

## The Presentation of the Model for Organizational Virtue in the Red Crescent Society of Tehran Province

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### Original Article

#### Abstract

**INTRODUCTION:** Considering the importance and significance of organizational virtue in promoting the performance of organizations, the present study was conducted with the aim of establishing a model of organizational virtue in the Red Crescent Society of Tehran province.

**METHODS:** This qualitative research is applied in terms of objective, which was conducted using the Grounded Theory approach. The study population includes academic members and experts of the RCS of Tehran province. Using purposive sampling method, data saturation occurs after 15 interviews with the experts. Data was collected by using semi-structured interview and data analysis has been done in three stages of open, axial and selective coding.

**FINDINGS:** The results showed that organizational virtue in the RCS of Tehran province is influenced by five dimensions which are effective factors. Considering the facilitating factors of organizational virtue as contextual conditions; the factors that inhibit organizational virtue as intervening conditions; components and indicators of organizational virtue as approaches will promote the organizational virtue in the RCS of Tehran province as much as possible.

**CONCLUSION:** The proposed model for organizational virtue in the RCS shows that five dimensions: optimism, empathy, trust, responsible leadership and ethics as the effective factors in promoting organizational virtue in the Society that considering contextual conditions, intervening conditions, actions and reactions will increase organizational virtue in the Society.

**Keywords:** Red Crescent Society of Tehran province; Organizational virtue; Grounded theory; Qualitative research

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#### Introduction

One of the most important components of organizational knowledge is the concept of organizational virtue. Virtue in organizations refers to the behavior of people in the organizational environment (1). Virtue is related to the factors in organizations that reinforce and sustain it (2). Although the studies on professional ethics, organizational social responsibility, and civic behavior have attracted the attention of researchers, virtue in organizations has been less studied.

Three characteristics are related to the key definition of organizational virtue: *first*, virtue relates to people, with their flourishing and moral character (3); *second*, virtue is associated with moral goodness (4); and *third*, virtue creates

social value that transcends instrumental requirements (5). Virtuous action not only benefits oneself or is even unique, but also benefits others. This view shows that virtuous organizations are more engaged in social responsibility and support environmentally friendly programs (6).

The literature on this topic suggests that virtues in organization are associated with positive performance despite the lack of experimental research in this area. Virtues such as optimism and hope are associated with better performance, more diligence and better mood in the organization (4) and also related to constructive interpersonal relationships, teamwork, effective decision-making,

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participation and a positive atmosphere in organizations (7). Given the positive relationship between virtue and desirable individual outcomes, it is reasonable to assume that when virtue occurs in organizations, there may also be a positive relationship with positive organizational outcomes.

The study of virtue in organizations provides a favorable environment for examining the pragmatic value of virtue. Virtue is an important practical phenomenon that should be considered by managers and researchers. Two key properties of virtue help to explain the outcomes achieved: the reinforcing property of virtue, which can reinforce increasingly positive outcomes, and the maintenance property, which can protect the organization from negative outcomes (8). When virtue emerges in organizations (e.g., when leaders or outstanding individuals exhibit virtuous behavior) or when the organization recognizes and legitimizes virtuous behavior (such as when courageous or compassionate action is encouraged). Virtuousness strengthens resilience to crisis.

Experimental research shows that organizational virtue has a legitimate place in organizational knowledge and that the positive, life-giving and virtuous aspects of organizations are a valuable and important area of study for organizational researchers. In general, research related to organizational virtue can be divided into two categories. Researches that try to build a model for organizational virtue and consider organizational virtue as an independent variable and the second category is researches that try to find the relationship between organizational virtue as a dependent variable and other independent variables. In this article, we try to present a model for organizational virtue as an independent variable in the RCS of Tehran province. Experimental research in this field will lead to the presentation of a model for organizational virtue.

As an example, we can refer to the researches of Goran Shurkchali *et al.* (9) to present the model of organizational virtue in the universities of Mazandaran province, Hosseinpour *et al.* (10) to present the model of organizational virtue based on the Islamic teachings in the seminaries (11) to present the model of organizational virtue based on the Iranian and Islamic teachings, and Faraji *et al.* (12) to present the model of organizational virtue in the central organization of Islamic Azad

University. This research shows that the presented models of organizational virtue can encompass different dimensions under the influence of environmental conditions and approaches.

In this study, we try to answer the question of what are the dimensions, components and indicators of organizational virtue in the RCS of Tehran province by using Grounded Theory and finally present an appropriate model for organizational virtue in the RCS of Tehran province.

## Methods

This research is applied in terms of objective and qualitative in terms of method, which was conducted using Grounded Theory approach based on the systematic approach of Corbin and Strauss (13). In the Grounded Theory scenario, triple coding (open coding, axial coding, and selective coding) is used for theory building after data collection.

In this study, semi-structured interviews with experts and professionals in the field were used to collect data. The interviewees were selected with the research topic in mind. The statistical population consists of experts including university experts, teachers, managers and professionals of the RCS of Tehran province. Sampling was done purposively using the snowball type, where the number of samples was determined during the work and sampling continued until the data reached theoretical saturation (14). In this study, 15 people were interviewed. The experts participating in the interview had the demographic characteristics described in Table 1: In this study, the interview was based on questions related to the topic and research objectives. The interview questions are listed in Table 2.

After conducting the interview, three coding steps were carried out, according to the "Grounded Theory" scenario. In the first phase of coding, "open codes" were extracted. In the second phase, which is the phase of "axial coding", the categories were related to the subcategories and the categories were linked at the level of characteristics and dimensions, and in the last phase of coding, called selective coding, the theoretical framework of the research is established and in this way the theory (model) is created based on the methodology of Grounded Theory.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of research samples

Characteristic	Variable	Number	Frequency
Gender	Man	8	53
	Woman	7	47
Age	Less than 30 years	0	0
	Between 30 to 50	10	67
Experience	More than 50	5	33
	Until 5 years	0	0
	6 to 10 years	3	20
	11 to 20 years	7	47
	More than 20 years	5	33
Education	Bachelor	0	0
	Master	2	13
	PhD student	2	13
	PhD	11	74
Job	Lecturer / faculty member	8	53
	Red Crescent manager/expert	7	47

**Table 2:** Interview questions

Row	Description of the question
1	In your opinion, what are the components and indicators of "organizational virtue"? (strategies)
2	What is your definition of "organizational virtue"? (phenomenon based)
3	In your opinion, what factors affect "organizational virtue"? (causal conditions)
4	In your opinion, what are the consequences of "organizational virtue"? (consequences)
5	In your opinion, what are the infrastructures, platforms and facilitators of "organizational virtue"? (contextual conditions)
6	In your opinion, what are the obstacles and inhibitors of "organizational virtue"? (intervening conditions)

In this research, in order to evaluate the reliability of the interviews, some samples from the interviews selected and recoded in a short and specific time interval. Subsequently, the extracted codes in these two time intervals were compared with each other. The test-retest method is used to assess the stability of the researcher's coding. In each of the interviews, the codes that are similar in two time intervals are identified. To determine the reliability, the "Kappa intra-subject agreement percentage coefficient" is used. This coefficient can be used to evaluate the agreement between two measurements (by two evaluators).

In this study, the agreement between the two evaluators was about 87% and the expected agreement was considered to be minimal, i.e. 60%. On this basis, the coefficient Kappa was obtained equal to 0.675. Since the calculated Kappa coefficient is 0.675, the calculated kappa coefficient based on the values shown in (15 is in the range of 0.61 to 0.80, and the degree of agreement is in the order of "high". It can be concluded that the coding of the interviews had the required reliability.

## Findings

In the process of data analysis with three-stage coding based on the evolved foundational data theory, 322 open codes were extracted from the semi-structured interviews without any restrictions. After examining the open codes, it was found that 243 of them expressed repetitive concepts; finally by removing the repetitive ones, 79 open codes was obtained in the first stage of data analysis.

In the next phase, after identifying the conceptual categories in the open coding phase, the axial codes were determined according to the axial coding pattern presented in the previous section and finally 15 axial codes were identified. In the last phase, i.e. the selective coding phase, 5 selective codes were identified, by integrating and checking the axial codes. The results of the three phases are shown in Table 3.

In this research, the visual coding model is used to present the theory after extracting the codes, which is similar to the axial coding model.

Table 3: Open, axial and selective codes

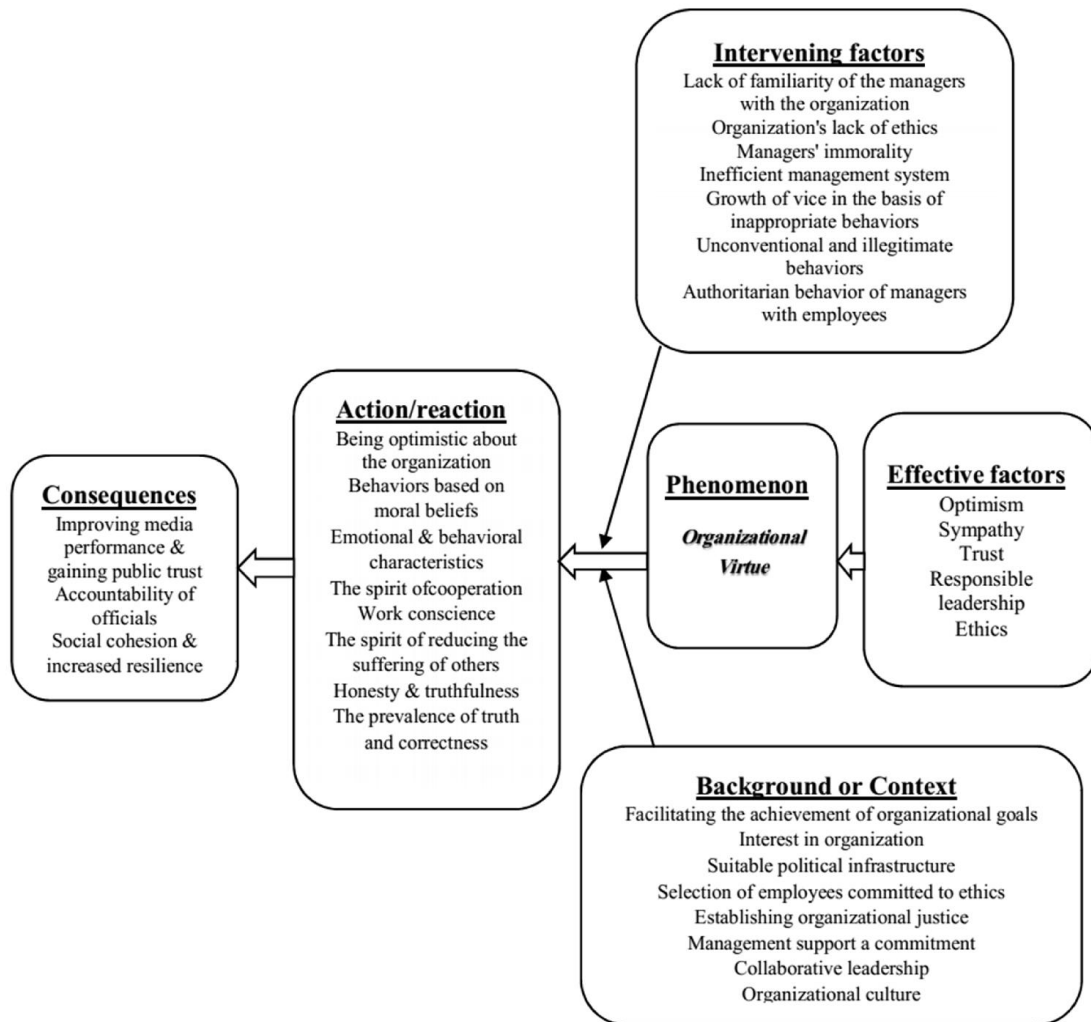
Open code	Axial code	Selective code
Creating an atmosphere of optimism in the organization, Optimism towards the organization/ Optimism, one of the influential factors in promoting organizational virtue/Optimism, an indicator of organizational virtue/Creating an atmosphere of optimism in the organization, the factor of promoting organizational virtue/Organizational optimism, one of the constituents of organizational virtue	Optimistic attitude towards doing things successfully	Optimism
Purposefulness in doing organizational work/Being purposeful of the organization, the factor of the growth of the virtue of the organization/The principles and goals of the organization's visions, effective factors in the organization's virtue/Moving in line with the organization's goals is one of the consequences of organizational virtue/Facilitating the achievement of organizational goals/Achieving organizational goals	Purposeful conducting of organizational tasks	
Job satisfaction, an effective factor in organizational virtue/Increasing job satisfaction and enthusiasm/Interest in the organization	Job satisfaction and interest in work	
Interpreting virtue as positive aspects of human behavior/The effect of political infrastructure on virtuous behavior/ Behavior in the organization based on rich moral and spiritual beliefs, expressing organizational virtue/Emotional and behavioral characteristics are among the constituents of organizational virtue/Behaviors and performances of employees, expressing organizational virtue/Doing good work in the organization	Being under influence of pleasant human behavior	Sympathy
The effect of empathy and thinking alike in organizational ethics/The spirit of helping is one of the characteristics of virtue/Compassion and kindness are among the constituents of organizational virtue/Lack of attention to organizational empathy is one of the factors preventing organizational virtue Selection of employees committed to ethics, facilitating organizational virtue/Moral conscience, an expression of organizational virtue/Work conscience, an effective factor in organizational improvement/Selection of employees with organizational commitment is one of the factors of promoting organizational virtue/Responsibility towards the rules, an effective factor in organizational virtue	A sense of attention and empathy towards others  Commitment, responsibility and work conscience	
Justice in the organization, a factor for organizational virtue/Organizational justice, the facilitating platform for organizational virtue/Organizational justice, the consequence of virtue/Organizational justice is one of the constituents of organizational virtue/Organizational justice, an influencing factor on organizational virtue	Being under influence of organizational justice	Trust
Supporting good behaviors and habits in the organization/The spirit of reducing the suffering of others is one of the characteristics of virtue/Management commitment and support, facilitating organizational virtue/Employee support, an effective factor on organizational virtue	Support and attention to employees	
The existence of trust in the employees of the organization/Trusting the virtuous organization/Organizational trust is one of the components of organizational virtue/A sense of trust is one of the constituents of organizational virtue/Organizational trust, the consequence of organizational virtue	Impressionability of trust between employees	
The effect of the transparency of managers' performance on virtuous behaviors/Managers' lack of familiarity with the organization is an obstacle to organizational virtue/Organization's lack of ethics is a factor that inhibits organizational virtue/The immorality of managers is an obstacle to organizational virtue/The level of adherence of employees and managers to ethics, the influencing factor on organizational virtue	The impressionability of the organization on the performance and behavior of managers	Responsible leadership
Virtue-oriented leadership, an effective factor in organizational improvement/The management style of the organization is one of the influential factors in promoting organizational virtue/Competent leadership of the organization is one of the factors of promoting organizational virtue/Collaborative leadership style, facilitating organizational virtue/Management system is one of the obstacles to promote organizational virtue	The impact of the role of leadership and management on the organization	
Supporting good behaviors and habits in the organization/Interpreting virtue as positive aspects in the behavior of employees and organizations/The impressionability of virtuous behavior from the economic factors of the society/The growth of vice in the context of inappropriate behavior/Behavior in the organization based on rich moral and spiritual beliefs, expressing organizational virtue/Unconventional and illegitimate behaviors hinder the promotion of organizational virtue/Authoritarian behavior of managers with employees is one of the factors preventing organizational virtue	The impact of organizational behaviors on the organization	
The interpretation of virtue is honesty and truthfulness/Honesty is a sign of virtue/Honesty, an effective factor in organizational improvement/The spread of truth and correctness in the organization is an indicator of organizational virtue/Honesty is one of the characteristics of organizational virtue	Honesty in behavior, speech and action	Ethics
Ethics in doing organizational work/Morality, the consequence of organizational virtue/Institutionalization of ethical behavior in the organization/Virtue is a desirable moral trait/Organizational virtue, a set of moral, customary and legal competencies/Organization's lack of ethics is a factor that inhibits organizational virtue/The moral atmosphere governing the organization, the influencing factor on organizational virtue	The effect of ethical characteristics on the organization	
The relevance of ethics to the culture and customs of different people/Refinement of foreign cultures in order to improve virtuous behaviors/Organizational culture, the most important platform for organizational virtue/Intellectual and cultural atmosphere, an effective factor on organizational virtue/Organizational culture, an influencing factor on organizational virtue	The role of culture-based behaviors	

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In many studies conducted on organizational virtues, researchers have used the dimensions indicated by Cameron et al. (17), such as optimism, trust, sympathy, cohesion, and forgiveness, to create a research model. (Figure 1) As an example, we can refer to the research of Kiani et al. (18), Turkian and Karimi (19), Kotobi et al. (20) and Ghanbari and Abdolmaleki (21) who used Cameron et al.'s five dimensions of organizational virtue in their research. However, it should be noted that organizational virtue can be influenced by external factors such as nationality, religion, culture, customs, and the nature of the organization, so presenting a model of

organizational virtue has more validity when it is specifically examined. To confirm this, we can refer to the research of Goran Shurkchali et al. (9) in which a model of organizational virtue was presented in the universities of Mazandaran province.

The results of this research show that the model of organizational virtue for universities in Mazandaran province includes the dimensions of leadership, culture, organizational structure, human resources, and technological development. In another study, Hosseinpour et al. (10) present a model of organizational virtue based on Islamic teachings.



**Figure 1.** The model of organizational virtue in Red Crescent Society of Tehran province

The results show that the presented model for organizational virtue based on Islamic teachings includes the dimensions of inner voice, populism, religious beliefs, moral characteristics, professional commitment and Islamic management. In another study, Hosseinpour et al. (11) presented a model of organizational virtue based on Iranian and Islamic teachings and concluded that in this model, organizational virtue includes the dimensions of organizational culture, management and leadership, interpersonal relationships, and personality traits.

Faraji et al. (12) presented a model of organizational virtue for the central organization of the Islamic Azad University. According to their results, the model includes nine dimensions such as organizational justice, organizational loyalty, professional commitment, organizational trust, organizational optimism, organizational ethics, organizational culture, organizational forgiveness, and organizational compassion. These experimental studies show that the presented models of organizational virtue can encompass different dimensions under the influence of environmental conditions and approaches.

Based on the positive results of qualitative research, we used Grounded Theory in this research to present the organizational virtue model for the RCS of Tehran province. Considering the importance of the organizational virtue issue and the special position of the RCS, the issue of organizational virtue in this society should be examined more sensitively. The statistical population of this study consists of university experts, lecturers, managers and experts of the RCS of Tehran province. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 experts in the field to collect data.

The obtained data were categorized in the form of open, axial and selective codes based on the Grounded Theory process. The validity and reliability of the results demonstrate the acceptability of the research process. After coding the data and analyzing it, the research theory was presented in the form of a visual coding model. The results of this research show that the model of organizational virtue in the RCS of Tehran province is influenced by five dimensions: 1) optimism, 2) empathy, 3) trust, 4) responsible leadership, and 5) ethics which define organizational virtue in this institution.

The results of this study are largely consistent with the dimensions of organizational virtue by

Cameron et al. The three dimensions of optimism, trust and empathy, of the five dimensions identified in this research, are consistent with the five dimensions of Cameron's model of organizational virtues and differ from each other in two dimensions.

The dimensions identified in the research model, as causal conditions, considering the facilitating factors of organizational virtue as contextual conditions, the inhibitors of organizational virtue, as intervening conditions, the components and indicators of organizational virtue as approaches, lead to the "improvement of organizational virtue" in the RCS.

The obtained model for organizational virtue in the RCS shows that organizational virtue is based on the dimensions of optimism, empathy, trust, responsible leadership and ethics and includes contextual factors (facilitation in achieving organizational goals, interest in the organization, appropriate political infrastructure, selection of employees committed to ethics, creation of organizational justice, commitment and support of management and participative leadership), intervening factors (lack of familiarity of managers with the organization, lack of ethics in the organization, immorality of managers, inefficient management system, increase in vice based on inappropriate behaviors, unconventional and illegitimate behaviors and authoritarian behavior of managers towards employees) and actions and reactions (optimism towards the organization, behaviors based on moral beliefs, emotional and behavioral characteristics, cooperative spirit, moral conscience, spirit of reducing the suffering of others, honesty and truthfulness and dissemination of truth and correctness), is explained. Therefore, strengthening the five dimensions of organizational virtue (optimism, empathy, trust, responsible and ethical leadership), which should be done taking into account the contextual and intervening factors, and the actions, can lead to the promotion of organizational virtue in the RCS of Tehran province.

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### Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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