



## Graduate School Professor's Perception Towards Teaching Public Ethics

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<i>Article History</i>	<b>Abstract</b>
Received: 06 June 2023 Revised: 05 Sept 2023 Accepted: 13 Nov 2023	<p><i>In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the teaching of public ethics in graduate programs has gained increasing significance. Graduate school professors play a pivotal role in shaping the ethical perspectives and practices of future professionals and leaders. This study delves into the attitudes, beliefs, practices, and challenges encountered by these professors in the domain of public ethics education. A mixed-method research approach was employed, encompassing surveys and in-depth interviews with a diverse group of graduate school professors. The study explored their attitudes towards public ethics education, the perceived relevance of ethics across academic disciplines, pedagogical approaches employed, and challenges faced in integrating ethics into their curriculum. The study employed thematic analysis to uncover nuanced insights from qualitative data and statistical analysis to derive quantitative trends. Quantitative analysis revealed a prevailing positive attitude among graduate school professors towards the importance of teaching public ethics. However, variations in perceived relevance across academic disciplines were observed. Professors reported diverse pedagogical approaches, ranging from case studies to ethical discussions, highlighting a rich educational landscape. Challenges included resource constraints and time limitations. The results underscore the commitment of graduate school professors to ethics education and the need for tailored approaches to address disciplinary variations. Diverse pedagogical approaches enrich the educational experience, while challenges present opportunities for institutional support and resource allocation. Interdisciplinary collaboration is recommended to bridge the gap between ethics education and various academic disciplines. This study illuminates the crucial role of graduate school professors in shaping ethical competencies among graduate students. Their positive attitudes, diverse teaching practices, and commitment to ethics education form a solid foundation for the continued integration of public ethics into graduate programs. Addressing challenges and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration will be instrumental in advancing ethics education and fostering ethically responsible professionals and leaders.</i></p>
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	<b>Keywords:</b> Graduate School, Professors, Perception, Teaching, Public Ethics

### 1. Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, the role of graduate school professors in shaping the minds and values of future leaders is of paramount importance. As educational institutions strive to prepare graduates who are not only academically proficient but also ethically conscious and socially responsible, the teaching of public ethics emerges as a critical facet of graduate education. This study, titled "Graduate School Professors' Perception Towards Teaching Public Ethics," embarks on an exploratory journey into the attitudes, perspectives, and practices of graduate school professors in relation to the teaching of public ethics.

Graduate education plays a pivotal role in producing professionals who are not only experts in their respective fields but also individuals with a deep sense of ethical responsibility and a commitment to the public good. Public ethics, encompassing principles of moral conduct, accountability, and social justice within a broader societal context, is a foundational element of this educational endeavor.

This study sets the stage for an in-depth examination of how graduate school professors perceive and approach the teaching of public ethics. The study recognizes that their perspectives, values, and teaching methodologies play a significant role in shaping the ethical perspectives of graduate students, who, in turn, will influence society through their professions and leadership roles.

In the subsequent sections, the study outlines its objectives, methodology, and expected contributions to the field of graduate education. By delving into the intricacies of graduate school professors' perceptions, this research aims to shed light on the opportunities and challenges associated with teaching public ethics at the graduate level. Ultimately, it seeks to inform educational policies and practices that can foster a new generation of professionals and leaders equipped not only with knowledge and skills but also with a profound commitment to public ethics and the betterment of society.

### **Objectives**

1. Assess professors' attitudes and beliefs.
2. Analyze perceived relevance of public ethics.
3. Examine pedagogical approaches.
4. Identify challenges and barriers.
5. Evaluate faculty development needs.
6. Assess ethical competency promotion.
7. Examine policy and institutional factors.
8. Inform curriculum enhancement.
9. Contribute to educational discourse.
10. Enhance graduate education quality.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This theory, developed by Icek Ajzen, is widely used in social psychology and educational research to understand and predict human behavior, including attitudes and intentions in the context of teaching and educational practices. TPB consists of three main components: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which are highly relevant to this study.

TPB posits that individuals' attitudes toward a behavior (in this case, teaching public ethics) influence their intention to engage in that behavior. This component can help assess how professors' personal attitudes toward teaching public ethics impact their willingness to incorporate it into their curriculum.

This component considers the influence of social norms and the opinions of significant others on an individual's intention to perform a behavior. In the context of teaching public ethics, it can help explore how professors perceive the expectations and opinions of colleagues, students, and institutions regarding the inclusion of ethics education.

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior. It can help evaluate whether professors feel they have the necessary resources, support, and autonomy to effectively teach public ethics.

Using TPB as a theoretical framework will allow researchers to systematically examine the factors that influence professors' intentions and behaviors related to teaching public ethics. This understanding can inform strategies to promote the integration of ethics education into graduate programs effectively and address any barriers or challenges that professors may encounter.

### **2. Materials And Methods**

For the study, a comprehensive research methodology was implemented, encompassing various data collection and analysis techniques. The following narrative outlines the steps undertaken in the past tense:

Structured surveys were distributed to a diverse sample of graduate school professors across different academic disciplines and institutions. The survey instrument was designed to gauge professors' attitudes, beliefs, and practices related to teaching public ethics. It included Likert-scale questions and open-ended inquiries to capture a broad spectrum of responses.

In-depth interviews were conducted with a select group of professors who had expertise and experience in teaching public ethics. These interviews provided rich qualitative data, allowing for a deeper exploration of their perspectives, challenges, and pedagogical approaches.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure representation across various academic disciplines and institutional settings. Participants were selected based on their willingness to participate and their expertise in the subject matter.

Quantitative data collected through surveys were subjected to statistical analysis using software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and profile the survey responses. Inferential statistics, such as correlation analysis, were used to examine relationships between variables, including attitudes, beliefs, and teaching practices related to public ethics.

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and unique insights from the interviewees' narratives.

Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation, understanding of the study's purpose, and assurance of confidentiality.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of professors. Their feedback led to refinements in question wording and format.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The survey revealed that a significant majority of graduate school professors held positive attitudes towards the importance of teaching public ethics in higher education. This finding indicates a strong recognition of the role of ethics education in producing socially responsible graduates.

Quantitative analysis demonstrated variations in the perceived relevance of public ethics across different academic disciplines. While professors from fields directly related to ethics and social sciences expressed higher levels of relevance, some STEM disciplines showed comparatively lower levels of perceived relevance.

Professors reported a variety of teaching practices related to public ethics. These practices included incorporating ethical case studies, engaging students in ethical discussions, and emphasizing the practical application of ethical principles. The data indicated a diverse range of pedagogical approaches.

A notable finding was the identification of challenges related to the integration of public ethics into the curriculum. Resource constraints, time limitations, and a lack of appropriate teaching materials were among the challenges cited by professors.

The overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards teaching public ethics among graduate school professors align with the broader recognition of the importance of ethics education in preparing future professionals. This commitment to ethics education bodes well for the cultivation of ethical competencies in graduate students.

The variations in the perceived relevance of public ethics across disciplines underscore the need for tailored approaches to ethics education. Efforts should be made to demonstrate the applicability and value of ethics education within STEM fields and other disciplines where its relevance may not be as immediately evident.

The diversity in teaching practices indicates that professors employ a range of strategies to impart public ethics education. This diversity can enrich the educational experience and cater to the varied learning styles of graduate students.

The challenges identified, such as resource constraints and time limitations, point to areas where institutions and educational policymakers can intervene. Investing in faculty development, providing access to teaching resources, and streamlining curriculum design can help address these challenges.

Given the variations in perceived relevance across disciplines, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration in ethics education could be beneficial. This approach encourages the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative teaching materials that bridge disciplinary gaps.

The results and discussions provide a foundation for further research and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing the integration of public ethics into graduate education. Future studies can delve deeper into the effectiveness of specific pedagogical approaches and the long-term impact of ethics education on graduate students' ethical competencies.

### **4. Conclusion**

The study provides valuable insights into the perspectives, practices, and challenges associated with the integration of public ethics education in graduate programs. The following conclusions are drawn from the study's results and discussions:

1. The study underscores the overwhelmingly positive attitudes held by graduate school professors towards the importance of teaching public ethics. This positive disposition reflects a deep commitment to the cultivation of ethical competencies among graduate students.
2. Variations in the perceived relevance of public ethics education across academic disciplines highlight the need for tailored approaches. Efforts should be made to bridge the gap between ethics education and disciplines where its applicability may not be immediately evident.
3. The diversity in teaching practices employed by professors indicates a rich landscape of pedagogical approaches in public ethics education. This diversity enhances the educational experience and accommodates different learning styles.
4. The identification of challenges, including resource constraints and time limitations, underscores the need for institutional support and resource allocation. These challenges represent opportunities for institutions to invest in faculty development and curriculum enhancement.
5. Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration in ethics education is vital for sharing best practices and developing innovative teaching materials. Such collaboration can foster a more holistic and effective approach to public ethics education.
6. The study serves as a foundation for future research and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing ethics education in graduate programs. Future studies can delve deeper into the effectiveness of specific pedagogical approaches and the long-term impact of ethics education on students' ethical competencies.

### **Recommendation**

Building on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are put forth to enhance the integration of public ethics education in graduate programs:

For Educational Institutions:

1. Provide opportunities for faculty members to undergo specialized training in ethics education. Workshops, seminars, and resource-sharing platforms can enhance their pedagogical skills and deepen their understanding of ethical principles.
2. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among professors to develop and implement innovative teaching materials and strategies that bridge the gap between ethics education and various academic disciplines.
3. Allocate resources for the development and dissemination of teaching materials specifically designed for public ethics education. Ensure that professors have access to updated resources and technology infrastructure to facilitate effective teaching.
4. Foster a supportive institutional culture that recognizes and rewards excellence in public ethics education. Institutions should provide recognition, awards, and incentives to professors who excel in teaching ethics.

For Graduate School Professors:

5. Embrace pedagogical innovation by continuously exploring new approaches to teaching public ethics. Experiment with active learning strategies, case studies, and real-world applications to engage students effectively.
6. Integrate ethical discussions and considerations into the broader curriculum. Rather than relegating ethics education to separate courses, infuse ethical thinking into existing courses across disciplines.
7. Encourage collaborative learning experiences that promote ethical discussions and ethical decision-making among students. Create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful dialogue and ethical reflection.

### **For Policymakers:**

1. Develop policy frameworks that emphasize the importance of ethics education in graduate programs. Include guidelines for faculty development, resource allocation, and interdisciplinary collaboration in these frameworks.
2. Establish incentive structures within educational policies that motivate institutions and faculty members to prioritize ethics education. Recognize and reward institutions and individuals for their contributions to ethics education.

**For Further Research:**

1. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of public ethics education on graduate students' ethical competencies and their ethical decision-making in professional contexts.
2. Investigate the effectiveness of specific pedagogical approaches in ethics education to identify best practices that can be shared with educators across disciplines.
3. Explore the integration of cross-cultural and global perspectives into ethics education, considering the increasingly interconnected nature of the world.

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