

Exploring Moral Values among Teacher Trainees in Teaching Profession: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract: Purpose: Teaching involves an moral dimension that tends to remain unspoken and thus difficult to reflect on and discuss. From the perspective of professionalism, moral values are important to the quality and status of the teaching profession. The current study examines the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession. Methodology: This research was conducted under a qualitative research approach with phenomenological design. the cohort comprised 600 subjects of twenty D. Ed., colleges from four Rayalaseema Districts of Andhra Pradesh were chosen through non - random convenience sampling. The instrument was self - developed keeping in view the objectives and hypothesis of the study on a four - point Likert scale, strongly agreed to strongly disagreed. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part - A was to illicit demographic details such as gender, location and community etc., and Part - B consists of 34 statements. Findings: The results of the study revealed that half of the sample demonstrated moderate levels of morals values towards teaching profession, while another quarter percentage confessed high as well as low levels of moral values. Similarly, no significant difference was found in the perception of moral values among teacher trainees with regard to gender, locality and community. Interestingly, a significant difference was found in the perception of moral values among teacher trainees with regard to their qualifications. Conclusion: The study investigates the moral values of teacher trainees towards the teaching profession, focusing on trainees from the Rayalaseema region in Andhra Pradesh, India. Using a phenomenological approach, the research includes 600 trainees from twenty D. Ed colleges surveyed using a Likert - scale based questionnaire. Findings indicate a spectrum of moral values, with variations across gender, locality and educational qualifications. The study underscores the importance of continuous professional development to instill moral values in future educators.

Keywords: Teacher Trainees; moral values; teaching profession; professional ethics Phenomlogical study

1. Introduction

Quality teachers are considered to be those individuals whose pedagogy is grounded in morals and values that lead to caring, positive teacher - student relationships, embedded in trust and high standards of professional ethics (Boon, 2011). Snook (2003) pointed out, as education aims to shape individuals in specific ways, and uses methods that involve close, personal, hierarchical relationships, teaching is an occupation where ethical issues are central therefore the provision of moral education to support the code of professional conduct of teachers is crucial.

The term 'moral' was first used by Cicero to translate the Ancient Greek word 'ethikós,' which meant 'moral. The term 'moral' comes from the Middle English, Old French, and Latin word 'moralis'. All of these words are related to morals or etiquette. The word moral is related to thoughts, behaviour, actions, traits, and characteristics that are right and good. A code is related to a set of rules. So, moral code is a set of rules that a person follows to live a good and happy life. Moral codes tend to be specific and situational. They tell us about how to behave or how not to behave in a defined set of situations (Keniston, 1965).

2. Significance of the Study

A teacher's first moral obligation is to provide excellent instructions. Teachers with large level of moral professionalisation have a deep obligation to help student learn. According to Wynne (1995), teacher with that sense of obligation demonstrate their moral professional by;

- a) Coming to work regularly;
- b) Being well informed about their student - matter;

- c) Planning and conducting classes with care;
- d) Regularly reviewing and updating instructional practices;
- e) Co - operating with, or if necessary, confronting parents of under achieving students;
- f) Co - operating with colleagues and observing school policies so the whole institution works effectively;
- g) Tactfully, but firmly criticizing unsatisfactory school policies and proposing constructive improvement.

According to National Association of state Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (2021) laid down five core principles required for the teacher educators

- a) Responsibility to the profession.
- b) Responsibility for professional competence
- c) Responsibility to students
- d) Responsibility to the school community
- e) Responsible and ethical use of technology.

3. Need for the Study

Moral values are internal. Morality is related to what is in - depth and most intimate in human nature. Without moral norms, human society would perish. The moral code controls the person so that he/she does what the entire group believes he/she should. The moral code for teachers is especially considered to protect the rights of the students. It is important that teachers understand that when they get a teaching position they are agreeing to follow the moral codes. Teachers are expected to be fair to all their students. They should not take advantage of their position. Teachers need to have a professional relationship with all students. There is quite a bit of abuse that is happening in the schools. Teachers need to protect their students' safety and not believe that this is someone else's job. Society can require publicly recognized

professions to hold its members to high ethical standards but the profession itself must establish the ethical norms that govern their work and form the basis of the relationship of trust with society (Legault, 2006).

4. Objectives of the Study

The principal objective of the present study is to appraise the phenomenon of moral values of teacher trainees toward their profession from Rayalaseema Region in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The specific objectives are:

- 1) To investigate the *levels* of moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh.
- 2) To delineate the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *gender*.
- 3) To appraise the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *locality*.
- 4) To probe into the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *educational qualifications*.
- 5) To examine the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *community*.

Hypothesis of the Study

H1. There exist a significant difference in the levels of moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh.

H2. There exist a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *gender*.

H3. There exist a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *locality*.

H4. There exist a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *educational qualifications*.

H5. There exist a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards teaching profession from Rayalaseema Region of Andhra Pradesh with respect to *community*.

Delimitations of the Study

- 1) The study was restricted to *600 teachers trainees of D. Ed.*,
- 2) The study was limited to 20 D. Ed., colleges in four districts viz., YSR Kadapa, Kurnool, Anathapur and Chittoor of Rayalaseema region in the State of Andhra Pradesh.
- 3) The variables of research include i) Levels; ii) Gender iii) Locality; iv) Educational qualifications and v) Community.

5. Literature Survey

Teacher educators play a critical role of developing trainees values. The quality of teacher education and that of the teacher educator determines the quality of teachers produced. This implies that if teacher educators believe in the values stipulated in the teacher education curriculum, then there is a possibility that teacher educators will integrate the same values in their teaching and learning process. Some of the pertinent studies are:

Neha Singh, Rekha Rani and Hridesh Rajput (2019) in a paper considers the nature of professional ethics for an emerging professional, the role of values and ethics education in empowering the emerging professional to shape and change their workplace

Nick Mead (2019) in a book '*Values and Professional Knowledge in Teacher Education*', urges values and Professional Knowledge in Teacher Education provides distinctive insights into potential strengths to develop trainee teachers' values within school - based training. Looking at the personal moral and political values of trainees as fundamental to strategic and critical professional knowledge, the book considers a key question about training contexts: to what extent is teacher education embedded in the purpose and rationale of the school so that trainees' values, and consequently their autonomy and identity, can flourish? The book is research focused and offers case studies that offer vicarious experiences which resonate with the professional needs and concerns of teacher educators.

A. K. W. Gui et al (2020) examined the roles of teacher and their challenges in developing students' morality. The data was collected from online database including PubMed, Science Direct and Google. The both qualitative and quantitative studies were reviewed and synthesized in a narrative format. There were seven roles of teachers being found in this study. There are moral model, moral mentor, caregiver, moral value conveyer, facilitator, counsellor and communicator. The challenges of teachers in developing students' morality were also discussed.

Toker Gökçe, A. (2021). examines the underpinning core values which educators ought to have, and students must acquire at schools adequately according to preservice teachers' perception. The research was designed according to the quantitative model, and three open - ended questions questionnaire was used for data collection. The research group involved 263 preservice teachers. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed 17 values for teachers, 21 values for principals, and 20 values for students. The revealed values were also categorized as - moral values, professional values, and cultural values.

Mahona Joseph Paschal (2023) presents evidence from literature on the significance of ethics and its standards that teachers and other education stakeholders in Tanzania can learn in order to promote teacher professionalism and effective academic performance in school organizations in Tanzania. It also discusses the prevailing teachers' professional misconducts in Tanzanian schools that have affected the learning outcomes. Furthermore, the paper

highlights strategies that could be used by school organization to ensure that the school organizations observe and encourage the development of teaching professionalism for the improved learning and organizational outcomes.

Zainul Hafizi (2023) explored the central role of moral education in the process of character formation of children. Through a literature review, we investigate the basic and theoretical concepts of moral education, as well as its positive impact on children's character development. An in-depth analysis of the literature shows that moral education includes not only moral norms, but also builds ethical values, empathy, and social responsibility. The research also highlights the linkages between moral education, the moral development of individuals, and their contribution to society more broadly.

Cronqvist, M. (2024) in a descriptive phenomenological study assessed teachers' ethical responsibility in teaching in Sweden. The results show that the teachers' main ethical responsibility is to guide the children about right and wrong. The guidance, a safe learning environment, and relationships with and between the children are dependent on each other.

Ishita Halder (2024) explores the meaning of professional ethics, its role and importance in teacher education programmes specifically as reflected in NEP 2020. As per the recommendations of NEP 2020, a common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) was to be developed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) by 2022. NPST ensures that all students at all levels of school education are taught by passionate, motivated, highly qualified, professionally trained and well - equipped teachers

Subramanyam. K Adenna Naik. M and Syed Jabeen (2024) examined the significant influence of self - efficacy and resilience on attitude towards moral values among teacher trainees and to find out the relation between self - efficacy and resilience with attitude towards moral values among teacher trainees.: Teacher trainees with high self - efficacy have better moral values of their attitude than subjects with low self - efficacy. Teacher trainees with good resilience have better moral values of their attitude than subjects with poor resilience. There are significant positively relation between self - efficacy and resilience with moral values among teacher trainees.

6. Methodology

The present study is based on a phenomenological approach, descriptive in nature. The study cohort consists of *six hundred teacher trainees* drawn from twenty D. Ed., colleges from four Rayalaseema Districts of Andhra Pradesh. The *moral inventory* was self - developed with 34 statements, keeping in view the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Content validity and face validity was used to validate the research instrument. Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used in testing the reliability of the instrument with a high score of .834. After the data collection, all the Likert - scale questionnaire items were quantitatively analysed.

7. Results and Discussion

H₁: There exists a significant difference in the levels of moral values of teacher trainee towards the teaching profession

Table 1: Showing Level of Teacher Trainees Moral value towards Teaching Profession

Levels of Moral value	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High	150	25%
Moderate	300	50%
Low	150	25%
Total	600	100%

It can be deduced from the table that half of the sample (50%) of the teacher trainees possess moderate levels of moral values towards teaching profession. Surprisingly, another quarter each (25.0% each) confessed high as well as low levels of morals.

H₂: There exists a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainee towards the teaching profession with respect to gender.

Table 2: Showing Teacher Trainees Moral value towards Teaching Profession with regard to gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Level of Significance
Male	251	130.1513	35.67251	0.06	0.01
Female	349	129.9544	35.62072		

*Significant at 0.01 level table value 2.58

It is evident from the table that the obtained t - value (0.06) of teacher trainees' moral values score with respect to gender is lesser than the table value 2.58 and is significant at 0.01 level. Hence the formulated – '*There exist a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainee towards the teaching profession with respect to gender*' is **rejected**.

H₃: There exists a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards the teaching profession with respect to locality

Table 3: Showing Teacher Trainees Moral value towards Teaching Profession with regard to locality.

Locality	N	Mean	SD	't' Value	Level of Significance
Urban	222	129.5764	35.56137	0.24	0.01
Rural	378	130.3072	35.6861		

Significant at 0.01 level table value 2.58

The table vividly depicts the obtained 't - value is 0.24 which is less than the table value (2.58) and significant at 0.01 levels. Hence, the hypothesis formulated – '*There exists a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards the teaching profession with respect to locality*' is **rejected**.

H₄: There exists a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards the teaching profession with respect to educational qualifications.

Table 4: Showing Teacher Trainees Moral value towards Teaching Profession with regard to educational qualifications

Variables	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F Value	Level of Significance
Between Group	273.058	2	136.529	3.48	0.01
Within Group	23356.353	597	39.123		

*Significant at 0.01 level, table value is 3.00

The table mirrors the obtained 'F' value (3.48) which is greater than the table value 3.00 and significant at 0.01 level. Hence the formulated hypothesis - *There exists a significant difference in the moral values teacher trainees towards teaching profession with respect to educational qualifications* is **accepted**.

H5: There exists a significant difference in the moral values of teacher trainees towards the teaching profession with respect to Community.

Table 5: Showing Teacher Trainees Moral value towards Teaching Profession with regard to Community

Variables	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F Value	Level of Significance
Between Group	372.234	2	36.118	0.92	0.01
Within Group	23357	597	39.123		

*Significant. at 0.01 levels, table value is 3.00

The table clearly exhibits that the obtained f - value (0.92) is greater than the table value (3.00) and significant at 0.01 levels. Therefore, the hypothesis constructed - *There exists a significant differences in the moral values of teacher trainees towards the teaching profession with respect to Community*, is **rejected**.

8. Major Findings of the Study

- 1) The findings of the study demonstrated that half of the sample (50%) of the teacher trainees possess moderate levels of moral values towards teaching profession. Surprisingly, another quarter each (25.0% each) confessed high as well as low levels of morals.
- 2) It was revealed from the study that no significant difference was found in the perception of moral values among teacher trainees with regard to gender.
- 3) The study exhibited no significant difference was found in the perception of moral values among teacher trainees with regard to locality.
- 4) Further, it was found that no significant difference was found in the perception of moral values among teacher trainees with regard to locality.
- 5) Conversely, a significant difference was found in the perception of moral values among teacher trainees with regard to their qualifications.

9. Conclusion

The findings reveal the varying levels of moral values among teacher trainees and emphasize the need for continues professional development to cultivate these values. Future research could expand on this foundation by exploring additional factors influencing moral values, thus strengthening the preparation of teacher trainees to meet the

ethical demands of teaching profession.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that no competing interests exists.

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