

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICAL CLIMATE AND ETHIC POSITIONS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: A FIELD STUDY

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## Abstract

*The concept of ethics points out the behaviour in accordance with the common moral values, and to preference of good to bad, in an environment. The science of ethics is involved with determination of the standards of those morals and goods. Persistence of ethics in not only the social life, but also the organizational culture is possible by complying with those standards.*

*Then, ethical climate involves the acceptance of ethical standards, within a social or organizational environment. Presence and level of ethical climate in an organization is admitted to be an effective factor on the organizational commitment of the individuals and the organizational cooperation. On the other hand, ethical climate perception of the individuals is also related to their ethical value judgements. Perceptions of the individuals, who can be idealistic or relativistic about ethics, towards the organizations can also differentiate according to their ethic positions.*

*The main topic of this study is to test the relationship between the ethic positions and ethical perceptions of the employees, working in public institutions. There are similar studies conducted over private organizations. Distinctively, in this study, it will be tried to make some observations about public institutions in turkey through the findings of the field study to be conducted in konya.*

*Keywords: ethical climate, ethic positions, public organizations, case of konya.*

## Introduction

*Ethics has one of the main concerns about social life during the known part of history. Philologically, the word ethics is originated from the ancient greece word of ethos. Ethos involves the meanings of habit, custom or tradition, while the ethics is the science of researching what is right, appropriate, good, obligation or task and which actions can be evaluated to be moral (özateş, 2010: 86). Since the ancient times, ethics lost nothing about its importance for social life.*

*Ethics is a meaningful concept for public administration as much as any other fields of social life. Possibly, it is more important for public administration. Unethical behaviour in public institutions, such as bribery, corruption or serving self-interest, lead to a society, members of which do not trust the rules and order. This position of distrust is a threat for social life and also democratic mechanisms. Therefore, it is required to test whether there is an ethical climate in the public institutions or not.*

*Additionally, it should not be forgotten that, ethical climate perceptions of the public employees differ, due to their ethic positions. That is another issue to observe. Idealistic or relativistic employees can depict different levels of ethical climate, when they are asked to define the same environment they are in.*

*In this study, short descriptions of ethics and its role in organizations will be given first. Then, ethical climate will be discussed briefly. Third ethical positions, which can be idealistic or relativistic, will be defined. Lastly, data and results of the field study will be evaluated and discussed after dealing with the recent studies about similar issues with the one of our study.*

### Ethics and its contribution to organizations

Ethics is necessary for society due to the endless conflict in the desires of individuals. Egoism is the most common cause of those conflicts. Most of the people want to serve their own interests, even at the cost of damaging the ones of others (ray, 2010: 3). Ethics, which not only has an effort for understanding and explaining but also is a lodestar for many sciences and disciplines in terms of determining rules, is the branch of philosophy producing values, principles and theories by questioning the right and wrong or good and bad (öztürk, 2009: 105). In terms of government, ethics is involved in the public activities, such as protecting the citizens from criminals, ensuring that confidential information is secured, keeping the citizens safe from environmental hazards. Ethical behaviour has great importance, due to providing respect for citizens, promoting of democratic values and commitment to the rule of law. The ones to have been appointed for the offices are expected to obey ethical standards, while carrying out their duties (menzel, 2010: 3).

Ethical principles play an important role on the organizations' achieving its goals by; only designing intra-organizational operations, but also developing the relationships with the extra-organizational individuals (ergün, 2009: 153). In this regard, ethical climate can also be dealt as a means to achieve organizational goals. It is known that; ethical climate is one of the most important factors, which positively affect organizational performance. Organizational values such as efficiency, effectiveness, quality, excellence, and teamwork can be induced by an ethical climate. Therefore, there is no doubt that, the classical thought about ethical climate and high performance to be incompatible is not true (menzel, 2007: 76).

Ethical organizations can attract labour forces in high numbers and in high quality to themselves. The individuals, who know that they will be behaved fairly, are more willing to become a member of the organization and participate in the organizational goals. Ethical organizations are observed to have low levels of turnover rate. However in the organizations, which are known to be unethical, organizational commitment and productivity rates are seen to decrease, while their members' intentions to leave and turnover rates are observed to increase; due to their making the members unhappy (ergün, 2009: 152-153).

In recent years a significant progress has been made by the public sector on ethics. It is not easy to measure if this had led to higher standards about ethics. On the other hand, due to the scandals in the public sector, a higher awareness about ethics has occurred by the time (sherman, 1998: 14).some ethical codes have occurred, because of that awareness and the effort to form ethical public organizations. The ethical codes determined in public sector refer to some core ethical values needed in public sector. However they differ from a country or culture to another; more common of them are (sherman, 1998: 15-16):

- Honesty and integrity,
- Impartiality,
- Respect for the law,
- Respect for persons,
- Diligence,
- Economy and efficiency,
- Responsiveness,
- Accountability,
- Courage and,
- Neutrality.

For the ethical codes to be obeyed, some regulations are needed. The authority of law is commonly used for sustainable ethics for public administrations. Legal regulations are seen to be good solutions for the application of ethical standards in all public fields. However it should not be forgotten that legal regulations and decisions are the products of the lawyers and legal practitioners. Then there is no warranty for the relativist ones to bend the law parallel with their wills (kaptein, 1998: 33).

On the other hand, there is always something additional to do in terms of ethics. Building an ethics system needs active players in the game. The ethics system to be built should not only determine minimal standards of conduct but it must also put forward high goals to achieve for public employees. Governments must not only tell their employees what they should not do, but also tell them what they have to *do*. That is the main point for future

government ethics. Public employees should be provided guidance about what will not be tolerated, and about the values that should be applied in public service as well (potts, 1998: 89).

#### Ethical climate

Ethical climate can be defined as admitting the organizational ethical procedures and practices. In an environment, where ethical climate is created, individuals are expected to tend to behave in accordance with ethical values (schwepker, ferrell and ingram, 1997: 100). However, creating an ethical climate is an endless process. It must be built and improved forever.

For improving the ethical climate, something can be done at any level and in any type of units. It is possible and necessary for the whole team and especially the manager to participate in the process. The things, which especially the manager should do for improving the ethical climate and integrating ethics into organizational operations are (lewis and gilman, 2005: 250):

- Do both compliance and integrity training and counselling.
- Give briefings on common ethical problems on the job for new hires.
- Give termination briefings on potential postemployment problems.
- Designate senior manager(s) for integrity issues, separate from compliance/investigative unit.
- Require annual sign-off on prospective commitment and compliance.
- Attend to ethical values and character in recruitment.
- Integrate ethical performance into promotional exams and annual reviews; link ethical behaviour to incentives.
- Publicize positive, noteworthy role models.
- Raise ethical concerns at meetings and through regular communication channels.
- Train middle managers to recognize and commend subordinates' statements about ethical concerns.
- Review management practices and administrative routines at every level and in every type of unit in the organization.
- Get the whole team—all employees, all levels, all units—to participate; ethics is not a spectator sport.
- Give earnest attention to ethical treatment of subordinates, clients, and others.

Climates-including ethical climate-refer to organizations operating and acting in the expected routine way. In an ethical climate, individuals' actions and ethical climate perceptions may vary due to their positions and personal properties (schwepker jr., 2001: 39). In the next part, we will discuss the ethical positions of the individuals, which are expected to influence ethical climate perception of them. What the individuals understand from ethics, and what they expect others to do in terms of ethics determine the ethical positions of them.

#### Ethical positions of the individuals

Any individual can prefer to act considering the universal values or situational values, when he/she faces a dilemma of judgement. That is not a crime to prefer one to the other. The society or the ones being affected by that action will not know anything about his/her decision, if the result is not harmful for them. Then, what influences the decision of the individual may be not considered important. On the other hand, if it is known that a personal characteristic of the individual constantly directs his/her decisions, it draws attention. The concern about forecasting individual actions makes the factor influencing that decision important.

In fact, that dilemma is one of the issues, which the philosophy is interested in. In terms of ethics, since the early ages, those two tendencies attract the attention of philosophers. It is possible to make relativistic or idealistic decisions, while an action having an ethical side is in question (özlem, 2010: 24). That constant direction helps us to refer to the individuals as idealistic or relativistic about ethics. Their general directions are their ethical positions.

About ethical positions of the individuals there are two main factors to influence their moral attitudes. One of them is relativism. Relative individuals reject universal moral values to be formulated or to rely on. The other factor is idealism. While the relativist ones reject universal ethical or moral values, the idealistic individuals insist on using and believe in universal moral values. They make their judgements, in the light of ethical values, which they believe to be universal (forsyth, 1980: 175).

Individuals are idealistic or relativistic in terms of ethics (forsyth, 1981: 220; forsyth, o'boyle and mcdaniel, 2008: 813) accordingly, a differentiation in terms of ethical climate perception can be expected between the idealistic and relativistic ones. Our hypothesis about the relationship between the ethic positions and ethical climate perception is that; idealistic individuals about ethics cannot be easily convinced about an ethical climate to be created. On the other hand, positive ethical climate perception of relativistic individuals about ethics is expected to be higher than that of the idealistic ones, in the same organization.

#### Idealistic individuals

In some cases, deciding to prioritize whether interests or ethics in public and private issues can be problematic. Caring about the interests of the organization or the common interests of the society can be questioned. One of the answers to this question states that caring about the ethics and common interests is prior to the latter (schulze, 1997: 43). When morality is determined to be the basic issue of ethics and the focus is on the action rather than its results, the ethical values are accepted to be universal. In this perspective, an individual's action is stated to be ethical or unethical, according to whether he/she had considered universal moral values rather than the results. One should behave to the others in the way he/she wants them to behave him/her (usta, 2012: 409-410).

That is what plato states. Plato's knowledge based (özkul: 2008, 52) approach about ethic is idealistic (tusiad, 2005: 52). According to him; people, who know what the right behaviour is, cannot behave in a wrong way. Or in modern approach; the right or good should be admitted by everyone (bilge, 2012: 98-99). On the other hand, sometimes idealistic approach to ethics may not be as good as it is expected to be. For example, unachievable ideals can be desired or public cooperation can be given up and result in "motivations either for extraordinarily violent action, such as in vigilante justice or a development of apathy for the real world, which is taken to be a lost cause in the end". And also such an approach can result in harm rather than good, because it can make the organized action away from achieving real-world ideals (weber, 2011: 116).

In this study idealistic individuals will be seen as the individuals, who think that the good results are accessible for everybody due to morally proper actions (forsyth, 1980: 176; poór et al., 2013: 27). Idealism of the individuals means that they care about the results of their actions, and are mindful of how the outcomes of their actions will an effect on the others (forsyth, 1980; luzadis and gerhardt, 2011: 2).

#### Relativistic individuals

However ethics puts forward general principles and standards for the individuals and societies, some scientists argue that ethical rules are not objective and individuals evaluate the rules according to their own systems of values. In their opinion, implementation of ethics can change according to time or place, and some different rights and wrongs or goods and bads can be determined for different situations (öztürk 2009: 106). Relativists define the moral or ethical standards in accordance with the ideas of their own or the people they are in relation with. A positive consensus about the behaviour is the sign of a right action or moral decision. Nevertheless, that kind of judgements is not valid in every case. When the context changes, the judgement about behaviour changes, as well (şentürk, 2006: 20-21).

Moral relativism or ethical relativism is the philosophical approach suggesting that morality or ethics depends on cultural, historical and/or individual circumstances. According to that approach; there are no absolute rights and wrongs (parsons, 2008: 38). Relativistic individuals about ethics reject the validity of ethical judgment, believing that right and wrong are culturally defined or personal opinions. Relativist individuals have casual decisions. In some cases, when relativism is so high, relativist individuals can decide to behave in an amoral manner such as doing "their own thing" (lewis and gilman, 2005: 137).

In other respects, relativist individuals are not always "selfish", or "maladaptive". Some of the relativist individuals "relate" to the society. They take the ethos of the individuals around them together with their experiences, as a base for their behaviour. They observe the actions of the other individuals in the environment and they act in accordance with the consensus in the group (odabaşı and oyman, 2009: 434).

Recent studies about ethical climate and ethical positions

According to menzel (1993) ethical climates of public organizations reinforce from organizational values such as efficiency, effectiveness, excellence, quality, and teamwork. His study puts forward that as the ethical climate of an organization has a positive influence on, organizational performance values such as efficiency, effectiveness, excellence, quality, and teamwork (menzel, 2007: 11).

The study of schwepker jr. (2001) states that, ethical climate affects job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention in sales force. There are significant and positive relationships between ethical climate and; job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Jaramillo, mulki and solomon (2006) had also found a significant positive correlation between ethical climate and job satisfaction.

Luzadis and gerhardt (2011) found in their empirical study that; the relationship between learning goal orientation and idealism was non-significant. Additionally, highly idealist subgroup members were found to have significantly higher mean scores on performance-avoidance goal orientation. And also they observed significant differences between the sob groups of relativistic individuals, in terms of learning goal orientation and performance-avoidance goal orientation.

Özer and özcan (2013) had conducted a field study over different groups of individuals working in the field of accounting such as academicians, dependent and independent accountants, and internal and external auditors. Their findings show that there are significant differences between the groups in terms of ethical judgements about profit management.

There are many other studies about ethical climate, ethic positions and their relationship with demographics (forsyth and o'boyle, 2011; alas et al., 2012), organizational behaviour (tokar-gökçe, 2013) and business behaviour (davis, andersen and curtis, 2001; poór et al., 2013), their questionnaire validity (johari, sanusi and ismail, 2012) and their practice in governmental issues (bowman, 1990; bowman and williams, 1997; kakabadze, korac-kakabadze and kouzmin, 2003; schumaker and kelly, 2012). The studies observed have reached valuable findings in terms of ethics, ethics in government, ethical climate and ethic positions. The main idea obtained from the studies mentioned above is; ethical climate of public institutions and ethical positions of public employees should be researched regularly, for ethical decision making and ethical administration.

#### Field study

In this part of our study, the importance and aim of the study will be stated. After giving brief information about the method and sample of the study, the findings of the field study will be illustrated. Then, the findings will be evaluated and discussed.



Figure 1: ethical climate model

Our model about ethical climate and ethic positions is given above. Ethical idealism and relativistic idealism is expected to have a significant relationship with ethical climate perception. On the other hand, another expectation of us from the findings of field study is to put forward a negative relationship or lower positive relationship between ethical idealism and ethical climate perception.

### Importance and aim of the study

It is important to know the attitudes of employees about ethics. Having knowledge about the ethical orientation of the employees makes it easier to make appropriate decisions about the issues involved in ethics. Ethical orientation differences -or gaps- can lead to disagreements on the subjects, about which the employees should be sensitive or about the judgments on ethics (johari, sanusi and ismail, 2012: 1). Ethics is not only important for decision making but also for organizational harmony.

Contrary to the thought that it is easy to talk about ethics and tell someone to that obey with the ethical standards, but it is not easy to achieve job performance such as efficiency and effectiveness; there is growing empirical evidence showing a significant correlation between the presence of a strong ethical climate and the emphasis the organization places on values such as efficiency, effectiveness, quality, excellence, and teamwork (menzel, 2007: 22).

Seeing that ethics makes the work easier and increases organizational harmony, it is important to observe the ethics situation of the organizations. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to test if there is an ethical climate in public institutions, where the public employees are in terms of ethic positions, and how their ethical positions effect their perception of ethical climate in their workplace.

### The method and sample of the study

In the questionnaire for of our study, ethics position questionnaire of forsyth (1980) and ethical climate questionnaire of schwepker jr. (2001) were combined. Closed-end questions except the ones to determine demographical characteristics were prepared according to likert scale. While the answer of "1" means "totally disagree", "2" means "disagree", "3" means "partly agree", "4" means "agree", and "5" means "totally agree". To measure the reliability and intelligibility of the questionnaire, it was tested on 10 participants, and the final form was given to the questionnaire. In evaluating the data derived from the survey, spss 16.0 (statistical package for social sciences) was used

The universe of the study consists of the public employees working in konya participants were included in the sample according to simple random sampling method. In this method each unit making up the universe have equal chance to be in the sample (ural and kiliç, 2005: 32). 160 questionnaires were distributed between 15th of february 2014-20th of february 2014 and 150 questionnaire forms, which were duly filled, were taken into consideration.

### Analysis and findings

In accordance with the aim of the study, close ended questions were used about demographical characteristics, ethical climate and ethic positions were included in the questionnaire forms. The main topic of the study is to find if there is a relationship between ethical climate perceptions and ethic positions of the public employees. 8 questions about demographical characteristics, 7 questions about ethical climate perception and 20 questions about ethic positions were directed to the participants.

Table 1: reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	N of items
0,961	27

To measure the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire, cronbach's alpha test was used. The reliability of the survey is found to be 0,961. It is seen that the items in the questionnaire are harmonised, can be used to measure the same structure (gaur and gaur, 2009: 134) and they are related to each other (mooi and sarstedt, 2011: 37).

Frequency and percentage distribution were used in the study to measure the distribution of the demographical data. Frequency is "how many times an event occurs" simply. By using percentage distribution; "relative frequency" of the event, frequency of which has been measured, is determined (bryman and cramer, 2005: 86). The table about the demographical characteristics of the participants is given below.

Table 2: demographical characteristics of the participants

Institution	Freq	Per%	Gender	Freq	Per%
Provincial directorate of social services	40	26,67	Female	66	44,00
Eti oper pit mine	40	26,67	Male	84	56,00
Ptt office of general directorate	70	46,67	Marital status	Freq	Per%
Age	Freq	Per%	Married	101	67,33
Between 19-26	32	21,33	Single	48	32,00
Between 27-34	28	18,67	Income	Freq	Per%
Between 35-42	41	27,33	Between 500-1000 tl	9	6,00
Between 43-50	36	24,00	Between 1000-1500 tl	17	11,33
Between 51-58	11	7,33	Between 1500-2500 tl	76	50,67
59 and older	2	1,33	Between 2500-3500 tl	44	29,33
Working time	Freq	Per%	Between 3500-4500 tl	3	2,00
Under 1 year	25	16,67	4500 and more	1	0,67
Between 1-5 years	38	25,33	Education	Freq	Per%
Between 5-10 years	31	20,67	Literate	1	0,67
Between 10-20 years	38	25,33	Primary school	3	2,00
Longer than 20 years	18	12,00	Secondary school	48	32,00
Position	Freq	Per%	High school	29	19,33
Worker	17	11,33	Undergraduate	55	36,67
Officer	132	88,00	Postgraduate	4	2,67

Majority of the participants, work in ptt office of general directorate. The age distribution of the participants is almost regular, except the ones over 51. In terms of working time, it is seen that the more group in number is composed of the ones, who had worked between 1 and 5 years. When working positions of the participant is dealt, most of them are seen to be officers. 56 percent of the participants are males, while 44 percent of them are females. 67.33 percent of them are married. Majority of the participants have income between 1500-2500 turkish liras. Very few of the participants have educational levels of literate, primary school and post graduate. Most of them had graduated from secondary school, high school or university.

For put forward an idea using the derived data, thousands of data are required to be reformed in some explanatory measurements (elliot and woodward, 2007: 4). To achieve that aim, descriptive statistics, which have been essential factors of statistical field studies (kerr, hall and kozub, 2002: 6), were used in the study to determine the ethical climate perceptions and ethical positions of the participants.

Table 3: ethics climate perception of the participants

Statement	N	Mean	Std.dev.
The institution, where i work, has formal, written code of ethics.	145	3,76	1,088
The institution, where i work, enforces a code of ethics.	143	3,63	1,111
The institution has policies regarding ethical behaviour.	142	3,73	1,065
The institution enforces policies regarding ethical behaviour, strictly.	147	3,56	1,129
In the institution, unethical behaviour is not tolerated.	148	3,63	1,174
Ones having unethical behaviour leading to personal gain are reprimanded for them.	146	3,75	1,130
Ones having unethical behaviour leading to corporate gain are reprimanded for them.	149	3,73	1,131

Table 3 shows that the participants' ethical climate perception is higher than middle level. Their perception about an ethical climate to be applied in their institutions is approximately in the level of "agree". Moreover, participants' agreement level of the institution to have a written code of ethics is higher than that of the code of ethics being enforced. The situation is similar about having policies and enforcing them. And also, it is seen participants expect nearly the same result about unethical behaviour for personal gain and corporate gain. Considering the perceptions of the individuals about ethical climate, it can be suggested that; the institutions are not as successful in applying the rules, as in determining them.

Determining the rules about any subject but not applying them successfully is a common problem for organizations. Many of the leaders may think that it is enough to set the rules. They do not refer with their application as carefully as their determination. In many cases they leave the employees free about obedience, after the determination of the rules. Therefore, a gap between managers and employees is observed. Although that gap may not be very deep, it is a problem to be solved. For turkish public administration, the leader model and auditing practices should be discussed, especially on ethical issues.

Table 4: participants views on idealistic ethic position

Statement	N	Mean	Std.dev.
People should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another even to a small degree.	146	3,96	1,231
Risks to another should never be tolerated, irrespective of how small the risks might be.	148	3,74	1,190
The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained.	149	3,92	1,112
One should never psychologically or physically harm another person.	146	4,20	1,074
One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual.	148	4,25	1,003
If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done.	148	4,16	1,076
Deciding whether or not to perform an act by balancing the positive consequences of the act against the negative consequences of the act is immoral.	144	3,28	1,437
The dignity and welfare of the people should be the most important concern in any society.	145	3,90	1,159
It is never necessary to sacrifice the welfare of others.	145	3,80	1,084
Moral behaviours are actions that closely match ideals of the most "perfect" action.	140	3,73	1,079



According to the findings given in table 4, it can be stated that idealistic level of the participant is high levelled. Especially for the statements involving avoidance of harm for other individuals have higher levels, when compared with other ones. The lowest level of acceptance is for the statement of “deciding whether or not to perform an act by balancing the positive consequences of the act against the negative consequences of the act is immoral”. It is seen that participants partially agree with that statement. It means they think that deciding about an action without evaluating its negative or positive consequences can be a moral behaviour as well. On the other hand they highly accept that actions causing a threat for the dignity of others, giving harm to other individuals and threatening innocent ones should be avoided.

Table 5: participants views on relativistic ethic position

Statement	N	Mean	Std.dev.
There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics.	143	3,50	1,227
What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.	147	3,79	1,093
Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers being moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.	147	3,64	1,193
Different types of morality cannot be compared as to “rightness.”	146	3,64	1,173
Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.	147	3,56	1,245
Moral standards are simply personal rules that indicate how a person should behave, and are should not be applied in making judgments of others.	149	3,75	1,084
Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.	147	3,60	1,180
Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relations and adjustment.	147	3,76	1,081
No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends upon the situation.	145	3,46	1,280
Whether a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.	145	3,43	1,195

Table 5 shows that the participants' acceptance about the statements about relativistic ethical position is approximately middle levelled. The participants are seen to have partly relativistic attitudes about ethics. Their levels of acceptance with the statements about lies to be moral in some cases, and general rules concerning lying to be impossible are lower than the levels about the others. Additionally they nearly agree with the statements of ethical context to be situational, rigid ethical rules to negatively affect social relations and moral standards to be personal.

When table 4 and table 5 are discussed together, the participants are observed to be more idealistic than relativistic in terms of ethic positions. They do not want any persons to interfere with the life, thought or judgements of other people. They support freedom, even in terms of ethics.

Table 6: correlations

		Ethical Climate	Ethical idealism	Ethical Relativism
Ethical Climate	Pearson correlation	1,000	0,625**	0,713**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000	0,000
	N	129	105	112
Ethical Idealism	Pearson correlation		1,000	0,528**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0,000
	N		119	105
Ethical Relativism	Pearson correlation			1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N			125

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 was prepared for putting forward the relationships between ethical climate perception of the individuals and their ethic positions. According to the table, one can say that there are significant positive relationships between both: ethical idealism and ethical climate, and ethical relativism and ethical climate. The relationship between ethical relativism and ethical climate has a higher positive value than that of the relationship between ethical idealism and ethical climate. Considering that result; our prediction of ethical climate to be in relation with ethical climate and ethical positions has been confirmed. Additionally, our second prediction about higher relation of ethical climate with ethical relativism has been confirmed as well.

Conclusion

Regarding the literature view and empirical findings of our study, some conclusions below can be stated. Ethics has gained growing interest throughout history. Additionally, many of the issues determined about ethics in ancient ages, continue to be discussed in modern times, as well. Ethical standards are required to solve endless problems arising from conflicting interests. If one talks about an organization and social environment, he/she also talks about conflicts. If it is desired to create a democratic view among the members, an ethical climate should be created in every fields of life, especially in public administration.

Ethical climate makes managing organizations easier. Such that, the individuals have a higher tendency to obey the rules, and take effective roles in corporate actions; when they perceive to be in an ethical climate. If they trust in leaders and other individuals to behave in accordance with ethical standards and rules, they will do the same mutually. However, individuals may be idealistic or relativistic in terms of ethic positions. Their perceptions of ethical climate are expected to be influenced by those positions.

According to the derived data, and findings of our study, our model of ethical climate and ethic positions is as follows:

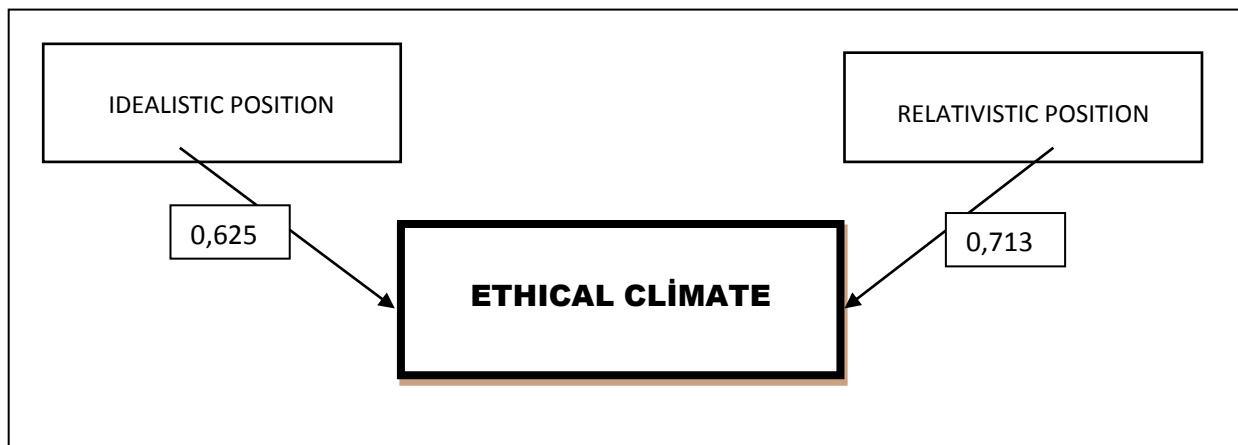


Figure 2: ethical climate model according to the findings

According to the model, ethical climate perception has a significant and positive relationship with both of ethical idealism and relativistic idealism. The relationship between relativistic position and ethical climate has a higher level, when compared with that of idealistic position and ethical climate. On the other hand the relationship is also positive between idealistic position and ethical climate perception. This situation can be a result of internalising relativistic ethical values. While participants' idealism is seen to be higher than their relativism, relativist individuals are observed to perceive an ethical climate in a higher level than the idealist ones. That is partly compatible with our prediction.

Another important finding of our study is participants' high perception of the ethical standards to be determined better than application. This is thought to be the sign of an administrative problem. It is not enough to merely set the rules. The organization should be observed to see whether those rules are applied or not. And also the participants do not want anyone to interfere with the ethical values of them, and they do not want anyone to harm or threaten any others' interests. Therefore, it is thought to be difficult to force them to obey strict rules. The problem should be solved democratically.

regarding the fact that, our field study was conducted in konya and in three public institutions; it is acknowledged that, in greater samples and taking a variety of institutions into consideration, better findings can be achieved. Additionally, it is thought to be useful to periodically conduct the questionnaire in greater samples. By doing so, the changes in ethical climate perception can be observed and the reasons for the tem can be determined using qualitative observations.

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