

Examination of Empathic Tendency and Honesty Value in Secondary School Students According to Different Variables¹

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to define the empathy tendency levels and honesty value levels of secondary school students and to determine whether there is a relationship between them. This was done by examining them according to variables such as gender and grade level. The research is quantitative in nature, and the general screening model was identified as the research model. The study's research group comprises a total of 388 students enrolled in secondary school at the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade levels. The "Empathic Tendency Scale" and the "Honesty Tendency Scale" are instruments utilized for the collection of data. In alignment with the objectives of the study, the data were subjected to statistical procedures, including the calculation of the arithmetic mean, correlation analysis, t-test, and ANOVA test. The findings indicated that secondary school students exhibited greater empathy tendency skills than honesty values. The findings revealed that, with regard to empathy tendencies, male and female students exhibited greater similarity in their honesty value levels. Furthermore, no correlation was identified between these two sets of values. A statistically significant difference was observed between the empathy tendency level and the gender variable (the empathy tendency level was lower in male students than in female students). However, no statistically significant difference was found between the gender variable and the honesty value. A statistically significant difference was observed between the grade level variable and both empathy tendency and honesty value. Sixth-grade students exhibited lower empathy tendency levels than students in other grade levels, while eighth-grade students demonstrated higher honesty value levels than students in other grades.

Keywords: Secondary school, student, values education, empathy, honesty

Introduction

Since its inception, humanity has endeavored to identify and promote positive qualities within individuals, while also contemplating the nature of virtue itself. The necessity for "good people" in societies to facilitate healthy communication has remained a constant throughout history and has become increasingly crucial. The process of socialization, which is inherent to human beings, entails the internalization of the lifestyle, thoughts, norms, emotions, and beliefs characteristic of a given society (Göksu, 2007). As individuals engage in socialization, they learn the principles, rules, and behavioral patterns that shape the social order, align their personal goals with the collective goals of society, establish

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a connection between the two, and internalize the shared values that underpin social cohesion (Köknel, 1996).

The Turkish Language Association (TDK) defines the concept of value as "an abstract measure that helps determine the importance of something, the response that something touches, value" (TDK, 2009). The values that define important elements for people serve as both the source of the behaviors exhibited by society and the basis for evaluating these behaviors (Erdem, 2003). There are values that are accepted by families, individuals, and societies. The concept of value is regarded as a common criterion for determining the suitability of the behavior, wishes, needs, and attitudes of people who share a certain cultural life (Özgüven, 1994).

The formation of values begins at the familial level. The belief system, the structure of society, and the moral values of the country where the family resides collectively shape the values of individuals. Individuals receive their values from the societies in which they live. Values acquired through formal or informal means are reflected in people's behaviors (Çelikkaya & Filoğlu, 2014).

Value acquisition is a process, and as individuals mature, they are accepted by society. Individuals who are considered suitable by society are typically described as having a strong moral compass. These individuals are expected to adhere to the values and behaviors that society deems acceptable. In essence, all moral provisions can be considered values (Güngör, 1998).

The formation of a value system among secondary school students continues throughout the adolescent period. Taylor (1996) posited that the formation of school-age children's values is influenced by a complex interplay between family, school, and society. He further suggested that any shortcomings in children's values education should be addressed by the school. A growing number of countries have recognized the pivotal role of schools in transmitting values to new generations, with teachers assuming a significant responsibility in this regard (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

Teachers assume a variety of roles and responsibilities in the teaching of values. These can be enumerated as follows: the creation of a common social fabric within the classroom environment; the provision of a model for students; the facilitation of students' moral development through the assignment of responsibilities to each; the allowance of students to make decisions; the encouragement of students; and the direction of students towards collaborative work and sharing (Dilmaç, 2012).

Those who are immature in terms of their value system may evince negative attitudes toward themselves, their environment, and other living things. The capacity of individuals exhibiting negative behavior to transform their attitudes into positive ones hinges on their empathic abilities. Empathy represents the inaugural step in the development of constructive social conduct and plays a pivotal role in the foundation of moral behavior (Hoffman, 2000). Erken (2009) investigated the influence of empathic competencies on moral conduct, uncovering a correlation between students' empathic capabilities and their moral behaviors.

As defined by TDK (2009), empathy is the capacity of an individual to adopt the perspective of another consciousness and comprehend the desires, beliefs, and emotions associated with that consciousness without resorting to deliberate attempts. Wiseman (1996) defined empathy as the act of viewing the world through the lens of another individual or entering into their frame of reference. The new perception posits that an individual who is able to empathize directs their attention towards the other person, rather than

focusing on themselves. During the 1980s, the notion that the concept of empathy encompassed both cognitive and affective elements gained widespread acceptance. In the 1990s, the concept of empathy was employed to signify the act of entering into an object or event and examining the situation from a third-person perspective (Dökmen, 1988).

The application of empathy skills serves to avert potential issues and conflicts in communication, thereby establishing a foundation for more harmonious and productive relationships. Empathy has been demonstrated to mitigate aggressive attitudes and anti-social behaviors by fostering self-disclosure, socialization, social sensitivity, adaptation to societal norms, and prosocial and cooperative behaviors. Furthermore, it has been established that empathy skills enhance children's academic performance by fostering positive contributions to the learning environment (Ünal, 2007). Individuals who communicate effectively, demonstrate reduced aggression, possess enhanced life comprehension, and make sound decisions in problem-solving processes tend to develop greater empathy skills (Türnüklü, 2004).

The data indicate that individuals with high levels of empathy skills in interpersonal relationships exhibit positive personality traits. These individuals are observed to possess compassion, acceptance, and tolerance. Additionally, research suggests that individuals with high empathy skills experience positive spiritual development and high self-esteem (Kalliopuska, 1992).

Empathy is a crucial skill for social and psychological well-being. Family members play a pivotal role in this regard. Early interactions with family members have been shown to significantly influence children's development of empathy skills (Kapıkıran, 1998).

The capacity for empathetic thinking represents a crucial element that influences an individual's preparedness and must be integrated into the curriculum of values education. The ability to engage in empathetic reflection prior to making a decision fosters tolerance and encourages a reflective approach to decision-making. The diverse perspectives acquired through this process facilitate the reasoning process, which encompasses the translation of values into action (Doğanay, 2006).

In order to comprehend the attitudes and sentiments of others, it is essential to adopt a detached perspective and engage with the individual in question. The ability to perceive the world from another person's perspective is the most accurate means of understanding the impact of emotions on others. It is only through this process that one can truly comprehend and empathize with the emotional experiences of others (Davis, 2004). Empathy allows an individual to adopt the perspective of another person, thereby facilitating comprehension of their emotional state, thoughts, and experiences (Dökmen, 1995). In other words, the capacity for empathy allows an individual to perceive another person in their totality, encompassing both their intrinsic characteristics and the external circumstances of their existence. This facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of that individual (Metin, 2011).

Empathy is a cognitive process that enables the expression of emotions, moral sentiments, and optical illusions. The capacity to empathize serves to equalize emotional and behavioral levels. Empathy is also an important instinctual process. The field of psychology first recognized the importance of empathy, and studies have shown that the success of therapeutic interventions is directly correlated with the degree of empathy exhibited by the therapist. Empathy training has been shown to have a positive impact on individuals' lives, as evidenced by scientific studies. Therefore, empathy has a beneficial effect on an individual's life and is a holistic process (Klis & Kossewska, 1996).

Given the importance of empathy in personal relationships, attitudes, and learning, it can be seen that this situation is related to the teacher's ability to empathize. The importance of empathy as a skill cannot be overstated. It is not only beneficial for the individual who is empathized with, but also for the individual who is able to empathize. Those who are able to empathize and have developed this skill are more likely to be loved and needed individuals in their relationships with their social environment. Additionally, individuals who are highly empathic are more likely to be effective leaders in their environment (Dökmen, 2008).

An individual who is able to empathize in their personal life is also capable of communicating effectively in a business context. In the role of an educator, one of the most crucial responsibilities of a teacher is to facilitate and assist the community they teach in gaining an understanding of themselves. The teacher's role is not limited to that of an instructor; it also encompasses the guidance and support necessary for students to navigate challenges, prepare for the demands of life, and realize their full potential. As an educator, the teacher shares his identity with his student, providing as much attention as a therapist would. Therefore, the teacher should evaluate himself throughout the education process and strive to enhance his abilities in this regard by providing feedback on his capacity for empathy. This positively affects his professional life and contributes to his development as a more effective teacher (Akkoyun, 1982).

The most significant factor influencing the educational development of children is the attitude and behavior of their parents. Parents convey to their children the distinction between right and wrong through their own behavior (Aydın, 2005). The development of empathy skills in children is influenced by parental attitudes, which can have a positive or negative impact. This situation is supported by numerous studies. In his study, Ceyhan (1993) investigated parental tendencies with regard to a number of variables. The empathy tendency level of children from families with democratic parenting attitudes has been observed to be higher than the empathy tendency levels of children from families with liberal or authoritarian parents. In a study conducted by Yeşilyaprak (1989), it was determined that disciplinary practices that align with a parent's intention to express affection or interest towards their child have a positive impact on the young person's personality. These practices facilitate the development of internal control through the acquisition of insight into one's own abilities to regulate emotions and behaviors. Furthermore, research indicates that parental attitudes that restrict a child's behavior, fail to respect their autonomy, and utilize punishment as a means of control, can have a detrimental impact on the child's personality development. These findings suggest that authoritarian and indifferent parenting styles can influence a child's capacity to develop empathy skills and form a healthy personality (Yavuzer, 1999).

Empathy is defined by Rogers (1980) as a special existential process that occurs between two people, as evidenced by the results of his psychiatric practice. The process in question is expressed as the ability to be included in the individual's inner world, to recognize the events they experience, the source of those experiences, and emotions such as love, anxiety, fear, and anger. Additionally, it requires attention and understanding towards the person's emotions. This process highlights the significance of adopting empathic behavior by both individuals to enhance the efficacy of communication between two people (Kabapınar, 2015). Recent studies on the presence of empathy in the classroom also underscore the importance of integrating the concept of empathy into the classroom environment. Empathy is employed as a pedagogical approach and is recommended for use (Ersoy & Köşger, 2016).

A teacher's capacity for empathizing is contingent upon three primary factors: emotional awareness, personality traits, and the ability to empathize. The capacity to empathize is a process, and the teacher may encounter certain challenges along the way. The most significant factor is the number of students in the class. As the number of students in a classroom increases, it becomes increasingly challenging for a teacher to empathize with each individual student and comprehend their unique emotional experiences. To facilitate this process for the teacher, it is essential that the student is aware that empathy is a viable approach for understanding their emotions, that empathy is a skill that can be cultivated, that they possess a high level of listening proficiency, that they are adept at accurately diagnosing emotions, and that they are able to define emotions with precision. Furthermore, for a teacher to be effective in empathizing with their students, they must utilize empathic skills in conjunction with diverse communication techniques, recognize that classroom management is profoundly influenced by empathic interactions with students, conduct themselves with politeness and respect during this process, possess a clear understanding of the appropriate actions to take, and embrace openness to diverse experiences (Kabapınar, 2015).

Empathy tendencies vary among individuals. While some individuals demonstrate low levels of empathy, others may exhibit high levels of these skills. With the application of education and effort, the level of empathy required for effective communication can be enhanced (Pişkin, 1999). The capacity of individuals to evince empathic sentiments and cultivate positive social relationships through educational endeavors is not contingent upon their age; it is attainable at all age levels (Cotton, 1992). Ayten (2010) posited that empathy skills develop gradually during childhood, reaching a point of understanding the emotions of individuals other than oneself during adolescence. Tarhan (2013) argued that knowledge of the term empathy is insufficient for empathy skills, and that emotional, intellectual, and behavioral empathy must be nurtured to achieve full empathy.

One of the most crucial values to consider when discussing the concept of a healthy society is the value of honesty. The term "honesty" is defined in various ways, including as "reflecting what is as it is," "being the same in essence," "not trying to appear or show anything other than what you know, believe, and are," "not hiding the truth," and "integrity" (TDK, 2009). In their 2018 study, Demirkaya and Çal define the value of honesty as encompassing the meanings of quality, purity, honor, and truthfulness, and as reflecting an individual's attitudes and behaviors.

The values of honesty and integrity have existed in all societies throughout history and have remained of paramount importance. The importance of honesty as a value is increasing over time. However, this increase involves some assumptions rather than objective criteria accepted by everyone. These include the notions that "the less is more valuable" and that "the most interesting is the most valuable." Accordingly, there is an inverse proportion between the increase in the value of honesty and the level of honesty in human behavior; as one decreases, the other increases (Işık, 2010).

The concept of honesty is one that can be measured and examined in concrete terms. The value of integrity is not an abstract concept that cannot be quantified. The accuracy of human behavior can be measured with the help of appropriate measurement tools. In developed countries, many scales have been developed to measure the level of honesty. Although these tests have been criticized, they are still used. Some types of these tests are now banned because they are unethical, or their use has been restricted (Işık, 2010).

Verley (2008) sought to ascertain the perceptions of physics graduate students with regard to the teaching of values. A Likert-type survey was employed, and the data collected from 132 students were subjected to quantitative analysis. The results of the research, which also employed qualitative methods, indicated that physics graduate students attach significance to values education and that such education should be incorporated into their formal curriculum. The research conducted by Balcı and Yanpar Yelken revealed that teachers considered all the values specified in the social studies program to be of paramount importance. Among these values, the values of "fairness," "peace," "honesty," and "respect for feelings and thoughts" were identified as the most significant (Balcı & Yanpar Yelken, 2013, pp. 195-213). Prencipe and Helwig (2002) posit that honesty is a frequently or positively shared value for moral character. This assertion is cited in Ulusoy and Dilmaç (2015).

The primary education period is of significant importance, as it represents the first instance in which the child spends the majority of their time in an alternative social setting, situated outside of the domestic environment and familial context. During the middle and late childhood period, there is an observable enhancement in the capacity to comprehend others and to regulate one's own emotions. An enhancement in the student's emotional comprehension has been observed (Santrock, 2019). A child who is able to establish a connection between the emotions of others and his own emotions becomes aware of the positive consequences of expressing his emotions. These processes appear to be associated with the development of empathy (Hoffman, 2000). The child is expected to adhere to a set of rules when engaging in games with their peers, at school, and at home, as well as in their interactions with the broader social environment. During the moral development period, the child tends to perceive the rules set by authority figures as unchanging (Senemoğlu, 2020). At the onset of the secondary school age (approximately 10 years of age), the child begins to undergo a transformation, questioning the strict compliance with the established rules (Yıldırım, 2015). The period of pre-adolescence, which corresponds to the middle school period, represents a transition from a relatively quiet period to one that is more intense, influenced by physical, biological, and psychosocial changes. While the initial years of adolescence are pivotal in shaping future identity, the growth of intellectual abilities offers a more expansive outlook (Steinberg, 2013). The child, who previously demonstrated care and assistance towards those in his immediate surroundings, now also exhibits concern for individuals he has never met in distant locales (Tarhan, 2020).

Empathy is a valuable and crucial skill in this context, as individuals with developed empathy abilities tend to experience positive outcomes in their interactions with others and in their broader social and professional lives (Goleman, 1995). Garaigordobil (2009) posits a positive correlation between empathy and prosocial behavior. In their analysis of the relationship between empathy and moral behavior, Waal and Preston (2017) found that the effect is not universally motivated under all conditions. In the relevant literature, it has been demonstrated that empathy skills and values education should be present in human life. Furthermore, it has been established that honesty is among the most fundamental root values that must be acquired, and that empathy skills are directly related to the moral development process. Furthermore, it is evident that empathy skills serve as the foundation for numerous human values, facilitate the individual's interactions with their surroundings, and play a pivotal role in moral development. It is believed that it is essential for contemporary children, who will shape the future of society, to be nurtured as honest individuals, both in their personal lives and in their familial relationships, in order to foster the development of a healthy and flourishing society. It is crucial to identify the skills and attitudes that facilitate this process in order to ensure the continuity of value acquisition. The role of

empathy in the acquisition of honesty has been identified as a valuable area of investigation. In the literature, Yüca (2018) conducted a study on values education and empathy skills titled "Predictive Relationships Between the Values Possessed by 5th and 6th Grade Students, Their Perceived Family Relationships and Their Empathy Level." Ödemiş (2019) also conducted a study on empathy skills and moral behavior in secondary school students. While there is a substantial body of research examining the relationship between relationships, there is a paucity of studies investigating the value of honesty and empathy skills. This research aims to contribute to the existing literature on the value of honesty and empathy skills within the context of values education. It will do so by identifying the factors that facilitate the acquisition of values among new generations.

The objective of this study is to ascertain the levels of empathy and honesty among secondary school students in grades 5–8. The investigation aims to determine the extent to which these two variables are correlated, identify any significant differences in their levels based on factors such as gender and class level, and assess the significance of these observed differences. To this end, the following questions were posed and answered:

1. What are the levels of honesty values and empathy tendencies exhibited by students in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades of secondary school?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between honesty values and empathy tendencies of 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students studying in secondary school?
3. Empathy tendency levels of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students studying in secondary school:
 - a. According to gender variables,
 - b. Does it differ at a statistically significant level according to grade levels?
4. Honesty value levels of 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students studying in secondary school:
 - a. According to gender variables,
 - b. Does it differ at a statistically significant level according to grade levels?

Method

Research Design

Descriptive studies are those which aim to investigate an event in its current form and determine the situation in question. In such studies, situations and events are investigated in detail, with an attempt being made to describe what the situation or event is by looking at its relationship with previous situations and events. The survey is the first method generally used in descriptive research studies. Consequently, descriptive research is also commonly known as survey research (Erkuş, 2005).

Survey research is a type of research that is frequently conducted in the social sciences. In this type of research, large groups are studied, the attitudes and opinions of group members about a given event or phenomenon are taken into account, and an attempt is made to describe the phenomenon and events in question. The researcher endeavors to provide comprehensive information about the present circumstances and to delineate them in detail (Karakaya, 2007).

This study is descriptive in nature and is designed as a general screening instrument. Data were collected using the honesty tendency scale and the empathy tendency scale to ascertain the levels of empathy tendency and honesty value exhibited by secondary school students.

Participants

The study group was constituted of students enrolled in a public secondary school in Kocaeli. The group was formed with the participation of a total of 388 students, 198 girls and 190 boys, who volunteered to take part in the study. The students were distributed across four grades: 90 in fifth grade, 118 in sixth grade, 101 in seventh grade, and 79 in eighth grade. The sample was selected using the easily accessible sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. In special cases where it is desired to study situations that provide the opportunity for in-depth research by selecting rich information situations and meeting certain criteria (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013), purposive sampling is the preferred method. The easily accessible sampling method adds practicality and speed to the study process (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this method, the researcher chooses a situation that is easy to access and close (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Data Collection Tools

In the study, the data collection tools are comprised of two distinct scales. One of the measurement tools is the Empathic Tendency Scale, which was developed by Dökmen (1988). The scale was employed to ascertain the empathic tendency level of the study group. This scale, which is a Likert-type scale, consists of 20 questions scored from 1 to 5. In order to prevent acquiescence bias, half of the items of the empathic tendency scale were written negatively. This was done in case people answered the questions without reading them. In calculating the scores, the responses to questions 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, and 15 were reversed. A minimum of 20 points and a maximum of 100 points are derived from the entire scale. The total scores obtained represent the empathy scores received by the research group. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.72, while the reliability coefficient of the data used in the study is 0.73.

The Honesty Tendency Scale, as developed by Sarmusak (2011), constitutes the other measurement tool utilized in the research. The scale comprises nine items and two factors. Scoring on the scale is a four-point Likert-type scale, with the following options: "never" (1), "very rarely" (2), "most of the time" (3), and "always" (4). In the case of negative statements, the scoring was conducted in the inverse manner. In calculating the scores for the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and ninth questions, the scoring was reversed. A minimum of nine points and a maximum of 36 points can be obtained from the entire scale. The resulting total score provides an indication of the honesty tendency score of the workgroup. A low score indicates a tendency towards dishonesty, whereas a high score indicates a tendency towards honesty. The reliability level of the honesty tendency scale was calculated as 0.89, while the reliability coefficient of the data used in this research was obtained as 0.73.

Collection of Data

The requisite permissions were obtained via email from the researchers who conducted the validity and reliability studies of the scales. Approval was granted by the Sakarya University Educational Research and Publication Ethics Committee on April 12, 2023, under the reference number E-61923333-050.99-238174. Furthermore, the requisite permission was obtained from the Kocaeli Provincial Directorate of National Education. The principles of publication ethics were observed throughout the course of the study. The data for this study were collected from public secondary school students in Kocaeli, Turkey, who were enrolled in the 2022-2023 academic year. Two scales, each of which required approximately twenty minutes to complete, were distributed to the participants on a voluntary basis, accompanied by instructions. The secondary school where the study was conducted was selected on the basis of its socio-economic diversity and the number of students who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. A total of 388 secondary school students (198 girls and 190 boys) participated in the study on a voluntary basis. The participants were provided with two scales, each of which took approximately twenty minutes to complete, along with instructions. It was observed that the students answered the survey questions in a sincere manner. The completed surveys were collected at the end of the specified period.

Data Analysis

In the course of the research, the available data were subjected to analysis using the SPSS 25 package program, in accordance with the questions and purpose of the study. The data were analyzed using a range of techniques, including the calculation of arithmetic mean, frequency, direct correlation analysis, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA tests. Prior to the commencement of data analysis, tests were conducted to ensure the homogeneity of variances and normality of the data. It was determined that the variances were homogeneous and that the data met the assumptions of normality.

Findings

Statistical procedures were carried out for the research and the results are mentioned in this section.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Secondary School Students' Empathic Tendency and Honesty Value Levels

Scale	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard deviation
Empathy Total	370	31,00	91,00	62,78	10,53
Integrity Total	370	9,00	19,00	12,95	2,04
Total	370				

Upon examination of the empathy tendency and honesty value averages of secondary school students as presented in Table 1, it becomes evident that the average empathy score is 62.78, while the average honesty score is 12.95. When the minimum and maximum scores are taken into account, it can be stated that secondary school students demonstrate a greater tendency towards empathy than towards honesty. When the standard deviation scores are considered, it is observed that the empathy tendency standard deviation score is 10.53, while the standard deviation score for honesty value is 2.04. Therefore, it can be said that secondary school students exhibit greater similarity in terms of honesty values according to their standard deviation scores.

Table 2

Direct Correlation Analysis Test Between Secondary School Students' Honesty Values and Empathy Tendencies

Variables	Empathy Total	Integrity Total
Empathy Total	1	
Integrity Total	-,04*	1

* $p < .05$

Table 2 illustrates a negative correlation between the honesty values and empathy tendencies of middle school students, with a statistically insignificant relationship ($r = -0.04$; $p > 0.05$).

Table 3

T-Test Results of Empathy Tendency Level According to Gender Variable

Gender	N	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	t	p
Girl	192	64,42	9,82	368	3,15	,00
Girl-Boy	178	61,01	11,00			

Upon examination of Table 3, it became evident that there was a statistically significant difference in empathy tendency levels between male and female secondary school students ($t(370) = 3.15$; $p < .05$). The average empathy tendency level for female students was $\bar{x}=64.42$, while the average for male students was $\bar{x}=61.01$.

Table 4

Anova Test Results of Empathy Tendency Level According to Grade Levels

Source of Variance	Squares Total	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	p	Significant Differences
Intergroup	2037,09	3	679,03	6,39	,00	7th grade- 6th grade
Within Groups	38886,18	367	106,25			8th grade- 6th grade
Total	40923,27	370				

Upon examination of Table 4, it becomes evident that the discrepancy between the grade levels and empathic tendencies of secondary school students is statistically significant ($F(3, 367) = 6.39$, $p < .01$). The Tukey HSD test was employed to ascertain the direction of the observed difference. The results indicated that there were differences between the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. It was determined that these differences were in opposition to those observed in the sixth grade. Consequently, it can be stated that the

empathic tendency levels of sixth-grade students are lower than those of seventh- and eighth-grade students.

Table 5

T-Test Results of Honesty Value Level According to Gender Variable

Gender	N	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	t	p
Girl	192	12,85	1,94	369	-,92	,36
Male	178	13,05	2,15			

Upon examination of Table 5, no statistically significant difference in honesty levels was observed between secondary school students based on gender ($t(370) = -.92; p > .05$). The mean honesty value level score for female students ($\bar{x}=12.85$) is lower than that for male students ($\bar{x}=13.05$). However, this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 6

Anova Test Results of Honesty Value Level According to Grade Level Variable

Source of Variance	Squares Total	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	p	Significant Differences
Intergroup	100,76	3	33,59	8,54	,00	8th grade-5th grade
Within Groups	1443,27	367	3,93			8th grade- 6th grade
Total	1544,03	370				8th grade- 7th grade

Upon examination of Table 6, a statistically significant difference is observed between the honesty value levels of secondary school students and the class level variable ($F(3-367) = 8.54, p < .01$). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to ascertain the direction of the observed difference. Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the eighth and fifth grades, as well as between the sixth and seventh grades. The results indicated that the eighth grade exhibited the highest levels of honesty, with the other grade levels demonstrating statistically lower levels of honesty.

Discussion

The objective of this research was to describe the empathy tendency levels and honesty value levels of secondary school students, determine whether there is a relationship between them, if there is a relationship, whether it is meaningful or not, and determine whether there are significant differences

according to their grade levels and gender. Based on the findings of the research, the following suggestions are presented.

The study involved students in their fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth years of secondary school. The findings indicated that the levels of empathy exhibited by these students were higher and more consistent with one another in terms of honesty value when compared to the honesty value. This situation can be associated with the cognitive development processes of secondary school students. It can be posited that students who progress from primary to secondary school may develop a plethora of skills as a consequence of their cognitive maturation, in addition to their empathy abilities. Gemci (2012) postulated that cognitive development represents a pivotal factor in the evolution of empathy competencies in children. He proposed that the concepts of self and others can be shaped in the child following the cognitive development process, thereby enabling him to comprehend the perspectives of those with whom he interacts. This hypothesis is corroborated by the findings of the present study.

The findings indicated that there is no notable correlation between the levels of honesty value exhibited by secondary school students and their empathic tendencies. This situation can be associated with the developmental characteristics of secondary school students. It can be posited that individuals may be more self-focused at the onset of adolescence. The findings of this study are not without precedent, as there are studies in the literature that contradict and support the results of this study. The results obtained by Sarmusak (2011) in his study on the effect of teacher attitudes and empathic tendency levels perceived by primary school students (4th and 5th grades) on students' moral values indicate that students' empathy tendencies are a variable that directly predicts their level of honesty. Furthermore, the results demonstrate a positive relationship between students' empathy tendencies and honesty values. In a study conducted by Erken (2009) on fifth-grade students, it was found that those with high empathy skills exhibited greater honesty, respectfulness, and helpfulness than their counterparts.

In Ödemiş's (2019) study with secondary school students using the focus group interview method, it was concluded that there was a relationship between students' moral behaviors and empathic tendencies. It has been observed that as the level of empathy tendency increases, behaviors that are considered morally correct are exhibited more frequently. These findings are inconsistent with those of the original study. Sarıçalı (2020) posits that cognitive development persists throughout adolescence, with the onset of pre-adolescence aligning with the middle school years. Consequently, adolescents' assessment of their environment and the world differs according to their childhood experiences. The development of abstract thinking skills has both positive and negative implications. Compared to previous periods, adolescents demonstrate enhanced comprehension of others' thoughts and an increased capacity to understand others. However, due to adolescent egocentrism, their attention is primarily focused on themselves, and it cannot be said that they can clearly distinguish the center of these thoughts. Therefore, this result is more supportive of the result obtained in the research.

The findings indicated that female students exhibited higher levels of empathy than their male counterparts. This situation can be associated with the impact of numerous variables, including social role expectations and biological predispositions of girls within their family, environment, and society, on their self-identity. It can be posited that the environment fosters a greater proclivity for understanding and harmonious interactions among female students, facilitating their empathic abilities (Çetin & Güngör-Aytar, 2012). In a study conducted with 9th-grade gifted students, it was found that female students

exhibited higher empathy tendencies (Erol, 2004). In Turkish culture, where girls are socialized to express their emotions, it is more socially acceptable for boys to experience their emotions internally and suppress them (Uyaroglu, 2011). Waal (2014) posits that gender affects empathy as a normal phenomenon. He posits that gender differences emerge prior to the onset of socialization. The tendency for girls to display more pronounced distress when they hear another individual crying is a well-documented phenomenon. Similarly, two-year-old girls demonstrate a greater proclivity for situations that elicit distress in others than boys. Waal posits that in adult humans, women exhibit greater empathic reactivity than men. Davis and Franzoi (1991) investigated alterations in self-consciousness and empathy. The study involved the observation of high school students on multiple occasions throughout three consecutive years. The findings revealed that female students exhibited higher empathy scores than their male counterparts. Consequently, the results of this research align with those documented in the existing literature.

The study yielded the conclusion that the levels of empathy tendency exhibited by sixth graders were lower than those observed in seventh and eighth graders. This suggests that the level of empathy tendency increases with grade level. As evidenced by Durlanik's (2019) research, sixth-grade students exhibited markedly higher empathic tendencies than their fifth-grade counterparts. This result is consistent with the findings of the aforementioned study. In a study conducted by Tatal (2022) with secondary school students in grades 6, 7, and 8, no significant differences were observed in empathy, sensory, and cognitive empathy levels across grade levels. Similarly, Ural (2010) observed no difference in empathic tendency according to grade level in a study of 6th and 7th-grade students. In Karamuk's (2015) study with 5th, 6th, and 7th-grade students between the ages of 10-13, and Sayin's (2010) study with 4th and 5th-grade students, no significant differences in empathy skills were observed according to grade level. In the studies conducted by Catalcam (2021) and Kose (2019), no significant differences were observed in empathy scale scores according to grade level. In their study with secondary school students, Rehber and Atici (2009) were unable to identify a significant correlation between students' empathy tendency levels and grade levels. Similarly, Ozbas (2010) found that students' empathy tendencies remained consistent across grade levels when researching gifted and normally gifted primary school fourth and fifth-grade students. Consequently, the results obtained in these studies contradict the existing literature.

The study yielded a non-significant result regarding the statistical difference in honesty value levels between male and female students. Specifically, the findings indicated that female students exhibited lower honesty value levels than their male counterparts. This result is supported by the findings of Erken (2009), which indicate that honesty tendencies among primary school students are not significantly influenced by gender. Additionally, the findings of Gunduz's (2021) research, conducted with students between the ages of 8 and 12, corroborate this conclusion. The study revealed that female students exhibited superior levels of self-control, respect within the school environment, positive social behavior, and social-emotional and moral development compared to their male counterparts. However, no statistically significant difference was observed with regard to gender in the dimensions of self-development, respect, and honesty at home. Similarly, Ozturk's (2021) study of children aged between 7 and 15 revealed no statistically significant difference in social-emotional and moral development and sub-dimension scores according to gender. In the study conducted by Islen (2021), no statistically significant difference was observed in adolescents' levels of respect and honesty according to gender. Gumus (2015) observed that the moral development levels of secondary school students did not differ according to gender. The findings of various studies in the literature are inconsistent with those of the present study.

In the study conducted by İlgül (2022) with 8th-grade secondary school students, it was determined that female students exhibited higher levels of positive social behavior than male students. In Metli's (2017) study with secondary school students, it was observed that female students exhibited higher levels of honesty and respect than males. In the study conducted by Aydın-Sümbül and Güçray (2016) on adolescents, it was observed that female participants exhibited higher levels of positive social behavior than their male counterparts. Similarly, in the comparative analysis study conducted by Garaigordobil (2009) on adolescence and childhood between the ages of 10 and 14, it was observed that girls demonstrated higher levels of positive social behavior than boys.

The findings of the study indicated that the eighth-grade students exhibited higher levels of honesty than their counterparts in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. This can be interpreted as an increase in the level of honesty as the grade level increases. It is a tenet of social psychology and behavioral science that values interact with the culture of society in a manner that affects personal attitudes, behaviors, and cognitive development processes, thereby reflecting these cultural patterns. Furthermore, it is asserted that values are regarded as a component associated with social systems and individuals, exerting an influence on all behaviors, either directly or indirectly (Özgüven, 1994). In light of the aforementioned evidence, it can be concluded that the results of the research are indeed supported by this situation. In the study conducted by Öztürk (2021) with students aged between 7 and 15, the students were divided into three groups according to the grade level variable, social-emotional and moral development, positive social behavior, self-development, self-control, respect at school, respect at home, and honesty levels. No significant differences were observed between the grade groups in these variables. The study conducted by Gümüş (2015) revealed no statistically significant differences in moral development levels among secondary school students across different grade levels. In Sarmusak's (2011) study with fourth and fifth-grade students, no significant difference was observed in students' tendencies to be honest and respectful according to grade level. In the study conducted by İşlen (2021), no statistically significant difference was identified in the levels of honesty and respect exhibited by adolescents according to their grade level. In Metli's (2017) research, no statistically significant difference was found in the respect and honesty levels of secondary school students according to grade level. Therefore, it can be said that there are studies in the relevant literature that support the research result and contradict the result obtained. Based on these results, the following suggestions can be made:

The research employs a quantitative methodology utilizing a survey model to examine the experiences of secondary school students. The investigation of the aforementioned research at various educational levels and age groups will facilitate the generalization of the study and enhance the precision of the understanding of the values held by students. Moreover, qualitative research can be conducted to obtain more detailed, comprehensive, and in-depth results. The study examined the empathy tendency levels and honesty value levels of secondary school students according to grade level and gender variables to ascertain whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables. Consequently, an investigation into the relationship between empathy tendency and different values, taking into account various variables (such as student personality, family background, school environment, etc.) in secondary school students or across different school levels, can be conducted using a specific model. Furthermore, additional studies may be conducted to examine the influence of other variables, such as personality characteristics, age, family background, school culture, and others, on empathy tendency levels and honesty value levels among fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students.

The findings of the research indicate that middle school students exhibit greater empathy tendencies than honesty values. However, the relationship between honesty value levels and empathy tendency levels is statistically insignificant. Additionally, girls demonstrate higher levels of empathy than boys, while the difference in honesty levels between the two groups is also statistically insignificant. As the grade level increases, there is a notable decline in empathy tendencies. Tendency (6) It may be recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the reasons for such results as the decline in empathy across grades and the increase in the value of honesty in the 8th grade, or to present the situation in a more realistic manner.

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