

Teachers' Perception of Professional Ethics and Its Impact on Their Professionalism

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Received May 02, 2020; Revised June 04, 2020; Accepted June 11, 2020

Abstract This study was aimed at investigating teachers' perception of professional ethics and its impact on their professionalism. Four districts from each of two zones, namely, Gamo and South Omo were selected using lottery methods. One primary school and one secondary school were selected using lottery method and further, teachers from the selected schools were taken totally using convenient sampling. To get as dependable data as possible, the study involved a mix of qualitative and quantitative approach. A questionnaire, which was developed by the investigators, was used after carrying out pilot study. To see how teachers perceive their codes of professional ethics, qualitatively gathered data was analyzed through description, frequency tables and histograms. To see the role teachers' perception of their code of professional ethics in their professionalism, linear regressions was used. To investigate whether teachers' sex modify the relationship between their perception of professional ethics and professionalism, an independent sample t-test was used. The result has indicated that many teachers perceive that they are fully compliant to the professional ethics, and they thought that their obedience to professional ethics has resulted from their conscience. Besides, the result has given us that for teachers' who attribute the source of their professional ethical stand to moral responsibility, their professionalism was found to be significantly affected by their perception. An independent sample t-test has shown us that teachers' there was no significant gender difference in professional ethical stand. Similarly, it has been revealed that there is no significant difference in perception of professional ethics between teachers of primary and secondary schools.

Keywords: professional ethics, teachers' perception, professionalism

Cite This Article: Woldeab Daniel & Solomon Sapo, "Teachers' Perception of Professional Ethics and Its Impact on Their Professionalism." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 8, no. 6 (2020): 400-410. doi: 10.12691/education-8-6-6.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Ethics is defined as norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior needed in certain professional or social settings. It is common that many people learnt ethical norms at home, at school, in religious institutions and other social settings. Moral development occurs throughout life and human beings pass through different stages of growth as they mature. However, many people acquire their sense of right and wrong during childhood [1].

Professionalism refers to the set of skills and values that characterize the essence of humanism in professional work. It is a status that is reached, maintained, and improved through the continuous effort and perseverance of those who practice the human principles and values that make it up. The term is directly associated with the concepts such as excellence, accountability, duty, altruism, respect, compassion and empathy, honor, and integrity [2].

It is hardly easy to see the title 'teacher' separately from his/her adherence to the codes of professional ethics. Teachers are duly licensed professionals who possess dignity and reputation with high moral values as well as technical and professional competence in the practice of their noble profession, they strictly adhere to, observe and practice this set of ethical and moral principles, standards and values [3]. This indicates that the title 'teacher' and his/her adherence to teacher's code of professional ethics are not seen separately.

The members of each profession put forward ethical codes of that profession. Setting the ethical codes involves ethical analysis. Professional ethics, ethical codes protect both the individual and profession and at the same time it offers convenience to the workers while they put it into practice. Ethical codes which are well developed help the individual to improve himself professionally and also acquire prestige in his profession [4].

Individuals' effective behavior and the way of working with employees in any organization is affected by variety of factors such as individual's abilities such as skills, intelligence and talents; personality characteristics, such as values, interests and motivations; job variables and

work climate; which include tools, working methods and machineries; organizational factors; such as, leadership styles and encouragers; specific training courses and experiences, which also include the extent and field of these experiences [5].

Teachers' role in determining attainment of educational goals at national as well as global level aims is paramount. Teachers' obedience to professional ethical code of conduct contributes to their success. It is obvious that any act of individuals, including their loyalty to the rules and regulation of their respective organizations is governed by the question of why it is needed to be loyal to such ethical standards and what will follow if not.

Moral teachings such as, you shall do right and good, love your neighbor, correct behavior between man and man, discipline or training of character under the law...etc can be seen that whilst both the secular person who wishes to behave ethically and the religious person who wishes to behave in accordance with the revealed code may do similar good deeds in order to achieve similar good and worthwhile objectives, their motivation is quite different [6].

Other teachers have moral orientation for any activity they perform. They held strong belief that the source of any good or bad activity is individual's moral stand. These group of teachers give the objection that they must not commit something which is not 'good'; simply because the act is immoral, and for the fact that they don't need it done for themselves. While carrying out teaching-learning tasks, they put their own children in the place of their students'; ask themselves whether whatever they attempt to do is pleasant for their own children, hence, judge tasks in this way. While stating the role of feeling of moral responsibility on teachers professionalism Campbell cited in [7] as:

"I don't come here [school] to collect a pay cheque and go home. Everybody works because we all need to get paid. But, there is some sense of satisfaction in what you do when I can walk out of here feeling good about what I do. Sometimes, however, I feel terrible because I worry that I wasn't fair to somebody during the day or that I didn't get back to somebody who needed to talk to me. I'm always scared of giving messages to students that might be taken the wrong way. So, you find that your day is all over the place and you think, what did I do today? What did I get accomplished because it just seemed like such a hectic day? I'm not a superhuman being, but I too have to make sure I make good choices."

Still, others' day-to-day instructional activity is determined by the degree to which they are adherent to their role responsibility; that is the extent to which they perceive that the task is their obligation as a teacher. These group of people have a strong stand that the loyalty to professional code of ethics is not something given or imposed up on them by someone else, rather by the very profession of teaching itself. They have response for any type of immoral activities as "I will not do this...because my profession itself governs me".

Some teachers tend to discharge their responsibility effectively because they perceive it as their social responsibility. That is, they think that the society, which their perceived ultimate customer would loss something if he/she doesn't discharge their tasks effectively. The role

of the sense of social responsibility on individuals' professionalism is also paramount. The degree to which certain teacher or any civil servant is loyal to professional codes of conduct is highly a function of his/her feeling of responsibility to the society which he serves. A study about the relationship between social responsibility and professional ethics in management has indicated that a business or an organization which hired socially responsible employees and which is ethically managed have appeared economically more successful and sustainable and vice versa [8].

Ethics guides teachers' overall practice in their handling of relationship issues and in their decision in overall aspects of their profession [9]. In Ethiopian primary schools, secondary schools and higher institutions, it is common to hear certain appeals and rumors indicating teachers' misconduct related to unfair opposite-sex-student relationships, class absenteeism, grading problems, drug abuse ...etc. hence, this study was conducted to investigate teachers' perception of professional ethics and its relationship to their professionalism.

1.2. The Statement of Problem

The quality of education in any nation depends much upon the quality of its teachers, since teachers are among the key pillars in the attainment of educational goals. Teachers are sources of light in the world that brightens nations' futurity because the fate of nation resides on what and how youngsters learn, which mostly is done by a classroom teacher. A teacher is a nation builder, who through his perseverance love and sacrifices, shows the right path in which great men can build nation. Berry cited in [10] stated that teacher's competence unfolds students' potential and fosters their mastering of content while analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and producing information.

Besides their determinant and irreplaceable role in nation building, it is common to see and hear some defects committed by few teachers. Some common claims and reports are unhealthy teacher-student relationships, grading problems, failure to devote instructional time for instruction, failure to submit grades on time, lack of preparation and planning, sexual harassment...etc.

If a teacher is ethical in his/her actions, he/she has to show 'right' behavior' or good character [11]. Teachers' planning, entering in to classroom and reporting about students' performance does not guarantee actual learning of the learners. What sounds more is what actually happens in the classroom while the teacher implements the curriculum. It is hardly easy to any authoritative body to have clear and comprehensive evidence and answers for questions like "what does a teacher do and let his/her students do in the entire lesson?", what does the teacher bear in his/her mind while scoring students result?, Does a teacher really follows the pedagogical guidelines while making assessments and evaluations about students' performance?, is he/she always loyal to his/her plan?, does he/she treat his/her students equally regardless of their diverse nature?...such kind of questions thought to be determined by the degree to which a teacher is loyal to his/her professional code of ethics. The question again is to what extent does a teacher loyal to the code of ethics? It

is obvious that the answer for this question will differ from teacher-to-teacher. Among many factors contributing to the variation in answer, teachers' association (linkage) of the professional ethics is treated in this study.

Everything the teacher does in a daily bases is complex, demanding and requires a level of personal engagement and commitment. Due to the escalating demands and new challenges inherent in the current educational climate, what it means to be a committed teacher is also changing. Teacher's commitment to teaching profession is closely associated with concepts such as quality of teaching, teacher adaptability, teacher attendance, teacher burnout, teacher retention, organizational health of the school, student attitudes and learning outcomes. It has become imperative to gain further insight into teachers' professional ethics and commitment [12]

Organizations' increased complexities and increase of immoral, illegal and irresponsible activities in the workplace have made the managers and scholars to pay special attention to the subjects of work ethics and management of ethics [13]. Despite the existence of emphasis on ethics, organizations did not perform something special in this regard. Moreover, developing ethical charter by the organizations does not guarantee the establishment of ethics in the organization and implementation of the charter.

The Code of Ethics is a public statement by educators that sets clear expectations and principles to guide practice and inspire professional excellence of teachers. It sets out the key principles of good conduct and practice for teachers, and is intended to guide teachers' practice, judgments and decisions as well as inform parents, and the community of these standards. It also informs members of the community of the standards expected of teachers. Teacher's loyalty to ethical principles plays great role in institution's success. Here, it has been underlined on the study by [14] that a persistent increase in teacher's misconduct in schools had been impeding the progress towards implementation of educational goals, particularly Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In spite of various measures taken by the Teachers' Service Department such as warnings and reprimands, and dismissing teachers from service, the problem of teacher misconduct among schools in the country was remained rampant.

We strongly hold a belief that teachers' linking of their accountability to one or more authoritative bodies, whom they think govern their activities, direct their ways, reinforce and punish themselves up on the accomplishment and failure respectively, and disobedient to which do they consider as immoral, sounds more in determining to what extent they have to be loyal to professional ethics.

Some may associate it to certain supernatural forces or consider as a religious responsibility, few consider as role responsibility, few as social responsibility, while few consider as a moral responsibility. Which one sounds more in determining teachers' loyalty to the professional ethics? is the question to be answered in this study.

Hence, the following were the leading questions that were answered after the end of investigation.

- How do teachers perceive the professional ethics?

- Does teachers' perception of professional ethics play a significant role in their professionalism?

- Does teacher's sex modify their perception about sources of professional ethics and professionalism?

- Is there significant mean difference in perception of professional ethics between primary and secondary school teachers?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

General objective:- this study was aimed at investigating teachers' perception of professional ethics and its relationship to their professionalism.

Specific objectives:- this study was rigorously conducted and was expected:

- To explain the ways in which schools teachers perceive the very nature of professional ethics
- To find out whether teachers' perception of professional ethics play a significant role in their professionalism.
- To state whether there exist significant gender difference in perception of professional ethics and professionalism between female and male teachers
- To state whether there exist a difference in perception of professional ethics between teachers of primary and secondary schools

2. Methodology of the Study

2.1. Design of the Study

This research was aimed at investigating teachers' perception of professional ethics and its relationship to their professionalism. Since, it involved investigating the relationship between variables; it is a correlation design type.

2.2. Study Area

This study was limited to Gamo and South Omo zones of Southern nation, nationalities and peoples' regional state, Ethiopia. The areas are geographically located in south western part of Ethiopia. The seat of Gamo zone, Arba Minch and that of south Omo zone, Jinka, are located about 550 kilometers and 790 kilometers far from the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, in southern direction. Since both zones are part of east African rift valley, region the zones have partly hot climatic conditions. The population of South omo zone are predominantly pastoral, whereas, that of Gamo are majorly agrarian.

2.3. Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

The target populations of this study are teachers of primary and secondary schools in South Omo and Gamo zones. There are 16 districts in Gamo Zone and 9 districts in South Omo Zone. For the sake of manageability, we selected four primary schools and four secondary schools from each zone (total of 16 schools) using lottery method to include in the sampling. Among

these, two primary and two secondary schools were equally taken from town areas and rural areas. Where there are numerous schools in the town areas, a single school was selected using again lottery method.

As per the data we collected from each sampled school, there were a total of 580 (356 male and 224 female) teachers in the selected schools.

To determine the sample size, we used the formula developed by Cochran cited in [15] and suggested to be applied for large population because a total number of teachers in all schools of selected zones exceeds 10,000 teachers, which was labeled as large population by Cochran.

$$no = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

where,

- no = sample size
- Z = abscissa of normal curve that cuts off an area at tails (it found in statistical tables which contain area under normal curve)
- e = desired level of precision
- p = estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population
- q = 1-p.

In this research, the desired confidence level is 95%, and of precision is = 5%, the assumed level of variability was 0.5 (maximum variability), that is, we assume that for 50% of teachers have proper perception of professional ethical code of conduct, whereas, the remaining 50 % teachers do not have proper perception of professional ethical code of conduct. The table value of Z is 1.96. Thus, the total sample size is calculated as:

$$no = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 385.$$

Accordingly, 385 teachers, the specific samples were taken from selected schools using proportional sampling.

To select teachers in order to fill the questionnaire, we applied a lottery method after obtaining full list of teachers from the offices of the respective school directors in alphabetical order. As indicated in table, a total of 237 male teachers and 148 female teachers were selected and have filled the questionnaire. We have tried to convince all the teachers to fill the questionnaire because we have administered it in face-to-face manner. When we face certain reluctance we have replaced them by those who were willing but not in the list of the selected. Additionally, we had planned to administer additional 32 (2 from each selected school) based on teachers' willingness and availability. However, only 23 (21 females and 2 males) have willingly filled it. Accordingly, 239 male teachers and 169 female teachers (a total 408) have filled the questionnaire. Then, before inserting data to the SPSS software, the researchers have carried out the screening, 43 papers from males and 2 papers from females were rejected due to hasty rating, incompleteness and skipping of background data. Hence, only 363 respondents have properly responded for all items in the questionnaire. Due to rejecting of large number of papers, the researchers agreed to include all 21 female and 2 male

reserve respondents (regardless of sex) in the analysis. Based on the decision, an entire analysis have been made for only 363 (196 males and 167 females) respondents.

2.4. Materials (Data Gathering Tools) and Phases

Materials:- all data needed for this study was gathered through questionnaire. Data about teachers' perception of professional ethics was gathered through questionnaire. Items of questionnaire were developed by the researchers. Equal number items were developed to measure all perceived sources to which teachers associate their code of professional ethics such as moral responsibility, job (position) responsibility and social responsibility. Similarly, items measuring teachers' professional standard or loyalty to those codes of ethics were developed by researchers. In both variables, both closed-ended and open-ended items were included. Pilot test has been conducted to check the reliability of items and all unreliable items have been discarded, while all those appeared less reliable have been modified to affordable degree.

2.5. Phases and Procedures of Data Collection

Procedures:- data gathering process was started by submitting the letter of permission that have been written from Arba Minch University to each school. Questionnaire was administered in face-to-face manner to give all necessary clarification on items.

Phases:- all data of this study was gathered concurrently

2.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Data gathered was analyzed by using both inferential and descriptive statistics. To see how teachers perceive professional ethics, qualitatively gathered data were analyzed through description and narration. Here, we also have used histograms as well as tables to rate the frequencies of the responses. To see the role of teachers' perception of their code of professional ethics in their professionalism, linear regression was used. To investigate whether teachers' sex modify their perception of professional ethics and professionalism, an independent sample t-test was used. To find out whether there existed significant mean difference perception of professional ethics and professionalism between teachers of primary and secondary schools, again an independent sample t-test was used.

3. Analysis and Interpretation of Results

3.1. Teacher's Perception of Professional Ethics

Data has been gathered through open ended and closed-ended items in the questionnaire to find out how teachers perceive the professional ethical code of conduct as well as whether or not they are aware of the professional ethics of teaching profession.

Table 1. Dimensions of teachers’ perception of professional ethics

Dimensions of perception	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Job (Position) responsibility	49	13.5	13.5	13.5
Social responsibility	36	9.9	9.9	23.4
Moral Responsibility	172	47.4	47.4	70.8
Other	106	29.2	29.2	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

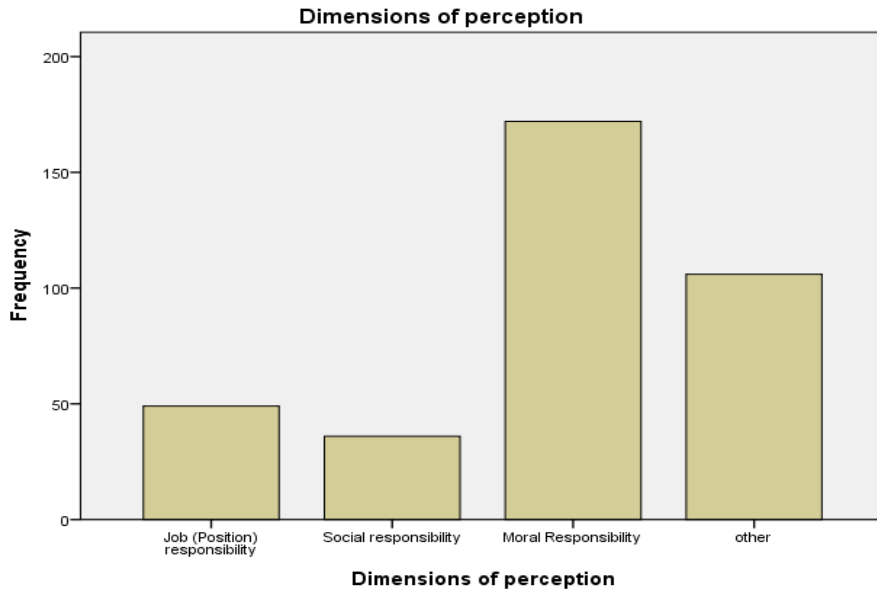


Figure 1. Dimensions of teachers’ perceptions of professional ethics

As it has been indicated in the Table 1 and Figure 1 above, the majority of teachers, that is, 172 (47.4%) perceive that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a moral responsibility, whereas 49 (13.5%) tended to perceive it as a job (Position) responsibility. However, about 29.2% of respondents have attributed professional ethical code of conduct to other sources.

Table 2. Teachers’ perception of the degree of their compliance to professional ethics

Teachers’ perception of degree of compliance	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fully	269	74.1	74.1	74.1
more or less	64	17.6	17.6	91.7
to some extent	29	8.0	8.0	99.7
not at all	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

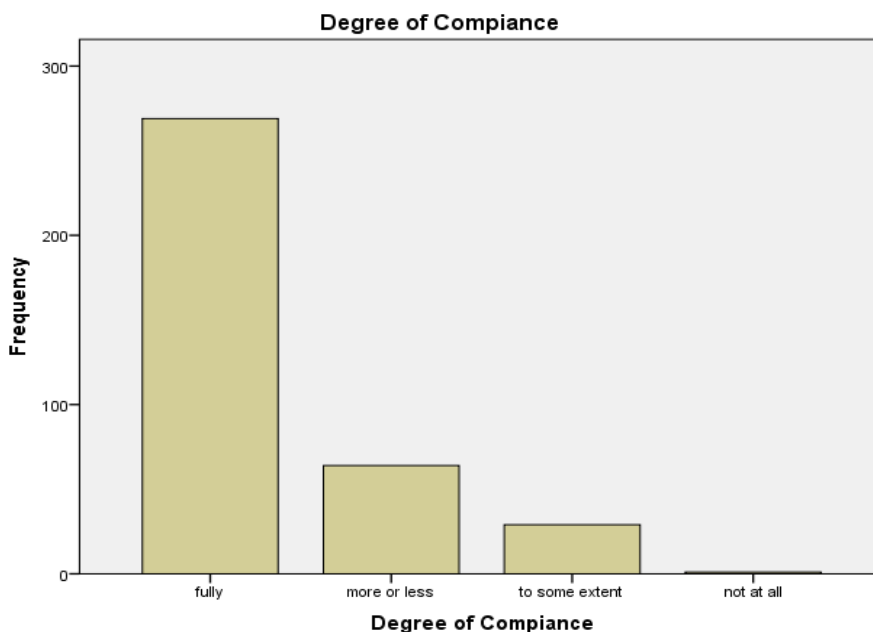


Figure 2. Teachers’ perception of the degree of their compliance to professional ethics

As it has been indicated in the Table 2 and Figure 2 above, majority of the participants (74.1%) perceived that they were fully compliant to professional ethical code of conduct. Likewise, 64 (17.6%) of respondents used to perceive that they were more or less compliant to professional ethical code of conduct, followed by 29 (8%) of respondents perceived that they were compliant only to some extent. Only 0.3% of respondents specified that they were not totally compliant to professional ethical code of conduct.

It can be inferred from the above findings that teachers are governed by their own moral stand and conscience than the professional ethical code because the result has indicated that teachers thought that they must be complaint to professional ethical code of conduct because of their conscience. Besides, many teachers used to perceive that they were fully compliant to professional ethics and their activities in job places were fully governed by it.

Qualitative responses about teachers' perception of professional ethics

For open-ended questions, which were intended to obtain responses regarding teachers' perception of professional ethics, the following responses were obtained.

- An ethically acting teacher means the one who loves teaching profession, the one who is loyal to the profession, the one who serves generation without any precondition, the one who updates himself/herself, the one who prepares himself to appear better than his/her fellow students (a female respondent in primary school).
- Teachers' professional ethics involves giving due attention to his profession, that is duly and meaningfully acting in an entire teaching learning processes, starting from the pre-service training to on job duties (a male respondent in secondary school).
- Professional ethics is all about satisfying customers (a male respondent in secondary school).
- Professional ethics is something that directs employees how to love his/her profession and how to properly discharge his/her duty. (a male respondent in primary school)
- Professional ethics means one's acting in line with the rules and regulations of his/her institution

(a female respondent in primary school).

- Professional ethical code of conduct means being full person in teaching learning process and being able to create harmonious relationships with the entire community. It is about being role model, creating harmonious relationships with students, with teacher, with school director and with the whole community (a male respondent in primary school)
- It is something that lets individuals to properly discharge his/her responsibility (a female respondent in secondary school)
- An ethically acting teacher means the one who learns while teaching and teaches while learning (a female respondent in primary school)
- Professional ethics is all about punctuality, honesty and transparency (a female respondent in primary school)
- It is about being role model for new generation as well as letting them know good things (a female respondent in secondary school)

Many of the definitions given for the term professional ethics deal with "the nature of a teacher acting in line with the professional ethical code of conduct", that is, not comprehensive by itself. Many of the concepts missed even the very existence of the document professional ethical code of conduct. Some of the definitions given by respondents also associate the professional ethics with teachers' personal qualities and behavior like humor, punctuality and helping his/her students know good things.

Generally, as it has been inferred from qualitative and quantitative responses, the conception of many teachers about the professional ethics is not affordable and many lack the proper meaning and what a professional ethically acting teacher mean.

3.2. The Effect of Teachers' Perception of Professional Ethics on Their Professional Act

To see effect of teachers' perception of professional ethics on their professionalism (obedience to professional ethical code of conduct), the Pearson product correlations and linear regressions were employed.

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient among variables

Variables		Age	Awareness	Professionalism	PercPos	PercSoc	PercMoral	PercTot
Awareness	Correlation	-.156**						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003						
Professionalism	Correlation	.172**	.155**					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.003					
PercPos	Correlation	.125*	.264**	.191**				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.000	.000				
PercSoc	Correlation	.162**	.065	.226**	.219**			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.216	.000	.000			
PercMoral	Correlation	.158**	.002	.385**	.217**	.267**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.963	.000	.000	.000		
PercTot	Correlation	.210**	.173**	.365**	.724**	.728**	.637**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N= 363

PercPos = perception as position (job) responsibility, PercSoc = perception as social responsibility

PercMoral = perception as moral responsibility, PercTot=Sum of all dimensions of perception

As the result in the above Table 3 indicates, teachers' awareness about professional ethical code of conduct is significantly inversely related to their age ($r = -0.156, p < 0.05$). Besides, professionalism (acting inline with ethical code of conduct) ($r = 0.172, p < 0.05$), the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a matter of position responsibility (PercPos) ($r = 0.125, p < 0.05$), the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as social responsibility (PercSoc) ($r = 0.162, p < 0.05$), and the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as moral responsibility (PercMoral) ($r = 0.158, p < 0.05$), and sum of all dimensions of perception (PercTot) were found significantly positively related to age of individuals ($r = 0.210, p < 0.05$). This implies that, as the teacher's age increases, his/her perception that compliance to the professional ethical code of conducts as social responsibility (PercSoc), as moral responsibility (PercMoral) and as position responsibility (PercPos) increase.

Similarly, teachers' awareness of their professional ethical code of conduct is significantly positively related with professionalism (acting in line with ethical standards) ($r = 0.155, p < 0.05$), with PercPos ($r = 0.264, p < 0.05$) and PercTot ($r = 0.173, p < 0.05$). Professionalism (acting inline with ethical code of conduct) was significantly positively related with PercPos ($r = 0.191, p < 0.05$), PercSoc ($r = 0.226, p < 0.05$), PercMoral ($r = 0.385, p < 0.05$) and PercTot ($r = 0.356, p < 0.05$).

Likewise, the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as position responsibility (PercPos) is significantly positively related to PercSoc ($r = 0.219, p < 0.05$), PercMoral ($r = 0.217, p < 0.05$) and PercTot ($r = 0.724, p < 0.05$). Lastly, the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as social responsibility (PercSoc) was found to be significantly positively related with PercMoral ($r = 0.385, p < 0.05$).

The result of linear regressions in Table 4 indicates that among the variables treated, teachers' awareness about the professional ethical code of conduct, and their perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is moral responsibility (PercMoral) were found to be significantly predicting the professionalism (acting in line with professional ethical code of conduct). The model has revealed that a teachers' awareness about the professional ethical code of conduct was found to significantly affect his/her professionalism ($F_{1, 363} = 20.817, p < 0.05$). Likewise, the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as moral responsibility (PercMoral), was found to be a significant predictor of professionalism ($F_{1, 363} = 20.817, p < 0.05$).

3.3. The Gender Difference in Perception of Professional Ethical Code of Conduct

Table 5 an independent sample t-test result.

As an independent sample t-test result in the Table 5 above indicates, there was no significant gender difference in the perceptions of the professional ethical code of conduct between female and male teachers. The result gives us that there was no significant gender difference in the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as responsibility of his/her job position (PercPos) $t(361) = 1.744, p > 0.05$, perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as social responsibility (PercSoc) $t(361) = 1.199, p > 0.05$ and the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a moral responsibility (PercMoral) $t(361) = -1.477, p > 0.05$ between female and male teachers. This indicates that there exist no significant perception difference about professional ethics between female and male teachers; or female and male teachers perceive professional ethics in almost the same way.

Table 4. Linear regressions on the effect of teachers' perception of professional ethics on their professional act

. Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R ² and Adjusted R ²
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	46.800	3.058		15.305	.000	R ² =0.189 Adjusted R ² =0.180
Awaresum	.160	.060	.131	2.656	.008	
PercSoc	.081	.106	.058	0.771	.441	
PercMoral	.552	.124	.301	4.435	.000	
PercTot	.076	.069	.108	1.110	.268	

F=20.817

a. Dependent Variable: Professionalism Sum

b. Predictors: (Constant), PercTot, Awaresum, PercMoral, PercSoc.

Table 5. An independent sample t-test on perception of professional ethical code of conduct

Variable	sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
PercPos	M	196	27.3367	4.98808	.35629	361	1.744	.082
	F	167	26.4551	4.57166	.35377			
PercSOC	M	196	20.8367	4.95351	.35382	361	1.199	.231
	F	167	20.2515	4.22944	.32728			
PercMoral	M	196	25.8469	3.53257	.25233	361	-.477	.634
	F	167	26.0240	3.51923	.27233			

Table 6. An independent sample t-test result on difference of perception

Group Statistics									
	school level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	Df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Professionalism	Primary	273	73.6630	6.29513	.38100	1.38523	361	1.770	.078
	Secondary	90	72.2778	6.86471	.72360				
PercPos	primary	273	27.1099	4.59087	.27785	.72100	361	1.233	.218
	secondary	90	26.3889	5.42921	.57229				
PercSOC	primary	273	20.6777	4.39486	.26599	.44432	361	0.788	.431
	secondary	90	20.2333	5.31914	.56069				
PercMoral	Primary	273	26.0879	3.42562	.20733	.64347	361	1.505	.133
	secondary	90	25.4444	3.78082	.39853				
PercTOT	Primary	273	73.8755	8.57273	.51885	1.80879	361	1.638	.102
	secondary	90	72.0667	10.49751	1.10653				

3.4. The Difference in Perception of Professional Ethics between Teachers of Primary and Secondary Schools

As it has been indicated in Table 6 above, among the variables entered, such as, PercPos, PercSoc PercMoral, PercTOT and professionalism, none of them have shown significant mean difference between teachers of primary schools and secondary schools.

The result gives us that there was no significant difference in the perception of professional ethics between primary and secondary school teachers. It has been revealed in Table 6 that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as a matter of responsibility of his/her job position (PercPos) $t(361) = 1.233$ $p > 0.05$, perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is social responsibility (PercSoc) $t(361) = 0.788$, $p > 0.05$ and the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a matter of conscience (PercMoral) $t(361) = 1.505$, $p > 0.05$ were not appeared to be significantly differ between teachers of primary schools and secondary schools.

4. Discussions

In this study, the responses of respondents have indicated that the majority of teachers, that is, 172 (47.4%) have perceived that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a moral responsibility than the social or job responsibility. In line with this, the lion's share 74.1% of teachers thought that they were fully compliant to professional ethical code of conduct. Regarding the concept, literatures tended to describe professional ethics in different dimensions. Professional ethics is associated with academic course [16]. However, other studies associated it with moral and spiritual based acts and decisions in the classroom [17]. The finding of current study is highly related to the findings by [18] where he has underlined that teaching and education, as professional as they are moral in nature. This gives us that in teaching and education, professional stand and the moral stand are inseparable. Our finding also partly relates to that of [19] where they have described that the concept professional ethics precedes the issues and questions of ethics and

principles and moral values in a system of professional ethics in the professional environment. They further have stated that professional ethics is about the set of rules which should be followed voluntarily and based on conscience. The finding of this study from qualitative data also relates to what had been stated by [20] where they have described the concept of teacher professionalism in three dimensions, that are, ownership of a systematic body of knowledge, authority and autonomy which enable teachers to exercise their competencies in complex and unpredicted situations, and to conduct appropriate relations with clients and colleagues.

Another concern of this study was to find out whether the teachers' perception of professional ethics significantly affects their professionalism or professional stand. The result of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient has revealed that Professionalism (acting in line with ethical code of conduct) is significantly positively related with teachers' perception of professional ethical code of conduct or PercTot ($r = 0.356$, $p < 0.00$). This implies that as Professionalism (acting in line with ethical code of conduct) increases, teachers' perception of professional ethical code of conduct also increases. Likewise, teachers' perception that the professionalism is rooted in their moral stand, that is, the perception of professional ethics as a moral stand found to be a significantly predicting variable of professionalism. This finding has been partly replicated by [21]. In his examination of the origins, potency and illusions ethical guardian, [22] stated that an ethical guardian; which is highly related to social responsibility and manifested through high status in society as well as a status that attracts power and responsibility, that was found to be an intrinsic part of public relations self-identity of professionals in organizations; cited in [23]. Likewise, the finding also is related to that of [24], where he has stated that teachers attempted to follow the dictates of their own conscience when dealing with parents with different educational values. In his study, he tried to nurture shared values and to provide students with a level of education which is satisfactory for both parents and teachers. His finding revealed that the teachers choose to adhere to their own professional values and ideas about teaching, while trying to cater to parental needs with great patience through continuing dialogue. Besides, [25] found that

teachers who were acquainted with the issues of professionalism were sought to enhance their professional development; that is, teachers who are concerned with and striving with the issues of professionalism were found to be more striving to professional development.

Another issue was to indicate whether teachers' sex modify their perception about sources of codes of professional ethics and professionalism. Here, an independent sample t-test has revealed that there is no significant gender difference in the perceptions of the professional ethical code of conduct between female and male teachers. There found no gender difference for PercPos, PercSoc and PercMoral between female and male teachers in this study. This finding goes in line with that of [26] where they have stated that rates of obedience to professional ethics did not significantly differ by gender.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Summary

This study was aimed at investigating teachers' perception of professional ethics and its relationship to their professionalism.

It was intended to sought answers to the following leading questions.

- How do teachers perceive the professional ethics?
- Do teachers' perceptions of professional ethics play a significant role in their professionalism?
- Does teacher's sex modify their perception about sources of codes of professional ethics and professionalism?
- Is there significant mean difference in perception of professional ethics between primary and secondary school teachers?

The following sections state the summary of findings of the above four leading questions one by one.

- *How do teachers perceive the professional ethics?*

To answer this leading question, data has been gathered through questionnaire. Open-ended and closed-ended items were included in the questionnaire. It has been revealed from the data that majority of teachers, that is, 172 (47.4%) have perceived that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a moral responsibility than the social or job responsibility.

Besides, it has been depicted that the lion's share (74.1%) of teachers have thought that they were fully compliant to professional ethical code of conduct, whereas, 64 (17.6%) of them thought that they were more or less compliant to professional ethical code of conduct. The findings give us that only one respondent (0.3%) has thought that he/she was not totally compliant to professional ethical code of conduct.

- *Do their perception of professional ethics significantly affect their professionalism?*

This research question was answered by using both correlation coefficient and linear regressions that have been conducted carried out on the data that has been gathered through questionnaire. the result has shown that:

- Teachers' awareness about professional ethical code of conduct is significantly inversely related to age of individual ($r = -0.156$, $p < 0.03$).
- Moreover, professionalism (obedience to the code of conduct), the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a position responsibility PercPos, PercSoc and PercMoral were significantly positively related to age of individuals.
- An awareness about professional ethical code of conduct found to be significantly positively related with professionalism, with PercPos, and PercTot. Professionalism (was found to be significantly positively related with, PercSoc, with PercMoral and PercTot, all with $p < 0.00$).
- The perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as position responsibility (PercPos) is significantly positively related to PercSoc, PercMoral and PercTot. Similarly, PercSoc is significantly positively related with PercMoral ($r = 0.385$, $p < 0.00$).
- Linear regressions has indicated that among the variables treated, teachers' awareness of the professional ethical code of conduct as well as PercMoral were found to be significant predictors of the professionalism; with $F_{1,363} = 20.817$, $p < 0.05$ and $F_{1,363} = 20.817$, $p < 0.05$ respectively.

Does teacher's sex modify teachers' perception about sources of codes of professional ethics and professionalism?

An independent sample t-test has been made to answer the above research question. The result has revealed that there is no significant gender difference in the perceptions of the professional ethical code of conduct between female and male teachers. All t-tests that have been conducted to see gender difference for PercPos, PercSoc and PercMoral between female and male teachers couldn't show significant difference.

Is there significant mean difference in perception of professional ethics between primary and secondary school teachers?

The result of an independent sample t-test gives us that there is no significant difference in the perception of professional ethics between primary and secondary school teachers. It has revealed us that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as responsibility of his/her job position (PercPos) $t(361) = 1.233$, $p > 0.05$, perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct as social responsibility (PercSoc) $t(361) = 0.788$, $p > 0.05$ and the perception that compliance to professional ethical code of conduct is a matter of conscience (PercMoral) $t(361) = 1.505$, $p > 0.05$ for teachers of primary schools and that of secondary schools.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions have been stated.

Many teachers perceive that the source of their compliance to professional ethical code of conduct was their moral stand. Many teachers also thought that they were totally obedient to the professional ethical code of conduct.

Teachers' perception of the professional ethics was significantly affected by their PercMoral and their awareness about the code of conduct. There was no gender difference in teachers' perception of the professional ethics.

5.3. Recommendations

For Universities and colleges

- For open ended items, many of respondents have responded that they were totally not aware of professional ethical code of conduct. We recommend that courses in teachers training colleges and universities must incorporate some basic concepts related to teachers' professional ethics as well as the teachers' ethical code of conduct.
- The result has indicated that teachers' professionalism was significantly affected by their perception as a moral responsibility. Hence, in universities, courses related to moral teachings must be given as a common course for all students including teachers.
- Should arrange regular training sessions in collaboration with departments of civics and ethical education as well as department of law on issues of morality, moral stand and professional ethics.

For educational administrations

- Should give due emphasis for ethical stand during the very recruiting of teachers using various measurement tools.

For ethics and anti-corruption commission agencies at regional and zonal levels

- In collaboration with departments of civics and ethical education as well as department of law in nearby universities and colleges, should arrange awareness creation sessions and training sessions on the very concepts of morality, professional ethics

For Schools

- School directors should effectively implement instructional supervision through which less experienced teachers learn more from more experienced teachers about the ethical standards.
- In performance evaluation of teachers, number of items measuring professional ethical stand, that is, teachers' treatment of students, care and sense of responsibility while enacting academic tasks, relationship with opposite sex students...etc must be included in affordable number.
- Should arrange the awarding and thanks giving sessions on annual and semester basis for ethically best performed academic and administrative staffs as well as students.
- Anti-corruption clubs in schools must incorporate activities related to teachers' professional ethics as co-curricular activities through arranging special programs related to professional ethics and teachers' obedience to it, like drama, role play, question and answering competitions, etc.

For teachers

- Should devote a great deal of time for learn more about professional ethics and what composes it from various books related to the issue.

- Teachers at any level should consider issues related to professional ethics while evaluating their respective colleagues during the peer evaluation in each semester.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Arba Minch University in general and vice president office of research and community services for helping us across all steps of this study.

We are also pleased to thank students, teachers and schools principals of the sampled schools for their friendly and collegial help for the success of this study by filling questionnaire transparently.

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