



The Impact of the Professor's Ethical Leadership on the Students' Deviant Behaviors

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Keywords

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, the organizational world has shown a particular interest in ethics. The majority of studies and research on the subject of ethics have been conducted within the framework of organizations, considered as a conventional environment; a few studies have, on the contrary, adopted a research framework in a unconventional context. This is the case with our current research on ethics in the academic and university environment in the context of Moroccan universities. As we shall demonstrate influence of the leader, or leadership can lead an individual to engage in deviant behavior as the ethical climate, which also serve as a reference for the behaviors to be adopted.

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Introduction

Today, organizations are urgently implementing codes of ethics and professional conduct to reflect a positive image and demonstrate their altruistic concern and societal involvement. This growing interest is attributed to financial, economic, and political scandals occurring within organizations. Internationally, there are disturbing scandals, highlighting real problems, related to ethical shortcomings (Martineau et al., 2017). These scandals primarily stem from the dishonesty of certain organizational actors, manifested through the adoption of deviant behaviors.

The organizational environment is a conventional research setting, and thus, there are very few studies that have ventured beyond this environment to conduct research in unconventional contexts, such as the academic environment. Ethics in the academic environment remains inadequately addressed by the scientific community, leading to a lack and scarcity of regulations, ethical codes, and charters of ethics guiding behaviors in the academic setting (Fave Bonnet, Marie-Françoise, 2015). Beyond regulatory frameworks, other influential factors may contribute to explaining the adoption of certain behaviors, emphasizing the importance of studying these factors in-depth to propose effective solutions.

In our research, we focus on the context of a Moroccan university which stands out in representing the Moroccan academic environment. It is crucial to shed light on ethics in the academic environment, not only in terms of ethical norms and rules but also in terms of practices. Therefore, we have chosen to address concepts related to management practices by adapting them to the academic environment. Consequently, in this research, we will explore three concepts: the ethical leadership of the university professor, the ethical climate within the group of students, and the deviant behaviors of students. We will identify the influence of ethical leadership of the university professor on students' deviant behaviors through the ethical climate within the group.

Our main research question is as follows: Can the adoption of ethical leadership by the university professor promote a group's ethical climate and consequently reduce the adoption of deviant behaviors by students?

Throughout this research, we will attempt to identify the impact of ethical leadership of the university professor on the ethical climate within the group and, consequently, on students' deviant behaviors.

1. Theoretical framework

1.1. Ethical leadership

According to Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005), ethical leaders set an example by adopting normatively appropriate behavior, such as honesty, fairness, loyalty, and attention to subordinates. Ethical leaders communicate ethical values to subordinates by reinforcing ethical standards and using rewards and sanctions regarding the adoption or non-adoption of ethical behaviors. The decision-making process of ethical leaders must consider ethics in every action and consequence to make fair and equitable decisions (Gini, 1998; Treviño et al., 2003; Bass et Avolio, 2000; Burns, 1978; Howell et Avolio, 1992).

Ethical leaders are characterized by moral principles guiding their behaviors. They question the fairest choices in their decision-making process, making them representative models of preferred ethical behaviors. Ethical leaders inspire individuals to live better lives and become better, paying special attention to the group's well-being (Freeman et Stewart, 2006; Kanugo et Mendonca, 1998). Personality traits play a significant role in ethical leadership, with honesty, integrity, and loyalty being identified as specific characteristics of ethical leaders (Treviño et al., 2000).

In this article, we rely on Brown et al.'s (2005) model, widely recognized in the literature, distinguishing ethical leadership into the moral person and the moral manager. This model has been empirically tested, and the "Ethical Leadership Scale" (ELS) developed by the authors to validate their construct has been widely acknowledged and used in various studies (Mayer et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 2012; Piccolo et al., 2010). Brown and Treviño (2006) focused on the antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership, reporting individual and contextual characteristics as antecedents and highlighting the positive relationships between ethical leadership, ethical decision-making,

prosocial behavior, and negative relationships with counterproductive behavior.

1.2. Ethical climate

Victor and Cullen (1987), pioneers of ethical climate theory, define it as a shared perception of what is ethical. Arnaud (2006) supports Victor and Cullen's (1987, 1988) ethical climate theory, considered one of the most recognized theories in the literature due to its empirical foundation.

Arnaud (2006) developed a theoretical model of ethical climate based on Rest's (1986) decision-making model, incorporating four components: collective moral sensitivity, collective moral judgment, collective moral motivation, and collective moral character. Antecedents to ethical climate include individual, organizational, and environmental factors, while consequences involve attitudes at work, ethical behaviors, and various ethical outcomes. The influence of ethical climate on ethical or deviant behavior has been identified by Victor and Cullen (1988) and Treviño (1990).

In this research, we primarily rely on Arnaud and Schminke's (2007) model, presenting the antecedents and impacts of organizational ethical climate. Leadership is considered among the antecedents, with Dickson and al. (2001) asserting that organizational ethical climate reflects the personal values and motivations of founders and organizational leaders.

1.3. Deviant behaviors

According to Robinson and Bennett (1995), workplace deviance is a voluntary behavior contrary to organizational norms, posing a threat to the organization or its members' well-being. The authors developed a typology based on voluntary employee behaviors, emphasizing dimensions of seriousness and interpersonal/organizational aspects, resulting in four categories: property deviance, production deviance, personal aggression, and political deviance. In the academic environment, categorizing deviant behaviors adopted by students is essential for better understanding and evaluation. Based on the internal regulations of the Moroccan University, inappropriate behaviors are severely sanctioned, falling into these four typologies.

Decision-making is a crucial step leading individuals to undertake a certain action over another. Rest’s (1986) decision-making model, widely adopted and studied in the literature, serves as the foundation for understanding the process of adopting deviant behaviors. Individual and contextual factors play a significant role in this process, with individual differences in age, gender, moral development, education level, and personal ethical stance being influential. Contextual factors, such as ethical leadership and ethical climate, also contribute to the decision-making process (Martinko et al., 2002; Deshpande, Joseph, et Prasad, 2006; Gove, 1985; Ross et Robertson, 2003).

2. Conceptual and methodological framework of the research

2.1. Research object

Through this study, we aim to confirm or refute the existence of a negative link between the ethical leadership of the university professor and the deviant behaviors of students in the academic environment, mediated by the ethical climate.

Our research question is formulated as follows: Can the adoption of ethical leadership by university professor promote a group's ethical climate and consequently reduce the adoption of deviant behaviors by students?

The research hypotheses we will attempt to verify in this study are as follows:

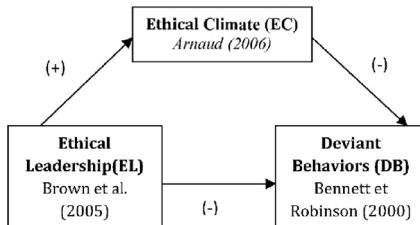
- H-1: The ethical leadership of the professor positively influences the ethical climate of the student group.
- H-2: The ethical climate of the student group negatively influences students' deviant behaviors.
- H-3: The ethical leadership of the professor negatively influences students' deviant behaviors.
 - Sub-hypothesis 3.1: The ethical leadership of the professor directly influences the deviant behaviors of students, negatively.

- Sub-hypothesis 3.2: The ethical leadership of the professor indirectly influences the deviant behaviors of students, negatively.

On the link between these variables, various theories have been identified in the literature, forming the basis for authors to support the existence of a significant relationship between these concepts. Particularly, the decision-making theory of Rest (1986) has been identified as a foundation for understanding the process of adopting deviant behaviors. Additionally, two theories, namely Bandura's (1971) social learning theory and Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, serve as the basis for understanding the link between ethical leadership, ethical climate, and deviant behaviors. Mayer and al. (2009) and Brown and Treviño (2006) support the idea that social influence theories shape individual behaviors.

Below is the theoretical model upon which our research is based, representing the independent variable, ethical leadership (EL), the mediating variable, ethical climate (EC), and the dependent variable referring to deviant behaviors (DB).

Figure 1: Research model



2.2. Methodological approach and data collection methods

Our research adopts a post-positivist stance with a focus on critical realism, also known as 'amended positivism' by Miles and Huberman (1991), who are recognized as part of the transcendental critical realism movement (Miles and Huberman, 2003). We have chosen a hypothetico-deductive approach for our scientific inquiry, aligning well with the nature of our research, where we aim to verify and test the different relationships between the three concepts under

study—ethical leadership, ethical climate, and deviant behaviors—through the postulated hypotheses. As we are in a process of verifying the various links between the concepts under study through testing, our approach is quantitative. To contextualize and frame our research, we conducted pretests and relied on the Internal Regulations of the Moroccan university to highlight unacceptable deviant behaviors within the university. The validity and reliability of data collection techniques in quantitative approaches are widely acknowledged (Thiétart et al., 2014; Gavard-Perret et al., 2012).

In our research, we will rely on data collection methods specific to quantitative approaches to determine the links between our variables: ethical leadership, ethical climate, and deviant behaviors. Surveys are a quantitative data collection method commonly used for describing a given population or exploring/test certain causal relationships (Thiétart et al., 2014). This method often prioritizes the questionnaire as the data collection technique.

The first version of the questionnaire was developed when the research problem and hypotheses were clearly identified. Subsequently, pre-established questionnaires for each concept were used, based on the different theoretical models that constituted our research model. Four measurement tools related to the four studied concepts were gathered to form the first version of our questionnaire. For ethical leadership, the measurement tool developed by Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) was used; for ethical climate, the measurement tool developed by Arnaud (2006) was used, and finally, for deviant behaviors, the measurement tool developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) was used. By combining these four measurement tools, we obtained the first version of our questionnaire. The second version of the questionnaire was developed after re-adapting the concept of deviant behaviors using the university’s Internal Regulations as a basis, which shed light on inappropriate behaviors within the university. Finally, a third and final version of the questionnaire was created after conducting a pretest with students. Some minor modifications were made to the final questionnaire for better question comprehension.

The anonymity of the students was ensured. Additionally, in choosing the professor exhibiting ethical leadership, care was taken to ensure that students

did not name specific professors or subjects so that respondents could be as honest as possible in their responses, thus obtaining valid and reliable results. The same measurement scale was used for all three concepts (Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Regarding the administration mode of the questionnaire, we decided to conduct it in person, allowing us to obtain responses from 262 participants.

In our research, we used two non-probabilistic sampling methods. We started with purposive sampling to precisely define the environment in which we wanted to conduct our study and the population targeted by this study. We concluded with convenience sampling when accessibility became challenging, where we only surveyed respondents who were accessible or those who agreed to participate in the study (Gavard-Perret et al., 2012). The target population consists of second-cycle students belonging to three faculties within the Moroccan university.

2.3. Statistical method: Structural equation modeling based on the PLS method

As for the chosen statistical method for research evaluation, we opted for structural equation modeling (SEM) as the modeling technique. SEMs are multivariate models that focus on modeling causal structures in data. The ultimate goal of this modeling is to simultaneously test the existence of causal relationships between different latent variables, which are not directly observable and cannot be measured directly. Unlike covariance analysis methods, which are confirmatory in nature, structural equation modeling based on the partial least squares (PLS) method is characterized by its predictive nature and flexibility regarding the prerequisites for its use, as it can handle data heterogeneity (Gavard-Perret et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2017; Sarstedt et al., 2017).

Structural equation modeling based on the PLS method involves two essential steps: first, the measurement model, and second, the structural model, also known as the structural model. In our research, we rely on a reflective measurement model, as the indicators reflect latent variables, which are not directly observable and can only be indirectly measured. The structural

model, on the other hand, focuses on the relationships between the latent variables of the model, emphasizing the predictive capacity of the model (Gavard-Perret et al., 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2017). To evaluate both the reflective measurement model and the structural model, several indicators must be considered.

3. Presentation and interpretation of results

3.1. Sample characteristics

As outlined in the methodological section, our study primarily focuses on students pursuing a Master's degree in three faculties.

Regarding the sample characteristics, it consists of Master's students of both genders, with a distribution of 59% males and 41% females. These results indicate a certain balance in the representation of men and women in the sample. Concerning age, the sample shows a level of homogeneity, with 89% of surveyed students being under 25 years old, 9% between 26 and 30 years old, and only 2% exceeding 30 years old.

Regarding the academic year, the study primarily focused on first-year Master's students, constituting 73% of respondents, with 19% being second-year students. The enrolment year for 8% of students could not be identified. Concerning disciplines, students in Geology represent the largest proportion of the sample at 28%, followed by students in Business Sciences and Engineering, each representing 19% of the sample. Students from other disciplines, such as Mathematics, Economics, Legal Sciences, Chemistry, and Biology, each represent less than 8% of the sample.

3.2. Measurement model analysis results

The variable Ethical Leadership (EL) is measured by two main dimensions: moral person and moral manager, each with five items. In the reliability and convergent validity analysis results of the measurement scale for this variable, the first indicator, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, indicates acceptable reliability values for the measurement items of both dimensions: moral person (0.80) and moral manager (0.60). Composite reliability and average variance

extracted also yield satisfactory results, well above the accepted threshold. Thus, for composite reliability, we have a value of 0.862 for the moral person and 0.748 for the moral manager. In this regard, composite reliability demonstrates good internal consistency of the measurement scale components.

The variable Ethical Climate (EC) is measured by four dimensions: collective moral sensitivity, collective moral judgment, collective moral character, and collective moral motivation. Two of these four dimensions have sub-dimensions. For collective moral sensitivity, it is divided into two sub-dimensions: empathic concern and moral awareness. Additionally, for collective moral judgment, it is divided into two sub-dimensions: altruistic judgment and selfish judgment. The results of the indicators show that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient provides values exceeding 0.7 for all four dimensions of the EC variable. Moreover, the values of composite reliability also exceed 0.8 for all four dimensions. This demonstrates and confirms the good reliability of the measurement model for this variable. Regarding the average variance extracted (AVE), it provides values exceeding 0.5 for all four dimensions of the variable, confirming the good commonality of items within the variable.

For the measurement of the Deviant Behaviors (DB) variable, we used items that measure two main dimensions: interpersonal deviance and organizational deviance. According to the results, there is good reliability of the measurement items for both dimensions of the Deviant Behaviors variable. Thus, for the Cronbach's Alpha of the interpersonal deviance dimension, it exceeds the minimal threshold of acceptability, reaching a value of 0.855. This result is almost similar for composite reliability, which, for interpersonal deviance, is equal to 0.886. Similarly, for the Cronbach's Alpha of the organizational deviance dimension, it also recorded a value exceeding the minimal threshold, namely 0.817, and likewise for composite reliability (CR) with a value of 0.856. In summary, for both dimensions of deviant behaviors, both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR) recorded values exceeding the minimal threshold and surpassing 0.8. Regarding the AVE of the interpersonal deviance dimension, it is equal to 0.566, and for the organizational deviance dimension, it is 0.533. For both dimensions, AVE

exceeds 0.5, indicating good reliability of the measurement scales of the dependent variable DB, and that the items effectively measure their construct.

To summarize the obtained results, the table below identifies the analysis results of the measurement models related to their reliability and convergent validity.

Table 1: Reliability and convergent validity of the measurement models

Variab	Sub-variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EL	<i>Moral Manager</i>	0,599	0,748	0,510
	<i>Moral Person</i>	0,798	0,862	0,661
EC	<i>Moral Awareness</i>	0,718	0,816	0,572
	<i>Empathic Concern</i>	0,781	0,842	0,535
	<i>Altruistic Judgment</i>	0,777	0,849	0,632
	<i>Selfish Judgment</i>	0,853	0,895	0,730
	<i>Collective Moral Motivation</i>	0,817	0,859	0,538
	<i>Collective Moral Character</i>	0,782	0,847	0,581
DB	<i>Interpersonal Deviance</i>	0,855	0,886	0,566
	<i>Organizational Deviance</i>	0,817	0,856	0,533

Concerning discriminant validity, it relies on two matrices: the Fornell-Larcker Criterion matrix, which provides the correlation between all variables in the model, and the Cross-loading matrix. In our case, through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion matrix, it is evident that the highest correlation value for each dimension/variable is the result of the dimension/variable being correlated with itself. This demonstrates good discriminant validity of the variables.

As for the cross-loading values, the results clearly show that each item has a high value with the dimension it is intended to measure. The correlations of

the items with other dimensions are relatively low. This result indicates good discriminant validity of the variables.

3.3. Results of the empirical analysis of the structural models in our research model

The analysis of Hypothesis 1 (H-1) yields a significantly positive standard Beta value at the 0.01 threshold. This means that the variable (EL) has a positive impact on the variable (EC). The standard Beta value is 0.343, indicating that any increase in ethical leadership by one unit leads to a 34% increase in ethical climate. This result confirms the first hypothesis that ethical leadership in professors positively influences the ethical climate within the student group.

The analysis of Hypothesis 2 (H-2) yields a significantly negative standard Beta value at the 0.05 threshold. This means that the variable (EC) has a negative impact on the variable (DB). The standard Beta value is -0.267, indicating that any increase in ethical climate by one-unit results in a 26% decrease in deviant behavior. This confirms our second hypothesis that the ethical climate of the student group negatively influences deviant behaviors in that group.

To test the third hypothesis, we broke it down into two sub-hypotheses to determine the nature of this influence (direct or indirect), in other words, whether this influence occurs with or without a mediating variable.

The analysis of the direct effect of (EL) on (DB) yields a non-significant result that exceeds the accepted error threshold of 0.05. This shows that there is no direct influence relationship between the ethical leadership variable and deviant behaviors, leading us to reject our sub-hypothesis (H-3.1). Regarding our second sub-hypothesis (H-3.2), we can deduce that there is an indirect effect of the (EL) variable on the (DB) variable through the mediation of the (EC) variable. We have a negative Beta value that is significant at the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, we can accept our second sub-hypothesis that ethical leadership influences deviant behaviors of students negatively and indirectly through the mediation of ethical climate. Based on Zhao, Lynch, and Chen's (2010) theory, we can conclude that we have a partial mediation relationship

since the indirect effect is significant, unlike the direct effect, which is non-significant.

The table below represents all the results discussed above related to the hypotheses in our research model.

Table 2: Hypotheses results

Results	Relation	Std. Beta (β)	Std. Error	T-Value	P-value	Decision
H-1	EL \rightarrow EC	0,343	0,061	4,962	0,000*	Accepted
H-2	EC \rightarrow DB	-0,267	0,072	3,293	0,001*	Accepted
H-3	EL \rightarrow DB	--	--	--	--	Partial Mediation
H-3.1	EL \rightarrow DB	-0,113	0,085	1,155	0,249	Rejected
H-3.2	EL \rightarrow EC \rightarrow DB	-0,091	0,028	2,587	0,010*	Accepted
*The value is significant at the 0.05 threshold						

Regarding the results of the analysis of the quality of the research model, our model shows an overall adjustment quality that is quite satisfactory, approaching 0.75, which can be interpreted as a high adjustment quality. This means that our empirical model accurately reflects the theoretical model with a high degree of precision. Below is a table that summarizes all the fit quality indicators of the research model.

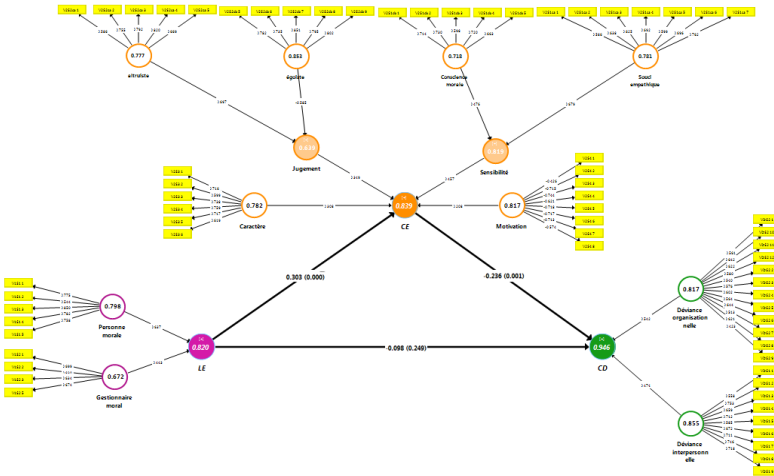
Table 3: Quality of the research model

Variables	Coefficient of determination ^a (R ²)	Size of the effect ^b (F ²)	Predictive Relevance (Q ²)	Goodness of Fit ^d (GoF)
Ethical Climate	0.998	0,024	0.015	0,75
Deviant Behaviors	0,896	0,007	0.020	

a : The value has to be $\geq 0,19$ b : The value has to be $\geq 0,02$	c : The value has to be > 0 d: The value has to be $\geq 0,1$
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Below is a representative and summary diagram of the overall structural model of the research.

Figure 2: Overall structural model of research[†]



Source: Software for Structural Equation Modeling "SmartPLS"

3.4. Discussion

Thus, returning to the research results, our first hypothesis, which posits that the ethical leadership of the professor positively influences the ethical

[†] The structural model of this research work was created using SMART PLS in the French language; however, the designations used for each variable and sub-variable can be translated as follows: Leadership éthique LE: Ethical Leadership EL; Personne morale: Moral person; Gestionnaire moral: Moral manager; Climat éthique CE: Ethical Climate EC; Sensibilité: Sensitivity; Souci empathique: Empathic concern; Conscience morale: Moral awareness; Jugement: Judgment; Altruiste: Altruistic; Égoïste: Selfish; Motivation: Motivation; Caractère: Character.

climate, has been accepted, meaning that the link between ethical leadership and the ethical climate is significant. It is worth noting that the theoretical model of the ethical climate used in our research is based mainly on Arnaud’s (2006) model, which relies on Rest’s (1986) decision-making theory highlighting the decision-making process leading to the adoption of one behavior over another. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), ethical leaders serve as role models for subordinates; they observe and learn the appropriate way to make ethical decisions, encouraging their own decision-making to become increasingly ethical. In summary, various authors in the literature agree that there is a positive influence of ethical leadership on the ethical climate. According to the results, there is a certain consistency between the theoretical framework and the obtained results. In this sense, the results have demonstrated that the ethical leadership of the professor positively influences the ethical climate within the group. The positive relationship has been confirmed, meaning that the more the professor adopts ethical leadership that focuses on ethical behaviors and the promotion of ethics, the more ethical the climate within the group will be. The theories of social learning and social exchange can also provide an explanation for the influence of the professor's ethical leadership on the ethical climate within the group.

In our second hypothesis, we postulated that the ethical climate of the student group negatively influences deviant behaviors. In the literature, several authors have demonstrated the influence that the ethical climate can have on ethical or deviant behaviors. Thus, according to Loe, Ferrell, and Mansfield (2000), both organizational culture and climate influence organizational ethics; organizational culture and climate shape and guide ethical behaviors, practices, and norms within the organization. Treviño, Butterfield, and McCabe (1998) conducted research whose results demonstrated that deviant behaviors are less frequent in an environment that encourages ethical behaviors and discourages deviant behaviors through leadership, reward systems, and codes of conduct. Finally, based on the obtained results, it can be said that our second hypothesis confirms what has been reported and supported by authors in the literature, even though the research environment is unconventional compared to the organizational environment, which has

been extensively addressed in the literature. Thus, the negative relationship between the ethical climate within the group and deviant behaviors has been confirmed, meaning that in the academic environment, the ethical climate within the group negatively influences the deviant behaviors of this group of students. The acceptance of this hypothesis particularly confirms the work of Vardi (2001), who argued that deviant behaviors maintained a negative relationship with the organizational ethical climate.

In our third hypothesis, we postulated that the ethical leadership of the professor negatively influences the deviant behaviors of the students. The analysis of the direct effect of ethical leadership on deviant behaviors gives a non-significant result, proving that there is no direct influence relationship between the ethical leadership variable and the deviant behaviors of students. Thus, ethical leadership in university professors does not directly influence the deviant behaviors of their students. This can be explained by the social desirability bias, as the studied concepts can be considered very delicate subjects from which it is difficult to extract completely truthful data. Regarding the indirect effect, we postulated that the ethical leadership of the professor negatively influences the deviant behaviors of students, through the mediation of the ethical climate, and this hypothesis has been accepted. The analysis of the indirect effect of ethical leadership on deviant behaviors gives a significant result, proving that there is an indirect influence relationship between the ethical leadership variable and the deviant behaviors variable, through the mediating variable, which is the ethical climate. Thus, it can be said that there is partial mediation, as the indirect effect is significant, unlike the direct effect, which remains non-significant. The negative relationship has also been confirmed; therefore, any increase in the level of ethical leadership of the professor will lead to an increase in the ethical climate within the group of students, which, in turn, will lead to a reduction in deviant behaviors among students. The result of this hypothesis can be explained by the theory of social exchange, which supports the link between the ethical climate within the group of students and their own deviant behaviors.

4. Recommendations and future perspectives

Through this research, we have been able to demonstrate that the ethical leadership of the professor negatively influences the deviant behaviors of students. This supports the choice of the study environment and proves that the adaptation of certain concepts traditionally studied in an organizational context can be applied to other environments, such as the academic setting. McCabe et al. (1999) have also supported the idea that professors can influence student behavior through the adoption of ethical leadership, communicating expectations, establishing codes of conduct, and setting an example through the adoption of ethical behaviors and encouraging their adoption. Additionally, this study allowed us to highlight the importance of the ethical climate within the student group and the impact it can have on students' deviant behaviors.

Demonstrating that the ethical leadership of the professor influences students' deviant behaviors emphasizes the importance and necessity for leaders within universities to focus not only on raising student awareness through internal regulations and codes of conduct but also on raising awareness among professors about the importance of their ethical leadership. This includes effectively communicating ethics to their students and identifying preferred behaviors and the consequences of deviant behaviors.

Based on the results obtained, we encourage the replication of similar research in other Moroccan universities and on a larger scale to enable the generalization of results. Furthermore, the study of concepts such as ethical leadership in professors, ethical climate within the group, and their influence on student behaviors can be particularly rich in terms of theoretical and practical contributions.

Even though the studied environment is not conventional, we have demonstrated parallels between these concepts, which can be studied in both organizational and university settings. In this regard, we can propose a research avenue related to adapting existing solutions in the organizational environment to address issues of deviant behaviors among employees and consequently applying these methods to the university setting.

Conclusion

The ultimate objective of the current research is to identify the influence that ethical leadership in university professors can have on the deviant behaviors of students, especially academic fraud. In this context, and in the literature, several authors have focused on the antecedents of deviant behaviors in the organizational environment, which can be either individual or contextual antecedents. Thus, in the framework of our research and based on the literature, we shed light on two antecedents of deviant behaviors: ethical leadership and ethical climate.

However, our research has slightly shifted its focus by directing our study towards a non-conventional environment, one that does not take place in an organizational context but rather in an academic and university setting. Through this study and a literature review, we have bridged the gap between the organizational and academic environments by representing ethical leadership of the leader through the ethical leadership of the university professor. In this regard, Brown et al. (2005) supported the idea that ethical leadership refers to both formal and informal leaders, provided that their leader status can be perceived by the respondents, who, in this case, are students.

In this research, we aimed to demonstrate that, in addition to the internal regulations established within universities, university professors can also play a role when it comes to academic infractions related to the adoption of unacceptable deviant behaviors in the academic environment. Thus, encouraging the adoption of ethical behavior, discouraging the adoption of deviant behaviors by setting an example, communicating ethical values, and raising awareness among students about existing internal regulations and the consequences of academic infractions can lead to an ethical climate within the group. In this climate, ethical behavior becomes a normative behavior adopted by all students. Additionally, the application of concepts generally used in an organizational environment to the academic environment allows the possibility of generalizing certain results within the scientific community to environments considered unconventional, such as universities.

This can also demonstrate that theoretical concepts are not necessarily exclusive to the environments in which these concepts were studied.

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