

## Designing a Model for the Implementation of an Ethics-Oriented Curriculum in Iran's Education System

Masoumeh Alidadi Abdolabad<sup>1</sup>, Naziasadat Nasser<sup>2</sup>, Farideh Hashemiannejad<sup>3</sup>

1. Department of Educational Sciences, Ma.C. Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran

2. Department of Educational Sciences, Ma.C. Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran, [naseri5586@mshdiau.ac.ir](mailto:naseri5586@mshdiau.ac.ir)

3. Department of Educational Sciences, Ma.C. Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran

### Article Info

#### Article type:

Research Article

#### Article history:

Received 14 Mar. 2025

Received in revised form 24

Jun. 2025

Accepted 22 Sep. 2025

Published online 01 Mar. 2026

#### Keywords:

Curriculum,  
Ethics Orientation,  
Education System of Iran

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The present study aimed to design a model for the implementation of an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system.

**Methods:** This research was applied and developmental in nature and employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. In the qualitative phase, the study population consisted of 25 experts, managers, heads, and educational specialists in the education system who were selected as knowledgeable elites. In the quantitative phase, the statistical population included approximately 8,000 teachers and staff working in different positions within the education system. Based on Cochran's formula, a sample size of 367 participants was determined and selected using cluster random sampling. Data were collected through a questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using the Delphi method, structural equation modeling, and path analysis with AMOS software.

**Results:** The findings indicated that the model for implementing an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system consists of nine dimensions: objectives, content, teaching-learning methods, facilities and equipment, customs and traditions, time, the role and characteristics of teachers, the role and characteristics of learners, and evaluation. These dimensions comprised 59 components. Among these, objectives and educational aids were identified as the most influential and applicable dimensions and components of the model. The measurement model of the ethics-oriented curriculum implementation was found to be acceptable and demonstrated appropriate validity, and the relationships within the model were significant and satisfactory.

**Conclusions:** The results suggest that the design and implementation of a model for an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system should be seriously pursued by educational authorities in order to promote students' moral virtues and contribute to the well-being of future society.

**Cite this article:** Alidadi Abdolabad, M., Nasser, N. & Hashemiannejad, F. (2025). Designing a model for the implementation of an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system. *Iranian Journal of Educational Research*, 5 (1), 1-16.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/5.1.1>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Hormozgan.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/5.1.1>

## Introduction

Ethics and moral education constitute one of the fundamental pillars of human culture. For this reason, the issue has long been a subject of attention in different cultures and, today, it continues to attract the interest of researchers in many countries. A considerable portion of the teachings of various religions is devoted to moral principles. Human experience demonstrates that even in the modern and postmodern eras, humanity has never been free from the need for moral education. In its original and etymological sense, ethics refers to those qualities that become firmly rooted and stable in the human soul, in such a way that a person possessing such qualities performs actions corresponding to them without hesitation. In its technical sense, however, ethics is defined as a body of knowledge that identifies good and bad moral traits and the behaviors associated with them, and explains the methods of acquiring virtuous qualities, performing desirable actions, and avoiding negative traits and undesirable behaviors (Hedayati, 2014).

Moral education, as a shared and collective responsibility within society, is pursued by various groups and institutions (Arthur et al., 2017). Moral education refers to a form of change encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains. The rational dimension of moral education focuses on developing moral understanding that enables individuals to distinguish between right and wrong. From an emotional perspective, moral education aims at cultivating certain feelings and sentiments within individuals. Furthermore, moral education necessarily involves action; thus, an individual's behavior should reflect their moral understanding and feelings (Bagheri, 2015). The universal nature of this responsibility, together with the priority given to this content area in most educational systems around the world, highlights the significant importance of this dimension of school learning (Kristjánsson, 2016). In the modern era, educational systems as cultural and socializing institutions have not been limited merely to transmitting knowledge to students; their normative and value-based dimensions have also been emphasized. It is widely accepted that the function of schools cannot be reduced solely to cultivating intelligent individuals capable of outperforming competitors in today's competitive world. Rather, alongside this function, schools are expected to educate learners in a way that enables them to distinguish morally right actions from wrong ones (Anderson, 2014).

In Iran, since the establishment of the modern formal education system during the Qajar period, available documents and research findings indicate that policymakers have regarded the moral

education of students as one of the primary missions of schools and the formal public education system as a whole (Aghili et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the current formal education system appears to adopt a dual approach toward moral education at different levels of policymaking and planning. At the macro level of policymaking, official documents such as the *Fundamental Transformation Document of Education* and its theoretical foundations, as well as the *National Curriculum Document*, explicitly emphasize moral education and define its scope and importance. According to these documents, the domain of religious, devotional, and moral education is considered the most important among the six domains of education. This domain not only has an independent identity but is also expected to manifest itself across all other educational domains. However, in practice, and particularly at the micro level of curriculum implementation within the educational system, this domain has not received adequate attention (Aghili et al., 2018).

Research findings in this area indicate that the moral dimension within the domain of religious, devotional, and moral education has remained largely neglected within the educational system (Barati-Zadeh, 2014). This neglect has been so significant that some scholars have concluded that ethics and moral education curricula have been largely overlooked within the educational system and its curricular programs (Afkari, 2014).

Therefore, on the one hand, considering the strong emphasis placed by Islam and Islamic values on ethics and moral education, as well as the importance of moral education within society and the educational system, and on the other hand, given the relative neglect of ethics and moral education in educational programs and curricula and the lack of sufficient practical attention to this issue, it is necessary to conduct further studies in this field and to design an appropriate model for establishing an ethics-oriented educational system. Such a model should be capable of responding to the indigenous and local needs of Iranian society in relation to moral and religious values, norms, attitudes, and beliefs. Accordingly, the present study seeks to design and develop an appropriate model for the implementation of an ethics-oriented educational system. Therefore, the main research question is: What is the model for implementing an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system?

## **Material and Methods**

The present study was conducted using both field (questionnaire) and library (note-taking from literature) methods based on the mode of implementation. In terms of methodology, the research employed a mixed-methods approach. Mixed-methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches and is used by researchers to achieve a comprehensive and accurate understanding of a phenomenon. This approach attempts to consider multiple perspectives, approaches, and viewpoints.

### **Statistical Population, Sampling Method, and Sample Size**

#### **Qualitative Section**

The statistical population in the qualitative phase of the study consisted of selected experts, managers, heads, and educational specialists within the education system who possessed executive and managerial experience in the education sector and had influence at decision-making levels. These individuals, referred to as knowledgeable elites, were selected to participate in the qualitative phase of the research.

In this study, the researcher selected 25 experts who met the required general and specific criteria as members of the Delphi panel, in coordination with the research supervisors and advisors.

#### **Quantitative Section**

The second group of the statistical population consisted of teachers and staff holding various positions within the education system, with the total population estimated at approximately 8,000 individuals.

Using a two-stage cluster random sampling method, the statistical sample size was determined as follows:

In the first stage, three provinces (Tehran, Isfahan, and Mashhad) were randomly selected from among the 31 provinces of the country. In the second stage, 30 primary schools (10 schools from each province) were selected from these provinces. From these schools, 367 individuals were randomly selected as the study sample, including 123 participants from Tehran, 122 from Isfahan, and 122 from Mashhad.

#### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study was conducted in the following stages:

**Literature review and note-taking method** to identify the dimensions and components of the ethics-oriented curriculum.

**Delphi technique** to obtain expert consensus for designing the proposed model.

**Structural equation modeling (SEM) and path analysis** using PLS software to validate the model.

## **Research Instruments**

### **Instruments in the Qualitative Phase**

Since one of the objectives of this study was to identify the dimensions and components of an ethics-oriented curriculum, a two-stage process was employed. In the first stage, the research literature was reviewed to identify relevant dimensions and components. In the second stage, the opinions of 25 experts were collected using the purposive snowball sampling method in order to identify the effective components.

Based on this process, a preliminary framework consisting of 9 dimensions and 61 components was proposed. After initial consultation and feedback from the Delphi panel, the framework was refined and reduced to 9 dimensions and 59 components in the third round, making it theoretically sound and practically applicable.

### **Validity**

In the present study, after designing the initial conceptual model based on theoretical foundations, previous research, and qualitative analysis, the dimensions, components, and questionnaire items were sent to 25 members of the Delphi expert panel. The validity of each variable was examined and monitored through four rounds of the Delphi technique.

Following the incorporation of experts' suggestions and necessary revisions, the final version of the questionnaire was prepared. All stages of the process, the findings of each round, and the questionnaires were also reviewed by the research supervisors, advisors, and several other relevant faculty members. Based on their feedback, the final questionnaire (attached) was designed and distributed among the study sample.

Therefore, in this research, the validity of the research instrument (the researcher-developed questionnaire on the dimensions, components, and items of the ethics-oriented curriculum) was assessed through face validity and content validity.

Generally, if the participants in a study represent the relevant knowledge domain, content validity can be ensured. Moreover, it has been argued that qualitative studies—particularly those using the Delphi technique—should not be judged solely by quantitative criteria; rather, criteria such as transferability, credibility, applicability, and confirmability are more appropriate for assessing the validity and trustworthiness of results (Powell, 2003). Since the experts participating in this study possessed significant expertise and research experience, the content validity of the identified dimensions and components was confirmed. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated at the end of the four Delphi rounds, and the results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha of the Questionnaire

| Delphi Round | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--------------|------------------|
| First Round  | 0.762            |
| Third Round  | 0.891            |
| Fourth Round | 0.890            |

As shown in the table above, the Cronbach's alpha values for the questionnaire in the first, third, and fourth Delphi rounds were 0.762, 0.891, and 0.890, respectively. These results indicate that the reliability of the questionnaire increased from the first to the fourth Delphi round. Since the Cronbach's alpha values in all Delphi rounds are greater than 0.70, the proposed dimensions and components demonstrate acceptable reliability.

In addition, in this study, the reliability of the research instrument (used to identify the dimensions and components of the ethics-oriented curriculum and to design the ethics-oriented curriculum model) was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is one of the most widely used and well-known methods for measuring reliability. For this purpose, Cronbach's alpha was calculated using the data obtained from a pilot test conducted with a sample of 30 members of the statistical population who responded to the research questionnaire. The resulting Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.894, indicating a high level of reliability for the research instrument. The Cronbach's alpha values for all questionnaire items and variables related to identifying the dimensions and components of the ethics-oriented curriculum and designing the ethics-oriented curriculum model are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Cronbach's Alpha Test for the Entire Questionnaire in the Statistical Population

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Cronbach's Alpha       | 0.894 |
| Number of Participants | 30    |

### Ethical Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles in educational research. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the research before completing the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for research purposes. No personal identifying information was collected, and the data were analyzed and reported in aggregate form to protect participants' privacy. Furthermore, the researchers adhered to the principles of honesty, integrity, and transparency throughout the research process, including data collection, analysis, and reporting of the findings.

## Results

### Results of the First Delphi Round

In order to identify the dimensions and components of the ethics-oriented curriculum, the opinions of 25 experts were collected in the first round of the Delphi technique. The results related to the evaluation of the curriculum dimensions are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Results of Examining the Dimensions of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum (First Delphi Round)

| Dimensions                          | N of Responses | Mean  | SD    | T value | DF | P     | Result    |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|---------|----|-------|-----------|
| Objectives                          | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Content                             | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Teaching-Learning Methods           | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Tools and Facilities                | 25             | 0.800 | 0.408 | 2.449   | 24 | 0.022 | Confirmed |
| Environment                         | 25             | 0.840 | 0.374 | 3.207   | 24 | 0.004 | Confirmed |
| Time                                | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Teacher's Roles and Characteristics | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Learners' Roles and Characteristics | 25             | 1.000 | 0.000 | 9.990   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Evaluation                          | 25             | 0.800 | 0.408 | 2.449   | 24 | 0.022 | Confirmed |

The results related to the evaluation of the components of the ethics-oriented curriculum in the first Delphi round are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Results of Examining the Components of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum (First Delphi Round)

| Dimensions  | N of Responses | Mean  | SD    | T value | DF | P     | Result    |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|---------|----|-------|-----------|
| Individual Moral Education  | 25             | 1.000 | 0.000 | 9.990   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Social Moral Education  | 25             | 1.000 | 0.000 | 9.990   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Competency-Orientation  | 25             | 1.000 | 0.000 | 9.990   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Comprehensiveness   | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Principles of Goal Formulation                                      | 25             | 0.880 | 0.332 | 4.221   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Ultimate Goals  | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| General Goals   | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Specific Goals  | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Emphasis on Agency and the Role-Modeling of Human Resources         | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Human Resource Empowerment  | 25             | 1.000 | 0.000 | 9.990   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Flexibility in the Concept of Place                                 | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Expansion of Instructional Time                                     | 25             | 0.880 | 0.332 | 4.221   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Method of Content Selection   | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Content Organization  | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Content Development   | 25             | 0.960 | 0.200 | 9.000   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Use of Experiences  | 25             | 1.000 | 0.000 | 9.990   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Compatibility with the Religious and Cultural Ideals of the Country | 25             | 0.840 | 0.374 | 3.207   | 24 | 0.004 | Confirmed |
| Compatibility with Learners' Age                                    | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Relationship with God   | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Teaching-Learning Activities  | 25             | 0.920 | 0.277 | 5.779   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |

The findings in Table 4 indicate that all nine dimensions of the ethics-oriented curriculum and 59 out of 61 components of the ethics-oriented curriculum variable were confirmed, as their mean values were higher than the cut-off point of 0.60. Since no additional dimensions or components were suggested by the experts, the study passed the second Delphi stage, and the identified items were approved for designing the third-round Delphi questionnaire.

**Table 5.** Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (First Delphi Round)

| Kendall's W | Chi-Square | DF | P     |
|-------------|------------|----|-------|
| 0.712       | 2486.2     | 69 | 0.001 |

The results presented in Table 5 show that the Kendall's coefficient of concordance in the first Delphi round was 0.712, with a significance level of 0.001, indicating a high level of agreement among the experts' opinions. Therefore, the level of consensus among the experts in the first Delphi round was considered satisfactory.

### Results of the Third Delphi Round

In the third Delphi round questionnaire, the set of components identified as important by the experts in the first Delphi round were presented. The questionnaire items for the third round were organized as follows:

The ethics-oriented curriculum variable consisted of 9 dimensions, including:

- Objectives (12 components)
- Content (7 components)
- Teaching–learning methods (5 components)
- Tools and facilities (2 components)
- Environment (5 components)
- Time (3 components)
- Teacher roles and characteristics (18 components)
- Learner roles and characteristics (2 components)
- Evaluation (5 components)

In the third Delphi round, the variables were distributed among the experts using a five-point Likert scale (1–5). Then, the mean score, t-statistic, and significance level were calculated for each component. If the mean score of each component exceeded the 70% cut-off level (3.5 in a five-point Likert scale), that component was considered confirmed.

**Table 6.** Statistical Analysis of the Dimensions of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum Model (Third Delphi Round)

| Variable                   | Dimension                 | N  | Mean | SD   | T value | DF | P     | Result    |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|----|------|------|---------|----|-------|-----------|
| Ethics-Oriented Curriculum | Objectives                | 25 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 15.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Ethics-Oriented Curriculum | Content                   | 25 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 15.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Ethics-Oriented Curriculum | Teaching–Learning Methods | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Ethics-Oriented Curriculum | Tools and Facilities      | 25 | 3.92 | 0.28 | 9.390   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Ethics-Oriented Curriculum | Environment               | 25 | 3.92 | 0.20 | 14.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |

**Table 7.** Statistical Analysis of the Components of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum Model (Third Delphi Round)

| Components                     | N  | Mean | SD   | T value | DF | P     | Result    |
|--------------------------------|----|------|------|---------|----|-------|-----------|
| Individual Moral Education     | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Social Moral Education         | 25 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 15.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Competency Orientation         | 25 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 15.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Comprehensiveness              | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Principles of Goal Formulation | 25 | 3.88 | 0.33 | 7.236   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Ultimate Goals                 | 25 | 3.92 | 0.28 | 9.390   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| General Goals                  | 25 | 3.92 | 0.28 | 9.390   | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Specific Goals                 | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |

|   |    |      |      |        |    |       |           |
|---|----|------|------|--------|----|-------|-----------|
| Emphasis on Agency and the Role-Modeling of Human Resources | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000 | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Human Resource Empowerment                                  | 25 | 3.92 | 0.28 | 9.390  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Flexibility in the Concept of Place                         | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000 | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Expansion of Instructional Time                             | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000 | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Method of Content Selection                                 | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000 | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Content Organization  | 25 | 3.96 | 0.20 | 14.000 | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |

The findings presented in Tables 6 and 7 indicate that the mean importance of all dimensions and components was confirmed by the experts. Therefore, these variables proceeded to the fourth Delphi round. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance for the third Delphi round is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (Third Delphi Round)

| Kendall's W | Chi-Square | df | Sig.  |
|-------------|------------|----|-------|
| 0.495       | 854        | 67 | 0.001 |

The results in Table 8 show that the Kendall's coefficient of concordance in the third Delphi round was 0.495, which is statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . This indicates a moderate level of agreement among the experts. The findings of the third round revealed that minor differences of opinion still existed regarding some variables. Therefore, the remaining variables were included in a new questionnaire for the fourth Delphi round.

#### Fourth Delphi Round

In the fourth Delphi round questionnaire, the set of components identified as important in the third Delphi round were presented to the experts. After distributing and collecting the questionnaires, the results were analyzed and are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

**Table 9.** Statistical Analysis of the Dimensions of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum (Fourth Delphi Round)

| Dimensions                | N  | Mean | SD    | T value | DF | P     | Result    |
|---------------------------|----|------|-------|---------|----|-------|-----------|
| Objectives                | 25 | 4.36 | 0.995 | 19.900  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Content                   | 25 | 4.28 | 1.021 | 18.993  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Teaching-Learning Methods | 25 | 4.32 | 0.954 | 20.737  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Tools and Facilities      | 25 | 3.80 | 1.190 | 14.283  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Environment               | 25 | 4.04 | 1.098 | 16.568  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |

**Table 10.** Statistical Analysis of the Components of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum (Fourth Delphi Round)

| Dimension  | Component   | N  | Mean | SD    | T value | DF | P     | Result    |
|------------|---|----|------|-------|---------|----|-------|-----------|
| Objectives | Individual Moral Education                              | 25 | 4.40 | 1.000 | 20.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Social Moral Education                                  | 25 | 4.28 | 0.891 | 21.781  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Competency Orientation                                  | 25 | 4.24 | 0.879 | 21.833  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Comprehensiveness                                       | 25 | 4.20 | 0.866 | 21.939  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Principles of Goal Formulation                          | 25 | 4.08 | 0.954 | 19.288  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Ultimate Goals  | 25 | 4.08 | 0.909 | 20.237  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | General Goals   | 25 | 4.20 | 1.000 | 19.000  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Specific Goals  | 25 | 4.24 | 0.879 | 21.833  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Emphasis on Agency and Role Modeling of Human Resources | 25 | 4.16 | 0.943 | 19.928  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |
| Objectives | Human Resource Empowerment                              | 25 | 4.32 | 0.988 | 19.833  | 24 | 0.000 | Confirmed |

The results in Tables 9 and 10 indicate that all dimensions and components included in the fourth Delphi questionnaire were confirmed by the experts, and the importance level of all components was higher than the 70% cut-off point (mean = 3.5).

**Table 11.** Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (Fourth Delphi Round)

| Kendall's W | Chi-Square | df | Sig.  |
|-------------|------------|----|-------|
| 0.728       | 65.4       | 67 | 0.001 |

The findings in Table 11 indicate that the Kendall's coefficient of concordance in the fourth Delphi round was 0.728 with a significance level of 0.001, demonstrating a stronger agreement among the experts' opinions.

### Conclusion of the Four Delphi Rounds

The results of the Delphi process indicate that all components reached stability according to the experts' opinions. Moreover, the mean values higher than 3.5 in the last two rounds for all components demonstrate the effectiveness of all components in evaluating the ethics-oriented curriculum model, and therefore no component required elimination.

The findings also show that the agreement coefficients increased in the fourth round compared with previous rounds. Since the Kendall's coefficient reached 0.728 in the fourth round, it can be concluded that the experts achieved a high level of consensus regarding the variables.

Overall, the analysis of expert consensus using Kendall's coefficient (0.728) indicates that agreement was reached regarding all dimensions and components. Considering the achieved consensus, the minimal differences in means in the last two rounds, and the absence of addition or removal of components in the final stage, the stopping criterion of the Delphi process was satisfied.

In total, 59 components within 9 dimensions were confirmed, and these final validated components were used to design the questionnaire for the quantitative phase of the research.

**Table 12.** Cronbach's Alpha Test for the Components of the Ethics-Oriented Curriculum

| Reliability Statistics | Value |
|------------------------|-------|
| Cronbach's Alpha       | 0.98  |
| Number of Items        | 67    |



**Figure 1.** The study conceptual model

## Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that the level of disagreement among experts was minimal. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model for implementing an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system consists of nine dimensions, including objectives, content,

teaching–learning methods, tools and facilities, customs and traditions, time, teachers’ roles and characteristics, learners’ roles and characteristics, and evaluation.

Furthermore, the model includes 59 components, namely: individual moral education, social moral education, competency orientation, comprehensiveness, principles of goal formulation, ultimate goals, general goals, specific goals, emphasis on human agency and the role-modeling function of human resources, human resource empowerment, flexibility in the concept of place, expansion of instructional time, methods of content selection, content organization, content development, use of experiences, compatibility with the religious and spiritual ideals of the country, compatibility with learners’ age, relationship with God, teaching–learning activities, teaching methods, holistic perspective, development of mental imagery (creativity), educational development and diversity, technology and technological applications, instructional aids, relationship with nature, the existence of an appropriate environment, cultural context, cultural values, cultural customs and traditions, scheduling of instructional hours, planning for leisure time, curriculum budgeting, creating opportunities for progress, recognizing abilities, participation, communication, flexibility, the supervisory role of the teacher, sound judgment, formation of research groups, courage and sacrifice, commitment, responsibility, work conscience, self-development, perseverance and diligence in work, sense of duty, learning ability, updating and being up-to-date, development and diversity in education, hard work, recognizing abilities, evaluation methods, evaluation criteria, providing feedback to individuals, self-correction based on evaluation results, and consideration of individual differences.

The findings of this study are not consistent with those of Rostami et al. (2015), who examined the necessity of teaching ethics and implementing an ethics-oriented curriculum in schools. Likewise, the results are not aligned with the findings of Taghipour and Ghaffari (2014), due to their focus on examining the role of the hidden curriculum in students’ disciplinary behavior. The findings also differ from those of Karami and Fattahi (2013), whose study investigated changes in higher education curricula, particularly the curriculum of educational planning based on the four main elements of curriculum (objectives, content, teaching–learning opportunities, and evaluation). Similarly, the results are not consistent with the findings of Fathi Vajargah and Abbabaf (2013), who examined professional components based on curriculum knowledge for teaching in higher education from the perspective of instructors in curriculum studies. The results

also differ from Norbakhsh (2012), who investigated the level of curriculum planning literacy among female high school teachers based on the Akker model.

Moreover, the findings are not aligned with Abbasi (2012), who examined the professional and specialized skills of primary school teachers in the teaching–learning process and ways to improve them. They also differ from Nikravan (2012), who studied the level of information literacy among secondary school teachers. In addition, the results are not consistent with Abbaszadehgan (2012), whose research evaluated the internal and external quality of the educational planning curriculum. Likewise, they differ from Soleimani-Nia (2012), who investigated the pathology of the art curriculum from teachers' perspectives, and Atashak et al. (2012), who examined the reflection of global ethics concepts in the objectives of Iran's education system.

Accordingly, the participants in the present study indicated that the model for implementing an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system consists of nine main dimensions. The objectives dimension aims to identify and determine the specific and general goals of the ethics-oriented curriculum. The content dimension focuses on shaping the themes and core texts of the ethics-oriented curriculum. The teaching–learning methods dimension determines the most practical strategies for teaching and learning within the ethics-oriented curriculum. The tools and facilities dimension emphasizes the use of instructional aids to enhance meaningful learning. The customs and traditions dimension aims to identify and teach the most significant ethical customs and social norms. The time dimension focuses on determining the most appropriate timing for implementing the ethics-oriented curriculum. In addition, the dimensions of teachers' roles and characteristics, learners' roles and characteristics, and evaluation aim to identify the level of feedback obtained from the implementation of the ethics-oriented curriculum.

Each of these dimensions encompasses several components, which together constitute 59 components forming the model for implementing the ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system.

One of the limitations of this study was the time constraint in establishing interaction and coordination among experts as the research population. Finally, it is recommended that future studies examine and design the model for implementing an ethics-oriented curriculum in Iran's education system from the perspectives of experienced teachers and educational authorities.

### Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

### Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

### Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

### Funding

The authors did (not) receive support from any organization for the submitted work.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

## References

- Abbasi, Z. (2017). Investigating the elements of the moral education curriculum model in higher education based on the Holy Quran according to the interpretation of Al-Mizan. *Qualitative Research in Curriculum*, 3(8), 1–27.
- Afkari, F. (2014). *A critique and review of moral education approaches in primary education textbooks (Bokhanim, Benevisim, Quran, Heavenly Gifts, Social Studies) and designing a curriculum model* (Doctoral dissertation). Allameh Tabataba'i University.
- Aghili, R., Alamhoda, J., & Fathi Vajargah, K. (2019). Exploring the governing principles for designing a desirable moral education curriculum model in the primary level of Iran's educational system. *Educational Sciences*, 26(1), 15–34.
- Atashak, M., Ghahramani, M., Abolghasemi, M., Farasatkah, M., & Mahzadeh, P. (2012). Reflection of global ethics concepts in the objectives of Iran's education system. *Journal of Ethics in Science and Technology*, 7(2), 1–11.
- Fathi Vajargah, K., & Ababaf, Z. (2013). Curriculum literacy for university instructors from the perspective of faculty members in curriculum studies. *Journal of Higher Education Curriculum Studies*, 3(7), 7–29.

- Karami, M., & Fattahi, H. (2013). Change in higher education curriculum: A case study of the master's curriculum in educational planning. *Journal of Higher Education Curriculum Studies*, 3(7), 111–138.
- Taghipour, H. A., & Ghaffari, H. (2009). Investigating the role of the hidden curriculum in students' disciplinary behavior from the perspective of principals and teachers of girls' middle schools in Khalkhal in the 2009–2010 academic year. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 2(7), 33–65.