

Investigation into the Perception of Physical Education Teachers on the Ethical Climate in their Workplace

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ABSTRACT The objective of this present study is to find the perception of physical education and sports teachers serving under the Ministry of Education in various provinces on the ethical climate in their workplace. The findings show that the physical education teachers perceived the behaviors of the staff working in their institutions in terms of prioritizing the institutional interests to be at the level of 'Undecided', and that there are significant differences, at the dimension of institutional interests which exist between the teachers in the province of Kayseri, and the ones in the provinces of Usak and Denizli. From this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers in Kayseri are considerably higher when compared to those in Usak and Denizli. It could be said that the teachers taking part in the study have positive view of the practices going on in the institutions, that they work in respect to laws, rules and policies; and that they have a positive perception of ethical climate in this regard.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means 'character' (Simsek et al. 2011; Aydin 2006). The concept of ethical climate is a part of the general organizational climate which helps one in getting to know the ethical character of organizations (Demir and Karakus 2015; Yener et al. 2012; Elci and Alphan 2009; Martin and Cullen 2006). While the word 'climate' on its own, is derived from a Greek word meaning 'slope' or 'inclination'. It is also used to refer to physical features such as heat, pressure and temperature. When used in business administration literature, climate means the way the members of the enterprise consider the internal and external environment of the organization (Bute 2011).

Today, the increase in the ethical problems in workplaces bring about new and different points of view regarding the ethical problems. In order to be able to ensure an effective and just management in organizations, it has become a must for managers to use ethical features. This

requirement has necessitated the organization of ethical climate to have a number of variables such as: the commitment of the employees to the organization, their organizational citizenship behaviors, their job satisfaction and their organizational fairness perceptions (Akbas 2010). Organizational ethics is a subset of the general set of work climate. The ethical climate structure draws the limits of a group of normative climates reflecting the organizational practices with their moral consequences (Demirdag and Ekmekcioglu 2015).

Ethical climate does not describe the ethical standards or moral development level of individuals, but rather, as is the case for other work climates, it represents the components in the environment of the individual that are perceived by the own members of the organization (Cullen et al. 2003). Therefore, ethical climate helps employees to evaluate the existing problems and to consider the available alternatives, which will guide them when deciding on the acceptable and unacceptable behaviors (Barnett and Schubert 2002). Ethical climate emphasizes the set of shared thoughts which concern how the behaviors of the employees of organizations would be correct, and how problems should be addressed and solved in relation to issues of moral dilemmas. In addition, ethical climate also directs the employees concerning which behav-

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iors are appropriate and supported (Victor and Cullen 1988; Treviño et al. 1998; Demirtas 2014).

Ethical climate shows which criteria should be taken into consideration when defining, evaluating and solving the ethical problems and it forms a structure showing the way to the management in the decision making process (Dogan and Kilic 2014; Suar and Khuntia 2004; Weber and Seger 2002). Conceptually, ethical climate is a type of organizational working climate. Studies on organizational behaviors conducted in the disciplines of sociology and applied psychology have focused on organizational work climates (Akkoc 2012; Wimbush and Shepard 1994). The perceptions of the employees on the ethical climate of the organization are affected by the policies, procedures and the award system of the organization, as well as by the formal or informal systems used in the organization (Dogan and Kilic 2014). Mahal (2009), Tyagi (1982) and Weber and Seger (2002) stated that ethical climate increases the motivation of employees. Based on this argument, it could be said that teachers' motivation can also increase depending on the perceived ethical climate of the environment (Demir and Karakus 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Analysis

The findings obtained in this study were evaluated by using the statistical methods included in SPSS 13.0 software package. In the section where the findings of the study are presented and evaluated, frequency distributions were used concerning the demographical characteristics of the participants in the study; the means and standard deviations of the questions were employed concerning their ethical climate perceptions; the reliability analysis was conducted in order to determine whether the data is in accordance with the statistical analysis; the factor analysis was employed in order to determine the number of the dimensions of the scale; the Independent Samples t- test was conducted in order to find out whether there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of the variables such as the gender, marital status, type of task and the status in terms of taking exercise; and the One-Way ANOVA test was conducted in order to determine whether there

was a significant difference between more than two groups.

Sample and Sampling

The study which is a diagnostic one, was carried out by applying a survey on 93 physical education and sports teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Usak Provincial Directorate of Education, on 116 physical education and sports teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Kayseri Provincial Directorate of Education, and on 61 physical education and sports teachers working in public schools affiliated to the Denizli Provincial Directorate of Education. In the first section of the questionnaire applied within the scope of the survey, questions such as whether the participating teachers took exercise, how much they read, how they spend their free times, and how they defined themselves were included as well as the questions comprising demographical information such as their age, gender, marital status, working experience, type of duty, level of education and the place of residence.

Reliability Analysis

By means of the reliability analysis of the ethical climate scale comprising 26 questions, its Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.838. Since the lowest reliability value for the studies conducted in social sciences is accepted to be 0.70, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.838 could be said to be a good result in terms of the internal consistency of the scale used in the present study.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
0.838	0.844	26

Data Collection

In the present study, the ethical climate scale developed by Cullen et al. (2003) was used. The original version of the scale had nine dimensions; however, it has been compacted into five dimensions in the studies conducted by Victor and Cullen (1988), Wimbush and Shepart (1994),

Peterson (2002), Vardi (2011) and Ogut and Kaplan (2011). The adaptation to Turkish of the expressions used in the scale was carried out by means of the translation – back translation method, by getting help from a linguist. To that end, the expressions in the scale were translated by the author into Turkish (Yurdakul 2013). Since the lowest value acceptable for the social sciences has been envisaged to be 0.70, it could be said that the Cronbach’s Alpha value which is obtained, is quite a good result in terms of the internal consistency of the scale (Nunally 1978).

RESULTS

It can be seen in Table 1 that the replies given by the participants to the questions about the ‘laws, rules and policies’ dimension of the ethical climate perception are similar. With a general mean value of $x=3.90$, the replies received for the entries related to the dimension of ‘laws, rules and policies’ fell into the ‘Agree’ interval of the 5-point Likert scale. Accordingly, it can be said that the teachers participating in the survey had positive view on the practices in the

institution they worked in, concerning the laws, rules and policies and had a positive ethical climate perception in this regard (Table 2).

When the general mean concerning the ‘Individual interest’ dimension of the ethical climate perception was considered, it was found to have fallen into the ‘Undecided’ interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $x=2.83$. Accordingly, the physical education teachers perceived the behaviors of the staff working in their institution with regards to ‘prioritizing their individual interests’ to be at the level of ‘Undecided’. The mean for the participants who responded with ‘Disagree’ to the expression: “*In our institution, there is no place for the own moral and ethical values of the employees*”, which is one of the four expression concerning this dimension, was found to be $x=2.478$ (Table 3).

It was found that there was a significant difference between the teachers in the province of Usak and those in the province of Kayseri in the dimension of ‘Laws, rules and policies’. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers working in the province of Kayseri is

Table 2: The results concerning the ‘laws, rules and policies’ dimension of physical education teachers

<i>Laws, rules and policies</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
5. Our institution always expect us to do what is correct for the customers and the public.	270	3.922	1.023
7. In our institution, everyone is primarily expected to work in an efficient way.	270	4.007	1.038
8. All employees are expected primarily to comply with the laws and occupational standards.	270	4.070	0.979
9. In our institution, laws and occupational standards constitute the primary criteria in all decisions and practices.	270	3.759	1.055
10. The employees working in our institution are expected to strictly comply with the laws and occupational standards.	270	3.881	1.042
11. The prior criterion in our institution is whether decisions are in accordance with the relevant laws.	270	3.807	1.056
12. In our institution, it is of utmost importance to comply with the institutional rules and procedures.	270	3.804	1.054
13. All employees are expected to be loyal to comply with the rules and procedures of the institution	270	3.919	0.909
Mean		3.90	1.02

Table 3: The results concerning the ‘individual interest’ dimension of physical education teachers

<i>Individual interest</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
16. The employees of our institution value their own interests above anything.	270	2.870	1.186
17. The employees of our institution mostly consider only their own interests.	270	3.019	1.286
18. In our institution, there is no room for the employees’ own moral and ethical values.	270	2.478	1.130
19. The employees are expected to do anything for the interest of the institution without thinking about the consequences.	270	2.967	0.977
Mean		2.83	1.14

significantly higher when compared to those working in Usak ($p < 0.05$). As for the dimension of 'Acting out of concern for others', again, a significant difference was found between the teachers in Usak and those in Kayseri in this dimension as well, while the ethical climate perception of the teachers in Kayseri is significantly higher than those of the teachers in the province of Usak ($p < 0.05$). At the dimension of 'Organizational interests', significant differences were found between the teachers in the province of Kayseri and those in the provinces of Usak and Denizli. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers in the province of Kayseri is significantly higher than those in the provinces of Usak and Denizli ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4).

In the dimension of 'Laws, rules and policies', a significant difference was found between the teachers living in city centers and those living in metropolis. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers living in metropolises was found to be significantly higher than those of the teachers living in city centers ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

In the dimension of 'Laws, rules and policies', a significant difference was found between

the teachers who defined themselves as energetic and the ones who described themselves as irritable and short-tempered. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as energetic was found to be significantly higher when compared to those who defined themselves as irritable and short-tempered ($p < 0.05$). In the dimension of 'Acting out of concern for others', a significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as energetic, and the ones who defined themselves as quiet and calm and as irritable and short-tempered. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as energetic was found to be significantly higher when compared to those of them who defined themselves as quiet and calm and as irritable and short-tempered ($p < 0.05$). In the dimension of 'Individual interest', a significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as quiet and calm and the ones who defined themselves as energetic. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as quiet and calm was found to be significantly higher when compared to those of the teachers who defined themselves

Table 4: The Tukey Test for the ethical climate perception of physical education teachers by the province they live in

Ethical climate dimensions	Tukey HSD		Difference between the means	P
	(I) Sehir	(J) Sehir		
1- Laws, Rules and Policies	Usak	Kayseri	-0.372	0.001
		Denizli	-0.190	0.282
2- Acting Out of Concern for Others	Usak	Kayseri	-0.373	0.016
		Denizli	-0.170	0.537
5- Organizational Interest	Kayseri	Usak	0.227	0.031
		Denizli	0.328	0.004

$P < 0.05$ means a significant difference.

Table 5: The Tukey Test for the ethical climate perception of physical education teachers by the type of the residential area they live in

Ethical climate dimensions	Tukey HSD		Difference between the means	P
	(I) Sehir	(J) Sehir		
1- Laws, Rules and Policies	Ýl	Village	0.030	1.000
		Small Town	-0.329	0.756
		District	-0.001	1.000
		Metropolis	-0.344	0.006

$P < 0.05$ means a significant difference.

as energetic ($p < 0.05$). In the dimension of ‘Organizational interests’, a significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as sociable and extroverted and the ones who defined themselves as energetic. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as energetic was found to be significantly higher than those who defined themselves as sociable and extroverted ($p < 0.05$) (Table 6).

DISCUSSION

The study conducted by Demir and Karakus (2015) produced findings which suggested that the positive perceptions concerning the ethical climate affects the organizational trust of the employees in a positive way. Other studies have also shown that the ethical climate have quite a strong and positive effect on the organizational trust of the employees. These results coincide with the results of the similar studies in the literature as well (Donertas 2008; Asunakutlu 2002; Topaloglu 2010; Bute 2011). The general mean of the responds given to the entries related to the dimension of ‘Laws, rules and policies,’ falls into the ‘Agree’ interval of the 5-point Likert scale with a value of $\bar{x} = 3.90$. Accordingly, it can be said that the teachers who participated in the survey had positive view of the practices in the institutions they worked with, in terms of laws, rules and policies and that they also had positive ethical climate perception in this regard. The ethical climate type of ‘Individual interest’ ap-

pears to have a negative effect on the level of the perceived organizational ethical climate level (Dogan and Kilic 2014). The physical education teachers perceived the behaviors of the staff working in their institution with regards to ‘prioritizing their own interests’ at the level of ‘Undecided’. The mean for the participants who responded with ‘Disagree’ to the expression “*In our institution, there is no place for the own moral and ethical values of the employees*”, which is one of the four expression concerning this dimension, was found to be $\bar{x} = 2.478$. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers working in the province of Kayseri is significantly higher when compared to those working in Usak ($p < 0.05$). As for the dimension of ‘Acting out of concern for others’, again, a significant difference was found between the teachers in Usak and those in Kayseri in this dimension as well. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers in Kayseri is significantly higher than those of the teachers in the province of Usak ($p < 0.05$). At the dimension of ‘Organizational interests’, significant differences were found between the teachers in the province of Kayseri and those in the provinces of Usak and Denizli. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers in the province of Kayseri is significantly higher than those of them in the provinces of Usak and Denizli. A significant difference was found between the teachers living in city centers and those living in metropolises as well. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers

Table 6: The Tukey Test for the ethical climate perception of physical education teachers by their self-definition

Ethical climate dimensions	Tukey HSD		Difference between the means	P
	(I) Sehir	(J) Sehir		
1- Laws, Rules and Policies	Hyperactive (energetic)	Quiet and Calm	0.303	0.161
		Sociable and extroverted	0.298	0.113
		Irritable and Short-Tempered	0.534	0.049
2- Acting Out of Concern for Others (energetic)	Hyperactive	Quiet and Calm	0.606	0.005
		Sociable and extroverted	0.272	0.355
		Irritable and Short-Tempered	0.833	0.007
4- Individual Interest	Quiet and Calm	Sociable and extroverted	0.249	0.182
		Hyperactive (energetic)	0.426	0.042
		Irritable and Short-Tempered	0.122	0.940
5- Organizational Interest	Sociable and extroverted	Quiet and Calm	-0.126	0.544
		Hyperactive (energetic)	-0.327	0.021
		Irritable and Short-Tempered	-0.061	0.980

$P < 0.05$ means a significant difference.

living in metropolises was found to be significantly higher than those living in city centers.

CONCLUSION

A significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as energetic, and the ones who defined themselves as irritable and short-tempered. The ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as energetic was found to be significantly higher compared to those who defined themselves as irritable and short-tempered. In the dimension of 'Acting out of concern for others', a significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as energetic and the ones who defined themselves as quiet and calm and as irritable and short-tempered. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as energetic was found to be significantly higher compared to those of them who defined themselves as quiet and calm and as irritable and short-tempered. In the dimension of 'Individual interest', a significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as quiet and calm and the ones who defined themselves as energetic. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as quiet and calm was found to be significantly higher when compared to those who defined themselves as energetic. Finally, in the dimension of 'Organizational interests', a significant difference was found between the teachers who defined themselves as sociable and extroverted and the ones who defined themselves as energetic. In this dimension, the ethical climate perception of the teachers who defined themselves as energetic was found to be significantly higher than those who defined themselves as sociable and extroverted.

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