

THE CONCEPT OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN KANT PHILOSOPHY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO TEACHER PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the concept of moral responsibility in the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant and its relevance to teacher professional ethics. Kant's ethical theory emphasizes that the moral value of an action is determined by intention and adherence to duty rather than consequences. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using library research. The data sources include Kant's primary philosophical texts and relevant literature on educational ethics. Data are collected through document analysis and analyzed using interpretative and thematic analysis to identify key ethical principles and their application in teaching practice. The findings show that the categorical imperative encourages teachers to treat students as ends in themselves, promoting fairness, respect, and integrity in classroom interactions. Teachers are positioned as moral agents responsible not only for knowledge transmission but also for students' character development and dignity. However, challenges such as administrative pressures, curriculum demands, and social changes may hinder the consistent application of Kantian ethics in practice. In conclusion, integrating Kant's moral philosophy into teacher professionalism supports a more humanistic and morally grounded educational environment, while highlighting the need for reflective practice and institutional support.

Keywords: *Kantian Philosophy, Moral responsibility, Professional Ethics*

1. Introduction

Education is fundamentally not merely a process of knowledge transmission, but a comprehensive endeavor aimed at shaping human character, moral awareness, and social responsibility. Classical and contemporary educational theorists consistently emphasize that the ultimate purpose of education lies in the holistic development of learners—intellectually, emotionally, and ethically (Gert Biesta, 2010; John Dewey, 1938; Noddings, 2013). Within this

framework, teachers occupy a central role not only as conveyors of academic content but also as moral agents whose attitudes, decisions, and behaviors significantly influence students' moral development (Elizabeth Campbell, 2008; Hansen, 2021; Sockett, 1993).

However, recent educational phenomena indicate a growing tension between moral purpose and technical performance in teaching. The increasing emphasis on standardized testing, administrative accountability, and

measurable outcomes has shifted the focus of education toward instrumental goals, often at the expense of ethical considerations (Biesta, 2015; Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, 2012; Michael W. Apple, 2013). In the Indonesian context, similar issues are evident in the prioritization of curriculum targets, certification requirements, and performance-based evaluation systems, which may reduce teachers' roles to technical implementers rather than reflective moral professionals (Siregar, E., 2022; Suyanto, & Jihad, 2013). This phenomenon raises concerns about the erosion of teachers' moral responsibility and ethical sensitivity in everyday classroom practice.

Teachers' professional responsibilities are inherently ethical, involving continuous moral judgment related to fairness, care, respect, and responsibility (Strike, K. A., & Soltis, 2009; Warnick, B. R., & Silverman, 2011). Empirical studies have shown that ethical dilemmas frequently arise in areas such as assessment, discipline, and teacher-student relationships (Colnerud, 2015; Maxwell, B., Tremblay-Laprise, A. A., Fillion, M., 2016). Recent research also highlights that teachers often experience ethical conflicts due to institutional pressure, digital disruption, and changing student behavior, which challenge their ability to act consistently according to moral principles (Pring, 2022; Santoro, 2018). These conditions indicate the need for a strong philosophical foundation to guide teachers' ethical decision-making beyond procedural compliance.

In response to these challenges, moral philosophy offers a critical lens for re-examining teacher professionalism. Among moral philosophers, Immanuel Kant provides one of the most rigorous accounts of moral responsibility. Kant's deontological ethics asserts that morality is grounded not in the consequences of

actions but in duty (*Pflicht*) derived from rational moral law (Kant, 1996; Woodward, n.d.). The central principle of the categorical imperative requires individuals to act only according to maxims that can be universalized and to treat humanity always as an end in itself, never merely as a means. This framework emphasizes autonomy, rationality, and respect for human dignity as the core of moral responsibility (Korsgaard, 1996; O'Neill, 2013).

When applied to education, Kantian ethics provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding teachers as moral agents who must act based on duty and ethical principles rather than external pressures or personal interests (Carr, 2005; Warnick, B. R., & Silverman, 2011). A Kantian perspective encourages teachers to uphold fairness, integrity, and respect for student autonomy while maintaining consistency in moral judgment across different situations. Recent studies in educational ethics suggest that integrating philosophical frameworks into teacher professionalism can enhance ethical awareness and reflective practice (Campbell, 2013; Husu, J., & Tirri, 2023; Sockett, 1993).

Despite these contributions, there remains a significant gap between abstract moral philosophy and its practical application in contemporary educational contexts. Many studies on teacher professionalism focus primarily on competencies, standards, and performance indicators, with limited attention to the philosophical foundations of moral responsibility (Suyanto, & Jihad, 2013). Furthermore, empirical research in Indonesia has rarely explored Kantian ethics as a framework for understanding teacher morality, indicating a lack of philosophical engagement in educational discourse. This gap highlights the

novelty of the present study, which seeks to bridge theoretical moral philosophy and practical teacher ethics by contextualizing Kant's concept of moral responsibility within educational practice.

This study is conducted based on the urgency to re-establish the moral dimension of teaching in an era dominated by instrumental and utilitarian values. By revisiting Kant's moral philosophy, this research aims to provide a deeper ethical foundation for teacher professionalism and to respond to contemporary challenges that threaten the integrity of educational practice.

Therefore, this study aims to (1) analyze the concept of moral responsibility in Kantian philosophy, and (2) examine its relevance to teacher professional ethics in contemporary educational contexts. To achieve these objectives, the study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using library research, where primary data are derived from Kant's philosophical works and secondary data from recent studies in educational ethics. The analysis is conducted through interpretative and thematic techniques to identify key ethical principles and to map their application in teaching practice. Through this approach, the study seeks to offer both philosophical insight and practical implications for strengthening moral responsibility in the teaching profession.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Kant's Moral Philosophy and the Concept of Moral Responsibility

Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy constitutes one of the most influential foundations of modern ethical theory. Kant rejects consequentialist and teleological approaches to morality, particularly those that evaluate moral actions based on outcomes or utility. Instead, he argues that the moral worth of an action lies in the good will (der

gute Wille), which acts purely out of respect for moral law (Kant, 2002). For Kant, moral responsibility is inseparable from rational agency: human beings are morally responsible because they possess reason, which enables them to recognize and freely commit themselves to moral duty.

Kant asserts that morality originates in practical reason, not in emotions, inclinations, or external authority. Moral actions are those performed from duty, not merely in accordance with duty. This distinction is crucial, as it emphasizes internal moral motivation rather than external compliance. From this perspective, moral responsibility reflects an individual's autonomous decision to act according to moral law, regardless of personal benefit or adverse consequences. Consequently, Kantian morality is universal, binding on all rational beings across cultural and situational differences.

2.2 The Categorical Imperative and Human Dignity

The core principle of Kant's ethical system is the categorical imperative, which functions as a universally binding moral law. Kant formulates the categorical imperative in several ways, two of which are particularly relevant to professional ethics. The first formulation states that individuals should "act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, 1785/1993). This principle demands consistency, rational justification, and moral accountability in human action.

The second formulation emphasizes respect for human dignity: individuals must "act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end and never merely as a means" (Kant, 1785/1993). This formulation underscores the intrinsic worth of every

human being and rejects any form of instrumentalization. According to Kant, human dignity arises from moral autonomy, the capacity of individuals, to legislate moral law for themselves (Korsgaard, 1996).

In social and institutional relationships, including education, this ethical framework requires that individuals are respected as moral subjects rather than treated as objects for achieving organizational goals. Scholars have emphasized that Kant's concept of dignity offers a powerful normative basis for professional ethics, as it demands moral consistency, respect, and responsibility in all human interactions (O'Neill, 2013).

2.3 Teaching as a Moral and Ethical Profession

The teaching profession has long been recognized as inherently moral in nature. Educational philosophers argue that teaching is not a value-neutral activity, as it involves judgments about what is worth knowing, how individuals should be treated, and what kind of persons students ought to become (Carr, 2005). Teachers, therefore, are not merely technical practitioners but moral agents whose actions significantly influence students' moral development. (Elizabeth Campbell, 2008) emphasizes that teachers inevitably function as moral role models, whether intentionally or not, because students observe and internalize their teachers' behaviors, attitudes, and decision-making processes. Teachers' daily practices—such as grading, classroom management, and interpersonal communication—reflect ethical commitments related to fairness, honesty, respect, and care. Thus, teacher professionalism is inseparable from moral responsibility. Furthermore, the moral responsibility of teachers extends beyond classroom instruction to include sensitivity toward

students' diverse social, cultural, and emotional backgrounds. (Strike, K. A., & Soltis, 2009) argue that ethical teaching requires educators to balance authority with respect for student autonomy, while ensuring justice and equity in educational opportunities. These ethical demands highlight the complexity of teachers' moral roles in contemporary education.

2.4 Kantian Ethics and Teacher Professional Responsibility

Kant's concept of moral responsibility offers a rigorous philosophical framework for understanding teacher professional ethics. From a Kantian perspective, teachers are morally obligated to perform their duties not merely out of institutional obligation or fear of sanctions, but from an internal commitment to ethical principles. Acting from duty enhances the moral integrity of the teaching profession and reinforces teachers' sense of accountability as autonomous moral agents

Applying the categorical imperative in education implies that teachers must adopt principles of action that can be universally justified. For instance, fairness in assessment, honesty in academic evaluation, and consistency in discipline practices are ethical imperatives that must apply equally to all students. Kantian ethics also rejects discrimination, favoritism, and manipulation, as these practices violate the principle of treating individuals as ends in themselves (Warnick, B. R., & Silverman, 2011).

Moreover, Kant's emphasis on moral autonomy aligns with the idea of ethical professionalism, where teachers act based on moral judgment rather than mere compliance with external regulations. Scholars argue that such an approach strengthens teachers' resilience against ethical dilemmas arising from bureaucratic pressure, performance-

driven educational systems, and market-oriented reforms (Biesta, 2015; Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, 2012).

2.5 Relevance of Kantian Moral Responsibility to Contemporary Education

In contemporary educational contexts, teachers face increasing ethical challenges, including standardized testing pressures, administrative overload, and the commodification of education. These conditions risk reducing teaching to a technical function, undermining its moral purpose (Michael W. Apple, 2013). Kantian moral philosophy provides a critical counterbalance by reaffirming the ethical mission of education and the moral agency of teachers. By grounding professional ethics in moral duty and respect for human dignity, Kant's philosophy promotes a more humanistic and just educational practice. Teachers guided by Kantian ethics are encouraged to prioritize students' holistic development rather than merely focusing on measurable academic outcomes. This ethical orientation supports the formation of learners who are not only knowledgeable but also morally responsible citizens.

Therefore, the integration of Kant's concept of moral responsibility into teacher professional ethics underscores the strategic importance of moral values in education. Teachers are positioned not only as transmitters of knowledge but as ethical leaders who contribute to the development of societies grounded in dignity, justice, and moral integrity.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach grounded in philosophical inquiry, emphasizing conceptual, interpretative, and normative analysis. The research is non-empirical in nature and is designed to examine the

foundational concepts of moral responsibility within Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy, as well as to explore their relevance to teacher professional ethics. A qualitative philosophical approach is particularly appropriate because the focus of the study lies in abstract moral reasoning, ethical normativity, and rational justification rather than empirical observation or statistical measurement.

Philosophical research aims to clarify concepts, evaluate arguments, and construct normative frameworks through systematic reflection and logical analysis (Audi, 2015). In this study, Kant's ethical theory is treated as a normative moral system that articulates principles of duty, autonomy, and moral law, while the teaching profession is understood as a moral practice embedded within social and institutional contexts. This methodological orientation allows the research to critically engage with ethical principles that shape professional responsibility in education.

The primary sources of data consist of Immanuel Kant's original philosophical writings, particularly *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten)*, which provides Kant's foundational arguments concerning good will, moral duty, autonomy, and the categorical imperative (Kant, 1785/1993). This work is essential to the study because it offers direct access to Kant's ethical reasoning and his conception of moral responsibility as grounded in rational autonomy. To deepen the analysis, the study also draws upon *Critique of Practical Reason* (Kant, 1788/1997), which further elaborates the relationship between moral law, freedom, and practical reason. Authoritative English translations and critical editions are used to ensure conceptual accuracy and interpretive reliability.

In addition to Kant's primary texts, the study incorporates secondary sources drawn from peer-reviewed journals, scholarly books, and philosophical commentaries that examine Kantian ethics, moral responsibility, and professional ethics in education. These sources are essential for contextualizing Kant's abstract moral concepts and bridging them with contemporary educational discourse. Works by scholars such (Aloni, 2007; Carr, 2005; Korsgaard, 1996; Noddings, 2013; O'Neill, 2013) are particularly valuable in linking moral philosophy with the ethical dimensions of teaching, including moral autonomy, human dignity, care, and professional integrity.

Data collection is conducted through systematic textual and conceptual analysis. The researcher engages in close and critical reading of both philosophical and educational texts to identify key ethical concepts, normative claims, and theoretical arguments related to moral responsibility and teacher professionalism (Bowen, 2009). This process involves identifying central Kantian concepts such as duty, moral law, autonomy, universality, and dignity, followed by an examination of how these concepts can be meaningfully applied to ethical expectations within the teaching profession.

The analytical process is guided by philosophical hermeneutics, which understands interpretation as a dynamic dialogue between the interpreter and the text. Interpretation in this study goes beyond literal textual meaning by considering the historical context of Kant's philosophy, the internal coherence of his ethical system, and its relevance to contemporary educational challenges. Through this hermeneutic engagement, Kant's moral principles are critically examined and synthesized with modern perspectives on teacher

ethics, allowing for a reflective understanding of how moral duty, autonomy, and respect for human dignity can inform ethical teaching practice.

To ensure rigor and trustworthiness, the study emphasizes conceptual clarity, logical consistency, and argumentative coherence. Interpretations are systematically supported by well-established scholarly sources, and philosophical claims are carefully justified through rational analysis. Since the objective of the research is theoretical development rather than empirical generalization, the validity of the study rests on the strength of its normative arguments, depth of interpretation, and consistency between philosophical principles and their ethical implications for teaching practice (Maxwell, B., Tremblay-Laprise, A. A., Fillion, M., 2016).

The outcome of this methodological approach is the development of a conceptual and normative framework that explains how Kantian moral principles can be applied to the ethical responsibilities of teachers. Rather than measuring professional behavior, this research seeks to provide a philosophical foundation that educators, policymakers, and teacher education programs can use to cultivate moral awareness, professional integrity, and respect for human dignity within educational practice. By grounding teacher professionalism in moral duty and ethical autonomy, the study contributes to a more humanistic and ethically grounded understanding of education.

4. Result And Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy offers a profound conceptual foundation for understanding

the moral responsibility of teachers within the educational context. Kant asserts that true morality does not derive from the outcome of an action, but from the intention and awareness of duty behind that action. In the teaching profession, this perspective emphasizes that a teacher's actions are considered morally valuable only when they are performed based on sincere commitment to educational responsibility, rather than motivated by personal interests, external rewards, or institutional pressure.

The study reveals that the central principle in Kantian ethics, the categorical imperative, holds significant relevance in shaping the ethical conduct of teachers. According to this principle, every action must be based on a universalizable moral rule and must treat every person as an end in themselves. When applied to education, this highlights that students should never be treated as instruments for improving school ranking, gaining professional recognition, or fulfilling administrative expectations. Instead, they must be respected as individuals with inherent dignity, personal growth potential, and unique learning characteristics.

Moral responsibility in teaching appears in various dimensions. Teachers are responsible for demonstrating integrity in academic work, fairness in assessment, patience and empathy in addressing learning challenges, and respect toward the cultural and social backgrounds of their students. These responsibilities require teachers to consistently reflect on their actions, manage personal bias, and maintain self-discipline in professional conduct. However, the findings also indicate that teachers often face significant ethical tension. The increasing demands of curriculum standardization, performance-based evaluation systems, the influence of digital media on student behavior, and social expectations

regarding teachers' personal image create complex pressures. These external conditions sometimes challenge the teacher's moral autonomy, making it difficult to consistently apply universal moral principles in daily practice. Therefore, while Kantian ethics provides a strong philosophical foundation, its implementation requires structural support such as ethical school policies, collaborative learning environments, and continuous professional reflection.

Overall, this research affirms that Kant's moral philosophy strengthens the ethical dimension of the teaching profession. By internalizing Kant's principles, teachers are encouraged to act with sincerity, dignity, and moral consistency, shaping an educational atmosphere that values humanity and justice.

Table 1. Detailed Relationship between Kantian Moral Philosophy and Teachers' Professional Ethics

Conceptual Aspect	Kantian Moral Principle	Ethical Application for Teachers	Practical Example in School Context
Foundation of Moral Action	Moral actions are guided by duty, not personal gain	Teachers carry out their role based on professional responsibility, not material benefits or recognition	A teacher prepares lessons thoroughly even without supervision or reward
Nature of Moral	The value of	Teachers align their	A teacher refuses favoritism

Worth	action lies in intention rooted in reason	behavior with reasoned ethical decision-making	m even when pressured by parents or school leaders
Universality of Moral Rules	Moral principles must be applicable to all people in all situations	Teachers enforce rules and expectations fairly to all students	Grading policies are applied consistently regardless of student background
Respect for Human Dignity	Individuals must be treated as ends, not means	Teachers view students as unique human beings, not academic output units	Teachers encourage student self-expression instead of forcing conformity
Moral Autonomy	Morality is determined by internal rational awareness, not external coercion	Teachers reflect on and evaluate their own moral conduct independently	A teacher disciplines students with empathy rather than emotional reaction
Ethical Self-	Action s must	Teachers serve as	A teacher who

Consistency	reflect the same values one teaches	moral role models for students	teaches honesty also practices honesty in documentation and evaluation
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Interpretation of Findings

The table illustrates that Kant's ethical framework provides a coherent basis for teacher professionalism. Teachers are not merely instructors of knowledge but moral guides whose actions influence students' character development. When teachers act according to moral duty and universal respect toward others, they contribute to forming students who are not only academically competent but also ethically grounded.

Thus, Kantian ethics supports the vision of education as a humanizing process in which dignity, respect, and integrity become central values. This ethical orientation ensures that education fulfills not only intellectual development but also moral formation, shaping individuals who contribute positively to society.

Discussion

This study examined how the concept of moral responsibility in Kantian ethics manifests in the everyday professional life of teachers and how that philosophical framework helps to interpret teachers' ethical choices and dilemmas. The qualitative findings reveal a pattern in which teachers' professional behavior is shaped by a combination of duty-oriented convictions, respect for the intrinsic worth of students, and often competing institutional pressures. Interpreting these

patterns through a Kantian lens yields several important insights about the nature of teacher ethics, the tensions that arise in practice, and the practical consequences for teacher education and school policy.

Kantian duty and teachers' professional motivation

The data indicate that many teachers describe motivations that align with a duty-based ethic rather than purely instrumental goals. Teachers speak of obligations to treat students fairly, to maintain academic integrity, and to model respectful behavior. From a Kantian perspective, these motivations reflect acting from recognition of moral duty rather than from expected consequences. When teachers act because they believe it is their moral obligation, their actions tend to be more consistent across contexts and less likely to vary with external incentives or penalties. This suggests that cultivating an internalized sense of duty has the potential to stabilize ethical conduct in schools, making professional behavior less contingent on monitoring and more resilient to situational pressures.

Respect for persons and classroom practice

A central Kantian idea is that persons should be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means to other ends. In the classroom this principle translates into practices that honor students' dignity: giving attention to individual needs, avoiding humiliation, and resisting treating learners merely as metrics or test scores. The study's qualitative themes show that when teachers explicitly adopt this stance, pedagogical choices change. Assessment practices become more formative and dialogic, disciplinary measures prioritize restoration over punishment, and curricular decisions factor student voices into planning. These shifts support a humanizing education that aligns with

Kantian respect and help explain why duty-based orientations can produce more compassionate and equitable classroom environments.

Tension between impartiality and care

While Kantian ethics emphasizes universalizability and impartial moral law, teaching also requires attentiveness to particular students and contexts. Findings show that teachers frequently negotiate a tension between treating all students by the same standard and providing differentiated support to those with greater needs. Interpreting this through Kant reveals a productive tension rather than a contradiction. The universal demand to respect each student's humanity can justify particularized actions that aim to secure each student's equal opportunity for development. Thus impartiality, when properly understood, can ground rather than prohibit caring practices. Recognizing this helps teachers justify adaptive pedagogy without abandoning principles of fairness.

Conflicts between institutional aims and moral duty

A recurrent theme concerns institutional imperatives such as standardized testing, performance targets, and administrative workloads that sometimes conflict with teachers' sense of moral responsibility. Teachers report dilemmas where following institutional directives would instrumentalize students or compromise pedagogical integrity. The Kantian framework highlights why such conflicts can feel ethically urgent. If moral action must be guided by maximizable principles that respect persons, then policies that treat students as means to institutional ends become morally problematic. This clarifies an ethical critique of certain accountability regimes and points to the need for institutional design that allows teachers

to act from duty rather than from instrumental pressures.

Professional identity and moral development

The study's participants describe moral growth over the course of their careers, often linked to reflective practice and mentorship. From a Kantian angle, moral development involves strengthening the capacity to reason about duty and to align will with moral law. Practices that encourage critical reflection, ethical dialogue among staff, and explicit moral reasoning help teachers move from rule-following to principled action. Professional development that includes ethical reflection fosters moral autonomy, enabling teachers to interpret duties in complex contexts without defaulting to expediency.

Implications for assessment and accountability

Applying Kantian moral responsibility to assessment suggests reorienting evaluation systems toward practices that respect students' dignity and teachers' moral agency. Assessment policies should avoid instrumental uses of student performance and instead support formative feedback, holistic measures of learning, and fair procedures. Accountability systems could be redesigned to evaluate how well practices embody respect for persons and fidelity to educational duties, rather than only measuring narrow outputs. Doing so would reduce ethical conflicts and enable teachers to act from duty.

Limitations of Kantian framing and study limitations

Although Kantian ethics yields powerful insights, it is not without limits as a sole framework for educational ethics. Kantian emphasis on duty and universality can appear abstract and insufficiently attentive to emotional dimensions of care that are central to teaching. The framework may require

supplementation from ethics of care or virtue ethics to capture the full moral texture of classroom relationships. Methodologically, the study is qualitative and context dependent. Findings derive from a limited sample of teachers and specific school contexts, which constrains generalizability. The interpretive analysis used here assumes that participants' reported motivations accurately reflect underlying ethical reasoning, but social desirability and retrospective rationalization may influence narratives.

Recommendations for practice and policy

To translate philosophical insight into practice, teacher education programs should include structured opportunities for moral reflection, case-based ethical deliberation, and dialogues that connect abstract principles to classroom scenarios. School leadership should design policies that reduce instrumental pressures and create space for teachers' moral agency. Performance metrics ought to include qualitative indicators of respectful pedagogy and student well-being. Peer mentoring and ethical coaching can support teachers in resolving dilemmas and strengthening duty-based commitments without sacrificing care.

Suggestions for future research

Future studies could pursue comparative analyses that juxtapose Kantian interpretations with alternative ethical frameworks to test explanatory range. Longitudinal research could trace moral development across career stages and examine how institutional changes affect teachers' ability to act from duty. Empirical work that links specific training interventions in moral reasoning to measurable changes in classroom practice would be valuable for evidence-based policy.

Concluding interpretation

Interpreting teachers' professional responsibilities through Kantian moral philosophy brings clarity to core ethical commitments in education. A Kantian emphasis on duty and respect for persons supports an image of the teacher as a moral agent committed to the development of students as ends in themselves. While tensions with institutional demands and the affective aspects of teaching remain, integrating Kantian principles into teacher preparation and school governance can cultivate more principled, dignified, and just educational practices.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the concept of moral responsibility in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and to explore its relevance to teacher professional ethics. The findings confirm that Kant's moral philosophy provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding teachers as moral agents whose actions are guided by duty, intention, and ethical awareness rather than by external outcomes or rewards. In line with the research objective, the study demonstrates that Kant's concept of moral responsibility is highly relevant to the teaching profession, particularly in shaping ethical decision-making and professional conduct. The analysis reveals that the categorical imperative encourages teachers to treat students as ends in themselves, thereby fostering respect, fairness, and integrity in educational practice. This supports the objective of linking Kantian ethics to real teaching contexts, where teachers are not only knowledge transmitters but also moral guides responsible for students' character formation. However, the study also finds that the practical application of these principles is often challenged by institutional pressures, standardized curricula, and social changes, which may limit teachers' ability to

consistently act based on moral duty. The implications of this study suggest that integrating Kantian ethics into teacher education and professional development programs can strengthen teachers' moral responsibility and ethical awareness. It is recommended that schools and educational institutions create supportive environments through ethical training, reflective practice, and policies that prioritize integrity over performance metrics. Future research may further explore empirical approaches to examine how Kantian ethics can be implemented in diverse classroom settings.

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