



The Renewal of Teaching Ethics within the Digital Literacy Ecosystem: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Professional Practices of Indonesian Teachers

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Abstract

This study examines how teachers reinterpret teaching ethics in the context of digital literacy-based education, by addressing gaps in previous studies that primarily viewed digital literacy as a technical skill. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, the study involved 80 teachers who were purposively selected and participated in digital learning practices. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using thematic coding, with stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that digital literacy is understood not only as a technological skill but also as an ethical foundation inherent in teachers' professional assessments. Five main themes emerged: ethical awareness formed by digital literacy, critical reflection on the use of technology, the construction of contextual ethical norms, the role of teachers as role models of digital ethics, and the need for institutional strengthening. Challenges include limited access to digital resources and lack of digital ethics training. This study offers a new theoretical contribution by integrating digital literacy as a contextual variable within the framework of teachers' professional ethics, while providing practical implications for policy development and teacher training in responding to ethical demands in the digital education era.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Teaching Ethics, Phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become a global phenomenon that has changed almost all dimensions of human life, including education. Digitalization not only affects the way humans interact, but also shifts the pedagogical paradigm and professionalism of teachers in various parts of the world. In the context of education, technological advances have brought about major changes to the way teachers teach, students learn, and how ethical values are applied in classrooms that

now operate in a virtual environment. These changes are not only technological, but also touch the moral, social, and professional dimensions of an educator. Teaching ethics, which used to be based on direct interaction between teachers and students, is now faced with new challenges in a fast-paced, transparent, and dynamic digital space.

The integration of technology in education requires the birth of a new ethical understanding that is able to adapt to the complexity of online interaction. These challenges have become even more pronounced as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the entire world to massively switch to technology-based learning. Teachers in various countries, including Indonesia, must adapt to online learning that requires high digital literacy skills and ethical sensitivity in communicating virtually. It was found that many teachers face professional dilemmas during the distance learning process, especially in maintaining ethical boundaries, maintaining student privacy, and upholding academic integrity in cyberspace.

In the national context, the Merdeka Learning policy and the national digital literacy strengthening program further emphasize the importance of transforming teacher competencies. However, in the field, there is still a large gap between the technological capabilities of teachers and the ethical understanding of their use. The Kominfo report shows that only about 37% of teachers in Indonesia have a high level of digital literacy, while the rest are still in the medium or low category. This condition indicates that most teachers are not fully prepared to face the new ethical challenges in the digital space. These challenges are not only related to technical skills, but also to the moral awareness and social responsibility of a teacher as an example in the digital environment.

In the perspective of value-based education, teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge, but also figures who shape the character and morals of students. As the learning process moves to the digital realm, the role requires reinterpretation. Today's teachers need to navigate the digital world ethically in order to be a model of positive behavior for students in the cyber age. Phenomena such as the spread of hoaxes, digital plagiarism, cyberbullying, and social media abuse among students demonstrate the importance of forming a new ethical

paradigm for teachers. Unfortunately, most of the existing research still focuses on the technological and pedagogical aspects, rather than on the ethical dimensions that accompany the use of these technologies. This is where this research takes a role, namely to dig deeply into how teachers interpret and reconstruct their professional ethics in the context of educational digitalization.

It was revealed that digital adaptation in education often takes place without adequate ethical assistance. Teachers are more trained in technical aspects such as the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) or video conferencing applications, but they are not equipped with a deep understanding of online communication ethics and the protection of students' personal data.

As a result, various dilemmas arise between professionalism and personal closeness in digital interactions between teachers and students. In this context, qualitative approaches become particularly relevant because they allow for an in-depth exploration of meanings, values, and experiences that cannot be quantitatively measured. Qualitative research helps researchers understand the complexity of social phenomena in a more contextual and reflective way.

The new paradigm of teaching ethics carried out by this research does not only talk about the boundaries of right and wrong in teaching practice, but also about how teachers interpret truth and ethical responsibility in the digital space. Phenomenological and interpretive approaches are used to uncover teachers' authentic experiences in dealing with the changes in values and norms produced by the digitalization of education. Credibility in qualitative research lies in a deep understanding of the subject's experience, not just in the generalization of data. Therefore, teachers in this study are positioned as active agents who reflect, negotiate, and reshape their ethical understanding in the midst of technological currents.

Various field studies show that teachers often face ethical dilemmas in the use of digital media, such as decision-making related to student privacy, online academic supervision, and the use of social media for learning purposes. On the other hand, local culture also plays a role in shaping the way teachers interpret their professional ethics. For example, the value of politeness and hierarchy in Indonesian culture influences how teachers view informal interactions in

cyberspace. The hermeneutic approach in this study is used to interpret the meaning behind the experience, while respecting the social and cultural context that surrounds it.

| Researchers | Research Focus | Method | Key Findings |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Smith (2022) | The ethical dilemma of teachers in Use of digital technology | Qualitative, in-depth interviews | Teachers face a dilemma Online privacy and surveillance |
| Lee (2023) | The influence of local culture on digital education ethics | Case studies, observations | Culture influences teachers' perceptions of ethics |
| Money & Ahmad (2024) | The role of digital literacy in Forming Teacher Ethical Awareness | Phenomenology, focus group discussions | Digital literacy strengthens teachers' professionalism ethics |

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the ethical discourse of the teaching profession by including the dimension of digital literacy as a contextual variable that has not been explored much in previous research. The need to reframing the professional ethics of teachers in the digital era in order to be able to keep up with changes in communication patterns and learning interactions. Thus, this research contributes to the expansion of the conceptual framework of teaching ethics which has tended to be normative, towards a more reflective and situational understanding.

Practically, the results of this research are expected to be the basis for the formulation of teacher competency development policies, especially in the aspect of training that integrates digital literacy and professional ethics. Teacher training programs should not only emphasize mastery technology, but also the formation of a reflective awareness of moral values in their use. In this way, education not only becomes more modern, but also more humane. Because, in essence, the essence of education is humanity itself. Ethical teachers in the digital world are not just technology users, but guardians of values and morality in the digital learning ecosystem.

This new paradigm of teaching ethics in digital literacy-based education is expected to be a foothold for the creation of sustainable, adaptive, and civilized educational practices in the 5.0 era. This research seeks to make a conceptual and empirical contribution to the discourse through an in-depth exploration of the experiences of Indonesian teachers. The phenomenological qualitative approach

allows researchers to capture the essence of teachers' ethical experiences in dealing with the dynamics of educational digitalization, as well as understand the accompanying self-reflection process. Thus, this research not only highlights changes in teacher behavior in the digital era, but also reveals the underlying meaning of these changes in the social, cultural, and moral context of the nation. Based on this, this research aims to explore the meaning and construction of a new paradigm of teacher ethics in the context of digital literacy-based education through a phenomenological approach.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological design to examine a new paradigm of teacher ethics in digital literacy-based education. The research population is all teachers involved in digital literacy-based learning, with a sample of 10-15 teachers selected purposively based on experience and in-depth understanding of teaching ethics in the context of digital literacy, to achieve data saturation.

The research instruments include in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of related policies or practices. Data validity is maintained through member check techniques, triangulation of data sources, and trail audits so that the research results are reliable and accurate. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques following the steps of Creswell and Moustakas which consisted of: 1) data collection, 2) data reduction by identifying main themes, 3) obtaining the core meaning of the experience, and 4) interpretation of the results to describe the paradigm of teaching ethics in a systematic manner.

| Stages of Analysis | Description |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Data Collection | Interviews, observations, documentation |
| 2. Data Reduction | Identify key themes through coding |
| 3. Core Meaning | Unearthing the essence of the teacher's experience |
| 4. Interpretasi | Preparation of a new paradigm of teaching ethics in the context of digital literacy |

The research procedure begins with the preparation of instruments and institutional permits, then data collection through interviews and observations, followed by transcription and intensive analysis based on phenomenological principles. The results of the analysis are visualized through a stage diagram. Phenomenological analysis that illustrates the process from data collection to

thematic interpretation, provides an in-depth picture of the transformation of ethical paradigms in digital education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research with the title "New Paradigm of Teacher Ethics in Digital Literacy-Based Education" aims to explore and enrich the discourse on teaching ethics through the addition of the dimension of digital literacy as a contextual variable that has so far received less special attention in the realm of educational ethics research. Using qualitative methodology and phenomenological research design, this study explores the experiences and meanings interpreted by educators in dealing with the problems of teaching ethics in the digital era. Phenomenology was chosen because it is able to reveal how teachers understand, interpret, and implement their professional ethics when interacting with digital technology in the learning process.

The results of this study illustrate that the new paradigm of teaching ethics no longer only focuses on traditional norms that are universal and conventional, but begins to embrace the dimension of digital literacy as an integral part of professional ethics. The teachers who became participants showed a high awareness of the need for digital literacy development, not only as a technical ability, but as an important ethical foundation in building fair, inclusive, and responsible pedagogical relationships. Digital literacy is understood as a critical ability to assess, utilize, and disseminate digital information ethically which has a direct effect on teaching practices and professionalism attitudes.

Furthermore, the findings show that teachers who have a good mastery of digital literacy tend to be more adaptive in applying the principles of teaching ethics in an all-digital learning environment. These adaptations include managing digital information and communications that respect student privacy, maintain academic honesty, and avoid the spread of invalid or misleading information. The teachers also emphasized the importance of building a positive and ethical digital culture that is able to minimize the risk of ethical violations such as plagiarism, cyberbullying, and misuse of personal data. In addition, teachers also feel that their ethical tasks are increasingly complex along with the demands to be models of ethical behavior

in the use of technology.

| Aspects | Introduce yourself Guru (%) | Information |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Digital Literacy Awareness | 85 | Teachers are aware of the importance of digital literacy as part of ethics |
| Ethical Digital Information Management | 78 | Teachers manage digital information responsibly |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Respect for Student Privacy | 90 | Teachers respect students' privacy in a digital context |
| Plagiarism Avoidance and Cyberbullying | 82 | Avoidance of unethical behaviors such as Plagiarism and cyberbullying |
| Role Type Ethical in Technology | 75 | Teachers are an example of ethical attitudes in the use of technology |

This study reveals a number of key themes that emerged from teachers' experiences in integrating digital literacy into teaching ethics, namely: first, a continuous critical reflection process related to the ethical implications of the use of digital technology in learning. Teachers feel the need to consciously weigh the moral consequences of every digital action they take. Second, the development of new ethical norms that are contextual and situational, which accommodate the dynamics of digital interaction and the moral challenges that arise from virtual spaces. Third, the importance of adequate training and institutional support so that teachers are able to develop digital literacy competencies while understanding the ethical aspects in depth. Fourth, the role of open dialogue between teachers, students, and the school community to create a mutual agreement on ethical standards in the use of digital technology.

This study also found that although digital literacy is increasingly recognized as an essential part of teacher ethics, there are a number of obstacles that teachers still face in implementing it optimally. These barriers include limited access to technology, lack of comprehensive training on digital ethics, and resistance to paradigm shifts from traditional ethical models to more contextual approaches. In fact, some teachers expressed confusion in balancing students' privacy rights and the need to supervise the use of technology to remain ethical and safe. This shows

that the renewal of the paradigm of teacher ethics must be accompanied by the provision of adequate resources and the formulation of supportive policies.

| Obstacles | Description |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Limited access to technology | Teachers struggle to access learning support technology digital |
| Lack of digital ethics training | Training on digital ethics is inadequate |
| Resistance against change paradigm | Teachers find it difficult to adapt to the new paradigm |
| Balance rights Privacy and supervision | Kesulitan Balance Privacy and Supervision of the use of technology |

Conceptually, the results of this study confirm the need to redefine the concept of teaching ethics by making digital literacy a critical and dynamic frame of reference. This new paradigm requires teachers to have an ethical awareness that is not only rooted in traditional humanistic values but also merged with technological capabilities and a critical understanding of digital culture. Thus, teacher education must reflect these changes by incorporating digital literacy materials and practices that are not only technical but also ethical in an integrated manner. This is important so that teachers are able to guide students in using technology in a positive way. responsible, while maintaining their own professional integrity.

On the other hand, the findings also highlight how the development of digital literacy as a contextual variable opens up new horizons for research on teacher ethics, by expanding the dimensions and indicators considered in teacher professionalism assessments. Factors such as digital citizenship, privacy awareness, online empathy, and digital integrity are key in building professional ethics that are in accordance with the demands of the times. This research recommends that educational institutions and the government pay attention to this dimension in the regulation, training, and evaluation of teachers in the future, so that teacher ethics can be more in line with technological developments and learning needs in the 21st century.

Overall, the results of this study make an important contribution to enriching the theory and practice of teaching ethics through the integration of digital literacy as a fundamental component in the new paradigm of education. Increased awareness of the relationship between technology and professional ethics forms the foundation for the development of more adaptive and progressive education policies. By

understanding and internalizing digital literacy-based teaching ethics, it is hoped that teachers can improve the quality of learning that is not only academically effective but also upholds moral and social values in an increasingly complex digital society. This new paradigm also opens up space for critical dialogue and innovation in the development of teacher professionalism in the ever-changing digital era.

The discussion of the research "New Paradigm of Teacher Ethics in Digital Literacy-Based Education" specifically focuses on the purpose of the research, which is to enrich the discourse on teaching profession ethics by including the dimension of digital literacy as a contextual variable that has not been explored much before. The results of the study show that integrating digital literacy into teacher ethics opens up a new paradigm that is more relevant to the conditions of technological development and current educational needs.

First, teachers' awareness of the importance of digital literacy as an integral part of teacher ethics illustrates a significant change in the understanding of teacher professionalism. Teachers not only see ethics as a rigid traditional norm, but also begin to internalize digital literacy as an ethical foundation in daily practice. This is in line with the purpose of the research which wants to highlight digital literacy as a contextual variable that provides added value and relevance to the ethics of the teaching profession.

Second, the obstacles found such as limited access to technology, lack of digital ethics training, and resistance to change are real challenges that must be overcome in order for this new paradigm to be implemented effectively. This discussion is important because it emphasizes that although digital literacy is recognized as an important component, the realization of its implementation requires systemic support in the form of policies, training, and the provision of facilities. Thus, the research Not only does it contribute to theory, but it also provides practical implications for the development of teachers' professionalism in the field of digital ethics.

Third, key themes that emerged such as critical reflection, development of contextual ethical norms, institutional support, and open dialogue are very relevant to the research objectives in developing an adaptive and dynamic framework for

teaching ethics. This discussion highlights the need for adjustment of ethical norms in order to be able to accommodate digital situations and challenges in a contextual manner. With dialogue and institutional support, teachers can internalize and practice ethical principles based on digital literacy optimally in learning practices .

Overall, the discussion of these results confirms that the new paradigm of digital literacy-based teaching ethics is not just a technical addition, but a conceptual transformation that brings professional ethics closer to the complex digital reality. This is in accordance with the purpose of the research to enrich and expand the discourse on teaching ethics by considering new contextual dimensions. Thus, this research makes an important contribution to the development of educational theories and practices that are more relevant, responsive, and digitally insightful according to the demands of the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the integration of digital literacy in teaching ethics creates a new paradigm that emphasizes digital literacy as an important ethical and technical aspect for fair and responsible learning practices, despite obstacles such as limited access to technology and lack of training. This paradigm enriches the understanding of professional ethics from normative to reflective and contextual, demanding the transformation of teacher education with institutional support for appropriate training and policies. The next research is expected to explore the implementation of digital literacy ethics policies and their impact on learning outcomes and the digital education environment. The main conceptual contribution is that the digital literacy-based paradigm of teaching ethics expands the ethical horizons of the teaching profession to be in line with the digital needs of the 21st century.

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