

## **Ethical Dilemmas: A Problematic Situation for Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

During the decision-making process, finding two or more ethically correct alternative solutions is known as facing an ethical dilemma. The current study aimed to determine ethical dilemmas faced by teachers in high schools in Turkey. The study uses a qualitative research method. The data was collected through a semi-structured interview technique. A descriptive analysis method was used in analyzing the data. In the data, 6 main themes were found; individualized education, school regulations, administrators, parents, colleagues, and democratic & social values. Situations causing ethical dilemmas are the centralized curriculum, the testing system, the disciplinary system, class-size and class culture, because of a lack of suitability for individualized education. Other situations causing ethical dilemmas are related to complying with the administrators or school regulations; showing or not showing compassion to parents, students and colleagues; and the disagreement between democratic values and society's values.

**Keywords:** Ethical Dilemma, Education Politics, Student-Centered Education, Education Curriculum, School Principals, Democratic & Social Values, Testing System, Disciplinary System

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## INTRODUCTION

Decision-making is the action of choosing among alternatives (Ergeneli & Mert, 2003). It is essential to think deeply as part of the decision-making process, however, sometimes, individuals may decide too lightly while decision-making (Barker, 1998). The ethical perception of the individual during the decision-making process has to be explicit (Al-Khatib, Robertson, Stanton & Vitell, 2002). Because, to develop moral behaviors in the organization, it is necessary to be loyal to one's values in the decision-making process, and to abide by moral principles (Hosmer, 1991).

During the decision-making process, finding two or more ethically correct alternative solutions is known as facing ethical dilemmas. Having an ethical dilemma is not about choosing right or wrong it's about taking a stand and facing situations where there are one or more acceptable behaviors (Jacobs & Hartshorne, 2003). When people deal with ethical issues, their aim is to do the right thing; however, individuals are often not aware what the right thing is, or if s/he has the capacity to do it. Generally, an ethical dilemma occurs because of the presence of multi-directional values competing with each other, or the claims of conflicting interest within groups (Tooffler, 1986; as cited in Özgener, 2004, p.121). These kinds of dilemmas are often faced in schools because there are various people who have different values and interests in the educational institutions, and all of them pressurize educational institutions to realize their own interests and values (Lashway, 1996).

The teaching profession is a lifework requiring you to make reasonable decisions and judgments in complex and uncertain environments. Teachers strive to handle extremely complex problems with the limited mental processes of humans (Riedler & Eryaman, 2016). Teachers tend to make reasonable decisions instead of rational ones (Borko & Shavelson, 2013). Teachers who are supposed to handle extremely complex problems are likely to encounter ethical dilemmas throughout their professional experience.

The current study investigates which practices, behaviors and physical conditions of the school environment are causing dilemmas for teachers in high schools in Turkey. The current study aims to determine ethical dilemmas faced by teachers in high school in Turkey.

### Ethical decision-making

According to Hitt (1990), individuals practice different ethical systems while making decisions. There are four types of ethical systems (Aydm, 2001). The four types, their most notable thinkers, and definitions, can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1. Ethical systems**

ETHICAL SYSTEM	THINKER	DEFINITION
Intended Consequence Ethics	John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)	Determined moral trueness of actions as a result of intended consequences.
Rule Ethics	Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)	Enacted moral trueness of actions through standards and regulations.
Social Contract Ethics	Jean Jack Rousseau (1712-1778)	Determined moral trueness of actions by the etiquettes and customs of society.
Personal Ethics	Martin Buber (1878-1965)	Enacted moral trueness of actions by individual's conscience.

(Hitt, 1990; as cited in Aydm, 2001)

To Martin Buber, one of the most important thinkers of the personal ethical system in the classification of Hitt (1990), what comprises a personal ethical system is the consciousness inside human beings that allows us to recognize the good and the bad. Intended Consequence ethics, Rule ethics and Social Contract ethics depend on social bases more than personal ethics. In Intended

Consequence ethics, the consequences of the action determine the trueness or falsity of the actions. The goal is to protect the welfare of all relevant parties, within the scope of humanism. In Rule ethics the trueness or falsity of actions are determined through moral principles and virtues. For Social Contract ethics, we are expected to behave in the manner required by the common courtesies of our society (Aydın, 2001).

### **Dilemmatic spaces at schools**

Ding & Wang's (2018) study pertains to the ethical dilemmas which pre-service teachers confront during their professional experience. Pre-service teachers are first-time teachers and in the process of training. When the results of the study are examined, it can be understood that dilemmas are usually concerned with the dilemma of "conventional educational conditions and educational approach of mentors" and "implementation of student-centered education perceptions".

According to the studies of Pope, Green, Johnson & Mitchell, (2009), ethical dilemmas focused on the evaluations of students. 62% of the participants in the study stated that they faced ethical dilemmas in the evaluation of students' academic performance. For instance; giving the answers to the students before the evaluation or changing the marks of the student in view of his/her effort.

According to the study of Helton & Ray (2005), teachers faced the following ethical dilemmas:

- Rules and policies: the need to go beyond the rules at situations such as protecting a student abused at home.
- Administrators: The decisions of the administrators conflicting with personal or professional ethics.
- Colleague behaviors: The discriminatory behaviors of colleagues towards the staff and students.

The examples about ethical dilemmas faced at schools determined by the studies of Beckner (2004, p.91) based on the studies of Cooper (1990), Fleishman & Payne (1980) and Kidder (1995) are below:

The facts against the legality: Administrators should have values such as honesty, indulgence, responsibility and keeping promises. The administrators sometimes ignore policies for the sake of the students' private situations. For instance, they may consider not revealing the situation of a family who want to hide the condition of a pregnant girl.

Justice against compassion: Ethical dilemmas are faced in the situations in which something is to be chosen, such as love versus rules, compassion versus equality, and love versus truth. For instance, if a student works at nights to support the family or when one of the family members of this student is sick, should we shut our eyes to the student dropping out, or coming late to the lesson? Being honest is important, but is it always necessary to tell the truth everywhere? Should an administrator take into consideration the psychological problems of a student?

Democracy and Responsibility: Does the meaning of the term majority stand for the majority of the people, school region or the students in general? When school policies are thought to reflect the demands of the majority in the region, should they keep on supporting these policies? Or should they resist these policies? This decision leads to ethical dilemmas according to Beckner (2004).

According to Tirri (1999), teachers face a dilemma about whether they should send out the naughty student or whether they should raise the mark of the student who is academically weak. They

also face dilemmas about whether they should warn their colleagues about unprofessional behaviors towards students. Similar findings are included in the study of Campbell (1996; as cited in Lishchinsky, 2010). Tirri (1999) stated that teachers face dilemmas about the rights of the minority. For instance, teachers think that the inclusion of content about the practices of the religion of the majority during the educational process may lead to the religious rights of the minority being ignored. According to the findings about ethical dilemmas teachers faced in Tirri's (1999) study, which was conducted with the participation of 33 teachers in Finland, teachers have ethical dilemmas about whether they should share students' secrets with their families and the administration, since they do not want to lose their confidence and trust.

Teachers may also have dilemmas about whether they should consider equality or the differences between students when they act. For instance, Colnerud (1997), emphasizes that teachers may be indecisive about whether they should choose to give attention equally to all students, or to concentrate on the students in need. The same study has also shown that when teachers face a dilemma about whether they should behave compassionately or formally to their students it's an indication of an ethical dilemma. Lashway (1996) stated that teachers had doubts, such as whether a guidance teacher should tell parents that a student is having an abortion, causing ethical dilemmas to occur at schools.

Disagreements occurring between experienced teachers and less experienced ones, disagreements about multi-grade classes, and disagreements on the issue whether couples could work together in the same school are all ethical dilemmas that are faced at schools (Nash, 1996; as cited in High, 2005). Strike, Haller & Saltis (1988) suggested that the ethical dilemmas faced at school are the answers to the questions of whether teachers should talk about their students' psychological mood with the parents or not. Should someone, who the administrator doesn't want, be invited for a conference? And should the administrator be against or for the teacher when conflicts about students' marks arise between teachers and parents.

## **QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

The current study investigates which practices, behaviors and physical conditions of the school environment are causing dilemmas for teachers in high schools in Turkey. The following sub-problems are also addressed as part of the scope of the current study:

- (1) In which situations do participants face ethical dilemmas regarding an individualized education approach?
- (3) In which situations do participants face ethical dilemmas regarding school regulations?
- (4) In which situations do participants face ethical dilemmas regarding administrators?
- (5) In which situations do participants face ethical dilemmas regarding parents?
- (6) In which situations do participants face ethical dilemmas regarding colleagues?
- (7) In which situations do participants face ethical dilemmas regarding democratic and social values?

## **MODEL OF THE STUDY**

The phenomenology approach, which is a qualitative method, was used in the study. A phenomenological approach to research focuses on participants' perceptions, views, and understandings towards a specific phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p.72).

## PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the study were teachers working in high schools in Turkey. Maximum variation sampling was used. In order to provide variety among participants, attention was paid attention to teachers' gender and subject. Table 2 includes data of the participants' code, genders and subjects.

**Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

Code	Sex	Branch
P1	Woman	Chemistry
P2	Woman	English language
P3	Man	English language
P4	Man	Religion
P5	Man	Turkish language
P6	Woman	Guidance service
P7	Woman	Philosophy
P8	Woman	Guidance service
P9	Woman	Philosophy
P10	Woman	Physics
P11	Man	English language
P12	Man	Philosophy

### Data collection tools and the process

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview questions section consisted of 11 open-ended questions in total. These questions were checked by a field expert before the interviews, for contributing to validity and reliability. Researchers can ask to participants new questions during the interview as well as the predefined questions according to the purpose of the research thanks to the semi-structured interview technique. This flexible structure of the technique allows the responses of the participants to be clarified. Interviews were conducted by the researcher to contribute to objectivity during the analysis of the data. The interview times with the participants vary between 30 and 90 minutes. The written documents obtained at the end of the interviews vary from one to three pages.

### Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data obtained at the end of the study, a descriptive analysis approach was used. The stages of the descriptive analysis approach are as follows (Merriam, 2015; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006):

*Coding of the data:* The data are divided into words, sentences, paragraphs or pages and each one is conceptually understood and encoded.

*Finding the Themes:* The codes obtained are categorized. Each set of categorized code bundles is a subject to encode as a theme, and each theme shows its general case.

*Organizing and defining data according to codes and themes:* The codes and themes are presented systematically to ease understanding for the reader.

*Interpretation of findings:* The codes and the themes presented in a particular system are discussed and interpreted in relation to past research.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Interview questions were prepared in accordance with previous research that aimed to determine ethical dilemmas faced by teachers. The questions were sent to experts to be checked. After getting feedback from the experts, necessary revisions were made. According to the views obtained, necessary corrections were made and a pilot interview with 1 teacher was conducted in order to test the clarity of the questions. At the end of the study, the internal validity of the questions was determined. In addition, during data collection from the participants, the extra new questions were used as much as possible, and participants were asked to express their views in detail. Direct citations have been included in the process of revealing the findings. The reliability of the study was calculated by using  $P$  (Percentage of divergence) =  $(Na \text{ (Number of agreement)} / Na \text{ (Number of Agreement)} + Nd \text{ (Number of Disagreement)}) \times 100$  formula. The numbers of 'agreement' and 'disagreement' were determined by the researcher and an expert. Over 70% of the reliability calculations are accepted as reliable (Miles and Huberman, 1994). According to this calculation, the reliability was found to be 0.85.

## **RESULTS**

After analysis, the participants' views obtained from the study were classified under 6 themes. These are: (1) Individualized education, (2) School regulations, (3) Administrators, (4) Parents, (5) Colleagues, (6) Democratic and social values.

### *Individualized education*

Participants in the study indicated that they face dilemmas ethically in some cases regarding individualized education. These cases are; the centralized curriculum specified for the country by the National Education Ministry, a testing system that evaluates all the students at once, class-sizes, disciplinary rules applied equally for all students, and the classroom culture. Due to these circumstances, teachers feel unsure whether to apply practices based on individualized education. Accordingly, some of the participants' views are as in the following paragraphs.

About the code, "Centralized curriculum OR Student's readiness level", P1 states:

*In the curriculum, there are so many irrelevant things. It is not appropriate for the child's readiness level, or well, they are too heavy subjects, maybe university curriculum, but we are expected to give all of these subjects. We try to teach them. However, these children have difficulties in learning, as well as us having difficulties in teaching.*

About the code, "Centralized curriculum OR School region's social and geographic conditions", P4 states:

*We would like to see a change in students' attitudes, behavior and academic levels during the education process. However, we still face difficult conditions such as physical conditions and geographical conditions of the region. I think it is a bit difficult to get the desired result when thinking of all of them in a comprehensive way because, if the curriculum is applied in the form of a template, it can be considered that positive results will be obtained. But, with any educational policy in any area, perhaps more different alternative training methods can be used. All areas need different perspectives.*

About the code, "Centralized curriculum OR To prepare students for life", P1 states:

*Chemistry is my branch. I want chemistry to add something to the life of students. But in most cases students only memorize processes or things. There are heavy topics in the curriculum.” For the same code, P6 states that “I have to apply the guidance curriculum, but I am entering the class at scheduled times, but the situation of the class is not very suitable for the process. In the previous hour there may have been a problem among friends, or problems between the teachers. In this situation the question comes, do I have to apply the curriculum or not?*

Teachers have difficulty in implementing individualized education in the classroom and so they face dilemmas in the classroom. The primary reasons for this were stated as: the density of the curriculum, the centralized nature of the curriculum and spontaneous unexpected states occurring in the school. Furthermore, class culture and class size are among the other factors that present dilemmas for teachers in terms of individualized education. In this context; some of the participants' views are as in the following paragraphs:

About the codes “Class culture OR Student-centered education approach” P2 states:

*We get into the class. We are on the stand. 30/40 students are there, sitting. We are getting in a position to rule them, not like something more equal. Even if I find an interesting activity, students are in a position to get used to something; they do not control themselves, they expect someone or an authority to say, “be quiet, don’t do that.” Or I give time in an activity. This will finish in 5 minutes and then we will get through another stage of this, 10 minute passes. Here, there is a situation, which also exceeds me... Maybe, we don’t give them responsibility from the beginning of their education, the teacher always tells them what to do... The students perceive the lesson as empty. When you make them very active in the lesson, you tell them to do group work. All is related with one thing and that is the responsibility... They have no habit of group work.*

About the code “Class-size OR Student-centered education approach” P3 states:

*Simple. Now, thirty-four students in forty minutes. We are responsible for forty minutes, what are the minutes per person, thirty-four students? This is my biggest dilemma, for example. Time and population dilemma is the biggest dilemma for me.*

Class culture and class-size are other challenges connected to the practicality of student-centered education. Teachers are supposed to give education to all the students and conform to the existing course hours. Furthermore, the disciplinary system is one of the other factors that puts teachers on the horns of dilemmas in terms of individualized education. As a participant (P3) states about the code “Disciplinary system OR Students’ creativity/entrepreneurship”:

*We saw something called The One World Schoolhouse, Salman Khan in one of the last seminars, he said he wanted a noisy class, a noisy school. Indeed, our system does not approve this. We wish... Discipline is a must for us, as you know... Unavoidably, this authoritarian personality depresses the child’s creativity and entrepreneurship, I mean, in response to the action, does it take a reward or a punishment? This forces the child to be a passive listener, which we never want them to be.*

P3 indicates that he has had training about noisy classrooms from the in-service training sessions organized by the Ministry of Education, and he thinks that the authoritarian manner of the current discipline system leads students to silence, in contrast to what the in-service training encourages. Furthermore, the testing system is another factor that presents teachers with dilemmas in terms of individualized education. In this context; some of the participants' views are as in the following paragraphs.

About the code, “Testing system OR Student-centered education approach”, P3 states:

*The system wants us to stay away from the teacher-centered education approach, give these children a chance. The exam causes memorization rather than exploring new things about the lesson. Therefore, the students cannot be expected to gain productivity, creativity.*

About the code “Testing system OR Student-centered education approach”, P3 states:

*For instance, there are six English teachers in a school. We will set a common test. All of us have the same curriculum. There can be differences between his method and mine or the level of students; the capacities or the student's behaviors of in our classes may show some discrepancies. Finally, making generalizations is the biggest conflict in education. Also expecting student-centered education approach in the generalization is the biggest conflict too.*

An assessment and evaluation system based upon the testing system shapes the learning-oriented behaviors of students towards reaching success in the exams. According to P3, this situation blunts the creativity and upstream skills of students. Furthermore, the principle of evaluation through standardized questions is in contradiction with the principle of student-centered education.

The centralized curriculum, the evaluation system of the student's success, class culture, class-size, and disciplinary system contradict the approach of student-centered education in Turkey.

#### *School regulations*

The school environment embodies dynamic processes. The school administration and teachers face dilemmas with factors such as student population and diversity, students' age group, and the aims of education as applied according to the school regulations. Some of the participants' views in this direction are as in the following paragraphs:

About the code “Regulation of tobacco products” OR “Attitudes of school administrators and parents”, P5 states:

*No. A student is smoking a cigarette, warning him/her. But tobacco products are forbidden. If one is caught at second time, He/she has to pay a fine. This time the parents do not accept it. The authority cannot support the teacher.*

About the code “To lie to the students about abolished disciplinary punishments OR To be honest to the students”, P5 states:

*For example, there is no a discipline penalty for the students, but we still say there are penalties just in order to ensure the order not be broken down.*

About the code “Regulation of school uniform” OR “Characteristics of adolescents”, P1, P2, P7 state:

*They are adolescents for students. They want to express themselves, dress freely, wear make-up, and so on. We, teachers, hear their worries about the freedom to express themselves. ... The administration warns us that students have to obey the rules regarding school uniform. Throughout this process we face dilemmas.*

About the code “Regulation of school uniform” OR “Students' psychology”, P6 states:

*The expectations of the headmaster regarding dress regulations leave me in a dilemma about warning students. For example, a student may have a problem with their family, thus they might not dress according to the regulations.*

About the code “Break time” OR “Flexibility”, P2 states:

*During forty minutes of lesson, sometimes the children make a show, or try to amuse themselves, we may want to go out. But we still get stuck in.*

About the same code, P1 states:

*Because when we have a break, of ten minutes for example. In the breaktime, sometimes children come and ask us questions. It is our break time but we while we are trying to drink tea, trying to breathe, it is in fact impossible because on the other side the bell rings. The administration wants us to follow the rules of class and do not understand whether we had a break or not. This situation puts us under stress.*

Teachers face dilemmas in implementing school regulations. One of the leading reasons is that some school regulations' legitimacy is ambiguous. Secondly, teachers can find more pragmatic solutions rather than implementing school regulations. Lastly, all the members of the school may not implement school regulations. These reasons present teachers with dilemmas regarding implementation of school regulations.

#### *Administrators*

Participants in the study indicated that they face ethical dilemmas in some cases regarding administrators' attitudes or decisions. Some of the participants' views in this direction are as in the following statements.

About the code "Administrator's attitudes OR To implement disciplinary rules for students" P3 states:

*Imagine there are 30 students in a class. You cannot achieve a university place for all of them. However, you should teach all these 30 students. Unless you set some rules, the problems caused by 5 of them deactivate the rest of the students. When the school administration is passive about these problematic students and when this is reflected in other students, this number increases to 10, and in time 15, and at the end of the year you just have 5 students available for the education. We put pressure on the administration about this issue, but the administration cannot convey this problem to the upper authorities. In the end, they have their own position and want to keep their position and in a colloquial manner do not want to get a scolding.*

P3 utters that s/he is on the fence with regards to applying the discipline system thoroughly because of a perceived lack of essential support from the administration about behavior in the classroom. P3 also indicates that this attitude of the principal is because of him not wanting the school to be seen as problematic to the his or her superiors.

About the code "To comply with the decisions of the administrator OR To comply with school regulations" P6 states:

*Between our ideas and the administrator... I point out our ideas to the administrator, yet I don't insist to the administrator. I just look and don't know if I should insist or not about our concern. For example, our headmaster commanded us not call the family and the police because he couldn't spare her/him. The decision of the headmaster left me in dilemma to obey the school regulations or obey the decision of the headmaster. Implicitly, I was on the fence between my conscience and the regulations and used my preference for school regulations.*

P6 tells of a dilemma in which s/he is caught between the reverse decision of the administrators and the school regulations when it comes to contacting the police or family when the student has committed a crime.

### *Parents*

Participants in the study indicated that they face ethical dilemmas in some cases regarding parents. They cannot decide whether they should support parents' attendance or not. Some of the participants' views in this direction are as the following:

About the code, "To know the negative attitudes and behaviors of the parents about the student pedagogically OR To share problems of students with the parents", P8 states:

*While explaining some significant cases to the parents, we encounter some problems. Then we need to choose the wise and right words while talking. Before the interview starts, we have some dilemmas such as how will they react, if there is any harm to the child, will they give positive reaction for the situation or will they place the child at the center of the problem or not.*

About the code, "Parents' expectation from their own children OR Students' real success", P2 states:

*Parents are always optimistic about their children. For instance... My child is intelligent while knowing that his or hers does not work as much as he should. In this kind of situation, they ask that we sympathize with them regardless of the reality.*

About the code, "Parents profile OR Parents attendance", P5 states:

*Our parents' potential, our profile has not improved yet. So we do not have much dialogue with the parents.*

About the code, "Parents profile OR Books proposal", P5 states:

*How can students read about another idea? We give a book; we have a book called Homeland Hotel. Parents often complain about it yet, our responsibility is to give such guidance. We may have to tell them like read this, but read in the library, do not take it to your home because... Why? Because still we cannot pass the cultural steps, thus it's our biggest annoyance anyway."*

About the code, "To ask donors OR Parents' economic conditions", P4 states:

*"We always feel uncomfortable in telling parents to buy the books due to economic conditions, some of the books may be expensive for them. It is another dilemma.*

Findings regarding to this theme leave teachers in dilemmas regarding instability between teachers due to parents' expectations from teachers and the school.

### *Colleagues*

Participants in the study indicated that they face ethical dilemmas in some cases regarding colleagues. They do not decide to support behaviors of colleagues or not.

About the code, "To respect colleagues OR To protect personal rights", P2 states:

*Some of us teachers pamper the students too much. And we always take them into the teachers' room. Yet, the teachers' room is not for students or private extra curriculum explanation but some of us do it and often students hear what we are talking about with other teachers. And so on and so forth but some of us have no power to prevent. Even if we may want them to go out, and in case I report to the principle it won't be on my colleagues but all of us.*

About the code “To respect colleagues OR To protect students’ rights”, P10 states:

*For example, if the teacher comes to class wearing inappropriate clothes ... the student end up doing the same why? Because the teacher did dare come to school wearing unsuitable clothes, now when it’s time to give the moral lesson we get ashamed about warning our student about the dress code once one of us came dressed inappropriately.*

About the code “To respect colleagues OR Reality” P2 states:

*Let’s suppose that one of our teacher’s children is our student in that school and he is not even a hard worker, but because of the camaraderie we tend to support and give all the necessary tools because the child is a part of us. This is another dilemma.*

About the code “To respect colleagues OR To raise students’ marks”, P11 states:

*For example, let’s say that the child is really working hard, trying hard, and putting in the best of his best to the limits of his own capacity. But I’m afraid he does not get good enough marks from the exam. In such cases, we tend to give the highest verbal grades the highest. Why? It’s because we believe in the student’s ability. It’s a dilemma? Yes it is, but due to the ability of the student and expectations we do it. Yet in private schools, children’s grades are usually not only inflated, but extremely high. They even send their children to private schools to buy grades. We teachers sometimes criticize among us, but a dilemma is a dilemma.*

About the code “To defend teachers towards parents OR To know inadequacy of teachers”, P10 states:

*For instance, if a teacher’s speech is not clear. The parent may complain about it yet as the teachers’ side we are forced to support them regardless of the truth, why because of ... the culture of the institute. ... We have to be in favor of our member. We can keep things within the family, but we protect our family against the outside.*

About the code “To believe the teamwork OR To know inadequacy of the work motivation of the colleagues”, P5 states:

*60% of our teachers regard teaching not as a profession. But a last option to join. When we assess it not as a profession, well! We are only doing it to make living, we only go into the class and teach the lesson to the ones who can understand, and for the others who cannot, we say they will understand through time, we don’t put effort into teaching them or even show the love of the subject that we are teaching. And if one of us does the opposite like hard-work, he is then blamed for supporting the school administration. And even blamed for being pragmatist. The teachers’ vocational task is not an individual task. ... In fact, teaching or education itself is teamwork. Therefore, the same motivation should be spread so that we teachers can have a better system for our students, yet this is not what is happening.*

Participants are informed about professional truths regarding students’ and parents’ rights, ideal behaviors oriented towards teachers’ cooperation and their own personal rights; however, in some circumstances, they witness the behaviors of their colleagues who do not conform to these truths. Thus, they are on the fence between maintaining friendship and warning their colleagues with the aim of preserving the organizational culture despite the misbehavior of colleagues.

#### *Democratic and social values*

Participants in the study indicated that they face ethical dilemmas in some cases regarding democratic and social values. They face dilemmas in abiding by the values of society and supporting free thought, which arise as a necessity of democracy.

About the code “Democracy OR Cultural values” P5 states:

*You cannot expect a person to grow in an environment within which we are not culturally ready to accept democratic values to become fully democratic. We cannot even talk about democracy to a society who has learnt to vote just by using ballots in every 4 years, founds and administrates the country in the corners of the coffeehouses”*

About the code “Democracy OR Cultural values”, P11 states:

*I think there is a bit of culture in Turkish society, there is a culture of fear. With persuasion, you cannot convince the children; especially those who are starting to become new adults. Even if you say it repeatedly, it's not what you want. But when you make it hard; This is sometimes a hard look, sometimes in a loud tone; It is much more effective when you say something with a high tone of voice.*

About the code “Liberalization OR Cultural values”, P4 states:

*What we want is, to some extent, to flex and expand the point of view of young individuals. However, this isn't mostly approved by the families when we look at the traditional approaches... We often offer them innovative sentences, words and an innovative point of view so that they can progress in their ways of life. However, strictly speaking, this point of view that we offer can lead to problems in their personal and family lives.*

About the code “Liberalization OR Society's religious values”, P4 states:

*Giving an example from my field, it is possible to say that there is an understanding of religious monopolism. In this understanding of monopolism, we take a look at a young individual who sees his belief as the best, most reasonable and sensible one, but when he reaches that point, universality and locality conflicts start to occur.”*

About the code “Liberalization OR Cultural values”, P5 states that

*Talking about socialism. When we introduce socialism to the student in return they label us as socialists, and so do the parents. The next week we may want to talk theories like nationalism. But again our students we will keep on labeling us nationalist.*

Participants are of the opinion that cultural values are not ready for different ideas, so sharing thoughts in the class environment that differ from national and moral values may trigger a conflict with parents or possible conflicts with children. Therefore, they are on the horns of a dilemma in sharing different thoughts. The views through this theme are based upon teachers' being mixed up in universal and local values. In other words, teachers do not find common ground in terms of both universal values and social expectations.

## DISCUSSION

The current research aims to identify situations where high school teachers are indecisive about which rights they should implement. Six themes were found at the end of the research. These are ‘student centered education approach’, ‘school regulations’, ‘administrators’, ‘parents’, ‘colleagues’ and ‘democratic & social values’. When the views under the all themes are examined, the participants remain in their teaching behaviors with the current education policies, administrators and parents, the beliefs / behaviors of colleagues and the culture of society

When the views under the individualized education theme are examined, dynamics such as ‘intensive content of the curriculum’, ‘class-size’, ‘testing system’, ‘settled educational habits of the students’ and ‘teachers’ effect on participants’ decisions’ are connected with whether to implement

student-centered education. In other words, the findings reveal some obstacles in applying individualized education. In Wang's 2011 study, which was carried out with pre-service teachers working in the suburbs of China, it was discovered that factors such as lecture time, curriculum, economic and cultural disadvantages of students keep the teachers in limbo in the frame of implementation of student-centered education perception.

According to participants in this research; 'intensive content of the curriculum' and 'evaluation system of the academic achievements of the students' are notable when considering the factors that make the implementation of the individualized education difficult. Both of them are a centralized structure in Turkey. In parallel with this situation, the OECD, of which Turkey is a member, makes some suggestions such as designing 'curriculum' and 'examination system' as a centralized structure to members (Aypay, 2015, p.245). As a result; 'centralized curriculum' and 'centralized examination system' are paradoxical contexts in terms of 'individualized education' in the participants' minds.

Pre-service teachers' responses related to student population and school timetable in the study of Ding & Wang (2018) clash with the findings of the individualized education theme in the current study. In the study of Ding & Wang, pre-service teachers state that they are eager to respond to students' personal needs and remember their names. On the other hand, they say that their efforts towards individualized education are being worn down owing to there being nearly 400 students, and that the content in school books is so intense. Accordingly, the mentor indicates that s/he educates with traditional methods. All the mentioned cases lead teachers to instability.

At the end of this research, the view is reached that a 'centralized curriculum' does not meet the needs of the individuals in all the cities of this country. The view suggests that a 'centralized curriculum' and 'centralized education policies' do not respond to the physical and geographical conditions of each school district. Moreover, in the current research, participants' views on the conflicts between the democratic values and the expectations of the society, which are included in the scope of democratic and social values, have been reached. In relation to these views, the research by Beckner (2004, p.91) based on Cooper (1990), Fleishman & Payne (1980) and Kidder (1995) questions if school policies should continue to be supported or resisted when reflecting the demands of the majority of the school district. Furthermore; the teacher of religious lesson participating in the research expresses worries that "the idea of freedom and the curriculum of the religious lesson" contradict his ideas. This view overlaps with the findings of the researches of Husu & Tirri (2001) and Tirri (1999). In the context of this, new studies can be carried out for whether the curriculum needs to be revised in terms of both social and democratic values.

At the end of the research, it was found that students' earlier experiences in teacher-centered education make applying student-centered education in high-school more difficult. Furthermore, 'class culture is more suitable for serving authority' and "teacher-training system" have an important role in affecting student-centered education negatively. New research can be done in how the restructuring of education faculties and the national education system should be organized in this direction.

One of the participants of this study thinks that the current perception of discipline damages creativity and keeps him/her hanging in midair. His view on this is under the sub-theme of "the present disciplinary approach - students' creativity/entrepreneurship". From the findings in the study of Ding & Wang's (2018), one of the pre-service teachers mentions that s/he got trained according to custodial pupil control but s/he couldn't control difficult situations without threatening punishment. S/he expresses that he is on the fence.

About the code of 'the curriculum - to prepare students for life' under the theme of individualized education, should the teacher show more interest to students? Or should she follow the curriculum? Dilemmas have been faced about these questions. The opinions match the findings of Colnerud (1997) and the research of Elbaz (1992) within which the teachers have had contradictions about how and when they should show compassion, kindness and concern to the students.

Uncertainties experienced by teachers regarding whether students are allowed to copy in examinations under the theme of colleagues and school regulations are similar to Pope et al. (2009) and Tirri (1999). Both this research and Pope et al. (2009) and Tirri's (1999) findings show that teachers who give students high grades while they do not deserve it experience dilemmas.

The code of "to comply with the decisions of the administrator - to comply with school regulations" under the theme of administrators, overlaps with the findings of the research of Helton and Ray (2005) regarding 'the decisions of the administrators on conflicting with professional ethics'. In this finding the counselor speaks about the dilemma in which s/he is confused by the reverse decision of the administrators and regulations of the school when it comes to communicating with to the police or family when the student commits a crime

The same guidance and counseling teacher who participated in the study underlined that some students experience familial problems and the students do not comply with the dress code at such times. For this reason, the guidance and counseling teacher expresses a doubt about the implementation of the regulation. These dilemmas overlapped with the findings of Beckner's research (2004). These findings are about "equality against schools of compassion, laws against love". In addition, Mahony (2009) underlines the necessity of the need to explore the causes of teachers' actions before making ethical decisions.

The dilemma between "to know the negative attitudes and behaviors of the parents about the student pedagogically – to share the negative attitudes and behaviors of students with the parents" under the theme of parents is similar to the findings of Tirri (1999), Lashway (1996) and Strike et al. (1999). The view of "positive expectations about "the students' achievement level - negative facts about the achievement level of the students" under the same theme overlap with the findings of Husu & Tirri (2001).

At the end of the study, it was also found that the professional values of the participants do not agree with some colleagues. They are concerned about whether to respect the negative behavior towards students of their colleagues. The views under this theme are similar with Tirri's (1999) survey done with 33 teachers in Finland and Campbell's (1996, as cited in Lishchinsky, 2010) finding on whether to warn their colleagues about their irrational behaviors towards students. In addition, the views under this theme overlap with the finding of "the discriminatory behavior of colleagues about students and staff" in the results of Helton & Ray's study (2005). A teacher who participated in the research of Husu and Tirri (2003) believes that smoking cannot be prevented if their colleagues continue to smoke in school and so the teachers face dilemma between 'colleagues', 'laws' and 'health of students'. As for the study of Ding & Wang (2018), most of the pre-service teachers hesitate between their classroom management and teaching perception and other teachers' education implementations. For example, while pre-service teachers prepare classes based on the principles of a student-centered education that allows students to gain experience, think critically and learn life, their mentor colleagues base classes on a perception of students having success in the exams as of more importance; in other words, a traditional perception. Pre-service teachers are concerned about this state. The related study of Ding & Wang (2018) show the findings on whether pre-service teachers adopt or not the student-centered education perception. In addition, the pre-service teachers who participated in the study of Ding & Wang (2018) find the authoritative behaviors of the mentors toward students unacceptable; however they say that they stay quiet rather than warning them and this leads to an increase in tension. These findings of study of Ding & Wang (2018) are similar with the current study's findings.

## CONCLUSION

As a result, there are many views in the current research that the curriculum is not suitable for individualized education. The other obstacles in front of the applicability of the individualized education are the testing system, disciplinary system, class-size and class culture. This awareness leaves the participants in dilemmas about how they should behave in the classroom during activities.

Some participants are in doubt as to whether they should comply with the administrator or school regulations in some cases. At the end of the study, some of the participants have uncertainty in which circumstances they should show compassion to parents, students and colleagues. Another common teachers' dilemma is the disagreement between democratic values and society's values.

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