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An Analysis of Moral Competency Emphasis in Grade 10 Edukasyon Sa Pagpapakatao at Cabuyao Integrated National High School

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the focus on moral competency in Grade 10 Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) curriculum as perceived by students. Using a quantitative method, the study surveyed 150 Grade 10 students from Cabuyao Integrated National High School. A guided questionnaire, aligned with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) of the Department of Education was used to measure students' self-reported understanding and internalization of key moral concepts such as freedom, conscience, dignity, and patriotism. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation on data analysis found that while all moral competencies received moderate emphasis, freedom and conscience received greater emphasis, whereas patriotism and environmental stewardship were less emphasized. There was a significant correlation between students' self-reported use in actual situations and the perceived focus on moral values ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$). The findings highlight the need to strengthen the underemphasized competencies and provide equitable curricular delivery. This research contributes to understanding the effectiveness of values education in developing morally responsible citizens and suggests practical solutions for improving EsP pedagogical practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) is one of the main subjects in the Philippine K-12 curriculum designed to create morally upright and value-driven citizens. At Grade 10, the EsP curriculum reinforces students' moral reasoning through its emphasis on ideas like conscience, human dignity, freedom, and sanctity of life (DepEd, 2022). These are formally stated in the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) to allow a systematic and worthwhile learning process.

However, at Cabuyao Integrated National High School in the school year 2024-2025, there is a perceivable gap between the planned curriculum and the students' classroom experiences. In-formal review from the teachers and the students indicates inconsistencies regarding emphasis on moral values during the process of instruction. Some students indicate that some competencies are given little or no attention, while others are excessively reiterated, which may influence their overall moral development.

This issue is not unique to the Philippine setting. Globally, country such as Japan, placed similar emphasis on moral and values education, integrating ethical development into their curricula through consistent delivery and cross-curricular approaches (Jaegyun, 2024). These international models underscore the importance of coherence between curricular goals and classroom practice—an alignment that is crucial for effective moral instruction.

This study aims to bridge this gap through the quantification of students' attitudes towards the degree to which each moral competency is taught in their Grade 10 EsP lessons. Such knowledge will assess whether the proscribed MELCs have a match in the classroom, and how this process can be enhanced for greater instructional effectiveness and value integration.

1.1. Statement of the problem

This study aimed to explore the moral competencies emphasized in the Grade 10 Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) curriculum and to determine whether there was a relationship between the values students perceived as important and their actual application of these values in daily life.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:
i. What is the perceived importance of each moral value area among Grade 10 students at Cabuyao Integrated National High School during the 2024-2025 school year, in terms of:

- Freedom;
- Conscience;
- Dignity;
- Patriotism
- Environmental Stewardship?

ii. How do the levels of perceived importance differ in the five areas of moral values in the Grade 10 EsP curriculum, in terms of:

- Freedom;
- Conscience;
- Dignity;
- Patriotism
- Environmental Stewardship?

iii. What is the level of real-life application of moral competencies as perceived by Grade 10 students?

iv. Is there a significant relationship between how important Grade 10 students perceive moral values to be and how often they apply these values in real life?

1.2. Research objectives

- To identify which Grade 10 EsP competencies are perceived as most emphasized by students.
- To determine the level of emphasis across the key moral domains.
- To analyze the correlation between competency emphasis and real-life value application.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence is a crucial stage in moral development, with multiple socializing agents affecting it, and schools taking a key role. Nucci (2009) asserts that educational institutions play an important role in shaping the moral thinking and ethical actions of adolescents. The Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP) curriculum in the Philippines, in particular, aims to develop ethically oriented individuals by promoting salient Filipino values like freedom, conscience, dignity, patriotism, and stewardship of the environment. This curriculum is designed to help students learn their places in society and how to make sound decisions that benefit the greater good (Calano, 2018).

Successful moral education has a strong association with the application of active learning techniques. Berry and Kowal (2022), noted that interactive techniques such as role-playing and moral dilemmas improve students' engagement and increase their depth of understanding of ethical concepts significantly enhance students' moral reasoning, as supported by Kohlberg's moral development theory (Carmichael *et al.*, 2019). These methods stimulate learners to think critically about moral issues and apply ethical concepts in practical situations. Despite this, effective application of such methods relies on teachers' readiness and self-confidence in imparting values education. Kakoulli-Constantinou (2021), points out that training gaps among teachers and the lack of adequate support may cause uneven delivery of the EsP curriculum, weakening its potential effectiveness.

Philosophical foundations of the EsP curriculum concur with Max-Neef's (1987) belief that human development must be value-based. According to Max-Neef, fulfilling minimal human needs involves prioritizing participation, identity, and freedom values that are integral to individual and collective well-being. By incorporating them into the learning process, the EsP curriculum aims to attain integral development and facilitate learners in making a constructive contribution to society.

Although holistic in its design, the EsP curriculum as it is practiced in practice is problematic. In the Philippines, Mista *et al.* (2024) note that values education practitioners are plagued by issues of lack of resources, inadequate training, and institutional support. These issues might constrain provision of effective moral education and students' potential to appropriate and enact ethical values. Tackling these concerns lies at the heart of ensuring that the curriculum will be capable of performing its role in creating morally responsible citizens.



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

Descriptive-quantitative correlational design was applied in this research to determine the level of perceived emphasis given to moral competencies and how these correlate with the actual utilization by students when applied in real-life situations. A self-constructed survey instrument, which had been validated by subject matter experts on Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao (EsP), was used to generate the required information.

3.2. Respondents and sampling

The participants of the study were 150 Grade 10 students of Cabuyao Integrated National High School for School Year 2024–2025. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation of different sections and academic strands in the Grade 10 level. This sampling method enhanced the representativeness and generalizability of the result within the target population.

3.3. Research instrument

The study utilized a 25-item Likert-type survey tool designed specifically to quantify the perceived emphasis on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) of EsP. The items were grouped into five core moral competency clusters: Conscience, Freedom, Dignity, Patriotism, and Environmental Stewardship. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test, where a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 demonstrated high internal consistency.

3.4. Research procedure

The study strictly adhered to ethical standards in order to maintain data validity and the safety of respondents, especially since the participants were young students. Approval was secured from the School Principal. Parental consent forms that included the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw were given and retrieved before participants answered the survey questions.

The survey instrument was piloted and validated, which was then distributed during class time with the help of class advisers using standardized instruction by the researcher. Anonymity was ensured by omitting names and personal identifiers; answers were numerically coded.

The data were kept safely in password-protected files, with hard copies placed in a locked cabinet and due to be disposed of securely after the study. All procedures were in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173).

3.5. Data analysis

Data collected through survey were subjected to descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, for the purpose of evaluating the extent of perceived focus on the five areas. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was also employed to examine the relationship between perceived emphasis on moral competencies and their self-reported real-life application by the students.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Emphasis on moral competencies table 1 shows the average perception scores for each moral competency domain

Table 1. Perceived emphasis on moral competency domains

Moral Competency	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Freedom	4.21	0.56
Conscience	4.18	0.59
Dignity	3.89	0.62
Patriotism	3.65	0.70
Environmental Stewardship	3.53	0.68

Source: Field data

Outcomes show that Freedom and Conscience are seen to be most emphasized, possibly because of the level of detail and applicability of the corresponding MELCs (e.g., EsP10MP-Ia-1.1 to EsP10MP-Ie-3.4). Lower emphasis on Patriotism and Environmental Stewardship may imply a call for better contextualization and integration. These findings reinforce Calano's (2018) and Max-Neef's (1987) assertions that such values are foundational to personal identity and societal responsibility.

However, Patriotism and Environmental Stewardship were perceived to receive the least emphasis. This is in alignment with the research by Mista *et al.* (2024), where it was noted that most EsP teachers encounter limitations including insufficient training and institutional support, which translate into inconsistencies in values transmission. The comparatively less focus on such capabilities could indicate challenges in operationalizing these ideas in the classroom environment or the lack of interactive activities, value-based approaches such as those propagated by Berry and Kowal (2022) and Carmichael *et al.* (2019).

4.2. Correlation with real-life application table 2 presents the correlation between perceived emphasis and real-life application of the moral competencies

Table 2. Correlation between perceived emphasis and application

Variable Pair	Pearson r	p-value
Perceived Emphasis and Application	0.63	<0.01

Source: Field data

The moderate-to-strong positive correlation suggests that greater emphasis in class positively influences students' behavior outside the classroom. This finding aligns with Nucci (2009), affirming the value of moral competency-focused instruction.



In addition, it also informs indirectly the arguments of Kakoulli-Constantinou (2021), when instruction delivery is lacking—most notably from teacher preparedness deficits—the potential for effective moral transfer reduces. Accordingly, while the findings hold promise for competencies such as Freedom and Conscience, the reduced focus and possible underutilization of Patriotism and Environmental Stewardship highlight the importance of more specific training and curriculum contextualization.

5. CONCLUSION

This research affirms that moral competencies are integrated in the Grade 10 EsP curriculum but to varying extents. While Freedom and Conscience are properly integrated, areas like Patriotism and Environmental Stewardship need greater instructional support. A strong correlation between perceived emphasis and actual-life usage corroborates that effective EsP learning can promote moral action. Future initiatives should be aimed at content balance as well as strengthening teacher training to more accurately portray all moral areas proportionally.

Curriculum reform initiatives should work towards a more equitable portrayal of all major moral competencies. Teacher training programs also have to work harder to prepare teachers with the competencies and confidence needed to implement values education in a complete and consistent manner. Policymakers and educational leaders are encouraged to make investments in instructional materials, professional development, and contextualized approaches a high priority to ensure that EsP lives up to its mission of creating morally responsible and socially active citizens.

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