

Teachers' Ethical Dilemmas at Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School through the Lens of Moral Philosophy

Rachelle Mae P. Columna

Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School, Masbate, Philippines

Publication history: Received: April 3, 2026; Revised: April 16, 2026; Accepted: April 20, 2026

Email of Author: rachelmae.columna@deped.gov.ph

Abstract

This study examined the ethical dilemmas encountered by teachers and their ethical decision-making approaches at Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School, with emphasis on the influence of demographic characteristics. Anchored on deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics, the study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to analyze relationships among demographic variables, ethical dilemmas, and ethical decision-making frameworks. Data were collected from 40 teacher-respondents using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson correlation. Findings revealed that teachers commonly experience ethical dilemmas in areas such as student discipline, grading and academic integrity, professional relationships, administrative pressures, and confidentiality. Results further showed that teachers strongly apply virtue ethics, along with deontological and utilitarian principles, in making ethical decisions. Significant positive relationships were found between demographic characteristics and both ethical dilemmas and ethical decision-making approaches, indicating that personal and professional factors influence ethical behavior. The study concludes that ethical decision-making in teaching is multidimensional and shaped by both philosophical frameworks and individual contexts, and recommends the development of targeted ethics programs, clear institutional guidelines, and reflective professional development initiatives. The study aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by promoting ethical teaching practices and strengthening institutional integrity in education. It contributes to educational, institutional, and socio-cultural sustainability by enhancing ethical competence, fostering accountability, and supporting the development of fair and inclusive learning environments.

Keywords: Academic Integrity, Demographic Characteristics, Ethical Decision-Making, Ethical Dilemmas, Moral Philosophical Theories, Teachers, Virtue Ethics

1. Introduction

Ethical decision-making in teaching is increasingly complex due to evolving institutional demands, diverse student needs, and sociocultural influences. Teachers regularly confront dilemmas involving fairness, academic integrity, professional conduct, and confidentiality, requiring the integration of moral reasoning and philosophical frameworks. This study examines how teachers at Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School navigate ethical dilemmas and how their decisions reflect deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics, while considering the influence of demographic factors.

1.1 Background of the Study on Teachers' Ethical Dilemmas and Moral Decision-Making in Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School

Ethics remains central in education as teachers make decisions affecting students, colleagues, and institutional integrity. Common dilemmas include academic dishonesty, favoritism, inequitable grading, confidentiality breaches, and conflicts between professional and institutional expectations (Campbell, 2008)¹. In the Philippine context, teachers often balance ethical integrity with contextual realities such as poverty and administrative influence, leading to moral distress when personal values conflict with institutional mandates (Añonuevo, 2016); (Strike & Soltis, 2009). Globally, teachers face tensions between fairness and discipline (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011), with ethical sensitivity shaped by culture, training, and moral orientation (Tirri, 2010). Teachers rely on personal judgment and ethical frameworks when navigating conflicting rules and student welfare (Husu and Tirri, 2007). In the Philippines, ethical practices are often guided by personal and religious values rather than formal training, resulting in inconsistent decision-making (Villena, 2019). Cultural values such as pakikisama and utang na loob further complicate impartiality (David, 2013). Philosophical ethics provide a foundation for understanding teacher decisions. Deontology emphasizes duty and fairness (Warnick & Silverman, 2011), utilitarianism prioritizes outcomes (Sokkett, 2012), and virtue ethics focuses on moral character (Carr, 2000). Demographic factors such as experience and age influence ethical reasoning, with experienced teachers demonstrating stronger moral

judgment (Lunenburg, 2010); (Baykara & Demirtaş, 2022). Organizational climate and institutional pressures also shape ethical dilemmas (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016). Additionally, digital environments introduce concerns on privacy and data ethics (Rizvi, 2020).

1.2 Themes and Insights from Related Literature on Ethical Dilemmas, Demographics, and Philosophical Theories

Literature consistently identifies key domains of ethical dilemmas: student discipline, grading integrity, professional relationships, institutional pressures, and confidentiality. Teachers struggle to balance fairness and empathy in discipline (Warnick and Silverman, 2011); (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011), while grading dilemmas arise from pressure to compromise academic integrity (Bjorklund and Rehling, 2010); (Strike and Soltis, 2009). Professional relationships present conflicts between loyalty and ethical responsibility (Oplatka, 2002); (Campbell, 2003), while institutional pressures often lead to moral distress (Bullough Jr., 2011); (Pollock, 2010). Confidentiality issues further challenge ethical judgment, particularly in student welfare cases (Meara et al., 2005); (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). Moral philosophical theories guide these decisions: deontology emphasizes duty (Strike & Soltis, 2009), utilitarianism focuses on outcomes (Beauchamp and Childress, 2013), and virtue ethics highlights character (Carr, 2007). Demographic factors such as age, sex, and education influence ethical orientation (Husu and Tirri, 2007); (Frick, 2009); (O'Neill, 2014); (Campbell et al., 2020). Philippine studies highlight similar dilemmas but emphasize cultural and institutional influences. Teachers often face pressure to adjust grades or discipline practices (Dela Cruz and Panganiban, 2017); (Navarra and Santos, 2016). Cultural values influence ethical decisions (Pineda and Magno, 2010), while administrative demands may lead to ethical compromise (Albis and Valencia, 2022). Ethical reasoning varies based on demographics and training (Soriano, 2015); (Cabansag and Dela Peña, 2012).

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Teachers' Ethical Decision-Making

Globally, ethical dilemmas are shaped by cultural diversity, institutional structures, and professional expectations (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002). Teachers must navigate varying moral standards while maintaining fairness and accountability. Nationally, Philippine education presents additional challenges due to cultural values, resource limitations, and policy pressures. Teachers often experience ethical tension between institutional demands and student welfare (De Chavez, 2016); (Espiritu and Lontoc, 2018). Locally, Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School in Mobo, Masbate, operates within a rural context influenced by community values, limited resources, and institutional expectations. The school's development and demographic composition of teachers provide a relevant setting for examining how ethical dilemmas are experienced and resolved in real-world conditions.

1.4 Theoretical or Conceptual Basis on Deontology, Utilitarianism, and Virtue Ethics

This study is anchored on three moral philosophical theories. Deontological ethics (Kant, 1785) emphasizes duty and adherence to universal moral rules, guiding teachers to uphold fairness regardless of consequences. Utilitarianism (Bentham; Mill, 1863) focuses on maximizing overall well-being, influencing decisions that consider collective outcomes. Virtue ethics (Aristotle, 350 BCE) centers on moral character, encouraging teachers to act with integrity, compassion, and wisdom. These frameworks collectively explain how teachers navigate ethical dilemmas by balancing rules, consequences, and character. The study assumes that ethical decision-making is multidimensional, integrating these perspectives in practice.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale on Teachers' Demographic Profile and Ethical Decision-Making

Existing studies often examine ethical dilemmas in isolation or without grounding them in formal philosophical frameworks. There is limited research linking teachers' demographic characteristics with their ethical decision-making approaches. Additionally, few studies contextualize ethical dilemmas within rural Philippine schools. This study addresses these gaps by integrating deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics with demographic variables such as age, sex, education, and length of service. It provides localized empirical evidence on how teachers in Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School navigate ethical dilemmas within their specific institutional and cultural context.

1.6 Alignment with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education by promoting ethical teaching practices that ensure fairness, integrity, and inclusive learning environments, and with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth by strengthening professional ethics and responsible decision-making among educators. It also supports SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions by contributing to ethical governance, accountability, and transparency within educational institutions. By examining teachers' ethical dilemmas and decision-making through philosophical frameworks, the study reinforces the role of ethical competence in building just, equitable, and effective education systems.

1.7 Importance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

This study contributes to educational sustainability by promoting ethical competence among teachers, ensuring fair and inclusive learning environments. It supports socio-economic sustainability by strengthening integrity in education, which influences long-term societal development. It also contributes to institutional and governance sustainability by informing

ethical policies and professional standards in schools. Furthermore, the study enhances community sustainability by fostering trust between educators, students, and stakeholders, and supports cultural sustainability by recognizing how Filipino values influence ethical decision-making. By integrating theory, demographics, and real-world context, the study provides a comprehensive approach to sustainable ethical practice in education.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the ethical dilemmas encountered by teachers and their relationship with demographic profiles and ethical decision-making approaches based on moral philosophical theories. The descriptive component identified and categorized ethical challenges such as student discipline, academic integrity, professional conduct, administrative pressures, and confidentiality, while the correlational component measured the relationship between demographic variables age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service and both ethical dilemmas and ethical frameworks including deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics. Data were collected using a validated researcher-made questionnaire administered to 40 teacher-respondents. Statistical analysis involved the use of weighted mean to describe response patterns and Pearson correlation to determine relationships between variables. This design is appropriate for examining naturally occurring variables without experimental manipulation and for identifying associations within educational settings (Creswell and Creswell, 2018); (Ary et al., 2019). The approach enabled a systematic analysis of how demographic factors influence ethical reasoning and decision-making.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School located in Barangay Umabay Exterior, Municipality of Mobo, Province of Masbate, Philippines. The locale represents a rural educational setting characterized by community-based values, limited resources, and diverse socio-cultural influences. The school serves as an accessible institution for learners from surrounding barangays and has developed through local government support and community contributions. The geographical and socio-cultural context of Masbate, which reflects a blend of Visayan and Bicolano influences, shapes the ethical environment in which teachers operate. This setting provides a relevant context for examining ethical dilemmas, as teachers must balance institutional expectations with community norms and resource constraints. The location also highlights the realities of public-school systems in provincial areas, making it appropriate for investigating context-specific ethical challenges.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were 40 teachers currently employed at Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School. These teachers were selected because of their direct involvement in classroom instruction, student assessment, and school policy implementation, making them well-positioned to provide relevant insights into ethical dilemmas and decision-making processes. Their experiences reflect real-world ethical challenges in areas such as discipline, grading, professional relationships, institutional demands, and confidentiality. The respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service, were considered essential in analyzing variations in ethical perceptions and reasoning.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling to select 40 teacher-respondents based on their relevance to the research objectives. This non-probability sampling technique allowed the researcher to intentionally choose participants with direct experience in handling ethical issues in the educational setting. Teachers were selected due to their active roles in decision-making processes that involve ethical considerations. Purposive sampling is appropriate for studies requiring information-rich participants, as it enables the selection of individuals with specific knowledge and experience related to the phenomenon being studied (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016); (Palinkas et al., 2015); (Patton, 2002). All distributed questionnaires were retrieved, resulting in a 100% response rate, ensuring completeness and reliability of the collected data.

2.5 Research Instrument

The primary data collection tool was a structured, researcher-made questionnaire developed based on relevant literature and moral philosophical frameworks, including deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics. The instrument consisted of three main parts: demographic profile, ethical dilemmas encountered, and ethical decision-making approaches. The demographic section collected data on age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, and length of service. The second section assessed ethical dilemmas in areas such as student discipline, grading integrity, professional relationships, institutional pressures, and confidentiality. The third section measured ethical decision-making based on deontological, utilitarian, and virtue ethics principles. A four-point Likert scale was used to quantify responses, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, allowing for objective statistical analysis. The scale provided a structured way to measure perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors. Prior to administration, the questionnaire underwent expert validation

to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with research objectives. A pilot test was also conducted to assess reliability and refine the instrument. The validated questionnaire ensured consistency in data collection and supported accurate statistical interpretation.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process followed a systematic procedure consisting of several phases. Initially, the research proposal was developed and reviewed by the adviser, with revisions incorporated based on feedback. The research instrument was then designed, validated by experts, and pilot-tested to ensure reliability. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Schools Division Superintendent and the school administration. Upon approval, the researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents, providing clear instructions and ensuring proper understanding. Adequate time was given for completion, and all questionnaires were retrieved on the same day. After data collection, responses were encoded, organized, and prepared for statistical analysis. An expert statistician assisted in processing and interpreting the data to ensure accuracy. The findings were then analyzed and used as the basis for conclusions and recommendations.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency count and percentage were used to describe the demographic profile of respondents, providing a clear representation of their characteristics. The weighted mean was utilized to determine the extent of ethical dilemmas encountered and the degree to which moral philosophical theories influenced decision-making. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength and direction of relationships between demographic variables and both ethical dilemmas and ethical decision-making approaches. This statistical method allowed the researcher to determine whether significant associations existed between variables. The level of significance was set at 0.05 to assess statistical relationships. Hypothesis testing was conducted by comparing computed values with critical values, where rejection or acceptance of the null hypothesis was based on the results. This analytical approach ensured a rigorous examination of relationships between teachers' demographic profiles, ethical dilemmas, and moral philosophical frameworks.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

3.1.1 Age Distribution of Teacher-Respondents

The results showed that the majority of respondents were aged 31–35 years (40%), followed by 36–40 years (20%) and 26–30 years (15%), with no respondents aged 25 years and below. This indicates that most participants are in the mid-career stage of their teaching profession. This concentration suggests that teachers at this stage possess both experience and increasing institutional responsibilities, which expose them to more complex ethical dilemmas. As teachers move beyond early-career adjustment, they become more involved in decision-making processes that require balancing policies, student needs, and professional expectations. This supports Campbell (2003), who emphasized that mid-career teachers are more likely to encounter ethically complex situations due to their expanded roles and reflective engagement in both classroom and institutional practices.

3.1.2 Sex Distribution of Teacher-Respondents

The findings revealed that 72.50% of respondents were female, while 27.50% were male, indicating a female-dominated teaching population in the school. This gender imbalance suggests that ethical decision-making may be influenced by gender-related perspectives, particularly in areas involving care, fairness, and relational dynamics. Female teachers' predominance may contribute to a stronger emphasis on empathy and interpersonal sensitivity in ethical situations. This aligns with Tirri and Husu (2002), who noted that gender differences shape how teachers perceive and respond to ethical dilemmas, with variations in justice-oriented and care-based approaches influencing decision-making.

3.1.3 Civil Status of Teacher-Respondents

The results indicated that 70% of respondents were married, 27.50% were single, and 2.5% were widowed. This suggests that many teachers manage both professional and family responsibilities, which may influence how they approach ethical dilemmas. Married teachers may demonstrate heightened sensitivity to relational and long-term consequences, particularly in decisions involving student welfare and fairness. Lunenburg (2009) supports this view, explaining that personal life circumstances, such as marital status, shape ethical priorities and decision-making by broadening perspectives on responsibility and care.

3.1.4 Educational Attainment of Teacher-Respondents

Most respondents (62.5%) had master's units, while 22.5% were college graduates and 15% held master's degrees, with no respondents pursuing doctoral studies. This indicates a relatively high level of academic preparation among teachers, which may contribute to increased awareness of ethical standards and professional responsibilities. Exposure to advanced studies likely enhances teachers' ability to critically evaluate ethical dilemmas using theoretical frameworks. This supports

Shapira-Lishchinsky (2011), who emphasized that higher educational attainment is associated with stronger ethical sensitivity and more structured moral reasoning.

3.1.5 Length of Service of Teacher-Respondents

The majority of respondents (55%) had 6–10 years of teaching experience, followed by 30% with 11–15 years, 10% with five years or below, and 5% with over 16 years. This distribution indicates that most teachers are in the mid-career stage, where exposure to diverse professional situations is substantial. Teachers at this stage have accumulated sufficient experience to recognize ethical complexities but still face ongoing challenges in resolving them. This finding supports Warnick and Silverman (2011), who noted that experience enhances ethical sensitivity and the capacity to navigate professional dilemmas through informed judgment.

3.2 Ethical Dilemmas Encountered by Teachers

3.2.1 Student Discipline and Fairness

The results showed that teachers strongly agreed that balancing fairness and empathy is challenging, particularly when dealing with students from diverse backgrounds or those facing personal difficulties. Teachers also acknowledged difficulties in applying rules consistently and expressed concern about discipline being misinterpreted as favoritism, while some reported pressure to be lenient due to external influences. These findings highlight the complexity of disciplinary decision-making, where teachers must reconcile institutional expectations with compassion for individual students. The tension between equality and equity becomes evident, as strict rule enforcement may conflict with the need for contextual sensitivity. This aligns with Bull and Wells (2012), who emphasized that disciplinary dilemmas arise from the dual responsibility of maintaining order while responding to students' unique needs, making discipline a deeply ethical issue rather than a purely procedural task.

3.2.2 Grading and Academic Integrity

The data revealed that teachers strongly agreed on upholding fairness in grading, even when it involves giving low marks to favored students, while also acknowledging pressure to reconsider grades for non-academic reasons. Teachers expressed conflict when dealing with cheating and when balancing student support with academic standards. These results demonstrate the ethical tension between integrity and compassion in academic evaluation. Teachers are placed in situations where maintaining objectivity may conflict with institutional expectations or emotional considerations for students. This reinforces Oduro (2008), who emphasized that grading dilemmas often arise from external pressures and relational influences, requiring strong adherence to ethical principles to preserve fairness and credibility in assessment.

3.2.3 Colleague Relationships and Professional Conduct

Findings showed that teachers strongly agreed on maintaining professionalism despite conflicts and acknowledged witnessing unethical behavior among colleagues. However, many expressed hesitation in addressing or reporting such behavior due to concerns about damaging relationships. This reflects the ethical conflict between loyalty and accountability within professional communities. Teachers may prioritize harmony over ethical action, leading to moral tension and potential compromise. Cranston et al. (2006) explained that such dilemmas are common in collaborative environments, where interpersonal relationships influence ethical behavior, and moral courage is required to uphold professional standards.

3.2.4 Administrative and Institutional Pressures

The results indicated strong agreement that teachers experience pressure from administrators to pass students regardless of performance and face conflicts when directives contradict their ethical beliefs. Some teachers also reported remaining silent on issues to avoid conflict. These findings suggest that institutional expectations significantly shape ethical decision-making and may lead to moral distress when they conflict with teachers' values. The pressure to comply with administrative demands can challenge professional autonomy and ethical integrity. This is consistent with Shapira-Lishchinsky (2011), who highlighted that institutional pressures influence ethical climates and may lead to ethical dissonance if not supported by ethical leadership and clear policies.

3.2.5 Confidentiality and Privacy

The results showed that teachers strongly agreed on being cautious in handling student information but expressed uncertainty regarding appropriate disclosure and reported witnessing breaches of confidentiality. This indicates that confidentiality remains a complex ethical domain requiring clear guidance. Teachers must balance the protection of student privacy with responsibilities related to safety and communication. Strike and Soltis (2009) emphasized that confidentiality dilemmas require careful ethical judgment, especially when institutional guidelines are unclear, increasing the likelihood of ethical uncertainty.

3.3 Ethical Decision-Making Based on Moral Philosophical Theories

3.3.1 Deontology (Duty-Based Ethics)

The findings revealed strong agreement that teachers prioritize fairness, follow rules, and act based on moral obligations, even when doing so creates conflict or discomfort. This demonstrates a strong orientation toward duty-based ethics, where teachers rely on principles of fairness and consistency in decision-making. Such adherence ensures ethical stability but may also create tension when rules conflict with individual student needs. This supports Warnick and Spinner (2009), who emphasized that deontological reasoning promotes consistency and integrity in educational practice.

3.3.2 Utilitarianism (Consequence-Based Ethics)

The results showed strong agreement that teachers consider the impact of their decisions on the broader school community, weigh consequences, and make adjustments to benefit the majority. This indicates that teachers frequently engage in outcome-based reasoning, especially in complex situations where competing interests exist. Utilitarian thinking allows flexibility but may also involve ethical trade-offs. Strike (2007) noted that teachers rely on this approach to navigate real-world dilemmas, focusing on maximizing overall benefit while managing practical constraints.

3.3.3 Virtue Ethics (Character-Based Ethics)

The findings showed very strong agreement that teachers value moral character, reflect on virtues such as honesty and compassion, and strive to act as role models. This suggests that ethical decision-making is deeply rooted in personal values and identity. Teachers' emphasis on character highlights the importance of internal moral development in guiding behavior. Carr (2007) emphasized that virtue ethics is central to teaching, as educators influence not only academic learning but also moral development through their actions and character.

3.4 Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Ethical Dilemmas

The results revealed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.9507$) between teachers' demographic profiles and the ethical dilemmas they encounter. This indicates that ethical challenges are significantly influenced by individual characteristics such as age, gender, experience, and education. Teachers' backgrounds shape how they perceive and respond to ethical situations, suggesting that ethical dilemmas are not uniform but context-dependent. This supports Saluja and Sinha (2018), who found that demographic variables significantly affect ethical sensitivity and professional decision-making.

3.5 Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Ethical Decision-Making Approaches

The findings showed a very strong positive relationship ($r = 0.996$) between teachers' demographic profiles and their ethical decision-making approaches. This suggests that teachers' moral reasoning is closely linked to their personal and professional backgrounds. Ethical frameworks are not applied uniformly but are shaped by individual experiences, education, and values. Boon (2011) emphasized that understanding teachers' backgrounds is essential in developing effective ethics education, as moral reasoning is deeply influenced by personal context.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that teachers at Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School are predominantly in the mid-phase of their careers, with considerable professional experience and academic preparation, which positions them to encounter and respond to complex ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas are commonly experienced in areas such as student discipline, academic integrity, professional relationships, administrative pressures, and confidentiality, reflecting the multifaceted nature of ethical challenges in teaching. The findings further show that teachers' ethical decision-making is strongly influenced by moral philosophical theories, particularly virtue ethics, along with utilitarianism and deontology, indicating that educators rely on a combination of character-based, consequence-based, and duty-based reasoning. Moreover, the study establishes that teachers' demographic characteristics significantly influence both the ethical dilemmas they encounter and their ethical decision-making approaches, highlighting that ethical behavior in education is shaped by personal and professional contexts rather than being solely guided by institutional rules.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that school administrators design and implement ethics-related programs tailored to teachers' professional stages, demographic characteristics, and lived experiences to ensure relevance and effectiveness. The school should establish clear, context-sensitive ethical guidelines addressing common dilemmas in discipline, grading, professional conduct, administrative expectations, and confidentiality, while regularly updating these policies to reflect evolving educational realities. It is also recommended that professional development programs incorporate moral philosophical frameworks such as deontology, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics to strengthen teachers' ethical awareness and consistency in decision-making. Furthermore, schools should adopt personalized training and mentorship approaches that recognize demographic diversity and create opportunities for reflective dialogue, allowing teachers to share experiences, enhance moral reasoning, and foster a collaborative ethical culture within the institution.

This study is limited to the perspectives of 40 teacher-respondents from Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School, using purposive sampling and self-reported data collected through a structured questionnaire, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other schools or contexts. The analysis is confined to selected variables, specifically

demographic characteristics, ethical dilemmas, and ethical decision-making approaches based on moral philosophical theories, and does not account for other potential influences such as organizational culture, policy variations, or external environmental factors. Additionally, the study relies solely on quantitative data, which may not fully capture the depth and complexity of teachers' ethical experiences and reasoning.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest, and this study received no external funding. The researcher acknowledges the participation of the teachers of Cristeta Bagano Memorial High School, whose voluntary involvement was secured through informed consent prior to data collection using non-invasive survey methods. All responses were treated with strict confidentiality, and no identifying information of participants was disclosed in the conduct and reporting of the study.

REFERENCES

- Añonuevo, C. A. (2016). Ethics in Philippine public school teaching: A reflective study. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 94(2), 24–30.
- Aquino, J. R., & Umali, K. C. (2018). Academic integrity issues among public high school teachers: An ethical dilemma. *Philippine Journal of Teacher Education*, 6(1), 23–39.
- Aristotle. (2009). *Nicomachean ethics* (W. D. Ross, Trans.). Oxford University Press. (Original work published ca. 350 B.C.E.)
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Irvine, C. K. S., & Walker, D. A. (2019). *Introduction to research in education* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Barrientos, R. A., & Lim, E. R. (2024). Philosophical orientation and ethical reasoning among Filipino teachers: A demographic analysis. *Journal of Ethics in Education*, 13(2), 145–162.
- Bautista, L. C., & Morales, A. S. (2024). Ethical teaching in conflict-affected zones: A qualitative study of public-school teachers in Mindanao. *Mindanao Education Research Journal*, 16(1), 112–130.
- Baykara, R. A., & Demirtaş, A. (2022). Ethical perceptions of teachers in relation to professional experience and institutional roles. *International Journal of Educational Ethics*, 6(1), 55–68.
- Beauchamp, T. L., & Childress, J. F. (2013). *Principles of biomedical ethics* (7th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Bentham, J. (2007). *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*. Dover Publications. (Original work published 1789)
- Bjorklund, W. L., & Rehling, D. L. (2010). Student perceptions of ethical decision making by faculty. *College Student Journal*, 44(1), 1–12.
- Boon, H. J. (2011). Raising the bar: Ethics education for quality teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(7), 76–93. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n7.6>
- Bull, B., & Wells, G. (2012). Ethical decision making in school discipline: Creating moral communities within educational settings. *Journal of Moral Education*, 41(4), 477–490. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2012.690727>
- Bullough, R. V., Jr. (2011). Ethical and moral matters in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 21–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.09.007>
- Cabansag, M. G., & Dela Peña, R. C. (2012). Ethical literacy among secondary school teachers in Northern Luzon. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 6(3), 55–69.
- Calingasan, D. J. (2021). Teachers' philosophical exposure and resistance to grade inflation. *Mindanao Journal of Pedagogy*, 9(2), 102–118.
- Campbell, E. (2003). *The ethical teacher*. Open University Press.
- Campbell, E. (2008). The ethics of teaching as a moral profession. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 38(4), 357–385. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2008.00414.x>
- Campbell, E., Robertson, J., & Gallagher, T. (2020). *Ethics in professional education: Research and practice*. Springer.
- Carr, D. (2000). *Professionalism and ethics in teaching*. Routledge.
- Carr, D. (2007). Character in teaching. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55(4), 369–389. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2007.00386.x>
- Cranston, N., Ehrich, L. C., & Kimber, M. (2006). Ethical dilemmas: The “bread and butter” of educational leaders' lives. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(2), 106–121. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610652015>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- David, R. (2013). Filipino values in education: Between tradition and transformation. *Philippine Social Science Review*, 65(2), 45–60.

- De Chavez, M. S. (2016). Ethical challenges in teacher evaluation and student promotion. *Journal of Philippine Teacher Education*, 8(1), 91–108.
- Dela Cruz, R. M., & Panganiban, A. L. (2017). Leadership and ethics in public school management. *Philippine Educational Review*, 10(1), 23–38.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Frick, W. C. (2009). Principals' value-informed decision making, intrapersonal moral discord, and pathways to resolution. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(1), 50–74.
- Garcia, J. F., & Molato, A. S. (2020). Navigating fairness in classroom discipline: The Filipino teacher's dilemma. *Journal of Educational Governance*, 6(4), 88–105.
- Hofmann, M., & Ruth-Sahd, L. A. (2015). Reflective practice: A qualitative study of critical thinking. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 54(2), 104–107. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20150120-07>
- Husu, J., & Tirri, K. (2007). Developing whole school pedagogical values. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55(1), 55–70.
- Island Properties. (n.d.). Masbate Province. Retrieved from <https://www.islandsproperties.com/places/masbate.htm>
- Kant, I. (1993). *Grounding for the metaphysics of morals* (J. W. Ellington, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company. (Original work published 1785)
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2010). The decision-making process. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, 27(4), 1–10.
- Mill, J. S. (2011). *Utilitarianism*. Dover Publications. (Original work published 1863)
- Navarra, J. A., & Santos, C. R. (2016). Academic integrity and ethical dilemmas in Philippine schools. *Teacher Development Journal*, 4(3), 101–117.
- Oduro, G. K. T. (2008). Ethical leadership for school improvement: The role of headteachers in Ghana. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46(4), 476–495. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230810882081>
- Oplatka, I. (2002). The emergence of educational administration as a field of study in Israel. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 30(3), 405–421.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Pineda, C. D., & Magno, A. R. (2010). *Foundations of ethics in Filipino education*. C&E Publishing.
- Rizvi, F. (2020). The ethics of teaching in a digital world: Emerging dilemmas. *Journal of Education Policy*, 35(1), 104–118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2019.1639576>
- Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. (2011). Teachers' critical incidents: Ethical dilemmas in teaching practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(3), 648–656. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.11.003>
- Socket, H. (2012). *The moral and ethical bases of teacher professionalism*. Routledge.
- Strike, K. A., & Soltis, J. F. (2009). *The ethics of teaching* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Tirri, K. (2010). Teacher values underlying professional ethics. *Education Today*, 60(1), 33–38.
- Villena, A. J. (2019). Ethical practices of teachers in public secondary schools in the Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(3), 18–25.
- Warnick, B. R., & Silverman, S. K. (2011). A framework for professional ethics courses in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487110398002>
- Woods, P., & Jeffrey, B. (2002). The reconstruction of primary teachers' identities. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(1), 89–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690120102872>
- Wikipedia. (n.d.). Masbate Province. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masbate>