

## ETHICAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A COMPARISON OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE SCHOOLS

### OKUL MÜDÜRLERİNİN ETİK LİDERLİK DAVRANIŞLARI: DEVLET OKULU-ÖZEL OKUL KARŞILAŞTIRMASI

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Başvuru Tarihi: 08.03.2022 Yayına Kabul Tarihi: 13.06.2023 DOI: 10.21764/maeufd.1084483

(Araştırma Makalesi)

**Abstract:** Ethical leadership is the leadership approach that principals use to regulate the communication, climate, behavior, and decision-making processes in the school. It is seen that these studies are carried out in both public and private schools. However, it is difficult to say that these studies reflect the sector and level-based view of ethical leadership holistically. Therefore, in the present study, ethical leadership behaviors of principals in public and private schools were examined at the secondary and high school levels. The study was carried out with a cross-sectional survey, one of the quantitative research designs. Research data were obtained from teachers working in public and private schools in Samsun. In this context, 400 participants' opinions were taken by stratified sampling. Software named SPSS 25.0 and *Mplus* 8.3 were used for the analysis. Findings illustrate that teachers perceive their principals as brave leaders in both sectors. However, it is understood from the findings that school principals have relatively low scores in respecting social values. Comparisons show that teachers working in public schools perceive their principals as more ethical leaders. In comparisons at the school level, the significant difference in finding the school principal more ethical favors public high schools and public secondary schools. Various inferences were made based on the research results, and suggestions were made.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** *Leadership, ethical leadership, school, principal.*

**Özet:** Etik liderlik, müdürlerin okuldaki iletişimi, iklimi, davranışları ve karar alma süreçlerini düzenlemek için başvurdukları liderlik yaklaşımıdır. Son yıllarda kamuya ya da özel sektöre ait okulların farklı kademelerinde bu yaklaşımın ele alındığı çeşitli çalışmalar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ancak bu çalışmaların etik liderliğin sektör ve kademe bazı görünümünü bütüncül biçimde yansıttığını söylemek güçtür. Bu nedenle mevcut araştırmada kamuya ve özel sektöre ait okullardaki müdürlerin etik liderlik davranışları ortaokul ve lise düzeyinde incelenmiştir. Çalışma nicel araştırma desenlerinden kesitsel tarama ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırma verileri Samsun'daki kamu okullarında ve özel okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerden elde edilmiştir. Bu kapsamda tabakalı örnekleme ile belirlenen 400 katılımcının görüşü alınmıştır. İncelemeler için SPSS 25.0 ve *Mplus* 8.3 adlı yazılımlarından yararlanılmıştır. Bulgular her iki sektörde de öğretmenlerin müdürlerini cesur liderler olarak algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Ancak bulgulardan okul müdürlerinin toplumsal değerlere saygı gösterme konusunda nispeten düşük puanlara sahip olduğu da anlaşılmaktadır. Karşılaştırmalar kamu okullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin müdürlerini daha etik liderler olarak algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Okul düzeyindeki karşılaştırmalarda ise okul müdürününü daha etik bulma konusundaki anlamlı farklılık kamu liseleri ve kamu ortaokulları lehinedir. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına dayanılarak çeşitli çıkarımlar yapılmış ve önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Keywords:** *Liderlik, etik liderlik, okul, müdür.*

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## Introduction

The literature on leadership shows that leadership is a phenomenon that has drawn attention since the existence of humanity. It is also one of the most studied, discussed, and interpreted concepts that arouse interest. According to Stogdill (1974), leadership, which has several definitions, contains as many descriptions as the number of researchers depicting it. Moreover, according to Bennis and Townsend (1995), there are about 650 definitions of leadership.

Leadership has been described in various ways in line with the historical improvements of humanity. This process includes different leadership styles and behaviors. New leadership styles have come out as the previous ones are found inadequate. However, what lies behind the changes in leadership is to do with the improvements in social and financial relations in that social, political, financial, technological, and similar development (Sadoula & Korumaz, 2020).

Although there are many different definitions of leadership, a leader can motivate followers to realize mutual aims, build strong relations based on trust, and pay attention to improving team members. Those people with leadership features can impress their followers through their resolution, success, and behaviors. Leaders take charge of the risks and responsibilities and guide and lead their followers. Moreover, they can change their followers' undesirable behaviors, thus achieving organizational goals (Brown et al., 2005; Eisenbeiss, 2012).

Leaders make their organizations successful thanks to their future and aim-oriented endeavors. Since the personal features, vision, and organizational commitment of leaders depict the quality of the management process, it is the success of leaders which is essential for the benefit of organizations (Kavrayıcı, 2019). Today's leaders associate success with their teams instead of miracles and aim to make a splash with their followers. In the case of educational organizations, leaders aim to gain success together with their teams composed of school principals and teachers (Beycioğlu, 2018). In order that leaders could constitute achievement, they are required to gain the trust of the people they manage. Thus, they are expected to care about and bring out the ethical principals and act accordingly (Erdem, 2015).

## **Ethics and Ethical Leadership**

Ethics is one of those concepts that is difficult to describe. Having criteria in relation to right and wrong in its essence, ethics deals with assessing the results of human behaviors rather than explaining them. In general, the code of conduct discriminates between true and false (Erdem, 2015; Kuçuradi, 2003). The word is derived from the Greek *ethos*, which means *character*, and translated into Turkish as habits, traditions, and customs rooted in history (Sezgin & Er, 2018). Morals, generally considered equal to ethics, are derived from Latin *morality* regarding *custom* and *tradition*. In short, ethics is to do with the characters of individuals, whereas morals are related to people's behaviors toward each other (Thiroux, 1998).

Ethics means the code of conduct and tradition people should comply with in society corresponds to a value judgment attributed to good or bad (Özdemir, 2012). In this sense, the author describes it as a decision-making process that brings moral standards and principals to the forefront. At the same time, Arar and Saiti (2022) depict it as ethics promoting social justice. Although ethics and morals are used in the same meaning, it is possible to argue that morals can change according to local and cultural features. In contrast, ethics has more universal/modern principles (Akın, 2019; Tuti, 2021). While ethics concerns the values intended to be expressed, morals are about how one realizes this (Hakan, 2007). Ethics is also accepted as a summary and theoretical field of philosophy where moral behavior and actions are questioned (Sezgin & Er, 2018). However, ethics means to the professional principles that members of numerous institutions or organizations provide public services (Katitaş et al., 2022; Özdemir, 2012). Nevertheless, it should be noted that ethical principles could be established thanks to ethical leaders.

Ethical leadership is described as displaying normatively suitable behaviors through individual acts and interpersonal relations and encouraging followers to exhibit such behaviors through communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. Ethical leaders, who are fair, trustworthy, and virtuous, convey the importance of ethical behavior to their followers (Aslan & Sarıyıldız, 2022; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leadership is a homocentric concept that is, according to Angus (2006), a social and relational application. Besides, ethical leaders emphasize values such as cooperation and social justice (Ehrich et al., 2015). It is an educational institution where ethical leadership is efficient. Since these institutions are value-based (Etzioni, 1975), school principals should pay more attention to ethical behaviors during management.

## **Ethical Leadership and School Management**

The concept of leadership is closely related to schools and the field of education because those responsible for attaining the school goals are school principals comprised of principals and their assistants. School principals are expected to reveal the aims of the school, make these common goals, use the resources of the school efficiently, ensure the application of curriculum, count various stakeholders of the school in the management process, establish and exhibit ethical principles, and behaviors (Özdemir, 2018). A school principal should be consistent and fair in their attitude toward teachers to maintain trust-based relations since trust is one of the basic dimensions of ethics. Lack of confidence in the school principal results in chaos and unrest within the institution and decreases teachers' performance (Açıklan et al., 2011).

The importance of leadership for schools has increased because they are the special institutions that could adapt society to the new conditions resulting from national and international competition and technological changes. These conditions have raised the expectation of the states and society from schools and enlarged the responsibility of school principals. As a result, school principals have strived to improve their leadership skills to meet these expectations. Schools are moral institutions designed to encourage social norms, and principals act based on this responsibility. School principals, as the leaders of their institutions, have particular duties in using their authority ethically. A school principal is supposed to have moral obligations to school management, teachers, and students. Teachers should be convinced that their school principals foster their values (Katıtaş et al., 2022; Özdemir, 2018; Zengin & Arpacı, 2021). School principals should also try to establish an ethical institution and achieve the standards set before. In addition, they are responsible for eliminating injustice within their schools and making social practices responsive to the needs of their school community (Starratt, 1991). The principal is expected to lead and supervise the staff in line with official goals (Buluç, 2009).

Ethical leaders create balance in their institutions and should purpose at sustaining a basis for negotiation and accountability. Being an ethical school leader requires conscious thought rather than obeying a few rules. Because ethical leadership, a multidimensional and complex concept, is based on the integrity of human the leader's qualities (Zengin & Arpacı, 2021). Moreover, it is a comprehensive approach utilized in public and private institutions, including educational ones.

Educational services are provided at private schools along with public ones in Türkiye. However, these schools are affiliated with the Ministry of National Education [MoNE]. While teachers and principals of public schools are employed through appointment, those of private ones are selected by the owners of the schools. Since the responsibility of the school principal is more than that of other staff, they are more careful in selecting the principals. Although private schools are managed based on business logic, they are compared to public schools and structured accordingly. Even though school principals at private schools act in line with the expectations of the school owners, their responsibilities are similar to those at public schools. Both are responsible for managing the school, following the goals of the school, using all kinds of resources effectively and efficiently, displaying respectful, loving, and reliable behavior, and improving teachers.

School leadership greatly influences establishing a positive learning environment and facilitates student learning (Harris & Muijs, 2004). School principals, as educational leaders, create change, and improvement in their schools, ensure accountability, target student progress, cooperate with teachers and enhance their creativity (Harris & Lambert, 2003). Their ability to display ethical leadership behaviors positively affects the performances of teachers, students, and the organization (Bozkurt et al., 2021; Buluç, 2009). Indeed, the literature consists of numerous studies on ethical leadership and its effects.

According to Helvacı (2010), principals are compassionate and respectful of the value of society. Moreover, the study revealed that they set reasonable school rules and know the limits of their behaviors. On the other hand, teachers have certain negative beliefs about school principals. In fact, they believe that school principals do not accept their mistakes, behave constructively, provide an environment for creativity, and reward equally. Madsen and Hipp (1999) showed that compared to public school principals, private school principals give more freedom to teachers and provide more support in professional development and curriculum design. They also found that private school principals are less likely to be autocratic but more likely to distribute leadership responsibilities. Furthermore, their study revealed that private school principals give teachers more autonomy and support in their professional development. Though, teachers at public schools stated that they could easily talk to the principals about their problems, have considerable freedom, and have strong social relations. Moreover, teachers at public and private schools declared that they are more successful when they feel the support of their principals. As to Yu (2008), private school principals prioritize

financial goals and compromise academic values and intellectual attitudes. This is found threatening and makes parents prejudiced against private schools and prefer public schools for they consider their curriculum more reliable. The study highlighted that leaders should create ethical schools by setting high ethical standards. Similarly, researchers underlined that teachers could be successful if school principals make decisions considering the ethical values, pay regard to justice, and act equally and honestly (Meriç & Erdem, 2013).

Scholars insisted that school principals should focus on developing existing resources, facilitating change, and adopting accountability to establish a dynamic school (Goldring & Rallis, 1993). They also expressed that school principals should have efficient communication skills to promote a *homocentric* and professional team spirit. Lastly, they revealed that school leaders are the owners of the school mission, and thus teachers need empowerment and delegation in making reforms. There is a strong relationship between the performance of schools and the leadership styles of principals. Leadership characteristic of school principals is significant because they positively influence teachers' and students' success (Buluç, 2009). All of these give a clue about the scope of ethical leadership in the governance of public and private schools. In this sense, research based on ethical leadership behaviors of public and private school principals is found timely. However, these studies examined ethical leadership in private or public schools. Studies combining ethical leadership in both of those types of schools have a limited scope. A study on this axis is expected to provide a holistic identity for teacher-oriented studies on ethical leadership at the private and public school levels.

The success of teachers, and school principals, who hold the most important responsibility of education and teaching, does not depend on comfortable school buildings and efficient teaching plans but on consistent, respectful, fair, ethical, and affectionate relations with each other. Otherwise, it could be inevitable for teachers to have negative attitudes toward their principals and schools concerning inequality and unethical behaviors. This paper analyses how teachers evaluate their school principals regarding ethical features in this context. Based on the arguments above, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the views of teachers in relation to the ethical behavior levels of their own school principals?

2. Do these perceptions show significant differences according to (a)the sector of the school (public-private) and (b)school type (secondary school-high school)?

## Method

### Design

The present paper aims to analyze the participants' opinions about ethical leadership. The data were collected at one point in time from a sample selected from a predetermined population. In order to describe some aspects of this population, a cross-sectional survey, one of the quantitative research designs, was adopted (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008, p. 390). In this way, the participants' opinions about the related issue wanted to be clarified effectively.

### Sample and Participants

The study's target population comprises 5239 teachers in high schools and secondary schools of Samsun in Turkiye. The participants were depicted with stratified sampling method to provide a suitable representation of sub-groups in the population. In this sense, the sample size table developed by Saunders et al. (2006, p. 212) was used to designate the sample. Accordingly, it was decided that 358 teachers would represent the population with  $\alpha=.05$  significance and %5 tolerance level.

The response rate of the scales is one of the most critical issues in scientific research. In this regard, Balcı (2016) argues that %80 response rate is adequate. Considering this criterion, this study aimed to attain 358 replies out of 448 scales ( $358/.80=448$ ). All the details about the sampling are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Population, Sampling, and Demographic Information*

School Type	Public School Teachers				Private School Teachers				All Teachers						
	Population	Sample	Distributed Scales	Respondents	Population	Sample	Distributed Scales	Respondents	Population	Sample	Distributed Scales	Respondents	Response Rate (%)		
Secondary	1928	132	165	139	447	30	38	32	2375	162	203	171	84		
High	2269	155	194	178	594	41	51	51	2863	196	245	229	93		
Total	4197	287 <sup>a</sup>	359 <sup>a</sup>	317	1042	71 <sup>a</sup>	89 <sup>a</sup>	83	5239	358 <sup>a</sup>	448 <sup>a</sup>	400	89		
Participans' Informations										<i>n</i>	%				
Gender			Female								222	55.5			
			Male								178	44.5			
Age			24-34								61	15.3			
			35-44								78	19.5			
			45-54								134	33.5			
Educational Background			55-64								127	31.8			
			Bachelor's								277	69.3			
			Master								117	29.3			
Sector (and School Type)			Ph.D.								6	1.5			
			Private (Secondary)								32	8			
			Private (High)								51	12.8			
		Public (Secondary)										139	34.8		
		Public (High)										178	44.5		
Total								400							

<sup>a</sup> Minimum.

According to Table 1, the population consists of 5239 teachers, %80.1 ( $4197/5239=.8011$ ) of whom come from public schools, whereas %19.8 ( $1042/5239=.1989$ ) of whom come from private schools. Considering the features of stratified sampling, it is found adequate to have 287 ( $358*.8011=287$ ) participants from public schools and 71 ( $358*.1989=71$ ) participants from private schools. The method used for depicting the number of teachers was followed in defining the number of teachers in different school types. Thus, 132 ( $1928*287/4197=132$ ) teachers of the 287 teachers working in public schools come from secondary schools, while 155 ( $2269*287/4197=155$ ) of them are from high schools. Similarly, 30 ( $447*71/1042=30$ ) teachers of the 71 teachers working in private



schools teach at private secondary schools, and 41 ( $594 \times 71 / 1042 = 41$ ) teach at private high schools. 448 surveys were distributed to the participants, yet 317 from public schools and 83 from private schools responded with a response rate of %89.2 ( $400 / 448 = .8928$ ), attaining a higher level than the minimum ones shown in Table 1. Based on these, it was found that the study accomplished sufficient participants and response rate. Table 1 also illustrates that 222 (%55.5) participants are female teachers. When the age variable is considered, it is clear that 137 (%33.5) teachers aged between 45-54 form the oldest group. Additionally, only 6 (%1.5) teachers from all participants hold a Ph.D. degree. Moreover, almost half of the participants, 178 (%44.5), come from public high schools.

### **Instrument**

This study employed *Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS)* generated by Yılmaz (2005) to collect data. *ELS* is a four-dimensioned Likert-type scale consisting of 44 items. While the *communicational ethics* dimension includes 15 items, *climatic ethics* comprises 11 items, *ethics in decision-making* consists of 9 items, and *behavioral ethics* involves 9 items. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability level of *ELS* is found .97, and the total item correlation of it is between .67-.86. However, the *behavioral ethics* dimension of the scale was utilized in this paper since Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability level of this dimension in the original version of *ELS* is .90. The factor loading of this dimension is between .73-.82.

### **Ethical Issues, Data Collection, and Analysis**

First, the developer's permission for the scale was taken in this study. Following this, we applied for the approval of *Ondokuz Mayıs University Ethical Board* to implement the study in schools (Date: 24.09.2021, No: 2021/778). Accordingly, the data was collected through on-site and online tools based voluntarily.

The survey data was analyzed on SPSS 25.0 and Mplus 8.3. Before the analysis, the data were investigated to detect missing values. Since there is no missing, the outliers of the data set were calculated through the Mahalanobis distances level for  $\chi^2$ . The findings gave appropriate values ( $p < .001$ ) (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2012, pp. 73-74); as a result, none of the forms was excluded. This was followed by skewness and kurtosis scores to assess if the data set followed a normal distribution. The researchers were attentive to having these values between -1.50 and 1.50 (p. 79).

The results revealed a skewness value between .100 and .930, whereas a kurtosis value between -.502 and -1.14. Accordingly, the data set's distribution was normal, and validity and reliability examinations were implemented.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was utilized to test the validity of the data set. It was adopted with the estimation of maximum likelihood, during which SRMR, Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ), RMSEA, CFI, and TLI were examined to see the goodness of fit (Kline, 2019). The criteria adopted for SRMR was  $<.08$ ; for  $\chi^2 p >.05$  ( $n < 200$ ), for RMSEA  $<.08$  (Thakkar, 2020); for CFI, and TLI  $>.90$  (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Since the goodness of fit values resulted in [ $\chi^2 = p >.001$  ( $n = 400$ ), RMSEA = .07, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, SRMR = .020] valid, reliability test was administered using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value for which intervals depicted by Özdamar (1999) were taken as reference. Accordingly, the scale is unreliable when Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is lower than .40 and highly reliable Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is higher than .80. Since Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is .95 in this study, the data set is considered highly reliable. Apart from CFA and Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , various reliability and validity methods such as composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and convergent validity (CV) were followed in this study. In this sense,  $\geq .60$  for CR,  $\geq .50$  for AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and  $CR > AVE$  for CV (Yashoğlu, 2017) were adopted. This current research revealed .95 for CR and .70 for AVE. Moreover, the  $CR > AVE$  for the CV assumption was provided. In line with these findings, it was assumed that the study's data set confirms validity and reliability.

## Findings

This study determined school principals' ethical behaviors according to teachers' perceptions. The results obtained from the quantitative analysis are presented in this part.

### Findings In Relation to the Level of Ethical Behaviour

In order to answer the first research question, "*What are the views of teachers in relation to the ethical behavior levels of their own school principals?*", means and standard deviation values of the items related to the ethical behaviors of school principals were calculated. The details of this analysis are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations Values of Ethical Behaviour*

No	Items	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{X}$	Sd.s of Items	Sd. of Scale
1	Truthful.	2.47		1.27	
2	Treats honestly.	2.53		1.25	
3	Acts bravely.	2.89		1.32	
4	Modest.	2.76		1.21	
5	Has real-like expressions.	2.54	2.55	1.20	.052
6	Does an activity based on the reality principle.	2.60		1.21	
7	Protects individual rights.	2.55		1.22	
8	Respects the value of society.	2.20		1.15	
9	Self-evaluates.	2.44		1.14	

As Table 2 illustrates, the participants have similar views on the behaviors of their principals. Moreover, thus their scores are close to each other ( $\bar{x}=2.55$ ,  $Sd.=.052$ ). However, the item "Acts bravely." has a partially higher mean than other items ( $\bar{x}=2.89$ ,  $Sd.=1.20$ ). Nevertheless, the item "Respects the value of the society." has the lowest mean ( $\bar{x}=2.20$ ,  $Sd.=1.15$ ).

**Findings in Relation to Public and Private Schools**

The study employed *t-test to respond to the first part of the second research question, "Do these perceptions show significant differences according to the school sector (public-private)?"* The results of this analysis are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3

*t-Test Analysis Results in Terms of School Type*

<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
1.52	.218	5.42	398	.000***
The Sector of the School	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>Sd.</i>	<i>Se.</i>
Public	317	2.69	1.03	.057
Private	83	2.01	.936	.102

\*\*\* $p<.001$ ,  $n=400$

As displayed in Table 3, the data set follows an equally distributed variance ( $t=5.42$ ,  $p=.218$ ). Accordingly, it means that the ethical behaviors of school principals show significant differences between teachers working in public and private schools. Teachers at public schools have higher scores ( $\bar{x}=2.69$ ,  $Sd.=1.03$ ) than the ones in private schools ( $\bar{x}=2.01$ ,  $Sd.=.936$ ).

The study utilized One-Way ANOVA to answer the second part of the second research question, "Do these perceptions show significant differences according to school type (secondary school-high school)?" Levene's tests were used to check normality and homogeneity of variance. Since the significance value is  $p > .05$ , it was decided that equal variance assumption was provided (Levene Statistic=.678,  $p = .566$ ).

The findings of this analysis are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

*Uniformity Tests of Variants and Results of One-Way ANOVA*

Sum of Squares		<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
32.8		3	10.9	10.7	.000***
School Type	Sector	N	$\bar{x}$	<i>Sd.</i>	<i>Se.</i>
High	→ Public	178	2.77	1.02	.077
	→ Private	51	2.03	.87	.122
Secondary	→ Public	139	2.58	1.02	.086
	→ Private	32	1.98	1.03	.183
Total		400	2.55	1.04	.052
Multiple Comparisons		Mean Difference		<i>Se.</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Public High	→ Private High	.735*		.160	.000
	→ Public Secondary	.185		.114	.484
	→ Private Secondary	.792*		.194	.000
Private High	→ Public High	-.735*		.160	.000
	→ Public Secondary	-.549*		.165	.004
	→ Private Secondary	.056		.227	1.00
Public Secondary	→ Public High	-.185		.114	.484
	→ Private High	.549*		.165	.004
	→ Private Secondary	.606*		.198	.008
Private Secondary	→ Public High	-.792*		.194	.000
	→ Private High	-.056		.227	1.00
	→ Public Secondary	-.606*		.198	.008

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  Between Groups

According to Table 4, the participants are not equally distributed in sub-groups. Thus, the Hochberg technique was selected as a post-hoc procedure during the One-Way ANOVA (Field, 2018). The results highlight that the views of teachers on the ethical behaviors of school principals differ

[ $F_{(534)}=10.7, p<.05$ ]. When the multiple comparisons of school types are examined, the teachers' views in public high schools deviate from the ones in private high schools ( $\bar{x}=.735$ ) and private secondary schools. Similarly, the scores of the teachers working in public secondary schools diverge from those of private high schools ( $\bar{x}=.549$ ) and private secondary schools ( $\bar{x}=.606$ ). However, this may differ from the teachers.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The current study analyzes public and private school teachers' experiences of their principals' ethical leadership behavior characteristics. Although there are many studies on leadership and ethical leadership, the ones comparing the ethical leadership behaviors of school principals in public and private schools are limited, which paved the way for conducting this study. In this sense, this research aims to contribute to developing a knowledge basis on this topic.

The teachers' views about the ethical behavior levels of their school principals revealed that the participants have different perceptions. Different studies address ethical leadership behavior in the school context (Gültekin, 2008; Karagöz, 2008; Kaya, 2020; Konak & Erdem, 2015). According to these studies, school principals' ethical leadership behavior levels were at the "good" level in the "behavioral ethics" dimension. However, Cemaloğlu and Kılınç (2012) found that school principals' leadership behavior levels are at the mid-range regarding the teachers. Thus, they asserted that school principals were unsuccessful in displaying ethical behavior.

The findings of the study's second problem, whether the teachers' opinions about the ethical behavior levels of the school principals differ in terms of the sector, and type of the school, displayed that the ethical leadership behaviors of school principals vary in public and private schools. It is also pointed out that there is a need for a study on this issue (Karagöz, 2008). It was concluded that public schools' principals are more sensitive than private schools' principals in exhibiting ethical behaviors. However, Baştuğ (2009) found a significant difference in favor of private schools in his study, comparing the ethical leadership behaviors of private and public primary school principals. Likewise, Çelik (2006) indicated similar results, and the writer attributes this to the contracted work of private school teachers and the determination of their wages by school principals. The results obtained from the studies above differ from the present study in that the ethical behavior levels of the principals in terms of school types were also analyzed. Moreover, the

specificity of the research findings also emerges at the school level. The data illustrates a differentiation in the ethical behavior levels of the school principals according to the school types. For example, it was found that school principals working in public secondary schools behave more ethically than their colleagues in high schools. This finding limitedly coincides with Su's (2015) study in which kindergarten principals show high ethical behavior while high school principals show low ethical behavior. It is known that the ethical behaviors of school principals raise cooperation and strengthen harmony in schools (Arar & Saiti, 2022). Moreover, staff working with ethical leaders tend to be motivated and exhibit high performance (Aslan & Sarıyıldız, 2022). When the study results are considered from this perspective, it can be expected that teachers working in public middle and high schools in Türkiye will produce higher quality outcomes than their colleagues in private schools. However, this expectation should be considered together with the question marks about the performance of MoNE. Ethical behavior and school life have complex natures (Özdemir, 2018). In this way, teachers' well-being and job satisfaction can be supported more effectively. Empirical research also proves this (Katıtaş et al., 2022).

This study has some implications. First, it is thought that school principals should behave ethically to achieve school goals. For teachers to embrace the school and reflect their motivation for the school, the behaviors of the school principals should not cause any discomfort. The fact that school principals show honesty, fairness, openness, equality, and transparency can give teachers the impression that they act ethically. The second one is about the ethical behaviors of the principals of teachers working in private schools. The research results suggest that teachers working in private schools may be exposed to unethical behaviors. Considering all these, it may be appropriate to make the following suggestions: Training teachers and school principals on ethical rules and behaviors will be beneficial for creating a healthy school environment. Ethical behavior and transparency should not be at the initiative of the principals; the central and local governments should draw the legal framework. Moreover, establishing ethical committees and commissions at the local level and imposing sanctions on those who display unethical behaviors will encourage ethical behavior.

This study has some limitations, such as the location of the study in that it was conducted only in the central districts of Samsun province and its cross-sectional design. Using longitudinal design or residing in various communities may be acceptable for future studies. Researchers should also

make a comparison at the primary school level. A similar study could also be done based on the qualitative method. In this case, it is believed that more distinctive data will be obtained, especially from private schools. It could also be expanded to include students and their parents.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Giriş

Liderler risk ve sorumluluk alan, çalışanlara rehberlik ve öncülük eden kişilerdir. Liderler bu süreçleri etik bir tutumla yürütmektedir. Özünde doğruya ve yanlışa ilişkin ölçütlerin bulunduğu etik, insan davranışlarını açıklamaktan çok insan davranışlarının sonuçlarının değerlendirilmesiyle ilgilidir. Etik bir liderliğin sergilenmesi ise yönetici ve yönetsel süreçler ile sıkı bir ilişki içindedir.

Etik liderlik, kişisel eylemlerde ve kişilerarası ilişkilerde uygun davranışların sergilenmesi ve takipçilerin bu tür davranışlara teşvik edilmesi olarak tanımlanabilir. Etik liderler adil davranan, dürüst ve ilkeli kişiler olup bu özelliklerini etrafındakilere yansıtan bireylerdir. Etik liderliğin işe koşulduğu kurumlardan biri de eğitim kurumlarıdır. Eğitim kurumlarının değere dayalı yapılar olmaları bu kurumların müdürlerinin etik davranışlarına dönük beklentiyi önemli ölçüde artırmaktadır. Bu beklenti hem kamuya hem de özel sektöre ait okulları kapsamaktadır.

Etik liderlik konulu çalışmalarda kamu okullarındaki müdürlerin öğretmenler arasında arabazucu olmadıkları, merhametli oldukları, kuralları doğru oluşturdukları ve toplumsal değerlere saygı gösterdikleri ifade edilmektedir. Benzer şekilde çeşitli çalışmalarda özel okul müdürlerinin öğretmenlere daha fazla özgürlük tanıdıkları, müfredat geliştirmeye ve mesleki gelişime destek oldukları belirtilmektedir. Dahası özel okul müdürlerinin öncelikli olarak finansal hedeflere odaklandığı da vurgulanmaktadır. Bir araştırmada ise kamu okullarındaki müdürlerin etik tutumla karar vermeleri ve kaynakların dağıtımında adil olmaları gerektiği belirtilmektedir. Tüm bunlar gerek kamu okullarında gerekse özel sektöre ait okullarda etik liderliğin önemli bir konu olduğunu onaylamaktadır.

Yapılan incelemelerden müdürlerin etik tutumlarının, davranışlarının ele alındığı çalışmaların ya kamu okullarında ya da özel sektöre ait okullarda yürütüldüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Müdürlerin, bir başka ifadeyle liderlerin etik davranışları hakkındaki sektör bazlı karşılaştırmaların ise anılan araştırmalara oranla sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda mevcut çalışmada okul müdürlerinin etik davranışlarının kamu okullarında ve özel sektöre ait okullarda görevli

öğretmenlerin görüşlerine göre karşılaştırılması hedeflenmiştir. Bu kapsamda şu sorular yanıtlanmıştır:

1. Öğretmenlerin, müdürlerinin etik davranış düzeylerine ilişkin görüşleri nasıldır?
2. Öğretmenlerin, müdürlerinin etik davranış düzeylerine ilişkin görüşleri görev yapılan;  
(a)Okulun ait olduğu sektöre (kamu-özel sektör) göre anlamlı bir fark göstermekte midir?  
(b)Okulun türüne (ortaokul-lise) göre anlamlı bir fark göstermekte midir?

## Yöntem

Çalışma nicel araştırma desenlerinden kesitsel tarama ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın hedef evrenini 2021-2022 eğitim-öğretim yılında Samsun il merkezindeki ortaokullarda ve liselerde görev yapan 5239 öğretmen, örneklemini ise tabakalı örnekleme ile tespit edilen 400 öğretmen oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak *Etik Liderlik Ölçeği (ELÖ)* kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen veriler *ELÖ*'nün geçerli [ $\chi^2=p>.001$  ( $n=400$ ), RMSEA=.07, CFI=.98, TLI=.97, SRMR=.02] ve güvenilir (Cronbach  $\alpha=.95$ ) olduğunu göstermektedir.

## Bulgular

Araştırmanın birinci sorusu olan “Öğretmenlerin müdürlerinin etik davranış düzeyleri hakkındaki görüşleri nasıldır?”ın sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların etik müdürlerinin davranışlarına ilişkin görüşleri birbirine yakın puanlara sahiptir ( $\bar{x}=2.55$ ,  $Sd.=.052$ ). Burada “Olaylar karşısında cesaretli davranır.” maddesi diğer maddelerden kısmen yüksek ortalamaya sahiptir ( $\bar{x}=2.89$ ,  $Sd.=1.20$ ) iken “İçinde bulunduğu toplumun değerlerine saygı gösterir.” ise diğer maddelere göre daha düşük ortalama puana sahiptir ( $\bar{x}=2.20$ ,  $Sd.=1.15$ ).

Araştırmanın ikinci sorusunun ilk kısmını oluşturan “Öğretmenlerin, müdürlerinin etik davranış düzeylerine ilişkin görüşleri görev yapılan okulun ait olduğu sektöre (kamu-özel sektör) göre anlamlı bir fark göstermekte midir?”ın yanıtlanması için t-testi yapılmıştır. Sonuçlara göre kamu okullarında çalışan öğretmenlerin puanları ( $\bar{x}=2.69$ ,  $Sd.=1.03$ ) özel sektöre ait okullarda çalışan öğretmenlerin puanlarına ( $\bar{x}=2.01$ ,  $Sd.=.936$ ) göre daha yüksektir. Araştırmanın ikinci sorusunun son kısmını oluşturan “Öğretmenlerin, müdürlerinin etik davranış düzeylerine ilişkin görüşleri

görev yapılan okulun türüne (ortaokul-lise) anlamlı bir fark göstermekte midir?" sorusu, One-Way ANOVA ile çözümlenmiştir. Sonuçlar katılımcıların müdürlerin etik davranışlarına ilişkin görüşlerinin farklılaştığını göstermektedir [ $F_{(534)}=10.7, p<.05$ ]. Burada kamu ortaokullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin puanları özel sektöre ait ortaokullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin puanlarından farklılaşmaktadır ( $\bar{x}=.606$ ). Benzer şekilde kamu liselerinde görev yapan öğretmenlerin puanları özel sektöre ait ortaokullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerin puanlarından farklıdır ( $\bar{x}=.735$ ). Bir başka ifadeyle kamuya ait ortaokullarda ve liselerde görev yapan öğretmenler müdürlerini daha etik davranan liderler olarak algılamaktadırlar.

### **Tartışma ve Sonuç**

Bu çalışmada kamu okullarında ve özel okullarda çalışan öğretmenlerin okul müdürlerinin etik liderlik davranışlarına ilişkin algıları araştırılmıştır. Literatürde etik liderlik temalı pek çok araştırma olmasına karşın, okul müdürlerinin etik liderlik davranışlarının kamu okulları ve özel sektöre ait okullar özelinde karşılaştırıldığı çalışmaların sınırlı görünümü bu çalışmanın hazırlanmasında etkili olmuştur.

Sonuçlar katılımcıların okul müdürlerinin etik davranış düzeylerine ilişkin görüşleri arasında farklılıklar olduğunu göstermektedir. Zira puanlardan kamu okullarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin özel sektöre ait okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerden görece yüksek etik liderlik algılarına sahip oldukları anlaşılmaktadır. Buna çeşitli çalışmalarda da rastlanmaktadır. Nitekim bu çalışmalarda, okul müdürlerinin etik liderlik davranış düzeylerinin “orta” ya da “iyi” olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu yönüyle mevcut çalışma literatürle uyumludur. Bulgular kamu okullarındaki müdürlerin etik davranış gösterme konusunda özel sektördeki meslektaşlarından daha başarılı algılandıklarını göstermektedir. Benzer bir durum ortaokullar ve liseler birbiriyle karşılaştırıldığında kamu okulları lehinedir. Oysa az sayıdaki çalışmada özel okul müdürlerinin etik liderlik düzeylerinin kamu okullarının müdürlerinden yüksek olduğu belirtilmektedir. Çalışma bu anlamda literatürle çelişmektedir.

Sonuçlar etik liderliğe ilişkin bu karşılaştırmanın farklı kentlerde, bölgelerde yapılması gerektiğini düşündürmektedir. Ayrıca ilköğretim müdürlerinin de bu karşılaştırmalara dahil edilmesi, bu konuda nitel çalışmaların yürütülmesi yerinde olabilir. Araştırma, etik liderlik hakkında okul düzeyli ve sektör bazlı karşılaştırmalar içerdiğinden özgün bir niteliğe sahiptir.

**ETİK BEYAN:**“Ethical Leadership Behaviours of School Principals: A Comparison of Public-Private Schools” başlıklı çalışmanın yazım sürecinde bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuş; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamıştır ve veriler toplanmadan önce *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Etik Komisyonu*’ndan 24.09.2021 tarih ve 2021/778 sayılı etik izin alınmıştır. Karşılaşılacak tüm etik ihlallerde “Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi Yayın Kurulunun” hiçbir sorumluluğunun olmadığı, tüm sorumluluğun Sorumlu Yazara ait olduğu ve bu çalışmanın herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiş olduğunu taahhüt ederiz.