

Examining the Opinions of School Principals Regarding Unethical Issues in School Management

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the ethical issues faced by principals working in public schools and determining their responses during and after unethical matters. This research was conducted in phenomenology design as qualitative study. Thirty school principals working in Tekirdağ province, Süleymanpaşa district public schools (special education, preschool, primary school, secondary school, and high school) participated in the study. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form. The findings were analyzed by applying the content analysis method and presented by creating themes and codes with quotations. The findings show that school principals are not involved in financial processes. Their relationships with parents are more discreet and they are sensitive in their relations with staff. There is no deliberate discrimination among teachers, they are neutral in tenders and canteens, they embrace the interests of students in opening courses, and they are far from financial expectations in student enrolments. For minimizing the ethical difficulties in schools and establishing a regular school ethical chain, it has emerged that the moral principles in schools should be defined beforehand. Administrators should be trained ethically before their assignment. Simultaneously, the obligation of solving financial difficulties, which are the source of ethical problems in schools, has emerged.

Keywords: School Management and Ethics, Ethical Problems, School Principals, Ethical Values, Phenomenology.

DOI: 10.29329/epasr.2020.334.7

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Introduction

Ethics as a concept originates from the Greek word "ethos", which suggests behavior and character (Özdemir, 2008). As Aristotle, one of the world's most recognized and discussed Ancient Greek philosophers, put it: "Man is a political animal by nature" (Tannenbaum & Schultz, 2007). Of course, due to this state of nature, it is inevitable to create a network of relationships. This political and social life created by individuals is a result of human nature. It can be undoubtedly stated that most thinkers accept the role of concepts such as ethics, virtue, and morality in this social and political life, which are formed by their nature (Berkowitz, 1999, p. 4; Miller, 2000).

In the context of social and individual relationship networks, behaviours that are almost entirely adopted and that arise by executing the essential rules and their requirements can be defined as ethical values (Kırlioğlu & Akyel, 2003). There are a relationship and difference between ethics and morality. Most comprehensively, concerning the relationship between morality and ethics, ethics can be described as follows (Cevizci, 2008, p. 1):

“Ethics can be defined as the way of thinking that has everything adding meaning to life, the theory of moral principles or the discipline of philosophy in terms of the life of the individual who has an absolute morality and strives to realize a specific experience ideal, secondly, those who criticize and even condemn the course of the age, the life of the society of which they are a member and consequently attempt to impose alternative values, living rules or principles instead of the current or in terms of the attitude of the philosopher who does not define him explicitly but tries to justify his implications and finally, just like the physicist who analyzes the language of morality, discusses the nature of moral concepts and judgments, in short, dealing with the phenomenal world, in terms of the work of the philosopher who is involved in a theoretical research that focuses on the world of value at least for now and conventionally, the subject of value, the human’s valuing experience, in short, the way of thinking that includes everything that adds meaning to life.”

The philosophical discipline that deals with the moral rules, values, which form the basis of both social and individual relationships built by individuals over time, with moral concepts such as evil or right or wrong or righteousness are called ethics (Kirel, 2000). There are some moral principles throughout the attitudes and behaviours that the individual exhibits in his daily life. The criteria by which individuals shape their actions in a wide range from what is right and wrong, to what is good and evil are also called ethics (Saban & Atalay, 2005).

Ethics in Schools

In the framework of the study, professional ethics is considered regarding concepts such as school, education, and school administrators. The title "Ethics in Schools" can be defined as professional ethics in educational sciences. With its shortest definition, professional ethics are the rules of behaviour and attitude that must be followed in the professional branches directly dealing with the individual. The main reasons why the issue of professional ethics has become critical nowadays when the Division of Labour is observed in every moment and every aspect of our lives, is the recognition and increase of ethical problems encountered in professional groups (Tepe, 2000). When evaluated in the context of schools, there is a holistic relationship between ethical management and teaching. An acceptable teacher is not only someone with excellent teaching abilities yet also a moral model with his life. In this context, teaching is not just a profession but also an ideal living typology (Pieper, 1999).

Ethics in School Management

According to Bursalioğlu (1997), it is difficult for school administrations to be successful without mastering the values professionally. Referring to the fact that moral and ethical leadership has become essential for schools and educational organizations like all the others, Bursalioğlu (1997) states that ethical thoughts and actions are the most important responsibilities of leaders. In his study, Sergiovanni (2001, p. 345) states that "Running schools is not a random business. Mind, heart, and hands must work together in the process of practice. Situations in schools should be authoritarian". According to another definition, as an ethical leader, the school administrator's principal responsibility is to comply with the ethical principles of the profession. The code of ethics should be idealistic and applicable to all school administrators. The school administrator recognizes that public schools serve the purpose of providing educational opportunities for all (American Association of School Administrators, 1996).

Research conducted on school management challenges of school administrators investigated the issues in financial resources management (Aslanargun & Bozkurt, 2012; Hoşgörür & Arslan, 2014; Karakütük & Özbal, 2017; Mentеше, Üstün, & Gökdelen, 2012); school-parent cooperation (Aslanargun & Bozkurt, 2012; Özgan & Aydın, 2010); environmental factors (Aslanargun & Bozkurt, 2012; Özcan, 2014). However, there is limited research on ethical issues that school administrators face in school management (see Argon, 2016) or ethical leadership characteristics of school administrators (see Börü & Boyacı, 2016) in national context. Therefore, the present study is expected to contribute to literature by addressing school management in terms of ethical issues and the way school principals deal with ethical difficulties.

This study aims to examine the unethical issues encountered by school principals in school management and to determine their responses during and after unethical problem situations. As a result of the research, it is attempted to reveal what initials are essential for the founding of ethical infrastructure in schools, the place, and the importance of moral elements in successful school management, and which features should be paid attention to ethically. Therefore, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How is a school principal's management of financial processes perceived in terms of ethical values?
2. How are unethical behaviours of school principals perceived in their relationships with parents?
3. How is the approach of the school principals towards teachers perceived in the context of ethical values?
4. How is the relationship of the school principals with the staff perceived in the context of ethical values?
5. For the school principals:
 - a. What are the unethical situations they face in conducting refresher courses?
 - b. What are the unethical situations they face in service and canteen tenders?
 - c. What are the unethical behaviours that students face while enrolling in the school?

Method

Research Design

This study was designed by the qualitative research design. Qualitative research can be defined as studies in which qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and documents are used, and qualitative processes revealed in the natural environment of perception and events are followed (Fraenkel et al., 2012). In qualitative research studies, data are usually collected through methods such as observations, interviews, and metaphors. The present study is conducted in phenomenology design. In this design, it is possible to determine the participants' experiences, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

Participants

In determining the study group of the research, one of the purposeful sampling methods, the appropriate sampling method was used. Appropriate sampling is the selection from easily accessible and applicable units due to the limitations in terms of time, money, and labor (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). Following the appropriate sampling method, the researchers interviewed 30 state school

principals who were working in different levels and types in Tekirdağ Province Süleymanpaşa District. Codes in the form of M1, M2, and M3... were used while conveying the direct opinions of the participants. Information about the participants is given in Table 1:

Table 1. Demographic Information about Participants

Gender	Number of Participants (f)
Female	6
Male	24
Age	
Ages 20-30	4
Ages 31-40	8
Ages 41-50	12
Ages 51-60	6
Branch	
Primary School Teaching	10
Turkish Philology Teaching	2
Math Teaching	2
History Teaching	2
Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Teaching	2
Pre-School Teaching	2
Physical Education Teaching	2
Turkish Teaching	2
English Language Teaching	1
Social Sciences Teaching	1
Philosophy Teaching	1
Accounting and Finance Teaching	1
Science and Technology Teaching	1
Guidance	1
Administration Year	
0-5 Years	12
6-10 Years	8
11-15 Years	4
16 and above	6
Teaching Year	
0-5 Years	4
6-10 Years	4
11-15 Years	4
16-20 Years	8
21 and older	10
School Type	
Pre-School	2
Primary School	11
Secondary School	9
High School	6
Special Education	2
Average Number of Teachers in Schools	
0-20 Teacher	6
21-50 Teacher	8
51-100 Teacher	14
101 and above	2
Average Student Amount of Schools	
0-500 Students	10
501-1000 Students	6
1001-2000 Students	10
2001 and above	4

The teaching career stages of 30 school principals who constitute the sample of the study were separated by the career stages suggested by Bakioğlu (1996) in his research. According to this, 1-5 years of professional seniority is "entering the career" stage, 6-10 years of professional seniority is the "settling" stage, 11-15 years of professional seniority is the "experimentation" stage, 16-20 years of professional seniority is "expertise" stage and 21 years or more professional seniority is defined as the "calmness" stage. In terms of teaching career steps, four of the school principals, who constitute the sample of the research, are at the beginning of the career, four of them are at the stage of settling, four of them are experimental, eight of them are at the expertise, and 10 of them are at the calmness stage.

Data Collection Tools

The interview method is another most frequently used system among qualitative data collection methods. The interview method is used as a powerful method to reveal the perspectives, experiences, feelings, and perceptions of the individuals (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). A semi-structured interview method was preferred to collect data in the study. This method is essential in terms of asking questions that will make it possible to examine in-depth on a specified subject. If the answers are not incomplete or unclear, it makes the situation clearer by asking questions at the end and allows the answers to be completed (Çepni, 2007). The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews consisting of seven questions with 30 state school principals and recorded the interviews using a tape recorder by informing them during the interviews. They made a clean copy of these records and reported the data. The demographic questions in the interview form, which is the data collection tool, are related to the school principals' gender, branch, age, professional and administrative experiences, school type, and the number of school teachers. With the open-ended questions in the interview form, school principals' opinions about their participation in financial processes in the context of ethical values, their relations with parents, staff, and teachers, their moral attitudes in courses, services, canteens, and registries were taken. They were asked to create solutions for the ethical problems encountered in these situations.

Validity and Reliability

An education management expert and two school principals and public administration experts to ensure the content validity of the data collection tools examined the questions in the data collection forms. After the review of the literature, the interview form prepared in accordance with the research questions was presented to the field experts to check to what extent it served the purpose, comprehensibility, and applicability. In line with the recommendations of the experts, questions were combined, arranged, and seven questions were seen in a semi-structured interview. In the research, internal validity (credibility) was tried to be ensured through expert examination and participant confirmation. Besides, the consistency of the data findings collected for the credibility dimension of

the research was ensured. Thus, the findings were compatible with the conceptual framework applied in the development of the interview form. To increase the external validity (transferability) of the research, the process and steps taken in this process were explained in detail (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this context, the research model, study group, data collection tool, data collection process, analysis, and interpretation of the data, and how the findings were organized were discussed in detail.

While creating coding and sub-themes, expert views were obtained from one field of education management and control and two fields of measurement and evaluation in terms of the reliability of the research. Thus, it was aimed to reach a consensus among the researchers by using the formula of $\text{Consensus} = \frac{\text{Consensus}}{(\text{Consensus} + \text{Disagreement})} \times 100$ (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, the consensus was reached at 81% and 86%, respectively, between the researcher and other experts. Situations with differences of opinion were evaluated and changed accordingly. The expressions that can be applied as literal quotes have been determined and included quotes form if necessary. Indirect quotations, mainly the views that are highly repetitive and important are tried to be conveyed.

Data Collection

The data were collected in the 2015-2016 academic year. Before applying the semi-structured interview questions, which are the data collection tools, to the participants, preliminary interviews were performed with the school principals, and the purpose of the study and their possible contributions were explained. The study data were collected at schools by making appointments in environments where school principals could express themselves comfortably, and voice recording could be made. Interview questions were directed to each participant with the same words and intonations that would evoke the related meaning. The data were collected between February and May 2016, and each interview lasted between 30-65 minutes on average.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, analysis in the ethnographic study is achieved with the "Descriptive or Content Analysis" method. With content analysis, the data are taken into the analysis process in detail. As a result, themes and dimensions that were not clear before being formed (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The content analysis method was applied to analyze the data. Content analysis is defined as a systematic, repeatable technique in which some words are summarized with smaller content categories with coding made according to specific rules (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008).

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) analyze the qualitatively collected data in four stages. The analysis of the research and these four stages are described below:

1. Coding Data: The data obtained from the Interview Forms were first transferred from the voice recordings to the Word Office program are read a few times, and the related coding was created. In Table 2 below, the continually repeating and essential codes that are formed because of the question-based analysis of the interview reports done by the researcher with the school principals are listed:

Table 2. Coding of Data

Questions	Codes
1. Research Question	Need for Financial State Support (16), Overshadowing Professional Dignity (15), Problem of State Support (12), Obligation to Meet Essential Needs (9), Solution Produce (9), Need for Financial Specialists (9), Focus on Education (8) Donations and Fundraising Trouble (8), Obligation (8), Parents' Associations (7), Begging (7), Parent and Student Prejudices (6), Additional Staff Salary Payments (5), Charity and Activities (5), Cleaning Needs (5), Quality Service (5), Inability to Employ (4), No Allowance (4), Expenditure Controls (4), Parent Relations (4), Regulation of School Buildings (3), Private School Supports (3), Wear (3), Pool System (3), Professional Units (2), Support of Local Governments (2), Senior Management Pressures (2), Autonomy for Schools (2)
2. Research Question	Financial Distress (11), Communication Problems (10), Failure to Maintain Level (9), Need for Fundraising (8), Exaggeration of Sincerity (6), Long Term Administrators (6), Grades (6), Student Absences (6), Managers Keeping Up with Parents (5), Incompetent Administrators (4), Compromise (4), Political Pressure (4), Parent Not Discrimination (4), Continuous Asking Parent (4), Negative Parent Profile (3), Population Using (3), Registration Requests (3), Family Association Support (2), Student Conflicts (2), Executive Elections (2), Parent Pressure (2), Parent Cooperation (2), Senior Management Pressure (2)
3. Research Question	Positive Discrimination (14), Teacher Who Loves His Job (9), Teacher Who Doesn't Work (7), Difference of Opinion (7), Nepotism (7), Self-Developing Teacher (7), Equality (6), Separations (5), Mobbing (5), Teacher Performing his/her Duty (5), Support For the Teacher (5), For Labour (5), Union Discrimination (4), Sacrifice (4), Sense of Justice (4), Transparent Management (3), Mobbing (3), Polarization (3), Good-Bad Teacher Distinction (3), School Benefits (2), Human Resources Management at School (2), Self-Inquiry (2), Not Equal Approach (2)
4. Research Question	Discreet Relationship (16), Personnel Fulfilment (11), Performing Personal Affairs (9), Fair Distribution of Tasks (9), Supervision of Personnel (8), Management Abuse (7), Dialogue (7), Over familiarity (7), Ethical and Principled School Management (6), Relations with Subordinates (5), Declaration of Duty (4), Integration of Personnel (4), Distrust in Management (3), Appreciation of Personnel (2), Favouritism (2), Interest Relations (2), Support and Valuation (2), Representation of the State (2)
5a. Research Question	Student Benefits (9), Evaluation of Parent Requests (8), Teacher Competence (8), Central Teacher Appointment and Planning (5), Affinity to Administration (5), A Skilled Teacher (5), Inability to Manage the Process (4), Low Wages (3), Unwillingness of Teachers (3), Teacher Favor (3), Financial Expectations (3), Management's Lesson Hours (3), Forced Volunteer Teachers (2)
5b. Research Question	Tender by Senior Management (17), Parents' Associations (11), Conducting Audits (10), Financial Expectations (9), Long-Term Management (8), Transparent Tender (8), Lack of Responsibility (6), No Announcements (5),

	Management's Involvement in Tenders (5), Unqualified Tender (4), Nepotism (4), Managerial Attitudes (4), Quality Search (3), Health and Hygiene (2), Expert Contractors and Auditors (2) Management Concessions (2)
5c. Research Question	Address Based Registration System (19), Financial Expectations (13), Parent Expectations and Attitudes (8), Implementing Change of Address (8), Families with Good Financial Status (7), Inappropriate Offers (6), Request to Choose a School (6), Teacher Selection (5), Central Placement (5), Socio-Economic Level of Parents (5), Doing Business Through Acquaintance (4), Registration by Lot (4), Contact With Senior Management (3), Transparency (3), Using Political Power (3), Allowance Problem (3), Management Guidelines (3), Desire for High-Quality Education (2)

2. Determination of themes: Coding and classification from the obtained data are not sufficient. It is necessary to find themes that can be collected under specific categories based on the determined codes. The codes obtained from the analysis of the data obtained through the interviews with the school principals were collected in seven (7) themes and written as follows in Table 3:

Table 3. Themes

Theme No	Themes
Theme 1	Financial Needs and Overshadowing of Professional Dignity
Theme 2	Communication Problems and Parent Attitudes
Theme 3	Discrimination and Positive Discrimination
Theme 4	Discreet Relationship and Fair Task Distribution
Theme 5	Student Interests and Nepotism
Theme 6	Senior Management Attitudes and Tenders
Theme 7	Registration Status and Applications

3. Arrangement of codes and themes: The thematic coding stage and the adjustment according to the code and themes created from the data are followed by the thematic coding stage. The researcher divided each theme into twenty-one (21) sub-themes suitable for seven (7) themes by the data. The theme and sub-themes are given in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub Themes
Financial Needs and Overshadowing of Professional Dignity	1. Government Support Requirement and Essential Needs 2. Fundraising 3. Solution Generation and Management Reputation
Communication Problems and Parent Attitudes	1. Over familiarity to Satisfy Needs 2. Parental Requests Due to Fundraising 3. Long-Term Managers and Compromise
Discrimination and Positive Discrimination	1. A Teacher Who Likes and Dislikes His Job 2. Differences of Opinion and Fronting Teacher 3. Mobbing and the Sense of Justice
Discreet Relationship and Fair Task Distribution	1. Personal Affairs and Personnel Fulfilment 2. Task Distribution and Supervision 3. Over familiarity and Management Abuse
Student Interests and Nepotism	1. Consideration of Requests 2. Teacher Competencies and Affinity to Management 3. Planning and Fee Status
Senior Management Attitudes and	1. Senior Management and Parents' Associations

Tenders	2. Transparent Tender Controls and Financial Expectations 3. Failure to Make Tender Announcements and the Role of Managements
Registration Status and Possible Applications	1. Address Based Registration System and Central Placements 2. Address Changes and Parent Preferences 3. Parent Socio-Economic Level and Inappropriate Offers

4. Definition and interpretation of findings: In the last stage, the researchers interpret the findings explained in detail and collected. Simultaneously, some results are achieved. In qualitative research, the researchers' views and inferences are essential since they are close and intertwined with data.

Results

Research findings are presented under this subject according to the themes obtained. Within the scope of the study, school principals' perceived unethical situations or behaviors include informal relationships with parents due to funding schools, favouritism regarding teachers, favouritism in tenders, treating unequally, using political power and false statement for school registration.

Financial Needs and Overshadowing of Professional Dignity

Government Support Requirements and Essential Needs

Under the theme of financial requirements and undermining professional dignity, the sub-theme most frequently expressed in language stands out as "state support and essential needs" (25/30). Even if the School Principals stated that it was not ethical to be involved in the financial processes in their schools, they were obliged (8/30), since there was not enough state support (16/30), they organized activities such as bazaars to meet the essential needs for quality education (7/30), and that they meet the cleaning and required personnel needs this way (13/30), and that they cannot focus on education while dealing with such financial affairs (8/30). Some of the statements of school principals belonging to this sub-theme are as follows:

"When we look at the essence of the principal's participation in financial processes in school management, it is not appropriate. While it should only be in terms of practicing it in the appropriate areas, in our state, financial support only contributes to the bill payment. Apart from that, they expect the school to manage by putting the excessive and indispensable needs such as cleaning supplies, attendant salary payments, repairs, and stationery on the administrators..." (M2).

"...The state does not cover any expenses other than the bills of schools. There is a shortage of officers and employees in schools. To overcome these challenges, schools have to buy service and recruit personnel who do the jobs such as cleaning staff, civil

servants, security and pay their pensions and insurance expenses with the financial resources they produce..." (M3).

Fundraising

Some of the school principals stated that they had trouble collecting donations and aid (8/30) due to not allocating funds (4/30), the necessity of collecting donations through the school-family association (7/30); otherwise, they faced prejudices between parents and students (7/30). Some of the school principals dealing with fundraising stated that they were unable to engage in education and training (4/30), worn out in financial processes (3/30), and fulfilled the task referred to as a begging (7/30). School principals explained their opinions as follows:

"...Due to the financial insufficiency of the schools, bringing these problems to the agenda in parents' meetings affects even the participation of parents to the meetings. Because of the system that left us in this situation, we are getting tired of the parents who come to the school by making sentences beginning with, They will ask for money again..." (M4).

"...There are financial difficulties in schools due to situations such as not meeting the salaries of the staff working in schools, and we have to collect donations from parents to solve these problems. It emerges as a situation that degrades the dignity of the school, school administration, and teachers..." (M13).

Producing Solutions and Management Reputation

The number of school principals who state being in financial processes in terms of professional reputation not appropriate is relatively high (15/30). Expressing the need for solution proposals to overcome financial difficulties, school principals (9/30) mentioned the need for expert staff (9/30), expenditure controls (4/30), and support for private schools should be provided to public schools (3/30). As a solution, they expressed the necessity of regular parent relations (4/30), distributing funds to all schools through the pool system (3/30), getting the support of local governments (2/30), and covering professional units in financial processes. The statements of a school principal concerning this are as follows:

"...To prevent ethical problems, resources should be transferred to the school by the government according to specific criteria (school size, number of students). Another solution is that our schools are located in almost the busiest parts of the cities. School gardens can be utilized as parking lots on weekends to create income for schools. Places that can be rented such as shops and conference halls can be built in the lower parts of the newly built schools and given to the management of the school family associations.

Another solution is to set up a pool system for all schools in a neighbourhood and share the income of the schools. " (M19).

Communication Problems and Parent Attitudes

Over familiarity to Satisfy Needs

School principals (5/30), saying that there are administrators who keep up with the attitudes of the parents mainly to eliminate the needs and troubles (11/30), state that they cannot maintain the level after a certain period (9/30) and exaggerate sincerity (6/30). Thus, they stated communication problems with the parents as follows:

“One of the most basic features that a school administrator should have is being a good communicator and relationship chainman. Having a level and effective communication with parents and school stakeholders will make the administration more permanent and effective...” (M25).

“...I believe that the dose of sincerity must not be exceeded for education to be healthy and qualified. When you make concessions to the parents, the parents will approach you as a friend, and the management you perform will be meaningless. When necessary, they will try to take a managerial position and cause short-sightedness to occur. There will be immoral disconnections and unethical conversations between parents and management.” (M1).

“...The main reason for the unethical behaviour with parents is that administrators have various relationships with these people due to the help they receive for the interests of the school as a result of the relationships they have established with the non-governmental organizations around the schools.” (M11).

Parental Requests Due to Fundraising

School principals (9/30), who expressed the necessity of collecting aid to meet financial needs in their schools, stated that parents started to make constant requests due to the presence of some incompetent school principals (4/30). Requests arising from these attitudes of parents such as grade status (6/30), student absenteeism (6/30) become evident. The statements of a school principal regarding these situations are as follows:

“...Parents who support the school financially are not treated very ethically. Due to the relationships established in the name of the interests of the school, ethical behaviours are avoided. This situation is caused due to the financial factors requested by the parents. Parents' requests should be evaluated, but not all claims should be executed. When all the wishes of the always asking parents are fulfilled, unethical requests begin.” (M9).

Long-Term Managers and Making Concessions

School principals (6/30), who work for a long time in their institutions, start to embrace the school after a certain period and are accepted by the environment. When this is the case, concessions start to occur among the parents and the people around them (4/30). Due to political pressures (4/30) and the presence of parents who use the population (3/30), demands and concessions appear on the school administration. There are school principals (2/30) who express the existence of relationships of interest, as well as school principals who report that there is parent pressure resulting from compromise (2/30). Therefore, registration requests arise due to concessions (3/30), and managers pay attention not to discriminate appropriately (4/30). The views of some school principals are as follows:

“...The most crucial problem is that an administrator may be working at the same school for many years. Parents knowing him and expressing their wishes freely create unethical issues between the parents and us. They should not be overly intimate with the parents for the solutions, and the rules should be reminded.” (M14).

“...Administrators and even all teachers should be at an equal distance to all parents. They should love each child as an individual; that is, they should not give privileges to those who have money. For example, I recently saw that they took a very spoiled child to the principal, but the principal does nothing except a few weak warnings. Call the child’s family and talk! No way. Because his family contributed to the school! Is this ethical now?” (M22).

Discrimination and Positive Discrimination

A Teacher Who likes and Dislikes His Job

Many school principals state that discrimination between teachers will be made according to circumstances in their schools (24/30). The principals stated that there should be a difference between the teacher who loves his job (9/30) and the teacher who does not do their duty correctly (7/30) and states that positive discrimination always implies ethics and quality (14/30). School principals (7/30) who say that if more teachers do their jobs properly, the principle of equality should be applied, cherish the teachers who make sacrifices (4/30), and always support the teacher who develops oneself (7/30). The opinions of school principals regarding this are as follows:

“School management does not treat teachers individually. All teachers and educators doing their job are equal in the eyes of the school administration. If he is not doing his job, of course, the performance will be different. Here, the main reason for being treated differently is whether or not to do their duty properly...” (M14).

“...For example, when a teacher does not work, they push the work on to another teacher who is always working. As such, you discourage the working teacher. Is this ethical? I don't think so. Thus, I am in favour of discrimination among teachers.” (M12).

Differences of Opinion and Fronting Teacher

School principals (7/30) stated that the most critical ethical situations to be experienced in schools are disagreements between teachers based on nepotism (7/30) and that this situation affects the moral system of the school (5/30). School principals, who said that teachers who did not share the same opinion were expelled from the school by the administration (3/30) with a policy of mobbing, stated that they sometimes protect some teachers for the interests of the school (2/30). The existence of school principals who adopt a transparent management approach (3/30) prevents unionism (4/30) and minimizes the distinction between good and bad teachers (3/30). The views of school principals on the differences of opinion and favouritism of teachers are as follows:

“...I felt that a woman of the school administrators fulfilled the wishes of a staff group she was close to from their coffee conversations, and favoured that group, as it were. At an event organized for teachers during the ethics week, I heard that a friend who was the manager was criticized, as "What you do is not ethical at all" by a group opposed to the group he was close to. I did not attend this meeting. But a teacher who participated in this meeting came and told me about this situation.” (M17).

Mobbing and the Sense of Justice

The participants (5/30), who stated that school principals are mobbing against teachers, noted that this situation is more against teachers who do not do their duty (5/30) and the teachers should be supported under all conditions (5/30). School principals (4/30), who stated that the sense of justice should be in school principals, expressed the necessity of paying the teachers' labour by preventing their polarization (3/30). The statements of the school principals are as follows:

“...Some administrators apply mobbing to teachers working in their schools. School administrators treat diligent teachers better. The teacher who only attends the class for filling the class and getting their salary and the teacher who spends all his/her energy for the future of the country cannot and should not be the same.”(M3).

“Justice is not absolute equality. I believe this should be the main approach. If a teacher who has internalized education and tries to add value gets the same treatment with a teacher who only gets his salary, always defends his rights but always puts his/her responsibilities behind, then it is called favouritism management...” (M1).

Discreet Relationship and Fair Task Distribution

Personal Affairs and Duties of Personnel

School principals (11/30), who said that most of the staff in schools do not do their work, expressed that school principals use staff to do their job (9/30) and that they should not be in the moral and principled school management (6/30). The school principals (4/30), saying that the staff in their schools should be informed about their duties, declared that they should be appreciated when necessary. Some of the school principals describe this situation as follows:

“School personnel are the people who carry out the work outside the education and training of the school. It should not be forgotten that this personnel is recruited to the school to work on the jobs of the school other than education...” (M6).

“...The administrators use the staff of the school as their maids. The basis for this is that job descriptions are not made correctly in our society. They attend who are responsible for meeting the needs of the school work as the staff of the administration. This situation causes the trust in management to be shaken and unethical elements to occur...” (M1).

Task Distribution and Supervision

Stating that there will not be ethical problems with ethical personnel when there is a fair distribution of tasks in schools, school principals (9/30) stated that it is necessary to inspect the staff from time to time (8/30) and it would be beneficial to implement practices to integrate them (4/30). 30); thus, distrust towards the administration would decrease (3/30). Stating the importance of establishing a dialogue with them (7/30), the executives said that it was essential to be careful not to be nepotist (2/30) and stated the necessity to stay away from interest relations. One of the school principals describes this situation as follows:

“...I believe there will be no problems after acting with the awareness of duties and responsibilities. In short, the staff should do their job, and the school administration should supervise the staff in terms of their responsibilities...” (M13).

“It is essential to have healthy relationships with subordinates in management. The school administrator should establish good relations with the people working at the school. The manager should inform the staff working at the school. Because knowing also increases people’s trust in themselves and others...” (M16).

Over familiarity and Management Abuse

Referring to the importance of being level in relations with staff, school principals (16/30) stated that the most important ethical problems are the misuse of management (7/30), excessive

sincerity (7/30), and forgetting that they represent the state (2/30). The statements of the school principals are as follows:

“...Just as the relations between teacher and staff should be cautious, there should be a certain level between school administration and staff. I always favour a certain distance in between...” (M12).

“...A school administrator should not be too serious or too sincere with the staff working in the school. If they overstep the limit, they may revert to relationships of interest. Over familiarity may require overlooking the abuse of the other party...” (M3).

Student Interests and Nepotism

Consideration of Requests

Referring to the importance of evaluating parents' demands, school principals (8/30) asserted that considering the interests of students (9/30), teachers who do their job well should be assigned to refresher courses (5/30). Emphasizing the importance of school principals in managing the process, school administrators (4/30) state that they should consider the development of the student rather than the effort to please. The views of the school principals are as follows:

“...Parents' demands and students' voices play an important role in teacher selection. The most ethical way is to assess all elements and make choices. Thus, you will please both the parent, the teacher, and the student who will benefit as a result.” (M14).

“...It is essential to employ volunteer teachers in the courses and to include the qualified one in the class in line with student and parent preferences. Course hours have a certain standard. Since there may be teachers who desire to teach more and less concerning financial expectations and time, but as a school administration, we do not allow this...” (M6).

Teacher Competencies and Affinity to Management

School principals (8/30) stated that teacher competence comes first among the difficulties and ethical problems in the refresher courses. Moreover, teachers who are close to the administration are appointed to the classes without questioning their competencies (5/30). Besides, they stated that the teachers were assigned to refresher courses (3/30), focused on financial expectations (3/30). School principals define the situation as follows:

“...I encourage teachers who can be productive for students to open these courses. If the school principal is randomly appointing teachers and ignoring students' progress, there is a dilemma. In that case, the courses are opened only for the procedure...” (M5).

“...The teachers assigned in the refresher courses are chosen from the ones who work devotedly in our schools. We prefer teachers who do their duty lovingly and try to give something for their students in order to provide high benefit for students who attend these courses...” (M8).

Planning and Fee Status

While assigning teachers to refresher courses, school principals (5/30) stated that it would be ethical to do it centrally and impartially and that teachers did not want to take part in refresher courses, even partially due to the low fees (3/30). School principals stated that the education to be provided by compulsory volunteer teachers (2/30) is not suitable for ethical values, that the school administration cannot manage the process (4/30), cannot arrange the course hours (3/30) as follows:

“...If the aim is to provide supportive education to children, the quality is expected to be high; it is unethical to employ reluctant and inadequate teachers. Justice will be ensured if willing and qualified teachers are assigned to the courses with the lottery method.” (M18).

“...I think there are unethical behaviours regarding the course hours in the refresher courses. Teachers who have good relations with the administration arrange their course hours according to themselves. In order to solve these problems, teacher selection, course time, and course schedule can be made from the district, province, or ministry.” (M3).

Senior Management Attitudes and Tenders

Senior Management and Parents' Associations

The school principals (17/30) stated that the top administrations are generally involved in the operations of the schools and the district national education directorates make the tenders, and the school family unions are effective in the service tenders (11/30). Stating that long-term school administrators are involved in tenders, school principals (8/30) indicated that school management intervenes when parents' associations cannot fully grasp the situation (5/30). Opinions are as follows:

“The district directorates make the tenders of the schools. Even though service tenders are within the parent-teacher association, school principals intervene in them...” (M10).

“In the past, these tenders were given to someone through acquaintances. Since there are no principals who have worked in the same school for a long time, unethical behaviour in this regard has decreased to almost none...” (M13).

Transparent Tender Controls and Financial Expectations

School principals stated that they had financial expectations from the tender party due to financial insufficiencies (9/30). Although these expectations are not ethical, school principals (8/30)

stated that the administrations are not responsible for tenders (6/30) and that they are only guided. One school principal explains the situation as follows:

“...The district national education directorate conducts canteen tenders. Service tenders are awarded to the company that supports the school the most. Whether this is ethical or not is debated. To prevent the compliance problem, schools should regularly inspect the service and canteen, record the results of the audit, and notify the canteen and service operators. If these works are done regularly, there will be no problems.” (M11).

Failure to Make Tender Announcements and Duty of Managements

Stating that not making tender announcements would cause ethical problems, school principals (5/30) expressed the importance of the qualifications of the tenderers (4/30). Besides, they stated that nepotism was done (4/30), and quality should be sought in tender processes (3/30). Referring to the importance of managerial attitudes in tender processes, school principals (4/30) found it necessary to attach importance to health and hygiene (2/30) and employ expert and qualified tenderers and inspectors (2/30). School principals expressed their tendering and senior management attitudes as follows:

“...If parent-teacher associations are passive, school administration is compulsorily involved here. Instead of trying to find the best quality and the most suitable canteen by considering the interests of the students, the school-family union's involvement in these works leads to abuses. The school administration may experience close, friendly assignment and tender transfer process.” (M5).

“It is an unethical situation for the government to apply the tender method for a subject such as nutrition and to award a company that offers cheap meals. It is more accurate that the meals that students will eat are prepared by companies, institutions, or organizations under state control and served healthily...” (M29).

Registration Status and Possible Applications

Address Based Registration System and Central Placements

The number of school principals who say that their problems in enrolment have decreased with the advent of the address-based registration system is quite high. (19/30). Stating that financial expectations are at the forefront in enrolment periods in schools (13/30), school principals (13/30) said that because of central placements in high schools, irregular situations imposed by the administration and other elements were prevented to some extent (5/30). The explanations are as follows:

“...Since central placements are made, unethical behaviour during registration is almost non-existent. However, some parents persistently want to enrol and offer money because they are uninformed...” (M14).

“Although primary and secondary school registration based on addresses seems to prevent this situation, people can rent a house and pay the rent of the empty place to have their children attend certain schools. I witnessed that popular schools cannot meet preschool education physically (lack of classroom and staff) and they are in a challenging situation, mainly due to the flexibility in the regions in kindergarten enrolments...” (M17).

Address Changes and Parent Preferences

School principals (8/30) stated that one of the unethical situations is that parents change their addresses to enrol their students in other schools, and said that parents' expectations and attitudes shaken ethical values during the enrolment period (8/30). According to school principals, the high number of parents who want to enrol using their acquaintances (4/30), the presence of parents who want to choose a school (6/30), the company of parents who want to choose teachers (5/30) make it difficult for school principals to comply with ethical principles. Stating that parents' desire for quality education (2/30) because school administrations to compromise in their duties, school administrators (1/30) explained the situation as follows:

“...We sometimes encounter ethical problems in enrolment. The main reason for this does not result from the students. Parents' expectations are their desire to receive a quality education and schools' expectations of donations from parents...” (M9).

“...Parents use various ways to give their students to the school and teacher they want. They make the school administration act unethically by changing the address, using their political power, using loyalty relationships, and acting unethically.” (M30).

Parent's Socio-Economic Level and Inappropriate Offers

According to the opinions of school principals, the socio-economic level of parents (5/30) encourages school administrators to misdirect. Families with good financial status (7/30) make indecent proposals (6/30); these attitudes of parents are prevented from transparency in management (3/30). The school principals' views on the inappropriate offers are as follows:

“...Parents find an acquaintance to enrol their children in the school they like and try to come up with a solution in their way, pretending to have "moved" to the school's enrolment environment. If their financial situation is good, even the school principals are directing them like; "do it this way, then I can enrol you to school...” (M4).

“...Expectations of well-off parents who are in the registration area to choose a promising classroom and teacher may cause them to make unethical offers during registration. Dinner and barbecue invitations, giving more donations to the school if they can choose the teachers they like, etc...” (M10).

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Considering the interviews conducted for the research and the data obtained afterward, financial expectations and the inability to meet the mandatory requirements of the schools stand out based on ethical problems in school management. These situations lead principals to different pursuits and draw them into financial processes (Brimm, 1983). The environment causes them to establish unethical relationships with parents and students. Stating that collecting donations causes problems, school principals indicated that they lost their professional dignity and that parents started to look at them prejudicially (Özcan, 2014; Turan, Yıldırım, & Aydoğdu, 2012). Drawing attention to the need to increase state support in schools, principals expressed the need for a professional finance or accounting specialist in institutions. They also explained that these personnel could overcome financial, ethical problems (Bayrakçı & Dizbay, 2013; Hoşgörür & Arslan, 2014). At the same time, increasing state support and providing monetary support to students studying at public schools, as in private schools, will relieve school principals and prevent them from suffering in situations such as donations.

Parents' expressing that education in public schools is free of charge and not wanting to donate to schools causes them to distance themselves from the school administration. In the context of ethical principles, it would be more appropriate to collect donations through parent-teacher associations and not to involve school principals in the process (Özdemir, 2018). At the same time, it is observed that school principals who devote a lot of time to these jobs are away from education and weaken the rings of the student-centered education chain, which is the primary purpose of schools (Yıldırım, 2020).

To meet the needs of schools, school principals have to ask for financial resources first from parents, then from businesses around the school, and then from local administrations (Hoşgörür & Arslan, 2014; Özgan & Aydın, 2010). Since sincerity is overplayed in these material relationships, it is natural for unethical dialogues to arise. Simultaneously, it was revealed that the requests and proposals of the parents differ individually due to the communication difficulties with the individuals. Even the parents who donate a nominal fee demand from the school administration consistently. In these developments, where the competence of school principals is questioned, the requests of parents are generally grade, absenteeism, teacher choices, and school preferences. It should be emphasized that distinguishing between parents is incompatible with ethical values. Thus, parents' requests must

be assessed reasonably, and it is important that school principals manage the process well (Menteşe et al., 2012).

School principals, who have been working in their schools for an extended period, possess an essential role in the occurrence of ethical problems, even if they are not aware (Aslanargun & Bozkurt, 2012). Neglecting that schools are public institutions and adopting the school as their own business, school principals exaggerate their relations with the neighbourhood and the environment. They begin to make concessions and allow parents to exert their influence, establish political pressure, and make constant requests. Therefore, it is essential to adjust the level between parents and teachers, and it will be appropriate for school principals not to care about parents' socio-economic status in the context of ethical values (Börü & Boyacı, 2016).

School principals participating in the study stated that distinguishing between teachers who love their job and those who do not like their job (positive discrimination) would not be a problem in the context of ethical values. Still, on the contrary, it would motivate the teacher to commit to his job (Akar, 2018). Teachers who perform their jobs correctly do the right thing in terms of professional ethics and fulfil the requirements of their profession. In this case, the fact that school principals are prone to positive discrimination reveals that they are consistent in the context of ethical values (Börü & Boyacı, 2016; Özkeskin, 2013). However, if all the personnel working at the school are discriminated against, although they are committed to their jobs of equal value, in terms of political views, union attitudes, and closeness to the school administration; in that case, it is not in line with ethical principles (Erdem, 2015). It would be appropriate for school principals to be at the same distance to all teachers and to motivate them in these and such situations.

Mobbing teachers in schools has recently gained an important place in educational science research. As a result of the research, it was revealed that teachers who do not perform their job within the scope of ethical values are more exposed to mobbing. If no problems are arising from the teacher in schools and if the school principal desires to motivate teachers, the feelings of justice should come to the fore, all teachers should be treated appropriately, and they should all be acquired as values within the school culture (Eryaman, 2007; Güngör & Potuk, 2018; Özdemir, 2012).

In schools, the principals to have their staff do their jobs shake the existence of ethical values in the institution. In addition, the personal guidance of the school principals to the staff does not comply with ethical principles. The staff in schools must provide technical, physical, and cleaning services, in short, technical and support services, except for school education. Therefore, it is in line with ethical principles that the distribution of duties to the personnel is done fairly, that they are not rushed to personal affairs, and there is no discrimination and favouritism between them (Argon, 2016; Meriç & Erdem, 2013). That said, adjusting the level in relations and trying not to make individual

concessions will cause the personnel to do their job properly and ensure that ethical factors are taken into account (Aydın, 2016).

School principals should always prioritize student interests in management affairs within the context of ethical values. The principals who were interviewed stated that they evaluated student and parent demands in school refresher courses and indicated that it would be ethical to assign qualified and competent teachers to the refresher courses, with which the student agreed easily (Gülay & Kahveci, 2020). Accordingly, teacher selection, assessment of their demands, and consideration of their interests in refresher courses will motivate students to achieve their goals and ensure that the values of the school are protected. It can be said that when assigning teachers for refresher courses, it is not appropriate to choose teachers who are close to the school administration and who only attend to the courses for additional money (Özcan, 2014). Thus, it can be stated that plans and teacher assignments should be made central in refresher courses and parents and students should be allowed to participate in the decision of determining teachers. In addition, it is essential to make additional course fees in the refresher courses attractive as an incentive for teachers to prevent unethical teacher assignments (Canlı, 2019).

School principals stated that the most common cases of unethical practices in schools are tendering processes (canteen and service tenders). Moreover, that these problems were not experienced in schools compared to the past, and that the school family associations and district national education directorates now carry out these tenders within their structure. Administrators, who have been working in schools for a long time, intervene in the tender processes unethically and direct the process as they wish (Karakütük & Özbal, 2017; Turan, 2007). We can state that teacher and manager rotations are the right practice to avoid ethical problems. Besides, beyond the involvement of school principals and senior management in the tender processes, a professional team will make the tender more transparent and ethical. We can assume that parent-teacher associations are inadequate in tendering, which draws school principals into tender processes. In these cases, parent-teacher associations should be informed about tendering processes and service inspections. Problematic situations can be overcome with audits that prioritize student interests and incorporate ethical elements. The tenders should be done far from financial expectations, and the tender participants should not be subjected to guidance by the management.

As a result, we can assume that the material elements in schools form the basis of ethical problems. Failure to fully meet the needs of schools leads to the evaluation of inappropriate offers by school principals, collecting donations and grants, and naturally making concessions to these resources. Moreover, the presence of unqualified school principals, overly sincere and unregulated staff and parent relationships indicate the necessity of the existence of ethical principles in schools. It

should be stressed yet again, that discrimination among teachers affects ethical values, and there is a necessity of auditing the registration and tender status.

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