

Survey of King Khalid University EFL Staff's Perceptions of Professional Ethics: A Broad Islamic Ethical and Educational Perspective

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Abstract—Professional ethics in teaching and training has commonly a unique honor between faculty members and students. This study was conducted to explore King Khalid University EFL staff members' perceptions of professional ethics from a broad Islamic ethical and educational perspective. To achieve the objectives of the study the two researchers adopted the descriptive survey method because of its suitability. For the data collection, a 15-item questionnaire was distributed to a purposive sample comprising 100 male and female EFL staff members who were randomly selected from all colleges of King Khalid University during semester three 2023 (A.D.) The findings of this study revealed that both male and female participants had a greater number of positive responses regarding the professional ethics components of teaching and training. There are many elements associated with the professional ethics of male and female EFL staff because of the significant influence of university settings in general, and of King Khalid University in particular. These elements are related to the future of university students and to teachers' responsibility to ensure that students are educated appropriately so that they can contribute to making societies more civilized, refined and educated. The results of the present study indicate that the following are the most important elements of professional ethics in teaching and training: educating students, maintaining high standards of morals and work ethics, and organizing a relevant and appropriate incentive scheme to encourage students to behave appropriately in terms of academic performance as well as conduct.

Index Terms—professional ethics, educational perspective, EFL staff members, King Khalid University, perceptions

I. INTRODUCTION

In every respect, it is important to note that professional ethics in teaching and training has commonly a unique honor between faculty members and students. In many universities across the globe in general and King Khalid University in particular, specific rules, standards, and directives have been established to improve professional ethics codes in the education domain. In general, most moral codes, ethics, and ethos are being respected.

Teaching and training are core elements of the tertiary education system and have unique ethical ramifications (Jones et al., 2013; Davies, 2006). Professional ethics, teaching, and training are three interrelated constituents (Monteiro et al., 2017; Durkheim, 2012). The goal of a university is, ultimately, to provide expert and skilled manpower to fulfill community needs. Local and global experiences in developing the quality of tertiary education indicate that the performance of EFL faculty members in particular, is of great importance as they are the main drivers of students' success and excellent academic outcomes (Rice, 2003; Goe, 2007). Capable EFL faculty members can promote the educational techniques and teaching methodologies and even compensate for textbook shortcomings and deficiencies of teaching facilities and training bodies. Conversely, incompetent teachers adopt ineffective teaching methods and produce poor learning outcomes despite an excellent learning environment and a rich curriculum (Cronbach, 1963; Stake, 1967).

Apart from the fact that EFL faculty members take responsibility for conveying knowledge and expertise, they should exemplify high standards of professional ethics for the academic community and for the students. Instructors and teachers have ethical responsibilities known as *professional ethics* that have two basic elements: 1) complying with the rules and moral code of work ethics established by the ethical culture of the school or university, and 2) treating students with kindness, tolerance and understanding which the students, in turn, can spread to the wider community (Hansen, 1998; Hoffman, 1979; Bean & Bernardi, 2007).

Faculty members, as ethical and educational models, not only impact their academic environment but also have a strong influence on students (Farahani & Farahani, 2014). The professional ethics of faculty members comprises promoting the teaching process, employing effective teaching techniques, solving problems associated with teaching,

improving the quality of teaching, ensuring ethical freedom, intellectual autonomy, and trustworthiness, taking into account students' individual learning differences, and having a good knowledge of students' needs.

Numerous studies have explored staff members' attitudes towards professional ethics, to date however, no research has been undertaken to investigate EFL staff's perceptions of professional ethics. Therefore, in this current study, the researchers chose an Islamic ethical and educational perspective that is a new research approach. Moreover, the study was carried out to address the gap in the literature on the phenomenon under the study. Also, this study is noteworthy because it is one of the first to investigate EFL staff members' perceptions of professional ethics from an Islamic ethical and educational perspective.

A. Objectives of the Study

This research, which involved EFL staff at King Khalid University, has three main objectives: to determine the EFL staff's attitudes toward professional ethics in teaching; secondly, to explore the extent to which EFL faculty members respect elements of professional ethics; thirdly, to identify the factors which affect male and female EFL staff members' perceptions of professional ethics in teaching.

B. Research Questions

In alignment with the three central objectives of the study, the prime research questions driving this research are:

- What are the perceptions and attitudes of EFL staff members' attitudes towards professional ethics?
- To what extent are the professional ethics components in education respected by EFL faculty members?
- What are the factors that affect male and female EFL staff members' perceptions of and attitudes toward professional ethics in teaching?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Concept of Professional Ethics

Professional ethics is a wider notion than business ethics. Professional ethics in an individual's life involves professionalism and ethics of business in full. Every person works together with three ethics spheres which are mutual: personal ethics, business ethics, and organizational ethics (Qaramalaki et al., 1388; Farahani & Farahani, 2014; Koehn, 2006).

B. Approaches to Professional Ethics

Marcuse (2017) offers six approaches to **professional ethics** that are gathered from the literature. These approaches can be:

- subjective
- pluralist
- objective
- egalitarian
- structural or
- process-based

C. Professional Ethics of EFL Staff Members: at a Glance

In terms of professional ethics, the length of time spent by university EFL staff members teaching skills play a prominent role in conveying the code of conduct of society, in providing social experiences, influencing the conduct, perceptions, and attitudes of students, and strengthening their moral values during their studies (Abdullah et al., 2019; Boon, 2011; Fallahi et al., 2019). Furthermore, the professional ethics of these EFL staff members can improve students' participation and academic performance in class (Hall et al., 2006; Robie & Kidwell, 2003). Adherence to ethical standards and rules of ethics are of enormous importance in some professions such as teaching and training, and help in the development of society in general (Dolgoff et al., 2012; Frankel, 1989). Universities are also responsible for training people to comply with professional codes and professional values and make efforts to enhance the ethical values of society (Schwartz, 2001; Harris, 1990; Fallahi et al., 2019). Thus, professional ethics influence students directly and indirectly and affect their academic performance.

D. Previous Studies

An exploration of the related literature shows that numerous studies have been carried out to examine staff members' perceptions of professional ethics. However, to date and to the best of the current researchers' knowledge, no study has been carried out to explore EFL staff members' attitudes towards professional ethics from a broad Islamic ethical and educational perspective. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will address this research gap. Again, it is essential to mention that numerous researchers have explored staff members' perceptions of professional ethics. For example, in his study, Airaksinen (2012) found that teachers foster human growth and development. However, teachers also have a high level of autonomy and power in the community. Farahani et al. (2014) found that the most important elements of professional ethics in education are: respect for students, ensuring that they are safe and healthy, and that their privacy

is safeguarded; and maintaining tolerance and openness when dealing with students. Soltis (1986) examined the significance of teaching professional ethics in teacher education programs. The findings indicated that teachers toned to be trained in the skills enabling them to determine ethical issues and make sensible ethical decisions and assessments. Fallahi et al. (2019) found that in teaching, the professional ethics of staff members have several dimensions. Schwartz (2001) found that ethical codes have the potential to influence the conduct of collective agents. Schwartz's study revealed factors that encourage adherence to ethical codes and those that may cause infringements. Brien (1998) found that to improve a job's ethical values and a culture that nurtures trust, professions must develop particular institutions, program frameworks, and protocols.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

Given the purpose of this study and its research questions, a descriptive survey method was deemed the most suitable for obtaining King Khalid University EFL staff members' perceptions of and attitudes toward professional ethics from a broad Islamic ethical and educational perspective.

B. Study Sample

A random sampling technique was used whereby 100 EFL staff members were selected randomly from all the colleges of King Khalid University.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY SAMPLE ACCORDING TO THE COLLEGE

The College	Frequency	Percentage
College of Sharia and Fundamentals of Religion	13	13.0
College of Education	13	13.0
College of Science	11	11.0
College of Human Sciences	8	8.0
Medical College	8	8.0
College of Applied Medical Sciences	7	7.0
Applied College	6	6.0
College of Economics	11	11.0
Business College	6	6.0
College of Languages and translation	9	9.0
College of Computer Science	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

C. Study Instrument

A questionnaire was the instrument used to collect the required data. The questionnaire items were all related to the research objectives. The initial version of the questionnaire was presented to 10 specialists in curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment and evaluation to verify the appropriateness of the sections of the questionnaire and the extent to which they were relevant to the participants. The final questionnaire was developed after taking into account the feedback offered by the specialist staff. Moreover, the questionnaire was piloted with a group of 30 EFL staff members. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.88 indicated a good degree of reliability.

TABLE 2
CRONBACH'S ALPHA FOR THE RELIABILITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE (ALL SAMPLE: N=100)

Statement	No. of Items	Alpha
The overall reliability of the questionnaire	15	0.88

D. Data Analysis

Analysis of the survey data enabled the two researchers to obtain overall findings regarding the participants' positive or negative perceptions of and attitudes towards professional ethics. A total of 100 EFL staff members completed the survey. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the percentages of each item on the five-item Likert scale in the questionnaire. The scale comprised strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. The strongly was given 5 and the lowest grade was given 1 the range calculated for the scale was $5-1 = 4$: dividing this by the number of categories (5) gave $4/5 = 0.80$, which was the length of each category of the five scales. Finally, the length of the category was added to the lowest grade of the scale, which was 1. Thus, the first category was calculated to be 1 to 1.80. By adding (0.80) for the next category (which starts with the first category ending) to produce the second category, and so on for the rest of the categories, the following criteria were defined to analyze the results.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO THE GRADIENT OF THE CATEGORIES USED IN THE SEARCH TOOL

Description	Rang of mean
Strongly agree	4.21-5.00
Agree	3.41-4.20
Neutral	2.61-3.40
Disagree	1.81-2.60
Strongly disagree	1.00-1.80

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After the reliability and validity of the questionnaire had been checked, the findings for each questionnaire item were carefully examined.

TABLE 4

Ser No.	Statement		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I see the success of any educational institution relies on teaching professional ethics.	Freq.	41	29	11	10	9	3.83	1.31	9
		%	41.0	29.0	11.0	10.0	9.0			
2	I fully perceive that ethics and teaching are two interconnected constituents.	Freq.	41	30	10	10	9	3.84	1.31	8
		%	41.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	9.0			
3	I understand competent EFL staff members can promote the teaching process and even indemnify textbook shortfalls and drawbacks.	Freq.	45	35	6	10	4	4.07	1.13	2
		%	45.0	35.0	6.0	10.0	4.0			
4	As a staff member, I hold fast in my teaching to the standards and morals of professional ethics because it is very crucial concerning a growing ethical professional culture among students.	Freq.	48	28	13	6	5	4.08	1.14	1
		%	48.0	28.0	13.0	6.0	5.0			
5	As a staff member at the colleges of King Khalid University must be adept in teaching and conversant with its career ethics.	Freq.	32	29	14	16	9	3.59	1.33	11
		%	32.0	29.0	14.0	16.0	9.0			
6	I Employ effective teaching techniques that can offer potentiated learning opportunities for the college students at King Khalid University.	Freq.	33	27	15	14	11	3.57	1.37	12
		%	33.0	27.0	15.0	14.0	11.0			
7	I see solving problems subsisting in teaching and promoting the quality of teaching can lead to achieving excellent educational standards.	Freq.	42	30	10	10	8	3.88	1.28	6
		%	42.0	30.0	10.0	10.0	8.0			
8	I focus attention on the teaching process and my student participation during my teaching.	Freq.	43	28	10	10	9	3.86	1.32	7
		%	43.0	28.0	10.0	10.0	9.0			
9	I use a variety of teaching techniques in harmony with the objectives and Content of the course I teach.	Freq.	30	29	16	16	9	3.55	1.31	13
		%	30.0	29.0	16.0	16.0	9.0			
10	I take into account students' differences in the teaching process, and good knowledge of students' needs.	Freq.	44	35	7	10	4	4.05	1.13	4
		%	44.0	35.0	7.0	10.0	4.0			
11	I create motivational, balanced methods to enhance students' cognitive, emotional, and field of technology.	Freq.	30	30	13	16	11	3.52	1.36	14
		%	30.0	30.0	13.0	16.0	11.0			
12	I organize a relevant and apt incentive scheme to supervise students' behavior and employ developmental evaluation in the teaching process.	Freq.	45	33	9	9	4	4.06	1.13	3
		%	45.0	33.0	9.0	9.0	4.0			
13	I give prominence to students' attendance, and their participation mandating time limits for checking exam papers and addressing complaints,(if any) timely attendance at class, and commitment to university regulations.	Freq.	32	29	14	16	9	3.59	1.33	10
		%	32.0	29.0	14.0	16.0	9.0			
14	I mandate time limits for checking exam papers and addressing complaints, (if any) timely attendance at class, and commitment to university regulations and research.	Freq.	27	31	14	17	11	3.46	1.34	15
		%	27.0	31.0	14.0	17.0	11.0			
15	I am fully consistent with the assessment of educational objectives, justice in evaluation, and premeditating the evaluation.	Freq.	41	36	13	6	4	4.04	1.07	5
		%	41.0	36.0	13.0	6.0	4.0			
Mean* for total								3.80	0.39	

* The mean of 5 points

In response to the statement, 'as a staff member, I hold fast in my teaching to the standards and morals of professional ethics because it is very crucial both in respect of growing ethical professional culture among students', 28% of respondents agreed, and 48% strongly agreed (ranking first in order of importance). This finding on respondents' positive view of the importance of professional ethics in teaching is indicative of EFL staff practices at King Khalid University.

In response to the statement, 'I understand competent EFL staff members can promote the teaching process and even compensate for textbook shortfalls and drawbacks', 35% agreed and 45% strongly agreed (rank = 2nd). This positive finding is evidence that the majority of EFL staff regard professional competence as a component of professional ethics. In response to the statement, 'I organized a relevant and apt incentive scheme to supervise students' behavior and

employ developmental evaluation in the teaching process', 33% of participants agreed and 45% strongly agreed (rank = 3rd). This finding suggests that EFL staff members know that they play a pivotal role by being responsible for educating students as well as guiding and counseling them about codes of ethics and values.

In response to the statement 'I take into account students' differences in the teaching process, and have good knowledge of students' needs', 35% of participants agreed and 44% strongly agreed (rank = 4th). This positive view can be seen as a sign that EFL staff members exercise fairness and show goodwill toward a student which is one of the components of professional ethics in education.

In response to the statement, 'I am fully consistent with the assessment of educational objectives, justice in evaluation, The participants perceived that they were fully consistent with the assessment of educational objectives, justice in evaluation, and premeditating the evaluation as 36.0% agreed and 41.0% strongly agreed (rank = 5th). This finding on respondents' positive view on being consistent with the assessment of educational objectives and fairness in evaluation indicated EFL staff's sense of justice and honesty toward students, which is one of the elements of professional ethics in teaching.

In response to the statement, 'I see solving problems existing in teaching, and promoting the quality of teaching, can lead to achieving excellent educational standards', of the participants, 30% agreed and 42% strongly agreed with this statement (rank = 6th). This positive finding indicated that EFL staff members' creativity is regarded as a component of professional ethics in education.

In response to the statement, 'I focus attention on the teaching process and my student participation during my teaching', 28% agreed and 43% strongly agreed (rank = 7th). This finding indicated that EFL staff members believed that using appropriate communication and teaching methods, and being up to date are elements of professional ethics in teaching.

In response to the statement, 'I fully perceive that ethics and teaching are two interconnected constituents', 30% agreed and 41% strongly agreed (rank = 8th). This finding suggests EFL staff's ability to convey concepts, and demonstrate management and professional competence.

In response to the statement, 'I see the success of any educational institution relies on teaching professional ethics, 29% agreed and 41% strongly agreed (rank = 9th). This finding showed that EFL staff members focus on educating student which is a part of professional ethics in education.

In response to the statement, 'I give prominence to students' attendance, and their participation mandating time limits for checking exam papers and addressing complaints, (if any) timely attendance at class, and commitment to university regulations', 29% agreed and 32% strongly agreed (rank = 10th). This finding showed EFL staff members following management and discipline protocols and paying attention to the importance of educational and research-related development of the university which are elements of professional ethics in education.

In response to the statement, 'a staff member at the colleges of King Khalid University must be adept in teaching and conversant with its career ethics', 29% of participants agreed and 32% strongly agreed (rank = 11th). This finding on respondents' positive view on adept in teaching and conversant with its career ethics showed EFL staff members are progressive, self-confident, loyal and trustful and respectful which are parts of professional ethics in education.

In response to the statement, 'I employ effective teaching techniques that can offer potential learning opportunities for the college students at King Khalid University', 27% agreed and 33% strongly agreed (rank = 12th). This finding indicates EFL staff's awareness of effective teaching methods, which is a part of professional ethics in education in general and teaching in particular.

In response to the statement, 'I use a variety of teaching techniques in harmony with the objectives and content of the course I teach', the participants responded that they use a variety of teaching techniques aligned with the teaching objectives and the curriculum. In this regard, 29% agreed and 30% strongly agreed (rank = 13th). This showed EFL staff members are aware of the importance of teaching methods, which is a part of professional ethics in education in general and teaching in particular.

In response to the statement, 'I create motivational, balanced methods to enhance students' cognitive, emotional, and field of technology', 30% agreed and 30% strongly agreed (rank = 14th). This finding showed EFL staff's professional competence, and their ability to apply the professional ethics concept by motivating students.

In response to the statement, 'I mandate time limits for checking exam papers and addressing complaints, (if any) timely attendance at class, and commitment to university regulations and research', 31% agreed and 46% strongly agreed (rank = 15th). This finding showed that EFL staff members comply with university regulations and have integrity in terms of their behavior and speech, their teaching practices, and their research undertakings.

To answer research question 1: What are the perceptions and attitudes of King Khalid University EFL staff members' attitudes toward professional ethics in teaching? The qualitative data indicated that the majority of staff members had positive attitudes towards the role of professional ethics in education, teaching, and training because the success of any educational institution relies on teaching professional ethics. Moreover, competent EFL staff members can improve the quality of teaching and compensate for what is lacking in textbooks and other shortcomings of materials or resources. The findings of the study showed that the EFL staff members perceived organizing a relevant and apt incentive scheme to supervise students' behavior and employ formative assessment in the teaching process. The results of this research paper confirmed the findings of previous studies which examined the significance of including professional ethics in

teacher education programs, various aspects of professional ethics for staff members, and ethical codes which have the potential to influence the conduct of teachers and students (Fallahi et al., 2019; Soltis, 1986; Schwartz, 2001; Brien, 1998).

To answer research question 2: To what extent, are the elements of professional ethics in education respected by EFL faculty members? The qualitative evidence indicated that EFL staff members are fully aligned with the assessment of educational objectives, justice in evaluation, and premeditating the evaluation. When teaching, they students' individual differences into account and are aware of students' needs. EFL staff members see that solving problems that arise in teaching, and improving the quality of teaching, can lead to students achieving excellent academic outcomes. The participants' positive responses indicated that EFL staff followed management and discipline guidelines, and acknowledged the importance of the educational and research-related development of the university which are elements of professional ethics in education.

To answer research question 3: What are the factors that affect male and female EFL staff members' perceptions and attitudes at King Khalid University toward professional ethics in teaching? The qualitative evidence indicated that the personality traits of EFL staff members, such as self-confidence, sense of responsibility, and creativity, are the main factors that affect the participants' perceptions of and attitudes toward professional ethics in teaching.

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to ascertain the perceptions and attitudes of male and female EFL staff members at King Khalid University toward professional ethics from a broad Islamic ethical and educational perspective of the ethical components of education. To limit ethical components in the training and teaching process which is the most apparent effective task of EFL staff members due to its impact on the education process. Currently, addressing professional ethics in teaching is common with concepts like a code of ethics. Identifying the professional ethics of EFL staff members at King Khalid University helps teachers and their students to improve their teaching and learning respectively, because the development of professional ethics in education will promote an academic ethical environment in the lecture halls. However, professional ethics in education must be based on a broad Islamic ethical and educational foundation. The findings of this study showed that the majority of both male and female EFL staff at King Khalid University had a positive attitude toward elements of professional ethics in teaching and training. It was also clear that in the domain of teaching and training, there are various dimensions of professional ethics because of the significant impact of educational environments of universities in general and King Khalid University in particular on the future of their college students, and because of their core responsibility to provide education that will make communities more civilized, refined and educated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The two authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through the General Research Project under grant number [G.R.P1, /324/1444].

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