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Date of publication: January 16th, 2020

Edition period: July 2019 - January 2020

To cite this article: Negiş Işık, A. (2020). Ethical Leadership and School Effectiveness: The Mediating Roles of Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 8(1), 60-87. doi: 10.17583/ijelm.2020.4114

To link this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17583/ijelm.2020.4114>

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Ethical Leadership and School Effectiveness: The Mediating Roles of Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examines how ethical leadership influences school effectiveness via the mediating role of affective commitment and job satisfaction. For this purpose, 306 teachers completed measures of ethical leadership, affective commitment, job satisfaction, and school effectiveness. The results supported the hypothesized positive links of ethical leadership to affective commitment, job satisfaction, and school effectiveness. The results also revealed that work attitudes (i.e., affective commitment and job satisfaction) partially mediated the relationship between ethical leadership and school effectiveness, indicating both direct and indirect effects of ethical leadership on school effectiveness. In light of these findings, a number of recommendations were given for further research, specifically regarding school administrative research and applications.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, School effectiveness, Work attitudes, Affective commitment, Job satisfaction.

Liderazgo Ético y Eficacia Escolar: los Roles Mediadores del Compromiso Afectivo y la Satisfacción Laboral

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Resumen

Este estudio examina cómo el liderazgo ético influye en la efectividad escolar a través del papel mediador del compromiso afectivo y la satisfacción laboral. Para este propósito, 306 maestros completaron medidas de liderazgo ético, compromiso afectivo, satisfacción laboral y efectividad escolar. Los resultados respaldaron los hipotéticos vínculos positivos del liderazgo ético con el compromiso afectivo, la satisfacción laboral y la efectividad escolar. Los resultados también revelaron que las actitudes laborales (es decir, el compromiso afectivo y la satisfacción laboral) mediaron parcialmente la relación entre el liderazgo ético y la efectividad escolar, lo que indica los efectos tanto directos como indirectos del liderazgo ético sobre la efectividad escolar. A la luz de estos hallazgos, se dieron una serie de recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones, específicamente con respecto a la investigación y las aplicaciones administrativas escolares.

Palabras claves: Liderazgo ético, Efectividad escolar, Actitudes laborales, Compromiso afectivo, Satisfacción laboral.

Ethical leadership is defined by Brown et al. (2005:120) 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.”* Researchers have noted that they purposely use “normatively appropriate” as norms vary among organizations, industries, and cultures. Brown et al.’s (2005) definition stems from research by Treviño et al. (Treviño et al., 2003; 2000). As a result of their studies on senior executives, they concluded that ethical leaders demonstrate both transformational and transactional leadership styles. Based on this conclusion, ethical leadership has two dimensions as moral person and moral manager. The first part of the ethical leadership definition is about the moral person dimension of the leader. The moral person dimension concerns the individual characteristics of the leader. These characteristics are honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, caring, openness to information, respect, and principled decision-making (Treviño et al., 2000; 2003). The second part of the definition emphasizes the moral manager dimension of ethical leadership. The moral manager dimension addresses the instruments the leader uses to build an ethical atmosphere within the organization. Strong moral managers perceive themselves as role models in the workplace (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). They draw attention to ethics by their own ethical behaviour, set and communicate ethical standards, and use rewards and punishments to induce their employees to obey these standards. Overall, moral managers are leaders trying to meet ethical standards by walking the talk talking the walk through their own behaviours and organizational process (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Leaders should be regarded as moral persons and moral managers for being perceived as ethical leaders by their employees (Treviño et al., 2000; 2003).

Brown et al. (2005) have noted that ethical leadership and its outcomes can be better understood on the basis of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986). According to social learning theory, individuals learn behaviours by observing their role models. Due to their positions within the organizations, leaders are regarded as role models for the appropriate behaviours. Behaviours by ethical leaders affect employees and encourage them to behave ethically to their colleagues, as well (Mayer et al., 2009). Social learning theory also

emphasizes the vicarious learning process. Individuals can also learn by indirectly observing others' behaviours and the outcomes of these behaviours. On this basis, ethical leaders can affect followers by both being a model of the appropriate behaviours and using rewards for positive behaviours and punishment for negative behaviours (Treviño and Brown, 2005).

Organizational outcomes of ethical leadership can also be explained by social exchange theory. According to social exchange theory, when ethical leaders conduct themselves fairly and equitably employees will feel beholden and thereby demonstrate ethical and citizenship behaviours in favour of their organization, as well as prevent behaviours that may result in negative organizational outcomes (Brown et al., 2005; Brown and Mitchell, 2010, Brown and Treviño, 2006).

To date, the relationship between ethical leadership and positive organizational outcomes (i.e., organizational commitment, identification, performance, citizenship behaviour, voice behaviour) has been well-documented (e.g., Lu, 2014; Neves and Story, 2015, Qi and Ming- Xi, 2014; Zhu et al., 2015). However, most of this research has been conducted in for-profit organizations and more research is needed to better understand the potential links between ethical leadership behaviours and organizational outcomes in non-profit organizations, such as schools. In addition, although ethical leadership has been theoretically seen as a prerequisite for effective schools (Calabrese, 1988; Sammons et al., 1995), to our knowledge, there is no study examining the underlying mechanisms of this potential link. Based on this view, there have been some attempts to link a school's effectiveness to its principal's characteristics and behaviours such as leadership style (Cheng, 1991; 1994; Silins, 1994), decision-making patterns (Glasman and Fuller, 1992), time use (Horng et al., 2010; Martin and Willower, 1981), and coordinating strategies (Goldring and Pasternack, 1994). Thus, adding to this literature on ethical leadership in schools, the current study sought to examine the associations of ethical leadership with school effectiveness and the mediating role of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in this relationship. The conceptual model of the study was given in Figure 1.

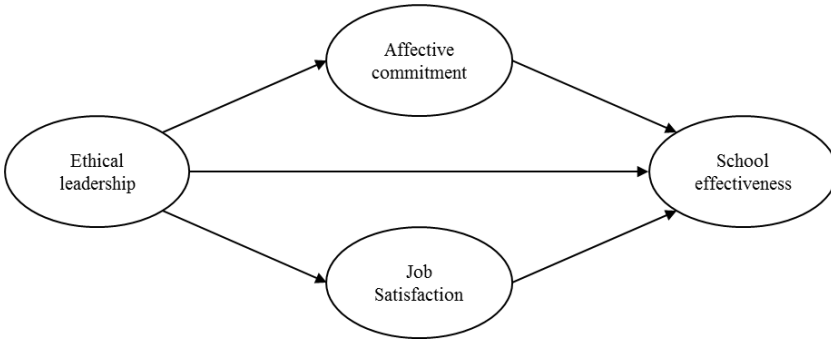


Figure 1. Conceptual model

Ethical leadership and school effectiveness

It is not easy to answer the question of what school effectiveness is. Divergent points of view and divergent expectations regarding the aims of the schools influence its definition. Firestone (1991) noted that the concept of effectiveness is not a neutral concept and that it is necessary to make a choice between conflicting values. Despite the complexity of defining effectiveness, the academic success of students is often taken into consideration by policy makers and researchers as indicative of a school's effectiveness. Bottery (2004) stated that, in the Western world, standardized student tests and rigid curriculum standards are preferred to ensure school performance, which is unfortunately true for Turkey as well. He also stated that this approach has led to a shift from management practices that emphasize teachers' commitment and motivation to reward and punishment-based management practices that require obedience from individuals. As such, teachers working in a system where they are not relied on develop a distrust of the system, lose their willingness to achieve the goals of the school, and pretend as if they were not the real actors in promoting the educational endeavours of their school; they rather feel like players of a game (Bottery, 2004, Sergiovanni, 2015). This approach negatively affects not only teachers but also students (Senge et al., 2014).

This ironically brings us back to the beginning of the debate on school effectiveness: “*Can schools really make a difference in disadvantaged groups?*” (Coleman, 1988). It is possible to say that if the rigid management practices imposed to determine and ensure school performance reduce the commitment of teachers to the school's aims and that teachers do not want to work with disadvantaged students, it is only a vicious circle, and schools cannot really make a difference for students.

Escaping this vicious circle may be possible with a moral point of view within the school context and leadership applications (Bottery, 2004; Sergiovanni, 2015; Stefkovich and Begley, 2007). In a study from three schools, Wilson (2008) found that ethical leadership behaviours of school principals contributed to promoting academic success among low-income students and to creating a school community where teachers continued their professional development to meet their students' needs. The Hypothesis 1 below is formulated based on the above supporting literature.

H1. Ethical leadership is positively correlated with school effectiveness.

Ethical leadership and work attitudes

Job satisfaction is one of the most studied concepts in the organizational behaviour literature. Job satisfaction can briefly be defined as an employee's positive emotion occurring through the evaluation of overall job characteristics (Robbins and Judge, 2012). Many job characteristics such as salary, promotion opportunities, and employee interaction may affect job satisfaction. Leadership behaviour is one of these characteristics that may influence employee work attitudes. In their meta-analytic work, Brown and Peterson (1993) concluded that leadership behaviours have significant effects on job satisfaction. Further studies have similarly supported the significant effect of ethical leadership on job satisfaction (Holtom, et al., 2008).

The association between leadership behaviour and job satisfaction would suggest that ethical leadership might have an influence on job satisfaction. Brown et al. (2005: 122) have noted that an ethical leader “*disciplines*

wrongdoers, treats their followers fairly and considerately, and exhibits transformational leadership style” therefore, there is a close relationship between ethical leadership and employee job satisfaction.

Brown and Mitchell (2010) have suggested that this relationship can be explained by organizational adjustment. Ethical leaders would help to accommodate a union between employees and organizational values by setting ethical standards and modelling these standards, thereby to increasing employees’ job satisfaction. Avey et al. (2012) have explained this association with the term “psychological contracts.” Accordingly, individuals implicitly await ethical behaviour standards in all forms of interaction. Employees partly evaluate how the leader meets these implicit expectations when evaluating their own job satisfaction. If the leader is perceived to meet these expectations, this will increase positive employee behaviour and, thus also job satisfaction. Results from previous research have supported this notion that ethical leadership is positively related to job satisfaction (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Neubert et al., 2009).

Organizational commitment is another one of the most widely studied topics within the organizational behaviour literature. Organizational commitment refers to employees’ emotional involvement, identification, and participation in their organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The commitment of an employee to the organization is bound to leadership behaviours (Meyer et al., 2002) and generally positive leadership behaviours contribute to this commitment most (Eisenberger et al., 2010).

This relationship can better be explained with Social Exchange Theory. Social exchange, unlike economic exchange, is more individualistic and connected with mutual affection, trust, and reciprocity (Hassan et al., 2014). According to Brown and Treviño (2006), ethical leaders’ behaviours of honesty, reliability, compassion, caring about others, and taking principled decisions brings about employees’ commitment to the leader and the organization.

Although Meyer and Allen (1991) have suggested a three-dimensional construct of organizational commitment (e.g., continuous, normative, and affective), many studies on the link between ethical leadership and employee commitment (Hassan et al., 2014; Loi et al., 2015; Neves and Story, 2015; Ng and Feldman, 2015) have studied organizational commitment on the basis of affective commitment, which is characterized by emotional attachment, organizational identification and involvement. Therefore, the current study, the affective commitment dimension was used to examine organizational commitment. Based on the results of previous research and literature the following Hypothesis 2 and 3 are set forth.

H2. Ethical leadership is positively correlated with job satisfaction.

H3. Ethical leadership is positively correlated with affective commitment.

Mediator effects of work attitudes

Many organizational theories share the attribute that happy workers are productive workers as well (Davar and Bala, 2014). A majority of research studies on various work settings has empirically verified this assumption. Meta-analytic studies on job satisfaction and performance have provided evidence for the significant relationship between the two constructs (Davar and Bala, 2014; Judge et al., 2001; Riketta, 2008). Within the educational settings, teachers' job satisfaction has been related to school effectiveness (Hung, 2012) and student achievement (Tek, 2014).

Employees' organizational commitment has also been associated with performance. For instance, Riketta (2002, 2008) has found that organizational commitment is positively correlated with job performance as a result of meta-analytic studies. In one study, Meyer et al. (1989) have found that job performance was positively related to affective commitment and negatively with continuous commitment. Similarly, Meyer and Allen's (1997) study has indicated that job performance was positively linked to affective and normative commitment where negative correlations were observed with continuous commitment. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that work attitudes would be related to school effectiveness.

Although there are many studies linking job attitudes to performance, there is limited research on the role of these variables in mediating the relationship between ethical leadership and performance. Social exchange theory would better explain why attitudes towards work are mediated by the relationship between ethical leadership and performance. According to social exchange theory, employees who are treated fairly, honestly, and pragmatically have more positive attitudes towards work, and these positive attitudes affect their behaviours and performances positively, as well (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Based on this finding, it can be considered whether attitudes towards work mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and job performance. Thus Hypothesis 4 and 5 are postulated.

H4. Work attitudes are related to school effectiveness

H5. Work attitudes mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and school effectiveness

Methodology

Participants

The participants consisted of 306 teachers who were selected from a random sample of schools located in three central districts in Konya, one of the biggest cities in central Anatolia, Turkey. Teachers were between the ages of 25 and 51, with a mean age of 29.2 years ($SD=3.2$). Of the participants 152 (49.7%) were women, and 154 (50.3%) were men. The average seniority was 10 years ranging from 1 to 35 years ($SD=7.36$), years in school was 4.06 years ranging from 1 to 30 years ($SD=3.66$), and years of work with current administrator was 2.50 years ranging from 1 to 8 years ($SD= 1.58$).

Instruments

Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) (Brown et al., 2005). ELS is a 10-item scale that measures respondents' perceptions of their supervisors' /directors' /managers' /principals' ethical behaviours. The current study used "My Principal" as the referent. Ratings are made on a five-point scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Sample items include "My ... makes fair and balanced decisions," and "My ... talks about the importance of ethics." The concurrent validity of the scale was supported by the positive correlations with consideration behaviour, honesty, trust in the leader, interactional fairness, socialized charismatic leadership and coefficient alpha reliability was .90. This study administered a Turkish version of the ELS (Tuna et al., 2012). The adapted ELS had an alpha coefficient of .92 and factorial analyses supported the unidimensionality of the scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the current study was .93.

Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer et al., 1993). OCS is an 18-item scale that measures three components of organizational commitment, namely, affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Ratings are made on a seven-point scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7). A sample item is "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own." Within the scope of this study, only 6-item affective commitment subscale was used. Affective commitment subscale has a good internal reliability across many studies ($\alpha=.85$) (Allen and Meyer, 1996). Turkish version of the scale (Wasti, 2000) had similar reliability and validity scores with the original scale. Affective commitment scale had acceptable internal reliability for this study ($\alpha=.75$).

Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al., 1967). MSQ is a 20-item scale which is used to measure respondents' satisfaction levels with their present jobs. Ratings are made on a five-point scale, ranging from Very Dissatisfied (1) to Very Satisfied (5). Sample items include "the way my boss handles people" and "being able to do things that don't against my conscience." The scale had good Cronbach alpha reliability of .88. This study administered a Turkish version of the MSQ (Baycan, 1985) which

demonstrated similar psychometric properties with the original scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this study was .95.

Index of Perceived Organizational Effectiveness (IPOE) (Miskel et al., 1979; Hoy and Ferguson, 1985). IPOE is an 8-item measure of the overall effectiveness of the school organization. Ratings are made on a five-point scale, ranging from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (6). Sample items include “The quality of products and services produced in this school is outstanding” and “The teachers in my school do a good job coping with emergencies and disruptions.” In previous research high Cronbach alpha estimates ($\alpha=.87$) (Hoy and Ferguson, 1985) were found. Turkish version of the scale (Negiş-Işık and Gümüş, 2013) had also good psychometric properties. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this study was .94.

Procedure

Packets of instruments and the covering letter explaining the purpose of the study, importance of voluntary participation and guarantee of autonomy were delivered to 363 teachers by the author. Of these delivered packets, 346 were returned with a 95.3% return rate. Thirty-two of the instruments were omitted because of missing responses or inconsistencies. Lastly, eight outliers were eliminated based on Mahalanobis Distance. The analyses were conducted with the remaining 306 teachers’ instruments

Analyses

All preliminary analyses, descriptive statistics, correlations, and Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates were conducted with SPSS version 22, and the measurement model was tested using AMOS version 22 (Arbuckle, 2013). Prior to analyses, study variables were examined for assumptions for normal distribution, linearity, and multicollinearity. No problems were detected with normality as normal probability plots of the residuals and residual histograms confirmed normality and multicollinearity, as all

correlations were below .90 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2015). To empirically address the common method variance issue, Harman's one-factor test was used. According to Harman's one factor test, common method variance is present if a single factor is emerged as a result of the factor analysis or a single common factor accounts for the majority of the covariance among the variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The results of an explanatory factor analysis using all items within the study variables did not indicate a single-factor structure as the largest variance explained by an individual factor was 42.6%. Thus, the results suggest that common method bias is not a significant issue in this study, and it does not confound the interpretation of the results.

Results

Measurement model

Prior to test the hypothesis model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the validity of measurement model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Measurement model consist of four latent variables (ethical leadership, school effectiveness, affective commitment and job satisfaction) with their respective items. The measurement four factor model had an acceptable fit ($\chi^2= 766.3$, $df= 286$; $\chi^2/df= 2.7$, $p< .001$; CFI=.94; RMSEA=.07; SRMR=.05 (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2015) and all indicators had significant loadings ($p<.05$) on their intended constructs, average factor loadings was .75. For the measurement model, all the fit indices were within the accepted threshold except for the RMSEA which is slightly over the recommended .06 cutoff value. Because criteria for the RMSEA ranges from less conservative $\leq .10$ to more conservative $\leq .05$ (Byrne, 2010; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996), the RMSEA value at .07 falls within the margins of acceptability.

Hypothesized model

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliabilities, and correlations among the study variables. All variables demonstrated acceptable reliability coefficients ranging from .75 to .95.

As expected, all variables had significant relationship with each other. A series of regression analyses were performed to test the research hypotheses and the results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics and Correlations among study variables.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Ethical leadership	3.83	.97	(.95)			
2. School effectiveness	4.30	1.12	.69**	(.94)		
3. Affective commitment	3.52	.86	.43**	.54**	(.75)	
4. Job satisfaction	3.72	.81	.75**	.77**	.58**	(.95)

Note. n= 306. The Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients are reported in diagonal. School Effectiveness Index is a six-point scale and all other scales are rated on a five-point scale.

** $p < .000$

Hypothesis 1 suggested that ethical leadership is positively related to school effectiveness. In the first step, regression analysis was conducted to test H1. Regression analysis showed that ethical leadership was significantly and positively related to school effectiveness ($\beta = .69$, $p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Second step requires that ethical leadership is significantly related to affective commitment and job satisfaction. In support of this requirement, results revealed that affective commitment ($\beta = .43$, $p < .01$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = .75$, $p < .01$) were significantly related to ethical leadership, so Hypothesis 2-3 were supported.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that work attitudes are related to school effectiveness. In the third step, multiple regression analysis was conducted to test H4. As seen in Table 2, affective commitment ($\beta=.15$, $p< .05$) and job satisfaction ($\beta=.69$, $p< .01$) were both related to school effectiveness. When examining the Beta values, job satisfaction was a stronger predictor of school effectiveness compared to affective commitment.

Hypothesis 5 predicts that work attitudes mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and school effectiveness. To test for mediation, Baron and Kenny (1986) recommendations was followed; (1) there must be a statistically significant relationship between the predictor (ethical leadership) and mediator(s) (affective commitment and job satisfaction), (2) there must be a statistically significant relationship between the mediator and the outcome (school effectiveness) and finally (3) when the mediator(s) is/are entered in the model, the relationship between the predictor and outcome must be non-significant (for full mediation) or weaken (for partial mediation). In step four, ethical leadership, affective commitment and job satisfaction were taken together in the same model and the change in the coefficient of ethical leadership from model 1 was assessed.

As seen in Table 2, regression results of model 5 revealed that mediator variables affective commitment ($\beta=.15$, $p< .05$) and job satisfaction ($\beta=.50$, $p< .01$) were significantly related to school effectiveness. Although the relation between ethical leadership and school effectiveness was still significant ($\beta=.25$, $p< .01$), regression coefficient was weakened. These results confirmed that work attitudes partially mediated the relationship between ethical leadership and school effectiveness. Finally, Sobel test (Sobel, 1982) was used to assess the significance of the mediation. The result of the Sobel test confirmed that indirect effect of ethical leadership and school effectiveness was significant (affective commitment: $z = 6.73$, $p < .01$; job satisfaction: $z = 14.49$, $p < .01$), thus Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Table 2.

Regression model results: effects of ethical leadership on school effectiveness.

Level and variable	School Effectiveness (Model 1)	Affective commitment (Model 2)	Job Satisfaction (Model 3)	School Effectiveness (Model 4)	School Effectiveness (Model 5)
<i>Step 1</i>					
Intercept	1.22 (.19)**				
Ethical leadership	.69 (.05)**				
R ²	.47**				
<i>Step 2</i>					
Intercept		2.05 (.18)**	1.30 (.12)**		
Ethical leadership		.43 (.05)**	.75 (.03)**		
R ²		.19**	.56**		
<i>Step 3</i>					
Intercept				.094 (.20)**	
<i>Affective commitment</i>				.15 (.06)*	
<i>Job satisfaction</i>				.69 (.06)**	
R ²				.61**	
<i>Step 4</i>					
Intercept					-.06 (.19)**
Ethical leadership					.25 (.06)**
<i>Affective commitment</i>					.15 (.05)*
<i>Job satisfaction</i>					.50 (.07)**
R ²					.64**

Note. Values in parentheses are standard errors.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Discussion and conclusions

The current study sought to examine the relationship between ethical leadership and school effectiveness as well as the mediating roles of job satisfaction and affective commitment on this relationship. The overall results revealed that ethical leadership positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment and all these variables associated with school effectiveness.

Specifically, the link between ethical leadership and school effectiveness was tested first and a positive high correlation was found. Previous research in different sectors demonstrated that ethical leadership is associated with in-role performance (Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014; Piccolo et al., 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2012; Weng, 2014; Zhu et al., 2015), organizational performance (Eisenbeiss et al., 2015; Zhu et al., 2014), and extra-role performance (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2013; Lu, 2014; Ogunfowora, 2014; Toor and Ofori, 2009). However, there have been few studies on the relationship between ethical leadership and teacher performance or student achievement in the school sample. In one example, Ehrich et al. (2015) emphasized that ethical leaders contribute to the achievement of students, who even seem disadvantaged, by encouraging both employees and students to adopt values, such as co-operation and social justice. Their study results revealed that ethical leaders can improve teachers' efforts on student learning by demonstrating ethical behaviours in their own behaviours as well as in their communication with teachers. Since student achievement is seen as an important indicator of school effectiveness (Hoy and Ferguson, 1985), the current findings that ethical leadership and school effectiveness is positively correlated supports Ehrich and colleagues' findings.

Another finding was that job satisfaction and school effectiveness were highly correlated. As aforementioned, very limited studies have been conducted on job satisfaction and school effectiveness. In one example (Hung, 2012), teachers' job satisfaction significantly affected school effectiveness among 521 primary schools teachers in Taiwan. In another example, Tek (2014) found that teachers' job satisfaction significantly predicted students' achievement as measured by two standardized tests developed and administered in the state of Massachusetts, US. Taken together, our current findings provide additional evidence that a school's effectiveness would be affected by its teachers' satisfaction with their profession.

The results of the mediation test demonstrated that job satisfaction and affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between ethical leadership and school effectiveness. That is, ethical leadership had both direct

and indirect (over teachers' work attitudes) effects on school effectiveness meaning that ethical leadership behaviours contribute to school effectiveness and that this could at least partly be explained by an improved affective commitment and job satisfaction of the teachers. Parallel to this result, many field studies indicated that administrators' ethical leadership behaviours are associated with employees' work attitudes (Avey et al., 2012; Çelik et al., 2015; Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014; Hassan et al., 2014; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Loi et al., 2015; Madenoğlu et al., 2014; Neves and Story, 2015; Ogunfowora, 2014). Brown et al. (2005) and Brown and Treviño (2006) stated that ethical leadership's effect on employee attitudes and behaviours can be explained by social exchange theory. Accordingly, ethical leaders' positive behaviours towards employees trigger employees' positive attitudes in return.

The current study's findings also demonstrated that employees' affective commitment is associated with school effectiveness as well. This result is not surprising when we consider that much research after Hawthorne's studies indicated that employees' positive attitudes affects employee performance (Judge et al., 2001; Meyer et al., 1989; Susanty et al., 2013) and school effectiveness (Hung, 2012; Schulz and Teddlie, 1989). In line with these researches, the current findings add to the international body of research on these relations, especially for the research in educational settings.

Similar results were obtained from studies examining the mediating role of job satisfaction and affective commitment between ethical leadership and organizational performance. For instance, Kim and Brymer (2011) tested a model examining the relationship between ethical leadership, emotional responses (job satisfaction, affective commitment), and behaviour outcomes (extra effort, turnover intention, and competitive performance). As a result of the research, it has been found that ethical leadership is related to emotional reactions and emotional reactions are also related to behavioural outcomes except for extra effort. The research also tested an alternative model in which the direct effect of ethical leadership on behavioural outcomes was examined, but direct pathways between ethical leadership and behavioural outcomes were not found to be statistically significant. Within similar studies of leadership styles that emphasize the moral potential of the leader

(transformational, spiritual, and authentic), the mediating effects of work-related attitudes between leadership behaviours and performance were also tested. In their research, Kader-Ali and Tang (2016) found that transformational, transactional, authentic and spiritual leadership styles are associated with job performance and that job satisfaction has a mediating role in this relationship. In accordance with these results, Feng (2015) concluded that transformational leadership is associated with organizational behaviour and that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment mediated this relationship.

As a result of the research, it has been found that ethical leadership is significantly related to school effectiveness, and that the job satisfaction and affective commitment of teachers have partially mediated this relationship. As this study shows, it is important to emphasize that ethical leadership is a variable that should be taken into consideration both in terms of the attitudes of teachers towards their work and in terms of school effectiveness.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present study has a number of limitations. First, because of the cross-sectional nature of the study design, causal inferences about observed associations cannot be made. Thus, further longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to better understand the nature of these associations.

Second, perceived school effectiveness was considered as a performance variable. Although Hoy and Ferguson (1985) reported that school efficacy scale data correlate with objective efficacy indicators such as student achievement at moderate and high levels, it is useful to use objective performance indicators in further research to obtain more reliable findings. A similar situation applies to attitudes towards work and performance. As a source of performance evaluation, self-ratings or manager ratings can be used (Judge et al, 2001; Riketta, 2002).

Third, all data of the study were collected from a single source which may cause a response bias. Therefore, using a multi-source measurement approach could help lessen the mentioned problems. Based on these limitations, it would be useful for future research to replicate the current findings within school settings and further examine other potential mediating factors between school principals' ethical behaviours and schools' effectiveness along with job satisfaction and affective commitment. For instance, organizational justice perceptions, organizational voice/silence, organizational climate/culture, and psychological ownership may be relevant mediators between ethical managerial behaviours and effectiveness within educational settings.

Despite these limitations, given the contribution of a school principals' ethical leadership behaviours in promoting a school's effectiveness, educational policy makers should recognize the importance of ethics and formulate policies that will encourage and support ethical behaviours within schools. They should also invest in ethics training programmes for principals and teachers aimed at increasing ethical behaviours in schools.

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