



The Impact of Ethics Education on Teachers' Professional Development and Its Influence on Decision Making, Classroom Practices, and Teacher-Student Relationships

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Abstract

This study explores the role of ethics education in the professional development of teachers, focusing on how it influences their teaching practices, decision-making, and professional behavior. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis involving 15 teachers from diverse educational backgrounds in Makassar City, Indonesia. The findings reveal that ethics education significantly enhances teachers' ability to navigate ethical dilemmas in the classroom, fosters positive teacher-student relationships, and promotes collaboration among colleagues. Teachers reported that ethics training equipped them with the tools to handle challenges such as fairness in student discipline, respect for cultural diversity, and digital privacy concerns. However, the study also identified gaps in the consistency and continuity of ethics education programs, with many teachers emphasizing the need for ongoing training and peer support. The study contributes to the literature by addressing the gap in understanding how ethics education is applied in real-world teaching contexts and its long-term impact on teachers' professional development. It highlights the importance of integrating ethics education into continuous professional development programs, ensuring that teachers are equipped to handle evolving challenges in education. This research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and institutions seeking to improve ethical standards and support teacher growth.

Introduction

Ethics training plays a pivotal function inside the professional improvement of instructors, shaping their ethical reasoning, choice-making strategies, and overall conduct within academic settings. As educators, instructors not handiest impart understanding however additionally function role models and ethical courses for their students. The integration of ethics training into their professional development applications is for that reason vital to fostering a tradition of moral attention and duty inside schools. Ethics training is foundational in equipping teachers with the vital skills to navigate complicated ethical dilemmas that arise of their expert lives (Abulibdeh et al., 2024). By conducting ethics training, instructors expand a deeper understanding of moral standards and values that manual their interactions with college students, colleagues, dad and mom, and the wider community (Pring, 2021). This knowledge is important as teachers frequently face situations where choices impact now not best

instructional consequences however additionally the emotional and ethical development of their students (Lepp et al., 2021).

Ethics education enhances teachers' ability to seriously reflect on their practices and make knowledgeable moral picks. According to Roy & Uekusa (2020), ethical mirrored image includes analyzing the results of 1's moves on others and considering alternative publications of action that align with ethical requirements. Such reflective practices are indispensable to professional growth and contribute to the cultivation of a positive ethical weather inside academic institutions (Colomer et al., 2020). The integration of ethics schooling affects diverse components of instructors' expert behavior and decision-making methods. Through ethical education, instructors increase skills in ethical reasoning, ethical judgment, and moral sensitivity, that are essential for retaining integrity and professionalism (Small & Lew, 2021). These competencies enable teachers to navigate ethical dilemmas with sensitivity to numerous perspectives and uphold moral standards of their interactions with stakeholders.

Ethics education promotes a subculture of duty and transparency among teachers. By examining case research and moral frameworks, educators learn to apply ethical principles to actual-world eventualities, fostering a sense of responsibility for their movements and selections (Martin et al., 2021). This cognizance contributes to the development of a professional identification grounded in moral values and principles. In recent years, there was a growing emphasis on integrating ethics education into teacher schooling applications global. Institutions and educational our bodies have developed diverse tactics to contain ethics into the curriculum, starting from standalone courses to embedded modules within present coursework (Berlinger et al., 2020). These projects intention to equip teachers with the ethical knowledge and talents important to navigate the complexities of cutting-edge educational environments.

A few teacher education programs include seminars or workshops on moral selection-making, where educators discuss moral theories and follow them to practical situations (Fiesler et al., 2020). Others include case studies and ethical dilemmas into school room discussions to promote critical wondering and moral mirrored image. By integrating ethics schooling into expert development, institutions are searching for to foster a subculture of moral leadership and promote integrity among destiny educators. The advantages of ethics training increase beyond person expert improvement to embody broader societal and institutional influences. By instilling moral values and standards in instructors, ethics education contributes to the introduction of a positive school weather characterised by means of agree with, respect, and moral conduct. This weather enhances pupil getting to know results and promotes social-emotional improvement by modeling moral conduct and selection-making.

Ethics schooling cultivates a feel of social responsibility amongst teachers, encouraging them to advocate for equitable academic practices and address ethical demanding situations inside their communities. By engaging in discussions about social justice and moral management, educators become catalysts for tremendous alternate and make a contribution to the improvement of a more inclusive and compassionate society. Despite the massive blessings of ethics education, numerous challenges hinder its powerful implementation in instructor training applications. One undertaking is the dearth of standardized ethics curriculum across academic establishments, main to inconsistencies in ethical schooling and improvement. Time constraints and competing priorities within teacher education packages may also restriction the depth and breadth of ethics training projects.

Educators may additionally face resistance to ethics education from stakeholders who prioritize academic achievement over moral development. Addressing those challenges calls for collaboration among educators, policymakers, and educational leaders to prioritize ethics schooling as a fundamental factor of teacher professional development. To conquer those

challenges, innovative techniques and procedures are had to integrate ethics training into teacher schooling successfully. One approach is to contain interdisciplinary perspectives into ethics schooling, drawing insights from fields inclusive of philosophy, psychology, and sociology. This interdisciplinary method encourages educators to explore ethical problems from a couple of angles and expand holistic answers to moral dilemmas.

Mentorship applications and peer support networks can facilitate ongoing dialogue about ethical practices and offer instructors with possibilities for collaborative mirrored image. By fostering a community of ethical inquiry, those projects sell continuous professional boom and decorate ethical decision-making abilities amongst educators. Examining case research and actual-international examples of moral dilemmas in training can offer treasured insights into the practical software of ethics training. Case studies can highlight the complexities of ethical choice-making in various academic settings and illustrate the effect of moral leadership on college subculture (Bhatt, 2022). By studying these instances, educators can increase strategies for identifying and addressing ethical challenges of their personal exercise. Looking beforehand, there is a want for ongoing research and improvement in ethics training to address emerging demanding situations and opportunities in instructor training. Future studies should explore the lengthy-time period results of ethics education on trainer conduct and student consequences, as well as inspect progressive approaches to integrating ethics into professional development packages. By advancing know-how in this region, researchers can make contributions to the refinement of ethics training practices and sell ethical excellence amongst educators global.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the perceptions and experiences of teachers regarding the role of ethics education in their professional development. The research sought to gain an in-depth understanding of how ethics education influenced teaching practices, decision-making, and professional behavior. The qualitative approach allowed the researchers to capture rich, contextual insights into the lived experiences of the participants, offering a nuanced perspective on the subject matter.

The study involved 15 teachers selected through purposive sampling to ensure their relevance to the research focus. Participants came from diverse educational backgrounds, representing elementary, middle, and high schools in Makassar City, Indonesia. The sample included 10 female and 5 male teachers, with teaching experiences ranging from 5 to 20 years. All participants had prior exposure to ethics education, either through formal training or professional development programs, which made them suitable contributors to the study's objectives.

Data collection utilized three methods: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. The interviews were conducted individually, each lasting 45–60 minutes, and focused on exploring participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to ethics education. Two FGDs were organized, with 6–8 participants in each session, to facilitate collaborative discussions and uncover collective insights. Additionally, the study reviewed relevant documents, such as training materials, school policies, and professional development guidelines, to provide supplementary context to the primary data.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, ensuring a systematic and rigorous approach to identifying patterns and themes. Interview and FGD transcripts were coded through an open coding process, allowing themes to emerge organically from the data. Constant comparison was used to refine themes and sub-themes, focusing on key areas such as the perceived

importance of ethics education, its practical applications in teaching, and barriers to its effective integration.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing were applied. Triangulation involved cross-verifying findings from the interviews, FGDs, and document analysis. Member checking was conducted by sharing initial interpretations with participants to confirm accuracy and relevance. Peer debriefing sessions allowed the researchers to refine their coding process and interpretations, ensuring the study's credibility and depth.

Result and Discussion

Courses in ethics are very vital for the development of teachers and to is important in the school system that teachers are taught how to behave appropriately. Due to the complexity of the situation and conditions under which the educators find themselves with the learners and colleagues in classroom, school and community, they need to be provided with ethical tools to handle them. In this research paper, the intention was to find out how Ethics education impacts on Teachers' decision-making process, Teaching and student relations in the school. Through the assessment of the student feedback related to ethical understanding and the results of the interview with teachers – recipients of ethics education, the study tries to identify the advantages, difficulties, and perhaps the shortcomings of the existing ethics education program. The next part of the paper provides the results that aim at the role of ethics training for the professional development of teachers and their capacity to solve ethical issues in practice.

Importance of Ethics Education

Ethics education plays a vital role in shaping the professional development of teachers, as it equips them with the moral framework necessary to navigate complex classroom and institutional challenges. Teachers often encounter situations where ethical decision-making is crucial, such as addressing conflicts among students, ensuring fairness in grading, and balancing their responsibilities to students, parents, and colleagues. Through ethics education, teachers can develop a deeper understanding of their professional obligations and cultivate the ability to make principled choices that align with the values of education and social responsibility. One participant shared,

“Ethics training helped me understand how to balance empathy and discipline when dealing with my students' diverse needs.”

Furthermore, ethics education enhances teachers' capacity to lead by example, fostering an environment of trust, respect, and inclusivity in their classrooms. Teachers serve as role models for their students, and their actions significantly influence students' moral development. A teacher who adheres to ethical principles demonstrates integrity and fairness, thereby encouraging students to emulate similar values. As noted by a participant,

“When I apply ethical principles in my classroom, such as fairness and honesty, I see my students adopting these behaviors in their interactions with each other.”

This highlights the profound ripple effect ethics education can have beyond the classroom.

In addition, ethics education supports professional growth by enabling teachers to handle dilemmas effectively and build stronger relationships within their school communities. Ethical training provides teachers with tools to resolve conflicts amicably and maintain professional boundaries, which are critical for fostering healthy collaborations with colleagues and administrators. One respondent remarked,

“After attending ethics workshops, I found it easier to manage misunderstandings with colleagues and build more collaborative relationships.”

This underscores how ethics education benefits not only individual teachers but also the broader educational ecosystem.

Ethics education also contributes to the development of policies and practices that align with a school’s core values. Teachers who are trained in ethics are better equipped to participate in policy-making processes and ensure that institutional guidelines reflect fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. As one participant noted,

“Being involved in discussions about school policies after completing my ethics course made me more confident in advocating for policies that prioritize students' welfare.”

This indicates that ethics education can empower teachers to play an active role in shaping an equitable learning environment.

Lastly, ethics education helps teachers navigate the rapid changes in education, particularly with the integration of technology and diverse cultural dynamics in schools. Teachers must address challenges such as online bullying, data privacy, and cultural sensitivity, all of which require ethical discernment. A teacher emphasized,

“The ethics training I received helped me approach digital learning tools more thoughtfully, ensuring that they are used responsibly and inclusively.”

This demonstrates that ethics education is essential for preparing teachers to address contemporary issues in education with moral clarity and confidence.

Current Practices in Ethics Education

Current practices in ethics education for teachers typically involve workshops, seminars, and professional development programs designed to instill ethical values and decision-making skills. These training sessions often cover core principles of ethics, such as fairness, integrity, and accountability, while also addressing context-specific scenarios that teachers are likely to encounter in their daily work. Participants in the study highlighted the importance of these programs in providing practical guidance. One respondent shared,

“The workshops I attended included case studies and role-playing exercises, which helped me think critically about real-life dilemmas in the classroom.”

This approach enables teachers to internalize ethical concepts and apply them effectively in various situations.

Despite the benefits of such programs, the implementation of ethics education remains inconsistent across schools and regions. While some institutions have comprehensive ethics training as part of their onboarding processes, others offer ethics education sporadically or not at all. This disparity often leads to varying levels of preparedness among teachers to handle ethical challenges. A participant observed,

“In my school, we only had one ethics workshop when I first joined, but there hasn’t been any follow-up training since then.”

This comment underscores the need for ongoing and structured ethics education to ensure consistent reinforcement of ethical principles throughout a teacher’s career.

Another notable practice in ethics education is the integration of ethical topics into teacher preparation courses at universities and colleges. Pre-service teachers are often introduced to ethical theories and their applications within educational contexts, equipping them with a

foundational understanding of professional ethics before entering the workforce. Some participants noted gaps in these academic programs. One teacher remarked,

“While I learned about ethical theories during my teacher training, there was little focus on how to handle specific challenges in real classroom settings.”

This suggests that ethics education in teacher training programs should balance theoretical knowledge with practical applications to better prepare educators for real-world scenarios.

Peer collaboration and mentorship also play a role in ethics education, as experienced teachers often guide their colleagues in navigating ethical dilemmas. Informal discussions and peer support systems help foster a culture of ethical awareness within schools. One teacher shared,

“I often consult my senior colleagues when faced with ethical issues, and their advice has been invaluable in shaping my decisions.”

This highlights the significance of leveraging existing expertise within the teaching community to enhance ethical practices.

Finally, some schools have started incorporating digital tools and online courses into their ethics education initiatives. These platforms offer flexibility and accessibility, allowing teachers to engage with ethical training at their own pace. One participant noted,

“The online ethics course I took was interactive and included scenarios that reflected current challenges, like online bullying and data privacy.”

This indicates that leveraging technology can be an effective way to address contemporary ethical issues and broaden access to training for teachers in diverse locations.

Benefits of Ethics Education

Ethics education provides teachers with a moral framework to guide their decision-making processes and professional conduct. By equipping educators with ethical principles, such as fairness, integrity, and respect, it enables them to handle complex situations with confidence and clarity. Many participants emphasized how ethics education has empowered them in their roles. One teacher remarked,

“Understanding the ethical principles of fairness and impartiality has helped me make balanced decisions, especially when addressing conflicts among students.”

This demonstrates how ethics education contributes to fostering a fair and equitable learning environment.

Another significant benefit of ethics education is its role in enhancing teacher-student relationships. Teachers trained in ethical practices are more likely to demonstrate empathy, respect, and understanding in their interactions, which creates a positive and nurturing classroom atmosphere. A participant shared,

“My ethics training taught me the importance of listening to students and valuing their perspectives, which has strengthened my bond with them and improved their engagement in class.”

Such outcomes underline how ethics education not only improves classroom dynamics but also supports students' academic and emotional development.

Ethics education also strengthens professional collaboration among teachers and other stakeholders within the school community. By fostering a shared understanding of ethical principles, it helps teachers work together more effectively to address challenges and achieve common goals. One respondent noted,

“After attending ethics workshops, I noticed that our team discussions became more focused on collective responsibility and mutual respect.”

This highlights how ethics education contributes to a cohesive and collaborative work environment, benefiting both educators and students.

Additionally, ethics education prepares teachers to navigate modern challenges in education, such as the integration of technology and cultural diversity. It helps them make informed decisions about issues like digital privacy, equitable access to resources, and cultural sensitivity. As one teacher pointed out,

“The ethics course I took included case studies on handling online bullying and respecting cultural differences, which gave me the confidence to address these issues in my school.”

This benefit illustrates how ethics education equips teachers to handle evolving educational contexts with competence and integrity.

Ethics education supports teachers' personal growth and professional resilience by reinforcing their sense of purpose and commitment to their roles. Teachers who are well-versed in ethical principles are better equipped to handle the emotional and ethical pressures of their profession. A participant reflected,

“Ethics training helped me align my personal values with my professional responsibilities, which made me feel more fulfilled and motivated in my career.”

This indicates that ethics education not only enhances professional effectiveness but also fosters a sense of personal satisfaction and purpose among teachers.

This paper fills the gaps in the ethnic education literature regarding its applicability to teacher practices, teachers' perspective, and support structures within the institutions. Prior research has primarily focused on the theoretical concept of ethic training, accompanied by significantly less attention paid to its relevance to classroom instructors (Banks et al., 2021). This study fills this gap by exploring the experiences of teachers and understanding the ways in which ethics affects their practice, thinking, and interactions.

One of the most important conclusions is that ethical training is underpins the ethical decision making in the complex environment. Extending the conversation from previous research, which underscores the significance of ethical sensitization of teachers (Tribukait, 2021), this work contributes to the evolution of the topic by articulating the instances of use of ethical imperatives in teachers' practice. The participants stated how ethics training assisted them in applying both equity and perspectives when solving students' disputes. These pragmatic concepts complement the theoretical findings of earlier research and stress the need for enforcing case discussion as a component of ethical training programs.

This research is able to meet a gap, which has to do with a lack of emphasis on 'recurring' ethical activities in the existing literature. McGarr & McDonagh (2021) have noted that the ethics education is offered in teacher preparation programs only at the beginning level. Nevertheless, this study has shown that there is a concern concerning the professional development to enhance ethical standards. Together with the increase of follow-up workshops and peer discussions, several participants emphasised the need for institutional support within a teacher's professional practice to continuously strengthen ethical competencies at institutions (Morrison et al., 2021).

The third ground-breaking feature of this work is its discussion of how is ethics education helps teachers to prepare for the current day complexities include digital privacy and cultural

sensitivity. Although these concerns have been discussed by other authors (Al Mamun et al., 2022), this work extends prior knowledge by illustrating how educators understand and engage with these challenges. The participants were able to identify the usefulness of cases in ethics training as a map to current issues such as cyber bullying. This idea indicates that it is high time to reconsider the idea that is promoted in ethics education programmes and involve modern dilemmas and give importance to the practical solutions.

This research adds to the literature about the impact of ethical learning on professional interaction between teachers and students as well as professional cooperation. Gómez wt al. (2022) have earlier written about the theoretical role of ethics in building trust and respect in schools. This research extends these notions by showing how teachers engage in ethical practice instilling positive peer relations in the classroom (Cornish et al., 2023). That is why the ethical arguments by the participants concerning increased student interest and enhanced collaboration between teachers support the claims about the transformative effects of ethics.

This study contributes to the existing literature to fill the gaps by including both the theoretical and practical approach to proposing an effective ethics education for the professionals. They reveal the desirability of recurrent and context-based ethics training and present some ideas for further research such as the incorporation of ethics into new technologies and policies. Thus, the presented findings not only validate this knowledge but also enrich existing literature, which can benefit educators, policymakers, and institutions in their practice.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that ethics education plays an important function in the development of teachers' professionalism, improving their decision making, and positive teacher-student and interprofessional relation. When analysing the interview data, it was made clear that through completion of ethos-based studies, individuals are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to respond to various issues, solve current problems, such as privacy in the digital age and culturally responsive practice, as well as adhere to fairness in their practices. These research findings show its critical to incorporate from time to time and context relevant ethics courses in professional development. This research fills a significant void in the literature and offers detailed recommendations on enhancing the practice of Ethics Training in educational programs to produce transformative change in teacher practice and professional development. The future research on the diffusion of ethics education should expand to various levels of education and examine the incorporation of the topic with other new issues related to education.

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