RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# Ethical Values Among Students: A Case Study of the University of Loralai

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**Abstract:** *The present study was conducted on the perceptions of students regarding the ethical values among students at the university level. According to a current research survey, ethical values are highly appreciated among students in the Education department. Students have a passion for care, honesty, respect and fairness among each other. It was found that students engage in academic activities, maintain university property, and share belongings. They show tolerance, apologize for mistakes, respect senior and female students, and do not cheat. They complete assignments on time, maintain cleanliness, communicate knowledge, and follow university rules. They also respect and return belongings to friends. A simple random sample technique was used for taking data from respondents. The population was students of the Education Department at the University of Loralai. Fifty respondents were taken as a sample from the Education Department of the University of Loralai. Data was collected by using a points Likert scale having options 'Strongly Agree,' 'Agree,' 'Neutral,' 'Disagree,' and 'Strongly Disagree.' The collected data was analyzed through simple percentages and frequency. Major findings of the study showed that there are positive effects of Ethical values among students of the University of Loralai.*

## Introduction

Based on the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, ethics is a branch of philosophy that studies how people behave according to rules, provides a scientific explanation for the need to uphold moral principles, upholds systematic moral values, and challenges the values of social structures. It has been studied for at least two millennia. Sert, 2020; Kaya, 2015; Akin and Ozdasli, 2014). Throughout history, philosophers have frequently offered a response. It is possible to sum up their straightforward message as "the lack of application of ethical values." King Salomon, Confucius, Mencius, Lao Tse, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Jesus, and Buddha were among the many individuals who discovered a fundamental way of living many centuries ago by simply putting the needs of others before their own and by rising and awakening to the principles of Honesty, Fairness, Respect, and Care. Ever since the dawn of civilization, ethical behavior has been of great importance to countless philosophers, educators, and intellectuals who shared their knowledge and insights with followers, communities, governments, and other individuals (Honderich, 1995; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Ethical principles serve as a guide for behavior, assisting in the determination of suitable conduct (Oretal, 2021). The definition of ethics, according to Ugurlu and Sert (2022), is "describing how to respond to unpredictable situations that we encounter in daily life." Kizil et al. (2015), Robbins and DeCenzo (2007), Tas and Bulut (2020), and other scholars claim that ethics is the study of moral concepts that form the foundation of students' social and interpersonal relationships, such as values, norms, rules, right-wrong, good-bad, duties, and obligations. Humans are unique among animals in that we are able to progress continuously by applying reason, which is backed by moral values (Holmes, 2003).

To achieve more prosperity, pleasure, tranquility, and quality of life, it is important to recognize that

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ethical standards are advantageous in all areas of life—material, mental, and spiritual. Then, we must begin implementing these benefits into our daily behaviors. The connection between a contented, peaceful life and moral principles is intriguing because it makes learning, understanding, greater zeal, achievement, and success easier. Thoughts and deeds awaken virtues such as accomplishment, help, care, service, contentment, humility, tolerance, honesty, respect, responsibility, gratitude, compassion, friendliness, selflessness, generosity, and fairness. Everybody is pursuing an unceasing quest for honesty and advancement. These are only moral principles, character traits, or characteristics that are freely given to all!

Moral values held by the student may have a big impact on the decisions and actions they make in the actual world. People are forced to change the way they live when they recognize the potential for their moral actions and beliefs to greatly benefit society (DeRoche & Williams, 2001). Through education at all levels, people will be able to establish the conditions that support genuine and universal ethical behavior. A more fulfilling life will be largely dependent on education, which is becoming an increasingly moral undertaking with zeal and integrity (Bell, 2002; McGrath, 1994). In order to become the author of one's own acts rather than merely a conduit for the plans and wishes of others, education is meant to help both people and society liberate the ethical self in each other (Breeden, 2001; Chrismer, 1998). Ethical ideals nourish ethics. Whether it's business ethics, media ethics, research ethics, environmental ethics, or character education, every notable profession and every institution that considers itself to be worth anything has its own "something ethics" to declare (Ginsburg, S., Regehr, G., & Lingard, L., 20)

The ultimate objective of education is to develop students ethically as well as their capacity for rational thought, self-sufficiency, and information acquisition. Furthermore, it is the duty of university education to generate graduates who apply their knowledge to further societal welfare. The fact that practically all professional bodies have written codes of ethics that members are required to abide by is evidence of the importance of ethical knowledge. Numerous studies demonstrate that graduates are becoming less aware of ethics and how to apply them, which is having a negative impact on society. Graduates' ethical development has been steadily declining for a variety of causes. Some of these include the focus on the development of the child in the home from an early age, the breakdown of family structures, the idea that knowledge should be independent of religion and social context, the removal of explicit ethical content from study materials, the quick fix mentality, and the financial pressure to teach courses that are focused on the market. This study is a component of a larger effort to investigate these ethical challenges in higher education by emphasizing the need for a model that aids in students' moral and ethical development.

## Statement of the Problem

Numerous scholars have noted that while ethical values among students are declining generally, the situation at universities is particularly concerning. It has been observed that ethical concerns are becoming more prevalent in professional education, particularly when it comes to the impact of technology on educators, students, society, and educational institutions. The institution and society are suffering as a result. There was a similar belief at the University of Loralai that students' ethical values are worse in professional learning courses than in courses delivered using professional methods. Therefore, it is necessary to study and investigate the state of ethical development in professional learning at university and suggest some ways that can help reduce the risks of factors involved in encouraging students to engage in unethical behavior.

## Objectives of the Study

There were four (four) primary goals for this study, all of which were related to one another and centered on moral principles, virtues, or character traits. The following four goals were intended to be achieved:

1. To investigate the perception of honesty among university students.
2. To develop a passion for fairness among university students.
3. To develop and pilot an instrument to assess care among university students.
4. To develop an instrument to describe the status of respect among university students.

## Significance of the Study

A thorough literature analysis led to the synthesis that produced a solid foundation of 12 developing needs, which helped to clarify and validate the goal of this study. To grow both personally and as a member of society, these requirements must be met as they arise on a constant basis. These requirements should clarify and address the many questions raised by different investigations and studies, which spark efforts to identify fresh avenues for improvement and a more fulfilling existence. Twelve priority needs that indicated the degree to which ethical beliefs have an impact on college students were investigated and evaluated.

1. The ethical principles held by college students are not well-studied or understood.
2. There are many different ways to define ethical ideals.
3. Terms like "moral values," "ethical values," "virtues," and "character education values" are sometimes used interchangeably.
4. It is challenging for people in general, as well as for academics, instructors, and students, to clarify the significance and practical implementation of ethical principles.
5. During their preparation programs or lessons, teachers, instructors, and professors typically do not take on the role of providing clarifications and interpretations, nor do they engage in conversations regarding ethical ideals.
6. Research on ethical ideals that university students possess and put into practice upon matriculating, during their studies, or after graduation is incredibly few.
7. There are a ton of studies on codes of ethics for most professions and institutions, but they seldom ever outline the advantages and disadvantages of ethical values or point out their repercussions.
8. Elementary schools have some applicable courses on moral principles, virtues, and character education; middle schools have less, and high schools, colleges, and universities have nearly no.
9. Families, coworkers, associations, and friends are thought to nurture the ethical principles of university students and individuals in general.
10. A lot of people discuss ethical principles and point out their importance, but relatively few of them can articulate what ethical values are.
11. The consolidation, application, and advantages of ethical values seem to differ significantly between elementary and university education, which is regrettable given that this is the age of adolescence and the period when students and young people frequently make decisions that influence and/or alter the course of their lives.
12. Those who lack the critical, rational, sensible, and analytical foundation to conduct and make judgments in their families, careers, and other professional and occupational roles will lack knowledge about the definition, implementation, and transcendence of ethical norms.

## Research Questions

The ethical principles held by college students are not well-studied or understood. It is vital to understand the values that serve as the foundation for securing the success and future of university students, as they will almost certainly be leaders in both their professions and society. This is due to the ongoing intervention of the need for the application of ethical values in the various spheres of action and development of humanity. However, not enough studies have been done on college students' ethical attitudes. Furthermore, there was a dearth of studies on university students' ethical convictions both during and after their enrollment. The primary goal of this study was to determine what moral principles university students adhere to. Other inquiries that were pursued were:

1. What ethical values do university students consider most important?
2. What ethical values do university students think others hold as the most important?
3. What ethical values do university students apply most in their life?
4. Do university students consider ethical values useful for people in work, family, society, and education?
5. What do university students feel are the main benefits of applying ethical values to individuals, families, education, and society?
6. Where do university students acquire and develop their ethical values?

7.  Are university students interested in themes related to ethical values?
8.  What ethical values do university students consider are the most important to apply in education?
9.  Do university students consider that it is important to include ethical values in curricula? If so, do students think that educational institutions should offer courses on ethical values?

## Research Design and Population

An instrument was created using a method that used data from this study and a pilot study with a literature review in order to address the primary and secondary research goals.

The literature review contained information from antiquity to the present that supported the idea that morality, ethics, and virtues have always been the foundation of wisdom. Many diverse intellectuals, philosophers, writers, and religious figures have left behind knowledge based on ethical standards as a legacy for populations both past and future. Despite this tradition, people still do not properly apply ethical standards to their lives and work, even if they continue to emphasize how important they are.

Following an initial stage of literature review, this study compiled and verified the significance of ethical ideals from numerous authors. An analysis and summary were conducted on a collection of fifteen lists of ethical ideals that had been developed and chosen by professionals using predetermined criteria. This gave rise to the development of an instrument and a resource for future use. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the topic and validate the study, other empirical research was examined and contrasted with the suggested study.

There is a clear and discernible connection between university students, education, and ethical principles. Many studies have been done on the two aspects of education: morals, virtues, ethical values, and character strengths or attributes. Sadly, few studies have been done with university students, and even fewer have identified the ethical values of university students. Our disparity served as the inspiration for our study.

To address the study questions and evaluate university students' ethical values, a survey or questionnaire-style instrument had to be developed for the purpose of investigating university students' ethical values. The author's final tool was composed of fifteen moral principles. To help grasp the meaning of each ethical principle, a definition was chosen for each one.

Initially, 50 University of Loralai students were used as a sample in a pilot study that developed and tested the instrument. This study, as well as the pilot study, concentrated on the significance and practical application of university students' ethical principles. The study also concentrated on the origins and importance of ethical ideals as well as their utility and advantages in education. Another area of emphasis is the courses that university students recommended should be included in the curriculum linked to ethical ideals. The validity needed for the instrument used for this investigation was supplied by the pilot research in conjunction with the literature review. A few modifications to the pilot study questionnaire—explained in Chapter 3—were added to the instrument chosen for this investigation. Fifty University of Loralai undergraduate students made up the population sample for this study. The students represented not any one college but rather the entire institution. The survey responses were examined, and the collected data was contrasted with the results of the pilot research. The study's data and conclusions led to conclusions and suggestions.

## Definition of Terms

From ancient times to the present, ethics and morality have been extensively studied topics. In this section of the chapter, these concepts have been defined; in the second and third chapters, they have been identified and examined.

These definitions of "ethics" support the goal of the research, which was to better identify the ethical ideals or virtues held by college students and the ways in which these relate to all external and internal facets of human development.

The author wants university students to be able to apply ethical values by providing a clear grasp of them. These term definitions provide a clear foundation for this research and are congruent with the

meanings of those defined in the literature. Because of their interconnectedness and the various combinations that different writers have proposed, the concepts taken into consideration in this study have a wide range of definitions and interpretations that were addressed through the literature review in chapters two and three, both separately and collectively.

To prevent grammatical misunderstandings and pointless or irrational debates, it was imperative for this study to define ethical values. After a careful examination and analysis of the literature, the researcher arrived at the definition that was assumed. After examining the many interpretations, the author came to the conclusion that, for the purposes of this study, the phrases "virtues," "ethical values," and "character education values or strengths" may be regarded as closely connected.

Understanding the many definitions that are provided in specialized dictionaries is also very significant. The aforementioned illustrates how definitions are constantly up for debate because of the various standards and justifications offered by wildly divergent viewpoints or subjective perspectives.

## Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to the students of the Department of Education at the University of Loralai.

## Population of the Study

All the students of the Department of Education constituted the population of the study.

## A sampling of the Study

Out of the total population, 50 participants were randomly selected as the sample size of the study.

## Research Instruments

A close-ended 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was constructed with the help of a supervisor containing 15 items based on the topic.

## Data Collection

The researcher personally visited the sampled university for data collection and distributed the questionnaire among the respondents.

## Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by using percentages as a statistical tool.

## Literature Review

People adhere to a variety of codes of ethics in order to act morally in both organizations and society at large. However, as virtues are concerned with individuals and their lives, it is not a legal question but rather one of wholeness and inner achievement, where virtues play a major role (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). There is a need to understand and provide clarification on terminology related to ethics, virtues, morality, ethical values, character values and strengths, and other types of values because interpretations of these concepts vary greatly and frequently, contradict one another. Because of this, different organizations and disciplines have given education and ethical principles varied meanings, interpretations, trends, and applications. Dictionaries that specialize in various disciplines such as civics, philosophy, education, psychology, religion, morals, and many more are all that are required. As a result, there are many ways to interpret and even manipulate the adaptability and worth of ethical principles in education. While the word "values" is usually avoided, character education places a strong emphasis on the knowledge and development of "virtue," "life skills," "citizenship skills," "moral behavior," etc. Teachers may be aware of the political debates and arguments that are frequently linked to the terms "value," "morality," and "ethics" (Lockwood, 1997).

A survey of the literature may offer answers to the queries "how to apply" ethical values in education, "which ethical values are applied more," and "how it has been interpreted and applied up to now" if the

true ethical values of university students are known. This assessment of the literature outlined the main areas of research that may still need further attention, as well as trends for the implementation of ethical ideals in society and education. As university students are exposed to a wide range of locations, careers, and societal contexts, Eisenberg (1999) highlighted that this should play a major part in their education. The relevance of their ethical basis is further enhanced by these opportunities.

The foundation of this study was the virtues, ethical principles, and character education strengths and values of university students. These ideals combine to form a similar 18-term combination known as ethics and morality. These final terms, which come from the Greek and Roman terms "ethos" and "mores," respectively, denote the norms, practices, guidelines, expectations, and unique qualities of social organizations (Holmes, 2003).

When translating ethos (spelled with a long "e"), moral character or just character usually works best. Though they are not the same, habit and character are linked (ethos is spelled with a short "e"). Character and habits can both be good or detrimental. There are two phases to developing good character. The initial phase happens in childhood when people guide us toward altruistic deeds; however, true excellent character doesn't show up until a person starts making choices on their own to pursue what is right for right's sake. Consistently making wise choices leads to stable conditions that are known as character virtues, including justice, temperance, and other virtues. Thus, deliberately chosen good actions create the virtuous states that form good character" (Devettere, 2002, p. 139).

Greek ethics is not about duty or obligation but about happiness. The goal is emancipation, not legality. It is not based on moral theory but rather on experience. Therefore, Devettere (2002) observed that the need to live an ethical life arises from our most fundamental human need—the need to live well in order to experience enjoyment while we are here. Plato (429–347) saw goodness at the center of human action and believed that virtues applied to the individual and to the ideal state or community were similar. Living properly entails leading a happy and decent life. His morals school, which developed from the Sophists' teachings, was built upon this idea, known as "the Idea of the Good" (Holmes, 2003). The primary theory upheld by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle is the unity of the virtues, which holds that all qualities have a close relationship with one another and are frequently complementary to one another (Honderich, 1995). According to Hindu philosophy, virtue is a means of manifesting with the cosmos, improving oneself and society, and arriving at ultimate realization. Hindu philosophy is around 1500 years older than Plato's. As a result, for ages, beliefs and the teachings of ethics and virtues have served as the foundation for heritage, behavior, and knowledge in many civilizations.

The goal of this introduction to the literature study was to establish a link between the ancient and modern philosophies, reiterating the fact that ethical principles and knowledge have endured throughout history as essential components of human advancement and a more harmonious and peaceful world. In one way or another, the world's ability to achieve a state of balance and peace has been thwarted by the refusal of many of its most powerful leaders to act morally.

## Theoretical Background

In the past, there have been conflicting trends, various criteria, and varying interpretations regarding the relationship between education and ethics, as well as the pressing need to combine education with ethical values and relate them to all areas of knowledge, domains of society, work, and life (Kenway & Bullen, 2001).

Fisher (2003) made it rather evident when he said that an ethical approach that is superficial and linked to self-interest would not encourage moral behavior. On the other hand, a thorough approach driven by the desire to act morally is capable of doing so.

University students should understand the role of ethics in public life as presented by Joseph (2002), who stated, "Three changes in the role of ethics in public life should inform our moral imagination and guide our intellectual inquiry:

1. A new moral consciousness is dawning in which many people who strive to live morally are now insisting that their institutions do the same;

2. While we have often used ethics to humanize and domesticate power, we now live in an era where ethics is power;

3. The private virtues, which gave us our moral strength at the dawning of independent nation-states, must now be transformed into public values appropriate for an interdependent world that is integrating and fragmenting at the same time."

The goal of this study was supported by a summary of the key ideas discussed in the theoretical backdrop and introduction. The following were the key points:

1. (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2007; Tas and Bulut, 2020; Kizil et al., 2015). Ethics studies moral ideas that underpin students' social and interpersonal relationships, such as values, standards, rules, good vs evil, duties, and obligations.

2. College is perhaps the highest level of education and one of the best locations to acquire and put ethical ideas into practice (Edwards, 1996; Eisenberg, 1999; Hutchison, 2002; McNeel, 1994; Morrill, 1980; O'Flaherty & Gleeson, 2004).

3. People and leaders are needed everywhere to think carefully about choices, facts, solutions, and the immediate and long-term effects of their activities. These individuals were typically college students in the past (Chavez, 1999; Cummins, Tatto, & Hawkins, 2001).

4. Applying ethical standards to one's life and career will improve both for the good of the majority of people as well as the specific interests of individuals or organizations. (Bando, 1994; Frankl, 1984; Franklin, 1990; Hall, 2000; Bell, 2002; Bennett, 1993; Butts, 1988; Conroy, 2000; Cummins, Tatto, & Hawkins, 2001; DeRoche & Williams, 2001)

Comparisons and Selection of Ethical Principles Among Various Writers Because there are so many ethical values that might be taken into consideration, it can be interesting to find out which ethical principles are included in results when researchers are discussing ethics. Consequently, compiling the numerous categories that people have developed in relation to virtues, moral values, ethical values, and character values—as well as qualities, strengths, and traits—was difficult after a thorough literature review. Values pertaining to societal, human, and life issues—such as peace, democracy, patriotism, ecological awareness, diversity, multiculturalism, family, work, societal, religious, national, and cultural values—were left out of this study. All of these, though, have a strong connection to ethical ideals when put into practice.

As a base for the instrument, the researcher selected some ethical values that were coincidentally analyzed. The ethical values selected were:

Attentiveness/Kindness, Communication, Comprehension, Courage, Creativity, Decision making, Enthusiasm, Fairness/Justice spirit, Forgiveness/Compassion, Friendliness/Unity, Generosity, Gratitude/Appreciation, Honesty, Humility, Humor, Integrity, Knowledge/Learning, Love, Patience, Perseverance/Hard worker, Respect, Responsibility, Self-discipline/Temperance, Self-fulfillment/Diligence, Self-motivation, Service, Tolerance, Vision and Objectivity.

## Summary

Numerous significant subjects pertaining to morality, virtues, ethical ideals, and character traits were discovered throughout this thorough literature review. However, none of the research 62 that addressed the ethical principles of university students or addressed the research objectives posed for this study could be located.

It is critical to acknowledge that we live in a time when ethics is valued and considered essential to society and education. It's also true that, despite the fact that many people talk about ethics, very few truly get what it means. These folks are abusing the term for political correctness, deceiving others, and concealing their assholes.

The importance of moral principles, virtues, and strong character traits is universal, and many institutions and organizations work to increase awareness of these concepts as well as, occasionally, their application. Although the progress has been gradual, the growing number of organizations founded on enduring ideas and values justifies the efforts despite the challenges. The application of ethical principles to achieve and advance in all spheres of life and work is a convergence of all disciplines. It will be simpler

to improve and find solutions to problems of all types when students, as well as their instructors and professors, are aware of the values they and others hold. There is a wealth of literature on morality, ethics, character, values, virtues, and related topics that touch on many facets of society and life. Nevertheless, most people still lack a clear awareness of the necessity of comprehending ethical ideals and their significance, advantages, applications, and benefits to individuals, families, the workplace, and society as a whole. Although they have heard about ethics, many are unaware of its true significance, implications, and meaning. This statistic confirmed the critical need for study once more, particularly including college students who, whether directly or indirectly, will be the leaders in their respective fields of expertise in the near to medium term.

After analyzing the entire literature review, it was intriguing to see that no writing or research had been done specifically focusing on identifying the ethical values that college students hold or on demonstrating the advantages, significance, applications, and standards that college students attach to these values. This result gave the author's emphasis and the proposed study a lot of support.

## Methodology

The study's design and the research methodology used to ascertain university students' ethical principles are both described and explained in this chapter. It comprises the concept of the research project, the created and carried out pilot study, and the final instrument used to collect the necessary data. It also covers the steps involved in population identification, sampling, data gathering, and the statistical techniques used.

## Nature of the Study

This research was quantitative research design in nature. In this type of research design, the objective of the study was achieved through a questionnaire method, which was sought through the questionnaire made by the current researcher.

## Population of the Study

All the students of the Education Department, University of Loralai, were the population of this research. The questionnaire was distributed to the students of the education department in a random manner.

## Sample of the Study

From the whole Education Department, the current researcher took 50 students as a sample size of the study. This sample was selected through the random sampling technique.

## Research Tools

The current researcher used the questionnaire as a research tool in this study. The questionnaire was made by the researcher and was categorized into two major parts. The first part of the questionnaire was established to obtain knowledge about the demographic profile of the participants, including name, gender and qualification, whereas the second part consisted of 16 statements and aimed to discover the ethical values among students at the University of Loralai. A five-point Likert scale was used to write the items of the questionnaire. For statements 1-16, the scale employed the following:
1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

## Data Collection

The researcher personally visited the sampled university for data collection and distributed the questionnaire among the respondents.

## Findings

- 80 % of students are in favor of the statement that "Students participate with each other in academic activities''.
- 72 % of students agree with the statement that "Students take care of university property''.

- 68 % of students agree with the statement that "Students help each other in their tasks''.

- 60 % of students are in favor of the statement that "Students share their objects with one another''.
- Seventy-six students agree with the statement that "Students show tolerance for differences from other students''.
- 64 % of students agree with the statement that "Students apologize for their mistakes''.
- 64 % of students agree with the statement that "Students give respect to senior students''.
- 86 % of students strongly agree with the statement that "Students give respect to female students'' while only 14 % of students disagree.
- 88 % of students agree with the statement that "Students do not cheat in the exam''.
- 74 % of students agree with the statement that "Students return everything that belongs to their friends''.
- 66 % of students agree with the statement that "Students don't place blame on other people for their own failure''.
- 68 % of students agree with the statement that "Students never take advantage of the kindness of others''.
- 86 % of students agree with the statement that "Students finish class assignments within time limits''.
- 58 % of students agree with the statement that "Students keep desks clean and neat without being reminded''.
- 72 % of students agree with the statement that "Students communicate their knowledge among each other''.
- 78 % of students agree with the statement that "Students follow the rules and regulations of the university''.

## Conclusion

Existence of Care

It was found that students participate with each other in academic activities, take care of university property, help each other in their tasks and share their objects with one another.

## Existence of Respect

It was found that students show tolerance for differences from other students, apologize for their mistakes, and give respect to senior students and female students.

## Existence of Honesty

According to the current survey, students do not cheat in the exam. They return everything that belongs to their friends, they do not place blame on other students for their own failings, and they never take advantage of the kindness of others.

## Existence of Fairness

It was found that students finish class assignments within time limits, keep desks clean and neat without being reminded, communicate their knowledge with each other and follow the rules and regulations of the university.

## Recommendations

The ethical behavior of university students is much better, but they should improve their educational and moral characteristics further. Teachers should focus on the ethical behavior of the students so that they will be able to impose 100% ethical values on each other. The board of study should include a subject related to Ethical values at this level because these students are going to be the builders of the future of our new generation.

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