

THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS AS AN ETHICAL MODEL ON THE STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

As a result of globalization, people are faced with large and rapid changes, but also with challenges for which they are not prepared and the reactions to these changes are often not at all in the interest of well-being and development. Today, educators face major challenges despite the various educational reforms and substantial research undertaken over the past decades. At the same time, rapid technological advances and increasing complexities in social life may make it difficult to emphasize morals, values, and ethics and present them through improved curriculum and teaching practices. The emphasis in this paper will be placed on the teacher who, as an ethical model, has a significant influence on the development of students.

Teachers play a decisive role in the cultivation of moral values and ethical behavior of students in schools. Through the model of their behavior, teachers influence the formation of perceptions and internalization of students' moral values, encouraging and promoting a sense of ethical responsibility and orienting the decision-making processes. Character, ethical, and moral behavior of teachers, remain an example in the development of students' talent, emotional intelligence, instructions in ethical decision-making, fostering the development of a moral culture, encouraging self-reflection, nurturing a sense of responsibility, integrating traditional and contemporary learning, encouraging critical thinking, and providing mentoring and support. Also, the effects of moral and ethical education are long-term, which are reflected not only in interpersonal and social relations, and impact in the community, but are also clearly reflected in the motivation to study, the encouragement of the development of talents, but also in the inheritance of these values in other generations.

Keywords: *ethical behavior, moral culture, students, development, and school community.*

1. Introduction

Globalization is one of the challenges of the century that every human being is facing. Students are one of the age groups that easily embrace any possible change, but this greatly impacts their daily lives. Being integral members of society, they often experience its impacts in difficult ways. During their student years, they are in a phase of self-discovery, making it more tangible to embrace new concepts. This makes them more likely to try new things without thinking about what might happen. Regrettably, these behaviors often involve negative aspects such as substance abuse or getting involved in trouble. Ultimately, these negative tendencies can affect students' prospects and alter their future success.

The impacts of social media, cultural diversity, and globalization, focus on school values and learning. This paper describes the importance of teachers' moral and ethical behaviors and the subsequent influence on their moral decision-making processes and behaviors outside the educational context.

The question is framed as follows: How does the teacher's ethical behavior impact the development of student talents? It also explores how teachers can address the contemporary moral and

ethical challenges facing students of this generation. In the field of education, the influence of teachers extends beyond the imparting of knowledge. Ethical role modeling by teachers plays an important role in shaping the character and talents of their students and the significance of ethical behavior in education and its direct correlation with the development of student talents. (Govindharajan, 2017)

When it comes to education, we are aware that the effects are long-term, so this paper also focuses on exploring the effects of the long-term, positive moral and ethical influence of teachers on students, exploring how these models shape the main part of the character and that how they affect and manifest in their personal lives, relationships, and contributions to society. If talented students are provided with an appropriately challenging and respectful global curriculum, we can help them prepare to do good work with global impact. (Landweher, 2009)

However, many have observed that Talented children express moral concerns at a younger age and in a more intensified manner than their age peers, and some theorists suggest that moral sensitivity increases with intelligence. (Krege, 2015)

2. Defining od terms

2.1 Ethical behavior

Ethical behavior can be defined as respecting the dignity, diversity, and rights of individuals and groups of people. It is characterized by honesty and fairness in interpersonal, professional, and academic relationships and research and scholarly activities. In defining the term ethical behavior, the following definitions from the Oxford Dictionary were used:

- "Dignity" - true value, excellence; high rank or estimation
- "Variety" - being different in nature or qualities; different kind; variety
- "Equity" - equity; recourse to the principles of justice to correct or supplement the law;
- "Fairness" - fair = fair, impartial, just, legitimate, according to rules
- "Honesty" - truthfulness; honest = fair and just in speech and deed, not lying, cheating or stealing; sincere; showing righteousness;
- "Respect" - respecting persons = respecting with reverence, respect, or honor; avoid humiliating or offending injuring or interfering or interrupting treat with care spare refrain from offending or spoiling or tempting
- "Right(s)" - a justification, equitable claim, right to privilege or immunity, anything that is entitled to; authority to act in a certain way.

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that examines the reasoning behind our moral life. Critical examination and analysis of the concepts and principles of ethics help to justify our moral choices and actions (Rice, 1999).

2.2 Moral, Morality, Ethics

People do not live in moral or ethical isolation but grow up within particular moral traditions (Reiss, 1999). Morality is a person's or society's idea of what is right or wrong, especially regarding a person's behavior. Ethics are the guiding principles that help individuals or groups decide what is good or bad. Generally, the terms ethics and morality are used interchangeably, although a few different communities (academic, legal, or religious, for example) will occasionally make a distinction. Both morality and ethics loosely have to do with distinguishing the difference between "good and bad" or "right and wrong."

Morals, values, and ethics are sometimes difficult to understand because the misunderstandings and misconceptions surrounding them hinder the arrival of the correct explanation. The objective of moral education lies in the fact that it can develop shared feelings with others and make one committed to one's responsibilities and actions (Campbell, 2008). Many people think of morality as personal and normative, whereas ethics is the "good and bad" standards distinguished by a certain community or

social setting. Ethics and morals relate to “right” and “wrong” conduct. While they are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different: ethics refer to rules provided by an external source, e.g., codes of conduct in workplaces or principles in religions. Morals refer to an individual’s principles regarding right and wrong.

Morality and ethics are part of a way of life and cannot be separated from all other aspects of life experiences (Kang & Glassman, 2010). Moral education aims at promoting students’ moral development and character formation. The theoretical framework of moral education is supported by moral philosophy, moral psychology, and moral educational practices (Han, 2014). Moral education is about an inner change, which is a spiritual matter and comes through the internalization of universal human values (Halstead, 2007).

2.3 Educational institutions

Educational institutions play a very important role in teaching the youth about morals and ethics. Their role starts from pre-school age, primary and secondary education, and continues in all educational cycles. In addition to imparting knowledge, schools serve as institutions where young people learn about values, ethical principles, and social responsibilities. Below we list several steps for the way educational institutions function in terms of moral and ethical education:

- **Formal Curriculum:** Many schools incorporate explicit instruction on morals and ethics into their curriculum through subjects like social studies, civics, and religious studies. These classes provide opportunities for students to explore moral dilemmas, ethical theories, and the importance of virtues such as honesty, empathy, respect, and responsibility.
- **Character Education Programs:** Schools often implement character education programs specifically designed to teach students about moral values and character development. These programs may include lessons, activities, and discussions focused on building traits like integrity, fairness, kindness, and citizenship.
- **Ethical Decision-Making:** Schools help students develop critical thinking and decision-making skills, including the ability to evaluate ethical issues and make principled choices. Through class discussions, debates, and case studies, students learn to consider different perspectives, weigh consequences, and apply ethical principles in their lives.
- **Codes of Conduct and Policies:** Schools typically have codes of conduct and policies that outline expectations for student behavior and promote ethical standards. By enforcing rules related to honesty, respect, bullying prevention, and academic integrity, schools create a culture that values ethical behavior and holds students accountable for their actions.
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** SEL programs, increasingly integrated into school curricula, focus on developing students’ social and emotional skills, including empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, and relationship-building. These skills are essential for cultivating moral character and promoting positive interactions with others. (Bler, 2007)

2.3.1 Moral and Ethical Challenges in Education

As a result of globalization, people are faced with large and rapid changes, but also with challenges for which they are not prepared and the reactions to these changes are often not at all in the interest of well-being and development. Educators are currently facing major challenges despite the various educational reforms and substantial research undertaken over the past decades. At the same time, rapid technological advances and increasing complexities in social life may make it difficult to emphasize morals, values, and ethics and present them through improved curriculum and teaching practices. We will list the following as the main ethical issues in education:

- **Social Inequity:** One of the biggest ethical issues that schools face is social inequity. Education institutions often fail to address the problems that arise thanks to the inequalities between different children because of their economic, ethnic, and other family backgrounds.

- **Cheating:** Cheating has been a prominent historical issue in every school. While it is challenging to tackle this problem thoroughly, there are things schools can do to minimize it. Assisted cheating is now becoming more popular and one of the most significant ethical concerns education providers face.

- **Social Diversity:** In multicultural countries and neighborhoods, it is vital for every place of education, especially public schools and colleges, to aim for ethnic and social equality in what is offered. Students from ethnic minorities and diverse backgrounds should not feel left out.

- **Bullying:** Bullying is a huge ethical problem in many schools. It is no surprise at this point, and pretty much everyone knows that some children are going to face some form of bullying in schools. However, the institutions often brush away the signs of bullying and ignore it even when they see it happening. Every school could organize multicultural festivals and ethnic sports to make such students feel included. Aiming to provide ethnic equality should not be used as a blanket statement. Instead, steps must be taken as ethnic and social inequity can become one of the most significant ethical issues in any place of education. (Copyleaks 2022)

3. Role models in schools

Role models possess qualities that inspire others to imitate them, fostering meaningful connections in the process. Adults, community members, historical figures, and character roles in literature can take the form of role models, (Berkowitz 2011). Role modeling is an effective means that influences students' academic and personality growth besides thriving toward career professionalism (Loh & Nalliah, 2010).

One of the most powerful aspects of having role models in education is the opportunity for students to learn good habits and behaviors. As the saying goes, "actions speak louder than words," and when students see their role models consistently exhibiting positive behaviors, it can profoundly impact their development. Good role models in education demonstrate various positive behaviors, including responsibility, respect, perseverance, and a strong work ethic. These behaviors not only help students excel academically but also prepare them for success in their future careers and personal lives. (MARIE, 2024) An individual may not be skillful but the display of an appropriate attitude could perceive the person as exemplary (Vescio, Wilde & Crosswhite, 2005).

3.1 Teacher as a Role Model

Teachers have a significant responsibility beyond just educating students; they also have a crucial role in influencing their moral and ethical growth. Positioned as both educators and role models, they are entrusted with shaping the future generation. Their duties extend beyond imparting knowledge to include character education and guiding students towards leading morally upright lives, thus contributing significantly to societal development.

Concerning the description of a good teacher, Harmer (1998), concludes that:

- The teacher makes their lesson interesting,
- A teacher must love her job,
- The teacher has his personality,
- The teacher has lots of knowledge, not only his subject,
- A teacher is an entertainment,
- Teachers, it is an example of behavior, ethics, and communication.

The character and personality of the teacher are crucial factors in teaching and learning in the classroom, and building the relationship between the teacher and the students is more essential than the teaching process itself. (Narinasamy, Vol. 5, No. 6; 2015) "Teachers should be the best minds in the country." Students seek advice and guidance from teachers and are not only interested in learning

lessons but are also interested in following their life lessons. That is why teachers should inspire students by their example to follow good habits, not bad ones. (Govindharajan, 2017) This has often been seen as one of the topics of debate between analysts and researchers where some of them argue that teachers should focus mainly on academic teaching and professional development, while others claim that teachers should set an example for the values they seek to instill to their students. Relating to the role, a teacher must provide a good attitude functioning as a role model to the construction of students' good traits – so-called good teacher (Hasnah, 2019)

The purpose of education extends beyond simply imparting knowledge and focusing solely on students' skills. It should also prioritize instilling essential aspects of their lives such as character traits like honesty, discipline, self-esteem, responsibility, respect for oneself and others, and trustworthiness. These qualities significantly impact relationships with peers, teachers, families, and the environment. Therefore, teachers bear a noble responsibility to foster virtues in education and shape students' attitudes. Their role as role models should be evident throughout the teaching and learning process across different subjects. This approach contributes to students' intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development. A teacher needs to help students resolve conflicts constructively, Teaching Students to be Peacemakers focuses on creating a cooperative context in which all participants seek mutual goals. (Marvin N. Berlowitz, 2005)

Teachers play an important role in the lives of students, not only to become successful in their careers but also to help them become good people in society and good citizens of the country. Teachers know that students are the future of any nation. (Govindarajan, 2017) They are the most important agents in shaping students' education and bringing about changes and innovations in educational practices. (Bakness, 2010) In terms of the broader context of ethics in education, Kohlberg's (1969) stages of moral development provide a theoretical framework for understanding how students' ethical reasoning evolves. This theory suggests that teachers, by promoting ethical discussions and modeling moral behavior, contribute to the moral development of their students. (Langdon, 2011)

3.2 Teacher influence on the moral cultivation of their students

Teachers are considered as second parents and it is undeniable that they play a very important role as models and examples of morality and ethics for their students. Teachers should model appropriate traits as they not only have an innate duty to disperse knowledge but also to develop students into good human beings (Campbell, 2003; Schwarz, 1998). When teachers consistently demonstrate compassion, honesty, and ethical behavior, they provide students with clear examples of how to behave well. This sets a standard for students to follow, and they learn these lessons quickly, especially at a young age. According to researchers, the socialization and familiarization of the school environment, along with the cultivation of appropriate moral and ethical values through teacher modeling and explanation, significantly impact children's self-esteem. Teachers regularly discussing positive and negative values with students and incorporating character education into their teaching can have a profound effect on how students view themselves and their place in the world. (Nashir, 2013).

The impact of engaging students as often and actively in conversations about what is right and wrong and giving students opportunities to think and talk about these issues helps students develop their moral compass. Teachers encourage students to think deeply about difficult moral issues by discussing them openly and taking concrete examples from everyday life that they experience. This not only helps students become better at moral reasoning but also allows them to relate moral ideas to real-life situations they may face.

Creating a supportive and educational environment is key for teachers in elementary schools. When teachers show empathy, respect, and understanding towards their students, it fosters a sense of trust. This trust makes students more open to learning about morals and ethics. It also encourages them to engage more in discussions about these topics, leading to further moral and ethical growth. It is the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others. (Pala, 2011)

4. Long-term effects on students

Teachers' positive influence on students' morals and ethics can have a lasting impact on their lives, affecting not only their personal growth but also their relationships and contributions to society. A large number of studies and research have proven these effects and consider them to be very significant. For positive outcomes of motivated learning, it is the quality of motivation that is decisive (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These qualities play a big part in how kids grow and decide what to do.

Firstly, when teachers model good moral and ethical behavior, it can shape students' character and values. Students who have teachers as positive role models are more likely to develop traits like honesty, discipline, respect, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility. These qualities not only benefit students personally but also influence how they interact with others and contribute to their communities. By observing and learning from ethical teachers, students internalize these values and carry them forward into their lives beyond the classroom. (Yasin, 2018; Wibowo, 2020; Rukmana, 2020).

Additionally, teachers impact how students get along with each other. When teachers show respect, kindness, and fairness, it creates an atmosphere where students treat each other the same way. Students who witness positive behavior like this are more inclined to be helpful and build strong friendships. The positive moral and ethical teacher's influence on students can be seen in the way students contribute to society. When students learn from teachers who emphasize good values, they are more likely to engage in actions that benefit their communities. This could be through volunteering, helping others, or being active participants in community projects. Students whom morally upright teachers have influenced are more likely to engage in community service, philanthropic activities, and advocacy for social justice (Cipolle, 2010; Allsup & Shieh, 2012).

Teachers who show students how to make good decisions based on morals and ethics can have long-lasting effects. When students learn from teachers who think critically about right and wrong, they better understand complex moral problems. This helps them make fair decisions and stick to important human values in different situations. Also, good teachers can help create a community where people care about doing the right thing. Students who learn from these teachers are likelier to stand up for justice, equality, and good behavior in society. They might speak out for human rights, work towards peace between people, and fight against unfair actions.

Teachers who teach good values can help keep these important ideas alive for future generations. Students who learn from these teachers are more likely to pass on these values to their kids, ensuring that good morals and ethics remain important in society. The best teacher is the one who is an example to his students. Teachers and tutors should primarily follow and practice what they preach. They should adequately use moral values in the right way in daily life to inspire their students. (Aymen, 2023)

5. Students' reception of moral behaviors in school

Teachers in schools have a multifaceted influence as role models on their students, influencing their moral and ethical development.

- Moral behavior and individual character

While serving as positive role models is important, educators also have an impact on students' moral development through their daily interactions with them. These interactions include their capacity to recognize and understand students' perspectives, their willingness to accept and learn from moral mistakes, their moral fervor and idealism, their generosity, and their ability to support students in developing moral reasoning without compromising their moral authority. (Ascd, 2003)

- Emotional Intelligence and the Connection with Empathy

Teachers with high emotional intelligence and empathy can positively influence students' moral development. They demonstrate understanding, compassion, and fairness, fostering an environment of care and respect. Research suggests that students who perceive their teachers as empathetic and

emotionally intelligent are likelier to internalize moral values and exhibit prosocial behavior. (Saarni, 2011)

- Ethical decision-making and appropriate guidelines

Teachers are the ones who guide ethical decision-making in schools. Open discussions, moral reasoning activities, and case studies help students develop critical thinking skills and make informed ethical choices (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping their moral decision-making processes by teaching students how to navigate ethical dilemmas and apply life teachings.

- Moral culture and the importance of its cultivation

Teachers are dedicated to the fulfillment of their mission, and promote honesty, respect, and justice, creating the classroom environment that encourages ethical behavior. The importance of moral culture in schools should be emphasized because it improves the moral development of students and encourages positive social interactions. Teachers are the main actors who contribute to the development of moral culture in the classroom and the school community (Bhat, 2019).

The way students see and understand their teachers' moral actions in school is super important. It influences how they make moral choices and act outside of school. (Nwile, 2022)

First, students learn from watching their teachers and copying what they do. They see their teachers as examples of how to act ethically. When students see their teachers being honest, kind, fair, and caring, they start to think those things are important too. They start to act the same way in their own lives. Second, the bond between students and teachers matters. When teachers and students have a good relationship, students want to be like their teachers. If teachers are kind and supportive, students look up to them and want to be good like them. When there's trust between teachers and students, it's easier for students to learn good values from their teachers. (Platz, 2021)

Conclusion

Through the model of their behavior, teachers influence the formation of perceptions and internalization of students' moral values, encouraging and promoting a sense of ethical responsibility and orienting the decision-making processes. Character, ethical, and moral behavior of teachers in education, remains an example of training not only in teaching, but also in the development of their talent, emotional intelligence, instructions in ethical decision-making, fostering the development of a moral culture, encouraging self-reflection, nurturing a sense of responsibility, integrating traditional and contemporary learning, encouraging critical thinking, and providing mentoring and support. So it is obvious that teachers play a decisive role in the cultivation of moral values and ethical behavior of students in schools.

Teachers with their role and mission contribute to the unique development of students, equipping them with the ability to orient moral challenges and make ethical choices in their personal lives and implement them in the wider society. The influence of teachers as role models significantly affects the moral, and ethical development of students, making them more responsible individuals in society. Also, the effects of moral and ethical education are long-term, which are reflected not only in interpersonal and social relations, and impact in the community, but are also clearly reflected in the motivation to study, the encouragement of the development of talents, but also in the inheritance of these values. in other generations.

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