

# Scientific and Theoretical Interpretation of The Concepts Of “Professional Deontology” And “Pedagogical Identity” In Preparing Future Teachers

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## ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the role of the concepts of “professional deontology” and “pedagogical identity” in the process of preparing future teachers and provides their scientific and theoretical interpretation. Drawing on J. Bentham’s deontological views, the author highlights the significance of pedagogical duty and responsibility in contemporary education and substantiates that the formation of pedagogical identity is a key factor determining a teacher’s professional competence and ethical profile. The study presents a theoretical discussion of the interrelationship between these two concepts and their influence on the development of the teacher’s personality.

**Keywords:** Deontology, professional deontology, pedagogical identity, education, upbringing, pedagogical duty, J. Bentham, ethics, professional competence.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of socio-economic reforms, the ethical foundations of public service and the moral–ethical qualities of civil servants are gaining particular significance. Regrettably, it should be noted that many incidents that have attracted broad public attention are the result not of legal issues, but of ethical problems related to the conduct of public officials. Today, most conflicts in the information space are connected less with violations of the law and more with a lack of ethical norms, arrogance, inability to control emotions, or the absence of basic communication culture.

A teacher is the key link shaping the intellectual and moral image of society. Therefore, in preparing future teachers, the main emphasis must be placed not only on their subject knowledge (their diploma), but also on their personality. In the sphere of education and upbringing, a truly professional educator is formed only when they continuously strive for moral growth, approach their profession with devotion,

derive spiritual satisfaction from their work, and possess a firm ethical “foundation” in everyday pedagogical practice. It is precisely this moral stability that plays a crucial role in a teacher’s relationships with pupils, parents, and society.

## METHOD

For many years, issues of professional duty and personal identity in the preparation of future teachers have remained at the center of pedagogical and philosophical research. Studies in this field can conventionally be divided into three major groups:

1. The formation of the deontological approach. The theoretical foundations of professional duty and moral obligations were first substantiated by J. Bentham as a “science of what is obligatory.” Based on his utilitarian views, the principle of “the greatest happiness for the greatest number” today serves as a key criterion for

defining a teacher's responsibility to society. [1] Likewise, I. Kant's "categorical imperative" became a foundation for developing universal rules of teacher ethics. [2]

2. Pedagogical identity and the concept of the professional "self." In Western pedagogy, issues of teachers' self-understanding were examined in depth by scholars such as C. Day, D. Beijaard, and N. Verloop. [3,4,5] Their research demonstrates that a teacher's professional identity is not a static concept, but a constantly changing process shaped by the social environment and personal experience. Among Russian scholars, E. F. Zeer analyzed professional identity in relation to stages of a specialist's psychological development. [7]

3. Interpretations in national pedagogy. In Uzbek pedagogical science, issues of teacher ethics and professional mastery are reflected in the works of scholars such as A. Zunnunov, O. Musurmonova, and B. Kh. Khodjayev. [9,10,11] However, in the context of contemporary digital transformation and new ethical norms for public servants, examining the concepts of "professional deontology" and "pedagogical identity" in their interconnection remains an urgent task.

A teacher's professional deontology is a set of moral principles, norms, and ethical categories that determine an educator's responsible attitude toward professional duty. Through these principles, the teacher comprehends and demonstrates in practice not only professional duty, but also civic and social responsibility.

The term "deontology" (from Greek *δεού* – duty, obligation) was introduced in the 18th century by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham to denote a doctrine about required conduct, actions, and a proper mode of activity. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was an English jurist, philosopher, and the founder of utilitarianism. He is considered the thinker who introduced the concept of "deontology" not only into philosophy, but also into law and pedagogy.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Bentham introduced the term "deontology" into scholarly usage as a science of human professional behavior. "Deontology is a branch of moral theory that examines duty, moral requirements and norms, and, more broadly, the issues of obligation as a form in which moral social necessity is manifested. This term was introduced by Bentham, who used it to express moral doctrine in a general sense."

"Deontology is a branch of ethics that studies problems of duty and obligatory actions. This term was introduced by Jeremy Bentham to express moral theory in a general sense." In English, the concept of deontology first appeared in 1826 in the sense of "a theory and doctrine of moral duty."

Bentham first used the term "Deontology" in his work "Deontology or, The Science of Morality" (Deontology or the science of morality). [1] This book was published after Bentham's death in 1834 by his student John Bowring. The book systematizes Bentham's ethical views, focusing on a person's duty to society and on the degree of usefulness of actions. Bentham coined the term from the Greek words "deon" (obligation, duty) and "logos" (doctrine, science) and called this discipline "the science of what is obligatory." In Bentham's view, a person must rely on rules that explain what is "right" and what is "wrong" in practical activity.

Bentham's deontological views are closely linked to his utilitarian (usefulness) theory. His core idea is: "to secure the highest degree of happiness for the greatest number of people." For Bentham, duty (deontology) is not merely a formal obligation, but an action that brings benefit to society. If an action increases happiness and reduces suffering, it is moral and consistent with duty.

According to Bentham, duty is not simply hardship; it is the foundation of social well-being. "The aim of deontology is to determine, in every situation, the course of action that leads to happiness and to teach a person to reach this goal by the shortest route." [1]

### **Bentham distinguishes two levels of deontology:**

Private deontology: a person's choice of actions in personal life that benefit them and make them happy.  
Social (professional) deontology: a person's duty to others as a member of society or as a representative of a particular profession.

As noted earlier, many problems faced by teachers arise precisely from the lack of this sense of "obligation" (duty).  
Duty: For a teacher, "what is obligatory" is not only teaching lessons, but also respecting the learner's personality.

Norm: According to Bentham, before every action one should ask: "Will this bring benefit to society or harm?"

The negative videos circulating publicly today indicate that this “filter” is not functioning.

**Core principles of Bentham’s views**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Content</b>
Duty (Obligation)	A set of actions that every person must perform based on their profession and status.
Interest	When a person fulfills their duty, it should serve both personal and social interests.
Pleasure and Pain	The basis of moral action is to reduce pain and increase general happiness (pleasure).

Bentham turned deontology into a “measure” of morality. He removed the notion of duty from religious mysticism and placed it on a practical, social, and professional foundation. Bentham linked duty not only to law, but also to inner motivation. In his view, a person should fulfill their duty not as a forced obligation, but because they are convinced of its usefulness. This is directly connected to the future teacher’s professional identity (finding oneself within the profession).

“Duty is such an action that, if it is not carried out, society or particular individuals will suffer harm. A true deontologist not only obeys the law, but also feels the vested interest of their own conscience.”

Bentham’s view that “deontology is the road to happiness” resonates with the modern pedagogical notion of teacher professional satisfaction. If a future teacher perceives duty (deontology) only as a “requirement,” their identity (self-understanding) will remain weak. If, as Bentham suggests, the teacher can see through this duty the future “happiness” of their pupils and themselves, then a strong pedagogical identity will develop.

Initially, Bentham assigned a rather narrow religious-moral meaning to this concept, referring to the believer’s duty and obligations before God, religion, and the religious community. Later, however, he used the term to express moral theory in a broader sense.

Soon, the concept of “deontology” began to be used in a

slightly different meaning—not only as the believer’s attitude toward religious obligations, but also as a term denoting the required behavior, deeds, and actions of an individual person or specialist. As a doctrine, deontology started to be distinguished from axiology, the doctrine of moral values. Deontology answers questions such as “What should be done?” and “What is duty?” (obligation-oriented), whereas axiology explores questions such as “What is valuable?” and “What are good and evil?” (value-oriented).

With the development of deontology, ethics shifted from a “morality of virtuous behavior” to a “morality of norms,” because a norm fixes required action in the form of rules and maxims (principles). Thus, another step was taken in the history of ethics from concepts of individual moral virtues toward morality grounded in laws and rules.

In practice, every modern profession forms its own understanding of the “state that ought to be” (an ideal) and at the same time compares it with the “state that exists” (reality). On the basis of ideas about the “state that ought to be,” demands are formed regarding behavior and actions, which for the specialist become professional duty and obligations. The category of professional duty always includes not only the functional responsibilities of representatives of a particular profession, but also their responsibility before colleagues, the profession itself, and society.

The doctrine of what is obligatory (duty) constitutes the

core of any system of professional ethics. The concept of “deontology” is narrower than the concept of “professional ethics.” If ethics reveals the essence of professional duty, deontology explains the specific features of its implementation in concrete types of communication and relationships. For this reason, deontology clearly demonstrates the unity of moral and professional components in a specialist’s behavior and actions.

The category of “professional duty” expresses the specialist’s moral obligations toward society, colleagues, clients, and their social environment. It also reflects the internal spiritual necessity to perform one’s tasks and the need to follow a certain line of conduct determined not by personal interests but, first of all, by external interests (the interests of society and the profession).

Duty is one of the most important categories in both general and professional ethics because it expresses a specialist’s social and professional ties, the totality of their obligations and responsibility before the state, society, colleagues, the profession, clients, and themselves. Awareness of duty determines a specialist’s behavior and the selection of moral norms they follow in everyday professional practice. Unlike professional obligations, professional duty is not perceived by the specialist as something imposed from outside, but as an internal spiritual need, a deep conviction in the necessity of certain actions.

Pedagogical activity is associated with moral responsibility that implies a high degree of independence and a conscious attitude toward professional duty. Responsibility is not an abstract concept; it is inseparable from creativity, autonomy, and the specialist’s attentiveness to people in their daily work. In such situations, the notion of professional duty imposes on the specialist the obligation to foresee the consequences of their actions, especially negative consequences—consistent with the famous principle attributed to Hippocrates, “*primum non nocere*” (“first, do no harm”).

Deontology is one of the foundations of the professional activity of social workers, lawyers, medical personnel, teachers, psychologists, and other professions whose object of activity is the human being. Their professional actions are directly oriented toward a person’s physical, psychological, and social health and well-being, and toward their social environment and society. The doctrine of duty is the central link of any professional ethics system.

Professional deontology is the doctrine of the duties and obligations of a professional before society and the state, the profession itself, colleagues, and ultimately the people for whom the activity is directed. Obligation is an external requirement (order, regulation), whereas duty is an internal will (conviction). The “do no harm” principle in pedagogy means not damaging a child’s psyche and development through pedagogical mistakes. The phrase “internal spiritual need” in the text directly points to pedagogical identity: only a person who fully recognizes themselves as a teacher can transform deontological requirements into an inner necessity.

In preparing future teachers, “Professional Deontology” (the doctrine of duty and responsibility) is not merely a theoretical discipline, but the “immunity” of the modern education system. In today’s informatized and open society, every step, word, and even a single “like” on social media is evaluated through the lens of professional deontology.

Let us consider, through practical examples, why professional deontology has become a vital necessity today.

1. Emotional pressure and self-control. In the modern era, pupils and parents know their rights well, but they are not always equally aware of obligations. This demands a high level of patience from the teacher. Imagine a situation where a pupil deliberately provokes during a lesson (scrolling through a phone or talking back). In a deontological approach, the teacher’s professional duty is not to shout or insult the pupil (a moral defeat), but to manage the situation with pedagogical skill and composure. Deontology teaches the principle: “You are not acting out personal hostility; you are performing a professional function.”

2. “Glass walls” in the digital world. In the past, a teacher’s life outside school was considered private. Today, due to social networks, a teacher is under public scrutiny 24/7. For example, a teacher posts on their personal page a photo inconsistent with pedagogical ethics or an unfounded opinion that contradicts state policy. A deontological approach requires the future teacher to understand that their “social image” affects not only themselves, but also the entire teaching community and the reputation of the institution where they work.

3. An “ethical filter” against corruption. One of the

greatest vices that discredits public servants is conflict of interest. For example, a teacher provides paid extra lessons to their own pupil or expects gifts from parents. Deontology teaches the criterion of “justice”: grades are given for knowledge, not for gifts or connections. This is presented as a teacher’s sacred duty to society.

4. Recognizing the inviolability of the pupil’s personality. In modern pedagogy, student-centered learning is central. Suppose there is a low-achieving pupil or a pupil in a socially vulnerable situation. Humiliating them in front of others or breaking their spirit by saying “you will never become anyone” is unacceptable. A deontological approach, in Bentham’s sense, treats a “right” action as one that brings benefit. The teacher’s duty is to find the “spark” in every child. Deontology teaches the teacher to be not a pedagogical executioner, but a pedagogical rescuer.

For a future teacher, a “deontological formula” can be expressed as:

Knowledge + Methodology + Ethics = A real teacher.

If the “Ethics” component is zero, the result becomes zero as well, because knowledge transmitted without ethics can become a dangerous weapon for society.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that in preparing future teachers, the concepts of professional deontology and pedagogical identity are complementary strategic components. The harmony of duty and personality is decisive: if professional deontology defines external professional obligations and rules of “what should be done,” pedagogical identity shapes the internal conviction of “who am I as a teacher?” Only at the point where these two concepts merge does a pedagogical “self” concept emerge.

Moral stability is essential. In today’s informatized society, a major cause of ethical crises is the lack of deontological knowledge among teachers. The teacher must perceive their duty (Bentham’s “obligation”) not merely as a legal requirement, but as an inseparable part of their identity (personality).

Social responsibility is also crucial. In shaping the image of the future educator as a “public servant,” deontology

serves as a “moral compass,” enabling professional responses to various controversial situations on social media and in public life.

In conclusion, the modern model of teacher preparation must shift its emphasis from the “knowledgeable teacher” to the “ethical teacher” model. A gap in knowledge can be filled over time, but a specialist without moral and deontological immunity can cause the discrediting of the entire education system. Professional deontology helps the teacher find the correct answers to the questions “Who am I?” and “What must I do?” in difficult situations. This, in turn, is one of the key ways to restore public trust in public servants. Therefore, deontology is the external rules (duty), identity is internal awareness (self), and the result is professional immunity.

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