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(Review Article)

Professional Ethics and Workplace Safety Behaviors

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Abstract

Background: Perceived organizational policy, considered as one of the most important variables in the organizational behavior and an effective factor in the social and organizational context of every society, has stimulated many studies. One important issue in the literature of organizational policy is examining its relation with job quit and ethics. These politics may be perceived either positive or negative. However, many researchers have focused their studies on the negative perception of organizational policies and its consequences at work for the communication power of policies in the organization and intensity of negative consequences resulting from negative policies at individual and organizational levels. Political behavior can affect job productivity. The employees who perceive organizational environment as political recognize it stressful, disappointing and disproportionate with their psychological features. The goal of this study is examining the role of professional ethics as the mediator of negative consequence of perceived organizational policy i.e. intention of job quit.

Conclusion: Most Organizations believe that if the intervening policies decrease in the organization, their psychological features will increase and they will consider professional ethics' criteria in that job more. They will also have lower intention to quit their jobs. Thus, organizations should provide the conditions for decreasing job quit and increasing professional ethics in case of the existence of organizational policy.

Keywords: Perceived organizational policy, Professional ethics, Job quit

Introduction

Nowadays, all signals reveal centrality of the role of human and human resources in opening bottlenecks, developing technology, and producing different products. Undoubtedly, the cornerstone of every organization is human resources. By the advent of knowledge-based economy and the school of knowledge management human being has found a superior and central role than the production factor as organizational capital (1). They believe that human resource is important for its scarceness, validness, non-succession and immutability (2). It is believed that human re-

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sources can create competitive advantages for the organization. In fact, among all production factors, human resources create difference in an organization. The capability and commitment of human being differentiates successful organizations from the others. Thus, reasonably, human resources require paying much attention and time for it (3).

One major issue in the organizations is job quit of the employees especially expert and valuable members. Managers and researchers identify job quit costly, problematic, with threatening consequences for the organizational efficiency (4). It can be said that intention of job quit measures employees' decision to leave the organization affecting dynamism of the inter-organizational labor and final destination of the organization (5). As the closest predictor of real job quit, intention of job quit is considered as an undesirable consequence in the organization (6). For the high costs of job quit, many organizations want to decrease the number of job-quitting staffs (7). From the factors which can affect the intention of job quit is perceived organizational policies

Based on some researchers view perceived organizational policies is defined as the perception of an organizational member from the organizational behaviors of other members with the goal of proceeding of one's personal benefits to the others' or organizational benefits (8). Perceived organizational policy is shaped as a result of interpreting others' behaviors and organizational events by the preceptor, being either positive or negative. Although these policies may be perceived either as positive or negative, for the power of communicating policy in the organization and the intensity of negative consequences resulting from negative policies at the individual and organizational level, many researchers have focused their studies on the negative perception of the organizational policy and its consequences at work (9-11). The relationship between organizational policies and the variables of attitude and job behavior is perceived. For example, previous studies found that perceived organizational policies have a negative effect on the job performance and satisfaction (9 , 12) and a positive effect on the intention of job quit (9,13).Also, two meta-analysis were published which examined the effect of perceived organizational support on different job returns. These meta-analyses found that perceived policies are positively correlated with job stress and intention of job quit and negatively correlated with job satisfaction and performance (14, 15). Some researchers identify that ambiguity is a vital feature of the work environment which provides a chance for different damaging political behaviors. Although the political behaviors provide a potential positive chance in the specific cases, research showed that they can have negative effects on the mental states of the employees (16). Related studies show that when political behaviors are observed in an organization, the staff may feel upset and suggest negative behaviors.

Regarding few theoretical perception from the way the perceptions of the politics affect the staffs' return, recent studies invite future scholars to examine related factors to the personal and underlying differences as the mediator in such relations (9-13). Although few studies have tried to explore the mediating role of the variables of individual difference in the relation between the perceived policies and different resources, there is little knowledge on the effect of individual psychological resources especially psychological capital on the relationship of perceived politics and the returns such as intention of job quit, professional ethics, job satisfaction, and job performance.

Nowadays, growing complication of the organizations and increased immoral and illegal deeds at work places have necessitated the attention of managers and leaders to create and retain professional ethics in all organizations (17).professional ethics is a kind of ethical commitment and consciousness towards any work, duty, and responsibility. Being ethical in any job is the result of knowing, demanding, performing, and attitude (18). Growing attention to the professional ethics has necessitated many research needs and studies. Accordingly, this study examines the role of professional ethics in decreasing negative consequences of perceived organizational policies (e .g. job quit).

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Ethics in politics

Politics is an inevitable phenomenon in the organizational life. Nowadays, the existence of political behaviors in the organization is an undeniable fact (19). The domain of organizational politics has received growing attention from the organizational researchers in two recent decades (20). The basis of the important theory for the politics in the organizations was suggested by Mintzberg (1983, 1985). He suggested that we can interpret the organizations as the political fields (21).Political behavior in the organization includes conscious actions done for the penetration by the people or groups for the achievements or protecting one 's benefits in the time of having conflicting solutions. Emphasis on one 's benefits in this definition differentiates political behavior from social penetration. Conceptualizing organizational politics is controversial. Undoubtedly, politics is a common and known phenomenon in every organization. In this vein, some researchers believe that all behaviors in the organization are political but there is little knowledge on the nature and borders of it. Most people just see the dark side of political behaviors. In this negative view, politics is synonym with deceit for meeting personal needs (Machiavellian ethics) whose features are destructive opportunisms and tricks. But, from a positive view, politics is reasonable conversation, negotiation, bargain, and solution finding for the conflicts of the people and groups (19).

Predictors of organizational politics' perception

Organizational factors: For examining the first category, the variables of concentration formality, procedural justice, and cooperation in decision-making were considered. Concentration is the extent to which the power of decision making is distributed in the organization. Cooperation in decision-making reflects power distribution in the organization. The employees who have more cooperation in decision-makings have more authority over the decisions and processes at work; this may lead to the justice and equity feeling, accompanying less perception of the politics. When cooperation in decision-makings increases, perception of organizational politics decreases. Since, cooperation decreases ambiguity and increases control and justice feeling (22).

Job factors: In this category, the variables of independence, feedback, skill variety, and interaction with manager are examined. According to some researchers view, people gain power as a function of their duties. More independence, skill variety and feedback are reflections of the growing responsibility that organization suggests for the person and may be known as the personal power. People who don't have such power and control may feel that their destination are determined by the political processes. Managers who deal with others opportunistically increase one 's perception about politics in the organization while good relations with people should be negatively related with politics' perception (23).

Personal factors: Personal factors affect politics perception. The primary mechanism which relates these factors with organizational politics is the duality between rational, fair, and professional views in the organization against biased view by the power games of authoritative people in the organization. The primary mechanism which relates these factors with organizational politics is duality between rational, fair and professional organizational view and directed view by the power games of authoritative and self-serving people in the organization (23).

Nowadays, organizations try to decrease negative effects of perceived organizational politics through different factors. Since the probability of removing or decreasing organizational politics is unlikely, this issue can be examined using psychological factors such as psychological capital, providing the grounds for increasing professional ethics (3). The following section discusses professional ethics and its elements. Professional ethics is a set of principles and standards of human life, identifying the behavior of the people and groups. In fact, professional ethics is a rational thinking process whose goal is finding the values and the proper times for their spread. Ethics suggests that "the environment has rights and the organization has duty (24).

When the complex ethical issues occur, important moral considerations may be ignored. In

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this time, professional ethics can be regarded as the decision making guide and a flip for one 's conscience. It can be said that ethical crises occur in every profession and society when no definite value is determined for different professions and societies or at least not formed conventionally in that profession (25).

Basic factors of professional ethics

One scholar of this theory, Zionts identifies the following factors as the basic elements of professional ethics:

1. Professional independence of scientific ethics: This factor like ethics in any professional system should reflect internal norms of the profession and the feeling of ethical commitment from the professionals and their technical institutes rather than being imposed accepted or warned in the module of ethical does and don'ts.
2. Professional self-understanding-basics of ethics are professional self-understanding. With the understanding of the professional work and activities, its philosophy, and relation with human life, people get ethical understanding of it and find a kind of internal commitment to those values in their relations with nature and the environment around themselves.
3. Objectivity, unbiasedness, impartiality: From important principals confirmed in most documents and debates on the scientific professional ethics is considering objectivity and unbiasedness. The person who uses professional ethics in his professional life should not have irrational bias towards the source which has immoral features.
4. Going beyond the livelihood concept: by the time that one is involved in the physiological issues, attention to other issues will be lower. The meaning of professional ethics reveals by passing from the livelihood concept.

Three feelings that people experience during their professional business:

1. The feeling of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality production as the value added,
2. The feeling of serving people and being useful,
3. The feeling of being released by the redistribution of the opportunities and power criticism (26).

The relationship between politics and job quit

Job quit is the issue in which most organizations are involved and try to avoid. In fact, job quit refers to the employees' intention to job quit. Among the factors that can affect the employees' job quit is perceived organizational support which is concerned as the negative behavior and self-service.

One basic issue and problem of the organizations is job quit of the employees and especially expert and valuable staff (4). Some researchers stated that deliberate quit of the members in an organization can decrease efficiency of an organization (27). High job quit rate of the employees endangers progress in reaching predefined organizational goals. Job quit shows many cost losses in provision, education, social investments, destruction, replacement of human resources, and spending many indirect costs. Consequently, it has negative effects on the spirit and return of the remaining people in the organization. Although, the benefits of weak employees' job quit, creating promotion opportunities and the possibility of recruitment of new people with new ideas for the organization should not be ignored. Thus, the organizations which can understand effective factors in the employees' job quit, using correct information with necessary and on time predictions along with ensured policies and methods are most likely to have effective management in retaining efficient human resources (28). Most researchers start their studies with the assumption that job quit of the employees is a non-functional and undesirable phenomenon that should be decreased possibly and its progress should be banned. Analyzing the reasons of different job quits, Abelson divides them into 4

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general groups. He considers two criteria for grouping the types of job quits. The first criterion is organizational control. Based on this criterion, a group of job quits like tendency to leave the organization for more payments in another place is under the control of the organization and inevitable. While, another group like the need to work at home or changing job path for more growth is not under the control of the organization and is inevitable. The second criterion is controllability from the employee based on which job quits are divided into two groups: The group under the control of the employee and deliberate such as conflict with the manager and the group which is not under the control of the employee being undeliberate such as compulsory or early retirement or disability(29). Generally, those job quits which are under the control of the employee are related to job and organizational satisfaction; while, those job quits which are under the control of the organization and its authorities are related to the performance, efficiency, and organizational commitment of the people.in this vein, job quits can be divided into two groups of functional and non-functional types.

As already mentioned, political behavior can affect job return, job satisfaction, and etc. if the people who work in the organization don't regard organizational policies proportional to their personal and spiritual qualities, they may leave the organization or stay in it without involving in the politics. Based on this difference, the employees who perceived organizational environment as political identify it stressful, disappointing and improper for their psychological features.

For minimizing the effects of organizational policies, some researchers have suggested some points. Based on them, performance evaluation processes should be elaborated, strong and weak performances should be differentiated and rewarded differently; rewards should be directly related with the performances. Conflict of interests among managers should be minimized or removed. Managers whose operations are based on the political personality must be dealt by issuing a directive (to prevent political tricks). If they still continue their ways, they should be removed from the organizational posts and if necessary be fired (30). Most organizational employees believe that if the intervening policies decrease in the organization, their psychological features will improve; then, they will consider the criteria of professional ethics, having lower intention to quit their jobs. Thus, the organizations should provide the grounds for decreasing job quit and increasing professional ethics in case of the existence of organizational policies.

The relationship between politics, job unit, and ethics in the experimental studies

Based on the literature, it is observed that by increasing perceived organizational policies, intention to job quit of the employees increases (8, 11, 19, 31- 35). Some researchers suggested at least three potential responses for perceiving political organizational environment. Employees may leave the organization, stay in the organization but don't get involved in the politics. They may also stay in the organization and do political activities. Based on this differentiation, the employees who perceive organizational environment politically know it stressful, ambiguous, and disappointing. Those who have decided to stay and get involved in the politics may try to gain degrees of control over the organizational environment (36). Most researchers have argued that perceiving politics is stressful and detrimental, with negative potential effects on a wide area of personal and professional consequences (37). Thus, in an organization where the employees perceive the organization and work place unfair in which just the demands and wishes of the political and strong people are improved, the grounds are provided for the job quit. This intention turns into practice and the person leaves the organization or leaves it mentally or spiritually although physically present in it. Despite the strong evidences on the perception of organizational policies and various negative consequences (such as job quit) for the people and managers, organizations should notice the factors that create these perceptions. Previous studies show the positive and significant correlation of perceived organizational support and intention to job quit. Thus, by increasing

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perceived organizational support the intention to job quit increases as well. Some researchers suggest that ambiguity is a vital feature of the work environment, providing the opportunity for various detrimental political behaviors. Although political behaviors are potentially a positive opportunity in specific cases, research shows that they will probably have negative effects on the mental states of the employees (22). Related studies showed that when the political behaviors are observed, the employees may feel upset and suggest negative behaviors. Consistent with the phenomenological approach of responsiveness, some researchers have generally discussed that political policies have more important roles in penetrating next attitudes and behaviors than objective realities. Thus, based on the theoretical and experimental evidences it can be said that people use organizational policy for reaching illegal goals or fulfilling legal goals through illegal tools. In fact, one feature of organizational policy is Machiavellian based on which people try to reach their goals by any means. While professional ethics are created in the organizations since people know how to behave and act. In other words, professional ethics is a set of principles and standards which the behaviors of the groups and people determine. Thus, in such conditions, a phenomenon like organizational politics can decrease professional ethics of the employees in the organization. In such conditions, people are ready to violate organizational standards and ethics to reach their goals. Based on the studies, there is a negative and significant correlation between the perceived organizational politics and professional ethics of the employees. Thus, by increasing perceived organizational support, the amount of professional ethics decreases.

Since psychological capital is the positive aspect of human lives based on one' s personal understanding and having goal for reaching success and consistency against problems (38, 39), it can predict professional ethics as a kind of ethical commitment and conscience (18). Thus, by increasing psychological capital of the staff, they will act with more positive attitude and way as a result of which professional ethics increases. In fact, one goal of most organizations is reaching high ethical level at work by which individuals can reach their organizational goals. This is not fulfilled unless there is a labor with strong psychological capital which acts with positive view, self-efficiency, hope and optimism in the organization, helping it to reach its goals.

Conclusion

Professional ethics has both organizational and meta-organizational effects. It can be said that one of the important success key in the organizations is attention to the professional ethics. The more the professional ethics is considered in the organizations by the managers and employees (or professional ethics is spread in the organization), the more the organizational conflicts decrease and the organization can fulfill predicted goals. Since political behavior can affect job return and job quit of many people, the employees who perceive organizational environment politically identify it stressful, disappointing, and disproportional to their own psychological features. Most employees of the organizations believe that if the intervening policies decrease in the organization, their psychological features will increase, criteria of professional ethics will be more considered, and there will be lower intention to job quit. As a result, organizations should provide the grounds for decreasing job quit and increasing professional ethics in case of the existence of organizational policies.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors.

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