

Professional Ethics in Practice: Teachers' Perceptions And Ethical Dilemmas In Schools

Anjula Swami Dr. Rajender Kumar Godara
Research Scholar^{*1}, Associate Professor^{*2}
Govt. IASE,
Bikaner^{*1}
Tantia University
Sri Ganganagar^{*2}

(Received-15-June-2025/Revised-30-June-2025/Accepted-10-July-2025/Published-30-July-2025)

Abstract

This article examines teachers' perceptions of professional ethics and the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their professional lives. Drawing on survey data and interviews from government and private senior secondary school teachers in Bikaner district, the study reveals that teachers generally hold positive perceptions of professional ethics, with minor variations across institutions. Ethical challenges frequently arise in areas of obligations toward students, parents, community, and colleagues. The findings highlight the need for continuous ethics training, institutional support, and value-driven teacher education.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Ethical Dilemmas, Teacher Perception, India, Secondary Education

1.Introduction

Professional ethics in teaching ensures trust, accountability, and respect within the educational system. Teachers face daily ethical dilemmas ranging from fairness in student assessment to managing conflicts with colleagues and parents. This study investigates how teachers in Bikaner perceive professional ethics and how their values influence responses to ethical challenges.

2.Methodology

-Sample: 16 schools (8 government, 8 private senior secondary schools).

-Tools:

-PEPST (Professional Ethics Perception Scale for School Teachers).

-Semi-structured interviews with selected teachers.

-Dimensions studied:

-Obligations toward students.

-Obligations toward parents, community, and society.

-Obligations toward profession and colleagues.

3.Findings

- Obligations toward students: Teachers demonstrated strong positive perception (mean = 59.02

- in some schools), emphasizing fairness, guidance, and academic support.
- Obligations toward parents/community: Teachers consistently acknowledged their role as community role models, but some cited challenges in aligning school policies with parental expectations.
 - Obligations toward profession/colleagues: Collegiality was valued, but ethical dilemmas emerged in balancing competition and collaboration.
 - Government school teachers scored slightly higher overall (mean = 129.01) than private school teachers (mean = 126.1), though the difference was negligible.

4. Discussion

The findings reflect consistency with NCTE's Code of Professional Ethics, which emphasizes teachers' obligations to students, society, and colleagues. The results are in line with international studies (Melo, 2003; Saat, 2004) highlighting that teachers' ethical orientation is influenced by their broader social and institutional context. However, dilemmas such as pressure to improve results, favoritism, and conflicting demands from administration remain prevalent.

5. Conclusion

Teachers perceive professional ethics as a cornerstone of their professional role. While both government and private institutions foster positive ethical orientations, ongoing training in handling ethical dilemmas is essential. Teacher education programs must incorporate ethics case studies, reflective practice, and workshops to strengthen ethical resilience.

References

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