# Whistle-Blowing Intentions of Prospective Teachers: Education Evidence

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**Abstract**

This study investigates whistle-blowing intentions of prospective teachers. Firstly, overall ethical awareness of the participants was examined, and then their underlying ethical reasons of whistle-blowing were investigated. Besides, impact on the intention to blow whistle to internal or external parties offering their job guarantee were searched. Three ethical dilemmas were constructed in three scenarios, and The Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale was used in the study. The results revealed that the students' overall ethical awareness is high, and justice provides strong explanation power for whistle-blowing intention of the participants. While there have been many studies examining whistle-blowing with different factors, there has not been any intention for examining it in education. Thus, this paper aimed to contribute to the extant literature by choosing Turkey and education as context as most studies have been conducted in the Western cultures, and in accounting or marketing service.

**Keywords:** ethical awareness, philosophical values, prospective teachers, Turkey, whistle-blowing

## 1. Introduction

Whistle-blowing is typically described as reporting wrongdoing to an individual or organization believed to have the power to stop it. An organizational member can report wrongdoing within an organization or can go to the public with that information. Although it seems to be hurtful to organizational interests, whistle-blowing may be managed to develop organizations. There has been increasing concern about whistle-blowing especially in American society for decades. While 26% of federal employees witnessed wrongdoings to blow the whistle in 1980, that rate increased to 48% in 1992. This means that public perception of whistle-blowing has been warmed positively. For instance, while David Welch was fired for reporting insider trading events by management of the Bank of Floyd in 2002, whistleblowers Cynthia Cooper, Sherron Watkins & Coleen Rowley were elected as 'Persons of the Year' by Time magazine in January 6, 2003 (Near & Miceli, 1986; Krebsbach, 2005; Kaplan & Schultz, 2007; Miceli et al., 1999; Liyanarachchi & Newdick, 2009).

Whistle-blowing came in the spotlight with the fall of American corporate giants such as Enron, Tyco, World Com, and many more because of their wrongdoings. After these corporate failures, number of studies increased introducing different whistle-blowing cases in many parts of the world (Miceli et al., 1999; Gundlach et al., 2003; Near & Miceli, 2008). Whistle-blowing studies have been conducted mostly in the US, and calls have been made for investigating whistle-blowing further in non-Western cultures (Park et al., 2005; Nayir & Herzig, 2012). This paper aimed to contribute to the extant literature by examining whistle-blowing among educators in Turkey as most studies have been conducted in the US and Europe, and little has been reported about it in non-Western cultures. Firstly, overall ethical decision-making with underlying reasons of prospective teachers were examined through three ethical dilemmas. Then, relationship between having job guarantee and intention to the modes of whistle-blowing was explored.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Whistle-Blowing

Whistle-blowing means disclosing organizational wrongdoings resulting in harm to third parties (Jubb, 1999; Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 2010). It has been discussed by researchers in ethics, law and social sciences, and defined in different ways (See Table 1). Nevertheless it has generally been defined as going public

with organizational information that threatens the public interest and as disclosure of illegal practices to someone who has power to affect it (Near, Rehg, Scotter, & Miceli, 2004; Elliston, 1982).

Table 1. Whistle-blowing definitions

| Reference | Description |
|---|---|
| Richard - 1980 | Going public with information about the safety of a product. |
| Bok - 1980 | Sounding an alarm from within the organization in which they work, aiming to spot light neglect or abuses that threaten the public interest. |
| Chalk and Hippel 1979 | An action comes true when an employee, independently makes known concerns to individuals outside the organization, without support or authority from his superiors. |
| Bowie - 1982 | A whistle blower is an employee or officer of any institution, profit or non-profit, private or public, who believes either that he/she has been ordered to perform some act or he/she has obtained knowledge that the institution is engaged in activities which (a) are believed to cause unnecessary harm to third parties, (b) are in violation of human rights or (c) run counter to the defined purpose of the institution and who inform the public of this fact. |
| Dozier and Miceli - 1985 | A pro-social behavior having both altruistic and egoistic motives. |
| Near and Miceli - 1985 | The disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action. |

Resources: Elliston, 1982; Near et al., 2004

A whistle blower, makes public know information about activities believing that s/he has been ordered to perform some act causing unnecessary harm or s/he has obtained knowledge that they should violate human rights (Elliston, 1982; Vinten, 1996; Dawson, 2001; Near et al., 2004). A whistle blower can be viewed either as someone who is trying to help or cause trouble for an organization. According to the 2002 Time/CNN poll report, 18% considered whistle blowers as traitors, while 59% considered them as heroes (Elliston, 1982). As the poll shows whistle-blowing is a controversial situation. Therefore, employees need to make two sets of decision when faced with questionable acts. First, they need to assess wrongdoing, and then they need to decide what to do if wrongdoing is present. Thus the ability to recognize and to evaluate correctly any ethical dilemma is the most important prerequisite to make right ethical decisions. Therefore one of the factors relevant with understanding one's propensity to blow the whistle is level moral reasoning (Miceli et al., 1991; Miceli, Scotter, Near, & Rehg, 2001; Gundlach et al., 2003; Near et al., 2004; Rocha & Kleiner, 2005; Liyanarachchi, Newdick, 2009; Taylor and Curtis, 2010).

*2.2 Assessing Wrongdoings*

Near et al., (2004) suggest that the type of wrongdoing is significantly associated with the decision for whistle-blowing. Robinson & Bennett (1995) introduced a typology, and four types of wrongdoings in organizations. Their construct involves two dimensions: (1) Minor vs. Serious, which describes the severity of the deviant behavior, and (2) Interpersonal vs. Organizational, which represents the target of the deviant behavior. Besides, Near et al., (2004) created taxonomies of wrongdoings in organizations such as waste and discrimination, legal violations mismanagement and sexual harassment, and stealing and safety problems. They argued that the type of wrongdoing affects whistle blower's intention to blow the whistle.

*2.3 Decision-Making*

Scholars (McDevitt & Van Hise, 2002; Keenan, 2002; Tavakoli et al., 2003; and Near et al., 2004) suggest that individual, organizational and situational factors affect individual's decision-making process to blow whistle. Individual factors include gender and stage of moral development. Therefore many empirical studies have been conducted to find out possible effects of personal factors on decision making process to blow whistle. The results by Arnold & Ponemon (1991), Brabeck (1984), Chan & Leung (2006), Miceli et al., (1991), and Near & Miceli (1986) concluded that moral reasoning influences an individual's decision-making process for whistle-blowing. Liyanarachchi & Newdick, (2009) found that the higher the individual's level of moral reasoning, the more likely s/he is to do the right thing. Further, various studies (McDevitt & Van Hise, 2002; Keenan, 2002; Tavakoli et al., 2003; and Near et al., 2004) evaluated materiality levels of individuals in ethical dilemmas in line with

Rest's decision-making model. An ethical dilemma is a situation in which the person does not know how to act because of conflicting beliefs about what is axiologically required (Lurie & Albin, 2006). Besides, Woiceshyn (2011) found that gender, ethical philosophy (such as relativism), and religion showed a direct effect on Rest's ethical decision making model.

Reidenback & Robin (1990), Cohen et al., (1993, 2001), and Cruz et al., (2000) have used ethical dilemmas and The Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale for examining ethical judgments, including the philosophical values such as justice, utilitarianism, relativism and egoism. Justice indicates the idea of fairness while relativist person considers any action culturally. Utilitarianism requires criticizing any action according to its benefits, while egoism indicates deciding under self-promoting (Cohen et al., 1996). These results show that, in general, individuals with higher levels of moral reasoning are more likely to blow the whistle than are individuals with lower levels of moral reasoning.

*2.4 Typology of Whistle-Blowing*

A whistle blower may report wrongdoing either internally or externally, anonymously or publicly. Whistle-blowing internally means reporting wrongdoing to someone within the organization who can correct the wrongdoing. This kind of whistle-blowing bypasses the normal managerial hierarchy, and report to a top manager when there are other available channels. Whistle-blowing externally refers to reporting the wrongdoing to outside agencies believed to have the power to correct it. This mode of whistle-blowing indicates reporting to those such as the media, a Member of Parliament or a professional body. Although, it is open to manipulation, internal reporting offers opportunity to the managers to deal with the case without outside pressure. However, external reporting refers a serious issue between managers and whistle blower (Near et al., 2004; Elliston, 1982; Clements, 2005; Vinten, 1996; Park et al., 2008).

*2.5 Whistle-Blowing Studies*

Studies that have attempted to explain whistle-blowing different ways can be categorized into four: (1) Researchers (Miceli & Near, 1985; Miethe & Rothschild, 1994) have tried to find out characteristics of a whistle blower. For example, Brabeck (1984) examined relationship between moral reasoning and whistle-blowing and found that those with higher levels of moral reasoning are more likely to whistle-blow. In addition, Miceli et al., (2001) showed that people were less likely report wrongdoings when they did not feel compelled morally. In addition, Miceli et al., (2001) examined effects of individual differences to whistle-blowing. Rhodes and Strain (2004) examined whistle-blowing in academic medicine. Besides, Ohnishi et al., (2008) examined process of whistle-blowing among nurses at a psychiatric hospital in Japanese, and found that nurses do not decide to whistle blow when they are suspicious of wrongdoing. Park et al., (2005) examined the effects of ethics and collectivism, on whistle-blowing intentions in South Korea, and found that Confucian ethics had significant but mixed effects on whistle-blowing intentions. Zhang et al., (2009) examined decision-making process for internal whistle-blowing in China. Liyanarachchi & Newdick, (2009) examined the effect of students' level of moral reasoning, on their propensity to whistle blow in New Zealand. Keenan (2002) and Near et al., (2004) explained the factors contributing to reasons for whistle blow internally or externally. Besides, they studied levels of moral reasoning and the effect of culture for whistle-blowing. In addition, Cohen et al., (2001) examined existence of different materiality levels implementing ethical scenarios through philosophical values. (2) Scholars (e.g., Miceli & Near, 1994; Near and Miceli, 1986) have focused on variables to predict volume of retaliation that will subsequently suffered by whistle blowers. Rehg et al., (2008) examined gender differences and power relation to whistle-blowing, and found that there were significant association with gender and whistle-blowing. (3) Researchers (Miceli & Near, 2002) have studied conditions under which whistle blowers are most likely to be effective in getting organizations to terminate wrongdoing. For example, Lewis et al., (2001) examined whistleblowing procedures in higher education introducing the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 in the UK. (4) Scholars have examined the relationship between culture and whistleblowing comparing different cultures. For example, Keenan (2002) examined the effect of culture and found that there were no significant differences between American and Indian managers in the likelihood of blowing the whistle. Park et al., (2008) examined the effect of cultural orientation and they found that there are significant variations related to nationality and cultural orientation among undergraduate students from South Korea, Turkey, and the U.K. Besides, they found that general preferences of the students from Turkey and the U.K. for anonymous over identified whistle-blowing was weaker than the students from South Korea.

Since whistle-blowing has been perceived as negative act, and whistle blowers have been supposed to be 'fink' in Turkey. Besides, whistle blowers have been punished generally in the country. For instance, teacher Yiğiter was suspended in teaching because he reported his school principal's wrongdoing in 2010 (Egitimbirsen, 2010).

Besides, since she reported school principal's sexual abuse, teacher A.U. was charged to work another school in 2010 (Milliyet, 2010). Similarly, since he reported his school principal's misconduct, teacher Kaya was charged to work another school in February 2011 (Aktifhaber, 2007). These cases make it clear that whistle blower teachers have been punishing in Turkey. Since education management system is centralized, teachers and school principals are recruited by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Therefore, personal rights of the teachers are protected by the Ministry. Besides, the school principals are accountable for their acts only to the Ministry. Thus, teachers could not report wrongdoings that they observed at schools to anywhere because of retaliation for years in Turkey. However there have been many changes in educational management system, in Turkey, for ten years. Some teachers have been recruited as contracted because of the fiscal adequacy in Turkey. In addition, the Ministry expanded communication channels, such as internet, to enhance information resources about teachers, and educational activities at schools for people. The Minister of National Education said that 'If a citizen complaint about anything related to the schools or educators, I will regard that is true, and manage it, even that complaint was unjust' at the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year (MEB, 2011). Although he reported these words to intimidate the educators, they might be supposed to feel untroubled for reporting misdeeds of educational management.

The extant literature has generally focused on the Western countries, and little has been reported about the whistle-blowing actions in non-Western cultures (Park et al., 2005; Miceli et al., 2009). Therefore the literature has focused on culture of these Western countries. However, Nayir & Herzig (2012) argue that cultural and ethical differences have an influence on the decision for whistle-blowing. Besides, they emphasize the importance of studying whistle-blowing from an individual perspective rather than from a national one as there may be significant variations in the individual orientations even within one and the same country. Different from the Western countries, majority is Muslims in Turkey, while the country does not have an official religion because of secularism (Kayabas & Kutkut, 2011). Oktem & Shahbazi (2012) examined Turkish and Iranian students and found no difference between the groups in terms of whistle-blowing intentions. Besides, Gökçe (2013) studied whistle-blowing with regard to type of intelligence of university students in Turkey.

### 2.6 Examining Prospective Teachers

Since teachers face widely different ethical cases during their career at schools, they need to be competent related with various ethical cases that they come up against in schools. Introductory courses such as introduction to education science, educational philosophy, and school management introduce students with the complex role of teachers at schools. These courses give opportunity to examine several of the ethical dimensions of educational cases for the students. So these students can evaluate the harmful consequences of the actions they analyzed in these courses. Thus these courses can be interpreted from different philosophical perspectives including stages of moral development and dimensions of moral judgment including philosophical values such as justice, utilitarianism, relativism and egoism (Cohen et al., 2001).

Since Lysonsky & Gaidis (1991) suggest that the ethical sensitivity of students is comparable to real employees, many scholars (e.g. Liyanarachchi & Newdick, 2009; Mayhew & Murphy, 2008; and Gökçe, 2013) examined students' intentions for whistle-blowing with variety of factors. Cohen et al., (2001) studied whistle-blowing comparing university students' and professionals' ethical decision-making in Canada. In detail, they examined entry-level students, graduate students and accounting professionals. Park et al., (2008) examined whistle-blowing with regard to materiality levels of university students from South Korea, Turkey and the U.K implementing ethical scenarios through philosophical values. Liyanarachchi & Newdick, (2009) examined whistle-blowing in respect to students' level of moral reasoning in New Zealand. Oktem and Shahbazi (2012) examined students from Turkey, and in terms of whistle-blowing intentions. Gökçe (2013) studied whistle-blowing with regard to type of intelligence of university students in Turkey. So the aim of this paper is to address whistle-blowing intentions of the prospective teachers for possible misdeeds of school principals, and to create a moral environment for all who have to work at schools, and learn from it.

### 3. Hypotheses

Level of moral reasoning and perceived threat of retaliation against whistle-blowing are the two of the most important factors to understand an individual's intention to blow the whistle (Liyanarachchi & Newdick, 2009). Therefore prospective teachers were needed to be examined to find out their ethical materiality levels as a first step of the study. So the first hypothesis is as below:

H1: Overall ethical awareness of the prospective teachers is high.

Gobert & Punch (2000) suggest that the whistleblower has generally left the organization before s/he report the wrongdoing. However, s/he, might remains within the organization when the wrongdoing might be generated the

greatest concern. In such cases the whistleblower would be vulnerable for retaliation by the employer. In many cases whistle-blowing are resolved peaceful, or the whistleblower is rewarded. The US has passed Whistleblower Protection Acts for the public sector with a compensation fund of up to $500,000 per individual to support whistle-blowing. Many American organizations presently have policies protecting employees from retaliation victimization. However, in many cases, the consequences of whistle-blowing have been anything. Even 62 % of 161 whistleblowers were dismissed from their jobs by 1989 (Vinten, 1996; Miceli & Near, 1994; Gobert & Punch, 2000). Since there has not been any regulation against retaliation and the teachers are recruited as permanently or temporarily in Turkey. So the second hypothesis was designed as below:

H2: The prospective teachers are more likely to whistle blow (internally or externally) when guaranteed their jobs.

How organizational members decide whether wrongdoing is serious enough to report it is questionable. Besides, they need to consider and balance several philosophical values when facing an ethical decision in organizations Cohen et al., (1993, 1993b, 2001). So, Cohen et al., (1993, 1993b, 2001); Cruz et al., (2000), and Reidenback & Robin (1990) have used The Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale for examining ethical judgments, including the philosophical values; justice, deontology, utilitarianism, relativism and egoism in many studies. Thus by extending prior researches, the following hypothesis is presented as:

H3: The prospective teachers will identify reasons related to philosophical values (justice, deontology, utilitarianism, relativism and egoism) as reasons for reporting wrongdoings.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Sample

163 prospective teachers, who were studying at a big university in Marmara region in Turkey, were surveyed in the academic year of 2010-2011. The survey was administered toward the end of the year. The survey was administered to the students who were voluntary to participate it toward the end of the semester, and they provided anonymous responses. The participants had achieved understanding of school management due to their previous training implementations at schools. All of the participants were Muslims. Of 163 possible responses 130 were received. Details of the sample can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample demographics

|  |  | N | % | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 99 | 76 | 130 |
|  | Male | 31 | 24 |  |
| Age | 20-24 | 128 | 99 | 130 |
|  | 25-29 | 2 | 1 |  |
| Departments | English | 71 | 23 | 130 |
|  | Science | 29 | 22 |  |
|  | Math | 30 | 39 |  |

As Table 2 shows, 76% were female and 24% were male participants. The age range of the students was 20-24 years (99%). While 23% were studying at English language, 22% were studying at science, and 39% were studying at math teaching.

### 4.2 Instrument

Near et al., (2004) claimed that the type of wrongdoing is significantly associated with whether observers of wrongdoing blew the whistle. Previous studies have incorporated a scenario-approach to determine the level of influence in their respondents' whistle-blowing intentions (Liyanarachchi & Newdick, 2009; Kaplan & Schultz, 2007). Moreover, this scenario-based approach (Cohen et al., 1993, 1996; 2001; Near et al., 2004; Liyanarachchi & Newdick, 2009; Taylor & Curtis, 2010) has been adopted in studies in this area of research. So, the author developed the questionnaire reviewing the literature. The questionnaire consisted of three scenarios with two parts of scales for each scenario (See Appendix A).

The first part of the questionnaire is the modification of the Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale by Cohen et al., (1993, 2001) into Turkish (See Appendix B). The second part is developed utilized by the scale developed by

Park et al., (2008). The author constructed scenarios into two steps: (1) the scenarios used by Cohen et al. (2001) were translated into Turkish and modified into education context; (2) newspapers were screened, and the translated and modified scenarios were compared to the news related to teachers. Finally the author piloted these scenarios with real teachers whether they experienced these kinds of cases at schools or not. Also personal information was asked at the beginning of the questionnaire.

*4.3 The Multi-Dimensional Ethics Scale*

The Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale exposes a moral evaluation within the philosophical views of justice, deontology, utilitarianism, relativism and egoism. Five ethical theories were included in the instrument: justice (the idea of fairness to all), deontology (the extent to which an action is consistent with an individual's duties or unwritten obligations; the extent to obliged to act this way), relativism (the extent to which an action is considered acceptable in a culture), utilitarianism (the extent to which an action leads to the greatest good for the greatest number of people), and egoism (the extent to which one chooses an action based on self-interest) (Cohen et al., 1996; 2001). The scale was translated and compared to the other translation into Turkish by Çakar and Arbak (2008). The case scenarios and the scales were revised after the piloting, and eight items (4,7,8,9,12,13,14, and 15) involved in egoism and deontology were dropped from the scale. Hence, egoism, and deontology were not included in the scale. This result is partially in line with the Cohen et al., (1993, 1996) who found that egoism is not significant underlying reason to influence ethical decision. The Cronbach's alpha values of the ethical evaluation with philosophical reasons for the three scenarios are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha values of the ethical evaluation for three scenarios

| Scenario | Justice | Relativism | Utilitarianism |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .81 | .81 | .72 |
| 2 | .93 | .88 | .51 |
| 3 | .94 | .95 | .77 |

As Table 3 demonstrates The Cronbach's alpha values of all scenarios' first subscales were above 0.50, and so the reliability of the subscales is acceptable for statistical analysis (Buyukozturk, 2002).

*4.4 Hypotheses Testing*

There was three items (Item16, Item17, and 18) in the Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale, and these items were used to measure overall ethical awareness of the participants to test H1. So they were asked to indicate their belief of ethical situation; whether they would do whatever the principal ask, and whether their colleagues would do whatever the principal ask, on the seven point Likert-type scale, ranging from very likely (1) to never (7) for each scenario (See Appendix B).

To test H2, participants' intention to whistle-blowing internally or externally depending on their job guarantee examined by asking them, 'would you blow the whistle internally / externally if you were guaranteed your job', and 'would you blow the whistle internally / externally if you were worked as contracted teacher' on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from never (1) to very likely (5) for each scenario.

Finally, to test H3, participants' answers to item 18 (Is it ethical?) in the MES were regressed with their beliefs related to justice, utilitarianism, and relativism to identify reasons for whistle-blowing (Cohen et al., 1996). The participants were asked to evaluate the scenarios ethically within the question of 'is it ethical?' to decide whether they were realize the case ethical or not. Further they were asked with the other questions, involved in justice, utilitarianism, and relativism to find out their reasoning for ethical evaluation for each scenario. Each item, involved in justice, utilitarianism, and relativism was rated on the seven points Likert-type in the MES. After the piloting, the scale was comprised three dimensions, one for justice and the three items for each of the remaining four ethical theories; utilitarianism and relativism. The respondents are required to evaluate the action in the each scenario along the items (See Appendix B).

## 5. Results and Discussion

*5.1 Test of the Hypotheses*

To measure overall ethical awareness of the participants (H1) for the each scenario, the answers of the three items (16, 17, and 18) were analyzed. As shown in Table 4, the means indicate that the participants believe each

act is unethical in all scenarios. In addition, they believed that they would be unwilling to undertake the same action more than their colleagues would be. Consequently, the H1 cannot be rejected.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of each ethical scenario

| | | Scenario 1 | | Scenario 2 | | Scenario 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | Sd | Mean | Sd | Mean | Sd |
| 1 | I would undertake the same action | 6.85 | 0.59 | 6.68 | 0.94 | 6.85 | 0.71 |
| 2 | My colleagues would undertake the same action | 5.42 | 1.46 | 5.24 | 1.54 | 5.53 | 1.43 |
| 3 | The action described above is ethical | 6.93 | 0.39 | 6.73 | 0.78 | 6.88 | .57 |

1= very likely, 7 = never

To test H2, the answers of the four items were analyzed to measure the likelihood that the students will blow the whistle under various circumstances. As Table 5 shows, the participants believed that they would prefer reporting internally more than reporting externally when they worked as permanent staff in all scenarios. Similarly, their possible preference of reporting internally is slightly more than reporting externally when they worked as contracted staff in all scenarios. The results indicate that the probability of participants' preference of reporting wrongdoing depends on their job guarantee. So, the H2 cannot be rejected according to the mean scores of the participants.

Table 5. Attitudes toward whistle-blowing for each scenario

| | | Scenario 1 | | Scenario 2 | | Scenario 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | Sd | Mean | Sd | Mean | Sd |
| 1 | I would report the case to the appropriate persons within the school if I worked as permanent staff (H2a) | 4.05 | 0.87 | 3.82 | 1.12 | 4.01 | 1.03 |
| 2 | I would report the case to the appropriate authorities outside of the school if I worked as permanent staff (H2a) | 3.61 | 1.12 | 3.57 | 1.17 | 3.84 | 1.14 |
| 3 | I would report the case to the appropriate persons within the school if I worked as contracted staff (H2b) | 3.46 | 1.07 | 3.51 | 1.08 | 3.74 | 1.09 |
| 4 | I would report the case to the appropriate authorities outside of the school if I worked as contracted staff (H2b) | 3.24 | 1.25 | 3.40 | 1.17 | 3.53 | 1.22 |

1=never, 5=very likely

As Table 5 indicates, the participants' preferences of blowing whistle internally and externally are high when guaranteed their jobs. This finding is consistent with the results of Park et al., (2008) who found that Turkish undergraduate students prefer blowing whistle internally more than externally. Besides, the results are in line with Vinten (1996), Miceli & Near (1994), and Gobert & Punch (2000).

To test the H3, participants' answers were analyzed to evaluate scenarios ethically, and to elicit their moral evaluation related to justice, utilitarianism, and relativism to blow the whistle. Table 6 illustrates the means of the items in each factor for each scenario.

Table 6. Means of ethicality and dimensions of each scenario

| | Is it ethical? | Justice | Utilitarianism | Relativism |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scenario 1 | 6.93 | 6.77 | 5.92 | 6.67 |
| Scenario 2 | 6.73 | 6.69 | 6.27 | 6.57 |
| Scenario 3 | 6.88 | 6.87 | 6.33 | 6.80 |

The mean scores in Table 6 indicate that the participants believe each act is strongly unethical in all three situations. Besides, their mean scores of justice, utilitarianism, and relativism are high. Thus it can be claimed that, overall ethical awareness, and philosophical values of the participants as reasons for ethical their evaluations is high (H1, and H3). Further, answers of the participants were analyzed to explore the reasons for whistle-blowing. To do this, the ethical orientation of the participants was measured within the philosophical beliefs of justice, utilitarianism, and relativism. Thus the participants' overall ethical evaluation was regressed on the four factor scores as follows:

Evaluation$_i$= a+$\beta_1$ (justice)$_i$+ $\beta_2$ (relativism)$_I$ + $\beta_3$ (utilitarianism)$_I$ +e$_i$ where subscript i refers to an individual. Table 7 illustrates the regression between the intension to whistle blow and the constructs as reasons for whistle-blowing of the questionnaire for each scenario.

Table 7. Regression coefficients of ethical evaluation on three dimensions for three scenarios

|  | Scenario 1 | | | Scenario 2 | | | Scenario 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | β | t-value | Sig. | β | t-value | Sig. | β | t-value | Sig. |
| Justice | .53** | 4.83 | .000 | .58** | 5.27 | .000 | .73** | 11.08 | .000 |
| Relativism | .06 | -.47 | .640 | .01 | -.13 | .901 | .20* | 2.99 | .003 |
| Utilitarianism | .08 | .89 | .373 | .20* | 2.59 | .011 | .05 | 1.51 | .135 |
| Adjusted R$^2$ | 27% | | | 52% | | | 88% | | |

*p<.05, ** p<.001

As Table 7 demonstrates, the justice had the strongest influence on participants' ethical evaluation in all scenarios. While the relativism had strong influence in Scenario3, it had not any effect on participants' ethical evaluation for the other scenarios. Besides, the utilitarianism had only middle influence in Scenario 2. Meanwhile, the pattern of regression coefficients in Table 7 is quite different from the pattern of means in Table 6. Similar to the Table 6, the justice had the strongest influence in all scenarios in Table 7. However while the relativism had strong influence in scenario3 in Table 6, it had little effect on whistle-blowing in the Table 7. Besides, utilitarianism has the same effect on whistle blow in both Table 6 and Table 7; that means it had strong influence in the scenario 2 and 3 in Table 6, and Table 7 while it had not any effect on whistle blow in the first scenario.

Overall, these findings provide little support for H3 in that the three groups generally are not similar in their ethical orientation. Table 7 shows that scenario 3 elicited most complex reasoning, because all ethical criteria (justice, utilitarianism, and relativism) affect the participants during ethical decision making in that scenario. These results are consistent with studies conducted by Cohen et al., (1993, 1996), and Cruz et al., (2000) who find that these constructs influence ethical decisions.

## 6. Conclusion

This study aimed to elicit whistleblowing intentions of prospective teachers, examining overall ethical awareness of student teachers firstly; underlying reasons of their ethical decision making within the philosophical values (justice, utilitarianism, relativism and egoism) when they encounter questionable practices secondly; and how would they blow whistle (internally or externally) when guaranteed their jobs lastly. Before examining the results in more detail, some of the methodological limitations should be acknowledged. There might be drawbacks in the use of student participants, in terms of their generalizability to the wider population. Besides, the use of self-reported attitudes means that students' responses might merely reflect prevailing social norms, or be subject to social desirability effects (Park et al., 2008). In addition, the samples in this study may not even be representative of the population of university students in Turkey. Further, the scenarios to which the students were asked to respond are very specific, and it may be that their responses in part reflect their attitudes toward that particular form of wrongdoing. Despite this limitation, the study offers a number of important insights.

The results reveal that the students recognize unethical acts, believe that they would be unwilling to undertake the unethical action more than their colleagues would be. They use justice as main reason to blow the whistle in all scenarios. While they applied utilitarianism as a second significant reason for whistle-blowing in the second scenario, they used relativism for ethical evaluation as a second significant reason for whistle-blowing only in

scenario3. It might be concluded that Turkish prospective teachers identify their ethical evaluation based on justice, relativism and utilitarianism on account of the dilemmas cited in this study.

Woiceshyn (2011) argued that religion has a direct effect as well as ethical philosophy on ethical decision making. So these results might be interpreted from the religious point. All of the participants of the study are Muslims. From religious point, the participants' were supposed to evaluate the ethical dilemmas based on initially justice, and deontology. Because Islam religion orders Muslims to be fair, and perform their duties properly. Above all things, Muslims must behave fairly even their interests are damaged in any case. So the participants' reaction in the second scenario is meaningful. This result shows interestingly that the participants do not mind using school's stuff, but taking the course trainee's money to their personal account. However, they evaluate the third scenario based on justice and relativism. The principal ask them to tell lie their students related to the price of the book, and the participants evaluate this scenario based on both justice and relativism. This result supports the idea that the prospective students evaluate ethical dilemmas based on religion as well as philosophical values.

The results indicate that the students would be unwilling to undertake the unethical action more than their colleagues would be. Besides, the probability of participants' preference of reporting internally or externally depends on their job guarantee. The students who suppose themselves with job guarantee would decide reporting externally and internally more than the others would do. Further they would prefer reporting internally more than reporting externally when they guaranteed their job. However they would prefer reporting internally slightly more than externally when they were not guaranteed keeping their job. From the religion point, these results are also significant. The results in the Table 5 are noteworthy that the mean values for internal and external whistle-blowing tend to lay the middle of the scale. However, the participants are supposed to be fair even they scare to lose their job. Because the Prophet Muhammad (nd) says 'if you see a wrong you fix it by hand; if you cannot do this, you fix it by your speech; even if you cannot do this you resist this in your hearth'. So the participants' slight inclination to blow whistle even they have job guarantee is interesting. This result might be because of the cultural characteristics of Turkish people who respect authority generally. They do not criticize administrators, and they tend to justify authorities' wrongdoings generally. When the students asked to examine administrators' or authorities' wrongdoings in the country, they tend to defend the administrators instead of criticizing their wrongdoings.

Teachers need to handle various ethical cases at schools and they need to be prepared well during their training. So their ethical evaluation skills need to be improved through courses. Therefore teacher training programs might involve courses such as logic, ethics, and philosophy. Besides, existing courses such as educational philosophy and educational sociology might be extended to all teacher training departments. Thus teachers would be skilled to evaluate ethical cases based on universal philosophical values instead of religious or cultural bases. So this study is supposed to bring attention to the importance of ethical evaluation for teachers to deal with ethical dilemmas at schools. Besides, this study supposed to contribute to the extant literature by choosing Turkey and education as context as most studies have been conducted in the Western cultures, and in accounting or marketing service. So this paper is concluded with a consideration of directions for future research. There are good grounds for assuming that studies replicating the present research design could be worthwhile.

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**Appendix A: Scenarios**

1) You are working at a school as a teacher. School principle invites tenders for managing canteen due to the legal obligations. Afterwards he allows someone who offers the lowest price because that manager had given the school principle a big monitor 3D LED TV as a present. Besides, he had promised that he would give another but a medium sized one for the teachers' room. But your assignment is needed and the school principle asked you to sign that letting contract.

2) School principle arranges a computer course for adults at the school laboratory, and he take the payment of the course personally. You learn that case. Thus the school principle asks you to join them, give lecture at that course, and share that payment with him.

3) You have to suggest a test book for your students to buy it for SBS (the most important exam for their academic career). School principle asks you to offer a test book he wanted and to collect extra money from the students for that book. He explained that he would use that extra money for something he needed for managing the school

**Appendix B:** The Multi-dimensional Ethics Scale

| | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Just | Unjust |
| 2 | Fair | Unfair |
| 3 | Culturally acceptable | Culturally unacceptable |
| 4 | Personally acceptable | Personally not acceptable |
| 5 | Traditionally acceptable | Traditionally unacceptable |
| 6 | Acceptable to my family | Not acceptable to my family |
| 7 | Not self-promoting for the actor | Self-promoting for the actor |
| 9 | Personally satisfying for the actor | Not personally satisfying for the actor |
| 10 | Produces the greatest utility | Produces the least utility |
| 11 | Minimizes benefits while maximizes harm | Maximizes benefits while minimizes harm |
| 16. | The probability that I would undertake the same action is high | The probability that I would undertake the same action is low |
| 17. | The probability that my peers would undertake the same action is high | The probability that my peers would undertake the same action is low |
| 18. | The action described above is ethical | The action described above is unethical |