



A Study of Professional Ethics of Teachers in Higher Education

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	<p>Professional ethics refers to the norms of morality, principles or guidelines a teacher should follow when dealing with students, parents, the community, the profession and the colleagues. The objective of the study was to find out the Professional Ethics of teachers teaching in higher educational institutes. A sample of 80 teachers from Ghaziabad districts was taken using random sampling technique. The investigator used descriptive survey method for the study. Data was analysed by calculating Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' test. The findings of the study revealed that the teachers had moderate level of professional ethics. No significance difference was found in the Professional ethics of teachers in terms of gender. The study highlighted the importance of professional ethics of teachers to train the students by inculcating good qualities in them to become the responsible future citizens.</p> <p>Keywords: Professional Ethics, Morality, Good qualities, Responsible citizens.</p>

Introduction

Professional ethics is accepted standard of personal and business behaviour, values and guiding principles. The code of conduct or professional ethics is set up by the expert members of the professional organizations. The underlying philosophy of having professional ethics established by professional organizations is to help and guide members in performing their job functions according to sound and consistent ethical principles of that particular profession. These principles include components like integrity, honesty, transparency, respectfulness towards the job, confidentiality, objectivity etc.

Etymology of Professional Ethics

The term 'Professional Ethics' is the combination of two words- 'profession' and 'ethics'. The term 'profession' is derived from the Latin word 'profiteor' which means to process. It is defined as a 'paid occupation' by the Oxford English Dictionary involving formal qualification and training. The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word 'ethos', which means character. Here 'professional' denotes knowledge and skills required by a profession and possessed by an individual in that profession, and 'ethics' means principles, values or moral code. In the words of Mackenzie (2010) ethics can be defined as the "study of what is right or good in conduct". Professional ethics means an order made by professional organisations to assist professionals to perform their duties as per the ethical principles (Centre for the Study of Professional Ethics, 2002). Professional ethics requires an enforcement of code of conduct for its existence and acceptance; and this code of conduct makes the profession self-governing, self-regulating and also self-satisfying. Defining the code of professional ethics, it may be said that it is a set of professional ideals & principles required to attain professional excellence. (Arora, & Chopra, 2004).

Professional Ethics in Teaching and Education System

Each profession has its own culture derived from the role of its practitioners and the expectations that the society has with respect to the professional service. Professional ethics in teaching and education system is a multi-dimensional concept. It is not only high quality of teaching but includes honesty and sincerity, transparency and confidentiality, respect towards students & society. Douglass (1987) realized the importance of professional ethics in teaching and said, "the life of the nation gets rejuvenated and secured, if its teaching

personnel are honest, truthful, and virtuous". Professional integrity and high quality of teaching are the basic determinants of professional ethics. A virtuous teacher should nurture students regardless of their class, creed, colour, race or religion. Professional ethics refers to the norms of morality, principles or guidelines a teacher should follow when dealing with students, parents, the community and higher authorities (Swamy & Harish, 2016). National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) has put forward a code of conduct for teachers which provides a framework to guide teachers in discharging their duties towards all the stakeholders.

Significance of Professional Ethics in Higher Education

The higher education system of India is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. It has been growing in a remarkable way in the post-independence period. But the question is- Is it sufficient that the educational infrastructure is expanding? Is it enough to produce good managers, skilled technocrats, politicians and entrepreneurs without the ethics or values? Can good human beings be produced without the basic ethics? Certainly not. Ethics is not only an issue of teaching or training but it should be in the centre of the objectives. Conduct and character development should be an integral part of the teaching profession. It is imperative to maintain peace and harmony amongst the youth of today and for the professional excellence as well. An ideal teacher can leave an everlasting impression on the minds of students. Professional ethics is a must to make the student-teacher relationship sacred, worthy and productive (Mercy Siwach, 2016).

Review of Related Literature

Gupta B.S. (2022), conducted a study titled "*A Study the Professional Ethics of Teachers of Secondary Schools*". In his study conducted on teachers of secondary schools from Prayagraj and Lucknow City he found that the female teachers of secondary schools had high professional ethics than that of male teachers of secondary schools. He also observed that the teachers of government secondary schools possessed comparatively high level of professional ethics than the teachers of private secondary schools.

Thoker A. A. (2017), conducted a descriptive study "*Professional ethics of secondary school teachers with special reference to rural urban dichotomy*". The randomly selected sample comprised of teachers working in government and private secondary schools in rural and urban areas of Kashmir Division. The collected data was analysed using percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and 't' test. It was observed that urban School teachers had high level of professional ethics as compared to rural school teachers. The analysis indicated that teachers working in government schools had better professional ethics than their counterparts working in private schools.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers create effective classrooms and schools (Wong et al., 2014). According to Lehman (2012), Effective teachers have dispositions of enthusiasm, compassion, and of valuing hard work. A purposeful, focused enthusiasm for the students, compassionate heart, a trust in their potential and unique individuality and the perseverance to work until they succeed are essential qualities of teachers to thrive. Keeping in view the importance of professional ethics in the educational system, the investigator tried to find out the level of professional ethics of teachers in higher education institutes. The problem taken by the investigator for the present study is titled: "**A Study of Professional Ethics of Teachers in Higher Education**".

Rationale of the Study

In this competitive world, we can see many changes in our educational system. The aims and objectives of education are changing according to the needs of the learners and society. The teachers have multiple responsibilities and have to perform many duties. Apart from having the appropriate professional qualifications, in-depth knowledge of subject, content and age-specific pedagogy the teachers should also possess knowledge of professional ethics. It is the teacher who can mould the society and can prepare responsible citizens of our country. The teachers with knowledge-driven professional ethics can provide quality education and inculcate ethical values among the learners. The present study may be valuable for the teachers and may contribute some improvement in education. That's why the investigator has undertaken the above-declared study.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To study professional ethics of teachers in Higher Education Institutes.
2. To study and compare professional ethics of male and female teachers in Higher Education Institutes.
3. To find out and compare the level of professional ethics of male and female teachers on its various dimensions.

Hypotheses of the Study

In order to achieve the afore-mentioned objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. There is no significant difference in the Professional Ethics of male and female college teachers.

2. There is no significant difference between the levels of male and female college teachers on various dimensions of the Professional Ethics.

Operational definitions

Operational definitions of terms and variables are as given below:

Professional Ethics: In the present study Professional ethics refers to the set of scores obtained by the respondents on Professional Ethics Scale developed by Dr. Baldwin B. Sumer and Professor Ibadani Syiem.

Teachers in Higher Education: The investigation refers to those teachers who are working in higher educational institutes (graduation/ university level).

Population and Sample

All the teachers of Ghaziabad district were considered as the population. The sampling frame of the present study comprises a sample of randomly selected 80 teachers teaching in higher educational institutes of Ghaziabad district.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study is delimited to the teachers working in higher educational institutes in Ghaziabad district.

Methodology/ Method of study

To study the Professional ethics of teachers teaching in higher educational institutes, the investigator used survey method under the descriptive research.

Tools used

Teacher Professional Ethics Scale developed by Dr. Baldwin B. Sumer and Professor Ibadani Syiem was used in the present study.

Procedure for Data Collection

The test named Teacher Professional Ethics Scale was filled by the randomly selected sample teachers (comprising of 40 male and 40 female teachers) and returned to the investigator.

Statistical Techniques Employed

Data gathered was put to suitable statistical analysis by computing Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and Test of significance (t-test).

Analysis of data

The investigator used Descriptive and Comparative Analysis.

Descriptive Analysis

Table-1: The Level of Professional Ethics of Teachers in Higher Education Institute

Level of Professional Ethics	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Very Low	12	15
Low	4	5
Average	51	63.75
High	10	12.5
Very High	3	3.75
Total	80	100

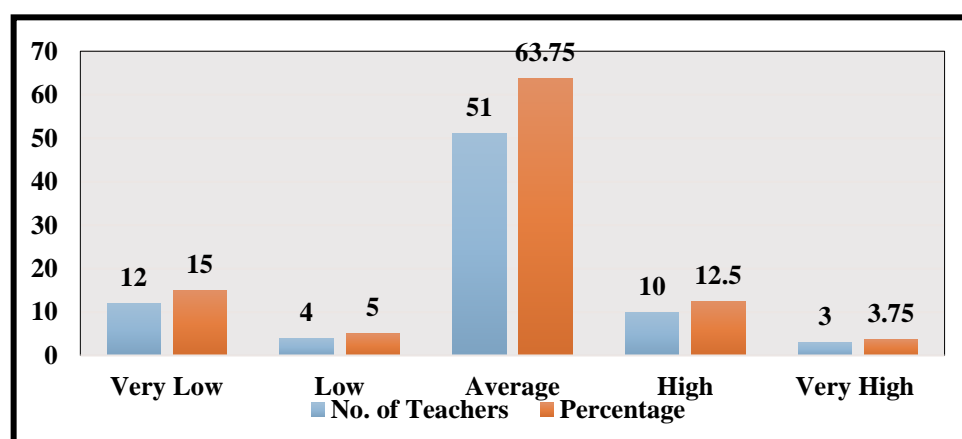


Figure-1: Level of Professional Ethics of Teachers

It is evident from the table above and corresponding figure that a majority of teachers (n=51, 63.75%) have average level of professional ethics. Only 10 teachers (12.5%) have high level of professional ethics whereas only 3 teachers (3.75%) have demonstrated on very high level of professional ethics. The table and graph further reveal that only 4 teachers (5%) are found having low level of professional ethics and 12 teachers (15%) have shown their professional level very low.

Comparative Analysis

Table-2: Showing the Levels of Professional Ethics of Male and Female Teachers

Level of Professional Ethics	Male Teachers		Female Teachers	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Very Low	09	22.5	03	07.5
Low	03	07.5	01	02.5
Average	20	50.0	31	77.5
High	06	15.0	04	10.0
Very High	02	05.0	01	02.5
Total	40	100	40	100

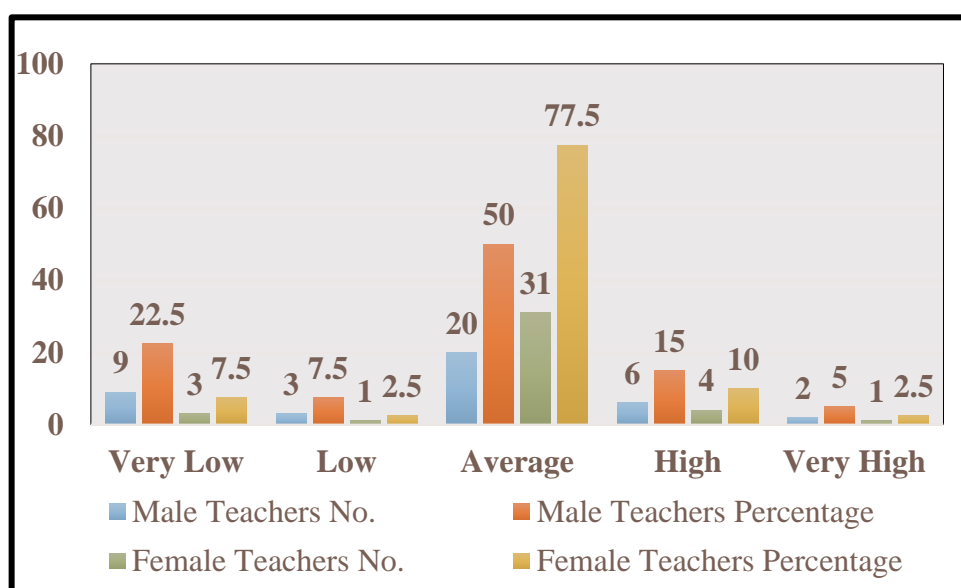


Figure-2: Comparison of Male and Female Teachers on Various Levels of Professional Ethics

On comparing the level of professional ethics of male and female teachers it was observed that 50% male teachers (n=20) and 77.5% female teachers (n=31) have an average level of professional ethics. The table and figure clearly indicate that 22.5% male teachers (n=9) fall on very low level and 7.5% male teachers (n=3) fall on low level of professional ethics whereas 7.5% and 2.5% female teachers (n=3 and n=1) fall on very low level and on low level respectively. The comparative percent-wise distribution of two groups under discussion revealed that 15% male teachers (n=6) and 10% female teachers (n=4) have shown high level of professional ethics whereas 5% of male teachers (n=2) and 2.5% of female teachers (n=1) have shown very high level of professional ethics.

Testing of Hypotheses

To test hypothesis one, the total scores of male and female teachers on Teacher Professional Ethics Scale were taken. The scores were analysed by applying 't' test and the critical ratio was obtained. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table -3: Value of Critical Ratio of Teacher Professional Ethics Scale

Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated Critical Ratio	Level of Significance	Tabulated Critical Ratio	Result
Male	40	201.53	24.32	78	1.90	0.05	1.99	Not Significant
Female	40	210.38	16.73					

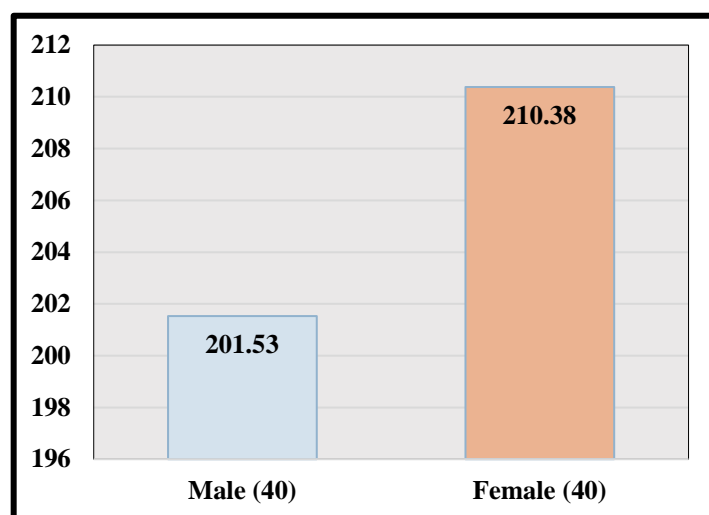


Figure -3: Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers on Teacher Professional Ethics Scale

In order to find out the overall comparison of male and female teachers on professional ethics scale, the mean score of female teachers has been found to be higher ($M=210.38$) as compared to mean score of male teachers ($M=201.53$). The calculated 't' value came out to be 1.90 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence. It shows that male and female teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards professional ethics. Therefore, in the light of the obtained results the hypothesis which reads as: *"There is no significant difference in the professional ethics of male and female teachers in higher education institutes"* stands retained. To test hypothesis two, the mean scores of male and female teachers on various dimensions of Teacher Professional Ethics Scale were calculated followed by standard deviation. The scores were then analysed by applying 't' test and the critical ratio was obtained. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table-4: Showing the Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers on Various Dimensions of Professional Ethics (n=40 each)

Dimensions of Professional Ethics	Male Teachers		Female Teachers		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
I- Obligation towards Students	41.13	5.37	43.13	3.83	1.92
II- Obligation towards Parents	34.7	3.16	33.95	2.64	1.15
III- Obligation towards Community	42.1	6.63	44.73	4.75	2.04
II- Obligation towards Profession	42.55	6.11	44.25	5.29	1.33
II- Obligation towards Colleagues	41.05	6.05	44.33	4.05	2.85

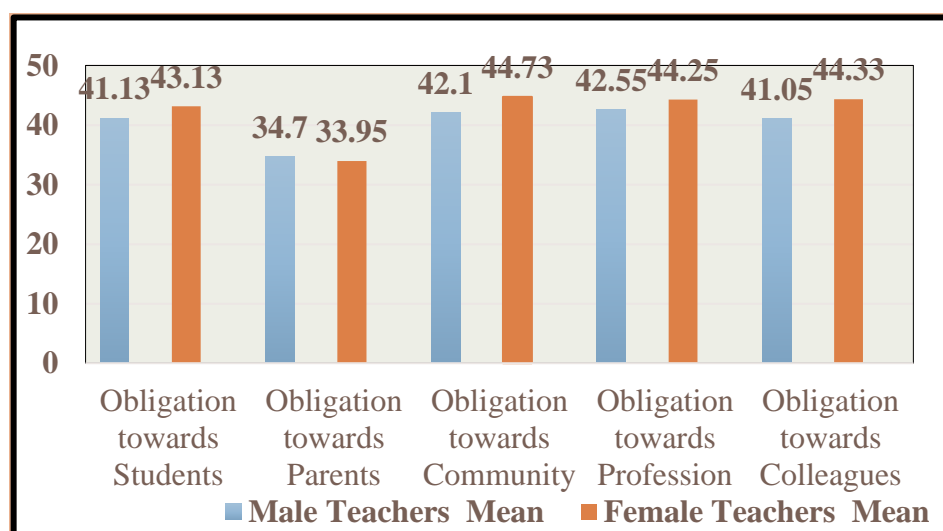


Figure-4: Showing the Difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers on Various Dimensions of Professional Ethics

In Table 4 (Fig. 4) the comparison of mean of male and female teachers on various dimensions of professional ethics can be observed. The dimension wise reporting is as given below:
On the first dimension of professional ethics scale (*Obligation towards Students*) the results reveal that female teachers have high mean score on ($M= 43.13$) as compared to male teachers ($M=41.13$). The obtained 't' value

(1.92) is not significant at both (0.01 and 0.05) levels of confidence. From this, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference between the Means of male and female teachers as far as obligations towards the students is concerned. With regard to second dimension of professional ethics scale (*Obligation towards Parents*) the results reveal that there is not much difference between the mean scores of male teachers' (M=34.7) and the mean scores of female teachers (M=33.95). The obtained 't' value (1.15) is not significant at 0.05 or 0.01 level of confidence. Therefore, it can be inferred that both male and female teachers exhibit almost the same level of professional ethics as far as obligation towards parents is concerned. Coming to the third dimension of professional ethics scale (*Obligation towards Community*) female teachers were found to have a higher mean score (M=44.73) than those of their male counterparts (M= 42.1). The calculated 't' value has been observed to be 2.04 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence though it is not significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Thus, it may be said that female teachers are more conscious towards community as compared to male teachers. While perusing the results on the next dimension (*Obligation towards Profession*) given in the same table of the professional ethics scale, the mean score of female teachers (M=44.25) was observed to be higher than the mean score of male teachers (M=42.55). The calculated 't' value came out to be 1.33 which is statistically not significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence.

Coming to the fifth and the last dimension of professional ethics scale (*Obligations towards Colleagues*) again female teachers were found to have a higher mean score (M=44.33) than male teachers (M= 41.05). The calculated 't' value has been observed to be 2.85 which is significant at both the levels of confidence i.e. 0.05 and 0.01. Thus, it may be inferred that female teachers possess high level of professional ethics on the Obligations towards Colleagues as compared to male teachers.

Educational Implications

Professional ethics for teachers is of immense importance in educating the youth in our present-day society. One who adopts teaching as a profession must conduct in accordance with the ideal of the profession. A teacher is constantly under the scrutiny of his / her students and the society at large. Therefore, a teacher should strike a balance between his/her precepts and practice. The ideals of education a teacher seeks to inculcate among students must be his/her own ideals. In order to enhance the level of ethical consciousness of teachers conferences and seminars should be organised. Teaching profession requires the high degree of professionalism. Therefore, teachers must honour and follow the professional and ethical standards so that they are not only accountable to students but to their parents, colleagues, employers and the community at large. Also, a commitment to professional ethics ensures the professional success of teachers.

Conclusions of the study

The conclusions of the study are as under:

Percent-wise distribution revealed that a majority of teachers have an average level of professional ethics. The comparative percent-wise distribution of two groups under discussion revealed that female teachers have better/ higher level of professional ethics than that of male teachers. However, calculated critical ratio depicts that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers. Similarly, the mean Scores of male and female teachers on various dimensions of professional ethics and corresponding 't' value on three dimensions stands insignificant whereas on two dimensions it is found significant. The study concludes that the male and female college teachers performed almost similar on the measure of Professional Ethics, and none of the group is much superior to others. The results are in line with the findings of some of the researchers (M. Rajeshkumar & A. V. Vasanthakumari, 2021; Sheela. S & M. Muthamizhselvan, 2022 and Aashiq Ahmad Thoker, 2017). But the fact remains that there is a need to upgrade their level because teachers play a significant role in shaping the life of the students. They are strong role models and can be regarded as a guiding light for their students. Education without ethics may be arrogant and dangerous. Good ethical principles can contribute to good teaching skills. We should not forget the ultimate aim of the education, i.e. to make our students decent human beings by inculcating good qualities in them. To sum up, we can say that professional ethics are valuable tactics that are enforced by teachers in relation to the students, colleagues and the community (David Carr, 2000).

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