

High School Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Principals' Ethical Leadership in Turkey

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This study has been carried out in order to determine to what extent principals demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors, and to present suggestions on the strength of these findings. The study has a descriptive quality in evaluating the teachers' perceptions and uses the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) developed by Yilmaz (2006), so as to determine the opinions of the participant teachers. The analysis of the data has been performed via the "SPSS for Windows" package program. In addition, such statistical processes as a significance test, standard deviation, one-way variance analysis (ANOVA), Kruskal-Wallis H Test, Mann-Whitney U Test have also been carried out. The findings reveal that principals *adequately* perform their ethical responsibilities like treating their staff justly and encouraging them, being fair, understanding, patient and humble, traits which all exist in the "communicative ethics, climatic ethics and ethics in decision making" levels at the state high schools in the city of Kütahya, Turkey. On the other hand, the participant teachers in the study have clearly admitted that the principals engaged in such ethical behaviors in the "behavioral ethics" level as self-evaluation, not lying and protecting individual rights *poorly*.

Key words: ethics, leadership, ethical leadership, principal, behavior

Introduction

An ethical life is a requirement for every person. People are supposed to behave in such a personality that is shaped with the concepts of good, beauty and righteousness at all the stages of life (McCurdy, 1998). People have the obligation to comply with the ethical values so as to live in society by sharing love, friendship, happiness and peace, because ethics starts and ends with human beings (Thiroux, 1980; Neuman, 1994). However, it might not be easy for people to accept and reflect on the above mentioned ethical

values in their behaviors, because it is rather difficult to change one's behavior. Those who have adopted certain behavior patterns and turned it into a life standard can hardly go beyond this pattern.

The concept of "ethics" is about the moral values and rules effective in determining right and wrong behaviors and attitudes. It means deciding what is good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust. Moreover, ethics does not give a list of the moral principles of a person, but explains his real behaviors (Schultz & Werner, 2005; Nolan, 1993; Jones, 1995; Martin, 1985). In this sense, ethical values can be expressed as *loyalty, honesty, justice, accuracy, respect, tolerance, responsibility, courage* (Moorhouse, 2002). In addition, it is not a consistent approach to speak of an absolute right or wrong in a universal sense, since there are various cultures in the world; that is, a behavior pattern acceptable in a society might be considered undesirable in

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another. Therefore, it is by no means wrong to say that some ethical values might vary among societies.

The scope of the research and studies on leaders and leadership is a concrete indicator of how much importance is given to the subject. It can be argued that the need for *guiding* and *being guided*, which is one of the most important and extensive characteristics of humankind, has a great role in giving that much importance to the subject (Aydin, 2000). Leadership is one of the basic subjects of management. Numerous studies have been done on it, and in these studies, many different definitions have been put forward. For instance, leadership is defined as affecting the ideas and actions of the followers; being aware of the needs and requests of the group members and thus directing their energy to achieving these needs and requests (Celik, 2003; Ercetin, 2000). As can be understood from this definition, there is an element of *power of impact* in the nature of leadership. When viewed from this organizational perspective, leadership can be thought of as the process of the administrators' affecting and guiding both the followers and the organization to their goals.

As seen above, each of the definitions defines leadership from a different perspective. Some of them focus on the impact power of leadership on thoughts and actions because leadership is a power of impact. There are also some definitions (Slater et al., 1994) regarding leadership as the skill of designing a learning organization. These notions are right in a sense because the responsibility of a leader is to transform the organization he is in charge of into a learning organization so as to keep it aloft in accordance with its goals.

One of the most important duties of a leader is to have an ethical perception of management. Of course, it cannot be expected from all administrators to display a management perception that is compatible with ethical values, because this is related closely with the leadership characteristics of the leader. In this respect, a leader is someone who can activate his followers in line with mutual objectives thanks to his ethical applications. When, in any case, he engages in unethical behavior, this will attract the attention of his staff first and thus will be subjected to negative reactions both in and out of the institution. Since the staff will exhibit ethical behaviors by being urged to do so by their leader, a leader cannot afford to behave unethically. Indeed, the expression "trouble starts either by

senseless leadership or by underground activities" confirms this evaluation.

The good image of leadership in educational settings is essential in understanding the nature of the school as a workplace and the quality of human interactions in schools. In a school workplace where there is a high quality of interactions among organizational members, teachers will commit themselves to work harder and make their work experience more meaningful (Turan, 2002). It is only possible through the precise application of ethical principles to build the quality of human interactions in schools and to guide the staff towards mutual objectives. For this purpose, school principals should be interested in ethical subjects and should think about the requirements of ethical management. When they try to run their institution with ethical values and strive for this end, discomfort at school will decrease. As ethical leaders, school principals should be good role models for their staff by displaying ethical behaviors themselves first. This will enable their staff and students to adopt ethical values and norms more easily. In this context, the core argument of this article is to discuss the importance of ethical leadership for school principals and educational institutions through the views of teachers in regard to the ethical leadership of their principals. Moreover, by presenting a general panorama of ethical leadership, its importance for school principals is also emphasized.

Ethical Leadership and the Characteristics of Ethical Leaders

In order for a leader to be successful, he must be able to be mature from *an ethical perspective* and also inspire his followers (Duffield & McCuen, 2000). Unless an administrator has the quality of *personal honesty*, he can never inspire others (Fleet, 1999). The leader who acts ethically will ultimately succeed. The leader who lacks an ethical foundation will ultimately fail. Clearly, leaders' characters influence their ethical performance at work. Many management scholars have emphasized the role that a strong character and principles play in effective leadership of self and others (Butcher, 2005; Brown, 2007).

In ethical leadership, maintaining a desirable character has more importance than technical efficiency (Celik, 2003). The leaders of the future may have to pay attention to

human values and *ethical behaviors* that are required for efficient and effective leadership in order to maintain their leadership (Ryan, 2000; Duncan, 1991).

Is ethical behavior profitable? Is this relevant? Studies in the U.S. and the U.K. have shown that a strong sense of ethics can be profitable. Mounting evidence suggests that a company's profitability is bolstered by its reputation as an honest, ethical business partner. Firms that routinely practice high business ethics and principles also attract the highest quality recruits and retain employees longer than other firms (Fulmer, 2004).

These ethical leadership theories are based on two new concepts: the first is that ethical leadership is based on the rules about what to do rather than those about what not to do. The second is that the definition of leadership should involve *ethical behaviors* (Rubenstein, 2001). Ethical leaders were described as moral persons who are *honest, trustworthy, and fair*. Ethical leaders were seen as principled decision makers who care about people and the greater good of society. They are known for behaving ethically in their personal and professional lives. The researchers found that ethical leaders were described as moral managers. Moral managers proactively attempt to influence their followers' ethical and unethical behavior. They make ethics salient by communicating clear ethical standards, intentionally role modeling ethical behavior, and by using rewards and discipline to hold followers accountable for ethical conduct (Brown, 2007).

Ethical leaders were thought to be honest and trustworthy, beyond that, they were seen as fair and principled decision-makers who care about people and the broader society, and who behave ethically in their personal and professional lives (Brown & Trevino, 2006). They are characterized as honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions. Ethical leaders also frequently communicate with their followers about ethics, set clear ethical standards and use rewards and punishments to see that those standards are followed. (Brown & Trevino, 2006). Finally, ethical leadership predicts outcomes such as the perceived effectiveness of leaders, followers' job satisfaction and dedication, and their willingness to report problems to management (Brown et al., 2005).

Ethical leaders are, at the same time, those who can satisfy the desires and expectations of the staff to a certain extent. The staff will always have certain targets and

expectations to achieve while working in an organization. Similarly, an organization has an obligation to achieve its targets to survive. Here at this point, the duty of an ethical leader is to merge these two objectives at a common point to achieve them. If administrators can secure a balance between the objective of the organization and the expectations of the staff, they will be able to contribute significantly to the adoption and application of ethical values in the organization.

Principals as Ethical Leaders

Principals are public officials who have responsibilities towards many people of stakeholders with various interests and values. Therefore, they have to pay attention to their ethical responsibilities and their role of *leadership* is vital in the organization and conduct of school. As an effective leader, a principal is the one who is able to strengthen the group dynamics among teachers and develops the aims of education and the school. In other studies on the subject, it has been determined that educational leadership is related to such virtues as honesty and respect (Lashway, 1996; Sisman, 1999; Johnson, 2000; Grace, 2000).

The school is supposed to turn the negative effect of its environment into a positive, and intensify its efforts to consolidate this positive effect. The priority of schools is to educate their students and to improve their behaviors. An educational institution is responsible for turning the individual who is essentially a tabula rasa from birth into an effective member of the society by socializing him and by making him productive (Kucukahmet, 2001; Mitchell, 1995; Basaran, 1996; Celep, 2000). The major responsibility of the school in achieving these aims is undertaken by the school principals and teachers, because they are primarily responsible for the quality of the education given in a school. Therefore, the fact that teachers in particular are satisfied with their job will yield to effect their motivation.

If the principals cannot unite their teachers in the common points of their educational missions and cannot provide them with the environment and opportunities to learn from each other, the most skilled teachers won't be able to have the expected effect upon the success of the students (Ozden, 1999). In order for the principals to achieve this unity, they are supposed to have the

characteristics of an ethical leader like honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and courage. In this sense, it can be argued that, in order for the teachers to be satisfied with their job and to exhibit excellent performance, principals are required to have an ethical conscience and show this conscience in practice, which will not only reinforce collaboration and trust among teachers but also increase respect around the school.

While mentioning ethical applications in institutions, the primary stress should be on the behaviors that are adopted by the society and that are not in conflict with the moral values of that society. In this context, in order to speak about an ethical management or an ethical institution, there should at least be a management perception that is consistent with humane, moral and social values. The most vital duty of an ethical leader is to adopt a management strategy that is integrated with humane, moral and social values and to ensure his staff adopt this strategy as well. When the staff adopt and display these ethical values, unethical behaviors in the institution will decrease significantly.

Schools are such institutions that have ethical values and where students are taught some precious values like justice, loyalty, honesty, and respect. During their administration, ethical principles should be considered and an ethical leadership concept should be applied. For this purpose, principals and teachers should first possess these values, and then reflect them in their actions (Sergiovanni, 1992; Beck et al., 1997). Principals should take some ethical principles into account while performing their profession. These can be listed as follows: *being honest and objective, showing respect to individuals, being tolerant and just* (Howe & Kaufman, 1983; Smith, 1997).

It is important for the reputation of schools that they have an ethical culture. When viewed from the perspective of teachers, their satisfaction and motivation will indisputably be enhanced when they feel that they are working at a school that is run with an ethical approach. Therefore, principals should mind their ethical responsibilities for their teachers; should respect their individual rights and should be just.

In any organization, paying attention to ethical behaviors and acting on the basis of ethical values are the most important responsibilities of an ethical management (McNamara, 1999). In this respect, the principal can first be an example of the application of ethical leadership

behaviors and thus provide an ethical culture within the organization. Hence, the school will possess not only an ethical management but also an ethical culture.

In a study by Nolan (1993), it was determined that there is a close relation between the ethical climate of the school and the leadership application of the principal. The fact that school principals fulfill their professional responsibilities properly is evidence that they work ethically at school (Celik, 2003). Those principals who behave on the basis of ethical principles will be regarded highly in the society and among his staff. Without doubt, the principals' ethical leadership is of great importance regarding the educational institution. When the principals demonstrate ethical behaviors in and out of the school, they will both contribute to institutionalizing the ethical principles at school and lead the staff to behave ethically. Therefore, it is hoped that studies on the level of principals' ethical leadership behaviors will contribute to the solution of the problems at schools arising from ethical problems.

Study Design

Objective and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent principals demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors, and to present suggestions on the strength of the findings. For this purpose, high school teachers' perceptions about the ethical leadership behaviors of their principals were analyzed and suggestions were presented relying on the findings. Moreover, in order to achieve our target, the following research questions were asked:

1. What is the level of high school teachers' perceptions about the ethical leadership behaviors of their own principals?
2. Do these perceptions show significant differences according to (a) gender, (b) education level, (c) seniority?

Research Methodology

Participants

The study was carried out as a descriptive survey

(Karasar, 1999), and the questionnaire was applied to present the current state. The population of the study is composed of the teachers employed in the state high schools in the city of Kütahya, a province located in the western part of Turkey. Due to convenience of data gathering in terms of cost and time, it was decided that the study would be conducted in the city of Kütahya. Besides, as there weren't any former studies on ethical leadership in the sampling of Kütahya, it is hoped that this study will fill in an important gap in this domain. Those can be said briefly about the education system in Kütahya: It has some infrastructure problems such as classroom shortages and insufficient education tools. Especially, in preschool education, Kütahya is far below the Turkish average. Local administrators, educators and the society have been struggling collectively to solve such problems for years. The sample is, on the other hand, composed of total 463 teachers chosen randomly from the population. The population of the study is composed of about 850 teachers working at the 36 high schools in the city of Kütahya.

Instruments, Data Collection/Analysis

The study was carried out in the 2006-2007 academic years. The data were gathered via literature scanning and Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) developed by Yilmaz (2006). ELS was graded as "totally agree"=5, "agree"=4, "no idea"=3, "disagree"=2, "totally disagree"=1. The following criteria have been used. When the mean value is calculated equal to $p < .05$ or higher, the attitude is accepted significant; when the mean value is calculated lower than $p < .05$, the attitude is accepted meaningless. The

development of Ethical leadership Scale of Yilmaz has gone through these stages: Prior to its formation, an interview form was prepared through interviews with teachers, school principals, inspectors and experts. During these interviews, they were asked what the ethical characteristics were to be found in school principals and how these were supposed to be reflected in behaviors. The data of the interviews were written down and then arranged. Therefore, as to determine the idea in the data correctly, the words, sentences and paragraphs were coded. Later, these codes were compared and grouped according to the relations between them. Finally, a list of ethical behaviors to be acted by school principals according to the opinions of the teachers, school principals, inspectors and experts was formed. As a result, in the light of former studies on ethical leadership (Brown & Trevino, 2006; Morgan, 2002; Cuilla, 1998; Czaja & Lowe, 2000), the dimensions of ethical leadership were grouped under four separate dimensions and the scale got its final pattern by putting the expressions about the ethical behaviors of school principals into the relevant dimension.

In order to assess the reliability of Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS), Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability was calculated separately both for the whole scale and for each individual sub-level. The total coefficient of reliability of the scale was found to be $\text{Alpha} = 0.93$. According to Ozdamar (1997), if Cronbach's alpha ranged from a low of 0.80 to a high of 1.00 questionnaires were quite reliable, so the reliability of the test prepared was considered to be sufficient. The names, article numbers and coefficients of reliability of 4 sub-levels are given in Table 1.

The scale was handed given to a total of 463 teachers and 351 of the questionnaire forms were handed back.

Table 1
Values Belonging to Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS)

Sun-levels of Ethical Leadership Scale	Number of the Items	The Loads of the Factors	Coefficient of Reliability (Alpha)	The Minimum and Maximum Points
Communicative Ethics	15	0.669–0.814	0.82	15–75
Climatic Ethics	11	0.631–0.752	0.82	11–55
Ethics in Decision-Making	9	0.631–0.752	0.75	9–45
Behavioral Ethics	9	0.735–0.824	0.74	9–45
Total	44	-	0.93	

However, due to several faults, 12 of the forms were excluded and the total number became 339. In the analysis of the data, the "SPSS for Windows" package program was used and such statistical tests as a significance test, standard deviation, one-way variance analysis (ANOVA), Kruskal-Wallis H Test, Mann-Whitney U Test.

Findings

In this section, findings and comments about the teachers' opinions on the level of the principals' ethical leadership behaviors are presented. Not all of the sub-levels in the scale are assessed, but those which show statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) are evaluated. The first sub-goal of the study is the answers to the question "At what level do the high school teachers perceive the ethical leadership behaviors of their own principals?" The answers are presented in Table 2.

According to the teachers' opinions about the first sub-level of ELS "communicative ethics", it can be argued that principals showed the ethical leadership behaviors in practice. The fact that the total sum of the points of this sub-level is so high ($M = 53.63$) shows that the principals demonstrate these behaviors at a *very high level*.

Considering the teachers' opinions about the second sub-level "climatic ethics", it will be clearly seen that the principals showed ethical leadership behaviors in practice at a moderate level ($M = 39.86$). The fact that the teachers' opinions regarding this are positive signifies that the principals demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors *adequately*.

According to Table 2, we can easily say that the principals put ethical behaviors in the third sub-level "ethics in decision-making" into practice in schools. In other words, the teachers stated that the principals demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors *moderately* ($M = 31.31$).

The teachers' perceptions about the fourth sub-level "behavioral ethics" revealed that the principals demonstrate ethical leadership behaviors *inadequately* ($M = 23.92$). Therefore, it can be argued that principals put the ethical leadership behaviors in "*behavioral ethics*" in practice *poorly*. When the principals don't act upon the ethical principles, the unrest among the staff will increase and their efficiency will be damaged. On the other hand, when the

principals act upon these principles, not only will the motivation of the staff increase, but also the success of the school will be enhanced.

Table 3 presents the findings regarding the differences in the teachers' perceptions of the principals' ethical leadership behaviors in terms of gender. These opinions were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test and the only significant difference was found in "climatic ethic level" depending on gender ($Z = -1.079$, $p = .014$).

As seen in Table 3, while the male teachers ($M = 40.45$) said that their principals demonstrated the behaviors in the "climatic ethic level" *adequately*; the female teachers ($M = 33.46$) thought that the principals were *inefficient* in demonstrating the ethical behaviors in question. The fact that there is a difference between female and male teachers' perceptions about the ethical leadership of their principals shows that the female teachers were *critical* in their answers. In short, the female teachers didn't find the principals' ethical leadership sufficient.

In Table 4, on the other hand, the difference in the findings about in the teachers' perceptions about their principals' ethical leadership behaviors depending on the education level is presented. According to the education level variant, the teachers' opinions about their principals' ethical leadership behaviors were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis H test and the only significant difference was observed in "behavioral ethics level" ($X^2 = 1.849$, $p = .029$).

In this regard, teachers who had graduated from college ($M = 36.61$) stated that the principals demonstrated ethical leadership behaviors *adequately*; whereas the ones with Master degrees ($M = 28.56$) thought that the principals were *inefficient* in demonstrating the behaviors in question. Depending on the data, it could be said that as the teachers' education level increased, they became more critical about their principals' ethical leadership.

The teachers' opinions regarding the level of principals' ethical leadership behaviors were compared with a one-way variance analysis (ANOVA), and it was found that the ethical leadership characteristics of the leader didn't differentiate "in any level" significantly according to the seniority variant (see Table 5), in which case it can be argued that the principals didn't behave differently according to the teachers' seniority while demonstrating ethical leadership behaviors. According to the different

Table 2
The Level of the Application of Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviours

Sub-Levels	Number	OPINIONS The Principal of Your School	Mean	SD
Communicative Ethics	1	accepts his faults.	53.63	9.48
	2	doesn't demonstrate selfish behaviors.		
	3	behaves justly his staff.		
	4	participates in discussions constructively and tactfully.		
	5	is patient.		
	6	is humble.		
	7	behaves equally to everyone.		
	8	behaves kindly to all his staff.		
	9	behaves passionately to all his staff.		
	10	shows respect to others.		
	11	isn't seditious among teachers.		
	12	is compassionate.		
	13	behaves sincerely to his staff.		
	14	doesn't judge his staff because of their personal characteristics.		
	15	has a feeling of gratitude for the services around him.		
Climatic Ethics	16	encourages his staff.	39.86	8.46
	17	tries to propagate his own ideas through an approach based on love.		
	18	determines concrete objectives for the future.		
	19	is willing to learn.		
	20	accepts the different ideas of his staff.		
	21	rewards the achievements of his staff justly.		
	22	establishes the rules of the school accurately.		
	23	creates free environment for discussion.		
	24	strives to increase his professional efficiency.		
	25	carries out his duty with a sense of responsibility.		
	26	creates the appropriate environment to reveal the creativity of his staff.		
Ethics in Decision-Making	27	is systematic in finding solutions.	31.31	6.36
	28	never tries to take advantage of political issues.		
	29	never tries to take advantage of religious issues.		
	30	never tries to take advantage of fiscal matters.		
	31	carries out his duties with honesty.		
	32	applies the common decisions efficiently.		
	33	determines the limits in school matters.		
	34	doesn't have negative habits.		
	35	knows the limits of his deeds.		
	Behavioral Ethics	36		
37		is honest.		
38		behaves honestly.		
39		behaves courageously.		
40		always tells the truth in all conditions.		
41		is knowledgeable.		
42		acts upon the principle of reality.		
43		protects individual rights.		
44		respects the values of the society.		

Note. N=339, SD= Standard Deviation

Table 3

Summary of Mann-Whitney U test for Gender Related to Teachers' Perception about the Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviors

Sub-Levels	Gender	Mean	SD	Z	p
Communicative Ethics	Male (n=204)	53.42	9.27	-2.93	.769
	Female (n=135)	53.94	9.83		
Climatic Ethics	Male (n=204)	40.45	8.75	-1.079	.014*
	Female (n=135)	33.46	7.26		
Ethics in Decision-Making	Male (n=204)	31.33	6.04	-.097	.923
	Female (n=135)	31.28	6.83		
Behavioral Ethics	Male (n=204)	23.59	5.70	-1.365	.172
	Female (n=135)	24.42	5.99		

Note. * Significant at $p < .05$ SD= Standard Deviation, p= significance level

Table 4

Summary of Kruskal-Wallis H Test for Education Level Related to Teachers' Perception about the Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviors

Sub-Levels	Education level	Mean	SD	X ²	p
Communicative Ethics	College (n=33)	54.67	8.36	1.100	.577
	Bachelor's Degree (n=269)	53.33	9.55		
	Master Degrees (n=37)	54.67	10.09		
	Total (n=339)	53.63	9.48		
Climatic Ethics	College (n=33)	38.48	9.11	.842	.656
	Bachelor's Degree (n=269)	39.99	8.33		
	Master Degrees (n=37)	39.94	8.99		
	Total (n=339)	39.86	8.46		
Ethics in Decision-Making	College (n=33)	29.21	7.11	3.714	.156
	Bachelor's Degree (n=269)	31.47	6.21		
	Master Degrees (n=37)	32.03	6.62		
	Total (n=339)	31.31	6.36		
Behavioral Ethics	College (n=33)	36.61	7.61	1.849	.029*
	Bachelor's Degree (n=269)	31.33	6.17		
	Master Degrees (n=37)	28.56	6.94		
	Total (n=339)	32.17	6.91		

Note. * Significant at $p < .05$ SD= Standard Deviation, p= significance level

Table 5

Summary of the one-way ANOVAs for Seniority Related to Teachers' Perception about the Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviors

Sub-Levels	Seniority	Mean	SD	F	p
Communicative Ethics	1-10 years (n=110)	53.31	10.03	.155	.856
	11-20 years (n=117)	53.56	9.30		
	21 years or more(n=112)	54.09	9.19		
	Total (n=339)	53.63	9.48		
Climatic Ethics	1-10 years (n=110)	39.71	9.23	.031	.970
	11-20 years (n=117)	39.87	8.12		
	21 years or more(n=112)	39.99	8.08		
	Total (n=339)	39.86	8.46		
Ethics in Decision-Making	1-10 years (n=110)	31.21	6.37	.242	.785
	11-20 years (n=117)	31.63	6.22		
	21 years or more(n=112)	31.07	6.53		
	Total (n=339)	31.31	6.36		
Behavioral Ethics	1-10 years (n=110)	23.80	6.14	.042	.959
	11-20 years (n=117)	23.93	5.79		
	21 years or more(n=112)	24.03	5.59		
	Total (n=339)	23.92	5.83		

Note. * Significant at $p < .05$ SD= Standard Deviation, p= significance level

seniority groups, the fact that the principals' ethical leadership was regarded positively by all the teachers clearly shows that there was a consistency in the ethical leadership behaviors of these principals.

Discussion

According to the opinions of the participant teachers, it can be seen that the principals were *sufficiently* mindful of their responsibilities such as carrying out their professional responsibilities, treating their staff justly and encouraging them, being understanding, patient and humble, which all exist in "communicative, climatic ethics and ethics in decision making" levels. In another study by Pehlivan Aydin (2002) on "Educational Administrators' Ethical Behaviours", it was determined that the principals generally behaved *in compliance* with the ethical principles in the level of tolerance, justice and respect according to the

teachers' opinions.

On the other hand, the teachers clearly stated that the principals performed such ethical behaviors in the "behavioral ethic level" as self-evaluation, not lying and protecting individual rights *poorly* ($M=23.92$, $SD=5.83$). Again, as a result of a study by Turhan (2007), such ethical behaviors of the principals as trustworthiness, not lying and honesty, all of which are based on trust, were not regarded by the teachers as *sufficient*. We can conclude from these findings that the principals didn't engage in some of the ethical behaviors listed. Therefore, to what extent these principals behave in compliance with the ethical leadership principles is controversial.

The only significant difference in the teachers' perceptions about the principals' ethical leadership behaviors depending on gender was in the level of "climatic ethics". The female teachers were of the opinion that their principals didn't carry out such ethical responsibilities as being just to their staff, being compassionate, patient and

humble completely. This result might have been caused by lack of communication between the female teachers and their principals. In a study by Ryncarz (1997), on the other hand, it was stated that the administrators' ethical behaviors didn't change depending on the gender variation.

The only significant difference in the teachers' perceptions about the principals' ethical leadership behaviors depending on education level was in the level of "behavioral ethics". Here, compared to others, the teachers with higher levels of education found their principals' such ethical leadership behaviors as acting wisely, not lying and honesty insufficient. This result shows that their criticism becomes harsher as their education level increases.

There was no statistically significant difference in the teachers' perceptions about the principals' ethical leadership behaviors depending on seniority "at any level". Therefore, it can be concluded that the teachers' opinions about their principals' ethical leadership behaviors were all common; that is, all of them accepted their principals' behaviors as positive. In other words, no significant relation was found between the teachers' seniority and their perceptions about their principals' ethical leadership. As a result, it was observed that the principals didn't act "completely" upon his responsibilities at "the behavioral ethics level" like self-evaluation, not lying, protecting individual rights, whereas they "generally" performed their ethical responsibilities at "the communicative, climatic ethics and ethics in decision making level" like being just, understanding, patient and humble.

Conclusion

In conclusion, principals have an important role to perform in establishing an ethical culture at schools. Therefore, they should be a good role-model for their staff by demonstrating ethical behaviors at and out of school, because the staff will act upon what he/she receives from their principal. If the school principals are sensitive to ethical principles, so too, will the staff.

The results of this study clearly show that it is understood that the female teachers stated that their principals didn't engage in some ethical leadership behaviors (e.g., behaving justly to the staff, etc.) sufficiently. The equality and justice perceptions of a principal will also

affect how much the staff accepts these ethical behaviors. Hence, in compliance with these ethical principles, principals should be tolerant and unbiased towards their whole staff.

The reputation of an educational institution is closely related to how much their administrators pay attention the ethical leadership characteristics. Thus, the principals should adopt these principles and reflect them in their behaviors. Besides this, when the schools are run with an approach based on ethical values, the staff will be satisfied and more efficient.

Schools with ethical values also possess a good outlook. Principals should determine ethical principles peculiar to their own schools considering universal ethical principles and the ethical values of their societies. In this regard, they should develop a plan outlining which behaviors are ethical and which are not, and put this plan into effect. However, it is not enough to only talk about these ethical behaviors, whether orally or in written form at schools. Therefore, the principals should act upon these ethical principles and urge their staff to follow their lead.

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Appendix

Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS)

1. Gender:

a. () Female b. () Male

2. Education Level:

a. () College b. () Bachelor's Degree c. () Master Degree

3. Seniority:

a. () 1-10 years b. () 11-20 years c. () 21 years and more

Totally Agree :5
Agree :4
No Idea :3
Disagree :2
Totally Disagree :1

N u m b e r	OPINIONS					
	<u>The Principal of Your School;</u>					
	5	4	3	2	1	
1	accepts his faults.	5	4	3	2	1
2	doesn't demonstrate selfish behaviors.	5	4	3	2	1
3	behaves justly his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
4	participates in discussions constructively and tactfully.	5	4	3	2	1
5	is patient.	5	4	3	2	1
6	is humble.	5	4	3	2	1
7	behaves equally to everyone.	5	4	3	2	1
8	behaves kindly to all his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
9	behaves passionately to all his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
10	shows respect to others.	5	4	3	2	1
11	isn't seditious among teachers.	5	4	3	2	1
12	is compassionate.	5	4	3	2	1
13	behaves sincerely to his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
14	doesn't judge his staff because of their personal characteristics.	5	4	3	2	1
15	has a feeling of gratitude for the services around him.	5	4	3	2	1
16	encourages his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
17	tries to propagate his own ideas through an approach based on love.	5	4	3	2	1

18	determines concrete objectives for the future.	5	4	3	2	1
19	is willing to learn.	5	4	3	2	1
20	accepts the different ideas of his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
21	rewards the achievements of his staff justly.	5	4	3	2	1
22	establishes the rules of the school accurately.	5	4	3	2	1
23	creates free environment for discussion.	5	4	3	2	1
24	strives to increase his professional efficiency.	5	4	3	2	1
25	carries out his duty with a sense of responsibility.	5	4	3	2	1
26	creates the appropriate environment to reveal the creativity of his staff.	5	4	3	2	1
27	is systematic in finding solutions.	5	4	3	2	1
28	never tries to take advantage of political issues.	5	4	3	2	1
29	never tries to take advantage of religious issues.	5	4	3	2	1
30	never tries to take advantage of fiscal matters.	5	4	3	2	1
31	carries out his duties with honesty.	5	4	3	2	1
32	applies the common decisions efficiently.	5	4	3	2	1
33	determines the limits in school matters.	5	4	3	2	1
34	doesn't have negative habits.	5	4	3	2	1
35	knows the limits of his deeds.	5	4	3	2	1
27	is systematic in finding solutions.	5	4	3	2	1
28	never tries to take advantage of political issues.	5	4	3	2	1
29	never tries to take advantage of religious issues.	5	4	3	2	1
36	can self-evaluate.	5	4	3	2	1
37	is honest.	5	4	3	2	1
38	behaves honestly.	5	4	3	2	1
39	behaves courageously.	5	4	3	2	1
40	always tells the truth in all conditions.	5	4	3	2	1
41	is knowledgeable.	5	4	3	2	1
42	acts upon the principle of reality.	5	4	3	2	1
43	protects individual rights.	5	4	3	2	1
44	respects the values of the society.	5	4	3	2	1