Exploring EFL Teachers' Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Ethical Climate: The Mediating Role of Organizational Justice

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Abstract

Organizational justice has been significantly considered in industrial psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior studies (Ismail, 2015). However, this issue is less explored in educational contexts. The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and ethical climate among Iranian secondary school EFL teachers. 386 EFL teachers selected via multi-stage cluster sampling responded to three questionnaires of organizational citizenship, ethical climate, and organizational justice posted online. To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics (structural equation modeling and regression analysis) were used. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the organizational citizenship behavior and ethical climate within the schools. Organizational justice was also found to have an influential role in this relationship. In addition, OCB was highly influenced by the ethical climate.

Keywords: EFL teachers; Ethical climate; Organizational Citizenship Behavior; Organizational Justice; Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Education is considered a very important and influential factor in the sustainable development of any country as the quality of educational systems is the sublime goal of all governments. In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system, it is very important to pay attention to the educational elements and processes. One of the most important elements in education is teachers who play a key role in the development of the educational system. To realize such an important goal, teachers and other school staff must go beyond formal organizational roles and requirements to bring about changes in education through innovative ideas. Achieving such a goal requires favorable organizational conditions and context. One of these conditions and requirements is the existence of an effective and desirable

ethical climate and organizational justice. Low levels of supportive ethical climate and effective organizational justice can have irreparable consequences for the educational system.

Over the past few decades, the importance of how organizations should treat their employees has grown exponentially (Akram et al., 2019). Hence, to achieve the desired objectives, organizations need to recruit and train human resources with acceptable organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) (Bizri, 2018). Organizational citizenship behaviors refer to behaviors that go beyond the description of formal occupational duties (Organ, 1988). In other words, it is a kind of behavior that makes people willing to participate more in organizational affairs and activities (Feather & Rauter, 2004) and equips employees with the attitudes and capabilities which are considered essential for empowerment and flexibility in line with an organization's goals and objectives. Organizational behaviors include the provision of constructive pieces of advice, cooperation in group work, avoidance of conflicts, preservation of the organization's assets, willingness to accept responsibilities, respect for the rules and regulations, and appropriate confrontation with job challenges (Robbins & Judge, 2013). In addition to the OCB, the influence of the ethical climate on employees' attitudes and performance has always been considered by researchers as a principal factor and variable in organizations (Newman et al., 2017). The ethical climate in organizations is considered an important source of information for employees which can help them identify the right practices in the workplace (Mayer et al., 2010).

Another variable that can influence the relationship between ethical climate and OCB as a mediating factor is organizational justice. Recently, the impact of organizational justice on job motivation, job satisfaction, and employee behavior has been attended to and much research has been conducted in this area (Guven & Gursoy, 2014). Organizational justice has been significantly considered in industrial psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior studies (Ismail, 2015). However, this issue is less explored in educational contexts. For an organization to achieve its goals and formulate its strategies, it is particularly important to pay attention to organizational justice too (Guven & Gursoy, 2014). In fact, employees' perceptions of organizational justice in the organization are found to be very influential in the development of OCB (Cole & Flint, 2004; Kolade et al., 2014). Lack of organizational justice or low levels of organizational justice leads to negative effects such as stress, poor mental health, dismissal, retaliatory goals, etc. (Silva & Kaetano, 2014). On the other hand, if members of an organization have a positive understanding of justice and think that there is a fair distribution and fair management, their commitment to the organization and consequently their efficiency

and performance will increase. On the contrary, when members of the organization encounter unfair behavior, it negatively affects their motivation and ultimately reduces the organizational citizenship behavior (Guven & Gursoy, 2014).

Unfortunately, despite the importance of OCB, it is much neglected in most educational settings, especially in contexts of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in which language is taught in a non-English-speaking country). This comes as a surprise since research has indicated that OCB for teachers should always be considered a particularly important factor to improve the organizational effectiveness of schools (Suifan, 2016).

 Therefore, the present study seeks to answer two main questions:

1.   Is there a relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' perception of ethical climate and organizational citizenship behavior?
2.   Can organizational justice play a mediating role in relation to ethical climate and OCB?

Review of the related literature

Performing organizational activities in a dynamic context is considered to be significantly important today and human resources have been construed as effective assets in this regard (Hamadamin & Atan, 2019). In order to keep up with today's competitive environment, organizations require human resources with high levels of commitment and desirable personalities (Lok & Crawford, 2001). In fact, human resources as one of the first elements in designing sustainable strategies for organizations are taken into account in today's fast-developing local and global competition standards) see Piwowar-Sulej, 2020; Stankevičiute & Savanevičiene, 2018). In addition, most scholars believe that the most important factor which is realized in all administrative processes and can move organizations forward is probably human resources (Çavuş & Develi, 2017).

The role of OCB in organizations

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a construct which is believed to motivate individuals to get more involved in the organization's affairs and activities. In fact, OCB can be considered as one of the most essential factors in the efficiency and effectiveness of the organizations which needs to be supported, strengthened, and reinforced. As far as human resource factors are concerned, OCB is the first

factor that needs to be considered. OCB is a common ethical behavior in organizations and is optional (Baker et al., 2006). The loyalty and commitment of employees who are equipped with high levels of OCB seem to be a factor to ensure the organization's health and survival in an ever-evolving environment. However, OCB is not usually concomitant with tangible rewards as it is beyond the official roles and duties of employees in organizations. A good citizen of an organization is someone who shows a variety of behaviors such as accepting and taking extra responsibilities, following organizational rules and procedures, maintaining and developing positive attitudes, and enduring dissatisfaction and problems in the organization. These behaviors can improve the performance of the organization and lead to its efficiency and effectiveness. That is why organizations are looking for employees who are committed and willing to do more than their formal occupational duties (Vance, 2006). Behavioral support, time investment, and presentation of ideas and innovations in an attempt to improve processes, procedures, and organizational structures are examples of extra-role performance which are considered conducive to the work environment (Baker et al., 2006).

As Sadeghi, Ahmadi., and Yazdi (2018) rightly note, organizations are unable to improve OCB among the staff without the voluntary willingness of individuals to cooperate. Understanding the difference between voluntary and compulsory cooperation is highly significant. If mandatory, a person usually performs his/her duties following the rules, regulations, and acceptable standards of the organization but only in compliance with the requirements. However, in voluntary cooperation, there are issues beyond common duties. Employees, in this case, invest their effort, energy, and insight to develop their abilities to the best of organizational favor. In other words, they usually sacrifice their interests and put the benefits of the organization ahead of other things (Demircioglu, 2020). Organizational citizenship behavior encourages teachers to participate more in effective pedagogical practices (DiPaola & Hoy, 2005). However, today's educational organizations are not citizen-oriented, OCB is rarely seen in them, and employees willingly or unwillingly avoid such behaviors. They are mainly concerned with the official duties and requirements of the job as specified by educational decision-makers, and do not engage in behaviors beyond the expected role, thus limiting the OCB levels.

In this regard, due to the role and position of schools in the development of fundamental values and desirable educational outputs, the need for teachers and employees who act beyond the official role and requirements of the organization is felt more than ever.

Organizational citizenship behavior and ethical climate

The development and institutionalization of OCB among teachers and other school staff require creating proper and desirable conditions and areas for which policymakers and school principals must show serious sensitivity and attention. One of these conditions is to create a favorable ethical climate in schools. Generally, the ethical climate is considered one of the dimensions of the organizational climate. Therefore, in a more general sense, the ethical climate is defined as the general ethical condition or foundation of the organization (Elçi & Alpkan, 2009). Weber (2007) believes that values are inherently desirable and accepted principles while ethics refer to the systematic application of those values. The ethical climate is part of the overall context of the organization and refers to organizational procedures, practices, and interpersonal relationships in terms of their ethical content (Schminke, Arnaud, & Kuenzi, 2007; Newman et al., 2017). In other words, the ethical climate has to do with the common perception of employees on how to deal with ethical problems and the emergence of correct ethical behaviors (Taştan, 2019).

Two general variables have been used to examine ethical behavior in organizations. Scholars use both formal and informal organizational activities to assess ethics. Formal activities include elements such as organizational structure, core values, goal and mission statement, ethical codes, performance appraisal, and reward systems while informal activities include elements of language, norms, customs, etc. (Webber, 2007). In recent years, the ethical climate has been considered vital in organizations due to changes in the social life of people and organizations (Turk & Bicer, 2018).

An ethical climate helps employees evaluate existing problems and consider alternatives, thus providing a clear path for them to decide which behaviors are acceptable and which are unacceptable (Lu & Lin, 2014). Organizations' disregard for ethical principles jeopardizes their legitimacy and ultimately affects the profit and loss of the organization (De Coninck, 2011). Therefore, organizations have a very important role in shaping the ethical behavior of employees (Newman et. al, 2017). They consider the ethical climate as a common perception of what is right and how the ethical climate should be managed in an organization (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Researchers believe that when employees know that their activities and actions are guided by rules and regulations, inconsistencies are perceived, work makes sense to them, and as a result, they show positive behavior and attitude towards the organization (Martin & Culen, 2006). The ethical climate also improves the quality of management, employee performance, and organizational loyalty, as well as the level of responsibility, and in many ways increases people's participation in the organization's activities (Schwepker, 2001; Weber & Seger 2002).

 Similarly, creating a positive ethical climate in schools can have many advantages such as developing extra-role behaviors, increasing teachers' participation in educational activities, improving students' academic achievement, increasing staff confidence, and increasing teachers' motivation, and job satisfaction. In a study conducted by Wei (2018), it was shown that not only the school ethics predicts the work ethic of teachers but also the work ethic of teachers positively and significantly predicts the OCB. In addition, the meaning of work, the quality of behavior, and the search for purpose play a part in the mediating role between the work ethic and the OCB among teachers. These variables also play a mediating role between the law-abiding ethical climate and the teachers' OCB.

A study conducted by Navid Hamidi et al. (2017), on the relationship between ethical climate and organizational citizenship behaviors of nurses in intensive care units showed a direct and significant relationship between the ethical climate and the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior (conscientiousness, politeness, chivalry, altruism, and civic behavior). In another study conducted by Faqih and Hassani (2019) on the analysis of the relationship between ethical culture with a tendency to ethical behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and individual-organizational matching among the staff of Urmia University, it was shown that ethical culture has a positive and significant relationship with behavior ethics and organizational citizenship behavior. Ethical culture also has a direct and significant effect on individual-organization matching. In addition, the mediating role of the individual-organizational matching between ethical culture and the other two variables, ethical behavior and organizational citizenship behavior was also confirmed in this study.

Yet in another study, Erdirencelebi and Akcan (2016) investigated the effect of ethical climate on organizational citizenship perception and the employee's performance. The results showed that employees' perception of ethical climate has a positive effect on organizational citizenship. The ethical climate also had a positive effect on employee performance and was enhanced through cooperation and coordination in the organization.

Finally, Ghaleei et al. (2017) investigated the effect of organizational climate on teachers' organizational citizenship behavior with the mediating role of individual accountability. The results showed that organizational climate had a direct and significant effect on teachers' accountability and citizenship behavior.

The mediating role of organizational justice

The concept of organizational justice was first introduced by Greenberg in the 1970s. Justice is considered to be the right action or decision which is made based on ethics, religion, or law, and employees' perceptions of justice are found to determine the quality of their communication and interaction with the organization (Swalhi et al., 2017). Organizational justice focuses primarily on fairness in the workplace and has a significant impact on employees' different attitudes on issues such as job satisfaction, resignation, absenteeism, job performance, trust, and organizational commitment (Ali, 2016). Generally, it can be said that an organization's fair treatment of employees affects their employees' feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, and can lead to higher commitment towards the organization and their citizenship behavior. In fact, most of the decisions that managers make in the organization are greatly affected by fair and equal treatment of employees (Tatum et al., 2003).

Burns and DiPaola's (2013)'s study showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior in public high schools of Virginia. However, no evidence of a significant relationship was found between organizational justice and student academic achievement.

In the Iranian context, Alborzi, Neyaz Azari and Taghvaeeyazdi (2017) examined the impact of organizational justice, organizational identity, and organizational culture on organizational citizenship behavior. Directors, deputies, heads and experts of the department of education participated in the study. Findings showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational justice and organizational culture in the occurrence of citizenship behavior. Organizational justice and organizational culture have the highest impact on conscientiousness and both variables have the least impact on respect in organizational citizenship behavior.

In another study, Kiamani and Zamani (2016) studied the relationship between ethical climate and organizational justice with the citizenship behavior of the organization in Education organization of Mazandaran. The results of the confirmatory analysis confirmed the existence of all dimensions of the ethical atmosphere (care and attention, rules and regulations, efficiency, independence) organizational justice (interactive, procedural, and distributive), and organizational citizenship behavior (altruism, conscience, chivalry, civic behavior and politeness and consideration).

Finally, Yarden et al. (2014) examined the effect of employees' perception of organizational justice on organizational citizenship behavior in a Turkish public hospital. The findings showed that distributive justice has a positive effect on

conscience and politeness. Interactive justice also has a positive and significant effect on work conscience and civic virtue. Finally, they concluded that increasing employees' perception of organizational justice significantly improves their organizational citizenship behavior.

Methodology

Participants

433 Iranian EFL teachers teaching at Iranian secondary schools who were selected through multi-stage cluster sampling participated in the study by answering the questionnaires in the 2017-2018 academic year. After initial screening, 47 incomplete questionnaires were discarded and finally, 386 questionnaires were analyzed. Participants were between the age of 23 to 50, with an average of 37.3. In addition, 185 (42.6 %) of them were male, and 248(57.4 %) were female. The participants had taught English solely within the foreign educational context with no experience of studying or living in an English-speaking country. Their job experience ranged from 1 to 25 years.

Three measures were used in this study to measure the intended variables of ethical climate, organizational citizenship, and organizational justice. These three questionnaires are delineated below. Since the reliability and validity of these instruments have been reported in several studies and they have been used in the Iranian context widely, the researchers did not perform pilot testing of the questionnaires/scales.

The ethical climate questionnaire (ECQ): This instrument is developed by Victor and Cullen (1987) to assess the respondents' perceptions of how they make decisions in cases that require ethical criteria and is designed to measure five subscales or facets of ethical climate including caring (sample item: "The most important concern here is the good of all people"), law and code ("The first consideration here is whether a decision violates any law"), rules ("Everyone is expected to stick by the rules and procedures"), instrumental ("Here people protect their interests above all else"), and independence ("The most important thing here is each person's sense of right and wrong"). The questionnaire includes 26 items coded on a six-level Likert scale from 0 (completely false) to 5 (completely true). The alpha Cronbach index calculated for the present study amounted to 0.86.

Organizational citizenship behaviour scale (OCBS):

This scale is designed by Lee and Allen (2002) to measure two dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. It includes 16 items which use a 7-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (I do not agree at all) to 7 (I absolutely agree). The first 8 questions measure organizational-oriented organizational behaviors related to the staff and the second 8 questions measure organizational citizenship behaviors related to organizations. The items reflect acts directed toward the organization that benefits the organization referred to as OCBO with a sample item "I Gave up meal and other breaks to complete work" (α = .87) and acts directed toward co-workers that help with work-related issues labeled OCBP with a sample item "I Changed vacation schedule, workdays, or shifts to accommodate co-worker's needs" (α =.89).

Organizational justice questionnaire (OJQ):

To have an estimate of organizational justice among participants, the 20-item scale adapted from Niehoff & Moorman (1993) was applied. The scale captured the tripartite dimensions of justice (Distributive (7 items), Procedural (6 items) and Interactional fairness (7 items). The present study adopted response categories ranging from (1) 'No, I strongly Disagree' to (7) Yes, I strongly agree'. Sample items are 'my work schedule is fair,' 'when decisions are made about my job, my boss is sensitive to my needs' and 'my manager explains very clearly decisions made about my job.' The reliability reported by Niehoff & Moorman is 0.92. However, the overall Cronbach alpha index calculated for the reliability in the present study equals 0.89.

Data Gathering and analysis

To collect the data, the electronic versions of the questionnaires designed in the form of an internet link (Google forms) were sent to participants through either e-mail or social media (WhatsApp and/or Instagram). Before the questionnaires were administered, participants were provided with an explanation of the purpose of the study and assured that the results would be kept confidential and for research purposes only.

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) (version 26) and AMOS packages were used to analyze the data. At first, descriptive statistics were generated to gain an overall picture of the collected sample. Then, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and correlation test were used and then SEM was run to find the relevant pattern.

Results

As the first step in data analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the data distribution of research variables. The results of this test are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. *Tests to check the normality of the distribution of research variables*

Indexes	Ethical climate	Organizational citizenship Organizational justice	
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.485	0.382	0.521
test	0.342	0.289	0.302
Significance level			

After the normality of the data distribution of research variables was confirmed, the correlation between the variables was analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis. The correlation coefficients related to the research variables are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 2. *Correlation coefficients among research variables*

Correlations				
Variable		**O. Justice**	**E. Climate**	**O. C. Behavioral**
O. Justice	Pearson Correlation	1	.315[**]	.345[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	386	386	386
E. Climate	Pearson Correlation	.315[**]	1	.249[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	386	386	386
O. C. Behavioral	Pearson Correlation	.345[**]	.249[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	386	386	386

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As the results of the Pearson correlation test show, the correlation coefficients between the research variables indicate a significant correlation between all variables in pairs. Next, the fit of the research model was examined through the analyses of structural equations, the results of which are presented along with regression coefficients in Figure 1. To come up with the final model, a two-step approach was used to fit the factor loads, and after they were found acceptable, the final model was developed. In the proposed model, the validity of the structures of ethical climate, organizational citizenship behaviour, and organizational justice are examined.
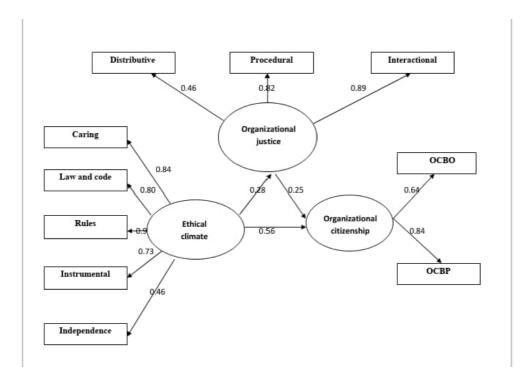
Figure 1. Structural equation modeling results

Notes: *** p<0.001; standardized coefficients are reported.

According to the model presented in Figure 1, the ethical climate has a positive and significant direct effect on the organizational citizenship behavior of the participants (0.56). In addition, the organizational justice variable with a direct positive and significant effect (0.25) has determined the variance in organizational citizenship behavior.

In modeling structural equations, to evaluate the fit of the research model, goodness of fit indices (GFI) is used. Values for the indicators of GFI namely adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed-fit index (NFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and chi-square/df are calculated to check the fit of the model and are reported in Table 4.

Table 3. *Goodness indicators of fitting the tested research model*

Fit index	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	AGFI	GFI	Chi-square/df
Value	0.06	0.97	0.93	0.90	0.96	2.17
Acceptable threshold levels	< 0.07	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	<3

Note: Acceptable threshold levels extracted from Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen (2008).

According to the results of Table 4, which summarizes the fit indices of the model related to the research hypothesis in Figure 1, it can be concluded that the indices are at a desirable level and the model calculated from the fit can be considered acceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research model has an acceptable goodness of fit and the correlation values of the model in Figure 1 can be trusted and the regression values can now be interpreted. The results of regression coefficients of structural equations for predicting organizational citizenship behavior based on ethical climate and also through the mediation of organizational justice are presented in the following three tables. First, Table 5 reports the regression coefficients of the ethical climate and organizational citizenship behavior.

To examine the predictability of OCB via the ethical climate and through the mediation of organizational justice, regression coefficients were analyzed and reported in table 5 below.

Table 4. *Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model*

			Estimate	**S.E.**	**C.R.**	**P**
O.justice	<---	Ethics.C	.282	.025	3.435	***
O.Citizenship	<---	Ethics.C	.267	.065	3.703	***
O.Citizenship	<---	O.justice	.250	.261	2.847	.004
Independence	<---	Ethics.C	.709			
Instrumental	<---	Ethics.C	.454	.105	8.521	***
Rules	<---	Ethics.C	.802	.071	14.936	***
Law and code	<---	Ethics.C	.924	.076	16.779	***
Caring	<---	Ethics.C	.833	.087	15.487	***
Distributive	<---	O.justice	.257			
Procedural	<---	O.justice	.898	1.069	4.586	***
Interactional	<---	O.justice	.815	.780	4.711	***
OCBO	<---	O.Citizenship	.642			
OCBP	<---	O.Citizenship	.835	.237	5.680	***

According to the values of the probability column in Table 5, which shows the significance level of regression coefficients between variables, we can say that the correlation between the factor variable (ethical climate) and the dependent variable (OCB) with the regression coefficient (r = 0.26) was significant. Also, the correlation between the mediating variable (organizational justice) with the regression coefficient (r = 0.28) was significant. In addition to the main variables, the correlations between the components of the factor variable (ethical climate) were also significant. Based on this, the main hypothesis of the research was confirmed. Table 6 summarizes the direct and indirect effects of predictor variables on organizational justice.

Table 5. *Path analysis coefficients of direct and indirect effects and total effects between variables*

Predicting variable	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Mediating variable	Total effect
Ethical climate	0.56**	0.28*	0. 25	0.53**
OCB	0.25**			0.25**

According to the path analysis coefficients reported in Table 6, it can be concluded that the direct effect of the ethical climate on OCB is 0.56. Also, the indirect effect of ethical climate on OCB through the mediation of organizational justice is about 0.53. This finding means that OCB is highly influenced by ethical climate and the role of organizational justice as a mediator and facilitator variable in this relationship is about 0.25.

Discussion

The present study strived to investigate the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and ethical climate among Iranian secondary school EFL teachers. The findings revealed that organizational justice plays a significant role as a mediating variable in the relationship between OCB and ethical climate. In other words, a low level of organizational justice can lead to a climate full of stress, poor mental health, and retaliatory goals among teachers thereby negatively affecting the OCB. Hence, regarding the relationship between ethical climate and OCB, the results confirmed this relationship which means the higher the ethical climate in schools, OCB improves among teachers and they will be showing more desirable citizenship behaviors. This finding is in line with the literature (e.g., Wei, 2018; Cavus & Develi, 2017; Burns & DiPaola, 2013; Navid Hamidi et al., 2017).

One of the concerns of school principals is to create a favorable environment and climate to motivate teachers to help students achieve their educational goals. Based on our findings, a favorable ethical climate has a profound impact on the formation of positive attitudes among teachers and improving their commitment to schools. Therefore, it is necessary to attend to the creation of an ideal ethical climate among teachers in order to improve the attitude and participation of teachers in schools' affairs. Following the effect of ethical climate on teachers' citizenship behavior, they are encouraged to participate in educational activities, loyalty and commitment in

teachers increase, and the health of schools and their survival in today's competitive environment is ensured.

In addition, results showed that organizational justice also has a significant effect on the relationship between OCB and ethical climate. This is consistent with the results of Burns and Dipaola (2013). Moreover, the dimensions of organizational justice (procedural, interactional, and distributive justice) had a direct and significant effect on OCB. The organization's fair treatment of employees affects their feelings, attitudes, and behaviors, and ultimately leads to their commitment to the organization and the promotion of their citizenship behavior. As long as the members of the organization are treated fairly, their motivation is enhanced and they behave more appropriately. But, as their perceptions of organizational justice diminish, they experience a kind of tension and confusion that decreases their participation in the affairs and activities of the organization and consequently leads to behaviours with irreparable consequences for both the individual and the organization.

Since teachers in schools play a key role in the effectiveness of educational activities, school principals should be more concerned with motivating teachers to participate effectively in educational activities and promote the goals of education through the establishment of effective organizational justice. When teachers have a positive understanding of organizational justice in schools, they are more inclined to participate in improving their educational performance as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the schools.

Moreover, the lack of proper ethical climate or staff perception of a low ethical climate can lead to destructive behaviors such as lack of commitment and loyalty, low motivation, irresponsibility, negative attitude, absence, retaliatory measures, and low performance which in turn has a direct negative impact on the performance of the individual and the organization. Therefore, principals can prevent such destructive behaviors by creating the necessary context for the creation of an environment and ethical climate in schools.

One of the measures that school principals can do to improve the OCB among teachers and other staff is building trust. By increasing the role of teachers in decision-making, giving teachers more educational authority, indirect supervision, and a good ethical model, school principals can create a positive attitude for teachers toward school and education. This increases teachers' trust in schools and provides more opportunities for teachers to participate in educational activities. In addition, desirable OCB levels can be created for teachers by increasing attention and care, enforcing ethical rules, paying attention to professionalism in education, teaching ethical principles, implementing professional and ethical standards, and avoiding

command and control. Since teachers play a key role in educating students about citizenship, they are better able to carry out their mission in such an environment.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and ethical climate among Iranian secondary school EFL teachers. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the organizational citizenship behavior and ethical climate within the schools. Organizational justice was also found to have an influential role in this relationship. In addition, OCB was highly influenced by ethical climate. As the results of the present study demonstrated, one basic requirement to this end is the provision of an appropriate ethical climate within the organization which paves the way for the emergence and promotion of OCB and contributes to the dynamism and survival of the organization. The impact of the ethical climate on teacher attitude and performance must be considered an important variable in the success of a school. Therefore, neglecting to observe ethical principles endangers the legitimacy of the schools and ultimately negatively affects the educational outcomes.

Drawing upon the findings of the study, policymakers, and planners at the macro level of education should develop strategic policies and operational programs to improve the ethical climate in schools. This can create a positive attitude among teachers and other employees towards schools and education, and this positive attitude increases their loyalty and paves the way for the emergence and further increase of OCB levels. As such behaviors increase, teachers' willingness to participate in improving educational performance in schools will increase, and the efficiency and effectiveness of educational activities will follow.

Educational decision-makers can create essential opportunities for teachers to engage in desirable citizenship behaviors by measures such as adopting clear policies and guidelines for resource allocation, paying attention to the real needs of teachers and other staff, and observing fairness in giving material and spiritual incentives. Adopting fair decisions in important decisions about teachers, avoiding discrimination among teachers, prioritizing collective interests over individual interests, etc. Finally, it is suggested that teachers who have a high level of desirable citizenship behavior and behaviors beyond their role are introduced as role models to increase the motivation of other teachers and staff to exhibit such behaviors in schools, and eventually the educational performance of schools will improve. Further research can focus on the importance of ethical decision-making and its influence on language teachers' development, the strategies to support

organizational justice in schools, and interdisciplinary studies comparing factors considered in this study in different organizations.

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