

Teachers' Moral Resilience in the Digital Era: Internalizing Professional Codes and Islamic Moral Values

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Abstract

Digital education presents ethical challenges requiring teachers to exercise moral judgment, maintain integrity, and demonstrate professional accountability. Discussions of professional codes often emphasize regulation, giving insufficient attention to their internalization as foundations for moral resilience and professional identity. This study examines how professional codes, moral principles, Islamic ethical values, and personal values can be conceptually integrated to strengthen teachers' ethical responsibilities in the digital era. A qualitative literature review synthesized academic books, scholarly articles, and relevant educational policy documents through descriptive analysis, thematic classification, and conceptual interpretation. The synthesis distinguishes four interconnected dimensions: ethics grounds rational moral judgment; morality articulates socially recognized standards of conduct; *akhlak* emphasizes spiritual integrity and exemplary behavior; and internalized values support consistency in professional decisions. Their integration provides a conceptual account of moral resilience that connects professional obligations with ethical reasoning and personal commitment. Digital privacy, artificial intelligence, institutional pressures, and the commercialization of education emerge as important contexts for applying this perspective. The study contributes an integrative understanding of professional codes as resources for moral responsibility, ethical reasoning, and professional identity formation. It recommends incorporating reflective ethical case studies, professional mentoring, and ethical training responsive to

educational contexts into teacher preparation and continuing professional development.

Keywords: Digital Education Ethics; Islamic Moral Values; Moral Resilience; Professional Codes of Ethics; Teacher Professional Identity.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is fundamentally an ethical profession because educators continuously make decisions that affect students' learning opportunities, personal development, well-being, and relationships within educational institutions. Beyond delivering instructional content, teachers are responsible for maintaining fairness in assessment, respecting students' dignity, protecting confidential information, and exercising professional judgment when institutional expectations conflict with learners' needs (Rizza et al., 2026a). Elizabeth (2003) argues that the moral dimensions of teaching are inseparable from professional responsibility because educational practices involve ethical commitments that extend beyond technical competence. Similarly, Shapira – Lishchinsky (2019) demonstrates that teachers frequently encounter ethical dilemmas arising from conflicts among institutional rules, professional standards, personal values, and students' interests. These challenges have become increasingly complex as digital technologies transform educational communication, instructional practices, and the management of student information. Artificial intelligence, digital learning platforms, and online interactions introduce additional concerns regarding privacy, transparency, fairness, and accountability. Sheridan et al. (2013) emphasize that ethical educational technology requires explicit consideration of human agency, inclusion, bias, and the potential consequences of technological decisions. Consequently, teacher professionalism in the digital era requires more than technological competence or compliance with institutional regulations. It also demands the capacity to maintain ethical judgment and professional integrity when confronted with changing educational circumstances.

Professional codes of ethics provide an important normative foundation for defining teachers' responsibilities, establishing standards of acceptable conduct, and maintaining public trust in educational institutions (Rizza et al., 2026). However, the existence of formal regulations does not necessarily ensure that teachers can resolve complex ethical situations appropriately. Professional codes commonly specify expected behaviors, but they may provide limited guidance when competing ethical responsibilities cannot be addressed

through predetermined rules. Maxwell & Schwimmer (2016), through their analysis of Canadian teachers' codes of ethics, demonstrate that formal ethical codes do not fully represent the moral obligations associated with teaching. This limitation suggests that ethical professionalism depends not only on knowledge of professional regulations but also on teachers' capacity to interpret moral principles, consider contextual consequences, and justify professional decisions. Within this perspective, moral resilience can be understood provisionally as the capacity to sustain ethical commitments and reflective judgment when professional responsibilities are challenged by institutional pressures, technological uncertainty, or competing values. The present study argues that such resilience may be conceptually supported by the internalization of professional codes alongside moral principles, Islamic ethical teachings, and personal values. Rather than positioning professional ethics as an external mechanism of behavioral control, this approach examines how ethical principles can become part of teachers' professional commitments and everyday educational practices.

Previous scholarship provides substantial evidence concerning the moral responsibilities of teachers, the limitations of professional codes, and the development of professional identity. Elizabeth (2003) establishes that ethical considerations are central to teaching as a moral profession, while Shapira-Lishchinsky (2011) identifies ethical dilemmas as recurring features of educational practice. Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) further show that professional codes contain important ethical principles but offer an incomplete representation of teachers' professional obligations. From the perspective of professional identity, Beijaard et al. (2004a) demonstrate that teacher identity develops through the interaction of professional experiences, interpretations of educational responsibilities, and changing institutional contexts. Their analysis indicates that professionalism cannot be understood exclusively through formally prescribed competencies. Moral education scholarship also highlights the relationship between ethical understanding, character development, and socially responsible conduct. Althof & Berkowitz (2006b) examine the interconnected contributions of moral education and character education, emphasizing the importance of developing ethical dispositions alongside knowledge and social responsibility. More recently, scholarship on digital education has expanded discussions of professional responsibility to include emerging technological concerns. Holmes et al. (2021) identify fairness, accountability, transparency, and human agency as central ethical considerations in artificial intelligence-supported education. Collectively, these studies establish important

foundations for examining how ethical principles influence professional conduct, although their analytical priorities differ across moral philosophy, professional regulation, teacher identity, and educational technology.

Despite these contributions, further conceptual integration is needed to explain how professional codes of ethics, moral principles, Islamic ethical values, and personal commitments may collectively inform teachers' ethical judgment in digitally mediated educational environments. Existing research provides detailed examinations of professional ethical dilemmas, regulatory frameworks, identity development, character education, and technological responsibility (Bag et al., 2024; Dhirani et al., 2023; Fitriyah et al., 2026; Nakar et al., 2026). However, these perspectives do not necessarily offer a unified explanation of how teachers internalize ethical principles and sustain professional commitments when confronting emerging digital challenges. The research gap addressed in this study therefore concerns the need to connect formal ethical standards with the internal processes of moral reasoning, value formation, and professional identity development, particularly within an educational context informed by Islamic moral values. This study proposes an integrative conceptual perspective encompassing four interconnected dimensions: ethics as reflective moral reasoning, morality as socially recognized standards of appropriate conduct, *akhlak* as morally exemplary conduct grounded in Islamic teachings, and internalized values as personal commitments guiding professional behavior. The proposed contribution is not the empirical validation of a new model of moral resilience, but the synthesis of these dimensions into a framework for interpreting teachers' ethical responsibilities. By situating the framework within the challenges of digital education, the study seeks to clarify how professional codes may function as resources for ethical reflection and identity formation rather than merely as instruments of administrative compliance.

The theoretical foundation of this study combines professional ethics, moral and character education, teacher professional identity, and ethical perspectives on digital technology. Professional ethics provides an analytical basis for examining the moral obligations associated with teaching and the limitations of formally codified standards (Campbell, 2008; Maxwell & Schwimmer, 2016). Moral and character education contributes an understanding of how ethical principles, values, and dispositions relate to responsible conduct (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Professional identity theory provides a complementary perspective by recognizing teachers as individuals whose professional self-understanding develops through experience, interpretation, and social interaction (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Within Islamic educational thought, *akhlak* introduces a religiously grounded understanding of moral character, sincerity, responsibility, and exemplary conduct. In this study, *akhlak* is treated as a distinct normative perspective that can inform ethical professionalism without assuming that religious commitments automatically ensure responsible behavior. The digital dimension is informed by ethical discussions of artificial intelligence in education, particularly the importance of accountability, fairness, privacy, and human oversight (Holmes et al., 2022). Wayne et al. (2023) further identify the need for human-centered approaches to generative artificial intelligence in education, including appropriate regulation, data protection, and institutional responsibility. Integrating these perspectives provides a conceptual foundation for analyzing how professional standards, moral values, religious ethical commitments, and reflective judgment may interact in teachers' responses to contemporary educational challenges.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the conceptual relationship between professional codes of ethics, Islamic moral values, and teachers' moral resilience in the digital era through a qualitative literature review. Specifically, the study seeks to analyze the ethical foundations of teaching as a profession, explain the functions and limitations of professional codes, identify the complementary contributions of ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and internalized values, and examine their relevance to professional identity and ethical decision-making. The study also explores the implications of these relationships for addressing emerging challenges associated with artificial intelligence, student data privacy, digital communication, and institutional accountability. By synthesizing relevant perspectives from teacher professionalism, moral education, Islamic ethics, and educational technology, the research seeks to develop a theoretically grounded interpretation of moral resilience that recognizes the importance of both professional regulations and internally sustained ethical commitments. The anticipated contribution is conceptual rather than empirical, offering a foundation for improving ethical reflection in teacher preparation, professional development, and institutional policy. This approach also establishes directions for future research examining how teachers interpret, negotiate, and apply ethical principles in actual digital educational settings.

METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative literature review with a descriptive and interpretive approach to examine the relationships among professional codes of ethics, Islamic moral values, and teachers' moral resilience in the digital era. The research focuses on synthesizing existing scholarly knowledge rather than collecting primary empirical data or measuring causal relationships. This approach is appropriate because the study seeks to understand how professional ethical standards, moral principles, *akhlak*, and internalized values contribute conceptually to teachers' professional identity and ethical decision-making. Snyder (2019) explains that literature reviews can function as independent research methodologies when they systematically organize, critically examine, and synthesize relevant academic knowledge. Accordingly, this study adopts an integrative orientation that accommodates diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives on teacher professionalism, moral education, and digital ethics.

The research design is further informed by Whittemore and Knafl (2005), who describe integrative reviews as approaches that allow researchers to combine theoretical and empirical literature to develop a broader understanding of complex phenomena. This orientation is relevant because the ethical challenges confronting teachers cannot be adequately examined through professional regulations or individual moral characteristics alone. The study therefore integrates perspectives from professional ethics, Islamic moral philosophy, teacher identity development, and digital education to construct a coherent conceptual interpretation of moral resilience.

Data Sources and Literature Selection

The study draws on secondary sources consisting of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, previous research, and relevant educational policy documents. The literature addresses several interconnected areas: teacher professional ethics, professional codes of conduct, ethical dilemmas, moral and character education, Islamic ethical values, professional identity, and the ethical implications of digital technologies in education. Indonesian educational regulations are included to provide contextual information concerning professional responsibilities and ethical standards applicable to teachers.

Literature selection is guided by relevance, academic credibility, conceptual contribution, and publication quality. Sources are considered relevant when they examine at

least one of the principal research themes or provide theoretical and empirical findings that support the development of the proposed conceptual synthesis. Priority is given to peer-reviewed scholarly publications and academic books with identifiable authorship and reliable publication information. Recent studies are considered particularly relevant for understanding digital education, artificial intelligence, data privacy, and emerging professional challenges, while foundational works are retained when they offer important theoretical contributions.

The selection process distinguishes between sources addressing normative ethical principles and those presenting empirical findings about teachers' professional experiences. This distinction is necessary because philosophical arguments, institutional regulations, and empirical research provide different forms of evidence. The literature is therefore examined according to its relevance to the research objectives and the nature of the claims it can reasonably support.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is based on documentary examination of academic and institutional literature relevant to the research objectives. The procedure involves identifying pertinent sources, examining their conceptual and empirical contributions, recording relevant information, and organizing the extracted materials into analytical categories. Particular attention is given to definitions of professional ethics, functions of teachers' codes of conduct, ethical reasoning, moral responsibility, Islamic moral values, and the development of professional identity.

Information from the reviewed sources is organized around five thematic areas: professional ethics and ethical decision-making, regulatory and developmental functions of professional codes, relationships among ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and personal values, ethical challenges associated with digital education, and the formation of teachers' moral resilience and professional identity. Relevant theoretical arguments, research findings, and normative principles are distinguished during the organization of the materials to preserve their respective contexts.

The documentary approach allows the study to examine different scholarly perspectives without involving research participants. Accordingly, the study does not employ interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, or experimental interventions. Its

findings are derived from the interpretation and synthesis of existing literature rather than direct measurements of teachers' ethical behavior or moral resilience.

Data Analysis

The collected literature is examined through qualitative content analysis and thematic conceptual synthesis. Krippendorff (2018) explains that content analysis provides a systematic approach to interpreting textual materials by considering their meanings and the contexts in which they are produced and communicated. This analytical orientation is appropriate for investigating professional ethics because the study addresses concepts, normative arguments, and interpretations of professional responsibilities rather than numerical relationships among variables.

The analytical process consists of four interconnected stages. First, relevant sources are examined to identify their central arguments, theoretical assumptions, and research findings. Second, information is classified according to recurring concepts and relationships, particularly ethical reasoning, professional accountability, moral character, value internalization, digital responsibility, and teacher identity. Third, the identified categories are compared to determine conceptual similarities, differences, and complementary perspectives. Fourth, the relationships among these categories are synthesized to develop an integrative understanding of teachers' moral resilience within contemporary educational contexts.

The interpretation follows the qualitative analytical principles described by Creswell & Poth (2023) and Miles et al. (2013), particularly data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involves identifying information directly relevant to the research objectives and distinguishing central arguments from secondary explanations. Data display involves organizing the conceptual categories into structured descriptions and comparative summaries. Conclusion drawing focuses on identifying relationships that are consistently supported by the reviewed materials while recognizing differences among theoretical perspectives.

The synthesis examines four interconnected conceptual dimensions. Ethics concerns reflective reasoning and the evaluation of professional decisions. Morality refers to socially recognized principles and expectations governing appropriate conduct. *Akhlak* represents Islamic understandings of moral character, sincerity, responsibility, and exemplary behavior. Internalized values concern personal commitments that guide consistent professional actions. These dimensions are examined in relation to professional codes and emerging

digital challenges to clarify their potential contributions to teachers' ethical judgment, professional identity, and moral resilience.

Research Trustworthiness and Conceptual Synthesis

The trustworthiness of the study is approached through careful consideration of source credibility, conceptual consistency, transparency of interpretation, and the relationship between scholarly evidence and analytical conclusions. The synthesis distinguishes normative statements from empirical findings and avoids treating theoretical propositions as evidence of demonstrated causal relationships. Sources representing different conceptual perspectives are compared to identify areas of agreement and disagreement without assuming that one theoretical tradition necessarily explains all dimensions of professional ethical conduct.

The final conceptual synthesis examines how professional codes of ethics may interact with ethical reasoning, social morality, Islamic moral values, and internalized personal commitments. Particular attention is given to situations in which teachers encounter competing responsibilities involving student welfare, institutional expectations, digital privacy, artificial intelligence, and professional accountability. The proposed relationships are presented as an interpretive framework that requires further empirical investigation rather than as a validated model of teacher behavior.

Through this methodological approach, the study seeks to clarify the conceptual foundations of teachers' moral resilience and explain how professional ethical standards and Islamic moral values may inform responsible educational practice in the digital era.

RESULTS

1. Main Findings of the Literature Review

The literature synthesis identifies five interconnected themes concerning teachers' professional ethics, moral responsibility, and professional identity in the digital era. These themes include the foundations of professional ethics, the regulatory and developmental functions of professional codes, the integration of ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and personal values, emerging ethical challenges in digital education, and the relationship between ethical internalization, moral resilience, and teacher professional identity.

The findings indicate that professional ethics extends beyond compliance with formal regulations. It encompasses teachers' capacity to recognize ethical issues, consider the consequences of professional decisions, and maintain responsibility toward students and educational communities. Professional codes provide normative guidance, while internalized ethical commitments contribute to the consistency of professional conduct across different educational circumstances.

The conceptual categories also reveal that ethical professionalism involves both individual and institutional dimensions. Personal values, moral awareness, and professional judgment influence how teachers interpret ethical responsibilities, while institutional regulations, organizational expectations, and technological environments shape the circumstances in which those responsibilities are performed. The following subsections present these findings according to the principal themes identified in the literature.

a. Foundations and Principles of Teacher Professional Ethics

The first finding concerns the nature of professional ethics as a foundation for responsible educational practice. The reviewed concepts position teaching as a profession involving continuous ethical judgment rather than the mechanical implementation of instructional procedures. Teachers encounter situations in which their decisions affect students' educational opportunities, interpersonal relationships, personal development, and well-being. Consequently, professional ethics concerns not only what teachers are permitted or prohibited from doing but also how they evaluate competing responsibilities and determine appropriate courses of action.

Three characteristics emerge from the conceptual synthesis: rational ethical judgment, professional responsibility, and concern for others. Rational ethical judgment involves examining educational situations, considering available alternatives, and assessing the moral consequences of possible decisions. Professional responsibility concerns teachers' obligations to maintain educational quality, uphold fairness, respect confidentiality, and protect students' interests. Concern for others reflects an orientation toward the needs and well-being of students rather than exclusive attention to personal interests or institutional convenience.

These characteristics are interconnected. Ethical reasoning provides a basis for evaluating professional decisions, responsibility establishes accountability for their consequences, and concern for others directs attention toward the individuals affected by

those decisions. Within educational practice, this relationship becomes particularly relevant when teachers encounter competing expectations, such as maintaining institutional assessment standards while responding fairly to students with different learning needs.

The findings distinguish ethical professionalism from compliance-oriented behavior. Compliance involves following established rules and procedures, whereas ethical professionalism additionally requires recognizing circumstances in which rules may be incomplete, ambiguous, or difficult to apply. Teachers may therefore need to exercise reflective judgment while remaining accountable to legitimate professional standards. This distinction identifies ethical awareness and responsible decision-making as central characteristics of professional teaching.

b. Functions and Significance of Professional Codes of Ethics

The second finding concerns the position of professional codes of ethics within teacher professionalism. The literature identifies professional codes as formal expressions of expected conduct, professional responsibilities, and normative commitments. These codes establish standards intended to guide teachers' relationships with students, colleagues, educational institutions, families, and wider communities.

Two principal functions are evident. The first is a regulatory and preventive function, through which professional codes define acceptable conduct, establish professional boundaries, and identify behaviors that may constitute ethical violations. This function provides a basis for institutional accountability and contributes to the protection of students' rights and interests. It also supports consistency in expectations across professional settings.

The second is an orientative and developmental function. Professional codes communicate ethical principles that can inform teachers' reasoning when confronting situations involving competing obligations. These principles may include honesty, fairness, confidentiality, respect, responsibility, and commitment to students' welfare. Rather than prescribing a single response to every situation, codes can provide reference points for evaluating professional alternatives.

The synthesis identifies an important distinction between knowing professional rules and internalizing their underlying values. Knowledge of ethical regulations concerns teachers' awareness of formal obligations. Internalization involves understanding the ethical purposes of those obligations and incorporating them into professional judgment and conduct. A teacher may comply with confidentiality requirements because institutional rules demand it,

while deeper ethical understanding also involves recognizing why protecting student information matters.

The findings therefore identify professional codes as instruments with both external and internal dimensions. Externally, they communicate standards and support accountability. Internally, they can provide resources for ethical reflection and the development of professional commitments. However, the conceptual review does not establish that the existence of professional codes automatically produces ethical behavior or moral resilience.

c. Integration of Ethics, Morality, Akhlak, and Internalized Values

The third finding identifies four interrelated conceptual dimensions underlying teachers' ethical professionalism: ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and internalized values. Although these concepts share an interest in appropriate human conduct, they differ in their principal orientations and sources of justification.

Ethics concerns the critical examination of actions, responsibilities, and decisions through moral reasoning. In professional teaching, this dimension involves assessing educational situations and explaining why particular decisions are justified. Morality refers to principles, expectations, and standards of conduct recognized within social and professional communities. It provides a normative context for evaluating behavior, although moral expectations may differ across institutional and cultural settings.

Akhlak represents a dimension of moral character grounded in Islamic ethical teachings. It emphasizes sincerity, honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, and exemplary conduct as qualities expressed through personal behavior and social relationships. Within the educational context examined in this study, *akhlak* concerns the consistency between teachers' moral commitments and their treatment of students and other members of the educational community.

Internalized values refer to ethical commitments that individuals recognize as personally meaningful and use to guide their decisions. These commitments may develop through education, professional experiences, reflection, social relationships, and religious or cultural traditions. In professional practice, value internalization is reflected in the extent to which teachers maintain ethical commitments across different circumstances rather than relying exclusively on external supervision.

The conceptual synthesis indicates that these four dimensions perform complementary functions. Ethical reasoning supports the examination of professional dilemmas, morality communicates shared expectations, *akhlak* provides an Islamic ethical understanding of exemplary character, and internalized values connect ethical principles with personal commitments.

The dimensions nevertheless remain analytically distinct. Ethical reasoning does not necessarily depend on religious commitments, while *akhlak* draws on a specific religious moral tradition. Likewise, social norms are not automatically ethically justified simply because they are widely accepted. The proposed integration therefore concerns their complementary contributions to teachers' professional judgment rather than an assumption that all four concepts have identical meanings.

d. Ethical Challenges Facing Teachers in the Digital Era

The fourth finding concerns the changing contexts in which teachers exercise professional ethical judgment. The literature reviewed in the original manuscript identifies digital transformation, institutional pressures, commercialization, and changing social expectations as important challenges affecting contemporary teaching.

Digital technologies introduce concerns regarding student privacy, the responsible use of educational information, online communication, and professional boundaries. Teachers may manage sensitive student information through digital platforms, interact with learners through online communication channels, and encounter uncertainty about the appropriate disclosure or use of educational data. These situations require attention to confidentiality, consent, professional responsibility, and the consequences of digital decisions.

Artificial intelligence introduces additional ethical considerations. AI-supported educational applications may influence instructional preparation, assessment, feedback, and access to learning resources. Their use creates questions concerning accuracy, transparency, fairness, accountability, and the extent to which teachers should rely on automated outputs. In this context, teachers retain responsibility for evaluating educational decisions and considering their consequences for students.

The findings also identify tensions between professional ethical commitments and institutional expectations. Performance targets, administrative requirements, public visibility, and economic pressures may create situations in which teachers must balance organizational

demands with their responsibilities toward learners. These challenges are not necessarily unique to digital education, but digital technologies may introduce new forms of exposure, data processing, and accountability.

The relationship between these challenges and moral resilience is conceptual rather than empirically established in the present review. The synthesis identifies ethical consistency, reflective judgment, and professional responsibility as relevant capacities when teachers encounter uncertainty or competing obligations. It does not demonstrate the prevalence of these challenges or measure their effects on teachers' behavior.

e. Ethical Internalization, Moral Resilience, and Professional Identity

The fifth finding concerns the relationship among ethical internalization, moral resilience, and teachers' professional identity. The conceptual review presents professional identity as a developing understanding of teachers' responsibilities, values, commitments, and roles within educational institutions. This understanding is influenced by personal experiences, professional relationships, institutional expectations, and interpretations of educational purposes.

Within this framework, ethical internalization concerns the incorporation of professional principles into teachers' self-understanding and decision-making. Teachers may encounter ethical standards through formal regulations, professional preparation, institutional guidance, and practical experiences. The significance of internalization lies in the movement from recognizing ethical requirements toward incorporating their underlying principles into professional commitments.

Moral resilience is conceptualized in this study as the capacity to sustain ethical commitments and reflective professional judgment when facing competing responsibilities, uncertainty, or external pressures. Three associated dimensions emerge from the synthesis: ethical awareness, consistency of professional values, and reflective decision-making. Ethical awareness concerns recognizing the moral implications of educational situations. Value consistency refers to maintaining professional commitments across changing circumstances. Reflective decision-making involves evaluating available responses and considering their consequences.

The findings indicate a conceptual relationship between these dimensions and professional identity. Ethical commitments form part of how teachers understand their professional responsibilities, while professional experiences provide contexts in which those

commitments are interpreted and exercised. In this interpretation, moral resilience concerns the continuity and responsible application of ethical commitments under challenging conditions.

However, the reviewed material does not establish a causal relationship between the internalization of professional codes and improvements in moral resilience. The proposed association represents an interpretive synthesis that requires empirical investigation to determine how these processes occur in educational practice.

2. Conceptual Synthesis of Professional Ethics and Teachers' Moral Resilience

The five themes provide a basis for organizing the relationship between professional ethics, ethical internalization, and moral resilience. The conceptual synthesis identifies professional codes as sources of normative guidance, ethical reasoning as a capacity for evaluating professional decisions, morality and *akhlak* as perspectives on appropriate conduct, and internalized values as commitments relevant to consistency in professional practice. Table 1 presents the principal dimensions, their associated characteristics, and their proposed relevance to professional teaching and moral resilience.

Table 1. Conceptual Dimensions of Teacher Professional Ethics and Their Relevance to Moral Resilience

Conceptual Dimension	Principal Characteristics	Function in Professional Teaching	Proposed Relevance to Moral Resilience
Professional ethics	Ethical reasoning, responsibility, fairness, and concern for students	Guides professional judgment and the evaluation of educational decisions	Supports recognition and responsible consideration of ethical dilemmas
Professional codes of ethics	Formal standards, professional boundaries, confidentiality, and accountability	Establishes normative expectations and references for ethical decisions	Provides professional principles that may guide responses to competing obligations
Morality	Social expectations, shared principles, and standards of appropriate conduct	Informs socially responsible behavior and professional relationships	Provides a normative context for evaluating professional choices
Akhlak	Sincerity, honesty, exemplary conduct, self-discipline, and moral responsibility	Connects Islamic ethical commitments with professional character	Offers a religious ethical perspective on consistency and moral responsibility
Internalized values	Personal commitment, reflective awareness, and consistency between values and conduct	Connects ethical principles with professional self-understanding	May support the continuity of ethical commitments under pressure

Conceptual Dimension	Principal Characteristics	Function in Professional Teaching	Proposed Relevance to Moral Resilience
Professional identity	Role understanding, professional commitments, and reflective development	Shapes teachers' understanding of their educational responsibilities	Provides a context for interpreting and sustaining ethical commitments

Source: Authors' conceptual synthesis based on the themes developed in the literature review.

Table 1 distinguishes the functions of professional codes from those of ethical reasoning and value internalization. Professional codes establish normative expectations, while ethical reasoning concerns the interpretation of those expectations in particular circumstances. Morality and *akhlak* contribute different perspectives on appropriate conduct, whereas internalized values concern the personal significance of ethical commitments.

The matrix also identifies professional identity as a related concept rather than a direct substitute for moral resilience. Professional identity concerns teachers' understanding of themselves and their responsibilities, while moral resilience concerns the proposed capacity to maintain ethical commitments under challenging conditions.

Together, these relationships provide a conceptual structure for examining teacher professionalism in digitally mediated educational environments. The framework does not imply that all dimensions operate independently or that their effects have been measured. It identifies possible relationships that can be examined in subsequent empirical research.

3. Differences in Perspectives Across the Literature

The conceptual review also identifies differences in how teacher professional ethics is understood. One distinction concerns the relationship between formal compliance and reflective ethical judgment. A regulatory perspective emphasizes professional standards, institutional accountability, and the prevention of misconduct. A reflective perspective places greater emphasis on teachers' ability to interpret ethical principles, recognize competing responsibilities, and justify decisions in particular educational circumstances.

These perspectives are not necessarily contradictory. Formal standards establish professional expectations, while reflective judgment addresses situations in which those expectations require interpretation. Nevertheless, their different emphases affect how ethical professionalism is conceptualized and how teacher education programs might approach ethical preparation.

A second distinction concerns the foundations of ethical conduct. Some perspectives emphasize individual responsibility, moral dispositions, and personal commitments. Others give greater attention to institutional contexts, professional relationships, social expectations, and organizational conditions. The synthesis identifies these perspectives as complementary in explaining the contexts and personal commitments involved in professional ethical decision-making.

A third distinction concerns the relationship between general professional ethics and Islamic moral values. Professional ethical frameworks may draw on principles such as fairness, responsibility, confidentiality, and respect without grounding those principles in a particular religious tradition. Islamic ethical perspectives include moral commitments associated with *akhlak*, sincerity, exemplary conduct, and religious responsibility. Although both perspectives may support similar professional behaviors, they differ in their philosophical and normative foundations.

The literature also varies in its treatment of digital challenges. Some discussions focus on traditional professional dilemmas involving fairness, institutional rules, and teacher-student relationships, while more recent debates address artificial intelligence, online communication, data privacy, and technological accountability. These differences indicate an expansion in the contexts requiring ethical judgment rather than the disappearance of established professional responsibilities.

The findings therefore identify both shared concerns and distinct theoretical orientations. Professional responsibility, ethical judgment, and consistency of conduct recur across the reviewed themes, but the sources differ in how they explain the origins, development, and application of these qualities.

DISCUSSION

1. Reinterpreting Professional Codes of Ethics: From Formal Compliance to Ethical Reasoning

The findings of this study suggest that professional codes of ethics should be understood not merely as regulatory instruments but as normative foundations that support ethical reasoning and responsible professional judgment. Formal compliance establishes minimum standards of acceptable conduct, yet adherence to written regulations does not

necessarily indicate that teachers understand the moral principles underlying their professional responsibilities. Campbell (2008) emphasizes that teaching is inherently a moral profession in which educational decisions involve ethical obligations beyond technical competence. Similarly, Maxwell and Schwimmer (2016) demonstrate that professional codes provide an incomplete account of teachers' ethical responsibilities, particularly when complex situations require interpretations that extend beyond prescribed standards. This distinction highlights the importance of ethical internalization, through which teachers critically understand professional values and incorporate them into their judgments and actions. Professional ethics, therefore, should not be reduced to avoiding institutional sanctions or fulfilling administrative requirements. Instead, professional codes should function as meaningful references for examining the moral consequences of pedagogical decisions and sustaining accountability to students, colleagues, and educational communities.

The significance of ethical reasoning becomes particularly evident when teachers encounter competing professional obligations. Institutional policies may require uniform procedures, while individual students may experience circumstances that warrant additional consideration. Shapira-Lishchinsky (2011) identifies conflicts involving institutional rules, professional expectations, and personal values as recurring sources of ethical dilemmas in teaching practice. Such situations require teachers to exercise moral agency by evaluating competing obligations, recognizing the potential consequences of their decisions, and providing defensible ethical justifications. Biesta & Affifi (2026) argues that educational professionalism depends on teachers' capacity for judgment concerning educational purposes rather than exclusive reliance on predetermined performance standards. Furthermore, Osguthorpe (2008) emphasizes the importance of moral dispositions in professional teaching, demonstrating that ethical character contributes to how teachers enact their educational responsibilities. These perspectives suggest that teachers' ethical competence involves more than knowledge of professional regulations. It requires the ability to interpret standards thoughtfully, consider students' dignity and welfare, and maintain responsible professional conduct without disregarding legitimate institutional obligations.

The transition from formal compliance to ethical internalization also has important implications for teacher education and the development of professional identity. Forster and Maxwell (2022) argue that professional codes are necessary but insufficient resources for preparing teachers to address the moral complexity of educational practice. Accordingly, ethical preparation should integrate professional standards with reflective discussions, critical

incidents, and contextual decision-making. Kelchtermans (2009) further demonstrates that teachers' professional self-understanding is closely connected to reflection, personal commitments, and the interpretation of professional experiences. Within the conceptual framework proposed in this study, these relationships suggest that moral resilience may develop when teachers consistently connect ethical principles with reflective judgment and professional responsibility, particularly under institutional or technological pressures. However, this interpretation does not establish that internalizing professional codes automatically strengthens moral resilience. Rather, it positions ethical internalization as a potentially important process through which teachers develop coherent professional commitments and exercise responsible judgment in situations where formal regulations alone cannot determine an appropriate educational response.

2. Integrating Ethics, Morality, Akhlak, and Internalized Values in Teacher Professionalism

The findings of this study indicate that teacher professionalism involves the integration of ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and internalized values, which represent distinct but interconnected dimensions of responsible educational practice. Ethics provides a reflective foundation for evaluating professional decisions, while morality encompasses socially recognized principles and expectations that shape appropriate conduct. However, professional integrity cannot be established solely through rational judgment or conformity to prevailing social norms. Elizabeth (2003) emphasizes that ethical knowledge requires teachers to recognize the moral significance of their actions and exercise responsible judgment when confronting complex professional situations. Similarly, Althof and Berkowitz (2006) demonstrate that moral and character education involve interconnected processes through which individuals develop ethical understanding, dispositions, and socially responsible behavior. These perspectives suggest that professional ethics should be understood as a continuing relationship between moral reasoning, personal character, and observable conduct. Within this relationship, teachers must not only identify appropriate ethical principles but also demonstrate consistency in applying them to educational decisions, interpersonal relationships, and professional responsibilities.

The inclusion of *akhlak* introduces a specifically Islamic ethical perspective that emphasizes sincerity, moral responsibility, exemplary conduct, and the relationship between personal character and religious commitments. Sahin (2018) further argues that Islamic

educational philosophy requires critical engagement with contemporary educational perspectives rather than an unreflective opposition between religious and secular traditions. Accordingly, the integration of *akhlak* into teacher professionalism should not imply that nonreligious ethical frameworks lack moral depth or that religious affiliation automatically produces ethical behavior. Instead, *akhlak* contributes a particular normative orientation through which teachers may understand honesty, justice, compassion, and responsibility as expressions of religious commitment. Kristjánsson (2015), from a virtue-ethical perspective, similarly emphasizes the relationship between moral character, practical wisdom, and character development. Although Islamic moral philosophy and Aristotelian virtue ethics differ in their philosophical foundations, both recognize that ethical conduct involves more than compliance with external rules. Their conceptual convergence provides a basis for examining how moral character and reflective judgment can complement formal professional standards.

Internalized values constitute the dimension that connects ethical principles and moral commitments with teachers' professional self-understanding. Schwartz (2012) explains that personal values function as guiding principles that influence individuals' priorities, evaluations, and behavioral choices, although competing values may generate tensions in particular circumstances. Similarly, Narvaez & Lapsley (2009) highlight the relationship between moral identity, moral functioning, and the development of character, suggesting that ethical commitments are connected to the ways individuals interpret and respond to morally significant situations. Applied to teacher professionalism, these perspectives indicate that internalization cannot be reduced to memorizing professional codes or expressing agreement with prescribed values. It involves interpreting ethical responsibilities, recognizing possible conflicts between personal and institutional commitments, and exercising judgment that remains accountable to students' interests. The present synthesis therefore proposes that ethics contributes reflective reasoning, morality provides socially recognized expectations, *akhlak* offers an Islamic foundation for moral character, and internalized values connect these dimensions with professional commitments. Their integration offers a conceptual explanation of how teachers may sustain ethical consistency and professional integrity under changing educational conditions. Nevertheless, the relationship between these dimensions and moral resilience remains a theoretical proposition that requires empirical investigation.

3. Moral Resilience and Ethical Decision-Making in Digital Education

The findings of this study suggest that digital transformation has introduced new dimensions of ethical complexity into teaching, requiring educators to exercise professional judgment beyond conventional instructional and administrative responsibilities. Artificial intelligence, digital learning platforms, and automated educational systems provide opportunities to improve instructional efficiency and expand access to educational resources. However, these developments also raise concerns regarding algorithmic bias, transparency, student privacy, accountability, and the potential displacement of human judgment in educational decision-making. Holmes et al. (2022) emphasize that ethical applications of artificial intelligence in education require explicit consideration of fairness, accountability, transparency, human agency, and inclusion. Similarly, Selwyn (2019) argues that the adoption of educational technologies should be examined critically in relation to their social, political, and professional implications rather than treated as an inevitable technological improvement. These perspectives reinforce the present study's finding that teachers' ethical responsibilities cannot be fulfilled through technological competence alone. Educators must also consider whether digital practices respect students' dignity, protect their interests, and remain consistent with professional commitments. Within this context, moral resilience is conceptualized as the capacity to sustain ethical principles and reflective judgment while responding responsibly to emerging technological challenges.

The relationship between moral resilience and ethical decision-making becomes particularly significant when teachers encounter conflicting obligations involving institutional expectations, technological efficiency, and student welfare. Digital education may create circumstances in which the convenience of automated assessment, the accessibility of artificial intelligence-generated materials, or the demands of institutional data systems conflict with professional responsibilities concerning fairness, confidentiality, and pedagogical accountability. Wayne & Fengchun (2023) emphasize the importance of human-centered approaches to generative artificial intelligence in education, particularly regarding data privacy, appropriate regulation, and responsible pedagogical implementation. Floridi & Cowls (2019) similarly propose ethical principles for artificial intelligence that emphasize beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, and explicability. These principles provide a broader normative perspective for examining educational technologies, although their application requires attention to the particular responsibilities of teachers and educational institutions. Ethical dilemmas in digital education should therefore not be interpreted merely

as technological problems requiring technical solutions. They also involve professional judgments about the appropriate balance between educational benefits, potential risks, institutional obligations, and learners' rights.

The integration of professional codes of ethics and internalized moral values provides a conceptual basis for understanding how teachers may respond to these challenges while maintaining professional integrity. Shapira-Lishchinsky (2011) demonstrates that ethical dilemmas frequently arise when institutional rules, professional expectations, and individual moral commitments come into conflict. Although such dilemmas are not exclusive to digital environments, technological developments may introduce unfamiliar situations in which established regulations require contextual interpretation. Forster and Maxwell (2022) argue that teacher education should move beyond the transmission of professional codes toward the development of ethical reasoning and informed professional judgment. The present study extends this perspective by proposing that moral resilience involves the interaction of ethical awareness, reflective decision-making, professional accountability, and internalized values. From an Islamic ethical perspective, *akhlak* may contribute a further orientation toward honesty, responsibility, fairness, and exemplary conduct in digital interactions. Nevertheless, religious commitments and professional codes should not be assumed to guarantee ethical behavior independently of institutional safeguards, digital literacy, and critical reflection. The proposed relationship between ethical internalization and moral resilience remains conceptual, highlighting the need for empirical research on how teachers interpret ethical responsibilities and exercise professional judgment when using digital technologies in educational settings.

4. Ethical Internalization and the Development of Teacher Professional Identity

The findings of this study suggest that ethical internalization is closely connected to the development of teacher professional identity because professional values influence how educators understand their responsibilities, interpret educational experiences, and exercise judgment in everyday practice. Professional identity should not be understood as a fixed collection of personal characteristics or a status automatically acquired through formal qualification. Instead, it develops through continuing interactions among individual beliefs, professional commitments, institutional expectations, and educational relationships. Beijgaard et al. (2004) conceptualize teacher professional identity as a dynamic and multidimensional construct shaped by teachers' interpretations of their professional experiences. Similarly,

Izadinia (2013) identifies reflection, professional relationships, and teaching experiences as important influences on the identity development of prospective teachers. These perspectives support the present study's interpretation that ethical internalization involves more than understanding professional codes or accepting institutional regulations. It requires teachers to examine the moral purposes underlying professional standards and incorporate these principles into their understanding of responsible teaching. Within this process, honesty, fairness, accountability, and concern for students become relevant not simply as externally prescribed obligations but as commitments that inform professional self-understanding and educational decision-making.

The development of an ethically grounded professional identity also depends on teachers' capacity to reflect critically on situations in which personal values, professional responsibilities, and institutional expectations come into conflict. Kelchtermans (2009) emphasizes that teachers' professional self-understanding involves personal commitments, vulnerability, and continuous interpretation of their professional experiences. Furthermore, Korthagen (2004) demonstrate how core reflection can connect observable professional behavior with deeper dimensions of teachers' beliefs, identity, and personal qualities. These perspectives suggest that ethical identity formation requires opportunities to examine not only what teachers do but also why they consider particular actions appropriate. However, the process cannot be understood exclusively through individual reflection. Institutional cultures, leadership practices, professional relationships, and organizational expectations influence the conditions under which teachers interpret and enact ethical commitments. Rushton et al. (2023), through a systematic review of teacher identity research, highlight the complex relationship between professional identity and teachers' working environments, experiences, and career development. Consequently, the internalization of professional ethics should be examined as both an individual and socially situated process. Teachers' ethical commitments may be reinforced through supportive professional communities, but they may also be challenged by contradictory institutional demands, limited professional autonomy, or pressures that complicate responsible educational judgment.

Within the conceptual framework proposed in this study, ethical internalization provides a possible connection between professional codes, Islamic moral values, and teachers' developing professional identities. The integration of ethics, morality, *akhlak*, and internalized values offers complementary perspectives through which teachers may interpret their responsibilities and maintain consistency between personal commitments and

professional conduct. Sachs (2005) emphasizes that teacher professional identity is shaped by wider professional and institutional discourses, indicating that identity formation involves negotiating expectations rather than merely adopting predetermined professional characteristics. Similarly, Loughran (2002) argues that meaningful reflective practice requires teachers to critically examine educational experiences and the assumptions underlying their professional actions. Applied to the present study, these perspectives suggest that professional codes may contribute to moral resilience when teachers engage with their ethical principles reflectively and relate them to real educational dilemmas. Islamic moral values may further inform this process by emphasizing sincerity, responsibility, justice, and exemplary conduct as dimensions of professional character. Nevertheless, ethical internalization should not be presumed to produce morally resilient teachers automatically. Its practical significance depends on how ethical commitments are interpreted, supported, and enacted within particular educational environments. The proposed relationship therefore represents a conceptual explanation of professional identity development that requires empirical investigation across different institutional and digital educational contexts.

5. Theoretical and Practical Implications, Research Limitations, and Future Directions

The findings of this study offer theoretical implications for understanding teacher professionalism through the integration of professional codes of ethics, moral reasoning, Islamic moral values, and professional identity development. The proposed conceptual perspective extends approaches that primarily emphasize regulatory compliance by positioning ethical internalization as a process through which teachers interpret professional responsibilities and connect moral commitments with educational decisions. Within this framework, ethics provides a foundation for reflective judgment, morality establishes socially recognized standards of conduct, *akhlak* contributes an Islamic understanding of moral character and exemplary behavior, and internalized values support consistency between professional commitments and personal conduct. These dimensions offer complementary perspectives on teachers' moral resilience, particularly when educators encounter competing institutional expectations, technological uncertainty, and ethical dilemmas. Forster and Maxwell (2022) emphasize that professional codes should be incorporated into teacher education through critical interpretation rather than treated as self-sufficient guidelines for professional conduct. Similarly, Grossman et al. (2009) highlight the importance of connecting professional knowledge with the practical demands of teaching. Building on these

perspectives, the present study proposes that ethical professionalism requires coherence between normative standards, reflective judgment, and professional identity. However, this synthesis represents a conceptual contribution rather than an empirically validated model of moral resilience.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest several directions for teacher education institutions, schools, and professional organizations. Teacher preparation programs could strengthen ethics education by moving beyond the memorization of professional codes toward reflective learning activities involving ethical case studies, critical incident analysis, and discussions of professional dilemmas. These activities could address situations involving student confidentiality, fairness in assessment, inappropriate digital communication, artificial intelligence-generated educational content, and conflicts between institutional policies and students' interests. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) identify active learning, collaboration, feedback, reflection, and sustained professional support as important features of effective teacher professional development. Kennedy (2016) further demonstrates that professional learning approaches should be evaluated according to how they influence teachers' instructional reasoning and practices rather than participation alone. Accordingly, the proposed ethical preparation should integrate professional mentoring, reflective dialogue, and institutional guidance to support teachers' capacity for responsible decision-making. In educational settings informed by Islamic values, discussions of *akhlak*, sincerity, justice, responsibility, and exemplary conduct could complement general professional ethical principles. Schools should also establish appropriate institutional safeguards, particularly clear procedures for protecting student data, reviewing AI-supported decisions, and addressing ethical concerns. These recommendations are theoretically informed proposals whose effectiveness requires subsequent empirical evaluation.

Despite its conceptual contributions, this study has several methodological limitations. First, the research relies on a qualitative literature review and does not collect primary data from teachers, educational institutions, or students. Consequently, the proposed relationships among ethical internalization, Islamic moral values, professional identity, and moral resilience cannot be interpreted as empirically demonstrated associations or causal effects. Second, the literature selection process is based on conceptual relevance, and the available methodological documentation does not establish a fully reproducible search and screening procedure. Snyder (2019) emphasizes that the credibility of literature reviews depends on methodological transparency and the alignment between research objectives,

source selection, and analytical procedures. Third, the synthesis brings together philosophical, normative, and empirical perspectives that differ in their assumptions and contexts. Whitemore & Knafl (2005) recognize that integrating diverse forms of literature requires careful consideration of methodological differences and the quality of supporting evidence. These limitations indicate that the proposed framework should be understood as an interpretive synthesis rather than a universally applicable explanation of teachers' ethical behavior.

Future research should examine the proposed conceptual relationships through empirical and context-sensitive approaches. Qualitative studies involving teacher interviews, classroom observations, and institutional case studies could investigate how educators interpret professional codes and negotiate ethical dilemmas involving digital technology, organizational expectations, and student welfare. Quantitative research could develop and validate instruments for examining ethical internalization and moral resilience, including their relationships with professional judgment, ethical decision-making, and professional identity. Mixed-methods and longitudinal studies could further explore whether structured ethics education, reflective case-based learning, and professional mentoring contribute to changes in teachers' ethical reasoning and professional conduct over time. Comparative investigations across public schools, Islamic schools, and teacher education institutions would also help clarify how institutional cultures and religious ethical commitments influence the interpretation and application of professional standards. Ultimately, these research directions could strengthen the empirical foundation of the proposed integrative framework and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers sustain ethical responsibility and professional integrity in increasingly complex digital educational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teachers' moral resilience in the digital era can be conceptually understood through the integration of professional codes of ethics, ethical reasoning, morality, Islamic moral values, and internalized professional commitments. The findings indicate that professional ethics extends beyond formal compliance with institutional regulations and requires reflective judgment, personal responsibility, and consistency in professional conduct. The synthesis identifies four complementary dimensions of ethical professionalism: ethics provides a foundation for rational moral

judgment, morality establishes socially recognized standards of appropriate behavior, *akhlak* emphasizes moral character and exemplary conduct grounded in Islamic teachings, and internalized values connect ethical principles with teachers' professional commitments. Together, these dimensions offer a conceptual perspective on how educators may maintain ethical awareness and responsible decision-making when confronting challenges involving artificial intelligence, student data privacy, and institutional expectations.

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in developing an integrative conceptual understanding of the relationship between professional ethical standards, Islamic moral values, and teacher professional identity. Rather than treating professional codes as external regulatory instruments, this study positions ethical internalization as a potentially important process through which teachers interpret moral responsibilities and incorporate ethical principles into their professional self-understanding. The proposed synthesis highlights that moral resilience involves not only recognizing ethical obligations but also sustaining reflective judgment and professional integrity when competing responsibilities arise. By connecting normative professional ethics with Islamic understandings of *akhlak*, value internalization, and professional identity development, the study offers a perspective that may enrich discussions of teacher professionalism in digitally mediated educational environments. Nevertheless, the proposed relationships remain theoretically informed interpretations rather than empirically validated associations or causal mechanisms.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that teacher education institutions, schools, and professional organizations should consider strengthening ethics education through reflective case studies, professional mentoring, ethical decision-making exercises, and responsible digital technology training. These approaches could help educators examine dilemmas while developing a deeper understanding of the moral principles underlying professional codes. In educational contexts informed by Islamic values, the cultivation of *akhlak*, sincerity, justice, responsibility, and exemplary conduct may complement broader professional ethical standards. However, because this research is based on a qualitative literature review, the effectiveness of these recommendations has not been empirically established. Future studies should investigate teachers' experiences of ethical dilemmas, develop appropriate measures of moral resilience and ethical internalization, and evaluate professional development interventions across different educational institutions. Such investigations would help refine the proposed framework and establish its practical relevance for strengthening ethical professionalism in the digital era.

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