



## A Holistic Approach to Creating Ethical Sensitivity and Awareness in Landscape Design Education

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### Abstract

The starting point of the present study was the observation of the increasing number of unethical behaviors among the students of landscape design education in recent years. The purpose of the study was to determine the ethical perceptions of students, and their ethical awareness, ethical behaviors, ethical preferences, ethical judgments, and ethical decision-making skills in the design process. In this context, the ethics concept and the importance of ethics in design education were explained, and a questionnaire was used to the students. Among the 199 students, 149 students participated in the study voluntarily. As a result of the study, it is possible to argue that the ethical perceptions and awareness of ethical/unethical behaviors of the students in design were high, their ethical decision-making skills improved, and they could make ethical choices and ethical judgments. Despite this fact, it is up to the students to make ethical choices and act ethically by showing ethical sensitivity in their designs. Ethics in design courses and how ethics education can be integrated into design courses were explained to provide ethical sensitivity and awareness to students in landscape design education.

**Keywords:** Ethics, ethic perception, ethic sensitivity, ethic awareness, ethic in design education.

## Peyzaj Tasarımı Eğitiminde Etik Duyarlılık ve Farkındalık Yaratmak için Bütüncül Bir Yaklaşım

### Öz

Son yıllarda peyzaj tasarımı eğitim sürecinde öğrenciler arasında etik olmayan davranışların gözlemlenmesi ve giderek artması bu çalışmanın çıkış noktası olmuştur. Çalışmanın amacı; Selçuk Üniversitesi, Mimarlık ve Tasarım Fakültesi, Peyzaj Mimarlığı Bölümündeki öğrencilerin etik algılarını; tasarım sürecindeki etik farkındalık, etik davranış, etik tercih, etik yargı ve etik karar verme becerilerini belirlemektir. Bu kapsamda etik kavramı ve tasarım eğitiminde etiğin önemi açıklanmış; öğrencilerin etik algı, etik farkındalık, etik davranış, etik tercih, etik yargı ve etik karar verme becerilerini belirlemek için anket uygulanmıştır. Araştırmaya öğrenim görmekte olan 199 öğrenciden 149 öğrenci gönüllü katılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda öğrencilerin etik algılarının, tasarımda etik olan/olmayan davranışlara yönelik farkındalıklarının yüksek olduğunu, etik karar verme becerilerinin geliştiğini, etik tercih ve etik yargılama yapabildiklerini söylemek mümkündür. Buna rağmen tasarımlarında etik duyarlılık göstererek etik tercihte bulunmaları ve etik davranışları öğrencilerin inisiyatifine kalmaktadır. Peyzaj tasarımı eğitiminde öğrencilere etik duyarlılık ve farkındalığın kazandırılması için tasarımda etik dersi ve tasarım derslerine etik eğitiminin nasıl entegre edilebileceği açıklanmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Etik, etik algı, etik duyarlılık, etik farkındalık, tasarım eğitiminde etik.

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## **1. Introduction**

*“Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do.”*  
Potter Stewart

The word “ethics” is derived from the Greek word “ethos” and means personality, character, and lifestyle and is associated with theories about moral actions (Hiort Af Ornäs & Keitsch, 2015). The word is used in three different meanings (i.e., “temper, personality and character”, “customs, habits, customs and traditions”, and “the homeland, hometown, place of residence, or the house where a person resides” (Bodur, 2017; Kuçuradi, 2020). Also, ethics is a concept associated with the behaviours and actions that people perform on a social scale and that have consequences affecting other people, and the thinking processes shaping them (Kurt et al., 2015). Every person has to exhibit an ethical attitude in every action he or she takes (Ilgaz & Bilgili, 2006). Not all human actions can be evaluated in the scope of ethical values, and it is very difficult to mention any human activity that is not associated with ethical values (Aydın, 2022).

To date, studies on ethics have focused on revealing the basis of all human behaviours and actions. As a subdiscipline of philosophy, ethics determines moral duties and responsibilities in determining what is good and what is bad. Ethics is an important part and a systematic field of study not only in philosophy but also in other disciplines (Aydın, 2012). In this respect, ethics is also the field of study of axiology, in other words, the philosophy of values. Axiology focuses on the definition of value fields such as ethics (moral philosophy), aesthetics (philosophy of art), and epistemology (philosophy of knowledge), their formation processes, limits, and relationships with each other. Ethics seeks answers to questions such as value qualities such as good/bad, aesthetics beautiful/ugly, and epistemology is the subject of value qualities such as right/wrong. Axiology, on the other hand, investigates the values that form the basis of individuals’ behaviours (Çetintaş, 2015). The axiological study asks “Do values have a source, are they internal or external (independent of individuals), are they objective or subjective, fixed or variable, are there absolute values for societies in every period, do values change among societies and over time?” (Özlük, 2016).

The fact that humans are at the core of education is among the most important reasons why ethics must be included in education. The fact that the general purpose of education is “a process of changing behaviours” has led to the emergence of a very close relationship between ethics and education. The disciplines of education and ethics, which are based on humans, intersect at the point of guiding human behaviours (Ilgaz & Bilgili, 2006). To date, ethics has mainly been considered a separate course in the design curricula (e.g., professional ethics and professional deontology). Today, awareness of the ethical aspects of design is becoming increasingly important (Sonneveld, 2016). The reason for this is that ethical problems in design have been increasing in recent years and uncertainties are being mentioned regarding the solution of the problems (Çelik, 2018). The design has powerful effects on the world, which has always had an ethical aspect. Design schools still treat ethics as a separate course, and acting ethically in design is left to the initiative of students (Sonneveld, 2016). Ethics in design is one significant area deserving further consideration by all concerned (Nini, 2020). Ethical issues must display integrity of behaviours with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students acquire with their will, not with the transfer of teachable knowledge (Aydın, 2015). For this reason, an integrated approach is necessary in design education (Sonneveld, 2016). There are many possibilities for embedding content related to ethical issues in design curricula (Nini, 2020).

Every situation, condition, event, institution, and action that changes and improves life and the quality of the living environment affecting all beings is included in the field of ethics (Özlem, 2004). Landscape architecture, which designs living spaces for living creatures, especially human beings, must be considered within the scope of ethics in terms of the design action and the education process. However, there are no definite and clear definitions of being ethical or acting ethically in landscape design of designers. For this reason, the ethics concept in landscape design has become a relative concept varying among people and including different interpretations and inferences. When faced with ethical dilemmas and deviations, which are often faced in landscape design, designers act

according to their ethical values (Çelik, 2018). Those who act in the field of design, those who train designers and designer candidates must analyze the development of design so far along with their reactions to economic, political, and cultural changes, and sometimes the models of creating these changes, with a different perspective than today, in parallel with the ecological, economic and social conditions of the present world, and as a result, they must determine some basic principles (Şişman, 2006).

The basic notion of the present study was the recent observation and increasing number of unethical behaviours among students in landscape design education. The purpose of the study was to determine the ethical perceptions of students at Selçuk University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Landscape Architecture, and their ethical awareness, ethical behaviours, ethical preferences, ethical judgments, and ethical decision-making skills in the design process. In this context, the ethics concept and the importance of ethics in design education were explained, and a questionnaire was administered to determine the ethical perceptions, ethical awareness, ethical behaviours, ethical preferences, ethical judgments, and ethical decision-making skills of students. Based on the questionnaire results, an answer was sought to the question of how ethical sensitivity and awareness, ethical creativity, ethical analysis, ethical judgments, ethical decision-making, and ethical discussion skills can be acquired. Ethics in design courses and how ethics education can be integrated into design courses are explained to provide ethical sensitivity and awareness to students in landscape design education.

### **1.1. Ethics in Landscape Design Education**

As design expands its scope from creating products to re-imagining systems, ethics has become an increasingly hot topic in design research (Özkaramanlı, et al., 2022). In education, ethics has an undeniable role in terms of the targets, values, and processes of education. The issue of ethics becomes even more important in education, which has an important mission, especially in bringing about certain behavioral changes in individuals (Aydın, 2022). Issues such as placing humans at the core of education, the targets set for the education system, the methods employed to achieve these targets, how the contents of the curriculum are decided, how the feedbacks are evaluated, the consistency of the ethical thoughts and actions of educators, and their commitment to their profession clarify the relationship between education and ethics (İlgaz & Bilgili, 2006).

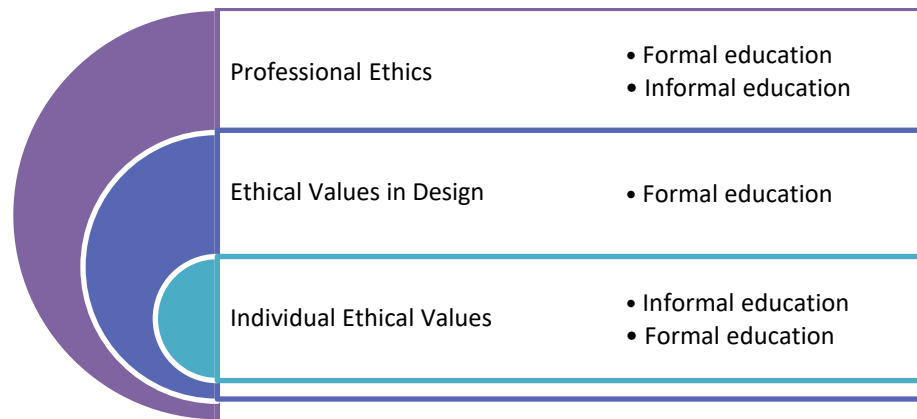
When the academic literature was reviewed, it was found that the subject has been discussed in many different dimensions in studies conducted on ethics and design, for this reason, it is difficult to adequately address the issues from a broad perspective (Dindler et al., 2022). Approaches representing ethical methods have emerged in the academic literature and design practice regarding design and are particularly focused on clarifying the normative dimensions of design and outlining strategies for incorporating ethical values into design (Donia & Shaw, 2021). Today, awareness of the ethical aspects of design is increasing and becoming more and more important with each passing day. Design has very strong effects on the world because it changes the world, and these effects always have an ethical aspect (Sonneveld, 2016). As a result of the widespread dissemination of ethical issues, ethics education is considered fundamental in the education of the next generation of both designers and engineers (Vilaza & Bækgaard, 2022).

The increased focus on ethics has developed in parallel with the rapid growth of technological improvements and capacity as a result of professions on a global scale establishing close contact and interaction through technological tools (Gray & Boling, 2016). In this context, it is possible to state the reason for the increased ethical problems in landscape design in recent years as a result of the inadequacy of ethical acquisitions in design education and the interaction with technology.

The most important characteristic of design education is that it focuses on skills on how to use versatile data inputs systematically in the design process (Altıparmakoğulları, 2022). University education does not only mean providing concrete knowledge to students, but rather focusing on what is difficult to define, and what is not certain. Abstract concepts such as intuition, common sense, emotional intelligence, ethics, sense of responsibility and justice, flexibility, and creativity come to the forefront in a world where uncertainty increases and education becomes individual and open-ended. Design

education, which is intertwined with abstract concepts, has a complex and contradictory structure that is comprehensive, open-ended, ambiguous, and difficult to define, understand, classify, and format. For this reason, architectural design education must be open-ended and methods must be developed to cope with its uncertainty (Yürekli & Yürekli, 2004). Recently, as a concept that is difficult to understand and open to discussion (Bozkurt, 2016), ethics has become an ambiguous and relative concept in landscape design education that does not have clear limits, varies according to students, and contains different interpretations and inferences. The reason for this can be explained as the lack of absolute and clear definitions of being ethical and behaving ethically in landscape design, known and applied by students. For this reason, ethical sensitivity and awareness must be acquired in design during the education process and placed within the informational framework.

The statement of Theodore Sturgeon “Ethics is not a fact to be sought, but a way of thinking” (Sturgeon, 1963) emphasizes that ethical values are a consciousness embedded in the way of thinking affecting actions of individuals, and this must be acquired through education. Ethical behaviours are based on the value system that individuals develop throughout their lives. The value system is formed by the combination of factors that are affected by each other, such as individual characteristics (gender, age), family, religious beliefs, social value system, education, and social, cultural, and economic characteristics (Akıncı Vural & Coşkun, 2011). Ethical awareness and ethical actions, which emerge through the interaction of many factors, are acquired through both informal education (family, social environment, mass media, etc.) and formal education (education curriculum). In this context, ethical values education is an integrated whole and must start in the family and be supported by education. With the combination of all these, values associated with professional ethics must be acquired as well. It is necessary to acquire design-related ethical values based on the designer’s ethical values during the design education process and then to raise awareness about sensitivity and professional ethics and put them into action (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** List of ethical values that the designer must acquire

Ethics emerges in the designers themselves, in their education, in their design actions, in their design products, between the designers and their customers, and the institution and society they work for (Ertürk, 2017). Recently, the issue of ethics in design has come to the forefront after the problems experienced at the education level, and efforts to prevent unethical and problematic actions in design are becoming widespread. Students are frequently faced with problems caused by ethical dilemmas and deviations in landscape design education. For this reason, it is necessary to examine and question the education curricula and to what extent ethics is included in the design of these curricula in landscape architecture.

Design courses start with Basic Design and continue with Landscape Design, Computer Aided Design, Planting Design, Special Purpose Design, and Project I, Project II, Project III, and Project IV courses in different semesters at Selçuk University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Landscape Architecture Department (Table 1). There is neither a course on ethics in the landscape architecture design education curriculum nor an integrated approach to design ethics. It is for this reason that design education has to contain for different approaches to teaching ethics and ethical behavior.

**Table 1.** Design courses at the Department of Landscape Architecture

Design Courses	Semester	Compulsory/ Optional
Basic Design	I. Semester	Compulsory course
Landscape Design	II. Semester	Compulsory course
Computer Aided Design	III. Semester	Compulsory course
Planting Design	IV. Semester	Compulsory course
Project I	V. Semester	Compulsory course
Project II	VI. Semester	Compulsory course
Project III	VII. Semester	Compulsory course
Special Purpose Design	VII. Semester	Optional course
Project IV	VIII. Semester	Compulsory course

The Professional Deontology course, which is an elective course in the eighth semester, is associated with professional ethics and does not have any content associated with design ethics and ethics in design education (Table 2). Also, raising awareness of ethical values and ethical-based responsibilities is not possible with professional ethics in design. The deontological approach sets some rules in a way that considers ethics a system of rules and tries to solve the complexities and conflicts in professional practice with these rules (Mutlu & Yoğurtçu, 2022). This causes a significant deficiency in terms of ethics in design education. Firstly, it may be more effective to provide students with ethical values, actions, and responsibilities in design at the undergraduate level, and then provide training on professional ethics.

**Table 2.** The purpose and content of The Professional Deontology course

The purpose of the course	The content of the course
The Professional Deontology	Deontology definition and concept
	Ethics definition and history, ethics regulation
	Principles of ethics (autonomy principle, the principle of beneficence, no harm principle, the principle of justice)
	Examination of moral teachings that assume people have certain duties
	Examination of duty and rules arising from moral teachings concrete projection in various professions
	Explaining the responsibilities and duties of landscape architects
	Explanation of moral values and ethical principles while applying the landscape architecture profession
	Ethical and legal problems and solution approaches in landscape architecture profession
	Recent developments in the profession of landscape architecture and ethical issues arising from them, and solution approaches
	General discussion on case study
The purpose of this course is to teach basic concepts of the main features of the code of ethics, code of ethics and rules of law relationship, ethics, work ethics, professional ethics, professional ethics and morals a variety of concepts and ethics.	

## 2. Method

In the present study, a mixed study design was adopted, combining qualitative (perceptual evaluation of facts) and quantitative (questionnaire and scale) study methods. Phenomenology focuses on describing and evaluating the experiences of individuals. The experiences, perceptions, and meanings of individuals about a phenomenon are revealed through phenomenology. Phenomenology comes from the philosophical tradition and is used to describe psychological reality by revealing the true

meaning of experiences (Onat Kocabıyık, 2015). Phenomenology was preferred as the method because ethics is a sub-discipline of philosophy and the field of study of axiology. In the present study, ethics was examined in terms of landscape design education. Phenomena emerge in different ways such as lived events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts, and situations. Phenomenology focuses on phenomena that are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). The phenomena in the present study were the ethical perceptions, ethical awareness, ethical behaviors, ethical preferences, ethical judgments, and ethical decision-making skills of students in the Department of Landscape Architecture. Based on these facts, it was explained how ethical education can be integrated into design education as learning objectives.

The present study was conducted with the voluntary participation (sample) of students (population) of Selçuk University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Landscape Architecture (Table 3). According to the qualitative and quantitative methods, students' ethical perceptions and ethical awareness, ethical behaviours, ethical preferences, ethical judgments, and ethical decision-making skills in the design process were examined. In the data collection stage, quantitative data were obtained with a questionnaire (closed-ended questions) and a 3-point Likert scale, and qualitative data was obtained with open-ended questions. The questionnaire form consisted of 2 questions that defined demographic characteristics, 2 closed-ended questions to determine ethical perception and awareness of ethical/unethical behaviours in design, and 3 open-ended questions with 20 propositions prepared following the 3-point Likert scale under the factors of ethical behaviours, ethical choice, ethical judgments, and ethical decision-making. Propositions regarding the facts are presented in a sequence. On one side, there are positive proposition options (always), which means accepting, agreeing, and supporting the phenomenon, and on the other side, negative proposition (never), meaning rejecting, disagreeing, and not supporting the phenomenon, on the other side. The middle value reflects agreement and disagreement (sometimes) with the phenomenon at the same time. A 3-point Likert scale was preferred so that students could give clear answers to propositions about facts because ethics is a difficult concept to evaluate.

Microsoft Excel program was used to organize the data obtained with the online questionnaire form, and the SPSS 21 (Statistical Package for the Social Science) statistical program was used to analyze the study data. Findings on students' gender and education levels are given with frequency distributions and percentage rates. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was calculated on the 3-point Likert scale, and the evaluation of the cases was also made with a percentage distribution. Open-ended questions were encoded and evaluated by the researcher. The questionnaire and scale were used as an electronic questionnaire between 10-30 January 2023. The purpose of the study and the fact that the data obtained would be used for scientific evaluation was explained to the students, and the students participated in the questionnaire voluntarily.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

The study was conducted with the voluntary participation of 149 students out of 199 students who were studying in the Department of Landscape Architecture. The distribution of the students who participated in the questionnaire according to their education levels is given in Table 3. Among the students who participated in the questionnaire, 74% were female and 26% were male (Table 3). This can be explained by the fact that the number of female students (148) in the department is more than that of male students (51). Also, studies do not show that there is a definitive connection between gender and ethical behaviours. The general perception is that women are more ethical than men, but contradictory results were reported in previous studies examining the effects of gender factors in the context of ethical decision-making. Although some studies reported that men tend to behave more ethically than women, other studies found that women exhibit more ethical behaviours than men. Some studies concluded that women and men make similar decisions regarding ethics and exhibit similar behaviours (Özen Kutanis et al., 2005).

**Table 3.** Education levels and participation rate of the students who participated in the questionnaire

Education levels	1st-grade	2nd-grade	3rd-grade	4th-grade	Total
Number of students	63	31	55	50	199
Number of students who participated in the questionnaire	47	20	42	40	149
Participation rate	75%	65%	76%	80%	75%

The students were asked “What does ethics mean to you?” to determine students’ perceptions about the ethics concept and were asked to choose the most appropriate definition among 5 ethical definitions. Within these definitions, the expression “it is a set of standards, values, and principles that guide the behaviours of individuals, institutions, and professionals and help determine good-bad and right-wrong” was given to meet the ethics concept. Although the students did not take any courses on ethics, 61.1% of the first graders, 63.8% of the second graders, 65% of the third graders, and 81% of the fourth graders chose the correct definition of ethics. The fact that students’ correct answers to the definition of ethics increased according to grades suggests that the level of ethical awareness increases as the level of education progresses. However, this can also be interpreted as students’ knowledge skills develop for ethical awareness that is not reflected in decisions and behaviours, but their ethical abilities do not develop in parallel (Kuçuradi, 2020) and they are at a general level of awareness about ethics. It is noteworthy that students associated ethics with the rules to be followed in business life at the lowest level at all levels of education (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Definitions of the ethics concept and students’ perception of ethics according to education level

Ethics definition	1st-grade	2nd-grade	3rd-grade	4th-grade
Forms of behaviors that result from individuals’ education, culture, and understanding of life.	26.5%	18.1%	23.5%	10.9%
A set of standards, values, and principles that guide the behaviors of individuals, institutions, and professionals and help determine good-bad and right-wrong.	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>63.8%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>81%</b>
They are written rules regulating social life.	8.3%	4.3%	5%	2.4%
The rules that must be followed in business life.	1.3%	2.3%	1.5%	1.2%
The rules of behaviors that individuals must comply with in society.	2.8%	11.5%	5%	4.5%

An evaluation was made according to the participation of the students in the propositions to determine the student’s ability to distinguish ethical and unethical behaviours in design. The high level of the answers to ethical behaviours, searching different ideas and designs according to educational levels (93.6% - 85% - 88.1% - 90%), examining others’ ideas and designs (76.6% - 90% - 85.3% - 90%), citing sources when using ideas and designs (87.2% - 90% - 83.8% - 92.5%), being inspired by others’ ideas and designs but creating own designs (76.6% - 85% - 71.4% - 90%) suggests that they can distinguish between ethical and unethical behaviours at all levels of education (Table 5). However, despite this awareness, it is up to the students’ initiative to make ethical choices and act ethically by showing ethical sensitivity in the designs. This prevents knowledge from turning into action and being reflected in behaviours. For this reason, students must be supported and their awareness must be increased about ethical choices and behaviors during the design education process.

The propositions “presenting others’ ideas and designs as their own”, “using others’ ideas and designs exactly” and “making sloppy designs” were described as unethical behaviours by the students who participated in the study (Table 5). The propositions “using others’ ideas and designs after changing

them”, “bringing together others’ ideas and designs and presenting them as a novel design”, and “using the same design in different places” are situations where it is difficult to make a clear distinction in terms of ethics. For this reason, it is natural that students cannot make a clear distinction between these propositions. “Having a student or a professional design and draw a project for money” (4.3% - 15% - 0% - 0%) and “Having another student design and draw a project for money” (4.3% - 20% - 2.4% - 2.5%) were situations that made ethical evaluation difficult. Despite this, students’ agreement with these propositions was quite low (Table 5). Each individual’s perception of ethics, the meanings they associate the ethics concept with, and their interpretation of ethics might be different. For this reason, ethical thoughts and behaviours vary according to individuals, socio-cultural characteristics, events, situations, and time (Akıncı Vural & Coşkun, 2011).

**Table 5.** Awareness of ethical and unethical behaviors in design

<b>Ethical/Unethical Behaviors in Design</b>	<b>1st-grade</b>	<b>2nd-grade</b>	<b>3rd-grade</b>	<b>4th-grade</b>
Searching for different ideas and designs	<b>93.6%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Presenting others’ ideas and designs as one’s own	0%	0%	0%	0%
Examining other people’s ideas and designs	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Using other people’s ideas and designs one-to-one	0%	0%	0%	0%
Using other people’s ideas and designs after changing them	17%	40%	21.4%	35%
Citing sources when using others’ ideas and designs	<b>87.2%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>92.5%</b>
Combining other people’s ideas and designs to present them as a novel design	6.4%	10%	7.1%	10%
Using the same design in different places	14.9%	10%	7.1%	17.5%
Making sloppy designs	0%	0%	0%	0%
Being inspired by others’ ideas and designs but creating one’s design	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>90%</b>
Having a design and project drawn by a student or professional in return for money	4.3%	15%	0%	0%
Making another student’s design and drawing his/her project in return for money	4.3%	20%	2.4%	2.5%

Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) were calculated for the reliability analysis in the ethical behaviours, ethical preferences, ethical decision-making, and ethical judgment scales used in the study, and the reliability level was determined (Table 6). The purpose of the present study was not to develop a scale, but the reliability coefficient and level of the scales were determined and the evaluation of the scales was made according to percentage rates.

**Table 6.** Reliability coefficients of ethical behaviors, ethical choice, ethical decision-making, and ethical judgment scales

<b>Scales</b>	<b>Measuring range</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha (α)</b>	<b>Confidence Interval</b>
Ethical behaviors	3-point scale	5	0.620	Low Reliability
Ethical choice	3-point scale	5	0.646	Low Reliability
Ethical decision making	3-point scale	3	0.804	High Reliability
Ethical judgments	3-point scale	7	0.737	Medium Reliability



Students were asked to rate the given propositions with a 3-point Likert scale to determine the ethical behaviors of the students in the design process, and an evaluation was made on 2 ethical behaviors and 3 unethical behaviors in design. According to the results of the analysis, 48.9% of 1st-grade students said always, 45% of 2nd-grade students said sometimes, 59.5% of 3rd-grade students said always, and 55% of 4th-grade students said sometimes accepted others' opinions, and said that they did not find it appropriate to use others' designs. Students at all learning levels agreed that when using others' ideas and designs, the source must always be cited (85.1% - 85% - 81% - 80%). A total of 95.7% of 1st-grade students, all 2nd-grade and 3rd-grade students, and 85% of 4th-grade students said that they did not use others' ideas and designs as if they were their own. Students sometimes "used other people's ideas and designs after changing them" (59.6% - 80% - 64.3% - 67.5%) and "tried to fit others' ideas and designs together by bringing them together" (51.1% - 60% - 42.9% - 67.5%) (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Ethical behaviors of students in the design process

Ethical Behaviors in the Design Process	1st-grade	2nd-grade	3rd-grade	4th-grade	Scale
I do not find it appropriate to use other people's ideas and designs.	6.4%	25%	4.8%	20%	Never
	44.7%	<b>45%</b>	35.7%	<b>55%</b>	Sometimes
	<b>48.9%</b>	30%	<b>59.5%</b>	25%	Always
When other people's ideas and designs are used, they must be cited as sources.	2.1%	0%	2.4%	0%	Never
	12.8%	15%	16.7%	20%	Sometimes
	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>Always</b>
I use other people's ideas and designs as if they were my own.	<b>95.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>Never</b>
	2.1%	0%	0%	12.5%	Sometimes
	2.1%	0%	0%	2.5%	Always
I use other people's ideas and designs after modifying them.	38.3%	10%	26.2%	22.5%	Never
	<b>59.6%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	2.1%	10%	9.5%	10%	Always
I try to bring other people's ideas and designs together and make them fit together.	44.7%	35%	54.8%	25%	Never
	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	4.3%	5%	2.4%	7.5%	Always

Ethical actions and virtues are considered together with making a choice, which is determined "by the mind" and directs the individual to the idea of "being in the middle" (Mutlu, 2009). The ethical choices of students in the design process show that they experience ethical dilemmas, depending on their educational levels. Students said that they always preferred to develop their ideas and designs (83% - 80% - 83.3% - 75%), and sometimes examined the ideas and designs of others but preferred not to use them (51.1% - 70% - 47.6% - 72.5%). Students also said that they did not prefer to use others' ideas and designs (74.5% - 55% - 76.2% - 65%). Despite this, students sometimes made designs inspired by others' ideas and designs (72.3% - 60% - 69% - 72.5%), and using others' ideas and designs contributed to their learning (55.3% - 45% - 52.4% - 47.5%) (Table 8).

Ethical judgment ability requires the individual to be able to distinguish between right and wrong and to internalize ethical values. Although the ethical perception and judgment ability of each individual are different (Dönmez et al., 2022), students at all education levels gave common answers to ethical judgment propositions at different levels. The fact that students were not affected by others' ideas and designs (51.1% - 65% - 83.3% - 75%) but also felt uncomfortable (74.5% - 50% - 76.2% - 47.5%) and guilty (70.2% - 40% - 71.4% - 42.5%) shows that there is a conflict between conscientious aspects and individual ethical values (Table 9).

**Table 8.** Students’ ethical choices in the design process

Ethical Preferences in the Design Process	1st-grade	2nd-grade	3rd-grade	4th-grade	Scale
I prefer to develop my ideas and designs.	0%	0%	0%	2.5%	Never
	17%	20%	16.7%	22.5%	Sometimes
	<b>83%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>Always</b>
I examine other people’s ideas and designs but choose not to use them.	4.3%	0%	4.8%	5%	Never
	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>47.6%</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	44.7%	30%	47.6%	22.5%	Always
I prefer to use other people’s ideas and designs.	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>Never</b>
	25.5%	45%	23.8%	35%	Sometimes
	0%	0%	0%	0%	Always
I design based on other people’s ideas and designs.	17%	15%	31%	12.5%	Never
	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	10.6%	25%	0%	15%	Always
Using other people’s ideas and designs contributes to my learning.	21.3%	10%	31%	7.5%	Never
	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	23.4%	45%	16.7%	45%	Always

**Table 9.** Students’ ethical judgments in the design process

Ethical Judgments in the Design Process	1st-grade	2nd-grade	3rd-grade	4th-grade	Scale
Using other people’s ideas and designs does not affect me in any way.	40.4%	30%	14.3%	15%	Never
	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	8.5%	5%	2.4%	10%	Always
I feel uncomfortable when using other people’s ideas and designs.	2.1%	15%	7.1%	22.5%	Never
	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>76.2%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	31.9%	35%	16.7%	30%	Always
I feel guilty when using other people’s ideas and designs.	4.3%	25%	11.9%	25%	Never
	<b>70.2%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	25.5%	35%	16.7%	32.5%	Always

Ethical decision-making is defined as a logical process involving how to decide on the most morally correct action through systematic thinking in a situation where there are contradictory and conflicting options (Berggren & Severinsson, 2006). Ethical decision-making is a choice process, which is affected by the personal characteristics of the individual. According to educational status, students gave different levels of common answers to the propositions in terms of ethical decision-making skills (Table 10). These results may not reflect the truth, as individuals tend to hide their unwanted behaviors/mistakes. The students’ answers support the propositions, but their actions during the design process differ, which is the starting point of the study. However, the results obtained still show that students’ ethical decision-making skills have improved, but they are not reflected in their behaviors or they do not know how to reflect it.

**Table 10.** Students’ ethical decision-making skills in the design process

I examine others’ ideas and designs during the design process because...	1st-grade	2nd-grade	3rd-grade	4th-grade	Scale
they will affect me.	29.8%	40%	40.5%	42.5%	Never
	<b>59.6%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	10.6%	0%	4.8%	5%	Always
I just examine them and ignore them.	4.3%	15%	28.1%	37.5%	Never
	<b>61.7%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	34%	5%	23.8%	10%	Always
I examine them to develop a solution.	6.4%	10%	4.8%	10%	Never
	42.6%	35%	31%	37.5%	Sometimes
	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>Always</b>
I apply them one on one.	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>88.1%</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>Never</b>
	0%	0%	9.5%	17.5%	Sometimes
	0%	0%	2.4%	0%	Always
I make them like a novel design by making small changes.	<b>68.1%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>Never</b>
	27.7%	20%	38.1%	35%	Sometimes
	4.3%	10%	7.1%	10%	Always
I make them like a novel design by making major changes.	29.8%	25%	23.8%	12.5%	Never
	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>
	21.3%	15%	26.2%	25%	Always
I combine multiple designs to make them like a novel design.	<b>55.3%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>Never</b>
	34%	30%	45.2%	57.5%	Sometimes
	10.6%	10%	4.8%	10%	Always

In the question, “Why would you use other people’s ideas and designs in the design process?”, the students were asked to choose 5 of the options that suited them. The word “inspiration”, which means “to be inspired by something”, was not specifically used in this question because inspiration, which has a very important place as the starting point of the design process, is defined as the blending and shaping of the data obtained as a result of a deep study about the source of inspiration in the designer’s self and transforming it into an original product or project (Gürçüm & Kartal, 2018), although it is clearly defined in the design. It is not easy to determine its limits and distinguish between inspiration-imitation-stolen. For this reason, it is very difficult to be sure that whether a student or a professional designer, stay on the right side of inspiration and create projects that are original and make a difference in design.

It is seen in Table 11 that the first reason for using others’ ideas and designs at all education levels is because they feel inadequate (74.5% - 75% - 83.3% and 80%). First graders said that they use the internet in the second place because they can easily access different ideas and designs (42.6%) and in the third place because they have limited time (38.3%). Second Graders come in second because they like other people’s ideas and designs or think they are better (40%), in third place because time is limited (35%), if they have difficulty making a design (35%) and because what is explained in the course is not enough (35%). Third Graders said that they used it secondly because they had limited time (50%) and thirdly because they liked other people’s ideas and designs or thought they were better (47.6%). Fourth graders said that they used it when they had difficulty in making designs in the second place

(45.7%) and in the third place, they used it because they liked other people’s ideas and designs or thought they were better (42.9%) (Table 11). Designing and creating the form involves a difficult process in the design phenomenon that includes dynamic variables. Students and young designers cause disruptions in design culture by copying the data and images they see, especially on social media, which has become widespread in recent years (Uluçay Özsvaş, 2017). In parallel with technological developments, the rapid production and dissemination of data, easier access to data, and increased competitive environment sometimes lead to the emergence of originality and ethical problems in design. In such a case, the correct use of technology and technological opportunities also requires ethical behaviors in landscape design. Artificial intelligence applications, which have become increasingly widespread in recent times, ethical concerns arise in tandem with technological innovation.

**Table 11.** Reasons why the students use others’ ideas and designs

<b>Reasons to use other people’s ideas and designs</b>	<b>1st-grade</b>	<b>2nd-grade</b>	<b>3rd-grade</b>	<b>4th-grade</b>
I use them because they provide convenience.	25.5%	30%	19%	28.6%
I use them because time is limited.	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>50%</b>	40%
If my friends use them, I use them too.	0%	0%	0%	5.7%
I use them to obtain high grades.	21.3%	5%	7.1%	2.9%
I use them because I feel inadequate.	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>80%</b>
I use the internet because I can easily access different ideas and designs.	<b>42.6%</b>	30%	23.8%	37.1%
I use other people’s ideas and designs because I like them/I think they are better.	34%	<b>40%</b>	<b>47.6%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>
I use them if I have difficulty making a novel design.	25.5%	<b>35%</b>	38.1%	<b>45.7%</b>
I use them because what is taught in class is not sufficient.	36.2%	<b>35%</b>	33.3%	34.3%
I use them because the faculty member teaching the course supports it.	17%	25%	33.3%	22.9%

The best way to explain a situation is to enable the students to understand the situation better by experiencing the behaviors s/he is doing to someone else. Understanding other people’s emotions, feelings and behaviors is also a key skill in the whole life. It can enable to resolve conflicts, ethical dilemmas, and deviations. Ethics and empathy act as a moral compass that steers students in their actions and discussions on personal and educational issues. Empathy is an important determinant of ethical behavior, and a necessary building block in creating students who have ethical values and behaviors. To develop empathy, students were asked open-ended questions “What would you think, how would you feel, what would you do if your ideas and designs were used by others?” With these questions, the purpose was for them to make perceptual evaluations, in other words, experiential judgments about ethical behaviors and preferences. In this way, they realized the unethical situation that the behavior they committed to developing their designs unknowingly created, and revealed the situation they faced and the reactions they would give when the same behavior was directed at them (Figure 2). Students said very strictly and firmly that they would take measures to seek and protect their rights when unethical behaviors were directed toward their work.



Figure 2. Students' reactions when their ideas and designs were used by others

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The results of the present study, which included the evaluations of the ethics concept in terms of landscape design education, were discussed within the framework of the philosophical discourse based on ethos (style of existence, way of living, character, personality trait, habit), which is the root of the word ethics. People frequently associate ethical issues with philosophical problems and include the ethical dimension in the philosophy dimension. However, the dimension of ethics exceeds the scope of philosophy. The ethical dimension is the way people "do something right", but "doing something right" is not only an ethical matter but also a matter of practice (Wenming, 2018). Ethical principles must be adopted in design and internalized by designers, reflected in decisions and actions, and rooted in curricula and professional practice processes, instead of legalization and sanctions. In this context, how ethical principles will be reflected in behaviors and practice is the most important part and must be acquired during the education process.

Based on the developments in design, planning, production, and communication technologies, the use of rapidly produced and widely distributed data affects the individual, society, economy, culture, politics, and nature, requiring the designer to ethically question his actions and decisions in the design process and practices. A fully integrated approach to ethics in landscape design education does not exist to establish the ethics concept as a way of thinking and to provide ethical sensitivity and awareness to students in the education process. Instead of teaching ethics as a separate course in design education, an integrated approach is necessary throughout the undergraduate education curriculum. Ethics education is given as a separate course called Professional Ethics or Professional Deontology in landscape architecture departments. Acting ethically in the design process is up to the students' initiative, which often leads to a weak awareness of ethics in their designs.

No official documents are available revealing responsibilities based on ethical codes, rules, and principles regarding landscape design in Turkey. There are no precise and clear definitions of being ethical or acting ethically in landscape design applied and adopted by designers. For this reason, the ethics concept in landscape design has become a relative concept that varies from person to person and includes different interpretations and inferences. When faced with ethical dilemmas and deviations often experienced in landscape design, designers act according to their ethical values (Çelik, 2018). The problems in professional actions also manifest themselves in the design education process. While students develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding design, their ethical abilities

must also be developed simultaneously. The knowledge, skills, abilities, and critical thinking acquired through different ways of thinking and seeing during the design education process will be the basis for the development of ethical sensitivity and awareness. When an environment that fosters ethical values is created on this basis prepared during design education, ethical sensitivity, and awareness will develop spontaneously.

According to Mistikoğlu et al. (2017), the targets of ethics education in design are as follows.

- To increase awareness about ethics,
- To develop the desire to behave ethically,
- To ensure that the principles of ethical behaviors are learned,
- To improve ethical decision-making,
- To provide skills for solving ethical problems.

Ethics has long been a part of design, and it has been examined how designer student candidates interact with ethics during the education process. In design, ethics is about moral behaviors and responsible choices in design practice (Schloesser, 2022). As a result of the increased ethical problems, ethics education is considered fundamental for training the next generation of designers and engineers (Stahl & Eke, 2024). Design students' learning experiences in college-level curricula play a major role in shaping their careers. The approaches and underlying philosophies to which students are exposed can lead to specific opportunities in the field and help shape their mindsets as practitioners. There is also increasing student and institutional interest in educational programs that address issues of ethics in practice. This situation often presents educators with the challenge of incorporating such issues into existing design curricula (Nini, 2020).

The purpose of ethical education is to enable students to make ethical judgments for themselves. According to the results of this research, it is explained how ethics in design courses and ethics education can be integrated into design courses were explained to provide ethical sensitivity and awareness to students in landscape design education. An "Ethics in Design" course can be added, ethical approaches can be discussed in design courses, information about ethical issues can be provided on the faculty website, and an education strategy can be developed that enables educators to set an example to raise ethical awareness and sensitivity in design education.

**Addition of the "Ethics in Design" course:** The "Ethics in Design" course can be added to undergraduate courses in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> semesters. Within the scope of this course, the ethics concept and morality, ethical/unethical behaviors and practices, achievements of ethical behaviors, and responsibilities of designers (responsibilities towards themselves, users, society, environment, and other designers) in design can be explained. The good-bad and right-wrong aspects of the interaction of students with each other and with other designers can also be explained and evaluated in terms of concepts such as conscience and responsibility and presented for discussion. Ethics education in design can also be given within the scope of examining the ethical problems faced during and after the design process because design education takes place through experiencing the design process and action.

According to axiology, when it is desired to produce some kind of value, a broad, deep, and solid foundation of knowledge is necessary, and to reach such knowledge, the rules containing ethical values must be understood. In design, ethical values education must aim to create a culture in which unethical behaviors and actions will not occur. A more effective approach would be to establish the idea that acting ethically will give designer qualities such as dignity, honesty, accuracy, and reliability rather than revealing and punishing unethical behaviors and actions during the design education process.

**Discussing ethical approaches in design courses:** The designer's way of thinking, decisions, and actions are decisive in behaving ethically in design and are greatly affected by individual ethical values, which are acquired through informal education and formal education. For this reason, firstly, students' value systems and individual ethical values must be developed and uncovered. Perceiving and interpreting these values is the result of the ethical instinct that individuals have because the virtues possessed by individuals are shaped within social life (Dinçeli, 2017). It can use an approach where explanatory and complementary contents related to ethics are threaded through the various design courses in the

Department of Landscape Architecture so that they can be strengthened and reinforced over time. An educational approach can be developed to uncover the skills to help students use their own values and individual ethical values in the design process and actions. In each design course, unethical situations and behaviors specific to the project topic can be explained and students can be made aware. The choices made from the beginning to the end of the design process can be evaluated in terms of the effects and consequences that may emerge. In design courses, ethical analysis and discussions can be effective in gaining and developing ethical thoughts and actions by questioning the importance, effects, and results of the designs made by students. Students who try to foresee the importance, effects, and future outcomes of their designs can act more responsibly during the design process. If a professional ethics course is provided after these achievements, it will be more effective in professional life. Instilling ethical values and awareness in design education will make it easier for students to decide how they must behave on their own after graduation.

**Information on the website:** The ethical decision-making process is affected by the structural characteristics of the institution in which students work as well as their characteristics. In this context, as well as designing courses, data that contain the definition and explanation of unethical behaviours in design can be provided to students on the faculty and department web pages. Considering that there is the interaction between students in different departments of the same department or even the same faculty, students can be made aware of ethical/unethical behaviours in design by providing data on the web page.

**Training of educators:** Of course, the acquisition and sustainability of ethical awareness is a condition that comes with experience and seniority, but the problems faced in this respect indicate that there is confusion in teaching ethical rules to students (Dikici, 2021). To raise designers who have ethical awareness in design, exhibit ethical actions, and are sensitive to ethical problems, educators must first have these qualifications. Educators' display of ethical actions in the educational process and their work can contribute to designer student candidates' learning by taking role models.

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The article has a single author and there is no conflict of interest.

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