

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS BASED ON PROPHETIC PEDAGOGY AS THE FOUNDATION OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM INTEGRITY

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Abstract:

This article, entitled "Professional Ethics Based on Prophetic Pedagogy as the Foundation of Teacher Professional Integrity," aims to critically analyze the position of professional ethics in teaching practice and its relevance to strengthening teachers' professional integrity amidst the increasingly technocratic and bureaucratic tendencies of professionalism. This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical literature study method, which regularly examines the latest literature related to professional ethics, teacher professionalism, and prophetic pedagogy as a conceptual framework for analysis. The results of the study indicate that professional ethics in teaching practice tends to be normative and reduced to an instrument of administrative compliance, thus potentially weakening the moral autonomy and reflective dimension of teachers as pedagogical subjects. The research discussion integrates these conceptual findings with a prophetic pedagogy framework that views professional ethics as a reflective moral praxis, as well as a critique of instrumental professionalism that ignores human values and educational ethical responsibilities. Within this framework, teacher professional integrity is understood as the integrity of believed values, developed professional attitudes, and pedagogical actions manifested contextually in educational decision-making. The study's conclusions indicate that professional ethics based on prophetic pedagogy can serve as a conceptual foundation that strengthens teacher professional integrity in a comprehensive and meaningful manner. The impact of this research lies in its theoretical contribution to the development of studies on teacher professional ethics, as well as its practical implications for strengthening teacher professionalism, which is oriented not only toward technical competence but also toward ethical awareness and moral reflection in pedagogical practice.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Prophetic Pedagogy, Integrity, Teacher Professionalism

1. Introduction

Teaching professional ethics is not simply a label displayed in a code of ethics or behavioral guidelines; it is an existential phenomenon deeply ingrained in every teacher's actions, relationships, and pedagogical decisions. When a teacher enters the classroom, they not only impart knowledge but also continually confront moral demands about what to do, how to treat students, and what values to present in every interaction. From a philosophical perspective, professional ethics is a concrete manifestation of good will rooted in a sense of moral responsibility (Oser, 2018; MacIntyre, 2013). An ethical teacher not only obeys the rules; they are aware of the ethical implications of their choices. However, the reality of contemporary education shows that this ethical orientation is being seriously tested. Amidst pressures of accountability, bureaucratization, and educational performativity, professional ethics often becomes merely administrative jargon used to legitimize policies, rather than a foundation of values in pedagogical practice (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; CochranSmith, 2021).

Teachers are forced to navigate the demands of achieving quantitative figures, while the moral horizon of education is often eroded. This phenomenon creates a structural contradiction: education demands moral creativity, yet the assessment system is based on reductive output. Recent empirical data shows that the ethical dilemma of the teaching profession is no longer a potential issue, but a real and widespread fact. The OECD TALIS 2018 and 2021 explicitly noted that teachers in various countries experience intense moral conflict between administrative performance demands and professional ethical values, for example, when rigid performance measures force teachers to make decisions that are "administratively safe" but detrimental to the interests of students (OECD, 2018; 2021). International empirical research also finds a direct link between structural pressures and the decline in teachers' professional integrity. Shapira-Lishchinsky (2020) asserts that ethical dilemmas in teaching often arise

from the discrepancy between idealized values and system-imposed practices. O'Neill & Bourke (2018) add that many teachers feel morally alienated when their held pedagogical values conflict with bureaucratic demands.

Nationally, several studies have also shown similar problems. Suyanto (2021) found that some teachers in Indonesia face a moral dilemma when having to choose between meeting administrative targets and treating students fairly and humanely. Mulyasa (2022) emphasized that weak internalization of professional ethical values often leads to "technical-formal" educational practices, resulting in a relationship between teachers and students.-Students lose their ethical dimension. Research by Prasojo & Yuliana (2023) also revealed that a school culture that lacks space for ethical reflection weakens teachers' moral commitment. In the context of this ethical crisis, prophetic pedagogy offers a philosophical framework that is not merely normative but transformative. Rooted in the thinking of Kuntowijoyo, prophetic pedagogy views education as a value praxis rooted in humanization, liberation, and transcendence (Kuntowijoyo, 2006; Huda, 2020; Latif, 2021). Humanization means education honors human dignity as the ultimate goal, not merely an instrument. Liberation means education must free students from the shackles of structural and cultural injustice that diminish their humanity. Transcendence means education does not stop at the mundane but is directed toward higher values: universal goodness, respect for life, and moral responsibility that transcends pragmatic interests (Freire, 2021; Noddings, 2021).

When these values are integrated into the ethics of the teaching profession, professional integrity is no longer merely a matter of etiquette or superficial obedience, but rather a concrete manifestation of moral consistency between the values believed in, the actions chosen, and the impacts they have on the lives of students. A professional teacher not only possesses pedagogical competence, but is also able to make decisions consistent with humanist ethical principles, is critical of structures that restrict moral freedom, and has the courage to uphold transcendental values amidst systemic pressures (Oser, 2018; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2020; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Thus, empirical data on teachers' moral dilemmas in various countries, as well as the reality of practice in Indonesia, show that without a strong foundation of values, teachers' professional ethics will easily be eroded by the logic of the modern education system. When teacher professionalism is understood only as adherence to procedures, their moral integrity will be fragile, and the system can manipulate teachers' actions without regard for their ethical qualities. By understanding professional ethics through the lens of prophetic pedagogy, we question not only what teachers can do, but also what values should guide every choice as a teacher. In other words, professionalism is no longer understood as mere technical competence, but as moral integrity, ethical reflection, and meaningful action.

2. Research methods

This research uses a qualitative approach through library research, because the main focus is to explore in depth the relationship between teacher professional ethics and prophetic pedagogy as the foundation of teacher professional integrity. This approach was chosen because the phenomenon being studied is conceptual, normative, and reflective; not simply something that can be measured with numbers or statistics. The library research allows researchers to examine various scientific literature, academic books, and official reports, thus constructing a critical and logical analysis, connecting theories, philosophical values, and relevant empirical data (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Research data sources include national and international journal articles, academic books, policy documents, and reports from global education organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO.

The literature was carefully selected based on academic credibility, thematic relevance, and recent publication dates, ensuring the analysis remains up-to-date and based on empirical evidence (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019; Punch, 2014). In this process, the researchers rigorously selected sources, ensuring that each piece of literature directly contributes to the understanding of teaching professional ethics, professional integrity, and prophetic pedagogical principles. Data analysis was conducted thematically and reflectively, exploring the relationships between concepts, patterns, and empirical findings that emerged in the literature. This process went beyond simply summarizing the work of others, but rather integrated theory and data to build a holistic understanding.

Researchers highlight contradictions, challenges, and opportunities in the ethical practice of the teaching profession, and interpret how prophetic pedagogical values such as humanization, liberation, and transcendence can strengthen the integrity of teacher professionalism (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Huda, 2020). In this way, the analysis is not only conceptual but also reflective of contemporary educational practices, emphasizing the concrete ethical implications for teachers and educational institutions. The validity of the findings is ensured through source triangulation, where theory, empirical data, and official reports are compared to ensure the consistency and strength of

arguments. This approach allows researchers to construct logical, critical, and systematic conclusions, rather than simply summarize the literature.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research result

3.1.1 Normativization of Professional Ethics in Teaching Practice

The research findings show that professional ethics in teaching practice develops primarily through normativization, a process in which ethics is understood, defined, and implemented as a set of formal, administratively binding rules. Professional ethics appears as a system of norms that have been formulated, applied uniformly, and are expected to be adhered to by teachers as part of their professional obligations. In this construction, professional ethics does not exist as a living space for moral reflection, but rather as a normative reference that functions to regulate the boundaries of professional behavior. This normativization of professional ethics shapes teachers' perspectives on ethics as something external to themselves, namely as institutional provisions that must be obeyed to maintain professional legitimacy.

Ethics is positioned as the minimum standard that must be met for teaching practice to be considered formally legitimate. As a result, teachers' relationship with professional ethics tends to be instrumental: ethics is carried out as needed to meet institutional demands, rather than as an expression of deeply internalized moral awareness. In practice, this normativization is evident in the tendency to understand professional ethics as a list of prohibitions and obligations, rather than as a framework of values that guide ethical considerations in complex and ambiguous pedagogical situations. Ethics becomes something static and textual, while pedagogical reality is dynamic and contextual. The tension between general norms and particular pedagogical situations is not always responded to through ethical reflection, but rather through efforts to adjust actions to remain within the corridor of applicable rules.

Furthermore, the normativization of professional ethics has resulted in a narrowing of the meaning of teachers' moral responsibility. Ethical responsibility is no longer understood as accountability for the pedagogical impact on student development, but rather as compliance with formal regulations that can be audited and assessed administratively. In this context, professional ethics functions as a control mechanism, not as a source of moral orientation. This finding suggests that professional ethics has lost its reflective power and tends to operate as a regulatory tool to maintain order in the system, rather than as a foundation for building professional integrity.

3.1.2 Reduction of Professionalism in a Techno-Bureaucratic Framework

This study found that teacher professionalism experiences a significant reduction in meaning when positioned within a technical and bureaucratic framework. Professionalism is no longer understood as a holistic quality encompassing competence, value commitment, and moral responsibility, but rather is reduced to a set of performance indicators that can be measured, reported, and evaluated administratively. Within this framework, professionalism is closely linked to the efficiency of task execution, adherence to procedures, and the ability to meet the demands of a standardized education system. This reduction in professionalism creates teaching practices that are oriented toward fulfilling technical requirements rather than embracing the meaning of education. Teachers are positioned as system implementers tasked with ensuring that all procedures are carried out according to regulations.

The reflective dimension of the profession—the ability to weigh values, question goals, and make meaningful decisions—is diminished. Professionalism, in this context, is more closely associated with structural compliance than professional autonomy. The techno-bureaucratic framework also shapes a work logic that assesses professionalism based on administrative evidence. Teaching practice is assessed through documents, reports, and measurable outcomes, while the quality of pedagogical relationships and ethical considerations in the learning process are rarely recognized.

These findings indicate that professionalism has shifted from a value orientation to a performance orientation, from meaning to mechanism, from moral responsibility to system compliance. In such a situation, professionalism has the potential to lose its ethical dimension. Teachers may be considered professional administratively, but not necessarily demonstrate moral integrity in their pedagogical practices. This reduction affects not only how professionalism is understood but also how teachers construct their professional identities. Professionalism becomes something to be fulfilled, not something to be lived. Thus, professionalism develops as a formal status, rather than as an ethical quality lived out in teaching practice.

3.1.3 Dynamics of Integrity in Pedagogical Decision Making

The research findings show that teacher professional integrity does not exist as a fixed and consistent quality, but rather as a dynamic and contextual process. Integrity emerges and is tested primarily in pedagogical decision-making situations, where teachers must weigh various, often intertwined, considerations. Pedagogical decisions are not made in a value vacuum, but rather within a

complex structural, institutional, and situational context. The dynamics of this integrity are evident in how teachers navigate the varying demands of their professional practice. On the one hand, there are professional values they believe in and aspire to embody in practice. On the other hand, there are systemic demands, institutional constraints, and the actual conditions of students that influence decision-making.

Professional integrity, in this context, does not always manifest as an ideal consistency between values and actions, but rather as the result of ongoing negotiation. This research shows that teachers' professional integrity is often manifested in pragmatic choices that attempt to maintain a balance between values and reality. In some contexts, pedagogical decisions are made not because they fully reflect ideal values, but because they are considered the most feasible option in the given situation. This suggests that professional integrity cannot be understood solely as an individual moral issue, but rather as a practice influenced by professional structures and contexts. This dynamic also reveals that professional integrity requires adequate space for reflection. When such space for reflection is limited, integrity tends to be practiced situationally and defensively. Teachers strive to maintain integrity to the extent permitted by the system, rather than to the extent demanded by values. Thus, professional integrity develops as an adaptive process, rather than as a completely autonomous principle. These findings confirm that teacher integrity is a relational phenomenon that cannot be separated from the structural conditions of teaching practice.

3.1.4 Lack of a Value-Based Ethical Framework in the Teaching Profession

This study also found limitations in values-based ethical frameworks that comprehensively guide teachers' professional practice. Existing ethical frameworks tend to emphasize procedural and normative aspects, while reflective and contextual dimensions of values have not been adequately developed. Professional ethics does not yet fully provide a value orientation capable of guiding teachers in addressing the complexity of real-world pedagogical issues. This limitation is evident in the weak integration of values, attitudes, and actions in teaching practice. The ethical values that should underpin professionalism have not been fully internalized as operational principles in pedagogical decision-making.

As a result, professional ethics often exists as a normative discourse divorced from the realities of practice. Teachers are aware of ethical norms, but these norms do not always serve as guidelines for their daily professional practice. Furthermore, the limitations of a values-based ethical framework make it difficult for professional ethics to serve as a foundation for professional integrity. Ethics have not yet become a source of meaning that unites the various dimensions of teacher professionalism. In this situation, professionalism develops without a strong value anchor, making it vulnerable to structural pressures and pragmatic demands. These findings suggest that professional ethics requires strengthening at the value level, not merely at the norm level.

3.2. Discussion

This discussion begins with the realization that teaching professional ethics never exists in a vacuum. It is always intertwined with how teachers interpret their work, how professionalism is defined by the education system, and the extent to which teachers have the moral space to act autonomously in pedagogical practice. Therefore, professional ethics in this article is not treated as a normative concept that ends at the level of rules, but rather as a lived practice that is continuously negotiated within the complex realities of education. In this context, prophetic pedagogy is used as a critical lens to re-read the relationship between ethics, professionalism, and teacher integrity. This approach allows professional ethics to be understood not simply as an instrument for controlling behavior, but as a value orientation that shapes how teachers think, behave, and act pedagogically.

3.2.1 Professional Ethics of Teachers as Reflective Moral Practice

Teaching professional ethics is often positioned as a set of universal and binding normative principles. However, in everyday educational practice, pedagogical situations are rarely black and white. Teachers face diverse student backgrounds, demanding curricula, administrative pressures, and intertwined social expectations. In such circumstances, professional ethics cannot simply function as a list of obligations and prohibitions, but rather must be present as a reflective ability to weigh available moral options. Recent educational ethics literature emphasizes that teachers are essentially moral decision-makers, faced daily with ethically nuanced decisions, even though they often go unnoticed as moral decisions (Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2020).

The way teachers assess, sanction, or even choose to remain silent in certain situations is a value-laden act. Therefore, professional ethics cannot be reduced to procedural compliance, as compliance alone does not guarantee pedagogical justice or meaningfulness. Within this framework, professional ethics is more accurately understood as reflective moral praxis, an ongoing process in which teachers consciously reflect on educational goals, their values, and the impact of their pedagogical actions. This

reflective approach positions teachers as active ethical subjects, not objects of professional regulation. Teachers not only question whether an action complies with the rules but also question whether it aligns with the humanizing goals of education (Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2021).

This understanding also critiques the tendency of modern education systems to overemphasize the standardization of professional ethics. When ethics is formulated too abstractly and uniformly, it risks losing contextual relevance. Yet, pedagogical practice always takes place in unique and unpredictable situations. This is where ethical reflection becomes key, as it allows teachers to interpret values contextually without losing their moral orientation. Ethics as a reflective practice also presupposes personal responsibility. Teachers cannot completely hide behind rules or policies when faced with the moral consequences of their actions.

This perspective aligns with the notion of moral agency in the education profession, which emphasizes that teachers are ethically responsible for the pedagogical choices they make, even when those choices are subject to systemic pressures (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2022). Thus, professional ethics is no longer understood as a normative burden, but rather as a professional capacity that strengthens pedagogical quality. Ethics becomes part of teachers' reflective competence, enabling educational practice to take place meaningfully, fairly, and responsibly.

3.2.2 Prophetic Pedagogy as a Critique of Instrumental Professionalism

The meaning of professional ethics cannot be separated from the way teacher professionalism is collectively understood. In many contemporary educational contexts, professionalism tends to be understood instrumentally, measured through performance indicators, administrative achievements, and adherence to system-set standards. This type of professionalism positions teachers as technical implementers of educational policy, while the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching practice are overlooked. Criticism of instrumental professionalism is gaining ground in critical education studies. Professionalism reduced to performativity and technical accountability has the potential to erode the meaning of the teaching profession as a moral and social practice (Wilkins, 2021).

In these conditions, professional ethics often serves as a tool for system legitimacy, rather than as a moral resource for teachers. Prophetic pedagogy offers a fundamental critique of the logic of instrumental professionalism by asserting that education is never value-neutral. Every pedagogical practice always carries a particular vision of humanity, society, and the future. Therefore, teacher professionalism cannot be separated from the underlying value orientation. Professional teachers are not merely those who are technically competent, but also those who possess a moral commitment to humanitarian values and social justice (Zembylas, 2023).

Within the framework of prophetic pedagogy, professionalism is understood as an ethical calling, not simply a job status. Teachers are positioned as subjects who carry a mission of values in educational practice. This perspective rejects the separation between professionalism and moral responsibility. Instead, true professionalism is characterized by teachers' courage to uphold pedagogical values, even when those values conflict with the technocratic logic of the education system. Prophetic pedagogy also critiques the tendency to depersonalize the teaching profession. When professionalism is measured solely through performance indicators, teachers' moral identity tends to be diminished.

In fact, meaningful pedagogical practice is born from personal involvement, empathy, and commitment to the values of teachers as individuals. In this context, prophetic pedagogy reaffirms the humanistic dimension of education, often marginalized in modern discourses of professionalism (Todd, 2022). Furthermore, prophetic pedagogy positions teachers as agents of transformation, not simply implementers of the curriculum. Teacher professionalism is measured by the extent to which their pedagogical practices foster critical awareness, foster human values, and respond to social injustice through education. Thus, prophetic pedagogy serves not only as a critique but also as a reconstructive framework for teacher professionalism grounded in ethics and integrity.

3.2.3 Professional Integrity as the Wholeness of Values, Attitudes and Actions

Teachers' professional integrity is often understood narrowly as consistent behavior or adherence to a code of ethics. However, in complex pedagogical practices, integrity is a much deeper moral quality. Integrity relates to the integrity of believed values, demonstrated professional attitudes, and pedagogical actions taken in concrete situations. This means that teacher integrity emphasizes that integrity is not static but is continually tested in the context of pedagogical decision-making (Klaassen, 2023).

Teachers are often faced with dilemmas that lack ideal solutions, such as conflicts between administrative demands and the individual needs of students. In such situations, integrity is not determined by the systemically safest choice, but rather by the teacher's ability to maintain fidelity to the pedagogical values they believe in. Prophetic pedagogy provides a conceptual foundation for understanding integrity as moral wholeness. A teacher's professional integrity is not merely manifested

through adherence to rules, but through an awareness of values and the moral courage to act in accordance with the goals of humanizing education.

Within this framework, integrity becomes an expression of internalized ethics, not simply an external demand. Integrity is also closely related to a teacher's professional identity. Teachers with integrity do not separate who they are as individuals from how they act as educators. This unity between personal identity and professional role enables authentic and meaningful pedagogical practice (Flores, 2020). Prophetic pedagogy reinforces this view by emphasizing that education is an ethical practice that demands complete self-involvement. Therefore, the professional integrity of teachers based on prophetic pedagogy requires the development of deep ethical awareness, continuous reflection, and a consistent commitment to values in pedagogical practice. Integrity is not built solely through regulation, but through a process of internalizing values that enables teachers to act ethically in complex and stressful situations.

4. Conclusion

The ethics of the teaching profession cannot be adequately understood if it is limited to adherence to formal norms and administrative mechanisms alone, because in complex educational practices, ethics actually functions as a living moral orientation in every pedagogical decision. Teacher professionalism that develops within a technocratic and bureaucratic framework tends to reduce the role of teachers to that of system implementers, thus potentially emptying the ethical dimension and moral autonomy in teaching practice. Within the framework of prophetic pedagogy, professional ethics is positioned as a reflective praxis that links value awareness, moral responsibility, and humanizing educational goals, while also functioning as a critique of instrumental professionalism. The professional integrity of teachers does not stop at consistency of behavior or adherence to a code of ethics, but is understood as the integrity between believed values, developed professional attitudes, and pedagogical actions that are realized contextually in real situations, including the moral courage to make fair and meaningful decisions amidst systemic pressures. Thus, professional ethics based on prophetic pedagogy becomes a conceptual foundation that strengthens the integrity of teacher professionalism, positioning ethics not as an instrument of control, but as a moral resource that forms the professional identity of teachers in a complete and relevant manner to the challenges of contemporary education.

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