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Designing a Model of Teachers' Professional Ethics with Emphasis on Qur'anic Teachings: A Case Study of the Education System of Kerman Province

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Purpose: The present study aimed to develop a model of teachers' professional ethics with emphasis on Qur'anic teachings by integrating religious and educational perspectives within a human resource management approach.

Methods and Materials: This study adopted a qualitative approach and employed two methods: qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. In the first stage, Qur'anic verses related to ethical, educational, and professional concepts were examined using qualitative content analysis. The units of analysis consisted of verses and concepts associated with professional ethics, which were selected through purposive sampling. Following coding, the main categories and subcategories were extracted. In the second stage, data obtained from semi-structured interviews with experts in education and professional ethics were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis method. The trustworthiness of the findings was assessed using the criteria of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Findings: The qualitative content analysis of the Qur'an resulted in the extraction of 5 main categories, 23 subcategories, and 124 initial codes. The thematic analysis of the interviews also identified 5 main themes, 42 subthemes, and 210 initial codes. The final model of teachers' professional ethics comprised five principal dimensions: teachers' personal ethics and self-development, professional responsibility, interpersonal and relational ethics, justice and respect for the rights of others, and the teacher's role as an ethical and educational model.

Conclusion: The findings demonstrated that teachers' professional ethics is a multidimensional construct that, in addition to specialized competencies, encompasses personal characteristics, professional commitments, interpersonal relationships, justice orientation, and teachers' educational responsibility. The proposed model can serve as a scientific framework for designing teacher empowerment programs, developing a professional code of ethics, and improving the human resource management system within the education sector.

Keywords: teachers' professional ethics, Qur'anic teachings, content analysis, thematic analysis, human resource management, education.

1. Introduction

Professional ethics has increasingly become a central concern in educational management because the quality of educational systems depends not only on teachers' technical knowledge and instructional competence but also on the ethical standards that guide their decisions, interpersonal relationships, professional commitments, and conduct toward students, colleagues, families, and educational institutions. Teaching is inherently a moral and relational profession because teachers continuously make decisions that affect students' intellectual development, psychological well-being, socialization, sense of justice, and perceptions of authority and responsibility. Consequently, professional ethics in teaching cannot be reduced to compliance with administrative regulations or formal codes of conduct; rather, it encompasses an integrated system of values, dispositions, responsibilities, and behavioral principles that regulate how teachers understand and perform their professional roles. Contemporary scholarship increasingly emphasizes that professional ethics should be regarded as a constitutive element of teacher professionalism and educational quality rather than as an optional personal attribute. Studies have therefore examined professional ethics in relation to teaching quality, organizational functioning, psychological contracts, professional development, and ethical decision making, demonstrating that ethical competence is intertwined with both individual teacher characteristics and organizational conditions (Alipour & Ashouri Damouchali, 2024; Gharibzadeh et al., 2026; Shojaei, 2023). From a human resource management perspective, professional ethics is particularly significant because teachers constitute the principal human capital of educational organizations, and their ethical behavior directly influences trust, organizational legitimacy, cooperation, accountability, and the sustainable achievement of educational goals.

The multidimensional nature of teachers' professional ethics has led researchers to conceptualize it through such domains as commitment, responsibility, honesty, respect, fairness, confidentiality, competence, accountability, professional development, and concern for students' welfare. Qualitative investigations conducted in educational contexts have shown that professional ethics is manifested through both personal moral attributes and role-related behaviors. For example, research on professional ethics among teachers has emphasized conscientiousness, respect for learners, adherence to professional standards, justice in

evaluation, professional competence, and responsibility toward the educational community (Nahani Estahbanati et al., 2020). Similarly, qualitative analysis of the professional ethics of physical education teachers in Iran's educational system has highlighted that ethical teaching is shaped by individual, interpersonal, organizational, and professional dimensions, suggesting that ethical conduct cannot be understood independently of the institutional environment in which teachers work (Mohammadi et al., 2024). Research involving faculty members has likewise identified multiple components of professional ethics in teaching, demonstrating that ethical professionalism encompasses behavior toward students, colleagues, the organization, and the profession itself (Fallahi et al., 2025). A recent systematic review and meta-synthesis of teaching ethics in nursing education similarly indicates that ethical teaching involves professional integrity, relational responsibility, respect for learners, fairness, accountability, and role-modeling, reinforcing the argument that teacher ethics is inherently multidimensional across different educational settings (Chaimo & Thanasilp, 2026).

Professional ethics also has important organizational implications. Teachers operate within formal educational institutions characterized by organizational goals, policies, leadership structures, systems of evaluation, and relationships of interdependence. Ethical behavior is therefore influenced not only by internal moral commitment but also by organizational justice, managerial practices, collegial support, professional expectations, and institutional culture. Empirical evidence suggests that teachers' perceptions of organizational justice are associated with their professional involvement and ethical conduct, indicating that fair organizational practices may reinforce ethical commitment and responsible professional behavior (Salehi et al., 2025). Likewise, the relationship between organizational agility and professional ethics has been examined through the mediating role of social support, demonstrating that teachers' ethical functioning is connected to the broader social and organizational environment in schools (Mahmoudi & Gheisari, 2025). Collaboration and professional relationships among teachers also constitute an important dimension of ethical educational practice, as ethical professionalism involves not only individual responsibility but also collegial cooperation, mutual trust, shared professional standards, and constructive participation in school communities (Hosaini et al., 2026). From the perspective of educational human resource management, these findings suggest that professional ethics should be

incorporated into teacher recruitment, induction, professional development, performance management, organizational culture, and leadership practices rather than being treated merely as an abstract normative concern.

The significance of teachers' professional ethics becomes even more evident when its consequences for students are considered. Teachers function simultaneously as instructors, evaluators, socialization agents, authority figures, counselors, and behavioral role models. Their ethical conduct can therefore shape students' academic self-perceptions, attitudes toward learning, interpersonal behavior, and understanding of moral norms. Evidence has indicated that professional ethics training for teachers can positively influence students' academic self-efficacy, suggesting that ethical teacher behavior may create educational environments characterized by trust, psychological security, encouragement, and equitable treatment (Mansourian, 2022). Furthermore, the teacher's role as a moral exemplar means that professional ethics is communicated not only through explicit instruction but also through daily behavior, patterns of communication, fairness in assessment, reactions to mistakes, respect for individual differences, and the consistency between professed values and actual conduct. The theoretical literature on the development of professional codes of ethics for teachers has therefore emphasized the need to identify normative principles capable of translating ethical ideals into concrete professional expectations (Ghaedi et al., 2013). Such a perspective is consistent with the argument that teacher ethics should be understood as both a personal moral orientation and an institutionalized professional framework guiding educational behavior.

The rapid transformation of contemporary education has further expanded the ethical responsibilities of teachers. Digital technologies, artificial intelligence, virtual learning environments, data-driven educational practices, and increasingly complex communication platforms have introduced new ethical questions concerning privacy, intellectual responsibility, digital equity, transparency, technological competence, and appropriate use of educational resources. The integration of educational technology therefore requires professional ethics to evolve in parallel with technological change. Professional ethics has been described as an indispensable component of educational technology because teachers must exercise ethical judgment in selecting, applying, and evaluating technological tools while protecting learners' dignity, rights, and educational interests (Alipour & Ashouri Damouchali,

2024). More recently, scholarship on the preparation of preservice teachers for responsible generative artificial intelligence use has emphasized ethics, privacy, AI literacy, responsible decision making, and the need to prepare educators for emerging technological dilemmas (Kohnke et al., 2026). These developments demonstrate that contemporary teacher professionalism requires a moral framework sufficiently stable to provide normative direction while also sufficiently adaptable to address new professional circumstances. This reinforces the need for foundational ethical models rooted in coherent philosophical and cultural systems rather than fragmented collections of context-specific rules.

Another major issue concerns the relationship between professional ethics and teachers' personal development. Ethical practice depends partly on teachers' capacity for self-regulation, resilience, professional self-efficacy, reflection, and continuing development. Research among rural teachers has demonstrated meaningful connections among self- and professional development, teacher self-efficacy, resilience, and attributes of professional ethics, highlighting the importance of personal formation in sustaining ethical professional practice (Erawan et al., 2026). Ethical decision making similarly requires more than knowledge of rules; it requires judgment, information competence, personal responsibility, and the ability to evaluate competing professional considerations. Research examining teachers' ethical decision making and professional ethics has drawn attention to the role of information literacy as an intermediary capacity that can facilitate more responsible professional decisions (Gharibzadeh et al., 2026). Psychological contracts also contribute to teachers' perceptions of professional obligations, reciprocity, and appropriate conduct, suggesting that professional ethics develops through interactions between personal expectations and institutional relationships (Shojaei, 2023). These findings collectively indicate that the ethical teacher is not merely one who obeys regulations but one who develops moral self-awareness, professional judgment, resilience, competence, and a sustained sense of responsibility toward the educational mission.

Despite this growing body of research, professional ethics remains a culturally and normatively embedded construct. Universal professional principles such as justice, honesty, responsibility, respect, and avoidance of harm may receive different conceptual emphases depending on philosophical, religious, and sociocultural traditions. Critical analysis of professional codes for teachers has shown that such codes

are not neutral compilations of technical rules but reflect deeper assumptions about society, citizenship, professional responsibility, authority, and the purposes of education (Saada, 2026). Accordingly, constructing an ethically meaningful model for teachers requires attention to the cultural and normative foundations of the educational system in which that model is intended to operate. This consideration is especially important in societies in which religious teachings constitute an important source of moral norms and educational philosophy. In the Iranian context, the educational system formally emphasizes Islamic values, moral development, human dignity, justice, responsibility, and the cultivation of learners in accordance with religious and national principles. The Fundamental Reform Document of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran places moral and spiritual development among the central orientations of educational transformation and regards teachers as key agents in realizing the educational and cultural objectives of the system (Supreme Council of the Cultural, 2011). Consequently, a model of teachers' professional ethics intended for the Iranian education system requires alignment not only with contemporary professional standards but also with the normative foundations of Islamic education.

Within Islamic thought, education is not restricted to the transmission of knowledge but is closely related to moral cultivation, human development, self-purification, responsibility, and the realization of human potential. Motahhari's educational thought emphasizes the integrated development of intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities and regards education as a process of cultivating human faculties in accordance with sound moral principles (Motahhari, 2010). Classical Islamic ethical literature similarly gives central importance to virtues such as sincerity, justice, patience, humility, self-control, honesty, benevolence, and responsibility. Naraghi's ethical scholarship, for example, conceptualizes moral excellence through the cultivation of virtues and regulation of individual conduct, interpersonal relations, and human responsibilities (Naraghi, 2011). Such perspectives are especially relevant to teaching because educators occupy positions of trust and influence that require both moral character and responsible behavior. Contemporary scholarship examining the religious foundations of professional ethics for teachers and university faculty members has likewise argued that the presuppositions of professional ethics can be grounded in religious anthropology, moral responsibility, and the ethical purposes of education (Farzaneh, 2022). Thus, Islamic ethical thought

offers a rich conceptual foundation for connecting teachers' personal morality with their professional obligations.

Among Islamic sources, the Holy Qur'an provides the most fundamental normative framework for moral and educational concepts. Qur'anic teachings repeatedly address justice, trustworthiness, fulfillment of commitments, honesty, patience, consultation, respectful speech, compassion, avoidance of injustice, human dignity, self-restraint, and responsibility. These concepts have direct implications for educational practice because teaching involves entrusted responsibilities, interpersonal interaction, evaluation, guidance, authority, and the formation of students' moral and intellectual capacities. Qur'anic interpretation can therefore contribute to identifying foundational ethical principles relevant to the teaching profession. The *Tasnim* commentary provides extensive conceptual analysis of Qur'anic ethical and educational teachings and clarifies their implications for individual and social conduct (Javadi Amoli, 2013). When these principles are interpreted in relation to professional teaching, sincerity may inform motivational integrity, trustworthiness may relate to fulfillment of educational duties, justice may govern assessment and treatment of students, patience may support appropriate responses to educational difficulties, and human dignity may guide interpersonal communication. Such an approach makes it possible to move beyond the simple addition of religious terminology to existing professional models and instead construct an integrated framework in which Qur'anic ethical principles provide substantive foundations for professional behavior.

At the same time, deriving a contemporary professional ethics model exclusively from textual interpretation may be insufficient unless these normative concepts are examined in relation to the realities of educational practice. Teachers and educational experts confront institutional pressures, administrative regulations, diverse student needs, professional conflicts, technological changes, workload demands, and organizational expectations that require contextual interpretation of ethical principles. Therefore, a comprehensive model should integrate normative religious foundations with the experiential knowledge of educational professionals. Methodologically, qualitative research is particularly suitable for such an objective because it enables researchers to identify underlying meanings, interpret culturally embedded concepts, and develop conceptual structures from textual and experiential data. Qualitative methodology in management research provides approaches for exploring complex organizational phenomena whose

dimensions cannot be adequately captured through predetermined quantitative variables (Alvani & Danaeifard, 2019). Combining qualitative content analysis of foundational texts with thematic analysis of expert interviews can therefore facilitate both deductive-normative understanding and inductive-contextual refinement, allowing the model to reflect Qur'anic principles while remaining applicable to contemporary educational management.

The need for such integration is reinforced by recent research suggesting that teacher ethics is simultaneously personal, professional, relational, organizational, and developmental. Teachers must cultivate ethical character, maintain professional competence, respect students' rights, cooperate constructively with colleagues, exercise justice, and serve as credible role models. Current international research increasingly treats professional ethics as a dynamic professional capacity connected to changing instructional environments, new technologies, collaborative work, and professional identity (Chaimo & Thanasilp, 2026; Erawan et al., 2026; Kohnke et al., 2026). Iranian research has similarly identified the significance of professional ethics across educational and organizational contexts, including teacher behavior, organizational justice, social support, academic outcomes, and professional development (Fallahi et al., 2025; Mahmoudi & Gheisari, 2025; Salehi et al., 2025). Nevertheless, existing studies have often focused on selected dimensions of professional ethics, relationships between professional ethics and organizational variables, or general descriptions of ethical components. There remains a need for an integrated model that systematically derives foundational ethical principles from Qur'anic teachings and subsequently contextualizes, supplements, and validates these principles through the perspectives of experienced educational experts, particularly within the administrative and cultural environment of a specific provincial education system.

This need is especially relevant for the education system of Kerman Province, where a contextually grounded professional ethics framework could support teacher development, ethical leadership, human resource policies, professional evaluation, and the formulation of practical codes of conduct. A coherent model may provide a conceptual basis for incorporating ethical criteria into teacher training and professional development, strengthening accountability while avoiding an exclusively compliance-based understanding of ethics, and aligning individual teacher conduct with broader educational values. It can also help educational managers distinguish among

personal moral qualities, professional responsibilities, interpersonal obligations, justice-related duties, and teachers' educational role-modeling functions. Such a multidimensional framework would be consistent with contemporary recognition that professional ethics should be embedded in the institutional management of teaching while also respecting the philosophical and religious foundations of the educational context (Hosaini et al., 2026; Saada, 2026). By combining Qur'anic analysis with expert perspectives, the resulting framework can potentially bridge the gap between normative Islamic ethics and the operational requirements of contemporary teacher professionalism and human resource management.

Therefore, the present study aimed to develop a model of teachers' professional ethics with emphasis on Qur'anic teachings by integrating the findings of qualitative content analysis of the Holy Qur'an with the thematic analysis of expert perspectives in the education system of Kerman Province.

2. Methods and Materials

In terms of purpose, the present study was applied research, and in terms of approach, it was a qualitative study conducted using a two-stage exploratory design. In the first stage, qualitative content analysis of documents was employed to extract the initial components of teachers' professional ethics based on Qur'anic teachings. In the second stage, data obtained from semi-structured interviews with experts were analyzed through thematic analysis, and the final model was developed. During the first stage, the theoretical and conceptual foundations of teachers' professional ethics were examined through written sources, including Qur'anic verses, authoritative Qur'anic commentaries, Islamic ethics literature, upstream policy documents of the education system, and relevant research, from which the preliminary concepts were extracted. In the second stage, to complement, refine, and contextualize the extracted components, the perspectives of experts in education, Islamic ethics, and the education system of Kerman Province were collected and analyzed through semi-structured interviews.

In the first stage of the study, the study population consisted of all verses of the Holy Qur'an that were directly or indirectly associated with concepts related to teachers' professional ethics, ethical values, educational responsibility, interpersonal relationships, commitment, justice, trustworthiness, honesty, sincerity, patience, respect,

and human dignity. Given the nature of the study and its objective of extracting the components of teachers' professional ethics based on Qur'anic teachings, criterion-based purposive sampling was employed at this stage. Accordingly, verses containing themes related to personal, social, and professional ethics that could be extended to the teaching profession were selected. The criteria for selecting the verses included conceptual relevance to professional ethics, the presence of educational implications, emphasis by authoritative Qur'anic commentaries on the ethical dimension of the verse, and relevance to teachers' professional responsibilities. The sample size at this stage was determined based on conceptual saturation. Thus, the examination of Qur'anic verses continued until the inclusion of additional verses no longer generated new concepts or categories related to the components of teachers' professional ethics. Ultimately, the selected Qur'anic verses containing themes relevant to the research topic were entered into the coding and content analysis process as units of analysis.

The second group within the study population consisted of experts and specialists in the field of education. Participants included faculty members in educational

sciences and Islamic studies, educational administrators, education-sector experts, and teachers with professional experience who possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: (1) holding at least a master's degree in educational sciences, educational management, Islamic education, Islamic studies, or other related disciplines; (2) having at least 10 years of academic or executive experience in the education sector; (3) familiarity with professional ethics, Islamic education, or issues pertaining to the educational system; and (4) willingness to participate in the study and provide expert perspectives. Purposive sampling was used in the human-participant phase of the study. Under this approach, individuals possessing the greatest degree of information and experience relevant to the research topic were selected. In cases where access to certain experts was facilitated through referrals by other specialists, snowball sampling was also employed. The number of participants was determined based on theoretical saturation, meaning that interviews continued until analysis of newly collected data no longer produced any new concepts or themes. Ultimately, 18 experts participated in the interview process.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Experts Participating in the Study

Code	Gender	Academic Degree	Area of Expertise	Years of Experience
P1	Male	PhD	Educational Sciences	18
P2	Male	PhD	Islamic Education	22
P3	Female	PhD	Educational Sciences	15
P4	Male	PhD	Philosophy of Education	20
P5	Female	Master's Degree	Educational Sciences	12
P6	Male	PhD	Educational Management	17
P7	Female	PhD	Islamic Studies	16
P8	Male	Master's Degree	Educational Management	18
P9	Female	PhD	Islamic Education	14
P10	Male	PhD	Curriculum Planning	15
P11	Female	Master's Degree	Educational Management	13
P12	Male	PhD	Qur'anic and Hadith Sciences	21
P13	Female	PhD	Educational Sciences	17
P14	Male	Master's Degree	Islamic Studies	15
P15	Female	PhD	Philosophy of Education	18
P16	Male	PhD	Educational Policy	24
P17	Female	Master's Degree	Education	11
P18	Male	PhD	Islamic Education	22

Given the two-stage nature of the study, two instruments were used for data collection:

Data collection instrument for the Qur'anic content analysis stage: In the first stage, a documentary data extraction form, or content analysis sheet, was used as the

data collection instrument. The form was designed to record information concerning the selected verses, extracted ethical concepts, initial codes, and emerging categories. At this stage, Qur'anic verses relevant to teachers' professional ethics were identified by consulting the text of the Qur'an,

authoritative Qur'anic commentaries, and specialized sources on Islamic ethics and were subsequently recorded in the content analysis form.

The content analysis form included components such as:

- number and text of the verse;
- extracted ethical concept;
- initial code;
- related theme; and
- relationship of the concept to teachers' professional ethics.

Data collection instrument for the thematic analysis of interviews: In the second stage, in-depth semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection instrument. The preliminary interview framework was developed on the basis of the findings obtained from the Qur'anic content analysis stage and the theoretical foundations of the study. The interview questions were formulated to identify, complement, and refine the dimensions and components of the proposed model of teachers' professional ethics. The interviews were conducted with experts in education, Islamic ethics, and the education system of Kerman Province. After obtaining the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Analysis of data from the Qur'anic content analysis stage: Data obtained from the examination of Qur'anic verses were analyzed using inductive qualitative content analysis. During this process, verses relevant to the research topic were first identified, and meaning units were extracted. The preliminary concepts were then recorded as open codes, and similar codes were grouped into components and subsequently organized into subcategories and main categories.

Analysis of data from the thematic analysis of interviews: Data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach.

The stages of analysis included:

1. familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts;
2. generation of initial codes;
3. identification of preliminary themes;
4. reviewing and refining the themes;
5. defining and naming the final themes; and
6. developing the final structure of the study's conceptual model.

Finally, the findings obtained from the thematic analysis of the interviews were integrated with the results of the

qualitative content analysis of the Qur'an, thereby forming the model of teachers' professional ethics with emphasis on Qur'anic teachings.

1. Trustworthiness of the Qur'anic content analysis

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings derived from the qualitative content analysis of the Qur'an, several measures were undertaken: the original text of the Holy Qur'an was used as the primary source of data; authoritative Islamic commentaries were consulted to facilitate accurate interpretation of the concepts contained in the verses; the extracted concepts were reviewed by specialists in Qur'anic sciences and education; and the data were reviewed repeatedly to ensure consistency between the codes and the content of the verses. Furthermore, to enhance coding reliability, a proportion of the selected verses and extracted codes was independently reviewed by a specialist in Islamic studies, and the level of agreement between the coding decisions was assessed.

Trustworthiness of the thematic analysis of the interviews: To assess the trustworthiness of the interview findings, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were applied.

Credibility: Credibility was enhanced through member checking with selected participants, expert review of the codes, and the use of multiple sources of data.

Transferability: Transferability was facilitated by providing detailed descriptions of participants' characteristics, the research context, and the data analysis process.

Dependability: The procedures of data collection, coding, and analysis were systematically recorded and documented to establish an auditable research trail.

Confirmability: To minimize researcher bias, the extracted codes and themes were compared with the raw interview data, and expert opinions were also obtained. The data were analyzed using MAXQDA 2020 software.

3. Findings and Results

In the first stage of the study, Qur'anic verses related to ethical, educational, and professional concepts were examined to identify the components of teachers' professional ethics from the perspective of Qur'anic teachings. Data obtained from the examination of Qur'anic verses were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, and following several stages of coding, initial concepts, subcomponents, and main dimensions were extracted.

The results of the qualitative content analysis of the Qur'an indicated that teachers' professional ethics could be classified into five main dimensions. Overall, 124 initial codes, 23 subcomponents, and 5 main dimensions were extracted. The main dimensions comprised teachers'

personal ethics and self-development, professional responsibility, interpersonal and relational ethics, justice and respect for the rights of others, and the teacher's role as an ethical and educational model.

Table 2

Example of the Coding Process for Qur'anic Verses

No.	Qur'anic Verse/Phrase	Meaning Unit	Open Code	Subcomponent	Main Dimension
1	"Indeed, Allah commands justice and benevolence" (Qur'an 16:90)	Command to uphold justice and benevolence	Practicing justice	Justice	Justice and respect for the rights of others
2	"And render the trusts" (Qur'an 4:58)	Returning entrusted matters	Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness	Professional responsibility
3	"And be patient over what befalls you" (Qur'an 31:17)	Patience in the face of hardship	Patience	Patience and perseverance	Teachers' personal ethics and self-development
4	"And speak kindly to people" (Qur'an 2:83)	Speaking kindly to others	Kind speech	Respect and compassion	Interpersonal and relational ethics
5	"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due" (Qur'an 4:58)	Fulfilling entrusted responsibilities toward their rightful recipients	Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness	Professional responsibility
6	"And whose affairs are conducted through consultation among themselves" (Qur'an 42:38)	Consultation in decision-making	Openness to consultation	Commitment and participation	Professional responsibility
7	"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example" (Qur'an 33:21)	The Prophet as a role model	Role modeling	Role modeling	Teacher's ethical and educational role
8	"And teach them the Book and wisdom" (Qur'an 2:129)	Teaching the Book and wisdom	Teaching	Guidance and moral education	Teacher's ethical and educational role
9	"Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong" (Qur'an 31:17)	Enjoining good and preventing wrongdoing	Moral guidance	Guidance	Teacher's ethical and educational role
10	"We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds" (Qur'an 21:107)	Mercy toward all beings	Compassion	Compassion and respect for human dignity	Interpersonal and relational ethics
11	"Indeed, Allah does not love the wrongdoers" (Qur'an 3:140)	Rejection of wrongdoing	Avoidance of injustice	Avoidance of discrimination	Justice and respect for the rights of others
12	"O you who believe, be mindful of Allah" (Qur'an 5:8)	Observing God-consciousness	Piety	Piety	Teachers' personal ethics and self-development
13	"Indeed, Allah commands justice" (Qur'an 16:90)	Command to uphold justice	Practicing justice	Justice	Justice and respect for the rights of others
14	"And do not insult one another by offensive nicknames" (Qur'an 49:11)	Avoidance of humiliation and derogatory labeling	Respect for human dignity	Respect for human dignity	Interpersonal and relational ethics
15	"And fulfill every commitment, for every commitment will be questioned" (Qur'an 17:34)	Fulfillment of commitments	Commitment	Commitment	Professional responsibility

Table 3

Main Dimensions, Subcomponents, and Frequency of Codes Extracted From the Qualitative Content Analysis of the Qur'an

Main Dimensions	Subcomponents	Number of Extracted Codes
Teachers' personal ethics and self-development	Sincerity, piety, patience, self-control, honesty	28
Professional responsibility	Commitment, trustworthiness, performance of duties, accountability	26
Interpersonal and relational ethics	Respect, compassion, respect for human dignity, kind speech	24
Justice and respect for the rights of others	Justice, avoidance of discrimination, respect for students' rights	22
Teacher's ethical and educational role	Guidance, moral education, role modeling	24
Total	—	124

In the second stage of the study, the data obtained from interviews with experts in education and professional ethics were subjected to thematic analysis in order to complement the findings derived from the qualitative content analysis of the Qur'an. The thematic analysis process resulted in the

extraction of 210 initial codes, 42 subthemes, and 5 main themes. The identified main themes were consistent with the dimensions obtained from the qualitative content analysis of the Qur'an and collectively constituted the final framework of teachers' professional ethics.

Table 4

Main Themes and Subthemes Extracted From the Thematic Analysis of Expert Interviews

Main Theme	Subthemes	Number
1. Teachers' personal ethics and self-development	1. Sincerity	10
	2. Piety	
	3. Patience and perseverance	
	4. Self-control	
	5. Honesty	
	6. Humility	
	7. Avoidance of ostentation	
	8. Self-reflection and self-accountability	
	9. Self-esteem	
	10. Appropriate outward appearance and inner moral refinement	
2. Professional responsibility	11. Organizational commitment	9
	12. Trustworthiness	
	13. Performance of duties	
	14. Sense of responsibility	
	15. Accountability	
	16. Punctuality	
	17. Adherence to rules and regulations	
	18. Perseverance and diligence	
	19. Continuous updating of professional knowledge	
3. Interpersonal and relational ethics	20. Mutual respect	10
	21. Compassion and kindness	
	22. Respect for human dignity	
	23. Kind speech	
	24. Good moral conduct	
	25. Empathy	
	26. Forgiveness	
	27. Avoidance of humiliation	
	28. Openness to consultation	
4. Justice and respect for the rights of others	29. Constructive interaction with colleagues	7
	30. Justice	
	31. Avoidance of discrimination	
	32. Respect for students' rights	
	33. Fairness in assessment	
	34. Respect for colleagues' rights	
	35. Avoidance of injustice	
5. Teacher's ethical and educational role	36. Observance of equality	6
	37. Guidance	
	38. Moral education	
	39. Behavioral correction	
	40. Role modeling	
	41. Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong	
	42. Development of critical thinking	
Total	42 subthemes	42

This table presents the five main themes, 42 subthemes, and their distribution based on the thematic analysis of interviews conducted with 18 experts.

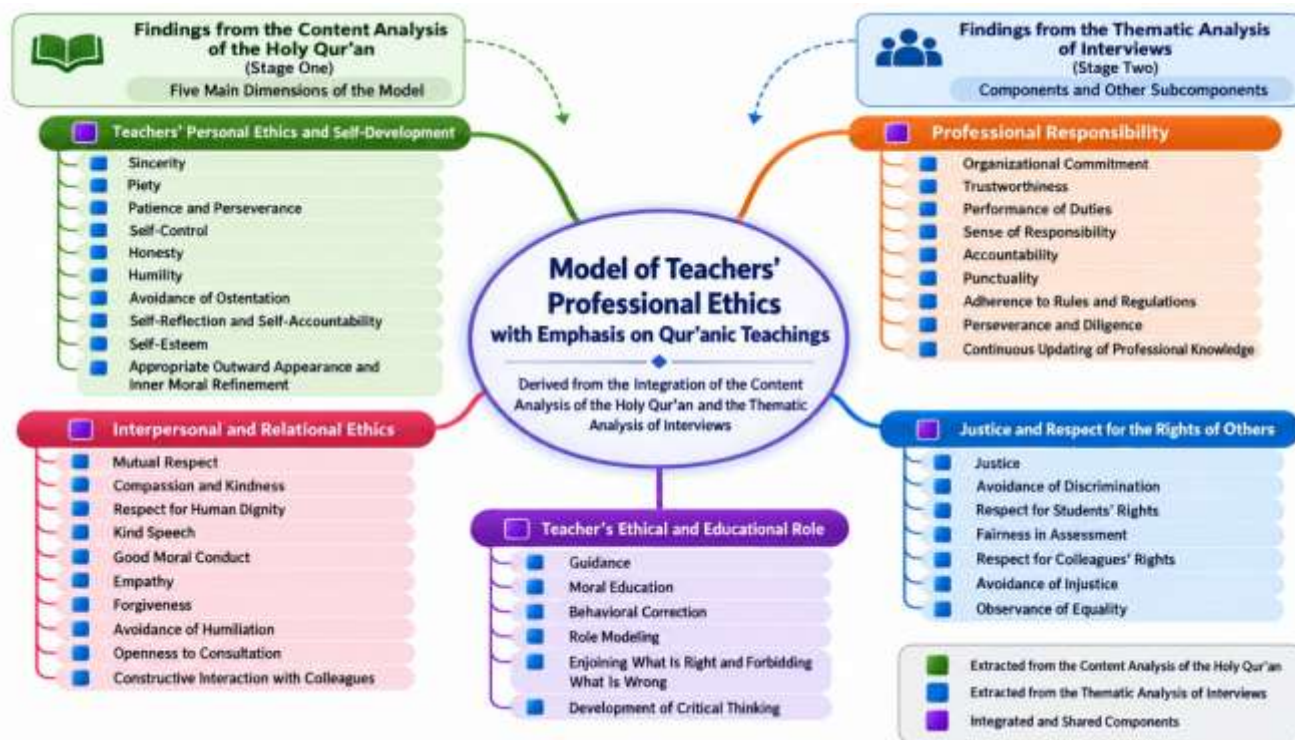
Table 5

Integration of the Dimensions and Components of Teachers' Professional Ethics Based on the Qualitative Content Analysis of the Qur'an and the Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Main Dimension (Qur'an)	Main Theme (Interviews)	Qur'anic Components	Interview Themes	Shared/Confirmed Components	Additional Components From Interviews	Final Total
1. Teachers' personal ethics and self-development	1. Teachers' personal ethics and self-development	Sincerity, piety, patience, self-control, honesty	Sincerity, piety, patience and perseverance, self-control, honesty, humility, avoidance of ostentation, self-reflection and self-accountability, self-esteem, appropriate outward appearance and inner moral refinement	Sincerity, piety, patience and perseverance, self-control, honesty	Humility, avoidance of ostentation, self-reflection and self-accountability, self-esteem, appropriate outward appearance and inner moral refinement	10
2. Professional responsibility	2. Professional responsibility	Commitment, trustworthiness, performance of duties, accountability	Organizational commitment, trustworthiness, performance of duties, sense of responsibility, accountability, punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, perseverance and diligence, continuous updating of professional knowledge	Organizational commitment, trustworthiness, performance of duties, accountability	Sense of responsibility, punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, perseverance and diligence, continuous updating of professional knowledge	9
3. Interpersonal and relational ethics	3. Interpersonal and relational ethics	Respect, compassion, respect for human dignity, kind speech	Mutual respect, compassion and kindness, respect for human dignity, kind speech, good moral conduct, empathy, forgiveness, avoidance of humiliation, openness to consultation, constructive interaction with colleagues	Mutual respect, compassion and kindness, respect for human dignity, kind speech	Good moral conduct, empathy, forgiveness, avoidance of humiliation, openness to consultation, constructive interaction with colleagues	10
4. Justice and respect for the rights of others	4. Justice and respect for the rights of others	Justice, avoidance of discrimination, respect for students' rights	Justice, avoidance of discrimination, respect for students' rights, fairness in assessment, respect for colleagues' rights, avoidance of injustice, observance of equality	Justice, avoidance of discrimination, respect for students' rights	Fairness in assessment, respect for colleagues' rights, avoidance of injustice, observance of equality	7
5. Teacher's ethical and educational role	5. Teacher's ethical and educational role	Guidance, moral education, role modeling	Guidance, moral education, behavioral correction, role modeling, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, development of critical thinking	Guidance, moral education, role modeling	Behavioral correction, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, development of critical thinking	6
Total	5 main themes	19 components	42 subthemes			

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Teachers' Professional Ethics With Emphasis on Qur'anic Teachings



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study developed a model of teachers' professional ethics with emphasis on Qur'anic teachings by integrating qualitative content analysis of the Holy Qur'an with thematic analysis of expert interviews. The findings revealed five main dimensions: teachers' personal ethics and self-development, professional responsibility, interpersonal and relational ethics, justice and respect for the rights of others, and the teacher's ethical and educational role. At the Qur'anic analysis stage, 124 initial codes and 23 subcomponents were extracted and organized into these five dimensions. At the interview stage, 210 initial codes and 42 subthemes were identified, which were subsequently integrated with the Qur'anic findings. The convergence between the two analytic stages indicates that teachers' professional ethics is not limited to formal occupational duties or compliance with organizational regulations but comprises an integrated structure of personal virtues, professional commitments, interpersonal responsibilities, justice-oriented conduct, and educational role modeling. This multidimensional interpretation is consistent with previous studies that have conceptualized professional ethics

as a combination of personal, interpersonal, organizational, and professional obligations (Fallahi et al., 2025; Mohammadi et al., 2024; Nahani Estahbanati et al., 2020). It also supports the view that professional ethics should be embedded in the broader human resource management system of educational organizations, because the ethical quality of teachers' behavior directly affects educational effectiveness, organizational trust, professional relationships, and the achievement of institutional goals.

The first dimension identified in the study was teachers' personal ethics and self-development, encompassing sincerity, piety, patience and perseverance, self-control, honesty, humility, avoidance of ostentation, self-reflection and self-accountability, self-esteem, and appropriate outward appearance and inner moral refinement. This finding indicates that professional ethics begins with the teacher's internal moral orientation and capacity for self-regulation before it is expressed in relationships or organizational conduct. From the perspective of Qur'anic ethics, professional behavior cannot be separated from the moral character of the individual performing the professional role. Sincerity, honesty, patience, self-control, and piety provide internal motivational and regulatory foundations that influence how teachers respond to

professional challenges, exercise authority, and manage their responsibilities. This interpretation is consistent with Islamic ethical thought, which emphasizes moral self-cultivation and purification as prerequisites for responsible social conduct (Motahhari, 2010; Naraghi, 2011). It is also compatible with Qur'anic interpretations emphasizing that moral action acquires value when it is grounded in sincere intention, justice, responsibility, and conscious self-regulation (Javadi Amoli, 2013). Contemporary studies similarly indicate that professional ethics is closely linked with self-development, resilience, self-efficacy, and the personal capacities of teachers (Erawan et al., 2026). Thus, teachers' professional ethics should not be viewed merely as externally regulated conduct; rather, it involves an internalized ethical identity that enables teachers to act consistently even in situations where organizational supervision is limited.

The identification of humility, avoidance of ostentation, self-accountability, and self-esteem as additional interview-derived components further extends the personal ethics dimension. These components illustrate how religiously grounded ethical concepts can be operationalized in contemporary educational practice. Humility can prevent authoritarianism and facilitate openness to feedback, while self-accountability encourages teachers to critically evaluate their own behavior, instructional decisions, and effects on students. Avoidance of ostentation emphasizes authenticity and prevents professional behavior from becoming merely performative or motivated by external recognition. At the same time, healthy self-esteem may help teachers maintain professional confidence and moral independence. The religious foundations of professional ethics for teachers have similarly been discussed in terms of internal moral commitments rather than merely external rules (Farzaneh, 2022). This result also corresponds with research showing that teachers' professional ethics can be predicted by psychological contracts and perceptions of reciprocal professional obligations, because internalized beliefs about duties and expectations influence professional conduct (Shojaei, 2023). Accordingly, the personal ethics dimension constitutes the moral infrastructure upon which the other dimensions of the model are built.

The second major dimension was professional responsibility, comprising organizational commitment, trustworthiness, performance of duties, a sense of responsibility, accountability, punctuality, adherence to rules and regulations, perseverance and diligence, and continuous updating of professional knowledge. The results

suggest that professional responsibility represents the translation of moral commitment into concrete occupational behavior. Within the Qur'anic framework, trustworthiness and fulfillment of commitments are central moral obligations, while in professional contexts they are manifested through conscientious performance, accountability, reliability, and respect for institutional responsibilities. Previous studies have similarly emphasized commitment, responsibility, competence, and accountability as fundamental elements of teachers' professional ethics (Ghaedi et al., 2013; Nahani Estahbanati et al., 2020). Professional ethics among teachers has also been associated with organizational variables such as organizational agility, social support, job involvement, and perceptions of justice, demonstrating that ethical conduct is closely connected with the way teachers understand and perform their institutional responsibilities (Mahmoudi & Gheisari, 2025; Salehi et al., 2025).

The inclusion of continuous professional knowledge updating is particularly important because it expands professional ethics beyond moral behavior in the narrow sense. Competence itself can be considered an ethical obligation when inadequate knowledge or outdated professional practices may adversely affect students. Teachers have a responsibility not only to behave honestly and respectfully but also to maintain the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching. This interpretation is consistent with research emphasizing that professional ethics must accompany educational technology and changing instructional practices (Alipour & Ashouri Damouchali, 2024). In contemporary educational environments, this responsibility has become even more significant because teachers increasingly encounter digital learning systems and generative artificial intelligence. Responsible use of such technologies requires both technical literacy and ethical judgment concerning privacy, transparency, academic integrity, and student welfare (Kohnke et al., 2026). The present model therefore appropriately situates continuing professional development within the ethical domain, suggesting that failure to maintain professional competence may itself represent a deficiency in professional responsibility.

The third dimension was interpersonal and relational ethics, which included mutual respect, compassion and kindness, respect for human dignity, kind speech, good moral conduct, empathy, forgiveness, avoidance of humiliation, openness to consultation, and constructive interaction with colleagues. This dimension reflects the

fundamentally relational nature of teaching. Teachers conduct much of their work through continuous interpersonal interaction with students, colleagues, administrators, and families, and therefore professional ethics is inevitably manifested in communication patterns and relationship quality. Respect for human dignity and avoidance of humiliation are particularly important in educational settings because the asymmetry of power between teachers and students can create conditions in which disrespectful conduct may have profound psychological and educational consequences. Qur'anic teachings concerning kind speech, compassion, consultation, and human dignity provide a strong normative foundation for this dimension (Javadi Amoli, 2013). Islamic educational philosophy similarly treats moral interaction and compassionate guidance as central elements of the educational relationship (Motahhari, 2010).

The present result also aligns with contemporary research on teaching ethics. The systematic review and meta-synthesis conducted by Chaimo and Thanasilp identified respect, care, relational responsibility, integrity, and learner-centered ethical conduct as recurring elements of ethical teaching (Chaimo & Thanasilp, 2026). Similarly, studies of professional ethics among teachers in Iran have identified respectful interaction, professional communication, and appropriate relationships with students and colleagues as essential components (Fallahi et al., 2025; Mohammadi et al., 2024). The emphasis on constructive interaction with colleagues and openness to consultation also corresponds with evidence that professional ethics is related to leadership collaboration and collegial relationships among teachers (Hosaini et al., 2026). These findings indicate that ethical professionalism cannot be sustained solely through individual virtues; it also requires social competencies that facilitate trust, collaboration, dialogue, and mutual respect within the school environment.

The fourth dimension, justice and respect for the rights of others, included justice, avoidance of discrimination, respect for students' rights, fairness in assessment, respect for colleagues' rights, avoidance of injustice, and observance of equality. This dimension is particularly significant because fairness is one of the most visible aspects of teachers' ethical behavior. Teachers distribute opportunities, evaluate performance, apply rules, allocate attention, and exercise authority, and these activities all involve potential ethical consequences. The Qur'anic emphasis on justice and the rejection of oppression provides a clear normative basis for this dimension. In the educational context, justice requires

teachers to apply standards impartially, respect individual differences without engaging in discriminatory treatment, and ensure that students' rights are protected. The identification of fairness in assessment as a specific subtheme demonstrates the practical relevance of this dimension because evaluation is one of the areas in which students directly experience teachers' sense of justice.

The importance of justice is also supported by organizational research. Studies have shown that organizational justice is associated with professional ethics and job involvement among teachers, suggesting that justice operates at both individual and institutional levels (Salehi et al., 2025). When teachers experience fair organizational treatment, they may be more likely to internalize and reproduce fairness in their own professional conduct. Conversely, ethical teachers themselves contribute to creating a more just educational climate. Theoretical analyses of professional codes of ethics have likewise emphasized fairness, rights, responsibilities, and non-discrimination as core professional principles (Ghaedi et al., 2013; Saada, 2026). Therefore, justice in the present model should be understood not merely as one virtue among many but as an organizing principle that shapes assessment practices, student treatment, collegial relations, and the ethical legitimacy of educational authority.

The fifth dimension concerned the teacher's ethical and educational role and consisted of guidance, moral education, behavioral correction, role modeling, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and development of critical thinking. This dimension demonstrates that the model extends beyond teachers' compliance with ethical expectations and assigns them an active formative role. Teachers are not only expected to behave ethically; they are also expected to contribute to students' moral, intellectual, and social development. The role-modeling component is particularly important because students often learn values indirectly by observing how teachers communicate, exercise authority, respond to disagreement, manage errors, and apply standards. In Islamic educational thought, teaching has traditionally been understood as a formative responsibility that integrates intellectual development with moral cultivation (Farzaneh, 2022; Motahhari, 2010). The Fundamental Reform Document of Education similarly conceptualizes teachers as central agents in achieving educational, ethical, cultural, and developmental objectives (Supreme Council of the Cultural, 2011).

The inclusion of critical thinking within this dimension is also noteworthy because it demonstrates that ethical

education should not be interpreted as passive moral conformity. Instead, ethical formation can include the development of students' ability to evaluate arguments, question assumptions, make reasoned judgments, and assume responsibility for their decisions. This broader conception of the teacher's educational role is compatible with contemporary approaches that view professional ethics as involving responsible decision making and preparation of learners for complex environments. The increasing role of artificial intelligence in education further strengthens the importance of critical thinking and ethical judgment, particularly when students must evaluate information authenticity, technological outputs, privacy implications, and responsible use of generative tools (Kohnke et al., 2026). Similarly, evidence that professional ethics training among teachers can influence students' academic self-efficacy indicates that ethical teacher behavior has consequences that extend beyond moral outcomes to students' broader educational development (Mansourian, 2022).

An important overall finding of the study was the high degree of convergence between the Qur'anic content analysis and the expert interviews. The five dimensions identified through Qur'anic analysis were reproduced in the thematic structure of the interviews, while experts provided additional context-specific subthemes within each dimension. This pattern suggests that Qur'anic ethical principles remain conceptually relevant to contemporary professional teaching, but their practical application requires interpretation in relation to current educational conditions. The interview-derived additions, such as punctuality, compliance with regulations, updating professional knowledge, fairness in assessment, constructive collegial interaction, and critical thinking, illustrate how foundational moral values can be translated into modern professional requirements. This integration addresses the concern that professional ethical codes may become either excessively abstract or excessively procedural. Research on professional ethical codes demonstrates that codes derive their meaning from underlying cultural and philosophical assumptions and therefore require contextual grounding (Saada, 2026). By integrating religious foundations with professional experience, the model developed in the present study offers a framework that is both normatively grounded and operationally relevant.

The findings also have implications for human resource management in education. The proposed dimensions indicate that teacher professional ethics should be integrated into multiple HRM functions, including recruitment,

selection, induction, professional development, performance appraisal, promotion, leadership development, and organizational culture. If professional ethics is treated only as a matter of individual morality, educational organizations may overlook structural conditions that encourage or inhibit ethical behavior. Evidence linking ethics with organizational justice, social support, collaboration, information literacy, and organizational agility suggests that ethical practice is reinforced when institutional systems are themselves supportive, fair, and professionally coherent (Gharibzadeh et al., 2026; Hosaini et al., 2026; Mahmoudi & Gheisari, 2025). Accordingly, the proposed model can serve not merely as a conceptual description of an ideal teacher but also as a framework for managing and developing the human resources of educational organizations in accordance with both professional and Qur'anic values.

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the interview component was conducted with 18 experts from the education system of Kerman Province, and although theoretical saturation was achieved, the contextual characteristics of this setting may limit the transferability of some subthemes to other provinces, educational levels, or cultural environments. Second, the qualitative nature of the study means that the resulting model reflects interpretive analysis rather than statistical generalization. Third, the selection and interpretation of Qur'anic verses necessarily involved researcher judgment, and despite the use of authoritative commentaries, expert review, and coding checks, some degree of interpretive subjectivity cannot be completely eliminated. Fourth, the study concentrated primarily on expert perspectives and did not directly incorporate the views of students, parents, school principals, or policymakers, all of whom may perceive teachers' professional ethics from different perspectives. Finally, the study developed a conceptual model but did not quantitatively test its factor structure, predictive validity, or relationships with organizational and educational outcomes.

Future studies should quantitatively validate the proposed model using large and diverse samples of teachers from different provinces, school levels, and educational contexts. A psychometrically sound instrument could be developed on the basis of the identified dimensions and subthemes, followed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to examine the model's structural validity. Comparative research could investigate whether the relative importance of the five dimensions differs according to gender, teaching experience, subject area, school type, or geographic region.

Further qualitative studies could incorporate students, parents, principals, policymakers, and teacher educators to obtain a broader stakeholder perspective. Longitudinal studies could also examine whether professional ethics changes as teachers gain experience or participate in professional development programs. Intervention studies would be particularly valuable for determining whether training based on the proposed model improves ethical decision making, teacher–student relationships, organizational commitment, fairness in assessment, and other educational outcomes. Cross-cultural research could also compare the Qur’anic-based model with professional ethics frameworks developed in other religious or secular educational traditions.

Educational authorities and school managers can use the proposed model as a framework for strengthening ethical professionalism throughout the teacher employment cycle. Teacher recruitment and selection procedures may include indicators related to responsibility, interpersonal ethics, fairness, reflective capacity, and commitment to professional development. Preservice and in-service training programs can be redesigned around the five identified dimensions and include practical scenarios, ethical dilemmas, reflective exercises, peer discussion, and case-based decision making rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction. Schools can also develop professional codes of ethics that translate the model’s components into observable behavioral expectations while maintaining sensitivity to the educational and cultural context. Performance appraisal systems should incorporate ethical indicators alongside instructional competence, and managers should ensure that organizational procedures themselves reflect justice, transparency, respect, and accountability. Finally, the model may serve as a basis for continuous teacher development programs aimed at integrating personal moral growth, professional responsibility, respectful communication, justice-oriented practices, and the teacher’s role as an ethical and educational model.

Authors’ Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

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