

Teachers' Moral Understanding in Encounters with Students Living in Poverty: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore and interpret teachers' moral understanding of students living in poverty within the school context. This research employed a qualitative approach using thematic analysis. The participants consisted of 15 teachers from public schools in Isfahan, who were selected through purposive sampling. All participants had at least three years of teaching experience and direct interaction with students living in poverty. Exclusion criteria included unwillingness to continue participation or incomplete data. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Based on the teachers' perceptions, the findings were organized into three overarching themes: "social and moral marginalization," "undermining distributive justice in access to opportunities," and "ethical challenges and difficult choices." These themes indicate that poverty not only leads to limitations in educational resources and learning but also contributes to reduced active participation of students in classroom activities, weakened social interactions within the school environment, and the emergence of ethical pressures and difficult choices in their daily lives. Nevertheless, poverty, as a multidimensional phenomenon in students' lived experience, affects the educational, social, and moral dimensions of their lives.

Keywords

Moral Understanding, Teachers, Students, Poverty, Qualitative Study.

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