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Original Article

Relationship Between Professional Ethics and Organizational Commitment With Self-Efficacy in Faculty Members

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Abstract

Introduction: Higher education requires strict adherence to professional ethics, especially among faculty members. Organizational commitment and self-efficacy (SE) are essential components of these ethical standards. This study investigated the associations among professional ethics, organizational commitment, and SE in faculty members at Hamadan University of Medical Sciences.

Methods: Overall, 240 faculty members from Hamadan University of Medical Sciences were recruited in this cross-sectional study. Data were gathered using Cadozir's Professional Ethics Questionnaire (2002), Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (1990), and Sherer's General SE Scale (1982). Finally, an independent t-test and Spearman's correlation were conducted using Stata 14.

Results: Most participants were male (65.4%), married (77.9%), and assistant professors (56.7%). Mean (±SD) scores for professional ethics, organizational commitment, and SE were 81.76 (±21.21), 79.24 (±14.13), and 60.53 (±12.64), respectively. Moreover, a significant positive correlation was found between organizational commitment and professional ethics ($P=0.02$, $r=0.15$) as well as between professional ethics and SE ($P=0.01$, $r=0.17$). However, there was no significant correlation between organizational commitment and SE ($P=0.75$, $r=0.02$).

Conclusion: Given the significant positive relationships between organizational commitment and professional ethics, as well as between professional ethics and SE, it is advisable to enhance professional ethics among faculty through targeted workshops.

Keywords: Ethics, Organizations/Ethics, Self-efficacy, Faculty

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Introduction

Professional ethics encompass rules and principles that individuals should voluntarily adhere to, guided by their conscience and inherent values, in their professional roles, without external coercion, and reflected in their moral actions and responses (1). Professional societies are expected to foster the highest standards of professional relationships among their members (2). Professional ethics involves rational thinking that guides an organization in determining which values to uphold and promote at any given time (3). As a professional system, higher education must establish and adhere to professional ethics, including defining boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behavior while guiding faculty in fulfilling their professional responsibilities (4). It is noteworthy that the professional conduct of faculty members profoundly influences students and drives the growth and success of the university. The sustainability of any university hinges on its individual and institutional advancement. Therefore, faculty must prioritize adherence to professional ethics (5). Faculty members serve as the living embodiments of ethical values in the academic workplace, and students absorb professional ethics implicitly through the behaviors of their instructors (6). More precisely, the ethical values of faculty members are transmitted to students. It should

be noted that adherence to professional ethics enhances psychological safety, personal growth, and productivity (7). Conversely, organizational commitment stands as a critical employee-related issue. Moreover, such adherence strengthens faculty capabilities while lowering societal and institutional costs (8). Additionally, appropriate professional ethics transform the university into an accountable institution by fostering faculty commitment to students (9). Sheikhzakaryaie et al demonstrated a significant positive correlation ($P<0.05$, $r=0.12$) between faculty members' professional ethics and organizational commitment (10). The present study has been conducted exclusively among the faculty members of the University of Kurdistan. Therefore, due to probable cultural, organizational, and structural differences across Iranian universities, the findings cannot be generalized to the faculty members of other higher education institutions.

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's degree of dedication to the organization and their alignment with its values and goals (9). Allen and Meyer propose that organizational commitment comprises affective, continuance, and normative dimensions.

a. Affective Commitment: The individual is identified with the organization, remains loyal, and adopts its goals as their own.
b. Continuance Commitment: The individual stays due to the perceived costs of leaving, including organizational investments, despite unfavorable conditions or alternative opportunities.
c. Normative Commitment: A sense of obligation and duty compels the individual to remain with the organization (11).

Today, organizational commitment is a key driver of job attitudes, enhancing motivation and productivity while fostering employee loyalty and dedication to achieving organizational goals (12). It should be mentioned that low organizational commitment leads to increased worry, anxiety, absenteeism, tardiness, reduced efficiency, and higher turnover among faculty members (13). Organizational commitment further enhances the educational and institutional performance of faculty members while boosting their self-efficacy (SE) (14). Nassri and Yaghmaei found a significant correlation ($P<0.05$, $r=0.02$) between organizational commitment and SE (15). This research was limited to faculty members of Islamic Azad University, Zanjan Branch, and due to likely cultural and institutional variations, the results are not generalizable to all Iranian universities.

Bandura defines SE as an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments in specific contexts (16). Similarly, SE is characterized as an individual's belief in their capability to succeed in specific situations. As a pivotal social institution, the university plays an essential role in cultivating a creative and innovative generation (17). The SE of faculty members has long been a focus of interest to education experts (18). A faculty member's SE refers to their confidence in implementing effective organizational and instructional practices that influence classroom performance (19). In fact, faculty members with high SE are less likely to criticize students but more likely to help hard-working students. Accordingly, increasing faculty SE improves students' learning, confidence, and classroom cooperation (20).

Moreover, faculty members represent the primary intellectual capital and driving force of universities. More precisely, the quality of education, research output, innovation, and even the prevailing organizational culture are profoundly influenced by their performance, motivation, and ethical conduct. Professional ethics and organizational commitment can act as crucial predictors or moderating variables in relation to faculty members' SE, or conversely, be influenced by it. Despite the theoretical and practical importance of these constructs, very few studies have simultaneously investigated the interrelationships among professional ethics, organizational commitment, and SE within the specific population of university faculty members. This notable gap in the literature prompted the present researchers to conduct a study aimed at examining the relationships between professional ethics and organizational commitment with SE among the faculty members of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences.

Materials and Methods

The participants of this cross-sectional study included 240 faculty members of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences in 2023. A response rate of 90% was achieved in this study. The sample was obtained using proportionate stratified random sampling, with sample allocation proportional to the population size of each faculty. The sample size was calculated according to the following formula:

$$N=\left[\left(\frac{Z_{1-\frac{\alpha}{2}}+Z_{1-\beta}}{C}\right)\right]^2+3$$

$$C=\frac{1}{2}\log\frac{1+r}{1-r}$$

where α represents the probability of committing a type I error, and β denotes the probability of a type II error (equivalently, 1 minus the statistical power of the test). In addition, r signifies the sample correlation coefficient derived from N observations (21).

The inclusion criteria required participants' informed consent to engage in the study. On the other hand, the exclusion criteria encompassed failure to complete the questionnaires or submission of partially filled forms. Several instruments were employed in this investigation, including a demographic profile checklist, Cadozir's Professional Ethics Questionnaire (2002), the Allen and Meyer Organizational Commitment Scale (1990), and Sherer's General SE Scale (1982).

- The demographic information checklist included

age, gender, marital status, type of residence, and academic degree, which was approved by 10 faculty members of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences.

- Cadozir (2002) developed the Professional Ethics Questionnaire, which consists of 17 closed-ended items that assess professional ethics across eight dimensions: accountability, integrity, equity and impartiality, allegiance, pursuit of excellence and competitive drive, respectfulness, empathy toward others, and adherence to societal norms and principles. Responses are rated on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = very low, 2 = low, 3 = moderate, 4 = high, 5 = very high). Items 1–2, 3–4, and 5–7 measure accountability, integrity, and equity and impartiality, respectively. Moreover, items 8–9 and 10–11 assess allegiance and pursuit of excellence and competitiveness. Furthermore, items 12–13, 14–15, and 16–17 evaluate respectfulness, empathy, and adherence to social norms, respectively. Total scores range from 17 to 85, with higher scores indicating greater adherence to professional ethical standards (22). Davoudi et al reported acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha > 0.70 (23). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.81, demonstrating excellent reliability.
- The Allen and Meyer (1990) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire consists of 24 closed-ended items distributed across three subscales: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. The reported validity coefficients for these subscales are 0.85 (affective), 0.83 (continuance), and 0.79 (normative). Responses are recorded on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", and total scores range from 24 to 168 (24). In the study by Davoudi et al, the Cronbach's alpha for the overall organizational commitment scale was 0.89 (25). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the current study was 0.95.
- The Sherer et al (1982) General SE Scale contains 17 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = indifferent, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). All items, except for 1, 3, 8, 9, 13, and 15, are reverse-scored. Items 1–7 and 8–13 measure willingness to initiate behavior and willingness to expend effort, respectively. Further, items 14–17 evaluate persistence in the face of obstacles. Total scores range from 17 to 85, with scores of 58 or above and below 58 indicating high and low SE, respectively (26). Shamsaei reported a reliability coefficient of 0.87 for this scale in an Iranian sample (27). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.80.

After obtaining ethics approval and informed consent, faculty members were provided with the questionnaires and instructions on how to complete them. Additionally, Spearman's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine relationships among professional ethics, organizational commitment, and SE. Descriptive statistics (including means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations) were also used to summarize demographic characteristics. All analyses were conducted using Stata (version 14), with statistical significance set at $P < 0.05$.

Results

This study included 240 faculty members from Hamadan University of Medical Sciences. The results revealed that most participants were male (65.4%), married (77.9%), and homeowners (96.3%) and held the rank of assistant professor (56.7%), with a mean (±SD) age of 43.78 (±6.77) years (Table 1).

The results demonstrated that the mean (±SD) scores of professional ethics, organizational commitment, and SE in faculty members were 81.76 (±21.21), 79.24 (±14.13), and 60.53 (±12.64), respectively (Table 2).

Correlation coefficient test results (Table 3) revealed a significant link between organizational commitment and professional ethics ($P = 0.02$, r = 0.15). Professional ethics and SE had a direct and significant relationship ($P = 0.01$, r = 0.17), whereas organizational commitment and SE had a direct but non-significant relationship ($P = 0.75$, r = 0.02).

Discussion

This study examined the relationships among professional ethics, organizational commitment, and SE in faculty members. The results indicated that professional ethics and SE were at desirable levels, whereas organizational commitment was at a moderate level. Spearman's correlation analyses confirmed significant positive associations between professional ethics and organizational commitment, as well as between professional ethics and SE. However, no significant relationship was found between organizational commitment and SE.

The level of professional ethics among faculty members at Hamadan University of Medical Sciences was

Table 1. Demographic Data in the Faculty Members of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences

Variables		Results
Age, M±SD		43.78±6.77
Gender, n (%)	Male	157 (65.4)
	Female	83 (34.6)
Marital status, n (%)	Married	187 (77.9)
	Single	53 (22.1)
Type of residence, n (%)	Personal	231 (96.3)
	Parents' house	9 (3.8)
Scientific degree, n (%)	Instructor	16 (6.7)
	Assistant professor	136 (56.7)
	Associate professor	49 (20.4)
	Professor	39 (16.3)

Note. M: Mean; SD: Standard deviation.

Table 2. Mean of Professional Ethics, Organizational Commitment, and Self-Efficacy in the Faculty Members of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences

Variable	Mean ± SD
Professional ethics	81.76 ± 21.21
Organizational commitment	79.24 ± 14.13
Self-efficacy	60.53 ± 12.64

Note. SD: Standard deviation.

Table 3. Correlation Between Organizational Commitment, Professional Ethics, and Self-Efficacy in Faculty Members

Variable		Organizational Commitment	Professional Ethics	Self-Efficacy
Organizational Commitment	r	1	-	-
	P-value	-	-	-
Professional ethics	r	0.15	1	-
	P-value	0.02	-	-
Self-efficacy	r	0.02	0.17	1
	P-value	0.75	0.01	-

favorable. Consistent with these findings, Bouzarjomehri et al reported that over 50% of clinical assistants at Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences in Yazd demonstrated strong ethical competence (28). Similarly, Karimi Yarandi et al concluded that professional ethics among faculty at medical universities ranged from moderate to moderately high (29). Beyond knowledge transmission, faculty members play a critical role in modeling ethical behavior during instruction. Adherence to professional ethics may foster greater student autonomy and social support (5). In contrast, Malekshahi et al observed unfavorable levels of professional ethics among faculty (30). These discrepancies may stem from differences in sample size, cultural context, and measurement tools. The above-mentioned study involved 176 faculty members at Lorestan University of Medical Sciences and used the David Musick questionnaire.

Organizational commitment among faculty members at Hamadan University of Medical Sciences was at a moderate level. Similarly, Nassri and Yaghmaei observed medium-to-high organizational commitment among professors (15). However, Farzanjou et al found high and favorable commitment among academic staff at universities in Sistan and Baluchestan (31). Variations across institutions may reflect differences in academic environment, cultural influences, and organizational factors. The current results suggest that faculty members at Hamadan University exhibit loyalty and motivation to sustain employment, arriving punctually, minimizing absences, and demonstrating enthusiasm for teaching and institutional engagement.

SE among participants was high. Likewise, Pourvakhshoori et al documented high SE among medical faculty in Gilan (32). Faculty with strong SE tend to adopt innovative teaching strategies, set ambitious goals, engage in thorough planning, persist in problem-solving, seek assistance when needed, and adapt instructional methods, ultimately enhancing student satisfaction.

Significant positive correlations emerged between professional ethics and organizational commitment, as well as between professional ethics and SE, though organizational commitment and SE were unrelated. Khani et al also identified a significant association between professional ethics and organizational commitment among nurses (33). Moreover, Imani et al reported a similar relationship among education specialists at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (9). Similarly, Mohammadi Fomani et al found organizational commitment to be a key predictor of professional ethics among the faculty members of Farhangian University (34). Albooghobeish et al also demonstrated that ethics training improved organizational commitment in nursing students (35). Regarding ethics and SE, Aghaie Motlagh observed a positive association among faculty members at Karaj Azad University (36). Despite positive relationships between professional ethics and both organizational commitment and SE, the effect sizes were small, indicating that other unexamined factors probably play a more substantial role.

Study Limitations

This study had some limitations, including the self-report nature and the small sample size. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies use larger sample sizes and other tools (e.g., interviews and observations) in addition to questionnaires.

Conclusion

Professional ethics and SE were at desirable levels, while organizational commitment showed a moderate level, with significant positive correlations between professional ethics and both organizational commitment and SE. Accordingly, universities should incorporate organizational commitment metrics into faculty evaluations and integrate ethics training into professional development programs. Workshops promoting ethical practices may also enhance commitment, thereby improving teaching quality and institutional sustainability.

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Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization: Arezou Karampourian, RM, and Fatemeh Karbin.
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Writing–review & editing: All authors.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical Approval

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences (approval No. 140109017311

and ethics code IR.UMSHA.REC.1401.645). Moreover, written informed consent was received from all participants.

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