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FACTORS AFFECTING ETHICAL LEADERSHIP OF BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE BASIC EDUCATION COMMISSION: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were (1) To study ethical leadership, internal and external factors of the school affecting ethical leadership; and (2) To study the influences of internal and external factors of the school affecting ethical leadership. The research sample consisted of 215 basic

education school administrators. The employed research instruments were a form containing guidelines for in-depth interviews, and a 5-scale rating questionnaire. Research findings:(1) It was found that five aspects of ethical leadership, namely, having good discipline, behaving as a good model, Leading the proper way of life, love and faith in the profession, and professional responsibility. And it was found internal and external factors of the school affecting ethical leadership, namely, having a prototype model person, ethical enhancement from social institutions, ethical enhancing social environment, characteristics fostering ethical development, having ethical oriented atmosphere, having the practices based on social norm, having ethical oriented organizational culture, and having ethical-based reward and punishment system.(2) The influence of the internal factors was a little higher than that of the external factors of the school.

Keywords

Factors affecting ethical leadership, Ethical leadership, and Basic education school, Administrator, The Office of the Basic Education Commission, Structural equation model

1. Introduction

At present, the Thai society has experienced the “leader crisis” and “moral/ethical crisis” causing the crisis of faith toward the leaders of various groups, which leads to the society becoming fragmented and conflicted. These crises have had serious impacts on political, economic and social mobilization of the country leading to the standing still condition without any way out. Especially in educational organizations, if the educational administrators who have the duty and roles in educational management have ethical leadership at the immoral/unethical level, or at the amoral level, the crisis of faith will inevitably occur (Saratna, Wirote, 2010). Problems that consequently occur as results of this crisis of faith were the lack of acceptance from teachers and other educational personnel, the dissatisfaction with the administrators and the lack of confidence in their leadership, or even the opposition to their authority which causes them to have obstacles in performing their duty and finally leading to failure in educational administration (Jen-aksorn, Noppadon, 2010). Worse than that, if the immoral or amoral conducts of the educational administrators are accepted by their inferiors and other personnel, the personnel under them will imitate their immoral conducts causing those immoral conducts to become the norm conducts of the group leading to finally transforming the organization into an immoral organization (Lussier & Achua, 2007). Organizations at any level need to have

leaders who will determine the operational directions based on the objectives and goals of the organization. If any organization has the leader with ethical leadership, knowledge and ability, it can successfully compete with any other organization. Therefore, ethical leadership is necessary and important to the development of the organization and the country.

Based on the above discussion on the importance of ethical leadership, the school administrators as leaders of the organization, the researcher is interested in studying factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The research findings can provide the body of academic knowledge that can be applied in practice in accordance with the context of schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. It can also be useful for basic education school administrators, their supervisory work agencies, outside organizations and interested persons to apply as the guidelines for further development of factors affecting ethical leadership in the future.

2. Objectives

2.1 To study ethical leadership, internal factors, and external factors of the school affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission.

2.2 To study the influences of internal factors and external factors of the school affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission.

3. Conceptual Framework of Research

The conceptual framework of research shown components of ethical leadership was obtained from a synthesis of characteristics of leaders who were well-accepted on their ethical conducts in accordance with the religious principles, Eastern theoretical concepts, Western theoretical concepts, laws, regulations and code of ethics, and research findings concerning ethics and ethical leadership both in Thailand and in foreign countries. The factors affecting ethical leadership was obtained from a synthesis of the Ethical Tree Theory (Phanthumnawin, Duangduean, 2008). Transformational leadership (Bass, 2005; Priyanka & Venkat, 2000; Sermsak Wisalaporn, 2007). And the synthesis of research studies on the moral characteristics and moral inculcation process in various countries (Chongsathityu, Chueachan & Sukharom, Rungruang, 2550). The conceptual framework of research is shown in Figure 1 below:

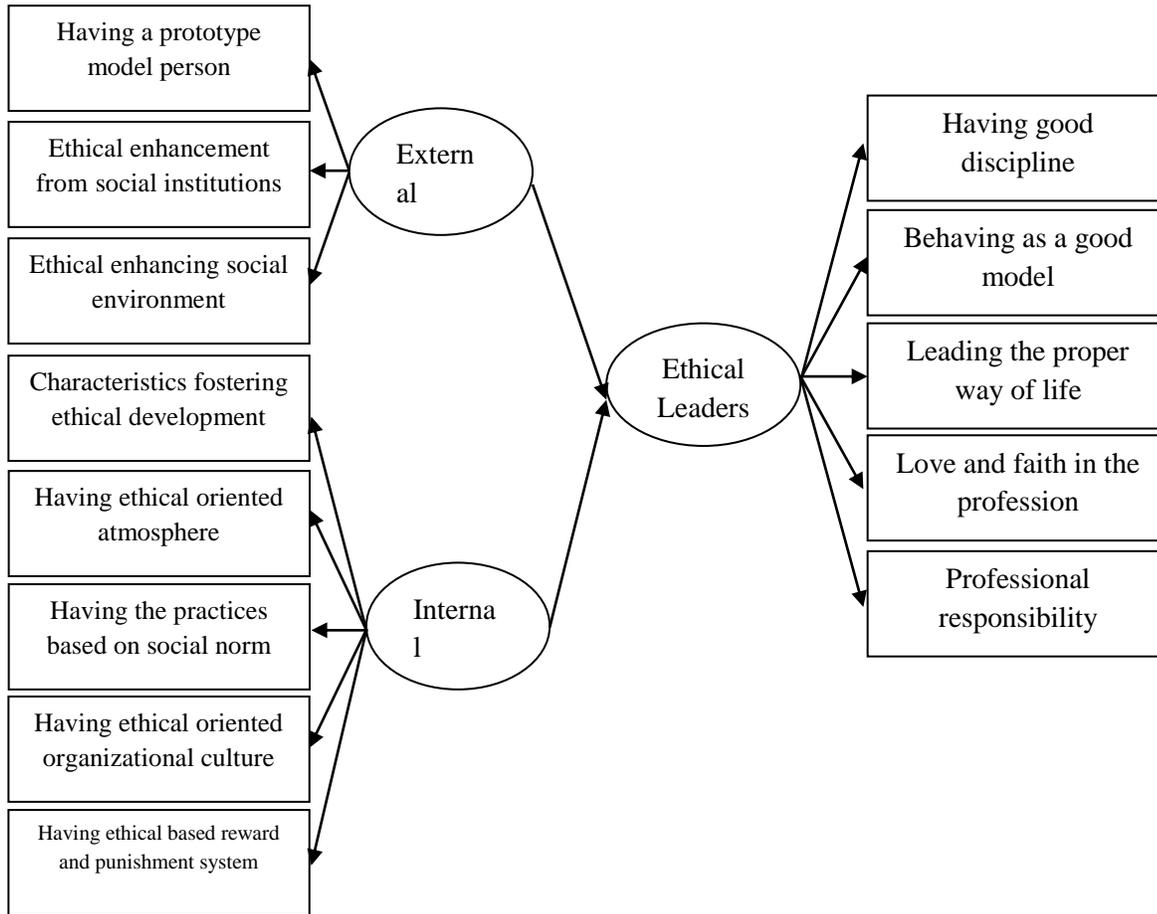


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Research

4. Research Operation

The research operation comprised two stages as follows:

The First Stage: Identification of ethical leadership components and indicators of factors affecting ethical leadership. The qualitative research method was employed in this stage. Data were collected via in-depth interviews. Key informants totaling nine experts comprised experts from the school administrator development group, experts on ethics, representatives of the school administrators group, and representatives of the group of school administrators acknowledged as having high ethical level. The employed research instrument was a guideline form for in-depth interview questions developed by the researcher and verified by the major dissertation advisor. Data were analyzed with content analysis. The results were

then synthesized to identify ethical leadership components and factors affecting ethical leadership to be developed into the conceptual framework of research.

The Second Stage: Validity verification of ethical leadership components and indicators of factors affecting ethical leadership. The research activities in this stage comprised two steps of operation:

The first step: confirmatory analysis of ethical leadership components and indicators of factors affecting ethical leadership. The survey research was employed in this step. The research sample consisted of 215 school administrators acknowledged as having high ethical level. The employed research instruments were two 5-scale rating questionnaires. The first questionnaire with 75 question items was on ethical leadership of basic school administrators. The second questionnaire with 45 question items was on factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators. The two questionnaires were verified on their quality by the major dissertation advisor and six experts.

The questionnaires were sent by mail to each member of the research sample for data collection. In data analysis, respondents' personal background data, level of ethical leadership, and factors affecting ethical leadership were statistically analyzed using the frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation; while data on the components of ethical leadership and factors affecting ethical leadership were analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis. Computer programs were employed for data processing and analysis.

The second step: determination of the influences of factors affecting ethical leadership. The data obtained from the second step of the first stage were analyzed with the structure equation model analysis. Then the structure equation model was tested to determine its conformity with empirical data using the goodness of fit statistics.

5. Conclusions of Research Findings

Conclusions of research findings are as follows:

5.1 Results of the study of components of ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission show that there are five components of ethical leadership: (1) having good discipline, (2) behaving as a good model, (3) following the appropriate way of life, (4) having the love and faith in the profession, and (5)

having professional responsibility. These five components with their levels as indicated by their rating means are shown in Table 5.1 below:

Table 1: *Levels of ethical leadership components of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission*

Ethical Leadership Components (MLEAD)	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
1.Having good discipline (DISCI)	4.47	.40	High
2.Behaving as a good model (MODEL)	4.45	.42	High
3. Leading the proper way of life (GOOD)	4.44	.39	High
4. Having the love and faith in the profession (LOVE)	4.40	.45	High
5. Having professional responsibility (RESPON)	4.43	.46	High
Total	4.44	41.	High

From Table 1, it can be seen that ethical leadership as a whole of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission, as perceived by teachers, is at the high level (overall rating mean = 4.44). The component with the highest rating mean is that of having good discipline (rating mean = 4.47); while the component with the lowest rating mean was that of having the love and faith in the teacher profession (rating mean = 4.40)

2 Results of the study of factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission show that there are two factors affecting ethical leadership: (1) External factors, namely, having a prototype model person, ethical enhancement from social institutions, ethical enhancing social environment. (2) Internal factors,namely, characteristics fostering ethical development, having ethical oriented atmosphere, having the practices based on social norm, having ethical oriented organizational culture, and having ethical-based reward and punishment system.having. Details of these factors and their sub-factors with their levels as indicated by their rating means are shown in Table 5.2 below:

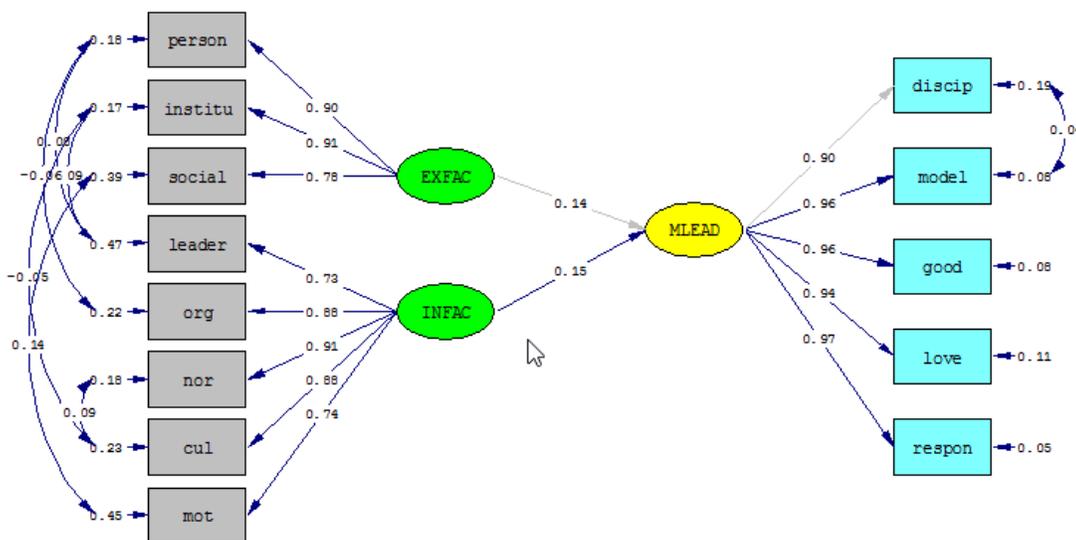
Table 2: *Levels of factors affecting ethical leadership components of basic education school administrators*

Factors Affecting Ethical Leadership	\bar{X}	SD	Level
External factors of the school (EXFAC)	4.24	0.54	High
.1 Having a prototype model person (PERS)	4.19	.59	High

Factors Affecting Ethical Leadership	\bar{X}	SD	Level
.2.Ethical enhancement from social institutions (INSTI)	4.33	.55	High
.3 Ethical enhancing social environment (SOC)	4.19	.66	High
Internal Factors of the school (INFAC)	4.30	.048	High
1. Characteristics fostering ethical development (LEADER)	4.33	.46	High
2 .Having ethical oriented atmosphere (ORG)	4.38	.59	High
3. Having the practices based on social norm (NOR)	4.34	.61	High
4. Having ethical oriented organizational culture (CUL)	4.33	.63	High
5. Having ethical-based reward and punishment system (MOT)	4.06	.78	High

From Table 2, it can be seen that both the overall and by-aspect internal and external factors of the school are rated at the high level (rating means are 4.30 and 4.24 for overall internal and external factors respectively). The factor receiving the highest rating mean is that of having ethical oriented atmosphere, with equal rating means of 4.38; while the factor receiving the lowest rating mean is that of having a prototype model person and working with ethical persons, and that of having ethical-based reward and punishment system with equal rating means of 4.19.

Table 3 Results of the study of influences of factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. The study was analyzed in two steps as follows:



Chi-Square=78.06, df=56, P-value=0.02734, RMSEA=0.043

Figure 2: Results of testing the conformity to empirical data of the adjusted conceptual framework model of research to study influences of factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators

From Figure 2, it can be seen that the model conforms to the empirical data as indicated by the value of $\chi^2 = 78.06$ df = 56 P-value= 0.027 $\chi^2/df = 1.39$ CFI = 0.95 AGFI = 0.99 RMSEA = 0.043 SRMR = 0.028; and the slope of Q-plot paralleling to the perpendicular line.

After that, the researcher analyzed the adjusted causal model of influences of the factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. Analysis results are shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Analysis results of the adjusted causal model of influences of the factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators

Variable Components		Influence Coefficients				R ²
Effect variables	Causal variables	<i>b</i> Influence coefficient (estimated)	B Influence coefficient (standardized)	SE	t	
MLEAD	EXFAC	0.14	0.14	-	-	0.08
	INFAC	0.15	0.15	0.07	2.15**	
Correlation Matrix						
	MLEAD	EXFAC		INFAC		
MLEAD	1.00					
EXFAC	0.97	1.00				
INFAC	0.29	0.29		1.00		

**p<.01

From Table 3, it can be seen that the factors affecting ethical leadership of school administrators in the adjusted model are significantly correlated with their ethical leadership, with the correlation between the external factors and ethical leadership being 0.97 and that between the internal factors and their ethical leadership being 0.29. As a result, their combined predicting power of ethical leadership is only 0.08 (R² = 0.08)

When individual causal factors are considered, it is found that for the internal factors, the factor of having the practices based on social norm (NOR) has the highest influence, while the factor of characteristics fostering ethical development (LEADER) has the lowest influence; while for the external factors, the factor of having received ethical enhancement from social institutions (INSTI) has the highest influence, while the factor of ethical enhancing social environment (SOC) has the lowest influence.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for implementation of research findings:

6.1.1 Basic education school administrators should be trained to develop their ethical leadership in the component of the love and faith in the profession. This is because this component receives the lowest rating mean.

6.1.2 Basic education school administrators should be trained to develop their ethical leadership in the matters of frugality and academic leadership. This is because these matters receive the lowest rating mean.

6.1.3 Basic education school administrators should develop internal factors of their schools by creating the organizational climate that enhances and upgrade the ethical level of their schools.

6.1.4 The supervising work agencies, i.e. the educational service area offices, the Office of the Basic Education Commission, and the Ministry of Education should have the policy to develop and promote the factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. This policy should be implemented concretely and on a continuous basis.

6.1.5 Outside organizations or work agencies should have the policy to develop and promote the factors affecting ethical leadership and should implement it concretely and on a continuous basis.

6.1.6 The family institution, educational institutions, religious institutions, and political and government institutions must instill and develop the factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission. This policy should be implemented concretely and on a continuous basis.

6.1.7 The society and the mass media of communication should have their roles in instilling, developing, or modifying ethical leadership behaviors of basic education school administrators to upgrade their ethical leadership levels.

6.2 Recommendations for further research studies:

6.2.1 There should be studies on ethical leadership of administrators of educational institutions at the higher level than that of the basic education school.

6.2.2 The research sample should be enlarged to include all basic education school administrators throughout the country.

6.2.3 There should be studies on factors affecting low level ethical leadership in order to develop and upgrade their levels.

6.2.4 This developed structural equation model should be implemented in the real situations in basic education schools as case studies.

6.2.5 The manual for development of the factors affecting ethical leadership in order to facilitate the implementation of measures for development of the factors affecting ethical leadership in schools.

6.2.6 There should be formulation of the policy proposal on guidelines for development of the factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators.

7. Conclusion

The conclusion of the study: The finding ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission show that there are five components of ethical leadership: (1) having good discipline, (2) behaving as a good model, (3) following the appropriate way of life, (4) having the love and faith in the profession, and (5) having professional responsibility. The factors affecting ethical leadership of basic education school administrators under the Office of the Basic Education Commission show that there are two factors affecting ethical leadership: (1) External factors, namely, having a prototype model person, ethical enhancement from social institutions, ethical enhancing social environment. (2) Internal factors, namely, characteristics fostering ethical development, having ethical oriented atmosphere, having the practices based on social norm, having ethical oriented organizational culture, and having ethical-based reward and punishment system having.

The factors affecting ethical leadership of school administrators in the adjusted model are significantly correlated with their ethical leadership. When individual causal factors are considered, it is found that for the internal factors, the factor of having the practices based on social norm has the highest influence, while the factor of characteristics fostering ethical development has the lowest influence; while for the external factors, the factor of having received ethical enhancement from social institutions has the highest influence, while the factor of ethical enhancing social environment has the lowest influence.

Recommendations for implementation of research findings: To develop ethical leadership consists of improving internal and external factors of the organization affecting ethical leadership.

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