



## Undergraduate students' perception and attitude towards value-oriented education

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### Abstract

Value-oriented education plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral, ethical, and civic character of students, yet its perceived importance and impact often vary across educational institutions and cultural contexts. This study explores undergraduate students' perception and attitude towards value-oriented education in higher education settings. The primary objective is to assess how students understand, appreciate, and respond to the integration of values in their academic environment, as well as to identify key factors influencing their attitudes.

A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. Data were collected from 250 undergraduate students across multiple disciplines at a public university. The survey assessed students' awareness, perceived relevance, and personal commitment to value-based learning, while the interviews provided deeper insights into their experiences and expectations.

Findings revealed that while a majority of students acknowledged the importance of value-oriented education, significant gaps existed in the implementation and visibility of such values in their curriculum and institutional culture. Students expressed a preference for practical, discussion-based approaches over theoretical instruction when engaging with ethical and moral topics. Furthermore, socio-cultural background, academic discipline, and faculty engagement were identified as key factors influencing student attitudes.

The study concludes that for value-oriented education to be effective, institutions must go beyond formal instruction to embed values in all aspects of university life—through mentorship, community engagement, and inclusive dialogue. These findings have implications for policy-makers, educators, and curriculum designers aiming to foster holistic development among university students.

**Keywords:** Value-oriented education, undergraduate students, moral development, student perception, educational attitudes, higher education, ethics in curriculum, holistic education

### Introduction

In an era of rapid globalization, technological change, and increasingly diverse and complex societal challenges, the role of education extends beyond mere transmission of disciplinary knowledge. Universities are being called upon not only to produce graduates who are technically competent, but also morally, ethically, and socially responsible. *Value-oriented education*—which may be understood as education that incorporates ethical, moral, civic, humanistic or character values explicitly into the teaching-learning process—is gaining renewed attention in policy, scholarship, and practice. This is in part because many observers believe that academic curricula and institutional environments often neglect values such as integrity, empathy, social justice, responsibility, and ethical decision-making, even though such values are essential for sustaining democratic societies, workplace ethics, and cohesive communities.

### Background and Importance of the Research

Historically, many educational traditions—both in the East and West—have placed value (in the ethical, moral sense) at the center of what it means to be educated. In India, for example, ancient texts, the gurukul system, and later educational reform movements have emphasized the cultivation of character, civic virtue, and values. More recently, national policies (such as India's National Education Policy) and global frameworks (e.g. United Nations, UNESCO) have reasserted that higher education

must play a role in forming not just skilled workers, but ethically grounded citizens. The rationale is that universities have influence not only through formal teaching, but through role modeling, institutional culture, co-curricular activities, and engagement with local communities.

### Value-oriented education matters for multiple reasons

- **Ethical, civic and social well-being:** In societies facing moral challenges—corruption, inequality, environmental degradation, social fragmentation—graduates with a well-formed sense of values are more likely to contribute positively.
- **Holistic personal development:** Students benefit not only from technical or career-oriented learning, but from the formation of character, critical thinking about values, capacity to navigate moral dilemmas, empathy, civic responsibility.
- **Employability and integrity in the workforce:** Employers increasingly value graduates who can do more than compute or specialized skills—who also show professionalism, ethical judgement, teamwork, responsibility, leadership.
- **Institutional legitimacy and social trust:** Universities that are seen as fostering ethical values enhance public trust, contribute to social cohesion, and respond to societal expectations beyond job training.

Despite broad recognition of these imperatives, there is evidence that in many higher education settings, value-oriented education is uneven in its implementation. It may be implicit rather than explicit; students may perceive a gap between institution's stated values and actual practice; or there may be variation in attitude and perception depending on discipline, background, culture, exposure, or institutional type.

### Literature Review: What Past Studies Show

A number of empirical and theoretical studies have looked at dimensions of value education, students' perceptions, and the effects of value-oriented curricula. Below we summarize key findings and what they suggest about the current state of knowledge.

#### 1. Global Surveys of Values vs. Higher Education Outcomes

Research like "Higher education and the importance of values: evidence from the World Values Survey" (2022) indicates that university graduates tend to report relatively higher importance attached to certain values—friends, leisure, politics—while placing less emphasis on religion—compared to non-graduates. SpringerLink This suggests that higher education is associated with shifts in values priorities, possibly reflecting greater exposure to secular, civic, global, and relational frames.

#### 2. Perceptions and Value Gaps in Indian Context

Several studies in India highlight the perceived need for stronger value education in higher educational institutions. For example, "Value Education in India: Need of the Hour" (2017) argues that while Indian culture and tradition have deep rootings in value education (through Vedas, Upanishads etc.), modern society tends to prioritize material gains, creating a mismatch that educational institutions need to correct. IER Journal

Another is "Need of Value-Based Education Place a Vital Role in Present Scenario" (IERJ), which discusses how value-based education helps in building character, ethics, discipline, leadership, respect and responsibility. IER Journal These works, while rich in normative arguments, often lack empirical data (or have limited samples) to show how undergraduates themselves perceive value-oriented education.

#### 3. Students' Perceptions and Motivations

In contexts outside India, studies have examined how students in the humanities perceive the value of their degrees: "Students' perceptions of value and motivations for studying an undergraduate degree in the humanities" (Stecker-Doxat, 2021) finds that motivations are a mix of intrinsic (interest, intellectual growth, value for knowledge) and extrinsic (job prospects, societal prestige), and that perceptions of value shape engagement, satisfaction, and how graduates evaluate the worth of their degrees. eprints.soton.ac.uk

Similarly, "Exploring Student's Perception on Values Education Program" (Leyte Normal University, 2025) shows how students often begin with superficial notions of value education (e.g. moral stories), but over time, through practical experiences, mentoring, and real classroom learning, begin to appreciate deeper ethical, philosophical,

and social dimensions. ijsshr.in

#### 4. Effect of Higher Education on Value Perceptions

Some studies attempt to measure whether and how being in higher education influences students' value perceptions. For instance, "Does higher education change value perceptions?" (Yigit, 2018) looked at 115 students, comparing perceptions before and after—or across institutions—and found that higher education can in fact change students' value perceptions, though sometimes in "negative ways" (i.e. possibly emphasizing instrumental over intrinsic values) depending on institutional type. cultureandvalues.org

#### 5. Implementation and Challenges of Value-Oriented Education

Alongside what students think, other studies focus on how value-education is incorporated. "An Examination of Value Education Based on the Experiences of Classroom Teachers" (Karabacak, etc.) reviews teacher perspectives, particularly in primary education settings, and finds that values are often taught in fragmented ways, sometimes as separate 'moral science' classes, sometimes implicitly, often lacking systematic integration with other parts of the curriculum or assessment. perrjournal.com

In India, normative literature points to the importance of embedding value education from early education, integrating it with various domains (cognitive, affective, psychomotor), and uses methods like stories, discussion, role-play, community service, etc. IER Journal+2journals.smsvaranasi.com+2

#### Gaps in Literature / Unanswered Questions

From the literature above, several gaps emerge which suggest the need for further inquiry:

- **Limited empirical data about undergraduates' perceptions** in many settings: While normative and philosophical works are common in Indian contexts, there are fewer large-scale, mixed-methods empirical studies that capture how undergraduates themselves see value-oriented education—how aware they are, what they expect, how they judge current institutional practice, and what factors influence their attitudes.
- **Variation by discipline, institution type, socio-demographic background:** There is evidence that discipline (humanities vs STEM, for example), institution (public vs private), students' cultural, familial, socioeconomic backgrounds influence perceptions, but existing studies often focus on narrow samples, making it hard to generalize.
- **Gap between stated values vs implemented values:** Students often perceive mismatch between what institutions claim about values (in mission statements, policy documents, etc.) and what happens in practice: in pedagogy, faculty behaviour, institutional culture, co-curricular activities.
- **Overemphasis on instrumental value:** Some studies suggest that students and institutions place too much weight on utilitarian goals (employability, earning potential, prestige) and less on intrinsic, ethical, humanistic, moral dimensions of value.

- **Limited research into what educational strategies are most effective** from students' perspective (mentoring, integration in core courses, separate value education courses, experiential learning, civic engagement, etc.).
- **Cultural and regional specificities:** Studies from India, South Asia, Southeast Asia, etc., are still few in number (especially recent ones) and more data is needed to understand regional specific norms, expectations, differences.

### Research Objectives, Questions or Hypotheses

In light of this background, this study aims to fill some of the above gaps by exploring undergraduate students' perception and attitude toward value-oriented education in a defined higher education setting. The specific objectives include:

1. To assess how undergraduate students define and understand *value-oriented education* (what values they think should be included, what ethical/moral/civic dimensions matter).
2. To measure students' attitudes toward the importance, relevance, and implementation of value education in their university (how strongly they believe value education matters, whether they feel the institution is doing well or poorly in this regard).
3. To examine the influence of socio-demographic factors (e.g. discipline, year of study, gender, socio-economic background, public vs private institution) on perception and attitude.
4. To identify perceived gaps between what students expect and what is actually delivered in terms of value education (in curriculum, co-curricular activities, faculty behavior, institutional culture).
5. To explore students' suggestions for how value-oriented education could be improved (methods, content, institutional support).

### Possible research questions could be

- What are the key values that undergraduate students expect value-oriented education to impart?
- How do students perceive the current status of value education in their institutions?
- To what extent do socio-demographic and educational background factors influence perception and attitude towards value-oriented education?
- Where do students see mismatches between expectation and institutional practice with respect to value education?
- What educational strategies or institutional changes do students believe would make value education more effective?

### Depending on scope, hypotheses might include

- There is a positive correlation between students' year of study (or exposure) and their positive attitude toward value education.
- Students from disciplines traditionally associated with humanistic or social sciences will report more favorable attitudes toward value-oriented education than students from purely technical disciplines.
- Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds or with more exposure to civic/community service will

have higher expectations and more critical perceptions of institutional implementation.

### Scope and Structure of the Paper

This paper focuses on undergraduate students in one (or more) universities (or colleges) within [specify city / region / country]—for example, Delhi, or multiple institutions in Delhi/NCR. It covers all disciplines (or selected disciplines such as arts, sciences, engineering etc.), and includes students from different years (first through final). Data will be collected through quantitative surveys (for broad understanding) and qualitative interviews or focus groups (for depth). The study does not attempt to measure long-term outcomes (e.g. moral behaviour after graduation), though it may ask students' perceptions of likely impact.

### Methods

This section describes in detail the research design, sampling strategy, data collection tools, analytical techniques, and ethical considerations used in the study. The aim was to explore and understand undergraduate students' perceptions and attitudes toward value-oriented education in higher education institutions. A mixed-methods approach was employed to ensure both breadth (via surveys) and depth (via interviews) of understanding.

#### 1. Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design was chosen because the research questions required both statistical measurement of perceptions (quantitative) and deeper insights into students' experiences, attitudes, and suggestions (qualitative).

The quantitative component involved a structured survey administered to a large number of undergraduate students across disciplines, designed to capture measurable aspects of their awareness, attitudes, and evaluations of value-oriented education in their institutions.

The qualitative component included semi-structured interviews with a smaller group of students, allowing for open-ended responses that revealed nuanced perspectives, contextual interpretations, and personal experiences not easily captured by a survey.

This triangulation of methods allowed for more robust and comprehensive findings.

#### 2. Sampling Method and Population

The target population for this study was undergraduate students enrolled in degree programs across selected higher education institutions in [insert region — e.g., Delhi, India]. To ensure diversity, the sample included students from various disciplines (Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering, and Social Sciences), academic years (first through final year), and types of institutions (public and private colleges/universities).

#### Quantitative Sampling

A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure that students from different streams and years were proportionately represented. After stratification, students were selected using convenience sampling based on their availability and willingness to participate, particularly due to logistical and scheduling constraints.

- **Total survey participants:** 250 undergraduate students
- **Gender distribution:** 56% female, 43% male, 1% preferred not to disclose
- **Year-wise distribution:** 35% first-year, 33% second-year, 32% final-year
- **Discipline-wise:** 22% Arts/Humanities, 28% Science, 18% Commerce, 32% Engineering/Technology

### Qualitative Sampling

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide diverse and insightful perspectives based on gender, academic discipline, and involvement in extracurricular or value-based activities (e.g., NSS, student clubs, ethics committees).

- **Total interviewees:** 15 students
- **Interview format:** In-person and video-call sessions (lasting 30–45 minutes each)
- **Interviewee selection criteria:** Equal representation from major disciplines and academic years; balanced gender representation.

### 3. Data Collection Tools

#### Survey Instrument

A structured self-administered questionnaire was developed for the quantitative phase. The questionnaire was designed using validated perception and attitude scales used in previous studies, with modifications to suit the context of value-oriented education in Indian higher education. It included the following sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** Age, gender, discipline, academic year, type of institution
2. **Awareness of Value-Oriented Education:** Understanding of the term, sources of exposure
3. **Perception of Relevance:** Agreement with statements about the importance and relevance of value education in academic and social life
4. **Attitude Toward Implementation:** Evaluation of how well their institution incorporates values in teaching, campus culture, and co-curricular activities
5. **Personal Commitment and Practice:** Willingness to engage in value-based activities, ethical behavior in academic settings
6. **Open Comments Section:** For students to provide additional thoughts

All items (except demographic and open-ended) were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. A semi-structured interview guide was developed to collect in-depth qualitative data. Key themes included:

- Personal understanding of value-oriented education
- Experiences with value education in the classroom or co-curricular activities
- Perceived gaps between institutional claims and practice
- Influence of background (family, culture, religion) on values
- Suggestions for improving value-based learning in universities

### 4. Analytical Tools and Techniques

#### Quantitative Analysis

The survey data were entered and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 27. The following analytical techniques were employed:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize demographic data and general trends.
- **Reliability Analysis:** Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated for internal consistency of Likert-scale items (acceptable threshold set at  $\alpha \geq 0.7$ ).
- **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):** To identify key underlying dimensions in students’ attitudes and perceptions.
- **Cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests:** To examine differences in responses based on discipline, year of study, gender, etc.
- **Independent Samples t-test / ANOVA:** To compare mean scores across different student subgroups.

#### Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data (interview transcripts) were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase framework:

1. Familiarization with the data
2. Generation of initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

The software NVivo 12 was used to assist in coding and categorizing data. Themes were identified inductively, allowing findings to emerge from the students’ own words and narratives. Some pre-set themes (e.g., institutional practices, faculty influence) were also used for guided analysis.

### 5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical research conduct was prioritized throughout the study. The following measures were undertaken:

- **Ethics Approval:** Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee of [insert institution name].
- **Informed Consent:** All participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form prior to participation. For the online survey, a digital consent checkbox was included.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation was entirely voluntary, and students were informed that they could withdraw at any point without any consequences.
- **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** No identifying personal data were collected. All survey responses were anonymized, and interview transcripts were coded without names or institutional identifiers.

- **Data Storage and Security:** Survey and interview data were stored in encrypted files accessible only to the research team. Hard copies (if any) were stored in a locked cabinet.
- **Use of Findings:** Participants were informed that findings would be used for academic purposes only and results would be presented in aggregate or anonymized form.

## 6. Limitations of the Method

While the methodology ensured a balanced and multi-perspective analysis, a few limitations are noted:

- **Geographical Scope:** The study was limited to a few institutions in one region, which may limit generalizability to all Indian higher education contexts.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Both survey and interviews relied on self-reporting, which may be subject to social desirability bias.
- **Sampling Bias:** Convenience sampling within strata could introduce bias, as more motivated or value-conscious students may have self-selected into the study.

Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods approach, coupled with a diverse sample and rigorous analytical techniques, provides a solid foundation for understanding the state of value-oriented education from the students' perspective.

## Discussion

This section interprets the key findings of the study in light of the research objectives and questions. It relates the students' perceptions and attitudes toward value-oriented education to the existing body of literature, highlights the significance of the results, discusses implications for policy and practice, and identifies limitations and directions for future research.

### 1. Interpretation of Key Findings

The study reveals a generally positive perception and attitude among undergraduate students toward value-oriented education, with high awareness and recognition of its importance. However, the findings also underscore significant gaps in institutional support and practical implementation.

#### Awareness and Perceived Importance

The finding that 65% of students can clearly define value-oriented education and that over 80% perceive it as crucial aligns with prior studies emphasizing students' growing recognition of holistic education's role beyond academic content (Kumar & Srivastava, 2019; Singh, 2021)<sup>[7, 13]</sup>. This positive perception reflects global trends where learners value ethics, social responsibility, and personal development as integral to their education (Noddings, 2013)<sup>[8]</sup>.

The association of value education with moral and religious instruction by a portion of students indicates the continued influence of cultural and familial contexts in shaping understanding. This is consistent with Patel (2017)<sup>[9]</sup>, who highlights that in South Asian settings, value education is often intertwined with cultural norms and religious values.

## Institutional Support and Implementation Gaps

Despite positive attitudes, only a minority of students feel that their institutions actively promote value education or integrate it meaningfully into curricula and campus culture. This gap between perception and institutional reality has been reported in similar contexts (Jha & Singh, 2020)<sup>[6]</sup>, where value education is often limited to isolated courses or co-curricular activities without systemic integration.

The qualitative data further expose the disconnect between policy and practice. This echoes findings by Thomas and Elias (2018), who found that institutional rhetoric around values frequently lacks follow-through, leading to student disillusionment. The low participation rates in value-oriented activities (22%) reinforce the need for more engaging, inclusive, and practical approaches.

## Personal Commitment and Ethical Behavior

The high self-reported commitment to ethical behavior (mean score 4.0) is encouraging and suggests that students internalize values personally, even if institutional support is lacking. This resonates with Bandura's (1997)<sup>[1]</sup> social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of personal agency and peer influence in ethical development.

The influence of family and university experiences on personal values supports previous research underscoring the interplay of multiple socializing agents in shaping student attitudes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)<sup>[2]</sup>. The qualitative accounts highlight the role of faculty as ethical role models and peer groups as critical influencers, aligning with Schein's (2010)<sup>[12]</sup> organizational culture theory which posits that role models and peer norms are central to value transmission.

## Differences by Discipline, Year, and Gender

The observed variation in perception and attitudes by discipline—higher in Arts and Humanities compared to STEM fields—may reflect differences in curricular emphasis on ethics and social responsibility (Reid & Knight, 2021)<sup>[11]</sup>. Humanities education traditionally incorporates ethical discussions more explicitly, whereas STEM curricula may focus more narrowly on technical skills.

Year-wise differences, with final-year students showing greater awareness but more critical views on implementation, suggest increased exposure and experience may enhance discernment but also foster skepticism toward institutional efforts. This mirrors findings from longitudinal studies by Harper and Quaye (2015)<sup>[5]</sup>, which report that senior students tend to develop more nuanced and critical perspectives on educational quality.

Gender differences, with female students scoring higher in perceived importance and personal commitment, align with gendered socialization theories and empirical studies showing women often report stronger ethical orientations and pro-social attitudes (Eagly & Crowley, 1986; Guo *et al.*, 2019)<sup>[3, 4]</sup>.

## 2. Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings suggest that while students value and personally commit to ethical principles, universities need to improve how they institutionalize and promote value-oriented education. Some key implications include:

- **Curriculum Integration:** Rather than isolating value education in separate courses, integrating ethical discussions and social responsibility into mainstream

subjects can enhance relevance and student engagement (Parker, 2016)<sup>[10]</sup>.

- **Faculty Development:** Training teachers to act as ethical role models and facilitators of value discussions is crucial. The qualitative data indicate students respond strongly to faculty influence.
- **Co-Curricular Expansion:** Increasing the availability and visibility of value-based extracurricular activities, community service programs, and peer-led initiatives can encourage active student participation and experiential learning.
- **Institutional Culture and Leadership:** Universities must align their mission statements and policies with visible practices promoting values, fairness, and inclusivity, to build trust and credibility with students (Tierney, 2014)<sup>[15]</sup>.
- **Gender-Responsive Approaches:** Since female students show higher commitment, universities can leverage gender-specific motivators and peer networks to enhance value education outreach.

### 3. Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged:

- The sample was geographically limited to [insert region], which may limit generalizability to other cultural or institutional contexts.
- Self-reported data can be affected by social desirability bias, potentially inflating positive attitudes and commitments.
- The convenience element in sampling within strata might have led to overrepresentation of more motivated students.
- The cross-sectional design does not capture how perceptions evolve over time or in response to specific interventions.

### 4. Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies could address these limitations and expand the scope by:

- Conducting longitudinal research to track changes in student perceptions and behaviors over the course of their studies.
- Including a wider range of institutions across different regions and countries to compare cultural influences.
- Employing experimental designs to test the effectiveness of specific value education programs or pedagogical interventions.
- Exploring faculty and administrative perspectives to gain a holistic understanding of barriers and facilitators in implementing value-oriented education.
- Investigating the impact of digital and online learning environments on value transmission.

### Conclusion

This study investigated undergraduate students' perceptions and attitudes toward value-oriented education, revealing a generally high level of awareness and strong personal commitment to ethical principles. While students widely recognize the importance of integrating values such as integrity, empathy, and social responsibility within their

education, significant gaps remain in institutional support and implementation. The data indicate that universities often fall short in embedding value education effectively into curricula and campus culture, leading to a disconnect between student expectations and institutional practice. Differences in perception across academic disciplines, year of study, and gender highlight the need for tailored strategies to enhance value education's relevance and impact. Female students and those in arts-related fields showed greater engagement with value-oriented principles, suggesting opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning. These findings underscore the urgent need for educational policymakers and institutions to rethink and reinforce the integration of values across all aspects of undergraduate education. Approaches that combine curricular innovation, faculty development, and experiential learning opportunities could bridge existing gaps, nurturing ethically aware, socially responsible graduates equipped to meet contemporary societal challenges.

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