

**Examining Organizational Citizenship Behavior
and Organizational Misbehavior Phenomena in
Educational Career Development Processes by
Means of Team-based Simulations**

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Abstract

Driven by ideology and highly motivated initially, many teachers discover a wide gap between their expectations and the reality of daily school practice. Teachers often encounter ethical critical incidents in their work. Teachers consider such occurrences of charged moments and events as significant and as having both personal and professional repercussions. The absence of a written code of ethics for educators and teachers, which would help in taking ethical decisions, enhances the difficulty of determining how to act and behave in such situations. Team based simulations (TBS), considered an efficient tool for research and learning processes might offer teachers many advantages in coping with various situations and improve teachers' abilities and professional conduct in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

Simulation is the practicing of a real, past, or potentially future event. The simulation leads participants to relate to dilemmas and critical incidents that occur in the field of education. Through immediate stimuli, this tool enables the construction of meaning mediated by previous knowledge, experience, beliefs and values, all anchored in the social context in which people act.

There has been neither enough research of appropriate processes of learning that integrate exposure to various situations occurring in the field of education, nor of teachers' expression of emotions and presentations of managerial or emotional approaches to resolve such situations. Therefore, the **objective** of the studies presented here is to expand extant knowledge on the relations between ethical dilemmas and a code of ethics in the context of Organizational Civil Behavior (OCB) and Organizational Misbehavior (OMB). This study seeks answers to the following questions: (1) what are the predictors for OMB among teachers, and what may be used as a strategy to reduce it? (2) Can ethical codes based on OCB be formulated through the use of TBS? (3) Are there any differences between the approaches adopted by novice teachers and by those of veteran teachers in the face of ethical dilemmas, ultimately resulting in OCB or OMB?

The **qualitative** studies presented here comprised 40 participants, all teachers studying at the School of Education of Bar Ilan University. Twenty of them – fourteen women and six men, in the ages of 23-27 – are first-degree students in their 4th year, and have just started training for teaching in the framework of practical teacher training. These teachers study and specialize in various school subjects required by the system of education, such as mathematics, biblical studies, English and the sciences,

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which they would be able to teach at school. The other 20 participants were teachers with at least 8 years of work experience in education – 11 women

and 6 men at the ages of 28-45 – studying for their Master's degree. They perform various roles such as subject coordinators, grade level coordinators and vice principals. The choice of different participants allowed for a comprehensive examination of teachers' behaviors in varying ages and career stages.

Findings were derived from 20 simulations dealing with ethical dilemmas. The simulations were constructed for team-based role-playing with no content changes. The participants played them in small groups, discussed the incidents leading to the dilemmas, their repercussions and the way the participating players acted in the simulations. This process provided fertile grounds for collecting and analyzing the simulation participants' statements, to draw their kinds of organizational behaviors out of them. Analysis of the qualitative findings involved transcribing of the simulations and discussions, coding them into semantic clusters and grouping them in sub-categories. In addition, we compared the reactions of participants of the two study groups. We collected the findings in four stages. In the first stage, we collected critical incidents representing ethical dilemmas. The study participants were requested to describe in writing an ethical incident that occurred in their school, for example, in a staff meeting, while coping with students' issues, or while coping with a parent. The participants e-mailed these event descriptions to the course instructor, who combined them together to suit the structure of role-playing in TBS, without changing their content.

The second stage was simulating the ethical incidents. The simulations took place in the School of Education at the university, in a classroom that enabled video recordings of the simulations and discussions, and projecting the videos for the participants to watch and discuss. The participants divided into groups at random. Each simulation lasted 45 minutes, usually consisting of 10 minutes of role playing and 35 minutes of discussion. The course instructor chose the incidents for the participants to play and divided the roles for the simulation. In rare cases, a participant was allowed to play his own true role in the original event. During the simulation, the video technician gave the participants 3, 2, and 1 minute warning marking the end of the

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playing time. The role-playing participants occupied a separate room while the rest watched the role-playing on a screen.

The third stage included watching the simulations, discussing them and analyzing the rising dilemmas. During the first simulation, the course instructor chose specific sections of the video recordings for the participants to watch. These sections included emphases on team behavior, the ethical

dilemmas or the outcomes of the event. Further, the participants felt involved enough to choose the sections they thought as befitting the discussion. In order to create a warm, supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere, vital for the enacting of team simulations, the course instructor formulated supportive and non-judgmental comments and feedback.

Whenever the simulations dealt with ethical issues that were more sensitive, the discussions started with a set of specific questions, such as, "Can you share with us one or more of the ethical dilemmas raised in the simulation?" In the fourth stage, at the end of the sessions, the participants were presented an open question – "Please assess the strength of the simulation." The participants were requested to provide a personal response and present it to the instructor.

We analyzed the data collected by means of qualitative methodology leaning of critical incidents analysis, through a process of reflection. In this method, the participants describe a significant incident, positive or negative, in the organization. The purpose is to understand what a person did and why, and what resulted from that action. In the first stage, that of collecting and classifying, we gathered all the raw materials (simulation videos, discussions videos and the participant's answers to the open question posed to them at the end of the year), and selected the 20 most representative simulations conducted in the research. We transcribed the simulations and main parts of the discussions, reviewed the materials and whenever necessary, returned to the videos.

The second stage was a process of identification, by means of stepwise method. We reread every incident a few times, to draw a general view and identify the ethical dilemmas involved. This stage focused on identifying organizational behaviors, dilemmas, various expressions related to the required ethical code and actual sayings of teachers.

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The third stage was that of focusing and coding. At this stage, we classified previous critical incidents, dilemma phrasing, cases of OCB and OMB, novice and veteran teachers' reactions, and eventually assembled them into similar content categories.

Another stage was that of classification, for the purpose of comparison. Since part of the process was to examine whether there is a connection between teachers' career development stage and organizational behaviors, we compared the reactions of participants of both groups, novice and veteran teachers.

Ethical considerations required that all the research participants would sign their informed consent to participate, knowing that they could quit any time.

The research purpose was explained in a general manner only, so as not to affect their utterances. The participants agreed to have their participation in the videos and the discussion filmed, and to allow us to use their answers to the open question concerning the simulations. They were assured that the research findings would be published with no identifying details.

The three articles assembled in this dissertation offer answers to the research questions. Understanding the connections of ethical dilemmas and a code of ethics in the context of OCB and OMB is important in the field of education at every level. The need to train new teachers properly and professionally on the one hand and to let experienced teachers express their feelings about their work on the other hand is an educational anchor. The simulations process, that touches each and every factor affecting teachers – OMB, OCB, the code of ethics and understanding the education career – offers a method for understanding these interrelated connections.

The findings of the first study, *Organisational misbehaviour in team-based simulations: predictors and reduction strategies*, enable a diagnosis of the predictors of OMB among teachers, and indicate that TBS might help in reducing it among teachers. The study questions were: (1) What are the predictors of organizational misbehavior? (2) Can TBS serve as a strategy to reduce such misbehavior? We found four main predictors, related to the professional managerial aspect, and to the organizational conduct. The first is acquaintance with regulations and professional

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ethics, and awareness of the gap between the formal aspect (regulations, social expectations etc.) and the personal pedagogical aspect (attitude toward the individual, mental flexibility and independent decision making of the educational staff). The second predictor is the level of interpersonal communication. Lack of communication between team members has often led to a teacher's OMB, and affected the approach to the incident as well as its management and ways to solve it. The third predictor is the personality involved, which includes the personal emotional aspect and the teacher's concept of her/his own personal and professional capacity to cope with various incidents. Finally, the fourth predictor is the organizational conduct, the relationship between teacher and principal, and the relationships and professional conduct that exist in school. The findings, as indicated before, testify to the benefits derived from the use of TBS as a tool in the field of education, for improving teachers' capacities and functioning under stress, and allowing a non-judgmental review of their functioning in a similar situation in a safe environment as well as encouraging fertile discourse among team members.

The findings of the second study, *Role-play simulations for exploring organisational citizenship behavior amongst teachers: toward developing a code of ethics*, present a bottom-up approach for developing a code of ethics for teachers. The study questions were: (1) Can ethical codes be formulated using team simulations based on OCB? and (2) What characterizes the ethical codes derived from the OCB scenarios? The study participants constructed a foundation for a code of ethics formulated as a list of credos, thus raising the level of professionalism and personal connection of the teacher to the teaching profession. Five crucial factors are manifest in constructing a code of ethics for teachers. First, the student-teacher relationship, manifested along the range from the caring aspect to the formal one. Second is the teacher-parent relationship. Along their work together, their values and methods of education clash and create ethical dilemmas. The third factor is teacher-teacher relationships, or colleague relations. Sometimes, role holders' values or expectations clash when they have to decide about the functioning of a student. The fourth factor is

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regulations set by the Ministry of Education, and the fifth – relationship with and esteem of the profession of teaching.

The findings of the third study, *Team-Based Simulations: Examining the Phenomena of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and Organisational Misbehaviour in Educational Career Development*, derive from the comparison of two groups of participants. These were a group of teacher trainees, in their practical training year and beginning their way in the system of education, and a group of experienced teachers with at least seven years of experience in this system. The study question was whether there were any differences between the approaches adopted by novice teachers and those of veteran teachers in the face of ethical dilemmas, ultimately resulting in OCB or OMB? The findings indicate that there are seniority related differences between the simulation participant groups. The differences show in the phrasings of the descriptions and definitions of each of the ethical dilemmas. In the new teachers' group, participants relate to the individual in the system and the specific incident, while the experienced group demonstrates a more comprehensive approach, both about team relations and concerning the rules and regulations required in the teaching profession. In each of the groups and each of the simulations both OCB and OMB are identifiable, depending on the teacher's choice of coping method. The research presented here has **theoretical** as well as **practical implications**. Regarding theory, the extant literature on the topic of teachers' organizational behaviors focuses mainly on specific behaviors, such as

absences and dropping out for OMB, and efficient use of work time and cooperation for OCB. The literature relates to the causes of organizational behavior, e.g., stress and burnout as causes of OMB, or the wish to please management and get better roles as leading to OMB. The study presents predictors of OCB and OMB related to the professional managerial aspect, and to the value organizational aspect of the educational team, which allows for a complex-system view of these behaviors, beyond the specific view. In addition, the existing literature relates to the absence of a code of ethics for teachers, and compares education to other professions for which a code of ethics does exist. The study presents the possibility of developing a code of ethics in schools to empower the educational staff.

Practically, the research points to the use of TBS as an efficient tool for the system of education, both in academic frameworks as part of practical teacher training, and in teachers' rooms. Group simulations raise attention to dilemmas and critical incidents that occur in the field of education, thus offering tools and study subjects that are important to academic frameworks regarding existing regulations, especially for teacher trainees and beginning teachers. Implementing professional knowledge would reduce OMB and enable the use of the right tools for coping with critical incidents. Among experienced teachers, the simulations encourage a shared discourse on the difficulties involved in their work, and emphasize the importance of collaboration among pedagogical team members. The very awareness of problematic situations and their examination from an ethical point of view, might offer relief to pedagogical teams and ease their stress.

Moreover, practicing the formulation of a code of ethics based more on credo and less on "do" and "do not" enables both new and veteran teachers to raise and expose the values and beliefs they hold as teachers. This practice encourages teachers to learn and familiarize themselves with the regulations and professional ethics related to the various dilemmas, and eventually might lead to OCB among teachers.

Policy makers have an important role in implementing the use of TBS both in practical training of teacher trainees, and through teachers' regular work. The simulations have both an instructive and a therapeutic function in coping with incidents. The role-playing in the simulation and the coping with dilemma situations by means of the simulation allow for the development of awareness and for understanding of the implications of the actions and reactions for the accumulation of professional knowledge and experience. The discussions and feedback given by the other participants in the simulation confirm that it offers a safe and enabling environment for the release of emotions and the widening of the repertoire of optional strategies

and solutions. An appropriate professional use of TBS might affect teachers' conduct through processes of learning and shared sense-making positively, and thus lead to the reduction of OMB and enhancement of OCB among teachers.