

## Ethical Leadership in Educational Administration: A Review

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – This study is to outline the main findings from an international literature review focused on ethical leadership. This synthesizes all the opportunities and potentials in the education administration in Malaysia to outline patterns in the future of research.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This review is based on an analysis of empirical articles published in indexed journals between 1991 and 2019.

**Findings** – This paper uses the basics of contemporary knowledge to explore: the contextual pattern of ethical leadership research so far.

**Research limitations/implications** – This study is based on studies in different countries, using various conceptual frameworks. The limitation is the scope of the sample. This study also does not include studies conducted in Malaysia.

**Practical implications** – The results of this study provide information on improving the quality of ethics in educational leadership.

**Originality/value** – The author recommends widening the scope of the sample examined to further clarify the concept of ethical leadership and its implications to the practice of educational leadership.

**Keywords:** Ethics, Education Management, Ethical Leadership, Decision Making, Educational Administration

### Introduction

Ethical leadership is critical to a leader's credibility and his or her potential to influence (Den Hartog and Belschak, 2012). The credibility of ethical leaders may have an important effect on the trust between leaders and followers (Eisenbeiss and Giessber, 2012).

Looking at ethics through different paradigms is a phenomenon that has been overlooked lately. Therefore, several studies have been developed that address ethical dilemmas from various perspectives. When we look at existing studies, it appears that scientists and industry practitioners are involved in professional ethical issues, but none have adopted the concept of professional ethics as a separate paradigm.

In recent years, many researchers across the United States and other countries have begun to incorporate ethical leadership concepts into their dissertations. Ethical leadership is defined in management as appropriate normal behavior through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, encouraging such behavior to followers through bilateral communication, enforcement, and decision making (Brown, Trevino, & Harrison, 2013). Ethical leaders set a good example of being honest and principled leaders and striving to do the right thing while leading a personal life in an ethical way and tend to make fair and balanced decisions (Bodner, 2013).

Ethical leaders set a standard, communicate, and enforce clear ethical standards among organizational members, and provide support, concern, and trust to subordinates (Brown et al., 2013). Ethical leaders tend to be role models that motivate subordinates to follow their example (Symlie, 2014; Brown & Trevino, 2006). Empirical studies of ethical leadership have confirmed that there is a direct link between managers' ethical leadership and some ethical and non-ethical behaviors.

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### **Ethical Leadership**

Since the last thirty years, there has been an increase in research on ethical leadership in education (Lapointe et al., 2010). In the late 1970s, Hodgkinson (1978) called for the restoration of the basic ethical theory of educational leadership. A few years later, Greenfield (1981) and Foster (1986) emphasized the need for further research into the ethics and ethical aspects of educational leadership.

Starratt (1991) was one of the first to propose a conceptual framework for ethical leadership and to suggest that leadership ethics should no longer be defined as style but as a basis for ethical dimensions and actions. Sergiovanni (1992) pursues this approach in his ethical model by integrating concerns for collective and individual interests and interests.

Productivity and efficiency are often the key actors; however, there is a point of view, claiming that it is the leader's responsibility to maintain ethical standards and ethical conduct. School Ethics Leadership Theory was first reviewed by Sergiovanni (Sergiovanni, 1992), who reviewed the literature on previous research, in his book *Ethical Leadership: Finding School Improvement*. According to him, leadership is about more than just technique; Ethical leadership, should be at the center of the leadership, can be understood as a school leader applying every possible means, in accordance with ethical authority, to stimulate the potential of the individual, to make his followers, and to form a noble one.

Along the same lines, the study argues that leaders' ethical leadership refers to school staff to pursue an unacceptable ethical appeal, based on its ethical integrity, so that ethics and values are properly affirmed, staff sense of responsibility and responsibility are inspired, and continue to raise their awareness of their work, their dedication to school development, and their collective efforts to achieve the vision of school development.

In Asia, however, ethical leadership research has begun to spread widely since the mid-1990s in Taiwan. Yan Tongwen (Yan, 2002) from the University of Taiwan concludes that ethical leadership encompasses six dimensions: 1) the most specific implementation of ethical leadership from post-modern achievement; 2) the spirit of ethical leadership focuses on the charms of individual leaders; 3) the enforcement of ethical leadership is established on the basis of authority; 4) The purpose of ethical leadership is to nurture its members with values driven by obligations; 5) the role of ethical leadership is proactive but not backward; 6) Ethical leadership's dream of establishing a welfare school for children.

In recent years, a more comprehensive and in-depth study of ethical leadership theory has been carried out. Academics offer differing opinions on the structure of ethical leadership, with representative views as follows. (Resick et al., 2006) defines the main characteristics of an ethical leader based on western literary views on leadership and ethics. With data gathered from Global Leadership and the Effectiveness of Organizational Behaviour and through analysis, they propose dimensions of ethical leadership, namely Integrity, Altruism, Collective Motivation, and Incentives, that play an important role in leadership effectiveness based on cultural background.

Langlois and Lapointe (2007) have identified three themes of principled leadership practiced by principals namely criticism, justice and concern. They find that newly appointed principals are more inclined to the theme of justice leadership. Whereas senior principals and teachers are able to work on the three elements, criticism, justice and concern are best.

Karakose (2007) conducted a quantitative study of teachers 'perceptions of their school leaders' ethical leadership. Karakose uses the Ethical Leadership Scale questionnaire developed by Yilmaz (2006) and contains four dimensions namely ethical communication, ethical climate, ethical decision making and ethical behavior. However, the study assessed demographics only. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed.

However, (Ladkin, 2008) believes that "ethical leadership" has three main dimensions: self-mastery and environment, coordination, self-image, purpose and consistency in terms of information, and the purpose, of specific goals being achieved. He considers that "ethical leadership" should play a part in the efforts of leaders, and question whether it is guided by "working hard for the best interests of the living".

Meanwhile, a multi-dimensional approach was performed by Kalshoven et al. (2011), where he developed seven multidimensional ethical leadership. All seven dimensions are human-oriented, justice, power-sharing, concern for sustainability, ethical guidance, role clarity and integrity. Patterson et.al, (2013) concludes that management plays an important role in implementing educational reforms, while striving to maintain its own priorities and values.

Further, many international studies on ethical leadership have raised several questions (Cherkowski et al., 2015; Kristinsson, 2014; Langlois & Lapointe, 2010, 2014): Does an ethical leader have the same meaning without any historical, religious or religious considerations specific culture? Finding answers to these questions can foster a better understanding of both national habits and universal equations related to ethical leadership,

as well as cultural and social features that facilitate or hinder the development of leadership ethics.

This is a bit different when we look at the study (Viet, 2015), which states that organizational ethical leadership is focused on structure and efficiency and comes with decision-making power. It's transactional. Ethical leadership is focused on adherence to the rules of the game through a performance evaluation system and a reward system and requires self-control. Leadership is responsible for the return on investment of shareholders and for compliance with the law (Viet, 2015). Ethical leadership in organizations shows adherence to internal and external regulations through remuneration (Viet, 2015).

A study was conducted to explore school principals' judgment that led to their decision not to meet the national and comprehensive national reform guidelines. This qualitative study was based on interviews with 59 school principals. Generating a theme is an inductive process, based on various perspectives articulated by the principal. And consider the characteristics and circumstances of the school (Schechter & Shaked, 2017).

Dinc (2018) has examined the direct and indirect effects of the relationship between ethical leadership, types of ethical climate, aspects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment components and organizational citizenship behaviour dimensions of 515 employees working in public and private universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Lowery (2019) conducted a study on principals' perceptions of south-eastern Ohio on decision-making ethics. He found that principals' perceptions varied in their familiarity and comfort with moral literacy. The overarching themes that emerge from this analysis find the connection between ethical dilemmas, becoming leaders of moral knowledge, dimensions of moral leadership, and integration of ethical and ethical values.

In the same year, a study on the ethical behaviour of school leaders in non-Euro-West countries by examining the difficulties faced by Kenyan integrity leaders was conducted. The study highlights the importance of contextual variables in influencing leaders' decisions, reflecting tensions between liberal and communist ethical approaches. Despite similar challenges faced by those working in the euro-western context, Kenyan leaders face additional challenges for working with Ubuntu's cultural values: maintaining an entire community, harmonious work relationships, brotherly loyalty and senior citizenship (Oduol & Cornforth, 2019).

Table 1

*Chronology of the Development of Ethical Leadership Studies (1991-2019)*

YEAR	AUTHOR	STUDY
1991	Starratt	- the model focuses on the development of ethics in the context of the school, which consists of three basic themes that school leaders should consider. - the three basic themes are criticism, justice and concern
1992	Sergiovanni	- pursue this approach in their ethical model by integrating concerns for collective and individual interests and interests.

<b>1998</b>	Kanungo and Mendonca	-develop an ethical leadership model through three dimensions: leader motives; leadership influence strategies; and the formation of a leader character.
<b>1998</b>	Craig and Gustafson	-developed the Perceived Leadership Integrity Scale (PLIS) instrument.
<b>1998, 2000</b>	Dempster, Freakley and Parry	- conducted a study in Queensland, Australia with the focus of their study on school principals' perceptions of ethical climate.
<b>2002</b>	Yan	- concludes that ethical leadership encompasses six dimensions
<b>2005</b>	Brown, Treviño and Harrison	- the development of instruments that measure the more scientific ethical leadership, the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS). - the ELS contains 10 items and measures ethical leadership in the form of unidimensional.
<b>2006</b>	Resick, Hanges, Dickson and Mitchelson	- determine the main characteristics of an ethical leader based on western literature on leadership and ethics.
<b>2006</b>	Yilmaz	- developed the Ethical Leadership Scale questionnaire.
<b>2007</b>	Langlois and Lapointe	- conducted a qualitative study in seven regions of Canada in an open interview of 47 principals. - Identify three themes of principled leadership practiced by principals: criticism, justice and concern.
<b>2007</b>	Karakose	- conducted a quantitative study of teachers 'perceptions of principals' ethical leadership in Turkey. - using the Ethical Leadership Scale questionnaire developed by Yilmaz (2006) and contains four dimensions: ethical communication, ethical climate, ethical decision making and ethical behaviour.
<b>2008</b>	De Hoogh and Den Hartog	- developing three specific dimensions of justice, power sharing and role clarification through literature studies.
<b>2009</b>	Bowers	- a study of 209 Ohio school teachers found that teachers' perceptions of ethical leadership had a strong impact on teacher commitment in schools. - using the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) developed by Brown et al. (2005).
<b>2011</b>	Chambers	- a study of 650 high school teachers in the United States of Tennessee found that teachers' perceptions of school principals were related to school excellence. - using the Perceived Leadership Integrity Scale (PLIS) developed by Craig and Gustafson (1998).
<b>2011</b>	Kalshoven, De Hoogh and Den Hartog	- encompassing seven dimensions of ethical leadership, namely human-oriented, justice, power-sharing, concern for sustainability, ethical guidance, role clarification and integrity.

		- Develop a multidimensional ethical leadership measurement called Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW).
<b>2013</b>	Patterson, Campbell, Johnson, Marx and Whitener	- concludes that management plays a key role in implementing educational reforms, while striving to maintain its own priorities and values.
<b>2014</b>	Langlois, Lapointe, Valois and Leeuw	- conducting quantitative research and developing the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ)
<b>2015</b>	Viet	- states that organizational ethical leadership is focused on structure and efficiency and comes with decision-making power. - Ethical leadership of the organization demonstrates compliance with internal and external regulations through remuneration
<b>2016</b>	Shapiro and Stefkovich	- study ethical leadership from the perspective of complex dilemma theory.
<b>2016</b>	Lapointe, Langlois, Valois, Aksu, Arar, Bezzina, Johansson, Norberg and Oplatka	- conducted research in 5 countries (Canada, Sweden, Israel, Malta, Turkey) to validate the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ).
<b>2017</b>	Schechter and Shaked	- conducting studies that consider the characteristics and circumstances of the school.
<b>2018</b>	Dinc	- has examined the direct and indirect effects of the relationship between ethical leadership, types of ethical climate, aspects of job satisfaction, organizational commitment components and organizational citizenship behaviors of 515 employees working in public and private universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
<b>2019</b>	Lowery	- conducted a study on principals' perceptions of southeastern Ohio on decision-making ethics.
<b>2019</b>	Oduol and Cornforth	- studied the ethical behavior of school leaders in non-Euro-West countries by examining the dilemmas faced by Kenyan educational leaders.

### Conclusion

The literature review that has been described shows several gaps related to the impact of ethical leadership in the context of educational management. To fill this gap is a lot of research that can be conducted in the future using theories and other sources of support.



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