Opinions of The Teachers of Pre-School Education on Ethics*

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to examine the opinions of the pre-school education teachers on ethics. The study has been designed pursuant to the qualitative and case study techniques. The study included 32 pre-school education teachers during the academic year 2020-2021. The general information form and structured questionary form, prepared by the researcher, were used to collect the data. Due to the epidemic period, the participants filled out the forms online and then sent them to the researcher. Data were transcribed in a text format and analyzed using an inductive approach. Descriptive and content analysis were used in the analysis of the data. First, similar data were combined, codes were created, and categories were reached from interrelated codes. The study's findings revealed that participants view ethics as having a social, personal, and global dimension. Moreover, the participants related professional ethics to the teachers' rules and competencies. In addition, findings showed that the participants took equality and justice as the basis for acting ethically in working with children, that they respected children's rights and individual differences, and that they were aware of the importance of the issue of values as it was related to ethical values. Finally, it was found that participants perceived ethical violations that inadequate communication with families in the distance education process, and difficulty reaching children. The themes that emerged from the research were compared with the ethical standards of national and international organizations.

1. Introduction

There are various rules; that have appeared to facilitate the common life in the society and ensure the regulations of the relations between the people. While maintaining this order, our social and personal relations are shaped primarily by the traditions and customs of the society we live but also by the help of written legal rules (İşgüden & Çabuk, 2006). These rules, which ensure prosperity in the common life of the societies, are ethical principles. As a sub-discipline of philosophy, ethics investigates what is good and bad, right and wrong in personal behavior, as well as the values of the society in which a person resides, as well as, and refers to, the value judgments that affect the development of the society and the behavioural standards those individuals should demonstrate in their current situation (Cevizci, 1999; Uluç, 2003). Whenever ethical principles are given importance and complied with, it becomes easier to ensure social order, peace, and trust (Aras, 2001).

As in all areas of our lives, regulating people's professional lives is subject to some rules and a certain ethical understanding. The relationship of professions with people and the environment also requires the establishment of some principles and rules (Altınkurt & Yılmaz, 2011; Aydın, 2002). Within this framework, the concept of professional ethics, which is a sub-branch of the disciplinary of ethics, emerges. Professional

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ethics is a set of professional principles and rules based on beliefs that professional groups create and protect in relation to the professions; that shows the principles that professional members should obey, ensures the order of intra-professional competition and contributes to the preservation of professional service ideals (Elgin, 2006; Pehlivan Aydın, 2001; Selimoğlu, 1997). Individuals, belonging to the same profession should act following the rules of conduct required by their profession, even if they are located in different parts of the world (Şahin, 2003). One of the professional fields in which ethical understanding prevails is the field of education. Education; is the process of realizing a deliberate change in the behaviour patterns of an individual through their own experiences and in a deliberately desired direction (Demirel, 2005; Ertürk, 1972; Senemoğlu, 2012). Education affects the life of a country in social, cultural, and economic aspects and constitutes a driving force for the gradual development and improvement of the country (Çakmak, 2008). The process of creating behavioural change, one of the main purposes of education, is carried out by teachers pursuant to various educational levels in schools, following the programs prepared by the experts (Campbell, 2008; Öztürk, 2012; Sünbül, 1996).

The teaching profession is a profession that has a great importance in determining the status of the societies in the following years (Yetim & Göktaş, 2004). Teachers have always been regarded as influential moral models, those with the highest moral standards prevailing through the socio-cultural norms of their society and are especially effective on children, and therefore they have been considered as important (Campbell, 2008). Since the teachers are one of the most important role models in social life, it can be said that their acknowledgement and application of the ethical principles required by their profession is important for the education and training to progress in a planned and systematic way. Since the principles of professional ethics are universal, it is a requirement for a teacher to comply with the professional ethical principles, no matter in which field s/he teaches (Ilgaz & Bilgili, 2006). Ethics education for the teachers, who will teach ethics and become an example for society in this regard, begins in pre-service training programs. In these programs, while the teacher candidates gain Knowledge and skills of the respected profession, they also start to gain ethical values (Altınkurt & Yılmaz, 2011; Aydın, 2002; Pehlivan Aydın, 2001). The pre-service training on ethics continues as on-the-job training programs, after the individuals start their working lives (Bıyıklar, 2019). Following all these ethical trainings, the teachers are also expected to act in accordance with both human and children's rights (Banks, 2016; Öztürk, 2010).

There are various classifications regarding the ethical rules those the teachers should follow while they are working with children and their families (Aydın, 2002; Haynes, 2002; Terhart, 1998). Many organizations such as NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals), NEA (National Education Association) and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) have listed the code of ethics in certain items (NAEYC, 2006; NASSP, 1973; NEA, 1975). For instance, according to NAEYC (2006) the, ethical principles are classified as; ethical responsibilities and principles for children, ethical responsibilities and principles for families, ethical responsibilities and principles for colleagues, and ethical responsibilities and principles for society. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey has determined the ethical principles as; ethical relations in relations with the students, ethical principles regarding to education profession, ethical principles in the relations with the parents, ethical principles in the relations with the school administration and the society, and the ethical principles in the relations of the school administrators with the teachers, students and the parents (MoNE, 2009). Teachers are expected to operate responsibly and in accordance with the ethical standards outlined in the process, regardless of the educational levels at which they work. The first step of the educational levels is pre-school education. Because significant changes occur in the physical, cognitive, psychomotor, language, social and emotional development areas of the children, self-care skills are acquired and their personalities begin to take shape with the influence of the environment during the pre-school education period covering the first six years, it is an important period (MoNE, 2013; Yaşar & Aral, 2010). The behaviours gained during the pre-school education period, one of the most critical periods of the life, have been transferred into the further years of life (Kuran, 2002, p. 266). Preschool education teachers, provide support for the children in acquiring basic life skills during this period, when they are preparing for life. They help the child to be aware of themself at first, and then of their environment. They try to teach the children to distinguish between right and wrong. The teacher is one of the most important role models for the children in the educational process. The children get their first experience in a structured environment with their peers and teachers in pre-school educational institutions. They gain many skills that they will use in the process of maintaining their daily lives in the relationships they will establish with their

environment through pre-school institutions. Moreover, pre-school educational environments are ethical practice areas where the teachers make decisions about and for the individuals for whom they are professionally responsible in general during daily activities (Dahlberg & Moss 2004; Dunn, 2003; Vasconcelos, 2006). Within this context, it can be said that it is necessary to provide the appropriate educational environment for the children in pre-school education.

In examining the literature, based on the results of the studies on ethics in education, it was found that the elements in question regarding ethics are school administrators (Berdibek, 2019; Işık, 2020), teachers (Alan, Özden & Yağan Güder, 2011; Blanuša Trošelj & Ivković, 2016; French Lee & Dooley, 2015), and teacher candidates (Coşkun et al., 2020; Uğurlu & Sert, 2020). Among these studies, it was detected that the relationship between the opinions of the teachers and the demographic characteristics such as age, gender, seniority, graduated institution and bachelor degree, was considered in the studies, examining the opinions of the teachers on (Manolova, 2011; Özbek, 2003). In some of these studies, while significant differences were found between the teachers' point of view on ethics and certain demographic variables, in some of them, no significant differences were found. For instance, while Özbek (2003) concluded in his study that there was a significant difference between the physical education teachers' level of compliance with professional ethical principles and their gender, in terms of respect; in another study conducted by Kocabıyık (2019), it was concluded that there were significant differences between teachers' views on professional ethical principles and gender, age, branch, the variables of professional seniority, etc., however no significant difference was found in the variable of educational status. It has been determined that there are very few studies completed at the pre-school level among the researches on ethics in the field of education and training in Turkey, and that these studies are mostly quantitative studies. The point of view of the pre-school teachers regarding to ethics was examined in the studies conducted with the teachers on the subject of ethics during pre-school period, and it was observed that the effects of teachers' opinions and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, seniority, graduated institution and bachelor degree were examined (Liu, 2016; Öztürk, 2010; Sağlam, 2016; Sakin, 2007). Thus, Tarkoçin and Yıldızhan Bora (2018) concluded that there is a significant difference between teachers' age and their views on ethics in terms of justice and morality. Sağlam (2016) examined the relationship between teachers' awareness of professional ethics and job satisfaction in preschool education and concluded that sub-dimensions of job satisfaction and demographic variables such as age and marital status influence their professional ethical responsibilities. Besides, when the studies on the subject of ethics in preschool education were examined, it was concluded that the studies were conducted based on face-to-face education. The Corona virus (Covid-19) epidemic, which emerged in late 2019, has caused major changes primarily in health, in social, economic and pedagogical aspects, all over the world (world (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Can, 2020; Duban & Şen, 2020; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2020). In the field of education, face-to-face (on campus) education was suspended; the students, teachers and parties had to continue the formal education through distance education (Sarı & Nayır, 2020). During the distance education process, which is new for the teachers and the students, teachers should interact with children and families according to the ethical rules (Can, 2020). However, the distance education process, which continues in the digital environment, brings a process open to ethical violations (Akgün & Özgür, 2014; Gençet et al., 2013). Acting in accordance with children's rights, protecting the rights of the families, providing an education following ethical rules, can be challenging for the teachers in distance education process (Kaymak et al., 2011; Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2005). It is also important to carry out the education programs following the ethical values and to ensure the protection of the rights of the people, especially of the children, in distance education and face-to-face education. When the literature is examined, no research has been found in which ethical values in distance education studies with children and families are examined and discussed at pre-school level. When we consider the importance of ethics in the studies carried out with the children and the families in pre-school period, and the distance education process that has been carried out today, it is thought that this research will contribute to the respected field. Within this context, the purpose of the research is to examine the views of pre-school teachers about ethics. For this purpose, the questions to be answered in the research is: "What are preschool teachers' views about professional ethics, ethics in working with children, ethics in working with families, and ethics in distance education?"

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

This research, examining the opinions of pre-school teachers about ethics, is qualitative research. A case study design was used in the research. Yin (2002) defines a case as "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context, particularly when the boundaries of a phenomenon and context are unclear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon and context" (p. 13). In this context, "ethics" was the research topic, and "distance education process" was the time frame (Miles & Huberman, 1994). On the other hand, Creswell (2007) defined the case study as a qualitative research approach in which the researcher examines one or more limited cases in time with data collection tools that include multiple sources and defines the situations and the themes related to the situation. The ground for using this technique is that pre school teachers, who are the research participants, develop subjective judgments about ethics and are affected by these judgments. Because the views of pre-school teachers about ethics are examined, the research phenomenon is ethics in this study.

2.2. Participants

In this research, the participation was made voluntarily. The research was conducted with 32 preschool education teachers working through a distance education model with the children attending preschool education in private and public independent kindergartens and primary schools; those are affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in Zonguldak, in the academic year of 2020-2021. In selecting pre-school teachers who comply with the specified criteria and declare that they are willing to participate in this research, the easily accessible case sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used because it is easily accessible by the researcher. Purposive sampling is a concept used in qualitative research. Purposive samplings might prefer the selection of situations that reflect different perspectives on the problem, process, and event to be presented and may lead to the emergence of important information about critical situations (Bernard, 2011; Creswell, 2015). The results about the gender, age, graduate institution or department, postgraduate education degree, type of employed institution, and professional seniority of the teachers who constituted the participant group were collected during the research in accordance with the questions in the general information form prepared by the researcher, and the frequencies and percentages related to these results were reported in Table 1.

Table 1. *Information of the Participants*

		n	%
Gender	Female	32	100
Age	21-25	7	21,87
	26-30	7	21,87
	31-35	5	15,62
	36-40	7	21,87
	41 and more	6	18,75
Bachelor Degree	4-Year Child Development and Training (Undergraduate Education)	1	3,12
	4-Year Pre-School Education Teaching (Undergraduate Education)	30	93,75
	Other (Handicrafts Teaching Department – Undergraduate Education)	1	3,12
Post Graduate Education Level	Yes	4	12,5
	No	8	87,5
Type of Employed Institution	Public Kindergarten	18	56,25
	Public Nursery Class	11	34,37
	Private Infant School and Kindergarten	3	9,37
Professional Seniority	2-5 year	12	37,5
	6-10 year	6	18,75
	11-15 year	7	21,87
	16-20 year	3	9,37
	21 year and more	4	12,5

According to Table 1, the gender of the whole participants of the research is female. Looking at age, there are 7 teachers in the 21-25, 26-30, and 36-40 age groups, 6 teachers aged 41 and over, and 5 teachers in the 31-35 age group. While 30 of the teachers have a bachelor's degree in pre-school education teaching, 1 (one) teacher

has a bachelor's degree in child development and 1 (one) teacher has a bachelor's degree in handicrafts teaching;. At the same time, it is observed that 4 teachers have postgraduate education, it is determined that 28 teachers don't have post-graduate degree. When the types of institutions are examined, it is observed that there are 18 teachers, working at the kindergarten, 11 teachers working at the nursery class, and 3 teachers are working at private kindergarten and nursery class. Furthermore, if we consider the seniority of the teachers, 12 of them have seniority of 1-5 years, 7 have seniority of 11-15 years, 6 have seniority of 16-20 years, and 4 have seniority of 21 years or more.

2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The general information form and structured questionary form, prepared by the researcher, have been used in the research as a data gathering tool.

General Information Form: General information form is a 6-question survey form, prepared by the researcher to obtain information about the demographic characteristics of the research participants. This form consists of 6 independent variables that make it possible to obtain information about the gender, age, institution or department in which they graduated, postgraduate education status, type of institution for which they work, and professional seniority of the preschool teachers who are participants in this study. *Structured Questionary Form*: This form is a form consisting of 5 open-ended questions prepared by the researcher to determine the opinions of preschool education teachers about ethics, professional ethics, ethics in studying with children, ethics in studying with families, and ethics in distance education. The questionary form is a method developed for ensuring the coverage of all dimensions and problems related to the research problem. At the same time, based on certain in forms allows for obtaining more systematic and comparable information from different individuals (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). The researcher developed this form based on the ethical principles that should be followed toward children, families, colleagues, and society established by the NAEYC (2006), the ethical principles established by NEA (1975), and the ethical principles established by the Ministry of National Education (2009) for those who provide educational services, and finally the ethical principles presented by Tomlinson & Little (2003) as a source (NAEYC, 2006; MoNE, 2009). After the questions of the form were prepared, they were submitted to the opinion of 3 field experts and the final version was revealed following the incoming feedback. In order to get opinions on the themes of "ethics", "professional ethics", "ethics in studying with children", "ethics in studying with families", and "ethics in distance education" determined by the researcher; the questions of "What are your views on ethics?", "What are views on professional ethics?", "What are your views on ethics in studying with children?", "How do you feel about ethical issues when studying with families??", and "What are your views on ethics in distance education?" the teachers were asked in this form.

2.5. Validity and Reliability

The concepts of validity and reliability are important concerns regarding the stages of creating a conceptual framework of any research, regardless of its type, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting its data, as well as presenting its findings (Merriam, 2018, p.200). The validity is about the accuracy of the research results. In qualitative research, validity is related with the fact that the researcher conveys the subject as unbiased as possible and that the measurement tool accurately measures the phenomenon it aims to measure. To ensure the internal validity in this study, the researcher constantly compared the results obtained from the study with each other and checked whether the findings were consistent within themselves. The researcher observed whether the findings were parallel to the previously created conceptual framework and took the framework as a guide for himself (NAEYC, 2006; NEA, 1975; Thomas & O'kane, 1998). At the end of the research, the researcher confirmed whether the results reflect the truth. The external validity is about how applicable the results of a study are when faced with different situations, and it describes the generalizability of the results of the study. In this study, the researcher presented the research model, how s/he collected the data, what s/he did to analyze and interpret the data, and the findings to the reader in detail and provided the transferability of the research.

The reliability is important since it is a prerequisite for ensuring the validity in scientific studies (Karataş, 2015). The external reliability regards whether the research results can be obtained similarly on similar occasions. To ensure the reliability, it is important to define the conceptual framework used in the analysis of the data obtained. In this study, the researcher ensured external reliability by explaining the collected data

comprehensively and in detail. The internal reliability is related to whether other researchers can achieve the same results using the same data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). To ensure internal security in this study, first of all, the collected data were coded by the researcher and a field expert independently and gathered under the categories obtained from these codes. The codes that the researcher and the field expert put forward independently of each other and the categories associated with these codes have been compared and thus, the final version of the categories and codes has been taken. The reliability of the research was calculated through the reliability calculation formula, developed by Miles & Huberman (1994). This formula is calculated as; "Reliability = Consensus / (Consensus + Divergence)". In this study, it was detected by the researcher and the field expert that the number of codes based on consensus was 159, and the number of codes based on divergence was 13. When the reliability of this study is calculated according to Miles & Huberman formula [Reliability = 159 / (159+13)], this ratio is calculated as 92 %. Since the research is deemed reliable, in case the reliability calculations equal more than 70%, it can be said that this research is reliable Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64).

2.6. Data Analysis

To analyze the data in the study, the obtained data were transmitted into electronic environment, in the first instance. The researcher read the transmitted data several times, examined line-by-line (verbatim), and then considered with an inductive approach. The inductive approach is compatible with the phenomenological approach, which argues that the interpretation of the social structure of the world is carried out by individuals (Finn et al., 2000). In this study, the data were analyzed by using the methods of descriptive analysis and content analysis. In the descriptive analysis, the data are arranged according to the themes revealed by the research questions and interpreted by describing them. The main purpose of content analysis is to achieve the concepts and relationships, which can express the collected data. The data, summarized and interpreted in the descriptive analysis, are subjected to deeper processing in the content analysis and the concepts and themes, which are not recognized through a descriptive approach, can be discovered as a result of this analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The data were analyzed through "coding" introduced by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The coding is marking or labeling the small pieces of data by identifying similar and different aspects of data (Creswell, 2015; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coding process consists of collecting text or visual data into small information categories, searching for evidence for the code received from different databases used in a study, and then giving a label to the code (Creswell, 2015, p.184).

In this study, the researcher tried to name them to reveal the reality, the circumstance or the fact hidden within the data and then compared them with each other. As a result of the comparison, similar thoughts were assembled under the same roof, and the codes emerged. Thereafter, s/he revealed the categories by gathering the codes with similar characteristic. The researcher examined the research data and then the determined codes were submitted to expert opinion. The required corrections were made by considering the expert's recommendations and the final version of the codes was decided. The commonalities of the codes developed were determined, and in this way the categories and themes were identified that formed the basis for the results section of the study. In order to finalize the themes, it was checked by the researcher and the field expert whether the codes and categories under the determined themes were consistent with the themes, or not. Following these checks, the final version of the codes and categories were developed.

2.7. The Role of the Researcher

The researcher has obtained theoretical Knowledge about the research subject, by examining the respected resources on ethics, professional ethics, and ethics in education, ethics in preschool education, and ethics in distance education, together with the respected studies, performed in land and abroad. The knowledge the researcher gained from the qualitative research course she/he took during her/his postgraduate education, the training she/he received on qualitative research, and the research she/he conducted using the qualitative research method contributed to the application of the qualitative method in this study and to overcoming the difficulties encountered during the research process. The researcher informed the teachers about the research during the data gathering process and delivered the general information form and the structured questionary form online to the teachers who agreed to participate to the research. After the teachers filled out the forms, they again sent them to the researcher online. The researcher didn't interfere with the teachers during the data gathering process, so the teachers were allowed to fill out the forms without feeling any pressure.

2.4. Ethical

The required permissions were obtained from Zonguldak Provincial Directorate of National Education to carry out this study and from Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University Ethics Committee, to determine the general compliance of the study with ethical rules. Participation in the research is based on volunteerism. After the permits were obtained, the information form prepared by the researcher was sent to the pre-school teachers working in the institutions, selected by the researcher. Since the participation was based on volunteerism, and due to the epidemic period, the general information form and structured questionary form, prepared by the researcher, were sent online to the teachers who desired to participate in the study, and they were collected online after the form filling out process was completed.

3. Findings

When the answers of the participants were analyzed, they were gathered under 5 main themes, as; "ethics", "professional ethics", ethics in studying with children", "ethics in studying with families", and "ethics in distance education" themes. The findings regarding the themes are presented in detail as follows.

3.1. Ethics Theme

The opinions of the preschool education teachers regarding ethics have been examined and the obtained themes and categories are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Findings Related to the Theme of Ethics*

Theme	Ethics		
Categories	Social	Universal	Personal
Codes	Society and life	Rules	
	Morality	Professional Ethics	Distinguish between right and
	Tradition, custom, custom, piece	Values	wrong
		Equality	Personality
	Etiquette	Justice	Individual differences
	Environment	Do not violate the rights of	Impulse control
	Order	others	Responsibility
	Family structure	Education	Conscience
	The manager determines the rules in business life	Human rights	Self-realization
		Respect	

According to Table 1, it was discovered that the participants perceived ethics in social, universal and personal scales. In the social dimension of ethics, it was observed that they expressed that ethics exists in every moment of our daily lives and directs us. For instance, K3 expressed her opinion: "*Ethics comes before us either in our profession or in human relations, at the grocery store, at the market, on the bus, shortly in our every moment, at all our activities*".

3.2. Professional Ethics Theme

The opinions of the pre-school education teachers regarding professional ethics have been examined, and the obtained themes and categories are shown in Table 2.

According to Table 2, it was discovered that the participants perceived the professional ethics under; values, environments, professional competency, personal characteristics and other categories. Under the category of values related to the professional ethics theme, it was observed that the teachers pointed that it is important to be fair towards children to be ethical. For instance, K22 declared her opinion: "*I am attentive to treat each of my students from different backgrounds fairly and equally in my classroom.*" Regarding the professional competency category, K9 mentioned the effects of ethical rules over the communication within her statement: "*I consider it significant to act within the framework of ethical rules, particularly in my communication with my colleagues in my own backyard and my attitude towards them*". In the category of personal characteristics, it was discovered that the professional ethics has an internal and spiritual aspect, and the ethical rules required by the profession to exhibit behaviours pursuant to the professional ethics was emphasized. For instance, K17 emphasized the criticality of the person, his/her own desire in observance of the rules through her opinions on this subject as: "*It is necessary for the person to desire the development of ethical values in him/herself, this is not something that will change through any outside intervention*". For the environment category, it was detected that the participant

stated that the teachers should develop a healthy environment for the children. For instance, K25 expressed that she is attentive to developing a healthy environment, stating her opinion: "*I organize an entertaining and instructive educational atmosphere for them in the most proper way, by considering their needs and programs*".

Table 2. *Findings on the Theme of Professional Ethics*

Theme	Professional ethics				
Categories	Professional competency	Values	Personal Characteristics	Environment	Other
Codes	Rules, Do your job well, Behaviours, Have professional knowledge, Sense of responsibility, Self-improvement, Being child-centered, Education, To be a role model, Being planned and programmed, Being open to innovations, Principles, Vocational, Compliance with the hierarchy, Strong human relations, Self-control, Being compatible with others, Protecting children,	Justice, Equality, Respect, Being honest, Valuing those around you, Confidence, Tolerance, Patience, Love, Sharing, Security,	Internalizing ethics, Morality, Conscience, Controlling your instincts,	Creating a healthy environment, Getting to know the child, parent and environment well,	Pre-school education, Social acceptance, Family,

The other category was created from the expressions, which cannot be directly related to professional ethics. For instance, K20 expressed this: "*The pre-school period constitutes the first step of the education and the experiences gained during this period configure the whole life of the individual*".

3.3. The Ethics Theme in Studying with the Children

The opinions of the preschool education teachers regarding ethics in studying with children have been examined and the obtained themes and categories are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Findings on the Theme of Ethics in Working with Children*

Theme	Ethics in working with children			
Categories	Profession	Child	Values	Family
Codes	Justice, Equality, Self-improvement, Compliance with the program, Sufficiency, Role model, Problem-solving, Effective communication, Being helpful to others, Professional ethics, Balance and order, Internalizing ethics, Morality, Compliance with laws and regulations, Not knowing what to do, Flexibility,	Children's rights, Individual differences, Children's needs, Readiness of the child, Children's egocentrism, Getting to know the child, Confidence, Security, Social media use,	Honesty, Responsibility, Confidence, Respect, Sharing, Solidarity, Patience,	Communication with the family, Influence of the family,

According to Table 3, it was observed that the participant perceived the ethics in studying with children under the categories of values, profession, child and family. The participants stated that in the profession category, the teachers should behave fairly towards the children without any discrimination among them. For instance, K12 mentioned this issue through her opinion: "*I think that children should be treated fairly, at first, in order to be ethical in studying with children*". K30, on the other hand, stated that it is important for children to treat each other fairly through her opinion as "*I pay attention to the fact that children also treat each other fairly among themselves*". In the child category, which has emerged as another category, it was stated that the children have certain rights and that we should respect their rights. K20 expressed her opinions related to the category: "*To exemplify, we should primarily accept the children as an individual. We should also take the children seriously, as if we value an adult person and as if we take them seriously*".

Furthermore, the participants also emphasized that the children should assume responsibilities, pursuant to their ages and levels and it is important to study with the families, on this issue. K16 stated that each child should assume responsibility with expressions such as: "*We shouldn't throw away the children by saying 'that kid can't manage this'*. Not every child can assume every responsibility due to their level. However every child can assume responsibility according to his/her level". In the family category, it was explained that children are influenced by their families and their behaviours are structured by the influence of their families. For instance, K23 declared that the families may differ from each other and these differences may reflect the behaviours of the children, in her statement as: "*I recognize that each child's family has its own right and wrong aspects in ethical behaviours regarding the children*".

3.4. The Ethics Theme in Studying with the Families

The opinions of the preschool education teachers regarding ethics in studying with families have been examined and the obtained themes and categories are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. *Findings Related to the Theme of Ethics in Working with Families*

Theme	Ethics in studying with the families				
Categories	Teacher	Family attitude	Professional ethics	Communication with family	School type
Codes	Caring for the family, Getting to know and understand the family, To be a role model, Supporting the family, Give feedback, Being child-centered, Professional qualification, Creating a suitable educational environment, Not accepting gifts, Colleague support, collaboration, Being honest, To be authoritarian,	Egocentrism, Expectations, Respect for the child, Classroom management, Not telling the truth, Trying to scare children quality time, Child's age, Perspective on pre-school education,	Photo sharing, Equality, Security, Respect for the child, Professionalism, Volunteering, Responsibility, Experience, Behavior analysis,	Meeting, Family involvement, Partnership, Obeying the rules, Home visits, Consultancy, Effective, Addressing,	Private school, State school,

In Table 4, the ethics theme in the studies with the families was achieved through the categories of "Teacher", "Family Attitude", "Professional Ethics", "Communication with Family" and "School Type". In the teacher category, it was recognized that the participants remained distant when communicating with families and were attentive to using appropriate language. For instance, K8 expressed that she stood aloof from the families, through her statements as; "*I stand aloof from the families, in general. I am teacher, s/he is parent. I take attention to this discrimination. My limits are firm*". On the other hand, K12 pointed out that the teacher should know the family's economic situation and make plans that do not put pressure on the family, according to her

statements, "I think that the family's economic situation should be known and that this should be taken into account during the study with the family. *Thus, the studies could be performed without creating any burden over any one*". In the category of family attitude, it was recognized that it was unethical for families to expect only their children to be interested. For instance, K29 expressed her opinions regarding to this issue as: "*The families prefer to interpret the events from their windows. They can only act by considering their children as unique and precious*".

Regarding the professional ethics category, the participants stated that the parents' attitude was decisive about sharing photos. K24 expressed her opinions on this issue as: "*In previous years, I had shared some of our performed activities in the group. However, when I faced the parents' questions who were comparing the children; I cancelled the photograph sending*". In respect of the category of communication with the family, the participants emphasized the significance of communication with the family. For instance, K 24 mentioned about communication methods with the parents, in her statement on this issue as: "*I carry out my communication with the family through WhatsApp group in case that there is an issue that considers everyone, and if it is a personal issue, through phone call or through face-to-face conversation*". Finally, in the school type category, it was discovered that there are differences among the school types (private/state/official) in respect to communication with the family. For instance, K11 declared that she had difficulty in communicating with the families while she was working at a private institution through her statement as: "*Sometimes, informing the families about something, organizing them is harder than studying with children. That might be seen difficult for me because I work in a private institution*".

3.5. The Ethics Theme in Distance Education

The opinions of the preschool education teachers regarding ethics in distance education have been examined and the obtained themes and categories are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Findings Related to the Theme of Ethics in Distance Education*

Theme	Ethics in Distance Education				
Categories	Teacher	Equality of opportunity	Family attitude	Distance Education System	Environment
Codes	Informing the family, Child centered, Preparation for lessons, Justice, Equality, Give feedback, Attract attention, Access to up-to-date, Knowledge and skills, Dynamism, Rules, Reinforcer,	Attendance problem, Lack of equipment, Internet problems, Lack of family care, Number of children in families, Timing, Monitoring, Children's development, Economy, School type,	The importance given to distance education, Interfering with children's autonomy, Participation in distance education, Distance learning, Supporting the child at the appropriate time, Interfering with the teacher, Not getting feedback, Don't blame the teacher, Respect for private life,	Age and developmental characteristics of children, Time spent in front of the screen attract attention, In-service training, Limited time, Lack of planning,	Lack of classroom environment, Privacy, Inability to get children's attention, Class rule,

The ethics theme in distance education was achieved through the categories of "Teacher", "Equality in Opportunities", "Family Attitude", "Distance education System" and "Environment". In the teacher category, it was understood that child-centred practices stood out during the distance education process. For instance, K6 stated that she had planned the things to be performed during the live lectures by considering the activities that would be beneficial to the child in her statement as: "*For the purpose of keeping strong dialogues between the children, I organized meeting hours for extracurricular conversations from time to time*". According to the category of equality in opportunities, the participants stated that the students had problems with tools, internet, and the system during this process and could not participate in the courses sufficiently. For instance, K4 mentioned the children's problems regarding the tools and equipments in her statement: "*Unfortunately, the possibilities of the children are not the same. While some have tablets, computers, the others don't have*". Regarding the family attitude category, it was discovered that the participant stated that the parents didn't accept the distance education

process and didn't participate in it. For instance, K25 stated, "*… 2 of the parents said that they did not attach much importance to the distance education in preschool, that the lessons of their other children were more important*".

On the other hand, the participants stated that the children could not perform the activities themselves due to the intervention of the parents in the activities held during the live classes, and they explained that this did not comply with the ethical rules. For instance, K25 indicated, "*For example, I perform an attention and perception exercise, and request from the parents to guide their children. However, the parents misunderstand this issue and sometimes do the exercise themselves in front of me*". For the category of distance education system, the participants declared that they thought that the distance education system was not suitable for the preschool children. For instance, K22 stated, "I can say that the distance education conditions are not suitable *for nursery class student*". For the category of environment, it was discovered that the distance education environment doesn't look like a class environment and they endeavoured to prepare the appropriate educational environment in this regard. For instance, K25 stated that environmental differences affect the preschool education, through her statement as: "*The professional ethical rules also vary in distance education. We have difficulty in fully complying with the rules that we apply in the classroom, with the children in front of the screen, due to their younger age groups*". Furthermore, K29 considered distance education to be unethical in terms of privacy, through her statement as: "*There was no privacy, and everything happened inside the house was reflected to the online classroom when the children forgot to turn off their microphones*". K13 also stated that the privacy of the private lives of the families couldn't be ensured, since the microphones were sometimes left on, through her statement as: "*There were a few times when my students forgot their microphones on. The daily dialogues that took place in the home atmosphere were also reflected in the lesson. However, after my warnings, the microphones were turned off*".

4. Conclusion and Discussion

As a result of this study's findings, it was determined that participants viewed ethics in three different ways: universally, socially, and individually. The teachers stated they considered the ethics as a body of rules that we encounter everywhere in our lives, related to morality and values, helping us distinguish between right and wrong. When the literature is examined, it has been discovered that there are studies examining the point of views of the teachers on the subject of ethics, in land and abroad (Coşkun et al., 2020; Covaleskie, 2005; Smith & Goldblatt, 2007). In a study by Kayataş (2019), it was discovered that the teachers regard the concept of ethics as acting following the social norms and laws and regulations under the ethics theme in social terms. Moreover, it was concluded that the teachers perceive the ethics as morality and faithfulness-honesty in individual respect. The results of this research suggest that teachers evaluate ethics as a fact that occurs in every moment of our lives, in their perception of the concepts of ethics in the social dimension; and that they emphasise the values in the universal dimension. Therefore, it can be said that this study's results provide evidence supporting the results of previously conducted research.

On the other hand, according to the result of research conducted by Coşkun (2016), it was revealed that the teachers participating in the study made their decisions about the teaching process by making an ethical evaluation. It was discovered that factors such as providing benefits to the students, equality, justice, and preventing their victimization were taken into account in these decisions. Also, Smith and Goldblatt (2007) determined teachers' ethical behaviors as "*honesty, respect and trust, social justice, authenticity, dedication, professionalism, and responsibility*". In this study, it was revealed that the matter of values is worthy, ethics is effective in our adaptation of the values, and values education is actually ethics education. In this context, the participants' statements, such that ethics include universal values, are remarkable.

On the other hand, Covaleskie (2005) declared that it is important for the teachers to improve themselves on professional development and to pay attention to aim at moral objectives, to behave ethically. Similarly, in this study, while the participants remarked on the morality aspect of ethics on the scale of social, they also stated that the teachers should improve themselves in both personal and professional senses in the personal scale of ethics. From this point of view, it can be said that the results of the two studies are consistent with each other. It can be stated as a highly significant result that the teachers clearly and apprehensible perceive it as professional ethics to effectively support the children by providing their development in a professional sense.

The principle of "*the teacher should not violate the laws or regulations designed to protect the children and should take measures pursuant to these rules*", which is one of the ethical principles announced by NAEYC, which is a determinative institution in terms of ethical principles that shows similarity with the statement of "*the teacher*

should know the ethical rules well and adopt them", which was revealed in the universal scale of ethics in this study. The principle of "*the society should be informed about child rights*", which is another principle determined by NAEYC, is in line with the statement of "*the teachers should comply with the professional ethics principles*" in the universal scale of ethics in this study. In addition, the principle of "*the teachers should provide their professional development in early childhood period*", determined by NAEYC (2006), is in harmony with the conception of "*the teachers should provide their professional developments*" in the universal scale of ethics in this (NAEYC, 2006). At the national level, among the ethical principles developed by the MoNE, the principle "A teacher should act in the exercise of his profession with the awareness that he is a member of a respectable and honorable profession" is similar to the statement "The teaching profession is an ethical profession and teachers should observe the rules of professional ethics" included in the universal ethical scale.. Another principle of "*the teacher should pay attention to up-to-dateness to have the knowledge, qualifications, and abilities required by his/her profession*" coincides with the statement of "*the teachers should beware of self-improvement and being up-to-date*" that was revealed in the personal scale of ethics. Also, the principle "Teachers should take a positive and active role in society and serve as role models for society by fulfilling their responsibilities" is consistent with the statement "Teachers should not forget that they should serve as role models for society and fulfill their responsibilities" included in the Personal Ethics Scale (MoNE, 2009).In addition to these, the principle "*the teacher should develop professional and merciful relations with the children and their families; they act with a cooperative approach depending on the values of trust, respect, honesty*" of the ethical rules determined by Childhood Professionals Ethics Association (2019), is similar with the statements of "*the teachers should act pursuant to the professional ethical rules in their communications with the parents*" and "*the teachers should act pursuant to certain values*", which revealed in the universal scale of ethics. The principle of "The teachers should try to provide a quality early childhood environment that recognizes and respects equality for everyone", explained by the Association, coincides with the statement that "*the teachers should give importance to equality and justice towards children and their families*" that revealed in the universal scale of ethics (https://www.myece.org.nz/code-of-ethical-conduct). In this respect, the results obtained in the research were similar to those of the research in the respected literature and the ethical principles announced by national and international organizations. Therefore, it can be stated that the preschool education teachers who participated in the research have a high level of awareness on ethics.

It was concluded that in the study, the participant perceived professional ethics in relation to professional competency, values, personal characteristics, environment and other categories. It was discovered that in the professional competency category the participants associated the professional ethics with the rules. In the values category, they emphasized the concepts of justice and equality. Besides these, it was concluded that in the personal characteristics category, the teachers should internalize the ethics, and in the environment category the teachers should be responsible for developing a healthy environment. Finally, it was discovered that in another categories, the participants highlighted the importance of being ethical in pre-school education. In other words, it was understood that the participants perceived professional ethics as; knowing and adopting the ethical rules well, acting with importance to equality and justice, identifying the children well, and developing the most appropriate educational environment for the children. Whenever the relevant literature has been examined, it has been discovered that many studies have been conducted on professional ethics (Gluchmanova, 2015; Kayataş, 2019; Kıranlı Güngör & Atalay, 2018; Manolova, 2011; Toprakçı et al., 2010). For instance, Kıranlı Güngör and Atalay (2018) discovered that the teachers were aware of professional ethical principles, and they acted pursuant to ethical principles. The study participants, consistent with this result stated that the teachers are aware of professional ethical principles and make an effort to comply with these principles. Besides, Toprakçı and colleagues (2010) determined that legal obligation, supervision, and safeguarding the public interest were among the reasons for teachers to comply with each ethical principle. Contrary to this, in this study, the participants declared that they didn't need external supervision to comply with the professional ethical rules and that internalizing the rules would be sufficient to be ethical. From this point of view, it has been understood that the studies have different results, and the pre-school education teachers are determined to comply with ethical rules without external supervision.

Besides this, in another study conducted by Kayataş (2019), it was detected that the teachers emphasized the importance of the matters of "compliance to professional rules and norms" and "fair and equal treatment" in professional ethics. In addition, a study conducted by Gluchmanova (2015) found that teachers and students should follow the rules and requirements established to fulfill their duties and that teachers should act as role

models for students so that students respect human dignity and adopt a moral life. In a similar manner, in this study, the participants stated that one of the responsibilities of the teachers is to teach the rules they should comply with and the values they should adopt, and the teachers should be role models for the society while doing this. Therefore, it can be said that the studies have results, support each other. Also, in a study conducted by Manolova (2011), opinions of the primary school teachers, working in public schools in Turkey and Moldavia, on adopting professional, ethical principles were examined. As a result of the research, it was stated that a high level of teachers complied with the principles of "*Behave faithfully towards students*", "*Does not discriminate between the students*", "*Behave faithfully towards parents*", and "*Does not discriminate the parents according to their socioeconomic level, during their communications*". Although the features of the participants are different (pre-school) in this study, it was concluded that the teachers stated that they should act faithfully and take into consideration equality and justice in their relations with both the parents and the children, in order to comply with professional ethics. In this respect, it can be said that the results of the studies show similarities. The principle of "*the teachers should advance the professional development of the early childhood care and education field*", determined by NAEYC is compatible with the statements of the participants that the teachers should have the professional competency required to comply with the professional ethics and they should develop themselves (NAEYC, 2006). It can be said that the principles of "*the teachers should provide a healthy and safe educational environment for students, teachers should comply with working and class hours elaborately, teachers mustn't accept any gift that is likely to affect their professional decision and objectivity except for the non-material symbolic gifts, presented on special days and weeks such as Teachers' Day, teachers should exhibit positive and active roles and set an example to the society by fulfilling their responsibilities*", developed by MoNE (2009), are compatible with the statements of the participants in this study as: the teachers should develop a health educational environment for the children, they should be role models to the society in practicing the ethical rules, they mustn't accept the valuable gifts from the children.

The ethics theme in studying with children was achieved through the categories of profession, child, values and family. It was recorded that in the profession category, the participants stated that the teachers should consider equality and justice to comply with ethics in the studies with the children. In child category, the participants stated that the children should be aware of their rights and the children should act in line with their individual differences. In addition, it was detected that the honesty and responsibility issues were highlighted in the values category. In the family category of ethics in studying with children, it was determined that children imitate their families and therefore the teachers express opinions that they should give importance to communication with the family. When the results are considered in general; it was understood that the participants emphasized the importance of being fair and equal, the requirement of the acknowledgement of the child rights by the teachers, the requirement of the respect to the children's individual differences, the importance of exhibiting behaviours in complying with the mentioned values by the teachers for gaining certain values to the children and the importance of effective communication with the families during the whole process, regarding the subject of ethics in studying with children. It can be seen that there are many studies in literature conducted on ethics in studying with children (Avcı & Pekince, 2019; Çakmak, 2018; Liu, 2019; Sørensen, 2014; Uzun, 2014). For instance, Uzun (2014) stated that it is important to protect children from the harmful media content, and Çakmak (2018) stated that the importance of ethics in studying with children increased with the idea of "child as an individual and as an active research participant", which started to gain acceptance with the studies on children's rights. In this study, similar to the previous studies it was concluded that the participants drew attention to the necessity of knowing and adopting the child rights well to comply with the ethical rules in the studies with the children. Also, in ethical terms, Sørensen (2014) discussed the remarkable points in video shoots of the younger children's plays and emphasized the necessity and the requirement of respect for the children's privacy. In addition, Liu (2019) stated that there might be cultural differences in studying with children and that care should be taken in this context. Therefore, in this study we face another important result such that the participants stated that to behave ethically in studying with the children, the rights and privacy of the children should be valued and protected.

It is understood that the principles of "*recognizing and respecting the unique qualities, talents and potential of each child, creating and maintaining safe and healthy environments that promote their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development and respect their dignity and contributions, providing the access to the required assistance services in order all the children to become successful including those with special needs, studying in harmony with the families*" determined by NAEYC (2006) on ethics in studying with children, are compatible with the statements as

"*taking into consideration the individual differences of the children, acting equally and faithfully, developing learning environments which support their developments by respecting their rights, providing effective communication with families and carrying out the process in cooperation*" of the participants in the research. Also, it has been seen that the ethical principles that "*the teachers should set an example for instilling love in all students by loving them, making them feel loved, they should be empathetical and tolerant, like others, to all students who differ in their characteristics, and they should make the necessary efforts to raise physically and spiritually healthy, good moral, self-confident, responsible individuals*" determined by MoNE (2009) are in supporting nature with the statements of this study as: "*it is important the teachers should give the children certain values and that teachers become role models for the children in this process, the requirement of attaching responsibilities in line with the level of each child, acting faithfully and equally towards each child, by considering the differences of the children*".

The categories of teacher, family attitude, professional ethics, communication with family and school type, which enable to reach the ethics theme, have been identified in the studies with families. In the teacher category of ethics in studying with the families, the participants stated that the teachers should prefer to be distant in their relations with the family, know them well to comprehend the family and be aware that they are role models to the families on many issues. When the other category is considered in terms of family attitude, it has been observed that the teachers don't like the egocentric attitude of the families and don't find it ethical. Furthermore, when looking at the participants' shared opinions on professional ethics in the studies with families, it was concluded that teachers share children's photos even though they consider it unethical. It was also found that participants preferred to meet with families face-to-face or by phone, depending on the actual situation. In addition, in the views on the category of school type about ethics in working with families, statements about the difference in ethics in working with families in private and public schools were reached. When the literature has been examined, it has been determined that there are relatively few studies conducted on ethics in studies with families (Sultana, 2014; Üstübal, 2015). Participants indicated that the following statements relate to ethical behaviour in learning with families: that it is important to know and understand the family, that teachers should always be a role model to the family and that the attitude of the family influences the course of the process, that teachers should prefer face-to-face and collective meetings when meeting with families, depending on the topic and situation. Sultana (2014), in her research, stated that although teachers have various responsibilities in the process of children's acquisition of ethics, the biggest and most important role in this regard belongs to families. Also in this study, the participants stated that the attitude of the family and being a role model are effective in the acquisition of ethical behaviours of children. On the other hand, even though it is suggested that family education and participation in pre-school education should be carried out by using many techniques such as parent meetings, group meetings, individual interviews, education boards, newsletters, brochures, photographs, internet, and year-end show (Üstübal, 2015), it was understood in this study that the participants considered it ethical to stand off the parents, and also they didn't communicate much with the families due to the epidemic. It was noted that the principles established by the NAEYC (2006) "It is necessary to be familiar with the database of effective studies with families, to be informed by continuous education and training, to listen to families, to recognise their strengths and competencies, to protect privacy by avoiding intruding into family life" are compatible with the statements of the participants that "emphasise the importance of communication with families and allow families to be involved in the process during the activities within it". However, it is assumed that this process was interrupted due to the epidemic. Also, one of the principles set by MoNE (2009) "There should be no discrimination between families based on race, language, religion, colour, gender, political views, and marital status" and the participants' statement "Teachers should treat families equally" support each other.

In the study, the participants stated that; the facts of "*the issue of informing the families, taking care of children's participation in classes, being aware of the importance of education even under remote and harder conditions, and providing education by taking into account the age and development features of the children*" are related to ethics in distance education. In other words, it was understood that the participation of the children, personal discriminations, and informing the family during the distance education are the principles that should be considered into distance education. When the body of literature is examined, there are studies, discussing distance education (Aral & Kadan, 2021; Bennett et al., 2020; Gündoğdu, 2021, Karadağ & Yücel, 2020). For instance, Karadağ and Yücel (2020) discovered that most undergraduate students don't have access to computers and the internet. In another study, Bennet et al. (2020) discovered the result that the internet services and socio-economical conditions of the families reveal the inequalities of opportunities among the students.

In addition, Saran (2020) discovered that there is an inequality of opportunities among the students in terms of participation in distance education online classes, especially in developing countries. In this study, the teachers regard the fact that "some of the children have a tablet or computer and internet connection required for their participation in distance education" as unethical, and they emphasize the inequality of opportunity consequently, therefore, this can be stated as a very significant result. In another study, Yürek (2021) concluded that pre-school teachers consider that they are deprived of the wide variety of materials offered by the classroom environment and the opportunity to implement various activities since they couldn't present in the classroom environment during the distance education process. Similarly, in this study, the participants discovered the teachers' statements regarding the unethical events that occurred, such as: They had difficulty providing the classroom environment in distance education, privacy was violated because the children forgot to turn off their microphones so that the private life at home was reflected in the classroom environment, the families interfered with the children where they should not interfere.

As a summary, it was understood that the pre-school education teachers, participating in the study, perceived the ethics in terms of social, personal, and universal. It was also noted that the emphasis on equality and justice as prerequisites for ethical action in dealing with children, the importance of respecting children's rights and individual differences, and the teaching of values to teachers and educators have come to the fore. On the contrary, it was detected that sufficient communication couldn't be provided with the families during the distance education period, inequality of opportunities in education emerged due to various reasons, and attaining the children was difficult.

4.1. Limitations and Recommendations

There are several limitations to the study. The first and major limitation of the study is that the data were collected in the form of questions and the results are not based on observations.. The fact that the participants were not selected from the teachers working in different places (province, district, etc.) can be expressed as another limitation. On the other hand, various suggestions were developed depending on the research results. First, according to the research, the teachers stated that the inequality of opportunity arising in distance education causes ethical violations. To prevent this violation, it may be recommended to provide the required support to the families experiencing disabilities. The pre-school education teachers were studied in this research, and their views on ethics were examined. To contribute to the literature, it may be suggested to conduct studies in which the opinions of the school directors, teacher candidates, and families are obtained regarding the issues of ethics and professional ethics in studying with the children, and then the findings can be compared. 32 pre-school education teachers participated in this research. For further studies, it can be recommended to conduct studies with a broader participant group. Finally, the participants' demographic features didn't generate the focus point of the research. Therefore, it can be suggested that demographic variables should be considered in future studies.

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