

Relationship between School Principals' Ethical Leadership Behaviours and Positive Climate Practices

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between school principals' ethical leadership behaviour and positive climate practices. Research sample consisted of 383 teachers working at schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in 2014-2015 academic year. This research was designed according to the relational model. Data was collected by using "Ethical leadership" and "Organizational climate" scales. The results of the research suggested that according to their perceptions, teachers respond to the ethical leadership levels of the school principals at the level of "I disagree" and to the positive climate practices at the level of "I partially agree". It has also been established that female teachers found principals' ethical leadership levels and positive climate practices higher than male teachers. The principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices did not show a significant difference in teachers' seniority, age and years working with principal. A high level of significant positive relationship was found between the school principals' ethical leadership levels and positive climate practices. In conclusion, it may be important for positive climate practice at school to raise the levels of ethical leadership behaviour of school principals. This may influence both the academic and social achievement of the students and behaviour of the teachers.

Keywords: school principals, teacher perceptions, ethical leadership, organizational climate, positive climate practices

1. Introduction

The role and behaviours of an organizational leader, and strategies and tactics he adopts, play an important role in achieving the prospective organizational goals in a coordinated manner, as well as affecting attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours towards leaders. The leader behaviours perceived ethically are considered as a source of motivation for organizations (Arslantaş & Dursun, 2008). Ethical leaders are those who provide the creation of production and learning environments, are in constant communication with those around, and exchange ideas with them. Being in communication with ethical leader own environment ensures that his environment is also sensitive to ethical principles (Acar, 2011). Based on ethical principles in their conduct, ethical leaders respect their employees' rights by treating them fairly. Moreover, they make efforts to develop the sense of justice in the organization by including their subordinates in the decision-making process (Demirdağ & Ekmekçioğlu, 2015). Aydın (2010) emphasizes that ethical leader is someone who esteems ethical values, gives importance to assessment of employees' ethical behaviour as a key factor and can integrate leadership abilities with ethical behaviours. Management of an organization by an ethical leader is important to ensure that all employees work in a harmonious and disciplined manner.

Turhan (2007) stated that the most important feature of ethical leader is that the decisions he makes are morally right, and this decision also strengthens organizational commitment by contributing to the development of social values such as truth, honesty, and loyalty within the organization. To become an expert, it is a pre-condition principle for an individual to continue professional life in the same field where he has graduated (Gür, 2013). Therefore, the contribution of expert managers and teachers to the development of school climate cannot be underestimated. Strengthening organizational commitment allows a strong structuring by protecting the organization from internal and external threats. The ethical leaders play a key role in creating a positive organizational climate. The effective management skills of the leaders may play an important role in shaping the

organizations. A positive working environment where the leader will create can also enhance the quality of work done as it will increase the employees' job satisfaction levels. O'Connell and Bligh (2009) pointed out that leadership behaviours are effective in creating an ethical or unethical climate in an organization. Beard (2002) stated that the relationship between teachers' behaviours and values should be consistent with supervisory and administrative activities in the effective management of schools. The aim of the supervision system is to re-structure the educational model and to make it competitive with the contemporary world's education system (Özcan, 2013). Teachers' ethical values should be able to show similarity with those of school organization. Thus, organizational climate of the school can be more embraced by teachers. In order for school organizations to have a positive climate, it may be needed leaders who can exhibit ethical leadership behaviours while balancing the values of the teachers and of the school organization. Schwepker (2001) noted that the leader takes an active role in creating an organizational climate with ethical principles, as well as in having the ability to balance individual and organizational values within the organization and providing positive guidance for individuals. Accordingly, a school principal who exhibits ethical leadership behaviours can ensure that organizational climate is developed within the framework of ethical values by reinforcing ethical behaviours without approving unethical behaviours within the school organization.

Organizational climate reflects the characteristics of an organization and the effect on which this organization creates the behaviour of employees. A positive organizational climate influences the morale, motivation, and organizational commitment of employees, ensuring that the interactions and relationships within the organization take place with confidence. In this way, the organization may compete with its competitors and stand by producing an outstanding performance (Halis & Uğurlu, 2008). A positive climate and increase of productivity in the organisation depend on employees feeling comfortable and safe (Özbilen & Oklay, 2017, p. 21). The researches on organizational climate date back to 1930s. The researcher to pioneer studies in this field was Kurt Lewin, who founded the group dynamics. Lewin applied three different leadership styles such as democracy, autocracy and laissez-faire in order to create a different group atmosphere in his famous "leadership style" study, and was the first to introduce the concept of organizational climate (Zhang & Liu, 2010). Addressed as organizational climate, this concept has become a concept that has been increasingly discussed by various researchers in the 1960s and after, and there exist many different definitions of the concept "organizational climate". For example, Forehand and Gilmer (1963) defined organizational climate as a number of characteristics that a) describe the organization and distinguish it from other organizations, b) relatively endure over time, and c) influence the behaviour of people in the organization as Gregopoulos (1963) defined organizational climate as a normative structure of attitudes and behavioural standards that form a basis for interpreting the situations and act as a source of pressure for directing activities (Quoted: Subashini & Samuel, 2011, p. 93). Organizational environments have a direct impact on the behaviour of all individuals within the organization. For this reason, the structure of this organization and the atmosphere which prevails in this organization are vital to know in order to efficiently manage human resources in an organization.

Unlike the culture that often covers unconscious components, the organizational climate with a different meaning describes the aspects of the environment consciously perceived by the organizational members although the concept of organizational climate is often mixed up with the concept of organizational culture. The best way to describe organizational climate is how people perceive (see and feel about it) the culture existing in their organization. This is a relatively persistent set of perceptions held by organizational members regarding the quality and properties of the organizational climate. As the culture represents actual situations, the climate is the way it is perceived. In other words, while the climate is more associated with how someone experiences his/her social environment, the culture relates to creation of a social environment by a group of people (Zagar, 2009). While organizational culture is generally regarded as values, beliefs, and basic assumptions, organizational climate consists particularly of shared perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural characteristics. Therefore, it may be expected that both the organizational climate and the organizational culture, as a whole, play an effective role in determining the managerial effectiveness towards working and organization (Ali & Patnaik, 2014).

Educational organizations are responsible for educating individuals who can turn onto human rights and responsibilities, can create environments where political participation is encouraged, and are influential in the fields of productivity and consumption (Özdemir, 1996). Educational organizations are institutions responsible for realizing and developing the education and training. It is necessary for organization employees to act in an organized manner in order to achieve the educational organizations' goals. When considered from this point of view, the ability of staff at schools to individually and collectively commit to targets and priorities is an application that can contribute to the development of schools (Broadhead, Hodgson, Cuckle, & Dunford, 1998). When the organizational structure of the educational organizations is considered, the leadership concept has a

crucial role because managing changeable and lively nature of the educational organizations is possible through a leader (Erçetin, Eriçok, & Eranil, 2016, p. 66). Grace (2000) stated that ethical leadership plays a significant role in educational organizations which should be managed in line with ethical considerations and actions. This may mean that the concept of ethics should be effectively found in the concept of leadership. School principals must consider ethical principles as well as existing laws when performing their duties. Ethical values in education are one of the fields that have main priority in the field of education management from the beginning of the new century, and the school principals should not contradict ethical and universal values in an increasingly globalizing world that attaches importance to democracy (Gümüşeli, 2001). Ethical leader's ability to create vision and mission may be important in defining the tasks of the organization's employees by clarifying organizational goals. Therefore, an organization with vision and mission can provide an insight into how the organizational climate will be shaped. Pushpanadham (2006) stated that school principal should have technical skills in sharing information within the school, and thus, develop a vision. The created vision can contribute to the formation of school climate together by evaluating with school's staff under the leadership of the leader. Centerbar (1995) indicated that a particular mission has to create and develop the school climate, and this mission will be an important factor in the change of school climate. All of these situations can help the school principal to have a certain vision. Employees develop various kinds of behaviours and attitudes according to the organizational atmosphere where they have worked. Employees who interact with the organization and all its members use their perceptions when they develop these behaviours and attitudes (Uysal & Aydemir, 2014). In order to exploit the available resources, it is necessary for an organization to have a healthy and sustainable environment. The ability of individuals working under the same roof to carry out their tasks in the most efficient way in line with institutional vision also depends largely on the fact that this organization has a favourable climate in addition to the other components.

Akar (2006) also stated that contributions to which the managerial skills of the principals are made organizational climate greatly influence perception level of teachers. Results from a study of Eroğluer and Yılmaz (2015) also suggested that employees in organizations with an ethical management style would have positive opinions about the organizational atmosphere. Therefore, school principals have great responsibility for establishing an effective learning environment at schools, being possessed by their teachers, increasing student success and obtaining the expected yield from the education and training processes. Being designed to draw attention to this topic based on these discussions, this research aimed to reveal the relationship between the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices.

1.1 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to establish the relationship between the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to the perceptions of teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. We sought answers to the following questions in line with this general purpose:

- 1) At what level are the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to teachers' perceptions?
- 2) Do the ways in which the teachers perceive the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices vary according to their gender, seniority, age, and years working with the principal?
- 3) Is there any relationship between school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to the teachers' perceptions?

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

This research was organized in accordance with the relational screening model. Screening models are research approach that aims to describe the situation as it is (Karasar, 2009, p. 77). It has been tried to determine whether there is any relationship between the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to the opinions of teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education.

2.2 Population and Sample

The research population consisted of 983,423 teachers working in the Ministry of National Education in the 2014-2015 academic year (MEB, 2014). Table 1 shows the adequacy of sample size according to Çıngı (1994, p. 25).

Table 1. Sample sizes for different deviation quantities (Adapted from Çıngı (1994, p. 25))

N	Deviation Quantity	.01	.02	.03	.04	.05
500						218
1000					375	278
3000			1334	787	500	341
5000			1622	880	536	357
10000		4899	1936	964	566	370
50000		8057	2291	1045	593	381
100000		8763	2345	1056	597	383
500000		9423	2390	1065	600	384

As shown in Table 1, at least 384 persons may suffice for the research which will be carried out with a 0.05 of deviation quantity in a study group consisted of 500,000 people.

The sample research was composed of 396 teachers obtained by snowball sampling technique. A few persons are designated for the purpose of study in the snowball sample. Then, it is reached other persons who will be included in the sampling through these persons (Kuş, 2009, p. 46). As the process progresses in the researches built on this type of sample, the names or situations that are recorded expand and, after a while, the researcher undertakes the research by choosing from these names or situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

Measurement tools were handed out to 436 teachers in order to collect at least 383 data. Implementation of the measurement tools was carried out via Facebook on the internet. 414 scales corresponding to 95% of the distributed sales returned. Eighteen of the returned scales were excluded from the study because they were filled out without necessary care. As a result, the scale of 396 people was assessed.

Table 2 below shows frequency and percentage distributions according to personal characteristics of the sample group.

Table 2. Distribution of teachers by gender, age, year working with principal and seniority

Demographic Variables of Teachers	Value	f	%
Gender	Female	248	64.1
	Male	139	35.9
Age	20-25 years	93	23.5
	26-30 years	146	36.9
	31-35 years	83	21.0
	36 years and older	73	18.4
Years Working with Principal	0-1 year	197	49.7
	1-2 year(s)	87	22.0
	2-3 years	65	16.4
	More than 3 years	47	11.09
Seniority	1-5 year(s)	205	51.8
	6-10 years	98	24.7
	More than 11 years	93	23.5

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that females vastly outnumbered males by gender. When analysed by age groups, it is seen that number of teachers in 26 to 30 age group was significantly higher than the other age groups. Table 2 shows that year working with principal was clustered between the range of 0 to 1 year and when

taken teachers' seniority status into consideration, number of teachers with 1 to 5 years seniority was significantly much higher than the other seniority groups.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

Variables belonging to the teachers in the research were reached using "Personal Information Form". The Personal Information Form was used to obtain information about the teachers' gender, age, year of professional seniority, and year working with principal.

Ethical Leadership Scale: The data on ethical leadership in the study were gathered by the "Ethical Leadership Scale" that was developed by Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005), adapted to Turkish by Tuna, Bircan and Yeşiltaş (2012), and conducted validity and reliability studies. In this research, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was examined to see whether the collected data on 10-item Likert-type ethical leadership scale of 5-point Likert scale are suitable for the factor analysis. (KMO) value and output for Bartlett's test were 0.949 and 3714.410 ($p < .000$), respectively, establishing that it was fitted to factor analysis and scale was one factor. The one-factor structure of the Ethical Leadership Scale accounts for 70.44% of the total variance. At least 30% of the total variance explained in single factorial designs can be considered sufficient (Büyüköztürk, 2009). As factor loadings of the scale changed between 0.57 and 0.91, Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be ($\alpha = 0.95$). These results suggest high scale reliability.

Organizational Climate Scale: The data on organizational climate in the study were collected using 8 items examining school principal subscale of the "Organizational Climate Scale" that was developed by Kılıç (2013). In this research, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was examined to see whether the collected data on 8-item Likert-type organizational climate scale of 5-point Likert scale are suitable for the factor analysis. (KMO) value and output for Bartlett's test were 0.938 and 2706.347 ($p < .000$), respectively, establishing that it was suitable for factor analysis and the scale was one factor. The one-factor structure of the Organizational Climate Scale explains 72.36% of the total variance. At least 30% of the total variance explained in single factorial designs can find it sufficient (Büyüköztürk, 2009). As factor loadings of the scale changed between 0.78 and 0.90, Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be ($\alpha = 0.94$). These results show high scale reliability.

2.4 Analysis of Data

Research data were analysed using Kolmogorov Smirnov and Levene test, assumption of normality, which is primary criterion of parametric statistical techniques. Non-parametric techniques (Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test) were used since data did not show the normal distribution in each subgroup as a result of the Kolmogorov Smirnov analysis and Levene test of variables of the related sub-problems. Data from the study were analysed using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient Technique, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis Test. The data were analysed using packaged software and the level of significance was accepted as 0.05.

3. Results

This section covers the findings of determining the relationship between school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices and of the sub-goals supporting problem status of the research according to the perceptions of teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education.

Table 3 below shows Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results as to whether distributions of the data obtained from the two scales used in the research meet the assumption of normality.

Table 3. Results of normality distribution tests for data obtained from scales

Results of One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
	Ethical Leadership Scale	Organizational Climate Scale
N	396	396
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	1.969	1.977
$p < .05^*$.001*	.001*

$p < .05^*$.

Non-parametric tests should be necessary to perform when $p < 0.05$ for both scales according to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in Table 3.

School principals' ethical leadership behaviour and positive climate practices according to the teachers' perceptions are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to teacher perceptions

n	5-Point Likert Mean	sd
EL 396	2.54	.05
OC 396	2.69	.05

Based on comparison of arithmetic mean with descriptive findings, five-point rating in the scales is as follows: I completely agree: 4.20-5.00, I agree: 3.40-4.19, I partially agree: 2.60-3.39, I disagree: 1.80-2.59, I never agree: 1.00-1.79. Individual items were scored on 5-Point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 from negative to positive. Table 4 indicates the average scores of school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to the teachers' perceptions. It has been found that according to teachers' perceptions, the average scores of the school principals' ethical leadership were 2.54 out of 5 and the average scores of positive climate practices were 2.69 out of 5. These results show that teachers responded to the ethical leadership levels of the school principals at the level of "I disagree" and to the positive climate practices at the level of "I partially agree".

Table 5 below shows gender-related results of Mann-Whitney U Test of school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and exhibiting positive climate practices according to teachers' perceptions.

Table 5. Gender-related results of Mann-Whitney U Test of school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and behaviours exhibiting positive climate practices according to teachers' perceptions

Variables	N	Mean	Mean Rank	Rank Sum	U	p	
Ethical Leadership Behaviours	Female	248	2.64	192.02	50,342.00	12,640.000	.035*
	Male	139	2.38	177.96	24736.00		
Positive climate practices	Female	248	2.79	202.90	50319.00	50319.00	.036*
	Male	139	2.53	178.12	24759.00		

$p < .05^*$.

Table 5 suggests that school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices differed significantly by gender according to the teachers' perceptions participated in the research ($p < .05$). It has been established that female teachers found ethical leadership levels of principals and their positive climate practices higher than male teachers; also it has been found statistically significant difference.

Table 6 below shows results of Kruskal Wallis Test of the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours regarding occupational seniority, age and year working with principal according to teachers' perceptions.

Table 6. Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours regarding occupational seniority, age and year working with principal according to teachers' perceptions

Variables	Value	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p					
Ethical Leadership Behaviours	Occupational seniority	1-5 year(s)	205	196.07	2	.200	.905				
		6-10 years	98	200.35							
		More than 10 years	93	201.90							
	Age	20-25 years	93	179.82	3	4.418	.220				
		26-30 years	146	210.89							
		31-35 years	83	200.36							
		35 years and over	35	192.70							
		Year Working with Principal	0-1 year	197				188.08	3	3.454	.327
			1-2 year(s)	87				206.10			
	2-3 years		65	214.0							
		More than 3 years	47	226.37							

p < .05*.

Table 6 indicates that school principals' ethical leadership behaviours did not differ significantly by these variables according to the teachers' perceptions participated in the research (p > .05).

Table 7 below shows results of Kruskal Wallis Test of the school principals' positive climate behaviours regarding occupational seniority, age and year working with principal according to teachers' perceptions.

Table 7. Results of Kruskal Wallis Test of the school principals' positive climate practices regarding occupational seniority, age and year working with principal according to teachers' perceptions

Variables	Value	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p					
Positive Climate Practices	Occupational seniority	1-5 year(s)	205	191.48	2	1.864	.394				
		6-10 years	98	201.92							
		More than 10 years	93	210.38							
	Age	20-25 years	93	181.32	3	3.087	.378				
		26-30 years	146	204.17							
		31-35 years	83	208.01							
		35 years and over	35	195.53							
		Year Working with Principal	0-1 year	197				194.20	3	.603	.896
			1-2 year(s)	87				202.91			
	2-3 years		65	204.65							
		More than 3 years	47	199.85							

p < .05*.

Table 7 indicates that school principals' positive climate practices did not differ significantly by these variables according to the teachers' perceptions participated in the research ($p > .05$).

Table 8 below presents results of Pearson Correlation analysing the relationship between the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to the teachers' perceptions which are the problem status of research.

Table 8. Relationship between school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices according to teachers' perceptions

	Values	Ethical Leadership Behaviours of School Administrators
	r	,884
Positive Climate Practices of School Administrators	p	0,000*
	N	396

$p < .05^*$.

Pearson Correlation analysis was used to test whether there is any relationship between the positive climate practices and the ethical leadership behaviours of the principals working at primary education institutions according to the teachers' perceptions. Data summarized in Table 7 show to be a high level of significant positive relationship between principals' ethical leadership levels and positive climate practices ($r = 0.88$; $p < .05$). This finding can be interpreted as an increase in the positive climate practices as the school principals' ethical leadership quality enhances.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

This study aimed to determine the relationship between school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices. In this context, it was intended to be created an effective educational environment at the schools, to be adopted the school by the students and teachers, to determine the ethical leadership levels of the school principals and to make positive contribution to the co-evolution of these factors by mutual interaction.

Findings of this study suggest that according to teachers' perceptions, the average scores of the school principals' ethical leadership were 2.54 out of 5 and the average scores of positive climate practices were 2.69 out of 5. These results show that teachers responded to the ethical leadership levels of the school principals at the level of "I disagree" and to the positive climate practices at the level of "I partially agree". From this point of view, it can be said that the teachers did not suffice for the school principals' ethical leadership behaviours and principals were minimum with regard to positive climate practices. Contrary to this, as a result of the studies by Katrancı, Sungu and Sağlam (2015), teachers indicated that school principals exhibited ethical leadership behaviors in their own schools. These authors have emphasized that teachers evaluated their behaviors positively. Likewise, Gülcan, Kılınç and Çepni (2012) also found that school principals demonstrated ethical leadership behaviors according to teachers. Demirdağ and Ekmekçioğlu (2015) described ethical leadership as those who do justice to employees and act respectfully towards them. This can be explained by the fact that school principals cannot pursue a fair policy among the employees and cannot exhibit necessary model behaviour towards them. Furthermore, it may be related to how school principal appoints, emphasizing the importance of how a school should be managed by a leader. Contrary to the results of this research, there are also some studies that find their behaviours related to ethical leadership roles of school principals high (Acar & Kaya, 2012; Erçetin & Eriçok, 2016; Gültekin, 2008; İskele, 2009; Kentsu, 2007; Küçükkaraduman, 2006; Turhan, 2007). It is noteworthy that studies with high level of ethical leadership of school principals were done between 2006 and 2012. The current study was carried out in June 2015 after 100 thousand school principals and assistant principals working in the Ministry of National Education were dismissed from post (Alp, 2015). Successors have been appointed to vacant posts in a very short time. Their interview scores became prominent in the evaluations of newly appointed school principals. This may have opened the way to question the extent to which school principals have managerial skills within the institution. Coexistence of successor and predecessor principals within the school may have caused these school principals to be insufficiently adopted by the teachers, and thus, to be interpreted in the way that newly appointed principals had lower ethical leadership behaviours than former principals. From a different viewpoint, it can also be expressed that newly appointed school principals' ethical leadership behaviours are not sufficiently accepted by the teachers. In addition, it could have caused distribution of the scales to teachers over

social networking sites and completion of questionnaire by teachers in a free environment without remaining under pressure outside the school to produce such results.

According to research findings, the average score of positive climate practices at the level of “I partly agree” can be expressed in the way that there is no effective link between school management and teachers within the school. Besides, problems may arise when school principals thought unable to exhibit ethical leadership behaviours by their teachers organize activities which will change climate within the school. Yahyagil (2006) stated that organizational climate is a reflection of a self-dynamic study on management practices, employees and organizational conditions, and is associated with how employees see and perceive their own institutions. The consequences of this situation may also prevent teachers from developing negative attitudes, and students from producing the expected outcomes of academic and social achievements. Gürbüz, Erdem and Yıldırım (2013) concluded from their study that school principals should exhibit behaviors towards the creation of a more moderate climate in their schools. It is also mentioned that people who work in such an environment would feel more confident, their performance would improve, and thus the success would bring by itself. Ziegler and Boardman (1986) and Williams (1994) also came the conclusion that school principals would create a moderate and healthy school climate in their schools if they use humor. In yet another study, Şenel and Buluç (2016) reached the conclusion that school climate would be a key factor in enhancing the effectiveness of schools. The same study stressed that the behaviors of the school principals came to the forefront in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of the schools. Accordingly, it has been stated that promotive principal behaviors by which the school principals exhibit supportive attitudes towards teachers, constructively criticize teachers and appreciate their achievements would enhance the effectiveness of schools.

Principals’ ethical leadership behaviours and positive climate practices vary significantly according to gender by the teachers’ perceptions. Accordingly, female teachers have found principals’ ethical leadership levels and positive climate practices higher than male teachers. There may be a connection between the fact that a significant part of school principals is male and the fact that female teachers are thinking in this way. In other words, school principals act more naively and responsibly towards their female colleagues than male colleagues. This could not be interpreted as a professional behaviour in the profession. This situation, also considered as positive discrimination, can pose a serious problem for male teachers. Similarly, Katrancı et al. (2015) concluded from their study that there was a significant difference between ethical leadership behaviors of the school principals according to the teachers’ perceptions but this difference was in favor of male candidate teachers. In a study by Küçükkaraduman (2006), it was also found that the ethical leadership behaviors of the principals differed significantly according to sex. In addition, no significant difference existed in the ethical leadership behaviors of school principals according to the teachers’ gender in some researches. The studies by Dogan (2005) and Doğan and Uğurlu (2014) revealed that principals’ ethical leadership behaviors did not differ significantly from the gender according to teachers’ perceptions. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers’ perceptions of the school principals’ ethical leadership behaviors in their own schools could sometimes differ by gender.

The findings from some researches on the school climate are remarkably consistent with the ones from this study. Pashiardis (2000) found that female teachers had higher perceptions of climate in their schools than male teachers. In a similar manner, Wilson, Pentecoste and Bailey (1984) determined that males exhibited more negative attitudes towards the climate in their schools. In yet another study, Canlı (2016) concluded that female teachers had higher perceptions of the sincerity dimension of the school climate than male counterparts but since this difference was too small, its significance could be questioned in practical terms. Likewise, Ekşi (2006) came to a conclusion that female teachers seemed to regard the relations in their schools as sincerer than male counterparts. Having looked at these results, it can be concluded that gender, namely female or male, did not differ significantly in the perception of school climate, but women regarded as the social relations sincerer at the schools where they worked. In brief, a leader principal should develop a work-oriented, not gender-oriented, behavioural model. Positive steps could be taken towards designing and implementing programmes in which policy makers, school principals, and teachers actively participate in the development of ethical behaviours at the regional and school level.

There is a high level of significant positive relationship between the positive climate practice levels and the ethical leadership behaviours of the principals working at primary education institutions according to the teachers’ perceptions. This finding can be interpreted as an increase in positive climate practices as the school principals’ ethical leadership quality enhances. The high level of correlation can be expressed in the way that ethical leadership exerts a powerful influence over the school climate. Eroğluer and Yılmaz (2015) found that employees’ perception of ethical leadership positively influenced the organizational climate they perceived. They have suggested that an employee-oriented and egalitarian management style in the organizations would

positively affect the employees' thoughts on the working atmosphere of the organization. Esmaelzadeh, Abbaszadeh, Borhani, and Peyrovi (2017) stated that ethical leaders improved the organizational climate composed of job environment, communication climate and ethical climate from three dimensions. They expressed that ethical leaders built an environment in which organizational definition, trust, and solidarity are ensured by standardizing working conditions among employees and increasing employees' interest in the environment. İskele (2009) also indicated that the sub-dimensions of ethical leadership in the schools correlated significantly with the level of assertiveness and motivation in creating a creative climate. At the same time, some researchers expressed clearly the importance of reliability in the ethical leadership and the role it plays in creating a reliable climate (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003; Walumbwa, Mayer, Wang P., Wang H., Workman, & Christensen, 2011). The results of various studies confirm that the demonstration of a reliable, fair and egalitarian management style in the organizations led to positive changes in the employees' perception of the climatic climate. It is undoubtedly that the employees who have positive thoughts on the organization where they worked will also increase their organizational success by working with greater desire and enthusiasm. As a result, the high ethical leadership behaviours of school principals can lead to a favourable climate environment. In this case, it may try to ensure that an effective education and training environment can be created, teachers' job satisfaction can be increased, and both their academic and social success can be achieved in within the body of the school. Therefore, teachers can play an important role in developing behaviours that are known correctly in line with school principals' principles, values, and beliefs, in seeing them a role model as ethical leader and in successfully fulfilling their duties as respected leaders by their followers.

In possible future studies on school principals' ethical leadership, researchers may focus more on its local and cultural elements and address, as a separate subject of work, its effects on school management, teacher and student behaviours in order to make ethical leadership more understandable. In addition, conducting researches on how ethical leadership influences student achievement is essential to further examine the concept. In addition, teachers and other employees serving at schools can create new areas of research by investigating positive aspects of their institution's climate in terms of variables that have not been covered before. Moreover, studies that further investigate the relationship between the sub-dimensions of the ethical leadership and organizational climate can be compared with demographic characteristics and samples that had not previously examined.

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