

The Characteristics Of 'Being A Good Professional' In the Intricacies of The Ethics of The Profession and Conduct Professional Ethics (Study with Professionals and University Students in Portugal)

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Abstract:

Address the issue of professional ethics in the training process of (future) professionals in Portuguese higher education institutions and the appreciation of professional ethics in the exercise of professional activity with its connection with code of conduct and professional deontology. The theoretical-conceptual reference framework comes from heuristic literature research, which was analyzed hermeneutically in order to substantiate our purpose and respective objectives. We intend to value professional ethics in university training by using an empirical part of a quantitative methodology study (descriptive, transversal, explanatory), to determine what are the characteristics/attitudes 'Being a Good Professional' referred to by active professionals and students in training. Master (N=109 subjects), from the interior region of Portugal, having inserted these characteristics most cited as a percentage in a 'checklist' integrated into the 5 skills that the literature indicates for the profession: cognitive/scientific, technical-organizational, affective-emotional, social, ethics. The results expressed that the subjects have more 'Technical-organizational' (29.4) and 'ethical' (23.9%) and scientific (21%) skills, due to the requirement of exercising and profile of their own profession (responsibility and principles deontological), to the detriment of other skills less valued by them, which is partly contrary to other studies. Therefore, higher education institutions must introduce professional ethics subjects into their study plans, ensuring good ethical conduct for future professionals to be 'expert' and act ethically well in their future professional activity in organizations/companies and responding to the demands of society.

Keywords: Ethics of the profession. Professional ethics. University education. Professional ethics. Code of Conduct.

Introduction:

Greater social and professional responsibility is increasingly required, to have 'good' professionals in the ethical-social dimension, with skills and professionalism to practice their profession and respond to society's demands (Aguayo, 2007; Hirsch Adler, 2010). It is known that ethics is the reflection of principles, norms, values, obligations or duties of conduct and moral action in humans to perform well in/for the profession. Hence, ethics

in the training process of (future) professionals translates into professional ethics and professional deontology in this conduct. Ethical reflection for the profession constitutes an integral part of training in courses at higher education institutions (from now on HEIs) (Cortina, 2006; Rosales, 2015; Suero, 2004).

In fact, ethics plays an important role in the subject's personal, moral and professional life,

being a crucial element in higher education institutions (from now on HEIs), as the 'ethics of the profession' (internalized concept of inherent moral obligations to work) requires a distinction between legal issues (norms linked to law) and ethical issues (conduct of moral action), between duties/obligations and basic responsibilities (Martins, 2010). Now the challenge for HEIs is to (re)think training models, giving more (re)meaning to the social, professional and deontological dimensions (Rosales, 2020). Training in HEIs, in terms of ethical principles and values, is questionable and, therefore, cases of influence of interests, corruption, breach of confidentiality, ethical misconduct in the profession, etc. arise. Therefore, it is essential to promote understanding in future professionals of the principles, norms, values and obligations to be good professionals (Knoch, 2004; Vicente Rodríguez, 2006). We conceive as a determining element in university education the principle of beneficence, which constitutes the ethical epicenter of a task and/or job, in order to achieve 'good' through policies and actions contained in the legislation and normative discourses of the profession, as according to A. Hortal (2001): an ethical professional is one who does 'good' in his profession and there is nothing more moralizing than each one of us doing 'good', which is our professional obligation.

Effectively, students in training and future professionals must be provided with elements of professional ethics, associated with the acquisition of scientific or cognitive skills, technical-organizational skills, social skills, with the principle of beneficence being the guiding link of the constructive action of 'professional ethos' intertwined with the principles of justice, non-maleficence, autonomy and responsibility, as the professional, when developing skills, creates dispositions to understand and help build a fairer and more democratic society (Hortal & Etxeberria, 2011; Svensson, 2003). In other words, professional ethics in training must be in the discourse of HEIs, as professional ethics, as an area of knowledge that generates training devices, due

to its importance constitutes a process of legitimacy and morality in teaching (Rosales, 2015).

It is our purpose to analyze the 'ethics of/for the profession' highlighting its principles, values, norms and obligations in professional conduct, identifying the role (ethical, social) of HEIs in the training process, giving emphasis to inclusion (curricular) of the ethical and deontological dimension in the training study plan, in order to enable (future) professionals to be ethically 'good professionals'. These training institutions have the duty to know the (new) discourses and organizational structures that society generates, training deontologically qualified professionals, knowing that knowledge is linked to organizational technique (culture) and the problems arising from professional practice are faced by level of their ethical-moral conduct (Camps, 2010; Cortina, 2009).

It is in the light of the theoretical framework that we build, on the basis of bibliographic or literature research, our hermeneutical argumentation, in order to provide greater familiarity with the theme, since ethics marks the border of our coexistence and helps us to put into perspective the ethical principles and values that guide our conduct. Therefore, by reflecting this conceptual epistemology, at the level of the ethics of the profession, it allowed us to understand the data from empirical research on the characteristics/attitudes of '*Being a good professional*' in the activity, in relation to their skills (scientific/cognitive; technical-organizational; social, ethical, affective-emotional) of professional activity. In fact, professional ethics constitutes an area of interest for the sociology of professions and organizations, as it allows us to approach the general ethics of professions, professional deontology, social responsibility and professionalism and professionalism of subjects. It is an ethics in the field of practical ethics, business ethics, bioethics and biomedical and health sciences, that is, the impact of professional ethics in the areas of knowledge (Hortal, 2002; López & Martín, 2010; Pizzi, 2006).

The methodological structure of the text integrates three points and respective subpoints, in line with the approach objectives, which are: hermeneutic analysis of the state of the art in a theoretical-conceptual way, ethics of/in the profession, professional ethics and specific principles and values of conduct in professional activity, the relevance and contributions of professional ethics in the training of future professionals in HEIs and professional deontology; In the following point we will explain the empirical study carried out in 2022, on a sample of N=109 subjects, who practice their profession and are 'master' students at HEIs, regarding the characteristics of 'Being a Good Professional', with adequacy to the five essential skills ('checklist'), in addition to reference to the participants' sociodemographic variables; and finally, the interpretative analysis of data in valuing the 'ethics of the profession' in HEIs, in order to adopt teachers with skills and resources for the training of ethics for the profession with research projects in this field and, also, training students in the field of ethics specific professional.

1.-State of the art on Professional Ethics and Professional Ethics:

In recent decades, ethics has come to be seen as a way of preserving human moral values (Ricoeur, 2011) and especially in professions. Ethical principles, values (personal, social and organizational), norms and obligations began to permeate codes of ethical conduct and deontological codes. Thus, the theme of ethics ('ethos') of/in the profession influences the actions of human moral conduct and the subject's way of being as a professional (Aguayo, 2007; Vilar, 2008). From the mobilization of these aspects of ethics in the profession, reinforced within the scope of professional ethics (professionalism, professionalism) and professional deontology, through the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and autonomy and, also, Humanity (human dignity as a value) it allows organizations and companies to follow standards for good professional performance, in order to achieve goals and objectives of the profession

(Bermejo, 2002; Carracedo, 2009; Reis, 2003). Professionalism, in addition to skills, scientific preparation and dedication, integrates personal and corporate commitment with types of goods that are important to society and, therefore, presupposes technical competence, knowledge and skills with a view to a good/correct performance of their professional practice, since that the professional, being an 'expert', has knowledge and develops skills and technical skills to act in accordance with a code of ethical conduct (Amendoreira, 2012; Bara & Buxarrais Estrada, 2004).

Therefore, 'professional ethics' and 'professional deontology' are used interchangeably, despite certain etymological differences between them, as 'professional ethics' focuses on 'professional ethics' (= 'doing well', the goods of the service provided, good professional, etc.) and professional deontology postulates the duties, norms and obligations of 'doing' or executing the service (Martínez, 2006; Monteiro, 2005). If professional ethics requires motivations from the subject, deontology adduces criteria shared by the professional collective (code). However, without an ethical perspective, deontology is left without horizons of reference and, therefore, we indicate the following coordinates in professional ethics (Martins, 2010):

*- 'Professional ethos': acting for the benefit of others (clients, users, recipients). In the correct exercise of a profession, a 'good' is obtained, which is the best criterion for defining what a good professional is in the technical and ethical dimensions. Professional ethics questions 'who it is aimed at' and 'what' the performance of a profession is for. In the 'good professional' (expert) we articulate the ends with the techniques/knowledge (skills, abilities) necessary for the adequate performance of an activity. Being competent and morally responsible characterizes the attitudes 'Being a good professional', that is, the principle that regulates the professional's relationships with the client/beneficiary of this service is that of beneficence.

*- Rights and recipients: principle of autonomy. This principle reinforces the dimension of the profession, by compensating for the lack of symmetry in the professional-client relationship, constituting a privilege of social guarantee. The professional must know what the client/user of his service needs and, therefore, his professional action and conduct is subordinated to the free acceptance of this provision and rights (sense of responsibility).

*- Relationship between the profession and society: principle of justice. This principle places professional practice within the framework of social ethics. Professional ethics, without the perspective of social ethics, lacks criteria in relation to the demands of professionals (means) and a better provision of services. The professional, in the exercise of his/her performance, with available resources, establishes his/her priorities with criteria of justice.

*- Responsibility (moral, social, public) that is supported by the principle of autonomy in the double personal and social dimension, knowing that the moral dimension of a profession cannot forget the social structure that the individual maintains in the correct execution of norms and their relationship with clients (collective responsibility) and, therefore, the ethical responsibility of a profession is classified by its values and duties (Bermejo, 2002).

*-Utility. This coordinate marks the development of deontology with the science of conduct applied to a profession, including the public utility of the service provided. Now it is up to ethics to clarify professional responsibilities, the criteria on which moral judgments of professional actions are based and what it means to be a 'good professional', which is achieved professionally through the 'excellence' of one's performance (Hortal, 2002).

*-Professional awareness. This property of the human spirit, of applying spontaneous and immediate norms regarding the value of certain individual acts, is combined with the principles of autonomy and responsibility. While psychological

conscience and moral conscience belong to the individual dimension of the person, professional conscience corresponds to the scope of interpersonal relationships, manifesting itself in responsible social behavior regarding the specific duties of a profession (Banks & Nohr, 2008).

*- Making ethical decisions through dialogue between experts, colleagues, clients and those responsible. In articulating the coordinates referred to professional ethics, through public debates, associations and ethics committees, it listens to the voice of specialists, clients/users and institutional managers, providing an integrating perspective of the multiple needs and interests with the possibilities and resources available, but prioritizing the principle of justice and equity (Bara & Buxarrais Estrada, 2004). Professionals and clients meet in a social space where the various needs and interests are articulated, as well as the possibilities and resources available (Aguayo, 2007). Thus, ethics of the profession has an important role in today's society and in the promotion of social justice and the well-being of citizens, as being an applied and/or practical ethics it constitutes a privileged bridge between human and social capital. Their reflection allows us to question the service that HEIs provide to society and the promotion of a culture of professional responsibility.

1.1 - The proportionality of Ethics of/in the profession in society:

We know that professions are occupational activities/tasks that are based on a set of characteristics (Hortal & Etxeberria, 2011), since a profession is a human social activity through which the individual provides a specific service to society, in an institutionalized way. This type of service requires professionals to have the right to be able to perform it for the company exclusively; This provision must be well defined, so that clients know what they expect from this service and the performance requirements of the professionals who perform it (type of service) (Hortal, 2002). It is obvious that professionals, in the full exercise of their activity, claim professional 'autonomy', as an

'expert' of the knowledge corresponding to their profession and the ways of exercising it, that is, the client has the right to demand and the professional to correctly perform their performance (self-regulation given by codes), as this autonomy corresponds to the duty to take responsibility for their acts and techniques (Hirsch Adler, 2004).

In fact, any professional activity is a social activity, which requires cooperation between the people who perform it, professionals, clients/direct beneficiaries of the activity, and other people involved in society. It is in this sense of social activity of the profession that we refer to the Aristotelian concept of 'praxis' (action), as cooperative professional activities contain ends: every action has included its own ends or ultimate goods. This model of 'practice' in the action of cooperative social activity is characterized by the obtaining of 'goods' internal to it (habits, virtues), which give it meaning (rationality) and social legitimacy (rights) and, on the other hand, external (remuneration, prestige, power). It is important to remember that professionals simultaneously develop technical skills and abilities and the ability to make decisions (professional values) (Tappolet, 2007). Now the 'good professional' intertwines skills and abilities with the capacity to value and, therefore, social activities are characterized by values (internal goods) and habits, since from the perspective of Aristotelian virtue ethics the 'virtuous in the profession' It is that individual who will aim for 'excellence' (skills), moving away from mediocrity (Mercier, 2003; Vicente Rodríguez, 2006; Vilar, 2008). Therefore, it makes sense to reflect professional ethics in society and in the training process in HEIs.

It is therefore clear that professional ethics is a relevant issue for HEIs, as they have significant sociocultural functions in the construction of society and the significant changes that occur within it, especially when looking for different ways to reduce the unequal distribution of wealth, promote social mobility and investigate and formulate possible solutions to priority problems (Hirsch Adler, 2004; Monteiro, 2005). Ethical

values are part of these issues, being an opportunity for the intellectual and moral consolidation of formative life and society as a whole (Ogien & Tappolet, 2008).

1.2- The formative relevance of professional ethics in the curriculum of HEIs:

HEIs have significant social and cultural functions in the construction of society, with the formation of knowledge and the development of skills, as well as values and ethical behavior, being an important issue in this mission of training (future) professionals. The performance and behavior intrinsic to the profession are essential, as is the meaning and life project of the subjects, associated with professional and technical competence (Hirsch Adler & Castro, 2005). Hence there is currently a sensitivity and social demand for ethics in professionals, insisting on incorporating into the curricular plan of higher education courses (study plans) some curricular unit of 'professional ethics' and 'professional deontology', especially in European countries, USA, Canada, Australia and Latin America, contributing to building a type of professional profile that faces new challenges and social demands related to the issue of professional responsibility (Fraga, 2019; Etxeberria, 2003).

Simultaneously, speeches and proposals arise about the need for change in HEIs in the recognition of new structures and business organizations that imply a transformation in values and ethical-moral learning, in order to avoid (ethical) conflicts in professional practice (public, private), largely due to the emergence of new professions with interdisciplinary fields (Tappolet, 2007). Now ethical training becomes a necessity in HEIs, both in the mission of these institutions and of the actors, as the role they play is decisive in the training of 'good professionals', in the development of knowledge, skills and abilities in science, technology and culture and reflection of principles and values (Macfarlane, 2004).

In fact, ethics in HEIs constitutes an opportunity for the intellectual and ethical-moral consolidation of life in higher education and in society in general

(Hirsch Adler, 2010). The priority principles and values that shape professional ethics in the various areas of knowledge in university education imply knowledge by students of the form of professional performance and the code of ethical conduct and respective identification with their future profession. We recognize that professional ethics is a privileged topic to promote the personal and collective self-esteem of students in training and professionals in terms of the professional and human quality that is required and also the social esteem of the services they will provide to society (Hortal & Etxeberria, 2011; Henderson; Antelo & Clair, 2010). It is no coincidence that at the University of Granada in Spain, a 'Chair of Ethics in Professions' was recently founded to articulate the various proposals in the field of professional ethics, boosting student training and research in this field.

There are, from our perspective, aspects of professional ethics in the training of professionals in HEIs that seem noteworthy, such as the inculcation of the principle of co-responsibility in the profession that leads us to the confrontation between 'nihilism' and 'responsibility' in the context of challenges current social and cultural aspects in the formation of citizens (Mayor, 2004; Moratalla, 2003). This 'nihilism' manifests itself in a certain indifference towards the impoverishment and forgetfulness of humanization programs. The ethics of the profession alerts us to the limits of neopositivism and scientific idealism, the irresponsibility of skepticism and existing moral relativism, promoting reflection in (future) professionals so as to have a fusion of horizons between the scientific areas and the curricular units of their training (Cortina, 2006; Rodríguez, 2008). This practical ethics constitutes one of the quality indicators in the evaluation processes and social function of HEIs. These institutions develop in future professionals the ability to judge (critical intelligence) and practical wisdom in applying critical knowledge, practical wisdom being that which allows forging the professional personality (conscience), professional lifestyle and/or

professional profile. . This process of forging the professional's character constitutes the energy we have to make decisions, avoiding the possible 'corrosion of character' in the neo-capitalist society in which we live (Cortina & Conill, 2010).

The organization of HEIs must be done so that they are a 'service forum' or social space with the instrumental function of training and qualifying (future) professionals. At the same time, these institutions promote their training objectives as a 'space of identification', that is, as a reference of value, moral authority and a hinge of meanings in the construction of personal and professional identity. Therefore, the ethics of professions in higher education institutions is a good instrument for students to express the authenticity of their vocation or inclination, the coherence of their professional decisions and the way to manage the opportunities that their qualification and training offers them (Hortal & Fernández, 1994; Rosales, 2020). It is about focusing on professional responsibility, so that the student can respond to the ethical challenges of society. The lack of response to these professional challenges represents the 'naturalist' or 'nihilist' model (Moratalla, 2003).

To understand the ethics of professions in HEIs, we analyzed three models of professionalization, according to A. Domingo Mortalha (2003):

(1st)-Mechanistic professionalization. HEIs adapt and adjust their training programs (curricula) to the mechanisms of the labor market (mechanistic or instrumentalist process). In the face of modernization processes, professionalization is located within the economic and utilitarian scope. These institutions train professionals for society that the processes of social rationalization and economic growth dictate. The objective of professional ethics would be training based on the triple relationship: Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. This option implies an institutional organization characterized by the separation of knowledge or knowledge, in order to train a professional specialist or 'expert', that is, a person with certain technical skills and abilities. Thus, the training institution would not have to worry about

other types of skills that have to do with character, social responsibility, the desire to serve others and a sense of justice. Professional identity will be limited to a technical identity, without worrying about anthropological, social and cultural dimensions. Training for accountability is reduced to the practice of complying with legality/duty and adapting the subject to their profession (Martins, 2010).

(2nd) -Civilizing professionalism. This model is defined as 'civilizing' because higher education institutions intend to respond to economic and civic modernization. Professional ethics would qualify professionals for economic and social calculation, that is, for the concern of economic development, compliance with standards and the social development and well-being of society. The organization of knowledge for this ethics presupposes the submission of knowledge to social planning and development of organizations/companies (Carracedo, 2009; Mayor, 2004). This is because training and professional qualification are based on a strong and weak personal dimension.

Professionals are not trained for individualism or social atomism, but rather for responsible individualism, concerned for 'others' (phenomenological principle of reciprocity), with an awareness of dependence and social cohesion. The dimensions of professional responsibility (intrasubjective, intersubjective and collective - related to the Codes of Ethics) would be a public co-responsibility that is not limited to a minimum of legal responsibility, but to environmental, cultural, family and labor market aspects. In this sense, solidarity coincides with distributive justice and social responsibility, taking as an example, patronage or volunteer professionals committed to the obligation to return to society what it has provided them. Therefore, professional co-responsibility implies a personal and professional connection with the society model and, at the same time, with a commitment to applying knowledge, skills and technical skills (Vicente Rodríguez, 2006).

(3rd)-Identifying professionalization. It is the professional model that is based on specialization and training in a set of values, principles and obligations. Values and their organization are decisive in understanding the ethics of professions. Therefore, professionals must be specialists ('expert'), good citizens with the aspiration of being people with a shared life project in an open society (K. Popper's meaning), in order to generate value and develop innovation and creativity capabilities. and service. Social values are not reduced to the commercial aspect, but rather to ethical-moral categories of society. Professionals are citizens who generate intangibles, administrators of trust and social credibility. It is up to professional ethics to facilitate this legitimacy (economic, legal) of/in the profession, in the historical sense and contribute to personal growth in community contexts of common good (Suero, 2004; Vilar, 2008).

Therefore, reflection on the ethics of the profession in HEIs contributes to raising the level of 'excellence', with responsibility being a way of putting the simple 'bureaucratic ethos' before the so-called 'professional ethos' in the performance of professional activity. The exercise of 'prudentia' in its Aristotelian sense, present in the responsible action of the professional, in the face of conflicts and uncertainties that generate the entanglement of human relationships and where agents/clients must have 'mutual respect' under the principle of reciprocity of Aristotelian 'prhónesis' or virtue of prudence (Moratalla, 2003). P. Ricoeur (2011) proposes the 'prudential reason' so that human action is not limited to the limits of the established legal, so that this intellectual virtue ('prhónesis') allows the citizen (person, professional) to act within the framework of what it can be another way – deliberating and deciding to act among the contingent (being prudent) (Martins, 2010).

2-Empirical methodology: Design, Methods, Sample and Procedures:

Within the scope of the Project proposal "Professional ethics and the values for 'Being a good professional'" at the CeiED Research Center

at Universidade Lusófona de Lisboa, interrupted by COVID, we carried out between October/November 2022, a quantitative methodology study (exploratory, transversal, descriptive and explanatory), through an interview survey about the main characteristics/attitudes of 'Being a good professional in your (future) profession', having analyzed the identifying or sociodemographic variables of the participating subjects (N=109), in especially by sex, age, profession, academic qualifications, residence, years of service in the profession).

The origin of that Project was due to the fact that international studies appeared on professional ethics, university professional attitudes and ethics (students and teachers) and ethical training in HEIs. We took into account, for example: the investigations of Ana Hirsch Adler (2004, 2010) – 'Interuniversity Project on Professional Ethics in several Universities in Mexico', by Hirsch Adler and Castro (2005), with López Rodrigo, Teresa Yurén, etc. , seeking to define the essential skills for professional practice in the different areas of knowledge, analyzing the competence-performance binomial, referring to learning acquired in a social context, to the values highlighted by university teachers, with emphasis on ethical, scientific/cognitive, social, affective-emotional and professional skills. Other investigations by Guadalupe Chávez at the Autonomous University of Nuevo León-México reflecting on professions and their ethical valorization in universities, giving importance to ethical skills, as well as affective-emotional ones, contrasting them with social skills; the studies by Martín López Calva, Isabel Royo and other collaborators at the Ibero-American University of Puebla on teachers in their social and professional commitment; the studies carried out at the Guana Juato University (Mexico), by Bárbara Kepowcz, Gabriel Medrano and Letícia Santacruz, which highlight the most preponderant ethical value held by teachers in their profession, the Juan C. Cabrera & Leticia Pons studies, at the Autonomous University of Chiapas, in gender differences, in the

profession according to areas of knowledge. Finally, the reference to the research team at the University of Valencia on teaching skills and at the University of Navarra in Spain.

The content analysis of these studies was decisive in substantiating the conceptions, principles and values that professionals must possess when carrying out their profession, that is, knowing the characteristics/attitudes in relation to their respective skills (scientific, technical-organizational, social, ethical and affective-emotional) in professional activity. We comply with ethical-legal procedures with the subjects (term of free acceptance), protecting their privacy/confidentiality and guaranteeing their anonymity. The survey was carried out by face-to-face contact and also via email and/or telephone contact.

Sampling and participant selection methods:

We initially constituted an invited sample of 120 participating subjects (convenience selection) that included active professionals and those in university-master's training at HEIs, in the Portuguese region of Beira Interior, which subsequently gave rise to a data sample of N=109 respondents that involved 10 % of non-return in relation to the invited sample. The sample was characterized by gender - M=53 (48.7%), F=56 (51.3%), by age between 20 and 60 years (20-30 years=36.7%; 31-49 years=21.1%; 41-50 years=28.4; 51-60 years, 13.8). In relation to the time of active practice in the profession, we structured it into levels: from 0 to 10 years of service=29.0% (included 'master's degree students from HEIs'); range from 11 to 20 years old=17.0%, from 21-30 years old=16.7%, from 31-40 years old=13.1%, from 41-50 years old=18.4%; 51 to 60 years =5.8%). The study subjects were divided into 4 sectors related to profession/professional activity or training: *-Sector 1 (N=30) - Professionals in practice - liberal professions (M=17; F=13) aged between 26 and 58. Regarding education, 66.3% of the subjects had a Bachelor's degree, 16.7% a Master's degree, 10% a Postgraduate degree and 6.7% a Bachelor's degree. With regard to length of

service, the largest percentage has worked for 2-9 years (43.3%), between 9-16 years (23.3%), between 16-23 years (20%), and between 30 -35 years (13.3%). As for residence, the largest percentage belonged to the municipality of Fundão (33.3%), municipality of Covilhã (20%), municipality of Guarda (16.7%), Seia (10%), Belmonte (10%) and Castelo Branco (10%).

*-Sector 2 (N=19) - Higher Education Teachers (M=; S8; F= 11), with the initial sample invited consisting of 30 subjects, but due to unavailability of the HEIs, the return was 19 respondents, belonging to various departments of the University of Beira Interior and the Polytechnic Institute of Guarda, aged between 35 and 55 years old and with 'Academic Qualifications' of Master's (19.9%) and Doctorate (43.3%).

*-Sector 3 (N=30) -Students of the 2nd Cycle of Masters in Higher Education Institutions (University of Beira Interior and Polytechnic Institutes of Castelo Branco and Guarda), characterized by M=15 and F=15 and ages included between 20 and 41 years old.

*-Sector 4 (N=30) -Population active in various jobs with lower education or with the 12th year of schooling or professional training courses (M=13; F=17), aged between 26 and 60 years old. Regarding education, educational qualifications were not homogeneous, as we found individuals with a degree working as counter waiters and others with professional training courses. It is also clear that some of the qualifications mentioned by these subjects were acquired while active workers, either on their own initiative in state schools, or through adherence to the "New Opportunities" program, as they have a more adaptable workload and are compatible with their "private life". The subjects surveyed had an average of 20.8 years in their work activity.

3-Analysis and Interpretation of Results:The subjects had to indicate at least 3 'Characteristics/attitudes of Being a 'Good Professional'', having obtained 539 identifying characteristics of the profession. The highest

frequency percentage of features in the answers (concepts) (30%) were: commitment; professionalism, responsibility; honesty; respect; attendance/punctuality; camaraderie; sympathy; communication; dedication; creativity and innovation; work as a team; technical skills; continuous formation; organizational capacity, etc. With a lower frequency (15%) of characteristics (concepts) were: humility; leadership, justice; autonomy, loyalty, tolerance, integrity, determination, availability, dedicated, discretion, mutual assistance, sincerity, practice, managing the activity, self-motivation, dynamics, wisdom, patience, demand, ambition, secrecy, spirit of initiative, etc.

We then group these traits or characteristics/attitudes referred to in an inventory - 'checklist' based on the five skills that the 'Professional' profile must possess in their performance of professional activity: Cognitive/Scientific; Technical-organizational; Social; Ethics; and Affective-emotional. This measurement of characteristics or characteristics/attitudes to the skills referred to "Being a good professional" gave the following percentage: 'Technical-organizational' (29.4%), followed by 'Ethics' (23.9%), 'Cognitive' /Scientific' (21%), 'Social' (19.85%) and least 'Affective-emotional' (5.75%).

In this way, the 'Cognitive/Scientific' and 'Technical-organizational' competencies significantly indicated: knowledge, training, organizational spirit, mastery of techniques, preparation, professional and technical competence, innovation, overcoming, continuous training (updating). In the 'Ethical' skills we recorded high percentages in: responsibility (public, social and professional), respect, honesty, dignity of the person, reciprocity with others, good moral conduct, providing a good service, moral principles, professional values, 'ethos' professional, etc. In the 'Social' skills, the most significant percentages were: companionship, communication, knowing how to work in a team, cooperation, camaraderie, personal relationships,

being a worker, applying yourself socially, etc. Finally, in the 'Affective-emotional' skills, we highlight the most mentioned in percentage: emotional capacity, identification with the profession, self-esteem, self-motivation, understanding the other (client or recipient), etc.

Now part of these results contradict some literature studies carried out, which highlight that the highest percentage of competencies are in order: 'Cognitive or Scientific', 'Technical and organizational', 'Affective-emotional' and 'Ethical' and, for Finally, the 'Social' ones (Hirsch Adler & Castro, 2005). This fact of differentiation is due to aspects inherent to the respondents' profession in relation to performance attitudes, due to the requirements and compliance with codes of ethical conduct and professional deontology. This analysis takes us to Kant's Theory, which defends some principles, namely, the principle of respect for people; the treatment and consideration for others; the capacity for rational thought and self-determined action; "active sympathy" and ethical-moral value (Hirsch Adler, 2010). In accordance with the Kantian theory of 'duty', we found that some of the features/characteristics obtained are actually integrated and interrelated, since respondents value the profile '*Being a professional*' in function of the normative and deontological requirements of the profession, ensuring respect for their identity, responsibility, impartiality, honesty (Hirsch Adler, 2003, 2004).

We know that professional practice creates a relationship between need and utility in human beings, whether we are individuals directly linked to work/employment, to the professional group in which such a relationship is inserted, or to society, since the profession is ennobled by correct and competent action. with conduct appropriate to ethical principles and values. Thus, professional value is accompanied by ethical value, so that there is an integral professional image of quality. Therefore, the characteristics/attitudes referred to the profession and professional activity have a lot to do with training (initial, continued) and experience. However, we deduce that there are

aspects to improve in this professional training:

- ❖ Higher education institutions have the duty to 'train good professionals' (qualified) and 'good people' and/or 'good professionals'. Ethics is not just limited to the personal kindness of the professional, who in addition to being a good technician (skills) in his profession is also a good person. Those institutions are concerned about the quality of students' morale, the excellence of their abilities and their future professional performance (Hortal, 2002; Knoch, 2004; Suero, 2004).
- ❖ The meaning and value of work as a human activity are identified with tradition. The new professions that appear need an organization of their moral reflection. It is not about learning principles, values and obligations, but also resolving conflicts between social legality and professional morality (Rodríguez, 2008). The new scenarios and contexts where the (new) professions are located require a new relationship between personal identity and professional life, between the narrative unity of the life project and the diversity of occupations that constitute the subjects' way of life (Reis, 2003).
- ❖ The ethics of professions configure social values, articulating the activity itself and the model of society. Any activity has an individual dimension and a public dimension, which materializes in the realization of values and making life valuable (Martínez, 2006). Therefore, professional responsibilities affect the legitimacy, plausibility and credibility of the profession itself. In this sense, professional responsibility is not only the corresponding legal compliance (codes), but also the questioning of the meaning of the profession as a source of human capital and the privileged instruments for creating and strengthening social capital (professional co-responsibility).

Conclusions and Implications:

Our study, the result of a hermeneutic analysis of the supporting bibliography consulted on the topic of professional ethics, professional ethics and deontology, with an impact on the training process of future professionals in HEIs, was associated with the practical results of applying an interview survey to a sample of professionals, which allowed us to understand the most notable characteristics/attitudes related to the exercise and/or performance and actions of the professional interviewed. We said that HEIs have the mission of training 'good' professionals in the fields of knowledge, with a sense of ethical conduct for the profession, in which the first ethical duty in the activity to be a 'good professional' requires the professional's ability to perform effectively in their tasks and, on the other hand, the duty related to the conduct to be followed. Now this set – capacity and conduct – becomes responsible for the professional's concept towards their clients, their professional group, their colleagues, society, the State and their own conscience.

We seek to highlight the need for an ethical awareness guiding professional activity and hence the requirement for HEIs to integrate the 'ethics for the profession' component into the training study plan. The ethics of professions is an applied ethics in that one of its objectives is to facilitate the analysis of practical problems in the light of what is correct or incorrect, right or wrong in the sense of dignifying man as a professional. We said that the scope of ethics is limited to the exercise of a profession and, therefore, we speak of deontology, understood as the set of norms or rules for the exercise of a profession. The formalization of these guiding rules gives rise to Codes of Ethics or Professional Ethical Conduct for a given profession. Any professional must commit to their abilities or skills, practical skills, creativity and training, in correct and fair ethical conduct, in order to fully respond to the demands of the recipients of their profession. The debate on the ethics of professions is a questioning about the meaning and value of professional training within HEIs, which

augur good professionals and good professionals. We can only talk about professional responsibility in a profession if we ask ourselves about the models of professional responsibility in force in new training curricula (Rosales, 2015; Suero, 2004).

Compliance with professional ethics is not only based on the set of standards of deontological codes, but on the conscience of those who have the duty to put them into practice. It is imperative that professionals base their actions, behaviors and attitudes on moral principles and, at the same time, reflect on them ethically, in order to exercise correct professional conduct. In this sense, professional ethics has a mediating function by bridging the gap between the traditions of knowledge and the demands of society, between the various specific areas and the need for a common moral culture between the pragmatic interests of different social groups and the creation of a critical, active and responsible citizenship (Henderson; Antelo & Clair, 2010; Martins, 2010; Vilar, 2008).

From our perspective, professional ethics is not a decalogue of duties or standards for exercising a profession, nor the need to harmonize personal interests with the collective common good. It is more ambitious in promoting professional responsibility, taking into account the convictions or ethical dispositions acquired in training, dialogue, in the search for coherence and authenticity in life projects and, above all, in the cultivation of virtues. Models of professional responsibility allow us to develop different ways of understanding the ethics of the profession, organizations and the way of organizing knowledge(s), the purposes and fundamental values of an 'educated man' (Camps, 2010; Cortina, 2006).

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Conflict of Interest:

If you have no Conflict of interest, state "None".

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