EFL Learners' Perceptions of Ethics in the Classroom

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Abstract

The present study investigated EFL learners' perceptions of classroom ethics, and 60 EFL learners participated in an interview and an ethics questionnaire. The analysis of collected data resulted in 13 categories of classroom ethics, including 'teacher punctuality', 'fairness and discrimination', 'respect and politeness', 'being humorous and energetic', 'discipline', 'rapport', 'commitment to the profession and colleagues', 'appropriate content of discussion', 'responsibility', 'adaptability', 'reliability and trust', 'avoidance of misuse', and 'dress code'. The findings showed that all the learners recognized ethics as an essential part of the classrooms while their views differed in ranking some ethics. The most and the least valuable ethics for the participants were 'punctuality' and "dress code and appearance" in order. The most important ethics perceived by the learners were 'punctuality', 'rapport', and 'being humorous and energetic'. The findings illustrated that the learners' consideration of ethics was focused on the teachers' manner and morality in the classroom.

Keywords: Classroom ethics, Code of ethics, EFL Learners, Perception, Values

1. Introduction

"The field of ethics in teaching as a moral profession is a robust and compelling one. It captures the interest and imagination of scholars, researchers, and practitioners alike because it is very important and integral to the world of education" (Campbell, 2008, p.21). Ethics are mainly regulations concerned with morality, code of behavior and conduct, groups of clear rules in sustaining a healthy, and friendly setting to confirm at par efficiency in the higher education division (Kumar & Kaur, 2014). According to Futterman (2015), ethics is a part of moral philosophy, involving defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong conducts. Therefore, ethics plays a crucial role, particularly in education systems and Promoting ethics in the different organizations particularly in teaching the English language generates a positive atmosphere for increased productivity and has a more influential part in society (Salehnia & Ashraf, 2015). In addition, Salehnia and Ashraf mentioned that ignorance of ethical principles may be the source of many problems for all associations and create obstacles for members' development in societies, as well.

Teacher-student relationships are widely known as an important factor in student motivation (Birch & Ladd, 1996). The importance teachers place on developing positive personal relationships with their students has been suggested as one characteristic of effectiveness and mastery in teaching (Carr, 2005). Additionally, teachers' professional ethics might cause such ethics to transfer to learners automatically, and the learners will consider such teachers as their model in their activities, and try to improve and elevate themselves and their future working situations (Heidari et al, 2015).

Codes of ethics vary across countries since cultures, religions, and beliefs play a central role in teachers' and students' perceptions of ethics in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. Some of the items of morality and ethics in the classroom may be the same all around the world, but to understand the exact ethics items for a special group of teachers with a specific culture and religion, a (distinct) research needs to be conducted. Most EFL instructors are not familiar with the concept of ethics in the classroom as much as they know about teaching methods. Some of the teachers might have heard about some rules and regulations for teaching in teaching preparation courses, but they do not have a list containing ethics items at their disposal to be consulted before getting started or when the need arises. It seems that most of the teachers' major concerns are teaching methods, materials, and dealing with students' mistakes rather than legislating morality in the class

while/ because they are not aware of the effects of ethics and morality on pupils' learning. In other words, numerous situations in teaching contexts are characterized by ambiguity and conflicting values and teachers make decisions that are based on their own beliefs about the way things ought to be. However, the fact is that these choices are not made by a critical decision-making process (Imel, 1991).

Numerous studies have been carried out, having exhaustively examined teachers' perceptions of ethics (for instance e.g., Atjonen, 2012 Şakar, 2014; Erzikova, 2009; Malla & Puhan, 2013) however; to the best of the researchers' knowledge, probing Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of ethics has gone largely unnoticed. Therefore, to have a better understanding of the importance of ethics, learners' perceptions of ethics need to be meticulously explored. This research is of significant importance on some grounds. Firstly, given the fact that very few studies have been involved in EFL learners' perceptions of ethics. Secondly, Probing Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of ethics have gone largely unnoticed and the findings of the current study can shed some light on how this group perceives ethics. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to inquire into the perceptions of ethics among Iranian EFL learners in order to set the stepping stone for enhancing learning quality in the classrooms.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Concept of Ethics

There is no profession that can really exist lacking a code of ethics to lead the behavior of its participants (Campbell, 2000). Teaching is a profession in its own way that one needs to have great professional proficiency and also requires its own code of ethics (Ashraf, Hosseinnia, & Domsky, 2017). According to Regan (2012), encouraging ethical conduct in the classroom is crucial to effective teaching. Since teachers have a prominent role in their surrounding environment, it is essential to equip themselves with ethical science and behavior and try to be familiar with its principles (Heidari et al., 2015). So, "teachers with professional ethics will make attempts to enhance such factors as physical, mental, intellectual health, social responsibility, commitment, modesty, honesty, creativity, accuracy, bravery, generosity, and flexibility among their students" (Heidari et al., 2015, p. 2461). Thus, the ethical classroom is a context where teachers and learners will enjoy, a

place of congruence, erudition, and a place of individual and spiritual improvement (Rushidi, Çeliku, & Rexhepi, 2016).

Brockett (1990) has posited a three-dimensional model for adult educators to think about their decision making concerning ethical issues. This model helped educators think and discover the best problem-solving action rather than providing a perspective guideline. The first dimension of Brockets' model is the practice of understanding personal values. The educators' personal value system affects how a person teaches, what they teach, and how they interact with their students, whether they treat students equally no matter their race, gender and so on. The second dimension is to understand if educators are responsible and what their frequent issues are. This dimension can be called multiple responsibilities. The third dimension is how to put your own values into practice. To this end, educators must practice six principles: respect, justice, the obligation to clients, beneficent, caring, and self-awareness.

Teachers' and learners' personal value systems may cause some issues. For instance, teachers who have a humanistic view of people usually tend to be facilitators and student-directed in their teaching; however, some students expect teachers to use lectures and tests rather than develop their skills as self-directed learners. In these dilemmas, teachers must decide whether to abandon, modify, or stick by their personal view. Therefore, teachers are supposed to think critically in advance about the problematic dilemmas which may happen in the teaching context. Teachers would get sufficient and practical knowledge by knowing learners' perceptions, value systems, and ethical views (Caffarella, 1988).

Association of American Educators (AAE) holds that the education profession consists of one education workforce serving the needs of all students and that the term 'educator' includes education support professionals. The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The aspiration for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of learners, of parents, and of the members of the community provides the motives to attain and retain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct. The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession indicates the aspiration of all educators and provides standards against which conduct can be evaluated.

Some principles designed by AAE are as follows:

(1) PRINCIPLE I: Commitment to the Student

The educator struggles to help each learner realize his or her potential as a respectable and effective member of society. The educator, therefore, works to trigger the spirit of

inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy targets. PRINCIPLE II: Commitment to the Profession

The education profession is conferring on the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service. In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly affect the nation and its citizens, the educator shall apply every effort to develop professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to attract trustworthy people to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified person.

There is another categorization for classroom ethics according to educational councils of New Zealand:

(1) Commitment to learners

The primary professional rules of registered teachers are to those they teach. Teachers boost the capacities of all learners to think and act with developing independence, and tend to motivate an informed appreciation of the basic values of a democratic society.

(2) Commitment to parents/guardians and family

Teachers recognize they work in collaboration with the parents/guardians and family of learners, encouraging their active involvement in the education of their children. They acknowledge the rights of caregivers to a consultation on the fortune and progress of their children and respect lawful parental authority, although professional decisions must always be weighted towards what is judged to be the best interests of learners.

(3) Commitment to society

Educators are known by the public with trust and responsibility, together with an expectation that they will help prepare students for life in society in the broadest sense.

2.2. Research on Ethics in the Classrooms

Bulk studies on ethics focused on the ethics of a particular group as a case study or teaching ethics rather than perceptions of ethics. Some studies have been done to examine on learners' ethical opinions (Lau, Caracciolo, Roddenberry, & Scroggins, 2012; Shrader, Ravenscroft, Kaufmann, & West, 2012), and on teaching and training ethics in other fields (Chesley & Anderson, 2003; Desplaces, Melchar, Beauvais & Bosco, 2007; Erzikova, 2009; Espinosa-Pike, Aldazabal & Martin (2012)).

2.2.1. Research on Learners' Ethical Opinions

There has been a study on college students' perceptions of ethics by Lau, Caracciolo, Roddenberry, and Scroggins (2012), the purpose of which was to examine students' perceptions of ethics using five factors: (a) the impact of faculty and teachers on ethics; (b) students' attitudes towards cheating; (c) the impact of technology; (d) the importance of ethics; and (e) the ethical campus environment. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The result concluded that ethics instruction has an effect on shaping students' own ethical behaviors (if meant to be in British). Also, students' cheating was measured and it was found that college students cheat less than high school students. Technology has an impact on students' ethical behavior since cheating is easier in online and hybrid classes that use technology. Finally, students admitted that they live in an ethical campus environment with ethical staff and they mentioned that it is good to hold themselves to the same ethical conduct as the others hold to.

Shrader et al. (2012) also examined the relationship between perceived ethical climate types through Victor and Cullen's (1993) ethical climate questionnaire and actual cheating behavior by students completing a take-home exam problem. Data regarding students' manners were gathered from sixty-four students in two parts of an accounting course at a well-known university.-The major finding was that students who perceived the classroom as a beneficent climate focused on local groups engaged in more cheating behavior than students who perceived a benevolent climate focused on the broader organization or societal groups. It was concluded by discussing the ethical and pedagogical implications of this connection between team-interest climate and higher levels of cheating behavior.

Pathak et al. (2013) examined the influence of emotional intelligence on the ethical orientation of male and female students. The findings of this study contribute to an understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and ethical orientation. The results indicate that there is a weaker relationship between emotional intelligence and ethical orientation, however, it cannot be assumed that the results resolve the fundamental relationship between the variables and it is indicating that there may be a number of other factors influencing ethical orientation of students which are not a part of the present study. The results of the second phase of the study also indicate that male and female students have similar emotional intelligence and ethical orientation.

Salehnia and Ashraf (2015) investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' commitment to professional ethics and students' self-esteem. Therefore, 357 teachers and

1785 students participated in this research. The results indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between most of the principles of professional ethics particularly teachers' student professional development principles and students' self-esteem. Results also revealed that self-esteem should be taken into consideration as a vital affecting feature in every English class. Teachers' commitment to student professional development principles had the strongest, highest and most positive correlation with students' self-esteem which showed that by the increase of commitment of teachers to professional ethics their students' self-esteem has increased. However, valid assessment of students had the lowest correlation with students' self-esteem. Correspondingly, there was no significant relationship between learners' self-esteem and content competence, dealing with sensitive topics, and respect for the institution.

2.2.2. Research on Teaching and Training Ethics in Other Fields

Chesley and Anderson (2003) investigated whether university professors are qualified to teach ethics. In light of recent talk in Canadian business schools about the importance of teaching courses in business ethics, the authors asked whether business professors have the qualifications required to teach business ethics. They point to various ethical dilemmas that arise in a collegial setting and argue that academics who teach business ethics have to first understand the complex ethical situations in which they find themselves if business ethics is to be taught in a meaningful way.

Another study was done by Desplaces et al. (2007) examined faculty perceptions regarding ethical behavior among colleagues and students, and faculty practices with regard to teaching ethics in three institutions over a 4-year period. The faculty reported an uneven pattern of unethical behavior among colleagues over the period. A majority of business courses included ethics, however as both a specific topic on the syllabus and within course discussions. The percentage of courses with ethics discussions increased in 2006, however, the time allocated to these discussions decreased. These results indicated that faculty were approaching ethics instruction less formally, raising concerns over the success of curriculum integration.

Erzikova's (2009) study examined the present state of teaching ethics in public relations departments in the U.S. and abroad. The results showed that public relations

teachers believed that ethics instruction in public relations education is essential, and they believed in a close tie between general morality and professional ethics. The most used pedagogies: teacher lectures, case studies, and group discussion- were known as the most effective approaches, whereas the most used resources in teaching ethics were: textbooks, trade magazine articles and newspaper or magazine stories; which were perceived as the most effective materials in teaching ethics.

A study by Espinosa-Pike, Aldazabal, and Martin (2012) was done on the influence of gender and ethical training on university teachers' sensitivity towards the integration of ethics in business studies. The aim of this study was to analyze the effect of gender and ethical received training on the sensitivity of university teachers towards the inclusion of ethics in graduate business studies. To this end, a study was carried out utilizing four ethical sensitivity indicators for teachers: their opinion about the need to include ethics in the world of business, their opinion about the need to include ethics in university education involving business studies, the current integration of ethics by teachers in the subjects they teach, and whether they intend to increase the time set aside for ethics in those subjects in the future. Results suggested that the ethical training received by teachers had a significant influence on their sensitivity towards the inclusion of ethics in graduate studies and the introduction of ethical aspects in their classes. Conversely, the results were inconclusive to substantiate that gender is a significant variable in terms of sensitivity towards the inclusion of ethics in the university education of business students. This work was of special relevance because it added to the extremely limited amount of literature available on variables that might explain the attitude of teachers towards the integration of ethics in higher education, by supporting the thesis defended by many authors of the positive effect of ethical training on improvement in sensitivity and ethical judgment.

In another study, Jeder (2013) inspected teachers' ethical responsibilities in the practice of education and training. The training of the professional in education implies, besides a very good specialization and psycho-pedagogical training, another extremely important aspect, with a direct and powerful impact on the whole educational process - the outline of the ethical profile of the future teacher's personality. The work focused on the following approaches: the role of studying the ethics of education in training for the teaching career, critical aspects regarding the practice of teaching and evaluation, the teacher's ethical responsibilities in approaching different types of curricula: hidden curriculum, null

curriculum, phantom curriculum, curriculum–in-use, rhetorical curriculum, and strategies of reflection on the ethical behaviors in education.

Ashraf, Hosseinnia, and Domsky (2017) examined the relationship between EFL teachers' commitment to professional ethics and their emotional intelligence. The results of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between professional ethics principles and emotional intelligence. Certainly, teachers' commitment to professional ethics may be related to the quality of their teaching. Based on the results, dual relationships with students' principle had the strongest, highest and most positive correlation and respect for institution principle had the lowest correlation with teachers' emotional intelligence. This study encourages teachers to improve their ethical commitments and their emotional intelligence since teachers' emotions may affect their presentation, decision-making, assessments, and ethical conduct.

Aghaalikhani and Maftoon (2018) investigated English teacher education programs and their effects on novice and experienced English language teachers' professionalism in Iran. Therefore, 150 participants from five Farhangian University Branches in Iran participated in this study. The results indicated that out of the four dimensions of professionalism-- professional development, reflection, responsibility, and ethics, only two of them (professional development and reflection) were statistically significant for the novice as well as experienced teachers. The results also revealed that the programs had a positive influence on teachers' professional development and also reflection. The study also revealed that the process of developing teacher professionalism is a complex one and that it will be a mixture of various features in the teacher education program and in the schools which means that context and also policy will govern how professionalism can ideally be improved in a specific educational system. It is also recommended in this study that educational policy-makers need to reexamine the curriculum for English language teacher education and use different domains of teacher professionalism.

Although a number of studies in various academic disciplines have examined the process and underpinnings of teaching ethics, not many studies have elaborated on this topic in relation to learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine the learners' perceptions of ethics.

The following research question is formulated for the present research.

What are the Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom?

3. Method

The purpose of this study is to investigate EFL learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom. To this end, a mixed-method research design was adopted. In this section, a detailed description of the participants, the instruments which were used for data collection, a comprehensive report of the data collection procedure, and data analysis techniques are provided.

3.1. Participants

Sixty Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners in different English language institutes of Iran (ranmehr, Safir, and Shokooh) participated in this study. For the sake of homogenization, this group involved 30 males and 30 females who had the ability in understanding English well enough to respond to the interview questions and fill the questionnaire; that is why the EFL learners were chosen from the upper-intermediate level. Their ages ranged from 13 to 38. At first, 30 EFL learners from the above-mentioned institutes were selected to participate in the current study for the interview phase. Later, the 30 other EFL learners participated in the other phase of this study. The study used convenience sampling since both groups were selected on the basis of their availability and accessibility. The participants' profile summary is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Participants' profile summary

Variables	Categories	Frequency
Institute	Shokooh	20
	Safir	20
	Iran Mehr	20
Gender	Male	30
	Female	30
Age range	13-25	30
	26-38	30

3.2. Instrumentation

In this research, the researcher drew on mainly two instruments, two series of semi-structured interviews and a Likert-scale questionnaire which is elaborated on below:

3.2.1. The first semi-structured interview

In order to explore EFL Learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom and in line with the findings of the previous studies and different codes of ethics for educators from different countries, two series of interviews were run. These interviews were in the semi-structured format since it was allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee said. The first semi-structured interview initially addressed demographic questions on the age, gender and academic degree of the participants, immediately followed by two questions (on learners' perceptions of ethics and their examples in their classrooms) that were developed by the researcher and were checked, reworded, and verified by two Applied linguistics specialists. All the interviews were recorded for future analyses. Then, the collected data was transcribed by the researcher and content analysis was done. In order to increase the reliability of codes and patterns, double-coding was required. Therefore, the codes and categories were finalized when an agreement was reached between the researchers and the inter-coders, who were two experts in the field of TEFL.

3.2.2. The Likert-scale Questionnaire

To assess learners' perceptions of ethics, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (from 1= totally disagree to 5= totally agree) with 36 items was developed based on the related literature and the results of the first interview. To design the items of the questionnaire, about 30 Iranian M.A students majoring in TEFL were involved in discussions and interviews to validate and elicit each item of the questionnaire. Moreover, the code of ethics for educators of different countries like the U.S.A. and New Zealand was consulted. The items referred to some ethics and behaviors in the classroom, such as dress-coding, respect, responsibility, politeness, fairness, punctuality, rapport, being reliable, appearance, and so on. In addition, in order to cross-check the problematic parts in the questionnaire, the validity of the items of the questionnaire was checked by two experts in applied linguistics. The experts were asked to peruse the questionnaire and comments on its language and content. After applying the experts' comments, the questionnaire was ready for distribution. In the current study, the

Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.76. Therefore, it could be claimed that the questionnaire owned a relatively high internal consistency. It is of high importance to mention that the first section of the questionnaire investigated the demographic information of the participants (including age, gender, years of learning).

3.2.3. The second semi-structured interview

Finally, after collecting the questionnaires data, to discuss the important ethics among 30 the EFL learners who filled the above-mentioned questionnaires and to find remaining items, the second semi-structured interview was run and the following questions were asked:

1. What ethics do you think are the most important and efficient ones in the classroom?
2. Could you tell me about the ethics you think are worth discussing, but were not mentioned in the questionnaire?

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

To answer the research questions, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed. With regard to the qualitative part, the data were obtained from a variety of sources, including semi-structured interviews with learners and extracting the codes from a case book (Spiegel et al., 2002) and code of ethics for educators of different countries like the U.S.A and New Zealand and the other related studies. Then, the content analysis of the data led to 13 categories of ethics with different sub-categories. Then, the researchers developed a Likert-scale questionnaire based on the interview results and the related literature and gave hard copies of it to upper-intermediate EFL learners in different English institutes of Iran to fill out. The internal consistency reliability of the developed questionnaire was examined using Cronbach alpha method. Then, descriptive statistics were run analyzing the questionnaire data. After collecting the questionnaires, the second semi-structured interview was run with 30 targeted participants who filled the questionnaire in order to confirm their provided information and find the remaining items of the questionnaire.

4. Results

This research yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. To answer the research question of the current study which investigated Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom, 30 male and female Iranian EFL learners were asked to participate in a

semi-structured interview containing 2 questions. Then, in the second phase of the study, 30 other Iranian EFL learners were asked to fill out the questionnaire and participated in another semi-structured interview which was conducted to discuss unexplored items and finalize the result of the study.

4.1. Results of the First Interview

To answer the research questions, 30 Iranian EFL learners were interviewed to capture their perceptions of ethics. Besides, some ethics codes were derived from related studies such as a book by Spiegel et al. (2002), and the code of ethics for educators of different countries like the USA and New Zealand. Then, the data were transcribed and read carefully to design a framework, the items were crossed-checked with two specialists in Applied Linguistics in order to enhance its validity. Then, the collected data was transcribed by the researchers and Content analysis of the results led to 13 categories of ethics with different sub-categories (Table 2).

Table 2.

A framework of ethics of EFL teachers in ELT classroom from the learners' perspectives

Code	Example
1. Dress code and appearance	• Have a proper dress code both for teachers and learners
2. Respect and politeness	• Respect students, colleagues, and parents. • Do not expose the students to embarrassment or disparagement. • Encourage learners to respect peers and teachers. • Teachers should try to have eye contact with all learners. • During interactions with learners, teachers should show them respect and care so as to remove possible barriers to learning. • Do not make fun of learners who have poor language performance.
3. Responsibility	• Take care of learners' behavior besides teaching them the language only. • Listen, support, and be mentally present for learners. • Be the source of motivation for learners.
4. Fairness and discrimination	• Do not exclude any student from participation in any program unfairly on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, marital status, political or religious beliefs, family, social or cultural background, or sexual orientation, • Do not deny benefits to any student, or grant any advantage to any student.

		•	Do not discriminate based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.
		•	Assessment of academic or professional performance based on factors unrelated to the established criteria of the evaluation
		•	Allow learners to know the criteria they use to assess their language performance.
5.	Punctuality	•	Be on time for the classes.
6.	Rapport	•	Create a good group spirit among all learners.
		•	Learners should feel free to express their ideas about all instructional and class-related issues.
7.	Reliability and trust	•	Do not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
		•	Act as they say.
8.	Discipline	•	Be well-organized and self-disciplined people.
		•	Encourage learners to follow the rules and regulations in the class.
		•	Appreciate responsible learners.
9.	Being humorous and energetic	•	Teachers should be enthusiastic and energetic in the classroom.
		•	Have a sense of humor.
		•	Not being moody.
10.	Adaptability	•	Meet the needs and goals of students
		•	Teachers are better able to structure their content and presentation methods when they have an understanding of their individual students and the way they live.
		•	Pay special attention to the needs of handicapped learners.
		•	Consider the physical, emotional, and social benefits of learners in their teaching.
11.	Commitment to the profession and colleagues	•	Do not make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications.
		•	Do not make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position.
		•	Do not misrepresent their qualifications and brag about their education and experience.
12.	Avoidance of misuse	•	Do not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
		•	Do not use the power and status to take inappropriate advantages of learners.
		•	Do not accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.
13.	Appropriate content of the discussion	•	Do not discuss unnecessary personal information about learners.
		•	Choose appropriate discussion topics.

4.2. Results of the Questionnaire

To examine the EFL learners' perceptions of the ethics, 30 Iranian EFL learners were asked to fill out a 36-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly

disagree to 5=strongly agree. Then, the descriptive statistics were used to present mean values and standard deviation for each item.

According to the participants, as it is shown in table 3, the highest-rated ethic was "Teachers should be enthusiastic and energetic in the classroom." (M=4.66; SD=0.65). The second most important ethic was "Teachers should be on time for the classes" (M=4.45; SD=0.76), whereas the third most valuable ethic was "Teachers should be honest about learners' questions which they cannot answer" (M=4.33; SD=0.64). Finally, the lowest-rated one was "Teachers should not accept gifts from learners" (M=2.85; SD=1.13).

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics for EFL learners

	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic
Item 5: Teachers should be enthusiastic and energetic in the classroom.	4.66	.65
Item 12: Teachers should be on time for the classes.	4.45	.76
Item 36: Teachers should be honest about learners' questions which they cannot answer.	4.43	.64
Item 20: Teachers should try to have eye contact with all learners.	4.43	.62
Item 10: Learners should feel free to express their ideas about all instructional and class-related issues.	4.35	.98
Item 22: Teachers should be the source of motivation for learners.	4.33	.72
Item 1: Teachers should create a good group spirit among all learners.	4.31	.56
Item 11: Teachers should not be biased against male and female learners.	4.30	.88
Item 8: Teachers should listen, support, and be mentally present for learners.	4.15	.68
Item 3: Teachers need to be well-organized and self-disciplined people.	4.11	.55
Item 24: Building up a good relationship with learners is an important duty of a teacher.	4.06	.98
Item 6: Teachers should not intentionally embarrass learners.	4.06	.84
Item 28: Teachers should encourage learners to follow the rules and regulations in the class.	4.05	.69
Item 16: During interactions with learners, teachers should show them respect and care so as to remove possible barriers to learning.	4.01	.67
Item 34: Teachers should not discriminate among learners based on factors like their economic status, ethnic background, and religion.	4.01	.94
Item 23: Teachers should not be moody.	4.00	.86

Item 14: Teachers should not discriminate among learners.	3.98	.98
Item 9: Teachers should not use their power and status to take inappropriate advantages of learners.	3.98	.83
Item 19: Having a sense of humor is necessary for teachers.	3.98	.65
Item 21: Teachers should avoid making fun of learners who have poor language performance.	3.91	1.12
Item 32: Teachers should consider the physical, emotional, and social benefits of learners in their teaching.	3.88	.80
Item 29: Teachers should pay special attention to the needs of handicapped learners.	3.88	.97
Item 31: Teachers should not intentionally make false statements about other teachers.	3.85	.87
Item 13: Teachers should adapt their lesson plans based on learners' interests, needs, and preferences.	3.81	1.01
Item 33: Teachers should allow learners to know the criteria they use to assess their language performance.	3.81	.81
Item 26: Teachers should appreciate responsible learners.	3.81	.83
Item 27: Teachers should encourage learners to respect peers and teachers.	3.78	.69
Item 35: Teachers should not pay more attention to learners who are good looking and handsome.	3.75	1.22
Item 2: Teachers should act as they say.	3.71	1.10
Item 4: It is part of a teacher's duty to take care of learners' behavior besides teaching them the language only.	3.71	1.04
Item 18: Teachers should not misrepresent their qualifications and brag about their education and experience.	3.55	.85
Item 25: Teachers should have their own appropriate dress code.	3.53	.98
Item 7: Teachers should not discuss unnecessary personal information about learners.	3.40	.86
Item 30: Teachers should ask learners to wear appropriate clothes.	3.16	1.27
Item 17: Teachers should be strict most of the time in the class.	3.13	1.06
Item 15: Teachers should not accept gifts from learners.	2.85	1.13

To highlight the highest-rated ethics among EFL learners, "mean" for each ethic category was calculated. The data showed the following valued ethics among the EFL learners in Table 4:

Table 4.

The highest-rated ethics among EFL learners

Code	Mean
Punctuality	4.45
Rapport	4.24
Being humorous and energetic	4.21
Reliability	4.07
Responsibility	4.06
Respect and politeness	4.03
Fairness and discrimination	3.97
Adaptability	3.85
Discipline	3.77
Commitment to the profession and colleagues	3.70
Avoidance of misuse	3.41
Appearance	3.40
Dress code	3.34

4.3. Results of the Second Interview

The targeted 30 Participants in the second phase of the study were asked to participate in the third phase of the study which was the second semi-structured interview. The results of transcribing the data showed that 15 EFL learners mentioned that discrimination is the worst thing every teacher can do. Some of the participants; answers were as follows:

Some *EFL learners* mentioned:

- *I don't like teachers who pay more attention to some students.* [Learner 1]
- *When a teacher likes one student more than the others, we'll give up doing our bests.* [Learner 2]
- *Discriminating between students because of their appearance is the worst thing.* [Learner 3]

Nine EFL learners mentioned the good relationship between teachers and students. Some of the participants; answers were as follows:

- *Teachers who have good relationships with students are more respectable for us.* [Learner 4]
- *A good relationship causes better learning.* [Learner 5]

Six EFL learners mentioned that having fun in the classroom is a teacher's duty. Some of the participants; answers were as follows:

- *If a class is boring, it means that the teacher doesn't have the qualification of teaching.* [Learner 6]
- *Having fun in class gives me more motivation to learn English.* [Learner 7]

In general, 50% of the EFL learners mentioned that discriminating is the worst thing every teacher can do, 30% of the EFL learners mentioned the good relationship between teachers and students, and 20% claimed that having fun is a teacher's duty (Table 5).

Table 5.

Ethics frequencies

Code	Frequency of Teachers	Frequency of Learners
Fairness and discrimination	62%	50%
Rapport	20%	30%
Being humorous and energetic	18%	20%

The responses of the second question were analyzed and the majority of the participants indicated that ethics mentioned in the questionnaire were sophisticated enough. However, three learners mentioned that teachers should not induce their beliefs to students, and nine students were extremely upset about their test scores being read out loud in front of the class. Moreover, five others mentioned that teachers should be available out of the class via emails and phones (Table 6).

Table 6.

New codes of ethics

New Code	Frequency of Teachers	Frequency of Learners
not having inappropriate relation and friendship	18%	-
banning political and religious topics	10%	-
teachers should not induce their beliefs to students	-	10%
test scores being read aloud in front of the class	-	30%
available out of the class by their emails and phone numbers	-	18%

Finally, 30 percent of the learners were really sad about their teachers' behavior and they mentioned that some of their teachers were not ethical at all. Some comments of the participants were as follows:

- *I don't like my teacher. He doesn't care about me in the class. He just has a good relationship with top students.* [Learner 8]

- *Most of my teachers didn't do the things that you had written in the questionnaire.* [Learner 9]

5. Discussion

In this study, the ethical opinions of Iranian EFL learners were investigated. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this research. To this end, 60 Iranian EFL learners participated in two series of semi-structured interviews and filled out an ethics questionnaire.

A thorough investigation of the findings in this study seems to go hand in hand with the literature representing a strong relationship with Lau et al.(2012), who examined the impact of technology on students' perceptions of ethics. Accordingly, the results showed that technology has an impact on students' ethical behavior. In a similar way, most of the participants in this study mentioned technology has an impact on the teacher-learner relationship. In this study, Lau et al.'s (2012) data and another study done by Rushidi, Çeliku, and Rexhepi (2016) also revealed that the students admitted that they lived in an ethical campus with ethical staff. However, in the current study, the learners mentioned that most of their teachers were not ethical.

In another study, Aghaalikhani and Maftoon (2018) investigated English teacher education programs and professionalism in the case of Iranian novice/experienced teachers. Based on the results of their study, being well-informed is a requirement for teacher professionalism but it is not a guarantee for being a decent and effective teacher in class. It is recommended that educational policy-makers in Iran reconsider the English language teacher education curriculum and put diverse areas of teacher professionalism in them such as: "(a) subject knowledge and four basic skills, (b) reflections on the relationship between students and teacher, (c) professional ethics as teachers, (d) preparation for good teaching in pedagogy and subject matter didactics, (e) classroom management and support for learning processes, (f) good cooperation and communication skills, and (h) coping with change and professional development" (p. 91). In a similar way, participants in the current study highlighted the importance of teachers' punctuality, rapport, reliability, responsibility, respect and politeness, fairness and discrimination, discipline.

In another case, the results were in accordance with Salehnia and Ashraf (2015) who worked on the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' commitment to professional ethics

and their students' self-esteem. They found out that self-esteem has a positive significant correlation with seven of the EFL teachers' commitment to professional ethics subscales as follows. Learners' self-esteem had a positive relationship with these seven principles: pedagogical competence, student professional development, dual relationship with students, respect for colleagues, valid assessment of students, respect for class, confidentiality with students, and collaboration with parents. In a similar way, firstly, regarding respect for colleagues, most participants in the present study believe that teachers should have a commitment to their profession and colleagues, Teachers should not intentionally make false statements about other teachers and they should encourage learners to respect peers and teachers. Secondly, regarding the valid assessment of students, they believed that teachers should allow learners to know the criteria they use to assess their language performance. Thirdly, regarding respect for class, most of the participants mentioned that teachers should be on time for the classes, learners should feel free to express their ideas about all instructional and class-related issues, and teachers should not intentionally embarrass learners. finally, regardinga dual relationship with students, the participants mentioned that building up a good relationship with learners is an important duty of a teacher and teachers should consider the physical, emotional, and social benefits of learners in their teaching.

Likewise, Malla and Puhan (2013) conducted a research on the code of ethics to examine school teachers' perspectives of their relationships with their students as well as how they described and negotiated relationship boundaries. It was found that the common ethical principles of teachers such as the ethic of care in teacher-student relations, proactive rather than reactive, demonstrates a caring attitude, use objective and fair assessments and boundaries in teacher-student relationships. In a similar way, as it was mentioned, most of the participants in this study highlighted the importance of respect and politeness, and Fairness and discrimination. They mentioned that during interactions with learners, teachers should show them respect and care so as to remove possible barriers to learning, Teachers should not be moody and should not discriminate among learners based on factors like their economic status, ethnic background, and religion.

The findings of the present study showed that all learners recognized ethics as an essential part of the classrooms while their views differed in ranking some ethics. Among participants, "punctuality" was considered the most valuable ethic, whereas "dress code and appearance" was the least noticeable ethic. The most important ethics perceived by the

learners were "punctuality," "rapport," and "being humorous and energetic." The findings revealed that learners' consideration of ethics was focused on the teachers' manner and morality in the classroom like having a good rapport and being energetic. The learners' perceptions highlight a need for teacher education courses to consider raising teachers' awareness of ethical issues in the classroom. This is in line with another study, in which Şakar (2014) evaluated the ethical opinions of primary classroom teachers in Turkey. The findings of the interview revealed that teachers could not express the difference between the concept of ethics and morals, they were aware of being a model in a class but the teachers are confused about the reference of modeling. They claimed that, due to the conflict between school and families in terms of transferring religious values, they should focus on universal virtues and the necessity of school is having a role in value transfer. The assessments include the ownership levels of teachers on knowledge of ethics and moral concepts, their views on the concept of virtue, to what extent their awareness of being model towards students, their views on teaching values.

As Espinosa-Pike, Aldazabal, and Martin's (2012) findings underscored, adding ethical training to business courses had a positive effect on improvement in sensitivity and ethical judgments of both learners and instructors. Along with the necessary knowledge of teaching and conveying language inputs to learners, ethics need to be taught in teachers' training courses (TTC). According to the interviews with the EFL learners in this study, most of the participants declared the teachers were not familiar with the concept of ethics. Furthermore, they were not aware of how applying ethics could be influential in the learning process in ELT classrooms. This represents a sustainable way to support professional practice and enhance teacher quality, by preparing and equipping teachers with techniques to explore and deal with complex ethical issues in the classroom and ultimately it will help the teacher create a concussive environment within the college which is needed for best learning.

Although the ethical principles summarized previously are common for teachers, the application of a particular principle in a specific situation may not be always clear-cut. Because most ethical codes for teachers constitute behavioral guidelines, not explicit rules of behavior, discussions among teachers as to whether a particular behavior is or is not ethical can often generate diverse opinions and perspectives. Thus, we recommend that

teachers take a proactive stance by developing a deeper understanding of ethical teaching and reflecting on these principles and their application to teaching.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to examine Iranian EFL learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom. By paying attention to the obtained results, it can be concluded that the participants recognized ethics as an integral part of the classroom.

The framework of ethics which was developed in this study will support teachers in their activities in classes while dealing with learners as they work with them. The intent of the code of ethics is to guide teachers in order to behave in a way that reflects the responsibilities of supervisors and stakeholders. A ''good teacher'' knows and applies a variety of teaching strategies in presenting the content, treats students with respect, reflects on the class to improve teaching, and completes the myriad of activities associated with teaching and schools. This deception of a teacher speaks to the technical end of teaching but not the core of teaching. Integrity is at the core of being a teacher: at the end of the day, integrity (as one aspect of ethics and conduct) is what remains'' (Malla & Puhan, 2013, p.893).

A professional teacher is one who can immediately come down to the level of the learners, transfer his spirit to the student spirit and also see and find out through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach properly and none else (Malla & Puhan, 2013).

This study makes a contribution to the current literature on ethics. Different research based on the examination of teachers' and learners' perceptions and preferences may help educators see trends in contemporary education, better understand their underpinnings, and possibly enhance their own teaching and morality.

The pedagogical implications of this study can be extended to teachers' trainees or language instructors or anyone who has a role in the process of L2 teaching. Since culture, gender and experience play an important role in the perception of ethics in a classroom, there is a need to investigate the ethics for every country or special geographical zones. EFL teachers can establish an interesting atmosphere in the class by creating good spirit and rapport based on learners' perceptions of a fruitful classroom in order to prove and emphasize the ease of language learning. Moreover, EFL learners will be more interested in language learning and will experience a more tangible atmosphere in the class.

In general, knowing learners' perceptions of ethics in the classroom may help the stakeholders design a code of ethics for Iranian EFL teachers, which can help teachers have a better ethical manner and foster the process of learning.

Ethics includes novel fields. There are still various aspects of ethics that have remained underexplored. Future investigations need to represent the various kinds and aspects of different ethics which have not been targeted yet. The current study was an attempt to analyze the perceptions of learners about ethics in the classroom. Thus, the effect of factors such as age and social background were not investigated. Furthermore, this study was just limited to institutes of Tehran. Therefore, research on this field can be expanded to other teaching contexts like universities and schools in different cities of Iran in further studies. Additionally, further research can investigate the differences between native, ESL, and EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions of ethics.

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