

The Role of Teachers as Role Models From The Perspective of Professional Ethics in Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine teachers' exemplary behavior from the perspective of professional ethics in teaching, as well as its implications for the character development of students in the modern era. The methodology employed in this study utilized a qualitative research approach with a literature review, involving the collection of various relevant data sources, scientific journals, and related documents, which were then analyzed descriptively using source triangulation techniques. The results of this study indicate that teachers play a strategic role not only as knowledge transmitters but also as role models who embody the values of integrity, honesty, discipline, and social responsibility. Teachers' exemplary behavior has been shown to significantly contribute to shaping students' character and fostering a positive school culture, despite facing various challenges such as technological advancements, the complexity of their roles, and inconsistencies in behavior. The limitation of this study lies in the use of secondary data without field observations, thus it cannot directly reflect empirical conditions. Therefore, future research is expected to apply a field research approach to obtain accurate data and examine practical strategies to strengthen teachers' professional ethics in the digital age.

Keywords: *The Role of Teachers, Exemplary Behavior, Professional Ethic in Teaching.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilakukan guna mengkaji keteladanan guru dalam perspektif etika profesi dalam pengajaran, serta implikasinya terhadap pembentukan karakter peserta didik di era modern. Metode yang diterapkan dalam studi ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka melalui pengumpulan berbagai sumber data yang relevan, jurnal ilmiah, dan dokumen terkait, yang kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif menggunakan teknik triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa guru memainkan peran strategis tidak hanya sebagai penyampai pengetahuan tetapi juga sebagai teladan yang mewujudkan nilai-nilai integritas, kejujuran, disiplin, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Perilaku teladan guru terbukti berkontribusi signifikan dalam membentuk karakter siswa dan menumbuhkan budaya sekolah yang positif, meskipun menghadapi berbagai tantangan seperti kemajuan teknologi, kompleksitas peran, dan inkonsistensi perilaku. Keterbatasan penelitian ini terletak pada penggunaan data sekunder tanpa observasi lapangan, sehingga tidak dapat secara langsung mencerminkan kondisi empiris. Dengan demikian, penelitian pada masa mendatang diharapkan dapat menerapkan pendekatan penelitian lapangan guna

memperoleh data yang akurat dan mengkaji strategi praktis untuk memperkuat etika profesional guru di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Peran Guru, Keteladanan Guru, Etika Profesi Keguruan.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers hold a crucial position in the world of education because they serve not only as conveyors of knowledge but also as moral guides and character builders for students. In the educational process, the success of learning is determined not only by a teacher's academic competence but also by the attitudes, behaviors, and personality traits demonstrated in daily life. Therefore, teachers are expected to act as positive examples for students both within the school environment and in the community (Napratilora, 2021).

From the perspective of professional ethics in teaching, a teacher is obligated to uphold moral values, responsibility, discipline, honesty, and a professional attitude in carrying out their duties. Professional ethics serve as a guide for teachers to maintain appropriate behavior and social relationships so that they can create a positive educational atmosphere. A teacher's exemplary conduct is a vital component in the application of professional ethics because students tend to imitate the behavior they observe in their educators (Sutrisno, 2022).

The changing times and current technological advancements present various challenges in the world of education. The rapid flow of information through digital media makes students susceptible to various negative behaviors that are inconsistent with the nation's moral and cultural values. This situation requires teachers to further strengthen their role as role models so they can guide students in navigating the social changes occurring in the modern era.

Furthermore, various issues persist regarding the low adherence to professional ethics among some educators, such as a lack of discipline, poor communication skills, and behavior that does not reflect educational values. This situation can undermine students' trust in teachers and hinder the character-building process in schools. Therefore, the implementation of professional ethics in teaching must be strengthened through consistent exemplary conduct in all educational activities.

Teachers' role as role models has a significant impact on the development of students' character traits, such as discipline, responsibility, religious devotion, honesty, and social awareness. Teachers who are able to uphold professional ethics effectively will create a healthy learning environment that supports students' moral development. Thus, teachers' exemplary conduct is not only part of their professional duties but also a crucial foundation for building quality education that fosters character (Khadijah, 2024).

METHODS

The method applied in this research is a literature review aimed at obtaining a comprehensive understanding of teachers' roles as role models viewed through the lens of professional teaching ethics. This approach was selected because the study emphasizes the examination of various concepts, theoretical perspectives, and

findings from earlier studies concerning teacher exemplarity, ethical standards in the teaching profession, and their application within educational settings. (Musdalifah, 2024). The literature review was conducted by collecting various relevant sources, such as books, scholarly articles, undergraduate research papers, graduate theses, dissertations, and other educational documents discussing teacher professionalism and educational ethics. The data collection stage was conducted systematically through library databases, academic search engines, and reliable online sources using keywords such as teachers' exemplary roles, professional ethics in teaching, teacher professionalism, and educator character in education (Fitriatin, 2024). The data obtained was then analyzed critically and descriptively to identify patterns, conceptual relationships, and the relevance between teacher role modeling and the application of professional ethics in the educational process. Through this method, the research seeks to offer a broader insight into the importance of teachers as exemplary figures in developing students' character, moral values, and personality in accordance with the principles of professional ethics in teaching (Az-Zahra et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of professional ethics by teachers has a significant influence on students' character development. Teachers who consistently demonstrate honesty, discipline, responsibility, and fairness are able to become positive role models for students both in the school environment and within digital spaces. In the digital era, educators are also expected to possess technological literacy and demonstrate ethical behavior in the responsible use of technology (Maisaroh et al., 2025).

The findings further show that teachers' exemplary behavior contributes to improving students' discipline, responsibility, honesty, and social attitudes. This supports Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which states that students acquire behavior through the process of watching and emulating influential figures, particularly teachers as the closest role models in the educational environment.

In addition, teachers who build positive communication, empathy, and integrity tend to create a supportive learning atmosphere that encourages students to internalize moral values more effectively. Teachers' role modeling is also reflected in the ethical use of technology, such as promoting academic honesty, responsible communication, and digital responsibility during online learning activities (Sidiq 2018).

Furthermore, the study reveals that the consistency of teachers in applying professional ethics greatly affects students' trust and respect toward the learning process. When teachers demonstrate consistency between words and actions, students are more likely to develop positive attitudes and emotional attachment to the values taught in school. Ethical consistency also strengthens teachers' credibility, enabling them to guide students not only academically but also morally and socially in their daily interactions.

The research also highlights that teachers' professional ethics contribute to the formation of a positive school culture. A learning environment that emphasizes

respect, discipline, cooperation, and mutual understanding encourages students to practice these values in their interactions with peers and teachers. In this context, teachers act as key figures in creating a learning climate that supports character formation and emotional well-being among students.

Another important finding is that teachers' attitudes toward diversity and inclusivity influence students' social awareness and tolerance. Teachers who treat students fairly regardless of their background, abilities, or social status help foster an inclusive educational environment. Through fair treatment and respectful communication, students learn the importance of empathy, equality, and appreciation for differences, which are essential values in multicultural societies.

In the context of digital transformation, the study also finds that teachers' ethical behavior in online learning environments significantly impacts students' digital character. Teachers who use digital platforms responsibly, communicate politely, and respect privacy rights indirectly teach students proper digital citizenship. As technology increasingly becomes part of everyday learning, teachers are expected to guide students in using technology wisely, ethically, and productively.

Moreover, the findings indicate that professional ethics strengthen teachers' ability to manage classroom challenges effectively. Teachers who demonstrate patience, emotional control, and fairness are more capable of resolving conflicts constructively and maintaining positive relationships with students. This creates a feeling of security and comfort within the classroom, enabling students to participate actively in the learning process and develop self-confidence.

Overall, the study confirms that teacher role modeling and ethical professionalism play a central function in developing students' moral, social, and disciplinary character. The effectiveness of character education is strengthened through collaboration between schools, families, and the wider social environment in supporting the development of positive values among students (Fepriyanti, 2021).

Finally, the study emphasizes that strengthening teachers' professional ethics requires continuous support through training, self-development programs, and institutional commitment. Schools and educational institutions should provide opportunities for teachers to improve both pedagogical competence and ethical awareness in response to social and technological changes. Continuous professional development will help teachers maintain their role as educators, mentors, and moral role models who contribute positively to students' character development in the modern era.

Teachers Understanding of Role Modeling from the Perspective of Professional Ethics in Teaching

Ethics can be understood as a form of self-control, while a profession is a field of work that requires specific intellectual abilities acquired through education and training, with the aim of mastering certain skills in providing services to others. A profession will earn the trust of society if its practitioners, including teachers, possess integrity and a sense of social responsibility to uphold professional ethics in carrying out their duties. Without ethics in the teaching profession, a profession that should

be noble can lose its meaning and become merely a job to earn a living, without being grounded in idealistic values, which ultimately leads to a loss of respect and trust from the public (Bahri, 2021).

Teachers are not only tasked with delivering lesson content in the classroom, but also bear a broader responsibility for shaping students' character and personality so that they develop into independent, responsible individuals with strong moral values. Therefore, every teacher is required to understand, uphold, and implement professional ethics in every aspect of their work, which includes honesty, a strong sense of responsibility, fair treatment of all students, and respect for students' rights, thereby creating a positive, safe, and ethical learning environment.

In educational practice, this can be seen in the guidance teachers provide when students experience failure, make mistakes, or face social conflicts within the school environment. Teachers with a strong commitment serve as role models by demonstrating patience and wisdom in guiding students back onto the right path. From an Islamic perspective, professional ethics for teachers emphasize that a commitment to students' success is an essential part of an educator's responsibilities. A Muslim teacher is required to have sincere intentions in educating, as well as to demonstrate consistency and patience in dealing with the various dynamics experienced by students (Asyha, 2025).

Interactions between teachers and students now take place not only in the physical classroom but have also expanded into the digital realm. This development presents new challenges, particularly in maintaining professional boundaries between teachers and students. Therefore, teachers need to understand the ethics of communication in virtual spaces, such as avoiding verbal harassment, refraining from irrelevant non-academic communication, and remaining neutral and objective when evaluating students. A lack of understanding of online communication ethics often leads to an increase in professional ethics violations in digital spaces, highlighting the importance of digital literacy grounded in ethical values for educators. Additionally, in carrying out their profession, teachers must prioritize the principles of inclusivity and fairness to ensure the learning process proceeds equitably and respects the diversity of students (Alfiyansyah, 2025).

The Role of Teachers as Role Models in Learning and Social Interaction

The implementation of teacher role modeling in learning and social interaction is a comprehensive approach that positions teachers as key figures in instilling values, attitudes, and character in students through concrete behavior. In the realm of education and social relationships within the school environment, teachers do not merely serve as instructors of academic material, but as role models who demonstrate positive examples for students. This role model is particularly relevant in the modern era, characterized by technological advancements and the complexity of moral challenges, requiring teachers to consistently embody positive values. Consequently, students not only gain knowledge but also internalize principles that shape their character and personality holistically. These findings indicate that teacher role modeling is not merely a supplementary element in the learning process but serves as an effective means of instilling values in students. This

phenomenon suggests that students find it easier to internalize values through direct role modeling rather than through theoretical explanations alone (Arfaiza, 2025).

Teachers can demonstrate exemplary behavior in the classroom through various practical actions, such as showing discipline in time management and responsibility in carrying out tasks, honesty in assessment, and an open attitude that respects students' opinions. Furthermore, teachers are able to integrate character values into their teaching approach through contextual learning and habit formation, enabling students to connect these values to real-life situations. The exemplary behavior demonstrated is not merely verbal but emphasizes observable, concrete actions that students can emulate during the learning process. Therefore, teachers' exemplary behavior not only reinforces students' cognitive development but also contributes to the formation of sustained ethical and moral awareness. However, the effectiveness of a teacher's exemplary behavior depends heavily on the consistency of the behavior demonstrated, as inconsistencies between words and actions have the potential to undermine the teacher's credibility as a role model (Sulaiman 2021).

In social interactions within the school environment, teachers' exemplary conduct is reflected in their ability to establish constructive relationships with students. Teachers demonstrate empathy, fairness, and good communication skills, and treat all students without discrimination. The respect, cooperation, and social awareness demonstrated by educators create a conducive and inclusive learning environment. Healthy social interaction between teachers and students plays an important role in the development of social character traits, such as tolerance, responsibility, and mutual respect. This indicates that the quality of teachers' social interactions plays a significant part in shaping students' social character. On the other hand, differences in students' backgrounds and character development within the classroom present a unique challenge, so teachers need a high level of adaptability to maintain the quality of these interactions (Ningtyas, 2024).

In addition, the implementation of teachers' exemplary behavior can be reinforced through activities aimed at fostering and developing school culture, such as discipline programs, religious activities, and social activities that involve the active participation of students. In this regard, teachers serve not only as facilitators but also as role models in every learning activity. In this context, the values instilled are not merely theoretical but are truly internalized in real life. Thus, teacher role modeling is a critical factor in the success of character education, as students tend to emulate behaviors they observe directly rather than merely receiving verbal instructions. Consequently, the success of character development depends not only on classroom instruction but also on the consistency of the school culture supported by teacher role modeling. Nevertheless, the application of teacher role modeling continues to encounter various obstacles, including the influence of digital advancements, as well as the increasing complexity of the teacher's role in the modern era (Marzuki, 2017).

Therefore, the success of teachers' role modeling depends on their consistency and integrity in fulfilling their roles, both in teaching and in social interactions. Role modeling carried out consistently will foster a supportive educational atmosphere that is not solely focused on academic success but also on shaping students' personality and character – one that is morally upright, ethical, and capable of facing

the challenges of the modern era. This underscores that teachers' role modeling is a crucial component in creating a holistic education that prioritizes character formation among students (Heri. 2022). The following table summarizes the role of teachers as role models in learning and social interaction:

Dimensions of Implementation	Concrete Actions	Impact on Students
The Learning Process	Demonstrating punctuality, honesty in evaluation, an open-minded attitude, respect for others' opinions, and the integration of character values through a contextual approach.	Strengthening cognitive skills, fostering moral awareness, and enhancing teachers' credibility as role models.
Social Interaction	Building empathetic, fair, and communicative interpersonal relationships free from discrimination, and demonstrating social responsibility within the school environment.	The development of social values, such as tolerance, responsibility, and respect, as well as the creation of a conducive classroom environment.

Figure 1. The Role of Teachers as Role Models in Learning and Social Interaction

The Challenges and Significance of Teacher Role Modeling in Student Character Development

The Significance of Teacher Role Modeling in Character Development

Teacher role modeling is a crucial element in the character development of students because teachers' behavior is often emulated by students in their daily lives. The way teachers behave, speak, demonstrate discipline, and resolve problems can influence the development of students' attitudes and personalities (Rifki et al., 2023).

In Islamic education, the concept of *uswah hasanah* is viewed as an effective educational approach to building students' character. Teachers who demonstrate positive behavior and good moral character tend to more easily instill moral values in students. This form of exemplary behavior is evident not only during the learning process but also when teachers interact within the school environment.

Sutrisno and Mukhammad Wahyudi explain that the development of students' character begins with teachers setting a practical and simple example

through their daily behavior. Teachers with high moral integrity create a positive learning environment that encourages students to emulate such good behavior.

Teachers' exemplary behavior also serves as a means of internalizing character values. Students tend to imitate behaviors they frequently observe in respected figures. Therefore, teachers who demonstrate honesty, discipline, politeness, and responsibility can help students develop similar character traits (Alfi, 2025).

Research by Aryawan Efendi Rohani et al. shows that teachers' attitudes and behaviors are highly relevant in shaping students' religious character, as students look to their teachers as role models in their daily lives. Through a positive relationship between teachers and students, the character education process can take place more effectively.

Furthermore, teachers' exemplary conduct plays a vital role in fostering a positive school culture. A school culture rooted in values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and tolerance will have a lasting impact on students' behavior. In this regard, teachers serve as the primary drivers of character culture within the school.

The Challenge of Teachers Serving as Role Models in Shaping Students' Character

Although teachers serving as role models play a crucial role, putting this into practice faces various challenges in the modern era. One of the main challenges is the development of digital technology, which influences students' behavior. Today's students obtain more information from and emulate public figures on social media than they do from teachers at school. This situation often leads to a shift in the teacher's role as a role model.

Additionally, the tide of globalization brings changes in lifestyle and culture that do not always align with moral values in education. Students are easily exposed to consumerist and individualistic behaviors, as well as poor communication ethics through digital media. This situation demands that teachers possess adaptability and moral consistency to remain relevant role models for their students.

The next challenge is the lack of consistency among some teachers in demonstrating exemplary behavior. In some cases, there are still teachers who lack discipline, fail to maintain communication ethics, or are unable to control their emotions when dealing with students. Such behavior can affect students' trust in teachers and hinder the character-building process.

Research by Nur Fitri Saputri et al. shows that teachers' exemplary behavior has a strong influence on students' character development, with the percentage of influence reaching 69% (Saputri, 2024). These findings demonstrate that teachers' behavior is crucial to the success of character education in schools.

In addition to internal factors related to teachers, challenges also arise from the family and community environments. Character education cannot function optimally if the values taught at school differ from those in the home or community. A lack of cooperation between schools and parents often causes students to feel confused about how to apply character values.

Another challenge is the increasing administrative demands placed on teachers. Many teachers must complete various administrative tasks, which reduces the time available for building personal interactions with students. In fact, a strong emotional bond between teachers and students is crucial to the process of modeling positive behavior.

On the other hand, the increasingly competitive nature of the education sector also requires teachers to continually enhance their professionalism. It is not enough for teachers to simply master the subject matter; they must also possess social, emotional, and spiritual competencies in order to serve as ideal role models.

Efforts to Strengthen Teachers' Role as Role Models

To address these challenges, various efforts are needed to strengthen teachers' role as role models in schools. First, teachers need to raise awareness that their daily behavior is an important part of the character education process. Attitudes of discipline, responsibility, honesty, and social concern must be reflected in concrete actions (Prasetyo et al., 2019).

Second, schools need to create a character education culture that involves the entire school community. Principals, teachers, school staff, and students must work together to build an environment that supports the cultivation of positive character values.

Third, professional training and development for teachers regarding character education and moral reinforcement are necessary. Teachers need to be equipped with communication skills, emotional management, and character-based learning strategies so they can face the challenges of modern education.

Fourth, cooperation between schools and families must be strengthened. Parents play a vital role in supporting the character values taught at school. Through synergy between teachers and parents, the process of character development in students will be more effective and sustainable.

Research by Lika Anis Zahro et al. shows that the exemplary behavior of Islamic Religious Education teachers can shape students' religious character through the cultivation of discipline, noble morals, and a religious culture at school. This indicates that consistent exemplary behavior can have a positive influence on students' character development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that teachers play a strategic role not only as educators, but also as role models who embody professional ethical principles, such as integrity, responsibility, honesty, and discipline. Teachers' role modeling has proven to be an essential factor in shaping students' character, both through the learning process and social interactions within the school environment. The implementation of this exemplary role is manifested through consistent, tangible behavior, such as being fair in assessment, demonstrating empathy, and being able to establish positive interpersonal relationships with students. Furthermore, in today's digital age, the exemplary role of teachers is undergoing a transformation that demands the integration of professional ethics and

digital literacy as a form of adaptation to ongoing technological advancements and social changes. The novelty of this study lies in its perspective that teacher exemplary behavior is no longer understood merely as conventional moral practice, but as a professional ethical construct integrated with digital competencies and modern social dynamics. In this context, teacher exemplary behavior is viewed as a holistic approach that connects ethical, pedagogical, and digital literacy dimensions in the process of shaping students' character. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of strengthening teachers' professional ethics education in a manner that is contextual, adaptive, and aligned with technological advancements and social changes in the digital age. Additionally, educational policy support is needed to foster the internalization of values through consistent exemplary practices within the school environment. Therefore, future studies are recommended to apply a field-based empirical approach to test the effectiveness of a teacher exemplary model grounded in the integration of professional ethics and digital literacy in real-world educational practice.

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