

Ethical Review of Teachers' Relations with the School Environment

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The aim of this study was to examine the relationship of teachers with the school environment from an ethical perspective, according to teachers' opinions. In this research, a case study design from the qualitative research method was used. The research data were obtained through face-to-face interviews with 20 teachers working in Sultanbeyli, Pendik, and Kartal districts of Istanbul. The data collection tool of the research was the semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers. The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using the descriptive analysis technique, and the participants' opinions were gathered under five themes (ethical behaviors of teachers, ethical decision making, increasing ethical sensitivity, unethical behaviors, and the harms of unethical behaviors). Because of the research, it was determined that the ethical competencies of teachers should be increased, that teachers should be role models for their followers, and that they should have several ethical competencies. Additionally, the study identified that teachers engaged in some unethical behaviors that negatively impacted the environment and students. For teachers to make ethical decisions in their relations with the environment, it is considered important that decision makers implement policies that function to increase their ethical awareness level.

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INTRODUCTION

Every system lives in an environment and can survive as long as it is compatible with its environment. Every system has a general and special environment. The general environment of the school system is the society in which it operates. The special environment of the school is the other organizations from which it receives inputs, to which it sends its graduates, and by which it influences and is influenced (Başaran, 2000). As an open social system, the school receives inputs from its environment, processes these inputs, and gives outputs to the environment (Yalçınkaya, 2002). Therefore, schools can only achieve their goals if they are in effective communication with their environment.

Teaching is a profession with the highest level of human relations and ethical principles based on moral responsibilities. Teachers are expected not only to teach in the education process but also to set an example for students, parents, and other stakeholders by setting an exemplary life and behavior (Özen & Durkan, 2016). Some areas of study need to be researched on teachers' ethical behaviors. These areas seek answers to the ethical challenges that teachers will face, whether they will behave ethically when they lack knowledge about ethical principles, and the clear criteria that teachers will refer to in making ethical decisions (Arthur, Davison & Lewis, 2005). The search for ethical criteria that all human beings should refer to in their behavior has been ongoing for centuries. The science of ethics attempts to take a systematic approach to the relationship between appropriate and inappropriate, good and bad phenomena among living beings to increase the welfare of individuals by making inquiries about how people should live (Bendik-Keymer, 2013; Mahony, 2009; Rich, 2016).

Ethics works to research and understand a life that is based on people's happiness and that everyone wants. The science of ethics develops a perspective on dilemmas such as what and how people should do, what they should or should not want, and what they should or should not have (Aydın, 2017). The science of ethics provides resources for people to make moral choices by listening to the voice of conscience in right-wrong, beautiful-ugly, good-bad, and positive-negative dilemmas (Uzun & Elma, 2012). It can be said that ethics is a concept used more in the philosophical field and focuses on standards related to the rules and principles of life together, while morality has a meaning that emphasizes daily experiences (Levent, 2022).

Professional ethics means that a person has a responsibility toward both his/her profession and the people he/she serves. In other words, professional ethics is to act according to the predetermined rules of the profession (Mahmutoğlu, 2009). The teaching profession is an ethical profession with intense human relations and moral responsibilities. Ethics in the teaching profession is the set of responsibilities, rules, and principles that must be fulfilled in relationships with students, society, and colleagues while practicing the

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teaching profession (Atayman, 2005). For example, public servants need to be morally accountable, transparent, and accessible to gain public trust (Gökçe & Levent, 2022). Teachers' accountability, transparency, and accessibility is also one of the requirements of being a professional (Sockett, 1990). Transparency can also help eliminate unethical behaviors and social problems by contributing to the education of responsible students in society (Karaevli & Levent, 2014).

As a professional, a teacher is aware of the need to maintain virtues such as fairness, caution, reliability, responsibility, honesty, and courage in daily life (NEA, 2019). Teachers' behaviors are critical in strengthening the moral infrastructure of their students and helping them exhibit ethical behaviors. Teachers ensure that the people who follow them, especially their students, are prepared for a virtuous life and have good thoughts (Campbell, 2013). Students are likely to be influenced by the behavior of the teachers they admire. The qualities that students admire are tolerance, clarity and fairness, reasonableness and willingness to explain things, mildness, kindness, respect, and sensitivity to students' wants and needs (Taylor, 2000).

Teachers should respect the nature of knowledge, respect professional knowledge, skills, and experience, have moral courage that demonstrates independence of mind and action, protect and respect students' interests, develop students' self-esteem, promote social solidarity, prevent abuse of a group or any individual, respect students' families and social situations, avoid offending students with their words, ensure equality of opportunity in education by considering sociological diversity, take responsibility for creating long-term effects in students' lives, accept that they may make mistakes in their knowledge and behavior, be humble, work in collaboration with colleagues, and accept that they can learn together as a team (Gardner, Cairns & Lawton (2000). In addition, teachers should have intellectual integrity, take responsibility for their behavior, and be characterized by honor and dignity, kindness and tact, compassion and kindness, respect, truthfulness and honesty, love, sensitivity and tenderness, enthusiasm and enthusiasm, diligence, impartiality, fairness, flexibility, loyalty, moderation and temperance, tolerance and permissiveness, trustworthiness, honor, helpfulness, modesty and humility, responsibility, and confidentiality (Davison & Lewis, 2005).

In recent years, there has been an increase in studies on ethics and professional ethics due to increasing social and youth problems (Campbell, 2013; Erdem & Şimşek, 2013; Bendik-Keymer, 2013; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016; Rich, 2016; Mahony, 2009; Karataş et al., 2019; Uzun & Elma, 2012). Although ethical debates are as old as the history of humanity, research in this field is still up to date (Warnick & Silverman, 2011). The fact that all human behaviors are closely related to the phenomenon of ethics and the need to examine the reasons underlying the behaviors exhibited by individuals and professionals increases the interest of ethical philosophers and researchers at every age. Each professional field also wants to determine the professional ethical criteria that are accepted by its employees by their age. Professions want ethical principles to guide them to reinforce the public's trust in them through the implementation of professional ethics and to bring the profession to the best (Karataş, et al., 2019). In this context, it is understood that in-depth research should be conducted today, as it has been throughout the ages, on what the professional ethical principles of teachers should be. In a changing world, the ethical principles that individuals and professions should have, the expectations of society from individuals and organizations, and the changes in the roles of professional employees such as teachers are among the continuous research topics of social scientists. This research will also contribute to the educational content of teachers' ethics education and the decisions taken regarding the teaching profession. This study examines teachers' relations with their environment from an ethical perspective and determines the ethical principles that teachers and the teaching profession should have based on their views.

METHOD

Research Design

In this study, a case study, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Qualitative research involves analyzing and interpreting texts and interviews to discover meaningful patterns that describe a particular

phenomenon (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). In this study, a case study, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. In case studies, a particular situation (events, individuals, or groups) is examined in depth and the focus is on the elements that affect or are affected by the situation (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). This study can be considered a case study in the sense that it examines teachers' views on the subject in depth to examine their relations with the school environment in terms of ethics.

Study Group

To examine the ethical aspects of teachers' communication with their environment, data were collected from 20 teachers working in Sultanbeyli, Pendik, and Kartal districts of Istanbul. While determining the study group for the research, the maximum diversity sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used. In the process of determining the study group, care should be taken to determine different situations that will reflect the sample by considering the purpose of the research (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). This sampling method was preferred to discover and define various themes related to the method, event, and phenomenon (Neuman, 2014). While determining the participant teachers, diversity was ensured by considering the gender, age, education level, and professional seniority of the teachers. The demographic characteristics of the teachers participating in the study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of teachers in the study group

Variables	Groups	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	12	60
	Female	8	40
Age	20-25	2	10
	26-30	8	40
	31-35	4	20
	36-40	4	20
	41-45	2	10
Level of education	Bachelor's degree	10	50
	Master's Degree	8	40
	PhD	2	10
Professional seniority	1-10	2	10
	11-15	10	50
	16-20	4	20
	20-30	4	20

As shown in Table 1, 12 of the participant teachers were male and 8 were female. According to age characteristics, 2 of them are 20-25 years old, 8 of them are 26-30 years old, 4 of them are 31-35 years old, 4 of them are 36-40 years old, and 2 of them are 41 and above. In terms of education level, 10 of them have bachelor's degrees, 8 have master's degrees, and 2 have doctorate degrees. In terms of professional seniority, 2 of them have 1-10 years, 10 of them have 11-15 years, 4 of them have 16-20 years, and 4 of them have 20-30 years of seniority.

Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview form was developed by the researchers to examine teachers' communication with their environment from an ethical perspective. This form first includes questions about demographic characteristics (gender, age, education level, professional seniority). In the second part, questions about the aims of the study were included. In the creation of the semi-structured interview form, a question pool was created to ensure content validity. In addition, additional questions (probes) were prepared to clarify the interview questions in case they were not understood by the participant teachers. To determine whether the interview questions served the purpose of the study, the opinions of four faculty members who are experts in the field of educational administration and measurement and evaluation in education were

obtained. According to the opinions of the experts, the questions that needed to be corrected were corrected and the form was finalized. The following are the questions in the semi-structured form that was shaped after the final arrangements were made:

- i.* What are the ethical principles of the teaching profession? What ethical behaviors do you think teachers should adopt?
- ii.* What are your thoughts on whether teacher behaviors are in line with professional ethical principles?
- iii.* What ethical responsibilities do teachers have toward the profession, school administrators, parents, and others?
- iv.* What ethical considerations do you think teachers should consider when deciding on a topic?
- v.* What are your thoughts on the harm that a teacher who does not act in accordance with ethical principles will cause to her environment?
- vi.* What unethical practices are teachers exposed to in the disciplinary and supervisory processes they encounter in their professional life? What are the ethical practices to be considered in audit processes?
- vii.* What types of studies should be conducted to increase the ethical competence of teachers and gain ethical sensitivity?

To understand whether the interview form was suitable for the study, two teachers were interviewed as pilot interviews to test whether the questions were correctly understood by the participants, and it was decided that the questions were understood by the participants. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with 20 teachers working in the Sultanbeyli, Pendik, and Kartal districts of Istanbul at the beginning of the spring semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. Interviews with the participants were recorded with a voice recorder on a voluntary basis with the permission of the teachers. The interviews lasted approximately 25–30 min, and the interview records were computerized. Necessary permissions were obtained from the Aksaray University Human Research Ethics Committee for data collection.

Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis technique was used to analyze the data obtained in this study. While analyzing the data obtained from the interviews, a descriptive analysis technique based on a deductive approach was used because there is a certain literature on the participant teachers' relations with the school environment. In the descriptive analysis, the data obtained were interpreted according to predetermined themes. Descriptive analysis consists of four stages: creating a framework for analysis, processing the data according to the thematic framework, describing the findings, and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this study, these stages were followed during the descriptive analysis. First, a thematic framework for data analysis was created on the basis of interview questions prepared according to the conceptual framework. Then, the data obtained according to the thematic framework were organized as a meaningful whole.

Validity and Reliability Study

Recently, it has been emphasized that scientific studies should be evidence-based. It is possible to state that evidence-based, valid, and reliable studies have scientific value. The validity and reliability of the studies differ according to the methods and techniques used. In this context, the validity and reliability of qualitative research should be handled differently from quantitative research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In qualitative research, the competence of the researchers plays a critical role in the emergence of findings as the subjects are examined in depth. Therefore, for the credibility of the study, the researchers' perspectives on the events should be clearly revealed (Cresswell, 2012).

Internal validity is the truthfulness of qualitative research or its ability to reveal facts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this research process, the study was conducted by considering the scientific research process to ensure truthfulness and credibility, and the findings obtained were compared with other research findings. To ensure diversity, people with different characteristics were included in the study depending on the type

of sample selected, and data diversity was attempted. To increase validity, importance was placed on obtaining participant confirmation. For participant confirmation, the statements of the interviewees were transferred to a word document, and it was compared whether the statements were consistent with what they wanted to say. Partial revisions were made as a result of feedback from the participants. To ensure credibility, the research process was discussed in detail. The data collection tool, demographic characteristics of the participants, and data collection and analysis processes are described in detail. While conveying the findings, credibility was enhanced by including statements with different opinions in the themes. To ensure the accuracy of the narrative, when the study was finalized, it was read by another academician who is an expert in the field, and a few minor adjustments were made as a result of their feedback.

The findings obtained in scientific research are expected to be generalizable and the research results are expected to be reproducible in similar settings, but the situation is slightly different in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In qualitative research, generalizability is replaced by transferability or transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To increase the transferability/transferability value of this research, the processes followed in the research, the type and number of samples, and other detailed descriptions of the environment in which the research was conducted were made. This contributed to both credibility and transferability. To confirm whether external validity was ensured, the issues that should be checked to increase validity, as suggested by Miles et al. (2014), were reviewed and tested for suitability in this study. In qualitative research, the processes followed by the researchers and detailed descriptions of these processes are necessary to ensure reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this study, detailed descriptions were provided in all steps, and the reliability value was increased. On the other hand, to increase reliability, the categorization of the data obtained and whether the themes and sub-themes represent the theme to which they belong were reviewed, and expert opinion was consulted in this context. An expert in the field was asked to read the answers, place the participants' answers in the themes and sub-themes listed by the researcher, and review the consistency of the results. At this stage, Miles and Huberman's (2016) reliability formula was used. This formula calculates "Reliability = Consensus + Disagreement". When calculated according to this formula, the themes and sub-themes in this study show more than 90% agreement.

FINDINGS

Information on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with the teachers participating in the study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Categories related to themes and subthemes*

Ethical behaviors of Teachers	Efficient use of resources, reliability and honesty, sincerity, universality, patriotism, responsibility, confidentiality, role modeling, empathy, tolerance, respect, love, professionalism, and justice
Ethical decision making	Confidentiality, consistency, legality, transparency, organizational benefit, honesty, fairness, principled behavior, good faith, impartiality,, and fitness for purpose
Increasing ethical sensitivity	Social activities, Ministry of National Education studies; ethical framework, sanctions, in-service training, case studies, encouragement of exemplary behavior, and academic incentives
Unethical behaviors	Profiteering, insulting, offending students, tutoring, neglecting one 's duties, misrepresentation, using students in personal affairs, political activities, taking the easy way out, rationalizing, and attributing personal mistakes to the profession
Unethical elements in the supervision system	Lack of supervision, the appointment process, personalized practices and misconduct
Harmful effects of unethical behavior	Harmful effects on the organization, harmful effects on society, harmful effects on individuals, harmful effects on the teaching profession, and harmful effects on the country

Teachers' Ethical awarenesses

According to the data obtained from the teachers, the participants had different opinions on the ethical awareness levels of the teachers.

Accordingly, some of the participants think that teachers do not have a certain ethical understanding (7/20), while others (8/20) think that teachers have an ethical understanding.

Some quotations regarding these opinions are shown below.

Although teachers are aware of the ethical rules related to their profession, I think that the majority of them are unsuccessful in implementing them. (P1)

When we think of a person who should be an example, it is very bad that people who lie, act biased, give importance to money and gifts, are not honest and sincere, waste time, and even lack empathy are teachers. It is a great gain to have teachers with good character, but there are very few of them. (P2)

Although most teachers try their best to comply with these ethical principles, one wrong leads to ten right. In other words, those who accept the profession have adopted ethical principles as a motto for themselves. (P9)

Regarding the compliance of teachers' behaviors with professional ethical principles, I believe that most teachers should receive training in professional ethics. When general ethical behaviors are examined, I witness ethical behavior disorder in many of my teacher friends. (P10)

Teachers' Ethical behaviors

According to the teachers, there are some ethical principles that teachers should follow due to the nature of the profession. These ethical principles are as follows:

Using resources efficiently: Teachers should use the various resources they use in the education process efficiently. Effective use of resources is important for providing an effective classroom environment.

In fact, the teaching profession is critical in terms of raising people, the most important resource of a country, in every field. If the human resources of a country are shaped in the hands of teachers, then we should think very seriously and train teachers first in line with what kind of human resources are needed, and very serious sanctions should be imposed on those who step out of line regarding the ethical issues of the profession. (P1)

When a teacher enters a classroom, he or she becomes the manager of the resources in that classroom. These can sometimes be material resources and sometimes moral resources. A good teacher should use these resources correctly. If a teacher can analyze the character differences of the students in his/her class well and use them correctly, he/she has created an effective classroom environment. (P8)

Reliability: A significant number of participants (14/20) stated that teachers should be trustworthy. Trust is considered a prerequisite for students to learn. Trust in the teacher is also considered to be effective in increasing lesson efficiency and ensuring discipline.

For students to learn from a teacher, they should trust him/her. Because they trust the teacher, they believe in the importance of what he teaches. The teacher can make them believe that he/she is a trustworthy person with sincere feelings and thoughts. (P2)

In a classroom environment where there is a sense of trust, lessons are taught much more efficiently and the rate of indiscipline decreases. (P6)

Sincerity: When students feel sincere toward their teachers, they are more likely to value their teachers' opinions. In this way, students are more likely to exhibit sincere behaviors.

A teacher should be honest and sincere, understand the nature of his/her profession well and love his/her profession. In an environment of sincerity, everyone can express their thoughts better. Thus, it is easier for the teacher to transfer information to the students. (P5)

Universality: According to the participants, it is very important for teachers to adopt universal values to raise students within the framework of universal moral values.

Unless a teacher adopts universal principles, he/she cannot raise individuals who are beneficial to society. I think this issue is very necessary for today's students. (P5)

Children who grow up playing games that lack many human values should first adopt universal rights. Teachers must have universal values and be able to convey them in the classroom environment. (P9)

Patriotism: According to the participants, teachers should be patriotic. It is stated that a teacher who loves his/her homeland will raise good students for his/her homeland, that patriotism is the basis of serving society, and that most social problems are caused by people who do not love their homeland.

Many problems in our country arise because of people who do not truly love their homeland. The solution to these problems lies in patriotic education. Therefore, teachers should be patriotic and convey this feeling first. (P3)

Teachers serve the society. What makes a society a society is unity, that is, love for the homeland. Therefore, I think all teachers should be patriotic. (P6)

A teacher must first love his/her homeland so that he/she can care for the children of his/her homeland. (P8)

Responsibility: Participants think that teachers should have a high level of responsibility. The fact that people are entrusted to teachers to educate increases their responsibility. Therefore, teachers must do their part.

It is especially necessary for teachers to attend their classes on time or to perform their duties fully with a sense of responsibility. (P4)

After all, teachers are entrusted with the classroom. The teacher, who bears the responsibility for this entrustment, should pay attention to every behavior. (P6)

Confidentiality: Teachers should keep personal information and the personal circumstances of students and colleagues confidential. They can share this information with relevant people and institutions when necessary; however, they should be careful not to share this information sloppily.

They should not disclose students' private and confidential information anywhere or in any way. (P2)

They should not disclose confidential information about their profession or colleagues. (P7)

Role Modeling: Teachers are seen as role models and respected by society. It is highly probable that people have a teacher as a role model throughout their education life. Every behavior of teachers can be taken as an example by students in the classroom environment. Therefore, teachers should act with this awareness and exhibit their attitudes and behaviors in a way that makes them role models.

Teachers should set an example for everyone by following the school's rules and ethical codes. They should act in a way that respects everyone's rights, such as opinion and privacy, and act as a model. (P5)

Teachers who legally provide public service are expected to set an example not only with their teaching skills but also with the way they live and behave to their students, families, colleagues, and everyone else. (P6)

When teachers behave by considering principles, they automatically realize the behavior of being a good model for everyone. (P8)

Empathy: For teachers to understand their students, parents, and other colleagues and to better explain themselves to them, it is important that they develop empathy skills.

A teacher should not only look at events, issues, or problems that arise in the classroom from the teacher's perspective, but should also be able to understand students' perspectives. Therefore, they should be able to empathize with students or parents when necessary. (P9)

Tolerance: Being tolerant and accepting of people with their differences is an important characteristic for teachers in a society where interpersonal conflict is very intense. Especially in the classroom environment, where there are students with various social and cultural values, teachers should act tolerantly.

Many problems in the world arise because of people's tolerance of each other or societies' tolerance of other societies. In an environment where people are becoming so intolerant, teachers should be tolerant and reflect this to their students. (P2)

Approach with respect and love: Teachers should treat their colleagues, students, and parents with respect and love. Most of the participants emphasized the concepts of approaching with respect and love as ethical values that teachers should have.

Being respectful toward parents and other educational staff as well as students and being open to informing them are behaviors expected from a teacher and can be considered among his/her responsibilities. (P1)

They should be open and willing to continuous development with respect for the profession, themselves, and those around them. They should first love their profession. (P4)

They should use love and respect proportionately in their work. Paying attention to student rights should be the most important principle. (P10)

Professionalism: The teaching profession requires a certain level of expertise and has clearly defined boundaries. In addition, it brings with it many challenges due to the diversity of stakeholders in education. For this reason, it is considered important for teachers to be professional.

He should keep his work as far away from his personal worldview as possible and be professional. (P3)

Teaching requires extensive training. Everyone should fulfill the requirements of their profession. After all, it is clear what we do and for what... (P17)

The participants also stated that the teaching profession is a profession of expertise and that teachers should strive for professionalization because education is a constantly changing and developing science.

They should be open and willing to continuous development with respect for the profession, themselves, and those around them. (P2)

Teachers should accept this job as a profession and make their environment feel it. They should actually support breaking the perception that teaching is a part-time occupation and becoming professionalized. (P18)

Justice and equality: The participants emphasized that teachers should adopt the principles of justice and equality in their professional lives. Differences in religion, language, race, and political views should not negatively impact teachers' fairness.

They should treat all students, colleagues or supervisors, and parents fairly and equally without any difference (language, religion, race, political opinion, financial status, etc.). (P1)

Decisions taken under the umbrella of adopting the profession as an expertise fairness, fitness for purpose, and impartiality will produce effective and functional results. (P4)

Ethical Decision Making

According to the views obtained from the participants, teachers should have some principles and competencies to make ethical decisions. These can be classified as confidentiality, consistency, legality, honesty, considering the benefit of the organization, principle of fairness, principle of good faith, principle of impartiality, and principle of fitness for purpose.

Decisions taken under the umbrella of adopting the profession as an expertise fairness, expediency, and impartiality will produce effective and functional results. (P1)

It is necessary to ensure that the decisions taken by the teachers are in accordance with the laws, legislation, regulations, school rules, and for the benefit of the people. (P3)

A teacher should not reveal information that should remain confidential between the school administration and teachers, between parents and him/herself, or between students and him/herself. (P4)

Justice is necessary for everyone living in the world, without exception. It is a concept that everyone should adopt unconditionally. Therefore, the concepts of justice, honesty, fairness, and trust should be seen as the main values of the organization, and decisions should be made in accordance with ethical values and in the interest of the organization. (P6)

The rules that teachers set in the classroom and the expressions they use among parents should be consistent with each other. In particular, changing the rules that are set and within a reasonable framework according to students or classes damages trust in the educational environment. (P7)

When making the decision, from the perspective of the students, issues such as whether it causes injustice, whether it causes discrimination against a group of students, whether it negatively affects the students' view of the course and school, whether it disrupts education, and whether it leads to a situation that undermines trust should be considered. (P14)

Ethical decision making requires acting in accordance with ethical principles. In addition, a teacher should have a stance, a philosophy of life, and most importantly, principles that they adopt for the sake of education. (P17)

Decisions taken under the umbrella of adopting the profession as an expertise fairness, fitness for purpose, and impartiality will produce effective and functional results. In particular, every step taken in the classroom environment should be in accordance with a specific purpose. For example, assigning homework. Many

teachers donot provide homework appropriate to the purpose of the subject, which makes students reluctant to do homework. I think this is also crucial... (P19)

Neither students nor parents should sense any ulterior motive in the decisions made. In this sense, the teacher should exhibit an open, transparent, and, most importantly, understandable attitude without raising any questions from students and parents about his/her good intentions. (P20)

Increasing Ethical Sensitivity

It is stated that for teachers to act ethically in the classroom or school environment, their ethical sensitivity should be increased. The unethical behavior of individuals lies at the root of the problems that occur in educational organizations. According to the participants' opinions, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) should take various steps to increase teachers' ethical competencies. MoNE has the biggest responsibility in taking these steps. MoNE should organize social activities to increase teachers' ethical awareness, organize in-service training programs that are effective in increasing ethical awareness, conduct case studies or case studies to increase experience in ethical decision-making processes by using case studies and previous experiences, establish a system to encourage academic studies on professional ethics and ethical behaviors that teachers should follow, and impose sanctions when necessary because teachers do not adopt ethical rules and behave unethically in their behaviors.

Case meetings on ethical principles can be organized in schools to keep such issues on the agenda. Ethical codes for teachers can be created. (P1)

*In my opinion, the Ministry of National Education, as the employer, plays the biggest role in this regard. (P3)
They should be informed about what they may cause and what situations they may face because they do not act within the ethical rules. In fact, this situation will be more effective if it is realized with examples. To better perceive the importance of ethics in their profession, they should be involved in social activities with their colleagues. (P4)*

...dreadful sanctions should be imposed on those who step out of line regarding the ethical issues of the profession. (P12)

Unethical behaviors in schools should be identified monthly and teachers should be provided with training through in-service activities (P14)

Teachers should specialize in such an important subject as ethics. In this way, there may even be teachers who are ethics experts. Teachers who make the effort for this should be financially supported with a satisfactory amount of compensation for master's and doctorate degrees. (P19)

Unethical Behavior

According to the views of the participants, unethical behaviors that teachers may exhibit can be classified as follows. These include gaining benefits, insulting, offending students, giving private lessons, disrupting their duties, making false statements, using students in personal affairs, political activities, choosing the easy way, rationalizing, and attributing personal mistakes to the profession.

He/she cannot pressure students in line with his/her own political views and cannot exhibit behaviors in this direction. They should act impartially during education. They should not reflect on their political views at school. (P1)

Playing with different materials that will distract the attention of the student and himself/herself in the lesson, playing with different materials such as mobile phones, etc. are incompatible with ethical principles, coming to the lesson prepared for the subject that the teacher will convey to the student can also be counted among the professional ethical behaviors of the teacher. (P2)

They should not use their parents or students for their private business. (P4)

Teachers may have difficulties in complying with these ethical rules in ethical dilemmas they face, because ethical rules may be ignored regarding benefiting themselves, or their attitudes toward people they know and people they do not know may differ, at which point they may ignore ethical rules and prefer to protect the interests of those they know. (P5)

Personal mistakes should not tarnish the name of the profession. For this reason, the issues concerning the teachers should be evaluated separately from his/her job. Negative situations related to students should be reported to the school administration, parents, and relevant institutions. (P7)

Professionally, does it put the school administration and colleagues in a difficult situation, or does it cause the unfair advantage and gain? They should not harm others for personal gain. (P14)

As in every professional group, there are certainly those who engage in unethical behavior among teachers. The most common ones we encounter are; entering the class late, taking care of personal affairs during the class, being busy on the phone during the class, giving private lessons to their own students, warning students in front of their friends in a way that offends them, and using insulting expressions. (P17)

He/she should not suggest or direct his/her colleagues in a way that may cause distrust or prejudice against students. (P18)

...Or they try to rationalize unethical behavior by making up justifications for it. (P20)

Unethical Elements in the Supervision System

According to the participants' views, an ethical supervision system is necessary to increase the ethical sensitivity of teachers and to build an ethical culture within the organization. According to the participants, ethical principles are ignored in the supervision system. These unethical elements are classified as follows. These were identified supervision gap, ignoring, deficiencies in the teacher assignment process, control and punishment orientation, personalized practices and misconduct.

After an effective investigation process, a teacher should properly compensate for his/her mistake. It is unethical not to apply the disciplinary process to a teacher who makes a mistake. (P5)

In this process, I believe that disciplinary processes are unfortunately used as a stick. Many people who have personal problems with teachers turn examinations and investigations into a means of punishment. It is obvious that this process is very harmful to the enthusiasm and effort of the teacher. (P6)

There have also been very strange investigations in the education community for absurd behavior. This is partly related to the teacher recruitment system. You can sense strange behavior in people you have a few words with when they apply to be teachers. But these people become teachers, and unfortunately, nobody can do anything. Teaching should not be so cheap. (P8)

I do not think it is right that teachers should be forgiven for offenses they have committed on purpose. I think they are protected too much. Especially against administrators, they are always right. If they swear, they are right. Therefore, there is no progress. I think people who behave inappropriately should be withdrawn from the civil service. People with moral weaknesses should definitely not even stay in the civil service. On the contrary, we have a system that rewards these people. (P9)

However, in some cases, personalized practices arising from the person or persons conducting the transaction may be encountered. If there is a prior acquaintance, mutual or unilateral dislike of the person, if there are situations such as not liking the opinion of the person, less or more than the sanction that should be applied may be applied. (P10)

Harms of Unethical Behavior

It is stated that teachers' unethical behaviors cause many harms. These harms harm not only the individual but also society, schools, professions, and the country eventually. In their answers to the question about the harms of unethical behaviors, the participants focused on harm to motivation and cooperation, harm to the organization, harm to society, harm to individuals, harm to the teaching profession, and harm to the country eventually. Based on these statements, the subthemes of the unethical behavior theme were shaped. The statements of the participants regarding the subthemes are as follows;

Unhappiness and low morale can negatively affect productive work and success. (P1)

...After all, a teacher is not only responsible for teaching but also for lifelong education, which he or she models through his or her behavior. Education will not fulfill its purpose, and the structure of society will deteriorate

relatedly. Because real learning occurs through observation. In this sense, the ethical or unethical behavior of teachers is essential for the whole society. (P2)

...Apart from this, it will lead to a decrease in the power of the organization, a decrease in motivation and cooperation in the working environment, and a decrease in the performance of other employees and Due to irresponsible behaviors, other teachers may take these behaviors as an example and cause the school culture and school climate to deteriorate. For example, if a teacher is unethical in terms of attending class and is constantly late, other teachers may exhibit negative behavior such as being late to class (P4)

Teachers without ethical principles negatively affect and damage the perception of the teaching profession. When they act without thinking or only thinking about their own advantages, they can negatively affect the school in which they work, trust in the school, school management, and colleagues in terms of social values, productivity, and trust. (P6)

A teacher far from ethical principles raises generations far from ethical principles. This will damage a country's human resources, its social and moral structure, its economy, and many other areas. (P10)

The students it raises negatively affect the peace and tranquillity of society. It ensures the upbringing of a generation other than the expected goals in education. The process of students adapting themselves to the unethical behaviors of the teacher causes role conflict and ultimately leads to the deterioration of the student's personality. (P13)

A seed of grudge and hatred created in a child can turn into a very big tree of evil in the future. (P16)

The greatest harm a teacher can cause is first to his/her students, who are the future of this country, and then to the name of the profession. (P18)

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

One of the most important features of the school, which is an educational institution, is that the human element is at the forefront and continues its existence as a part of the social environment (Taymaz, 2001). In this study, in which teachers' relationships with their environment are examined ethically, teachers' ethical awareness levels, ethical behaviors that teachers should have, ethical decision-making, and the effects of ethical and unethical behaviors on the environment were examined. According to the findings of the study, it can be said that the number of opinions that teachers exhibit unethical behaviors is remarkable.

According to Socrates, ethics and education are inseparable and moral behavior can be acquired through ethics (Pieper, 2012). In addition, teachers are not expected to exhibit unethical behaviors in educational organizations where the foundation of students' moral behaviors is laid. Şişman and Acat (2003) state that the ethical value perceptions of new teachers are lower than those of senior teachers. In terms of ethical behaviors, teachers face ethical dilemmas mostly in the areas of protecting students, protecting colleagues (Colnerud, 1997), and balancing parental intervention (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2010). Among the ethical dilemmas, the behavior of "not complying with ethical principles to protect the student" was found to be the most common (Tezcan & Güvenç, 2019). In a study conducted by Altınkurt and Yılmaz (2012), it was determined that "not taking care of students with low achievement" was the most common unethical behavior among teachers

By identifying teachers' ethical and unethical behaviors, positive changes can occur in their behavior. While adults exhibit ethical behaviors, they consider factors other than themselves to a great extent. Kohlberg (1969) states that most adults are at the level of traditional cognitive moral development. Based on this idea, it can be said that people's actions and decisions within the organizational structure are influenced by the organizational climate, leader, and peers (Bandura, 1986, Kohlberg, 1969). The ethical climate of the organizational structure reduces unethical behaviors and significantly increases moral feelings and moral activities (Arnaud & Schminke, 2012). The behaviors of adults can be handled in three types in relation to ethics. These are behaviors that are contrary to the accepted moral norms in the society (lying, stealing, cheating, etc.), routine behaviors that meet the minimum moral behaviors of the society (honesty, treating people with respect, etc.), and behaviors that go beyond the moral minimums of the society (philanthropy, donating, etc.) (Treviño et al., 2006; Treviño et al., 2014). According to this research,

teachers should have the behaviors of using resources efficiently, reliability, sincerity, universality, patriotism, responsibility, confidentiality or privacy, being a role model, empathy, tolerance, approaching with love and respect, professionalism, justice, and equality. When making ethical decisions, teachers should pay attention to the principles of confidentiality, consistency, legality, honesty, the benefit of the organization, fairness, principled behavior, good faith, impartiality, and fitness for purpose. In Hartog 's (2014) study, the characteristics of people with ethical values are expressed as altruistic, honest, caring, conscientious, success-oriented, reliable, morally responsible, having a sense of duty, consistent, and emotionally stable. Considering Baydar 's (2022) study, the ethical behaviors that teachers should have were scored. According to this order, the most important ethical behavior expected from teachers is to be truthful. These behaviors are followed by moderation, responsibility, and courage.

Teachers ' ethical behavior in their relationships with society depends on their high ethical awareness. Social problems arise due to unethical behavior. On the other hand, unethical behaviors resulting from individual perception differences and social degeneration are also increasing (Gül, 2006). The most important task in increasing teachers ' ethical competencies falls to school administrators (Aydın, 2000; Çelik, 1999). After school administrators, the central organization of the Ministry of National Education has great responsibilities. To reduce unethical behaviors, the disciplinary regulations of the Ministry of National Education include various sanctions for these behaviors. However, it is important to implement incentive practices for ethical behaviors to be permanent and sustained. Unethical behaviors harm students, educational institutions, the teaching profession, and the state. It is possible to classify the harms caused by unethical behaviors as environmental harms, harms to motivation and cooperation, harms to organizational structure, harms to society, harms to individuals and students, harms to the teaching profession, and harms to the country eventually. While teachers are expected to be ethical role models when they exhibit destructive leadership behaviors, it can lead to negative attitudes in people (Mayer et al., 2012). In contrast, because of toxic leadership, there is a decrease in welfare in the organization, negative attitudes, and stress in followers (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Therefore, it is possible for managers and teachers to exhibit ethical leadership behaviors and followers to develop job satisfaction, professional commitment, happiness, and positive attitudes (Kim & Brymer, 2011).

When the results of the research are evaluated in general, it is seen that there are as many teachers who exhibit ethical behaviors in communication with their environment as some behave unethically. It is a remarkable finding that unethical behaviors are frequently encountered in the teaching profession although it is a respected profession that educates all other professionals. In the research, the ethical behaviors that teachers should follow and expect from them are efficient use of resources, reliability, sincerity, universality, patriotism, responsibility, respect for confidentiality, being a role model, tolerance, love and respect, professionalism, justice, and equality. The unethical behaviors of teachers mentioned by the participants include gaining benefits, insulting, offending people, giving private lessons, neglecting their duties, giving false information and statements, making students do their personal work, politics, facilitation, rationalization, and gaining personal benefits. In their ethical decision-making processes, teachers should make decisions in accordance with moral virtues and in the best interest of their followers. Therefore, teachers are expected to increase their ethical awareness and reflect ethical values in their behaviors. Unethical behaviors in teachers have negative effects not only on themselves but also on their environment, the educational organization, the teaching profession and the country's future eventually. The ethical behaviors of teachers in their communication with the environment were examined based on the opinions of the teachers. The fact that the effect of other external factors on the research findings was not revealed is a limitation as the research was shaped only by the opinions of the teachers. The working group can be diversified by including other people, institutions, and stakeholders that make up the school environment. On the other hand, the study group consisted of districts of Istanbul province. With the participation of teachers or other stakeholders working in various provinces or regions, it will be possible to make more comprehensive comparisons and analyzes by increasing sample diversity.

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations for practitioners, decision-makers, and researchers can be listed:

- The scope of both theoretical and practical studies should be expanded to gain moral virtues in teacher training programs.
- To increase the quality of teaching as a professional profession, comprehensive professional training studies should be conducted in line with the principle of continuous development.
- Teachers' behaviors in accordance with moral virtues should be encouraged and their contrary behaviors should be controlled using contemporary approaches.
- The reasons for the increase in social and youth problems today should be investigated in different aspects, and the ethical responsibilities of school administration and the teaching profession regarding these problems should be determined by researchers.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflicts of interest were disclosed by the author(s) with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

Ethics Approval

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Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Aksaray University (Approval Number/ID: 2023/04-30). Hereby, we as the authors consciously assure that the following is fulfilled:

- This material is the authors' own original work, which has not been previously published elsewhere.
- This paper reflects the authors' own research and analysis in a truthful and complete manner.
- The results are appropriately placed in the context of prior and existing research.
- All sources used are properly disclosed.

Contribution Rates of Authors to the Article

The authors make an equal contribution to this work.

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