

Teacher Training and Professional Ethics

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Explaining and analyzing the professional and religious ethical needs of the human resources at Farhangian University, with an emphasis on the esteemed faculty members of this university, can be a positive step towards achieving the critical mission of teacher training and education in the country. As indicated by the title of the article, the goal of this research is to analyze the needs of instructors and faculty members in the domain of professional and religious ethics. This article aims to answer the following questions: 1) What professional ethical characteristics do Farhangian University professors need? 2) Do Farhangian University professors possess these characteristics? 3) How can these characteristics be created and reinforced?

Methodology: The research methodology of the present study follows a mixed paradigm and employs descriptive-analytical and descriptive-survey methods.

Findings: In summarizing the findings, it was concluded that: empathy and the development of a spirit of cooperation among students by the professor, campus presidents, providing a foundation for self-confidence, preventing rigid and dogmatic discipline in the educational environment, and adherence to the scientific and cultural norms and regulations of the university are crucial. Therefore, it is expected that the planners and managers of Farhangian University, in addition to issuing directives and regulations, also pay special attention to implementation and practice. Thus, considering the important fact that in universities, education alone does not have a meaningful impact; rather, the educational process includes teaching ethics and institutionalizing it in order to properly implement the quality charter of Iran's teacher training university.

Conclusion: The study underscores the necessity for Farhangian University to integrate ethical training into its educational practices to fulfill its mission effectively.

Keywords: Professors, Teacher Training, Professional Ethics.

1. Introduction

Professional ethics in education is a multifaceted construct that encompasses a range of principles including integrity, responsibility, respect, and fairness. These principles are fundamental in fostering a positive educational environment and in guiding the professional conduct of educators (Astereki et al., 2022; Esmaeel et al., 2022; Hadian et al., 2023; Hossein Zadeh et al., 2022; Kalantari & Bassijeh, 2021; Montazer Ataei & Karimi Moonaghi, 2022; Taherpour kalantry et al., 2023). According to Campbell (2008), teaching is inherently a moral profession that requires educators to navigate complex ethical landscapes. This moral dimension is integral to the profession and underscores the necessity for robust ethics education within teacher training programs (Campbell, 2008). Adebayo (2020) emphasizes the significance of integrating morals, values, ethics, and character education in today's digital age, where the rapid proliferation of information technology presents new ethical challenges and opportunities. This integration is not only essential for the personal development of educators but also for the holistic development of students who are increasingly exposed to diverse and often conflicting values online (Adebayo, 2020).

Promoting teacher ethics involves addressing various challenges and implementing effective practices within teacher education programs. Anangisye (2011) identifies several practices and challenges in promoting teacher ethics in Tanzania's colleges of teacher education. These challenges include inadequate resources, lack of training in ethical decision-making, and the need for continuous professional development. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to embed ethical education within the curriculum and to provide ongoing support for educators (Anangisye, 2011). Boon (2011) advocates for raising the bar in ethics education to ensure the production of quality teachers. This involves not only the inclusion of ethics courses in teacher training programs but also the adoption of innovative teaching methods that engage students in ethical reflection and practice (Boon, 2011). Moreover, Clarke (2009) discusses the ethico-political dimensions of teacher identity, highlighting how teachers navigate their professional roles in relation to broader societal values and expectations. This navigation is crucial in maintaining the ethical integrity of the teaching profession (Clarke, 2009).

The role of leadership in fostering an ethical culture within educational institutions is pivotal. Karakose (2007) explores high school teachers' perceptions of principals'

ethical leadership in Turkey, noting that ethical leadership is characterized by fairness, integrity, and respect for all stakeholders. Ethical leaders set the tone for the institutional culture and play a critical role in modeling ethical behavior for both staff and students (Karakose, 2007). Mehrparvar, Keshmiri, and Jambarsang (2023) highlight the perspectives of various stakeholders on the components of teachers' professionalism. These components include not only pedagogical skills and knowledge but also ethical conduct and professional demeanor. Ensuring that teacher training programs address these components comprehensively is essential for the development of well-rounded educators (Mehrparvar et al., 2023).

The influence of neoliberal policies on education has significant implications for teacher ethics. Nakar and Olssen (2021) examine the ethical dilemmas faced by teachers in Australia's vocational education and training sector as a result of neoliberal policy initiatives. These policies often prioritize economic efficiency and measurable outcomes over the ethical and moral development of students, posing challenges for educators committed to holistic education (Nakar & Olssen, 2021). Tielman et al. (2022) explore the value-based tensions experienced by teachers in senior secondary vocational education and training. These tensions arise from the need to balance vocational training objectives with the ethical and moral development of students. Addressing these tensions requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between educational policies and ethical practice (Tielman et al., 2022).

Understanding educators' perceptions of their ethical responsibilities is crucial in designing effective ethics education programs. Roux and Marais (2013) investigate teachers' perceptions of their ethical responsibilities, particularly in balancing individual rights with professional duties. This balance is often challenging but essential in maintaining the trust and respect of students, parents, and the broader community (Roux & Marais, 2013). Burnaz, Atakan, and Topcu (2010) examine changes in ethical perceptions among Turkish faculty members over time. Their study indicates a shift towards greater awareness and emphasis on ethical behavior in academia. This shift reflects broader societal changes and the increasing importance of ethics in professional life (Burnaz et al., 2010).

Several studies have identified key components of professional ethics that are essential for effective teaching. Fallahi et al. (2019) explore the perspectives of Iranian faculty members on professional ethics in teaching. Their findings highlight the importance of attributes such as

honesty, respect, and responsibility in fostering an ethical educational environment (Fallahi et al., 2019). Similarly, Farahani and Farahani (2014) study the components of professional ethics among faculty members in engineering, emphasizing the role of ethical conduct in maintaining professional standards and integrity (Farahani & Farahani, 2014). Tabsh, Kadi, and Abdelfatah (2012) investigate faculty responses to ethical issues at an American university in the Middle East. Their study underscores the importance of institutional support and clear guidelines in addressing ethical dilemmas faced by educators. This support is crucial in helping faculty navigate complex ethical landscapes and maintain professional integrity (Tabsh et al., 2012). Taghadosi, Valiee, and Aghajani (2021) examine nursing faculty's views on noncompliance with ethics in academic environments. Their qualitative study reveals the challenges and implications of ethical noncompliance, highlighting the need for continuous ethics education and institutional oversight (Taghadosi et al., 2021).

The integration of professional ethics into teacher training programs is essential for preparing educators who are not only knowledgeable but also morally grounded. This integration involves addressing various challenges, including inadequate resources, lack of training, and the impact of neoliberal policies. Effective ethics education requires the collaboration of educators, administrators, and policymakers to create an environment that supports ethical behavior and professional integrity. Explaining and analyzing the professional and religious ethical needs of the human resources at Farhangian University, with an emphasis on the esteemed faculty members of this university, can be a positive step towards achieving the critical mission of teacher training and education in the country. As indicated by the title of the article, the goal of this research is to analyze the needs of instructors and faculty members in the domain of professional and religious ethics. This article aims to answer the following questions: 1) What professional ethical characteristics do Farhangian University professors need? 2) Do Farhangian University professors possess these characteristics? 3) How can these characteristics be created and reinforced?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The research design of the present study is a descriptive-analytical mixed paradigm. The study was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods,

depending on the specific aspect of the research. The research sites included teacher training centers in Ardabil province, and the participants consisted of education experts, professors, and students of Farhangian University.

2.2. Data Collection

The study utilized two primary tools: semi-structured interviews and a researcher-made questionnaire. In the absence of a standardized questionnaire for this research topic, a researcher-made questionnaire was developed, comprising 7 components and 22 items. The response continuum for the questionnaire was structured on a Likert scale ranging from "very low" (one point) to "very high" (five points). To ensure the face and content validity of both the interview and questionnaire tools, four faculty members from the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Shiraz University and Mohaghegh Ardabili University, who possessed the requisite expertise, were consulted. The reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach's alpha, calculated at 80%, based on responses from 50 participants. Data collection for the questionnaire was conducted via email.

2.3. Data Analysis:

The qualitative sampling method for selecting education experts and specialists was purposive sampling, supplemented by snowball sampling during the interview process. After reaching theoretical saturation, the interview form's validity was reviewed and confirmed by individuals who had studied the questionnaire's validity. For the quantitative part, stratified random sampling was employed. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula, including 100 student-teachers (both male and female) from the campuses of Shiraz and Ardabil provinces, and 30 faculty members due to the small number of department heads, were selected as the quantitative sample. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 20 software, employing the chi-square test (K-score) for statistical analysis.

3. Findings and Results

Since this research uses a mixed-method approach, the findings of each section are presented based on the research questions. In the qualitative section, using the categorization method, the texts of 17 interviews were transcribed and repeatedly examined. After reaching theoretical saturation,

meaningful sentences in each interview were identified, resulting in 150 statements (codes). After coding the statements, 100 statements were obtained in the second stage, and 67 statements in the third stage, leading to the identification of the main categories.

Response to Question 1

What professional ethical characteristics do Farhangian University professors need?

In this context, after transcribing the interviews, three domains with sub-categories (as described in Table 1) were classified and extracted, including:

The need to understand the lives of role models: According to 10 participants, familiarity with the biographies of role models can be very effective in teaching and transmitting religious culture. The modeling method, which is a pedagogical method in the Quran, can be utilized in this regard (Interviewee 14). Interviewee 3 believes that through education and studying the biographies of role models, this combination can be integrated into the curriculum content of professors at the university.

Understanding the practical conduct of the Prophet and Imams: Ten participants believe that awareness of the

practical conduct of the Imams is a need that should be addressed. According to Participant 4, teaching is about "transmitting love" rather than "transmitting knowledge." Therefore, for a teacher, an interest in education and having a teaching ethos is crucial, as emphasized in the Quran and the conduct of the Imams.

Practical teaching of ethics and teaching ethos: Thirteen participants see this as another essential need for professors. They believe that the critical issue in this domain, which is missing in our current society, not among professors, is the issue of ethics. For example, if a professor is teaching health, they should also teach practical ethics based on the environment alongside their lesson (Interviewees 7 and 9).

Teaching the dos and don'ts and ethical foundations in Islamic education: This need was emphasized by 8 participants. Interviewee 15 believes that ethics means the dos and don'ts that a professor must observe in their educational environment and fulfill their role model function for students effectively. Furthermore, honesty, professional integrity, respecting individuals' privacy, and familiarity with factors contributing to students' well-being and mental health are important considerations.

Table 1

Most Important Professional and Religious Ethical Needs Expressed by Interviewees

Main Category	Sub-domains and Most Important Educational Needs
Ethical-Professional Ethics	a. Ethical Domain: Understanding the roles and mission of Farhangian University as the core of education. Familiarity with the role of education in students' moral growth. Understanding the ethical needs and concerns of students (Codes 12-3-8-2-5). Familiarity with societal ethical problems and social phenomena. Practical teaching of ethics and teaching ethos (Codes 1-2-7-11). The need for teaching dos and don'ts (honesty, professional integrity, and respecting individuals' privacy) (Codes 3-4-8). b. Professional Ethics Domain: 1. Responsibility 2. Honesty 3. Justice and fairness 4. Loyalty 5. Maintaining decorum in the classroom 6. Having educational programs for effective teaching 7. Receptiveness to criticism 8. Scientific competence 9. Respecting social values and norms 10. Competitiveness 11. Observing societal norms and citizenship as a cultural and academic individual

Response to Question 2

Do Farhangian University professors possess these characteristics?

To answer this question, data collected through a researcher-made questionnaire with 8 components and 23 items were scored using the Likert scale method. Given that the test was discussed at qualitative levels, the chi-square test (K-score) was used to examine these components. The test's significance level indicated the significance of the range of responses in the above components, meaning that the mentioned components had significant skewness. The results showed that professional ethics, from the perspective of all three groups (students, faculty members, and experts), is crucial in aspects such as responsibility (questions 1, 2), honesty (questions 3, 4), justice and fairness (questions 5, 6), loyalty (questions 7, 8), competitiveness (questions 9, 10),

respect for others (questions 11, 12), empathy with others (questions 13, 14), and respect for social values and norms (questions 15, 16). Having educational programs for effective teaching (questions 17, 18), receptiveness to criticism (questions 19, 20), being up-to-date and scientifically competent (questions 21, 22), and observing societal norms and citizenship as a cultural and academic individual (questions 23, 24) are of great importance. The mean scores from the two provinces indicated that the need for teaching professional and religious ethical characteristics to professors and faculty members is above average. The descriptive statistics test showed that the highest frequency among individuals' responses was in the low and very low options. Receptiveness to criticism, being up-to-date, high scientific competence, and having educational programs for teaching were low and very low among the sample studied.

Therefore, there is a need to create and strengthen these characteristics.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Variable Receptiveness to Criticism

Option	Observed	Expected	Residual
Very Low	4	2.4	1.6
Low	5	2.4	2.6
Medium	5	2.4	2.6
High	5	2.4	2.6
Very High	2	2.4	-0.4

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Variable Being Up-to-date

Option	Observed	Expected	Residual
Very Low	5	2.4	2.6
Low	5	2.4	2.6
Medium	8	2.4	5.6
High	1	2.4	-1.4
Very High	2	2.4	-0.4

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the Variable High Scientific Competence

Option	Observed	Expected	Residual
Very Low	4	2.5	1.5
Low	4	2.5	1.5
Medium	4	2.5	1.5
High	9	2.5	6.5

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of the Variable Having Educational Programs for Teaching

Option	Observed	Expected	Residual
Very Low	6	2.5	3.5
Low	4	2.5	1.5
Medium	10	2.5	7.5
Very High	1	2.5	-1.5

Table 6

Examining Components of Receptiveness to Criticism, Being Up-to-date, High Scientific Competence, and Having Educational Programs for Teaching

Variable	K-score	Significance Level	Degrees of Freedom
Receptiveness to Criticism	1.6	0.008	4
Being Up-to-date	3.7	0.001	4
High Scientific Competence	3.5	0.003	4
Having Educational Programs	1.8	0.04	4

Response to Question 3

How can these characteristics be created and reinforced?

In the ethical and professional ethics domain, the following results are noteworthy: In this regard, through semi-structured interviews with professors and instructors of

the university, as well as campus directors and education experts, and student-teachers, the interviews were transcribed, and the concepts were categorized. After data saturation, using axial and selective coding methods, the following results were inferred: According to Interviewees 7, 9, 5, 10, and 13, professors can create or enhance their ethical and professional characteristics by adhering to indicators such as receptiveness to criticism, seeking consultation, and good judgment. From the perspective of Interviewees 1, 4, 2, 11, 12, 16, 17, and 14, empathy and the development of a cooperative spirit among students by the professor and campus directors, providing a foundation for self-confidence, preventing rigid and dogmatic discipline in the educational environment, and adherence to scientific and cultural norms and regulations of the university can play a significant role in creating and promoting professional ethics among professors. According to Interviewees 3, 6, 8, and 15, good judgment, creating motivation, receptiveness to criticism, respect for the classroom and learning environment, valuing research, and scientific interaction and collaboration with students can positively impact creating and enhancing professional ethics in teacher training centers.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore the professional and religious ethical needs of faculty members at Farhangian University, focusing on identifying the necessary ethical characteristics, assessing whether faculty members possess these traits, and determining how these characteristics can be developed and reinforced. The mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of these needs through qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

The qualitative findings revealed several key ethical characteristics deemed essential for Farhangian University professors. These included familiarity with the lives of role models, understanding the practical conduct of the Prophet and Imams, practical teaching of ethics and teaching ethos, and knowledge of the dos and don'ts of ethical behavior in Islamic education. The quantitative analysis further highlighted that professional ethics, such as responsibility, honesty, justice, loyalty, competitiveness, and respect for others, are highly valued among students, faculty, and experts.

The findings indicated that while some faculty members possessed these ethical traits, there was a notable gap in areas such as receptiveness to criticism, being up-to-date with scientific advancements, and having structured

educational programs for teaching. The results also suggested that there is a need to create and strengthen these characteristics through targeted professional development and institutional support.

The findings of this study align with several previous studies on the importance of ethics in education. Campbell (2008) emphasizes that teaching is inherently a moral profession, which supports the need for educators to possess a strong ethical foundation. This study's emphasis on understanding the lives of role models and practical conduct mirrors Campbell's assertion that moral education is a critical component of teacher training (Campbell, 2008).

Adebayo (2020) discusses the integration of morals, values, ethics, and character education in today's digital age, which corresponds with this study's findings on the necessity for professors to be familiar with ethical and moral principles. This integration is crucial for preparing educators to handle the ethical challenges presented by the digital landscape (Adebayo, 2020).

Anangisye (2011) highlights the challenges and practices in promoting teacher ethics, particularly in resource-limited settings. This study's findings on the gaps in ethical training and the need for continuous professional development resonate with Anangisye's observations. The emphasis on practical teaching of ethics and understanding Islamic educational principles underscores the need for context-specific ethical training, as advocated by Anangisye (Anangisye, 2011).

The role of ethical leadership, as discussed by Karakose (2007), is critical in setting the tone for institutional culture. The findings of this study indicate that ethical leadership can play a significant role in fostering an environment where ethical behavior is modeled and encouraged. This is particularly important in ensuring that the ethical principles taught to faculty members are consistently applied within the institution (Karakose, 2007).

Boon (2011) calls for raising the bar in ethics education to produce quality teachers, which is supported by the findings of this study that highlight the need for comprehensive ethics training. This includes not only theoretical knowledge but also practical application, as emphasized by the study's participants (Boon, 2011).

Recent studies further support the findings of this research. Mehrparvar, Keshmiri, and Jambarsang (2023) identify key components of teachers' professionalism, including ethical conduct, which aligns with this study's emphasis on responsibility, honesty, and respect. The need for continuous professional development in these areas is

crucial for maintaining high standards of professionalism (Mehrpour et al., 2023). Nakar and Olssen (2021) discuss the ethical dilemmas faced by teachers due to neoliberal policies, which often prioritize economic efficiency over ethical considerations. This study's findings on the gaps in ethical training and the need for institutional support resonate with Nakar and Olssen's observations. The emphasis on creating a supportive environment for ethical behavior is critical in addressing these dilemmas (Nakar & Olssen, 2021). Tielman et al. (2022) explore the value-based tensions experienced by teachers, particularly in balancing vocational training with ethical development. The findings of this study, which highlight the importance of ethical training in teacher education, support Tielman et al.'s call for a balanced approach that incorporates ethical considerations into vocational education (Tielman et al., 2022).

The findings of this study have several implications for practice. First, there is a clear need for comprehensive ethics education within teacher training programs. This includes both theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to handle ethical challenges in their professional roles.

Second, institutions must provide ongoing professional development opportunities focused on ethics. This can include workshops, seminars, and other training programs that address the specific ethical needs identified in this study. Providing such opportunities can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that faculty members are consistently updated on best practices in ethical behavior.

Third, the role of ethical leadership within educational institutions cannot be overstated. Leaders must model ethical behavior and create an environment that encourages ethical conduct among faculty members. This includes setting clear expectations, providing support, and holding individuals accountable for their actions.

Finally, institutions must consider the broader societal and policy contexts in which they operate. As highlighted by Nakar and Olssen (2021), neoliberal policies can create ethical dilemmas for educators. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to prioritize ethical considerations alongside economic efficiency, ensuring that the educational mission is not compromised.

The study underscores the critical importance of professional ethics in teacher training programs. By identifying the essential ethical characteristics for educators, assessing the current state of these traits among faculty members, and proposing strategies for development and

reinforcement, this research provides valuable insights for educational institutions. The alignment with previous studies and the support from recent research highlight the broader relevance and applicability of these findings.

In conclusion, the integration of comprehensive ethics education within teacher training programs is essential for preparing educators who are not only knowledgeable but also morally grounded. This requires a collaborative effort among educators, administrators, and policymakers to create an environment that supports ethical behavior and professional integrity. By addressing the identified gaps and challenges, institutions can better prepare educators to navigate the complex ethical landscapes of modern education and contribute to the development of morally grounded future generations.

Authors' Contributions

The first author was responsible for conducting the interview and collecting data, and the other authors were responsible for analyzing the data and writing the article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance

of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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