Principals' Ethical Leadership Perspectives: A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Everyone's top priority is ethics because it is the foundation of a prosperous society. The educational system is responsible for cultivating, fostering, and strengthening ethical sensibilities in society. Respected as innovators, explorers, and transformers of ethical awareness are educators and principals. Unfortunately, they lack the maturity and confusion necessary to serve as examples. They receive criticism as a result of their various unethical actions. This paper presents stories of school principals from their leadership experiences while drawing on ethical school leadership. The primary goal of this paper is to examine three-dimensional lived experiences: care ethics, justice ethics, and critiques of ethical leadership. We mainly focused on the principals' professional backgrounds, performances, and epistemological perspectives regarding ethical leadership. In-depth interviews from protracted interviews were used to create narratives as part of interpretivist narrative inquiry—four principals specifically chosen from Kathmandu Valley institutional schools. The interpretations were verified by pertinent literature. This study examined how ethical leadership promotes fairness in society and schools by valuing individuals. Crossing the structural line to include and empower the followers also takes courage. This research clarified the nature of the school leadership phenomenon so that concerned authorities could enhance matters. Additionally, it might direct readers toward moral principles that could serve as a fundamental tenet.

Keywords: School principal, school leadership, ethics, ethical leadership and experiences

Introduction

Ethics, as the heart of society, determines the movement and the quality of society. It organizes and harmonizes the lives of every web of society. According to Gahnem (2018), ethics is a set of norms and values, a group of individuals, and accepted social norms and ethical principles. It deals with standardized abilities to distinguish right from wrong (Bhattarai, 2010). Education is the universal process of harnessing the ethical strengths of every individual so that we can live with human dignity and be prepared for a sustainable future. Education is the hope of love, care, trust, transparency, justice, and transformation so that every student can value and respect self-intelligence. As a result, the SSDP (2016-2023) established the educational vision to support the growth of self-reliant, creative, and value-driven citizens for the country's socioeconomic transformation. However, these visions can only be achieved and transformed with influential and effective academic leaders. Ethics is an original concern to enhance effective leadership, and an ethical leader is an effective leader (Cuilla, 2005). According to Sendjaya (2005), ethics is a crucial element of leadership and its absence could have disastrous effects on transformational leadership. In this regard, Starratt (2004) also makes the case that effective leaders can help society develop an ethical/moral mindset, which is essential for a sustainable future.

Diversity in social /cultural structures and performances is our unique identity and the national asset of Nepal. It is also a pride of all Nepalese since ancient times periods. Creating moral/ethical consciousness, maintaining a tuned environment, and living with harmonious relationships in this mosaic society is a native strength of Nepalese society. Therefore, protecting and promoting these beauties and strengths is an opportunity for our new federal government. At this point, our society must step towards the two different challenges. One step is to commit to developing basic requirements and arrange them in productive order for further enhancement. At the same time, another step has to prepare to stand as a deserving member of the twenty-first century. Production and perfection of competent human potentialities is a strong challenge and a bitter reality. Society faces multidimensional, multidirectional phenomena in this big circle of local to global context. All thoughts and practices are mushrooming at their label understanding.

Nepal has a short educational history. Nepal's general and institutional (private) schools are regulated through the Education Act of 2028 (NIDR, 2073 B.S.). The profit-oriented (private) institutional schools emerged only in the early 1980s, and a few schools were opened in the country. The public education system in Nepal has been severely undermined, which has fueled the expansion of private education (Carney & Bista, 2009; Mathema, 2007). Since then, it has been a "dream" for all students, parents, and society to enroll their children in private schools. The main

attraction of institutional schools is the English language as a medium of instruction which has triggered debate recently. Tiwari (2018) highlights, "English language is a crucial factor that parents consider while shifting their children to private school from government schools" (as cited in Hayes, 2018, p.27). Parents also receive a colossal message and impression of English as a "magic bullet" for individual prosperities and broader economic development (Brown as cited in Hayes, 2018). Institutional schools have thus been drawing more and more students and parents away from public schools (Mathema 2007; Thapa 2011). The better academic performance of Institutional schools might be the outcome of effective leadership of school principals. Now my concern is how have they been experiencing ethical dimensions in influencing leadership?

Theoretical Framework

The words 'morality' and 'ethics' create warm and positive vibrations for almost everyone. It energizes people and motivates them toward the dimension and depth of human existence. It is an innate quality of an individual that pays value and maintains a harmonious pattern of society. The definition of ethics,covers abstract, deep and wider perceptions. The word "ethics" derives from the Greek word "ethos," which describes the accepted norms and customs of a particular culture. So, in general, ethics is the set of rules for behavior that aids in identifying right from wrong (Ghanem, 2018). According to Northouse (2013), "It is concerned with the kinds of value and moral that an individual and society find desirable or appropriate" (p. 425). Similar to this, Miheli et al. (2010) emphasizethat ethics is a private matter that a person and his conscience share. Ethics is a relation to oneself, according to Foucault. This is its worth, regardless of any potential advantages. . According to Freeman (2000), ethics is the set of moral standards and values that directs an individual's or a group's behavior in terms of what is right and wrong. It is the study of the fundamentals and procedures for differentiating between good and bad, right from wrong, and just from unjust (Reeder, 2011). The kinds of values and morals that a person or society deems desirable or appropriate are the subject of ethics (Northous, 2013). Ethics, according to (Bhattarai, 2010), deals with standardized capacities to distinguish between right and wrong. According to Ahmed (2016), it is also the study of people's rights and obligations, the moral standards that people use to guide their decisions, and the nature of interpersonal relationships. Since ethics is understood to be a very broad and all-encompassing phenomenon, no expressed opinions for universally accepted ethics exist. So, while it differs from region to region and country to country, one thing is constant: everything that is immoral and contrary to dignity is unethical (Ahmed, 2016).

Now focusing on ethical leadership, we highlight on the definition and its multiple dimensions. Strratt (2004) defines ethical leadership as an effort to act following the

guiding principles, presumptions, beliefs, and values in the leader's professed ethical system. Heifetz (1994) also enforces on values of identity and states ethical leadership deals values of followers, institutions and society where they belong (as cited in Northous, 2013). It is described by Brown, Trevino, and Harrison (2005) as the promotion of normatively appropriate behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making, as well as the demonstration of such behavior through one's own actions and interpersonal relationships. the rule of law, love, tolerance, secularism, respect, frugality, justice, equality, honesty and truthfulness, impartiality, responsibility, human rights, humanism, love, tolerance, openness, democracy, good human relations, openness, rights and freedoms, (Mackenzie & Mackenzie, 2010; Shapiro & Gross, 2013).

School Principals as a Representative of Ethical Standards

"*Guru Brahma, Guru Bishnu, Guru Deva Maheshowra*" (Dhakal & Koirala, 2005a) is a metaphorical sentence derived from Hindu philosophy that represents the infinite attributes of teachers. This is also the core foundation of the deity position of teachers in Eastern societies. Due to this notion, teachers are holding supreme positions in society since ancient periods in the Nepali context. Teachers are offered the word "Guru" which symbolizes the God, truth and creator of moral human beings (Dhakal & Koirala, 2005b) too. With these beliefs, teachers are securing the prestigious position even in this diverse and globalized society. People have a true natural faith in teachers with a hope that they will lead toward a bright future through education and education is the "eye" of society. In addition, they are also perceived as a moral agent because schools are standing as a moral institution (Greenfield, 1991) in society. In this regard, teachers are respected as supreme power holders who can cultivate, explore, and educate the ethical consciousness in the fertile minds and hearts of the students. They are also honored as a source of ethics and ideal transformers of ethical strengths in the school, society and nation.

Now centering on images of the principal, they secure even more prestigious and influencing recognition in society. They are respected and treated as an intellectual personality of the society who can nurture and qualities of purify the society with moral and ethical values. They are honored as a creator, designers, and transformers of humanity in society. In the same ways, furthermore, he or she is a director, mentor, motivator and leader of the leaders (teachers) and a determining figure in the school community. As administrative chiefs or headsof schools, principals are not only an individuals, but also representatives of school and school leadership. They hold the higher legal position to lead the teachers and members of the institutional community. In this respect, principals buckle various responsibilities toward the school as well as society. The head of the school, who holds the key to all of its outcomes, can easily identify the factors that have

contributed to its expansion and advancement. The moral and ethical atmosphere also matters according to the ethical intelligence and dedication of principals and its implications. This is the reason, they are regarded as not only the driver of the values, beliefs and ethics of the school community but the actual designer (Eyal et al., 2011). They interact with all facets of society, and each of these social groups has different needs and demands of school principals (Ghanem, 2018). Since society has a strong belief that effective school leaders can influence the effectiveness and efficiency of education, Cichucki (2005) proposed that the role of school community leaders should be to serve as examples of moral and ethical behavior. Based on this knowledge, we assume that the world of principals is an essential living force to generate, perform and transform the ethical consciousness in the school, society as well as a nation. When keeping the researcher's eyes on ethical awareness and its execution in the world of our principals we became frustrated and even more desperate. Picturing the image of principals from the social lenses, we are compelled to voice that teachers and principals are not free from ethical accusations.

The current context of educational leadership presents a disturbing picture (Starratt, 2004). We cannot deny that immoral and unethical activities committed by teachers and principals are highlighted as hot issues in various newspapers, magazines and social media. Many intolerable, unbelievably painful and sinful events are committed by principals in various corners of the nation. It warns me that something is missing, gapping between recognition of principal and their practical life. The perception and performance on ethical sensitivities are found not as trustworthy as it is supposed to be. In addition, the research findings also state that school teachers and head teachers are found to be criticized for unethical practices (Bhattarai, 2010). They are also found in stages of dilemmas on ethical practices. This evidence symbolized the immaturity and confusion regarding the ethical awareness of our school principals. Similarly, the confusing state of teachers picturized the weak foundation of their professional qualities as well. Various activities were implemented for the betterment of the professional dignity of teachers and principals but they are still in a problematic stage. Various studies highlight on unpleasing and unpractical phenomena created and performed by teachers and principals. For example, (Bhattarai, 2015) has revealed that principals do not demonstrate optimal care and justice fully exercise their professional judgment. This made me even more curious and responsible to dig and expand the horizon of ethical premises on the lived world principles.

Methodology

This study used with narrative inquiry approach under the interpretivism research paradigm. We believe the nature of reality is how each participant sees and

interprets their experiences therefore we entered the lived world of participants to understand the phenomena from their perspective. Participants' beliefs, values and associated social actions are the source of the knowledge as interpreted through their narratives. And, the knowledge generated from the meaning of those experiences. In the beginning, six school leaders were purposefully selected from three different districts. But in the end, only four participants exist because of the richness of the narratives. In-depth interviews (Clandining, 2006a) several times were conducted so that participants can interpret their experiences with elaboration and clarity on different aspects of experiences as they were involved.

In addition, we focused on getting closer to the attitudes and beliefs (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011) of participants with thick descriptions of their lived world. The narratives generated through informal conversations and provoking questions as per the need (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Padilla-Díaz, 2015) participants so that I may get closer to the subjective world of their experience. The narratives are presented in the form of storytelling (Caine et. al., 2017; Clandinin, 2022a) with the hope of authenticity of their perspectives. Adopting the procedure of recording, transcription and translation (from Nepali into English language) of the various stories, only four stories were selected as source of our information. We have unfolded the packs of stories under the three themes. Then after, we have gone through analyzing, interpreting and meaning-making processes to construct our understanding of each theme. On the basis of this understanding, the insights on the leader's perceptions and practices for the change were used. Moving forward, in the process of theoretical discussion, our insights were discussed and developed with three paradigms of ethical leadership. The knowledge of the study was explored through our perspectives, along with participants' "given voice" (Taylor & Medina, 2011) and supports from ethical leadership perspectives. Only then after, we complete our study with new knowledge on the perception and practices of educational leaders for the change. The conclusion is based on our reflections as narrative researchers.

For us, our knowledge is characterized as justified, true beliefs of our participants therefore, we kept in centre how our participants think and deal with their value. During the meaning-making process, we were consistent in information from their stories and ourselves while writing about their experiences along with our reflections. In doing so, we always remember to connect the dots around the centre of participants and their perceptions and practices. We were sincere with the three-dimensional narrative inquiry of temporality, sociality and place (Clandinin, 2006b; Clandinin, 2022b) of each story to maintain the quality of our exploration. As a researcher of ethical issues, we paid our ethical responsibilities with participants and narratives. We informed our participants about this study with its significance, purpose and procedure. We took consent and permission to use their narratives as

data of our research because our participants are the actual owners and possessors. Respecting their personal, professional and social dignities, the confidentiality of the participants was on top priorities. Using the pseudo name, we ensured our participants to maintain confidentiality, the privacy and not to harm their social, economic, physical and emotional aspects, and do not harm (human right) beneficence. We also promised not to use collected opinions for any other purpose except this research project. Honesty with information was another ethical strength as we adopted to draw the meaning. Besides that, we perceived ethical consideration as central essence of academic research (Bowen, Rose, & Pilkington, 2019) therefore entire process of the study grounded on it.

Unwrapping the narratives

As we have shared earlier, this study aims to clarify the concept of ethical leadership through the personal experiences of school principals that they have had in the workplace. These narratives were analyzed to draw the meaning of ethical leadership as they perceived, and performed in their journey of effective school leadership. Additionally, it emphasized how every decision made by the entire school community during the process of ethical leadership had repercussions. We have structured our narratives following Starratt's (1991) three ethical leadership principles. The three are care ethics, justice ethics, and critical ethics. Every character, event, and context that existed in narratives was sincerely valued so that we could explore the meaning of ethical leadership as experienced by school principals. Consequently, the essence of the narratives of every participant is strong and clear enough to draw the three themes for three principles of ethical leadership.

Ethics of care: Valuing the identity

Standing at the foundation of ethics of care, we assume that the fulfilment of basic human requirements is the core root of the healthy germination of ethical consciousness in individuals' perception and performance. The requirement may include the emotional, psychological, physical, financial, and social necessaries of entire team members of school leadership. Care is defined as a sense of loving, caring, and nurturing with respect and valued as an individual. Following my query, we walked with narratives by Ms Naina Rai (29). She is very humble, caring, soft, and clear speaker. Her pleasing personality and transparent appearance might be the strengths of her 11 years of leadership experience as a coordinator, vice-principal, and principal. To elaborate on the understanding of being a caring leader, she narrates;

> *My experiences allow me to share that only guiding and controlling create confusing and doubtful relationships between principals and students. We*

leaders have to have the capacity to listen to other minor voices, even if they are not directly related to school activities. Paying concern to students' emotions, feelings, and hope is the most effective and natural way to care for, respect, and value their dignity. It produced love and trust in our relationship. That transparent relationship made me easy to counsel, guide, motivate, and empower. The most important part was it was that genuinely influencing and transformative.

Now I understand the term care covers a sense of loving, nurturing, respecting, and trusting. Accepting the background, caring about every movement, listening to the voices, sharing the feeling, and being honest about students' emotions are the ways to create a mutual relationship between students and principals. A trustworthy relationship is a strong foundation for leading followers. In addition, in this concern, Mr. Pun has been leading the school for more than eighteen years. He bears soft and clear conversation, a respectful and compassionate attitude, charitable and inspiring personality adds knowledge through a case-based story.

He narrated;

It was a case of 2069 B.S. I made a quick and sole decision to help one of my students diagnosed with kidney problems. His financial condition was not strong enough, so I decided to provide specific amounts for his treatments. My intention was just to offer him good medical treatment so that he could take his last with less pain. Unfortunately, he is no more, but I listened to his sorrow, shared his pain, and I was with him till his last breath. I was terribly blamed for spending school funds for individual purposes initially. But now it is a pride for myself and my school.

From this story, we acknowledge principal is using his positional power for charitable contributions to the students' welfare. He is listening to the student and parents respectfully and standing there for humanity. From these two narratives, we understand that every student is expected to be treated as an individual rather than a student who compels to follow the principals. Students can be energized to explore and perform with their human qualities if they feel secured, cared and valued as individuals.

Ethics of justice: Right alternatives

Using the lens of ethics of justice on narratives, we explored the meaning of ethical leadership. As we understood, the individual right of students to value fairness or equity is the ethics of justice. A principal must have rights and equity of individuality; they cannot just concentrate on the "rules". It is necessary to exercise rights and create an atmosphere where students can find themselves as equals. This may explore the conscience of students and enhance an essential component of the

institutional culture and a window into the morale code. With this concern, we included the experiences of a towering personality in the school principal-ship Mr Jha. He has been leading various schools in different leading positions for twelve years. According to him, the true ethical leader has to have the courage to take personal risks and make alternative decisions for fairness and equity. To elaborate on this point, he shares;

> *Sometimes I feel our social, cultural realities, kinship system, and transparent relationship with my team members and are causes of my ethical confusion. The terrible experience in my journey was to fire a female teacher whom I knew very well personally. After six months after her appointment, the school decided to terminate her because of her inefficiency. As a principal, I was tasked to inform her and complete the official procedures. But didn't do that because I knew the necessity of her job for the living of her entire family members. Respecting her rights, I decided to extend her teaching duration till the end of that academic year. So I did. During that period, I transferred her to another school with immense respect. She did not know the hidden realities, my dilemmas, and my involvement till today. My position forced me to decide as a principal, but my personal ethics disagreed with that, so I had to set other alternative strategies for fairness.*

Now, these narratives suggest that principals are equally responsible for society as much as school stakeholders. The personal and professional qualities shape and save the emotions and dignity of anyone. Creating the environment for further improvement signifies opportunities for exercising the teacher's rights. Similarly, transferring into the school carries the essence of quality and equity as well. Principals are expected to balance the diverse realities of school members with social expectations. The documented legal system may not be authentic in addressing the complex realities of individuals as narrated story. Therefore, According to Quick & Normore (2004), a balance between an ethic of justice and an ethic of care is necessary. Effective educational leader think beyond one size fits all model and allows for the individual needs of the student to be guided to ethical decision-making (Gross & Shapiro, 2013)

Ethics of critique: Courage to step beyond the boundary

Since the application of critical lenses illuminates injustices in order to achieve greater social justice, the ethics of critique is "close to the ethic of justice" (Starratt, 1991). As per authors understanding, now the time has come not only to followand rethink laws and justice but also to consider other concepts such as "privileged, power, culture and language (Robison & Garratt, 2004, p. 128). In this concern, Ms. Sherpa shared;

> *Last year, one student joined the Science faculty even though that subject was not her area of interest. I counselled her on the subject section, but she said she cannot change it because her parents were keen and adamant that she continues with the Science. I was sorry for her and her choice of life. Then I decided to exercise my courage in with dealing her parents in a very responsible manner. On the one hand, I allowed her to continue science classes and on the other hand, I counselled, motivated, and encouraged her to stand with her own freedom of choice. Fortunately, after six months, she became strong enough to choose her subject then she shifted to the Management faculty.*

Principals are seeking opportunities so that students can build self-confidence to decide right and wrong for themselves. The desires, feelings, skills, and understanding levels of every student differ from one to another, so the principal has taken the courage to introduce different options as per their context. This courage motivated students for self-empowerment, equity, and inclusion. The principals attempt to create an appropriate environment for to gauge both good and bad aspects of life choices.

Understanding and insights

After going through every corner of narratives, we understand that the construct of ethical leadership differs in ways of performing, but all are directed and regulated toward the right and good objectives. Now centring on the theme of ethics of care, respecting the personal entity of students and caring every movement, listening to the voices, sharing the feeling, and being honest about the emotions of students are the ways to create a mutual relationship between students and principals. A trustworthy relationship is a strong foundation for leading followers. These caring attributes of the principal ensure the emotional well-being of students and regulate the student's emotions in the right direction (Bhattari, 2020). Similarly, the ethics of care is the empathy and responsibility for the well-being of the individual (Eyal, Berkovich & Schwartz, 2011). Furthermore, Gilligan (1982) shares the ethics of care includes the concept of being there, listening, understanding, sharing responsibilities for another's welfare, strengthening and maintaining relationships, and attachment.

The rationale behind all these is to value the identity of team members. The principal, as an ethical leader, speaks to us about our identity, what we are, and what we can become (Freeman & Steward, 2006). In accordance with Katranc, Sungu, and Salam (2015), the institutional system needs ethical leaders who uphold moral principles and values in the context of universal references if it is to succeed. On this basis, we understand that ethics of care means valuing the identity of individuals as human beings rather than followers. But unfortunately, in general,

school principals are not found very professional enough to raise their voices and perform in action as much as they intended.

Concerning ethics of justice, the personal challenges of the principal sound natural in the process of following justice. Only the documented legal system may not be appropriate and authentic to address the complex realities of individuals' professional and personal values. So, the principal has explored alternative solutions so that everyone can feel secure and grow with fairness. An ethic of justice and an ethic of care must coexist, according to Quick & Normore (2004). The principal emphasizes the present scenario rather than long-term assumptions. That is why ethical leaders are known as present (Starratt, 2004), and they are fully aware of what is in front of them. The necessity and complexities of fellow teachers are widely considered by the principal as prime responsibility. This symbolizes the ethical strength of the principal to figure out the justices. Sendjaya (2008) asserts that moral leaders prioritize their subordinates. Supporting and nurturing subordinates is its primary purpose. Now, we can assume that ethics of justice is to the invention of alternative solutions for creating fairness with dignity in the school as well as in society. Regarding ethics of critique, it concerns opportunities for self-development of the students so that they could be empowered and included. The courageous commitment of principals is a force for improving the social and educational systems. Strike (2007) argues that the basis for social cooperation in such communities is the shape of human societies where people can thrive. Based on this premise, critique ethics have to do with a person's courage to push the boundaries.

School principals, as a being exemplary figures in the society, their leadership is very influencing source in the school community and society as well (Tursina, 2023). They are not only expected to possess ethical character and practice ethical behavior, but they are also expected to build a culture of integrity (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how school principals' experiences with ethical leadership affect their ability to lead effectively. The narratives of lived experiences from four school principals presented as a source of information. These explorations authenticated me to generate the meaning of ethical leadership. The meaning of ethical leadership and its peripheral strengths are presented as an exploration of paper (Wright, 2008). The study shed light on the ethical awareness, sensitivities, strengths and transformation in the school atmosphere. This study helps the school principals to equip with ethical knowledge and it consequences so that they may figure out the right possibilities to overcome complexed situations (Pirson, 2017). It is also significant to enlarge the personal and professional dignity for right influences. Furthermore, it may stand as a one torch light which ethical sensitivities in the academic world for ethical citizen and society.

Drawing the essence from the above mentioned issues, we came up with three points that the meaning of ethics still needs to be clarified, unstable and abstract in the perception of school principals. They are immature, confused and inefficient to live with ethical strengths in their own life. These points inspired us to study ethical leadership as they experienced in their leadership. We contend that education's true goal is to prepare students to not only dare but also defend reality and the truth (Vairagya, 2012). But if the principals themselves are not matured and confident enough to defend the truth with principles of ethics in action then how can we figure out the ways to ethical society? For this reason, my query is concerned with the meaning, understating, and practices of ethics acquired by school principals and experienced in their various junctures of leadership. School leadership is a mirror of the principal therefore we do believe, the study of school leadership would be an appropriate way to get closer to my knowledge to full fill my query.

Three Paradigms of Ethical Leadership

In addition, based on the definition of ethical leadership, we believe that ethical leaders can be identified by their actions that are consistent with their values of honesty, reliability, fairness, and compassion, making them true and sincere role models. We have adopted three of the many dimensions of ethical leadership that have been proposed by Starratt (1991): the ethics of care, the ethics of justice, and the ethics of critique. These dimensions are briefly discussed here.

Ethics of care: The general word care means of love, respect, compassion, trust, transparency, and welfare. It is the innate attributes of human beings and indispensable strength of human identity. It is also the natural basis of human life; therefore, all people want to be cared (Noddings, 2002) at every juncture of life. The inventor of ethics of care Gilligan (1982) viewed that ethics of care include being there, listening, understanding and sharing responsibilities for another's welfare, strengthening and maintaining the relationship, attachment, and abandonment of the relationship. In addition, Langonis (2011) also stress that human relation and welfare are the significant components of ethics of care. A paradigm of mutual respect, compassion, and attention to others in the organization (Bhattarai, 2020). When contemplating According to Starratt (1991), "ethics of care related to the fundamental to interpersonal relation, not from the legal standpoint but in terms of absolute respect" (p.195).

Ethics of justice: It mainly emphasizes what is right and wrong. It believes in the rule of law and hopes for advancement (Delgado, 1995). According to Starratt (1991), a logical system of laws, rules, and regulations aims to safeguard the rights of all individuals. Additionally, it calls for decision-makers to put fairness-related issues at the forefront of their considerations (Northouse, 2013). If someone is treated differently, there must be a clear reason for it that is based on morally sound

principles. This viewpoint emphasizes individual rights and is based on the idea that everyone has the right to receive equal treatment (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

Ethics of critique: Critical theory is where the ethics of critique originate. By giving voice to those who are ostracized in society, it aims to question the status quo. Many theorists ask us to rethink laws and justice under the ethics of critique, but they also ask us to take into account concepts like privilege, power, culture, and language (Robison & Garratt, 2004). According to Starratt (1991), the ethics of critique are "close to the ethic of justice" because they both aim to expose injustices and advance social justice. Based on the aforementioned, we understood that the moral guidelines for leadership are: love, care, justice, equality, honesty and truth, impartiality, responsibility, human rights, humanism, devotion, rule of law, tolerance, secularism, respect, frugality, democracy, positive human relations, openness, and rights.

Conclusion

Ethics is a subjective force that enhances the influences of leadership toward prosperity in the school community and society. School principals' quest for love, care, trustworthy relationship, justice, and equity picturized their ethical sensitivities in the leadership process. The clear and possible understanding of individual values, fairness, and empowerment perceived by the principal defines ethical leadership. Valuing the identity of students and parents is a crucial aspect of caring for the school community members. As alert citizens, school principals are responsible for two roles and responsibilities toward the school and society. They have a solid intention to interlock head, heart, and hand to cherish the school and society through ethical standards in their leadership. Principals are rich with love, honesty, care, respect, trust, dedication, charitable contribution, transparency, and personal courage to change and transform the school and society. To clearly outline a path to advance with an ethical point of view, there are many complications.

Declarations

Ethical Consent and Consent to Participate

We declare that this research was conducted ethically and take sole responsibility for any plagiarism or misconduct.

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