



The studies on professional ethics education for students majoring in Early Childhood Education, both domestic and international

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Abstract

This paper reviews both international and domestic studies on professional ethics education for students majoring in Early Childhood Education. International research highlights professional ethics as a foundation in teacher education, emphasizing that it should go beyond rule compliance toward an internal commitment that fosters humane and positive learning environments. In Vietnam, research has focused on the essential moral qualities, personality traits, and professional responsibilities specific to preschool teachers, while also proposing solutions for integrating ethics education into training programs, ranging from awareness-raising to habit formation and professional practice. Overall, the literature confirms that professional ethics is a core component in preparing preschool teachers, yet this issue has not been sufficiently addressed in the context of digital transformation, suggesting a promising direction for future studies.

Keywords: professional ethics, early childhood education, teacher training, moral development, early childhood teacher

I. Foreign Studies

From a historical perspective, J.A. Comenius (Comenius)—regarded as the “father of modern education”—asserted that the cultivation of virtue in human beings must begin in early childhood, when the soul is still pure and malleable. He emphasized that “virtue can be nurtured by always acting honestly,” while considering teachers not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as “living examples” of morality for their students. This viewpoint laid the foundation for the idea of moral education in teacher training, highlighting that the development of professional qualities is inseparable from the cultivation of ethical behavior and motivation (Comenius, 1632/1896).

Building on that spirit, Caropreso and Weese (2005), in their work *Educative Ethics: Lessons for Teacher Preparation Programs*, pointed out that moral education in teacher training remains an underexplored field. They emphasized the role of

educational experiences in shaping moral conduct and proposed a theoretical framework that integrates moral education into teacher preparation programs.

In Australia, particularly in the state of Victoria, teaching ethics has been institutionalized through professional ethical standards, including respect, kindness, fairness, honesty, and integrity. These standards are not merely regulatory codes of conduct but also serve as benchmarks for teachers’ self-reflection and self-regulation, as well as tools for society to assess the professional quality of teachers (Nguyen, 2014).

Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016), in their comprehensive review *Professional ethics education for future teachers: A narrative review of the scholarly writings*, systematized curricula, strategies, and objectives for integrating professional ethics into teacher education. Their study identified three overarching goals: (i) developing moral courage in professional decision-making, (ii) enhancing the ability to judge and interpret complex situations, and (iii) nurturing a professional identity grounded in social responsibility.

Feeney and Freeman (2018), in the third edition of *Ethics and the Early Childhood Educator: Using the NAEYC Code*, further advanced the theoretical framework by viewing professional ethics not only as rule compliance but as an “inner commitment” arising from a sense of responsibility. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct they introduced has become a guiding principle for early childhood educators in the U.S. and many other countries.

Sherpa (2018) emphasized that in the context of globalization, professional ethics increasingly serves as a “compass” for teachers, helping them maintain the humanistic character of education. Ethical teachers not only deliver knowledge but also create a positive, humane learning environment, thereby contributing to the formation of well-rounded students who are socially responsible.

In their study of preschool teachers, Oktay, Ramazan, and Sakin (2010) demonstrated that



professional ethics is closely linked with attitudes, life perspectives, and everyday behavior. Preschool teachers, alongside parents, play a central role in children's moral development, since children directly absorb norms through daily interactions.

Similarly, Ozturk (2010) found through research in Turkey that preschool teachers hold very concrete views about their ethical responsibilities toward themselves, their students, colleagues, families, and society. This study contributed to the establishment of the first professional code of ethics for preschool teachers in Turkey.

BlanušaTrošelj and Ivković (2016), in their study in Croatia, highlighted a critical point: moral education cannot stand alone but must be embedded within professional competency training. Their experimental research revealed that ethics courses can positively shift preservice teachers' awareness and attitudes.

II. Domestic Studies

In Vietnam, research on professional ethics in teacher education has received growing attention in recent decades, reflecting the country's efforts to align with international trends while responding to specific national contexts.

Nguyen Van Luong (2009), in *Professional Ethics of Vietnamese Teachers in the Context of Educational Reform*, emphasized that teacher ethics is not only expressed through personal morality but also through professional responsibility and commitment to students and society. He argued that in the period of educational renovation, teachers must embody both moral exemplarity and professional competence.

Tran Kieu (2010) analyzed the nature of teachers' professional ethics in the work *Teachers' Morality in the Renovation Era*. According to him, teachers' ethical standards are rooted in national cultural traditions while being responsive to modern social demands. He stressed that teacher ethics should be seen as a synthesis of moral qualities (such as integrity, compassion, and fairness) and professional responsibility (such as accountability, dedication, and lifelong learning).

Nguyen Thi Bich Hanh (2012), in her research on *Moral Education in Teacher Training Colleges*, underscored the need to integrate ethical education into teacher preparation programs in Vietnam. She proposed that ethics should be cultivated not only through theoretical courses but also through practical training, extracurricular activities, and community engagement.

Phan Van Nhuan (2013) conducted a study on *Professional Ethics of Primary School Teachers*.

He found that primary teachers face complex ethical challenges due to their close interaction with children and parents. The study suggested that professional ethics training should focus on communication skills, conflict resolution, and moral decision-making in daily teaching practices.

Nguyen Thanh Phu (2014), in *Professional Ethics in Education: International Experiences and Suggestions for Vietnam*, analyzed international models and drew lessons for Vietnam. He argued that the development of professional ethics should be embedded into teacher training curricula and linked with professional standards to ensure sustainability and accountability.

Pham Thi Lan Anh (2016), in *Fostering Professional Ethics for Vietnamese Teachers in the Context of Globalization*, highlighted the dual pressure of globalization and cultural identity preservation. She pointed out that Vietnamese teachers must adapt to new global values while maintaining traditional moral foundations.

More recent studies have also stressed the ethical dimension of early childhood and general education. Le Thi Thu Huong (2018) argued that the ethical qualities of preschool teachers play a decisive role in shaping children's personalities. Similarly, Nguyen Van Khoi (2019) emphasized that ethical education in teacher training institutions must be systematic, combining curricular, extracurricular, and social activities.

III. Conclusion

In summary, professional ethics is recognized as an indispensable element of teacher education. In summary, both international and domestic studies confirm that professional ethics is an indispensable component of teacher education, complementing knowledge and professional skills. Globally, approaches range from emphasizing personal role modeling to adopting legal standards and integrated theoretical frameworks, all underscoring ethics as a foundation for effective teaching. In Vietnam, research highlights ethics as both a personal quality and a professional responsibility, calling for systematic integration into teacher training through diverse approaches. However, the challenge remains in reconciling universal professional standards with national cultural and educational traditions, especially in the context of globalization and ongoing digital transformation.

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