

## ***Ethical Leadership Behaviours of School Administrators from Teachers' Point of View***

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**Abstract:** The main objective of this study is to determine the degree of ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators according to teachers' opinions. As a quantitative research, this study was carried out in the academic year of 2010-2011 with 371 teachers who were employed in elementary schools. *Ethical Leadership Questionnaire* developed by Langlois (2007) has been used in the research. Findings of study reveal that as the year of seniority increases, more teachers think that administrators act within the ethical standards. Teachers' opinions about school administrators' ethical leadership behaviours do not differentiate according to the teachers' gender variable. However; in terms of branch variable, a significant difference is observed in teachers' opinions about their school administrators' ethical leadership behaviours when they faced with an ethical problem. Class teachers' opinions are more positive than branch teachers' opinions regarding school administrators' ethical leadership behaviours. Results indicate that teachers think that their school administrators often faced with an ethical dilemma while deciding upon personnel issues. This study concludes that establishing written ethical codes for school administrators may help them to make decisions with integrity, fairness, and in a more ethical manner especially about personnel issues.

**Keywords:** ethical leadership; school principals; ethical decision; teachers.

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## 1. Introduction

Globalisation and development of communication technologies resulted in ethical problems in the school management as well. Therefore, in all areas of life, such as politics, education, media and health, ethics has been discussed more frequently. Some of these ethical problems are discrimination, tax evasion, bribery and bias. These problems are reflected upon school management, thereby causing students and society to face ethical issues (Celik, 2000, p. 89). Students, parents and teachers expect that administrators make ethical decisions and behave ethically while resolving conflicts. This enhances the significance of ethics and increases the liabilities of administrators. Ethics is crucial in that it sets rules and customs that require the particular profession to obey. Within the field of educational administration, ethical codes enable all administrators to make ethical decisions and act accordingly. Thus, subjective practices are minimized.

In any profession people doing their job within the scope of ethical codes and standards earn trust of others, prevent waste of time and resource, and contribute to the order of organization. Society expects from employees to act justly, responsibly and respectably. When employees behave ethically in their job, organizational interest is protected more than self-interest. Welfare of the society prospers and stability is enhanced (İsgüden & Cabuk, 2006). An administrator who behaves ethically easily gains support of all employees because employees who work in such an environment believe that administrator would act ethically in any circumstance.

Today society expects much more from school administrators and this puts extra duties and responsibilities upon them. In fact, these duties are so excessive that one cannot easily stand. Administrator is responsible not only for enhancing academic success but also creating an environment in which both students and employees can learn effectively (Coplan, 2001, pp. 528-533).

Ethics must be taken more seriously in schools because teachers and administrators not only face ethical problems but they are also responsible for whether next generations will be educated and moral people (Haynes, 1998, p. 17). The role of schools in raising people, far-reaching decisions made in schools and close relations with environment are important for us to realize the significance of ethics for school organizations. Therefore, ethics in this field has been a subject of considerable debate.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the degree of ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators according to teachers' point of view. This study also aims to define primary school teachers' perceptions regarding their school administrators as ethical or unethical leaders. The research took place in Turkey and thus the discussion on to what extent the findings can be generalized should be thought in this perspective. It has been examined whether opinions of teachers about ethical leadership of administrators differ in terms of branch, gender and seniority variables. To achieve this goal, points below have been examined:

1. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators while resolving an ethical problem
2. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators when they face an ethical problem

3. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators while making decisions to resolve an ethical problem
4. Feelings when faced with an ethical problem in the workplace.

## **2. Conceptual framework**

In this section principal leadership approaches, ethics, ethical leadership and the importance of ethical leadership for schools will be discussed.

### *2.1. Leadership and Leadership Theories*

It is evident that many researchers (such as Adair, 1998; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2012; Hofstede, 1980; Ford, 2006; Northouse, 1997) from different scientific fields have studied on the subject of leadership. As Bolden (2004, p. 2) stated the topic of leadership has been of interest for a long time, from the early Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates to the plethora of management and leadership gurus. Thus it is very common to see that leadership has many diverse meanings. In a broad definition, Yukl (2002, p. 8) and Northouse (2003, p. 3) define leadership as the process of influencing others. There are four common themes that describe leadership: (1) leadership is a process; (2) leadership involves influence; (3) leadership occurs in a group context; and (4) leadership involves goal attainment Northouse (2003, p. 3).

The researchers in social sciences have always wondered how leaders manage to influence the followers (Yukl and VanFleet, 1992, p. 149). This curiosity has yielded a detailed literature review about leadership theories. These theories try to explain the leadership from different perspectives. According to the extensive literature on leadership, leadership theories can be examined in four groups. These are the trait approach, the behavioral approach, the situational approach, and new leadership theories (Bryman, 1992).

Trait approach argued that leaders are born, not made. The early leadership researchers were confident that some characteristics such as height, appearance, energy, self-esteem, dominance, intelligence, verbal fluency, intuition, foresight, creativity and persuasion are related to exceptional leadership. Leadership traits of an individual do not change from situation to situation (Stogdill, 1974; Yukl & VanFleet, 1992; Yukl, 2002, p. 177). The trait-based approach was seriously criticized as it has important shortcomings and says little about leader effectiveness (Yukl & VanFleet, 1992).

Increased frustration with the trait approach caused theorists began to research the leadership from a different perspective (Zepeda, 2013; Xu, Caldwell & Anderson, 2016; Shields, 2012; Spillane, 2012; Chemers, 2014). The researchers started to focus on what leaders actually do, rather than their underlying characteristics (Bolden, 2004, p. 9). The Ohio State research has a significant effect in support of this approach and it indicates that when the effective leadership behaviors are known, then leaders can learn to adopt them and accomplish greater effectiveness (Bryman, 1992). Also The University of Michigan Studies are very valuable for this approach as they gave «special attention to the impact of leaders' behaviors» (Northouse, 1997, p. 37).

One of the most popular leadership approaches is situational leadership approach which asserts that different situations demand different leadership styles. According to the basic assumption of the situational approach, leadership behavior is subject to change depending upon the changing circumstances (Eren, 1993, p. 120; Yukl, 2002, p. 208; Northouse, 1997, p. 99). Whilst behavioural theories introduced the notion of different leadership styles, they gave little guidance as to what constitutes effective leadership behaviours in different situations (Bolden, 2004, p. 10).

The trait approach, the behavior and the situational leadership approach are criticized for their determined and narrow perspective, which fails to cover leadership reality. Following these criticisms, new leadership theories have been proposed to define and conceptualize the process of leadership as a complex, dynamic and interactive process (Winkler, 2009, pp. 5-6). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, visionary leadership and servant leadership can be examined in the new leadership theories. In this sense, ethical leadership is one of the modern leadership approach which tries to define the leader in an ethical framework.

### 3. Ethics and Ethical Leadership

The word, ethics, was once used for customs and practices differentiate one society or group from others. Its origin is a Greek word, *Ethos*. Later on, it began to mean mainly character and temper and people started to use the term, ethics, to describe decent behaviours. This raises two questions, namely to whom is something ethical or not and how can we determine the right and wrong? These questions make sense when we consider them deeply in terms of society (Stefkovic & Shapiro, 2003, p. 89).

Starrat (2004, p. 5) defines ethics as rules, beliefs, assumptions and values that determine the limits of a moral life. Ethics in schools requires teachers to act abiding by rules, beliefs and values. Price (1992, p. 23) points out that ethics is a guiding process in which acts of people can be described as good or bad. Ethics deals not only with the result but also the process and indicates what should and should not be done. Ethics mainly aims to determine what is good or right to do (Gross, 1993, p. 213; Schultz, 2005, p. 1).

Touching upon the notion of ethics, it is necessary to mention leadership and ethical leadership. Maxwell (1998, p. 17) argues that ethics is the power of influencing people. This power is gained in such ways as interaction with others, intimidation and exertion of force. However, influential leaders are actually the ones who know how to win the favour of employees before asking them to follow. Since everyone wishes to be appreciated, the impact of leader depends on forming good relations with others by making ethical decisions. Otherwise, applying rules gets harder and the leadership of school administrator comes into question.

In general terms, leadership is defined as the power to influence people. Leadership in terms of ethics, on the other hand, is the power to determine what is good and bad or right and wrong so as to reach common aims of organizations and to influence others accordingly (Bolat & Seymen, 2003, p. 72). In other words, leaders who are ethical lay down rules, follow these rules, and seek to enforce them. Table 1 shows the characteristics and roles of an ethical leader.

**Table 1.** The characteristics and roles of ethical leadership

<b>Key Characteristic of Leadership</b>	<b>Ethical Role of Leader</b>
Raising awareness of values and ethics	Mentioning common values regularly and making sure that these are internalized
Sharing responsibility	Supervising himself and others with whom he shares responsibility so that they all act ethically
Being a role model	Being honest and admirable
Regarding values while making a decision	In all procedures regarding ethical values
Training about ethics and values	Helping colleagues to acquire trust and necessary skills
Give an opportunity to ethical people	Give priority to the people with a high ethical perception

**Source: Yaman, A. (2010).**

Yaman (2010, p. 11) explains some necessary characteristics that ethical leaders should have in the table above. First of all, leaders should raise awareness of ethics and values. When they behave ethically, they make similar decisions in similar circumstances. Thus, they treat employees more fairly. Leaders who are responsible for others' ethical or unethical acts should set an example for them. As ethical leaders internalize ethical values, they are guided by these values and try to convey them to their colleagues.

Ethics in school administration puts greater emphasis on the actions concerning education and decisions of administrators. School administrators should decide ethically since their decisions have an influence on several people in schools. Consequently, this makes ethics particularly important.

#### **4. The Significance of Ethical Leadership in Schools**

The bulk of research in teacher efficacy shows that there are a lot of factors effecting teachers' job performance (Güven & Çakir, 2012; Holzberger, Philipp & Kunter, 2013; Putman, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). One of the most important factors is the school administrators as they are the main actors in creating a relaxed, comfortable and desirable workplace (Yirci *et al.*, 2014). Due to social responsibilities of schools, administrators have to interact with many people, including students, teachers, other staff members, parents and inspectors. In these formal and informal settings various things may be expected from them. Thus, the question arises as to which demands should be met and to what extent is it possible? Administrators always face ethical problems because of these demands and expectations. In such a case, they are expected to act lawfully without conflicting with ethical principles (Taymaz, 2003, p. 23).

Since schools are structurally open systems, ethics in school administration is far more important. As a social organization, schools are responsible not only for employees but for the external environment (state, nature, environment and society) as well (Aktan, 2012). Schools aim to meet demands both internally and externally, which pushes administrators to act ethically. However, Holland (2005) argues that it

is pretty hard for an administrator to be both an expert on school administration and a leader for teaching process. Consequently, many administrators have to make a choice between conflicting ethical values.

School is an ideal place for people to apply ethical principles and internalize them all their lives. Here teachers and administrators build next generations of society (Langlois & Lapointe, 2009). Mendes (2003) puts forward that students spend more time in schools than they do at home and develop their identity here by imitating their teachers. This is why schools play a crucial role in raising future generations with a moral sense, thereby ensuring peace and quiet in society.

Sergiovanni (1992, pp. 54-55) states that ethical principles determine moral responsibilities of people who are employed in schools. They are regarded more respectable by society thanks to these principles. However, only professional ethics serve no useful purpose unless they totally internalize and abide by the principles. Thus, a leader who acts ethically influences people and can reach a particular goal more easily.

As ethical leaders administrators have three different responsibilities. First, they are responsible to themselves. They should stick to ethical principles more than anyone. Secondly, they are responsible to the organization because they have to enforce ethical rules. Finally, their social responsibility is to introduce these principles to the public (Celik, 2000, p. 102). Ethical leadership starts with the leaders themselves and gradually include many people in the society.

## **5. Making Ethical Decisions in the light of Ethical Principles**

Deciding, to put it simply, is to choose one of the options available as a decision-maker. Decision making is the process of detecting the problem and choosing one of the solutions available. It is generally related to problem-solving because most decisions are taken to solve a problem (Gumusoglu & Ozdemir, 2008). While making a decision, aims are set out at first. Then, probable problems in attaining these aims are spotted, necessary data is collected and evaluated, alternative methods are determined, and finally, the best option is chosen to reach the aim (Iraz, 2004). Organizational decisions affect all the employees in that organization. Each administrative decision is so crucial that it may entirely change lives of people (Foster, 1986, p. 33). Therefore, administration usually faces ethical dilemmas and plays an important role in resolving these dilemmas (Stefkovic & Shapiro, 2003, p. 91).

One of the basic characteristics is to make morally right decisions. Leaders who can differentiate between right and wrong are regarded more trustworthy by others in the organization and can influence other more easily. If leaders act ethically, virtues like honesty and loyalty are enhanced and employees become more committed to the organization (Turhan, 2007, p. 18). Ethical principles are the guide to make decisions at work. They enable the organization to develop an identity and be respectable in the society. As they show the right way in case of a dilemma, they enable decision-makers to decide more confidently (Johnson, 2004, p. 7).

Ethical principles include such virtues as honesty, justice, respect, responsible citizenship and loyalty. In the short run, it may be hard to regard ethical values, but they benefit greatly in the long run. When ethical problems are fairly resolved abiding

by ethical principles, people in the organization trust each other and relations are consolidated (Guy, 1990, pp. 20-22).

Realizing the positive effect of ethical decisions on employees, increasing emphasis has been placed on research in this field. In 1997 Aydin (2006, pp. 100-104) carried out a study in this field of research. In the study, ethical acts of administrators are listed under six main headings:

- Tolerance
- Justice
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Democracy
- Respect

Tolerance requires respect for various opinions and empathy. Justice enables equal enforcement of rules. Responsibility involves performing tasks and internalizing professional principles. Since success is usually associated with skills and performance of administrator, it is important to emphasize responsibility. Honesty is to keep promises, not to lie and not to get involved in corruption. Democracy protects freedom of conscience and requires respect for opinions. Respect determines the limits within which administrators build relations with other subordinate employees. Thus, others are not irritated by administrators.

Like principles Aydin has laid, Guy (1990, p. 14) states that ten principles should be regarded to make ethical decisions. These include tolerance, honesty, accountability, keeping promises, seeking for the perfection, loyalty, justice, consistency, respect for others and responsible citizenship. These ethical values share similarities with the principles of Aydin (2006). In addition to ethical principles, there are ethical standards in school management. When the available literature is examined, it is clearly seen that ethical standards for teachers and administrators exist in such countries as Australia, Canada and the USA. According to all these standards, employees engaged in education should be fair, consistent, responsible, honest, impartial, law-abiding and democratic. In the light of ethical principles, everyone acts coherently and schools become peaceful workplaces (Campbell, 2003, pp. 112-113). Considering that ethics is the base for a good administration, in 2005 regulation of *Ethical Principles for Public Officers* was passed for all public officers, including school administrators and teachers in Turkey. Accordingly, public officers have to be honest, principled, accountable, honourable, law-abiding, respectful of human rights and impartial. Public officers seek to raise public pleasure and cannot abuse their position (Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey, 2005). Although it is a positive step which binds public officers to act ethically, there are some deficiencies in the regulation as well. For instance, there is no clear statement for school administrators and teachers.

## 6. Method

Descriptive survey method has been used in the research. It is one of the quantitative research methods and aims to describe phenomena, objects, beings,



corporations, groups and various fields. Thus, it is easier to comprehend and associate concepts by dividing them into groups (Kaptan, 1998). Survey model is ideal for studies aiming to describe phenomena as they are (Karasar, 2007, p. 77).

In this study, the level of ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators was tried to be determined from the teachers' point of view. To this end, the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire developed by Langlois (2007) was first simplified and translated into Turkish then was used as the data collection tool. The questionnaire is made up of four dimensions and respondents answer on a 5-point Likert scale of 33 items rating their perceptions about ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators while solving ethical problems and ethical leadership behaviours that school administrators display when faced with an ethical problem. The ethical leadership behaviours which are perceived according to the decisions that administrators make while solving a problem and the structured interview with which feelings that are experienced when faced with an ethical dilemma at work are questioned, form the last two dimensions of the questionnaire. Respondents are offered five different options for the questions, and they are asked to choose one or more of them.

### 6.1. *Population and Sample*

Population is comprised of teachers employed in primary schools in the central district of Elazığ during the academic year of 2010-2011. In the city centre there are 52 primary schools and 2762 teachers. The teachers are employed in five different educational districts. Six schools from every district and fifteen teachers from every school were randomly selected by random sampling method and sample has been determined. The number of the fully completed surveys was 371 out of 450 and they have been included in the research. According to the findings, it is seen that of the teachers whose opinions are taken for the study, 58.2 % are male (216) and 41.8 % are female (155), and of the teachers who participated in the study, 30.2 % have a seniority of 1-5 years (112), 29.6 % of 6-10 years (110), 17.3 % of 11-15 years (64), 22.9 % of over 16 years (85). The study has been carried out with the participation of 189 class teachers (50.9 %) and 182 branch teachers (49.1%).

### 6.2. *Data Collection Instrument*

By obtaining necessary permissions Ethical Leadership Questionnaire developed by Langlois (2007) has been used so as to collect data. Cronbach's alpha of the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire is .79. The Questionnaire which has been developed by Langlois was also used in Simonis Joan's doctoral dissertation titled «Relationship Between Music Educators' Ethical Awareness and Students' Sense of Belonging and Academic Achievement» in 2009. It was applied to 542 participants.

The 7-point Likert scale, 84 items Ethical Leadership Questionnaire has been translated into Turkish. To be able to assure accuracy of the questionnaire, the standard back-translation techniques were applied by the four expert translators. Then it was adapted and shortened as 5-point Likert type questionnaire which has 33 items. In this process faculty members (n= 5), teachers (n=4) and principals (n=4) helped the researchers to eliminate the questionnaire items which contains cultural differences.



It is apparent that 7-point scales and 5-point scales are the most favourite likert-type scales for social science researchers. According to Mcgoodwin (2001, p. 67) and Peters (2008, p. 170) it is essentially the 5-point scale that is commonly employed in questionnaires. It is particularly useful for measuring people's attitudes, emotions or orientations and these internal states are multidimensional. As Goodwin (2009, p. 477) states a 5-point scale normally provides sufficient discrimination among levels of agreement while a 7-point scale can increase the time it takes to complete the survey. Similarly Dawes (2007) asserts that with a 5-point scale, it is quite simple for the interviewer to read out the complete list of scale descriptors. This clarification is lengthier for the 7-point format. For these reasons the scale was used in 5-point scale format so as to get as many as reliable and fully filled questionnaire forms. The questionnaire has been carried out with extra two interview questions. Factor analysis was performed in order to determine the construct validity of scale. Results were meaningful by .92 in Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling, 5300 in Bartlett's test of Sphericity and .000 in Significant. Cronbach's Alpha, which determines the reliability coefficient, was .90. Following the processes, the number of items in the scale has remained the same. The scale consists of four dimensions below:

1. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators while resolving ethical problems
2. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators when they face an ethical problem
3. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators while making decisions to resolve an ethical problem
4. Feelings when faced with an ethical problem in the workplace

In the part which includes ethical leadership behaviours of administrators while resolving ethical problems, there are 26 5-point Likert type items. Ethical leadership behaviours of administrators when they face an ethical problem consist of 7 items. Participants have been asked to choose the closest one out of the five different cases by structured interview method. In this way, how administrators' behaviours are perceived by teachers while making decisions to resolve a problem has been examined. The same method has been used to examine the feelings when faced with an ethical problem in the workplace.

### *6.3. Analysis of Data*

In the analysis of data chi-square test, mean, standart deviation and frequency analysis have been used. In the third and fourth dimension of the scale, analysis has been carried out by giving frequencies to find out the views of participants.

## **7. Findings**

In this section, findings that are related to the research results are displayed in tables and evaluated. The findings related to the ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators while they are solving ethical problems, are given in the Table 2.

**Table 2.** Teachers' opinions about the ethical leadership behaviours that school administrators display while they are solving ethical dilemmas

I. No	While school administrators are solving an ethical dilemma,	$\bar{x}$	sd
3.	They follow procedures and rules.	4.07	1.01
7.	They check the legal and regulatory clauses that might apply	3.97	0.98
10.	They seek to preserve bonds and harmony within the organization	3.94	1.05
1.	They try to be fair.	3.93	1.17
11.	They avoid hurting people's feelings by maintaining their dignity.	3.82	1.15
12.	Their decision reflects the organization's values.	3.82	1.03
5.	They try to preserve everyone's safety and well-being.	3.80	1.10
2.	They consult their colleagues about decisions that affect them.	3.78	1.05
9.	They accept to review their position with regard to something previously agreed upon.	3.74	0.99
6.	Situations create an inequality present an ethical dilemma for them.	3.72	1.12
21.	They conduct an investigation	3.64	1.11
24.	Their decision in the resolution is based on the particulars of a situation	3.60	1.08
13.	Their decision in the resolution is based on a greater social justice.	3.58	1.07
25.	Inform individuals of ethical policies and ethical strategies for problem-solving.	3.58	1.03
18.	Their decision in the resolution is based on the statutory and legal framework	3.57	1.02
8.	They check the organisation's unwritten rules.	3.46	1.08
4.	Situations over which they have no authority put them into ethical dilemma	3.41	1.06
26.	When a problematic event occurs they try to handle it by themselves so that no one else knows what happened.	3.27	1.11
20.	They feel torn between what they really want to do and the prevailing rules.	3.20	1.12
22.	They hesitate to make a decision when their decision could set a precedent for other similar situations.	3.19	1.06
14.	They feel torn between what I really want to do and the prevailing legal framework when they have to solve an ethical dilemma.	3.17	1.03
17.	They hesitate to make a decision when their decision could cause important changes	3.12	1.02
15.	They hesitate to make a decision when rules in the organization go against their personal beliefs	3.06	1.10
23.	When a problematic event occurs they try to hide the situation.	2.83	1.15
16.	They hesitate to make a decision when their religious beliefs dictate that they behave differently.	2.77	1.12
19.	Spirituality plays a large role in their professional conduct	2.75	1.17

When Table 2 is examined, it is observed that, among the items about the ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators while they are trying to solve ethical

dilemmas, teachers «strongly agree» to the items «They try to be fair (1)» ( $\bar{X}=3.93$ ) «Situations which create an inequality present an ethical dilemma for them (6)» ( $\bar{X}=3.72$ ) «Their decisions are completely based upon social justice (13)» ( $\bar{X}=3.58$ ). According to these results, it can be maintained that making their decisions, administrators act parallel to individuals' equality principle. This finding is vital as McCabe (2013) states ethical relationship requires trust and integrity. Using an ethical leadership and decision-making approach helps administrators creating an ethical environment at school (Cherkowski, Walker, & Kutsyuruba, 2015; Gardiner & Tenuto, 2015).

It is seen that teachers also «strongly agree» to the items: «They consult their colleagues about decisions that affect them (2)» ( $\bar{X}=3.78$ ), «They try to preserve everybody's safety and well-being (5)» ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ), «They avoid hurting people's feelings (11)» ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ), «Their decisions in the resolution are based on the particulars of the situation (24)» ( $\bar{X}=3.60$ ), «They inform individuals of ethical policies and ethical strategies for problem-solving (25)» ( $\bar{X}=3.58$ ). According to these results, it can be mentioned that, while making decisions, the school administration generally avoids hurting people's feelings and tries to ask for their opinions. It can be seen that a school administration which aims to preserve its personnel's safety and well-being, puts great emphasis to the notion of «ethics» and they make their personnel be aware of its importance as well. This finding is compatible with Yamamoto, Gardiner, Tenuto (2014) and Culham's (2013) research findings. Understanding one's own and others' perspectives is an important vehicle for leadership.

According to the teachers who are involved in the study, the number of administrators who make their decisions according to official rules and who abide by the legal framework is more than the administrators who face a dilemma between their emotions and formality while making their decisions. Among the items which support this view, majority of teachers «strongly agree» to «They follow procedures and rules (3)» ( $\bar{X}=4.07$ ), «They check the legal and regulatory clauses (7)» ( $\bar{X}=3.97$ ), «Their decision are based on statutory and legal framework (18)» ( $\bar{X}=3.57$ ) and «They conduct investigation (21)» ( $\bar{X}=3.64$ ), on the other hand, teachers «agree» to the items «They face an ethical dilemma when they face a situation that exceeds their responsibility(4)» ( $\bar{X}=3.41$ ), «They feel torn between what they really want to do and the prevailing legal framework when they have to solve an ethical dilemma (14)» ( $\bar{X}=3.17$ ), «They hesitate to make a decision when rules in their organization go against their personal convictions (15)» ( $\bar{X}=3.06$ ), «They hesitate to make a decision when their religious beliefs dictate that they behave differently (16)» ( $\bar{X}=2.77$ ), «They hesitate to make a decision when their decision could cause important changes (17)» ( $\bar{X}=3.12$ ), «They feel torn between what they really want to do and the prevailing rules (20)» ( $\bar{X}=3.20$ ), «They hesitate to make a decision when their decision could set a precedent for other similar situations (22)» ( $\bar{X}=3.19$ ).

Most teachers «strongly agree» to the items «They check their organisation's unwritten rules (8)» ( $\bar{X}=3.46$ ), «They accept to review their position with regard to something previously  $\bar{X}$  agreed upon (9)» ( $\bar{X}=3.74$ ), «They seek to preserve bonds and harmony within the organization (10)» ( $\bar{X}=3.94$ ). According to these results, it can be maintained that the rules which are prepared in a harmony and mutual agreement in an organization and which are peculiar to that organization are applied instead of the official rules.

While teachers prevailingly «strongly agree» to the item «Their decision reflects their organization's values (12)» ( $\bar{X}=3.82$ ) majority of teachers «agree» to «Spirituality plays a large role in their professional conduct (19)» ( $\bar{X}=2.75$ ). According to this, it can be said that, while making decisions, the school administration is well aware of the importance of the decisions they make and the influence they have on the popularity of the school. In short, they are aware of the indirect contribution of the decisions to the value of the school. In addition to this, it is obvious that the school administration makes the decisions objectively and their personal convictions do not affect the decisions much. From this finding it can be said ethics is in the heart of leadership at school as Rowe and Guerrero (2012) suggested. According to their views ethics is central to leadership because it involves character, what leaders do, and how they demonstrate morals and values in their actions and decisions.

Majority of teachers are «not sure» about the item «When a problematic event occurs they try to hide the situation (23)» ( $\bar{X}=2.83$ ), «When a problematic event occurs they try to handle it by themselves so that no one else knows what happened (26)» ( $\bar{X}=3.27$ ). According to these results, it can be maintained that by hiding the problems that are caused by the administration from teachers, the administration tries to preserve an unproblematic work environment for the personnel.

Mean scores and standard deviations of the respondent opinions about the ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators when they face an ethical problem are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Teachers' opinions about the behaviours that school administrators display when faced with a problem

I. No.	When school administrators face an ethical problem;	$\bar{x}$	sd
27.	They are inclined to resolve it as quickly as possible.	3.79	1.00
31.	They are inclined to try anything to get rid of it.	3.49	1.05
32.	They are uneasy about living with it.	3.49	1.02
33.	They are anxious to resolve it in order to stop it from creating even more serious problems in their organization.	3.41	1.13
30.	They feel anxious about how others will react to the solution.	2.94	1.07
28.	They hesitate to find a solution.	2.73	1.06
29.	They are unsure about their solution even though it seems acceptable to them.	2.68	1.03

When the Table 3 is examined, it is observed that teachers «strongly agree» to the items «They are inclined to resolve it as quickly as possible (27)» ( $X=3.79$ ), «They are inclined to try anything to get rid of it (31)» ( $X=3.49$ ), «They are uneasy about living with it (32)» ( $X=3.49$ ). According to these results, it can be maintained that school administrators are pretty much frustrated at the problems and that they do not give up until these problems are resolved.

It is also observed that teachers are «not sure» about the items «They hesitate to find a solution (28)» ( $X=2.73$ ), «They are unsure about their solution even though it seems acceptable to them (29)» ( $X=2.68$ ), «They feel anxious about how others

will react to the solution (30)» ( $\bar{X}=2.94$ ). According to this, it can be maintained that school administrators are unsure about the solution they find to problems and that they are worried about how others will react to their solution.

Teachers «strongly agree» to the item «They are anxious to resolve it in order to stop it from creating even more serious problems in their organization (33)» ( $\bar{X}=3.41$ ). According to this, it can be maintained that school administrators adopt the view that one problem leads to even more problems.

Depending on gender factor, teachers' opinions about the school administrators' behaviours while resolving ethical problems an ethical problem are evaluated as a whole and chi-square test has been conducted. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Chi-square test regarding the opinions about the behaviours school administrators display while resolving ethical problems depending on teachers' gender

Gender	n	$\bar{x}$		Standard Deviation		Asymp. Sid. ( p )
		n	N	N	N	
Female	155	3.49	3.50	.60	.62	.86
Male	216	3.50		.63		

According to the findings on table 4, it can be asserted that no significant difference is observed in opinions about the ethical leadership behaviours depending on teachers' gender factor ( $\chi^2 = 69,837$ ,  $p=.86 > .05$ ). This finding is not statistically significant at 95% confidence interval. When the arithmetic average of the groups is examined, it is observed that both female ( $\bar{X}=3.49$ ) and male teachers ( $\bar{X}=3.50$ ) state that they *Agree* and that the arithmetic average points of female (n=155) and male (n=216) opinions are very close to each other.

Depending on branch factor, teachers' opinions about the school administrators' behaviours while resolving ethical problems are evaluated as a whole and chi-square test has been conducted. The results are shown in table 5.

**Table 5.** Chi-square test regarding the opinions about the behaviours school administrators display while resolving ethical problems depending on teachers' branches.

Teachers	n	$\bar{x}$		Standard Deviation		Asymp. Sid. ( p )
		n	N	N	N	
Class Teachers	189	3.55	3.49	.61	.62	.03
Branch Teachers	182	3.43		.62		

According to the data obtained from 189 class teachers and 182 branch teachers, a significant difference is observed in teachers' opinions about the ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators when faced with a problem. This finding is statistically significant at 95% confidence interval ( $\chi^2 = 11,981$ ,  $p=.03 < .05$ ) This difference is resulted from the fact that class teachers' opinions ( $\bar{X}=3.55$ ) have a higher mean score than branch teachers' opinions ( $\bar{X}=3.43$ ). The branch teachers' mean score is lower than the overall expected mean score ( $\bar{X}=3.49$ ). This finding may be the result of the fact that class teachers have more lessons to teach at school

and that, because of this, they spend more time with the school administrators and that in this way they get to know the school administrators more closely.

Depending on seniority variable, chi-square test has been conducted to define teachers' opinions about the school administrators' behaviours while resolving ethical problems. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Chi-square test regarding the opinions about the behaviours school administrators display while resolving ethical problems depending on teachers' seniority

Seniority	n	$\bar{x}$		Standard Deviation		Asymp. Sid. ( p )
		n	N	N	N	
1-5 years	112	3.38	3.51	.64	.53	.001
6-10 years	110	3.45		.52		
11-15 years	64	3.59		.52		
16 years +	85	3.62		.45		

When Table 6 is examined, it is observed that depending on their seniority factor teachers have different perceptions about the school administrators' behaviours while resolving ethical problems. According to the seniority variable, a significant difference was observed in the teachers' views. The findings are statistically significant at 95% confidence interval ( $\chi^2_{250,640}$ ,  $p=.001 < .05$ ). As the year of seniority rises, more teachers think that administrators act within the ethical standards. The teachers who have 16 and more years of experience have highest mean scores ( $\bar{X}=3.62$ ). This finding is compatible with the results of the study done by Aydin (2010). According to this study (2010), teachers find school administrators successful at obeying the ethical principles, making ethical decisions, creating an ethical school culture and environment, social responsibilities, leadership based on service and trust and principle-centred leadership. As the year of seniority, duration of employment and the age rises, teachers have a more positive opinion about ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators.

Depending on gender factor, items related to teachers' opinions about the school administrators' behaviours when they are faced with an ethical problem are evaluated as a whole and chi-square test has been conducted. According to chi-square test results, no significant difference has been observed in teachers' opinions depending on their gender ( $\chi^2_{24,743}$ ,  $p=.81 > .05$ ). Analyzes were carried out at 95 % confidence interval Both female ( $n=155$ ,  $\bar{X}=3.21$ ) and male teachers ( $n=216$ ,  $\bar{X}=3.23$ ) *Agree* – yet females with a lower average than males. These findings overlap with the findings of Topuzoglu's (2009) and Karakose's (2007) studies. Both researchers have found that there is no significant difference in teachers' view of ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators depending on gender.

Depending on branch variable, teachers' views about school administrators' behaviours when they are faced with an ethical problem are evaluated as a whole and chi-square test has been conducted. Findings indicate that both branch teachers ( $\bar{X}=3,24$ ) and class teachers ( $\bar{X}=3,20$ ) state that they *Agree* – yet branch teachers with a higher average, and thus, no significant difference has been observed depending on branch variable ( $\chi^2_{13,652}$ ,  $p=.59 > .05$ ).



Depending on seniority variable, chi-square test has been conducted to define teachers' opinions about the school administrators' behaviours when they are faced with an ethical problem. The results are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Chi-square test on the opinions about the behaviours school administrators display when faced with an ethical problem depending on teachers' seniority variable

Seniority	n	$\bar{x}$		Standard Deviation		Asymp. Sid. ( p )
		n	N	N	N	
1-5 years	112	3.23	3.23	.66	.62	.001
6-10 years	110	3.14		.60		
11-15 years	64	3.26		.64		
16 years +	85	3.28		.56		

The items about the «Ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators when faced with an ethical problem» which makes up of the second dimension of the questionnaire have been evaluated as a whole and according to chi-square test results a significant difference has been observed depending on seniority variable ( $\chi^2 = 235,682, p = .001 < .05$ ). This significant difference was observed at 95 % confidence interval. It is seen that the highest average points belong to the teachers who have of 16-20 years of seniority ( $\bar{X} = 3,28$ ) while the lowest average points belong to the teachers who have 6-10 years of seniority ( $\bar{X} = 3,14$ ). This suggests that the teachers find the most experienced school administrators as the most successful ones in terms of showing ethical leadership behaviours.

In the third dimension of the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire which is «Ethical leadership behaviours that are perceived according to the decisions school administrators make for the solution of an ethical problem», teachers are asked to choose one or more of the five options in the structured interview. As the respondents chose more than one option, total number of answers exceeds the number of respondents. They chose the option «Equally reflect the values of the organization and the administrator» 228 times, «Reflect the administrator's values considerably» 182 times, «Reflect the organization's values considerably» 106 times, «Reflect only the administrator's values» 96 times, and «Reflect only the organization's values» 75 times. It is interesting to note that although 61% of the teachers chose «Equally reflect the values of the organization and the administrator», 182 respondents chose «Reflect the administrator's values considerably». Likewise, the fact that the options «Reflect the organization's values considerably» and «Reflect only the administrator's values» have a close frequency to each other is should be questioned.

The respondents' answers to the questions in the fourth dimension of the study which aims to question the feelings teachers have when they face an ethical problem at work. In the study which aims to question the feelings of teachers when faced with an ethical problem at work, teachers chose the option *Angry* 238 times, *Indifferent* 123 times, *Humiliated* 112 times, *Guilty* 28 times, *Embarrassed* 14 times. It is interesting to note that although 238 teachers feel *Angry* when faced with an ethical problem and this is an expected situation, 123 teachers feel *Indifferent* about this issue. The fact that teachers feel *indifferent* to ethical

problems can be interpreted as they do not try to fix this problem. It is interesting to note that teachers feel *guilty* and *embarrassed* although this feeling has a very low percentage among teachers.

## 8. Conclusion

It can easily be seen that a lot of researches regarding different dimensions of school administration have been conducted in different countries so far. As a result there is a huge literature about school administrators and school management. William (1978) states that although there are some differences in the role of the school administrators in different types of schools, it is a fact that there are some universal, common points in the administrators' roles and responsibilities (cited in Sears, 2006, p. 35). Mattar (2012) lists some of the Lebanese public school administrators' responsibilities as implementing the policies set by the Ministry of Education, guiding teachers, throughout the academic year, preparing the yearly financial budget at the beginning of each academic year, organizing school facilities for a better education, maintaining communication with teachers, attending classes regularly to oversee teachers' performance. Lee (2008, p. 8) classifies Canadian school administrators' tasks within five groups. These are (a) developing vision and direction, (b) creating a supportive school climate, (c) supporting teaching and learning, (d) embedding the school in community, developing an effective school team, and (f) managing school resources. Researchers from various countries put forward more or less the same roles and responsibilities for the school administrator (Bolívar-Botía, 2011; Cisse & Okato, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Mitchell & Castle 2002; Kaya, 1999). It is clear that school administration and its scope is an international concept as the related literature presents a global perspective about school administrators' tasks at school. That's why it seems that the results of this specific study may appeal to most of the practitioners, researchers and policy makers around the world.

About the ethical leadership behaviours of school administrators, teachers state that school administrators are fair and they take account of the organizational justice without compromising equity. This situation is important in terms of organizational commitment. Likewise, the application of rules that are determined by the employees and that are peculiar to the organization is an administrator behaviour that supports organizational commitment.

The fact that organizational justice is adopted by the administrators positively affects the employee performance. Teachers' view of school administrators making their decisions within the boundaries of a legal framework without coming under the influence of the human and social relations and their taking decisions in an objective way, can be evaluated in this context. In addition to this, teachers think that in certain circumstances school administrators face an ethical dilemma while making decisions. Although these kinds of opinions appear with a low frequency, they should not be ignored.

It is also crucial that school administrators give an opportunity to stakeholders in the process of decision-making, in that it enables teachers to get an organizational identity. A similar result is seen from the Gultekin's (2008) study which concludes that «school administrators are good at making organizational decisions and showing

ethical leadership». This situation improves the organizational climate. This result and the research findings bear similarity to each other.

Participants are of the opinion that the organization's values are given particular importance in the decisions taken by the school administrators, and this is important in that schools gain an organizational structure. When the organizational values are embedded in schools, the criteria that change from one administrator to another will be abolished and will make the professional ethical standards be taken into consideration instead. This will foster the trust in the school and the school administrators. In addition, this situation will enhance the school's organizational esteem.

The fact that school administrators tend to solve the problems in a fast way in the case of they face an ethical problem, will enhance the employees' organizational commitment and positively affect their motivations by making the work environment a more peaceful place. It is, in this regard, meaningful that teachers think of school administrators that way. Teachers hardly think that administrators have uncertainty in the solutions to the problems they find and that they worry about other people's reactions. This shows that administrators are not in quandary as they take the organization's values and legal regulations into consideration.

While the finding that a great majority of teachers feel angry when they face an ethical problem at work, is understandable, it is interesting to note that a considerable number of teachers stay indifferent to ethical problems. A more in-depth study can be conducted to find out why teachers do not take the necessary steps when they are faced with ethical problems.

While no significant difference among teachers' view of ethical leadership behaviours has been seen by gender and branch variables, it has been observed by seniority variable. As the year of seniority rises, more teachers think that administrators act within the ethical standards. Results indicate that administrators generally seek to resolve issues at once within the scope of ethical standards. It will be inevitable that the school administrators who act according to the ethical principles in their decisions will be successful, that the schools will have the desired administration standards and that, in this way, enhancement of quality in education will be ensured.

This research has some significant implications for educational researchers, school administrators and policy-makers as the literature about the school administration and school administrators has various common features. The findings require school administrators to check their leadership skills in the light of ethical leadership framework. The implications for school administrators indicate that ethics in school management plays an essential role in the school. That's why it is important to have some ethical codes which were defined clearly and they should be shared with teachers. Also novice school administrators may get help from the veteran school administrators to resolve the ethical problems at schools. In this sense, policy-makers are responsible for ensuring an ethical environment at schools by raising awareness about the importance of ethical leadership. As for the implications for researchers, the study involves a limited study group including only teachers. Some other researches can be done to examine the school administrators' ethical leadership behaviours. Further research with students or students' parents and other staff at school can enrich the findings of this study.

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