

Teacher Professional Ethics in Addressing the Changing Characteristics of Generation Alpha Students

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technology has shaped the characteristics of Generation Alpha learners, who are highly familiar with technology, visually oriented, interactive, and accustomed to instant access to information. These changes create new challenges for teachers in carrying out their professional duties. Many educational practices still rely on conventional approaches that are less relevant to current students. This study aims to analyze the importance of teacher professional ethics in responding to the changing character of Generation Alpha students. This research uses a qualitative library research approach by examining books, journal articles, and relevant academic sources. The findings show that teacher professional ethics remain a fundamental basis in education, but their implementation must be adjusted to current developments. Ethical values such as responsibility, integrity, fairness, exemplary conduct, empathy, and professionalism need to be integrated with digital literacy and adaptive learning approaches. The study also finds a gap between the ideal concept of teacher ethics and educational realities, where some teachers still face limitations in technology mastery and innovative teaching strategies. Therefore, redefining teacher professional ethics in the modern era is necessary to meet the needs of Generation Alpha learners.

Keywords: *teacher ethics, professionalism, Generation Alpha, digital education, learning adaptation.*

ABSTRAK

Perkembangan pesat teknologi digital telah membentuk karakteristik para pelajar Generasi Alpha, yang sangat akrab dengan teknologi, berorientasi visual, interaktif, dan terbiasa dengan akses instan terhadap informasi. Perubahan-perubahan ini menimbulkan tantangan baru bagi para guru dalam menjalankan tugas profesional mereka. Banyak praktik pendidikan masih mengandalkan pendekatan konvensional yang kurang relevan bagi siswa saat ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pentingnya etika profesi guru dalam merespons perubahan karakter siswa Generasi Alpha. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian perpustakaan kualitatif dengan mengkaji buku, artikel jurnal, dan sumber akademis yang relevan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa etika profesi guru tetap menjadi landasan fundamental dalam pendidikan, namun implementasinya harus disesuaikan dengan perkembangan terkini. Nilai-nilai etika seperti tanggung jawab, integritas, keadilan, perilaku teladan, empati, dan profesionalisme perlu diintegrasikan dengan literasi digital dan pendekatan pembelajaran adaptif. Studi ini juga menemukan kesenjangan antara konsep ideal etika guru dan realitas pendidikan, di mana sebagian guru masih menghadapi keterbatasan dalam penguasaan teknologi dan strategi pengajaran inovatif. Oleh karena itu,

mendefinisikan ulang etika profesi guru di era modern diperlukan untuk memenuhi kebutuhan pembelajar Generasi Alpha.

Kata Kunci: *etika guru, profesionalisme, Generasi Alpha, pendidikan digital, adaptasi pembelajaran.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are a central element in the implementation of education as they play a direct role in shaping students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and character. The success of education is not only determined by the curriculum and facilities, but also by the quality of teachers in carrying out their professional duties. Teachers do not merely function as transmitters of knowledge, but also as mentors, facilitators, motivators, and moral role models for students. Therefore, teachers are required to possess pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies based on strong professional ethics (Zajuli & Darmiyanti, 2023). Teacher professional ethics serve as a guideline for behavior so that educational tasks are carried out responsibly, fairly, with dignity, and oriented toward the interests of students.

In the context of 21st-century education, the role of teachers faces increasingly complex challenges along with the rapid development of digital technology. Digital transformation has influenced communication patterns, access to information, learning styles, and the behavior of younger generations. These changes have given rise to a new generation known as Generation Alpha, namely children born around 2010 and beyond who grow up in an environment closely connected to the internet, smartphones, social media, and artificial intelligence. Generation Alpha is the first generation fully born in the digital era, thus possessing characteristics different from previous generations (Fadlurrohman et al., 2019).

Generation Alpha is known for its high adaptability to technology, preference for visual and interactive learning, fast information processing, and familiarity with instant systems. On the other hand, this generation also faces challenges such as shorter attention spans, dependence on gadgets, reduced face-to-face social interaction, and lower persistence in long processes. Hafizah (2023) explains that Generation Alpha students tend to require digital learning media that align with their learning styles in order to enhance learning effectiveness. This finding indicates that traditional and monotonous teaching strategies are becoming less relevant if implemented without innovation.

These conditions present new challenges for the teaching profession. Teachers are no longer required only to master subject matter, but also to understand the characteristics of digital learners, utilize educational technology, build humanistic communication, and instill moral values amid the rapid flow of information. Ofita & Sururi (2024) state that 21st-century pedagogical competence requires teachers to be adaptive in dealing with Generation Alpha. Thus, teacher professionalism in the current era must be understood more broadly, integrating academic competence with technological skills and professional ethics.

Several previous studies have discussed themes related to teachers and Generation Alpha. Indriawati et al. (2023) examined teacher professional ethics in

primary education and emphasized the importance of ethical codes as a foundation for professional conduct. Rusmiatiningsih & Rina Rizkyantha (2022) analyzed the literacy characteristics of Generation Alpha and found that this generation is more responsive to visual and digital information. Apandi, Sandi, Lumbantoruan et al. (2024) explained that digital technology influences the habits, mindset, and behavior of Generation Alpha. Neltiana & Putri (2025) Highlighted that the implementation of teacher professional ethics can improve learning quality. Another study by Mu'minin et al. (2025) showed that teacher ethics are essential in creating a conducive learning environment.

However, these studies generally discuss teacher professional ethics and the characteristics of Generation Alpha separately. Research that specifically analyzes how teacher professional ethics should be reconstructed to address changes in the characteristics of Generation Alpha learners is still limited. In fact, changes in students' learning behavior due to digitalization demand a redefinition of professional teaching practices. If professional ethics are only understood as formal compliance with rules, they are insufficient to address contemporary educational challenges.

Based on this gap, this study offers novelty by proposing that teacher professional ethics in the era of Generation Alpha must be understood adaptively. Teacher ethics should not only include moral responsibility, discipline, and exemplary conduct as in classical concepts, but also digital literacy, communication skills with new generations, psychological sensitivity toward students, and the ability to create relevant, creative, and humanistic learning. In other words, teacher professional ethics need to shift from a normative concept to a transformative one that aligns with current developments.

This study is important because realities in the field indicate that some teachers still struggle to adapt to technology, rely on one-way teaching methods, and have not optimally guided students in facing digital-era challenges. If this condition persists, it may create a gap between students' learning needs and the educational services provided by schools. Therefore, discussing teacher professional ethics becomes increasingly relevant in strengthening the quality of contemporary education.

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to: (1) analyze the changing characteristics of Generation Alpha students, (2) identify the challenges faced by teachers in responding to these changes, and (3) formulate the implementation of adaptive and relevant teacher professional ethics in addressing Generation Alpha learners in the digital era.

METHODS

This study employs a library research method, which utilizes various written sources as the primary data to examine a problem theoretically and conceptually. Library research is chosen because the topic of teacher professional ethics in addressing the changing characteristics of Generation Alpha students requires an in-depth review of theories, previous studies, and relevant educational concepts.

Through this approach, researchers are able to analyze phenomena systematically based on credible scientific sources.

The approach used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative approach aims to understand meanings, concepts, and relationships between phenomena in depth, while the descriptive nature is used to describe the objective conditions regarding the challenges faced by teachers, the characteristics of Generation Alpha, and the implementation of teacher professional ethics in the digital era. With this approach, the study does not focus on statistical data but rather on comprehensive data interpretation.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data include scientific journal articles, books, and research findings that directly discuss teacher professional ethics, teacher professionalism, Generation Alpha, educational technology, and changes in student characteristics. Secondary data include supporting documents, seminar proceedings, educational regulations, and other references relevant to the research topic. One of the normative foundations used in this study is Law Number 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers as the legal basis for the teaching profession in Indonesia.

The data collection technique is conducted through documentation study, which involves searching, reading, recording, and classifying various literature related to the research focus. The literature is selected based on relevance to the topic, credibility of the authors, year of publication, and contribution to the discussion. The sources used are primarily drawn from accredited journals, academic books, and scientific publications within the last ten years to ensure alignment with contemporary educational issues.

The data analysis technique used is content analysis. The analysis process involves several steps: (1) data reduction by selecting information relevant to the research focus; (2) data categorization into main themes such as teacher professional ethics, characteristics of Generation Alpha, educational challenges, and implementation strategies; (3) data interpretation by comparing expert opinions and previous research findings; and (4) drawing conclusions systematically in accordance with the research objectives. Through this method, a comprehensive understanding is obtained regarding the importance of adaptive teacher professional ethics in addressing Generation Alpha students in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teacher Professional Ethics as the Foundation of Education in the Digital Era

The results of the study indicate that teacher professional ethics remain a fundamental foundation in the implementation of education, despite changes in learning systems due to the development of digital technology. Teacher professional ethics encompass a set of moral values such as responsibility, honesty, fairness, discipline, care, and exemplary conduct that serve as guidelines in carrying out teaching duties. These values are essential because education is not only aimed at transferring knowledge but also at shaping students' character. This finding is in line

with Zajuli & Darmiyanti (2023), who state that teacher professionalism must be built upon strong character and ethical principles.

From the perspective of humanistic education theory, teachers are viewed as facilitators who support students in developing holistically, both intellectually and emotionally. Therefore, teacher professional ethics serve as the basis for a healthy pedagogical relationship between teachers and students. Amid technological advancement, this role cannot be entirely replaced by machines or artificial intelligence. Technology can assist in delivering learning materials, but it cannot replace empathy, role modeling, and the moral guidance provided by teachers.

However, the current reality of education shows that some learning practices are still oriented toward administrative and cognitive aspects only. Teachers are often burdened with curriculum targets and administrative reports, causing relational ethical aspects to receive less attention. This condition reinforces the need to strengthen teacher professional ethics so that education does not lose its humanistic dimension.

Characteristics of Generation Alpha Students and Their Implications for Learning

The findings of this study indicate that Generation Alpha students possess characteristics that differ from previous generations. They are born and raised in a digital environment, making them highly familiar with the internet, smartphones, social media, and various interactive applications. Fadlurrohman et al. (2019) describe Generation Alpha as the first generation to grow entirely in the digital age with a high intensity of technology exposure.

The main characteristics of Generation Alpha include a preference for visual-based learning, rapid responsiveness to information, the ability to engage in multiple activities simultaneously, and a tendency toward shorter attention spans. Hafizah (2023) emphasizes that students of this generation require digital learning media that align with their learning styles to ensure effective and meaningful learning processes.

From the perspective of learning development theory, these conditions indicate that traditional passive learning strategies are less suitable when applied dominantly. Generation Alpha students tend to be more active when provided with project-based learning, collaboration, educational games, simulations, and audio-visual media. Therefore, teachers need to adjust their pedagogical approaches to keep the learning process relevant.

On the other hand, easy access to digital technology also brings challenges such as a tendency toward instant gratification, dependence on gadgets, and reduced face-to-face social interaction. This indicates that technological proficiency does not always align with emotional maturity and character development. Therefore, character education remains an urgent necessity.

In addition, Generation Alpha students tend to exhibit a strong dependence on digital technology, which affects not only their learning preferences but also their social interactions. Although they are highly connected through digital platforms, some studies indicate a decline in direct interpersonal communication and social

skills. This condition may lead to reduced empathy, limited face-to-face interaction, and increased individualistic behavior (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Generation Alpha demonstrates a tendency toward instant gratification, where they expect quick results and immediate feedback in learning processes. This is influenced by continuous exposure to fast-paced digital content and algorithm-driven platforms that prioritize speed and convenience. As a result, students may struggle with patience, persistence, and appreciation of long-term learning processes (Intan, 2024). Therefore, teachers need to design structured learning strategies that balance engagement with discipline, such as gradual goal-setting, consistent feedback, and character-based learning approaches.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Responding to the Changing Characteristics of Generation Alpha

The analysis shows that teachers face multidimensional challenges in educating Generation Alpha. The first challenge is teachers' digital literacy. Not all teachers have the same level of readiness in utilizing educational technology. Some teachers still experience difficulties in using digital platforms, interactive media, and technology-based assessment systems. This finding is in line with Ofita & Sururi (2024), who state that 21st-century pedagogical competence must be strengthened in order to respond to changes in students' characteristics. In addition, teachers are required to continuously develop their professional competence in line with technological advancements (Herman Budianto Uno, 2016).

The second challenge relates to instructional strategies. Many students quickly become bored with lecture-based methods that last too long. If teachers do not innovate, student engagement will decline. This indicates the need for transforming teaching approaches into more participatory and student-centered learning models. As emphasized by Sanjaya (2013), effective learning should actively involve students so that they can construct their own understanding.

The third challenge concerns character development. Students today live in an environment with a massive flow of information. They are easily exposed to inappropriate language on social media, instant culture, misinformation, and non-educational content. In this situation, teachers are required not only to deliver subject matter but also to act as moral guides and value guardians. This aligns with Muslich (2011), who states that character education is essential in addressing moral challenges in modern society.

The fourth challenge is intergenerational communication. Some teachers come from generations shaped by conventional learning cultures, while students grow up in fast-paced digital environments. These differences in mindset often create communication gaps. Therefore, teachers need to understand the characteristics and psychology of modern learners to build effective learning interactions. In this context, teachers must position themselves not only as knowledge transmitters but also as facilitators who guide students' development holistically (Mulyasa, 2013).

Implementation of Teacher Professional Ethics in Facing Generation Alpha

Based on the results of the study, the implementation of teacher professional ethics in facing Generation Alpha needs to be realized in several forms. First, professional responsibility through continuous competency development. Teachers need to continuously learn about educational technology, innovative teaching methods, and students' psychological development. Lifelong learning attitudes are part of professional ethics that must be possessed by teachers (Ofita & Sururi, 2024).

Second, integrity in the use of technology. Teachers must demonstrate proper, honest, and productive use of digital media. For instance, respecting copyright, using valid sources, protecting students' privacy, and communicating politely in digital spaces. This reflects the expansion of teacher ethics from the classroom to the virtual environment (Neltiana & Putri, 2025).

Third, fairness and empathy in learning. Not all students have the same abilities, access to technology, and learning styles. Therefore, teachers need to implement differentiated instruction so that each student receives appropriate learning services. This aligns with the principle of student-centered learning (Ofita & Sururi, 2024).

Fourth, character modeling. In the midst of a crisis of public role models often seen in digital media, teachers remain real figures who are observed daily by students. Attitudes such as discipline, consistency, patience, and respect for others have a stronger impact than verbal advice alone. This reinforces the importance of ethical modeling in shaping students' character.

Critical Analysis: The Gap Between the Idealism of Teacher Ethics and the Reality of Contemporary Education

Normatively, teacher professional ethics require educators to be professional, innovative, patient, and adaptive to the development of the times. However, the findings of this study indicate that there is still a gap between these ideals and the realities in the field. Some teachers are still trapped in administrative routines, have limited time to develop their competencies, and have not optimally understood the characteristics of students in the digital era (Ofita & Sururi, 2024). This condition reflects that the development of teacher professionalism has not fully aligned with the demands of technological advancement and changes in student characteristics (Apandi et al., 2024).

Furthermore, teacher professional ethics are often interpreted merely as compliance with formal regulations such as attendance discipline, instructional administration, and bureaucratic requirements. In fact, contemporary educational challenges are far more complex, including how teachers build emotional connections with students, guide them amidst the overwhelming flow of information, and instill moral values in digital environments (Mu'amin et al., 2025). This shows that ethical practice in education should not only be procedural but also relational and contextual.

This study reinforces previous findings regarding the importance of teacher professionalism, while also highlighting that professionalism without technological adaptation and generational sensitivity will be less effective (Ofita & Sururi, 2024).

As emphasized by Mulyasa (2013), teachers are required to continuously develop their competencies in response to educational changes. In addition, character education remains a crucial aspect in addressing the moral challenges faced by students in the digital era.

Therefore, teacher professional ethics in the era of Generation Alpha need to be redefined as adaptive ethics, which integrate classical moral values, digital competence, emotional intelligence, and pedagogical innovation. This finding also strengthens previous studies stating that the role of teachers must evolve from knowledge transmitters to facilitators and character builders in the modern educational context (Indriawati et al., 2023).

Relevance to Islamic Education

From the perspective of Islamic education, teachers hold a noble position as *murabbi*, *mu'allim*, and *muaddib*, referring to educators who not only transfer knowledge but also cultivate students' moral character (*adab*) and spiritual values. These roles emphasize that education in Islam integrates cognitive, affective, and moral dimensions. Recent studies highlight that teacher ethics in Islamic education play a crucial role in shaping students' character and strengthening moral awareness in the digital era (Indriawati et al., 2023).

In the era of Generation Alpha, Islamic education has significant opportunities to integrate spiritual values with digital technology. The use of digital media in Islamic learning—such as Qur'anic learning applications, digital storytelling of prophetic traditions, and interactive religious content—can enhance student engagement and accessibility. This is supported by recent findings that digital-based learning is effective in accommodating the learning styles of Generation Alpha, who are highly familiar with technology (Apandi et al., 2024).

However, the integration of technology in Islamic education must be accompanied by strong ethical guidance. The openness of digital information exposes students to various risks, including misinformation, moral decline, and reduced social interaction. Therefore, teachers must act as moral guides who direct students toward responsible and ethical use of technology. This aligns with recent research emphasizing the importance of integrating character education and digital literacy to build responsible digital behavior among students (Dira et al., 2025).

Thus, teacher professional ethics and Islamic educational values mutually reinforce each other in addressing contemporary challenges. The integration of ethical values, digital competence, and spiritual education becomes essential in preparing Generation Alpha to become knowledgeable individuals with strong moral and religious character.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that teacher professional ethics play a crucial role in addressing the changing characteristics of Generation Alpha students in the digital era. Generation Alpha is characterized as a technology-oriented generation that prefers interactive learning and has rapid access

to information. However, they also face challenges such as shorter attention spans, a tendency toward instant gratification, and reduced face-to-face social interaction. These conditions require teachers not only to master academic competencies but also to possess adaptive professional ethics, including responsibility, integrity, fairness, exemplary conduct, empathy, and the ability to utilize technology wisely.

The findings of this study indicate that teacher professional ethics need to be redefined from a normative concept into a transformative one that aligns with the needs of digital learners. Therefore, teachers are expected to become professional educators who are capable of integrating moral values, pedagogical innovation, and digital literacy in the learning process. Furthermore, future research is recommended to conduct field-based studies on the implementation of teacher professional ethics in addressing Generation Alpha across various educational levels in order to obtain more comprehensive empirical insights. The authors also express their gratitude to all parties who have supported the completion of this study.

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