

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS PERCEIVED BY STUDENT-TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: *The present study focused on the comparison of professional ethics perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions of Delhi and NCR. The non-probability sampling technique was used. For the present study, descriptive survey method was being adapted. The survey was conducted exclusively for the student-teachers in one government and one private selected teacher education institutions of Delhi and NCR region. Sample comprising of 100 student-teachers, 50 each from both types of institutions was drawn through random sampling technique. The investigator used one self constructed tool, Professional Ethics Perception Scale for student-teachers (PEPSST) for studying student-teachers perception towards professional ethics. Mean, median, mode, standard deviation, t-test were applied for analysis of data. The analysis and interpretation of the raw data, lead to certain findings. The mean scores of student-teachers in government and private institutions on composite scale of Professional Ethics Perception Scale for Student-teachers (PEPSST) are 133.93 and 119.55 respectively. Student-teachers in government institution have strong positive perception towards professional ethics whereas student-teachers in private institution have moderate positive perception towards professional ethics. Therefore, student-teachers in government institution (mean score: 133.93) have slightly better perception than student-teachers in private institution (mean score: 119.55) towards professional ethics. There is significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.*

Key Words: *Code of Conduct, Perception of Professional Ethics, Student-teachers*

1. INTRODUCTION: PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Like all important profession, teaching profession should have its own professional ethics which is one of the basic requirement and characteristics. There should be a code of conduct or professional ethics which can guide the teacher's conduct and behavior in their institutions and outside. A code of professional ethics when properly enforced enhances the power, prestige and status of the teacher in particular and of the teaching profession a whole. Professional ethics concerns the moral issues that arise because of the specialist knowledge that professionals attain and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the public. (Encyclopedia, Wikipedia)

In pursuance of the recommendations of National Policy On Education (1986, 1992), a code of professional ethics for teachers was jointly developed by the NCERT and All India Federation of primary & secondary School Teacher's Organization in 1997, which reiterates the resolve of the country's teachers to uphold their professional integrity, strive to enhance the dignity of the profession & to take suitable measures to curb professional misconduct. 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, G.L & Chopra, K R., Encyclopedia of Indian Education, NCERT 2004).

The code highlights that a teacher is not only a purveyor of knowledge for the cognitive development of pupils but is also a democratic & socializing agent responsible for helping children to gain social-supporting citizens (Arora, G.L & Chopra, R. K.) (2004).

The NCTE further in 2009 reviewed this code keeping in view the context of the relevant sections of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 and also examined the Codes of Professional Ethics currently in use in some other countries. The revised Code of Professional Ethics for teachers thus 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.

Burant, Chubbuck and Whipp, (2007) of United States argued for an urgent re-focusing on morals through teacher training programs: ...we are convinced that our attention in teacher education must shift considerably to the formation not only of knowledge and skills but also of the moral sensibility that underlies them. The moral nature of teaching cannot be conflated with the knowledge and skills important for teaching; neither can it be neatly separated from them. As we have known throughout the ages yet also frequently ignore, the moral is always in play in classrooms in teachers' actions, whether intentionally or not, and the complexity of the classroom environment-- its

immediacy and ever-changing activities--makes demands on teachers that reveal their orientation to their work in a myriad of daily acts.

Because of that seamless connection, explicit attention to the moral formation of pre-service teachers is crucial. (Burant et al., 2007, p. 408) Support for this viewpoint is found in Campbell (2008). She lamented that “teacher education neglects the teaching of ethics” (Campbell, 2008, p.372) and urged that more emphasis must be placed on moral and ethical education because teacher training programs are “the initial place to acquaint new teachers with the moral dimensions of their chosen profession” (Campbell, 2008, p.373).

Recent reports in the newspapers about immoral & unethical behaviors of the teachers have revealed that the teachers lack professional ethics. Now the questions arise, where do these teachers imbibe the professional ethics? Is it innate or nature? or the training program that they have undergone develops it. While the teacher trainees may have the desired level of teaching aptitude competency etc but it's the program training that is offered at the Teacher Training Institute (TTIs) that helps them imbibe professional ethics. While such dimensions to a teacher's personality can't be added by any course or module on Professional Ethics, it is obvious that the entire Teacher Education Institute Climate aids in developing the desirable professional ethics in the prospective teachers. Perhaps if corrective measures are taken at the Teacher Education Institute Climate level, then we can hope for quality school education which will go a long way in building a prosperous nation.

A report revealed that faculty now spends less time with students (Milem et.al, 2000). Gone are the days when lecturers and students interact frequently and devote themselves towards teaching excellence. Changes in academia has set great challenges to lecturers, students for one, lecturers are now expected to not only perform the teaching and academic advice, but doing research, consultancies, publications as well as doing social services. Stakeholders of education institutions value teaching, as they perceive that lecturers or academicians should play the role as a shaper of minds and values. However, we reward research and scholarly publication. Teaching seems to be secondary in the eyes of University top management and lecturers themselves. Thus, students may come to be disappointed when their mentors do not live up to expectations.

2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Increasing societal concern about the perceived decline of moral and ethical values in contemporary life is promoting renewed interest in moral education or character education (Wynne and Ryan, 1993). Some argue that the current educational climate has contributed to a culture in which many do not know what a genuinely moral standard is (Delattre and Russell, 1993, p. 24). While Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik, 1990 exploring the moral and ethical dimensions of schools, claim schooling is a moral endeavor by its very nature.

It has been predicted that in the next decade, the population of adolescents will cross billion. At such point, it would become essential to provide necessary guidance to them in order to enable them to undertake their services well to the country & this universe. This guidance can be aptly provided only by able teachers. Teachers, who are committed to their profession & have a sense of professional ethics, will ensure that they do justice to their students, society & their profession.

Elizabeth Campbell (1997), in her article connected conceptually the professional ethics of teaching and moral education by exploring the function of teacher education to prepare teachers to understand the moral and ethical complexities of their role and thus enable them to reflect ethical actions and decisions in their professional practice. Teachers' practice inevitably has a strong influence on the moral lessons students directly and indirectly acquire in the classroom (Jackson et al., 1993).

Teachers, as professionals, are engaged in one of the most ethically demanding jobs, the education of young people; thus it is important that teachers should constantly reflect on the ethics of their activities to ensure that they exhibit the best ethical example possible in their work to those they are morally educating. If teachers are to become ethically aware then the pre-service teacher education program is the most important place for the inclusion of ethical content and commitments required in the teaching profession. Recently there has been a sudden increase in the teacher education institution in various states of India that has no doubt lead to wealth of educational options in remote areas for all; however it has also resulted in dilution of quality, infrastructure, human resource etc, along with an absence of professional ethics. As teacher educators are preparing teachers of tomorrow there is a need for them to demonstrate professional ethics to inculcate values in the society at large. Elizabeth Campbell (1997) recognized that teacher education programs must develop alternative ways to enable student teachers to understand their future role and anticipate the moral and ethical significance of their practice.

The teacher training has consequently become the big agenda to be addressed with immediate effect. UGC seventh pay commission has been revised to invite worthy candidates to opt for the teaching profession. Thus meaningful study in the areas of teacher education becomes inevitable as it will have a wash back effect on improving the teacher education in our country.

One of the major causes of ethical deterioration in education system is rapidly spreading corruption. There was a time when corruption was only in government offices, private institutions, police stations etc. But, now a day's corruption has spread its roots in education system also. Privatization of educational institutes is another major cause

for the declining ethical values in education system. Privatization of education has emerged in several forms in the recent decade in India. Government allowed opening self-financing private institutions with recognition, which may be termed as commercial private education institutions (Singh and Purohit, 2011). With the mushrooming of these private institutes in the modern era, the education has acquired the status of a marketable commodity, where educational institutes are the traders and students are the customers (Garg and Kaur, 2012). Hence, the need to study the government and private teacher education institution existing in Delhi and NCR was felt.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To study the professional ethics as perceived by student teachers in government institution.
- To study the professional ethics as perceived by student teachers in private institution.
- To compare the professional ethics as perceived by student teachers in government and private institutions.
- To determine the significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.

4. HYPOTHESIS:

1. There is no significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.

5. METHODOLOGY:

For the present study, descriptive survey method was being adapted. The survey was conducted exclusively for the student-teachers in one government and one private selected teacher education institutions of Delhi and NCR region. Sample comprising of 100 student-teachers, 50 each from both types of institutions was drawn through random sampling technique. The investigator used one self constructed tool, Professional Ethics Perception Scale for student-teachers (PEPSST) for studying student-teachers perception towards professional ethics. Mean, median, mode, standard deviation, t-test were applied for analysis of data.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

There are two approaches which are employed in the analysis of data, have been used here in the present study:

1. Descriptive analysis
2. Inferential analysis

6.1 Descriptive analysis

Objective 1: To study the professional ethics as perceived by student teachers in government institution.

The mean, median, mode and standard deviation obtained by student teachers in government institution is given below in the table 1.

S. No	Dimension	No. of items	Government Institution				Private Institution			
			Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
1	Obligations towards Students	13	57.43	58	61	4.28	52.34	53	54	6.77
2	Obligations towards Parents, Community and Society	6	25.16	25	26		22.05	22	23	2.91
3	Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues	11	46.83	46	46	2.01	45.16	46	51	4.24
4	Composite Scale	30	133.93	128	124	7.56	119.55	120	121	9.46

Table 1 showing score obtained by student-teachers in government & private institution

It is evident from the above table 1 that the mean score of student teachers in government institution in first dimension (Obligations towards students) is 57.43 and the median is 58 which denotes that half of the participants scored lower than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 61 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 4.28. Also from the mean in this dimension which is 57.43 and is above the value of 52 (13x4), it can therefore be inferred that the student teachers of government institution have strong positive perception towards the dimension of obligations towards students. In second dimension (Obligations towards parents, community and society) mean is 25.16 and the median is 25 which denote that half of the participants scored above than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 26 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 2.01

Also from the mean in this dimension which is 25.16 and is above the value of 24 (6x4), it can therefore be inferred that the student-teachers have strong positive perception towards this dimension.

In third dimension (Obligations towards the profession and colleagues) mean is 46.83 and the median is 46 which denotes that half of the participants scored above than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 46 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 3.64. Also from the mean in this dimension which is 46.83 and is above the value of 44 (11x4), it can therefore be inferred that the student teachers have strong positive perception towards this perception. The mean score of student teachers in government institution on the composite scale is 133.93 and the median is 128 which denote that half of the participants scored above than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 124 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 7.56. Also from the mean of the data which is 133.93 and is above the value of 120 (30x4), it can therefore be inferred that the student teachers in government institution have strong positive perception towards professional ethics.

Objective 2: To study the professional ethics as perceived by student teachers in private institution.

The mean, median, mode and standard deviation obtained by student teachers in private institution is given above in the table 1.

It is evident from the above table 1 that the mean score of student teachers in private institution in first dimension (Obligations towards students) is 52.34 and the median is 53 which denotes that half of the participants scored lower than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 54 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 6.77. Also from the mean in this dimension which is 52.34 and is above the value of 52 (13x4), it can therefore be inferred that the student-teachers in private institution have strong positive perception towards the dimension of obligations towards students. In second dimension (Obligations towards parents, community and society) mean is 22.05 and the median is 22 which denote that half of the participants scored above than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 23 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 2.91. Also from the mean in this dimension which is 22.05 and is above the value of 18 (6x3), it can therefore be inferred that the student teachers have a moderate positive perception towards this dimension. In third dimension (Obligations towards the Profession and Colleagues) mean is 45.16 and the median is 46 which denote that half of the participants scored lower than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 51 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 4.24. Also from the mean in this dimension which is 45.16 and is above the value of 44 (11x4), it can therefore be inferred that the student teachers have a strong positive perception towards this perception. The mean score of student teachers on the composite scale is 119.55 and the median is 120 which denote that half of the participants scored lower than that score. The most frequent item in the distribution is 121 and the standard deviation of the distribution is found to be 9.46. Also from the mean of the data which is 119.55 and is above the value of 90 (30x3), it can therefore be inferred that the student teachers of private institution have moderate positive perception towards professional ethics.

Objective 3: To compare the professional ethics as perceived by student teachers in government and private institutions.

The comparison of mean scores on different dimensions on PEPST reveals that student-teachers in government institution have slightly better perception towards professional ethics. Also from the table 1 the mean scores on composite scale (Government institution: 133.93 and Private institution: 119.55) reveal that student-teachers in government institutions have strong positive perception towards professional ethics whereas student-teachers in private institution have moderate positive perception towards professional ethics. It can therefore be interpreted that student-teachers in government institution have slightly better perception towards professional ethics. This particular mean score of both government and private institution unfolds the fact that the student teachers of government institution have undergone better orientation regarding their perception on professional ethics than student-teachers of private institution.

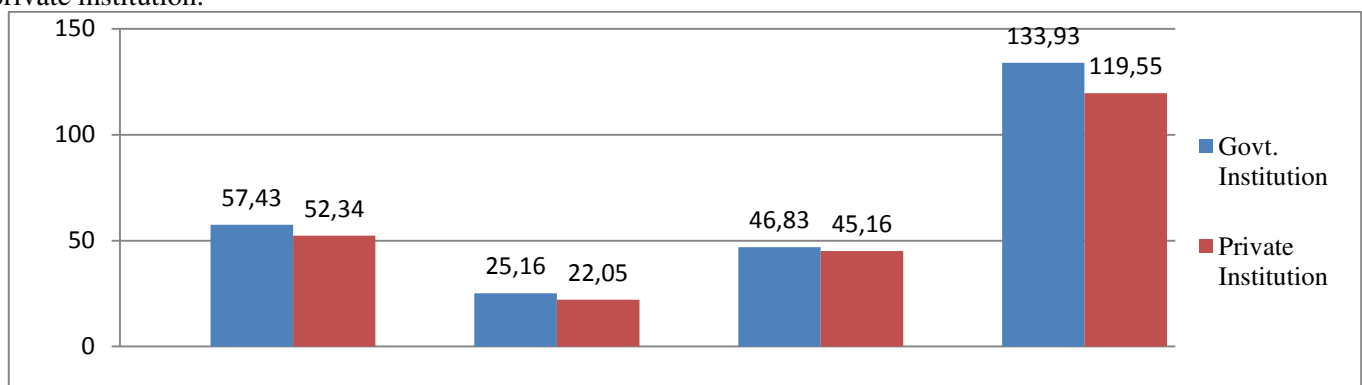


Fig: 1 graph representing the comparison of Mean score obtained by student-teachers in government & private institution on PEPST

6.2 Inferential analysis

Drawing conclusions about the population based upon observation of samples is the purpose of inferential analysis. T-test has been applied in the present study and the finding of which has been tabulated in table 2.

Objective 4: To determine the significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.

For determining the significant difference in the student teachers' perception towards professional ethics in government and private institutions, null hypothesis is formulated as,

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.

T-ratio is calculated for student-teachers of both the types of institution. The obtained statistics of both the types of institution are mentioned in the table 2 below.

Institution	Mean	N	SD	t-value	S/NS
Government	133.93	50	7.56	5.15**	S
Private	119.55	50	9.46		

** Significant at .01

Table 2 showing mean scores, SD, t-value of student-teachers in government & private institution

Table 2 indicates that the mean scores and standard deviation of student-teachers of government and private institutions are 133.93 and 7.56 while for private institution are 119.55 and 9.46 respectively.

The obtained result further indicates that t-value 5.15 is significant at 0.01. This indicates rejection of null hypothesis, thereby acceptance of alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.

7. FINDINGS:

The analysis and interpretation of the raw data, lead to certain findings. These have been listed below:

1. The mean scores of student-teachers in government and private institutions on composite scale of Professional Ethics Perception Scale for Student-teachers (PEPSST) are 133.93 and 119.55 respectively.
2. Student-teachers in government institution have strong positive perception towards professional ethics.
3. Student-teachers in private institution have moderate positive perception towards professional ethics.
4. Student-teachers in government institution (mean score: 133.93) have slightly better perception than student-teachers in private institution (mean score: 119.55) towards professional ethics.
5. There is significant difference in the professional ethics as perceived by student-teachers in government and private institutions.

8. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

By following these points the teacher education institutions may ensure a favorable environment for nurturance of right professional ethics among the student-teachers and inculcation of right personal values among them

- There should be a proper implementation and observance of code of professional ethics for teachers given by NCTE in every teacher education institutions. The violation of the code of conduct and non-observance should invite disciplinary action against defaulter.
- Teachers should be recognized for their commitment towards their profession. They should be appreciated and given certificate of merit for following professional ethics. This will motivate others to follow them.
- Institutions must conduct enrichment workshops for both pre-service and in-service teachers for their professional growth and excellence. Besides such gatherings will expose the student-teachers to existing practices in schools and give them a unique opportunity to imbibe the right codes of the profession.
- Teacher-educators must cautiously select methods and activities that involve students in the process of reflection about moral/ethical issues.
- Brainstorming needs to be done to devise new and innovative modes of evaluation. Peer mediated evaluation can be thought of as it would require putting in to practice the code of professional ethics.

9. CONCLUSION:

One of the major findings of the present study is that the student-teachers in government and institutions have strong positive perception and moderate positive perception respectively towards professional ethics which infer that student-

teachers in government institution (mean score: 133.93) have slightly better perception than student-teachers in private institution (mean score: 119.55) towards professional ethics. The present study also emphasized that there should be a proper implementation and observance of code of professional ethics for teachers given by NCTE in every teacher education institutions. The violation of the code of conduct and non-observance should invite disciplinary action against defaulters.

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