Ethical Leadership, Deviant Workplace Behaviors and it's relation to Perceived Organizational Support among Nurses

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Abstract

Background: Ethical leadership has meaningful influence on the attitudes and ethical conduct of nurses and increased sense of perceived organizational support from hospital and decreased engagement in deviant workplace behaviors. **Aim of study:** Was to assess ethical leadership, deviant workplace behaviors and it's relation to perceived organizational support among nurses. **Design:** A descriptive correlational research design was utilized. **Setting:** The study was conducted in Critical Care Units at Benha University Hospitals. **Sample:** Convenient sample of all available nurses (230) nurses with at least three years of experience was included in study. **Tools:** Three tools were used for data collection. **I:** Ethical leadership scale, **II:** Deviant workplace behaviors scale and **III:** Perceived organizational support questionnaire. **Results:** More than half (52.6) of nurses had moderate ethical leadership perception level, the majority of nurses (89.6%) had negative prevalence of deviant workplace behaviors perception level and more than half (55.7%) of nurse were had moderate perceived organizational support level. **Conclusion:** There was a negative statistically significant correlation between ethical leadership perception level and deviant workplace behaviors perception level and between deviant workplace behaviors perception level and perceived organizational support level. Additionally, there was a positive statistically significant correlation between ethical leadership perception level and perceived organizational support level. **Recommendation**: Put hospital management system for rewarding and supporting nurses who behave ethically and serving as ethical role models by providing different kinds of bonuses and incentives, create hospital management strategies that promote supportive work environment and reduce workplace deviance behaviors such as rewards, flexible work schedules, fair pay and benefits, safe working conditions, and training. Provides hospital management promotion and fairness system through distributing resources for nurses equally.

Key words: Ethical leadership, Deviant workplace behaviors, Perceived organizational support, Nurses.

Introduction

In nursing profession, nurses have responsibilities to the patients they give care, to colleagues, to profession, and to the society. Ethical dilemmas arise in all these relationships, and the solution requires an ethical approach. Ethical leadership requires acting in accordance with the requirements of the nursing profession for the benefit of individuals, groups, and organizations in these ethical conflicts that nurses often meet. Nurses' negative perceptions of ethical climate and the ethical characteristics of leaders may lead to a failure in the care and treatment of the patients they are responsible for **(Hsieh et al., 2020)**.

When nurses perceive the support of the organization and feel that are accepted by the hospital, will be motivated to devote themselves to work and care about the

development of the hospital. Therefore, probably do not look for other employment opportunities and stay in the current position and don't engage in deviant workplace behaviors **(Li MS et al., 2020).**

Ethical leadership is defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" extended this with various behavioral dimensions such as fairness, power sharing, role clarification, people orientation, integrity, ethical guidance, and concern for sustainability **(Cullen, 2020).**

Deviant workplace behaviors are each type of behavior that does not comply with the legal regulations, rules, values, norms, social culture, customs, and traditions. There are many different expressions to deviant workplace behaviors such as antisocial behaviors, counterproductive work behaviors, organizational misbehaviors and dysfunctional behaviors. A deviant workplace behavior has many undesirable consequences for nurses and hospital itself such as decrease productivity, absenteeism, under performance **(Bayin et al., 2019).**

Perceived organizational support maybe defined as the nurses' belief of the hospital's consideration regarding his/ her contributions, and the extent to which the hospital is concerned about the nurses' well-being and appreciates participation which satisfy nurses' emotional and social needs **(Prakosa et al., 2019)**, help nurses to minimize workplace related stressors depression, excitement, and exhaustion. On the other hand, positive work environment is considered as the most important factor for nurses' job satisfaction and enhancing readiness for innovation that affects positively maintenance of manpower in the hospital, as well as patient care services **(Abd El- Aliem et al., 2020).**

Significance of the Study

Deviant workplace behaviors in nursing profession have been a global problem. They are widely observed among nurses' working in critical care units due to working in an extremely stressful work environments for a long time and conflict with colleagues and patient's families. It makes experience burnout, low job performance, dissatisfaction, turnover intent and absenteeism. When nurses' perceived morally behaviors displayed by ethical leaders and perceived support from hospital. It will improve their performance and this lead to less engagement in deviant workplace behaviors **(Ugwu et al., 2017).** So, this study will assess ethical leadership, deviant workplace behaviors and its relation to perceived organizational support among nurses.

Aim of Study

The present study aimed to assess ethical leadership, deviant workplace behaviors and it's relation to perceived organizational support among nurses.

Research Questions:

1- What is nurses' perception level toward ethical leadership?
2- What is nurses' perception level toward deviant workplace behaviors?
3- What is nurses' perception level toward organizational support?
4- Is there relation between ethical leadership, deviant workplace behaviors and perceived organizational support among nurses?

Subject and Methods

Research Design

A descriptive correlational research design was utilized.

Ethical Leadership, Deviant Workplace Behaviors and it's relation to Perceived Organizational Support among Nurses

Setting

The current study was conducted in Critical Care Units at Benha University Hospital.

Subjects

Convenient sample of all available nurses (230) nurses with at least three years of experience was included in study.

Tools of data collection:

The data for this study was collected by using three tools:

Tool (I) Ethical Leadership Scale.

It was developed by **Khan & Javed (2018)** to assess nurses' perception level of ethical leadership in the organization. It included two parts:

- **First part**: Personal characteristic data about nurses (age, gender, marital status, educational levels, years of work experience).
- **Second part**: It contained 21 items to assess nurses' perception level of ethical leadership in the organization.

Scoring system:

Responses of each statement was measured on three point likert scale as the following agree (3), neutral (2), disagree (1). The perception of ethical leadership considered high if the percent scores was more than (>75%), moderate if the percent scores ranged from (60% - 75%), while it considered low if the percent scores less than (< 60%) **(Islam et al., 2017).**

Tool (II): Deviant Workplace Behaviors Scale

It was developed by **(Bennett and Robinson 2000)** to assess nurses' perception level toward deviant workplace behaviors and it contained (19) items under two main dimensions (interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance).

Scoring system:

Responses of each statement was measured on three point likert scale as the following never (1), sometimes (2), always (3). Scores of each dimension was summed up and converted into percent scores. The level of deviant workplace behaviors was considered yes if the percent score was more than (> 60%), no if the percent score was less than (< 60%)

Tool (III): Perceived Organizational Support Questionnaire

It was developed by **(Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002)** to assess perceived organizational support among nurses and it contained (46) items under three main dimensions (Supervisor support, Fairness and Organizational rewards and job Conditions).

Scoring system:

Responses of each statement was measured on three point likert scale as the following agree (3), neutral (2), disagree (1). The level of perceived organizationl support considered high if the percent score was more than (>75%), moderate if the percent score ranged from (60% - 75%), while it considered low if the percent score less than (< 60%).

Tool's validity

The study tools were presented to panel of jury for face and content validation. The jury included 5 experts from Nursing Administration.

Reliability for the study tools:

Reliability of tools tested Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, it was (0.90) for ethical leadership scale, (0.81) for deviant workplace behaviors scale and (0.88) for perceived organizational support questionnaire.

Ethical consideration:

Approval of the faculty ethics committee for scientific research. Subjects were informed that the content of the tools will be used for the

research purpose only. In addition, confidentiality of the subjects were assured through coding of all data. Nurses were informed about the purpose and benefits of the study and their participation was voluntary and they had the right to refuse to participate in the study without reason.

Pilot study:

A pilot study was carried out in October 2020. It was conducted on (23) nurses who represent 10% of total study subjects to ensure the clarity, feasibility, and objectivity of the content of the tools and to estimate the time needed to fill the questionnaires. No modification was needed so the pilot study was included in the study subjects.

Field Work:

Data collection was done from the first of November 2020 to the first of December 2020. The subject was informed about the aim of the study, and the method of filling questionnaire. The investigator distributed the questionnaires to the participated subjects to fill it. Data was collected three days per week from 15-20 nurses daily on morning and evening shift during work in the presence of the investigator to clarify any ambiguity. The time needed by nurses to fill the three tools: Ethical Leadership Scale was ranged from 10-15 minutes; Deviant Workplace Behaviors scale was ranged from 10-15 minutes and Perceived Organizational Support Questionnaire was ranged from 15-20 minutes.

Statistical analysis:

Data were collected, tabulated, statistically analyzed using an IBM personal computer with statistical package of social science (SPSS) version 22 with statistical package of social science (SPSS) version 22 where the following statistics were applied:

- Descriptive statistics: In which quantitative data were presented in the form of Mean, standard deviation (SD), frequency, and percentage distribution.

- Analytical statistics: Used to find out possible association between studied factors. The used tests of significance included;

- Chi-square test (X2): Was used to study association between two qualitative variables.

- A significance level value was considered when p- value ≤ 0.05anda highly significance level was considered when p- value ≤ 0.001, while p-value >0.05 indicated non-significance results.

- Correlation coefficient (r) test was used to estimate the closeness association between variables.

Results:

Table (1): Shows that more than half (51.3 %) of nurses were had more than 20 to less than 30 years with (M±SD = 31.32±6.87). As regards to their sex, marital status the majority (90.0 % & 86.1%) of them were females and married. As far as their educational levels more than half (55.2%) were had Nursing technical institute. Concerning their years of work experience (40.0%) of them were had more than 10 to less than 20 years with (M±SD = 12.08±8.32).

Figure (1): Displays that more than half (52.6%) of them had moderate ethical leadership perception level. While, only (7%) of them were had low ethical leadership perception level.

Figure (2): Displays that the majority of nurses (89.6%) reported that there is no prevalence of deviant workplace behaviors perception level. While, only (10.4%) reported that they had prevalence of deviant workplace behaviors perception level.

Figure (3): Shows that more than half (55.7%) of them were had moderate perceived organizational support level. While, only (3.4%) of them had low perceived organizational support level.

Table (2): Shows that there was a negative statistically significant correlation between ethical leadership perception level and deviant workplace behaviors level and

Ethical Leadership, Deviant Workplace Behaviors and it's relation to Perceived Organizational Support among Nurses

between deviant workplace behavior and perceived organizational support level. Also, there was a positive statistically significant correlation between ethical leadership perception level and perceived organizational support level.

Table (1): Distribution of studied nurses regarding their personal characteristics (n=230)

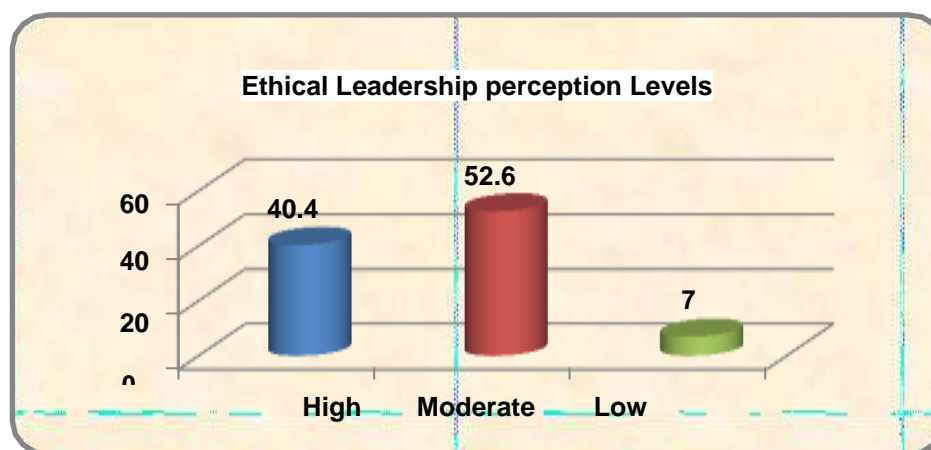| Personal characteristics		No	%
Age	20<30 years	118	51.3
	30<40 years	77	33.5
	40 years and more	35	15.2
	M±SD	**31.32±6.87**	
Sex	Female	207	90.0
	Male	23	10.0
Marital status	Married	198	86.1
	Unmarried	32	13.9
Educational levels	Diploma in Nursing	57	24.8
	Nursing technical institute	127	55.2
	Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Science	46	20.0
Years of work experience	3< 10 years	90	39.1
	10<20 years	92	40.0
	20 <30 years	39	17.0
	More than 30 years	9	3.9
	M±SD	**12.08±8.32**	

Figure (1): Total levels of ethical leadership perception among nurses (n=230)
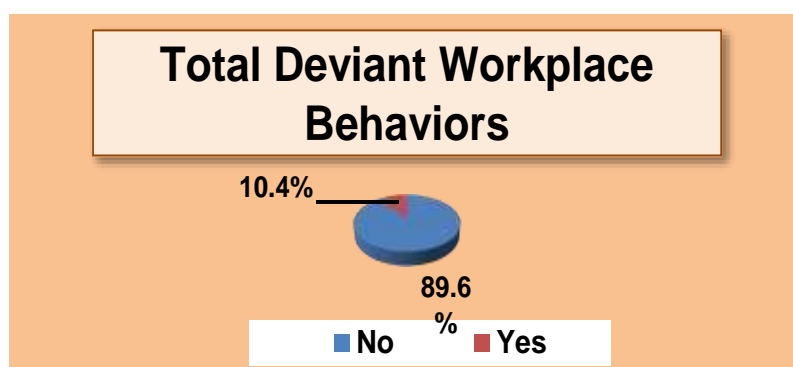
Figure (2): Total perception levels of prevalence of deviant workplace behaviors among nurses (n=230)

Figure (3): Total levels of perceived organizational support among nurses (n=230).

Table (2): Correlation matrix between total Ethical leadership perception level, Deviant workplace behaviors level and perceived Organizational support level

Variables	Ethical Leadership Perception Level		Deviant workplace behavior Perception Level		Perceived Organizational Support Level	
	r	P	r	P	r	P
Ethical Leadership Perception Levels	1	-	0.045	0.000**	0.947	0.000
Deviant Workplace Behavior Perception Level	0.045	0.000**	1	-	0.072	0.000**
Perceived Organizational Support Level	0.947	0.000**	0.072	0.000**	1	-

*A statistical significant correlation (P < 0.05)

Ethical Leadership, Deviant Workplace Behaviors and it's relation to Perceived Organizational Support among Nurses

Discussion

The finding of the present study illustrated that more than half of studied nurses had moderate ethical leadership perception levels. While, minority of them were had low ethical leadership level. This could be due to nurses' leaders promote altruistic attitudes among nurses through role modeling, open communication which enhances identification and commitment. Also, they are responsible for clarifying responsibilities, priorities, performance goals. In addition, give them feedback about their performance. Thus they feel confident and trust their supervisor.

This finding was matched with **Aryati et al., (2018)** who studied "The influence of ethical leadership to deviant workplace behavior mediated by ethical climate and organizational commitment" and found that more than half of nurses had moderate ethical level

Also, this finding was agree with **Elsayed, (2019)** who conducted a study about "the relationship between nurses' perception of ethical leadership and anti-social behavior through ethical climate as a mediating factor" and found more than half of nurses had spread awareness of ethical leadership due to the good conduct of the supervisor towards the nurses and his respect for them .

On the other hand, this result incompatible with the study findings **Elçi et al., (2017)**who conducted a study about "The impacts of ethical leadership on the antisocial behavior of nurses: the mediating role of ethical climate" and clarified that more than half of studied nurses had low perception level of ethical leadership.

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of studied nurses had negative deviant workplace behaviors, while the minority of them had positive deviant workplace behaviors. This could be due to nurses' leaders often neglect the deviation

behavior in the workplace until it is too late. Hence, it is important for leaders to know the root causes of such behavior in order to find appropriate solutions. Also, great emphasis has been placed on hospital policies that must be carefully integrated into the hospital in order to effectively manager nurses behavior.

These results were in harmony with **Paracha et al., (2017)** who conducted the study about "Workplace bulling on deviant work behavior among nurses in Pakistan: mediating role of interpersonal conflict" and found that the majority of studied nurses had negative deviant workplace behaviors. Also, the result of the present study agreed with **Hashish, (2019)** who conducted a study about "Nurses' perception of organizational justice and its relationship to their workplace deviance" and showed that nurses who perceived organizational justice don't do deviant workplace behaviors.

The result of this study aligns with **Shafique et al., (2020)** who conducted a study about " Workplace ostracism and deviant behavior among nurses: a parallel mediation model" and reported that the minority of nurses engaged in deviant workplace behaviors.

On the contrary with the previous finding **Hamid et al., (2016)** who conducted the study about " Abusive supervision and workplace deviance as moderated by spiritual intelligence: An empirical study of Selangor nurses" and reported that nurses will respond negatively to leaders mistreatment by engaging in behaviors that are harmful to individual and the hospital.

In contrast with the study finding **Hany et al., (2020)** who conducted the study about "Relation between organizational justice and workplace deviance behavior among nurses" and found that less than one third of studied nurses had no workplace deviant behavior, and slightly more than two thirds of studied nurses had high workplace deviant behavior and this

result may be attributed to lack of fair practices, stress, job dissatisfaction, and low financially rewarding.

The finding of the present study revealed that more than half of studied nurses had moderate perceived organizational support level and the minority of them had low perceived organizational support level. This could be due to sense of support from the hospital and his appreciation for the nurses' efforts.

These results were agreed with **Yahya et al., (2017)** who conducted a study about "The Relationship between perceived organizational support, perceived external prestige, growth need strength and job satisfaction of nurses in pakistan" and reported that more than half of nurses had moderate perceived organizational support.

These results were in harmony with **Malki et al., (2020)** who conducted a study about "Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support and Quality of Nurses' Work Life at King Fahad Hospital-Saudi Arabia" and revealed that near to two thirds of nurses had moderate perceived organizational support.

These results were disagreed with **Maan et al., (2020)** who conducted a study about" Perceived organizational support and job satisfaction: a moderated mediation model of proactive personality and psychological empowerment" and found that more than half of nurses had low perceived organizational support level.

Concerning the relationship between ethical leadership and deviant workplace behaviors, the present study revealed that there was statistically significant negative correlation between ethical leadership and deviant workplace behaviors. This could be due to when the supervisor behaviors is normative and in accordance with the work ethics, nurses will feel happier to be involved in the work and will reduce the intention to do deviant behaviors in hospital.

In the same line, this finding was congruent with **Aryati et al., (2018)**who conducted a study about "The influence of ethical leadership to deviant workplace behavior mediated by ethical climate and organizational commitment" and **Yasir & Khan, (2020)** who conducted a study about "Mediating role of nurses' trust in the relationship between ethical leadership and workplace deviance in the public sector hospitals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" and found that there was statistically significant negative correlation between ethical leadership and deviant workplace behaviors.

Concerning the relationship between ethical leadership and perceived organizational support level, the present study revealed that there was statistically significant positive correlation between ethical leadership and perceived organizational support level. This could be due to when hospital support increases, the leader's support for nurses increases and treating them in an ethical manner based on morals and values, which increases their job satisfaction and work affiliation.

This result was supported with **Wang et al., (2019)** who conducted a study about " when and for whom ethical leadership is more effective in eliciting work meaningfulness and Positive Attitudes: The moderating roles of core self- evaluation and perceived organizational support" and **Rashed et al., (2020)** who conducted a study about " Role of ethical leadership on nurses commitment: Mediating effects of Trust and Perceived organizational support" and reported that there was statistically significant positive correlation between ethical leadership and perceived organizational support level.

Concerning the relationship between deviant workplace behaviors and perceived organizational support level, the present study revealed that there was statistically significant negative correlation between deviant

workplace behavior and perceived organizational support level. This could be due to when hospital support nurses, concern for their interests and appreciate their efforts all this leads to less engagement from nurses in deviant workplace behaviors.

This result was supported with **Panatik et al., (2015)** who conducted a study about "The Role of Perceived organizational support and emotional intelligence towards workplace deviance among nurses" and **Dar et al., (2019)** who conducted a study about "Deviant behaviors and procedural justice: Mediating role of Perceived organizational support" and found that there was statistically significant negative correlation between deviant workplace behavior and perceived organizational support level.

Conclusion

More than half of nurses had moderate ethical leadership perception level. Majority of nurses had negative prevalence of deviant workplace behaviors. More than half of nurses were had moderate perceived organizational support level. Additionally, there was a negative statistically significant correlation between ethical leadership perception levels and deviant workplace behaviors level and between deviant workplace behavior and perceived organizational support level. Meanwhile, there was a positive statistically significant correlation between ethical leadership perception levels and perceived organizational support level.

Recommendations:

Recommendations for hospital administrators:

- Hospital management put system for rewarding and supporting nurses who behave ethically and serving as ethical role models by providing different kinds of bonuses and incentives.
- Hospital management create strategies that promote supportive work environment and reduce workplace deviance behaviors such as rewards, flexible work schedules, fair pay and benefits, safe working conditions, and training.
- Hospital management provides promotion and fairness system through distributing resources for nurses equally.

Recommendations for nursing manager:

- Create equitable work environment for all nurses through maintaining an open clear communication with all nurses about the ethical behavior, ethical dilemmas.
- Provide honesty and sincerity work environment for creating emotional relationship with nurses to avoid deviant workplace behaviors.
- Nursing manager provide nurses constructive feedback to increase their capabilities and job satisfaction.
- Nursing manger listen to nurses suggestions in order to promote positive team work and enhance feeling of appreciation.

Recommendations for nursing level:

- Nurses consider time value for caring for patient in order to increase patient satisfaction.
- Nurses behave appropriately toward their colleagues at hospital to increase commitment in hospital.
- Nurses are complying with regulations of the hospital to avoid punishment from hospital management.

For further research

- Replicate the study for large sample in other departments at clinical setting and other hospital with differences circumstances to prove its effectiveness.
- Investigate factors the can lead to occurrence of deviant behaviors between nurses in hospital.
- Conduct studies to examine the effect of workplace deviance behaviors on job performance and productivity.

- Investigating the relationship between deviant workplace behaviors and leader mistreatment.

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القيادة الأخلاقية، سلوكيات العمل الإنحرافية وعلاقته بالدعم المؤسسى كما يدركه الممرضين

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تعتبر سلوكيات العمل الإنحرافية فى مهنة التمريض مشكلة عالمية وتلاحظ على نطاق واسع بين الممرضين وعندما يدرك الممرضين السلوكيات الأخلاقية التى يظهرها القادة ويدركوا الدعم من المستشفى يؤدى ذلك إلى قلة مشاركتهم فى سلوكيات العمل الإنحرافية. لذلك هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقييم القيادة الأخلاقية وسلوكيات العمل الإنحرافية وعلاقته بالدعم المؤسسى المدرك بين الممرضين. وقد أجريت الدراسة فى وحدات الرعاية الحرجة فى مستشفى بنها الجامعى على ٢٣٠ ممرضة لا يقلون عن ثلاث سنوات خبرة. حيث كشفت النتائج أن أكثر من نصف الممرضين لديهم مستوى إدراك معتدل للقيادة الأخلاقية والدعم المؤسسى. كما أوصت الدراسة بضرورة إجراء برامج تدريب مستمرة حول توجيه الأفراد وتقاسم السلطة والنزاهة والشفافية.