

Teaching Profession: Basic Concepts, Competencies, Teacher Roles, And Philosophical Foundations In Education

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Abstract

The teaching profession is a fundamental pillar in the formation of quality human resources through education. This study aims to comprehensively examine the basic concepts of the teaching profession, including the characteristics, competencies, roles of teachers, and the underlying philosophical foundations. The significance of this research lies in the understanding that the teaching profession not only requires mastery of teaching materials but also requires moral integrity, pedagogical skills, and a high level of professional commitment. The method used is a literature study (*library research*) with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained from various relevant literature sources, including books, scientific journals, national education regulations, and international academic sources. The research findings indicate that the teaching profession has unique characteristics, namely requiring special expertise, a commitment to a code of ethics, and social responsibility. Professional teachers are expected to be able to act as learning facilitators, character mentors, and agents of change in society. Philosophical foundations including idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism provide ontological, epistemological, and axiological directions for teaching practice. A deep understanding of these concepts is a prerequisite for systematic and sustainable improvement of the quality of national education.

Keywords: Teaching Profession, Teacher Competence, Teacher Role, Philosophical Basis, Education

Abstrak

Profesi guru merupakan pilar fundamental dalam pembentukan sumber daya manusia berkualitas melalui pendidikan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara komprehensif konsep-konsep dasar profesi guru, termasuk karakteristik, kompetensi, peran guru, dan landasan filosofis yang mendasarinya. Signifikansi penelitian ini terletak pada pemahaman bahwa profesi guru tidak hanya membutuhkan penguasaan materi pengajaran tetapi juga membutuhkan integritas moral, keterampilan pedagogis, dan tingkat komitmen profesional yang tinggi. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka (penelitian kepustakaan) dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif.

Data diperoleh dari berbagai sumber literatur yang relevan, termasuk buku, jurnal ilmiah, peraturan pendidikan nasional, dan sumber akademik internasional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa profesi guru memiliki karakteristik unik, yaitu membutuhkan keahlian khusus, komitmen terhadap kode etik, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Guru profesional diharapkan mampu bertindak sebagai fasilitator pembelajaran, pembimbing karakter, dan agen perubahan dalam masyarakat. Landasan filosofis termasuk idealisme, realisme, pragmatisme, dan eksistensialisme memberikan arahan ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis untuk praktik pengajaran. Pemahaman mendalam tentang konsep-konsep ini merupakan prasyarat untuk peningkatan kualitas pendidikan nasional yang sistematis dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Profesi Guru, Kompetensi Guru, Peran Guru, Landasan Filosofis, Pendidikan

INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession plays a central role in developing the nation's next generation, excelling not only in cognitive and skill aspects but also in moral and character dimensions (Siswanto et al., 2024). A teacher's job is not simply to deliver subject matter but also to fulfill complex functions as a guide, facilitator, motivator, and role model in everyday life (Darmadi, 2015). In this context, teachers play a crucial role in instilling life values, shaping students' personalities, and fostering a strong social awareness (Elitasari, 2022).

A comprehensive understanding of the teaching profession is crucial, especially for educators, prospective teachers, and education policymakers. This study focuses on the definition of the teaching profession, the characteristics of the teaching profession that distinguish it from other professions, and the importance of a code of ethics as a moral guideline in carrying out professional responsibilities. Furthermore, the discussion expands to the philosophical foundations of professional teachers, which provide direction and profound meaning to teaching practice (Septi & Kristiawan, 2025).

The discussion is conducted through a literature review, referring to educational literature, national regulations, and relevant academic sources. It is hoped that the results of this study can serve as a reference for improving teacher professionalism, especially in the global era characterized by rapid change and increasingly complex challenges (Sachs, 2016; Warastri, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a literature study method (*library research*), namely a research approach that collects, analyzes, and synthesizes data from various relevant literature sources (Snyder, 2019). Literature studies were chosen because they are able to provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of theoretical concepts that have been developed by experts in the fields of education and educational philosophy.

The approach used is descriptive qualitative, which aims to describe and interpret the phenomenon of the teaching profession based on secondary data obtained. Data collection techniques are carried out by identifying, reading, recording, and analyzing various literature sources, including: 1. Textbooks and monographs in the field of education and educational philosophy; 2. National and international scientific journal articles published in the last 10 years; 3. National education regulations, especially Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers; 4. Official documents of professional organizations, such as the Indonesian Teachers' Code of Ethics published by the Indonesian Teachers' Association (PGRI).

Data analysis was conducted thematically by grouping findings based on conceptual categories: (a) the definition of the teaching profession, (b) characteristics of the teaching profession, (c) professional teacher competencies, (d) the role of teachers in the education system, and (e) the philosophical

foundations of professional teachers. Each finding was critically analyzed by considering theoretical and practical perspectives, and synthesized to form a coherent framework of understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Definition of the Teaching Profession

The teaching profession plays a crucial role in the development and enhancement of human resource quality. As educators, teachers bear a significant responsibility in shaping the character, personality, and intellectual abilities of students (Hamalik, 2012). Therefore, a teacher's duties extend beyond delivering subject matter to encompassing moral, social, and spiritual roles in guiding the nation's future generations. Therefore, the teaching profession is viewed as a noble and dignified profession, as it carries the mandate to shape individuals holistically, encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

In general, the teaching profession can be defined as a job that requires specialized expertise in the field of education, acquired through an organized formal education and training process. Mulyasa (2005) states that the teaching profession is a position or job that requires specific competencies, which can only be acquired through continuous specialized education in the field of teaching. A professional teacher is required to have adequate academic qualifications, mastery of teaching materials, the ability to apply effective learning methods, skills in classroom management, as well as social sensitivity and a good personality (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013).

Furthermore, the teaching profession is imbued with ethical values. Teachers are expected to uphold the dignity of their profession by adhering to the code of ethics established by professional organizations. This code of ethics serves as a guideline for attitudes, behavior, and interactions, both while carrying out duties at school and in the community (PGRI, 2015). A professional teacher is not only required to possess high academic competence but is also expected to be a role model for students and the community in various aspects of life.

B. Characteristics of the Teaching Profession

The teaching profession has unique characteristics that distinguish it from other professions. Based on the criteria put forward by experts, the characteristics of the teaching profession can be described as follows:

1. Have a solid scientific foundation

A teacher doesn't just convey information; he must also be able to help students develop their potential through appropriate approaches tailored to each individual's needs and characteristics (Oviyanti, 2013). Therefore, teachers need to master educational theories, understand child psychological development, and implement creative and innovative learning strategies (Bahri, 2022).

2. Humanistic in nature

The teaching profession is humanistic, meaning teachers interact directly with individuals with diverse characters, backgrounds, and needs (Sudjana, 2009). Therefore, teachers are required to understand this diversity and organize an inclusive, fair, and enjoyable learning process for all students. Teachers must also create a conducive learning environment, respect freedom of thought, and encourage students to be active and creative in their learning.

3. Requires High Dedication and Commitment

Becoming a teacher is not merely about earning a living, but rather a calling to educate the nation and contribute to advancing human civilization (Suyanto & Jihad, 2013). Therefore, the teaching profession is often viewed as a noble and dedicated one.

4. Have a Professional Organization

The teaching profession is characterized by the existence of professional organizations that oversee and support its members. In Indonesia, the officially recognized professional organization for teachers is the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI). This organization plays a role in setting professional standards, developing a code of ethics, providing legal protection, and facilitating the career development of its members (PGRI, 2015).

5. Continuing Professional Development

Professional teachers need to be aware of the need to continuously learn, update their knowledge, improve their skills, and develop themselves in line with the dynamics of scientific and technological developments (Sitompul, 2022). In the current era of globalization and digitalization, teachers are required to possess strong digital literacy, master educational technology, and be able to equip students to compete internationally (Sugiarto & Farid, 2023).

The National Education Association (NEA) describes the following characteristics of the teaching profession: (1) a position involving intellectual activity; (2) a position that deals with a specific body of specialized knowledge; (3) a position that requires long-term professional preparation; (4) a position that requires continuous in-service training; (5) a position that promises a lifelong career and permanent membership; (6) a position that sets its own standards; (7) a position that prioritizes service over personal gain; and (8) a position that has a strong and closely knit professional organization (Juhji & Suardi, 2018).

C. Professional Teacher Competencies

Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teacher competency encompasses four main dimensions: pedagogical competency, personality competency, social competency, and professional competency (Republic of Indonesia, 2005). These four competencies serve as the foundation for teachers in optimally carrying out their professional duties.

1. Pedagogical Competence

Pedagogical competence encompasses a teacher's ability to plan learning, implement it, assess learning outcomes, and guide and train students. Teachers with strong pedagogical competence are able to design learning tailored to

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student characteristics, utilize a variety of learning methods and strategies, and create a conducive learning environment (Putri et al., 2020).

2. Personality Competence

Personality competency concerns the personal qualities of teachers, reflecting exemplary behavior, emotional stability, independence, and social maturity. Teachers with strong personality competency are able to serve as role models for students in their attitudes and behavior (Mazrur et al., 2022).

3. Social Competence

Social competence relates to a teacher's ability to communicate and interact with students, parents, colleagues, and the wider community. Teachers with strong social competence are able to build harmonious and productive relationships with various parties involved in the educational process (Iskandar, 2019).

4. Professional Competence

Professional competence encompasses a teacher's mastery of the teaching materials, curriculum, and scientific content. Teachers with strong professional competence are able to master the teaching materials in depth, relate them to current developments, and convey them in a way that is easily understood by students (Faridah et al., 2020).

D. The Role of Teachers in the Education System

Teachers play a strategic role in the education system. Based on various literature, teachers' roles can be categorized as follows:

1. As a Learning Facilitator

Teachers act as facilitators, helping students access, understand, and construct knowledge. In this role, teachers are no longer the sole source of knowledge, but rather as guides, facilitating students' active and independent learning (Siswanto et al., 2024).

2. As a Character Mentor

Teachers are responsible for shaping the character and personality of their students. Through their role models and daily interactions, teachers instill noble values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and hard work (Elitasari, 2022). This role is becoming increasingly important given the challenges of moral degradation facing today's younger generation.

3. As a Motivator

Teachers act as motivators, encouraging students to achieve and develop their potential optimally. By providing positive reinforcement, teachers can increase students' intrinsic motivation to learn (Arianti, 2019).

4. As an Agent of Change

Teachers are expected to be agents of change, positively impacting the school environment, society, and the progress of the nation (Warastri, 2023). In this role, teachers not only remain in the classroom but also actively contribute to improvements and innovations in education.

E. Philosophical Foundation of Professional Teachers

The philosophical foundation of professional teachers is a foundation of thought derived from educational philosophy, used as a reference in carrying out teaching duties. Educational philosophy discusses the nature of humankind, the nature of knowledge, and the values that must be instilled in the educational process (Septi & Kristiawan, 2025). Therefore, a philosophical foundation is crucial for teachers, ensuring they teach not only technically but also with a clear direction and purpose.

1. The Nature of Professional Teachers from a Philosophical Perspective

From a philosophical perspective, professional teachers are viewed as individuals with a moral and intellectual responsibility for educating students. Teachers are not only tasked with imparting knowledge, but also with shaping the character and personality of students as a whole (Socket, 1993). Philosophically, teachers must understand that each student is a unique individual with different backgrounds, abilities, and potential. Therefore, teachers should not treat all students the same, but rather adapt their learning approach to their individual needs (Noddings, 2003).

Professional teachers must also be aware that education is a continuous process. This means that teachers must continuously learn and develop themselves to keep pace with developments in science and technology. Furthermore, from a philosophical perspective, teachers also have a responsibility to instill humanitarian values. Education aims not only to produce intelligent individuals but also individuals with noble character (Buxarra, 2021).

2. Philosophical Streams that Underlie Professional Teachers

In the world of education, there are several schools of philosophy that form the basis for the formation of professional teachers:

a) Idealism

Idealism emphasizes that the primary reality is ideas or concepts. In education, this school of thought considers the material world merely a shadow of the more real world of ideas. Teachers act as guides, helping students develop their thinking and moral abilities. The goal of education, according to idealism, is to help students attain a higher level of awareness of truth, goodness, and beauty (Schi, 2020).

b) Realism

Realism holds that the real world can be understood through experience and observation. Teachers must impart knowledge that aligns with facts and objective reality. This school emphasizes the importance of disciplines and scientific methods in the learning process. Teachers act as instructors, conveying factual knowledge and helping students understand the structure of the real world (Schi, 2020).

c) Pragmatism

Pragmatism emphasizes that knowledge must be useful in everyday life. This school, developed by John Dewey, believes that education should be

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oriented toward experience and problem-solving. Teachers should relate learning to students' experiences and encourage students to learn through practical activities. The goal of pragmatic education is to develop individuals capable of adapting to social change and solving problems effectively (Schiro, 2020).

d) Existentialism

Existentialism emphasizes individual freedom to determine their own choices and the meaning of life. In education, this school of thought provides ample space for students to develop creativity, choose their own path, and take responsibility for their choices. Teachers act as facilitators, helping students discover their identity and existential meaning (Guayana, 2020).

3. The Role of Philosophical Foundations in Teacher Professionalism

Philosophical foundations have a very important role in forming professional teachers, including:

- **As a basis for determining educational goals.** Teachers can understand the true direction of education in accordance with the philosophical values they adhere to.
- **As a guideline in the learning process.** Teachers can design learning that suits students' needs based on a philosophical understanding of human nature and knowledge.
- **As a basis for decision-making.** Teachers can determine appropriate actions in various situations by referring to philosophical principles.
- **As a teacher personality builder.** With a strong philosophical foundation, teachers become wiser, more patient, and more responsible (Septi & Kristiawan, 2025).

4. Characteristics of Professional Teachers Based on Philosophical Foundations

Professional teachers who have a strong philosophical foundation have several characteristics, namely: (a) having an understanding of the nature of education; (b) prioritizing moral and ethical values; (c) being able to think critically and reflectively; (d) respecting individual differences; and (e) having a commitment to the profession (Schön, 2016).

5. Implementation of Philosophical Foundations in Learning

The application of philosophical foundations in learning can be done in various ways, namely: (a) student-centered learning; (b) instilling character values; (c) using varied learning methods; and (d) continuous reflection on learning (Korthagen, 2017).

6. Challenges of Professional Teachers from a Philosophical Perspective

In practice, teachers face various challenges, such as technological developments, curriculum changes, and differences in student characteristics. Teachers must be able to adapt to these changes without abandoning the philosophical values underlying their teaching practice (Sachs, 2016; Miller & Cook, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature study that has been carried out, several important things can be concluded regarding the basic concept of the teaching profession and its philosophical basis:

1. The teaching profession requires specialized expertise in education, acquired through an organized formal education and training process. This profession possesses distinctive characteristics, including a solid scientific foundation, a humanistic nature, strong dedication and commitment, the existence of professional organizations, and ongoing professional development.
2. Professional teachers must have four main competencies, namely pedagogical competency, personality competency, social competency, and professional competency, as regulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers.
3. Teachers play a strategic role in the education system, not only as instructors, but also as learning facilitators, character mentors, motivators, and agents of change.
4. Philosophical foundations, including idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism, provide ontological, epistemological, and axiological direction for teaching practice. A strong philosophical understanding helps teachers become wiser, more critical, and more reflective in carrying out their professional duties.

Suggestion

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