Identifying the Components of Professional Ethics and Examining Their Status in the Social Security Organization

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Abstract

Organizational development is a consistent, coherent and well-planned effort to improve and modernize the system. Given the importance of professional ethics in the development of the organization, the purpose of this article is to identify the components of professional ethics and examine their status in the social security organization. This research is fundamental-applied in terms of purpose and of correlation descriptive nature; it is a survey. The statistical population of the present research includes 1) experts familiar with the subject from among whom we selected 15 people. 2) Employees of the Social Security Organization (3474 people) whose 346 people were selected according to Cochran's formula by multi-stage cluster sampling method. In order to collect data, we prepared a questionnaire based on previous studies, research literature and a survey of experts using the Delphi technique. The content validity or CVR of the questionnaire was higher than 0.8 and acceptable. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was greater than 0.7 with a confirmed reliability. In order to analyze the data, we benefited from the mean and single-sample t using SPSS software. Based on the results, we identified components (responsibility, honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy with others, observance of and respect for social values and norms). Considering that the means were higher than moderate (3) and the level of significance was less than (0.05), so we can say that the variable of professional ethics and its components are in good condition.

Keywords: professional ethics, social norms, responsibility, employees, social security organization

Introduction

Professional ethics, as a branch of ethics, examines the ethical duties in a profession and its ethical issues. The researchers have defined ethics as a certain activity that leads a person to a certain position with special ethics (Birjandi et al., 2019).
Behavioral patterns at the level of social institutions and organizations unify the religious community. To determine the practical components of (Islamic) professional ethics, we can use the strategic principles of professional ethics in Islam. The main strategic principles (in Islam) are: genuine and unconditional respect for human beings, respect for human freedom, justice for human beings, trustworthiness in personal behavior and insight (Miller, 2017).
Professional ethics in the administrative system of the Islamic Republic must have an Islamic identity and be based on Islamic

ethics. In order to have an Islamic professional ethics in our country, we can mention four reasons: a) Culturally, the dependence of the masses of our people on the Islamic ideological system; Religiously, the inseparability of morality from religion in the context of Islam; C) The need for dynamism within Islamic culture in view of its challenge to globalization; D) From the point of view of the governmental system, the obligation to have a religious government in the system of religious government and from the legal point of view, according to the constitution - in the eighth principle - to approve Islamic laws in the country. (Andalib Koraim et al., 2017).

Regarding the latter, it should be said that in the Islamic professional ethics, the ultimate criterion of ethics is the will of God, the Absolute Good. The most important strategic principles that can be the source of the formation of practical components of (Islamic) professional ethics are: a) human dignity; B) individual freedom; C) social justice in the general sense of putting everything in its proper place; D) Trustworthiness in two levels of being trustworthy and trust insight. Among these, the fourth principle is the most important principle (principle of principles) (Safari et al., 2018).

Organizational development is a consistent, coherent and well-planned effort to improve and modernize the system. The purpose of organizational development is to improve both the (professional) life of the individual and the functioning of the organization. Given the importance of professional ethics in the development of the organization, it is necessary to pay attention to professional ethics training in the organization for determining the effectiveness (fulfilment of organizational goals) and the direction of resources (including human resources) (Amin Bidokhti & Mardani, 2015).

Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to identify the components of professional ethics and examine their status in the Social Security Organization.

Methodology

This research is fundamental-applied in terms of purpose and of correlation descriptive nature; methodologically it is a survey. The statistical population of the present research consists of two groups: 1) Experts familiar with the field of effective communication, organizational commitment and professional ethics. Their number is unknown and they are scattered throughout the country and how to select them is selective. They must have characteristics such as knowledge and experience in the subject, inclination, sufficient time to participate and effective communication skills (Wang, 2016), having scientific researches and articles related to the research topic, availability, experience, suitability of the field of study, doctoral degree and teaching at the university. Therefore, we selected 15 people as suitable sample from among the population of experts and university professors who had the necessary criteria. 2) Employees of the Social Security Organization (3474 people), who are working in 31 general departments of social security and treatment in 31 provinces. According to Cochran's formula, we selected 346 of them as a statistical sample using multi-stage cluster sampling as described in (Table 1).

Table 1. Statistical sample size of the Social Security Organization for each province selected in the sample

Type of province	Row	Name of province	Sample size
Developed	1	Tehran	101
	2	Esfahan	44
	3	Khorasan Razavi	41
Relatively developed	4	Kerman	31
	5	Gilan	38
Less developed	6	Golestan	22
	7	Kermanshah	29
	8	Semnan	21
Deprived	9	Sistan and Baluchestan	19
Total			346

In order to collect data, we composed a researcher-made questionnaire of professional ethics based on past studies, research literature and expert opinion polls with Delphi approach including components (responsibility, honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, Empathy with others, respect for social values and norms) and 16 questions in a five-grade Likert scale ranged from perfectly appropriate to completely inappropriate.

The questionnaire of the present research was first reviewed and approved by 15 experts in terms of apparent and conceptual validity; then, to measure its content validity, we used the content validity ratio or CVR method. The formula of this method is as follows:

$$CVR = \frac{n_e - \dfrac{N}{2}}{\dfrac{N}{2}}$$

Where N represents the total number of responding experts, n_e is the number of experts who have approved the item. The CVR value can be calculated for all indicators and factors. The CVR value can fluctuate between -1 and +1. When CVR = 0.00, the closer the CVR value is to one, it indicates that more respondents have identified the item as appropriate. The validity of the professional ethics questionnaire was 0.87.1. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Professional Ethics Questionnaire was (0.89.3); it is acceptable for research (greater than 0.7). In order to analyze the data, we used the mean and one-sample t-test using SPSS software.

Results

Based on previous studies, research literature and interviews; we identified a total of 8 indicators of professional ethics. These criteria were given to the experts in the field in the first stage of Delphi technique. These experts were asked to submit a proposal on the combination of some criteria in the form of a new criterion. Finally, no index was added to these sub-criteria. We provided the description of the indicators of professional ethics in (Table 2):

Table 2. Summary of professional ethics indicators in the first round of Delphi technique

Criteria	Sub-criteria
professional ethics	Responsibility
	Honesty
	Justice and fairness
	Loyalty
	Superiority and competitiveness
	Respect for others
	Empathy with others
	Respect for social values and norms

In the second step of the Delphi technique, first, we screened the 8 sub-criteria of professional ethics to select the criteria that are more important and appropriate. Then, by experts in this field who were selected from 15 people in the sample and were familiar with all sub-indicators, each criterion was examined based on the purpose and according to the Delphi method. We used Delphi technique for the initial screening of the identified criteria (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of the results of the second round of the Delphi technique of organizational commitment

Criteria	sub-criteria	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Expert 6	Expert 7	Expert 8	Expert 9	Expert 10	Expert 11	Expert 12	Expert 13	Expert 14	Expert 15	Mean
Professional ethics	Responsibility	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4.3
	Honesty	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4.5
	Justice and fairness	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4.4
	Loyalty	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4.5
	Superiority and competitiveness	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	5	4.3
	Respect for others	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.5
	Empathy with others	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	5	4	4.4
	Respect for social values and norms	4	3	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4.5

The Delphi technique continued in two rounds and was stopped in the second round after reaching a final agreement. Finally, the remaining 8 indicators in the second round have all scored above 3 again. Therefore, the Delphi technique has been discontinued and the identified professional ethics indicators have been used for the final analysis.

Question 1: What are the components of professional ethics in a social security organization?

Based on the criteria proposed by experts, dimensions and components of professional ethics include responsibility, honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy

with others and respect for social values and norms. As can be seen in (Table 4), the average of all dimensions is between 4 and 5 (between appropriate and perfectly appropriate), which means that according to the experts of this research, there is a fit between all dimensions of professional ethics based on the proposed criteria.

Table 4. Average degree of appropriateness of the dimensions of professional ethics

Variable	Dimension	Average proportionality of a dimension to variable
Professional ethics	Responsibility	4.333
	Honesty	4.533
	Justice and fairness	4.400
	Loyalty	4.533
	Superiority and competitiveness	4.333
	Respect for others	4.533
	Empathy with others	4.400
	Respect for social values and norms	4.467

Question 2: What is the status of professional ethics and its components in the Social Security Organization?
As can be seen in (Table 5), given that –P of the test value (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, according to the mean obtained for this variable, we can say that the status of the professional ethics variable is in the desired state.

Table 5. Status of professional ethics variable

Variable	Mean	Statistic t	Significance	Lower limit	Upper limit
.524Professional ethics	3.577	21.510	0.000	0.524	0.629
Responsibility	3.718	16.388	0.000	0.632	0.804
Honesty	3.461	8.505	0.000	0.354	0.568
Justice and fairness	3.579	13.512	0.000	0.495	0.664
Loyalty	3.660	14.642	0.000	0.572	0.749
Superiority and competitiveness	3.643	15.418	0.000	0.561	0.725
Respect for others	3.413	9.542	0.000	0.330	0.502
Empathy with others	3.470	9.804	0.000	0.375	0.564
Respect for social values and norms	3.665	14.105	0.000	0.572	0.757

Discussion

Based on the criteria proposed by experts, dimensions and components of professional ethics include responsibility, honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy with others and respect for social values and norms. As you saw, the average of all the dimensions is between 4 and 5 (between suitable and perfectly suitable). This means that according to the experts of this research,

there is a fit between all dimensions of professional ethics based on the proposed criteria. According to the results of research and theoretical literature in this field and based on the view of (Cubbin & Geroski, 2017), we formed the components of professional ethics and a five-point continuum questionnaire that includes the option "completely inappropriate" to the option "completely appropriate". In this research, the components of professional ethics include 8 components: responsibility, honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy with others, observance of and respect for social values and norms. These results are consistent with (Sheperz et al., 2018) findings which showed that professional ethics have a positive and significant effect on job adjustment of Norwegian railway employees and with (Real, 2016) findings which showed that there is a significant relationship between professional ethics and entrepreneurial orientation on the one hand and job adaptation and organizational skills of Stockholm state-owned bank employees on the other.

According to the mean obtained above moderate (3) and the level of significance less than (0.05), we can say that the professional ethics variable in the Social Security Organization is in a favorable condition, but this rate is not high enough for saying that professional ethics is doing well in this organization. These results are in line with the findings of (Martinez, 2019). He showed that there is a significant relationship between professional ethics and spiritual leadership on the one hand and job adaptation and organizational skills of employees of industrial estates in Barcelona, on the other. In explaining this finding, we can say that in order to perform their organizational affairs, in addition to organizational and legal criteria, organizations need a set of ethical and value guidelines that help them in administrative behaviors and practices, and make it possible a kind of coordination and unity of procedure in moving towards the desired collective style of action. One of the important factors in the formation of intra-organizational relationships and employee conditions is professional ethics, which has a significant impact on the development of organizations. Organizations pay attention to ethical issues because people expect them to show high levels of ethical standards. That is why if there is professional ethics in an organization, that organization will also make significant progress in competing with others.

According to the results, the responsibility variable in the Social Security Organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that it is doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Bahavernia et al., 2019). He showed that professional ethics and organizational entrepreneurship have a significant effect on job adaptation and organizational skills of the staff of Georgia University Medical University. In explaining this finding, we can say that high levels of ethical standards support people who work in the organization or work in high-risk situations. Employees who perceive their organization as ethical find it appropriate for themselves and are likely to increase their satisfaction.

According to the results, honesty variable in the social security organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that honesty is doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Tabli & Kowsari, 2015). They showed that professional ethics and organizational transparency have a positive and significant effect on job adjustment and organizational skills of employees due to the moderating role of burnout in Greek maritime service companies. They also are consistent with the findings of (Tabli & Kowsari, 2015).

who showed that there is a significant inverse relationship between professional ethics and organizational loyalty and their dimensions. In explaining this finding, we can say that with the increasing complexity of organizations and the increase in the amount of unethical, illegal and irresponsible actions in the workplace, the attention of managers and experts has turned to the discussion of work ethic and moral management.

According to the results, the variable of justice and fairness in the Social Security Organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that justice and fairness are doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Miller, 2017). They showed that among the dimensions of professional ethics of management accountants, the competence and professional competence of management accountants have the most, then the objectivity and impartiality of management accountants have a significant effect on the qualitative characteristics of management accounting information. In explaining this finding, we can say that studies show that the main factor in the development of science and technology in developed countries is due to a serious commitment to the organization, especially in justice and fairness, and this index can be the most important aspect of the existence of organizations.

According to the results, the loyalty variable in the Social Security Organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that loyalty is doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Rahmani & Rajab Dori, 2016). They showed that professional ethics affect organizational performance, as well as factors of ability, clarity, incentive, evaluation, validity and environment are affected by professional ethics. In explaining this finding, we can say that in our society, despite the existence of many positive elements in national and religious culture (in which work is highly valued), those values prevail that

weaken work ethic and, consequently, work conscience. This can have a devastating effect on organizational profitability and development and destroy the body of the organization. Therefore, it is necessary to deal with the issue of loyalty and professional ethics and its effects on organizations through comprehensive and detailed studies.

According to the results, the variability of superiority and competitiveness in the Social Security Organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that superiority and competitiveness is doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Cadozier, 2002). They showed that professional ethics is a process of rational thinking and its purpose is to realize what values should be maintained and disseminated in the organization and when; educational management is responsible for recognizing the educational policies of the government; proper behavior should be observed not only in laws and policies, but they must have a professional ethics that emphasizes global and universal values. In explaining this finding, we can say that many behaviors of managers and employees are influenced by ethical values and are rooted in ethics. Failure to pay attention to work ethic in the management of organizations can create major problems for organizations. Organizations' disregard for work ethic and non-observance of ethical principles in dealing with the organization's manpower and external beneficiaries can create problems for the organization and question the legitimacy of the organization and its actions. Poor work ethic affects people's attitudes toward jobs, organizations and managers and can affect individual, group and organizational performance and negatively affect their organizational skills.

According to the results, the variable of respect for others in the Social Security Organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that respect for others is doing well in this organization. These

results are consistent with the findings of (Andalib Koraim et al., 2017). They showed that moral transformation is able to predict 10% of changes in professional ethics. These findings showed that given the role of ethical change in professional ethics, education is a way to increase ethical change in organizations. In explaining this finding, we can say that paying attention to the ethics in organizations can provide the basis for entrepreneurial activities as well as organizational skills of individuals. Therefore, we can be sure that professional ethics and respect for others governing the organization is the key to success and scoring efficient people and strengthening their organizational skills.

According to the results, the variable of empathy with others in the Social Security Organization is in good condition, but this rate is not high enough to say that empathy with others is doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Martinez, 2019). He showed that there is a significant relationship between professional ethics on the one hand and job adaptation and organizational skills of service staff in Sochi, Russia on the other. In explaining this finding, we can say that today, the observance of professional ethics by employees is one of the most important variables in the success of organizations. In recent decades, managers of organizations have increasingly realized the importance of injecting professional ethics into the vital arteries of organizations. It is now well known that the element of ethics is one of the factors of stability of the organization and achieving its ultimate goals. One of the most basic principles of creating healthy and effective communication among the employees of organizations is the observance of the principles of professional ethics by the managers of organizations.

Conclusion

According to the variable results, the variable of observance of and respect for social values and norms in the social security organization is in a favorable situation, but this rate is not high enough to say that the observance of and respect for social values and norms in this organization is doing well in this organization. These results are consistent with the findings of (Andalib Koraim et al., 2017). They showed that cultural, basic, value, organizational, managerial factors are influential in the development of professional ethics and managerial factors are most influential in the development of professional ethics. Explaining this finding, we can say that in today's world due to the increasing development of technology and extensive communication in the virtual environment and lack of attention to the spiritual dimensions of man and lack of familiarity with the principles and techniques of management and professional behavior, many ethical principles have been neglected among the managers of organizations and their lack of attention to ethical standards has caused many problems in organizations. However, if the principles or values of professional ethics are widely used among the employees of the organization and the behavior of managers is based on the correct professional principles, organizational success will increase.

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