

A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND MORALITY: A CASE OF MONGOLIAN AND KAZAKHSTANI TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Principles defining the professional behavior of teachers are often discussed but relatively little researched (e.g. Campbell, 2000; Nash, 2002; Strike, 2006). Teachers' beliefs about professional principles and their corresponding conduct are usually examined less in their relation to the principles and more as embedded in everyday conflicts. While there is a long tradition of discourse on universal moral principles, these may be manifest in different behavioral norms in different cultures. In turn, cultures shape the professional roles in education. International surveys often collect data on issues related to teachers' morale (TALIS, 2013; OECD, 2015, 2017) to examine their impact on the efficiency of education systems. However, there have been no attempts to compare teachers' cultures.

The objective of this small-scale study is to explore teachers' perception of ethics and morality in samples of teachers of English as a foreign language from Mongolia ($N_{MNG}=50$) and Kazakhstan ($N_{KZ}=50$). These two countries are similar in their education system (due to former overwhelming Soviet influence), but differ greatly in their cultures. Therefore, the comparison of the opinions of their teachers may yield insight into the formation of professional identities in society. English teachers were chosen in order to maximise a common understanding of the issues targeted, by presenting the same instrument in English in both countries. Considerations for participants' ease in giving information resulted in different media for data collection (online in Mongolia, paper and pencil in Kazakhstan). The instrument was self-developed, informed by several previous empirical studies. Results from the following items of the questionnaire are presented in this paper: Teachers rated the morality and prestige of the profession in their countries. They also rated a list of 43 problematic behaviours on five-point Likert scales regarding their acceptability and their frequency.

It seems teachers in the targeted counties see their situation in society similarly. However, when rating the acceptability of the behaviours presented, small but significant differences ($p<.05$) were found on half of the items. These mostly concerned children's rights issues and professional relationships with colleagues. Regarding the frequency of the same behaviours, significant differences ($p<.05$) were found for a third of the items. Again, children's rights issues featured among these, and the abuse of position in a broader range of professional situations.

The findings indicate that the consensus on the universality of components of teachers' professional ethics and morality may not be undisputed. The example of the target countries shows much general similarity, but subtle differences also, due to cultural influences, which need to be explored in depth in the future.

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