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Effects of University Teachers' Professional Ethics on their Students' Achievements

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Abstract

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Keywords: University Teachers, Professional Ethics, Students' Achievements.

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Cite Us

**Title**

Effects of University Teachers' Professional Ethics on their Students' Achievements

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of university teachers' professional ethics on the academic achievements of their students. Employing a descriptive research design and utilizing survey methods, the study focuses on graduation-level education at the University of Okara, Punjab. The population of the study encompasses students enrolled at the University of Okara, necessitating the use of convenient sampling techniques due to its size. Eight departments, including Botany, Chemistry, Education, English, Information Technology, Management Sciences, Mathematics, and Zoology, were selected for data collection. A self-developed Professional Ethics Rating Scale (PERS) was employed to measure the ethical conduct of teachers. The scale's validity was confirmed through expert opinion, and its reliability coefficient was determined to be 0.79. The study revealed a significant relationship between teacher ethics and student achievement. The findings underscore the importance of ethical conduct among university teachers and its profound influence on student academic performance.

Keywords:

[University Teachers](#)
[Professional Ethics](#)
[Students](#)
[Achievements](#)

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Introduction

Professional ethics refers to the moral principles and standards that guide the behavior and conduct of

individuals within a particular profession. In the context of university teaching, professional ethics encompass a range of values and principles that



educators adhere to in their interactions with students, colleagues, and the broader academic community. These ethics often include integrity, fairness, respect, honesty, confidentiality, and a commitment to excellence in teaching and scholarship (White, 2004).

When university teachers uphold professional ethics, they create a positive and supportive learning environment where students feel respected, valued, and safe to express their ideas. This conducive atmosphere fosters engagement, participation, and active learning among students, ultimately enhancing their academic performance. Ethical behavior builds trust and credibility between teachers and students. When students perceive their teachers as trustworthy and ethical individuals, they are more likely to be motivated to learn, follow instructions, and seek guidance when needed. This trust fosters a collaborative relationship that facilitates effective teaching and learning experiences (Barkley & Major, 2020).

University teachers serve as role models for their students. By demonstrating ethical behavior in their professional practice, educators instill important values and norms in students, shaping their ethical development and professional identity. Students who observe and emulate ethical conduct are more likely to exhibit similar behavior in their academic pursuits and future careers. Professional ethics contribute to enhanced academic performance among students. Teachers who prioritize fairness, transparency, and impartiality in their assessment and evaluation processes ensure that students are evaluated based on merit and achievement rather than favoritism or bias. Consequently, students are motivated to strive for excellence and achieve their academic goals (Campbell, 2014).

Ethical teaching practices promote students' personal and professional growth. When educators demonstrate integrity, empathy, and respect for diversity, they create an inclusive learning environment that celebrates individual differences and encourages intellectual curiosity. Students feel empowered to explore new ideas, challenge assumptions, and develop critical thinking skills

essential for success in academia and beyond (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017).

A code of ethics serves as a written guide outlining principles and rules for ethical behavior within a profession, defining what is considered acceptable and unacceptable conduct (Gotterbarn et al., 2018). Its primary aim is to uphold professionalism, provide guidance in navigating ethical challenges, and set a standard against which the public can hold professionals accountable (Stievano & Tschudin, 2019). The main goal of these codes is to ensure that members of a profession behave appropriately.

In the field of education, such codes are essential. For example, in South Africa, the professional code of conduct for teachers emphasizes the importance of behavior that upholds the quality of the teaching profession (Nuland & Khandelwal, 2006). Similarly, in England, teachers are required to demonstrate high personal and professional standards both within and outside the school environment (Rychert & Diesfeld, 2019).

Concerns about the level of professional ethics extend to various professions globally. In Russia, for instance, Evstratova et al. (2020) noted a low level of professional ethics among civil servants, resulting in underperformance and misuse of official positions for personal gain. Given the crucial role of teachers in shaping students' knowledge and skills for societal responsibility, a strong commitment to the teaching profession is essential.

In Nigeria, the code of conduct for teachers emphasizes discipline and the implementation of proper corrective measures in response to any inappropriate behavior (Iroegbu & Uyenga, 2019). Similarly, teachers worldwide are held accountable by codes of conduct, expected to prove acceptable behavior and serve as positive examples to students and society.

The university teachers in Pakistan must also show acceptable behavior, with the code of conduct outlined in their employment contracts. This code delineates teachers' responsibilities to students, the state, their employer, the profession, and the community at large (URT, 2007). Specifically, teachers are tasked with ensuring the holistic

development of students—physically, cognitively, spiritually, and socially. They play a vital role in fostering the overall growth and well-being of the students under their care (Anangisye, 2019). Teachers must model good behavior for their students to emulate, attend classes regularly, and deliver instruction effectively to help students' cognitive development. In the Pakistani context there are studies related to students' achievement in the latest study academic achievement of elementary school students was explored based on gender (Jamil et al., 2024). Similarly in a study by Shah et al., (2021), children's academic achievement was seen keeping in view the parental involvement.

Reports suggest a low level of professionalism among teachers, with many lacking commitment to the teaching profession, resulting in ineffective teaching and learning outcomes. Consequently, there is a need to investigate the impact of teachers' professional ethics on their students' achievements. Thus, the current study aims to address this gap in research. Teachers, being entrusted with students, play a pivotal role in creating a positive learning environment and serving as role models for behavior (Nuland & Khandelwal, 2006). To keep order in schools, a professional code of conduct has been developed and implemented in the universities. This code emphasizes university teachers' responsibilities to the students under their care, the communities they serve, the teaching profession, their employers, and the state (TSC, 2016). The study also draws on the Utilitarianism Theory by John Stuart Mill in 1863 as its theoretical framework. Utilitarianism posits that utility, or the greatest happiness for the greatest number, should guide ethical reasoning and decision-making. According to this theory, once rules are set up, it is morally incorrect to break them, even in individual cases where it may seem unfavorable.

Evstratova (2020) explored the professional ethics of Russian Federation public officials in quantitative research. Findings revealed a low level of professional ethics among civil servants, including teachers, attributed to the misuse of official positions for personal gain, irresponsible attitudes towards official duties, and disrespectful behavior towards public

service consumers. Similarly, a study by Bull et al., (2021) in the UK focused on discrimination in educational institutions, particularly sexual misconduct in higher education. Through qualitative research methods, the study found prevalent instances of sexual misconduct and recommended strategies for managing such misconduct within the teaching profession.

The study recommended the implementation of guidance to address staff sexual misconduct in UK higher education. Additionally, Hogan, et al., (2019) conducted a qualitative study in Canada, focusing on classroom teacher's verbal abuse. They reviewed decisions of the discipline committee of the Ontario College of Teachers, finding instances of verbal abuse in Ontario classrooms. The study highlighted inadequacies in responses to teacher misconduct, particularly the slow evolution of measures to address it. Male teachers were often identified as offenders, with serious and life-changing impacts on stakeholders. The study stressed the urgency of effectively addressing complaints and disciplinary matters to protect students from abuse.

In India, Muralidharan et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the fiscal cost of weak governance, specifically focusing on teacher absence in public schools. Their research, based on a nationwide representative sample of public schools in rural India, revealed a teacher absence rate of 23.6%. Additionally, they found a strong correlation between increasing school monitoring and reductions in teacher absence rates.

Ayeni (2018) did another study that looked at the relationship between the professional integrity of teachers and teaching and learning outcomes in secondary schools in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The research established a significant link between teachers' professional ethics and instructional performance.

Basimwaki (2020) studied the effects of dual employment among secondary school teachers in Dar es Salaam City Council, Tanzania. To supplement their incomes, the instructors engaged in part-time lecturing, operating small businesses, running retail outlets, catering services, and selling snacks before or

after classes. Teacher moonlighting has advantages and disadvantages but loss of teaching time is the main concern.

There have been various studies on how to improve the professionalism training programs for teachers within different contexts. For example, Rychert and Diesfeld (2019) conducted exploratory research in New Zealand that explored linkages between professional misbehavior and well-being among teachers. The reason for this was that it discovered several instances where disciplinary measures had been taken against several teachers who were found guilty of drug abuse, boundary crossing, or use of excessive force among other charges. The article also explained how such misbehaviors can escalate due to discipline if one has health problems. In its recommendation, health-based treatments should be included in professional development programs as preventive measures.

The aim of the study by Koç and Fidan (2020) which was carried out in Turkey was to determine educators' perspectives about institutionalized moral/immoral actions in educational environments. The researchers found out that there are no concerted efforts aimed at bringing ethical values into education let alone a committee meant to address professional misconduct among educators. However, Rychert & Diesfeld's (2019) research highlights the importance of using health-based solutions before going ahead with further sanctions against unruly teachers. Since deviant behavior sometimes results from psychological factors such as ill-health, family issues, or stress linked to work conditions, instructors who receive health-based interventions would recover and revert to their normal selves.

Ndung'u (2017) conducted a study on the effectiveness of disciplinary actions taken by head teachers on teacher indiscipline in public secondary schools in Githunguri Sub-County Kiambu County, Kenya. According to the survey findings, common cases of indiscipline among teachers are absenteeism, failure to seek permission from the administration, missing classes, and insubordination. All head teachers used verbal warnings as their major form of discipline;

written warnings and the establishment of disciplinary committees were other methods employed.

Although ethical issues are essential to good teaching techniques everywhere, there aren't many thorough studies that particularly look at this relationship in the context of higher education institutions in Pakistan. This gap in research leaves a significant knowledge deficit regarding the influence of professional ethics on student success and the broader educational landscape in Pakistan. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities facing educators and students in Pakistani universities and for developing targeted strategies to enhance the quality of education and academic outcomes in the country.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study.

1. To explore university teachers' professional ethics
2. To analyze university students' achievements
3. To find out the effects of university teachers' professional ethics on their students' achievements.

Research Questions

Following were the research questions of the study of professional ethics at the university.

1. What are the underlying principles and practices shaping university teachers' professional ethics?
 2. What factors contribute to variations in university students' academic achievements?
 3. How do the professional ethics demonstrated by university teachers impact the academic achievements of their students?
- 1.

Research Methodology

The study in hand was conducted to examine the effect of teachers' professional ethics on their students' achievements. This section deals with the procedural steps of the study. Those are as follows. The nature of the study was descriptive, and a survey method was used. The study aimed to examine the effect of

teachers' professional ethics on their students' achievements at the secondary level. The data were collected from the students enrolled at the University of Okara. The population of the study included students enrolled at the University of the district of Okara, Punjab. The purpose of selecting university-level students was to examine the effect of university teachers' professional ethics on their students' achievements. The population of the study comprised all the students enrolled in the University of Okara so,

the researcher couldn't study the whole population. Thus, the researcher used a convenient sampling technique to select the sample of the study. Eight departments namely, the Department of Botany, Chemistry, Education, English, Information Technology, Management Sciences, Mathematics, and Zoology were selected from the University of Okara. The following table represents the picture of the selected sample.

Table 1

Summary of the Selected Students Enrolled in Secondary Schools

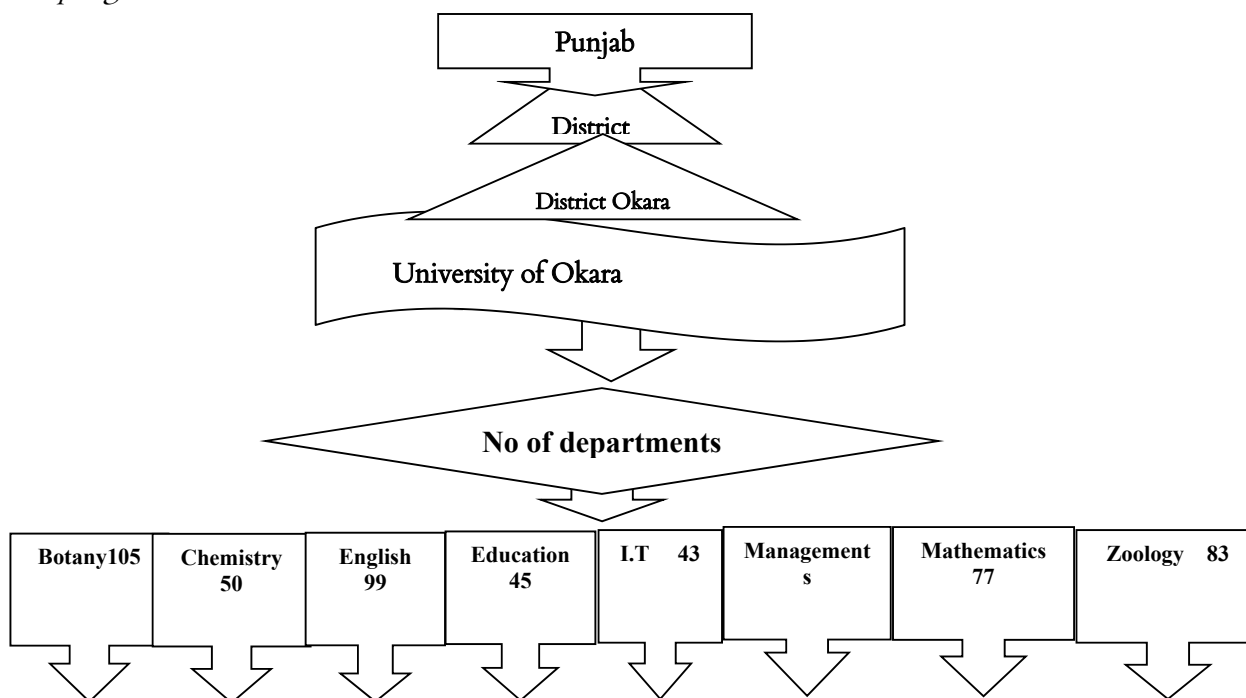
S.No	Name of Department	Gender of Students		Total
1	Botany	Male (5)	Female (40)	45
2	Chemistry	Male (24)	Female (53)	77
3	Education	Male (12)	Female (56)	68
4	English	Male (30)	Female (69)	99
5	Information Technology	Male (59)	Female (24)	83
6	Management Sciences	Male (23)	Female (10)	33
7	Mathematics	Male (18)	Female (35)	53
8	Zoology	Male (5)	Female (38)	43
9	Total	Male (158)	Female (343)	501

Table 1 shows that the researchers divided the students University of Okara (male, and female) as a sample of

the study. The following figure represents the sampling tree of the study.

Figure 1

Sampling Tree



Research Instruments

The researchers personally developed the questionnaire namely Professional Ethics Rating Scale (*PERS*). The detailed description of the scale is as under.

Piloting of Instrument

The validity of the Professional Ethics Rating SCALE (*PERS*) was observed through the expert opinion. The researcher sought out expert opinions from experts in relevant fields. The reliability coefficient of the scale was also measured which was 0.93. The table of the piloting is as under.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Reliability Coefficient on PERS

No. of Items	Mean	SD	Reliability Coefficient
27	96.40	23.42	0.935

Table 2 reports the statistical values for the mean, SD, and alpha reliability coefficient of the Professional Ethics Rating Scale used to collect data. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.935 and

therefore *PERS* was considered to be a reliable instrument to measure classroom environment.

The following presents descriptive information for all six subsets of *PERS*.

Table 3

Number of statements in each Subscale of PERS

PERS Factors	Item Serial Number	α -reliability coefficient
Conduct	1-6	.79
Integrity	7-11	.63
Punctuality	12-14	.72
Behavior	15-17	.72
Motivation	18-23	.86
Accountability	24-27	.77

Table 3 shows the factor-wise division of the items of *PERS* and it reflects analysis of alpha reliability for subsets of *PERS*. It is evident from the findings that the Professional Ethics Rating Scale is reliable. The

reliability values for all subscales of *PERS* are above 0.5 thus fulfilling the criteria as described by De Vellis (1991).

Table 4

Inter-scale Correlation Matrix for CEQ

PERS Factors	Co	In	Pu	Be	Mo	Ac
Conduct	1	0.662**	0.548**	0.69**	0.73**	0.61**
Integrity		1	0.48**	0.58**	0.65**	0.59**
Punctuality			1	0.62**	0.64**	0.54**
Behavior				1	0.76**	0.71**

Motivation	1	0.71**
Accountability		1

**p<0.01

Table 4 shows the inter-scale correlation between subscales of PERS. All factors of PERS are positively and significantly correlated as p<0.01.

After reliability and validity analysis, it was concluded that the Professional Ethics Rating Scale proved to be a valid and reliable tool to measure professional ethics as perceived by university students.

Data Analysis

The data analysis relevant to the research questions are described as under.

Research Question #01: What are the underlying principles and practices shaping university teachers' professional ethics?

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics on Subsets of PERS

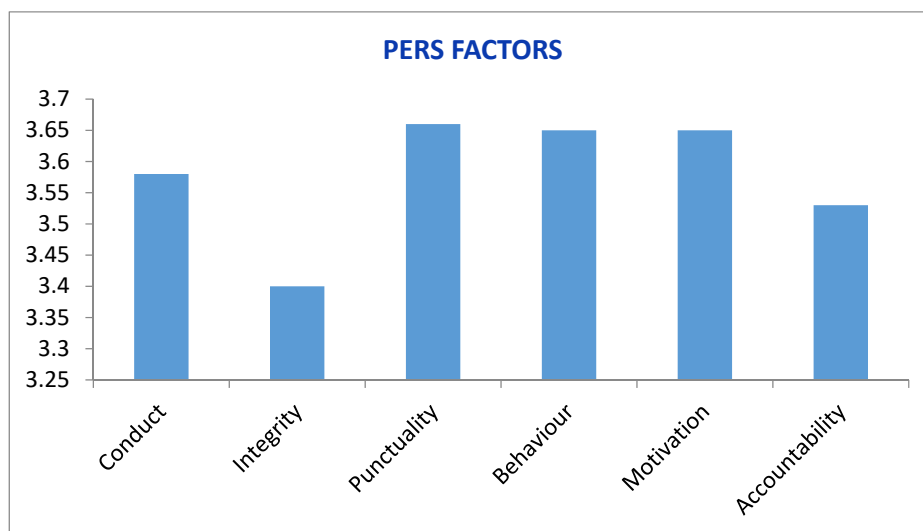
PERS Factors	Mean	S.D
Conduct	3.58	.99
Integrity	3.40	1.02
Punctuality	3.66	1.11
Behavior	3.65	1.09
Motivation	3.65	1.02
Accountability	3.53	1.02

Table 6 provides principles and practices shaping university teachers' professional ethics in Mean Score. Table 6 revealed that Punctuality M= (3.66) sub-factors of PE are widely observed by the university

teachers along with Behavior M= (3.65), Motivation M= (3.65), Conduct M= (3.58), Accountability M= (3.53) and Integrity M= (3.40) in respectively.

Figure 2

Professional Ethics as Observed by University Teachers.



Research Question 02: What are the university students' academic achievements?

Table 7

University Students' Academic Achievements

Level	N	Percent
2.76-3	135	26.9
Above 3	366	73.1
Total	501	100

Table 7 shows majority of the students got a CGPA above 3.

Research Question 03: How do the professional ethics demonstrated by university teachers impact the academic achievements of their students?

Table 8

Correlation between Professional Ethics and students' Achievement

	Mean	S.D	Correlation(r)	Sig. value
Professional Ethics	3.19	0.28	0.24*	0.02
Students' Achievement	3.57	0.87		

*N=501, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$*

Table 8 reflects that the Pearson Correlation "*r*" value (0.24) is a significant relationship beyond at significance level $\alpha = 0.01$. Hence, the answer to the research question is that there exists a significant relationship between Professional Ethics and students' Achievements.

Findings and Conclusions

The underlying principles and practices shaping university teachers' professional ethics are reflected in the mean scores of numerous factors of professional ethics as measured by the Professional Ethics Rating Scale (PERS). Table 6 illustrates the mean scores for different subsets of PERS factors. Notably, punctuality ($M=3.66$) appears to be the most widely observed principle among university teachers, followed closely by behavior ($M=3.65$) and motivation ($M=3.65$). Conduct ($M=3.58$), accountability ($M=3.53$), and integrity ($M=3.40$) also demonstrate significant adherence among university teachers.

The academic achievements of university students, as measured by their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), are presented in Table 7. It shows that most

students (73.1%) have achieved a CGPA above 3, indicating a prominent level of academic success among the student population.

The impact of professional ethics demonstrated by university teachers on the academic achievements of their students is examined through correlation analysis in Table 8. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r=0.24^*$) indicates a significant positive relationship between professional ethics and students' achievements at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.01$. This suggests that higher levels of professional ethics among university teachers are associated with greater academic success among their students.

The findings of this study reveal several important insights regarding university teachers' professional

ethics and their impact on student academic achievements:

- Academic instructors exhibit a resolute dedication to professional ethics, specifically with timeliness, conduct, motivation, accountability, and honesty.
- The majority of college students demonstrate strong levels of academic success, with a notable percentage attaining CGPA values of more than 3.
- A positive correlation exists between university instructors' professional ethics and their students' academic achievement.

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

The research provides insight into the complex relationship between students' academic success and university teachers' professional ethics. It concluded that high moral standards maintained by teachers have a significant impact on student's performance and learning outcomes in college.

Research has shown that university teachers are highly committed to professional ethics. For instance, most lecturers display a high level of commitment to punctuality in their professional duties. Furthermore, the findings show high ratings on behavior and motivation which seem to indicate a good deal of adherence among tutors to moral behavior and enthusiasm for their work as teachers. Strong ratings on responsibility, honesty, as well as other characteristics, also reveal how much value lecturers place on maintaining moral principles in their work.

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), which measures students' cumulative level of achievement in courses over their years at the university shows positive information about the overall academic performance of students. The majority have CGPAs above 3 which means they performed excellently well academically with great competence. This suggests that student achievement is strongly influenced by the learning environment created by university instructors who are characterized by their dedication to professional ethics.

The study's most important conclusion is that there is a favorable relationship between

university teachers' professional ethics and their pupils' academic success. A strong and statistically significant association between higher levels of professional ethics among teachers and better academic achievement among students is revealed by the correlation study. This demonstrates the critical role that moral behavior and conduct play in the educational process, where teachers' dedication and moral character have a favorable impact on students' performance and learning results.

The conversation is consistent with the numerous studies, i.e., research from different nations provides insight into how teachers' professional ethics affect their ability to teach and the results they achieve for their students. Evstratova ([2020](#)) found a link between poor performance in task fulfillment and low levels of professional ethics among government officials including teachers in the Russian Federation. Research from other countries like Tanzania, the United Kingdom, Canada, and India has also exposed problems that affect negatively students' academic achievements like misbehavior and teacher absenteeism (Bull et al., [2021](#); Hogan et al., [2019](#); Muralidharan et al., [2017](#); Basimwaki, [2020](#)).

The findings have implications for educational policy and research. First, tertiary education institutions should prioritize the development of a culture of professional ethics among university teachers. By giving continuous training, motivation, and recognition of moral conduct, universities can succeed in this move. Second, legislative authorities responsible for education should recognize the role played by moral principles in enhancing student achievement and enact laws and regulations that promote and maintain ethical behavior in teachers.

The study calls for more detailed future research to better understand how professional ethics affect students' academic performance. Qualitative research and longitudinal studies could offer deeper insights into this relationship, thereby guiding targeted interventions and strategies to improve student learning outcomes. However, taken together, these findings confirm the crucial role played by

professional ethics in shaping the nature of education
and promoting academic success among students.

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