


# Chapter 1

# Instructional Framework of Professional Ethics: A Design–Based Research

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## **ABSTRACT**

*There are two distinct types of ethics, namely theoretical ethics and applied ethics, usually referred to as professional ethics. Review of pedagogical approaches revealed that a variety of pedagogical approaches are adopted in teaching ethics. Nonetheless, the progressive nature of ethics education requires a more dynamic approach. Instructional design is considered as the process of solving educational issues via systematic strategy. Design-based research is adopted utilising qualitative techniques to explore teaching practices in professional ethics. Data is collected via document analysis and interviews with selected technical educators. The study identified elements of professional ethics which integrated into the proposed instructional framework using applied cognitive task analysis. The formulation of instructional framework of professional ethics for technical educators addresses the gap between theoretical aspects of professional ethics and instructional activities, optimising technical educators' knowledge and teaching experience.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Ethics, at its core, involves evaluating actions as right or wrong, requiring a systematic approach beyond intuitive judgment (Deigh, 2010). When applied professionally, it becomes “professional ethics,” focusing on the responsibilities professionals hold toward stakeholders, including clients, colleagues, and society (Zulkifli et al., 2019; Hamzah et al., 2016). Ethical competency, or the ability to act per these codes, is a vital skill in industries facing rapid innovation and evolution (Paul et al., 2021; Idris et al., 2019; Balamuralithara et al., 2019). The dynamic nature of industries often presents ethical dilemmas, particularly in a technologically advancing era. A PwC Malaysia survey (2020) reported an increase in bribery incidents, rising from 19% in 2014 to 35% in 2020, with many cases involving internal actors in positions of authority (Monteiro et al., 2020; Sharma & Bagozzi, 2021). Such trends highlight the need for robust measures to counter ethical misconduct, including ethics education (Hamzah et al., 2016; Kohlberg, 1976; Rest, 1986).

Higher education institutions, both locally and internationally, have recognised the pivotal role of ethics education in nurturing ethical professionals. A comparative study conducted by Balamuralithara et al. (2019) examined engineering ethics education in Malaysia and Japan, underscoring the significance of preparing future engineers to embrace their responsibilities with integrity. Similarly, Coldwell et al. (2019) explored the efficacy of ethics courses in South African universities, highlighting that formal education at the tertiary level serves as a catalyst for cultivating ethical managers. This assertion is bolstered by a multitude of studies that investigate ethics education at the undergraduate level, the point at which individuals receive formal training in their respective fields. Kidd et al. (2020), Dziubaniuk and Nyholm (2020), Bairaktarova and Woodcock (2017), Song et al. (2017), Marzlin et al. (2017), and Miñano et al. (2016) have collectively examined ethics education's impact on the ethical development of future professionals across diverse disciplines.

Ethics education has gained significant recognition within the Malaysian higher education system, as evidenced by its inclusion in the national curriculum development. The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) emphasised the importance of ethics and professionalism as integral components of the learning outcomes (MQA, 2019). As a result, ethics education has been incorporated into various levels of study, including undergraduate programs. This is a crucial step, given that ethics education at the undergraduate level serves as the initial exposure for aspiring professionals to the ethical challenges they are likely to encounter in their respective fields of practice (Balamuralithara et al., 2020; Prasad, 2019). Nonetheless, the Malaysian

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