

Professional Ethics in Policymaking: Evidence from the Iranian Red Crescent Society

Abuozar Moradbaygi Sani¹ , Mohammad Tohidfam² , Saeed Eslami³ ,
Seyyed Mohammad Naser Taghavi⁴ 

Received: 14 Jun. 2026

Accepted: 14 Jul. 2026

Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), as a major humanitarian organization, faces a gap between formally stated ethical principles and their application in policymaking and practice. This study examines the role of professional ethics in policymaking and develops a contextually grounded framework.

METHODS: A qualitative documentary content analysis was conducted using purposefully selected sources, including the Society's Statute, Code of Ethics, Islamic normative concepts (Ihsān, Infāq, Ta'āwun), and empirical studies (2005–2025). Data were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis. Trustworthiness was ensured via peer debriefing, audit trail, and thick description.

FINDINGS: Three themes emerged: a) formal embedding of ethical values (accountability, impartiality, justice); b) a gap between policy and practice; and c) the mediating role of moral intelligence and prosocial orientation in implementation.

CONCLUSION: Ethics-based policymaking requires institutionalization through a binding ethical charter, continuous training, and transparent accountability mechanisms. This study contributes by linking professional ethics to macro-level policymaking within an Islamic–Iranian context.

Keywords: Professional ethics; Policymaking; Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS); Accountability; Islamic ethics; Moral intelligence.

This work has been published under CC BY-NC-SA license.

Copyright © Authors

How to cite this article. Moradbaygi Sani A, Tohidfam M, Eslami S, Taghavi SMN. Professional Ethics in Policymaking: Evidence from the Iranian Red Crescent Society. J Rescue Relief 2026; 18(2):91-95.

Introduction

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), as a key humanitarian organization and a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, plays a critical role in disaster response and social support through a complex organizational structure (1). Despite the existence of high-level strategic documents and a formal Code of Ethics (2), evidence from prior studies suggests a persistent gap between normative frameworks and their operationalization in policymaking processes (5,19,21). Specifically, ethical principles are often articulated at the declarative level but are not systematically embedded within policy design and decision-making structures.

This gap is particularly consequential in relief settings, where practitioners face complex ethical dilemmas—such as resource allocation under scarcity, culturally sensitive interventions, and rapid decision-making in high-pressure environments—where formal regulations alone are insufficient (22). Although ethical conduct has been shown to influence policy implementation (5), limited attention has been paid to the role of professional ethics in earlier stages of the policy cycle, particularly agenda-setting and policy formulation.

1. PhD Candidate, PhD Candidate, M.Sc. Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

2. Professor, Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

3. Associate Professor, Islamic Azad University, Chalous Branch, Chalous, Iran

4. Assistant Professor, Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

Correspondence to: Mohammad Tohidfam, Email: tohidfam_m@yahoo.com