

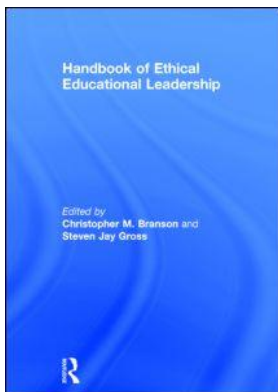
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## **Handbook of Ethical Educational Leadership**

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### **The Ethical Perspectives of Turkish School Leaders**

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# 23

## THE ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF TURKISH SCHOOL LEADERS

MUALLA AKSU AND GAMZE KASALAK

The main purpose of the study described in this chapter was to quantitatively explore Turkish school leaders' views and understanding of ethical principles. The research population consisted of approximately 600 school principals working in the Antalya province in 2010–2011, and questionnaires were sent out to all of these principals via the Internet. Data collected via the questionnaires included answers to some demographic questions: a 12-item ethical scale for school leaders; a 21-item ethical scale for the school administration process, developed by the researchers for this study; and 5 open-ended questions. As a result, some 310 principals completed the questionnaires. The most important contribution provided by this study is its capacity to present to current and future Turkish school leaders insight into ethical principles, which are highly supported by their peers. This knowledge can then make an important contribution to a school principal's self-reflection process with respect to an understanding of his or her own ethical principles and values.

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE THAT GUIDED THIS STUDY

An "ethic" is defined in dictionaries as a system of moral standards. However, Cohen (2010, p. 73) draws attention to the difference between being ethical and being moral. Being ethical, in the context of leadership, is related to the rules and standards that shape the behaviors of a person or members of a profession. Being moral means complying with the rules of correct behavior. Starratt (2004) indicates the difference between ethics and morality as follow:

Ethics is the study of what constitutes a moral life; an ethics is a summary, systematic statement of what is necessary to live a moral life. Morality is the living, the acting out of ethical beliefs and commitments. Often, characterizing

leadership activity as moral and characterizing it as ethical mean the same thing: moral leadership involves the moral activity embedded in the conduct of leading; ethical leadership is the attempt to act from the principles, beliefs, assumptions, and values in the leader's espoused system of ethics.

(p. 5)

As quoted by Clark (2005), Walker in 1993 defined ethics as a standard of duty and virtue that indicates how one should behave according to principles of right and wrong. The focus of ethics is on "what one ought to do." Clark also compares ethics and values, and defines values as beliefs leading and motivating attitudes and actions in a broader concept than ethics because it includes a set of beliefs and desires that motivate individual behaviors. Ethics goes beyond the person's belief and focuses on the ability to discriminate "right from wrong" and the responsibility of "doing what's right."

Educators must hold themselves to a higher ethical standard than the average members of society because of the importance of their educational task and the trust students and their families place in them. However, the principals of the schools are the primary architects and promoters of the values and standards that ensure everything and everyone in the school is acting in accord with the expected ethical standards. Therefore, the principals must be leaders who take time routinely to consider their solid ethical principles, primary responsibilities, and core values (Harsh & Casto, n.d.).

But, how can an ethical school be created by a principal? Millett (2002) suggests that help is needed in the following areas: staff agreements, discipline and pastoral care, conformity versus individuality, student empowerment, and student leadership within the whole life of the school. Starratt (1991) affirms that educational administrators need to consider their responsibility to promote an ethical environment in their schools, especially during a period of school restructuring. In order to build such an ethical school, he suggests three ethical themes—critique, justice, and caring—as the pillars of the foundation. Branson (2010) discusses five ethical perspectives—justice, care, critique, the profession, and personal moral integrity—that may impact on others. He suggests a diagram in which the ethic of personal moral integrity is at the center, adapted from Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005, quoted in Branson 2010), and affirms that this perspective will ultimately guide the leader in making the most ethical choice.

Researchers have been very interested in the topic of ethics, especially "ethical leadership." Lashley (2007) suggests the use of an ethical lens for principals as they work to improve educational performance and opportunity for all children. In the study conducted by Engelbrecht, van Aswegen, and Theron (2005), it is found that transformational leaders can make a significant impact on the ethical performance of organizations.

The findings of Valentine, Godkin, Fleischman, and Kidwell (2011) show that group creativity and corporate ethical values are positively related and that both variables are associated with increased job satisfaction. Their results also indicate that corporate ethical values and job satisfaction are associated with decreased turnover intention. Biron (2010) indicates a negative relation between perceived organizational

ethical values and organizational deviance. When high levels of abusive supervision and low levels of perceived organizational support took place in the context of low ethical values, the result was the highest level of organizational deviance. Clark (2005) affirms that Illinois superintendents behave in an ethical manner, adhere to some chosen standard of ethics, and respond differently based on their gender, working region, basis of professional ethics, and interpretation of the situation.

According to the findings of Deshpande and Joseph (2010), caring value, perception of ethical conduct, and age had a significant impact on counterproductive behavior of students of a public university in the United States. Narayanasamy and Lama (2008) find no significant effect on the gender, race, or level of education on the ethical values of the lecturers, but rather, the ethical values of the lecturers increased with age, teaching experience, and marriage. However, the ethical values of the male students were found to be significantly higher than those of their female counterparts in the same study. Al-Kahtani (2007) revealed that graduate engineering and business students in three selected Saudi universities were more ethical than their undergraduate counterparts. While there is no apparent consistency in the outcomes from across this array of research, what is clearly evident is that within a particular context, there are such consistencies, which can have meaning and significance for others associated with this context. The context highlighted in this particular chapter is that of schools in the province of Antalya in Turkey.

Aydın (2002) conducted the first study on the topic of ethics in Turkey, which focused on the ethical behaviors of high school principals. The findings of Aydın show that according to the participating principals, high school principals “always” practice 79 ethical principles developed by the researcher, while participating supervisors and teachers think that these principals only ever “generally” or “sometimes” practiced those principles. The findings of Küçükkaraduman (2006) show that school principals mostly act in accordance with ethical principles according to the teachers’ views, and there are significant differences in terms of the variables of gender, age, teaching field, and length of service. Kara (2006) found that principals of schools having stronger organizational culture show more ethical behaviors, and principals of private schools are perceived to be more ethical than the principals of public schools. The research of Yılmaz (2007) suggests that beginner academics observe unethical actions in terms of the responsibility toward the profession and colleagues. Kentsu (2007) proclaims that the views of the school administrators on compliance with ethical principles differ only in terms of the variable of gender in favor of males in dimensions of tolerance, fairness, and responsibility. In Akyıldız’s (2007) study, it is found that according to 837 teachers’ views, educational inspectors were more responsive to veteran teachers than their younger counterparts during the classroom observation process. Döven (2009) identified the principles of professional ethics for educational inspectors. In a qualitative study conducted by Demirtaş (2010), school administrators developed 34 ethical codes, but the most frequently applied ethics were in the codes of justice and honesty.

Hence, it can be seen how research, both abroad and in Turkey, is now reflecting the importance of ethical issues in educational settings. Specific to the Turkish educational system, this importance has been formalized in the 2005 Regulations on the

Principles of Ethical Behavior for Government Officials, and Application Procedures and Essentials, which contain a section pertaining to ethics that must be signed by all government employees. It therefore lacks specificity and needs to be defined further for the school administration process as well as the ethical behavior of school leaders. Schools are the best places for the development of such specific guidelines for knowing how to behave ethically within a school, and school leaders are the most important ethical role models not only for the teachers but also for the students. Therefore, this research study was conducted to examine the current situation in Antalya schools on such ethical issues.

The main purpose of this study was to reveal school leaders' views and understanding of ethical principles. In order to achieve this purpose, the following research questions were developed:

1. According to the school leaders, what is the necessity level of ethical principles? Here, "necessity level" is the mean value obtained from the items developed by the researchers as ethical principles.
2. At what level do school leaders, themselves, practice ethical principles?
3. According to the school leaders, on what level do the other school leaders practice ethical principles?
4. Are there significant correlations among necessity level, school leaders' practice, and other school leaders' practice of ethical principles?
5. Are there significant differences among necessity level, school leaders' practice, and other school leaders' practice when applying ethical principles?
6. What kind of actions do the school leaders choose concerning a specific ethical situation?

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The key to the design of this research was a relational survey. The target population for this study was all of the school leaders working in the province of Antalya in Turkey, as this provided an accessible population. Antalya has more than 600 school leaders either at the elementary or secondary school level. Because the number of the accessible population was not excessive, sampling was not seen as necessary, and the questionnaires developed by the researchers were sent to all of the 600 school leaders via the Internet. After two follow-up procedures, 310 school leaders, providing a 51.66% return rate, voluntarily responded to the questionnaires. This return rate may be seen as statistically very satisfactory because it is relative to the accessible population and not the entire population of Turkish school principals.

## COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

Data from this study were collected from the school principals by means of a questionnaire developed by the researchers through literature review. A pilot version of the questionnaire was sent to a few school leaders from the population, and some

changes were made to the questionnaire prior to its full use. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part was a 12-item/10-point scale named the Ethical Scale for School Leaders (ESSL); the second part was a 21-item/10-point scale named the Ethical Scale for the School Administration Process (ESSAP), and the third part contained demographic questions and open-ended items. Both ethical scales were administered on three columns: Necessity level of the chosen principles is placed in the first column, own practice of the school leaders is illustrated in the second column, and the practice of the other leaders is marked in the third column. The questionnaire used a Likert scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the higher necessity and practice level for a given ethical principle and 1 being the lowest necessity and practice level for a given ethical principle according to the personal opinion of each participant.

The explanatory factor analysis (EFA) was applied on the data obtained from the three columns of scales, and only one factor was determined for each scale. According to the analyses, for the ESSL the factor loadings were between .771 and .952 in the necessity level column, .781 and .936 in the own practice column, and .803 and .882 in the other school leaders' practice column. For the ESSAP, the factor loadings were between .623 and .916 in the necessity level column, .639 and .883 in the own practice column, and .689 and .893 in the other school leaders' practice column. The respective total variances for the ESSL were 80.287%, 75.943%, and 70.303%, and Cronbach's alpha values were .976, .970, and .961. For the ESSAP data, the total variances were 68.180%, 64.168%, and 66.881%, respectively, and Cronbach's alpha values were .974, .969, and .974. The EFA results show that both scales explain at least two thirds of the total variance and are acceptable as one-dimensional research instruments.

In the third part of the questionnaire, an ethical situation quoted from Clark (2005) was presented to the participants, and they were asked to choose from the alternative actions submitted within the scenario. In addition, the participants were asked to share their original solutions with the researchers for this situation if they did not choose one of four alternatives given within the scenario. Furthermore, the participants were asked to share similar ethical situations they had personally experienced and to describe how they resolved each situation. The research questionnaire also had some open-ended and demographic questions. The entire study was conducted through a Web-based survey. Quantitative data were analyzed and interpreted by using the SPSS 13.0 data analysis program, and descriptive data analysis techniques were used for the qualitative data.

## LIMITATIONS

This study has the following limitations:

1. It included only the views of the principals working at the primary or secondary schools, either state or private, in the province of Antalya in Turkey.
2. Data are limited to the questionnaires conducted and collected in the 2011 spring semester.

## DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

As shown in Table 23.1, the vast majority of the participants (93.9%) were male principals, which is in line with the gender balance of the overall Turkish school principal population itself. The fields of more than half of the principals (57.1%) were classroom teaching, the overwhelming majority (96.5%) worked at state schools, and nearly three fourths of their schools (74.2%) were at the primary education level.

In addition, 71.0% of the responding principals had worked for 10 years or less as principals, while 54.7% had served within the education system for 20 years and more.

Table 23.2 shows the descriptive data on ESSL within the three columns of necessity levels of the principles, school leader's own practice concerning the related principles, and other school leaders' practice according to the views of the participating principals.

As shown in Table 23.2, the mean values for the necessity level were calculated to be 9.74 at the highest and 9.48 at the lowest, while the means for the school leader's own practice changed from 9.69 to 9.01 and the means for the other school leaders' practice changed from 8.80 to 7.66. The highest means were obtained from item 8: "A school leader does not discriminate among parents based on social class, creed, ethnicity, etc." for the necessity level and principal's own practice columns. The highest mean for the other school leaders' practice column was obtained from item 9: "A school leader does not use school resources for personal gain." The lowest means were obtained from item 6: "A school leader does not divulge private information obtained as a result of the job" for the necessity level column; from item 2: "A school leader fulfills the required responsibility and authority of the position" for the principal's own practice column; and from item 3: "A school leader communicates fairly and objectively with individuals" for the other school leaders' practice column.

As shown in Table 23.3, mean values for the necessity level were calculated 9.69 at the highest level and 9.01 at the lowest level, while the means for the school leader's own practice changed from 9.66 to 8.82 and the means for the other school leaders' practice changed from 9.2 to 7.70. The highest means were obtained from item 14: "Banning teachers and other staff from attending school after consuming

**Table 23.1** Demographic data on the participating principals

Variable	Variable level	<i>n</i>	%
Gender of the participants	Female principals	19	6.1
	Male principals	291	93.9
Teaching field of the participants	Branch teacher	133	42.9
	Classroom teacher	177	57.1
School status of the participants	State school	299	96.5
	Private school	11	3.5
School level of the participants	Primary education	230	74.2
	Secondary education	80	25.8

**Table 23.2** Means and standard deviations of the items in ESSL\*

No.	A school leader:	Necessity level		School leader's own practice		Other school leaders' practice	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Performs his/her job correctly, honestly, and reliably	9.72 (2)	1.26	9.27 (10)	1.39	7.68 (11)	2.02
2	Fulfills the required responsibility and authority of the position	9.50 (11)	1.30	9.01 (12)	1.49	7.80 (10)	2.02
3	Communicates fairly and objectively with individuals	9.66 (5)	1.29	9.36 (9)	1.35	7.66 (12)	2.10
4	Avoids using the position's authority for personal benefit	9.64 (8)	1.45	9.60 (3)	1.46	8.38 (6)	2.01
5	Uses mutual affection and respect as bases for human relations	9.62 (9)	1.32	9.43 (7)	1.35	8.17 (8)	1.91
6	Does not divulge private information obtained as a result of the job	9.48 (12)	1.63	9.40 (8)	1.55	8.50 (4)	1.94
7	Comes to meetings prepared	9.54 (10)	1.35	9.09 (11)	1.48	8.17 (9)	1.92
8	Does not discriminate among parents based on social class, creed, ethnicity, etc.	9.74 (1)	1.27	9.69 (1)	1.25	8.78 (2)	1.89
9	Does not use school resources for personal gain	9.68 (3)	1.51	9.63 (2)	1.42	8.80 (1)	1.91
10	Distributes tasks fairly among staff	9.65 (6)	1.34	9.47 (6)	1.34	8.44 (5)	1.93
11	Demonstrates unbiased behavior in the reward/punishment process	9.67 (4)	1.36	9.57 (5)	1.30	8.23 (7)	2.10
12	Puts the interest of the school over personal interest	9.64 (7)	1.42	9.58 (4)	1.34	8.60 (3)	1.92

\*Numbers in parentheses show the rank of the means. The lowest number symbolizes the highest mean in the scale, while the highest number stands for the lowest mean.

alcoholic beverages” for the all columns. The lowest mean was obtained from item 7: “Taking precautions to prevent teachers from providing paid tutoring to their own students” for the necessity level and other school leaders’ practice columns. The lowest mean for the principal’s own practice column was obtained from item 2: “Providing services to not only the school, but also society.”



**Table 23.3** Means and standard deviations of the items in ESSAP\*

No.	Ethical principles for the school administration process are:	Necessity level		School leader's own practice		Other school leaders' practice	
		Mean	SD	Mean	Mean	SD	Mean
1	Continuing advantageous projects and implementations initiated by the previous administration	9.36 (17)	1.54	9.08 (13)	1.66	8.07 (17)	2.02
2	Providing services to not only the school, but also society	9.30 (18)	1.48	8.82 (21)	1.61	7.83 (20)	1.99
3	Warning colleagues about negative behaviors and attitudes in a constructive manner	9.42 (13)	1.41	8.88 (19)	1.55	7.87 (18)	1.90
4	Trying to make constructive use of both personal criticism and criticism directed toward the school	9.21 (20)	1.74	8.94 (17)	1.67	7.87 (19)	2.03
5	Avoiding interference in the private/personal matter of colleagues	9.40 (15)	1.65	9.36 (7)	1.50	8.49 (9)	1.84
6	Trying to implement an effective administration team with vice principals	9.60 (4)	1.37	9.24 (10)	1.41	8.21 (16)	1.80
7	Taking precautions to prevent teachers from providing paid tutoring to their own students	9.01 (21)	2.11	8.85 (20)	1.98	7.70 (21)	2.28
8	Taking precautions to prevent teachers from starting classes late or ending classes early unless they have a valid excuse	9.55 (7)	1.42	9.12 (12)	1.52	8.45 (10)	1.91
9	Generating ethical rules with stakeholders regarding student absenteeism and tardiness	9.45 (11)	1.44	9.05 (14)	1.46	8.4 (11)	1.87
10	Preventing the sale of books, periodicals, etc. at school to students for monetary gain	9.39 (16)	1.70	9.33 (8)	1.52	8.32 (15)	2.01
11	Taking necessary precautions to prevent the use of physical punishment at school	9.49 (10)	1.58	9.30 (9)	1.53	8.50 (8)	1.95

*(Continued)*

Table 23.3 (Continued)

No.	Ethical principles for the school administration process are:	Necessity level		School leader's own practice		Other school leaders' practice	
		Mean	SD	Mean	Mean	SD	Mean
12	Taking the necessary measures to prevent students from cheating	9.28 (19)	1.78	9.03 (16)	1.65	8.61 (5)	1.83
13	Preventing classes from being impeded due to social, political, and other reasons of a similar nature	9.60 (5)	1.26	9.44 (3)	1.39	8.82 (3)	1.74
14	Banning teachers and other staff from attending school after consuming alcoholic beverages	9.69 (1)	1.42	9.66 (1)	1.40	9.20 (1)	1.80
15	Warning staff regarding false health reports	9.42 (14)	1.60	9.20 (11)	1.62	8.56 (7)	2.05
16	Banning the use of profanity at school	9.55 (8)	1.61	9.46 (2)	1.46	8.93 (2)	1.85
17	Disallowing staff from smoking in areas that are visible to students	9.45 (12)	1.70	9.04 (15)	1.97	8.34 (14)	2.22
18	Disallowing the school staff from mobbing each other	9.58 (6)	1.41	9.40 (6)	1.35	8.35 (13)	1.99
19	Making arrangements at school that meet the requirements of handicapped students and parents	9.52 (9)	1.49	8.89 (18)	1.73	8.37 (12)	1.92
20	Supporting teachers striving for personal and professional development without impeding their normal tasks at school	9.65 (2)	1.32	9.43 (4)	1.42	8.58 (6)	1.84
21	Taking the appropriate measures to provide a safe environment within the school for students and teachers	9.64 (3)	1.33	9.41 (5)	1.39	8.82 (4)	1.77

\*Numbers in parentheses show the rank of the means. The lowest number symbolizes the highest mean in the scale, while the highest number stands for the lowest mean.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Table 23.4 shows the differences and correlations between the two columns for both scales. As illustrated in the table, necessity level had the highest means, while others' practice had the lowest means in all of the paired comparisons not only for ESSL but also for ESSAP. All *t* values show that there were significant differences and correlations between the two means at the alpha level .001. The highest correlation coefficients were

**Table 23.4** Means, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and the values for ESSL and ESSAP

Columns	ESSL				ESSAP			
	Mean	SD	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	Mean	SD	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>
Necessity level	9.63	1.22	.947***	9.003***	9.45	1.26	.913***	9.026***
Own practice	9.43	1.21			9.19	1.24		
Necessity level	9.63	1.22	.493***	16.021***	9.45	1.26	.588***	14.184***
Others' practice	8.27	1.65			8.40	1.57		
Own practice	9.43	1.21	.576***	14.826***	9.19	1.24	.676***	11.893***
Others' practice	8.27	1.65			8.40	1.57		

\*\*\**P* < .001**Table 23.5** Mann–Whitney *U*-test results for ESSL

Name of the variable	Level of the variable	<i>n</i>	Necessity level	Own practice	Others' practice
Gender	Female	19	2,072*	2,174	2,250
	Male	291			
Teaching field	Subject teacher	133	10,355*	11,142	11,735
	Classroom teacher	177			
School level	Primary	230	8,895	8,965	8,998
	Secondary	80			
School status	State	299	1,359	1,478	1,149
	Private	11			

\**P* < .05 (Mean ranks obtained from the level of female and subject teacher are statistically higher than their counterparts.)

calculated between the columns representing necessity level and own practice with the values .947 for ESSL and .913 for ESSAP, while the lowest correlation coefficients were calculated between the columns representing necessity level and others' practice, with the values .493 for ESSL and .588 for ESSAP. However, the lowest correlation coefficients for ESSL and ESSAP were calculated at the medium value as well.

Table 23.5 illustrates the results of the comparisons between two levels of the variables of gender, teaching field, school level, and school status for ESSL. The Mann–Whitney *U*-test was preferred for this analysis because the assumptions of the parametric tests may not be met by the obtained data. As shown in Table 23.5, no significant differences were found in the principal's own practice and other school leaders' practice columns for the variables, although gender and teaching field were significant variables only in the necessity level column, and mean ranks of the participants who were female and subject teachers were higher than their counterparts.

Table 23.6 illustrates the Mann–Whitney *U*-test results concerning the variables of gender, teaching field, school level, and school status for ESSAP. As shown in the table, no significant differences were found in the second and third columns for the variables, although gender, teaching field, and school status were significant variables only in the necessity level column, and mean ranks of the participants who were female, subject teacher, and working at a state school were higher than their counterparts.

**Table 23.6** Mann–Whitney *U*-test results for ESSAP

Name of the variable	Level of the variable	<i>n</i>	Necessity level	Own practice	Others' practice
Gender	Female	19	1,981*	2,188	2,579
	Male	291			
Teaching field	Subject teacher	133	10,099*	11,487	11,374
	Classroom teacher	177			
School level	Primary	230	8,630	8,292	8,526
	Secondary	80			
School status	State	299	1,259	1,239	1,000*
	Private	11			

\**P* < .05 (Mean ranks obtained from the level of female, subject teacher, and state are statistically higher than their counterparts.)

Table 23.7 shows the responses of the participants to the alternatives given by Clark (2005, p. 203) for the following ethical situation:

The parents of a good student and generally responsible youngster have come to you with complaints about the teaching style of a social studies teacher. They claim the teacher is using biased materials and slanted opinions in the classes. Further, they claim that when their son tried to question these approaches, he was greeted with sarcasm and thinly veiled threats to have his grades lowered. The matter is not relieved by the father's active role in town matters, and he demands evidence of action immediately. What action do you take?

In contrast to Clark's (2005) study, in which no participant chose alternatives "a" or "b" and very few selected alternative "e," Table 23.7 indicates that in this Turkish study, 15 participants marked either "a" or "b" and nearly half of them chose alternative "e."

**Table 23.7** Participants' preferences on the ethical scenario

What action do you take on the above-mentioned ethical situations?	<i>f</i>	%
a. Agree with the parents that the teacher is in the wrong, and indicate that censure will be applied in some form.	7	2.3
b. Have the boy transferred into another classroom with a teacher whose techniques and methods are well known to you and which you know will placate these irate parents.	8	2.6
c. Call the most immediate supervisor of the teacher and ask for some corroboration of the incidents, then proceed with action.	4	1.3
d. Indicate to the parents that you will take the matter up with the teacher and the teacher's supervisors, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.	148	47.7
e. None of the above, but rather:	143	46.1
Total	310	100.0

The highest frequency responses obtained from the open-ended question for the alternative “e” are categorized in Table 23.8, which shows that nearly 3 of 10 participants preferred meeting with the teacher and listening to him or her. The three most strongly supported alternatives were: “Meets with the student and listen to him/her” (12.2%); “Meets with the parents and listens to them” (11.3%); and “Investigates the issue on the sincerity” (10.4%). The least chosen alternative was the statement “Seeks help from the superior” (3.0%).

In open-ended questions in the research questionnaire, the responding principals were also asked to write down their ethical scenarios if they had experienced any. One principal responded this question and shared the event called a scenario in the study. Only one participant was willing to share his scenario. The source of this scenario is this principal’s experience:

A parent working as a teacher comes to the principal’s office and tells him angrily that his daughter does not have a passing grade from any course because her teacher gives a poor 44 points. A passing grade must be equal to or higher than 45 points in the evaluation system. The parent is furious and charges the teacher with discrimination. The principal tells the parent his claims are not true because he knows the teacher well, but he cannot convince him. However, the principal promises that he will look into the situation before he leaves the school. Afterward, the principal goes through all of the scores in the mentioned course and observes that the student has got the following scores: 35, 38, and 39 out of 100 from three previous examinations. Later, he meets with the course teacher and discusses the complaint of the parent. The teacher says that he always tries to grade on the high side and give more points to encourage the students, but he did not think the paper earned it.

**Table 23.8** Participants’ responses for alternative “e” on the ethical scenario

Open-ended responses <sup>a</sup>	<i>f</i>	%
Meets with the teacher and listens to him/her	97	28.9
Meets with the student and listens to him/her	41	12.2
Meets with the parents and listens to them	38	11.3
Investigates the issue on the sincerity	35	10.4
Meets with the other students and listens to them	24	7.2
Warns the teacher about his/her behavior	22	6.6
Convinces the parent that s/he will do what is required	20	6.0
Informs the parents about the real situation	18	5.4
Controls the teacher via either formal or informal procedures	16	4.8
Supports the teacher in all conditions	14	4.2
Seeks help from the superiors	10	3.0
Total	335	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Because participants’ responses contained more than one category, total number of the frequencies may sum to more than 143, which is the number rated “e” response for the given scenario.

Some questions for discussion of this scenario with school leaders are as follows:

- How can you handle such a complaint?
- Do you need more information? About what?
- What kind of behavior is expected from you as an ethical principal?
- Do you have ethical standards for students, parents, colleagues, and the larger community for being proactive rather than reactive?

How can a school leader be trained to internalize these ethical principles? Answers to this question are summarized in Table 23.9.

As shown in Table 23.9, more than two thirds of the participants wanted in-service education in order to be able to internalize ethical principles. Nearly 1 in 10 respondents suggested pre-service education, while only 1.4% of them recommended graduate education.

Table 23.10 shows pre-service and/or in-service training topics with the frequencies and percentages. “Leadership and administration” was the most suggested topic, with 31.6% support from the participants, while “human relations” followed with 30.6% support. The topics “ethics” and “self-improvement” were chosen by more than one tenth of the participants.

In addition, the participants were asked to state their suggestions for the ways in-service education in ethical principles should be organized. Their recommendations were as follows:

1. In-service courses should be organized every year for all the school leaders.
2. In-service courses should be organized in collaboration with the faculty of education.
3. In-service courses should be conducted within small and interactive groups.
4. Examples of actual school events should be discussed during in-service courses.
5. Important and major problems faced by school principals should be handled at in-service training activities.

**Table 23.9** Ways of internalizing ethical principles according to the participants' views

How to internalize ethical principles:	<i>f</i>	%
Through in-service education	146	67.3
Through pre-service education	20	9.2
Through the proper selection of candidates for school principal	12	5.5
Through summer camp	11	5.0
No education is needed because it's related to the personality	8	3.7
Through job training	6	2.8
Through internships with at least 2 years by a school principal	6	2.8
Through continuing education	5	2.3
Through graduate education	3	1.4
Total	217	100.0

**Table 23.10** Pre-service and/or in-service training topics

Training topics recommended by the responding principals	<i>f</i>	%
Leadership and administration	62	31.6
Human relations	60	30.6
Ethics	24	12.3
Self-improvement	21	10.7
Legislation	13	6.6
Adaptation to change	8	4.1
Economy and accountancy	6	3.1
Information technology	2	1.0
Total	196	100.0

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research was conducted in order to reveal the views and understanding of the school leaders in the province of Antalya, Turkey, concerning ethical principles. However, the most important output of this study is the development of two ethical scales, the ESSL and the ESSAP, which complement each other. The results of EFAs applied in the research data show that future researchers can also use them and may explore the reliability and validity of these scales. Admittedly, there is still a need to make an observation on the leaders about these principles while practicing at the school. Nevertheless, the following limitations of this study should not be ignored for the generalization: numbers of the participants (only 310 school leaders), regional study (working in Antalya province), and method chosen for the data collection (questionnaire developed by the researchers).

The main conclusion is that an awareness of ethical principles, not only for school leaders but also within the school administration process, was found to be extremely necessary in the opinion of the participants. Interestingly, though, the participating school leaders see themselves as being much more ethical than their counterparts. As can be seen in the data from this study, the necessity levels obtained from two scales were the highest, while that of the other leaders' practices were the lowest at the alpha level of .001. Indeed, only very few participants reported that they could not know what their colleagues did in regard to complying with ethical principles, whereas a great majority of the participating leaders gave their counterparts a lower rating. How can this result be explained? It implies that the participating school leaders evaluate their own leadership behaviors as being significantly more ethical than how they judge the actions of other school leaders. This result reminds us of Yunus Emre, a Turkish poet living in the 13th–14th centuries, who wrote: “What if you think for yourself / Think about it for others as well.”

Another consequence of this study is the finding of significant positive correlations among three columns in both scales at the alpha level of .001. The correlation coefficients between necessity level and own practice for both scales are very high (.947 and .913), while they are moderate for the other binary comparisons. This result shows that the necessity level, own practice, and others' practice are positively interconnected.

Another important result is that the necessity levels are the highest in ethical principles concerning nondiscrimination, honesty, and no personal gain for the ESSL. The leaders also proclaim at the highest levels that they practice nondiscrimination behaviors at the school, and their counterparts do not use school resources for personal gain. However, the mean difference among the three columns—necessity level, own practice, and others' practice—for the ESSL was only 2.08 because the lowest mean obtained from item 3 was 7.66 in the third column, and the highest mean obtained from item 8 was 9.74. This means that even the lowest mean is more than 7 out of 10 points, and this result shows that the chosen principles for the study were accepted and practiced by the participating leaders. On the other hand, the highest means were obtained from the same principles (item 14) expressed in the form “banning teachers and other staff from attending school after consuming alcoholic beverages” in all three columns, and the mean difference among the columns was only 1.99 because the lowest mean obtained from item 7 was 7.70 in the third column for the ESSAP.

It emerged that school leaders participating in this study mostly have similar views and understandings about ethical principles. However, significant differences were found in favor of “female” and “subject teacher” in the variables of gender and teaching field only with regard to the necessity level, while the variable of school status was found statistically different in favor of “state school” in only the ESSAP at the alpha level of .05. Although the alpha level shows that the effect size of the difference may be small, the findings of this research are not consistent with the finding of Kara (2006), which suggested that principals of private schools are perceived to be more ethical than the principals of public schools, or with the finding of Kentsu (2007), where the difference is in favor of males, or with the finding of Küçükkaraduman (2006), who highlighted the differences in terms of the variables of teaching field and length of service. Doubtless, neither populations nor the instruments of the above-mentioned studies are the same as with this current study.

The researchers argue that the most important contribution of this study is to present Turkish school leaders with ethical principles, which are highly supported by the participants. However, only the views of the participants were reflected in this study. Further researchers need not only to focus on observing school leaders' behaviors in an actual school setting but also on a broader population. Admittedly, the limitations of this study should be taken into consideration for generalizing the results. Therefore, further studies are still required for generalization to the whole Turkish educational system. Finally, the following practical suggestions may be given:

1. Turkish school leaders need to empathize with their colleagues and cooperate more with each other.
2. Turkish school leaders should become more explicitly aware of the ethical dimensions and demands of their role.
3. Turkish school leaders need to learn how best to personally model ethical behavior.



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