

STUDENTS' OPINION ABOUT PROFESSIONAL ETHICS RELATION OF THE TEACHERS

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UDK: 37.064.2(497.7)"2010";
371.15(497.7)"2010"

Abstract: Professional teacher's ethics is a collection of moral codes of their professional work. It is significant that the teaching profession respects certain designated professional-ethical codes of conduct between the teachers and the students, with their colleagues and other people they professionally cooperate with.

This study is focused on analysis of the professional ethical relation of teachers towards students, seen from student's point of view. These are the results of student's reported opinion of the eighth graders from six primary schools in the region of the city of Skopje. The obtained results show that teachers mainly keep in line with the moral codes of conduct with the students, but not always all teachers respect them.

Keywords: Teacher ethics; Professional ethics; Students; Primary schools; Primary school teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The professional teacher's ethics is a sum of moral codes of their professional work. At the teaching profession it is important to respect few kinds of moral codes, which are basically divided into the following groups: general moral codes of the teaching profession, moral codes of conduct between teachers and students, with their colleagues, and the other subjects they professionally cooperate with.

This study is focused on the analysis of the issue about the kind of opinion students have. On how teachers keep up to certain moral codes in the communication they achieve with the students during their education. This professional ethical relation of the teachers with the students is analyzed in relation to respecting the following moral codes:

1. Implementing fair and professional teacher-student relation;
2. Motivating students to express free ideas and opinions;
3. Accepting and respecting different student's needs and requests;
4. Establishing a relation of teacher-student mutual trust and respect, paying respect to student's personality and rights;
5. Following standards of non-aggressive communication, with the students during teaching and during extra-curriculum activities;
6. Keeping to the principles against discrimination, offensive behaviour and acceptance of inhuman punishments for the students;
7. Objective evaluation of the student's achievements.

According to the many research results, it has been confirmed that keeping to the moral codes of conduct between teachers and students is a base condition in creating positive atmosphere in teaching and establishing a relation of partnership with the students. It has been stated that the degree of their respect is not only in dependence with the degree of student's accomplishments, but in the stimulation of their development as well.

2. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The empirical information about the student's feedback in relation to the professional ethical relationship of the teachers has been obtained by applying specially designed questionnaire. It contains ques-

tions by which students have the opportunity to report their opinion about teachers respecting moral codes of conduct with the students.

The sample report of the respondents comprises a total number of 137 eight graders, one class from six primary schools in the region of the city of Skopje. The sample report includes 62 female students and 75 male students. Whereas, according to the given school progress, the number of the students in separate categories is: excellent progress students - 78, very good progress students - 33, good progress students - 23 and sufficient progress students - 3. The questionnaire had been realized in March 2010, and in order to enable the students to be honest in giving their responses the questionnaire has been anonymous.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the examined student's opinion about teachers keeping to the moral codes are here separately presented for each of the already given codes and according to the same order as they were previously stated. The given results are shown in a table, only for those questions that were statistically processed and where a difference in the reported opinion between the students of a different sex and between the students of a different school progress has been notified.

The moral code of practicing a fair and professional teacher-student relationship is here given according to the obtained responses to three questions. The responses of the students given to the question, *Do teachers behave in a fair and professional attitude with the students?* are given in this table.

Table 1. Categories and frequencies of responses, according to sex and school success of the students

Category of responses	Sex		School Results		Total	
	Female f	Male f	Excellent f	Others* f	f	%
Yes, all teachers	37	49	47	39	86	62,77
Only the class teachers	14	17	21	10	31	22,63
Only the subject teachers	7	4	2	9	11	8,03
No, not even one teacher	4	5	8	1	9	6,57
Total	62	75	78	59	137	100,00

χ^2 test = 1,67, df= 3, P > 0,05,

χ^2 results = 12,15, df= 3, P < 0,01

The analysis of the information in the table shows that the biggest percentage of the students consider that the teachers have fair and professional relation with the students, both by the female and male students. However, the analysis also shows that there has been a significant difference in reported responses to this question by students with different school progress. The students with very good, good and sufficient school progress reported a better opinion about their teacher's code of conduct in comparison to the students with excellent school progress.

The obtained results to the question, *How do teachers behave with the students?* to which multiple choice answers have been offered, are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Categories and frequencies of responses, according to sex and school success of the students

Category of responses	Sex		School Results		Total	
	Female f	Male f	Excellent f	Others f	f	%
Polite	20	43	30	33	63	45,98
Rude	9	6	8	7	15	10,95
Motivating	14	16	20	10	30	21,90
Arrogant	8	5	8	5	13	9,49
Indifferent	11	5	12	4	16	11,68
Total	62	75	78	59	137	100,00

χ^2 test = 10,93, df= 4, P < 0,05,

χ^2 results = 5,61, df= 4, P > 0,05

The given results in Table 2 show that the highest percentage of the respondents considers that the teachers behave politely and motivating, whereas one third that the teachers are rude, arrogant or they are indifferent towards them. The analysis of the presented information shows that male students have better opinion about their teachers in comparison to female students. However, there is no difference in

opinion between students with a different school progress.

The third question, *Are teachers arrogant and unapproachable*, 20 students or 14,60% of the total number of respondents, answered *Yes, all the teachers*, 3 students or 2,19% answered *Only the class teachers*, 27 students or 19,71% answered *Only the subject teachers*, and 87 students or 63,50% answered *No, not even one teacher*. These responses do not differ at students with a different sex or school progress. These results show that the largest number of students thinks that the teachers treat them fairly and professionally, politely and motivating and those teachers are neither arrogant nor unapproachable.

How much do teachers go in line with the moral code of motivating their students in expressing free ideas and thoughts, are given in the following responses to the question: *What is the teacher's attitude to their student's ideas?* 88 students or 64,23%, *they motivate expressing free ideas*, 28 or 20,44% answered, *they do not pay attention to the student's ideas*, and 21 students or 15,33% responded, *They do not motivate student's free idea expression*. The largest number of the respondents considers that teachers motivate students in expressing free ideas. There are no differences in the responses between the students of a different sex, and between students of different school progress.

In relation to the moral code, – paying respect to student's requests and needs, the respondents answered: 19 students or 13,87% said *that their needs are more respected by the senior teachers*, 37 students or 27,01%, said *that their needs are more respected by the younger teachers* and 81 students or 59,12% said *that their needs are respected by all teachers*. These results show that teachers accept and respect student's needs and requests.

Establishing a relation of trust and respect between the teachers and the students, paying respect to their personality and their rights, as moral codes in the

teaching profession have been estimated according to the student's responses to three questions.

Responses to the question, *Do teachers encourage a relation of mutual trust and respect?* are: 51 students or 37,23% answered *Yes*, 21 students or 15,33% answered *No* and 65 students or 47,44% answered, *I do not know*. To the question, *Do teachers respect your personality?* 96 students or 70,07% answered, *Yes all the teachers*, 26 students or 18,98% answered, *Only the class teachers*, 10 students or 7,30% answered, *Only the subject teachers*, and only 5 student or 3,65% answered *No, none of the teachers*. And to the third question, *Do teachers respect your human rights?*, 104 students or 75,91% answered, *Yes all teachers*, 17 students or 12,41% answered, *Yes, only the class teachers*, 8 student or 5,84% answered, *Yes, only the subject teachers* and 8 or 5,84% student answered *No, none of the teachers*. These results show that teachers mainly respect student's rights and their personality, but that in their teaching they have not encouraged the significant moral code in this profession - nourishing a mutual trust with the students, enough. The analysis of the given answers to three questions shows that there is no difference between the reported opinion between students of a different sex and of a different school progress.

Whereas, the question about the moral code, if teachers respect the principles of non-aggressive communication in their relation with the students, was answered as following: 61 students or 44,53% answered *that teachers always respect those moral codes*, 61 students or 44,53% answered *that teachers occasionally respect those codes* and 15 students or 10,94% reported *that moral codes are never respected by the teachers*.

As far as keeping to the moral codes against discrimination and against insulting students and against applying unfair, unauthorized punishment for the students, very interesting responses have been reported. At the question, *What is that you do not*

like about your teacher's attitude towards you?, the following original responses have been reported:

- Some teachers are more polite towards some students. Even though I am an excellent student I do not like the discrimination because of the student's school progress;

- Some teachers show higher tolerance and permissive attitude to the girls;

- Teachers get soften towards student's parents they know well and who are well off;

- If we have not learned well they use bad language;

- They are not fair to all students and that is insulting;

- Some teachers insult and threaten;

- Because I have a bad school progress, teachers address me with bad offensive words – dope, illiterate, etc. student.

The given responses to the question, *Do teachers apply corporal punishments and other punishment activities by which they humiliate and intimidate their students?* are stated in the table:

Table 3. Categories and frequencies of responses, according to sex and school success of the students

Categories of responses	Sex		School Results		Total	
	Female f	Male f	Excellent f	Others f	f	%
Yes they do it on an almost daily basis	3	1	1	3	4	2,92
Sometimes	22	24	20	26	46	33,58
No, they never do that	37	50	57	30	87	63,50
Total	62	75	78	59	137	100,00

χ^2 test = 1,81, df= 2, P > 0,05

χ^2 progress = 7,68, df = 2, P < 0,05

The information here shows that almost two thirds of the respondents say that teachers never apply corporal or other punishment by which they are humiliated and intimidated, and one third says that only sometimes teachers do that. We have found a difference in the reported responses between the students of a different school progress, but not at students of a different sex. In comparison with the excellent progress students, the others consider that teachers apply punishments. Whether

teachers are fair when applying a punishment, students reported the following: *they are always fair*- 36 or 26,28% , *they are only sometimes fair* – 81 students or 59,12% and *they are unfair* – 20 students or 14.60%. There is no difference here at the students of a different sex or school progress.

The reported answers to the question *How often do teachers use bad words and embarrass students with bad language?* are shown in the following table.

Table 4. Categories and frequencies of responses, according to the sex and school success of the students

Category of responses	Sex		School Results		Total	
	Female f	Male f	Excellent f	Others f	f	%
Yes they do it on an almost daily basis	11	4	10	5	15	10,95
Sometimes	37	45	47	35	82	59,85
No, they never do that	14	26	21	19	40	29,20
Total	62	75	78	59	137	100,00

χ^2 test = 6,47, df= 2, P < 0,05

χ^2 progress = 0,90, df = 2, P > 0,05

The stated responses show that less than one third of the respondents have answered that teachers do not insult them and do not humiliate them with offensive words, whereas others say that sometimes or on a daily basis teachers do that. This answer differ according to the students of a different sex, but not between students of a different school progress. Compared to the male students, significantly larger percentage of the female students reported that teachers do that more often.

These research results show that not always and not all teachers respect the moral codes against discrimination, against using offensive language to the students, and against applying inhuman punishment in communication with the students.

The objective evaluation of student's achievements by the teachers are a moral code whose disrespect always causes negative feelings at the students. In relation to keeping to this code by the teachers, the question, *Are teachers objective when giving marks?*, has been responded as following: 49 students or 35,77% answered *Yes*,

37 or 27,01% answered *No* and 51 students or 37,22% answered *I do not know*. At the question *What is that you do not like about your teacher's attitude towards you?* the following responses have often been given:

- Sometimes teachers give unreal marks;
- They do not let us improve our grades;
- Some teachers do not mark objectively;
- They grade us without examination;
- They are very strict when grading;
- They do not give objective marks to students they do not like, no matter how well they have learned;
- They sometimes give unfairly low grades;
- They do not grade fairly because they are influenced by the other teacher's marks.

4. CONCLUSION

What can actually be drawn as a general conclusion, based on the reported results obtained in this research? First, they show that primary schoolteachers mainly keep to the moral codes of conduct in relation to the students. This conclusion is based on the fact that the largest number of the respondents consider that teachers have fair and professional attitude that they pay respect to students needs and requests, that they motivate free idea expression and opinion, that they respect their rights and opinion, that they respect their rights, their personality and dignity, as well as the principles of non-aggressive communication with students. The results also show that not always and not all teachers keep to the moral codes of conduct with the students. One third of the respondents have reported their opinion of the total number of respondents. Their reactions are that teachers sometimes treat them rudely and arrogantly, that the teachers do not motivate and do not pay attention to student's ideas, that they are more tolerant and subjective to-

wards female students, that they do not grade them objectively and that some teachers insult them using bad language and threaten them.

The expressed attitude and opinion about not respecting moral codes of teacher's conduct that have been reported at one third of the respondents, point out that this problem is present and that the educational institutions should treat it with more concern. Despite the fact that the moral codes of conduct of the teachers are regulated by certain laws and by-laws, still, it is necessary that this issue is treated more precisely by a special ethical codex for the teaching profession. That way all moral standards of this profession would become accessible and beneficial for the teachers, the students and their parents.

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