman, 2010: P4). In other words in decision making, men are more influenced by their feelings and perceptions about right and wrong things (Appelbaum, 2005: P4). Also results show there is no significant difference among married and singles employees in ethical work climate.

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Table 8: The result of t-test for ethical work climate among male and female

Final result	Acceptance or Rejection of H_0	t- test			The result of Variance test	Variance test		equality or inequality of variances	Research variables
		sig	df	t		sig	F		
There is no significant difference	A H_0	0.875	168	- 0.158	equality	0.257	1.291	equality	ethical work climate
		0.898	19.50	- 0.129				inequality	
There is no significant difference	A H_0	0.192	168	- 1.309	equality	0.689	0.151	equality	Caring ethical culture
		0.189	21.65	- 1.357				inequality	
There is no significant difference	A H_0	0.659	168	0.442	equality	0.194	1.703	equality	Professional ethical culture
		0.723	19.46	0.360				inequality	
There is no significant difference	A H_0	0.397	168	- 0.849	equality	0.437	0.607	equality	Rules ethical culture
		0.471	19.89	- 0.735				inequality	
There is no significant difference	A H_0	0.946	168	- 0.045	equality	0.576	0.315	equality	Instrumental ethical culture
		0.962	22.24	- 0.049				inequality	
There is no significant difference	A H_0	0.805	168	- 0.247	equality	0.178	1.751	equality	Efficiency ethical culture
		0.840	19.75	- 0.204				inequality	
There is significant difference	R H_0	0.018	168	2.393	equality	0.615	0.254	equality	Independence ethical culture
		0.041	20.30	2.187				inequality	

Table 10: The result of t-test for ethical work climate among married and singles

t-test for Equality of Means							Test for Equality of Variances		Ethical work climate
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		Std. Error Difference	Mean difference	sig	df	t	sig	F	
Upper	Lower								
0.362	-0.121	0.122	0.120	0.328	168	0.981	0.558	0.334	Equality of variances
0.398	-0.158	0.134	0.120	0.380	21.74	0.896			Inequality of variances

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