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Extended Abstract

Developing an Ethical Tendencies Scale Based on the Theories of Ethics*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to develop an ethical tendencies scale for educators based on ethics theories. The study is a quantitative scale-development study, and 312 volunteer education-faculty students joined in the study. From among the purposeful sampling methods, convenience sampling was used. Content and language validity were provided by following a scale-development process and receiving expert opinions. After administering the scale in order to test items' distinctiveness, item-total correlations were calculated and those less than .30 were omitted. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis the scale and theoretical model were found to show a fit between normal and perfect. To test the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha, Guttman, split-half, and test-retest coefficients were calculated. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for teleological ethics was found to be .74; for deontological ethics, .67; and for virtue ethics, .73. Furthermore, the coefficients for teleological ethics were calculated as Guttman = .75, split-half = .76, and test-retest = .93; for deontological ethics, Guttman = .70, split-half = .74, and test-retest = .91; and for virtue ethics, Guttman = .71, split-half = .75, and test-retest = .90. As a result of the study, a valid and reliable ethical tendencies scale (ETS) consisting of three factors (teleological ethics, deontological ethics, and virtue ethics) has been obtained.

Keywords

Ethics theories • Pre-service teachers • Ethical tendencies • Teleological ethics • Deontological ethics • Virtue ethics

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Researchers who want to study ethics will initially face different definitions of the concept of ethics. Because of this, it is necessary to dwell on the definition of the term before anything else. The term *ethics* stems from the Greek word *ethos*, which has meanings like morals, tradition, customs, habits, temperament, mood, and character (Cevizci, 2014a; Pieper, 1999). Cevizci (2014a, p. 11) also states that ethics can be defined as “a branch or sub-discipline of philosophy dealing with morality and moral values.” Ethics can be defined as “a systematic thinking on morality; a query, an inquiry, and discussion on moral life” (Cevizci, 2002, p. 5), “a philosophical thinking or inquiry on the concepts of morals and morality” (Cevizci, 2013, p. 17), “principles; standards and values in the relationship of an individual with other individuals, institutions, and state that stems from the experiences, traditions, and customs of society; and a product of reasoning that increases social harmony, unity, and solidarity and that stabilizes the economic, political, and social constructs of society” (Kolçak, 2013, p. 3), or “a theory of moral action” (Pieper, 1999, p. 60). According to Türkeri (2013, p. 11), ethics expresses a system of principles according to which people organize their behaviors. Cevizci (2014a, p. 11) stated that ethics could also be defined as “a sub-discipline or branch of philosophy concerning morality and moral value.” Kuçuradi (2009, p. 30) states that although this kind of conceptualization of ethics seems problematic to her, ethics comprises “(i) attempts to define the good and bring universal norms for action; (ii) attempts to reveal higher norms for use as measures to evaluate and ground existing norms.”

Ethics and Ethics Classification

According to Kuçuradi (2009, p. 30), when considering books on the history of ethics, one can see that ethics has shown a development like this:

Ancient Greek ethics was *eudaemonist* (Ancient Greek philosophers tried to answer the questions of “what do we need to do?” or “how do we need to live?” to be happy.); deontological ethics (i.e. the ethics aiming to bring universally valid formal norms) began with Kant; in the 20th century (with Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann) began virtue ethics; today, the point that ethics come up to is meta-ethics (i.e., ethics that try to analyze and ground norm propositions or that try to find a basis for them).

Although ethics could, in short, be chronologically classified this way, different ethics classifications exist that use different criteria. Ethics from the point of its function can be classified under normative, descriptive, and meta-ethics (Cevizci, 2002); classical, modern, and post-modern from the point of historical progress (Bauman, 2011; Cevizci, 2002, 2014a); and from the point of persons or civilizations (i.e., Aristotle or Kant, Greek or Roman) (Türkeri, 2013). One can say ethics is also classifiable according to what main problem (i.e., good, truth, will) (Özlem, 2015) or what moral values and responsibilities (i.e., teleological, axiological, and deontological ethics) (Cevizci, 2002) it puts emphasis on.

This study reviews some classifications in the related literature (Cevizci, 2002, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Frankena, 2007; Frolov, 1997; Kuçuradi, 2009; Özlem, 2015), basically dividing ethics into two, theoretical and applied ethics, and basing theoretical ethics on normative and descriptive ethics (see Figure 1). Something that mentions “what should be” rather than the existing situation is indeed normative, and the basic feature of a moral judgment is its normativity (Cevizci, 2014b). In this sense, one can say that all ethics are normative. However, one should note here that normative ethics and descriptive/meta-ethics have different conceptualizations, unlike the conceptual approach in normative ethics, in descriptive/meta-ethics concepts are handled in a phenomenological manner; even the concepts themselves are discussed and their meanings and/or probabilities reasoned (Özlem, 2015).

Under the title of normative ethics are teleological, deontological, and virtue ethics, which have been classified as classical theories by Cevizci (2013; 2014a). Frankena (2007) made a similar classification but grouped the theories under egoist-duty, utilitarian and moral values, and responsibility titles. This classification strongly coincides with Cevizci’s (2013; 2014a).

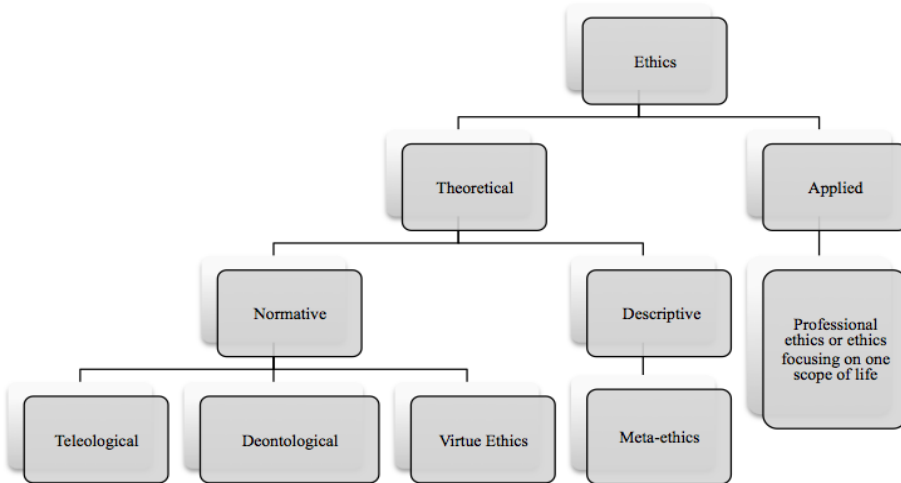


Figure 1. A classification for ethics.

Creating the Draft Scale

Theoretical Framework

Normative ethics “gives a theoretical basis for moral principles, ideals, and norms. It theoretically deals with the problems that emerge as they are, and reaches solutions in the consciousness of a society or class. Any comprehension reflecting the moral ideals of any specific social group is normative in the final analysis,” (Frolov, 1997, p. 155). Theories proposed in normative ethics can be divided into three according to their focus points. The first of these are theories based on the concept “good” and define the moral situation of the individual through an ultimate purpose. The second group is based on the issues of true action and understanding the morality involved in duties and responsibilities. The last group proposes that moral life derives from a mature character and virtues. These theories can be classified respectively as *teleological ethics*, *deontological ethics*, and *virtue ethics* (Cevizci, 2013, 2014a).

Teleological ethics. From the viewpoint of teleological ethics, what determines the value of a moral action or even a moral life results from that action or life; therefore, theories within teleological ethics are also called consequentialist ethical theories. In this type of ethics, the basic concepts are good and bad, and the concepts of right or wrong function as types of these concepts’ derivative. An action is not good or bad in itself; what makes an action good or bad is its outcome. Similarly, the trueness or falseness of an action is defined by the outcomes of that action, thus setting a moral standard that enables the ends legitimizing the means. The ultimate purpose is seen as individual happiness, self-actualization, or having the most amount of people happy. Accordingly, the measure in moral action is the production ratio of good to bad. The hedonisms of Cyrenaics, Aristippus, and Epicurus; Hobbes’s ethical egoism; and Bentham and Mill’s utilitarianisms can be counted under the scope of teleological ethics theories (Arslan, Kılıç Akıncı, & Bayhan Karapınar, 2007; Cevizci, 2013, 2014a; Frankena, 2007; Türkeri, 2013).

Deontological ethics. Deontological ethics, somehow on the opposite side of teleological ethics, emphasizes the trueness of the action itself, rather than its consequences. Accordingly, the trueness or falseness of an ethical action is determined by whether a person fulfills a moral duty or the moral rules of an action. The intention and the principles on which the action is based are also important. This approach considers the human being as reasonable and responsible, presumes that there are duties that need to be fulfilled, and places the concept of duty as its central point of view. True actions are those that stem from a duty and are compatible with the moral codes. Unlike teleological theories, deontological ethics have criteria like equity, objectivity, and universalizability. These ethics theories are based on the presupposition that an action can be considered ethical, independent from pleasure

and pain, as long as it is based on principles, really true, or intrinsically valuable rather than seeming good. Thus there are moral and conscientious truths independent of time and conditions. One should act in a manner that follows a universal code, or one should consider how things would be if one's principles in action were universal. According to these understandings, actions that are unethical are indeed also irrational. Mentionable in deontological ethics are religious ethics (Christian ethics like Thomas Aquinas, Islamic ethics such as Ghazali, etc.), Kant's deontological ethics and its modern reflection, and Ross's deontological intuitionism (Arslan et al., 2007; Cevizci, 2013, 2014a; Türkeri, 2013; Yüksel, 2010).

Virtue ethics. While teleological ethics emphasize good and beneficial consequences; and while deontological ethics emphasize duties, responsibilities and a universal moral code; virtues ethics emphasize the doer's character and virtue. Virtue ethics are basically interested in a good life and how a human should be; it uses the concept of character. The important thing is to be a good or virtuous, character-wise person. A virtue is a temperament, habit, quality, or characteristic that an individual should want to have. According to this approach, beliefs, sensitivity, and experiences are important, not codes or results. Whether or not benefit or harm comes to an individual or society as a result of the action is not important; the important thing is for the person to show virtuous behaviors. According to this understanding, actions are a reflection of inner morality, and virtues are what shape that morality. Virtue ethics, having its roots in classical ethics, can also be said to have representatives in critical ethics. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle can be said to have formed the basis for this ethics in classical ethics, and MacIntyre's contemporary virtue ethics can be said to represent this type of ethics in meta-ethics (Arslan et al., 2007; Cevizci, 2013, 2014a; Frankena, 2007).

Generating the Item Pool and Factors

While the scale was being formed and drafted, each of the three ethics theories (teleological, deontological, and virtue ethics) were taken as factors. The factor of teleological ethics consists of 17 items; deontological ethics, 11 items; and virtue ethics, 10 items.

Scoring. The draft scale was designed as a 4-point Likert-type scale. Scoring has been designed as *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *agree* (3), and *strongly agree* (4); no neutral expressions (i.e., undecided) were used. Neutral categories were not used in developing the scale because they provide no clue to diagnosing answers. Although some researchers have stated that as the number of categories increase, so does reliability to a certain level; others say this is the researcher's decision to make in accordance with the respondents, items, and situation (Tekindal, 2009).

Method

Participants

The participants of the study consist of 312 education-faculty students chosen through convenience sampling, a purposive sampling technique not based on probability. Convenience sampling is a technique in which relevant and easy-to-reach data sources are included in the research; it is useful for testing the effectiveness of a research design or data-collection tool (Newby, 2014). In scale-development studies, 300 or more participants are enough for factor analysis (Field, 2005). The participants here consist of 312 students from a state university during the 2015-2016 academic year. 92 (29.5%) participants are male, and 220 (70.5%) are female.

This study aims to develop a valid and reliable ethical tendencies scale and follows steps for developing a scale for this purpose. The draft scale was sent to field experts for content validity and to Turkish language experts for language use; revisions were made according to their feedback. To ensure the construct validity of the scale, confirmatory factor analysis was carried out on the draft scale. Again, to ensure the internal consistency of the scale item-total correlations, and to test its reliability, Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated. During the analyses, 12 items with low item-discrimination that were thought to negatively affect the validity and reliability of the scale were omitted from the draft version. When testing inter-item correlations, factors were not seen to have positive significant correlations. As a result, no total score can be calculated. Anyway, the factors can in fact have theoretically opposite, conflicting, or irrelevant independent hypotheses. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, the scale has been found to consist of 26 items that show a fit between normal and perfect with the theoretical model.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed in order to test construct validity, as the scale had been theoretically presumed to have three factors. Confirmatory factor analysis is a method used to ensure construct validity if a model is developed according to the theory or if a pre-developed scale is re-used; in other words if a theoretical construct is available. This method is highly used in scale development wherein the researcher tests categories that are pre-defined or revealed by theory. Said another way, researchers use confirmatory factor analysis when the number of factors related to the conceptual construct have been defined in the literature or when researchers determine the number of factors to be extracted based on their own observation (Şencan, 2005, p. 778). Item-total correlations were calculated to test item discrimination, as well as Cronbach's Alpha to test reliability.

Item Discrimination

Items 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 16 were omitted from the draft scale as a result of items with item-total correlations less than 0.30.

Construct Validity: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, items 10, 24, 25, 26, 28, and 37 were omitted from the scale. The remaining analyses were carried out on 26 items.

The first of the tested fit-indices was the chi-square/degrees of freedom; it showed the model to have perfect fit ($\chi^2 = 532.86$; $Sd = 296$; $p < .01$; $\chi^2/Sd = 1.80$). Checking the other fit-indices found them to be $RMSEA = 0.051$; $NFI = 0.97$; $NNFI = 1.06$; $RMR = 0.033$; $SRMR = 0.058$; $GFI = 0.95$; $AGFI = 0.94$; $PGFI = 0.80$; $CFI = 1.00$ (see Table 3). GFI and $AGFI$ indices that vary between 0.0 and 1.0 are interpreted as having no fit; .90, as good fit; and between .95 and 1.0, as perfect fit (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1982; Smith & McMillan, 2001). Some researchers have stated that .85 can also be used as a cut-off point (Hu & Bentler, 1999). $RMSEA$, unlike other indices, is interpreted as better fit when closer to 0 with 1 meaning no fit. Values less than .05 show good fit; between .06 and .09, normal fit; and below .10, acceptable fit. CFI varies between 0 and 1 (Bentler, 1990); values above .90 can be interpreted as a normal fit, and between .95 and 1.0 as a perfect fit. NFI and $NNFI$ values measure between 0 and 1; closer to 1 means a better fit (Bentler, 1990). While .90 can be taken as a cutoff point for goodness-of-fit, .95 or higher is seen as perfect fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Smith & McMillan, 2001). $NNFI$ values can exceed 1.0, and are interpreted as 1 when this happens (Bentler, 1990). RMR and $SRMR$ values can vary between 0 and 1; .05 or below means perfect fit, and less than .08 means good fit. $PGFI = 0$ means no fit, and $PGFI = 1$ means perfect fit. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis here, one can say the scale and theoretical model show a fit between normal and perfect (Table 1).

Table 1
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices

| Fit indices | Coefficient | Fit |
|--------------|-------------|---------|
| <i>RMSEA</i> | 0.05 | Normal |
| <i>NFI</i> | 0.97 | Perfect |
| <i>NNFI</i> | 1.06 | Perfect |
| <i>RMR</i> | 0.03 | Perfect |
| <i>GFI</i> | 0.95 | Perfect |
| <i>AGFI</i> | 0.94 | Perfect |
| <i>PGFI</i> | 0.80 | Good |
| <i>CFI</i> | 1.00 | Perfect |
| <i>SRMR</i> | 0.06 | Good |
| χ^2/Sd | 1.80 | Perfect |

$N = 312$, $\chi^2 = 532.86$, $Sd = 296$.

Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha, Guttman, split-half, and test-retest coefficients were calculated to test the reliability of the scale for each factor. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for teleological ethics was found to be .74; for deontological ethics, .67; and for virtue ethics, .73. Furthermore, the coefficients for teleological ethics were calculated as Guttman = .75, split-half = .76, and test-retest =.93; for deontological ethics, Guttman = .70, split-half =.74, and test-retest =.91; and for virtue ethics, Guttman = .71, split-half =.75, and test-retest =.90 (Table 2). Reliability coefficients mostly show acceptable reliability greater than .70. However, the type of scale and number of items in the factor should be taken into consideration while interpreting this coefficient. Scales like intelligence tests are expected to have higher alphas, while scales like psychological tests may have somewhat lower alphas. In addition, the more items in the scale, the higher the coefficient tends to be, and, conversely, the fewer items in the scale, the lower the coefficient tends to be (Field, 2005).

Correlations between factors. Mean, standard deviation, reliability and inter-determination coefficients of the factors are shown in Table 2. When the correlations between the factors are analysed it can be seen that they don’t have positive high correlations, so that a total score cannot be calculated.

Table 2
Factors’ Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients, and Inter-Determination Coefficients.

| Factor | Item count | \bar{x} | Sd | Cronbach’s Alpha | Split-half | Guttman | Test-retest | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------------|-----|------|------|
| Teleological | 10 | 3.01 | .43 | .74 | .76 | .75 | .93 | 1.0 | 0.09 | 0.16 |
| Deontological | 7 | 3.24 | .41 | .67 | .74 | .70 | .91 | | 1.0 | 0.28 |
| Virtue ethics | 9 | 3.15 | .41 | .73 | .75 | .71 | .90 | | | 1.0 |
| Total | 26 | 3.15 | .33 | | | | | | | |

Discussion

Creating a valid and reliable ethical tendencies scale has been the purpose of this study. As a result of the analyses, the scale and the theoretical model show a fit between normal and perfect.

Factor 1: Teleological ethics. While interpreting scores from the scale, one can be said to have an ethical tendency corresponding to the highest mean. A maximum of 40 and a minimum of 10 points can be scored for teleological ethics. Individuals whose highest mean score is from this factor can be said to put emphasis on the results of actions rather than the reasons behind them or how the person acted, give importance to the increase of pleasure and happiness, think that enjoying the moment is important instead of worrying, and that the value of actions depends on one’s situation.

Factor 2: Deontological ethics. A maximum of 28 and a minimum of 7 points can be received for this factor. People whose highest mean score is from this factor can be said to have a deontological tendency, which means they believe that humans have certain duties and responsibilities and are principled, and that rather than the consequence of an action, the intention behind it is important. They can be said to believe that individuals should act based on universal ethical principles. If an individual does the right thing, it is because they did something that made themselves feel worthy.

Factor 3: Virtue ethics. From this factor, a maximum of 36 and a minimum of 9 points can be received. One who has their highest mean score from this factor can be said to evaluate the ethicalness of an action according to the character and morality of the doer. According to these individuals, someone being ethical and solid is related to their use of common sense and reasoning while making decisions. An ethical action is one that an individual puts forth not because of a pressure or norm but because of one's inner morals, good will, and common sense. Individuals with a virtue-ethics tendency can be said to focus on the doer and the doer's characteristics rather than the reason or the result of that action.

As a result of the study, the 26-item scale shows a fit with its theoretical model between normal and perfect. For the last step, the items were renumbered and a valid and reliable 4-point Likert-type ethical tendencies scale consisting of 26 items was obtained. For future studies, the scale can be suggested for use with different samples.

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Ek 1*Etik Eğilimler Ölçeği*

| No | MADDELER | Hiç Katılmıyorum | Katılmıyorum | Katılıyorum | Kesinlikle Katılıyorum |
|----|--|---------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Bir eylemin değerini eylemin sonucu belirler. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Mutluluk hayatın en büyük amacıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | İnsanlar acıdan kaçıp hazzı yöneldiği takdirde mutluluğa ulaşır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | Kişi gelecek için endişelenmek yerine anın keyfini çıkarmalıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | Kişinin ne yapması ve nasıl davranması gerektiği bütünüyle içinde bulunduğu duruma bağlıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | İnsan kendi varlığını mümkün olan her yolu kullanarak korumak zorundadır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | Bir şey mutluluğa katkı yaptığı oranda istenir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | Mutluluk insan eylemlerinin nihai amacıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | Fedakârca davranışlar bireysel ya da toplumsal mutluluğu artırdığı oranda iyidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | Kişi iki eylem arasında seçim yapmak zorunda kaldıysa en fazla haz ve mutluluk getirecek eylemi seçmelidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | İnsan sorumlu bir varlıktır ve insanlık gereği gerçekleştirmesi gereken bazı ödevleri vardır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Bir eylemde eylemin sonucundan çok niyet önemlidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 | İnsan doğru olanı yaptığında kendine yakışanı yapmış olur. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14 | İnsan ilkeli olmalıdır ve hayatında bu ilkelere uymalıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15 | Kişi sadece kendisi için değil, diğer insanların da gelişimi için çaba sarf etmelidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16 | Etik eylem, evrensel ölçütlere göre de etik olan eylemdir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17 | Kişinin eylemde bulunurken sırf zorunluluktan dolayı belli ilke ya da kurallara uyması o eylemleri etik yapmaz. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18 | Bir eylemin etik olma durumunu, eylemi yapan kişinin karakteri ve erdemliliği belirler. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19 | Bir kişinin yaptıkları, onun iç ahlakının bir yansımasıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20 | Ahlâklı kişi iki eylem arasında seçim yapmak zorunda kalırsa bunu aklını kullanarak, rasyonel bir biçimde yapan kişidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 | Hayatta aklı başında, akliselim tercihler yapan kişi erdemli kişidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22 | Bir kişiyi ahlaki olarak değerlendirirken çok dikkat edilmesi gereken şey kişinin iyi niyetli ve sağduyulu olmasıdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23 | Bir kişide bulunması gereken en önemli niteliklerden birisi o kişinin adil olmasıdır | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24 | Bir kişinin yaptığı şeyler kadar, o kişinin nasıl biri olduğu da eylemleri değerlendirmede önemlidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25 | Erdemli eylem değerini, o eylemin altında yatan erdemli güdülerden, saiklerden alır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | Kişi iyi davranışı dış baskılar sonucu yapmışsa erdemli sayılmaz, o davranışı içinden gelerek gerçekleştirmesi gereklidir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |