

## THE PRINCIPALS CONTRIBUTION IN DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE CITY SKOPJE

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(Original scientific paper)

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### **Abstract**

*From the first beginnings of the operation and development of schools, the way of working and other benefits provided by the successful operation, the question arises: Does the work have points of contact with the morale and moral behavior of individuals and groups, i.e. how and to what extent does the principals in primary schools contribute to the development of ethics and ethical relations between employees? Observing the relationship between work and ethics can be expanded in a way that works, the management of primary schools, the attitude towards teaching staff, the quality of work, the attitude towards the local community. For these reasons it is important to explore the relationship of management and its contribution to the development of moral and ethical behavior in primary schools. Variables in the research are the principals from different primary schools and their contribution through the management of the teaching staff for the development of ethics in the school itself. The sample consists of 46 principals from primary schools in the city of Skopje. The obtained quantitative results through the qualitative analysis confirmed the individual hypotheses, as well as the general hypothesis: The role of the principals in the development of ethics in the school will depend on several indicators, including human resources, culture and ethics, the behavior of the principals and the management of people in the educational sphere in modern society.*

**Key words:** principal, management teachers, morality, ethics, code of ethics.

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### **Introduction**

*“Ethics is an infinitely extended responsibility for everything that is alive “*

*Albert Schweitzer*

When it comes to the view that morality is tied exclusively to the individual, it is not possible to talk about school ethics without the presence of people who will adhere to and implement moral norms. The teaching staff with their work and behavior present the business ethics of the school in which they work. The people who are employed in the school are the foundation of that organization. The human factor is the most important resource in any school. The school's image in the public sector also largely depends on the human factor.

The values of the principal and his views play an essential role in creating an ethical atmosphere in the school, because their impact on employees is the greatest and most pronounced. Developing an ethical and productive climate is one of the most important roles of a principal. The ethics of working in the school rises to the level of managerial discipline, has a great role and according to the importance corresponds to the management of human resources and public relations.

Moral notions and moral norms are perceived on two levels. **Conversely**, what is characteristic of a moral interpersonal relationship is to understand the needs of others, to forgive them, to help and accept the individual as a member of a social environment. At the **pre-conversely** level, the individual realizes that every society has its own norms that strive to improve, modify, develop rationally applicable moral principles and universal ethical values. Each school has its own rules of operation that can be set in the rulebook, manual, guidelines, code of conduct. It is a document that aims to explain the organizational structure and establish standards for employee behavior. The question is how ethics in school can be most successfully applied.

The school should develop a program for introducing ethics in the field of work that is based on the values of a particular school. There are two approaches to solving these dilemmas. One is to establish strict moral principles that would be adhered to regardless of the situation or conditions in which the school operates. If you use this solution to solve dilemmas, the principal will get rid of the possibility of creating ethical problems. Conscience remains clean because the advance is regulated to a certain limit that can go, and thus the problem of ethics is regulated. The second approach is more flexible, where the principal is the one who will decide whether and how much to control and modify his behavior in each case individually. This approach requires the principal's ability to assess the situation and change his or her moral attitudes depending on it. One of the most definite definitions of management ethics is that it is the norms of governance or moral judgment that the principal uses to accomplish set goals and objectives.

**Management norms** are often a reflection of the general norms and values adopted in the family, society, institutions, or they are acquired through one's own experience. There are three basic levels of moral ethical decision-making, or judgment, that are characteristic of managers: moral management; immoral management; anti-moral management.

**The Code of Ethics** is defined as an official organizational document that specifies the primary values in the school and the ethical rules that the teaching staff should follow. Every school should be actively involved in developing appropriate and formal rules of procedure, which will ensure compliance with the law. One code model cannot apply to all schools because they operate in different social cultures. The introduction of a code of ethics or the public announcement of the ethical appearance of the school is not a guarantee that individuals will behave more ethically. Four factors are important for more successful and effective implementation of ethics: management; delegating; communication; motivation. There are two ways to achieve this:

*Social audit or social reporting* is an overview of school activities in areas prone to unethical behavior. *Disclosure or transparency* is the second area that can help in assessing the code of ethics and access to the school, this is the most difficult way because the results of the audits should be published inside and outside the school. The publication of the results will strengthen the determination and fulfillment of the ethical programs in the school, and thus will provide an opportunity for the teaching staff to participate and contribute with their own suggestions for improvement.

**Organizational culture** is an important element and organizational factor. Ethics can be understood as philosophy, philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems and moral reasoning enabling norms for proper behavior in all activities of social development. Organizational culture should be in the organizational mission, vision, goals and be emphasized in communication trainings.

*Highlighting, rewarding and punishing* shows what is really important in primary school. The prescribed norms and ethics in school management are very important for the development of the same and the behavior of the principal. Organizational culture in many ways clearly affects the ethical behavior of the teaching staff, work environment, dress code, office space, training, time, interactions. Healthy organizational cultures and ethical behavior create and attract productive teaching staff, and satisfied and productive employees help build developmental and successful schools.

## Materials & methods

This paper investigated the relationship and influence of principals in the development of ethical behavior in primary schools in the city of Skopje. This shows the basic problem of the research, which is defined as follows:

### **Does the principal contribute to the development of ethical relations in primary schools with his behavior and commitment?**

How much the ethics and ethical behavior of the principal influences the more efficient performance of the tasks assigned to the teaching staff, is the problem that was researched in this paper. The research was conducted in several primary schools in the city of Skopje. There are conditions for such research because in the city of Skopje and the surrounding area, they are one of the more developed primary schools in Macedonia.

**The subject of the research** is to determine whether the principal's behavior has an impact on school ethics, whether the principal has a role in the development of ethical behavior among teachers, and the development of ethics in human resource management in primary schools.

The basic problem in the research arises from the hypothetical framework, i.e. the general hypothesis and the special hypotheses.

The **general hypothesis** is defined as follows: **If the principal advocates ethics, then he will contribute to its development in the school.**

**Special hypotheses** are defined to verify and prove the general hypothesis. 3 special hypotheses have been identified:

1. If the principal adheres to the **ethical norms** in the school, then he contributes to the development of the ethics in the school.
2. If the principal **respects the code of ethics** and behaves ethically towards the teaching staff, then he develops the ethical behavior in the school and initiates changes in the development of ethics.
3. If there is **ethical behavior between the principals and the teaching staff**, then there is ethics in the school and it is subject to change, novelty and sanctions.

Variables in the research are the principal and his contribution through the management of teaching staff, for the development of ethics in primary school.

An **independent variable** is the principal and his management, and a **dependent variable** is the ethics in primary school.

Data analysis includes conceptualization and planning, data evaluation, analysis technique, hypothesis verification.

In the conducted research, the sample consisted of 46 principals from several primary schools in the City of Skopje. The respondents were selected according to a random selection criterion, which means that it is not necessary to know the structure of the group in advance, i.e. there is a tendency to equally represent all aspects of the basic group.

The sample consists of 8 men and 38 women aged 28-54, of which 8 principals by education are masters of science, and 38 by higher education, while 19 principals are subject teachers, while 27 principals are class teachers.

The survey data were collected based on two survey questionnaires compiled by the authors of the paper. The questions are of closed type. Seven questions are asked in Questionnaire 1 concerning the independent variable, the principal's management in the primary school. Questionnaire 2 also consists of seven questions related to the dependent variable, ethics in primary school. There are three alternatives to each question: **"yes", "no" and "partial"**.

The questions are simple and do not take time to clarify. Attention was paid to the logical and psychological order of the questions, so that the respondents experienced the content for which they had to answer. The results, i.e. the data obtained from the survey, are computer processed by applying an appropriate program. In the process of data processing, the methods of data analysis and synthesis are used.

## Results & discussion

By processing the survey data obtained results are shown in **quantitative analysis**. For a clearer display of the results, a tabular display is used, where Table 1 shows an overview of the results of Questionnaire 1, which deals with the management of the principal, and Table 2 which shows the results of Questionnaire 2, which deals with the development of ethics in the school.

**Table1.** Review of the results related to the management of the principal

Questions for the management of the principal	no	partially	yes
Has the principal established ethical norms for teacher behavior?	0,0 %	4,3 %	95,7 %
If so, does the management follow ethical norms?	0,0 %	6,5 %	93,5 %
Has the management adopted a code of ethics in your school?	0,0 %	8,7 %	91,3 %
Does the principal respect the code of ethical conduct in your school?	0,0 %	15,2%	84,8%
Does your school staff behave ethically towards management?	0,0 %	26,1 %	73,9 %
Does management treat teachers in your school ethically?	0,0 %	8,7 %	91,3%
Does management encourage ethical behavior in your school?	0,0 %	13,0 %	87,0 %

Based on the qualitative analysis of the obtained quantitative results, an interpretation was made, emphasizing what most influences the development of ethical behavior in primary schools, all in order to confirm or reject the given hypotheses.

Special hypothesis 1: If the principal adheres to the ethical norms in the school, then he contributes to the development of the ethics in the school.

Through questions 1 and 2 of Questionnaire 1, it was investigated whether the principals contribute to the development of ethical norms in primary school. According to the results of the quantitative analysis, most of the principals convincingly answered that they are committed to the ethical norms in their school.

In this hypothesis, the contribution to the development of ethics in primary school is taken from the aspect of the answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 of Questionnaire 2, where the quantitative analysis shows that most of the respondents answered in the affirmative, which means that they think that they are developing the ethics in the primary school. The independent variable in this hypothesis is 2.94, while the dependent variable is 2.75. So, the principal has set ethical norms of behavior and behaves according to them, and this leads to the development of ethics in primary school and contributes to the development of ethics. The obtained quantitative results confirm the individual hypothesis 1.

**Table 2.** Review of the results related to the development of ethics in the school.

Questions for development of ethics in the school	no	partially	yes
Do you think that the development of ethics in your school depends on you?	0,0 %	37,0%	63,0 %
Do you think you are doing something to develop ethics in your school?	0,0 %	10,9 %	89,1 %
Does ethical behavior develop in your school?	4,3 %	23,9 %	71,7 %
Are there any changes for the better within the ethics of your school?	4,3 %	26,1 %	69,6 %
Are there any innovations in the ethics in your school?	8,7%	32,6 %	58,7 %
Are there sanctions if teachers do not respect school ethics?	10,9 %	43,4 %	45,7 %
Has the principal initiated changes in the development of ethics in your school?	4,3 %	10,9 %	84,8 %

Special Hypothesis 2: If the principal respects the code of ethics and behaves ethically towards the teaching staff, then he develops the ethical behavior in the school and initiates changes in the development of ethics.

Through questions 3, 4, 6 of Questionnaire 1, it was investigated whether the principal respects the code of ethics and behaves ethically towards teachers. According to the results of the quantitative analysis, most of the principals answered convincingly that they respect the code of ethics and that they behave ethically towards the teachers. The value of the independent variable is 2, 88. In this hypothesis, the contribution to the development of ethics in primary school and initiating changes in the development of ethics is taken from the aspect of the answers to questions 3 and 7 of Questionnaire 2, where the quantitative analysis shows that most of the principals responded positively, which means that they consider that they develop ethical behavior and initiate changes in the development of ethics. The dependent variable has a value of 2.82. According to the analysis, it can be said that the special hypothesis 2 is confirmed, i.e. if the principal respects the code of ethics (which he has previously adopted) and behaves ethically towards the teaching staff, then it means that he initiates development and changes in the ethics in the school itself.

Special Hypothesis 3: If there is ethical behavior between the principals and the teaching staff, then there is ethics in the school and it is subject to change, novelty and sanctions.

Through questions 5, 6, and 7 of Questionnaire 1, it was investigated whether there is ethical behavior between the teaching staff and the principals. According to the results of the quantitative analysis, the independent variable 2.83 shows that most of the principals convincingly answered that there is ethical behavior between them and the teaching staff. In this hypothesis, the dependent variable is represented by ethical behavior that is subject to change, novelty and sanctions, and is analyzed from the aspect of the answers to questions 4, 5 and 6 of Questionnaire 2, where the quantitative analysis shows that half of the respondents responded with "partial" and "no", which means that ethical behavior is not sufficiently subject to change, novelty and sanctions. Its value is 2.63. According to the analysis, the special hypothesis 3 can be confirmed, i.e. the ethical behavior of the principal towards the teachers initiates the existence of ethics in the school and its changes, novelties and sanctions.

All of the above confirms the general hypothesis, namely: If the principal advocates ethics, then he will contribute to its development in the school.

The development of ethics, its application, change for the better, the introduction of innovations, the development of relationships between teachers largely depend on the behavior of the principals. The more the principal behaves according to ethical rules, the more he contributes to encouraging ethical behavior in primary school teachers.

## Conclusions

The research was conducted in order to prove the assumption that the personal example of the principals and his ethical behavior towards the teaching staff will contribute to the development of ethics in the school. The main factors for the development of ethics in a school are the behavior of principals, their respect and treatment of teaching staff, proper rewarding for the effort, active participation of teachers in decision making that contribute to a positive working atmosphere and good interpersonal relationships.

The results of the research conducted on 46 principals from primary schools in the City of Skopje, show that most of the principals consider that they behave ethically towards their teachers and thus contribute to the development of ethics in the school.

The results indicate that in most of the schools where the survey was conducted, the principals have established ethical norms and have a code of conduct.

In most of these schools, the principals behave ethically towards the teaching staff, trying to comply with most of the ethical norms, and as a consequence the teaching staff also behaves ethically towards the principals.

The principals who were involved in the research believe that their exemplary behavior encourages ethical behavior in school and that ethics in their work environment depends largely on them, and thus ethical behavior contributes to the development of ethics, initiating change and innovation for the development of ethical action and operation.

Schools cannot function ethically only with the help of prescribed norms, codes and regulations that can be easily violated and disrespected. Ethics need to be on the minds of teachers and their principals.

Given that ethical and unethical behavior are taught, the situation can be improved, but more education is needed to manage it fully, for business ethics and its principles, for ethics and ethical values in operations and for their greater engagement in the field of respect for all aspects of ethics.

Unfortunately, due to the low development of social awareness of normal and ethical behavior, it should be part of the culture of behavior, and not be regulated by law or norms that are more difficult to implement in practice. However, the personal example of principals and their correct and ethical behavior towards school teachers can greatly contribute to the development of the ethics and ethical behavior of the entire teaching staff.

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