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Values Education and Its Influence on Learners' Behavior and Attitudes at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Sr. Memorial National High School

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Abstract

Values Education is intended to strengthen learners' moral reasoning, prosocial behavior, and positive attitudes toward self, others, and community. However, the extent to which values lessons translate into observable classroom behavior and day-to-day attitudes remains uneven across school contexts. This qualitative descriptive study examined how Values Education influences learners' behavior and attitudes at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Sr. Memorial National High School. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with Values Education teachers and junior high school learners. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns regarding values instruction, behavioral change, and enabling or constraining conditions. Findings yielded four themes: (1) values instruction as a guide for self-regulation and respectful conduct, (2) modeling and consistent reinforcement as drivers of behavioral internalization, (3) reflective and dialogic activities as mechanisms for attitude formation, and (4) contextual pressures that weaken sustained practice of values. Learners reported improvements in respect, cooperation, and classroom discipline, while teachers emphasized that authentic modeling and a supportive classroom climate strengthen values transfer. Challenges included peer influence, limited time for values integration, and inconsistency between school and home reinforcement. The study concludes that Values Education can positively influence behavior and attitudes when delivered through participatory strategies, teacher modeling, and school-wide consistency. Implications highlight the need for strengthened whole-school approaches, teacher capacity-building, and structured opportunities for reflection and application.

Keywords: values education, learner behavior, learner attitudes, character education, qualitative study, secondary education

1. Introduction

Values Education is widely regarded as a foundational component of holistic education because it shapes learners' moral development, interpersonal conduct, and dispositions toward learning and community life. In secondary schools, Values Education supports not only knowledge formation but also behavioral regulation and attitude development, particularly in contexts where learners negotiate identity, peer relationships, and increasing academic and social demands. Research in character and moral education suggests that values are more likely to influence behavior when learners encounter consistent expectations, supportive relationships, and opportunities to practice moral reasoning in authentic contexts (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Lickona, 1991).

Yet, schools often face challenges in translating values concepts into sustained learner behavior. Values lessons may become content-heavy or compliance-oriented, while learners' daily experiences may be shaped by competing social influences, inconsistent reinforcement, or limited opportunities to apply values in meaningful school activities. The social environment—teacher–student relationships, classroom climate, and peer culture—may either strengthen or weaken the internalization of values (Wentzel, 2010). Moreover, attitudes such as respect, responsibility, and civic-mindedness develop through repeated reflection and guided practice rather than one-time instruction (Nucci, Narvaez, & Krettenauer, 2014).

Given these realities, examining how Values Education is enacted and experienced in school settings is essential. This study investigated Values Education and its influence on learners' behavior and attitudes at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Sr. Memorial National High School, focusing on instructional practices, perceived behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, and the contextual conditions shaping implementation.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine the influence of Values Education on learners' behavior and attitudes at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Sr. Memorial National High School. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Describe the Values Education teaching–learning practices implemented in the school;

2. Explore perceived influences of Values Education on learners' behavior (e.g., respect, discipline, cooperation);

3. Examine perceived influences of Values Education on learners' attitudes (e.g., responsibility, empathy, civic-mindedness, learning disposition); and

4. Identify enabling factors and barriers affecting the translation of Values Education into everyday learner behavior and attitudes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative descriptive design to capture participants' accounts of how Values Education is taught and how it influences learner behavior and attitudes in natural classroom

contexts. This design is appropriate when the goal is to provide a coherent, practice-focused description of experiences and meanings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2 Participants and Setting

Participants included Values Education teachers and junior high school learners who were directly engaged in Values Education classes and related school activities. Purposive sampling was used to ensure participants had relevant experiences with Values Education implementation and learner behavior management.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with teachers and focus group discussions (FGDs) with learners. Guides explored: (a) common values-focused strategies, (b) observed changes in learner behavior, (c) learner attitudes and motivations, and (d) supports and constraints. Sessions were conducted in a language comfortable to participants, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving familiarization, initial coding, category development, and theme refinement. Themes were generated by identifying repeated patterns across teacher and learner accounts and linking them to the study objectives.

3.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation (teacher and learner perspectives), member checking (confirming summaries with selected participants), and peer debriefing (reviewing codes and themes with a qualitative research peer), consistent with qualitative rigor standards (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4. Results

Four themes describe how Values Education influences learner behavior and attitudes.

Theme 1: Values Education as a Guide for Self-Regulation and Respectful Conduct

Participants described Values Education as a "behavioral compass" that supports learners in managing emotions, controlling impulses, and showing respect. Teachers emphasized that values lessons become practical when connected to daily classroom situations (e.g., conflict, group work, compliance with rules). Learners noted that values discussions helped them pause, reflect, and choose respectful actions, especially during peer-related tensions.

Participant Responses:

> *"Mas naiisip ko na dapat magpigil kapag galit ako, kasi napag-usapan namin sa Values."* (Learner 8)

> *"Kapag may issue sa klase, binabalikan namin ang respeto at pakikinig."* (Teacher 6)

> *"Hindi na ako basta sumasagot nang pabalang—naalala ko 'yung empathy."* (Learner 5)

These accounts suggest that Values Education supports **self-regulation** and **respectful interaction**, reinforcing behavioral expectations that contribute to orderly learning environments. This aligns

with character education literature arguing that internalized values function as self-guides for behavior, especially when learners practice applying them to real situations (Lickona, 1991; Nucci et al., 2014).

Theme 2: Teacher Modeling and Consistent Reinforcement Drive Internalization

Participants stressed that values are "caught" as much as they are taught. Learners were more likely to adopt positive behaviors when teachers consistently modeled respect, fairness, and calm problem-solving. Teachers noted that behavior improves when values are reinforced across subjects and school routines (e.g., hallway behavior, group tasks, class meetings), not limited to Values Education periods.

Participant Responses:

> *"Kapag nakita ng bata na ginagawa rin ng guro, mas sumusunod sila."* (Teacher 2)

> *"Mas madali kaming makinig kasi hindi naninigaw si Ma'am—pinapakita niya 'yung respeto."* (Learner 12)

> *"Kapag pare-pareho ang paalala ng teachers, mas nagiging habit."* (Learner 10)

This theme indicates that consistent teacher modeling and reinforcement are central mechanisms for values internalization supporting evidence that effective character education depends on adult modeling and whole-school coherence (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Wentzel, 2010).

Theme 3: Reflection and Dialogue Shape Attitudes and Moral Reasoning

Learners highlighted reflective tasks (journals, real-life cases, dilemma discussions) as influential in shaping attitudes such as empathy, responsibility, and fairness. Teachers described how dialogic strategies invite learners to justify decisions, consider consequences, and respect multiple viewpoints helping Values Education move from "rules" to "reasoned commitments."

Participant Responses:

> *"Kapag may scenario, napapa-isip kami kung ano ang tama at bakit."* (Learner 1)

> *"Mas lumalalim kapag may sharing at reflection, hindi lang definition ng values."* (Teacher 8)

> *"Dati wala akong pakialam, pero nung pinag-usapan ang community, narealize ko may role ako."* (Learner 6)

These responses suggest that attitudes strengthen through **guided reflection** and **moral dialogue**, consistent with moral development perspectives emphasizing reasoning, perspective-taking, and reflective practice (Nucci et al., 2014).

Theme 4: Contextual Pressures Limit Sustained Practice of Values

Despite positive influences, participants reported constraints that weaken consistent practice of values. Teachers cited time limitations and competing academic demands, while learners noted peer pressure, social media conflicts, and inconsistent reinforcement between school and home. These pressures sometimes caused a "gap" between what learners know and what they do.

Participants' Responses :

"Minsan alam nila ang values pero nadadala ng barkada." (Teacher 4)

"Sa school okay, pero pag-uwi iba ang environment, kaya bumabalik sa dating ugali." (Teacher 9)

"Kapag tinukso ka online, mahirap maging calm kahit alam mo dapat." (Learner3)

This theme highlights that values-to-behavior transfer is moderated by social contexts and reinforcement consistency. It supports the view that character formation is ecological: school efforts work best when supported by aligned environments and repeated practice opportunities (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Wentzel, 2010).

5. Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that Values Education influences learner behavior and attitudes through self-regulation support, teacher modeling, reflective dialogue, and consistent reinforcement. The strongest reported influences occurred when values were embedded in authentic classroom life conflict resolution, group work, decision-making not merely taught as abstract concepts. This supports character education evidence that programs are more effective when implemented as a whole-school culture rather than a stand-alone subject (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Lickona, 1991).

At the same time, constraints such as limited time, peer influence, and inconsistent reinforcement highlight why values instruction may not always lead to sustained behavior change. These findings imply that Values Education needs structured application opportunities (service learning, advisory circles, restorative practices) and coordination among teachers, parents, and school leadership. Teacher capacity to facilitate reflection and moral dialogue is also crucial, since attitude change depends on learners' ability to reason through dilemmas and connect values to lived experiences (Nucci et al., 2014). Strengthening these supports may improve the durability of positive behaviors and attitudes.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that Values Education at Eliseo C. Ronquillo Sr. Memorial National High School positively influences learners' behavior and attitudes, particularly in promoting respect, self-regulation, cooperation, and reflective decision-making. Learners' internalization of values is strengthened by teacher modeling, consistent reinforcement, and reflective-dialogic strategies. However, sustaining these outcomes is challenged by contextual pressures such as peer influence, competing demands on instructional time, and inconsistent reinforcement beyond school.

7. Implications

For instruction: Values Education should prioritize reflection, dialogue, and real-life applications (case discussions, dilemma-based learning, classroom agreements) to deepen moral reasoning and attitude formation.
For schools: A whole-school approach (shared norms, consistent reinforcement, mentoring/advisory systems) can strengthen values transfer into everyday behavior.
For teacher development: Professional learning should emphasize facilitation skills in reflective dialogue, restorative communication, and values integration across subjects.
For stakeholder partnership: Stronger school–home collaboration can reduce inconsistency in reinforcement and support sustained behavioral outcomes.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate: Informed consent was obtained from participants; confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured.

Conflicts of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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