The Importance of the Existence of a Code of Ethics in a Workplace for Blue-Collar Workers

Radi, Sherihan

Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus–Senftenberg, Germany

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of the existence of a code of ethics in the work place on the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction.

The data for this research was collected using self-administered questionnaires from blue-collar employees working in the construction and contracting sectors in Egypt. The results of this research showed a significant relationship between the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace and the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction. The development of this research line in future can benefit from using the insights from this study.

Keywords: code of ethics, workplace, blue-collar workers, security, job satisfaction.

1. Introduction

In accordance with Parvin & Kabir (2011), managing people is an important aspect of any organization's success. A well-managed organization considers its average workers as the main source of its gains and considers them as the key foundation of its business and contributors to its success more than capital.

According to Taneva-Veshoska & Drakulevski (2012), it is necessary for the success of an organization in the existence of strong competition to maintain harmonized and good human relations which promote motivation for efficient business operations and achieve the goals of the organization. All managers and workers should act ethically and have high moral principles which are considered a key to great performance.

The code of ethics applies to all managers and employees of an organization to make them know what is expected of them at all times such as respecting the dignity and

rights of other workers. Any type of behavior which contradicts with the principles of the code of ethics will be immediately identified and remedied.[1]

1.1 The problem of the study

Some organizations do not pay particular attention to having a clear code of ethics which has serious consequences for both its workers and the organization itself. This research examines the impact of the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction.

1.2 Research Objectives

• RO1: To study the impact of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers' security.

• RO2: To investigate the impact of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction.

1.3 Research questions

The study will tend to answer the following research questions:

- What is the impact of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers ' security?

- What is the impact of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers ' job satisfaction?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H0: A code of ethics in a workplace has no significant impact on the blue-collar workers' security**.**

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[1] *Is it Important to Have a Code of Ethics in the Workplace?* (n.d.). Retrieved April 11, 2020, from https://www.trivantus.com/is-it-important-to-have-a-code-of-ethics-in-the-workplace/.

H1: A code of ethics in a workplace has a significant impact on the blue-collar workers' security**.**

H0: A code of ethics in a workplace has no significant impact on the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction**.**

H1: A code of ethics in a workplace has a significant impact the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction**.**

2. Literature review

This section will discuss the literature related to a code of ethics, key components of code of ethics in a workplace, the importance of the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace, blue-collar workers, security and job satisfaction.

2.1 Code of Ethics

According to Spiro (2010), a code of ethics in an organization is a set of practices and principles which works in conjunction with the mission statement of an organization.

As mentioned by Adam(2020), a code of ethics outlines the values and mission of an organization and is designed with the aim of assisting professionals to conduct business with integrity and honesty.

It can be defined as a policy statement or a form of legislation that binds on its employees with certain sanctions for the violation of the code and provides guidelines for making ethical choices in the conduct of the work.[2]

2.2 Key components of a code of ethics in a workplace

As mentioned by Chandrashekhar & Mahavir (2017), a code of ethics in a workplace consists of the following key components:

- <u>Values</u>

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[2]*Code of Ethics Law and Legal Definition.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 9, 2020, from <u>https://definitions.uslegal.com/c/code-of-ethics/</u>.

In accordance with Chandrashekhar & Mahavir (2017), the values of an organization are related to the daily interactions of the organization with its employees, suppliers and customers. The code of ethics aims at making it clear that the organization is based on fairness and honesty.

According to Pfeiffer, Goodstein, & Nolan (1985), values evolve from the organization's culture and the philosophy which it follows.

- Principles

Principles in an organization govern everything during its activities day by day. They guide the organization in fulfilling its responsibility and building a trusted relation with its stakeholders. They influence the productivity and professionalism of an organization and serve as a guide for all its decisions and actions when communicating with others. [3]

-Management support

Based on Chandrashekhar & Mahavir (2017), the code of ethics can include the management's support of the principles and values to show how seriously the management considers the code.

- Personal Responsibility

Personal responsibility is the responsibility of the employee for his actions in a workplace. Any employee who tries to avoid personal responsibility when something goes wrong is acting in an unethical way for this organization.[4]

It changes as mentioned by McGrath (2017) from one person to another based on several factors such as his beliefs, cultural values, upbringing and moral compass.

[3]*Telefónica Business Principles.* (2018). Retrieved April 9, 2020, from https://www.telefonica.de/file/public/776/Telefonica-Business-Principles-en--01-2018.pdf?attachment=1

[4]*Ethics & Personal Responsibility at Work.* (2019, September 3). Retrieved April 9, 2020, from https://careertrend.com/info-8071315-ethics-personal-responsibility-work.html.

- Compliance

Based on Chandrashekhar & Mahavir (2017), any laws or regulations can be referred to in the code of ethics and act as rules which the organization can abide by as part of its daily interactions.

2.3 The importance of the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace

In accordance with Ince (2017), the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace promotes an atmosphere of respect, trust and confidence in the actions of each worker. When there is a written code of ethics, employees are expected to behave in a particular way towards each other and towards customers. A more peaceful environment is created which is free of several problems such as violence. When management abides by a code of ethics and takes it seriously, it will gain the trust of all the workers in the organization. When all workers work in an ethical manner, the production will run easily and smoothly.

Based on Nieweler (2016), when an organization develops a code of ethics, its workers will regard it as a responsible organization. Customers will feel reassured that the organization values integrity and will perform accordingly.

A clear code of ethics allows the employees to treat each other with respect and dignity which builds a reputable business for the organization.[5]

When a code of ethics exists, the decision-making is improved and employees become more autonomous and are able to make decisions that are in line with the values of the organization when there is no direct supervision.[6]

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[5]Ray, L. (n.d.). What Is the Importance of a Code of Ethics in Workplace Harassment? Retrieved April 11, 2020, from https://woman.thenest.com/importance-code-ethics-workplace-harassment-21515.html.

[6]*Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.* (2019, July 29). Retrieved April 11, 2020, from https://www.betterteam.com/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct.

2.4 Blue-collar workers

Blue-collar workers work in places such as construction sites and production lines.[7]

A blue-collar worker is performing manual labor in industries such as manufacturing and warehousing. [8]

According to Fontenot(2007), there are various distinctive elements of blue-collar work such as the general pay may be lower than the white-collar employees.

As mentioned by Kauhanen & Napari (2012), blue-collar work requires low educational levels.

2.5 Security

The less knowledgeable and educated workers as mentioned by Kalleberg & Marsden (2013)rank security ahead of income in comparison with higher educated employees who prioritize other job values such as career advancement opportunities.

Workers want to feel secure and it will be hard for them to do their best, if they feel insecure or worried.[9]

When workers feel insecure, they become emotionally exhausted and experience increased levels of work-life conflicts. [10]

2.6 Job satisfaction

[7]*Blue collar worker definition.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2020, from https://resources.workable.com/hr-terms/blue-collar-worker-definition.

[8]*Blue Collar Workers.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2020, from https://www.mightyrecruiter.com/recruiter-guide/hiring-glossary-a-to-z/blue-collar-workers/.

[9]*Why is employee job security so important to company success?* (2017, December 11). Retrieved April 13, 2020, from https://www.enmehr.com/en/blog/why-is-employee-job-security-so-important-to-company-success/.

[10](n.d.). Retrieved April 13, 2020, from https://www.thediscoveryway.com/how-important-is-it-for-employees-to-feel-secure-in-their-job/.

Based on Mullins (2005), job satisfaction is a complex concept which can have different meanings. It is mostly associated with motivation, but it is more of an attitude. It can be linked for example to a personal feeling of achievement whether qualitative or quantitative.

As stated by Statt (2004), job satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which a worker is content with what he receives from his job or the rewards he gets.

As mentioned by Spector (1997), job satisfaction is related to the feelings of people about their jobs and its various aspects.

The concept job satisfaction as mentioned by Armstrong (2006) refers to the feelings and attitudes of the persons towards their job. Having positive feelings indicate job satisfaction and on the contrary, negative feelings indicate job dissatisfaction.

3. Conceptual Framework

The model illustrated below was constructed according to the objectives of the study. The conceptual framework of the research model is based on the independent variable (code of ethics in a workplace) and the dependent variables (blue-collar workers' security) and (blue-collar workers' job satisfaction).

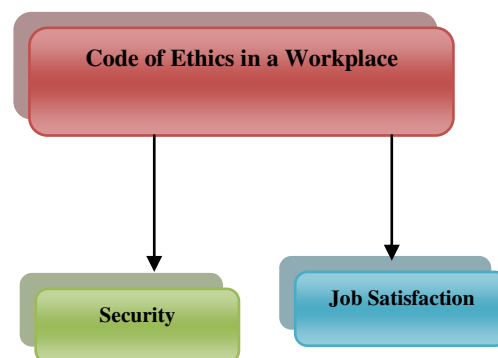It shows the impact of the aforementioned independent variable on the dependent variables.

Figure 1: Independent variable (code of ethics in a workplace) and dependent variables (blue- collar workers' security) in and (blue-collar workers' job satisfaction)

Source: By researcher

3.1 The impact of a code of ethics in a workplace (independent variable) on the blue-collar workers' security (dependent variable)

As mentioned by Ince (2017), the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace promotes trust. The workers know that they will be protected in any situation that can occur. A code of ethics also promotes responsibility. Everyone will take responsibility for their actions. In such an atmosphere where rules are followed and the organization promotes rules that benefit and protect all its workers equally, employees will continue to work for this organization. When all persons hold themselves accountable, a productive and cohesive workforce is created.

A code of ethics encourages inclusivity which means that all workers are included regardless of their backgrounds, identities, beliefs or educational levels. It also encourages respect. Even if there are disagreements, there is no excuse for any disrespectful behavior towards any worker. There will be no personal attacks allowed and workers will feel comfortable and not threatened which results into a productive and creative environment. Workers will feel more secure as based on the code of ethics; every member of the organization should be kind to others. Insults, harassments, putting others down, threats of violence, discriminatory jokes and language are not acceptable. [11]

A code of ethics shows that all workers are valued by the organization which leads the employees not to question their importance to the organization and decreases their feelings of insecurity. [12]

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[11]*Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.* (2019, July 29). Retrieved April 11, 2020, from https://www.betterteam.com/code-of-ethics-and-professional-conduct.

[12](n.d.). Retrieved April 13, 2020, from https://www.thediscoveryway.com/how-important-is-it-for-employees-to-feel-secure-in-their-job/.

Workplace violence such as bullying based on Glambek et al.,(2014) and especially when the worker is powerless to fight it, he begins to experience increased levels of job insecurity.

Bullying takes many forms such as discrimination, harassment, using abusive language, intimidation, being ignored or threatened. It can threaten the emotional, mental and physical well-being of the worker and makes him feel insecure.[13]

When there is a code of ethics, a safe and secure environment is created which allows all workers to be productive. [14]

3.2 The impact of a code of ethics in a workplace (independent variable) on the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction (dependent variable)

Based on Spector (1997), when an organization is guided by human values where its workers are respected and treated fairly, the levels of their job satisfaction will increase. This is a sign of the good mental and emotional state of the workers which will serve as a good indicator of their effectiveness. Job satisfaction affects the activities and the whole functioning of an organization and leads to positive behaviors of its workers.

As stated by the International Labour Organization ILO (2003), workplace violence includes physical injuring a person, verbal abuse, insults, swearing, harassment, bullying or a threatening behavior which as mentioned by Heponiemi et al,. (2014) leads to the worker's decreased job satisfaction.

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[13]*Feeling safe at work? This is what workplace safety looks like.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 13, 2020, from
https://coact.org.au/feeling-safe-at-work-this-is-what-workplace-safety-looks-like/.

[14] Ray, L. (n.d.). What Is the Importance of a Code of Ethics in Workplace Harassment? Retrieved April 11, 2020, from
https://woman.thenest.com/importance-code-ethics-workplace-harassment-21515.html.

The existence of a code of ethics in a workplace increases the job satisfaction and happiness of the workers. They will enjoy coming to work without feeling that it is a source of burden.[15]

4. Methodology

This study analyzes the impact of a code of ethics in a workplace as the independent variable on the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction as the dependent variables.

4.1. Population of study

The research was conducted with a sample of 50 respondents, representing the blue-collar workers in construction and contracting sectors in Egypt.

4.2 Research instrument and sample

This research is a survey-type study. A questionnaire was developed in order to collect data.50 questionnaires were self-administered and distributed to the targeted respondents. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter that assured the confidentiality of the information provided and the directions for completing each survey.

The questionnaire items were measured using five point Likert scale that ranges from 1 "strongly disagree", 2 "disagree", 3 "neutral", 4 "agree", and 5 "strongly agree". The analysis in this study contains descriptive statistic, reliability, Pearson correlation and regression analysis.

4.3 Analysis, Finding and Interpretation of Results

Table 1 below shows the demographic characteristics of the sample.

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[15]*Importance of Workplace Ethics.* (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2020, from https://www.managementstudyguide.com/importance-of-workplace-ethics.htm.

Demographic Variable	Sample Composition	
Gender	**Men**	90.50%
	Women	9.50%
Age	20-25	48.50%
	26-30	40.50%
	31-35	9.00%
	Above 35	2.00%
Education	Diploma	46.00%
	Technical high school diploma	54.00%
Work Experience	Less than 1 year	48.00%
	1-3	39.00%
	4-7	10.50%
Above 7		2.50%

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=50)

Source: By researcher

Table 1 above shows that out of 50 respondents (90.5%) were males while the remaining (9.5%) were females. The majority of the respondents were from the aged group 20-25 years old (48.5%), followed by those aged group between 26-30 years old (40.5%). (9.0%) were in the aged group between 31-35 years old. The smallest group was those from above 35 years old (2.0%). Majority of the respondents were having a technical high school diploma (54.0%) while the remaining (46.0%) respondents were having a diploma. Based on the respondents' job working experience only (2.5%) respondents have been working for more than 7 years in their

current organization, (10.5%) respondents have been working for at least 4-7 years and (39.0%) respondents have been working for 1-3 years while the remaining (48.0%) respondents have had job experience of less than 1 year.

Table 2 below shows the Alpha Coefficient of Reliability on variables.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Code of ethics in a workplace	0.912	6
Security	0.876	3
Job satisfaction	0.834	4

Table 2: Alpha Coefficient of Reliability on variables

Source: By researcher

Table 2 above demonstrates that all variables have Cronbach's alpha value ranging from .834 to.912. The independent variable of code of ethics in a workplace has the highest Cronbach's alpha of.912, followed by the dependent variables security with Cronbach's alpha of.876 and job satisfaction with Cronbach's alpha of.834. All of these variables have value more than.80, which are considered good. The results show that all the variables are reliable for the data collection.

Table 3 below shows the correlation of the variables.

	Code of ethics in the workplace	Security	Job Satisfaction
Code of ethics in a workplace	-----		
Security	0.412^{**}	-----	
Job Satisfaction	0.375^{**}	0.454^{**}	-----

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Correlation of the Variables

Source: By researcher

To understand the strength and the direction in the linear relationship between variables i.e. code of ethics in a workplace, the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction, the Pearson's of coefficient correlation was measured. Table 3 above shows the outcomes achieved from the correlation test which state that there is a

significant relationship between the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace and the blue-collar workers' security. The strength of this relationship is 41.2%. There is a significant relation between the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace and the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction and the strength is 37.5%. The significant relationship between security and job satisfaction is 45.4 strong. It is indicated that a code of ethics in a workplace has a significant correlation with the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction with p value of 0.000, which is significant at 1%. Therefore, it is concluded that the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace increases the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction.

Table 4 below shows the regression results of a code of ethics in a workplace and the blue-collar workers' security.

independent variable	unstandardized coefficients (B)	standardized coefficients (Beta, β)	sig.
(constant)	1.797		.000
Code of ethics in a workplace	0.552	0.438	.000
R	0.438[a]		
R square (R^2)	0.661		
Adjusted R square	0.532		

a. predictors: (constant), code of ethics in a workplace
b. dependent variable security

Table 4: Regression results of a code of ethics in a workplace and the blue-collar workers' security

Source: By researcher

Regression analysis was carried out in order to find the impact of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers' security. Table 4 above demonstrates that the regression results of the R square value is 0.661. The coefficient of relationship explains that the value of R square is 0.661; which means 66.1% of the variance in blue-collar workers' security was affected by the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace. The Beta (β) value of standardized coefficients indicates the variable that contributes to the dependent variable. These findings show that the blue-collar

workers' security is significantly influenced by the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace ($\beta=0.438$, p value less than 0.01). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted that the code of ethics in a workplace has a significant impact on the blue-collar workers' security.

Table 5 below shows the regression results of a code of ethics in a workplace and the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction.

independent variable	unstandardized coefficients (B)	standardized coefficients (Beta, β)	sig.
(constant)	3.578		.000
Code of ethics in a workplace	0.272	0.367	.000
R	0.367[a]		
R square (R^2)	0.413		
Adjusted R square	0.451		
a. predictors: (constant) code of ethics in a workplace			
b. dependent variable job satisfaction			

Table 5: Regression results of a code of ethics in a workplace and blue-collar workers' job satisfaction

Source: By researcher

Regression analysis was used to investigate the impact of the code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction. Table 5 above shows the model summary having R and R square which shows the simple regression. The coefficient of relationship explains that the value of R square is 0.413; which means that 41.3% of the variance of the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction was affected by the code of ethics in a workplace. Standardized coefficient indicates the Beta (β) value of the variable that contributes to the dependent variable. This analysis indicates that the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction is significantly influenced by the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace ($\beta=0.367$, p value less than 0.01). The existence of a code of ethics in a workplace is the significant predictor for the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis

is accepted that the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace has a significant impact on the blue-collar workers' job satisfaction.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to find out the impact of the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace on the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction in construction and contracting sectors in Egypt. A set of hypotheses related to the research's questions directed the research. Data was collected through questionnaires. The results show that the existence of a code of ethics in a workplace has a significant impact on the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction.

6. Recommendation

This study suggests that organizations should create a clear code of ethics that includes a fair and equitable treatment for all their workers. The code of ethics should be implemented throughout all members of the staff in all levels and the management should follow up that the code of ethics is implemented and respected by all workers. This will positively influence the working atmosphere and will assist the organization in achieving its goals.

This research focused only on one variable and tested its impact on the blue-collar workers' security and job satisfaction in the construction and contracting sectors in Egypt, so further future studies can be conducted on other sectors and can investigate others variables.

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