

Ethical Dilemmas Experienced with Students by Teachers and Their Solution Strategies: A Case Study Conducted in Public Schools in İstanbul¹

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ABSTRACT:- This research was conducted to identify the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience with students and the solution strategies they use to overcome these dilemmas. Case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the research. Convenience sampling and purposeful random sampling were chosen to determine participants including 12 teachers working in five different public-school types such as primary school, secondary school, vocational high school, Anatolian high school, and project school in the 2023-2024 academic year. Data of the study were obtained through a semi-structured interview form including six personal questions, a sample case and four basic questions. Through the content analysis process, thematic coding was utilized. The results have revealed four themes regarding the ethical dilemmas teachers experienced with their students and the solution strategies. These themes are teachers' reactions to cheating, ethical dilemmas that teachers experience with students, solution strategies that teachers use, and the effect of time on the decisions of teachers. When teachers' reaction to cheating was examined, it was determined that teachers' behaviors were grouped under subheadings such as initiating disciplinary action, ignoring, and preventing cheating. It has been ascertained that the most common ethical dilemma teachers experience with students is cheating. It has been found that the most frequently used strategy by teachers is communicating with the students. Under the title of the effect of time on the decision of teachers, it was concluded that the majority of teachers would make the same decision if they encountered the same ethical dilemma later on.

Keywords -Ethics, Ethical Dilemma, Student, Solution Strategy, Teacher

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder and very complex process, and educational institutions must respond to the increasing expectations and demands of societies and parents related to education and make changes in education and school-based processes when necessary (Erdoğan, 2019). In modern societies, some functions such as humanitarian, social, cultural, political, and economic aspects, etc. are assigned to education and schools. School is also a normative and moral system and there are several written rules and norms that determine the behavior of its members. It is an important necessity for the school community, like other organizations, to have some ethical principles that ascertain and limit the behavior of its members. In this context, different conceptualizations, and issues such as organizational ethics, business and work ethics, ethics in the education process, and professional ethics gain importance.

In institutional life, as in social life, people's behaviors are expected to occur in accordance with moral/ethical rules and norms through a number of social control mechanisms. Due to the increasing social, moral and ethical problems in social and institutional life, an increase is observed in studies on the improvement of some ethical principles, education of ethics, ethical leadership, etc. in Türkiye, as in the world. Unethical behavior and corruption are seen as one of the biggest reasons why the Turkish public administration does not function effectively and efficiently. Situations such as unethical behavior in public tenders, abuse of discretion, favoritism and discrimination in staff selection and employment, waste of public resources, giving and receiving

gifts using public resources, paying personal expenses within institutional budgets and psychological harassment/mobbing against employees are reported through the media from time to time, and these can be seen as examples of unethical behavior that are frequently encountered. The influence of decision-makers on the bureaucratic structure, the lack of ethical culture in the public sector, bureaucratic privileges, lack of transparency in public administration, lack of audits, inadequacy of the media and non-governmental organisations are seen as the leading reasons for unethical behavior in Turkish public administration (Altun, Sayer & Barutçu, 2013).

Education management is a subfield of public administration, and school management can be seen as a practice area of education management. It is impossible to think about problems related to education and school management separately from the general problems of public administration. For principals and teachers, some ethical issues that draw attention from time to time occupy the agenda in the media and research. In particular, the use of public resources for individual interests is among the issues that frequently occupy the agenda (Kahvecioğlu, 2022). Research has shown that some unethical behavior encountered by school administrators in schools is not limited to irregularities and corruption. In this context, it is observed that problems such as unethical behavior in relations with colleagues, dereliction of duty, discrimination, and psychological pressure are frequently experienced (Kuru Çetin& Demirkasimoğlu, 2015).

The structure of this research will begin with a review of the current literature on professional ethics and ethical dilemmas in education. Secondly, some ethical dilemmas faced by teachers and school administrators will be explained. The main objective and sub-objectives of the research will be presented next. Subsequently, the methodology section will detail the research design, participants, data collection instruments, data collection and data analysis. The fourth chapter will present the research findings based on the content analysis of the data. Finally, the discussion, conclusion and recommendations chapter will compare the research findings with the existing literature and make suggestions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Professional Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas in Education

As educational and instructional leaders, principals and teachers are expected to act according to certain moral codes and ethical frameworks in professional practice. These rules are usually expressed in written form. But obviously, there are also unwritten professional norms and practices. Less formal aspects of the concept of professional ethics refer to moral responsibility, that is, the desire to do the best for all students. These rules may also include general expectations placed by society on administrators and teachers to act in certain ways (Cranston, Ehrich & Kimber, 2004).

In some countries, various councils have been established and circulars have been published to determine ethical principles in the field of education. For example, in the USA, the National Education Association (NEA) set basic standards for educators in 1975. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), previously established by Columbia University in 1922, developed ethical rules for educators working with people with exceptionalities in 2003 (Bucholz, Keller & Brady, 2007). The Professional Standards for Teachers study in Australia was initiated in 2009 by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), now known as the Education Council (Forster, 2012; AITSL, 2011). For the first time in Türkiye, ethical codes related to the teaching profession were published by the Ministry of Education in 2015 under the name Professional Ethical Principles for Those Providing Education. In this document, the determined principles are given under four headings such as ethical principles related to students, ethical principles related to the education profession, ethical principles related to educators and ethical principles related to parents (MEB, 2015). In addition, some ethical principles are included in the General Competencies for the Teaching Profession (2017) published by the Ministry of Education. Besides, some unions, as professional organizations, of which teachers are members, have also carried out some studies on this issue (MEB, 2017; Eraslan, 2012). In addition, a new course called Morals and Ethics in Education has been added to the new teaching programs, which were updated by the Higher Education Council and started to be implemented in the 2018-2019 academic year. Some topics related to the ethical principles mentioned above are also included in the scope of this course (YÖK, 2018).

In order to strengthen the ethical culture in public administration in Türkiye, the Public Officials Ethics Board was established on 25.05.2004. This board has determined principles of ethical behavior such as "honesty, objectivity, transparency, accountability, public service awareness" that public officials must comply with while carrying out their duties. The Board is responsible and authorized to monitor the implementation of these principles and to examine allegations of ethical violations against senior public administrators. According to the 2022 Public Officials Ethics Board Activity Report published in February 2023, the principles of ethical behavior have been violated 289 times in 2022 (Public Officials Ethics Board Activity Report, 2023). In the activity report of 2020, it was determined that ethical principles were violated 269 times (Public Officials Ethics Board Activity Report, 2021). As a result, according to the reports mentioned, it has been determined that the

number of violations of ethical principles in public administration is increasing. Certainly, this number includes only official applications and complaints made on this issue. However, there may be other violations that are not included in these numbers.

An ethical dilemma is considered as a problem that a person experiences in choosing and making decisions among different options. In other words, it is having difficulty while a person is making a choice among possible options and deciding which option to choose since a person has to consider many factors when making a choice. Teachers might often be unaware of the impact the consequences of their actions in light of ethical principles. Research has shown that sometimes some behaviors of teachers who are forced or instructed by higher authorities are considered unethical by themselves. These behaviors can even lead them into ethical dilemmas (Singh & Sabharwal, 2020).

An ethical decision is defined as “a decision that is both legally and morally acceptable to society,” while an unethical decision is considered “illegal or morally unacceptable to society” (Selart & Johansen, 2011). Ethical decision-making of an individual occurs by systematically analyzing the consequences of a behavior according to ethical principles (Özdemir, 2009). In the ethical decision-making process, ethical dilemmas emerge if all of the alternatives available to the individual are reasonable and acceptable (Şallı & Levent, 2019). The ethical dilemma is also defined as the state of indecision experienced by individuals (Tezcan, Güvenç, 2020) regarding which of the two alternatives for solving a problem is more logical (Yücel & Kasapoğlu Tankutay, 2023). In other words, it can be said that ethical dilemmas arise as a result of the conflict of values that people hold tightly to (Kıranlı, 2002). Kidder (1995) stated that there is a difference between an ethical dilemma, which is a situation in which one must decide between two right options, and unethical behavior, which means choosing wrong over right (Butler, 2019).

School administrators and teachers may find themselves faced with some challenging responsibilities and choices in order not to act unethically. School administrators and teachers, who are exposed to more stress of making evaluations in situations where they need to make decisions, must face conflicting interests and find a solution to this situation by balancing various values and expectations during the decision-making process. Some of these decisions involve critical choices that contain value conflicts, and this situation results in ethical dilemmas. According to research, ethical dilemmas frequently take place in the daily life of schools (Erdoğan, 2019).

2.2 Some Ethical Dilemmas Faced by Teachers and School Administrators

In research conducted in the field, it is observed that teachers and administrators face some ethical dilemmas in schools. Some ethical dilemma situations that teachers and school administrators frequently encounter or may experience are summarized below (Lindqvist, Thornberg & Colnerud, 2021; Singh & Sabharwal, 2020):

- The teacher may experience an ethical dilemma when he must decide between maintaining the trust of the student who shares something with him and complying with organizational rules that require him to share some confidential information with the school administration.
- On social media, the interaction between a student and teacher can go beyond the classroom. Some teachers may maintain an informal relationship with students to develop rapport on social media. This could lead to a conflictual situation.
- The teacher may face another dilemma in choosing between loyalty to colleagues and the rules of the school (e.g., protecting students). Many times, teachers see a colleague mistreating or ignoring a student, and it can be difficult to confront that teacher for many reasons. This situation causes the teacher to experience a dilemma.
- Some situations are realized that some teachers have deleted or corrected some answers on students' exam papers or given students high grades even though they do not deserve them. But how correct and fair is this practice for students who study hard and regularly?
- Teachers may ask students to solve some questions in tests or test books, which might help students get good grades in exams but will not prepare them for life professionally. However, it can also be said that this situation is legal although it is unethical and corrupt.
- In schools, it is sometimes seen that students fail classes due to absenteeism. A dilemma for administrators here might be about whether to record the absence of a student who is bright but is absent for some acceptable reasons.
- Parents and the community are important stakeholders who must interact directly or indirectly with a teacher. Today, expectations related to the roles of teachers among parents are very high since when families pay tuition for private schools and consider that their children spend approximately eight hours a day in school, they can expect teachers to care for their children not only academically but beyond that. This might result in the teacher having a dilemma about what he is being paid for.

As a result of the literature review, many studies were found in the world and Türkiye related to the ethical dilemmas faced by teachers. In terms of method, some of these studies (Erdoğan, 2018; Dayanç, 2007; Duran, 2014) are mixed studies; Some of them (Saçlı, 2022; Karakuş, 2022; Öziğgen, 2021; Erdoğan, 2019) are quantitative studies focused on the ethical dilemmas experienced by teachers. It has been figured out that most of the qualitative studies on the ethical dilemmas experienced by teachers were conducted in a phenomenological design (Çelik, 2019; Yücel & Kasapoğlu Tankutay, 2023; Tezcan & Güvenç, 2020; Saban & Çelik, 2020; Yam, 2017; Erdoğan & Sezgin, 2020; Börü, 2020; Altunbulak et al. 2023; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011; Rissanen, Kuusisto, Hanhimäki & Tirri, 2017; Mahony, 2009; Tirri, Husu & Kansanen, 2023; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2009; Tirri, 1999). In the literature review, it was ascertained that the number of qualitative studies conducted in the case study design was less (Şallı & Levent, 2019; Elma & Mercan-Uzun, 2012; Husu, 2002; Husu, 2003).

The purpose of this research is to identify the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience in their relationships with students and the solution strategies they use to overcome these dilemmas. Accordingly, the problem statement of the research was determined as follows:

What are the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience in their relationships with students and their solution strategies?

Depending on the main purpose or problem above, answers to the following questions were searched in the study:

1-What are the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience with students?

2-What kind of solution strategies do teachers apply to overcome the ethical dilemmas they experience?

III. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, information on the research design, participants, data collection instruments, sample case, data collection and data analysis process is given.

3.1 Research Design

In this research, case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The data collected in a qualitative study consists of detailed descriptions of the situation, event, person, interaction, and observed behavior. Examples of this qualitative data include documents, correspondence, records, case histories and direct quotations from people's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts. Detailed descriptions, direct quotes, and case papers of qualitative research are unprocessed data from the empirical world (Patton, 2002). Researchers using the qualitative method benefit from observational and interactional texts that describe routine or problematic moments in individuals' lives, as well as experience, introspection, life history and cultural texts. In addition, considering that these researchers always aim to better understand the current topic and make comprehensive comments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), it was supposed appropriate to conduct this study with a qualitative research design.

A case study is a type of story in which participants are given various problems related to a situation that has been experienced or is likely to be real (Kaya & Kaya, 2013). A case study includes three components: a report based on a real situation, an analysis that helps identify problems, and a critical discussion that helps uncover new perspectives and underlying assumptions (Kish, 2004). Its advantages include helping people learn problem-solving techniques and analysis, encouraging collaboration and collegiality, enabling individuals to understand their own stories, and closing the gap between action and thought (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 1995). This study was conducted in a case study design because choosing a single case can provide meaningful information about the "reality" as much as possible (Vural Akar & Cenkseven Önder, 2005).

3.2 Participants

The participants of this research consist of 12 teachers working in five different public-school types: primary school, secondary school, vocational high school, Anatolian high school, and project school in the 2023-2024 academic year. It was taken into consideration to interview at least two teachers from each type of school. Convenience sampling technique was used while determining the first half of the participants. Convenience sampling relies entirely on items which are available, quick, and easy to reach. Qualitative researchers are forced to choose easy-to-reach situations when the sample size they use does not allow generalization (Baltacı, 2018). Purposeful random sampling technique was used when determining the second half of the participants. This type of sampling involves the researcher using his expertise to select the sample which suits best the objectives of the research. Although there is a limitation of generalization in the purposeful random sampling technique, it has been determined that the credibility of the results increases significantly (Patton, 1990). This method is frequently used in qualitative research, where the researcher wants to obtain detailed information about a particular phenomenon rather than making statistical inferences (McCombes, 2023).

With the answers to the questions in the semi-structured interview form, firstly, Table 1, which conveys the personal information of the participant teachers, was created.

Table 1 The Personal Information of the Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Disciplinary background	Type of the school	Tenure	Education background	Marital Status
Deniz	Female	Primary school	Primary school	15 yrs.	Master's	Married
Martı	Female	Primary school	Primary school	16 yrs.	Bachelor's	Married
Doğa	Female	Primary school	Primary school	18 yrs.	Bachelor's	Married
Çiçek	Female	Arts	Secondary school	11 yrs.	Master's	Married
Kemal	Male	Maths	Secondary school	22 yrs.	Bachelor's	Married
Light	Female	English	Anatolian high school	22 yrs.	Master's	Married
Kardelen	Female	Maths	Anatolian high school	15 yrs.	Master's	Single
Blue	Female	Geography	Anatolian high school	17 yrs.	PhD	Married
Harezmi	Male	Maths	Project high school	10 yrs.	Bachelor's	Married
Cahil	Male	Turkish literature	Project high school	17 yrs.	Bachelor's	Married
Traveller	Female	English	Vocational high school	5 yrs.	Master's	Single
Newton	Female	Physics	Vocational high school	24 yrs.	Bachelor's	Married

As can be seen from Table 1, twelve teachers were interviewed. Nine of the participants are female and three are male. At least two teachers working in each type of school were interviewed. All teachers work in public schools.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative research describes people's experiences deeply. Data is obtained by asking open-ended questions to find out what people's lives, experiences, and interactions mean to them in their own words and their natural environments. Qualitative findings are difficult to analyze because they are long and detailed, and the responses are not systematic and standardized as in quantitative research. However, open-ended responses allow the researcher to see the phenomenon from the participant's point of view. Since the purpose of finding responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand other people's perspectives beyond the survey categories (Patton, 2002), a semi-structured interview form was used as the data collection tool of this research.

A literature review was conducted before developing the semi-structured interview form. 12 examples of ethical dilemma cases were created by the researcher. Additionally, questions regarding these sample cases have been prepared. The ethical dilemma case samples and prepared questions have been presented to three researchers in the field. Based on the opinions of researchers, a sample case was selected, the questions were changed and a semi-structured interview form containing six personal information questions, a sample case and four basic questions was finalized. After the questions were prepared, a mock interview was made with a teacher, and it was determined that the questions were appropriate for the research.

3.4 Sample Case

Meral teacher, who works at a public school, invigilates an exam during the common exam week. While invigilating an exam, she sees Selim, a student in her class, cheating, and at that moment she makes eye contact with Selim. Since Selim comes from a low-income socio-economic family, he is among the students who were given a scholarship by the parent-teacher association. If Meral teacher takes Selim's exam paper and directs him to the discipline council, the parent-teacher association will cut off his scholarship and Selim will have to leave school because in a similar case in the past, the parent-teacher association cut off the scholarships of students who received disciplinary punishment. Should Meral teacher take Selim's exam paper and start the disciplinary process? Or should she ignore the act of cheating? Why?

3.5 Data Collection

Some of the interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes and were audio-recorded with the permission of the teachers. Interviews with teachers who did not allow audio recording lasted approximately 30 minutes. As required by qualitative research, teachers were given pseudonyms. Additional questions were asked when necessary to enable teachers to detail their answers.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data obtained as a result of the semi-structured interview was examined by content analysis. Content analysis is a technique used to analyze many different materials such as documents, texts, and papers within the framework of certain rules in order to obtain detailed information (Metin & Ünal, 2022). Content analysis is a very useful research technique for researchers who can measure and analyze the meanings and

relationships of certain words, themes or concepts using content analysis (Sallan Gül & Kâhya Nizam, 2021). Content analysis is especially used to analyze direct transcripts of interviews. Because it aims to reach the invisible and subtle elements, not the elements that are noticed at first glance. Pursuing this aim, the researcher carried out an objective second reading by taking objective reading principles into consideration rather than her knowledge, attitudes, intuitions, and values (Metin and Ünal, 2022). At the end of the content analysis, four themes were determined.

IV. FINDINGS

In this research, as a result of the thematic analysis of the findings obtained from the interviews, four themes were created related to the ethical dilemmas that teachers experienced with their students, and the strategies they applied in solving these ethical dilemmas. These themes consist of the titles “teacher behavior against cheating action”, “ethical dilemmas teachers experience with students”, “solution strategies applied by teachers” and “the effect of time on the decisions of teachers”.

4.1 Teacher Behavior Against Cheating Action

In the first question, the participant teachers were given a sample case and asked how they would act if they were in the place of the teacher in the sample case. The answers given by the teachers were collected under three headings. These are initiating disciplinary action, ignoring, and preventing cheating.

Table 2 Teacher Behavior Against Cheating Action

Themes	Participant/Pseudonym
Initiating disciplinary action	Deniz, Kemal, Kardelen, Newton
Ignoring	Blue, Traveller
Preventing cheating	Çiçek, Light, Harezmi, Cahil, Doğa, Martı

According to Table 2, most of the teachers who encountered cheating stated that they would prevent cheating. Four of them stated that they would initiate disciplinary action, and two stated that they would ignore this incident.

4.1.1 Initiating Disciplinary Action

When teachers were asked how they would act in case of cheating actions of students, the reasons for the behavior of four teachers who stated that they would initiate disciplinary action were grouped under two headings: justice and responsibility.

Table 3 Initiating Disciplinary Action

Themes	Participant/Pseudonym
Justice	Deniz, Kardelen
Responsibility	Kemal, Newton, Deniz

According to Table 3, two teachers initiate disciplinary action to ensure justice and three teachers initiate disciplinary action to ensure that the student takes responsibility. Deniz expressed both reasons.

...I do not want any discrimination to occur here, and I also think that we need to provide guidance to this child, that is, to teach him the truth and honesty in behavioral terms. That's why I would make him pay the price. So yes, it will cost him a lot, but he has already taken the risk of cheating. (Deniz)

If it made a significant difference, for instance, he answered 1-2 questions correctly, then I would intervene completely. In other words, I would keep a record about the student. (Kardelen)

...since a high school student chose to follow this path knowing what the consequences would lead to... this is no longer tolerance, this is to abuse good intentions. You do what needs to be done, because yes, the student receives a scholarship, but ultimately this scholarship is given to him with the commitment to be successful. Now the student is not successful and is trying to obtain it through unfair gain. (Kemal)

Examples of teachers' opinions on initiating disciplinary action are given above. Stating that it is necessary to guide the student, Deniz emphasized that both ensuring justice and student's responsibility are important. Kardelen mentioned that she would decide according to the student's cheating style. For example, she stated that she would change the seat of the student who looked at his friend's paper but would initiate disciplinary action if the student had a pre-prepared cheat sheet and the answers to the questions were found on a piece of paper. Kemal said that such a mistake could be tolerated if the student was a middle school student, but the high school student should take responsibility for his behavior. Apart from Kardelen, the other three teachers are married, and it can be said that their marital status does not affect the teachers' decisions. In addition, teachers' disciplinary backgrounds are different, and it can be said that their disciplinary backgrounds

do not affect the decisions they make. The type of school where all four teachers work is different from each other, and it can be said that the type of school where the teachers work does not affect the decisions they make.

4.1.2 Ignoring

When teachers were asked how they would act in case of cheating actions of students, the reasons for the behavior of two teachers who stated that they would ignore cheating were grouped under two headings: giving the student another chance and preventing the student from being harmed.

Table 4 Ignoring

Themes	Participant/Pseudonym
Giving the student another chance	Traveller
Preventing the student from being harmed	Blue

According to Table 4, two teachers say that they will ignore the act of cheating. While one of these teachers aims to give the student another chance, the other aims to prevent the student from being harmed.

...I wouldn't give the child disciplinary punishment; I would talk to him. If he has other problems, I can lead the student to the guidance counselor without telling him about the cheating incident later on. But I wouldn't mention the cheating action. (Blue)

...I would not take the exam paper and initiate the disciplinary process during the exam. I would take my notes not to forget and talk to that student privately later on. (Traveller)

Examples of teachers' views related to ignoring the act of cheating are given above. Both teachers stated that they would not intervene in the incident during the exam. However, they added that after the exam they would thoroughly investigate the reasons why the student attempted to cheat. Traveller also stated that if she thinks that the student has learned from this situation, she can contact the course teacher to give him homework or repeat the exam. Stating that children may not be aware of things at a certain age and may be affected by their environment, Blue added that she would try to support the student. Considering that one of the two teachers is single, and the other is married, it can be said that marital status does not affect their decision. In addition, teachers' disciplinary backgrounds and the types of schools they work in are different, and it can be said that the disciplinary background and the type of school they work in have no effect on the decisions they make.

4.1.3 Preventing Cheating

When teachers were asked how they would act in case of cheating actions of students, the reasons for the behavior of two teachers who stated that they would prevent cheating were grouped under two headings: giving another chance and preventing the student from being harmed.

Table 5 Preventing Cheating

Themes	Participant/Pseudonym
Giving the student another chance	Light, Doğa, Martı
Preventing the student from being harmed	Harezmi, Cahil, Çiçek

According to Table 5, three teachers preferred to prevent cheating to give the student a chance, and the other three teachers preferred to prevent cheating to prevent the student from being harmed.

I would prevent cheating during the exam. Then I would ask him why he did it and make him realize why he shouldn't have done it. I think there is goodness in every person's soul... It is easy to lose a person but difficult to win. (Cahil)

...in fact, I don't ignore it... The child knows this, he knows that I noticed... so I give the child the sign that I noticed him... I wait by his side, it's not ignoring him, I'm just preventing him from being expelled from school. (Çiçek)

I am generally in favor of preventing a negative behavior before it occurs... If I sense that a student tends to cheat while I am invigilating an exam, they usually reveal it through facial expressions and body language. I either stand next to him, for example, I change his position, I try to take precautions before the student cheats by changing the direction of his paper... I would like to give him a chance. I don't want to take away the opportunities he has. (Light)

...I would first meet with the student and prevent him from cheating. I would prevent him from going on cheating, to prevent him from further damage. (Harezmi)

Examples of teachers' views on preventing cheating are given above. Teachers who try to prevent cheating in order to give the student a chance or to prevent the student from being harmed prioritize the

student's goodness. Cahil stated that he would initiate disciplinary action for cheating in his first years as a teacher, but now that he knows the students better with years of experience and that one should not be too strict for incidents that can be compensated. Çiçek mentioned that by waiting over the student during the exam, she would prevent the student from being harmed further. Light emphasized that she would try to give the student a chance by changing the location or direction of the paper if the student showed signs of cheating. Martı said that if she believed that the student attempted to cheat just once, she would prevent him from cheating with eye contact and small warnings. All the teachers who say they will prevent cheating are married and have children. For this reason, it can be thought that their marital status and having children were effective in their decision. In addition, teachers' disciplinary backgrounds and the types of schools they work in are different, and it can be said that the disciplinary background and the type of school they work in have no effect on the decisions they make.

4.2 Ethical Dilemmas Teachers Experience with Students

Participants were asked to give examples of ethical dilemmas they experienced with students throughout their careers. Accordingly, it has been determined that the ethical dilemmas which teachers experience with their students mostly arise from the act of cheating.

Table 6 Ethical Dilemmas Teachers Experience with Students

Themes	Participant/Pseudonym
Cheating	Cahil, Harezmi, Doğa
Student who doesn't do his homework	Deniz
Giving a passing grade to a student who does not present a portfolio	Çiçek
Not allowing a student who does not have a petition or medical report to have a make-up exam	Kardelen
Students complaining about each other	Kemal
Protecting student privacy	Martı
Student accusing another teacher of violence	Traveller
Lack of dilemma or not remembering such an event	Blue, Light, Newton

According to Table 6, the most common ethical dilemma is related to the act of cheating. Three teachers stated that they had never experienced an ethical dilemma with their students or did not remember such an event.

...I had a student, Demir. This child was a lazy student. He was naughty. At first, I couldn't get along with this child either, but then, after establishing a bond, I did my best to save the child... He was telling me everything. And he didn't cause any problems in my class. This is how it proceeds with the student after establishing the bond. Then he came to me with his friend. He said, "My teacher, the teacher named Ahmet slapped me. And to slap me, he chose a place where there was no camera." I listened to the incident... I observed Ahmet teacher. The students were afraid of Ahmet teacher. This didn't seem very normal to me. I went to the guidance counselor. "First... I didn't see it... but that student told me about it, and I trust that student.", I said. "My teacher, it would be better if you tell this to the principal." he said. So, I told the principal. This is my colleague, and I must support him. I explained that I did not see or witness it... "I'm glad you explained it. There were other complaints about that teacher," the principal said. Since the child I am talking about is a child who really has discipline problems, it is a little difficult for the other party to believe you. Even I thought about this. I wondered if the child is telling the truth, I said to myself. When I was sure, I explained the incident. They did not take official action, but they said that they would talk to him. Here I had a dilemma in my mind as to whether I should go and talk to the teacher first. But now, frankly, it didn't seem right to me to talk to the teacher, because after all, we are in the same teachers' room, looking at each other face to face. There could be a problem. That's why I told them what I knew. They probably also listened to the students later on. And... when the principal said that I had done the right thing and they had received this complaint from students in other classes, too. I mean, I didn't regret it at all. (Traveller)

At a school where I worked, the principal insisted on telling us that students at school frequently have make-up exams after not having the common exam, so they should not be allowed to have make-up exams without a medical report or family petition. Otherwise, students are taking the advantage of it a lot, he said... So, in a make-up exam, I confirmed the students who did not have the exam from the e-school or from the deputy principal. I informed the children beforehand that I would not allow them to the exam if there was no medical report or petition from the parents. After confirming, I allowed the children to the exam. In fact, one of my students had nothing, no petition or anything like that, so I did not let him have the make-up exam. But after the exam had been finished, while reading the papers, I noticed that some of my colleagues did not apply this decision and let some students from their own classes have the make-up exam, even though they did not have any medical reports or petitions. I had a dilemma at this point. So, I had such a dilemma wondering whether I

had been unfair to my student, but the reason why I did not allow my student was actually this: Since we, as a school, made such a decision in the council. If I let him have the make-up exam, I would actually be unfair to other children... I didn't allow this child to ensure equality and fairness here, but it seems that nobody thought the same way... They thought that it was for the benefit of the students. That's when I thought I was doing an injustice to the child. I'm sorry about this... (Kardelen)

...there were students from whom I requested the portfolio, and there were some who did not bring it... For example, the school administration said, "Teacher, give good grades to the students." I experienced such a situation. I thought about that too, whether they should be good grades or not, but in the end, the ministry of education does not let them fail. Give as bad marks as you want, but the ministry won't let them fail. (Çiçek)

...now, since we are primary schools, we are very much in touch with families... we know their inner world, that is, their family environment, at least superficially... and their family problems... But I can say that I try to help financially or morally in situations that develop involuntarily... I have that dilemma. Probably there is a problem with my student or his side. In other words, the most fair and correct way is to decide, but of course, without violating justice. In a way that will not be perceived by other students... (Martı)

...I've experienced it, I don't remember anything very clearly right now, but I've probably been in a similar or different dilemma, but I'm a bit strict. I mean, since I'm not a person of making emotional compromises, I don't act too emotionally, I act realistically. In other words, I act realistically because an action such as ignoring will have a negative impact on the child and his life. (Newton)

...I have never been in a dilemma, that is, I have never come across a student who I get to know so deeply and who cheat. Even if I saw that way, I wouldn't say it. (Blue)

Samples of teachers' opinions related to ethical dilemmas they experience with students are given above. Traveller faced a dilemma in believing his student's story of another teacher's violent behavior. This teacher first made observations in the teacher's room and in the school environment and concluded that the student was telling the truth. Kardelen experienced an ethical dilemma because she did not allow a student who did not have a medical report or petition to have the makeup exam. She emphasized that she had to confirm with the teachers before. Çiçek experiences an ethical dilemma when she must give a good mark to a student who does not show a portfolio. Martı, on the other hand, stated that since she is a class teacher, she knows all kinds of financial and moral family problems of her students and supports families, when necessary, but she has an ethical dilemma in ensuring justice and confidentiality. Although Newton could not remember an ethical dilemma she experienced, she stated that since she did not have an emotional personality, she acted more objectively and solved ethical dilemmas realistically without being influenced by her emotions. Blue said that she has never had an ethical dilemma and added that there would be no ethical dilemma when she knows the student so closely.

4.3 Solution Strategies Applied by Teachers

Participants were asked what solution strategies they used to overcome ethical dilemmas they experienced with students. The solution strategies applied by teachers when they have ethical dilemmas are grouped under nine headings such as communicating with the student, meeting with the guidance counselor, meeting with the school administration, meeting with the teachers, meeting with the family, investigating the reason for the incident, giving a chance, observation and ensuring equality.

Table 7 Solution Strategies Applied by Teachers

Themes	Participant/Pseudonym
Communicating with the student	Blue, Cahil, Deniz, Light, Traveller, Çiçek, Kemal, Martı, Harezmi, Newton, Doğa, Kardelen
Meeting with the guidance counselor	Blue, Deniz, Doğa, Harezmi, Martı, Traveller
Meeting with the school administration	Deniz, Traveller
Meeting with the teachers	Deniz, Kardelen, Newton, Traveller
Meeting with the family	Deniz, Martı
Investigating the reason for the incident (Analysis)	Deniz, Kemal, Newton, Traveller
Giving a chance	Light
Observation	Traveller
Ensuring equality	Doğa

According to Table 7, the first strategy that all teachers use is communicating with the students. The second strategy is to meet with the guidance counsellor.

Understand him, go on communicating with him and do not judge him. But if it continues in spite of all this, take the precaution. There's nothing left to do there anymore. (Cahil)

...first, I try to analyze the situation which occurs, that is, before going to that decision-making process, I take some emotions, some logic, some truths into consideration. And I analyze what should be done and what should not be done. Then, if it is something I can resolve with the family, I make sure to meet with the family. I consult the guidance department and the school administration if it is necessary. In case of indecision, I always exchange ideas with my colleagues, that is, I prefer to consult with people whose knowledge I am sure of and decide accordingly. (Deniz)

...I would definitely consult with other colleagues with whom I organize the exam at that moment. At that time, I thought that everyone would comply with the decision, but I saw and experienced that they did not. In a similar situation, I will consult with colleagues during the exam to see if they allow students to the make-up exam and I will show tolerance to my students in this regard... (Kardelen)

But has anyone cheated in normal exams? Of course, it happened. When I notice it, I intervene. If I give more points to one of them, I ensure equality by giving five points to all of them. (Doğa)

...my priority is to take precautions before situations which will leave me in a dilemma take place, but of course, there may be unforeseen situations. My perspective is to talk to each other, gain the student over, and give the student a chance. (Light)

Examples of teachers' views on the solution strategies they use in ethical dilemmas they experience with students are given above. Cahil emphasized the importance of establishing human connections with students. He also added that one should never give up the connection with them and that communication should be continuous, not once. Deniz stated that after investigating the reason for the incident, she tried to make the best decision by meeting with the family, guidance counsellor, school administration and other teachers. Kardelen, who experienced that her colleagues did not comply with the decision taken by the teachers' council, stated that she would show tolerance to her students in their make-up exams after talking to other teachers. Doğa, on the other hand, mentioned that she gave five points more to other students to ensure equality in the case of cheating, a situation in which she could not intervene. Light's priority is to prevent ethical dilemma situations at the beginning. However, in cases where she cannot prevent, she prefers to give the student a chance.

4.4 The Effect of Time on the Decisions of Teachers

When the participants were asked whether the decisions they made while solving ethical dilemmas with their students would change if they encountered the same dilemma later, most of the teachers stated that they would make the same decision again. However, if they encountered cheating, four teachers who ignored the first time or tried to prevent the student from cheating stated that they would initiate disciplinary action if they witnessed the same student cheating again.

Table 8 The Effect of Time on the Decisions of Teachers

Themes	The effect of time	Participant/Pseudonym
Initiating disciplinary action	The same decision	Deniz, Kemal, Newton, Kardelen
Ignoring	The same decision	Traveller
Ignoring	Initiating disciplinary action in case of the same student	Blue
Preventing cheating	The same decision	Çiçek, Cahil
Preventing cheating	Initiating disciplinary action in case of the same student	Light, Harezmi, Doğa, Martı

According to Table 8, if 7 teachers encounter an ethical dilemma such as cheating again later on, they will make the same decision they made in the past.

...my decision would be the same, it would never change... (Newton)

The child needs to realize that he is abusing other people's rights here. I would say it is unimportant if it only harms you or if it only benefits you, but this common test is not done to make you feel different and special from others. Everyone is in the same condition. I think he should take responsibility here... Yes, I would do the same thing again. (Kardelen)

...so what I will pay attention to here is whether this student is aware of the consequences of his behavior due to his age or not. If he is aware, I will do what needs to be done... (Kemal)

If, after a while, I saw the same student cheating again in another exam, then I would not forgive him because I felt that this would become a habit and I would want to show him that life would not be that easy for him anymore, that is, I would want him to learn something by experiencing it. (Deniz)

Examples of the opinions of the teachers, who initiate disciplinary action in case of cheating, related to the decisions they will take if they encounter the same action again are given above. Newton, Kardelen, Kemal and Deniz stated that their decision would remain the same and that they would initiate disciplinary action again. Kardelen emphasizes that the student should take responsibility and must not think of himself as special. Kemal questions whether the student is aware of the consequences of his actions due to his age and tells that he will start the disciplinary process again if the student is a high school student. Deniz, on the other hand, mentioned that the student should learn that life is not easy and informed that she would initiate disciplinary action against the student again when she encounters the same situation. In addition, related to the ethical dilemma she experienced, and her student did not do homework, Deniz explained that she would make the same decision again and that her tone of voice would be low again towards this student who had done his homework regularly in the past.

...if I saw the same student cheating again, then I would start the disciplinary process. Yes, I gave him a chance first. But I saw that the child was not honest, even though we talked about it... I would not forgive him the second time; my decision is the last. (Blue)

...yes, I would make the same decision. I'd do the same thing. Because my school does not have a good environment in terms of socio-economic status, the situation of the families is not good. These students actually work after school and contribute to their families. If I didn't protect their rights, I would feel guilty. (Traveller)

The opinions of Blue and Traveller on the decision they would make if they encountered the same dilemma again are given above. They both ignored the cheating student at first. However, when Blue encountered it for the second time, she stated that if it was the same student, she would initiate disciplinary action because she doubted the student's honesty. Traveller, on the other hand, said that she would make the same decision again in order to protect the rights of the students since the school she works in is a school attended by students from families with low socio-economic status. In the ethical dilemma she experienced, in which a teacher committed violence against a student, Traveller stated that she would make the same decision and inform the guidance department and school administration about the situation.

...Yes, I would make (the same decision). Because every day I get to know people's different stories more closely. I find them special. We communicate with hundreds of young people every year. My connection with students gets strong every day. Also, I don't think setting rigid rules is the solution. After all, it is a rule that cheating is prohibited, but the economic situation and punishment directly concern the person. We must care about people before rules. I don't start a disciplinary process unless I feel stuck. I don't get there easily either. (Cahil)

...can be ignored in the first case. You may not report this to the administration in the first case, but you will inform the child that you know. In the second case, maybe action can be taken, but if the child is really going to be expelled from school when his scholarship is cut off, that decision should not cost the child's life. I think the second time (I would make the same decision). Think of it like this: If you make everyone equal and every child equally incapable of cheating, and if you expel them (from school) in any way, I say okay, expel this one, too. (Is there) equality in education? Do you treat everyone the same? Can you provide this in Turkish standards? If you cannot provide it, you should not violate that child's rights. (Çiçek)

Then, I would act within the framework of the rules thinking that he is not behaving in an expected way because I warned him before. (Light)
If I encounter it for the second time, I will lead to a higher authority. That means that I couldn't prevent it. (Harezmi)

...I document it at that moment. It will be very different now, which is a sign that he is taking a risk for something. So he's taking the risk. I wouldn't hesitate. (Doğa)

If it's the first time, I ignore it the first time. But if the one who repeats it a lot, risks everything to get the scholarship and if he does it with self-confidence saying, "I cheat so that my scholarship continues.", this should be reported to the administration. A student who deserves it should receive the scholarship. That child should not receive it. I will behave in the same way as I just explained. (Martı)

Çiçek, Cahil, Light, Harezmi, Doğa and Martı, who previously tried to prevent the student from cheating, gave their opinions on the decision they would make if they encountered the same action again. Çiçek and Cahil stated that they would make the same decision again and prevent the student from cheating. Cahil emphasized caring about people, not rules. Çiçek also mentioned the importance of making students unable to cheat. Light, Harezmi, Doğa and Martı said that they would initiate disciplinary action if the cheating student was the same student. Light, Harezmi and Doğa explained that they would initiate disciplinary action directly if the same student committed cheating. Martı emphasized that the situation of being in an ethical dilemma was more frequent in the first years of the profession, but as he gained experience, the frequency of being in an

ethical dilemma decreased. He also added that the scholarship should be received by those who deserve it, not by a student who constantly cheats.

V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, 12 teachers working in public schools were interviewed and the ethical dilemmas that teachers experienced in their relationships with students and the solution strategies they applied to overcome these dilemmas were investigated. At the end of the study, four themes were identified: “teacher behavior against cheating action”, “ethical dilemmas teachers experience with students”, “solution strategies applied by teachers” and “the effect of time on the decisions of teachers”.

Under the title of “Teacher behavior against cheating action”, the titles “initiating disciplinary action”, “ignoring” and “preventing cheating” came to the forefront. The results of this study do not coincide with the results of the research of Yücel and Kasapoğlu Tankutay (2022) and Altunbulak et al. (2023). Yücel and Kasapoğlu Tankutay (2022) interviewed 21 teachers and identified the dilemmas experienced by teachers. In the study mentioned, none of the 21 teachers ever mentioned the act of cheating in the ethical dilemmas they experienced with students. Altunbulak et al. (2023) interviewed five administrators and five teachers and asked them about the ethical dilemmas they experienced. None of the ethical dilemma examples given are related to the act of cheating. The results of this study coincide with the results of the research of Tirri (1999) and Campbell (2003). In Tirri's (1999) study, the teachers interviewed mentioned some students' cheating as an example of the ethical dilemma they experienced. In Campbell's (2003) case study, it is suggested that a decision should be made together with other teachers, not alone, as a solution strategy in the ethical dilemma of a student who wanted to receive a scholarship and who was found to have plagiarized.

Under the heading of “ethical dilemmas teachers experience with students”, it has been determined that teachers experience ethical dilemmas related to issues such as “cheating”, “student who does not do his homework”, “giving a passing grade to a student who does not present a portfolio”, “not allowing a student who does not have a petition or medical report to have a make-up exam”, “students complaining about each other”, “protecting student privacy” and “student accusing another teacher of violence”. It has been figured out that the most common dilemma is related to the act of “cheating”.

In the literature research, the results of this research do not coincide with the results of Elma and Mercan-Uzun's (2012) study which focused on solution strategies of preschool teachers to overcome the professional ethical dilemmas they experience. In Elma and Mercan-Uzun's study, preschool teachers stated that they encountered dilemmas on issues such as “accepting valuable gifts from parents”, “how to treat a colleague who neglects his duties” and “treating the students suffering from violence in the family”. The reason for the different results may be due to the different school levels and school types. In the study conducted by Şallı and Levent (2019), it has been determined that teachers encounter ethical dilemmas such as “violence against a student - protecting a close friend, a colleague who neglects his duties - suffering students, financial aid to the school - request for an increase in grades, death of a family member - the student's educational life, privacy - ethical codes and privacy - financial aid.” The ethical dilemmas encountered in this study related to issues such as giving a passing grade to a student who does not present a portfolio, protecting the student's privacy, and student accusing another teacher of violence according to the results of Şallı and Levent's (2019) study. In Bucholz, Keller, and Brady's (2007) study on the ethical dilemmas experienced by teachers, the ethical dilemma of a teacher who was asked by the school administration to raise his grades was given. The same ethical dilemma was expressed by a teacher in this study. In the study of Bucholz, Keller and Brady, as a solution strategy for this ethical dilemma, it was suggested that teachers comply with the third ethical code of the standards published by the US National Education Association (NEA) for educators in 1975. This ethical code states that the results regarding the student's academic development should not be distorted by the teacher. In addition, the other strategy that the teacher should implement in the study is to remind the school principal, who is unaware of the third code. Another ethical dilemma expressed in this study is protecting the student's privacy. In Yam's (2017) study with counselors, more than half of the counselors interviewed stated that they experienced ethical dilemmas related to privacy. Tirri (1999) also stated that the ethical dilemma experienced by the two teachers he interviewed was about protecting the student's private life.

In this study, the solution strategies which teachers apply in case of ethical dilemmas are grouped under the headings of “communicating with the student, meeting with the guidance counselor, meeting with the school administration, meeting with the teachers, meeting with the family, investigating the reason of the incident, giving a chance, observation and ensuring equality”. The results of this research under the headings of “meeting with other teachers and the school administration” coincide with the research results of Şallı and Levent (2019). In Şallı and Levent's study, teachers stated that they consulted their colleagues and the school administration during the decision-making process related to the ethical dilemmas they experienced. However, while four out of twelve teachers in this study consulted their colleagues, in Şallı and Levent's study, nine out of ten teachers preferred to consult their colleagues. Additionally, in this study, two out of twelve teachers consulted the school administration, while in Şallı and Levent's study, one out of ten teachers preferred to consult the school

administration. In this study, the most used solution strategy in ethical dilemmas with students is talking to the student. However, the most used strategy in Şallı and Levent's study is to consult with colleagues. In Elma and Mercan-Uzun's (2012) study, preschool teachers who encountered an ethical dilemma mentioned that they would consult the guidance counselor and the school administration. In Husu's (2003) study, in which he expressed the ethical dilemmas experienced at school with smoking students and teachers and interviewed a teacher, the participant teacher stated that he first met with the teachers to prevent students from smoking. In Husu's (2002) case study with preschool and primary school teachers, teachers meet with their colleagues and students' parents to overcome ethical dilemmas. In the study conducted by Saban and Çelik (2020), a classroom teacher stated that in the sample case, he expressed, he met with the student's family to overcome the ethical dilemma he experienced with the student. In this study, two teachers also said that they would meet with the student's family to overcome an ethical dilemma. The counselors interviewed in Yam's (2017) study also reported that they applied strategies such as consulting the school administration, colleagues and experts and meeting with the student's parents when they encountered an ethical dilemma.

Under the title of the effect of time on the decision of teachers, teachers were asked whether they would make the same decision if they experienced the same ethical dilemma again later on. According to the results of this study, most of the teachers stated that they would make the same decision again when they had the same ethical dilemma. In Şallı and Levent's (2019) study, the effect of time on the decisions of teachers was questioned. However, in the study, only two teachers stated that they would make the same decision again, and the answer of the other eight teachers was not given.

As a result, in this study, the ethical dilemmas that teachers experience with their students and the solution strategies they apply are examined. Solution strategies used by teachers to overcome ethical dilemmas were searched through a case study. Half of the teachers who encountered cheating action decided to prevent the student from cheating. It has been determined that teachers act according to their own personal views, thoughts, and justice perceptions, not according to certain ethical codes while making decisions. The most common ethical dilemma mentioned by teachers is related to the act of cheating. Teachers experience some ethical problems with students throughout their professional lives, but they do not name these problems as ethical dilemmas. Since the teachers' tenure is five years or more, none of them have taken the "Morality and Ethics in Education" course related to professional ethics in education, which was added to the bachelor's programs in 2018-2019. While all the teachers preferred the strategy of communicating with the student to overcome the ethical dilemma they experienced with the student, the fact that only two teachers stated that they would meet with the school administration can be interpreted as a possible trust problem between the school administration and teachers. In addition, it can be thought that because teachers want to be sure that the decision, they make is the right one, they do not stick to one strategy but apply a wide variety of strategies while overcoming the ethical dilemmas they experience with students. Moreover, more than half of the teachers stated that they would make the same decision if they encountered a similar situation again in the future, which may be due to the fact that they are sure that the decision they made is correct. It has been concluded that teachers' marital status, disciplinary background, type of school they work, and tenure have no effect on the decisions they make.

According to the results of the research, the following suggestions can be made:

1. Ethical codes can be determined for schools and training can be organized for educators on topics such as ethical awareness and conflict resolution. Accordingly, a common language and discourse related to ethical problems that may occur at school and solution strategies can be created.
2. Units where teachers can determine solution strategies for ethical dilemmas experienced at school and consult in practice can be established.
3. As they are the ones who are consulted related to ethical problems which may occur at school, training can be organized for school administrators to provide them with competence and awareness on issues such as ethics in education, ethics in school management, ethical dilemmas and conflict resolution at school.
4. The ethical dilemmas that teachers experience with other stakeholders of the school, such as parents, administrators and colleagues, can be examined in detail by researchers using different methods at different school levels and with different sample groups.

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