Ethic behaviours of schools administrations

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze how much school principals who work at primary and secondary state schools in Konyaalti district of Antalya province behave appropriately to ethical principles in their behaviours according to their own and teachers’ perceptions considering variables of gender, seniority, age and education level. Descriptive statistical method was employed in this study and the sampling is composed of 389 teachers and 22 school principals. Of these 234 are primary schools teachers and 155 secondary school teachers. In the scale 79 ethical principles are separated into 6 dimensions. These dimensions are tolerance, justice, responsibility, honesty, democracy and respect.

Keywords: Ethic, Ethic Principles, Ethic Perceptions, School Administrations.

1. Introduction

One of the most complex and fundamental subjects on the agenda of administrators is ethics. Ethics is about individuals’ behaviours and good-bad, right-false perceptions which embodies the behaviours. Immorality behaviours such as lying, stealing, bribe, not to do tasks in accordance with the regulations and favouritism cause social degeneration. Therefore, the administrators mustn’t forget to fulfill their responsibilities in ethical principles and they should be role models to their employees in this manner.

The subject of ethics in the educational administration is a sensitive subject which affects rather large groups. Each of administrators working in the educational field is expected to behave appropriate in accordance to ethical principles. He should put society interests prior and they should carry out their responsibilities for society.

The subject of ethic in school administration is a subject on which we always have to emphasise cautiously. Maybe the most important social responsibility of school is able to be model by using its power according to ethical principles. Therefore, school administrators bear tremendous responsibilities. School administrators can behave suitable for ethical rules and provide ethical principles to be institutionalized at their schools as institutions.

2. Literature

When the root of word of “Ethic” which we often use in daily life is analyzed, it is seen that this word was derived from the word of ethos which means Greek character and social emotion (Toffler, 1991, 10; Çilingir, 2003, 205.)
It is possible to encounter with the lots of definitions about ethic in the literature. Some of the definitions are as follows;

**Ethics is a philosophy discipline that inquires people's underlying values and rules of their individual and social relations as right and wrong or good and bad in terms of morality (Kirel, 2000, 2).**

**Ethics is a set of standards or codes that includes the definition of human activities according to human rights and mistakes and good and bad (Owens, 1978, 46).**

According to Dedegöl (2006, 1), the subject matter of ethics is about right and wrong or good and bad which is foundation for our decisions and choices, and a guide to our behaviours.

According to Carroll (1989, 83) ethics is defined as the harmony between action, decision, and behaviours and the prevailing norms and standards in the society. According to his definition, ethics is about individual decisions and behaviours, however, the prevailing norms and standards in the society have an important role in the formation of these behaviours.

By asking the questions like “Can anyone talk about the moral values of a man living alone on the earth? Against whom he will have moral or immoral behaviours?” Akarsu (1965, 6) emphasizes that to talk and think about people’s morality—that is ethics— one should evaluate people in the society.

### 2.1. Professional Ethics and Codes of Ethics

The thing that Professional ethics deals with or wants to put forward is special quality norms. These norms are expected to be applied by every person who exercises the profession regardless their own world view, culture, ideology, and religion (Kuçuradi, 2005, 52).

According to Leimgton ve Killingbeck (2000, [25.04.2009]) professional ethics is about the obligations that arise from the profession of people. How these people need to use professional power should be determined with ethical codes. With these codes, professional values, private principles and standards are introduced to the society, and it is promised that personal powers will not be used especially as a means of self-interest. Of course, the ethical codes cannot be a guarantee for ethical behaviours, yet it can be considered as having a binding role.

### 2.2. Organizational Ethics

Ethical behaviour is needed for long-term business success. This recommendation is important for both large organizations that affect economical systems of countries and small organizations founded by people. Unethical behaviour can cause the interruption of work in both cases by creating insecurity (Fritzsche, 1997, 18-21).

According to Arslan (2001, 136) business life is the most time-consuming activity of life and the greatest source of happiness and prosperity. For this reason, business life with a more moral structure will affect individual happiness.

### 2.3. Institutionalization of Organizational Ethics

Organizations are places in which many employees who have different value judgements are together. Each employee’s idea about good and bad or right and wrong may be different from each other. In this case, the organization must have its own ethical principles that define the general system of organizational values and objectives, and guide the appropriateness of the decisions with the objectives and values. The institutionalism of ethical principles by all employees is the institutionalization of organizational ethics. In this context, it gains importance.

According to Çelik (2003, 98) the ethical support plays a powerful stimulus role in instituting ethical rules and developing ethical performance. Ethical orientation, based on organizational identification, provides contribution to the more desirable in organizational behavior. Organizational culture is one of the most effective elements for instituting organizational ethics. Foundation of organizational culture is based on value system. Shared values play an important role in leadership behavior. Organizational culture, creates a
positive emotional identity, strengthen social stability and provide guidance to workers on what is acceptable behavior. A strong organizational culture is widely shared by workers, and shed light on the leader's philosophy (Carlson & Perrevve, 1995 transferred by Çelik, 2003, 98).

2.4. Ethical Behavior of Managers

According to Penninton (1998, 23) the most important leadership issue facing the world today is the lack of confidence. Character traits of leaders shows the difference between people’s long-term loyalties and short-term forms. Leaders who do not leave fundamental issues such as honesty, loyalty, fairness, patience and confidence perceive their attempts they start as honest efforts that take the organization forward. If the leader's character is not accepted, his power and position will be discussed. Those who followed the leader, look at the leader’s consistency to draw their own ways. Deming who is famous for his principles in developing quality, states in his expression "as the leader's task is to create a climate of trust" (Çelik, 2003, 190).

2.5. Ethics in School Management

School is a place where people live and work. Like other social organizations, school uses the power, the structure, the logic and the value and has power on people to answer their questions and fulfill their needs (Owens, 2000, 17).

Ethics is related with people who have moral judgement, praise or condemn others’ acts. It has a special meaning for education; because teachers and administrators are both surrounded with moral issues and the responsibility of next generations’ education (Haynes, 2002, 17).

American Association of School Administrators (AASA) whose mission is developing and supporting school administrators to have a highly qualified education for students; listed “Ethical Principles for School Administrators” in 2007 as follow;

Education administrators
1. Put their prior role is good for their students.
2. Perform in professional responsibilities like honestly and truly; and always act honestly.
3. Protect and support all individuals’ citizenship and human rights.
4. Behave appropriately according to district’s, state’s and country’s rules.
5. Apply managerial rules and regulations in accordance with education policies at school.
6. Look for appropriate ways to take precautions to improve law, policy and arrangements which are not consistent with educational purposes.
7. Avoid using his professional situation to provide political, social, and economical or personal profits.
8. Accept only academically degrees taken from authorized institution or vocational certificates.
9. Maintain professionalism by doing research to protect standards and increase managerial effectiveness.
10. Obey all agreements until it ends or it is ended.
11. Accept the responsibility of his behaviors.
12. Serve for his superior.

It may not be enough for school managers to behave properly to the listed principles above in order to create an ethical school. An ethical school culture must be created to be sure that all the people at school obey the ethical principles.

First step for that is preparing ethical rules program for the school. This program can be seen as the ethical law of school. There is no place for dictatorship at school. If school manager expects teachers to behave proper to ethical values, he should do so first. Managers who try settle ethical principles to school culture, voices them in high volume (Çelik, 2003, 110).
Another step to create an ethical school culture is training workers about ethics, giving necessary in-service seminars. It is both necessary and important for everybody to have information about behaviors which are ethical or unethical and it should be made clear what should be done when faced an unethical behavior. It will be an important step to develop a vision that is proper to philosophy of education and make all stakeholders believe it sincerely.

3. Model, Universe and Sampling of the Research

In this research, descriptive method was employed. It is a literature research for theoretical parts and perceptions of principals and teachers. It is described by surveys by applying specific questions related with type of school, task, gender, seniority, age and educational status in surveys.

3.1. Universe and Sample

Working universe of research is formed by 854 teachers and 22 school managers. Sampling of research consisted of 234 from primary schools, 155 from secondary schools totally 389 teachers. All the school managers took part in the research. At the research, “Ethical Principles” scale was used developed by Pehlivan (1997)(Pehlivan,2002). SPSS 19.0 packet program is used for analysis of data. Frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean and standard deviation distribution of data in groups is tested and t-test and one way variance analysis and (Anova), and Mann Whitney U tests, proper to sub-goals were tested.

4. Results

The statistical analysis of research has the following results;

1. School administrators’ perception about their behaviours is appropriate to ethical principles or not is as “Always Appropriate”. School administrators perceive that they behave appropriate to ethical principles in “Respect” dimension most and to ethical principles in “Tolerance” dimension least. School administrators’ perception about the appropriateness of their behaviour to ethical principles does not vary according to the school type (primary or high ) they work in.

2. Primary school teachers’ perception about the appropriateness of school administrators’ behaviour to ethical principles is as “Often Appropriate”. According to the average points of the answers given to dimensions, teachers perceive that school administrators behave appropriate to ethical principles in “Respect” dimension most and to ethical principles in “Tolerance” dimension least.

3. For “Respect” dimension, there is a significant difference between male and female primary school teachers’ perceptions about the appropriateness of school administrators’ behaviour to ethical principles. Female teachers perceive their administrators’ behaviors more appropriate to ethical principles more than male teachers do.

4. For “Responsibility” dimension, there is a significant difference in terms of work experience among primary school teachers’ perceptions about the appropriateness of school administrators’ behaviour to ethical principles. Teachers with 21-25 years of experience perceive administrators behaviors more appropriate to ethical principles in “Responsibility” dimension than the other teachers with different years of experience do.

5. For “Respect” dimension, there is a significant difference related to age variable among primary school teachers’ perceptions about the appropriateness of school administrators’ behaviour to ethical principles. Teachers above 51 perceive administrators state that principals behave more appropriate to ethical principles in “Respect” dimension than the other teachers at different ages do.

6. Secondary school teachers’ perception about conformity of school administrators’ behaviours to ethical principles at dimension of respect is “Always appropriate”, for all the other dimensions is “usually appropriate”. When it is examined the average points that were given to answers, teachers perceive that
there their administrators behave least proper to ethical principles at “Tolerance” dimension, and most proper to ethical principles at “Respect” dimension.

7. There is a meaningful difference according to gender variable at the perception of secondary school teachers about conformity of behaviours of school administrators to ethical principles at “Democracy” dimension. According to that, female teachers in proportion to male teachers perceive that their administrators behave more proper to ethical principles at the democracy dimension.

8. There is a meaningful difference according to occupational seniority variable at the perception of secondary school teachers about conformity of behaviours of school administrators to ethical principles at “Respect” dimension. According to that, teachers who have 26 years and more occupational seniority in proportion to the other teachers, perceive that their administrators behave less proper to ethical principles at the respect dimension.

9. There is a meaningful difference according to age variable at the perception of secondary school teachers about conformity of behaviours of school administrators to ethical principles at “Honesty” and “Respect” dimensions. According to that, teachers who are 51 years old and more in proportion to the other teachers (except 21-25 years old), perceive that their administrators behave less proper to ethical principles at the honesty and respect dimensions.

10. Primary school teachers in proportion to secondary school teachers perceive that their administrators behave more proper to ethical principles at “Tolerance”, “Justice”, “Responsibility”, “Honesty” and “Democracy” dimensions.

11. There is not a meaningful difference between educational status and perceptions secondary school teachers about conformity of behaviours of school administrators to ethical principles.

References