

# A RESEARCH REGARDING THE OPINIONS OF ACADEMICS ON ETHICS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES: TRNC CASE

Temel, C.A, University of Kyrenia  
Dolunay, A., Near East University

## ABSTRACT

*Ethics, as in every field, recommends the rules that professionals must exhibit appropriate behavior in the field of public relations. In the study, first of all, the concept of public relations ethics was discussed based on the concept of ethics. In this context, public relations ethics regulations were examined. In the research part of the study, the sample was determined as follows: 8 of the 19 university sites operating in the TRNC have communication faculties; There are public relations departments in 5 of the 8 related faculties. In this context, semi-structured in-depth interviews, one of the qualitative research methods, were conducted with full-time lecturers from two of the 5 public relations departments determined by non-random sampling, in order to determine the importance of public relations ethics, audit institutions, problems and solution proposals. Within the framework of the findings, the importance of public relations ethics in terms of professional honor and dignity was emphasized, and it was determined that public relations regulations were strengthened under the leadership of IPRA, especially the Helsinki Declaration and Athens Convention. It has been determined that the problems in terms of public relations ethics are mainly about the ability of individuals outside the field to perform the profession, unfair competition and inappropriate behavior. Emphasizing the importance of adopting ethical behavior as a core principle by public relations professionals as a solution proposal; At the same time, it is recommended to raise awareness of relevant employees through life-long training activities and international audit institutions to carry out more active audits and to be more effective with the sanction power they will be equipped with.*

**Keywords:** Public Relations, Ethics, TRNC

## INTRODUCTION

Ethics, as in many other fields, has a high importance for Public Relations, which is a field of Communication. According to Pieper, ethics alone will not be meaningful; However, when it is considered within the framework of the approach that something will gain meaning as an ethics, the concept of “Public Relations Ethics” emerges (Uzun, 2007; Dolunay & Kasap, 2018). According to a general approach, public relations is considered as a continuous function of an enterprise and/or institution operating in the private or public sectors to obtain and maintain the understanding, sympathy, and support of those with whom it has or may establish relations (Bilgin, 2008). At this point, public relations ethics regulates what should be done and what should not be done in establishing and maintaining the relationship.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Frameworks

#### Concept of Public Relations

It is accepted that the field of public relations historically is a relatively new field compared to other disciplines (Kalender, 2013). The foundations of public relations in terms

of practice and theory date back to the beginning of the 20th century. There is no agreed definition of the concept of public relations. One of the main reasons for this situation is that the discipline of public relations has a multi-faceted structure and includes studies that are similar to areas such as advertising, marketing and propaganda. In this context, the concept of public relations is sometimes compared with the concepts such as advertising and marketing (Bayar, 2008).

On the other hand, first, when the meanings of the words are examined, 'people' includes the entire population, including men and women, young and old, educated, and uneducated, and individuals from various income groups. In general terms, all people in a geographical area are expressed as public. In terms of public relations, it is not appropriate to look at the concept of public in this sense. In public relations, the word 'public' appears as the target audience. In the same way, the word 'relation' is defined as a bond that is formed and carried out with activities that appeal to at least one purpose, and includes feelings, thoughts and beliefs that can be repeated and terminated, although it is permanent or temporary on both sides (Okay, 2005: 1-2). Although the meaning of the word "relationship" is similar to the meaning used in the discipline of public relations, it contains different details. According to public relations, the concept of relationship is the social, economic, cultural, and political benefit between the institution and the public, and the mutual realization of this. In general terms, it refers to the trust and positive image that is aimed to be created between the institution and the target audience (Kalender, 2013).

In the light of the aforementioned information, it would be healthier to examine public relations instead of describing them separately. There are many definitions for public relations. Among these definitions, the most valid definition internationally is the one given by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA):

*“Public relations is a decision-making management practice tasked with building relationships and interests between organizations and their publics based on the delivery of information through trusted and ethical communication methods.”*

In this definition, a general definition has been made of those addresses to whom the activities carried out by public relations should address, the issues that need to be addressed (reliability and ethics) while these activities are carried out, and what purpose they serve. Another common definition was created by Rex Harlow (1977) by examining the information received from 65 public relations experts and 472 public relations definitions Okay, 2005; Yıldırım, 2020):

*“Public relations is a management function that helps to ensure and maintain mutual communication, agreement, acceptance and cooperation between the organization and its related circles. This function also includes the duties of informing the management about the public, determining the responsibilities of the management towards the public, and warning the management about the changes in the environment, and these duties are fulfilled by using research and communication techniques.”*

According to this definition, the keywords included in the concept of public relations are included in the triangle of public, administration and establishment. Public relations is a management function that has a two-way communication, undertakes a task for the benefit and problems of the public, and builds the bridge between the public and the organization.

### **Concept of Ethics**

The origin of the concept can be based on a French word *éthique* (moral), which comes from the Greek word *ethikós* (something related to morals). (Ethics word origin, n.d.; Dolunay & Kasap, 2018).

It is difficult to determine boundaries of the concept because of the wide meaning. On the other hand, when the concept analyzed; can be explained as “*describes what is moral, which develops means for scrutiny, has a disciplinary nature, includes a group of people or society, creates universal rules and sanctions, and builds the criteria for what is considered good and bad or right and wrong*”. (Moressi, 2006; Girgin, 2000; Dolunay & Kasap, 2018).

In this framework, while ethics have universal validity; the morals have geographical validity (Dolunay & Kasap, 2018). For example, what is considered moral in the German society may not be moral in the Turkish community.

The aim of ethics is to determine and develop the principles and rules that will guide the behavior of individuals and to support the implementation of these principles and rules. This is the fine point between ethics and morality. In this context, it is related to the principles, norms and values that create and defend ethical behaviors (Mahmutoğlu, n.d).

Badiou (2004) argues that “*there is not just one ethic, but there are ethics of arts, sciences, politics, and other areas*”. Pieper, cited in Uzun, “*contended that ethics are not only a theoretical scientific concept but also something that can be practically performed*”. For Badiou, “*ethics can take a solid state when general precepts are applied to a specific life or action*” (Uzun, 2007; Dolunay & Kasap, 2018).

There are ethical rules that professions have. These rules set out what is right and wrong, who is right and who is wrong about professional practice and behavior, and are based on certain beliefs about it. Professional ethics is affected by the ethical patterns of the individual, the institution and the public. All other stakeholders, customers, institutions are the factors that affect the professional ethical principles and enable it to be formed around it (İşgüden, 2016).

## **Professional Practices Areas of Public Relations**

In public relations, there are stereotyped basic responsibilities such as research, management consultancy, early warning for problems to be encountered, and communication. (Okay, 2005). However, there are important application areas in professional/professional understanding: Media relations, financial public relations, public affairs, problem management, lobbying, etc. On the other hand, there are other important areas in public relations such as crisis and crisis management, corporate social responsibility, marketing communication, sponsorship, reputation management, event, corporate identity and image management, management, and relations with the target audience (Bayar, 2008).

In this part of the study, it would be appropriate to briefly describe public relations practices:

**Media Relations:** Institutions; While conveying information and developments about the institution to the target audience, it also uses the media to create a positive image in front of the target audience and to learn the opinions of the relevant stakeholders about the institution. Preparing press releases, organizing press conferences, creating relevant events for media personnel, etc. practices are among the relations of public relations experts with the media (Peltekoğlu, 2018).

**Announcement:** It is the transfer of messages about the institution to the public using a free method and through the media. It is the duty of public relations specialists to transfer information and developments about the institution to the media and to publish the announcements without paying (Peltekoğlu, 2018).

**Financial Relations:** Also known as investor relations. It carries out studies aimed at ensuring the evaluation of a company's shares and minimizing the cost of existing capital to provide confidence to the shareholders of the institution and to be attractive in the face of individual investors, financial analysts, and institutional investors (Okay, 2005).

**Public Affairs:** Public relations; undertakes to establish, develop, and maintain mutually beneficial administrative and public relations. The main goal of this field; It is to

develop the relationship with the public effectively and to balance the organization in harmony with the public demands (Bilgin, 2010).

**Problem Management:** Issue or problem management; It is defined as the preliminary process of predicting, revealing, and evaluating problems that may affect the institution and the public. In short, it is to foresee the problem before it arises and harm the institution and to take measures in a way that does not affect the institution (Okay, 2005).

**Lobbying:** It is defined as certain activities that enable people, organizations and countries to make decisions for their own interests by influencing political actors in their decision-making (Bilgin, 2010).

**Crisis Management:** In general, plans are prepared to prevent internal and external crises and to turn the crisis into an opportunity. The essence of the crisis is the communication work done. Every crisis experienced shows important data for the precautions to be taken for the crisis situation to be experienced in the future (Okay, 2005).

**Reputation Management:** It is a field of public relations activity that aims to maintain a positive relationship between the institution and the target audience, while adding value and prestige to the institution. In the activities carried out by the institution to influence the public, it aims to positively affect and perceive the public's thoughts for the institution (Okay, 2005).

**Marketing Communication:** Public relations is referred to as marketing communication, which is applied to directly support an organization's marketing objectives. In addition, the use of marketing, advertising and public relations together provides great benefits for institutions. This situation is called integrated marketing communication (Okay, 2005).

**Sponsorship:** It means contributing to sports, arts, culture, and fields by providing individual or institutional support in money, equipment, or service issues. As a jersey sponsor for a football team, the logo of the institution on the jersey can be given as an example of sponsorship practices. Public relations specialists undertake the task of creating sponsorship projects, realizing the projects and executing all activities related to sponsorship (Bilgin, 2018).

**Corporate Social Responsibility:** The main objective of the institutions is to think socially in their decisions and to avoid situations that may cause social harm. It is not enough for the institutions to work only in the direction of making profits. Along with this, it is necessary to plan and carry out studies that also consider the benefit of society (Okay, 2005).

**Event Management:** It offers great opportunities for the employees of the institution and the target audience to come together and provide a mutual impression. For this reason, event management is an important field of activity in public relations (Peltekoğlu, 2018).

**Corporate Identity and Image:** Public relations specialists undertake the task of creating, developing, and evaluating the identities of organizations and their intended images in corporate identity and image studies (Peltekoğlu, 2018).

**Employee/Member Relationships:** This is an application area for working personnel. It means activities aimed at responding to the interests of the employees of the institution, informing and motivating the employees. Providing good communication, revealing team spirit, establishing a sense of belonging and commitment, and showing that employees are valued are important in terms of feeling (Peltekoğlu, 2018).

**Community Relations:** They are the activities planned and realized to create and develop an environment where both the institution and the society will benefit (Okay, 2005).

## **Ethics in Public Relations**

Public relations is a field that is rapidly developing and gaining importance in different geographies as well as in the world. In some countries, there are different problems in the professionalization phase of the public relations discipline (Kalender, 1999). At the beginning of these problems, there are general factors such as the understanding and thought

of the public, as well as similar reasons such as insufficient qualified personnel during the training and recruitment conditions of the public relations discipline and the inadequacy of the officials who perform this recruitment (Güllüoğlu, 2006). One of the biggest problems that arise in the acceptance and development of the public relations discipline as a profession is the problem of ethics. Although ethical rules are universal, they are affected by the moral understanding and cultural codes of the society we live in. The stronger and more effective the professional disciplines that determine, implement, and supervise the rules of professional ethics, the more prestige they gain in that profession together with professional ethics (Sabuncuoğlu, 1998).

Public relations employees must be effective and active within the institution. Trust is very important in the profession of public relations. Because public relations establish the relationship between the institution and the public. Trust is important for maintaining a good impression and good relationships. If public relations professionals commit ethical violations, they will have harmful effects not only on the individual but also on their colleagues. This is apart from individual negative effects; It will also negatively affect the public relations profession and lead to its disrepute. Organizations that attach importance to ethical principles, instead of being successful no matter what, give importance to performing their implementation activities correctly within the framework of responsible and ethical rules. Because mistakes made will cause damage to both public relations experts and the public relations profession (Okay, 2005).

The areas that public relations specialists are responsible for within the scope of professional ethics are as follows:

**Responsibility to the Institution and Client:** The public relations specialist is obliged to protect the current or past clients or the professional secrets of the institution, if it is not contrary to ethical rules and the law (Bilgin, 2010).

**Responsibility towards the Media:** Attitudes and behaviors that will disrupt the freedom of the press should be avoided in the public relations specialist's connection with the media (Bilgin, 2010).

**Responsibility Towards the Community:** The public relations specialist should take care not to oppose the social slander of the customer or institution he/she serves, not to transmit misleading or false information, and not to allow it to be transmitted by different people (Peltekoğlu, 2018).

**Responsibility Towards Colleagues:** The public relations specialist should avoid behaviors that will harm the public relations profession that he/she represents personally and avoid inappropriate behaviors towards taking the job of another public relations colleague or behaviors that will humiliate their colleagues (Güllüoğlu, 2006).

Public relations practitioners should be the representatives of ethical principles in the society and determined to act in accordance with ethical principles as their most important priority to fulfill their social responsibilities (Cutlip, 1995; Ünlü & Kurt, 2017).

It is a set of standards that show what is right and wrong in ethics, practice, and behavior in the public relations profession. Ivy Lee, who is seen as the father of public relations, underlined the importance of openness and accuracy in the field of public relations in his 'Statement of Principles'. (Sabuncuoğlu, 1998).

*Launched in 2011 the IPRA (International Public Relations Association) Code of Conduct is an affirmation of professional and ethical conduct by members of the International Public Relations Association and recommended to public relations practitioners worldwide. The Code consolidates the 1961 Code of Venice, the 1965 Code of Athens and the 2007 Code of Brussels. ("IPRA Code of Conduct", n.d.).*

*"In the conduct of public relations practitioners shall:*

1. **Observance:** Observe the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

2. Integrity: Act with honesty and integrity at all times so as to secure and retain the confidence of those with whom the practitioner comes into contact;
3. Dialogue: Seek to establish the moral, cultural and intellectual conditions for dialogue, and recognise the rights of all parties involved to state their case and express their views;
4. Transparency: Be open and transparent in declaring their name, organization and the interest they represent;
5. Conflict: Avoid any professional conflicts of interest and to disclose such conflicts to affected parties when they occur;
6. Confidentiality: Honor confidential information provided to them;
7. Accuracy: Take all reasonable steps to ensure the truth and accuracy of all information provided;
8. Falsehood: Make every effort to not intentionally disseminate false or misleading information, exercise proper care to avoid doing so unintentionally and correct any such act promptly;
9. Deception: Not obtain information by deceptive or dishonest means;
10. Disclosure: Not create or use any organization to serve an announced cause but which actually serves an undisclosed interest;
11. Profit: Not sell for profit to third parties copies of documents obtained from public authorities;
12. Remuneration: Whilst providing professional services, not accept any form of payment in connection with those services from anyone other than the principal;
13. Inducement: Neither directly nor indirectly offer nor give any financial or other inducement to public representatives or the media, or other stakeholders;
14. Influence: Neither propose nor undertake any action which would constitute an improper influence on public representatives, the media, or other stakeholders;
15. Competitors: Not intentionally injure the professional reputation of another practitioner;
16. Poaching: Not seek to secure another practitioner's client by deceptive means;
17. Employment: When employing personnel from public authorities or competitors take care to follow the rules and confidentiality requirements of those organizations;
18. Colleagues: Observe this Code with respect to fellow IPRA members and public relations practitioners worldwide. ("IPRA Codes", n.d.).

IPRA members shall, in upholding this Code, agree to abide by and help enforce the disciplinary procedures of the International Public Relations Association in regard to any breach of this Code." ("IPRA Codes", n.d.).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Method

In the study, based on the ethical principles in professional practices in the field of public relations; In order to determine what kind of violations of ethical principles and prevention methods are in question, it is aimed to discuss the views of academics. In this context, the interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred as a method.

In many branches of social science, such as journalism, law, and medicine, "interviews" are used as a professional technique or an auxiliary tool (Kahn, 1983; Tekin, 2006). While the interview, which is a data collection technique frequently used in qualitative research, provides the opportunity for the interviewees to express themselves (directly), the researcher also has the opportunity to make a comprehensive observation of the person being interviewed (McCraken, 1988; Tekin, 2006).

The interviewees were asked questions covering all dimensions of the research subject, and detailed answers were received; it is a technique that allows information to be

collected directly (Johnson, 2002; Tekin, 2006). Interviews can be divided into three categories: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Punch, 2005; Tekin, 2006). In semi-structured interviews, while pre-determined questions are used, they are more limited than unstructured interviews, but it is possible to ask spontaneous questions based on the course of the interview and to detail the targeted data/responses.

In the research, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the academicians working in the relevant public relations departments within the scope of the Faculty of Communication and the Department of Public Relations affiliated to the Faculties of Communication from Universities operating in the TRNC.

## Sampling

In the study, the interview group to be conducted semi-structured interviews was determined by purposive sampling. In this context, the universities operating in the TRNC, communication faculties and those with public relations departments affiliated to communication faculties constitute the universe of the research.

There are officially 19 universities that provide undergraduate education in the TRNC. The number of people operating within these institutions varies. Out of the current 19 universities, 8 of them have communication faculties. And 5 of the 8 related faculties have a public relations department.

In this framework, the universe of the research consists of the lecturers of the 5 related departments. Sample of the study determined via purposive non-random sampling method.

The main objective of a purposive sample is to produce a sample that can be logically assumed to be representative of the population. This is often accomplished by applying expert knowledge of the population to select in a non-random manner a sample of elements that represents a crosssection of the population (Lavrakas, 2008).

In this context academicians of Near East University Faculty of Communication Public Relations and Advertising department' and European University of Lefke Faculty of Communication Sciences Public Relations department' (n10) have been included in the sampling.

Participants have been given the codes (P1, P2, P3 etc.). In the analysis, the direct opinions of the interview group were included in the rate of 30%.

## Analyses

In-depth interviews were held in a semi-structured form with xx public relations specialists, and the data were analyzed using the content analysis method.

Content analysis is a research technique in which valid comments extracted from the text are revealed as a result of successive processes (Weber, 1989: 5; Koçak & Arun, 2006:22).

Depending on the context of the specific study, highly detailed coding may or may not be required (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008: 233; Karataş, 2017: 80). In this context, due to the nature of the study, it was not necessary to create more intricate coding and themes. Themes and codes as follow:

<b>Table 1</b>		
<b>THEMES AND CODES</b>		
	<b>THEMES</b>	
		<b>Importance, Regulations and Audit Organizations of Public Relations Ethics</b>

<b>Codes</b>	<i>Importance of Public Relations Ethics</i>	<i>Ethical Problems</i>
	<i>Public Relations Regulations</i>	<i>Solution Suggestions</i>
	<i>Auditing Organizations of Public Relations Ethics</i>	

## Importance, Regulations and Auditing Firms of Public Relations Ethics

### Importance of Public Relations Ethics

Ethics in the field of public relations, as in all professional fields, has a high importance. In this context, the importance of ethics is mentioned in many studies (See Pearson, 1989).

100% (n10) of the interview group emphasized the importance of ethics in the field of public relations:

*“Public relations ethics is the building block on which public relations are based; it is indispensable.”*

P2: *“Ethics in the context of public relations has come to the fore within the framework of the importance given to the society by the management structures and is a very important issue.”*

P5: *“Public relations works without ethical principles cause mistakes that can harm the person/organization in the long run.”*

P10: *“Ethics is very important in terms of public relations, as it is in every field.”*

### Public Relations Regulations

In the literature, the Declaration of Helsinki and the Athens Law are mentioned on public relations ethical regulations. The approach that the two related regulations form the basis of public relations ethics regulations stands out (See Creedona & Al-Khajab, 2005; Watson, 2014). Also, IPRA comes to the fore which strengthens the relevant regulations.

The interview group emphasized the importance of the Declaration of Helsinki, the Athens Law and the IRPA at a rate of 80% (n8), in line with the common approach in the literature:

P1: *“Public relations ethical principles are determined by national/international Public Relations associations, especially IPRA...”*

P3: *“The Helsinki Declaration and the Athens Code, sometimes referred to as the International Code of Ethics. Especially with these two, the ethical principles and ethical codes of public relations have become more clear, and they are guiding for ethical and ethical problems in public relations practices.”*

On the other hand, 10% (n1) of the interview group expressed the regulation adopted by the American Public Relations Association in 1950 and %10 (n1) mentioned the other regulations and general laws.

### Audit Organizations of Public Relations Ethics

At a rate of 70% (n7), the interview group stated that IPRA is the universally recognized public relations audit organization. And in the same answers at a rate of 60% (n6) the interview group stated that TÜHİD (*Turkish Public Relations Association*) is the important public relations audit organization on Turkey:

P1: *Internationally, IPRA; In Turkey, TÜHİD works to establish standards on public relations practices and ethical problems.”*

P3: *“In the field of public relations, there are institutions or organizations that control such problems or discuss and make suggestions. For example, TÜHİD in Turkey or IPRA, an international organization, can be specified.”*

P6: *“Universally IPRA and in Turkey TÜHİD comes to the fore.”*

## **Ethical Problems and Solution Suggestions**

### **Ethical Problems**

In ethical problems; The fact that individuals outside the field can work in the field, behaviors against the rules of honesty and fairness, unfair competition and inappropriate behavior towards customers and colleagues come to the fore. Such unethical approaches damage the prestige of the public relations field and profession (Okay, 2005: 499).

Participants gave more than one answer on this subject as follows. The ethical issues that came to the fore within the framework of the related answers are as follows:

*Violations of the Rules of Integrity and Honesty (60%, n6)*

P5: *“False statements, all works done without investigating their truth and validity constitute a violation of public relations ethics”*

P9: *“...Some basic ethical issues in the public relations literature can be listed. One of them is the title of truth in public relations...”*

*Ability of Non-Field Individuals to Work in the Field (50%, n5)*

P1: *“The most important ethical problem at the point of professionalization is that people from different disciplines can also work in this field, apart from individuals who have been educated in the field...”*

*Unfair Competition and Inappropriate Approaches to Competitors (50%, n2)*

P8: *“In order to draw attention to the designs of the agencies in the intense competition environment, sometimes ethics are observed to go out.”*

### **Solution Suggestions**

Participants gave more than one answer on this subject as follows. The ethical issues that came to the fore within the framework of the related answers are as follows:

*Adopting an approach in line with ethical principles as a core principle (70%, n7)*

P4: *“It is important that individuals (employees) adopt ethical principles as core principles. Recruitment of people who respect ethical principles will contribute to the process.”*

P9: *“As practitioners follow the existing ethical codes in public relations practices, they can foresee and correct the ethical problems that may be encountered.”*

*Equipping Audit Bodies with Wider Enforcement Power (Dismissal of those who behave inappropriately) (50%, n5)*

P6: *“For example, an audit can be made and a decision can be made upon complaint. But is it enough? It is not. More inclusive and sanctioning rules are needed for this association. In other words, it is clear that legal and administrative resources and regulations are needed in ethical practices in the field of Public Relations.”*

*Increasing lifelong trainings for field experts (40%, n6)*

P7: *“It would be appropriate to increase the level of awareness continuously by increasing the training for public relations employees.”*

## **FINDINGS**

In the field of public relations in the study;

- Identifying the prominent ones in terms of ethical regulations,
- Identification of the prominent ones in terms of audit organizations regarding divergences in ethical principles,
- Identifying ethical issues,
- It is aimed to determine solution proposals for ethical problems.

In this context, the following findings were reached within the framework of semi-structured in-depth interviews with the lecturers of the public relations departments of two universities operating in the TRNC:

In accordance with the common approach in the literature, ethics is also of high importance in terms of public relations.

In terms of ethical regulations in the field of public relations, The Declaration of Helsinki and The Athens Law stand out; Regulations that became normative under the leadership of IRPA are important.

IRPA as the international audit organization and TÜHİD as the local (for Turkey) audit organization came to the fore.

It has been determined that the prominent ones in terms of ethical problems are violations of the rules of integrity and honesty, the ability of individuals outside the field to work in the field, unfair competition and inappropriate approaches to competitors.

As solution suggestions for the identified ethical problems; adopting the approach in line with ethical principles as a core principle by the field employees, increasing life-long trainings for field experts, and equipping the audit institutions with more active audits and at the same time wide enforcement power (removal of those who behave inappropriately) are listed.

## CONCLUSION

Ethics, as in every field, is also very important in terms of the profession/field of public relations and professional practices. Unethical behaviors in professional practices carried out in the field of public relations not only damage the reputation of the field and the profession, but also harm public relations workers (Okay, 2005: 499).

While IRPA from a universal point of view and TÜHİD from a local point of view are prominent audit institutions/associations; It is expected that audit institutions will be more deterrent in the formation of ethical problems by performing more active audits. In this context, equipping audit institutions with a wider sanction power and having a sanction authority extending to disqualification from the profession in serious ethical violations will increase deterrence. Of course, it is not preferable to have punishments as severe as dismissal, but for example, the main purpose in criminal law is not to punish but to deter. This authority will be meaningful when considered in a similar way. However, it should be noted that fair and transparent implementation is at least as important as the deterrent effect it will serve.

While deterrence is an important method, another and perhaps more important method in preventing ethical problems is to adopt ethical values as a core principle. In this context, it is very important for public relations employees to adopt ethical rules as a core principle. At this point, it would be appropriate to state that the employment of individuals with public relations education is also important. It is thought that this situation will serve to prevent ethical violations by carrying out conscious studies. Again, care should be taken by employers that the employees to be employed are individuals who respect ethical principles. And also, clearly state of public relations organizations' commitment to ethical principles will also be supportive in adopting it as a core principle.

Another important method for adopting ethical principles and preventing ethical problems is to increase lifelong training for public relations employees. In this regard, vocational training to be carried out by the Communication Faculties of the Universities for the field workers will be beneficial in terms of adopting and reinforcing the ethical principles.

While the suggestions to the field are in this direction; For researchers, it is recommended to measure the level of adherence to ethical rules by conducting surveys with public relations employees within the scope of the appropriate sample to be determined in future academic research.

## REFERENCES

- Bayar, Ö. (2006). Halkla ilişkiler ve etik. Unpublished master dissertation. Ankara University Graduate School of Social Sciences, Ankara, Turkey.
- Bilgin, L. (2008). Creating a Positive Image Public Relations. İstanbul: Kumsaati Publications.
- Creedon, P., & Al-Khaja, M. (2005). Public relations and globalization: Building a case for cultural competency in public relations education. *Public Relations Review*, 31(3), 344-354.
- Cutlip, M.S. (1995). *Public Relations History: From the 17th to the 20th Century*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dolunay, A. (2018). Press rights and freedoms within the framework of legal and ethical codes in the digital age: The example of TRNC. İstanbul: Oniki Levha Publications.
- Dolunay, A., & Kasap, F. (2018). Freedom of the press in the digital age within the frameworks of ethics, law and democracy education: example of the North Cyprus, Quality & Quantity. *Quality & Quantity*, 52, 663-683.
- Dolunay, A. & Kasap, F. (2020). New Media Journalism Which Ignores Communication Ethics and Basic Legal Codes: A Research on Political News. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 9(2), 511-531.
- Dolunay, A., & Keçeci, G. (2017). Copyright Problems İn The Turkish Cypriot Law Within The Framework Of Communication Ethics. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(4), 1396-1409.
- Ethics Word origin (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://www.etimolojiturkce.com/kelime/etik>
- Girgin, A. (2000). News and Journalism Ethics in the Written Media. İstanbul: İnkılâp Publishing.
- Güllüoğlu, Ö. (2006). Ethics in the profession of public relations in II. *National Public Relations Symposium*, 145-166.
- Harlow, R. F. (1977). Public Relations Definitions Through The Years, *Public Relations Review*, 3(1), 49-63.
- IPRA Codes. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://www.ipra.org/member-services/code-of-conduct/>
- İşgüden, B., & Çabuk, A. (2006). Professional ethics and effects of professional ethics on business life. *Journal of Balıkesir University Graduate School of Social Sciences*, 9(16), 59-86.
- Kalender, A., & Fidan, M. (2008). *Public Relations*. Tablet Publishings: Konya.
- Lavrakas, P.J. (2008). *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*. Sage.
- Mahmutoğlu, A. (n.d). Ethic and Moral; Similarities, Differences and Connections. *Türk İdare Dergisi*, 225.
- Moressi, E. (2006). *News Ethics Establishment and Criticism of Moral Journalism* (Trans. Genç, F.). Ankara: Dost Publishing.
- Okay, A. (2005). *Public Relations Theory, Strategies and Practices*. İstanbul: Der Publishing.
- Peltekoğlu, F.B. (2018). *What is Public Relations?* İstanbul: Beta Publishing.
- Pearson, R. (1989). A theory of public relations ethics [Unpublished Doctoral dissertation]. Ohio University.
- Uzun, R. (2007). *Communication Ethics Issues and Responsibilities*. Ankara: Gazi University Library of Faculty of Communication' 40. Year Publications.
- Ünlü, S., & Kurt, C. M. (2017). Ethics in the Public Relations Profession, Communication in the Age of Media (Edt. Kırık, M., A.). Çizgi Publishing
- Watson, T. (2014). IPRA Code of Athens—The first international code of public relations ethics: Its development and implementation since 1965. *Public Relations Review*, 40(4), 707-714.
- Yıldırım, A. (2020). An investigation on the conceptual definitions of public relations. *İletişim Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 6, 133-150.

**Received:** 17-May-2022, Manuscript No. JLERİ-22-12034; **Editor assigned:** 19- May-2022; PreQC No. JLERİ-22-12034 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 28- May-2022, QC No. JLERİ-22-12034; **Revised:** 03-Jun-2022, Manuscript No. JLERİ-22-12034 (R); **Published:** 13-Jun-2022.