

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN ENHANCING TEACHER INTEGRITY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstrak

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The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on the field of education, particularly regarding the roles and responsibilities of educators. In today's digital age, teachers' duties are no longer limited to classroom teaching but have expanded to include online professionals, where their behavior and activities can be easily observed and evaluated by the wider community. This situation requires teachers to demonstrate strong integrity and consistently apply professional ethics. This study was conducted to examine the application of professional ethics in teachers as an effort to strengthen their integrity in the digital era. The approach used was a literature review through a review of various scientific sources, journals, and related references that discuss professional ethics, educator integrity, and challenges in digital education. The findings of this study revealed that optimal implementation of professional ethics makes a significant contribution to maintaining teacher integrity, both during the learning process and when utilizing digital technology. However, several obstacles remain, including a lack of ethics-based digital literacy, heavy workloads, and limited institutional support. Thus, strategic and sustainable steps from educational institutions and the government are essential to deepen the understanding and practice of professional ethics, so that teacher integrity and professionalism can be improved in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

Professional ethics, which encompasses norms, values, beliefs, and moral principles, serve as a guideline for individuals in carrying out their professional duties. This framework helps educators act fairly, responsibly, and transparently, especially in the use of technology. Since the advent of the digital era, various aspects of life have undergone significant changes, including education. The rapid advancement of digital

technology has significantly transformed the world of education, both in terms of teaching methods, forms of interaction, and the skills required of teachers. In today's digital age, teachers can no longer rely on traditional teaching methods; instead, they must be able to utilize technology as part of their professional duties. The use of online learning platforms, social media, and various digital tools has expanded the scope of teachers' work. They not only deliver lessons in the classroom but also exist online to mentor students, provide guidance, and organize digital learning activities. This transformation has made teachers' tasks increasingly complex and requires a higher level of professional integrity than ever before.

However, the emergence of digital technology also presents ethical consequences and challenges that cannot be ignored. Numerous examples in the field demonstrate that inappropriate or unethical use of technology can impact the relationship between teachers and students, the school's reputation, and public trust in education. Consequently, professional ethics is crucial when using digital devices, social media, and online learning platforms. Educators must balance the use of technology with their moral responsibilities to maintain the quality of education. Yusuf (2018) stated that in this dynamic digital era, educators must not only fulfill their duties as educators but also be prepared to face the challenges of ever-evolving technology. Digital education has enriched learning methods and provided broader access to information, but it also raises questions about the ethics of technology use by teachers. To maintain the quality of educators, professional ethics are crucial, including their ability to adapt to technological changes. To improve the quality of education and perform their work professionally, teachers must utilize technology carefully (Khalisatun Husna et al., 2023). This study examines how professional ethics is crucial for enhancing teacher integrity in the digital age. This study focuses on the role of professional ethics in today's world. as a basis for producing high-quality teachers. Every aspect of a teacher's work is based on the principles of honesty, accountability, and professionalism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching professional ethics is the moral foundation that governs the attitudes and behavior of educators in carrying out their duties responsibly and professionally. In the educational context, professional ethics plays a crucial role not only in maintaining the honor of the teaching profession but also in shaping exemplary moral values for students through consistency between words and actions (Yusuf, 2018, p. 3). With the rapid development of digital technology, the scope of teaching professional ethics has expanded as the educational process now largely takes place online and through various digital platforms. This situation requires teachers to be more prudent in utilizing technology, maintaining professional boundaries, and protecting student confidentiality and rights (Husna et al., 2023, p. 103). Teacher integrity is an integral element of the application of professional ethics, as it reflects the alignment between moral values, professional commitment, and daily teaching practice. Teachers who consistently apply professional ethics tend to maintain honesty, transparency, and fairness in the learning process and academic assessment (Sartiwi et al., 2025, p. 103). 6). Various studies have shown that the application of professional ethics makes a real contribution to strengthening teacher integrity, particularly in facing the challenges of education in the digital era (Diah Hasbi Maula et al., 2025, p. 14). However, teachers also face a number of ethical challenges, such as high workloads, administrative pressures, and the use of technology and artificial intelligence that have the potential to reduce professional accountability if not accompanied by adequate ethical oversight (Purba et al., 2024, p. 158; Muhamad, 2025, p. 25). Therefore, strengthening ethical digital literacy is a crucial need to support the implementation of professional ethics in teachers.

Ethical digital literacy is not only related to the technical ability to use technology, but also includes an understanding of internet ethics, copyright protection, and upholding academic integrity, which play a role in maintaining professionalism and public trust in the teaching profession (Darmayasa et al., 2025, p. 47; Pebriana & Rosidah, 2025, p. 63). Thus, it can be concluded that the application of professional ethics supported by ethical digital literacy and a supportive institutional environment has a strategic role in maintaining and improving teacher integrity in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a library research approach, utilizing various sources obtained through internet searches. This method was chosen because the issue of professional ethics in the digital age is widely discussed in recent literature, including scientific journals, research articles, and educational regulations and guidelines. The research process began by collecting references from various academic platforms such as Google Scholar. These sources were analyzed to obtain a comprehensive picture of how professional ethics is applied in a digital context and how its application impacts teacher integrity in the digital age. The collected literature was then thoroughly read to select information relevant to the research theme.

The data obtained from various sources were analyzed using content analysis techniques, which involve reading, understanding, and interpreting literature content to identify patterns, themes, and new insights surrounding the research topic. This analytical approach is descriptive, aiming to provide a comprehensive description of the empirical situation as reflected in previous research findings. Through this method, this study was able to generate a deep understanding of the relationship between professional ethics practices and strengthening teacher integrity when facing the challenges of the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept Of Professional Ethics And Its Impact On Education

In Addition to imparting knowledge, educators also have the responsibility to serve as role models in terms of morality, integrity, fairness, ethics, and dignity within the classroom. The term “*professional ethics in education*” refers to the norms and behaviors that educators are expected to uphold while carrying out their professional duties. These ethical aspects are essential in fostering professional conduct grounded in moral values and widely accepted social norms. Professional ethics emphasize the importance of responsibility, fairness, and honesty in the performance of professional duties, while also encouraging educators to continuously enhance their professionalism. Educators are expected to establish professional standards both inside and outside the classroom, including on social media platforms, by acting honestly and fairly, as well as by safeguarding students’ privacy and confidentiality. In this context, professional ethics are not limited to the teaching process alone, but also encompass moral obligations toward students and society at large. Teachers face significant challenges in adapting to modern skill demands and rapid technological advancements in the digital era. Moreover, educators are expected to possess strong pedagogical and professional competencies, along with the ability to innovate and utilize information technology to support the learning process. Professional ethics function as moral guidelines in various situations, including in the education sector, and are crucial for educators to adhere to. Neglecting professional ethics may result in injustice within the education system, moral crises among students, and damage to the reputation of the teaching profession. In today’s

technologically driven era, prioritizing teachers' professional ethics is vital to improving the quality of education. Professional educators are expected not only to transfer knowledge but also to demonstrate moral values, integrity, and social responsibility. Although the application of technology in education offers numerous opportunities to utilize diverse learning resources, its use must be carried out with strong ethical awareness and a sense of responsibility.

Thus, professional ethics in the field of education serve as a guiding framework that helps teachers behave fairly, ethically, and responsibly. A teacher's role is not limited to delivering knowledge; teachers are also expected to serve as positive moral role models for their students. The implementation of professional ethics ensures fair assessment practices, strengthens teacher-student relationships, and creates a positive learning atmosphere. In today's digital era, professional ethics have become increasingly crucial in addressing emerging issues such as plagiarism and the misuse of technology. Educators must exercise caution in the use of digital tools and educate students about digital ethics in order to foster an ethical and responsible learning environment.

Implementation of Professional Ethics in Teaching Practices in the Digital Era

The implementation of professional ethics in the field of education has become increasingly crucial alongside the growing use of digital technology in the learning process. Educators are required not only to understand how to use digital tools and platforms, but also to be able to apply appropriate ethical principles. Teachers are expected not only to master the technical use of digital tools and platforms, but also to integrate ethical values into every aspect of their professional activities. The application of professional ethics is reflected in the way teachers maintain the quality of their relationships with students, adhere to professional boundaries, and manage data and information responsibly. In an era where communication is frequently conducted through digital media, teachers must demonstrate professionalism even when interacting in virtual spaces without face-to-face encounters.

The use of social media, online learning platforms, and digital communication spaces has become an essential element of teachers' professional environments, requiring the continuous application of ethical principles. Professional ethics are also reflected in how teachers ensure that all uses of technology align with moral values and the educational responsibilities of educators. Teachers must be aware that digital tools carry certain risks; therefore, adherence to a professional code of ethics requires teachers to safeguard the confidentiality of students' personal information, avoid excessive or inappropriate communication unrelated to the learning context, and exercise sound judgment in selecting digital information used as instructional materials. The application of these norms is not merely a formal obligation, but a vital element in building trust and maintaining the dignity of the teaching profession.

In practice, educators ensure that the use of technology supports the teaching and learning process and does not undermine students' rights to receive quality guidance. Santoso and Fitriatin (2024) reveal that teachers who effectively implement professional codes of ethics are able to address ethical dilemmas in online learning, such as ensuring academic fairness, maintaining transparency in assessment, and selecting instructional methods that do not disadvantage students. Therefore, the application of professional ethics serves as a foundation for strengthening teacher integrity while simultaneously enhancing the quality of educational services in the digital era.

Ethical Challenges Faced by Teachers

The implementation of ethics in the teaching profession is often hindered by environmental conditions and work-related pressures. Some of the main challenges identified include high workload demands and limited support from the workplace environment (Purba et al., 2024). Such pressures may lead to unethical behavior in digital settings or to burnout, which can ultimately undermine professional integrity. Teachers experiencing these pressures may seek

shortcuts, such as over-reliance on artificial intelligence tools for administrative tasks or even for assessment preparation without adequate supervision (Muhamad, 2025). Although these practices are intended to improve efficiency, they may violate professional ethics by compromising quality and accountability.

Strategies for Strengthening Teacher Integrity Amid Technological Advancements

Enhancing trust in teachers in the digital era requires a well-planned approach that focuses on the development of moral competencies as well as strong institutional support.

a. Development of Teacher Competencies

Adequate digital skills for teachers should not be limited solely to the operation of technological tools. Teachers need to be able to understand, evaluate, and create digital content in a critical and ethical manner (Darmayasa et al., 2025). Therefore, the adopted approach should emphasize a transition toward Ethical Digital Literacy. The core components of ethical digital literacy should include practical aspects such as online ethics, understanding the use of copyrighted materials, the enforcement of academic integrity (anti-plagiarism), and copyright literacy (Pebriana & Rosidah, 2025).

b. Role of Educational Institutions in Creating an Ethics-Supportive Work Environment

A supportive work environment is essential for fostering teacher integrity. Educational institutions, both at the school level and within government agencies, must ensure that existing policies remain flexible and adaptive. Although many schools already have comprehensive ethical guidelines, continuous development is necessary to ensure that these guidelines remain relevant to the evolving educational landscape shaped by technological advancements (Purba et al., 2024).

Institutional support also includes the provision of appropriate infrastructure. When teachers do not receive adequate support through secure Learning Management Systems (LMS) or licensed digital tools, they may be forced to rely on less secure or unofficial third-party platforms to share sensitive data, which constitutes a major source of privacy and ethical violations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that professional ethics are a fundamental factor in maintaining and enhancing teacher integrity in the digital era. Technological advancements have expanded the scope of teachers' responsibilities, thereby requiring the consistent application of ethical values in all professional aspects, both in the teaching and learning process and in the use of digital technology. Teachers are not only expected to possess technological competence, but also moral awareness to uphold professionalism, fairness, responsibility, and the protection of students' rights and privacy.

The strong implementation of professional ethics is capable of strengthening public trust in the teaching profession while simultaneously creating a conducive and dignified learning environment. However, in practice, teachers continue to face various challenges, including limited ethical digital literacy, work-related pressures, and insufficient support from educational institutions. Therefore, the active role of educational institutions and the government is essential in providing appropriate policies, continuous professional development programs, and adequate supporting facilities. Through these efforts, teacher integrity can be sustainably maintained and the quality of education in the digital era can continue to improve.

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