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Designing a Professional Ethics Model for Primary Teachers in Yazd

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Abstract

Background: Regarding the principles of professional ethics by teachers is one of the most important and vital issues in the field of education and training of children, especially in primary school. In this regard, the purpose of this study was to design a model of "professional ethics" for primary school teachers in Yazd.
Method: The research approach was qualitative and the research method was "grounded theory". The study population was all primary school teachers in Yazd. 11 interviews were conducted until the theoretical saturation was reached. Participants were selected using "theoretical sampling" method. The research tool was "in-depth semi-structured interview". Data were analyzed at three levels of open, axial and selective coding. The "triangulation" method `as used to determine the validity of the data.
Results: The findings showed that the core catregory of this research is professionalism. Also, the most important causal conditions included culture and family education, teacher modeling, the position and importance of ethics in the educational system, the position of the teacher's job and moral education. In addition, rules and regulations, salaries and benefits, school climate, school management and the structure of the education system were the most important contextual conditions. Environmental intervention conditions including socio-cultural, political, economic and technological environment were identified. Strategies, motivation and feedback were also determined. Finally, concequences were identified, including students' performance and life course, popularity, career success, and social impact.
Conclusion: In a general conclusion, it should be said that the presented model can be used in the development of ethical and professional codes and by training ethical teachers can take a big step toward promotion of science, understanding and ethics in society.

Keywords: Professional ethics model, Elementary school teachers, Professional ethics

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Introduction

Today, attention to ethical issues has become one of the most widely accepted issues in organizations, which is addressed under various headings such as work ethic, professional ethics, business ethics, and so on. Ethics is divided into theoretical and applied areas and professional ethics is the most important component of applied ethics (1). Professional ethics is a branch of ethics knowledge that examines the duties, tasks and ethical issues in a profession and seeks to provide methods and guidelines that determine these tasks for individuals and groups of professionals (2). This ethic includes a set of principles and standards of human behavior that determine the behavior of individuals and groups (3). Professional ethics has a significant impact on individual and group activities and performance and the results of the organization (4).

The quality of education in any country depends on the quality of teachers in this country, because teachers are one of the main pillars of achieving educational goals (5). For teachers, like any other professional group, familiarity with collective ethical norms and the possibility of using them decisively in practice, will necessarily improve the quality of work, because having this knowledge and capacity is part of the meaning of doing your job professionally (6). Teaching undoubtedly requires more professional ethics than other professions. Ethics can only be developed through commitment (7). Today, the importance and position and key role of teachers in the process of education is so great that it can be said that other factors are somehow overshadowed by this element. This importance is doubled when primary school teachers are employed. Because in the elementary school, a teacher teaches all the lessons of a class (8). The most important factor in the development of elementary students is the correct relationship between teacher and students (5). The first and most important social experiences of people's lives are formed in the first years of education and in primary school, which can be largely derived from the ethics of teachers in this period. A competent teacher can be an example of ethics, behavior, sincerity, movement and dynamism for them; and establish a deep connection with his educational task by giving real life lessons to his students (9).

Many researchers have explored issues and challenges related to the discussion of professional ethics. For example, a study of the relationship between teachers' professional ethics and their educational performance in Owo Local Government High Schools, Ondo State, Nigeria, found that there was a relationship between teachers' professional ethics and teachers' performance. There is also a significant relationship between the performance of teachers 'educational tasks and students' academic performance (10). Researchers in another study on the international study work on the content of ethics and curriculum in initially teacher education (ITE), with the participation of five countries; the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands. The results of this study showed that 24% of the ITE programs surveyed include at least one compulsory course of independent ethics education (11). Findings from another study showed that for managers, soft skills, including professional ethics, are the factors that teachers need more, but especially novice teachers do not have, and the importance of this issue is quite unaware (12). Other researchers in their research findings stated that Islamic work ethic has a positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (13).

Another study that uses a mixed exploratory approach to identify the dimensions and symptoms of teachers 'professional ethics and observe it, introduces eight basic components for teachers' professional ethics, which are: spirituality, personality, Self-knowledge, moral responsibility towards students, moral responsibility towards parents and guardians, moral responsibility towards profession and colleagues, moral responsibility towards organization and administration, and social responsibility (14). The results of another study showed that professional ethics training has an effect on job conflict and organizational commitment (15). Findings of a study explained seven basic components for the professional ethics of primary school teachers, which are: honesty, justice, and responsibility,

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preservation of human dignity, respect, lawfulness and loyalty (16). The results of another study showed that environmental factors (family, sexual and educational issues), responsibility (support, guidance, empowerment, respect for personality and confidentiality), environmental barriers (family barriers, barriers related to sexual problems and educational barriers) and organizational barriers (lack of manpower and facilities, managerial and organizational barriers), cause teachers to move towards professional ethics in teaching (17). The results of another study showed that six individual factors, organizational structure, technology, servant leadership, religious and socio-cultural influence on the effectiveness of teachers' professional ethics (18). Findings of a study showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between the two variables of professional ethics and its components, with the confidence of faculty members (19). Also, the results of other studies showed that: the status of professional ethics and all its components, except the component of justice, which is in the average hypothetical average of research, in all dimensions is higher than the hypothetical average of research (20).

The question is; what factors cause the observance or non-observance of the principles of professional ethics by primary teachers and what problems and obstacles exist in this field that prevent the observance of these standards? Of course, various studies have pointed to factors such as education, family culture and upbringing, commitment and responsibility, justice, honesty, organizational structure, cultural and social environment, and so on. These factors are research valid; but there are a few things to keep in mind; first, each research has used different methodologies; second, the situations and communities targeted by this research have been different; another point is that the identified factors have been very scattered and dependent on temporal, spatial and situational requirements. Therefore, it can be argued that the validity of these factors has not been independent of context, indicating a major gap in the literature. This makes the applicability of research difficult in different situations. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to design a model of professional ethics for primary school teachers in Yazd using the qualitative methodology of grounded theory, appropriate to its situation and cultural context.

Material and Methods

In the present study, the qualitative method of "grounded theory" was used. It is an inductive and exploratory method that allows researchers in various fields to formulate their own theory through comparative analysis of observations instead of relying on existing theories (21). The study population included all primary school teachers in Yazd. Participants in the present study included 11 primary school teachers in Yazd who were selected based on the logic of repetition (22) and in order to construct a theory in a purposeful way, which is referred to as theoretical sampling (23) and continued until saturation of the collected information was achieved. The research tool was "semi-structured in-depth interview". To avoid bias in semi-constructive tools with 6 questions about the dimensions, characteristics and components of professional ethics of primary school teachers, the content, strategies, contextual and environmental conditions as well as the consequences of the challenges of the problem were studied. The duration of the interviews was between 60 and 120 minutes and for each person the cases were recorded and then implemented. In order to ensure the validity of the research, i.e. the accuracy of the findings from the perspective of the researcher, participants or readers of the research report, adaptation strategies by members, peer review and participatory and reflectiveness of the researcher were used (24). Several professors of educational sciences reviewed the findings and commented on them; at the same time, participants were assisted in analyzing and interpreting the data.

Results

In the stepwise analysis of the findings using the analytical techniques of Strauss and Corbin (2016), the concepts were considered as a unit of analysis

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at the levels of the whole text of the interview, paragraphs, phrases and sentences. An attempt was made to extract open codes by breaking down the text of the interview into message elements within the lines or paragraphs. Through open coding, 609 concepts were obtained, which by classifying these concepts, 30 sub-categories were formed and in the axial coding stage, they were classified as 21 main categories.

Finally, 6 dimensions (causal conditions, core category, strategies, intervening conditions, contextual conditions and consequences) were identified, which are presented in Figure 1.

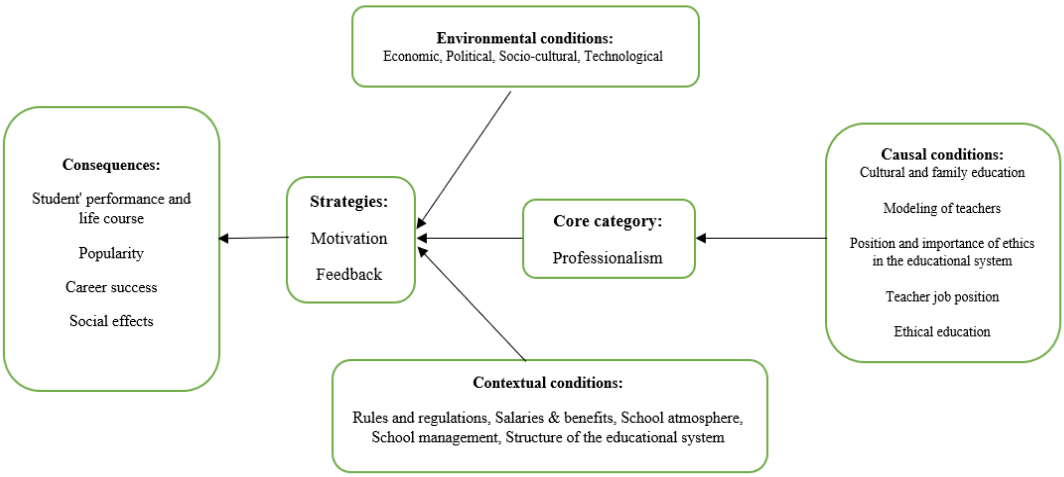


Fig. 1: Paradigm model of professional ethics of primary teachers in Yazd

- ***Core category***

It is observed that in this model, the focus of informants (core category) is the core category; it means "professionalism". The core category is a category that tells us "what is going on?" (25). in the present study, "professionalism" is a category that all factors and influences move to describe it. This category consists of 9 subcategories: "acquisition of knowledge and experience", "love and commitment to the job", "belief", "organizational behavior", "interactions", "personality", "being a role model", "guidance" and "childhood seeing the students" has been formed. In the existing system of primary education, it seems logical to choose a profession as a focal category and it is a sign of validation of findings and analyzes because this category is the center of formation of many issues and problems related to the professional ethics of primary teachers. The way of exploring the main topic can be referred to several quotes from the interviewees. One of the interviewees puts it this way: "The consequence of practicing professional ethics, especially in elementary school, can be that the student also learns that ethics is more important than other subjects. He knows and he will observe these issues in the future in the family and society, he will make the teacher as his role model and if he sees positive things, he will surely follow him and vice versa. Another interviewee states: "I think not paying attention to the individual differences of the students leads to a lack of professional ethics." If the teacher does not pay attention to the differences that students have with each other, it will cause them to be unable to observe the ethics of the teaching profession properly."

- ***Causal conditions***

Causal conditions include factors that directly lead to the core category of professionalism. Its causal conditions are composed of five main categories: 1) culture and family education, 2) modeling of teachers, 3) the position and importance of ethics in the

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educational system, 4) teacher job position,5) ethical education.
- Culture and family education: In all cultures, the family is a pillar and the main factor of socialization and cultural acceptance of individuals (26). Respondents say: "In my opinion, family upbringing and culture are the most effective factors in observing or not observing professional ethics. Of course, although I believe that change is possible, because most people resist change, I think the most important factor is the culture and family upbringing of the individual."
- Modeling of teachers: Every teacher who steps into the classroom brings with him / her the models that originate from his / her family and the community where he / she lives (26). The interviewees commented: "If I see a decent and ethical work from one of my colleagues, I will definitely praise him in public and try to follow his example."
- The position and importance of ethics in the educational system: According to the interviewees, the position and importance of ethics in the educational system is one of the factors creating the phenomenon of teacher professionalism. Respondents commented: " If the structure was as sensitive to the ethics of the staff of an educational system as it was forced to discuss the completion of a student descriptive form or the importance of mathematics and science, the issue of professional ethics would be much better observed."
- Teacher job position: Viewpoint, value and position of teacher's job position in society is one of the factors that can affect the formation of the phenomenon of teacher professionalism. Respondents commented: "As far as I know, in other countries the value of a teacher's work is very high and the teacher is highly valued. As far as I have heard, in some countries a signed white check is given to the teacher as a salary. This means that the value of his work cannot be determined by money."
Ethical education: Education can play a key role in determining how a person's personal life and future work. (27). Respondents commented on this issue: "In my opinion, ignorance and lack of education is the most important factor in the lack of professional ethics by teachers. Because the organization and the educational system neither teach professional ethics to teachers nor ask them to observe it."

- ***Strategies***

In this study, two basic strategies, including: 1) motivation, 2) feedback, were identified in the face of the core category.
Motivation: The interviewees stated about motivation as one of the strategies for dealing with professionalism: "The manager should motivate people to observe more ethical issues according to how they are motivated. For example, talk to others about a teacher who adheres to the ethical principles and values of his or her job and praise him or her in public so that he or she and others can be motivated to follow these issues more."
- Feedback: According to the perceptions of the interviewees, exposure to the phenomenon of professionalism causes positive and negative feedback from the person and those around him. Respondents commented: "It is very important that what I do my best is not ridiculed and blamed by others. For example, when I try very hard to learn as a student, I am told how much you are paid and how much time you spend on children."

- ***Contextual conditions***

The professional ethics of primary school teachers in Yazd is influenced by the context in which strategies for overcoming challenges are formed, and ultimately its effects will appear in the strategies and consequences. In the present study, the contextual conditions were identified in the form of five categories: 1) Rules and regulations, 2) Rights and benefits, 3. School atmosphere, 4) School management, and 5) The structure of the educational system.
- Rules and regulations: Rules and regulations are one of the contexts for the formation of professional ethics of primary teachers. Respondents commented: "There is no law or obligation in our education structure to adhere to the principles of professional ethics, and all that is there is compulsion about educational issues and lessons."
- Salaries and benefits: The amount and type of salaries and benefits is also one of the factors that affect the strategies for dealing with teachers' professionalism. "In my opinion, the worries of living on

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a low salary, as well as engaging in extracurricular activities for a living, are among the factors that influence the formation of teachers' professional ethics," the interviewees said.
- School atmosphere: One of the types of organizational climate is the moral climate, which is defined as a common perception of correct behaviors and how to manage ethical conditions in an organization (27). "The school atmosphere, if it is friendly and competitive, makes teachers strive to improve their work and teach each other good things instead of jealousy," the interviewees said.
- School management: Management factors and the way the principal views moral values in school are also important factors affecting coping strategies. Respondents commented: "Strict or easy rules in school are also very important. A teacher who can establish a good relationship with the principal and for whom the promotion of the school is important, also observes the principles of professional ethics. On the other hand, if the principal has a very authoritarian and controlling attitude, he will turn the teacher away from observing ethics."
- The structure of the educational system: The interviewees consider the structure of the educational system as one of the factors influencing the strategies for dealing with professionalism; Respondents say: "One of these issues is the issue of professional ethics, of which we are only familiar by name, and the reason for that, in my opinion, is that there is no specific framework and structure for this issue, neither in our educational system, nor in Farhangian University, nor even in in-service training."

- ***Environmental conditions***

The causal conditions of the phenomenon of professionalism are formed not in a vacuum, but in environmental conditions. Therefore, explaining the process of formation of professional ethics of primary teachers requires an understanding of environmental conditions. In the present study, environmental conditions consist of four main categories: cultural-social environment, economic environment, political environment, and technological environment.

- Socio-cultural environment: Culture is the most important level of environmental conditions (25). Socio-cultural environment is one of the intervening environmental conditions affecting strategies for dealing with teachers' professionalism. Respondent's state: "Environmental factors affecting professional ethics include the school and the behavior of one's own teachers, and the community and mass media, especially television and culture, created by the contradictions in different media."
- Economic environment: One of the points emphasized by the interviewees in relation to the discussion of professional ethics of primary teachers in Yazd is the economic conditions and environment. "Economic factors are also important, meaning that the better the economic conditions for a person in society, the better he or she will be able to observe professional ethics in his or her job," the interviewees said.
Political environment: One of the intervening environmental conditions affecting strategies for dealing with teachers' professionalism is the political environment. Respondents commented: "If high-ranking people and politicians in society are good and have constructive competition and do not destroy each other and are honest, the rest of society will follow their example".
- Technology environment: Although technology cannot be an alternative tool for teachers, but can be a complement to better teaching and learning (28). With the development of information and communication technology, learning tools and methods have also undergone changes (29). Respondents say: "The teacher must learn to be up-to-date in terms of knowledge and technology, and due to the generation gap between teachers and students due to the rapid growth of technology, it is necessary for the teacher to update himself regularly."

- ***Consequences***

Consequences in the present study include four main categories: "students' performance and life course", "popularity", "career success" and "social effects".
- Students' performance and life course: Paying attention to the overall growth of the teacher, while

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improving classroom performance, it can also lead to security, well-being and individual and group excellence of students (28). Respondents describe them as follows: "In general, as our primary teacher, he does not receive a complete and correct education in professional ethics. Ultimately, this makes his students later knowledgeable but uneducated people who, in any position, cannot understand and observe moral issues. Like a doctor who kills his patient for the sake of stitches!"

- Popularity: One of the consequences of applying strategies in the face of professionalism is popularity. Interviewees say: "If a student sees that the teacher observes ethics in the school environment, he / she sets an example and the teacher becomes popular in their eyes."

- Career success: Career growth and development and obtaining high grades and achieving the desired goals, is one of the most important consequences of paying attention to the discussion of professional ethics of primary teachers in Yazd. Respondents commented: "A teacher's failure to follow professional ethics can lead to negative reactions from others; For example, the student does not come to class with interest or does not like his teacher, this causes a drop in education and a drop in grades in the classroom, and lowers the credit and performance score and the teacher's rank."

- Social Impacts: If the strategies for dealing with the professional phenomenon work well, it is expected that the observance of the principles of professional ethics by primary teachers can be effective in their lives and those of their students and affect the whole society. Respondents commented: "I believe that if our children are well educated, society will be reformed and if they are not, society will decline."

Discussion

The findings of the present study confirm the paradigm model that shows the core category of the professional ethics model of primary teachers in Yazd city as professionalism. This issue was influenced by factors such as culture and family upbringing, teacher modeling, the status and importance of ethics in the education system, the position of the teaching profession and ethical education. In the meantime, strategies were obtained from the perspective of the interviewees and with regard to their experiences and perceptions of the professional ethics of primary school teachers in Yazd, which included motivation and feedback. On the other hand, the establishment and implementation of these strategies takes place in environmental conditions such as socio-cultural environment, economic environment, political environment and technology environment, and also should not play the role of contextual conditions such as rules and regulations, salaries and benefits, school atmosphere. , School management, and the structure of the education system were neglected. Ultimately, despite these actions and reactions, and in the face of a core category with strategies, we have to wait for the consequences of students' performance and direction, popularity, career success, and social impact. The results obtained in this study were consistent with studies (4, 10, 11, 13-18).

However, the present study faced some limitations, such as not using the opinions of ethics professors and not using the opinions of educational policy makers, as well as the lack of conditions for conducting group interviews in focus groups to collect more accurate data. In general, based on the results of this study, suggestions are made to improve the professional ethics of primary school teachers:

- At the time of selection and before starting the work of teachers, filters should be placed based on the level of their professional ethics.

- Policymakers and those in charge of education, paying more attention to the importance and necessity of observing the professional ethics of primary teachers, provide a suitable platform to add the necessary educational provisions and how to observe professional ethics in university courses.

- It is suggested that in schools, by inviting experienced professors of universities, professional ethics training workshops be held with both a scientific approach and a practical and applied ap-

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proach to provide solutions to promote the professional ethics of teachers, a big step in to align this important goal.

- Continuous holding of in-service training courses and providing practical booklets related to the discussion of the professional ethics of the teaching profession to teachers, by the Education Organization.
- Annual evaluations and review of the status of observance of issues related to professional ethics by teachers to determine their strengths and weaknesses in this area.

Conclusion

According to the research findings, it should be said that the presented model can be used in the development of ethical and professional regulations and can be understood by training teachers, and with ethics, a big step can be taken to improve the level of knowledge. Understanding and ethics in society. Education for the institutionalization of ethics in its organizational culture needs the continuous and effective promotion of ethics in all elements of the organization. Professional ethics in teachers causes this ethic to be automatically transmitted to other people inside the school or educational organization and they also make him their role model and strive for their growth and excellence, within themselves and in the workplace and job (18). This shows that professional ethics training should be included in in-service teacher training programs. Education system staff can also consider professional ethics as one of the criteria for assessing the competencies of individuals when hiring teachers.

Ethical Consideration

In this study, teachers were informed about the content of the research and obtained their consent to participate in the interviews.

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