

Professional Ethics of Secondary School Teachers with special reference to type of School

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Abstract

The present study focuses on the level of Professional ethics of the teachers working in Government schools of Kashmir Division. By using the descriptive survey method 800 respondents were drawn by investigator under random sampling technique from the school teachers working at higher secondary schools. Professional Ethics Scale developed by Mattoo, M. I. & Thoker, A. A. was used for data collection. The data was subjected to statistical treatment by using percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and 't' test. Results show that impact of school seems to be significant on level of professional ethics of teachers. However, Government school teachers were found high level of ethical consciousness towards their profession as compared to Private School teachers.

Key words: 1. Professional Ethics, 2. Type of School i.e., 3. Government and Private School

Introduction

Obviously speaking, professional ethics means knowing what is good and what is bad in one's profession and subsequently doing only that which is good. The code of professional ethics may be defined as a set of self-imposed professional ideals & principles necessary for the attainment of professional excellence & self-satisfaction (Arora, & Chopra, 2004). Ethics deals with moral principles, which are usually accepted voluntarily by an individual or a group. The code of professional ethics may be defined as a set of self-imposed professional ideals and principles necessary for the attainment of professional excellence and professional efficacy. Professional ethics means an establishment made by professional organisations to help professionals in performing their job functions according to sound and consistent ethical principles (Centre for the Study of Professional Ethics, 2002). Professional ethics is a set of standards or codes or value system by which free human actions are determined as ultimately right or wrong, good or evil. A teacher's job is not easy unless high professional ethics is developed. It leads to moral consciousness which helps a teacher in the promotion of academic integrity and excellence amongst the learners. Professional ethics acts as a guiding principle in the teaching behaviour of the teacher. It provides moral obligation on part of the teacher to respect the basic principles of the profession. Professional ethics helps a teacher in the maintenance of transparency and confidentiality in the system of education. Professional ethics establishes mutual respect and trust in teaching and learning process through which students' confidence building measures may be enforced to its optimistic approach. Every profession considers the development and application of a Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct (PCEC) as a means of maintaining acceptable professional standards. As far as teaching profession, teachers are supposed to exhibit a high level of professionalism, responsibility, integrity, competence, character, respect and honesty; so as to stand on their professional principles and such moral virtues are imperative for teachers.

The term professional ethics, is the combination of two words, "profession" and "ethics". "Professional" is a term which denotes a level of knowledge and skills possessed or required by an individual to perform an assignment through extensive education and training. Secondly, ethics means principles, morals, beliefs, values, moral code etc. The word "Ethics" is derived from the word "Ethos", which means character. In this way, Ethics is a science of character, habits of activity or behaviour of human beings. It evaluates human habits, character and voluntary determinations and discusses their property or otherwise. Ethics adds to the professional

obligation that a profession abides by. In the words of Mackenzie (2010), Ethics is defined as the, “study of what is right or good in conduct”. Any profession demands its worthy existence, acceptance and enforcement of code of ethics which in return makes the profession self-regulating, self-governing and self-satisfying. Professional ethics in teaching, being a multi-dimensional concept, includes four areas: a) **Honesty and sincerity:** It is considered a building block for establishing professional ethics in one’s teaching profession. Respecting, integrating, honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, decency, punctuality, virtual approach etc. come under this dimension. While realizing the importance of professional ethics in teaching Douglass (1987) puts forth his views as, “the life of the nation gets rejuvenated and secured, if its teaching personnel are: honest, truthful, and virtuous”. Professional ethics of teacher being the science of discrimination enforces that always teachers should associate their behaviour towards honesty and sincerity. b) **Transparency and confidentiality:** This dimension is a fundamental constituent for establishing professional ethics in one’s profession. Professional ethics acts as the strong revolt against bias, discrimination, favouritism, prejudice etc. in one’s teaching profession. Ethical consciousness and sense of unbiased judgements are given important place in one’s profession as far as this dimension is concerned. c) **Respect towards student and society:** Teaching being a tri-polar process which consists of teacher, student and society. Respect towards student and society should be given prime importance. Champa (2015) identified few components in this regard : i) professional ethics, honesty, integrity, transparency, accountability, confidentiality, objectivity, respectfulness towards student and society, obedience to law, creative discipline, optimism, respect, trust, and impartiality etc. Professional ethics is said to treat other members of the profession in the same manner as they wish to be treated by themselves. So, it is the professional obligation of the teacher which take care of the uniqueness and the dignity of each learner. It ameliorates them from any kind of psycho-social complexity. Besides, the professional teacher shall nurtures students for lifelong respect and compassion towards him regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, social class, disability, religion, gender. d) **High quality of teaching:** The dream of modern education is to realize the aims of education through the means of high quality of teaching and learning process. Professional ethics acts as a runway through which teacher travels with the restoration of high quality teaching. Professional integrity and high quality of teaching are considered as the basic determinants of professional ethics. Teacher’s professional ethics means a set of dignified principles put into practice by the teachers themselves.

Professional ethics is an attempt to provide direction and guidance to teaching personnel in the restoration of their dignity to ensure professional work. It is universally felt that like all other professions, the teaching profession should follow a code of professional ethics to ensure dignity and integrity. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 entrusts teachers with some onerous professional responsibilities to be internalized by them in the performance of their duties. Accordingly, it was considered necessary that the Code of Professional Ethics be evolved and adopted by the teaching community. According to Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics Ireland (2013) professional ethics includes: a) *respect for the dignity of the person*, b) *professional responsibility and accountability*, c) *trust and confidentiality*, d) *quality of practice* and e) *collaboration with others*.

Significance of the study: In modern global village, scientific and technological developments are observed to be unimaginatively progressing. The character and conduct of the individual, society, teaching personnel and the students are at the lower ebb with some unpleasant situations reported in major parts of our country. Besides, reports of molestation, racial discrimination, bribery, and favouritism are galore. Teaching personnel are required to help the society to control these unwarranted tendencies with their intellectual potentialities. This is possible if a code of professional ethics is evolved, enforced and practiced. Ethics basically is a science of discrimination between the right and the wrong. Conduct and character development should be considered an integral part of teaching profession. Since teachers are the makers of history who prepare the future responsible citizens of our country. The teachers of India should resolve to adopt the professional ethics of day to day dealing with those entire concerned. To make the human relationship sacred, worthy, fruitful and productive, professional ethics are must. In our present society, there is violence, injustice, oppression and we witness more broken communities, to remove these social evils, responsibility lies on the shoulders of teachers. Professional ethics in teaching is the only effective medium through which we can achieve peace, justice, love through the process of reconciliation. Thus, the code of professional ethics for teachers provides a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Increased awareness of the

ethical principles governing the teaching profession is essential to ensure 'professionalism' among teachers. In pursuance of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1986), a Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers (CPET) was jointly developed by National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and the All India Federation of Primary and Secondary School Teachers Organizations. The preamble of the draft code of the professional ethics (2010) gives a professional obligation message in the field of education that teachers should integrate their professional behaviour with below mentioned qualities of professional ethics: i) recognizing that every child has a fundamental right to education of good quality, ii) recognizing that every child has an inherent potential and talent, iii) recognizing that education should be directed to the all-round development of the human personality, iv) recognizing the need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity, viz., democracy, social justice and secularism, v) recognizing the need to promote through education the concept of composite culture of India and a sense of national identity, vi) recognizing that teachers, being an integral part of the social milieu, share the needs and aspirations of the people, vii) recognizing the need to enhance self-esteem of teachers, viii) recognizing the need to organize teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialized skills and dedication are pre-requisites, ix) recognizing that the community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers' professionalism, and x) recognizing the need for self-direction and self-discipline among the members of the teaching community. Thus to conclude from the above observations it is evident that level of consciousness in teaching profession is need of hour. Therefore, keeping this thing into consideration efforts have been made by the present researcher to study the research problem as:

Statement of the Problem

Professional Ethics of Secondary School Teachers with special reference to type of School.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been formulated for the purpose of investigation:

- 1) To study and compare professional ethics of Government and private school teachers on below mentioned dimensions:
 - a) honesty and sincerity,
 - b) transparency and confidentiality,
 - c) respect towards students and society and
 - d) high quality of teaching,

Hypothesis

Based upon the above mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1) There is significant difference between professional ethics of Government and private school teachers on below mentioned dimensions:
 - e) honesty and sincerity,
 - f) transparency and confidentiality,
 - g) respect towards students and society and
 - h) high quality of teaching,

Operational definitions: Operational definitions of terms and variables are given as under:

- 1) **Professional ethics:** Professional ethics in the present study refers the set of scores obtained by the respondents on Professional ethics Scale developed by the Mattoo, M. I. and Thoker A. A.
- 2) **Secondary School Teachers:** Secondary school teachers in the present investigation refer to those teachers who are working at + 2 level at Higher Secondary schools level either run by the Government or private trusts/ organizations.

Delimitations of the Study: The present study delimited in following manner:

- a) The teachers working in Government and private higher secondary schools and
- b) Five districts of the valley viz. Srinagar, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam.

Methodology: Keeping in view the research methodology, the researcher found it suitable to go through descriptive survey method.

Sample: The present investigation was carried out on a sample of 800 teachers working in Government and private Secondary Schools of Kashmir Valley. These teachers were drawn from five districts: Srinagar, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam. A random sampling technique was adopted to carry out the investigation. The age of the subjects was between 30 to 50 years.

Tools used: Professional ethics Scale developed by the Mattoo, M. I. and Thoker A. A. was used for data collection.

Statistical Techniques Employed: Information gathered was put to suitable statistical analysis by computing:

- Percentage,
- Mean, S.D. and
- test of significance (t-test).

Analysis of data: The data was analysed into below mentioned captions:

SET-I (Descriptive Analysis)

SET-II (Comparative Analysis)

SET-I (Descriptive Analysis)

Table 1: Showing the Percent-wise Distribution of Government and Private School Teachers on Various Levels of Professional Ethics.

Levels of Professional Ethics	PST		GST	
	N	%age	N	%age
Strongly Disagree	65	16.5	70	17.5
Disagree	70	17.5	85	21.25
Undecided	34	8.5	37	9.25
Agree	101	25	105	26.25
Strongly Agree	130	32.5	103	25.75
Total	400	100	400	100

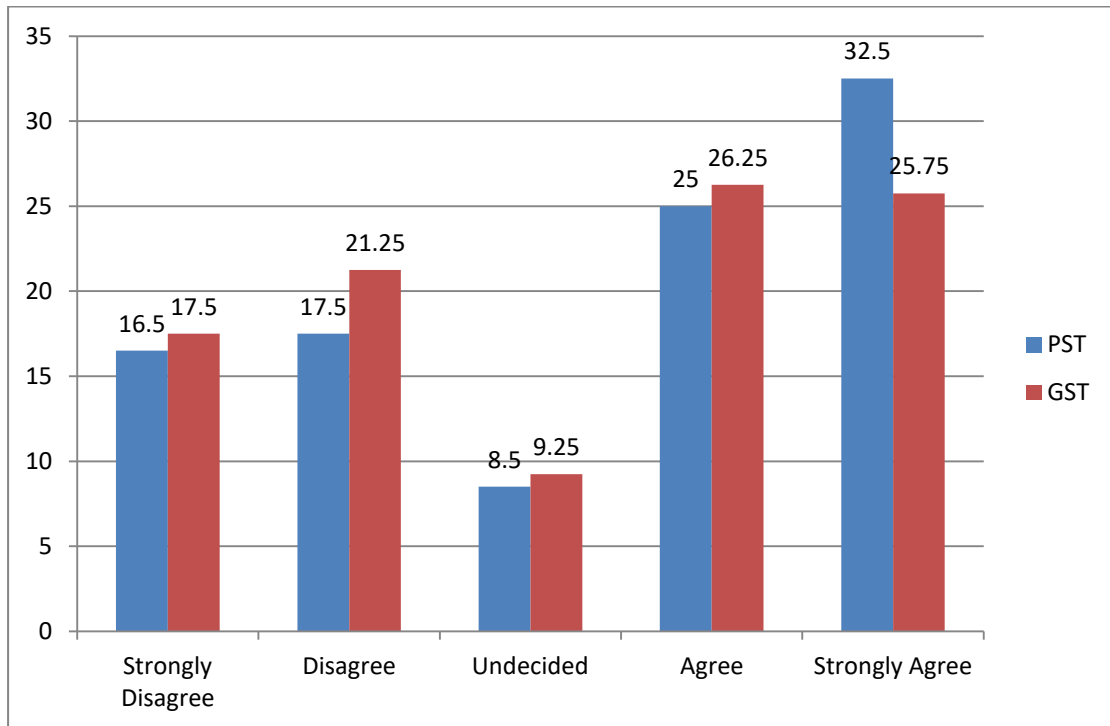


Fig. 1: Comparison of Government and Private School Teachers on Various Levels of Professional Ethics.

Index: PST: Private School Teachers
GST: Government School Teachers

SET: II (Comparative Analysis)

Table 2: Showing the Significance of Difference between the Mean Scores of Government and Private School Teachers on Various Dimensions of Professional Ethics (N=400 each).

Dimensions	PST		GST	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
I Honesty and Sincerity	23.04	5.01	20.35	4.15
II Transparency and Confidentiality	24.83	6.30	20.68	5.26
III Respect Towards Students and Society	26.85	5.68	22.63	5.00
IV High Quality of Teaching	25.38	5.30	22.99	3.60
V Composite Score	100.04	16.91	85.60	11.37

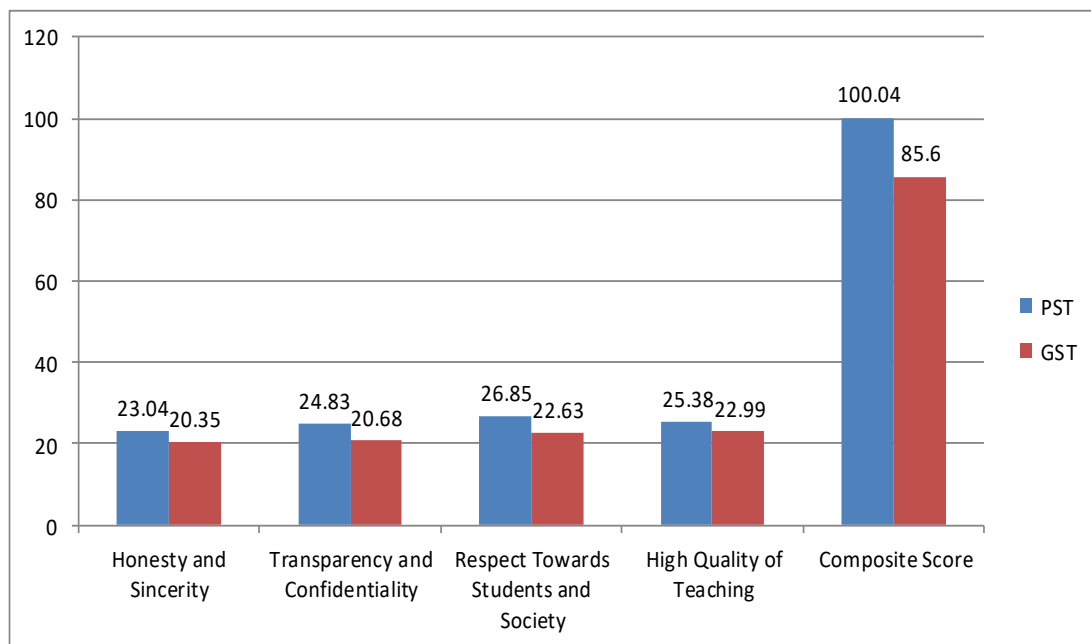


Fig. 2: Comparison of Government and Private School Teachers on Various Dimensions of Professional Ethics.

Index: PST: Private School Teachers

GST: Government School Teachers

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

Interpretation of data

In the light of the above observation, the collected data was put statistical treatment. Percentage and inferential procedure was followed to test the hypotheses. The present investigator delineated this process under two captions as:

SET-I: Descriptive Analysis on the basis of Type of School (Private/ Government)

SET: II: Comparative Analysis on the basis of Type of School (Private/ Government)

SET-I: Descriptive Analysis

The data presented in **Table 1 (Fig. 1)** shows the percent-wise distribution of Government and private school teachers on various levels of professional ethics. It has been revealed that in case of private school teachers, 16.5% respondents seem to disagree strongly towards their professional ethics. The table further reveals that 17.5% private school teachers were found to disagree towards professional ethics. However, among private school teachers, small percentage, (8.5%) has shown inability to decide their professional ethics. 25% respondents (private school teachers) were observed to have a sense of agreement with regarding to their professional ethics. The results revealed majority of the respondents, (32.5%) from private school teachers strong in the agreement on their professional ethics. Moreover, 9.25% Government teachers were noticed to be neutral in expression of their professional ethics. In case of Government school teachers, majority of the respondents (26.25%) were found in agreement towards their professional ethics. Conversely, 25.75% Government teachers were observed strongly in agreement towards their professional ethics. The comparative percent-wise distribution of the two groups under discussion revealed a significant percentage of private school teachers with a strong sense of agreement towards

their professional ethics. Therefore, it may be said that type of school is an important factor that influences the professional ethics of school teachers.

SET: II: Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of private and Government school teachers on different dimensions of professional ethics has been reported in **Table 2 (Fig. 2)**. A perusal of this table reveals a significant mean difference between the two groups of teachers on all the four dimensions of professional ethics. An observation on the first dimension (**Honesty and Sincerity**) of the professional ethics reveals that both the groups of teachers differ significantly to each other. The mean score in case of private school teachers was reported to be higher ($M=23.04$) as compared to Government school teachers ($M=20.35$). The calculated 't' value came out to be 8.50, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. From these results, it may be said that private higher secondary school teachers seem to appear honest and sincere as compared to Government school teachers on professional ethics. It can further be said that these teachers may be loyal towards higher authorities and are used to demonstrate respect and obedience towards their supervisors as compared to the comparable group. The results further revealed that private school teachers have a keen tendency in shaping the psychological makeup of their pupils and consider it as their primary duty. With regard to second dimension (**Transparency and Confidentiality**) of the professional ethics of private and Government school teachers, the two groups under discussion have been found significantly different from each other. The mean score of private school teachers has been found to be 24.83 and in case of Government school teachers the mean score is observed to be 20.68. The calculated 't' value ($t=10.65$) is reported to be significant ($p > 0.01$). It is revealed that private school teachers appear to respect their students as well as society as compared to Government school teachers. It may further be said that private school teachers may be successful in maintaining the transparency and objectivity in their profession. Besides, they are seen to inspire students during their teaching learning process and do not favour in the disclosure of the weaknesses of their students. On the other hand, Government school teachers are reported provide the chances of favouritism in the achievement of students as compared to the comparable group. Confidentiality has been seen the prime goal of teachers working in private schools. Coming to the third dimension of professional ethics (**Respect towards Student and Society**) it has been observed that the mean score in case of private school teachers is reported to be higher ($M=26.85$) as compared to the teachers of Government schools ($M=22.63$). The obtained 't' value has been found to be significant at .01 level of confidence ($t = 11.37$). It can be said that the private school teachers experience respect towards students and society as compared the teachers belonging to Government schools. They were observed to show responsibility of rights and duties effectively. This may be attributed to the fact that private teachers are used to respect the suggestions of the stakeholders of education and subsequently enhance their professional competence by using these suggestions as a feedback mechanism.

The table further reveals a significant mean difference between the two groups under discussion on the fourth dimension of professional ethics (**High Quality of Teaching**). The mean score of private school teachers on this dimension is reported to be 25.38 and in case Government school teachers it came out to be 22.99. The mean difference has been found significant at .01 level with a 't' value of 9.43 ($p > .01$). It may be inferred that private school teachers have a leaning towards high quality of teaching as compared to the teachers of Government school teachers. It is further reported that private school teachers have a high belief in the principle of self-discipline and self-direction. It may be due to their optimistic approach towards teaching and observance of proper supervision and administrative approach. Private school teachers never feel fatigued during interaction in the class room viz-a-viz delivering their lessons; even they handle arrangements in the casual absence of their colleagues. The results further revealed that private teachers have special training in demonstrating the core teaching skills and methods.

Coming to the composite score of professional ethics of the two groups i.e. private and Government teachers, the mean score of private school teachers is reported higher ($M=100.04$) than Government school teachers who are observed to be lower ($M=85.60$). The obtained 't' value came out to be 9.43 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This mean difference on composite score of professional ethics favours the teachers working in private schools. Therefore, it can be inferred that private school teachers demonstrate/ exhibit better professional ethics as compared to the comparable group. Besides, private school teachers were reported to have a high ethical

standard and were observed to get their behaviour merged with transparency, confidentiality, honesty and sincerity. They were reported to be punctual towards their duties and consider that their fundamental duty is to shape the psychological makeup of the students by respecting the privacy and dignity of the students. In the light of these results reported above, the Hypothesis which reads as, *“There is significant difference between professional ethics of Government and private higher secondary school teachers.”* stands retained, as it has been found that both the groups of teachers (Government and private) are different on the various dimensions and the composite score of professional ethics. The results are in line with the findings of some of the researchers in the field. (Muhammed and Aruna, 2014; Song, Yuan, Qijun&Xie, 2014; Chaudhary, 2007; Singh, 2006; Khushwinder, Pushvider and Kaur, 2001).

Muhammed&Aruna, (2014) found significant differences between Government and private school teachers in professional development. The study has further revealed that the type of school has a significant influence on the professional development of secondary school teachers. Professional development among private secondary school teachers was found higher than Government secondary school teachers. Song, Yuan, Qijun&Xie, (2014) found that public schools have more qualified and well experienced teachers but performance is not better. The trend of absenteeism, late coming and lack of regular practice of teaching activities, procrastination are found among public school teachers despite being higher salaried as compared to private schools teachers. The study recommended that causes and consequences of this behaviour among public schools teachers should be investigated and the Government should also initiate a strict policy to contain this trend and also introduce social workshops to create the awareness of responsibilities of teachers. Chaudhary (2007) found a significant relationship between Government aided and private aided college teachers in relation to their professional consciousness. Professional consciousness among private aided college teachers was found high as compared to Government aided colleges teachers. Singh (2008) made a comparative study of teacher educators of aided and Government teacher training institutions in relation to their professional values, family relationship, adjustment and job satisfaction. It was found that teacher educators of private aided institutions have better professional values, family relationship, adjustment and job satisfaction in comparison to teacher educators of Government run institutions. Khushwinder andKaur (2001)found teacher educators of private institutions more creative than those working in Government institutions.

Conclusions of the study: The chief conclusions of the study are as under:

- I. Percent-wise distribution of Government and private teachers was seen strongly in agreement on various levels of professional ethics.
- II. Private school teachers were found to be high achievers on all the four dimensions of professional ethics viz. honesty and sincerity, transparency and confidentiality, respect towards students and society and high quality of teaching.
- III. The type of school was observed to have a significant effect on the professional ethics of school teachers. Private school teachers were observed with high level of professional ethics as compared to Government school teachers.

Educational implications: The study boosts towards the below mentioned implications:

- 1) The study has revealed that professional ethics is a key which opens the door of effective teaching-learning process. Therefore, efforts need to be initiated to recruit ethically sound and competent teachers in educational institution, so as to ensure the global effectiveness of the institution.
- 2) In order to enhance the level of ethical consciousness at secondary school level, conferences and seminars should be organised.
- 3) Draft Code of professional ethics should frame at District level so that ethical awareness may reach in every corner of the state.
- 4) Value and moral education should be imparted at secondary school level. So that importance of values is realised to a great extent.

5) For the smooth establishment of effective administration and supervision in educational institutions, bond of agreement between Government and incumbents need to be made stronger.

Suggestions for Further Research:

1) A comparative study on professional ethics is recommended to be conducted on teachers at various levels like: primary, secondary, college and university.

2) The present piece of research was confined on variables- professional ethics, in relation to type of school. Therefore, similar investigations are recommended to be carried out on the variable of demographic profiles, socio-economic status, length of service and marital status.

3) It is recommended to undertake co-relational studies on the variables of professional ethics, professional commitment and occupational self-efficacy by involving teachers regulated by different autonomous organizations.

4) The study may be conducted to find out the impact of various draft code of professional ethics on cross cultural based teaching.

5) Studies are suggested to be conducted on job satisfaction of teachers at different levels in relation to their professional ethics.

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