

Teacher Professionalism Ethics: Challenges and Obstacles in the Digitalization Era

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Abstract: Teachers, as the main agents of change in the education system, are faced with complex challenges in carrying out their ethics of professionalism amidst ever-changing technological flows. This research aims to investigate these challenges in the ethical context of teacher professionalism in the era of rapidly developing digitalization. Through the literature study method. The results presented in this article are the identification and analysis of various aspects of teacher ethics and professionalism, including integrity, teaching quality, equality and justice, collaboration with colleagues and parents, and continuity of professional development. Apart from that, this article also highlights the special challenges teachers face in carrying out their ethics and professionalism in the era of digitalization, such as data privacy and security, ethical use of social media, character education in the digital world, disinformation and digital literacy, as well as gaps in access and equality. By understanding these challenges, teachers can increase their competence in digital literacy, integrate character values in the use of technology, and ensure equal access to digital technology for all students. In this way, teachers can play an effective role in guiding students towards a digitally connected future wisely and responsibly.

Keywords: Digitalization Era; Teacher Professionalism Ethics.

Introduction

The rapid development of digitization and the integration of technology in education have undergone a significant revolution, including the adoption of e-books, digital learning platforms, and various other online resources in various teaching practices (Richi et al., 2023; Sousa et al., 2020). Although this innovation promises improved accessibility and efficiency in the learning process, this transformation also raises significant ethical dilemmas for education professionals. Previous studies have explored the implications of technology on educational practices but tend to underestimate how education professionals, particularly teachers, maintain ethical standards in this ever-changing context (Indrawan, 2019; Novelita et al., 2023).

Overreliance on technology for teaching can reduce the quality of education if not used wisely. Excessive or inappropriate use of technology can

distract from good pedagogy and reduce the deep interaction that is essential for effective learning (Sundari, 2024). This will certainly have an impact on the identity of a professional teacher.

Given these circumstances, it is important for us to identify more existing literature on how teachers maintain professional ethics in the face of ever-evolving technological innovations. Teachers, as key agents of change in the education system, face complex challenges in carrying out their ethical responsibilities in this dynamic educational context. Therefore, understanding how teachers can integrate ethical principles with the use of technology is an urgent necessity (Faiqoh, 2019; Kamaruddin et al., 2023).

This research needs to be conducted to explore the ethical principles underlying teacher professionalism in the era of digitalization, as well as how these principles interact with the need for continuous adaptation and renewal of knowledge and skills. This discourse is very important given

the central role of teachers in the application and integration of educational technology (Bagou & Sukung, 2020; Mardhiyah et al., 2021).

Through an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by professional teachers in the context of technology use, this study fills a gap in knowledge by considering the application of ethics in contemporary educational practice. This research is expected to produce substantive insights that will support policymakers, education practitioners, and researchers in formulating and supporting effective, ethical, and professional teaching practices amid technological advances (Sugiarto & Farid, 2023). The primary objective of this study is to facilitate the development of policies and practices that support professional integrity and ethical compliance in the use of educational technology.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

Researchers applied the literature review method to explore the problems of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in social studies learning. Literature review is an approach to finding, evaluating, and summarizing empirical evidence comprehensively (Krupinski, 2019). This method provides reliable results to support decision-making and serve as a guide for future research. The main focus of this study is to explore the obstacles and challenges faced in implementing the curriculum at the school level. This process includes searching for literature related to the topic (Mahanum, 2021). By examining various articles and journals, researchers identified key themes that emerged in previous studies, thereby helping to build a more solid research framework (Hariyati, 2010).

Procedures

This study adopts a comprehensive literature review method to understand the complexity of ethics and professionalism among teachers in the rapidly developing digital era. This approach was chosen to gather in-depth insights from various existing sources, including secondary data analysis from recent scientific publications, scientific articles, books, regulations focusing on educational ethics,

and relevant research (Hadi & Afandi, 2021; Wibowo, 2021).

Data Analysis

The first step is to conduct a literature search using leading electronic databases and digital libraries to ensure the diversity and relevance of the sources accessed. After collecting the initial data, a synthesis and critical evaluation process is carried out to extract and integrate key findings from the literature. This step involves comparative analysis to identify common trends and differences in the application of ethics and professionalism by teachers in various educational contexts. Furthermore, the data analysis process focuses more on the specific challenges faced by educators in integrating technology in an ethical and professional manner. This includes examining the ethical dilemmas that arise from the use of technology in teaching and its influence on the relationship between teachers and students, as well as the dynamics of cooperation with colleagues and the wider community. Finally, the article is written by describing the results of the data analysis. This stage compares various references and supporting citations in order to achieve the objectives of this literature study.

This study aims to articulate and discuss these critical issues with the goal of providing pragmatic and forward-looking recommendations for education practitioners, researchers, and policymakers. Through this extensive literature review, it is hoped that valuable insights will be generated in formulating effective strategies to support the implementation of ethical and professional practices in an increasingly digital educational environment. The results of this study are expected to enrich the existing literature and pave the way for further studies in addressing professional ethical challenges in the digital age.

Results and Discussion

A. Teacher Professionalism Ethics

Research on teacher professionalism ethics explores the complexity of values and principles that guide teacher behavior in educational settings. The origin of ethics, which comes from the Greek word "*ethos*"

meaning character or disposition, emphasizes the importance of moral principles that guide individuals in society. Octavia (2020) describes ethics as the foundation that determines how a teacher acts and makes ethical decisions, based on values that are valued by society. In the context of education, this requires the application of normative ethical theories, such as deontology and utilitarianism, which help teachers assess actions based on moral obligations or the consequences of those actions (Disantara, 2021).

Professionalism in education, on the other hand, refers to the qualities or behaviors expected of an individual in a position that requires specific expertise. Ni'am et al. (2021) and Yohamintin (2023) states that not all jobs can be called professions, but professions can be identified through the fulfillment of certain criteria in a field of work. Teacher professionalism, as defined by Qulub (2019), covers a set of standards related to the competencies expected and demonstrated in the practice of the profession. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, a teacher is a professional educator whose main duties include educating, teaching, guiding, and evaluating students (Ritonga, 2021), which emphasizes that the teaching profession is more than just a job.

In achieving professional standards, Government Regulation No. 20 of 2003 concerning National Education Standards stipulates four competencies that a teacher must possess, namely personal, pedagogical, social, and professional competencies (Novitasari & Fitria, 2021). Each of these competencies supports teachers in carrying out their duties ethically and professionally, while maintaining the quality and integrity of education.

In practice, professional ethics for teachers is a framework of behavior that governs teacher interactions in the context of education. Professional teachers are seen as individuals who have a calling to help students learn and continue to develop themselves throughout their careers (Saerang et al., 2023). However, challenges continue to arise, especially in today's era of digitalization, where the dynamics of new technologies, changing educational policies, and evolving social expectations require teachers to proactively adapt

their ethical and professional principles. This awareness is important to ensure that educational practices remain relevant and sensitive to the ever-changing social and technological context. The following are some of the professional ethics that a teacher must possess.

1. Integrity

In the context of teacher professionalism ethics, this study highlights five essential dimensions that define teacher performance and responsibility in the modern education era. First, integrity is considered a key pillar in the teaching profession, where teachers are expected to act honestly, fairly, and ethically in all their interactions, whether with students, parents, or colleagues (Idris, 2020). The professional code of ethics emphasizes the importance of integrity, including motivating students to leave their comfort zone that can hinder their growth (Mau, 2020).

2. High Quality of Teaching

Furthermore, high-quality teaching is key to shaping the future of the younger generation. Teachers must deliver instruction that meets high academic standards and supports the holistic growth of students (Supit et al., 2023). This includes comprehensive and inspiring learning designs that enable students to reach their maximum potential (Jaya & Halik, 2023).

3. Equality and Justice

Equality and fairness are also important fundamental principles, whereby teachers are expected to treat all students fairly and provide equal opportunities for learning, regardless of their background or individual characteristics. This principle ensures that an inclusive and fair learning environment is created for all students (Wahid, 2023). Teachers who practice the principle of equality treat every student with respect and provide equal opportunities to learn and develop, regardless of their social, economic, or cultural background. Faiz et al (2022) believes that teachers must recognize that each individual has unique and valuable potential, and aim to facilitate the growth and success of each student individually.

4. Cooperation with Colleagues and Parents

Furthermore, cooperation with colleagues and parents is a vital aspect that emphasizes the importance of maintaining strong professional relationships to support students' learning experiences. This collaboration involves various parties in the educational process and facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices that improve the quality of teaching and the learning environment (Rahayu et al., 2023). Setiyo (2022) mentioned that collaborative efforts between teachers and parents can improve student well-being. Thus, through the application of these principles of professional ethics, teachers not only strengthen educational standards but also promote an environment conducive to continuous learning and development for all students. (Mu'minin et al., 2023).

5. Continuity of Professional Development

Finally, in the context of teacher professionalism ethics, continuous professional development is one of the fundamental principles. Azizah & Fuadi (2021) emphasized that education is a dynamic and evolving process, which requires teachers to actively update and improve their knowledge and skills. Teachers are committed to professional development through regular participation in training, seminars, or courses relevant to their field, and use the latest resources and technology to improve the effectiveness of learning (Efendi & Sholeh, 2023). In addition, teachers with a strong professional ethic are also involved in building networks with colleagues to exchange experiences and strategies in overcoming new educational challenges (Panda, 2019; Sulastri et al., 2020; Yasin, 2022). This commitment not only improves the quality of teaching but also demonstrates to students the importance of lifelong learning and dedication to professional excellence.

B. Challenges in Implementing Professional Ethics for Teachers in the Digital Age

Meanwhile, in the era of digitalization, the implementation of ethics and professionalism among teachers faces unique and complex challenges. Rapid technological developments have given rise to a variety of new challenges, particularly those related to the privacy and security

of student data (Zebua, 2023). These challenges include the following.

1. Data Privacy and Security

In the use of digital technology, teachers are often involved in the collection, storage, and processing of sensitive student data. Nikolova et al. (2022) and Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2023) revealed that this could pose a risk of privacy violations if the data is not strictly managed. Prioritizing privacy and data security is essential to creating a safe and trustworthy learning environment, where students feel comfortable sharing personal information, supporting the creation of an effective and sustainable learning process.

2. Social Media Ethics

The challenge lies in understanding and applying appropriate ethics in interactions between teachers and students and parents through social media, as well as maintaining healthy boundaries between personal and professional life. The ethics of social media use is also a major concern, where interactions between teachers and students and parents through digital platforms require clear boundaries between professional and personal life. (Nudin, 2020). Teachers play an important role as models and role models for students in the use of social media. In addition, Apriliani (2020) adds that teachers must also be careful in managing their social networks to ensure that their communication remains professional. This is also useful for avoiding unnecessary confrontation or controversy.

3. Character Education in the Digital World

Syamsuar & Reflianto (2019) mentioned that one of the challenges emphasized in this era for teachers is instilling character values in education. This requires teachers to not only teach digital skills, but also guide students in implementing ethics in using social media (Novita, 2023). Therefore, this challenge integrates character education into teachers' use of digital technology and promotes values such as empathy, integrity, and responsibility in the online environment.

4. Disinformation and Digital Literacy

The challenge in helping students understand and evaluate information found online, as well as

developing strong digital literacy to avoid the spread of disinformation. This disinformation is often known as fake news (Khosiah & Rohmiyati, 2019). Information disseminated through various posts on social media should be a focus of collective attention. Misinformation and false information can easily spread on social media and internet platforms, threatening accurate and critical understanding of the digital world (Bahram, 2023).

The challenges for teachers in addressing digital literacy include integrating these lessons into the curriculum. Koppel & Langer (2020) defines digital literacy as the ability to use, evaluate, and participate critically in an increasingly complex digital world. In this case, teachers guide students to understand the truth of online information and help them develop skills to communicate ethically and safely in a digital environment (Ahyati et al., 2024). Teachers' ability to understand ever-changing technological developments and their impact on learning, so that they can effectively guide students in the wise use of digital tools.

5. Access and Equity Gaps

Ensuring that all students have equal access to digital technology and preventing a digital divide that could exacerbate educational disparities is an additional challenge for teachers. Not all schools have adequate access to facilities and infrastructure (Widianto, 2021). In fact, many are still considered inadequate. These issues can also lead to disparities in the skills of educators and educational staff in operating digital-based hardware and software (Alfiyanto & Hidayati, 2022). It is ironic that teachers are required to master various technologies in line with the developments of the era.

Conclusions

The rapidly developing era of digitalization has seen technology profoundly change the landscape of education, significantly influencing teaching and learning practices. Teachers, as key agents of change in the education system, face complex challenges in upholding their professional ethics amid the ever-changing tide of technology. The importance of understanding and practicing teacher ethics and

professionalism in the context of the digitalization era cannot be overlooked. Teacher professionalism ethics encompasses moral principles that govern teachers' behavior in their interactions with students, colleagues, and the community at large, while teacher professionalism encompasses adherence to high standards in teaching practice, continuous professional development, and a commitment to student welfare. In practicing their ethics and professionalism, teachers face a number of unique challenges, including data privacy and security, social media ethics, character education in the digital world, disinformation and digital literacy, as well as access and equity gaps. To overcome these challenges, teachers need to continuously improve their digital literacy skills, integrate character values into the use of technology, develop critical information evaluation skills, and ensure equal access to digital technology for all students. In this way, teachers can play an effective role in guiding students toward a digitally connected future with wisdom and responsibility.

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