

Teachers' Ethical Responsibilities Regarding Educational Assessment

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Article Detail:	Abstract
<p>Received on: 10 Aug 2024</p> <p>Revised on: 04 Sep 2024</p> <p>Accepted on: 13 Sep 2024</p> <p>©2024 The Author(s). Published by International Journal of English Language, Education and Literature Studies (IJEEL). This is an open access article under the CC BY license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).</p> <p>Keywords— Ethical Responsibilities, Educational Assessment, Professional Ethics, Teachers, and Students.</p>	<p><i>It can be challenging to consider and discuss the often unsaid ethical aspect of teaching. From a professional standpoint, the caliber and standing of the teaching profession depend on professional ethics and a shared body of knowledge. The impetus for this descriptive phenomenological study stemmed from the need to understand how teachers perceive their own professional ethics and how they manifest in their instruction. We interviewed thirty-six Iraqi teachers who work with students ages one to sixteen to formulate the essence of the phenomenon. The findings demonstrate that teaching pupils right from wrong is the primary ethical duty of educators. A secure learning environment, relationships with and among the pupils, and guidance are all interdependent. The surrounding society impacts the pupil's supervision and opportunities for cooperation with guardians and coworkers.</i></p>

I. INTRODUCTION

Several cases demonstrate the necessity for ethical evaluation criteria. A moral or ethical statement may declare that a specific action is good or bad, right or wrong, or that certain types of acts are. It could draw a distinction between good and poor personalities or dispositions, or it could establish a principle that allows for more detailed judgments of this type. Hope proposed that "we need to develop our hearts as well as our minds" (6).

People do not live in moral or ethical isolation; rather, they are raised amid certain moral traditions (Reiss 1999). Morals refers to human conduct, with morality describing actual action and ethics describing the theoretical, systematic, and logical analysis of that behavior (Churchill 1982).

At all levels of society, education is essential. In this regard, establishing an ethical environment, confidence, and trust based on mutual respect, as well as acting in accordance with those values, is

critical to successful teaching, since everyone deserves respect and well-being as a primary incentive for learning in educational environments (Haynes 2002).

Ethics in education is vital for all students since it aids in the development of their personalities. Ethics in education aids in the management of the educational system and ensures that these behaviors contribute to human well-being in a good way. Ethical knowledge is an inherent quality of consciousness that exists between moral and ethical standards.

Instructors have distinct relational and ethical obligations to their pupils, especially in the context of assessment and testing, because they recognize the inextricable link between learning to teach and learning to question.

1.1. Problem of the study

As a component of teachers' professional ethics, the ethical aspect of teaching is always present but frequently goes unacknowledged, making it elusive. Furthermore, ambiguity increases when different perspectives view ethics in teaching practice. Teachers may need to approach ethics from a gray scale or from concepts such as accountability and responsibility, as the perceptions of right and wrong can become problematic (Cliffe and Solvason 2022).

Nowadays, there is a general lack of interest in the ethical aspects of professional education training. Many teacher education programs overlook the fields of ethics and law. The professionalization of the teaching profession has overlooked an important aspect: education/professional ethics. The study delves into the ethical responsibilities of teachers in relation to educational assessment, while also presenting the reasons and justifications for the existence of morality, values, and ethics.

1.2. Aims of the study

The current study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- Raising Iraqi EFL Teachers' awareness of ethical issues.
- 2- Developing Iraqi EFL teachers' knowledge of ethical assessment.

1.3. Limitation of the study

The study is limited to teachers' ethical responsibilities regarding educational assessment.

1.4. Value of the study

The current study provides valuable insights for students regarding their ethical responsibilities in educational assessment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploring the ethical dimensions of teaching remains a complex endeavor, often shrouded in unspoken norms and assumptions. The integrity and reputation of the teaching profession heavily rely on a foundation of professional ethics, underscoring the necessity for educators to engage in reflective practices regarding their ethical responsibilities. This descriptive phenomenological study emerged from a desire to delve deeper into teachers' perceptions of

their professional ethics and the ways in which these principles manifest in their instructional methods.

2.1 The Concept of Ethics

Ethics is demonstrating to others in society the good ideals that an individual has internalized and is persuaded of. It involves assimilating a society's ethos and standards to govern human affairs effectively. It all comes down to the individual's overall beliefs and values. Human behavior simply revolves around what is right or wrong. People sometimes refer to ethics as a scientific discipline. However, we should clarify a few facts to assist us in understanding why this is the case. According to Robin George Collingwood, the term "science" encompasses not only natural science but also "ordered and systematic thinking on every topic," including not only orderly and systematic theoretical thinking but also orderly and systematic "practical thinking" (85). However, calling ethics a science does not mean that values can be "sciences," like physical science. On the other hand, people regard ethics as a "normative science" because it scrutinizes human behavior standards. Ethics is not a science in the traditional meaning of the term. It focuses on human morals and values; ethics is an important field of philosophy. Ethics, as the normative "science" of human conduct, is concerned with more than only telling us how to conduct ourselves in order to live a positive and happy life (Agulana 2011).

The moral life is concerned with the fundamental heart of personal existence, rather than the exterior and observable aspects of life. The norms and traditions that man has previously internalized through his knowledge of natural order present him with what he would deem moral or immoral. According to Khosrow Himmeifard, "Morality relates to free decision and the principles upon which it is founded, not on the resultant act in itself" (19). Certain types of acts befit his nature, promote his overall well-being, and lead him to happiness and self-fulfillment; not all kinds of actions befit his nature, promote his general well-being, and lead him to happiness and self-fulfillment.

Ethics are ideas about what is morally right or wrong. Since everyone is unique, there is no universal agreement on the precise boundary between ethical and unethical behavior. However,

some organizations, particularly those dealing with the general public or their own employees, have established ethical best practices.

2.2 The concept of Assessment Process

Assessment and testing have a significant impact on young people's lives and careers. The decisions made inside and by schools are impacting the chances and opportunities of their students, and the outcomes of national exams and examinations are even more important.

Any assessment should contain the following characteristics:

Validity: The assessment must encompass all elements of the students' achievement and only those parts that are important to the goal.

Reliability: The construction should ensure that consumers can trust the findings to be sufficiently reliable and consistent for their needs.

Impact or practicality: It should not just track performance but also have positive implications for teaching, learning, and student motivation.

2.3 The Role of Teachers in the Assessment of Learning

Teachers play a central role in deciding upon assessment techniques and grades. Therefore, various researchers argue that it is crucial for teachers to be assessment literate. In the context of education, assessment literacy refers to a deep understanding of fair assessment principles through the use of various practices, theories, and philosophies that enhance teaching and learning. Therefore, the use of multiple assessment tools is not only an indicator of fairness and assessment validity but also an indicator of a teacher's assessment literacy and broad knowledge.

The responsibility for making the mission of education achievable lies mainly with teachers. Furthermore, the way teachers interact with students shapes the mission of educating moral norms. David T. Hansen pointed out that "any action a teacher undertakes in the classroom is capable of expressing moral meaning that, in turn, can influence students" (286). Furthermore, people typically view teachers as moral role models. Popham specified that educators' ethical obligations derive from their agreement to serve in loco parentis: "Educators take

on an ethical responsibility to serve as models of ethical behavior for children" (67). In this sense, teachers consider it morally important to show respect for themselves and their pupils. By behaving and acting respectfully, the teacher shows the students how to be respectful to themselves as well as to others. Consequently, this builds a strong bond between the teacher and students, strengthening their mutual trust. This idea explains why society, parents, and pupils manifest their trust in teachers.

Assessing student learning is something that every teacher has to do, usually quite frequently. Written tests, book reports, research papers, homework exercises, oral presentations, question-and-answer sessions, science projects, and artwork of various sorts are just some of the ways in which teachers measure student learning (Campbell 2003).

When creating assessments, they should have a clear objective in mind. All forms of assessment—for, as, and of learning—play a crucial role in promoting and enhancing student learning, necessitating a balanced approach. The interpretation and use of the data obtained for the desired objective is the most important part of evaluation.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach to investigate the often-overlooked ethical dimensions of teaching, specifically focusing on how educators perceive and embody their professional ethics in instructional contexts. The choice of this methodology stems from a desire to capture the lived experiences of teachers and understand the essence of their ethical practices in the classroom.

We used a purposive sampling method to gather rich qualitative data, specifically targeting thirty-six Iraqi teachers who work with students aged one to sixteen. We selected this demographic to offer a comprehensive view of the ethical challenges encountered at various educational levels. The teachers represented a variety of backgrounds, ensuring diverse insights into the ethical considerations inherent in their teaching practices.

Data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to express their thoughts and experiences in an open-ended format. Each interview lasted approximately one

hour, encouraging teachers to reflect deeply on their ethical responsibilities and the complexities of their roles. We designed the interview questions to delve into teachers' perceptions of their ethical obligations and how these perceptions impact their interactions with students and the wider educational community.

The subsequent analysis of the interview transcripts followed a systematic coding process. This involved identifying key themes and patterns that emerged from the data, focusing particularly on the central ethical duty of teaching students the difference between right and wrong. The analysis also revealed that a safe learning environment, strong relationships with students, and effective guidance are interconnected elements that support ethical teaching practices.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the influence of societal context on the teachers' ability to supervise students and foster collaboration with parents and colleagues. By employing this methodology, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ethical landscape within the teaching profession, emphasizing the critical role of educators in shaping students' moral development while navigating the complexities of their professional responsibilities.

IV. DATA

This descriptive phenomenological study involved in-depth interviews with thirty-six teachers from Iraq, all of whom educate students aged one to sixteen. The aim was to explore how these educators perceive and enact their professional ethics within the classroom context. The data collected revealed a strong consensus among participants regarding their ethical obligations, particularly the fundamental duty to teach students the distinction between right and wrong.

4.1 Data Collection and Procedures

Self-reflective methods filter the behaviors, attitudes, intentions, and personal sentiments that identify us as people who are more or less accountable for the consequences of our actions via consciousness. These techniques aim to increase awareness and empower instructors about the impact of their own actions on their students' lives.

4.2 Method

This study utilized a survey method to investigate the behavior of teachers who adhere to educational ethics. The study was conducted at Iraqi public schools in the spring term, 2024. The study employed a technique to collect data on teachers' perceptions of ethical behaviors.

4.3 Participants

The current study involves 36 English teachers from various schools in the Salah AL-Din Directorate of Education, with approximate gender percentages and an average age of 21.4.

4.4 Data Collection(Instrument)

We collected the data using a flexible questionnaire that was sensitive to the social content. The purpose of the questionnaires was to evaluate the influence of teachers' ethics on organizational assessment.

4.5 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

Experts specializing in language teaching and learning evaluate, suggest, and advise the researcher to modify certain items in the questionnaire to ensure its validity. To measure item reliability, the half split formula is used. This formula, with a value of 0.87, is considered acceptable for measuring each item in the study instrument.

4.6 The Statistical techniques

This study employs various statistical techniques to analyze the data.

1. The percentage formula.
2. standard deviation.
3. A half-split method to measure reliability.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis highlighted the interconnectedness of various factors contributing to ethical teaching practices, including the creation of a secure learning environment and the fostering of positive relationships among students.

5.1 Data Analysis Related to the Questionnaire

We conducted this study to determine ethical behaviors based on teachers' perceptions. This section presents the results from both the quantitative and qualitative parts.

Table (1): The Percentages and Standard Deviations of Teachers' Questionnaire Items

No	Items	Percentages	SD
1	It is possible to be rewarded for being honest	60	0.90
2	Organization has enhanced awareness on organization ethical conducts	50	0.97
3	Efforts are made to change teachers' ethical conducts at your school, it will improve the performance of his assessment.	60	0.60
4	Ethical behavior of teachers can help to improve students' performance.	95	0.32
5	Ministry of education has enhanced awareness on ethical assessments	30	0.50
6	Your directorate strike a proper balance between commercial needs and moral concerns	40	1.3
7	Its required of your principles and act ethically	80	0.44
8	Its requirement for teachers to sign a code of conduct statement	70	0.32
9	Your principals behavior is in line with the ministry of educations declared principle	60	0.32
10	Teachers principles behave honestly	50	0.44
11	There is a formal ethical document in place at your school	70	1.3
12	Corporate ethics training is available at teachers directorate	40	0.32
13	Teachers principles are trustworthy	60	0.68
14	Teachers principles show favoritism	40	0.32

VI. DISCUSSION

It is obvious that there are variations in teachers' points of view concerning ethical behavior. We find that students perform better than their factual counterparts when teachers strive to maintain a professional demeanor with their students, a trait sadly shared by most. The implementation of ethical performance can enhance learners' performance, as it fosters a stronger interaction between the teacher and the learner, resulting in improved negotiation and recognition. Additionally, the mental and cognitive parts of the mind will be able to acquire knowledge more quickly and effortlessly.

An effective filter of Krashen's theory of learners could illustrate how the learners are ready to learn if there is a response between the learner, his/her feelings, and the actions of the teachers who teach him/her. Furthermore, research shows that the item "Ethical Behavior of Teachers" can significantly improve students' performance, accounting for a higher percentage. This reflects the significance of using the principle of "ethical behavior" to improve learners' results.

VII. CONCLUSION

The data analysis in this study produced detailed conclusions. While assessment ethics research isn't as extensive as in other fields, the debate continues. Due to the various techniques, varied types of participation, and potential dangers, the literature specifically focuses on establishing the differences in managing ethical concerns in the field of assessment compared to other fields.

Teachers should have clear criteria describing levels of progress in various aspects of achievement, and, ideally, they should help to develop these criteria. As well as providing a common basis for interpretation of evidence, such criteria should also spell out the learning opportunities that are required. This makes it easier for teachers to assess pupils dependably on the basis of regular classroom work. Teachers require professional development to ensure they adhere to procedures that ensure dependability. Research has revealed sources of potential bias, and training should also focus on these.

A system of moderating teachers' judgments through professional collaboration benefits both teaching and learning, as well as assessment. Moderation, which influences the planning and implementation of assessments and, consequently, teachers' understanding of learning goals and the criteria indicating progress toward them, serves more than just a quality assurance function.

The provision of a bank of well-designed tasks, with marking criteria, can do more than help teachers to make judgments about their pupils' achievements. Such tasks exemplify activities through which pupils can work toward important goals, such as critical reasoning and the application of knowledge in new situations. As assessment tasks, they can provide pupils with intriguing and relevant learning experiences. We should not allow them to dominate the assessment process, nor should we view them as separate measures to supplement teachers' judgments. Nor do they aim to validate the judgments of teachers. Instead, they serve as a component of the evidence that teachers can utilize, if necessary, to guarantee the achievement of all intended goals in their assessment.

Where teachers and users of summative assessment have become dependent upon external tests, it will take time to increase teachers' competence in using ongoing assessment and to build confidence in teachers' judgments. Everyone involved should have enough time to test and assess new practices, and they should understand the procedures and the built-in safeguards to ensure dependability.

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