

## **Professional Ethics of Teachers and their Relationship with Emerging Values in their Students**

**Eladio González**

Doctoral Program in Education, Universidad Especializada de las Americas

Santiago de Veraguas, Republic of Panama

E-mail: Mond\_egonzalez\_20@hotmail.com

**Alexis Tejedor De León**

(Corresponding Author)

Department of Materials and Metallurgy, Regional Center of Veraguas

Universidad Tecnologica de Panama

P.O Box 0923-0074 – Santiago de Veraguas, Republic of Panama

E-mail: Alexis.tejedor@utp.ac.pa

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### **Abstract**

The study used a qualitative, transversal approach to focus on interpreting and explaining, on the one hand, the conceptions about the professional ethics of the investigated teachers, as well as the emergent values expressed by their students, and on the other hand, on identifying their relationship. For the development of the study, the application of self-administered and validated ad hoc questionnaires with Cronbach's alpha was used as a field technique. In the design of the questionnaire, variables and sub-variables were considered and a representative sample, without replacement, was applied for teaching and student populations, 381 and 1,697 subjects, respectively. The results were analyzed separately for each sample, to determine the existence, or not, of a possible relationship between the given answers. With respect to the Professional Ethics of the teachers and their respective sub-variables, an analysis of variance (f Fisher) was performed for  $\alpha = 0.05$ , resulting in the Axiological Profile being the most important sub-variable in Professional Ethics. However, when performing the analysis of variance of the sub-variables of the Emerging Values manifested by the students, it was verified that the Value Formation is the one with the highest incidence. Finally, when calculating Spearman's Rho coefficient for a level of significance of 0.05, it yielded a value of -0.007, which indicates that there is no significant correlation between the Professional Ethics manifested by teachers and the Emerging Values in their students.

**Keywords:** Deontology, System of Values, Spearman's Rho, Professional Ethics, Axiological Profile.

## 1. Introduction

The great scientific, technological, social, and cultural changes in which today's society is immersed demand a professional teacher who is conscious of their formative role in the ethics and values that guide human progress in the present and the future generations.

Faced with these changes, ethics occupy an important place, because they allow the balance between the human being and his relationship with the environment, with others, and with himself. Emerging values, on the other hand, become a challenge for the teaching profession in the training of students, but we want to contribute to human development in accordance with the harmonious demands of society (Méndez, 2012).

The professional ethics of teachers enable the teaching profession to act with honesty, justice, equality, and responsibility among other values, becoming an example for their students and a sign of social implications (Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

### 1.1 Ethics and Teaching

We can assume that ethics, in the broad sense, defines the human being as an individual and as part of society and it will not be difficult to find the relation between the professional ethics of the teacher and their values. In fact, education is itself an ethical project and ethics would not be possible without an educational process (Mitrany & Peón, 2015).

However, when it comes to comparing ethics with education, for example, according to Schonhaut & Carvajal (2007), when contemplating the advance of thought and the reflections that can be made between the two, they have the same importance and implications.

That is why ethics applied to education has among its primary tasks to train the teacher to act as a responsible citizen, competent and committed to social development and to educate the student to be a responsible citizen, competent and committed to society (Woods, 2005).

The foregoing will not be possible to achieve from the postulates of traditional teaching. Therefore, education needs a new generation of teachers with a proactive mind to accompany the student in the process of building knowledge, attitudes, and values. The teacher assumes new functions that are expressed in his capacity as information manager, guide to the learning process of students and which can be summarized as an educational model (Briggs, Reis, & Sullivan, 2008).

In this sense, education in values should contribute to the internal tendency of the personality to integrate and harmonize internal and external factors and the autonomy of it, that is to say, self-regulation on the basis of conscious ends, which is of course, in interaction and dependence on social realities (Thomberg, 2008).

On the other hand, Cohen et al., (2009) point out that the ethical dimension emphasizes the responsibility that the professional teacher has with his or her school, natural, and social environment. Here, professional dignity stands out as the supreme value to be achieved, bearing in mind that through it respect for the profession is shown. However it is a respect that is signified in relation to an understanding of the reality in which one lives and a manifestation of commitment to their work.

In the field of education, there are a number of ethical principles that set the guidelines for the performance of teaching professionals. Due to the characteristics of this profession, the teacher, beyond the freedom of teaching that exists, must take into account the people with whom he works (Kruk, 2013).

The social responsibility implied by the teaching position obliges these professionals to follow a series of ethical principles, not only performing their tasks and functions, but also carrying them out in the best possible way. Teaching professionals should promote the

responsibility of each classroom member regarding their peers, their family, and society, and thus develop an ethical commitment (Naval et al., 2011).

On the other hand, their interventions must be geared to creating provisions that make it easier to take care of others, to stimulate the desire for real participation in public affairs, which places members of the political community as protagonists; which pass from individuals who are the object of help to subjects of collaboration between them.

Teachers must promote the personal autonomy of students, which involves promoting learning that improves the levels of consciousness and personal decisions in matters that concern the students, as described by Reeve and Jang (2006) in their previous annotations. It is to be expected that the teaching professional has acquired not only knowledge and skills, but also ways of doing, a sense of belonging to a professional group, and a tradition focused on the best provision of the service that is his own.

In socialization within his professional group, the teacher acquires the sense of what it is to be a good professional, what are the obligations and the ways of interpreting them in the present, drawing on a history of professional practice, based on his best achievements and their deviations or bad practices (Reeve et al., 2004).

It is not possible to make a general moral approach to what should be done in all professions, but rather that the professional ethics of teachers have to be constructed from their own sources (Pérez & Ruiz, 2014). The ethics of the teaching professional, in the knowledge society, have to be built between all the people who affect the decisions that are made in the field of teaching and learning.

This is reinforced by the fact that the decisions taken in the education system impact everyone, in one way or another, and this raises the need to assume not only the perspective of the expert, nor in his case the trade union or collegial representative, but that of all people affected by decisions, who are not mere objects that are the beneficiaries of them, but autonomous subjects, empowered and entitled to participate meaningfully in such decisions. This participation of all the people involved is necessary in a real democracy and in a vigorous civil society (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

## **1.2 Values**

Values are understood to be what is valued and what is worthy of appreciation. So, value is identified with the good; for example, truth, health, or sense of humor as values, are good, that is to say they are desirable as explained by Lalwani, Shrum, & Chiu (2009).

Values within the educational field (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010), are defined as the quality of the community educational life that is generated in the interior generating positive behavioral changes in students. The expression, emergent values (Pushkar et al., 2003), refers to the set of new values that are gradually becoming generalized, in a certain historical moment, and in harmony or in conflict with those in force. Education in values is based on human rights, and it becomes the axis and motor of the formative processes of the human being. However, such approaches are not possible if in the institutional context, and in the daily life of the schools, there are no spaces to rethink the educational processes that are developed, and to analyze how they are building relations of justice that are respectful of differences, or the promotion of limiting relationships of diverse identities (Banks, 2008).

At present, the profile of the teacher is varying towards that of a professional who possesses a set of cognitive, social, and emotional competences in areas of activity that are increasingly varied and differentiated (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Because of the above, the school has an intrinsic difficulty in educating in values. However, it is an irreplaceable mission because a quality education can not only consist of the transmission of knowledge, but must also be oriented towards the formation of people capable

of facing the challenges of today's society (Starkey & Tempest, 2005). Teachers should become mediators and guides that lead students towards the discovery of their values of reference and the development of capacities that allow them to develop autonomously in school and in life. Only mediated learning allows subjects to improve their performances and update their learning potential constantly (Marín, 2003).

Education is not a neutral action. Ethical values are found in the reason and the objective of the educational action, since learning is, first of all, to educate oneself, to form one's own being; This is a process that develops permanently throughout our lives, known in English as LLL (Life-Long-Learning) (Boud & Falchikov, 2006).

The main objective of the present research was to identify the main aspect that identifies the professional ethics of the teacher and the emerging values in students and secondly to verify the possible relationship between these variables.

## 2. Method and Procedure

The quantitative framework of the research valued, on the one hand, the professional ethical performance of the teacher and, on the other hand, the emerging values of the students to establish their relationship. From this perspective, the study is a correlational type of analytical content.

### 2.1 Type of Study and Sample

The research is framed within the non-experimental, transversal design of a single application. The typology is quantitative where it is sought to correlate two sets of variables. The study was developed during a period of 24 months divided into three phases, each one with its nature and with its own activities.

The research was carried out in 16 official educational centers and took into consideration, as the population under study, 823 teachers actually in employment and 6,585 students of the average level of the region from which the representative samples were extracted.

Once the size of the sample unit was known, a selection of subjects by clusters was carried out, with a total of 381 subjects – teachers of secondary education, and 1,697 subjects – students of secondary education. The respective research instrument in the field was applied to those subjects selected, without replacements.

### 2.2 Questionnaire and Its Variables

The research considered key variables and their dimensions and analyzed them in different ways. Table 1 and 2 show the variables and their dimensions for each of the study focus groups.

**Table 1:** Variables and sub-variables included in the questionnaire applied to teachers

Variables	Sub-variables
Professional Vocation	Resolution of dilemmas; assumption of values; assumption of change of ethical attitude; assumption of awareness; relationship between performance and teaching vocation; and influence of teacher ethics on values
Performance	Internal reflection; acceptance of ethical code; support of professional practice; self-appraisal; standards of correct behavior; performance evaluation; relationship between performance and teacher training; dependence of subject vs. formation of values; and capacity of knowledge and values.

Axiological Profile	Values self-practice; relationship between professional ethics and religious values; relationship between professional ethics and axiological profile; relationship between professional ethics and value object; and influence of professional ethics on behavior
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**Table 2:** Variables and sub-variables included in the questionnaire applied to students

Variables	Sub-variables
Object of value	Concern for physical appearance: looking thin and exaggerated personal care; influence of bad examples; belonging to groups; tolerance for the teacher; theft for survival; tattoo on body; does not tolerate lies; profession of faith; and global disarmament
Formation of values	Behave; hate to copy; disrespect for the ideas of others; responsibility; intolerance of immorality; school commitment; dialog vs. force; violence; peace; and freedom.
Behavior	Respect; bullying; disorder; courtesy; spirituality; sexual promiscuity; honesty; tolerance; plagiarism; locker room; morality; Maras; physical dissatisfaction; eating habits; delinquency; virtual communication; language; sense of purpose; youth; culture of silence; and digital dependency.

### 2.1.1 Field Work

The field work was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the validation phase of the questionnaire was carried out in terms of its comprehensibility.

After completing the phase of understanding the questionnaire, and having made the relevant adjustments to the questionnaire, the second step was the application of the respective data collection instruments.

Regarding the application of the instrument to the teachers, the researchers themselves were responsible for their distribution. However, the support of trained personnel was used for the instrument intended for students.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Before determining the existence or not of a correlation between the professional ethics of the teacher and the formation of values in the students, answers were given to the questionnaires for each one of the study focus groups.

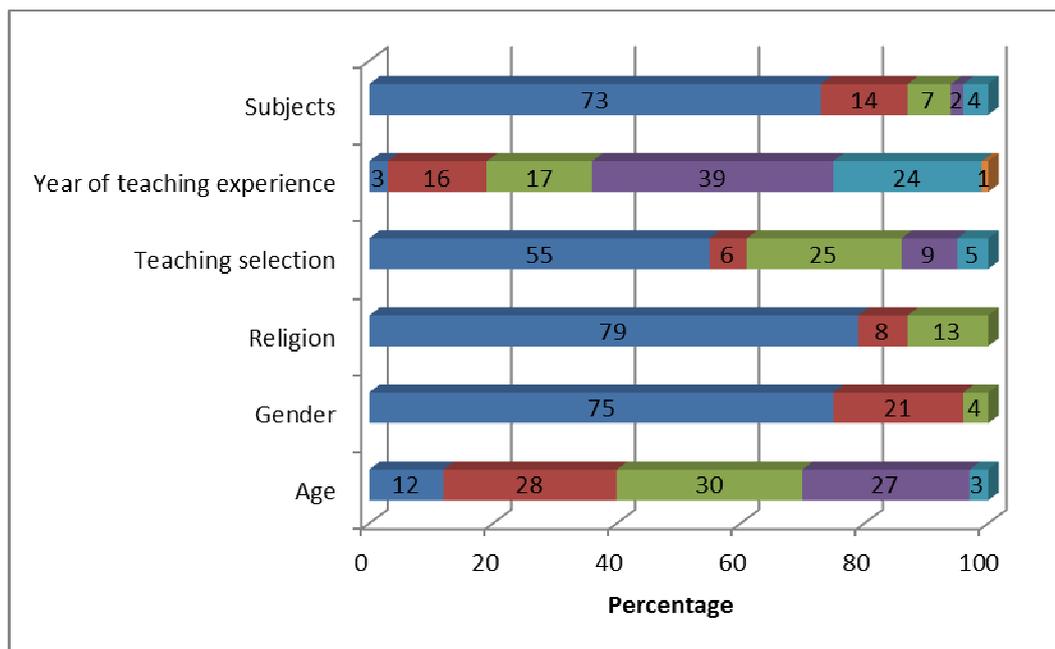
The questionnaires for both teachers and students were structured in two large sections, one of them to determine or know their respective general information, and the other large section to determine variables and sub-variables related to both professional ethics and the manifestation of emerging values.

### 3.1 Teacher Profile

The following paragraphs describe the teacher profile, in terms of chronological age, gender, religion, motivation in selecting their teaching work, years of teaching experience, and the type of subject they teach at the time of the research as outlined in Figure 1.

When considering the valid answers issued, 30% of teachers say they have a chronological age between 41 and 50 years of age, followed by the age range between 31 and 40 years (28%), i.e. more than 55% of the teachers interviewed are less than 50 years old.

According to Friedrichsen *et al.*, (2009), it has been observed how older and more experienced teachers are better at repairing negative emotions and promoting values through strategies, especially when compared to the intermediate age group. This may explain the fact that the more experienced and mature teachers have been able to develop strategies of greater introspection in teaching with respect to ethics and values than teachers in the lower age range.



**Figure 1:** General data of the profile of the teachers investigated

In relation to the chronological age that teachers must possess for a "better" teaching of values, Cano-García, Padilla-Muñoz, and Carrasco-Ortiz, (2005) state that more than having an optimum age, the most important thing is the character and democratic authority that the teacher transmits, which, according to the author cited, constitutes a necessary condition for learning and training in values.

In terms of gender, teachers who answered the questionnaire indicated that the female presence was 75%, while male teachers corresponded to 21%; that is, female teachers predominate in the educational community studied.

Klassen and Chiu (2010) state that any inquiry into the ethical and moral domain cannot fail to consider the category of gender, given the high level of degree of feminization of the profession. In regional terms, for example, and from the demographic point of view, the universe of teachers is characterized by being fundamentally female and of great diversity in terms of age. This indicates that the results obtained in this research are in accordance with the current situation in Latin American (Lechini & Romero, 2016).

More than 70% of the teachers surveyed profess the Catholic faith and therefore are supposed to have a formation in values. They should also have a formation in citizenship, according to Hoover-Dempsey (2005), which is not only a question of principles and values, it is also part of the same form of schooling, in the way that learning in values takes place, in a system of discipline, in a set of rules. It is born above all in a school form, mainly when the parents become involved.

Taking into consideration the valid answers issued, 57.5% of teachers say that reason why they chose their profession was by natural vocation, followed by personal inspiration. The above points to what is emphasized in the literature consulted, in the sense that a teacher who has chosen his profession because he considers that he has a natural vocation to practice it as such, serves as a motivation in active pedagogy in ethical training and values in their students (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010).

The vast majority of respondents had more than 20 years of teaching experience. In this regard, several researchers have conflicting opinions about the incidence or not of years of experience in the formation of values. According to Friedrichsen et al., (2009), education is the process and the result of training man for life, of tempering the soul for life, in all its complexity. Therefore, the authors mentioned above, reaffirm that the teacher should possess a remarkable experience and communicative competence translated into the skill set to properly organize the functions and styles of communication, so that it can create favorable conditions and the appropriate psychological climate for developing the values of the students.

Finally, in terms of the subject taught, 73% of teachers are teaching subjects that are outside the traditional thematic axes of Social Sciences and Exact Sciences.

In the teaching process according to Darling-Hammond (2000), regardless of the subject taught by the teacher, the teacher must be the main protagonist, since the daily quality depends on the quality with which the students are educated. In addition, commitment as a person to his teaching work, the quality of his training, the motivation to develop his practice, the level of identification he develops with the institution to which he belongs, are factors that, independently of his subject, transmit values.

### 3.1.1 Variables of Teacher Professional Ethics

In the following paragraphs, we discuss those variables and sub-variables related to the professional ethics of the teacher.

For this purpose, the ANOVA inferential statistic (f Fisher  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) was used to identify which of the three variables was of higher incidence in the answers given by the teachers. The results obtained are presented in the table below.

**Table 3:** Results of the analysis of Fisher's f of variance for the variables and its incidence in the Professional Ethics of the teacher

Variables	Weighted average	Variance
Vocation	5.31	1.09
Performance	5.39	1.16
Axiological profile	5.47	0.89

Origin of variations	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	$f_{cal}$	$f_{teo}$
Between groups	26.303	2		
Within groups	8,365.737	7,885	12.39	4.24
Total	83.92.04	7,887		

As can be seen in Table 3, the  $f_{cal}$  (12.39) is greater than the  $f_{teo}$  (4.24), it is concluded that in the Professional Ethics expressed by the teachers the variables contemplated affect unequally. Thus, by ordering them according to their weighted mean, we have the following sequencing in the incidence level:

**Axiological Profile > Performance > Vocation**

It is important to recognize that the Axiological Profile (see Table 1) is indicative the range of values that the teacher must possess to be an effective agent of change at a time when input of this nature seems more and more necessary.

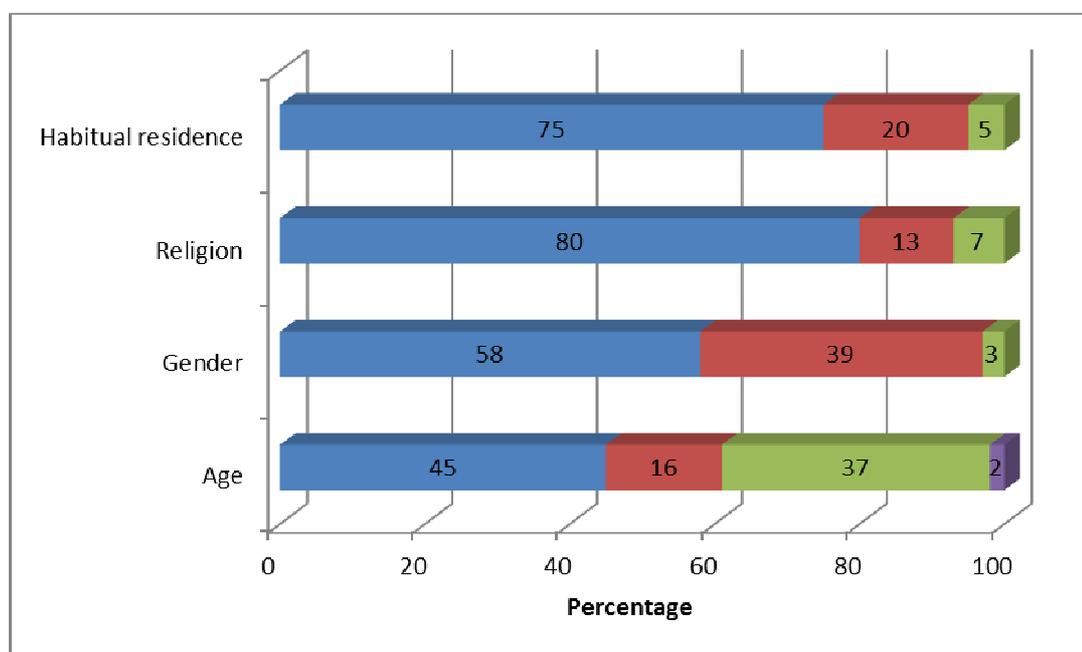
Likewise, the variable Axiological Profile was analyzed separately and it was verified that the sub-variable *Values* had the highest incidence.

The teachers responded that in order to be able to form emerging values in their students, they must demonstrate them in their teaching work.

### 3.2 Students Profile

The questionnaire for students was divided into two major sections, one of them to determine the general profile and the other to determine the variables and sub-variables related to their emerging values.

The following paragraphs describe the profile of the student, in terms of chronological age, gender, professed religion, and place of habitual residence. The results are outlined in the figure below.



**Figure 2:** General data of the profile of the students investigated

Considering the valid answers issued, 45% of the students say they have a chronological age between 17 and 18 years of age, followed by the age range between 15 and 16 years (37%), i.e. more than 80% of the students interviewed are over 16 years of age. At this chronological level, it is important that learning is based on the observation of models, especially those evidenced by the teacher and the conditions that involve the different spaces of socialization and education, which are, without a doubt, factors that contribute to build a solid matrix guiding the moral development and the promotion of values in students.

As for the students who answered the questionnaire, a majority presence is found in the female gender of 58%, while the male gender corresponds to 39%; That is, female students predominate in the population studied.

Taking into account the valid answers issued, 80% of the students said they professed the Catholic religion, 13% professed a religion, and 7% professed no religion. That is why the

current understanding of religion will allow the student to place religious belief in the religious cultural framework.

Due to the above, it is recognized that this phenomenon represents important challenges for educators who, from their work and service contexts, must exercise their educational work while testing their conciliatory capacity (Mahib ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

As for the students who answered the questionnaire, it is found that 67.5% reside in urban areas, while 26.6% say they live in rural areas. The literature consulted (Fowler et al., 2009) refers to the fact that students from urban centers are more prone to, or vulnerable to, violent behavior, mainly influenced by the proliferation of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and social networks, than students from rural educational centers.

For this reason, it is necessary for teachers to take actions aimed at regulating the use of ICT and to raise awareness of the proper use of these tools.

### 3.2.1 Variables of Emerging Values in Students

In the following paragraphs, we discuss those variables and sub-variables related to the emerging values of the students. For this purpose, the ANOVA inferential statistic (f Fisher  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) was used to identify which of the three variables was of higher incidence in the answers given by the students. The results obtained are presented in the table below.

**Table 4:** Results of the analysis of Fisher's f of variance for the variables and its incidence in the Emerging Values of the student

Variables	Weighted average	Variance
Object of value	3.65	3.31
Formation of values	4.71	2.64
Behavior	3.70	3.46

Origin of variations	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	$f_{cal}$	$f_{teo}$
Between groups	13,215.98	2		
Within groups	231,507.99	71,556	2,042.44	3.00
Total	244,723.97	71,558		

As can be seen in Table 4, the  $f_{cal}$  (2,042.44) is greater than the  $f_{teo}$  (3.00), it is concluded that in the Emerging Values manifested by the students the subvariables contemplated (see Table 2) have an uneven impact. Thus, by ordering them according to their weighted mean, we have the following sequencing in the incidence level:

**Value Formation > Behavior > Value Object**

According to Mahib ur Rahman and Alhaisoni, (2013), the interest of the different sciences has been: to focus their field of action towards the formation of values, by virtue of the fact that we live in a society without values, or because new values have been associated with the new socio-economic and cultural paradigm, or by the existence of a multivariate range of values, which produces confusion and disorientation in the performance and valuation of human beings.

Also, the variable Formation in Values was analyzed separately and it was verified that in it the values of the sub-variables of greater incidence.

In other words, the sub-variables *Good to be Positive*, *Peace and School Commitment* are the ones with the highest incidence and that of *Copying* and *Disrespect* are the ones with the lowest impact on the variable Values Formation in students. In this sense, the students responded that in order to acquire these values their teachers should encourage them.

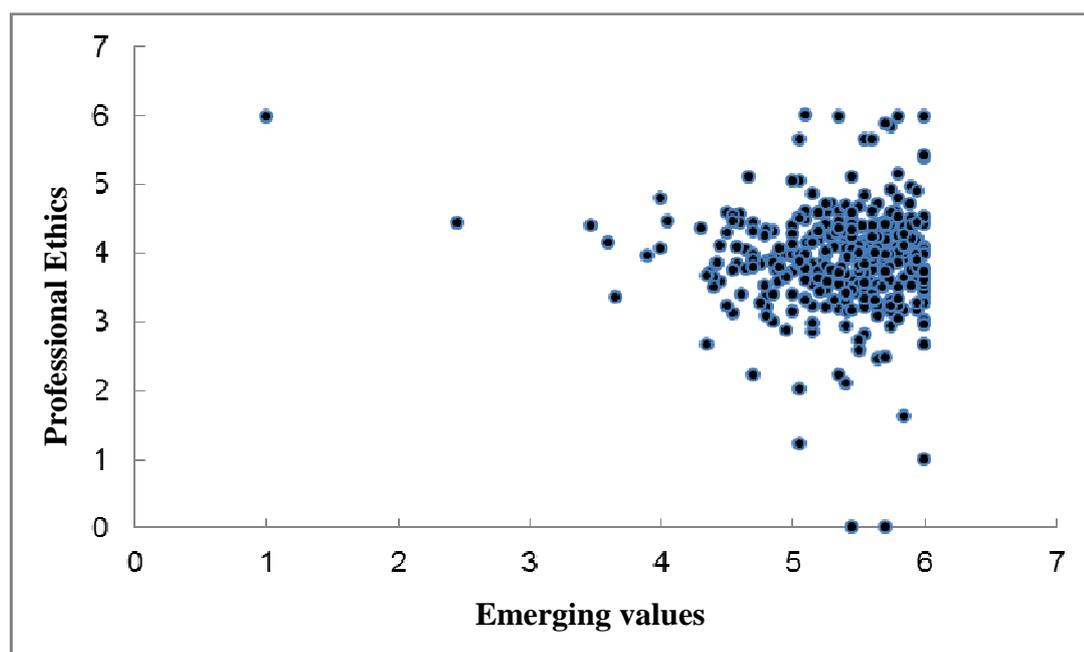
### 3.3 Correlation between Professional Ethics and Emerging Values

To know the existence or not of a relationship, whether positive or negative among the identified variables of the research, nonparametric statistical models were used, which do not require the specification of an assumption about the distribution of the data.

In this sense, a dispersion analysis was performed to visualize the behavior among the variables. Figure 3 shows the distribution.

In the figure, we do not observe a linear or curvilinear behavior, but rather a *cloud* of points that are randomly distributed, which is indicative that there is no significant correlation between the professional ethics of the teacher and the emerging values manifested by the students.

However, in order to corroborate the above, that is, to determine the dependence or independence between the variables, the measure of association between them was calculated by means of the Spearman hierarchy correlation coefficient (Spearman's Rho) for a level of significance of 0.05.



**Figure 3:** Scatter plot between professional ethics and emerging values

The Spearman Coefficient calculation procedure was performed using the statistical software IBM® SPSS® Statistic Version 21.0 resulting in the value presented -0.007 whose numerical value indicates the magnitude and the sign indicates the direction of the correlation.

In interpreting the results in the light of established ranges and scientific evidence, we can observe the value obtained from Spearman's Rho, which establishes that there is a negative correlation between the professional ethics of the teacher and the emerging values of the weaker students. The above could provide plausible support for the theory that, even at an early age, the professional ethics of the teacher should be channeled to promote emerging values in their students similar to those manifested by them. This practice greatly affects the

non-correlation between them. Not to take the above into consideration could generate a vicious circle with undesirable negative consequences on education.

#### 4. Conclusions

Education, ethics and values are a trilogy that cannot be separated. After analysis and discussion of ethics and values, data provided by teachers and students who were part of the research is exposed as follows:

It was verified that 30% of the teachers studied say they have a chronological age between 41 and 50 years of age, 39% say they have a teaching experience of between 10 and 20 years; 75% belong to the feminine gender, 70% claim to profess the Catholic religion, 57.5% said they chose their teaching by natural vocation and natural inspiration, and finally 73% of teachers investigated teach subjects that are outside the thematic axes traditions – Social Sciences and Exact Sciences.

For the variable corresponding to the professional ethics of the teacher, the first thing to be pointed out is that, in the manifest results by the teachers, it is concluded that the sub-variables contemplated affect in an unequal way. It is important to recognize that the sub-variables, axiological profile, performance, and vocation are the foundation for the teaching professional in recent times.

With regard to the Professional Ethics of the teacher and their respective variables, an analysis of variance was performed, resulting in the Axiological Profile being the most important variable.

On the other hand, 45% of the students investigated say they have a chronological age between 17 and 18 years of age; 58% are male; 80% claim to profess the catholic religion and 67.5% reside in the urban area.

When performing the analysis of variance of the sub-variables of the Emerging Values expressed by the students, it was verified that the Value Formation is the one with the highest incidence.

Finally, it was possible to know that in trying to relate the Professional Ethics of the teacher with the Emergent Values of the students, a behavior neither linear nor curvilinear was observed, but rather a cloud of scattered points at random, which is indicative of the absence of a significant correlation between the variables studied in the present investigation, Spearman's Rho has a level of significance of 0.05 of -0.007.

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