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REPRESENTATION OF PROFESIONAL ETHICS ADHERENCE IN THE TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IN PURWAKARTA REGENCY

Rika Purnamasari[1], Bunyamin Maftuh[2], Mupid Hidayat[3], Warlim[4]
[1]Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini, STAI DR.KHEZ.MUTTAQIEN Purwakarta
[234]Pendidikan Umum dan Karakter, Pascasarjana Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
e-mail : rikapurnamasari057@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to measure the level of compliance among early childhood education teachers regarding professional ethics and its implementation in the learning process in Purwakarta Regency, based on age demographics, certification status, and educational qualifications. The research method used was a quantitative survey employing a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to 322 Islamic teachers in Purwakarta Regency. The research instrument was a 24-item teacher professional ethics questionnaire on a 1–4 scale, developed based on Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to comprehensively describe the level of ethical understanding among early childhood education teachers, examined in terms of age, educational qualifications, and teacher certification status. The research results indicate that the level of compliance with professional ethics among Early Chilhood education teachers in Purwakarta Regency falls into the high category, with a percentage of 89%. The demographic characteristics teacher preschool adherence to professional ethics in Purwakarta are dominated by those aged 19–40 years (56%) compared to 40–60 years (44%), with the majority being uncertified (64% vs. 36%), and diverse educational backgrounds including high school (38%), a bachelor's degree in early childhood education (24%), and a bachelor's degree in Islamic education (38%). Overall, the research findings indicate that the professional ethics of early childhood education teachers in Purwakarta Regency are at a good level, although a small number of teachers still require attention and guidance to achieve an optimal level of professionalism.

Keyword: Ethics, Early Childhood Education (PAUD) Teaching Professionalism

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a crucial stage in human development because it is during this phase that the foundation for children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development is laid. In this context, the role of an ECE teacher is not merely that of an instructor but also that of an educator, mentor, and facilitator who must carry out their profession with full responsibility and professional ethics (Prety, 2018; Zhang, 2022). Furthermore, the study revealed that, on average, teachers are unfamiliar with the regulations governing the implementation and oversight of the professional code of ethics. Teachers' understanding of professional ethics is crucial because their attitudes and behaviors significantly influence the quality of learning and the character development of young children (Abduh et al., 2023). Specifically, Islamic-based early childhood education is oriented toward the formation of religious morality, which is closely related to professional ethics. Teachers' professional ethics utilize knowledge that employs reason or rationality as a benchmark to assess whether a human action is classified as good or bad (Fauzi, 2018). Professional ethics for teachers can be understood as a guide to values and morals in determining attitudes and behavior within the learning process (Anggraini, 2025; Darlis et al., 2022; Hanum et al., 2023). professional ethics for teachers can be understood as a guide to values and morals in determining attitudes and behavior within the learning process. Normatively, the teaching profession in Indonesia is governed by various regulations, including (Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, n.d.), which states that teachers have the primary duties of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students. Furthermore, guiding documents such as the Indonesian Teachers' Code of Ethics outline the norms and principles agreed upon by teachers as a respected, noble, and dignified profession, serving as a guide for attitudes and behavior in carrying out their professional duties. This is because educators are closely tied to the mastery of knowledge and skills that focus not only on the teaching profession but also on various other disciplines, both as instructors and as subjects of learning . In the field of early childhood education , the normative study "Understanding Standards and Professional Ethics for early childhood education Teachers" indicates that the professional ethics of early childhood education teachers are a strong factor influencing children's willingness to learn and the quality of learning (Eliza et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, issues persist regarding the limited understanding of the code of ethics among early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, who tend to rely solely on a basic knowledge of the code rather than its practical application (Sukirman, 2023) .This leads to behaviors that fail to reflect adherence to the professional code of ethics; for instance, research by (Nalle, 2025) found that some PAUD teachers remain inconsistent in applying ethical values, particularly when facing situations that test their patience and emotional control.

Meanwhile, in Purwakarta, although there have not been many specific studies explicitly addressing early childhood education teacher ethics, there are reports that educational institutions in Purwakarta Regency have organized activities to enhance understanding of preventing violence, bullying, and intolerance in early childhood education settings through collaboration with major institutions (Muhtar: 2026) . This indicates that early childhood education teachers are not only required to possess professional competencies but must also uphold professional ethics in addressing contemporary challenges (such as violence and inclusivity). However, there are also indications of ethical violations in a broader context that impact the education sector in Purwakarta, such as reports regarding a school principal suspected of violating civil service regulations, which subsequently drew public attention (Ade, 2025). Although not directly involving early

childhood education teachers, this case serves as a reflection that issues of professional ethics remain a challenge in the local educational environment.

Several real-world examples illustrate the need to focus on understanding the professional ethics of early childhood education teachers. For instance, at the national level, (Eliza et al., 2022) emphasizes that a code of ethics serves to protect the teaching profession from unprofessional behavior and clarifies what is right and appropriate for professional teachers. On the other hand, the study . "A Study on the Professional Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Education Teachers in Belu Regency" found that although there are efforts to apply professional values among early childhood education teachers, significant variations still exist in their understanding and consistency of implementation. Nalle found variations in the understanding and implementation of the code of ethics for early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, influenced by education and training, facilities and infrastructure, and educational policies(Nalle, 2025) . Factors influencing this include the quality of teacher education and training, facilities and infrastructure, and regional educational policies.

Other research in Indonesia indicates that the professional ethics of early childhood education (ECE) teachers are closely linked to professionalism and the quality of instruction. Research (Nofriyanti, 2019) found that professional ethics play a positive role in supporting teachers' professional competence and instructional quality. Meanwhile, Salsabila et al (2025) identify the application of a code of ethics as a crucial element in fostering teacher professionalism. However, quantitative research measuring the level of professional ethics compliance among ECE teachers specifically within Islamic ECE settings based on factors such as age, certification status, and educational qualifications remains limited. Addressing this research gap, this study surveyed 322 Islamic ECE teachers in Purwakarta Regency to examine their understanding of and adherence to professional ethics.

This study aims to assess the extent to which Islamic early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in Purwakarta and the surrounding areas understand and adhere to professional ethics. The findings will contribute to strengthening teacher professionalism - for instance, through training, the reinforcement of local policies, and the development of professional ethics indicators tailored to demographic conditions. To this end, the study will conduct an in-depth analysis of the level of understanding and adherence to professional ethics among these teachers, taking into account factors such as age, certification status, and educational background, in order to empirically map the state of professional ethics within the profession.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative descriptive approach to analyze numerical data; once the data is collected, it is analyzed using statistical methods (Creswell, 2017) specifically to examine the professional ethics of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in Purwakarta Regency based on demographic factors. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on measuring structured variables related to the dimensions of professional ethics, while the survey method was used to obtain representative and generalizable empirical data (Creswell, 2017) study population includes all early childhood education teachers in Purwakarta Regency, totaling 1,059 teachers (Purwakarta . The sample consisted of 322 early childhood Islamic education teachers under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, selected via proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure representation based on sub-district and type of early childhood education institution, thereby facilitating analysis of teacher certification demographics. This sample size was selected to ensure adequate population representation and to obtain sufficient data to characterize the professional ethics of Islamic early childhood education (PAUD) teachers.

Based on calculations using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, a population of 1,095 individuals requires a minimum sample of approximately 293 respondents. Consequently, the inclusion of 322 respondents exceeds the required minimum, thereby providing broader sample coverage and mitigating the risk of limited data representativeness. This sample size also allows for a more comprehensive depiction of respondent characteristics such as age, certification status, and educational background. These considerations are crucial, as the study aims not only to provide a general overview of professional ethics but also to describe the state of professional ethics in relation to the teachers' demographic characteristics. The research instrument was pilot-tested on 100 early childhood education teachers using the Rasch model, yielding 24 valid items out of 31 created, with each item's MNSQ falling within the range of 0.5–1.5 and ZSTD between -2 and 2. The instrument's reliability is indicated by Person Coefficient of Reliability ranging from 0.82 to 0.85 and Person Coefficient of Discrimination ranging from 2.13 to 2.36, indicating that the instrument is sufficiently consistent and capable of distinguishing respondents' ability levels effectively, consistent with the findings (Sumintono, 2015) the criteria for person reliability in Rasch analysis are: < 0.67 = weak, 0.67–0.80 = adequate, 0.81–0.90 = good, 0.91–0.94 = very good, and > 0.94 = excellent. The data analysis used in this study was descriptive statistics showing percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Out of 31 items, 24 were found to fit, indicating good validity and reliability. Each item represents one of seven dimensions: the teacher's relationship with students, parents/guardians, the community, colleagues, the profession, the professional organization, and the government. Demographic data analysis was conducted to examine the adherence to professional ethics among early childhood education teachers in Purwakarta Regency based on demographic aspects, including age, education level, and teacher certification, which serve as a comprehensive information resource for understanding the landscape of professional ethics among PAUD teachers.

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection by submitting the research protocol to the relevant ethics committee to ensure that all research procedures complied with ethical principles for research involving human participants. Before participating in the study, all prospective participants were provided with clear information regarding the research objectives, data collection procedures, potential benefits, use of the data, and their rights to participate voluntarily and withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Participants who agreed to take part in the study provided informed consent before completing the research instrument. To ensure data confidentiality, participants' personal identities were not recorded in the research instrument or reported in the research findings; instead, each participant was assigned a unique identification code. All collected data were securely stored and access was restricted to the researchers. The findings were presented only in aggregated form to prevent the identification of individual participants, and the data were used solely for research purposes and were not disclosed to unauthorized parties without appropriate consent or legal justification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on descriptive analysis using empirical calculations , which were conducted to determine the mean, standard deviation, and maximum values, as well as minimum values. Calculations were performed using Microsoft Excel to facilitate the process. The steps for the analysis are presented in the following table:

Table1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Data Professional Ethics

N	Mean	SD	Max	Min
322	84,5	8,29	96	24

Based on Table 1, which indicates that a Likert-scale survey consisting of 24 statements was administered to 322 respondents. The analysis results show that the mean score of the respondents is 84.5 with a standard deviation of 8.29, the highest score being 96, and the lowest score being 24. Based on these empirical calculations, the next step is to categorize or determine the levels of teacher professionalism in the early childhood education learning process in Purwakarta Regency.

Table 2. Professional Ethics Category

Interval	F	Percentage	Category
78-96	288	89%	High
60-77	28	8%	Moderately High
42-59	2	0%	Moderate
24-41	4	1%	Low

Based on the data analysis, the majority of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in Purwakarta Regency fall into the high category, with scores ranging from 78 to 96. Of the 322 respondents, 288 teachers (89.4%) fall into this category, indicating that most teachers have implemented optimal early childhood education practices. Furthermore, 28 teachers (8.7%) fall into the fairly high category with scores of 60–77, indicating that while their teaching practices are considered good, there is still room for improvement to reach the high category. Meanwhile, the “moderate” category, with scores of 42–59, was occupied by only 2 teachers (0.6%), and the “low” category, with scores of 24–41, was occupied by 4 teachers (1.2%). The categorization of professional ethics in this study employs an ideal score interval approach. This approach was selected because the study aims to provide a descriptive overview of professional ethics levels based on the entire range of scores theoretically obtainable by respondents from the research instrument. The instrument comprises 24 statements, each with a score range of 1–4, resulting in a minimum ideal score of 24 and a maximum ideal score of 96. Subsequently, this ideal score range is divided into four categories with relatively equal interval widths—low, moderate, moderately high, and high- to ensure a systematic and objective classification. The interval width is derived by dividing the difference between the maximum and minimum scores by the number of categories: (96–24)/4 = 18. Based on this procedure, scores of 24–41 are categorized as low, 42–59 as moderate, 60–77 as moderately high, and 78–96 as high. Thus, the categorization is not determined by the distribution of respondents' results but is established based on the instrument's theoretical characteristics prior to data interpretation, thereby serving as a consistent basis for describing the professional ethics levels of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers.

These results indicate that the number of teachers requiring guidance or intervention to improve the quality of learning is relatively small. Overall, this data shows that the implementation of early childhood education (PAUD) in Purwakarta Regency is at a satisfactory level; however, it still requires sustained efforts through training and mentoring to ensure all teachers can achieve optimal teaching competency standards. When examined from a demographic perspective, the professional ethics of PAUD teachers involve numerous

dimensions and influencing factors. The following table illustrates the state of professional ethics among PAUD teachers in Purwakarta Regency.

Table 3. Demographics Professional ethics

Demographics		F	Percentage
Age	19-40	179	56%
	40-60	143	44%
Certification	certified	117	36%
	uncertified	205	64%
Education	High School	123	38%
	Bachelors in Early Childhood Education	76	24%
	Bachelor&s Degree in Islamic Education	123	38%

Based on age distribution, the majority of early childhood education teachers in Purwakarta are in the 19–40 age group (56%), while the 40–60 age group accounts for 44%. This indicates that younger teachers demonstrate greater adherence to the professional ethics of early childhood education. This has implications for their potential to understand and adapt to innovations as well as more modern professional ethical practices. The most productive period in human life is adulthood (ages 20–40), as individuals are at the peak of their physical strength, social independence, work roles, family responsibilities, and productive contributions to society (Hurlock, 1989) . Younger early childhood education teachers tend to be more open to innovations in education and professional ethics, while their more senior counterparts possess more mature practical experience but are less flexible regarding change. Consequently, strategies for enhancing professional ethics must account for these age differences to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.

An analysis based on certification status found that compliance with professional ethics was 36% among certified teachers, while compliance among uncertified teachers was 64%. Although certification status is closely correlated with formal knowledge of professional ethical standards, it does not serve as a significant determinant of ethical compliance among early childhood education teachers. According to theory, certified teachers are likely to have a more structured and documented understanding of the professional code of ethics (Sitorus, 2023) while uncertified teachers may rely on practical experience or informal understanding. Thus, these findings emphasize the importance of certification programs and ongoing training to enhance awareness and the application of professional ethics in the early childhood education setting.

Furthermore, based on formal education, adherence to professional ethics among early childhood education teachers in Purwakarta is distributed almost evenly among high school graduates (38%), early childhood education bachelor's degree holders (24%), and Islamic education bachelor's degree holders (38%). These differences in educational background imply variations in understanding of professional ethics; early childhood education and Islamic education (PAI) bachelor's degree graduates show a balanced percentage between

PAI bachelor's and high school graduates, while PAUD bachelor's graduates account for only 24%. Analysis of these findings indicates that there is a similarity in adherence to professional ethics among early childhood education (PAUD) teachers who are high school graduates and those with a bachelor's degree in Islamic education (PAI). Thus, this approach can foster a more consistent understanding of professional ethics across the entire population of PAUD teachers. However, interventions to strengthen professional ethics must be tailored to educational levels, for example, through different training modules to enhance conceptual understanding of ethics for teachers with a high school background and to deepen practical application for those with a bachelor's degree.

First, regarding age, teachers aged 19–40 constitute the majority at 56%, while those aged 40–60 make up 44%. This distribution indicates that the study's respondents are predominantly from the 19–40 age group. While these findings help characterize the educators participating in the study, the difference in age proportions does not warrant the conclusion that younger teachers are more adaptable to professional ethics or that older teachers are more conservative in interpreting ethical standards. Drawing conclusions about differences in ethical understanding or application based on age requires an analysis that directly compares professional ethics scores across age groups. Thus, these findings are best understood as a snapshot of the respondents' age composition, serving as a basis for further analysis regarding potential links between age and professional ethics.

Second, regarding certification status, 36% of teachers hold professional certification, whereas 64% do not. This indicates that the majority of respondents lack professional certification. However, this distribution does not directly demonstrate a difference in the quality of professional ethics implementation between certified and non-certified teachers. Similarly, the presented data are insufficient to conclude that certified teachers possess a superior understanding of ethics or that non-certified teachers rely more heavily on personal experience. Establishing such differences would require an analysis comparing levels of professional ethics based on certification status. Therefore, the key finding in this regard is the larger proportion of non-certified teachers, highlighting the importance of addressing access to and the equitable distribution of teacher professional development. While certification programs and ethics training could be considered part of a professional development strategy, their effectiveness in enhancing professional ethics requires empirical validation.

Third, regarding educational background, there is a relatively balanced distribution: 38% are high school graduates, 24% hold bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education, and 38% hold bachelor's degrees in Islamic Religious Education. This composition reflects the diversity of educational backgrounds among the respondents. However, these differences in formal education levels cannot yet serve as a basis for claiming that teachers with bachelor's degrees possess a deeper understanding of ethics or that high school graduates require additional support. Such a claim could only be substantiated through a direct comparison between educational backgrounds and scores or indicators of professional ethics. Thus, these findings primarily highlight the need to consider educational background diversity when designing professional development programs. Training initiatives could be structured flexibly to accommodate the needs of teachers with varying educational backgrounds.

Analysis of certification status reveals that only 36% of teachers hold professional certification, while 64% remain uncertified. This finding reinforces the picture that the majority of teachers in the study sample lack certification. The (OECD, 2019) identifies qualifications and professional development as crucial elements in strengthening the quality of the teaching profession. However, the findings of this study do not yet indicate that

certified teachers possess higher levels of professional ethics compared to their uncertified counterparts. Therefore, the relationship between certification and professional ethics should be viewed as a matter requiring further examination rather than a conclusion proven by the data distribution. Further analysis comparing professional ethics scores based on certification status would provide a more robust basis for determining whether certification is linked to differences in the application of professional ethics. Meanwhile, the high proportion of uncertified teachers remains a significant finding that should be considered when formulating policies to improve access to certification and professional training.

Research findings indicate that variations in the educational backgrounds of early childhood education (ECE) teachers suggest that academic qualifications are a factor influencing a teacher's readiness to understand and apply professional ethics. Teachers who have completed formal undergraduate education particularly in fields such as early childhood education and Islamic education generally have greater opportunities to gain a conceptual understanding of child development, pedagogy, and the values underpinning the teaching profession. However, academic qualifications cannot be viewed as the sole determinant of the quality of professional ethics application, as this competence also develops through experience, professional guidance, and actual practice within the educational environment.

From the perspective of "pedagogical content knowledge" developed by Shulman, a teacher's knowledge relates not only to subject matter mastery but also to the ability to integrate that knowledge into instructional practice (Shulman, 1989) . Thus, while formal education provides a crucial conceptual foundation, an understanding of professional ethics becomes truly meaningful when translated into a teacher's decision-making and behavior when facing real-world classroom situations. This demonstrates that theoretical mastery and practical experience should be regarded as complementary components in the professional development of ECE teachers.

This view aligns with the findings (Nawir & Mardiah, 2026; Zulu, 2022)) who indicate that limited formal qualifications can hinder the professional development of early childhood educators. However, this does not imply that teachers with lower educational qualifications are incapable of applying professional ethics. Work experience can serve as a vital source of practical knowledge, especially when accompanied by reflection, mentoring, and opportunities for continuous competency development. Therefore, efforts to enhance professionalism should not focus solely on meeting academic qualification requirements but also on strengthening teachers' abilities to apply ethical principles across various instructional contexts.

In this context (Puspitaningtyas, 2017) perspective regarding the importance of combining formal education with practical experience becomes highly relevant. An understanding of professional ethics cannot remain merely theoretical; it must be manifested through consistent behavior in the performance of one's duties as an educator. Consequently, professional ethics development programs for early childhood education (ECE) teachers need to take into account the diversity of educational backgrounds. Teachers with stronger academic backgrounds can benefit from activities focused on case analysis and reflective practice, whereas those with more limited educational backgrounds may require reinforcement of fundamental concepts, followed by practical application exercises using real-life scenarios. These differentiated approaches are expected to foster a more uniform understanding of ethics and encourage its consistent application in early childhood education practice.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the professional ethics of Islamic early childhood education (PAUD) teachers in Purwakarta Regency are in a good state and have become an integral part of professional practice within the learning process. However, the application of these ethics is not yet uniform across all teachers. Variations in age, certification status, and educational background indicate a need for the continuous strengthening of professional ethics, tailored to the teachers' specific professional needs. Consequently, enhancing professional ethics requires more than just an understanding of the code of ethics; it must be realized through consistent guidance, mentoring, reflection, and competency development. These findings underscore that strengthening professional development systems and institutional support are crucial steps toward ensuring the consistent application of professional ethics in early childhood education practices.

This study has limitations due to its descriptive approach and reliance on questionnaire data; consequently, the results reflect teachers' self-reported responses and do not fully represent the ethical behaviors actually exhibited within the learning environment. Teacher professional development should focus on practical ethics training involving case studies, ethical dilemmas, mentoring, and reflection. Development programs ought to be tailored to teachers' educational backgrounds and experience rather than employing a one-size-fits-all approach. Educational institutions and policymakers need to integrate professional ethics into supervision and continuous professional development. Future research is encouraged to utilize mixed methods including observation and interviews to gain a more objective understanding of how professional ethics are applied in actual teaching practice.

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