Teachers' Ethical Professional Practices in Higher Education for Holistic Development of Students: A Roadmap to Success

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Abstract

In the realm of higher education, the role of teachers transcends the mere transmission of knowledge; it encompasses the broader goal of nurturing students for holistic development. Central to this endeavor are teachers' ethical professional practices, which not only shape academic prowess but also contribute significantly to the social, emotional, and ethical dimensions of students' growth. The article embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the pivotal role of teachers' ethical professional framing them as an indispensable roadmap to fostering holistic student development and paving the way to success. Teachers, as architects of the learning environment, wield the power to shape the culture of their classrooms and lecture halls. The ethical dimensions inherent in this responsibility lay the groundwork for fostering a positive and inclusive atmosphere. The teaching encompasses fostering inclusivity, respecting diversity, and modeling integrity. These practices create an environment that nurtures not only academic achievement but also emotional well-being and cultural competence. The implications of studying teachers' ethical professional practices in higher education are far-reaching, influencing not only the academic landscape but also the broader societal and personal development of students. The findings of this research carry significant implications for various stakeholders, including educators, institutions, policymakers, and students themselves.

Keywords: *Ethical Professional Practices, Higher Education, holistic development, Academic Integrity, Professional Development and Collegiality and Collaboration.*

Introduction

The college instructor plays a crucial role as the primary input resource in the whole higher education system. He is the primary factor that determines the quality of higher education. In addition, he has a multitude of psychological attributes such as attitudes, emotions, ideas, thoughts, and desires. The strong morale of instructors is a key strength for institutions [7]. The future of students in the context of education is greatly impacted by the values, attitude, and beliefs of their teachers. Teachers have a crucial role in fostering social cohesion, promoting national unity, and cultivating a community that

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values education. Teachers are professionals who possess the legal authority to engage in the activity of teaching. As professionals, they need a specialized and advanced set of information and abilities that enable them to practice their competence. The quality of the education system is mostly contingent upon the calibre and dedication of the instructors to their profession, a fact that is generally recognised and acknowledged. Proficient, skilled, capable, and dedicated teachers consistently demonstrate themselves as invaluable resources for any country 3]. The teacher has the most esteemed position in the professional hierarchy since they are responsible for cultivating and shaping all other professionals. Teachers serve as facilitators, distinguishing them from other professions. The performance of teachers is the most essential factor in the sphere of education. Performance pertains to the conduct of the instructor throughout the teaching-learning process, specifically inside the confines of the classroom. The term "quality of teachers" refers to the level of competence, effectiveness, and capability in teaching. Being professional entails swiftly and successfully doing one's obligations while maintaining ethical conduct. Therefore, it is essential for a teacher to exhibit professional ethics [14]. The concept of a teacher and the act of teaching is persistently undergoing change. Educators in today's world are tasked with a multitude of responsibilities and duties to complete. In addition to having the right academic and professional qualifications, it is vital for them to have a comprehensive awareness of professional ethics. Not only that, but they must also hold the appropriate credentials. The concept of professional ethics functions as a guiding principle that helps educators to ensure that their pupils get an education of the highest possible quality and to inculcate ethical ideas in them. The ability to exhibit and act in a manner that is emotionally and socially savvy is vital for a teacher in this day and age, when there are huge job expectations and severe competition. Because of this, students will have the opportunity to assimilate these advantageous attributes, which will eventually lead to them being responsible and productive members of society [9]. The teaching profession is an important employment that is necessary for the operation of all other businesses. A comprehensive mastery of the subject matter, content, and pedagogy that is targeted to certain age groups is required for this career, which is among the most rigorous jobs available. In order to reverse this tendency, a significant amount of work is required. For the purpose of enhancing and cultivating the skills of the teacher, explicit measurements need to be expressed in a clear and concise manner.

Background of the study

Professionalism, accountability, fairness, equity, a safe and healthy learning environment for students, non-corruption, objectivity, respect, dedication to one's profession, respect for students, respect for one's own abilities, and efficient use of resources are all components of an ethical professional practice in education. Ever since the beginning of time, people have been asking themselves whether certain actions are morally acceptable. Researchers' focus on the ethical core of teaching and professionalism in the field has grown over the last 20 years. Also, a lot of research stresses the need of providing educators with ethical training before hiring them to work with kids and other people. It is widely acknowledged that acquiring an ethical education is crucial for developing ethical attitudes, actions, and choices. The use of excellent ethics may lead to two effects: first, acquiring the confidence of superiors; and second, developing integrity, which is continuing to do the right thing even when no one is watching. It is preferable to highlight the significance of ethics in professional life via the lens of positivity, despite the fact that the failure of firms may serve as a useful illustration of the relevance of ethics in professional life. The term "work ethics" refers to a collection of ideas and ideals that teachers adhere to in order to improve their professional behaviour, relationships, and overall performance while they are on the job. Within the context of a working setting, professional ethics encourages equality, non-partiality, and a mentality that is collaborative rather than competitive. Ethical standards must be maintained in order to guarantee that all individuals in the workplace are treated in an equitable and respectful

manner. This is an essential need for the success of the institution or organisation in question, as well as for the development of an individual's personality. When it comes to maintaining the integrity of the school or organisation, having strong ethics will be of great assistance. This will assist in preventing actions of this kind, which would be detrimental to the reputation of the profession and, therefore, the institution as a whole. When instructors uphold their professional ethics, it contributes to an overall improvement in the environment. As a result, upholding ethical standards requires always allowing one's conscience to take the initiative.

Summary of Previous related literature

The results of the research reveal that there is a lack of standardised professional ethics for teachers, which has a detrimental influence on the social intelligence of teachers and their performance in the teaching profession [1]. It is vital to do more study that is both imaginative and analytical in order to grow new abilities and give teachers with specialized training in order to support the development of a positive mentality. Consequently, the investigator has begun the investigation in this specific environment of their choosing. In this modern and globalised day, the old value-based civilization that existed in India has been supplanted by a culture that is more focused on material possessions [9]. It is the result of the individual's activities and the cognitive processes that transpired at that time. To reconstruct a society that is built on principles is a huge responsibility for our country, and it is also vital to understand the causes for this change. There are many reasons for this transformation. It is through education that change may be brought about in the first place [12]. Consequently, we are able to remedy the issue if educators and administrators adopt a viewpoint that is founded on values rather than commercialized conceptions. To achieve this goal, people should get instruction on the ethical concepts that pertain to their chosen career. The concept of professional ethics has been around for a very long time. In the realm of professional ethics, codes of conduct often include fundamental concepts that encompass knowledge, honesty, accountability, integrity, loyalty, and conformity to legal obligations. One of the most important components of professional ethics is the presence of individual accountability [14]. There are a variety of alternative strategies that organisations may use in addition to codes in order to enforce professional ethics. These approaches include continual education and a variety of support networks for professionals. It is expected that every profession will produce a set of ethical principles that will regulate the acts and behaviours of its members [6]. When it comes to differentiating between professional conduct and behaviour that is good and behaviour that is not favourable, the ethical norms serve as a basic basis. The field of study known as ethics is concerned with the investigation of moral principles that are often accepted voluntarily by a person or a group. In the context of professional ethics, the term "code of professional ethics" refers to a set of self-imposed professional ideals and principles that are vital for attaining both professional success and personal happiness. Professional integrity and a commitment to assisting society are often the two essential ideas that serve as the foundation for a code of ethics adopted by professionals.

Teachers' Ethical Professional Practices in Higher Education for holistic development of students: an overview

Encouraging students' holistic development is greatly influenced by teachers' ethical professional behaviours in higher education. The term "holistic development" refers to a student's progress in all areas of their being, including academics, emotions, and ethics. Teachers have a profound impact on their pupils' personal growth, moral compass, and academic achievement because of their position as authoritative characters in the classroom.

Early-Career Instructors: At the outset of their academic journey, early-career instructors often bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a strong desire to make a positive impact on their students. However, the lack of teaching experience may pose challenges in navigating ethical dilemmas. Novice teachers may grapple with issues related to establishing authority, maintaining fairness in grading, and effectively managing power dynamics in the classroom. In terms of technology use, younger instructors may be more adept at integrating digital tools into their teaching methods, potentially impacting their ethical considerations. The use of social media, for instance, could raise questions about the boundaries between personal and professional life, as well as appropriate communication channels with students. The eagerness to establish a positive rapport with students might lead younger teachers to prioritize relatability, sometimes blurring the lines between professionalism and informality. While building strong connections with students is valuable, maintaining a balance that upholds ethical standards and boundaries is crucial.

Mid-Career Faculty: As teachers progress in their careers, accumulating experience and expertise, their ethical considerations may evolve. Mid-career faculty members often find themselves juggling teaching responsibilities, research endeavors, and administrative duties. The challenge here lies in managing competing demands while maintaining a commitment to ethical practices. With increased experience, educators in this stage may have developed a deeper understanding of the nuances of academic integrity. They are more likely to have encountered various ethical dilemmas and, as a result, may have honed their ability to navigate such challenges with greater sensitivity and wisdom.Mid-career faculty members might also take on mentorship roles for early-career colleagues, influencing ethical practices within the academic community. Their leadership and guidance can contribute to a culture of professionalism and integrity within the department or institution. However, the mid-career phase can also be a time when burnout becomes a concern. The pressure to balance multiple responsibilities might tempt some educators to compromise on ethical standards, such as resorting to shortcuts in grading or neglecting to address instances of academic misconduct adequately.

Late-Career Professors: Seasoned professors, having weathered the academic landscape for decades, bring a wealth of experience, institutional knowledge, and a deep understanding of their subject matter. Ethical considerations for late-career professors may revolve around legacy-building, mentorship, and sustaining a positive impact on the academic community. The challenge at this stage may be resisting complacency. With a long and successful career behind them, some late-career professors might be tempted to relax their ethical standards. Maintaining a commitment to academic rigor, fairness, and integrity becomes paramount, especially as these professors continue to influence students and colleagues. Late-career educators often play key roles in shaping institutional policies and contributing to the governance of academic departments. Their ethical decision-making extends beyond the individual classroom to impact the broader academic environment. However, there may be a risk of resistance to change or a reluctance to adopt new teaching methodologies. The ethical challenge here lies in ensuring that the desire for continuity does not hinder the adaptation of best practices or the incorporation of innovative pedagogical approaches.

Common Ethical Themes across Career Stages: Regardless of career stage, certain ethical themes remain universal among educators in higher education. These include a commitment to fostering an inclusive and respectful learning environment, upholding academic integrity, and prioritizing student welfare. The age of the educator may influence the specific manifestations of these themes, but the core values persist.

Technology and Age: The integration of technology in teaching is a domain where age can significantly impact ethical considerations. Younger instructors, having grown up in a digital age, may be more inclined to experiment with innovative educational technologies. However, the ethical use of these tools, including issues related to privacy, data security,

and digital accessibility, remains a constant concern for educators of all ages. Conversely, older educators might face challenges in adapting to rapidly evolving technological landscapes. The ethical imperative here is to ensure that teachers of all ages receive adequate training and support to navigate the ethical dimensions of technology use in education. In higher education, the ethical professional practices of teachers form the bedrock of a conducive learning environment, contributing significantly to the holistic development of students. However, as the educational landscape evolves, various challenges and concerns arise in the realm of teachers' ethical conduct. One central issue pertains to the potential clash between traditional teaching methods and the rapidly changing technological landscape. The integration of technology in education brings forth ethical dilemmas related to privacy, data security, and maintaining an equitable digital learning environment. As teachers navigate these challenges, there is a need to explore how ethical considerations evolve in tandem with technological advancements. Another concern revolves around the diversity of the student body in higher education. Teachers must navigate cultural, socio-economic, and learning-style differences among students while upholding ethical standards. Understanding the impact of teachers' ethical decisions on diverse student populations is crucial for promoting an inclusive and equitable learning environment. As the prevalence of digital resources and online learning increases, teachers face challenges related to preventing plagiarism, ensuring fair assessment, and maintaining the credibility of educational outcomes. Examining the ethical dimensions of these challenges provides insights into preserving the integrity of academic practices. The problem acknowledges the potential impact of age and experience on teachers' ethical professional practices. Younger educators may grapple with establishing authority and navigating the ethical considerations of technology use, while more experienced faculty members may face challenges in adapting to new teaching methodologies. Understanding how age influences ethical decision-making is vital for fostering a supportive and collaborative academic community. The problem recognizes the dynamic nature of the higher education landscape and the evolving challenges teachers encounter in maintaining ethical professional practices. Addressing these issues is essential for promoting a learning environment that not only imparts knowledge but also contributes significantly to the holistic development of students. The subsequent exploration of these challenges will provide valuable insights into potential solutions and strategies to enhance teachers' ethical conduct in higher education.

Research objectives and methodology

The study aims to investigate and analyze the ethical professional practices of teachers in higher education with a focus on their impact on the holistic development of students. To explore the various ethical considerations embedded in the teaching practices of educators in higher education, including issues related to fairness, integrity, and the promotion of an inclusive learning environment and to assess how the integration of technology in higher education affects teachers' ethical decisions, with a particular emphasis on issues such as privacy, data security, and maintaining equitable digital learning space [6] and to understand how teachers contribute to creating a positive and inclusive learning environment, considering aspects of diversity, cultural competence, and the impact on students' sense of belonging. The primary sources of data were collected from members of the college teachers (250) through Google form by using convenient random sampling technique.

Analysis, Presentation and Results

Perception of Teachers' Ethical Professional Practices

Teachers in higher education are expected to adhere to a set of ethical and professional practices to ensure the well-being of students, maintain academic integrity, and uphold the reputation of the educational institution. The perception of the respondents about the Ethical Professional Practices is studied in 8 dimensions. The perception will vary according to the nature of the respondents. In this context, the following hypothesis is framed.

H_0: There is no significant difference in the perception of the respondents towards the Ethical Professional according to the nature.

It is tested with the help of Kendal's W test, Kruskal Wallis test and Mann-Whitney U test. The result is discussed below.

1.   Age

The perception of the teachers will change according to their level of age. The 8 dimensions of the perception is analysed with the help of Kruskal-Wallis test. They are given below.

Table 1 Level of age and perception

Perception	Age group	N	Mean Rank	Test	Result
Commitment to Student Learning	Young	111	267.05	Chi-Square	3.411
	Middle	90	221.45	df	2
	Old	49	253.76	Sig.	0.112
	Total	250			
Adherence to Institutional Policies	Young	111	254.13	Chi-Square	4.026
	Middle	90	209.28	df	2
	Old	49	206.17	Sig.	0.069
	Total	250			
Academic Integrity	Young	111	215.33	Chi-Square	0.218
	Middle	90	258.13	df	2
	Old	49	272.02	Sig.	0.823
	Total	250			
Professional Development:	Young	111	273.84	Chi-Square	6.745
	Middle	90	216.21	df	2
	Old	49	227.30	Sig.	0.013*
	Total	250			
Collegiality and Collaboration	Young	111	216.88	Chi-Square	1.328
	Middle	90	216.42	df	2
	Old	49	244.30	Sig.	0.517
	Total	250			
Communication	Young	111	233.41	Chi-Square	4.165

	Middle	90	221.34	df	2
	Old	49	245.21	Sig.	0.119
	Total	250			
	Young	111	271.21	Chi-Square	3.005
Ethical Research Practices	Middle	90	221.31	df	2
	Old	49	257.53	Sig.	0.427
	Total	250			

* Significant at 5% level

The perception of the respondents towards teachers' ethical professional Practices shows that the respondents from the young age group feel it as Ethical Research Practices (271.21), Commitment to Student Learning (267.05) and Professional Development (273.84). The opinion of the respondents towards the teachers' ethical professional Practices does not significant doffer based on their age except one dimensions. The Chi-Square values for the degree of freedom 2 for professional Development (χ^2 – 6.745; p-0.013) are significant. The proposed hypothesis for the aspects is rejected. The impact of age on teachers' ethical professional practices in higher education is a multifaceted and nuanced aspect of academic life. As educators span various age groups, from early-career instructors to seasoned professors, the intersection of age and ethical conduct plays a significant role in shaping teaching methodologies, interactions with students, and overall contributions to the academic community. This discussion will delve into how age can influence teachers' ethical professional practices, considering both the challenges and benefits associated with different stages of an academic career.

Level of income and ethical professional Practices

In higher education, the role of teachers extends beyond the imparting of academic knowledge; it encompasses the holistic development of students. Ethical professional practices are the cornerstone of this development, shaping not only students' intellectual capacities but also their social, emotional, and ethical dimensions. This essay explores the vital role of teachers' ethical professional practices in higher education as a roadmap to holistic student development and success.

Income level

Table 2 Level of income and ethical professional Practices

Level of income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Less	96	68.45	8.235		
Middle	111	74.79	9.397		
High	43	72.43	10.159	2.177	0.123
Total	250	72.10	9.675		

From the above table, it is understood that the performance of the middle income group respondents (74.79) is more than the less income group (68.45) and high income group (72.43) respondents. The difference in the mean is tested with the help of ANOVA. The F value is 2.177 and p value is 0.123. It is insignificant. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted that there is no major difference in the Professional Practices of the teachers according to their level of income. The level of income can have profound implications for the ethical professional practices of teachers in higher education. This aspect is critical to

understanding the socio-economic dynamics that may influence educators' decisions and behaviors within the academic environment. Examining the impact of income levels on ethical practices provides insights into potential disparities, challenges, and areas for improvement. Teachers with lower income levels may face limitations in accessing professional development opportunities. This can impact their ability to stay updated on best practices, innovative teaching methods, and ethical considerations in higher education. Conversely, higher-income educators may have greater access to conferences, workshops, and training programs, enhancing their professional development and ethical awareness. Educators in institutions with lower financial resources may face challenges in providing students with necessary learning materials, potentially impacting the fairness and inclusivity of their teaching practices. Teachers in well-funded institutions may have more resources at their disposal, allowing for a more enriched and equitable learning experience for students.

Implications of the study

i.   Educators' Professional Development: Understanding the ethical dimensions of teaching in higher education provides valuable insights for educators' professional development. Identifying challenges and effective strategies allows teachers to enhance their ethical decision-making skills, ultimately contributing to the improvement of the overall educational experience for students.

ii.   Institutional Policies and Guidelines: The research outcomes can inform the development or revision of institutional policies and guidelines related to ethical professional practices. Institutions may consider incorporating the findings into faculty training programs to promote a culture of ethical awareness and accountability.

iii.   Technology Integration and Ethical Frameworks: Given the increasing use of technology in education, the study's insights into the ethical considerations related to technology use can guide the formulation of ethical frameworks for digital pedagogy. This, in turn, can influence the adoption of best practices in the integration of technology, ensuring a balance between innovation and ethical responsibility.

iv.   Promoting Inclusive Learning Environments: Understanding how teachers contribute to inclusivity in higher education can prompt institutions to prioritize diversity and cultural competence in their educational policies. This, in turn, can contribute to a more supportive and inclusive learning environment, positively impacting students' personal and social development.

v.   Student Well-being and Success: Teachers' ethical practices significantly influence students' overall well-being and success. The study's insights into fostering a sense of belonging, cultural competence, and academic integrity contribute to creating an environment conducive to holistic student development, positively impacting their future personal and professional lives.

Conclusion

The impact of age on teachers' ethical professional practices in higher education is a complex interplay of experience, values, and evolving perspectives. Early-career instructors bring enthusiasm and innovation but may grapple with establishing boundaries. Mid-career faculty members balance multiple responsibilities and play key roles in mentoring colleagues. Late-career professors contribute institutional wisdom but must guard against complacency. The common thread across all career stages is the need for a commitment to ethical conduct, including fairness, integrity, and a dedication to student welfare. Regardless of age, educators must navigate the ever-changing landscape of higher education, adapting their ethical practices to meet the needs of students and the

broader academic community. Ongoing professional development, mentorship, and a commitment to a culture of integrity are essential for teachers of all ages as they navigate the ethical complexities of their profession. It is evident from the preceding section that a teacher's position is complex, requiring them to wear several hats during their tenure at the school. Educators help provide a safe and moral learning environment by adhering to certain professional principles. Educators have a significant impact on their students' lives because of the way they model and encourage honesty, respect, and a thirst for knowledge. Having a strong work ethic is crucial for developing a work ethic. The implications of studying teachers' ethical professional practices in higher education are far-reaching, influencing not only the academic landscape but also the broader societal and personal development of students. The findings of this research carry significant implications for various stakeholders, including educators, institutions, policymakers, and students themselves.

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