

THE ROLE OF ANCIENT GREEK ETHICAL VALUES IN THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS' MORAL IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

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Abstract: The teacher-student relationship has been acknowledged for a long time as a critical element in the learning process, but the spotlight has recently been turned on emotional intelligence (EI) among other factors to determine the quality of the relationship. Emotional intelligence which is characterized as the capacity to sense, interpret, and manage emotions in oneself and in others, has very much to do with the manner in which a teacher communicates, provides support, and meets the needs of his/her students. The study aims at interlinking the contributing aspects of emotional intelligence with the promotion of more effective learning environments by focusing on empathy, respectful communication, and positive classroom climate. By the use of data from current scientific literature and semi-structured interviews with secondary school teachers in Spain and Greece, the research methodology collects both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously (Bracket, 2019). Besides literature review (Hagenauer, Ivanova, & Muhlbacher, 2023), emotional attunement is one of the most powerful attributes which teachers display when playing a role in positively determining the child's behavior, reducing the child's anxiety, and generating the conditions for the child to be intrinsically motivated. Confirmatory of these insights are the interview results: teachers who deliberately engage in emotional reflection and empathetic listening practice have fewer classroom conflicts and more students. Moreover, students of teachers with emotional intelligence describe themselves as feeling "heard," "respected," and "safe to express ideas," which is congruent with the finding that emotional support enhances academic curiosity and participation (Pekrun, 2021). The research also highlights the fact that teacher education programs barely offer any formal EI training. A lot of teachers went on record saying that even though they appreciate emotional sensitivity, they still got very little formal training to develop it professionally. This gap, more often than not, leads to different communication styles between teachers and students that could result in misunderstandings or emotional overload in the classroom, particularly in places where people from different cultural backgrounds are learning. Researches have recently asserted that the incorporation of emotional skills in curriculum and teacher training corresponds not only to great learning outcomes but also to better classroom atmosphere (García-Sancho, Salguero, & Fernández-Berroca, 2017). The research in light of these findings suggests that EI development should be systematically included in the training of teachers, with the use of reflective teaching exercises, supervision groups, and classroom dialogues that promote mutual respect and active listening as the methods. It is also recommended that schools should follow the practice of collaborative learning models that would create room for emotional expression and speak-up for students.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Teacher - Student Relationship; Classroom Climate; Reflective Teaching; Educational Psychology

1. INTRODUCTION

Present-day education is at the mercy of rapid social, cultural, and technological changes, and schools hence have responsibilities not only toward teaching academic learning but also toward instilling ethical values and developing the personality of the student. Hence the question of how to build an individual's moral identity has grown in importance as present societies go through several challenges of individualism, social fragmentation, and the weakening of common value systems. Ancient Greek ethical philosophy offers a serious window into the unfolding of these problems since it offers ideas about the development of character and pursuing excellence. Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle regarded education as a lifelong process of either "forming" the mind or the moral self wherein knowledge and virtue are both one and the same; they consist of the very best kind of human flourishing (Nussbaum, 2010). In keeping with ancient Greek ethics, it was thought that reflection, dialogue, and community participation build moral character. Values such as arete (virtue or excellence) and phronesis (practical wisdom) put decision-making under the conscious mind, responsibility, and an understanding of one's proper place within society. Widely accepted today, these values are part of the curriculum that engenders critical thinking, empathy, and citizenship. But, in reality, the system often favors standardized tests and data-driven decisions, pushing little room for ethical inquiry or character development. Reintegration of ancient ethical concepts into education has necessarily to involve pedagogical approaches whereby students would engage in conversation, interpret narratives, and learn exponentially. Rather than presenting these values as relics of history that do not have meaning anymore, educators could equip students to use these ethical values as a prism through which to examine concrete dilemmas and human relationships-and in this way build a bridge for themselves to connect ethical thought

with concrete reality, creating for themselves an identity that rests on being responsible and respectful toward others. Therefore, placing ancient Greek ethical values within modern education would be an opposite way toward enhancing the moral development (Mintz, 2023).

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The purpose of the research study was to acquire an understanding of the perceptions of students and educators concerning moral development and how such perceptions may have implications in terms of teaching methodology and classroom interaction. (Ruiz Esparza Flores & Sandoval Aldana, 2021). The study population therefore consisted of 200 participants from Greek secondary schools. The population consisted of 150 students aged between 15 and 18 years, along with 50 teachers in a variety of disciplines, including humanities, social sciences, and language education. Stratified random sampling was utilized to ensure that samples were taken from schools that were either urban or rural and represented the academic tracks possible in each. The collection of quantitative data arises from the administration of structured questionnaires directed towards stakeholders' understanding of the selected ethical notions: virtue, responsibility, empathy, and practical wisdom (phronesis). These questionnaires contained Likert-type or scaling items, multiple-choice questions, and scenario-centered prompts in which moral dilemmas were put to the participant for evaluation. Thus, this method was aimed at measuring both the cognitive understanding and application of ethical principles in various situations (Kristjánsson, 2017). Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews held with 20 teachers and 30 students. The topics covered in the interviews included strategies for teaching moral development, students' involvement in ethical issues, and difficulties encountered in the infusion of ethics into the curriculum. Teachers described the methods, activities, discussions, and assessments used in the classroom. The students, however, talked about their reflections on the application of ethical principles in their everyday decision-making. The qualitative approach allowed for a richer understanding of experiences and attitudes that would not have been possible to capture with questionnaire. In parallel to research activity, an exhaustive literature review was conducted to accord a context to the empirical findings. Through the academic databases, namely Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC, a search was performed for publications between 2020 and 2025 on ethical education, character formation, and applications of ancient philosophical frameworks within contemporary pedagogy. Search terms used were "Aristotelian ethics," "Socratic dialogue," "moral education," and "character formation in schools." Reviews of literature considered under inclusion criteria helped identify topics of convergence and divergence, best practices, and where existing educational approaches fall short (Nussbaum, 2010). Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to understand the spread of ethical perception among students and teachers. Mean scores and percentages were calculated to analyze responses toward each item, while correlations between students' engagement and teachers' instructional strategies were investigated. The qualitative data transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved categorizing them into different codes to identify common themes, insights, and difficulties related to promoting ethical development. It was therefore triangulated with survey data to ensure validity and credibility of the results.

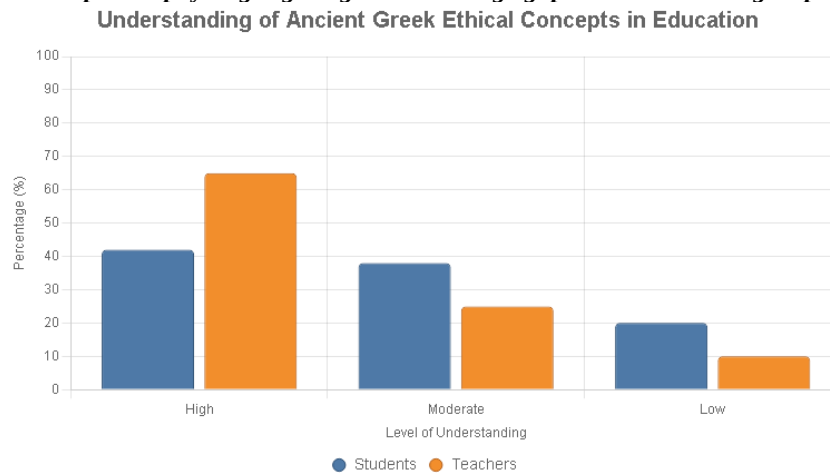
Research findings indicate notable variations in how students and teachers understand and apply ethical concepts derived from ancient Greek philosophy in contemporary educational settings. The survey showed that only 42% of students fully grasped core ethical principles such as virtue, justice, and empathy, while 38% had a moderate level of understanding, and 20% had limited knowledge. In contrast, 65% of teachers demonstrated a clear ability to discuss ethical principles and embed them in class discussions, with 25% showing a moderate understanding and 10% having limited familiarity with the theoretical foundations (Kristjánsson, 2017). Scenario-based assessments were pointing out that practical dilemmas have students struggling most of the time to apply ethical reasoning to the situation and even more so, in cases of peer pressure or conflicting interests. Teachers, on the other hand, while reporting the regular use of case studies and discussion-based strategies to promote critical reflection, mentioned time constraints and curricular limitations as barriers to full integration. Interview data pointed to the fact that students were more inclined to participate in discussions on moral topics if interactive methods, such as group debates or role-play scenarios, were used, while traditional lectures resulted in very little student involvement. The analysis of the recent literature (2020-2025) corroborates these findings and lays particular emphasis on the point that moral education draws heavily from active, participatory approaches that link the abstract principles to the students' daily life situations. In addition, the limited availability of structured ethical curricula has been one of the reasons for the inconsistency in students' moral development, with a definite difference between students in schools with dedicated ethics modules who are better in both comprehension and application. Teachers told that professional development in ethical pedagogy was of great help to boost their confidence and teaching effectiveness. However, the availability of such training is not uniform, and rural schools in particular have difficulties offering specialized workshops. On the whole, the findings indicate that there is a great demand for integrated methods that not only help teachers to develop a better understanding of the theory but also provide students with the opportunity to learn

through experience and offer teacher support on a consistent basis, thereby raising the ethical literacy of the entire student population.

3. RESULTS

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Table 1 *The differences between students' and teachers' levels of understanding of ethical concepts from ancient Greek philosophy. highlighting the knowledge gap between the two groups.*



Source: Author research

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4. DISCUSSION

This research study has come up with the results that there is still a big difference between the theoretical comprehension of ethical principles of the ancient Greeks and their implementation in the contemporary classrooms. In general, the teachers manage to show an excellent knowledge of the philosophical ideas, such as virtue, justice, and moral responsibility, while the students have a hard time downloading these concepts from the cloud of abstraction into the area of daily decision-making. The disparity is an indication of a more profound problem in the present-day schooling system, where the moral development is often placed in the shadow of academic performance

and standardized testing . What is more, the research indicates that the students get involved in ethical learning more when it's related to the real world and through the learning methods that are involving. Group dialogues, role-playing, and discussing ethical dilemmas are some of the activities that allow students to critically analyze their decisions, thus, it is creating a more profound and personal interaction with ethical reasoning . (Wang, 2024)

5. CONCLUSION

This research delved into the potential connections between ancient Greek ethics and the modern educational systems of primary and secondary schools. The results point to the fact that among others, justice, respect, responsibility, and self-awareness are still very much alive and usable for character and social behavior building of the students today. But their integration in the school system is often limited and irregular. On the one hand, teachers' moral education is generally accepted but, on the other hand, many teachers experience constraints like lack of time, no or little ethical instruction training, and curricula pushing for academic success rather than character development. Students had a greater involvement, and their moral reasoning's performed at a higher level when they were introduced to ethical concepts through a discussion, real life examples, and reflective activities instead of through an abstract theoretical approach. The schools that mentioned incorporating ethics in all subjects and daily practices, and not only in isolated lessons, reported significant improvements in interpersonal relations, teamwork, and classroom atmosphere. To enhance the effect of ethics education, schools must introduce a systematic professional development program for teachers, set aside time for discussions on ethics under guidance, and practice values-based thinking in all learning areas. This is a way of nurturing the students not only as learners but also as responsible and considerate members of society. All things considered, ancient Greek moral principles can be relied upon as a major educational resource in our times, as long as they are delivered consistently, reflectively, and in relation to the students' everyday experiences.

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