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Psychometric properties of the Turkish Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire

Emrah Özsoy^{a,b} , Mark D. Griffiths^b  and Meliha Ceylan^c 

^aSakarya Business School, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Türkiye; ^bInternational Gaming Research Unit, Psychology Department, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK; ^cSakarya Graduate School of Business, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Ethical leadership is necessary to adopt a fair and reliable management approach in business life and offer sustainability advantages to organizations. One of the critical issues in ethical leadership studies is the assessment of ethical leadership. Kalshoven et al. (2011) developed the multidimensional Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (ELWQ) but it has yet to be adapted to Turkish. Therefore, the ELWQ was translated into Turkish (ELWQ-T), and its psychometric properties were tested. The sample comprised 442 employees. Descriptive statistics, internal consistency tests (Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, and composite reliability), Pearson's correlations, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to analyze the data. The ELWQ-T showed acceptable internal consistency. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the seven-factor model had acceptable fit indices. Findings supporting convergent validity were obtained between the ELWQ-T and the Turkish version of the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS). The seven dimensions showed distinctive associations with other variables (eg autocratic leadership, cynicism, and job satisfaction). Age and gender were not associated with the ELWQ-T. All the findings indicate that the ELWQ-T has robust psychometric properties and can be used in future management and organizational psychology research in Türkiye.

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Introduction

Leadership has recently become one of the most widely studied topics in organizational psychology research (Asrar-Ul-Haq & Anwar, 2018; Samul, 2020). This is because leadership's role and importance are critical in achieving sustainable success and competitive advantage for organizations (Avery, 2005). For this reason, organizations allocate a lot of time and resources to training and development activities to increase the leadership skills of their employees in managerial roles (Liu et al., 2020; Solansky, 2010). As a result of the intense increase in leadership research, many leadership styles (ie autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, coaching, democratic, ethical, laissez-faire, pacesetter, servant, situational, strategic, supportive, transactional, transformational, and visionary leadership styles) have been posited (Akkaya, 2020). Among these leadership styles, ethical leadership is one of the most critically important (Den Hartog, 2015).

Ethical leadership refers to a leadership style that includes many features, such as making decisions fairly and honestly, taking into account moral and cultural values, interacting with employees healthily, and guiding employees adequately on ethical issues (Brown et al., 2005; Kalshoven et al., 2011; Treviño et al., 2003). Studies examining ethical leadership show that it contributes to many positive outcomes for employees and organizations (Bedi et al., 2016; Neubert et al., 2013; Toor & Ofori, 2009). However, the increase in ethical leadership studies is closely related to the existence of scales that enable valid and reliable assessment of ethical leadership (Ko et al., 2018; Sen & Gocen, 2021).

One of the most critical issues in assessing ethical leadership is to consider the components of ethical leadership comprehensively (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Ko et al., 2018). In this regard, Kalshoven et al. (2011) first identified 90 ethical leader behavior items from various sources: (i) items adapted from previous scales, (ii) quotes from the interviews with managers,

CONTACT Emrah Özsoy  eoosoy@sakarya.edu.tr  Sakarya Business School, Sakarya University, Sakarya, Türkiye

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and (iii) items formulated by researchers. Later, as a result of a pilot study and two separate studies, the scale was reduced to 38 items with seven dimensions. These dimensions (ie people orientation, fairness, power sharing, concern for sustainability, ethical guidance, role clarification, and integrity) represent ethical leadership behaviors. The final version of the scale was supported in terms of its factor structure, convergent and discriminant validity, and internal consistency. Therefore, the ELWQ offers a critical alternative to assess ethical leadership. The ELWQ has several advantages. First, it enables multidimensional assessment of ethical leadership, which better covers the conceptual and theoretical background of ethical leadership. Second, the ELWQ includes items that encompass the leader's interaction with employees and stakeholders, such as corporate social responsibility (Steinmann et al., 2016). Moreover, the ELWQ is used internationally (Ab Rahman & Jantan, 2020; Kersemaekers et al., 2020), and it has adapted into two other languages: German (Steinmann et al., 2016) and Korean (Kim & Park, 2015).

Although various scales have been developed to assess ethical leadership, the most commonly used scales currently are the Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS; Brown et al., 2005), Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELI; Yukl et al., 2013), and Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (ELWQ; Kalshoven et al., 2011). The ELS is a single-factor scale used to assess ethical leadership. The ELS has received support for its psychometric properties (Rowold et al., 2009), and it is widely used (Hsieh et al., 2023; Zappalà & Toscano, 2020) in ethical leadership research (Bahadori et al., 2021; Benevene et al., 2018). However, there are various criticisms regarding the ELS. First, ethical leadership is multidimensional, but the ELS is a unidimensional scale (Kalshoven et al., 2011). For example, the ELS does not adequately cover ethical leadership features such as honest communication, fair distribution of rewards, and behaviors consistent with adopted values (Yukl et al., 2013). Second, while trust in the leader is a potential outcome of ethical leadership, it is included in the scale as a direct item (eg '*can be trusted*') (Steinmann et al., 2016; Tanner et al., 2010). Third, two items in the scale (ie '*Has the best interests of employees in mind*' and '*Listens to what employees have to say*') have been criticized as representing consideration rather than ethical leadership (Yukl et al., 2013).

Another scale that assesses ethical leadership is the ELI, developed by Yukl et al. (2013). The ELI is a 15-item unidimensional scale, that addresses some the limitations of previous ethical leadership scales.

The scale includes items regarding altruism, communication of ethical values, consistency of behaviors with espoused values, fairness, honesty, integrity, and providing ethical guidance regarding ethical leadership. The positive aspects of the scale are that it is short and overcomes some of the limitations of previously developed scales. However, it offers a composite score in assessing ethical leadership and does not provide a score based on ethical leadership dimensions.

Although there are various scales for assessing ethical leadership, the ELWQ is arguably the most comprehensive. However, to date, the scale has not been validated in the Turkish culture. The validation of the ELWQ into Turkish, which has a population of more than 85 million people, would contribute in various ways. First, it could support the growth of ethical leadership studies in Türkiye. Second, it would increase the number of international studies examining ethical leadership, by including Turkish samples. Third, it would provide additional findings regarding the psychometric properties of the ELWQ.

Ethical leaders are individuals who are fair, transparent, honest in their interactions with employees, encourage employees, and prioritize honesty over fraudulent behavior (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Den Hartog, 2015; Kalshoven et al., 2011; Keselman, 2012; Lawton & Páez, 2015). These features also include the principles required by the modern management approach (Robbins & Judge, 2018). In this regard, these characteristics of leaders provide the basis for positively affecting the attitudes and behaviors toward work among those they line manage (Ahn et al., 2018). In previous studies, ethical leadership has been positively associated with job satisfaction (Qing et al., 2020; Tu et al., 2017) and negatively associated with autocratic leadership (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Steinmann et al., 2016) and cynicism (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Qian & Jian, 2020). Similar findings obtained in the present study would support the discriminant validity of the ELWQ-T.

Additionally, as in the study in which the scale was developed (Kalshoven et al., 2011), and the previous ethical leadership scale development study (Brown et al., 2005), it was expected that the ELWQ-T would not be associated with gender and age in testing discriminant validity. Perceptions of ethical leadership are primarily shaped by leaders' behaviors, such as fairness, honesty, and people orientation (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Therefore, age and gender are not expected to exhibit a significant association with ethical leadership perceptions across different cultural contexts. Indeed, previous studies conducted

with Turkish samples have also found that employees' perceptions of ethical leadership do not significantly differ based on age and gender (Durmuş, 2015; Erol & Kulualp, 2019). Therefore, the lack of association between age, gender, and ethical leadership in the present study was considered as part of testing the scale's discriminant validity.

To confirm if the Turkish version of the Ethical Leadership Work Questionnaire (ELWQ-T) has robust psychometric properties, it must meet specific expectations. First, the internal consistency of the ELWQ-T must be at a reasonable level. Second, confirmatory factor analysis findings must be consistent with the original scale. The present study examined its correlations with the ELS, autocratic leadership, job satisfaction, and cynicism to test the psychometric properties of the ELWQ-T. A positive association would be expected between the total score and dimensions of the ELWQ-T and the ELS regarding convergent validity. Regarding nomological associations, correlations of the ELWQ-T with other constructs, as in the study in which the scale was developed (Kalshoven et al., 2011), would be in the expected direction (ie a positive association with job satisfaction, and negative associations with autocratic leadership and cynicism).

Based on the aforementioned literature, it was hypothesized that (i) internal consistency values of the ELWQ-T would be within the acceptable range (H_1), (ii) the seven-factor structure of the ELWQ-T would be supported (H_2), (iii) convergent validity of the ELWQ-T would be supported (H_3), and (iv) the ELWQ-T dimensions would be positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to autocratic leadership and cynicism and unrelated to gender and age (H_4).

Methods

Participants and procedure

A total of 442 employees participated in the study. Of these, (i) 51.4% were males and 48.6% were females, (ii) 54.1% were married and 45.9% were single, and (iii) 73.1% were private sector employees and 26.9% were public sector employees, (iv) 80.8% were white-collar employees and 19.2% were blue-collar employees, and (v) 29% had a managerial role. In the organizational hierarchy, 19.9% worked at the lowest level, 67.4% at the middle level, and 12.7% at the upper level. The sample had a mean age of 35.62 years ($SD = 9.68$; range = 18–62 years). Regarding their education, 16.3% had high school

and equivalent education, 10.4% had an associate degree (two years study at university), 56.1% had a bachelor's degree (four years study at university) education, 15.6% had a master's degree, and 1.6% had a doctoral degree (see Table 1).

Data were collected using an online survey comprising psychometric scales to assess the study variables, and demographic information. The data were obtained voluntarily from participants. Before data collection, informed consent was provided by all participants. The consent form explicitly stated that only individuals actively employed at the time of data collection were eligible to participate. The survey was distributed via the authors' professional networks, including a group of currently employed workers (MBA graduates) who were contacted through their social media channels. Three attention check questions were included at different points in the survey (eg 'If you are reading this question, please mark 1'). A total of 21 participants who failed any of the attention check questions were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, 10 participants were removed due to incomplete responses. As a result, the initial sample of 473 participants was reduced by 31, and the final analysis was conducted on the data of 442 participants. Ethical approval for the study was received from the first author's university ethical board before the recruitment of the participants and complied with the Helsinki Declaration.

Translation procedure of the ELWQ

First, permission was obtained from the ELWQ developers to adapt the scale into Turkish. Beaton et al's. (2000) international standardized translation protocol was followed to adapt the scale into Turkish. The scale was translated into Turkish independently by

Table 1. Demographic statistics.

| Variables | Category | N | % |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----|------|
| Gender | Male | 215 | 48.6 |
| | Female | 227 | 51.4 |
| Marital status | Married | 239 | 54.1 |
| | Single | 203 | 45.9 |
| Sector | Private sector | 323 | 73.1 |
| | Public sector | 119 | 26.9 |
| Employee category | Blue-collar | 85 | 19.2 |
| | White-collar | 357 | 80.8 |
| Organizational position | Lowest level | 88 | 19.9 |
| | Middle level | 298 | 67.4 |
| | Upper level | 56 | 12.7 |
| Educational level | High school and equivalent | 72 | 16.3 |
| | Associate degree | 46 | 10.4 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 248 | 56.1 |
| | Master's degree | 69 | 15.6 |
| | Doctoral degree | 7 | 1.6 |

the first author of the study and a professional translator. Then, both translations were examined by five academics who work in organizational psychology and were fluent in English. Then, a single version was obtained by combining the most appropriate translations for each item. Then, a group of academics were asked what they understood from the items using the think aloud method (van Someron et al., 1994). After the feedback was received, some minor revisions were made to a few items. Then, the scale was back-translated into English by two academics who work in organizational psychology and were fluent in English but did not know the original version of the scale. As a result of the re-examination of these translations by the study's first author, a minor change was made to one Turkish item. Finally, the Turkish version of the ELWQ was finalized (see Appendix A).

Measures

Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (ELWQ)

The ELWQ (Kalshoven et al., 2011) comprises 38 items and seven factors. The dimensions are: people orientation (seven items; eg 'My supervisor is genuinely concerned about my personal development'), fairness (six items; eg 'My supervisor holds me responsible for things that are not my fault': all items in this dimension are reverse coded), power sharing (six items; eg 'My supervisor seeks advice from subordinates concerning organizational strategy'), concern for sustainability (three items; eg 'My supervisor shows concern for sustainability issues'), ethical guidance (seven items; eg 'My supervisor explains what is expected from employees in terms of behaving with integrity'), role clarification (five items; eg 'My supervisor indicates what the performance expectations of each group

member are'), and integrity (four items (eg 'My supervisor can be trusted to do the things he/she says')). Participants rate items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely disagree*) to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Higher scores indicate a greater ethical leadership perception. See Table 2 for internal consistency scores.

While all items in the fairness dimension contain negative wording, one item in the power sharing dimension (ie 'My supervisor does not allow others to participate in decision making') is also negatively worded. Using negatively worded items in scales is a method to reduce acquiescence bias, which refers to respondents' tendency to agree with statements without careful consideration (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Prior to analysis, all negatively worded items in the fairness dimension and the negative item in the power sharing dimension were reverse-coded to ensure scoring consistency, and data analysis was conducted accordingly.

Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS)

The ELS (Brown et al., 2005; Turkish version: Tuna et al., 2012) comprises 10 items (eg 'My supervisor makes fair and balanced decisions') assessing ethical leadership as a single factor. Participants rate items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely disagree*) to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Higher scores indicate a greater ethical leadership perception. See Table 2 for internal consistency scores.

Autocratic leadership

The 10-item single-factor Autocratic Leadership Style Scale dimension of the Leadership Style Behaviour Scale developed in Turkish by Taş et al. (2007) was used to assess autocratic leadership. Participants rate

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, internal consistency scores.

| Variables | α | ω | CR | Mean | SD |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|------|------|------|
| ELWQ-T Total | | | | 3.49 | 0.92 |
| People orientation | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.84 | 3.43 | 1.17 |
| Fairness | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.89 | 3.47 | 1.19 |
| Power sharing | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.73 | 3.21 | 0.94 |
| Concern for sustainability | 0.90 | 0.90 | 0.85 | 3.55 | 1.10 |
| Ethical guidance | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.71 | 3.63 | 1.09 |
| Role clarification | 0.94 | 0.94 | 0.77 | 3.66 | 1.13 |
| Integrity | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.79 | 3.50 | 1.19 |
| ELS | 0.93 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 3.52 | 1.01 |
| Autocratic leadership | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.89 | 2.56 | 0.84 |
| Job satisfaction | 0.83 | 0.83 | 0.89 | 3.63 | 0.98 |
| Cynicism Total | | | | 2.67 | 1.01 |
| Cognitive cynicism | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.89 | 2.94 | 1.14 |
| Affective cynicism | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.85 | 2.30 | 1.29 |
| Behavioural cynicism | 0.81 | 0.81 | 0.79 | 2.71 | 1.10 |
| ELI | | | | 3.85 | 1.26 |

$N=442$, α = Cronbach's alpha, ω = McDonald's omega; CR: composite reliability, SD: standard deviation; ELS: Ethical Leadership Scale by Brown et al. (2005); ELI: ethical leadership item.

items (eg *'My supervisor prefers to solve problems by giving orders'*) on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely disagree*) to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Higher scores indicate a greater autocratic leadership. See [Table 2](#) for internal consistency scores.

Organizational Cynicism Scale (OCS)

The OCS (Brandes et al., 1999; Turkish version: Kalağan, 2009) comprises 13 items and three dimensions: cognitive cynicism (five items; eg *'I believe that my organization says one thing and does another'*), affective cynicism (four items; eg *'When I think about my organization, I experience aggravation'*), and behavioural cynicism (four items; eg *'I criticize my organization's practices and policies with others'*). Participants rate items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely disagree*) to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Higher scores indicate greater organizational cynicism. See [Table 2](#) for internal consistency scores.

Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)

The Turkish translation (Özsoy & Ardiç, 2017) of the shortened general JSS developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) was used to assess job satisfaction as a single factor. The scale comprises five items (eg *'I find real enjoyment in my job'*). Participants rate items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely disagree*) to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Higher scores indicate greater job satisfaction. See [Table 2](#) for internal consistency scores.

Ethical leadership item (ELI)

Participants were asked to rate the item *'My supervisor attaches importance to ethical principles'* on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely disagree*) to 5 (*absolutely agree*). Higher scores indicate greater perception of ethical leadership. This item was added to test its correlation with ethical leadership scales.

Demographics

Participants first answered demographic questions indicating gender (1=female, 2=male), marital status (1=married, 2=single), education level (1=primary school, 2=high school or equivalent, 3=associate degree, 4=bachelor's degree, 5=master's degree, 6=doctoral degree), age (open-ended), work sector (1=public sector, 2=private sector), employee type (1=blue collar, 2=white collar), and the position in the organizational hierarchy (1=lowest level, 2=middle level, 3=upper level). All demographic

information was self-reported by participants, and no additional explanations were provided regarding the categories.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, internal consistency tests (Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, and composite reliability), Pearson's correlations, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used using AMOS. Several fit indices (comparative fit index [CFI], Tucker-Lewis index [TLI], and root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA]) were used to examine if the factor structure was supported for the ELWQ-T. CFI and TLI > .9 with RMSEA < .08 were used to indicate support for the factor structure (Bentler, 1990). IBM SPSS version 22 was used for descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, and correlations, while AMOS, integrated within SPSS, was used for CFA.

Results

Descriptive statistics and internal consistency values are shown in [Table 2](#). Internal consistency scores for all variables, including Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, and composite reliability, were good to excellent, ranging from 0.71 to 0.96. Correlation analysis findings are shown in [Table 3](#).

Total scores on the ELWQ-T and ELS were highly correlated ($r=0.90$). Both the ELWQ-T (including its total score and dimensions) and the ELS were negatively correlated with autocratic leadership and cynicism (including all dimensions) and positively correlated with job satisfaction with similar effect sizes. More specifically, there were significant correlations between the ELWQ-T and autocratic leadership ($r=-0.68$), ELS and autocratic leadership ($r=-0.64$), ELWQ-T and cynicism ($r=-0.53$), ELS and cynicism ($r=-0.49$), ELWQ-T and job satisfaction ($r=0.44$), and ELS and job satisfaction ($r=0.45$). All dimensions of the ELWQ-T had positive correlations with each other. The ELS were positively correlated with all the dimensions of the ELWQ-T. The correlation coefficients of the ELS with the ELWQ-T dimensions were similar to the correlation coefficients of the ELWQ-T total score with the ELWQ-T dimensions. Gender and age were not associated with the ELS and any dimension of the ELWQ-T. Finally, the ELI rating was positively correlated with both the ELW-Q (including its total score and dimensions) and the ELS all with strong effect sizes (see [Table 3](#)).

Table 3. Convergent and discriminant validity findings.

| Variables | ELWQ-T | | | | | | | | | | Other Variables | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|---------|-------|
| | ELWQ-T | PO | F | PS | CS | EG | RC | I | ELS | AL | JS | CYT | COS | AC | BC | G | A |
| ELWQ-T | — | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| People orientation (PO) | 0.89*** | — | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fairness (F) | 0.65*** | 0.48*** | — | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Power sharing (PS) | 0.78*** | 0.69*** | 0.45*** | — | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Concern for S. (CS) | 0.74*** | 0.63*** | 0.36*** | 0.50*** | — | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ethical guidance (EG) | 0.90*** | 0.74*** | 0.43*** | 0.59*** | 0.71*** | — | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Role clarification (RC) | 0.86*** | 0.70*** | 0.37*** | 0.59*** | 0.70*** | 0.85*** | — | | | | | | | | | | |
| Integrity (I) | 0.88*** | 0.75*** | 0.52*** | 0.66*** | 0.59*** | 0.80*** | 0.74*** | — | | | | | | | | | |
| ELS | 0.90*** | 0.83*** | 0.51*** | 0.71*** | 0.64*** | 0.82*** | 0.77*** | 0.82*** | — | | | | | | | | |
| Autocratic leadership (AL) | -0.68*** | -0.60*** | -0.59*** | -0.55*** | -0.49*** | -0.55*** | -0.51*** | -0.59*** | -0.64*** | — | | | | | | | |
| Job satisfaction (JS) | 0.44*** | 0.40*** | 0.35*** | 0.28*** | 0.39*** | 0.39*** | 0.34*** | 0.36*** | 0.45*** | -0.39*** | — | | | | | | |
| Cynicism Total (CYT) | -0.53*** | -0.43*** | -0.62*** | -0.38*** | -0.31*** | -0.40*** | -0.34*** | -0.48*** | -0.49*** | 0.64*** | -0.50*** | — | | | | | |
| Cognitive cynicism (COS) | -0.50*** | -0.39*** | -0.54*** | -0.38*** | -0.30*** | -0.37*** | -0.38*** | -0.47*** | -0.47*** | 0.62*** | -0.38*** | 0.87*** | — | | | | |
| Affective cynicism (AC) | -0.52*** | -0.44** | -0.58*** | -0.37*** | -0.32*** | -0.40*** | -0.34*** | -0.45*** | -0.48*** | 0.57*** | -0.51*** | 0.89*** | 0.65*** | — | | | |
| Behavioural cynicism (BS) | -0.33*** | -0.28*** | -0.48*** | -0.21*** | -0.17** | -0.25*** | -0.14** | -0.30*** | -0.30*** | 0.44*** | -0.41*** | 0.83*** | 0.56*** | 0.65*** | — | | |
| Gender (G) | -0.6 | -0.06 | -0.04 | -0.05 | -0.08 | -0.05 | 0.02 | -0.06 | -0.07 | 0.04 | -0.11 | 0.08 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.10* | — | |
| Age (A) | 0.00 | -0.01 | 0.06 | -0.02 | 0.07 | .01 | -0.07 | 0.008 | -0.01 | -0.00 | 0.15** | -0.13** | -0.004 | -0.15** | -0.22*** | -0.16** | — |
| ELI | 0.69*** | 0.61*** | 0.36*** | 0.47*** | 0.53*** | 0.67*** | 0.62*** | 0.69*** | 0.64*** | -0.46*** | 0.33*** | -0.38*** | -0.38*** | -0.34** | -0.23*** | -0.04 | -0.03 |

N=442, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$, *** $p < 0.0001$, ELS: Ethical Leadership Scale by Brown et al. (2005); CS: Concern for sustainability, ELI: Single item ethical leadership, Gender was coded as 1 = Female, 2 = Male.

CFA was used to evaluate the factor structure of the ELWQ-T. The seven-factor model fitted the data well for the ELWQ-T: $\chi^2 = 1787.09$, $p < .01$, $\chi^2/df = 2.81$, TLI = .93, CFI = .93, and RMSEA = .06. The CFA indicated that the ELWQ-T had acceptable factor loadings across all dimensions. Standardized factor loadings for People Orientation ranged from 0.82 to 0.88, Fairness ranged from 0.66 to 0.92, and Power Sharing ranged from 0.50 to 0.87. Concern for Sustainability factor loadings ranged from 0.86 to 0.89, Ethical Guidance ranged from 0.79 to 0.92, and Role Clarification ranged from 0.80 to 0.94. Integrity ranged from 0.91 to 0.96.

Discussion

In the present study, the ELWQ was successfully translated and validated into Turkish. First, all of the internal consistency values of the ELWQ-T were found to be good to excellent. Second, CFA fit values supported the seven-factor structure of the ELWQ-T and all standardized factor loadings were within acceptable ranges (0.50–0.96; Kline, 2015), further confirming the construct validity of the scale. Third, convergent and discriminant validity of the ELWQ-T were supported based on the associations with the ELS, autocratic leadership, job satisfaction, cynicism, gender, and age. Therefore, H_1 to H_4 were all supported.

Although the ELWQ was not developed to obtain a composite ethical leadership score, the total score of the ELWQ-T was calculated in the present study to test the convergent validity with the ELS since the ELS assesses ethical leadership with a total score only. Similar to the German validation study of the ELWQ (Steinmann et al., 2016: correlation coefficient between the ELWQ and the ELS was 0.83), the present study also obtained a high correlation between the ELWQ-T and the ELS ($r=0.90$). This finding shows that both scales are similar but distinct from each other.

Considering the correlation of the dimensions of the ELWQ-T with each other, similar findings were obtained to that of the original scale validation study (Kalshoven et al., 2011), except for one dimension (ie concern for sustainability). In the study by Kalshoven et al. (2011), although the concern for sustainability was significantly correlated with all the other ELWQ dimensions, its effect sizes were smaller than the present study (ie the correlation coefficients of concern for sustainability with other dimensions varied between 0.16 and 0.49). However, in the present study, concern for sustainability had an effect size

varying between 0.36 and 0.71 with the other ELWQ-T dimensions. Similar to the present study, in the German validation of the ELWQ-T (Steinmann et al., 2016), the correlation coefficient of concern for sustainability with other ELWQ dimensions varied between 0.15 and 0.63. In all three studies (including the present one), concern for sustainability showed the lowest effect size with fairness. Moreover, in all three studies, although statistically significant, concern for sustainability showed the lowest correlation with the other ELWQ dimensions. This finding obtained within the scope of the concern for sustainability dimension can be explained by the fact that this dimension includes the perception of the leader's actions regarding the external environment and stakeholders and does not include items directly related to leader-employee interaction (Kalshoven et al., 2011).

The correlation coefficients obtained between the seven ELWQ-T dimensions and the ELS (ranging between 0.51 and 0.83) were similar to those reported in the original validation study Kalshoven et al. (2011), where the correlation coefficients varied between 0.37 and 0.75. Significant correlation coefficients were obtained between (i) autocratic leadership and the ELWQ-T dimensions (ranging between -0.51 and -0.60), (ii) job satisfaction and the ELWQ-T dimensions (ranging between 0.28 and 0.40), and (iii) cynicism and the ELWQ-T dimensions (ranging between -0.31 and -0.62). In the original validation study (Kalshoven et al., 2011), the correlation coefficients between the ELWQ-T dimensions and same variables ranged between (i) -0.04 and -0.28 for autocratic leadership, (ii) 0.40 and 0.76 for job satisfaction, and (iii) -0.24 and -0.51 for cynicism. These findings are generally in line with those of the present study.

Although the correlation coefficients obtained in the present study between autocratic leadership and the ELWQ-T dimensions (ranging between 0.49 and 0.68) were similar to Steinmann et al. (2016) study (ranging between 0.32 and 0.77), the original validation study Kalshoven et al. (2011) reported weaker effect sizes, ranging between 0.04 and 0.53. The significant correlation obtained between autocratic leadership and the ELWQ-T dimensions supported the validity of the ELWQ-T even more strongly in the present study.

In other studies, ethical leadership and autocratic leadership have been negatively associated with a strong effect size (Oran, 2019; Steinmann et al., 2016). The main reasons for this could be that autocratic leadership has characteristics such as being oppressive, not

prioritizing employees to participate in the decision-making process, making central decisions instead of consultation in employee interaction, and having limited communication with employees (Altan & Özpehlivan, 2019). Largely different from this, in ethical leadership, behaviors such as healthy information sharing and consultation, compromise instead of pressure, and healthy communication come to the fore when making decisions and interacting with employees (Den Hartog, 2015).

Ethical leaders emphasize integrity, fairness, and open communication, fostering a work environment where employees feel valued and respected (Brown & Treviño, 2006). This supportive climate enhances employees' attitudes toward their jobs and organizations (Neubert et al., 2013). Prior studies have similarly found a strong association between ethical leadership and higher job satisfaction (Qing et al., 2020; Tu et al., 2017). At the same time, ethical leadership reinforces a culture of trust and accountability, which can diminish skepticism and reduce cynical workplace attitudes (Hsieh et al., 2023; Lawton & Páez, 2015). Consistently, previous research has shown that ethical leadership plays a key role in lowering cynicism (Kalshoven et al., 2011; Qian & Jian, 2020). The positive association between ELWQ-T score and job satisfaction, alongside the negative association between ELWQ-T score and cynicism in the present study, provides further empirical validation of the ELWQ-T.

Limitations

The present study had a number of limitations. First, test-retest reliability was not conducted, so this should be performed in future similar studies. Secondly, mainly white-collar professional employees from the private sector participated in the study, and the data were collected using a convenience sampling method. For this reason, in future replication studies should aim to include a larger sample size and more diverse sample of employees from various sectors (eg the public sector), from different backgrounds, and from different organizational levels in Türkiye to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Third, although scale validation studies are, by definition, self-reports, all the data collected were self-reported, which has several well-known method biases, such as social desirability bias, memory recall bias, and self-perception bias, that may affect the accuracy of self-reported data. Fourth, the main type of analysis used was CFA. However, other types of more in-depth analysis may provide additional insights into the relationship between variables. Fifth, the adaptation of the ELWQ-T

into the Turkish cultural context may not have necessarily included all relevant local nuances, which may potential affect the validity of the construct. Finally, to reduce the length of the survey in an attempt to avoid survey fatigue, variables known to be positively related to ethical leadership (eg trust in the leader, commitment to the organization, and transformational leadership) were not included in order to test the relationship of the ELWQ-T with other structures in more detail. Future research incorporating these variables could allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of the scale.

Conclusion

Overall, findings regarding the good to excellent internal consistency values, the conformation of the seven-factor structure of the ELWQ-T, the expected associations between the ELWQ-T dimensions, and the theoretically consistent association of the ELWQ-T dimensions with the relevant variables, all provide significant evidence concerning the robust psychometric properties of the ELWQ-T. Therefore, the translation and validation of the ELWQ-T will directly contribute to future studies on ethical leadership and, consequently, to the increase of the importance and awareness of ethical leadership. It will also contribute to increasing international studies on ethical leadership by including Turkish samples.

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Ethics statement

Ethical approval for the study was received from the first author's university ethical board before the recruitment of the participants, and complied with the Helsinki Declaration.

Disclosure statement

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About the authors

Emrah Özsoy is an Associate Professor of Organizational Psychology at Sakarya University Business School. His research focuses on personality, individual differences, and workplace behavior, with publications in various international journals related to organizational psychology.

Mark D. Griffiths is a Chartered Psychologist and Distinguished Professor of Behavioural Addiction at the Nottingham Trent University, and Director of the International Gaming Research Unit. He is internationally known for his work into gambling, gaming, and behavioral addictions. He has published over 1600 refereed research papers, 200+ book chapters, and seven books.

Meliha Ceylan holds a Master's degree in Management and Organization and currently works at the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

ORCID

Emrah Özsoy  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2886-8824>

Mark D. Griffiths  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8880-6524>

Meliha Ceylan  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3530-1343>

Data availability statement

The dataset generated during and/or analysed during the study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Turkish Translation of the Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (ELWQ-T).

My boss/supervisor

People orientation (İnsan Odaklılık)

Nasıl hissettiğim ve nasıl olduğumla ilgilenir.
Kişisel iletişim için zaman ayırır.
Kişisel ihtiyaçlarımı önemser.
İşte deneyimlediğim duygulardan bahsetmem için zaman ayırır.
Kişisel gelişimimle gerçekten ilgilenir.
Sorunlarım olduğunda bana anlayış gösterir.
Astlarını önemser

Fairness (Adil olma)

Üzerinde kontrolümün olmadığı sorunlardan beni sorumlu tutar. (-)
Üzerinde kontrolümün olmadığı işlerden beni sorumlu tutar. (-)
Hatam olmayan şeylerden beni sorumlu tutar. (-)
Başkalarının zarar görmesi pahasına kendi kişisel başarısının peşinden koşar. (-)
Genelde kendi hedeflerine ulaşmaya odaklanırlar. (-)
Astlarını manipüle eder. (-)

Power sharing (Güç paylaşımı)

Astlarının kritik kararlara etki etmesine imkân sunar.
Başkalarının karar alma sürecine dâhil olmalarına müsaade etmez. (-)
Örgütsel stratejiyle ilgili konularda astlarının tavsiyelerine başvurur.
Astlarının tavsiyeleriyle kararlarını yeniden gözden geçirir.
Astlarını zorlayıcı sorumluluklar için yetkilendirir
Astların kendi performans hedeflerini belirlemelerinde etkin rol oynamalarına müsaade eder.

Concern for sustainability (Sürdürülebilirliğe ilgililik)

Çevreye duyarlı bir şekilde çalışmak ister.
Sürdürülebilirlik konularına ilgi gösterir.
Birimimizdeki ürün ve malzemelerin geri dönüşümünü teşvik eder.

Ethical guidance (Etik rehberlik)

Dürüstlikle ilgili olan davranış kurallarını açıkça belirtir.
Dürüst davranma konusunda çalışanlardan ne beklendiğini açıklar.
Dürüstlük ilkelerini net bir şekilde açıklar.
Çalışanların dürüstlük kurallarına uymalarını sağlar.
Astlarının olası etik dışı davranışlarının muhtemel sonuçlarını açık bir şekilde belirtir.
Çalışanlar arasındaki dürüstlikle ilgili konuların tartışılmasını teşvik eder.
Dürüstlük ilkelerine göre davranan çalışanlarına övgüde bulunur.

Role clarification (Rollerin açıklanması)

Her bir grup üyesinden performans beklentilerinin neler olduğunu belirtir.
Her bir grup üyesinden ne beklendiğini açıklar.
Yöneticim, benden ve iş arkadaşlarımdan ne beklendiğini açıklar.
Öncelikleri netleştirir.
Kimin nelerden sorumlu olduğunu netleştirir.

Integrity (Dürüstlük)

Verdiği sözleri yerine getirir.
Söylediği şeyleri yapma konusunda güvenilirdir.
Taahhütlerini yerine getirme konusunda güvenilir biridir.
Daima sözünü tutar.

The items reflect the same order as the original. (-) indicates negative items.