

## Teachers' Views on Work Values, Employee Performance and Ethical Climate

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### Abstract

This research aimed to determine high school teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate and to examine the relationship between these views. The population of the research consisted of 285 teachers employed in Bolu province central district high schools in the 2020-2021 academic year. Work Values Scale, Employee Performance Scale and Ethical Climate Scale were used as data collection tools in this study conducted with the survey model. Standard deviation, mean and Pearson Correlation analysis were performed as data analysis. According to the findings, teachers selected "Agree" regarding work values, employee performance and ethical climate. Significant moderate positive relationships were found between Employee Performance Scale and Work Values Scale and its sub-dimensions, between Ethical Climate Scale and Work Values Scale and its sub-dimensions, and between Employee Performance scale and Ethical Climate Scale. Based on the research results, it can be suggested to enrich the educational settings where teachers can implement work values with determination in line with the principles they have adopted. For this purpose, administrators' rewarding teacher behaviors related to work values by emphasizing their contribution to their professional performance in board meetings and in the teachers' room will increase the frequency of these behaviors at the school and teachers' level of awareness about these issues will improve. It can also be suggested to include courses during internships and in-service trainings to increase teachers' sensitivity to the ethical climate created in the school.

**Key words:** Work values, employee performance, ethical of climate, teacher.

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### Introduction

The need for qualified teachers has become more prominent with the rapidly changing education system due to globalization (Çelik, 2019). Considering that the quality of the education system is directly proportional to the quality of teachers (Seferoğlu, 2004), it becomes clear that effective and efficient teachers should be employed in educational organizations for the success and future of education (Tezuçar, 2019). In addition to professional and technical qualifications, teachers should be in constant communication and interaction with students, parents, and colleagues within the framework of the rules (Şimşek & Erdem, 2016), implement work values meticulously and exhibit ethical behaviors while performing their professional actions (Akbuğa, 2018) so that they can raise qualified individuals who are aware of their duties and responsibilities, who can fulfill the requirements of the age in every regard and who are of service to themselves and their families in line with the expectations of the society (Ordu, 2019). Teachers' work values and qualifications related to their profession will not only shape the quality of education but also move their institutions one step further compared to their competitors (Troman & Raggl, 2008; Lin, 2007) and make the education and training process more efficient (Kaymak & Titrek, 2021). In this regard, it is extremely important to develop and improve teachers' understanding, attitudes and, accordingly, vocational-professional approach to the working conditions and school atmosphere in educational organizations (Bağçe, 2022; Ergül, 2009; Kayaalp & Özdemir, 2020; Demir & Çobanoğlu, 2022).

The principled behaviors of employees enable them to perform their duties without having problems with other employees and also enable them to make the expected contributions in line with the interests of the organization (Lyons, 2003). The work and actions of employees while performing their duties are in fact performance behaviors (Argon & Eren, 2004). In this process, employees perceive the organization

positively and work selflessly and willingly when the required professional and environmental conditions are provided by organizations (Boylu, Pelit & Güçer, 2007). In other words, organizations that meet the individual and organizational needs of their employees have paved the way to increase employee satisfaction and organizational performance to higher levels (Aytaç, 2003). In this context, it is very important to create a positive school climate based on mutual harmony in schools, which are the organizations in the sector of education, so that teachers can work selflessly and willingly (Şişman, 2004). A positive school climate with beliefs, values and attitudes to shape the way employees interact (Kızmaz, 2006) can ensure principled professional work and high organizational performance (Klenke, 2005), and also act as the driving force in the success of the organization (Vural & Coşkun, 2007). Research shows that carrying out professional actions with adopted work values is effective in improving the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of learning environments, the implementation of educational policies, and student achievement and school success (Kaya, 2010; Meral & Alpkan, 2006; Değirmencioglu, 2009). Similarly, teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards work values were found to be one of the main factors that increase the academic achievement of the school and students (Şentürken & Oğuz, 2020; Şahin, 2015; Fidan, 2015; Atay, 2016; Özdemir, 2006). In addition, by performing effectively and efficiently based on the professional beliefs and motivation adopted to ensure that the school achieves its goals, teachers display responsibility for the academic achievement of their students (Şişman, 2002; Saylık & Memduhoglu, 2021; Gökçen, 2021).

Organizational climate is a natural process that affects the emergence of employees' work values, selfless behaviors and performances (Kuruüzüm, Irmak & Çetin, 2010). It is reported that the identified values are important factors in increasing school loyalty and performance levels in educational organizations (Titrek, 2010). In this respect, determining organizational conditions around professional values creates an environment for employees not to experience conflict with their organization and to carry out productive professional work in line with the common goals they adopt (Aka, 2014). The performance behaviors of teachers, who are the main employees of the school in maintaining the desired efficiency in line with the aims of the education system, constitute the basis of the desired student and school success (Ağaoğlu, 2002; Aydın, 2010; Altun, 2003). Teachers' adequate level of effort in their professional activities such as providing learning opportunities to students, systematically increasing their motivation and educational levels, and planning the instruction is related to their work performance (Kılınç, 2012). Teachers' positive perceptions of the school environment ensures that they perform more effectively and successfully (Korkmaz, 2005; Arifin, 2015). Büyükgöze & Özdemir (2017) reported that motivation and individual competencies resulting from positive emotions and behaviors play a role in bringing organizational effectiveness to the desired level. Teacher performance in fulfilling professional responsibilities with a sense of duty as well as planning and implementing teaching activities is an important factor in achieving the educational goals of the school and maintaining the quality of the instructional process (Hatipoğlu & Kavas, 2016; Gökçen, 2021; Özdemir & Yirmibeş, 2016; Yazıcıoğlu, 2010; Balcı, 2002). The higher the performance of teachers, the more they adopt the goals and objectives of the school, exhibit selfless behaviors for the benefit of the school, and have more motivation (Açar, 2015). In this respect, it can be regarded as an expected result that the high level of performance exhibited by teachers will be reflected in the academic achievement of students as well as increasing the instructional effectiveness in the school.

The most basic goal of successfully managed educational organizations is to create a school environment with an ethical climate and to achieve the desired educational performance (Berdibek, 2019). Each profession has its own unique characteristics, including the implementation of the necessary rules of conduct and the provision of an ethical climate in the organization (Kuçuradi, 2003). Ethical climate environment enables employees to perform their professional actions within the framework of formal behaviors without making mistakes (Kuruüzüm et al., 2010). In educational organizations, teachers' acting in line with professional principles leads them to ethical behaviors and makes it possible to create an ethical climate in schools (Şimşek & Erdem, 2016; Tepe, 2009; Tezuçar, 2019). Teachers are expected to be in close relationships with students, parents, and colleagues while performing their professional actions and to demonstrate ethical behaviors through communication and interaction without going beyond the framework of professional principles (Akbuğa, 2018). Research shows that the ethical climate plays an important role in ensuring the desired efficiency of the education system (Kocayığit & Sağnak 2012). There is a mutual positive relationship between education and ethics (Uğurlu, 2009). In addition, ethical climate has a positive effect not only on the efficiency of schools but also on performance of teachers (Demir, 2014; Şenel & Buluç, 2016; Demir & Karakuş, 2015). Therefore, teachers protect their professional reputation and ensure that the ideas and values they believe in are taken into consideration thanks to the ethical climate and ethical climate is a factor that significantly increases their work performance (Karataş, 2009; Saylık & Demir, 2021).

Teachers can exhibit professional behaviors by taking responsibility and carry both their own and the school's performance to higher levels in a school environment where ethical climate and professional work values are adopted by teachers (Lishchinsky & Rosenblatt, 2010). Based on this information, this study examined the relationship between work values, work performance and ethical climate based on teachers' views and the role of this relationship in achieving the goals of educational organizations. In addition, the study aimed contribute to the literature on these three areas and bring new perspectives.

### **Work values**

When the importance of the concept of value became significant at the end of the 1920s with the Hawthorne Studies, various studies were conducted to determine the effects of working conditions and human characteristics on work behaviors. In the 1970s, studies on work values gained momentum and various scales were developed (Kubat & Kuruüzüm 2010). Work values, a concept that emerged as a result of applying personal values in the work environment, identify the situations that employees want and desire in their professional activities (Rokeach, 1973). Criteria that enable individuals to make judgments such as "good or bad", "right or wrong" are examples of these situations (Dose, 1997). Work values (Kuruüzüm et al., 2010), which are formed by employees' beliefs and value perceptions that guide their actions, tendencies, judgments and comparison of situations and objects in the work environment, also signify the importance given to the precise outputs produced in the work environment (Elizur, 1984). In addition, personal values can be adapted to the work environment and adopted by employees (Ros, Schwartz & Surkiss, 1999) or they can be learned (Van Pletzen, 1988). The degree of value, importance and willingness given to what happens in the work environment (Knoop, 1994) and employees' expectations about work or work-related expectations display their work values (Kalleberg, 1977).

Work values in educational organizations include the official job descriptions of the teaching profession and consist of many factors such as experiences in the education and training process, school climate and culture, social conditions and working environment. Elizur (1984) stated that work values are shaped by general values, but specific work values may also be selected depending on the professions and they may differ regarding settings and situations. Similarly, Williams (1979) emphasized the importance of work values in professions and stated that sociological, economic and historical factors affect the formation of work values. Likewise, Elizur, Borg, Hunt & Beck (1991) stated that factors such as ethnicity, subculture, gender roles etc. are effective factors in the formation of work values in organizations. There are studies in the literature that examine work values from various aspects (Tanatar & Alpaydın, 2019; Özcan, 2008; Altaş, 2019; Sıgri, 2007; Turan & Aktan, 2008; Yıldırım, 2009; Elizur & Sagie, 1999). These studies had a common point and reported that teachers' individual attitudes and professional values guide the formation of common principles and beliefs adopted at school through work values (Turan & Aktan, 2008; Bozkurt & Doğan, 2013; Altaş, 2019). Teachers' beliefs about professional actions, judgments and educational situations in the work environment are also improved through work values (Ros et al., 1999; Sıgri, 2007).

Teachers implement the universal values of the profession, but they also exhibit other values for the benefit of the organization to achieve the results expected from them. They fulfill their duties by taking into account the values that are important in their own lives. In short, work values, which are influenced by many factors, are one of the important and desired characteristics for the teaching profession while fulfilling their duties and responsibilities via integrating them with the school. Topaloğlu, Koç & Yavuz (2008) reported those employees' adoption of work values lead to responsible, harmonious and high-performance level employees and productive work with less cost in organizations. Balay (2000) stated that work values affect teachers' characteristics such as performance, motivation, selfless work, targeting school achievement, positive influences on the organizational climate, and being open to change and Bartels, Christensen, Kristensen, Bliddal & Astrup (2007) reported that work values lead to increased employee commitment, integration with the organization, identification, decreased intention to quit, and increased job satisfaction. In addition, teachers' work values in the school environment enable them to fulfill their professional responsibilities and maintain positive relationships with the help of principled attitudes and behaviors (Yılmaz, 2008). As can be seen, work values are one of the main factors directly reflected on work performance.

### **Employee performance**

The performance of employees with their technical knowledge and skills is crucial for organizations to have the outputs identified in line with their organizational goals and to survive in the business world. Performance is the concrete indicator of the extent to which employees achieve the goals of organizations

or the extent to which they have the competencies required by the job (Sertgöz, 2005). Performance, in general, is the ratio of actively using one's work potential and abilities in line with one's goals (Şehitoğlu & Zehir 2010) and displaying one's abilities within the framework of the responsibilities undertaken within the unit time (Vural & Coşkun 2007). In this direction, employees should know how to successfully undertake the responsibilities given to them in line with their abilities, within certain limits and with the resources at hand (Kılınç, 2012). In addition, employees should be able to turn their individual characteristics into performance at the desired quality and extent by putting forth the necessary effort to fulfill their duties. The individual performance of employees is also reflected in organizational performance. Employees must have jobs definitions in accordance with their qualifications and skill levels and they must make an effort to fulfill their jobs in full (Tokay, 2001). In this direction, employees will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in direct proportion to the level of success they display in line with their capacities.

Employees are expected to fulfill their professional duties in line with the specified goals by displaying a high level of effort and it is undesirable for employees not to perform at the expected level because they regard themselves sufficient (Yıldız, Dağdeviren & Çetinyokuş, 2008). In order for employees to perform for the benefit of the organization and to be positively affected by this situation, it is important to establish a link between their individual expectations and organizational goals (Tutar & Altınöz, 2010). Although employee performance is primarily seen as the job potential of individuals, it includes many factors such as the individual's satisfaction with his/her job in the organization, receiving professional support, and improving working conditions in line with expectations. Therefore, organizations should create environments by shaping their working processes so that employees can display their performance better (Sabuncuoğlu, 2000).

Improving the working environment based on the individual and professional needs of teachers will enable them to display better work performance in line with their knowledge and skills, therefore educational organizations may become more successful (Bayram, 2006). In this direction, teachers, who are responsible for educating the individuals who make up societies, will be able to completely fulfill their duties and responsibilities given to them in the work environment and concretely demonstrate their professional performance. Studies also showed that the work performance of employees who are loyal to their organizations and have common goals with their organizations is positively affected (Gül, Oktay & Gökçe, 2008), the harmony with the organization is an effective factor in employee performance (Uygur, 2007), and the perception of the support provided by the institutions positively affects employee performance (Çöl, 2008). In addition, Ordu (2019) stated that the opportunities given to employees to train themselves positively increase their performance and productivity, Kaya & Başkaya (2016) and Sarıkaya (2011) reported that the climate in organizations contributes positively to work participation and job performance. These findings show that employee performance is a very important concept for both the organizations and the employees.

### **Ethical climate**

As a concept, ethics has existed since the beginning of human history, has never lost its significance and has always been questioned about its meaning and use in society. Today, ethics is not questioned only individually or organizationally but also globally (Sabuncuoğlu, 2011). The concept of ethics, which includes the examination of moral principles and rules (Kılıç, 2019), is derived from the Greek word "ethos" and many views have been shared on the concept in the literature. For example, Socrates likened the concept of ethics to a compass that should be followed to make sense of life (Büte, 2011). Ethics not only shows the right behavior in the environment, but also contains a set of values that guide the behaviors that should be displayed (Karayaman, 2021).

The concept of ethics, related to the actions and behaviors that everyone encounters in daily and business life, presents the reasons for wrong and right behaviors (Tepe, 2009). This concept, which shows people what to do or how to live, is a guide which acts in line with moral principles and values (Eyidoğan, 2013). The concept, which is generally used as ethics, corresponds to the ethical climate in the work environment, which is formed by the behaviors exhibited by employees (Parboteeah, Cullen, Victor & Sakano, 2005). In this context, ethical climate includes the attitudes and behaviors exhibited by employees within the framework of organizational values and principles in the work environment (Victor & Cullen 1987).

Ethical climate is reflected in employee attitudes and behaviors in different ways according to the structure and characteristics of the organizations (Pelit & Güçlü, 2007). The existence of certain moral criteria and behavior patterns in organizations (Victor, Cullen & Parboteeah, 2003), which have to be followed by the groups as well as by the individuals, not only emphasize moral issues, but also enable employees to create a psychological mechanism. The mechanism established in this manner provides

solutions to the problems experienced by employees regarding moral issues (Homans, 1958). Ethical climate also gives employees the opportunity to become aware of the moral issues in individual relations in the business environment. It provides explanatory and guiding assessments regarding issues that lead to dilemmas in organizations (Victor et al., 2003).

School climate should be adopted by all members so that teachers can fulfill their duties and responsibilities at the expected level in educational organizations. The established ethical climate provides educational institutions with superiority over their competitors regarding time, success and quality, it also creates a basis for the formation of respectful relationships among teachers. Teachers will not hesitate to exhibit voluntary behaviors in an ethical climate and this will be reflected in student and school success. The harmony between the ethical values self-identified by the teachers and the values of the school will unlock the expected professional behaviors. According to studies, a strong ethical climate in organizations increases unity, solidarity and motivation among employees (Wimbuch & Shepard, 1994) as well as performance and productivity (Singhapakdi, Kraft, Vitell & Rallapalli, 1995). Ethical climate creates a positive environment for employees (Hunt, Wood & Chonko, 1989) and positively affects organizational performance (Dickson, Smith, Grojean & Ehrhart, 2001; Karayaman, 2021). At the same time, ethical climate increases the professional satisfaction of individuals in the work environment (Schwepker, 2001); motivates them to exhibit selfless (Hunt et al., 1989; Saylık & Demir, 2021) and responsible behaviors towards organizational members and the work environment (Singhapakdi et al., 1995).

### **The relationship between work values, work performance and ethical climate**

The ethical values developed by organizations based on the value judgments of the environment and society and the practices they engage in to gain the trust of their employees form the basis for their successful existence. In this direction, ethical climate should be among the policies with priority to enable the employees to develop positive attitudes towards their organizations and to sustain their existence in the conditions of increasing competition (Boylu et al., 2007). Similarly, organizational members' positive perception towards the work environment facilitates the achievement of the organization's goals (Özmete, 2007) and affects the upbringing of individuals who will meet the needs of the society in the future with awareness of their duties and responsibilities. Employees can feel integrated with their organizations when they feel that their organizations care for the same ethical values as the society and themselves (Aydın, 2010). Mutual actions of the organization and employees by focusing on common goals will also improve the bond between them (Özmen, Arbak & Süral, 2007). Educational organizations, which are established to meet the needs of the society in every field, should not deviate from ethical values and should design environments where trust, respect and loyalty are adopted due to the positive climate created in the organization. Teachers, who shape the individuals who make up the society, should fulfill their roles in education and training properly with their professional knowledge and feel integrated with the interests of the organization by exhibiting exemplary behaviors (Özkan & Çelikten, 2018).

Educational organizations are social environments where a set of principles and rules are adopted, which need to be followed in relations with both organizational members and the society. Unity and cooperation should be essential and relationships in educational processes should be maintained with mutual respect around ethical foundations. Teachers should have unique professional ethics and work values that do not disrupt their official duties (Toprakçı, Bozpolat & Buldur, 2010). In the literature, it is reported that the work values adopted by teachers will lead to exhibiting behaviors compatible with common values and goals in educational organizations, giving importance to the expectations of the school rather than individual expectations, exhibiting high-level performance in the preparation of learning environments, and conducting instructional practices that facilitate student learning, and thus increasing effectiveness and efficiency (Demir & Çobanoğlu, 2022; Tanatar & Alpaydın, 2019; Bozkurt & Doğan, 2013; Gökçen, 2021; Saġnak, 2005; Altaş, 2019). In this context, it can be argued that teachers can carry out more efficient and effective instructional activities thanks to their professional work values, and their trust and commitment to the school will be higher. Roe & Ester (1999) also stated that teachers should have professional work values in order to be able to act comfortably, willingly, selflessly and effectively at school and to shape their professional behaviors.

Valuing and appreciating employees' ideas will increase their feelings of cooperation, solidarity and commitment to the organization, and it will ensure positive behavior and high performance (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Professional core values that are accepted and prioritized will prevent conflict and create a desirable cultural environment in the workplace. Establishing an effective formal communication will facilitate the achievement of organizational goals, and the emotions, interactions and professional values created around common beliefs shared among employees will contribute positively to the benefit of the

organization (Eren, 1998). It is a known fact that all these factors are of great importance for employee success and effectiveness. Similarly, in an ethical climate created in educational organizations without compromising professional values, processes such as effective learning, sharing knowledge, discipline and control can be implemented as desired and the instructional performance of the organization will increase. As a matter of fact, Çelik (1997) reported that raising good people with the skills of the modern age, as needed by societies, is only possible in an effective school environment. Teacher performance is one of the most important elements in the formation of an effective and efficient educational process in schools (Can, 2004). Similarly, Steinberg & Garrett (2016) emphasized that when teachers exhibit better work performance, success can be achieved regarding the schools' educational goals. Studies showed that the performance levels exhibited by teachers increase the effectiveness and quality of education in line with the school's goals and can lead to desired learning outcomes (Jacob, Rockoff, Taylor, Lindy & Rosen, 2016; Eren & Hayatoğlu, 2011; Rodríguez, Hinojosa & Ramírez, 2014; Kılıç, 2019; Çetin & Duman, 2022; Özdemir & Yirmibeş, 2016; Pope, 2019; Yazıcıoğlu, 2010; Dee & Wyckoff, 2015).

Creating an ethical climate in educational organizations will clarify the standards of ethical behavior for teachers. Hence, teachers will be able to focus on the educational process, school and student achievement to the best of their abilities. In addition, thanks to the existence of ethical climate, teachers will be able to continue their professional work in a safe and fair environment without conflicts with administrators and colleagues. As a matter of fact, studies reported ethical climate decreases employee conflict with organizational members (Schwepker, Ferrel & Ingram, 1997) and stress (Bozkurt & Altan, 2013), increases commitment to the organization (Çetin & Duman, 2022) and leads to high performance (Sarıkaya, 2011). In addition, organizational and individual harmony will be high in educational organizations where professional values are important (Sağnak, 2005). In this direction, work values will provide the desired school culture and school effectiveness in the working environment (Gökçen, 2021) and will guide the behavior of employees (Baloğlu & Balgalmış, 2005).

Today, it is thought that when teachers are faced with problems related to work values and ethics, they can only display the right behaviors and act according to formal criteria in schools where ethical understanding is dominant. Accordingly, it can be argued that educational organizations where work values and ethical climate are dominant are extremely important for the school and teachers to achieve the desired performance. In this direction, it is thought that this study which addressed the relationship between these three concepts will guide the educational organizations. The study is believed to be important to fill in the gaps in the literature, to provide new perspectives and to contribute to the literature.

### **Purpose of the research**

This study was conducted to determine the views of high school teachers on work values, employee performance and ethical climate and to reveal whether there was a significant relationship between these views. In line with this purpose, high school teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate were identified and whether there was a significant relationship between their views was investigated in this research.

### **Method**

#### **Research model**

This research was conducted as a quantitative study in the relational survey model. According to the relational survey model, relational analysis is made by correlation and comparison between variables (Can, 2015).

#### **Study population**

The study population of the research consisted of teachers working in Bolu Province central district high schools. The research was conducted in the 2020-2021 academic year and 495 teachers, who constituted the entire study population, were reached. The data collection tool was distributed to participating teachers and 285 scales (57.50%) that were returned to the researcher were evaluated. The obtained return rate had the power to represent the population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Table 1 presents the participating teachers' demographic information.

**Table 1.** Teachers' demographic data

Characteristics		f	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	166	58,2
	Male	119	41,8
<b>Professional Seniority</b>	1-10 years	107	37,5
	11-20 years	66	23,2
	21 years and over	112	39,3
<b>Educational Status</b>	Undergraduate	213	74,7
	Postgraduate	72	25,3
<b>Type of High School</b>	Anatolian	216	75,8
	Science	17	6,0
	Vocational	52	18,2
<b>Subject Matter/Branch</b>	Non-science lessons	146	51,2
	STEM lessons	84	29,5
	Skill-talent based lessons	55	19,3
	<b>Total</b>	285	100

According to Table 1, 166 of the participating teachers were female and 119 were male; 107 had a seniority of 1-10 years, 66 had a seniority of 11-20 years, 112 had a seniority of 21 years or more; 213 had undergraduate degrees and 72 had postgraduate degrees. Of the participants, 216 teachers worked in Anatolian High Schools, 17 in Science High Schools and 52 in Vocational Technical High Schools. Among the participating teachers, 146 taught non-science classes, 84 taught STEM related classes courses and 55 taught talent-based classes.

### Data collection tools

Personal Information Form, Work Values Scale, Employee Performance Scale and Ethical Climate Scale were used as data collection tools. The Personal Information Form included questions about the participating teachers' gender, professional seniority, education level, type of high school they worked in and their branches.

The Work Values Scale was developed by Kaya (2010) to determine the work values sought by teachers in their work. The scale consists of 25 items and four sub-dimensions: meaningfulness and usefulness of work, human relations, work environment and autonomy. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the total scale was reported as .93 by Kaya (2010) and found as .94 in this study.

Employee Performance Scale was developed by Şehitoğlu & Zehir (2010) to measure the extent to which teachers perform their duties effectively and successfully in their organizations. The scale has 6 items and one dimension and Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .76. In this study, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found as .82.

The Ethical Climate Scale was developed by Schwepker (2001) and adapted into Turkish by Develi (2015) to determine the extent to which teachers comply with ethics in their actions and behaviors while performing their duties at work. The scale has 7 items and one dimension and Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .79. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .88. All three scales are graded on a 5-point Likert scale as follows: "Strongly Disagree" (1), "Disagree" (2), "Undecided" (3), "Agree" (4) and "Strongly Agree" (5).

### Data analysis

Before data analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was utilized to determine the data distribution and the skewness and kurtosis coefficients were obtained. Since these coefficients were between -1 and +1, the data were found to be normally distributed (Büyüköztürk, 2006). Percentage (%) and frequency (f) values were obtained for personal data. Mean (X), and standard deviation (SD) values, which are descriptive statistics, were used to find the levels of teacher views on work values, ethical climate and work performance. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether there was a relationship between these views. According to Büyüköztürk (2006), a correlation value of 1.00 indicates a perfect positive relationship, a correlation value of -1.00 indicates a perfect negative relationship, a correlation value of 0.00 indicates no relationship, a correlation value of 0.70-1.00 is

defined as a high-level relationship, a correlation value of 0.30-0.70 is defined as a medium level relationship, and a correlation value of 0.00-0.30 is defined as a low level relationship. The score ranges used in the interpretation of the data related to teachers' work values, ethical climate and work performance scales are as follows: 1,00-1,79 Strongly disagree, 1,80-2,59 Disagree, 2,60-3,39 Undecided, 3,40-4,19 Agree and 4,20-5,00 Strongly agree.

**Findings**

**Teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate**

Table 2 provides the data related to teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate as arithmetic mean and standard deviation values.

**Table 2.** Results of the descriptive statistics related to teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate

Scale	Sub Dimensions	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
<b>Work Values Scale</b>	Meaningfulness and usefulness of the work	285	3,66	,68
	Human relations	285	3,96	,64
	Work environment	285	3,54	,68
	Autonomy	285	3,77	,75
	Work values total	285	3,69	,62
<b>Employee Performance Scale</b>		285	3,89	,69
<b>Ethical Climate Scale</b>		285	3,53	,75

Table 2 shows that teachers' views on work values centered on "agree" in the Work Values Scale sub-dimensions of meaningfulness and usefulness of the work ( $\bar{X}$ =3,66), human relations ( $\bar{X}$ =3,69), work environment( $\bar{X}$ =3,54) and autonomy ( $\bar{X}$ =3,77) and the total scale ( $\bar{X}$ =3,69). Teachers' views on employee performance ( $\bar{X}$ =3,89) and ethical climate ( $\bar{X}$ =3,53) similarly centered on "agree" level.

**The relationship between teachers' views on work values, employee performance, and ethical climate**

Table 3 provides the results of the Pearson Correlation analysis conducted to determine whether there was a significant relationship between teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate.

**Table 3.** Pearson Correlation analysis results for teachers' views on work values, employee performance and ethical climate

		Ethical Climate Scale	Employee Performance Scale
<b>Employee Performance</b>	r	,479**	1,000
<b>Work Values Scale</b>	Meaningfulness and usefulness of the work	r	,502**
	Human relations	r	,373**
	Work environment	r	,452**
	Autonomy	r	,321**
	Work values total scale	r	,498**

\*\* $p < 0.01$

In Table 3, analysis of the results pointed to various positive relationships between work values and employee performance and ethical climate scales at a moderate level. These findings are provided below:

Between the work values scale and its sub-dimensions and the ethical climate scale, a moderate, positive, significant relationship was found in the meaningfulness and usefulness of the work sub-dimension ( $r=.502, p<.01$ ), human relations sub-dimension ( $r=.373, p<.01$ ), work environment sub-dimension ( $r=.452, p<.01$ ), autonomy sub-dimension ( $r=.321, p<.01$ ) and work values total scale ( $r=.498, p<.01$ ). Between the work values scale and its sub-dimensions and the employee performance scale, there

were moderate positive significant relationships in meaningfulness and usefulness of the work sub-dimension ( $r = .596$ ,  $p < .01$ ), human relations sub-dimension ( $r = .452$ ,  $p < .01$ ), work environment sub-dimension ( $r = .462$ ,  $p < .01$ ) autonomy sub-dimension ( $r = .397$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and work values total scale ( $r = .576$ ,  $p < .01$ ). There was a moderate positive significant relationship between Employee Performance Scale and Ethical Climate Scale ( $r = .479$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

### Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that teachers selected "Agree" regarding work values, employee performance and ethical climate. According to the findings, it can be argued that teachers regarded work values, ethical climate and employee performance in their professional work positively and that they described these concepts as valuable that should be included in the teaching profession, which is accepted as a sacred profession in society. It can be argued that teachers can fulfill their professional responsibilities by performing beyond expectations in a school environment where professional work values and ethical climate are protected. In other words, it can be said that teachers had positive opinions about being provided with educational settings in which ethical values were the main purpose and that they could carry out their professional work performance at the desired level. It is observed that universal rules such as believing in and adopting the goals of the profession and dedicating themselves to the profession under all circumstances are accepted in the teaching profession as in many other professions (Tezuçar, 2019). At the same time, as the practitioners of education themselves, teachers are exemplary people who both interact with students using their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and guide them with their behaviors. In this sense, by adopting moderate behaviors, teachers will prevent the occurrence of undesirable situations in the work environment and it will be easier for them to focus on their professional work. In support of this finding, Victor & Cullen (1988) stated that the frequency of unethical behaviors in the organization negatively affects the working environment and decreases professional productivity. In addition, employees' beliefs about work values are directly proportional to their professional efforts (Kaya, 2010), and ethical climate positively affects the individual performance of employees (Altaş & Kuzu, 2013). When the findings of the research were analyzed in detail, the following findings were obtained.

Teachers agreed on work values in all dimensions and the highest mean ( $\bar{X} = 3,96$ ) was found in the human relations sub-dimension. Educational organizations are among the organizations with the highest number of employees and address the human dimension the most in their duties. Experiencing human relations very intensely in their workplace and integrating their work with emotions lead teachers to prefer both formal and informal behaviors in their individual relationships. Teachers are models for their colleagues and students since they work on shaping human behavior. Although there are certain rules of behavior in every profession, teachers need to be more patient and understanding towards the situations that occur at school and act responsibly and consistently in their professional activities (Hochschild, 1983). This is because teachers have to patiently demonstrate their professional competencies against students and colleagues with different individual characteristics, from teaching processes to the activities to be carried out. In other words, they should fulfill their professional responsibilities in every situation by making the necessary arrangements to provide students from different social environments with the general aims of education, knowledge and skills.

Teachers also "agreed" to the sub-dimensions of work environment ( $\bar{X} = 3,54$ ) and autonomy ( $\bar{X} = 3,77$ ). Making the necessary educational arrangements according to teachers' expectations will facilitate carrying out their instructional activities in the way they want so that they can do their work effectively and efficiently. Indeed, increasing the quality of education in schools is only possible by empowering teachers and ensuring their autonomy (Ada & Şahin, 2007). For this purpose, educational organizations should take teachers' needs into consideration, make them feel good and ensure that they are self-confident in their professional activities (Yılmaz & Altinkurt, 2012). Friedman (1999) defined autonomy as the ability of teachers to personally manage their professional activities and to display their actions professionally, while Little (1995) stated that schools that provide teachers with the autonomy to plan, organize and timely implement the instructional activities can increase their commitment to the school. Teachers who are committed to their schools can use their capacities to present their professional potential, offer ideas and suggestions in administrative processes (Koçak, 2011) and make effective decisions that ensure student learning (Dee, Henkin & Singleton, 2006). It is also emphasized that teachers with high levels of autonomy implement the responsibilities they undertake in their professional actions by making more effective decisions and do not refrain from exhibiting selfless behaviors for the benefit of their schools (Short, 1994). In this context, school environments where teachers can express their feelings and behaviors comfortably should be created to organize effective and efficient teaching-learning

processes (Akbaba & Turhan, 2016). It should be taken into consideration that teachers can fulfill their professional competencies as effectively and efficiently as possible by ensuring their autonomy at the desired level (Şentürken & Oğuz, 2020).

Teachers also "agreed" to the sub-dimension of meaningfulness and usefulness of the work ( $\bar{X}=3,66$ ). Similarly, Bayrak (2001) also found the same result in his study. Based on these findings, it can be argued that teachers do not see their profession only as a source of livelihood, on the contrary, they believe that it is a valuable and useful profession that raises people and contributes to society, and their behaviors display awareness in this regard. The teaching profession has a number of unique characteristics and represents a wide range of duties and responsibilities. As a profession, teaching not only about planning and managing student learning but also has the competence to take responsibility for students' lives and includes constant interaction with individuals (Çelikten, Şanal & Yeni, 2005). Therefore, the teaching profession requires the establishment of good communication with affection, conducting of teaching activities in schools as an expert, and carrying out professional activities for the benefit of the school and society (Eskicumalı, 2014). In line with the expectations of the society, teachers are expected to fulfill their defined professional duties, establish a strong bond with students and develop a sense of belonging to their organizations. Cüceloğlu & Erdoğan (2016) also pointed out that the most important meaning and benefit of being a teacher is the relationship to be established with students. At this point, the meanings attributed to the teachers by the education system change day by day in addition to the personal characteristics that teachers should have (Demir & Köse, 2016). The meanings attributed to teachers are listed as providing learning and a safe environment at school, exhibiting exemplary behavior, guiding others for the benefit of society and individuals, being a participant, being an architect who constructs people, being an artist who shapes people's personality, and being a confidante (Demir & Köse, 2016; Bursalıoğlu, 2005). The fact that teachers carry out their professional activities with the awareness of the duties and meanings defined for them will motivate them further in their efforts to fulfill educational goals in a contented and successful manner.

Teachers also "agreed" with the employee performance with a mean of ( $\bar{X}=3,89$ ). Accordingly, it can be argued that teachers strive to show the expected performance based on the meaning and value they attribute to their profession while fulfilling their professional duties and responsibilities. Compared to other professions, teaching profession requires teachers to undertake duties and responsibilities that are constantly on a rising trend (Değirmencioğlu, 2009). Being supported by the school administration affects teacher motivation and makes it easier for teachers to continue their professional work in line with school goals. It is known that organizations that value their employees and offer them working environments where they can reveal their potential display higher performance (Kayar, 2015). Similarly, making them feel valued, motivating them and giving them tasks according to their abilities will ensure the expected performance and efficiency (İnce, Bedük & Aydoğan, 2004). In addition, giving employees the opportunity for professional development and their participation in decision-making processes will increase the adoption of the work and participation in voluntary activities in professional studies (Büyükebeşe, 2012). Based on the results of this study, it can be argued that teachers fulfill their professional activities with dedication and make efforts in line with individual and organizational goals. Kılınc (2012) and Karademir (2019) also mentioned that individual characteristics and professional competencies should be given importance in the organizational environment to ensure desired level employee performance.

Teachers also "agreed" with the ethical climate with a mean of ( $\bar{X}=3,53$ ). Accordingly, it can be argued that teachers are committed to ethical values in their profession, have a refined and respectful manner in their relationships, and adopt ethical values at school to set an example for their students. An ideal teacher is an ideal personality not only with his/her individual abilities but also with modeling what he/she teaches (Pieper, 1999). In an environment where ethical principles such as justice, equality, love and respect are protected, it will be easier for teachers to continue their educational activities without experiencing conflict with their colleagues who strive to comply with ethical criteria. Ethical climate has the power to guide employees in carrying out their professional activities and prevent undesired behaviors (Saylık & Demir, 2021). The ethical climate created in schools will increase teachers' feelings of trust in their organizations, provide a democratic environment and motivate them to undertake professional work in a willing, devoted and effective manner (Lishchinsky & Rosenblatt, 2010). In this direction, it can be argued that teachers can exhibit voluntary behaviors for the benefit of the school by combining the goals of the school with their individual goals in an ethical climate. Similarly, Jaramillo, Mulki & Locander (2006) and Eren & Hayatoğlu (2011) concluded that in organizations where ethical climate is dominant, ethical values have a positive effect on employees' work behaviors and increase their organizational commitment and voluntary contribution to organizational productivity. In their studies, Develi (2015), Altaş & Kuzu (2013) and Büte (2011) also found that employees' views on ethical climate were at the level of "agree", supporting the findings of this research. It can be said that it will be easier for

employees to fulfill their professional work voluntarily and increase their performance in line with the organizational goals in work environments where ethical climate is provided.

The study also found that positive and moderately significant relationships between teachers' views on employee performance and work values scale and its sub-dimensions, between ethical climate scale and work values scale and its sub-dimensions, and between employee performance scale and ethical climate scale. Based on the findings, it can be argued that an ethical climate environment can be created with the positive perception of the work values implemented in the school, and thus, teachers' work performance will increase in the desired direction. In other words, it can be stated that an educational environment in which work values are adopted and ethical climate prevails is an important determinant that can positively affect teachers' work performance. These relationships based on teachers' views are important for educational organizations because schools that focus on institutional and academic achievement and keep up with the rapidly developing and changing education system can show high performance with employees adopting work values in an ethical climate environment. Sverko (1998) also stated that employees who adopt work values should be preferred in shaping the future of organizations, and that it is important to make professional definitions of employees and to mutually determine their personal expectations. The overlap of teachers' individual values with the values of the school will create positive feelings in the school and will enable them to make more effort to achieve the goals of the school. Employees decide how they will perform by looking at the overlap between the values they have formed in their lives and the values of the organization and adapt to their organizations accordingly (George & Jones, 1997).

Teachers, who are the building blocks of educational organizations, fulfill the educational activities expected of them by exhibiting exemplary behaviors to their colleagues and students with the professional values they adopt. Teachers' efforts are supported by their beliefs and the necessary driving power is provided by their respect and love for their profession (Başaran, 1992). In addition, the teaching is a profession that can carry out the education and training processes planned for the classroom with self-control. The professional values exhibited by teachers will ensure the formation of a harmonious working environment and ethical climate in the school and increase their ability to carry out the educational processes in the classroom in the best way with their internal control. In this respect, teachers will be able to transfer their professional knowledge and skills in a certain pattern with appropriate methods and techniques from the moment they enter the classroom and will experience the conscientious relief of realizing their responsibilities. At the same time, in schools where the ethical climate is ensured and work values are adopted, teachers will have positive emotions and behaviors as a result of doing their job with dignity and self-confidence.

The study presented significant positive relationships between work values and their sub-dimensions and employee performance in the school environment. Defining the work values adopted by teachers in educational activities and implementing them with appropriate behaviors in this direction are indispensable elements for an efficient and effective school. In this respect, work values, which shape teachers' behaviors and direct them to educational goals in action, is a strategically important factor that will enable teachers to demonstrate their performance to transfer the desired knowledge and skills to students. Can (2004) also emphasized that the increase in the effectiveness and efficiency of the school will be ensured by the increase in teacher performance and hence, the education and training process will be continued effectively. Common work values, established by forming the professional responsibilities undertaken by teachers in line with the expectations and goals of the school, manifest themselves concretely in attitudes and behaviors and determine the academic performance of the school and students (Bayar, 2016). In the literature, Randall (1999) and Ravlin & Meglino (1987) reached similar findings and found a significant, positive relationship between work values and employee performance.

The efforts of employees to successfully complete the tasks and responsibilities defined for them in the organization within a certain period of time reflect their employee performance (Yıldız et al., 2008). Teachers also demonstrate their work performance while continuing their educational activities at school to achieve personal and school goals without compromising the professional values they believe in. In this sense, the work values that employees adopted as principles show their love for their work, regulate their work performance and even their relationships with their colleagues (Locke & Henne, 1986). At this point, while employees show a disciplined work performance, they also contribute to the formation of a work environment in which respectable and refined relationships are maintained. Because the more importance is attached to establishing sincere, cordial, refined friendship relations between employees around the specified values, the more positive the climate in the organization will be (Özdemir, 2006). Employees' positive approach to ethical principles and rules in professional work values will increase the prestige of the profession (Celep, 2000). The ethical climate environment established via the acceptance of these values by the members of the organization will show the employees that their attitudes and

behaviors are important in being successful (Tepe, 1997). In a work environment where ethical values and universal rules are established, employees will fulfill their duties and responsibilities regularly, thus increasing the efficiency of the organization (Tepe, 2009).

This study found significant positive relationships between teachers' work values and their sub-dimensions and ethical climate in the school environment. It can be argued that the professional values adopted by teachers, who are the building blocks of educational organizations, are an important factor in creating a school environment dominated by ethical climate. The ethical climate in the school will also guide teachers' behaviors in the classroom. Henne & Henne (1986) also stated that the work values adopted as principles by the employees indicate their desire and goals for their work, are reflected in their relationships with their colleagues and enable them to exhibit ethical behaviors. In this case, it can be argued that while teachers pay attention to their work values, they contribute to the formation of a respectful work environment dominated by ethical behaviors where refined relationships are maintained. There are studies in the literature that overlap with this research result. Can (2004) concluded that employees' acting in accordance with the principles and rules within professional values creates an ethical climate environment; Altaş & Kuzu (2013) found a positive relationship between ethical climate and work values.

The present study found significant positive relationships between teachers' work performance in the school environment and ethical climate. Based on this finding, it can be argued that the learning outcomes that teachers produce as a result of the educational processes they carry out in line with the educational activities planned in an ethical environment are a variable that can increase their work performance. Yıldız et al. (2008) also stated that the desired goals can be achieved in the school and an effective education and training can be maintained by increasing the work performance of teachers who carry out one-to-one educational activities and by preparing learning environments for students in the classroom. On the other hand, the ethical climate adopted by the employees will provide a respectable environment and will also display which behaviors will achieve successful results in regards' to professionalism (Tepe, 1997). Therefore, organizational efficiency will be ensured with employees fulfilling their duties and responsibilities at the desired level in a business environment where ethical values and universal rules are established (Tepe, 2009). There are studies in the literature that overlap with this research result. Tezuçar (2019) and Bozkurt & Doğan (2013) reported a positive relationship between employee performance and ethical climate variables.

Today, providing students with only theoretical knowledge in education and training activities is not sufficient for individuals to acquire the attitudes, values and behaviors expected by society. In addition to developing students mentally and emotionally, it is also important to transfer national culture, basic values and to provide them with the skills to meet the needs of the new century. At this point, teachers should focus on their professional development to acquire new knowledge and they should have flexible approaches that can meet the different needs of the current age. This requires teachers to make more effort to realize the purposes of the existence of schools with changing educational processes and developing technology over the years. In this direction, it can be said that the future of a nation depends on the education given in schools and the future of education depends on teachers. Hence, teachers should share what they have learned with their colleagues in line with professional principles in addition to corroborating in educational activities with them such as learning, teaching, facilitation, discipline and evaluation activities. The cooperation, solidarity and commitment created in this manner will lead to the creation of strong educational institutions, carrying the performance of schools further. One of the ways to achieve this is for teachers to adopt work values and not to see teaching and learning as a mechanical process or a source of financial livelihood, but to know how to achieve the required performance through selfless efforts.

On the other hand, it is crucial to provide an ethical climate environment where ethical rules and behaviors are dominant so that teachers can organize the assigned tasks in the most effective way without compromising their professional values. The ethical climate in the school will guide teachers on how they should behave and prevent the emergence of inappropriate behaviors. Love and respect can be characterized as values to be practiced only in these settings where teachers will be able to respond to societal expectations as well as legally defined duties without compromising their professional values through the internal control mechanism they create, and they will be able to strive to transfer their knowledge and skills with a high performance. Similarly, Jaramillo et al. (2006) also supported these results with the finding that ethical climate has a positive effect on employees' professional behaviors and improves employee performance by providing benefits to the organization.

*In conclusion*, teachers can increase their work performance more easily in schools where they are accepted for their professional principles and where an ethical climate prevails. The increase in performance, which is largely dependent on teachers' mental abilities, beliefs, work values and personal

characteristics, will facilitate achieving the desired productivity as well as school and student achievement. Studies indicate that ethical climate can provide the desired effective and efficient teaching practices, high-level learning environments and educational success in schools by increasing the performance of teachers in line with the goals of the education system and the school (Celep, 2000; Akşit, 2006; Özdemir, 2006; Saylık & Demir, 2021). According to these findings, the positive results of the ethical climate formed in the work environment with established work values will lead to the formation of a supportive, cooperative and motivating work environment and increased school and student success. It can be argued that with the help of ethical climate, teachers can display positive emotions and behaviors and can reveal and increase the necessary working performance such as achieving the goals of the school in the changing education system, raising individuals in accordance with the requirements of the age, planning and implementing teaching and organizing learning environments.

The suggestions developed in line with the research results are as follows:

1-The importance teachers attach to work values is an important factor that will affect the success of students who are the future of a country. For this reason, educational environments where teachers can work in line with the determined principles without compromising work values should be enriched. For this purpose, in settings such as board meetings and teachers' rooms, administrators' rewarding teacher behaviors related to work values by emphasizing the contribution of these behaviors to professional performance will increase the frequency of these behaviors within the school and the level of awareness among teachers will improve in this direction.

2-To keep the performance and motivation of teachers high, a harmonious organizational climate should be maintained and their participation should be ensured in in-service trainings, department workshops and professional meetings to support their professional development.

3- Educational organizations should enrich the environments in which ethical climate is dominant in interpersonal relations, trust-based relationships are established, sincere and refined relationships are developed, and policies should be developed and increased to guide ethical attitudes and behaviors in schools. The developed policies should be implemented meticulously by the school administration and teachers, and unethical behaviors that disrupt the ethical climate of the institution should not be allowed. At the same time, it can be suggested to include courses in teacher training and in-service training to increase the ethical sensitivity of teachers..

4- Considering the positive relationship between teachers' work values, employee performance and the ethical climate in the work environment in achieving the targeted success in educational institutions, importance should be given to creating work environments where teachers can fully perform their professional work in line with work values and where the ethical climate is adopted and protected without exception. In this context, it can be suggested that educational institutions should adopt work and ethical values as their main purpose, mutually establish some standards and take decisions that make the implementation of these standards compulsory. In addition, trainings can be provided at schools with experts and exemplary teachers in this field to attract the attention of teachers.

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