

ETHICAL PRACTICE ON INNOVATION IN THE EDUCATION MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the paths by which the ethical gamesmanship played in the junior high school education market in the greater Taipei area influences innovation in school education. This study defined ethical gamesmanship in education as the behavior displayed by schools in dealing with pressure from competitors' confrontation and satisfying the demands of parents without compromising ethical principles. Revealing these paths of influence involved the administration of a questionnaire survey to junior high schools in the greater Taipei area. A total of 1,190 questionnaires were distributed through two stages of sampling; 917 valid questionnaires were recovered (77 %). Structural equation modeling and the analysis of the survey results led to the following findings: (1) Schools should strengthen the integration and application of ethical principles in educational strategies; (2) School leaders should give heed to vulnerable leadership and a decline in professionalism to prevent inhibitory mechanisms from merging; and (3) School leaders should encourage flexibility. The government should intervene only when necessary, in order to maximize innovation in education under any circumstances.

Keywords: marketization of education, ethical practice, junior high school, structural equation modeling

INTRODUCTION

Marketization is a driving force behind corporate innovation (Wolf, 2003), and the marketization of education refers to the use of market theory to enhance innovation in schools. To satisfy the demands of parents, principals must strive for innovation and quality in education (Robenstine, 2000). Thus, the consumption behavior of parents has become a driving force in improving the quality of education.

However, to gain competitive advantage in the education market, school leaders may resort to unethical means. This can affect the professional conduct of teachers and inhibit the provision of an ethics-oriented education. This can then lead to a gradual decline in commitment to social progress. This study therefore highlights the importance of promoting ethical practices in schools in the face of market competition.

Most previous investigations into the education market have focused either on competitive strategies to enhance innovation in education (Sung, 2004) or on the attitudes of school leaders when market demands and ethics collide (Stevenson, 2007). We are of the opinion that market competition can in fact enhance ethics-oriented school operations and strengthen the position of schools as ethical organizations.

The education market is a forum in which schools vie to win public resources (Sell *et al.*, 2002). The primary motive behind this study was to assist schools to abide by ethical principles as they formulate competitive strategies, even in the face of pressure from competitors, the demands of parents, and the expectations of the social environment (House,

1998). The ultimate aim was to provide recommendations to help prevent the marketization of education from distorting educational and humanitarian expectations and to maintain the ethical quality of education (Goodman and Lesnick, 2001).

Bates (2003) believed that the concept of ethical practice can be applied to situations in which schools seek to honor ethical principles when facing challenges from competitors. Furthermore, Apple (2005) purported that this concept could be used to promote innovation in education.

Competitive pressure in schools arouses greed and stirs ambitions, thereby increasing the potential for progress (Oplatka, 2007) and instilling a need for innovation (Bates, 2003). However, attempting to succeed by any means necessary (Magill and Prybil, 2004) is gamesmanship rather than ethical practice. Mutual maligning is a common transgression among schools, which impedes the coordination of resource development and suppresses innovation (Arnsperger and Vill'e, 2004).

Competition from other schools (Fourcade and Healy, 2007), the demands of parents (Heng, 1994) and the need to fulfill social responsibilities (Kallio, 2007) can sometimes lead schools to engage in ethically questionable behavior. To guard against this, the role of leadership in schools must be closely scrutinized (May, 2007).

Within marketized organizations, interpersonal relationships are inevitably influenced by market competition (Langlois & Lapointe, 2010). The practice of ethics in schools accentuates the development of healthy social relationships, moderating the drive to seek a favorable position in the market (Cuban, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning and Strategies Of Ethical Practice In The Education Market

Meaning of Ethical Practice in The Education Market

Particularly in the context of education, it is important that ethical principles are adhered to, even when pursuing selfish interests (Marshall, 2004), as manifest in marketing strategies (Bates, 2003). Therefore schools cannot proceed on the idea that success must be won, no matter the cost. Ethical practice implies pursuing a sport or activity for its own sake, with due regard for ethical considerations. Thus, ethical practice in education refers to the phenomenon in which schools abide by ethical norms in the face of market competition (Apple, 2001) in order to maintain a fair educational environment and fulfill their social responsibilities (Baker and Forbes, 2006). This in turn leads to the gaining of public approval and the cultivation of a strong relationship with society.

Strategies of Ethical Practice in The Education Market

Virtuous Organizations

A virtuous organization operates according to a strict code of ethics. Its strong moral compass guides the actions taken by the organization. For example, when teachers practice tolerance, honesty, and justice (Maitland, 1997), they are better able to maintain teaching quality and protect student rights (Vandenbergh, 1999). This, in turn, helps to develop trust, tolerance, a willingness to serve other faculty members (Baker and Forbes, 2006), and builds balanced relationships within the school (Bates, 2003). Leaders of virtuous organizations should seek to cultivate their knowledge base, moral virtues, moral reasoning skills, and moral imagination (Walker, Haiyan, & Shuangye, 2007:379). When school leaders encourage their schools to operate as virtuous organizations, they emphasize the establishment of reasonable

rules and shared norms, thereby preventing disorderly confrontations induced by school competitiveness (Hawkes *et al.*, 2004).

Atmosphere of Deliberation

An atmosphere of deliberation in schools can be cultivated by promoting transparency within the school system. That is, open channels of communication between the school and parents should be developed, and democratic mechanisms of decision-making implemented. Increasing parental involvement in schools can stimulate dialogue regarding the development of curricula (Bates, 2003), and promote mutual adaptation (Driver, 2006), thereby giving students from different backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy education of the same quality (Blanke, 1992) while promoting fairness in education (Beck, 2007). In addition, promoting parental involvement can cultivate democratic deliberation, allow a greater variety of voices to be tolerated, and promote social justice (Beck, 1998). Furthermore, doing so can stimulate the empathic processes of parents (Fujitani, 1984) and incorporate humane care into the professional practice of faculty (de Mesquita, 2006) so that they can cater to the unique learning needs of students (Gregg, 2004) and unlock their learning potential (Robenstine, 2000). These diverse advantages make promoting an atmosphere of deliberation an effective, ethical strategy for satisfying the demands of parents and improving a school's position in the education market.

Cultivating an Appropriate Legitimate Environment

An appropriate legitimacy environment allows schools to gain recognition from the public, including the parents of potential students. In other words, the school has a good standing in society. The cultivation of appropriate legitimate environments not only stimulates the exchange of ethical cognition between parents and the school, but also enhances the school's image (Marshland, 2001). It promotes organizational citizenship behavior among faculty and helps the school to fulfill its responsibilities to society (Kallio, 2007), through improvements to its internal operation as well as allowing it to serve in an auxiliary role in social welfare systems (Bates, 2003). Therefore while strengthening ethical practices such as pursuit of truth and justice (Brauges, 2004), the cultivation of appropriate legitimate environments also increases the competitiveness of a school.

Influence of Ethical Practice on Innovation in School Education

Innovation: In the face of pressure from market competition, the school can implement strategies that are in accordance with its ethical principles. They can, for example, use ethical practices as driving forces to improve leadership and communication, or strategically implement policies mandated by governing bodies.

Enhancing Goal Attainment

Goal attainment: The school can use efficient methods and minimal resources to enhance social cohesion, respond to parent needs, and complete educational tasks. The ethical practice in the education market has been shown to enhance goal attainment (Richman, 2001). We examine this statement through the lens of the three strategies of ethical practice as defined by this paper: virtuous organizations, deliberation and appropriate legitimate environments. First, the strong commitment to ethical norms evidenced by a virtuous organization improves quality of teaching, forms a focal point for marketing endeavors, and enhances school efficacy (Wolf, 2003), all of which increase a school's efficiency (Lauder and Hughes, 1999). Second, promoting a more inclusive atmosphere fortifies democratic processes, which is accompanied by increased attention to the voices of teachers and parents (Apple, 2005). This enhances the quality of education offered overall and allows for specific targeting of parent demands. Third, cultivating appropriate legitimate environments facilitates the fulfillment of

social responsibilities and creates a trusting social environment (Smith, 2002), which then invokes enthusiasm in families and students, enhances social cohesiveness, and maintains social harmony (Bates, 2003).

Catalyzing Professional Growth

Professional growth occurs when the school faculty members work to enhance their knowledge, teaching skills and problem solving skills. The strategies mentioned above can also lead to the professional growth of faculty members. An organization operating under virtuous motives will necessarily seek to enhance equal educational opportunities, thereby invoking problem-solving momentum (Boyd and Walberg, 1990). Cultivating deliberation encourages innovation, stimulates parent/teacher involvement in school matters, and ensures the professional autonomy of teachers, thereby empowering them and promoting dialogue and exchange among stakeholders. Appropriate legitimate environments help to fulfill social responsibilities (Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown, 2004), making it easier to establish the reputation of the school. This successful ethical development of competitive advantage engenders an adventurous spirit among faculty, which further serves to catalyze professional growth (Hartley, 2007).

Introducing the Abundance of Resources

Resources which schools can draw on in their efforts to develop include technology, experts, capital, information, authority, and manpower (Blanke, 1991).

Seeking to enhance competitive advantage in an ethical manner leads to an abundance of resources (Marshland, 2001). First, virtuous organizations increase the public's trust (Fourcade and Healy, 2007), and stimulate the desire for educational development among faculty (Heng, 1994). Second, promoting an atmosphere of deliberation diversifies education strategies (Lim and Tan, 1999), which brings an abundance of information resources to the school. Third, cultivating an appropriate legitimate environment promotes cooperation between schools (Dow, 2008), which increases exchange among teachers, enhances the charm of innovative education, and injects more professional resources.

Inhibitory mechanisms of ethical practice in the education market

Inhibitory mechanisms: In the practice of ethics in schools, improper communication, leadership, and behavior can lead to the loss of momentum in the fulfillment of moral obligations.

Greed

Greed: As market competition stimulates the ambitions of school leaders or teachers, it can cause them to seek to develop their schools and careers at the expense of providing equal opportunities of education to their community. Ethical practice among schools can be undermined by greed (Wolf, 2003). Greed is a common driving force in the world of business, and induces competitive behavior such as usurpation (Makowitz, 1992), cheating, lying, and theft (Hunt and Mullins, 2005) and is a hindrance to the operation of a virtuous organization. Greed can also lead to irrationally competitive behavior (Kelly, 1970). In the context of the education market, schools can sometimes sacrifice educational development in order to appear competitive (Arnett and Hunt, 2002). In fact, greed breeds selfish competitive behavior, and when the success of one's opponent becomes intolerable, repulsive means may be used in an attempt to succeed (Alvey, 2000).

Vulnerable Leadership

Vulnerable leadership: School leaders may lack the courage and ability to guide faculty members in the maintenance of educational equity. Vulnerable leadership can inhibit ethical practice in the education market (Oplatka *et al.*, 2002). School leaders must have the capacity to deal with the ambiguities involved in ethical questions. They must also be strong enough to remain fair even when their decisions might prove unpopular and thereby threaten their position (Davies, 1997). Principals occasionally maximize personal interests rather than serve public interests in their resource allocation (Eckel, 2007). Competitors then follow, undermining attempts at a virtuous cycle (Griffith and Rust, 1997).

Inequality for the sake of Efficiency

Inequality for the sake of efficiency: The pursuit of efficiency can prevent schools from effectively using social resources to meet public demands. Inequality for the sake of efficiency can inhibit ethical practice among schools (Oplatka *et al.*, 2002). Schools emphasizing the pursuit of efficiency for the sake of competitive advantage often look at education with a corporate eye. However, this can adversely influence social justice (Menashy, 2007), expand inequality in education (Beck, 1998), and undermine attempts to operate a virtuous organization. In fact, in the pursuit of efficiency, schools often take extreme measures such as frequent assessments to increase their visibility in the market. However, this is unfavorable for students with poor economic or familial circumstances and reduces their educational opportunities (Cui and Choudhury, 2003). Schools focusing on the pursuit of efficiency are also easily influenced by advantaged parents (Marginson, 2006), which can lead to status differentiation and the neglect of disadvantaged students (Macfarlane, 1993). This damages the equality of education (Cui and Choudhury, 2003).

Decline in Professionalism

A decline in professionalism occurs when faculty members neglect to adhere to their professional beliefs and cultivate their professional skills, such as not enlivening their teaching or neglecting the learning rights of their students. A decline in professionalism can inhibit ethical practice (Hyland, 1996). When a school focuses on gamesmanship, prioritizing the end over the means, citizenship behavior is undermined (Apple, 2006) and inequality in professional practices proliferates (Brauges, 2004). Furthermore, this competitive behavior is reductionist, leading to a lack of cultural interactions in teaching (Arnsperger and Vill'e, 2004) and educational ideology (Hesketh and Knight, 1998). This restricts the extent of professional practice and prevents schools from fulfilling their social responsibilities (Roosevelt, 2006). School marketing then no longer follows the professionalism of education, but rather focuses on image and packaging (Geva, 2006), which undermines attempts to operate a virtuous organization and promote a more inclusive atmosphere.

Facilitating Effects of Ethical Practice in the Education Market

Establishment of an Ethical Policy Environment by Government

Governments can establish a system that helps schools enhance their ethical practice. Governments should establish a comprehensive educational policy that encourages ethical practices (Liao, 2006). First, governments should design programs that promote school ethics to ensure that schools abide by ethical norms when competing (Cui and Choudhury, 2003; Gregg, 2004). Furthermore, governments should adopt circumspect laws that prevent competitive monopolies (Fujitani, 1984) to promote cooperation among schools and resource sharing. At the same time, sufficient educational funding should be provided (Lin, 2007) to increase rational and regulatory market control. This can prevent unfair resource allocations and promote the operation of virtuous organizations. The government should encourage the

development of partnerships (Adnett and Davies, 1999), such as those between parents and teachers or those between schools.

Mutual Adaptation by School Leaders

Mutual adaptation: School leaders can implement peer reviews for their staff. Parents can also be invited to participate in critical assessments of school policies and teacher performance. School leaders should encourage mutual adaptation among stakeholders (Fourcade and Healy, 2007), whereby the needs of parents from different backgrounds can be met, and the professional norms of school education taken care of. From an extended view, mutual adaptation prevents violent communication from teachers and parents by calling for a shared responsibility for educational development (Altman, 2007). From a wider perspective, mutual adaptation prompts critical reflection in teachers and parents (Lauder and Hughes, 1999; Hoffman and Burrello, 2004). As a result, a good communication networks can be constructed (Davies, 1998), which aids the cultivation of both an inclusive atmosphere and an appropriate legitimate environment.

Establishing Audience Structures

The establishment of audience structures implies introducing formal frameworks through which teachers and parents can communicate with and make suggestions to the school leaders. Audience structures can be useful tools in educational development. First, audience structures can integrate the voices of teachers and parents and convey a sense of belonging (Blum, 1999). Internally, teachers can identify with the school, and externally, the school can earn the trust of parents. This helps the school gain public trust, which then promotes the cultivation of an appropriate legitimate environment. In another respect, the establishment of audience structures can increase respect for the voices of parents and induce actions of concern (Hull, 1996) which in turn increases parent trust in the problem-solving capabilities of the school, invigorates the coordination between them (Halliday, 1990), and helps promote an atmosphere of deliberation. In particular, audience structures provoke more response to student opinions, leading to student-centered education (Taylor, 1996; House, 1998).

Discussion of Related Research

Previous research on the education market tended to focus on competitiveness; few studies have dealt with the issue of ethics. In addition, most previous studies examined universities or vocational colleges rather than vocational high schools or public school systems. Independent research on junior high schools is rare. This study therefore adopted the following methodologies: 1. interviews with university supervisors, principals, administrative workers, and teachers in vocational high schools, and with principals, administrative workers, teachers, and students in senior high schools; 2. document analysis, including comparisons of marketization in public school systems of different countries; and 3. questionnaire surveys distributed to administrative supervisors.

While previous research has established the influence of marketization on educational innovation, and its resulting effects of comprehensive preparation, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity, these studies have not investigated the performance of school leaders in terms of their enactment of social responsibilities. Previous research considered the role of school leaders to be as initiators of ethical practice rather than catalysts. In addition to examining this issue, the current study considered the potential for market competition to suppress, as opposed to support, innovation in education.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Research Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the framework of this study. The objective of this study was to examine the relationships among four major constructs: 1) the strategies of ethical practice adopted by junior high schools, 2) facilitating effects, 3) inhibitory mechanisms, and 4) innovation in school education.

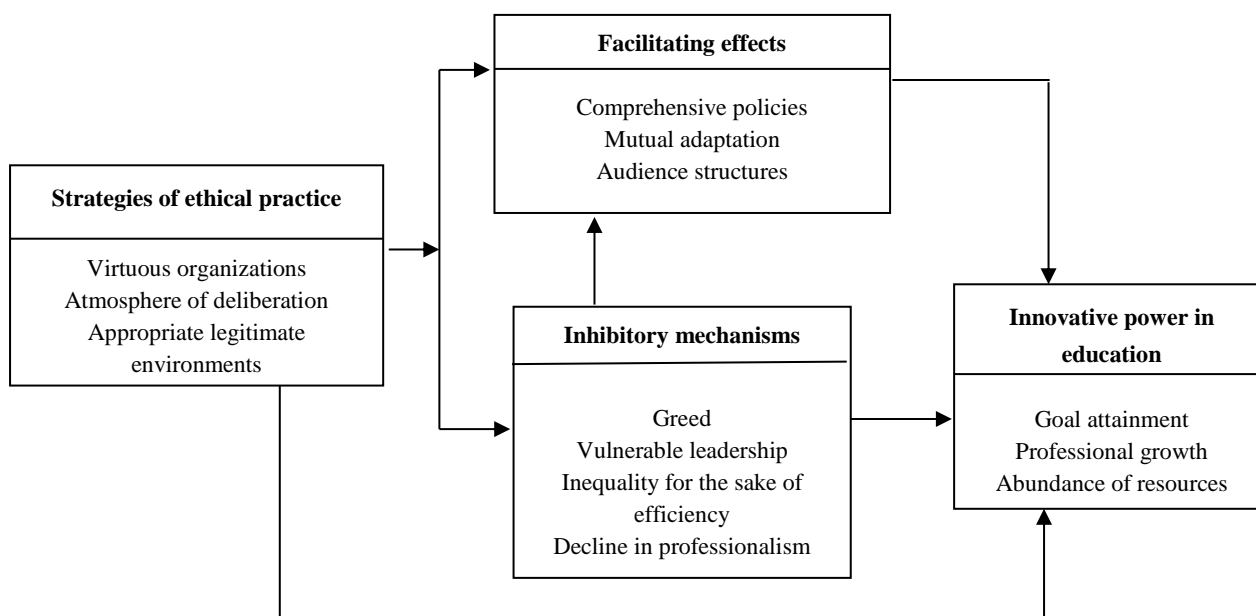


Figure 1. Research framework of ethical practice in junior high school education market

Research Hypotheses

The primary hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- H1: The strategies of ethical practice in the education market directly influence inhibitory mechanisms.
- H2: The strategies of ethical practice in the education market directly influence facilitating effects.
- H3: The strategies of ethical practice in the education market directly influence innovation in school education.
- H4: Inhibitory mechanisms and facilitating effects are correlated.
- H5: The inhibitory mechanisms of ethical practice directly influence innovation in school education.
- H6: The facilitating effects of ethical practice directly influence innovation in school education.

Research Instrument and Sampling Structure

A questionnaire was designed based on a review of relevant literature. The 4-point Likert scale was used, ranging from ‘strongly agree’ (4 points) to ‘strongly disagree’ (1 point). The theoretical outline and preliminary draft were evaluated by four scholars in educational administration. With the help of a coordinating principal, the researcher held a symposium with a dean of academic affairs, two division leaders, and two teachers to amend the question items. A statistician was also consulted on the structure of the questionnaire to ensure that the

statistical applications were reasonable. Finally, we administered a pilot test at six junior high schools, using reliability and factor analysis to confirm the validity of the research instrument.

The subjects in this study included principals and teachers at the 181 junior high schools in the greater Taipei area (including principals and teachers concurrently doing administrative work). The 21 administrative regions in Taipei City and New Taipei City served as sub-populations, in which two stages of sampling were conducted. Based on the number of classes in the junior high schools, we first divided the schools into small schools (12 classes or fewer), medium schools (between 13 and 48 classes), and large schools (49 classes or more). In the first stage of sampling, we randomly selected between one third to one half of the schools in each sub-population. We distributed questionnaires to a total of 72 schools. In addition to the principal (required), we also included general teachers (including homeroom teachers and subject teachers) and teachers concurrently doing other administrative work.

We distributed 10 questionnaires to small schools (1 for the principal, 3 for teachers concurrently doing administrative work, and 6 for general teachers), 15 questionnaires to medium schools (1 for the principal, 5 for teachers concurrently doing administrative work, and 9 for general teachers), and 25 questionnaires to large schools (1 for the principal, 7 for teachers concurrently doing administrative work, and 17 for general teachers). We recovered a total of 917 valid questionnaires (at least 90 of the 95 question items were completed), accounting for a valid recovery rate of 77 %.

Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's α values of the 13 sub-constructs, namely virtuous organizations, atmosphere of deliberation, appropriate legitimate environments, audience structures, mutual adaptation, comprehensive policies, greed, vulnerable leadership, inequality for the sake of efficiency, decline in professionalism, goal attainment, professional growth, and the abundance of resources, ranged between 0.78 and 0.91, thereby indicating a sufficient degree of internal consistency among the question items in each sub-construct.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis

We used LISREL 8.51 for the sample covariance matrices of the 86 question items and selected the parameters of the ML estimation model. With regard to SEM fitting, several researchers, including Hoelter (1983), Hatcher (1994), and Byrne (1998), have proposed criteria for acceptable goodness-of-fit, which include the following: $\chi^2/df < 3$; NFI (Normed Fit Index) > 0.9 ; NNFI (Nonnormed Fit Index) > 0.9 ; CFI (Comparative Fit Index) > 0.95 ; IFI (Increment-of-Fit Index) > 0.9 ; RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) < 0.08 ; GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index) > 0.9 , and AGFI (Adjusted GFI) > 0.85 . GFI or AGFI values greater than 0.8 present a reasonable fit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1 and Figure 2 show that of the three strategies of ethical practice, the operation of virtuous organizations exerts a direct, significant influence on all of the latent endogenous variables. More specifically, the operation of virtuous organizations directly inhibits greed, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and decline in professionalism; however, it has facilitating effects in inducing audience structures and comprehensive policies, strengthens goal attainment, encourages professional growth, and introduces the abundance of resources, which further enhances innovation in school education. However, the operation of virtuous organizations can exacerbate the problem of vulnerable leadership and suppress actions for

mutual adaptation. Fortunately, promoting an atmosphere of deliberation and cultivating an appropriate legitimate environment can significantly curtail the vulnerability of leadership and directly catalyze mutual adaptation, the effects of which are sufficient to compensate for the flaws of virtuous organizations in this respect. Moreover, promoting an atmosphere of deliberation directly fortifies goal attainment. The direct effects of the three strategies prevent inhibitory mechanisms, magnify facilitating effects, and expand innovation in school education. From the perspective of the total effects, the integration and application of strategies used for ethical practice can prevent inhibitory effects, magnify facilitating effects, and enhance innovation. This demonstrates the importance of strategies of ethical practice in the education market.

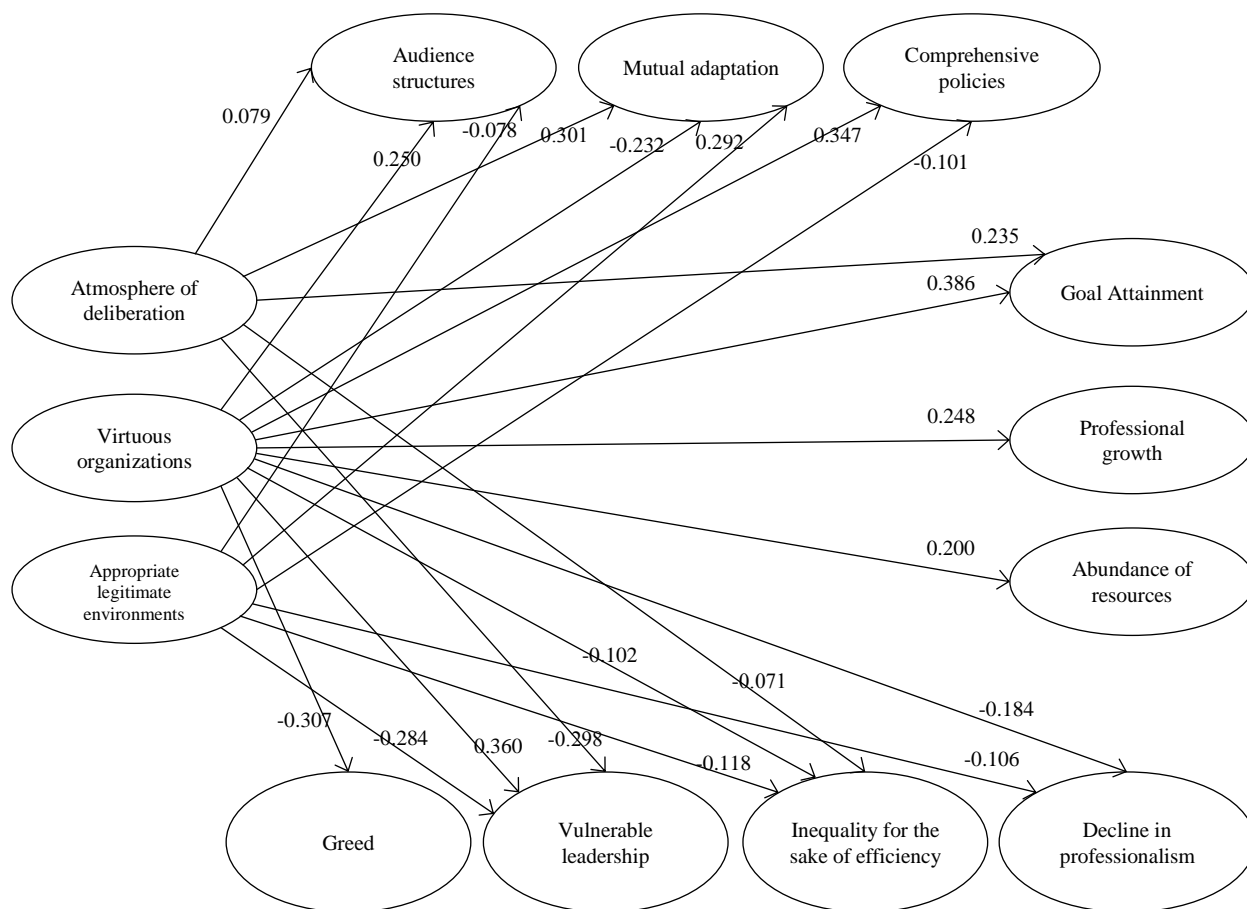


Figure 2. Direct flows from strategies of ethical practice to inhibitory mechanisms, facilitating effects, and innovation

Table 2 reveals that vulnerable leadership can significantly inhibit audience structures, goal attainment, and professional growth; greed significantly strengthens goal attainment; inequality for the sake of efficiency significantly and directly introduces the abundance of resources, and a decline in professionalism significantly restricts audience structures. Naturally, each of the four inhibitory mechanisms significantly strengthens the other three. As for the indirect effects of the inhibitory mechanisms on the latent endogenous variables, they significantly decrease the facilitating effects. In particular, vulnerable leadership presents a significant indirect influence on the three sub-constructs of innovation in school education. From the perspective of total effects, the four inhibitory mechanisms are mutually reinforcing; vulnerable leadership, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and a decline in

professionalism significantly hinder the facilitating effects, and vulnerable leadership significantly suppresses the three sub-constructs of innovation in school education. Contrary to expectations, greed and inequality for the sake of efficiency significantly strengthen goal attainment and the abundance of resources.

Table .1 Estimated total, direct, and indirect effects of strategies used for ethical practice on facilitating effects, inhibitory mechanisms, and innovation

		Total effects			Direct effects			Indirect effects		
		Virtuous organizations	Atmosphere of deliberation	Appropriate legitimate environments	Virtuous organizations	Atmosphere of deliberation	Appropriate legitimate environments	Virtuous organizations	Atmosphere of deliberation	Appropriate legitimate environments
Audience structure	Estimated coefficient	0.319	0.368	0.118	0.250	0.079	-0.078	0.069	0.290	0.196
	Standard error	(0.079)	(0.075)	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.055)	(0.041)	(0.051)	(0.050)	(0.040)
	Z value	4.065	4.898	2.094	4.205	1.436	-1.882	1.357	5.844	4.903
Mutual adaptation	Estimated coefficient	0.022	0.518	0.349	-0.232	0.301	0.292	0.253	0.217	0.057
	Standard error	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.072)	(0.072)	(0.068)	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.043)	(0.036)
	Z value	0.231	5.480	4.879	-3.224	4.420	5.448	5.012	5.103	1.580
Comprehensive policies	Estimated coefficient	0.410	0.213	0.026	0.347		-0.101	0.063	0.213	0.127
	Standard error	(0.070)	(0.040)	(0.060)	(0.056)		(0.053)	(0.038)	(0.040)	(0.030)
	Z value	5.892	5.327	0.428	6.174		-1.906	1.661	5.327	4.272
Greed	Estimated coefficient	-0.437	-0.145	-0.210	-0.307			-0.130	-0.145	-0.210
	Standard error	(0.080)	(0.049)	(0.045)	(0.053)			(0.055)	(0.049)	(0.045)
	Z value	-5.488	-2.953	-4.649	-5.813			-2.346	-2.953	-4.649
Vulnerable leadership	Estimated coefficient	0.182	-0.412	-0.427	0.360	-0.298	-0.284	-0.179	-0.114	-0.142
	Standard error	(0.119)	(0.117)	(0.091)	(0.103)	(0.099)	(0.076)	(0.041)	(0.033)	(0.031)
	Z value	1.521	-3.524	-4.675	3.502	-3.026	-3.723	-4.341	-3.445	-4.588
Inequality for the sake of efficiency	Estimated coefficient	-0.290	-0.249	-0.333	-0.102	-0.071	-0.118	-0.188	-0.178	-0.215

	Standard error	(0.103)	(0.097)	(0.078)	(0.073)	(0.069)	(0.053)	(0.057)	(0.046)	(0.043)
	Z value	-2.809	-2.564	-4.268	-1.393	-1.031	-2.233	-3.299	-3.853	-4.945
Decline in professionalism	Estimated coefficient	-0.338	-0.168	-0.302	-0.184		-0.106	-0.154	-0.168	-0.196
	Standard error	(0.083)	(0.049)	(0.077)	(0.056)		(0.055)	(0.054)	(0.049)	(0.039)
	Z value	-4.071	-3.451	-3.929	-3.280		-1.910	-2.831	-3.451	-4.977
Goal attainment	Estimated coefficient	0.334	0.458	0.270	0.386	0.235	0.073	-0.052	0.223	0.197
	Standard error	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.047)	(0.080)	(0.058)	(0.049)	(0.060)	(0.044)	(0.039)
	Z value	5.177	7.219	5.719	4.822	4.050	1.504	-0.866	5.106	5.004
Professional growth	Estimated coefficient	0.258	0.317	0.263	0.248			0.010	0.317	0.263
	Standard error	(0.067)	(0.055)	(0.045)	(0.063)			(0.068)	(0.055)	(0.045)
	Z value	3.877	5.780	5.919	3.957			0.152	5.780	5.919
Abundance of resources	Estimated coefficient	0.385	0.222	0.089	0.200			0.185	0.222	0.089
	Standard error	(0.071)	(0.046)	(0.033)	(0.067)			(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.033)
	Z value	5.420	4.851	2.677	2.969			4.068	4.851	2.677

Table 2. Estimated total, direct, and indirect effects of inhibitory mechanisms of ethical practice on facilitating effects, inhibitory mechanisms, and innovation

		Total effects				Direct effects				Indirect effects				
		Greed	Vulnerable leadership	Inequality for the sake of efficiency	Decline of professionalism	in Greed	Vulnerable leadership	Inequality for the sake of efficiency	Decline of professionalism	in Greed	Vulnerable leadership	Inequality for the sake of efficiency	Decline of professionalism	in Greed
Audience structure	Estimated coefficient	-0.026	-0.133	-0.121	-0.106	0.035	-0.065	-0.039	-0.038	-0.061	-0.067	-0.082	-0.069	
	Standard error	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.012)	
	Z value	-1.026	-5.277	-4.372	-4.265	1.801	-3.580	-1.822	-2.078	-5.270	-6.396	-5.901	-5.909	
Mutual adaptation	Estimated coefficient	-0.017	-0.071	-0.072	-0.058					-0.017	-0.071	-0.072	-0.058	
	Standard error	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.014)					(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.016)	(0.014)	
	Z value	-1.288	-5.073	-4.457	-4.256					-1.288	-5.073	-4.457	-4.256	

Comprehensive policies	Estimated coefficient	-0.022	-0.051	-0.073	-0.046			-0.025		-0.022	-0.051	-0.048	-0.046
	Standard error	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.026)	(0.013)			(0.017)		(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.013)
	Z value	-1.691	-4.506	-2.797	-3.631			-1.445		-1.691	-4.506	-4.125	-3.631
Greed	Estimated coefficient	0.305	0.331	0.543	0.486	0.115	0.281	0.237	0.305	0.216	0.262	0.248	
	Standard error	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.032)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.030)	(0.018)	(0.021)	(0.019)	
	Z value	10.288	11.242	15.067	15.012	4.689	12.415	10.719	10.288	12.079	12.735	12.950	
Vulnerable leadership	Estimated coefficient	0.331	0.180	0.407	0.358	0.115	0.192	0.154	0.216	0.180	0.216	0.204	
	Standard error	(0.029)	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.016)	
	Z value	11.242	9.124	13.506	13.002	4.689	8.417	7.100	12.079	9.124	12.332	12.661	
Inequality for the sake of efficiency	Estimated coefficient	0.543	0.407	0.353	0.505	0.281	0.192	0.229	0.262	0.216	0.353	0.277	
	Standard error	(0.036)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.029)	(0.021)	
	Z value	15.067	13.506	11.996	16.430	12.415	8.417	10.155	12.735	12.332	11.996	13.426	
Decline in professionalism	Estimated coefficient	0.486	0.358	0.505	0.290	0.237	0.154	0.229	0.248	0.204	0.277	0.290	
	Standard error	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.024)	
	Z value	15.012	13.002	16.430	11.943	10.719	7.100	10.155	12.950	12.661	13.426	11.943	
Goal attainment	Estimated coefficient	0.083	-0.092	0.008	-0.060	0.082	-0.066		-0.036	0.000	-0.026	0.008	-0.024
	Standard error	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.014)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.028)		(0.031)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.015)
	Z value	3.012	-3.348	0.596	-1.905	3.002	-2.387		-1.160	0.018	-2.122	0.596	-1.645
Professional growth	Estimated coefficient	0.052	-0.124	-0.004	-0.120	0.071	-0.087		-0.080	-0.019	-0.036	-0.004	-0.039
	Standard error	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.021)	(0.043)	(0.037)	(0.035)		(0.042)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.018)
	Z value	1.403	-3.483	-0.203	-2.791	1.919	-2.509		-1.937	-1.229	-2.623	-0.203	-2.140
Abundance of resources	Estimated coefficient	0.060	-0.045	0.135	-0.080			0.163	-0.070	0.060	-0.045	-0.028	-0.010
	Standard error	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.061)	(0.054)			(0.058)	(0.056)	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.024)
	Z value	2.525	-2.223	2.222	-1.478			2.817	-1.255	2.525	-2.223	-1.322	-0.428

Table 3. Estimated total, direct, and indirect effects of facilitating effects of ethical practice on facilitating effects, inhibitory mechanisms, and innovation

		Total effects			Direct effects			Indirect effects		
		Audience structure	Mutual adaptation	Comprehensive policies	Audience structure	Mutual adaptation	Comprehensive policies	Audience structure	Mutual adaptation	Comprehensive policies
Audience structure	Estimated coefficient	0.379	0.704	0.420	0.423	0.155	0.379	0.281	0.265	
	Standard error	(0.043)	(0.058)	(0.038)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.043)	(0.034)	(0.028)	
	Z value	8.814	12.203	11.190	15.107	5.056	8.814	8.268	9.582	
Mutual adaptation	Estimated coefficient	0.704	0.450	0.530	0.423	0.289	0.281	0.450	0.241	
	Standard error	(0.058)	(0.056)	(0.047)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.034)	(0.056)	(0.026)	
	Z value	12.203	8.078	11.371	15.107	10.013	8.268	8.078	9.089	
Comprehensive policies	Estimated coefficient	0.420	0.530	0.220	0.155	0.289	0.265	0.241	0.220	
	Standard error	(0.038)	(0.047)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.026)	(0.029)	
	Z value	11.190	11.371	7.633	5.056	10.013	9.582	9.089	7.633	
Greed	Estimated coefficient	-0.026	-0.017	-0.022	0.035		-0.061	-0.017	-0.022	
	Standard error	(0.025)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.020)		(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.013)	
	Z value	-1.026	-1.288	-1.691	1.801		-5.270	-1.288	-1.691	
Vulnerable leadership	Estimated coefficient	-0.133	-0.071	-0.051	-0.065		-0.067	-0.071	-0.051	
	Standard error	(0.025)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.018)		(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.011)	
	Z value	-5.277	-5.073	-4.506	-3.580		-6.396	-5.073	-4.506	
Inequality for the sake of efficiency	Estimated coefficient	-0.121	-0.072	-0.073	-0.039		-0.025	-0.072	-0.048	
	Standard error	(0.028)	(0.016)	(0.026)	(0.021)		(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.016)	
	Z value	-4.372	-4.457	-2.797	-1.822		-1.445	-5.901	-4.457	
Decline in professionalism	Estimated coefficient	-0.106	-0.058	-0.046	-0.038		-0.069	-0.058	-0.046	
	Standard error	(0.025)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.018)		(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.013)	
	Z value	-4.265	-4.256	-3.631	-2.078		-5.909	-4.256	-3.631	
Goal attainment	Estimated coefficient	0.085	0.589	0.038	-0.144	0.401	-0.138	0.228	0.189	
	Standard error	(0.071)	(0.079)	(0.050)	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.056)	(0.047)	(0.047)	
	Z value	1.192	7.479	0.767	-1.683	4.408	-2.461	4.850	4.032	

Professional growth	Estimated coefficient	0.019	0.754	0.191	-0.375	0.555	0.394	0.199	0.191
	Standard error	(0.093)	(0.089)	(0.036)	(0.101)	(0.092)	(0.050)	(0.053)	(0.036)
	Z value	0.205	8.491	5.314	-3.720	6.060	7.889	3.780	5.314
Abundance of resources	Estimated coefficient	0.566	0.478	0.205	0.412		0.154	0.478	0.205
	Standard error	(0.090)	(0.060)	(0.032)	(0.063)		(0.036)	(0.060)	(0.032)
	Z value	6.304	7.971	6.458	6.494		4.288	7.971	6.458

Note: Blank cells indicate that the corresponding effect is 0.

Table 4. Estimated total, direct, and indirect effects on innovation created through ethical practice

		Total effects			Direct effects			Indirect effects		
		Goal attainment	Professional growth	Abundance of resources	Goal attainment	Professional growth	Abundance of resources	Goal attainment	Professional growth	Abundance of resources
Goal attainment	Estimated coefficient	0.050	0.219	0.126	--	0.185	0.079	0.050	0.034	0.047
	Standard error	(0.017)	(0.046)	(0.033)		(0.042)	(0.033)	(0.017)	(0.010)	(0.013)
	Z value	2.915	4.734	3.853		4.434	2.382	2.915	3.513	3.677
Professional growth	Estimated coefficient	0.219	0.086	0.232	0.185	--	0.198	0.034	0.086	0.034
	Standard error	(0.046)	(0.025)	(0.043)	(0.042)		(0.038)	(0.010)	(0.025)	(0.010)
	Z value	4.734	3.472	5.349	4.434		5.235	3.513	3.472	3.499
Abundance of resources	Estimated coefficient	0.126	0.232	0.056	0.079	0.198	--	0.047	0.034	0.056
	Standard error	(0.033)	(0.043)	(0.018)	(0.033)	(0.038)		(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.018)
	Z value	3.853	5.349	3.126	2.382	5.235		3.677	3.499	3.126

Note: Blank cells indicate that the corresponding effect is 0.

Table 3 shows that audience structures can significantly and directly inhibit vulnerable leadership and a decline in professionalism and directly repress the growth of professionalism, but also directly increase the abundance of resources. Furthermore, mutual adaptation can significantly and directly strengthen goal attainment and professional growth, whereas the establishment of comprehensive policies can significantly and directly limit goal attainment. With regard to the indirect effects of the three facilitating effects on the latent endogenous variables, they can significantly accelerate facilitating effects, promote inhibitory mechanisms, and increase innovation. In terms of total effects, we found that the facilitating effects of ethical practice in the education market are beneficial to themselves, and significantly suppress vulnerable leadership, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and a decline in professionalism, and enhance the innovation in school education. In particular, mutual adaptation displays significant overall efficacy in enhancing the three sub-constructs of innovation; comprehensive policies significantly strengthen professional growth and increase the abundance of resources, and audience structures can significantly increase the abundance of resources.

Table 4 indicates that the various direct, indirect, and total effects among the three sub-constructs of innovation were all significant. This shows that goal attainment, professional growth, and the abundance of resources share a complementary relationship.

DISCUSSION

In the face of market competition, the practice of ethics in schools can be viewed from two perspectives: the integrated application of values and the ranking of values according to influence (Eyal, Berkovich, & Schwartz, 2011).

The first approach emphasizes the unified practice of ethics, which involves integration of the following three practices: virtuous organizations, deliberative atmospheres, and appropriate legitimate environments. This impels organizational innovation in the best interests of students (Firick, Faircloth, & Little, 2012). However, complementing ethical practices and the development of balanced relationships are also important; these can be achieved through mutual adaptation, audience structures, and comprehensive policies. Greed, vulnerable leadership, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and the decline in professionalism are factors inhibiting the practice of ethics in schools (Eyal *et al.*, 2011). These factors also restrict school innovation.

The second approach involves ranking ethical practices based on their influence on organizational innovation. The results of this study return the following ranking: (1) deliberative atmosphere, (2) virtuous organization, and (3) legitimate environment. Thus, in the face of market competition, schools should first seek to realize a deliberative atmosphere, then implement the principles of a virtuous organization, before working on cultivating an appropriate legitimate environment.

Audience structures expand the ethical practice of virtuous organizations and atmospheres of deliberation. Therefore, school leaders should be empathetic towards parents and listen to them. Furthermore, mutual adaptation also promotes the practice of deliberative atmospheres and appropriate legitimate environments by encouraging critical assessments (Eyal *et al.*, 2011). Comprehensive policies contribute to the development of virtuous organizations and deliberative atmospheres. In addition to establishing regulations regarding the practice of ethics in schools and allocating resources to support these plans, the government should also promote the building of partnerships with stakeholders. Accordingly, the government should work to establish a minimum of legal norms and encourage parents to participate in the

creation of these regulations to connect governmental action with the microcosm of the school system (Wagner, 2012).

It must also be noted that an appropriate legitimate environment can be considered a school resource, as it provides an external measure of performance (Blanke, 1991). It also induces goal attainment, professional growth and a collective sense of responsibility. Thus, an appropriate legitimate environment can provide an efficient interactive management platform for internal and external performance (Knapp & Feldman, 2012).

Among the strategies of ethical practice in the education market, the operation of virtuous organizations has the most widespread influence, making use of the facilitating effects of audience structures and comprehensive policies, inhibits greed, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and a decline in professionalism, and generates innovation in school education. In addition, the operation of virtuous organizations abides by ethical standards, which restricts contingency during the organizational progress, obstructs mutual adaptation actions, and enhances vulnerable leadership. In contrast, promoting an atmosphere of deliberation and cultivating appropriate legitimate environments promotes democratic exchange and equitable relationships, induces mutual adaptation actions, and inhibits vulnerable leadership, which makes up for the flaws in the operation of virtuous organizations. In addition, all three strategies can strengthen goal attainment.

When enhancing the effects of vulnerable leadership, the use of strategies for the practice of ethic in education markets can also hinder audience structures, which then inhibits goal attainment and professional growth. When magnifying the effects of greed, it instead strengthens goal attainment and promotes professional growth. While inducing inequality for the sake of efficiency, it suppresses audience structures and comprehensive policies but increases the abundance of resources. When promoting a decline in professionalism, it subdues audience structures and restricts goal attainment, professional growth, and the introduction of resources, which in turn undermine innovation in school education.

School leaders should prioritize issues of vulnerable leadership and a decline in professionalism. Once these issues have been resolved, preventing inequality for the sake of efficiency and giving heed to the unethical interactions brought on by greed are also important focal points for schools interested in good ethical practice. Furthermore, the overall effects of the four inhibitory mechanisms (vulnerable leadership, greed, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and a decline in professionalism) weaken facilitating effects. While the integration of audience structures can hinder goal attainment and professional growth, they can prove effective in combatting vulnerable leadership, inequality for the sake of efficiency, and a decline in professionalism. They furthermore tend to increase the input of resources and encourage mutual adaptation. However, the implementation of comprehensive policies by government can easily restrict goal attainment. As a result, school leaders should encourage flexibility, which will subsequently facilitate the establishment of audience structures. As for the role of the government, they should not be too overbearing, but rather should lead with minimal legal regulations and only intervene when necessary. This will facilitate their efforts in goal attainment at schools and enhance innovation in school education (Milliman & Maranto, 2009).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study proposed three strategies for the implementation of ethical practice in the education market: operating virtuous organizations, creating an atmosphere of deliberation and cultivating appropriate legitimate environments. The integration of these strategies can encourage competitiveness without compromising ethical principles. In effect, this can

enhance social efficacy, bring about social justice, strengthen the balance of relationships within a school, promote self-awareness, and contain organizational acts of monopoly. Furthermore, it can promote transparent communications, motives for reflection, social development, public trust, and innovation for the provision of high-quality service.

Innovative measures should be gradually implemented. These measures are at their most effective when introduced according to the following ranking: deliberative atmospheres, virtuous organizations, and legitimate environments.

School leaders should watch for a decline in professionalism as it can hinder audience structures, which can then obstruct goal attainment, professional growth, and the introduction of resources. Next, they should beware of vulnerable leadership because it also impedes audience structures and places limits on goal attainment and professional growth. Inducing greed, on the contrary, strengthens goal attainment and promotes professional growth. Enhancing inequality for the sake of efficiency minimizes the effects of audience structures and comprehensive policies but increases the abundance of resources. In other words, innovation is still maintained when inequality for the sake of efficiency and greed are present. Therefore, school leaders should give heed to a decline in professionalism and vulnerable leadership, as the presence of strong moral fiber in the faculty and leaders of a school keeps inequality and greed in check, allowing them to bring what benefits they can without sacrificing the ethical foundations of the school.

Mutual adaptation is also an ethical route to innovation in school education, as are audience structures. Comprehensive policies implemented by the government limit goal attainment; therefore, the government should not assert overwhelming dominance in this respect, but formulate minimal legal regulations and only intervene when necessary.

Finally, an appropriate legitimate environment will conserve resources and induce goal attainment and professional growth, which will further arouse a collective sense of responsibility among staff members, strengthen the management of internal and external performance, and guide efficient innovation.

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