Teachers as Ethical Role Models: Their Influence on Student Character Formation

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Abstract: *In an era where digital influence and evolving societal norms increasingly shape student behavior, the role of teachers as ethical role models has gained renewed importance. This study examines how teachers contribute to student character formation through their moral responsibilities, ethical conduct, and the integration of character education into everyday classroom practices. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilizes a narrative review of existing literature to explore five key areas: (1) the moral responsibilities of teachers in shaping student character; (2) the challenges and barriers teachers encounter in upholding ethical standards; (3) the specific ethical behaviors that positively influence students; (4) the role of schools and policymakers in enhancing teacher ethics training; and (5) the strategies teachers use to embed character education in their pedagogy, along with the effectiveness of these methods. The findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive ethics training, supportive institutional policies, and a strengthened emphasis on moral education in teacher preparation programs. Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of ethically grounded teaching practices in cultivating values such as integrity, respect, fairness, and responsibility among students.*

Keywords: Teacher Role Modelling, Moral Responsibility, Character building, Professional Ethics

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In today's digital age, teachers face increasingly complex decisions that impact their professional image, particularly as some take on roles as social media influencers. While these platforms extend their reach beyond the classroom, they also subject educators to greater public scrutiny. The merging of personal and professional spheres online has raised concerns about how teachers present themselves and how their behavior influences students in person and virtually.

Teachers play a vital role in shaping not only academic outcomes but also students' moral and ethical development. However, teacher preparation programs often emphasize technical skills over ethical formation. In many educational settings, guidance on professional behavior, dress, communication, and social media conduct remains secondary, despite its significance in forming well-rounded students.

Character education is a key component of holistic learning. Without a strong ethical foundation, students may achieve academically but lack the moral reasoning necessary for responsible citizenship. Professional ethics guide teachers' decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and overall contribution to school culture, factors significantly affecting student development. Teachers are role models, embodying values such as integrity, respect, and fairness.

This study is grounded in Social Learning Theory and informed by scholars like Berkowitz, Nucci, and Kohlberg, who argue that students learn moral behavior by observing adults in authority. When teachers consistently model ethical behavior, students are more likely to internalize those values. Conversely, unethical conduct by educators can hinder moral development and erode trust within the school community.

Despite growing attention to character education, a research gap remains in examining how everyday teacher behavior, especially in the context of modern digital challenges, directly influences student character formation. Few studies focus on the observable link between teacher ethics and student values in real-life school settings.

This study seeks to address that gap by exploring how ethical teaching practices shape student character, offering implications for teacher training, policy development, and the cultivation of ethical learning environments.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the teachers as ethical role models in shaping student character and the challenges they face. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are teachers' moral responsibilities that shape student character?
2. What challenges and barriers do teachers encounter in maintaining ethical standards while fulfilling their role as character builders?
3. What are the key ethical behaviors demonstrated by teachers that influence student character formation?
4. How can schools and policymakers enhance teacher ethics training to improve student character formation?
5. What strategies and methods do teachers employ to integrate character education into their daily teaching practices, and how effective are these strategies?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for various stakeholders in the education sector:

- **Teachers**: The study provides a deeper understanding of ethical challenges in teaching and offers guidance to uphold professional conduct, thereby improving teacher-student relationships and fostering a more ethical learning environment.
- **School Leaders**: The insights of this study help administrators understand the importance of initiating and motivating teachers to be committed to establishing a supportive school climate in shaping students' character.
- **Policymakers**: The study contributes valuable information on ethical considerations in education, helping policymakers formulate guidelines and regulations that promote fairness, integrity, and accountability in the teaching profession.
- **Students**: By addressing ethical concerns in education, this study creates a learning environment where students receive equitable treatment, fair assessments, and holistic character development.
- **Future Researchers**: The study serves as a valuable reference for future research on educational ethics, guiding scholars in exploring further issues related to professional ethics and conduct in the teaching profession.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study employs a qualitative approach through a narrative review of existing literature to examine the role of teachers as ethical role models in shaping student character. The scope is limited to literature relevant to secondary education, particularly within the Philippine context, though insights from broader international studies are also considered where applicable.

As a literature-based study, it does not involve the collection of primary data. Therefore, its findings are based on the interpretation and synthesis of existing research. While this allows for a comprehensive and reflective analysis, it also means the study is limited by the availability, depth, and quality of existing literature. Additionally, as a narrative review, it does not follow the methodological rigor of systematic reviews or meta-analyses.

The insights drawn may not be generalized across all educational settings or levels, but they offer valuable perspectives that can inform future empirical research, policy development, and teacher training programs.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' character, extending their influence beyond academic instruction. Many scholars, including Nucci (2014) and Noddings (2013), highlight that teachers are ethical role models who help foster values such as honesty, integrity, and respect. These values are foundational for students' development into responsible members of society. Yet, while this ideal is widely accepted, the literature often falls short of addressing the real challenges teachers face in consistently modelling these behaviors within complex and diverse school environments.

Campbell (2008) notes that concerns about declining student character have placed renewed expectations on teachers to be moral exemplars. However, the realities of institutional demands and cultural differences can make this role difficult to fulfill fully. Teacher professionalism, discussed by Campbell (2003) and Strike and Soltis (2009), is central to ethical teaching. Still, these works present ideal standards rather than exploring how teachers negotiate conflicts between personal values and systemic pressures.

Sockett (1993) argues that a teacher's professionalism must rest on a solid moral foundation, emphasizing that integrity and character are essential, not optional. While this perspective encourages a school culture grounded in respect and justice, there remains a lack of empirical studies showing how teachers implement these ideals daily. Akbari and Tajik (2012) expand this understanding by framing professional ethics such as guidance, relationship-building, safe learning environments, and influence; however, translating these concepts into practical teacher training is an ongoing challenge.

The holistic approach to education championed by Albert Einstein reminds us that character development must accompany intellectual growth. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) support this by showing how character education programs, when paired with strong ethical role models, improve students' empathy, responsibility, and sense of justice. Nucci (2017) emphasizes that encouraging ethical dialogue in classrooms helps students reflect on moral dilemmas, deepening their moral reasoning.

Kohlberg's theory of moral development offers a useful framework for understanding how students evolve from obeying authority to embracing universal ethical principles (Saul, 2024). However, his focus on justice has been critiqued for neglecting relational ethics—an area where Noddings' (2013) ethics of care offers valuable insights. Bandura's social learning theory (1986) underscores the importance of teachers' modeled behavior, but it assumes teachers can consistently demonstrate ethical conduct, which may not always be realistic given external constraints.

Berkowitz and Bier (2005) also highlight the importance of school climate and teacher commitment for teaching, but also for everyday interactions and subtle cues. Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner model encourages teachers to examine their values and actions to promote ethical growth, yet more research is needed on how reflection translates into ethical improvements in practice.

Finally, Strike and Soltis (2009) frame teaching as an ethical leadership role requiring moral courage and consistency. This perspective expands the conversation to include systemic leadership within schools, but this remains an underdeveloped area in educational research.

Synthesis:

Overall, the literature supports the view that teachers are vital ethical role models who shape student character. However, there is a tendency for existing research to focus on ideals rather than on the practical complexities teachers face. There is a need for further empirical studies exploring how ethical role modelling occurs in real classrooms and how institutional culture and professional development support or hinder this process. This study addresses this gap by synthesizing the current knowledge and emphasizing the importance of intentional ethics training, reflective practice, and supportive policies to foster meaningful moral development in students.

III. METHODS

This study employs a narrative review approach as its methodological framework, which is a type of integrative literature review aimed at assessing, critiquing, and synthesizing existing research to generate new theoretical insights (Torraco, 2005). The narrative review allows for a comprehensive examination of literature related to teachers' influence on student character formation, providing a broad understanding of the topic while highlighting

emerging perspectives.	The research process involved several key steps: first, identifying relevant sources and seminal works pertinent to the study's focus; second, selecting and collecting literature that addresses the core concepts of ethical role modeling by teachers and its impact on students; and third, analyzing these materials to develop an in-depth understanding of how teachers contribute to character development.

Synthesizing the findings from diverse studies, this narrative review aims to answer critical questions regarding teachers' moral responsibilities, ethical behaviors, and the strategies they use to nurture student character. Ultimately, this approach offers a rich conceptual foundation for exploring the ethical dimensions of teaching and their implications for educational practice.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Moral Responsibilities that Shape Student Character

Dr. Dipty Subba, in her paper *"Shaping the Mind Towards an Effective Moral Education,"* emphasizes that moral responsibility is intimately related to our reactions to one another. She underscores the integral role of educators in this context, stating that dealing with values and moral issues is a fundamental part of a teacher's role. Teachers serve as role models, and their behavior significantly influences students' moral development. Schools, therefore, play a crucial role in inculcating moral values, as students spend a significant portion of their time in educational settings, where they are more receptive to rules and ethical guidance.

For Goodlad (1988), he claimed that the emerging professional teacher should be a morally witting moral agent, with moral obligations derived from moral imperatives. Teachers with a good reputation are qualified to play an agent of moral consciousness in students' development. It is the teacher in school who serves as a role model for ethical behavior, to gain confidence in instilling moral values in students. According to Noddings (2013), educators have a moral responsibility to demonstrate care, compassion, and respect, fostering an environment where students learn not only academic content but also ethical principles. This moral obligation extends beyond the classroom, influencing how students interact with their peers, respond to challenges, and develop a sense of integrity. When teachers embody ethical virtues such as honesty and fairness, they set a standard for students to emulate, reinforcing moral development in educational settings (Lickona, 1991).

Theorists such as Dewey (1960), Piaget (1905), and Kohlberg (1971) considered the process of moral deliberation as one legitimate aim of schooling and, by implication, of teacher education. Teachers, as an influence on students' character formation, are required with deep commitment and dedication to guide the students to moral decision-making. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) argue that moral education should be intentional, integrating discussions about ethical dilemmas and personal responsibility into the curriculum. This approach helps students develop critical thinking skills in ethical decision-making, preparing them to navigate moral challenges in their personal and professional lives. Additionally, teachers who engage students in discussions about justice, responsibility, and empathy encourage them to internalize moral values, promoting a lifelong commitment to ethical behavior (Nucci, 2001).

An inclusive learning environment must also be established. This aspect makes teachers morally responsible for every action and decision made in school. Equal treatment of students in school gives a perception of a school-child friendly school. According to Strike and Soltis (2009), fairness and equity in the classroom are fundamental to moral education, as students are more likely to adopt ethical behaviors when they perceive their learning environment as just. Problems in school like bullying, discrimination, and violation of students' rights must be addressed so that it will create a school environment with concern for the moral conduct of everyone in school. This promotes inclusive education concerning diversity, which students believe that having good morals and conduct is a personal choice in any form of social engagement. Banks (2019) confirms that by promoting inclusivity and respect for diversity, educators cultivate students' ability to engage in ethical reasoning within a pluralistic society.

To foster a just learning environment, the moral consciousness of teachers in digital and technological spaces must also be considered. Teachers must be role models in demonstrating ethical behavior in online interactions. Many teachers have turned to blogging and content creation. With these, social media displays of these teachers do not set a good example for students. Ribble (2011) highlights the importance of digital citizenship, emphasizing that teachers should educate students on responsible online behavior, Cyber ethics, and the ethical use of information. By integrating

digital ethics into their teaching practices, educators ensure that students develop the moral responsibility necessary to navigate the complexities of the digital world.

In addition, teachers are agents to understand the sense of responsibility in the community. Dewey (1938) explains that education should prepare individuals not only for personal success but also for active participation in a democratic society. It is a moral responsibility of the teacher to allow students' engagement in community service projects and activities. This promotes student values on civic-minded consciousness to become good citizens. When students develop care and awareness of the community, they will become our future ethical leaders with empathy and social awareness to create a progressive community.

As emphasized by Goodlad (1994) that education should aim not only at intellectual development but also at character formation, preparing students for responsible citizenship. When teachers emphasize virtues such as honesty, responsibility, and kindness, they contribute to the development of individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally conscious.

Thus, a teacher as a moral agent who provides moral education in a school-friendly environment significantly shapes students' character, which contributes to the welfare and development of society.

Challenges and Barriers that Teachers Encounter in Maintaining Ethical Standards While Fulfilling Their Role as Character Builders

Teachers in school deal with academic performance metrics.Maintaining ethical standards as character builders is challenged by the time pressures in achieving learning competencies in every quarter of a specific learning area. Moral and character education is set aside due to prioritizing test scores. According to Campbell (2003), standardized testing and curriculum demands can limit the time and flexibility teachers have to address ethical and moral lessons. This pressure forces educators to prioritize test scores over character development, leading to a conflict between academic expectations and ethical responsibilities. As a result, teachers may struggle to integrate moral education into their already packed schedules. It is weakening their ability to serve as character role models.

Maintaining classroom discipline is also a challenge. A just environment in the classroom is complicated when the focus is only on the lesson. Instead, the teacher tends to be unmindful of enforcing ethical discipline, considering that this can defeat the objectives of the lesson targeted in a specific instruction. According to Strike and Soltis (2009), teachers must navigate issues of equity, balancing the need for firm discipline with compassion and understanding. Bias, favoritism, or inconsistent enforcement of rules can undermine their credibility as ethical role models.

Moreover, disciplining students today is crucial for teachers. Strict punishment and restorative justice approaches are taken care of with consideration of students' rights. Teachers become hesitant to uphold their authority for discipline because it might compromise their teaching profession when the act of disciplining a student is opposed by most of the parents. Creating an ideal classroom with students in good behavior is an added burden that causes the teacher to be hesitant in correcting the misconduct of the student.

Diversity of students is also a challenge to ethical standards in character education. A school with students brought up with different cultures and shaped by their religion and socio-economic status creates ethical conflicts. It is not easy for the teachers to shape the moral character of the students when sensitivity to students' rights is a priority. According to Banks (2019), educators must navigate these differences carefully to avoid imposing personal values while still promoting universal ethical principles. The challenge lies in respecting cultural diversity while ensuring that students develop moral reasoning skills that align with democratic and human rights-based values. Without proper training in culturally responsive teaching, educators may struggle to handle ethical issues effectively. Despite the acknowledged importance of teacher ethics, challenges exist in ensuring that all educators consistently serve as positive role models. Factors such as cultural differences, institutional pressures, and personal biases can sometimes interfere with ethical decision-making in schools (Warnick & Silverman, 2011).

Social media is another complication in establishing the moral foundation of the students. Teachers' role as ethical guides is also weakened when there is no training or policies to support the limitations of teachers in presenting their image as bloggers, TikTok personalities, and digital creators. Likewise, teachers have a lack of control over their students due to the rise of cyberbullying in school, academic dishonesty, and online misconduct. Ribble (2011)

highlights the importance of digital citizenship education, yet many teachers lack the necessary training or institutional support to address these moral issues effectively.

Digital communication between teachers and students leads to a lack of ethical boundaries. It is important that the teacher set policies and guidelines for navigating online interactions. When ethical behavior is strongly imposed in online communication, students will behave accordingly. However, the teacher must first show by establishing respect, rapport, and positive language for the students to follow.

Maintaining ethical standards is also hard due to institutional and systemic barriers in school. With the bureaucratic framework, which sometimes does not align with ethical formation. Schools operate within bureaucratic frameworks that may not always align with ethical teaching practices.

Educators stand for what is moral to teach the students, but by being driven by political and economic conflicts of interest, moral responsibility lags. According to Goodlad (1994), ethical decision-making in education is often constrained by institutional pressures, limited resources, and administrative expectations. Character education is less priority for a teacher who is carrying a heavy workload, behind in professional development, and experiencing a lack of support from a school leader. Rants, complaints, and resentment take over and may lead to conflict with a colleague and a superior. This situation is caused by systemic challenges that affect teachers' moral integrity which the the role modelling image to students is eroded.

Despite these challenges, teachers can overcome barriers through ethical leadership, professional collaboration, and continuous self-reflection. Establishing strong professional ethics, engaging in dialogue with colleagues, and seeking guidance from ethical frameworks can help educators navigate complex moral dilemmas (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2016).

It is perceived that the school must provide ethics training. Inclusive education and implementation of policies that lead to academic excellence and character formation must be established. Teachers' ethical awareness leads to good role modelling for students, and this affects shaping students' moral understanding. With the appropriate action in addressing the challenges of students' moral formation, the teachers as role models and ethical leaders in education are established.

Key Ethical Behaviors Demonstrated by Teachers That Influence Student Character Formation

Teachers play a fundamental role in shaping students' moral and ethical development through their actions, attitudes, and interactions. Their behavior sets an example for students, influencing their understanding of ethical principles such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and fairness. According to Noddings (2013), teachers are not only responsible for imparting knowledge but also for fostering moral growth by demonstrating ethical behavior in their daily interactions with students. By modeling integrity and ethical decision-making, educators help students develop strong character traits that extend beyond the classroom and into their personal and professional lives.

One of the most crucial ethical behaviors demonstrated by teachers is fairness and impartiality in their treatment of students. When teachers ensure that all students receive equal opportunities, unbiased evaluations, and just disciplinary actions, they reinforce the value of fairness (Strike & Soltis, 2009). This behavior teaches students the importance of treating others equitably and encourages them to uphold fairness in their interactions. Conversely, favoritism or discrimination can undermine students' trust in their teachers and weaken their commitment to ethical principles. Therefore, teachers who consistently act with impartiality create an environment where students learn to value justice and equality.

Another key ethical behavior is honesty, a foundation for academic integrity and trust within the classroom. When teachers are transparent about expectations, grading policies, and feedback, they foster a culture of trust and accountability (Lickona, 1991). Furthermore, educators who admit their mistakes and take responsibility model the importance of honesty and self-improvement. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2005), students are more likely to develop ethical decision-making skills when they observe their teachers practicing honesty in various aspects of their profession. This ethical behavior helps students internalize the value of truthfulness in their academic and personal lives.

Respect for students is another ethical behavior that significantly influences character formation. When teachers treat students with dignity, listen to their perspectives, and encourage open dialogue, they promote mutual respect (Nucci, 2001). This behavior fosters a positive classroom climate where students feel valued and empowered to express their thoughts ethically. Additionally, respectful interactions between teachers and students help cultivate empathy, an essential component of moral character (Banks, 2019). By demonstrating respect, educators teach students the importance of treating others with kindness and consideration, shaping them into responsible and empathetic individuals.

Teachers also influence student character formation through their commitment to responsibility and ethical leadership. Educators who consistently fulfill their professional duties, meet their commitment, and demonstrate accountability as role models for responsible behavior (Goodlad, 1994). For instance, when teachers uphold ethical grading practices, enforce rules consistently, and take responsibility for classroom management, they reinforce the importance of responsibility and integrity. Shapira-Lishchinsky (2016) emphasizes that students learn ethical behavior by observing adults in positions of authority, making teachers' demonstration of responsibility essential to character education.

Ultimately, teachers' ethical behaviors play a crucial role in shaping students' moral development and guiding them toward ethical adulthood. Through fairness, honesty, respect, and responsibility, educators provide students with a framework for making ethical decisions in their own lives. Schools should recognize the importance of ethical teaching by providing professional development in ethical decision-making and character education. By upholding high ethical standards, teachers ensure that they positively influence students' character formation, preparing them to become responsible and principled members of society.

Enhancing Teacher Ethics Training to Improve Student Character Formation

Many teacher training programs focus primarily on pedagogy and subject knowledge, often neglecting formal instruction on ethical leadership and moral development (Arthur, 2010). Addressing these gaps is essential for strengthening ethical education in schools. School leaders and policymakers are the keys to ethics training. Hansen (2021) said that if your leadership isn't 100% behind ethics training for employees, they may be sending the message that ethics are not very important. So there is a need for ethical school leaders, and they are the ones to work for it with the teachers. Professional development programs are given to teachers, and this must include a policy that teachers continuously emphasize moral judgement, ethical decision-making, and character education. When teachers are equipped with this program, they choose to present themselves in society and on social media as a good influence on their learners. Research suggests that when teachers receive structured ethics training, they are better equipped to model moral behavior and foster character formation in students (Campbell, 2008). Ethics training should be prioritized in schools, like collaborative expertise workshops, case studies, and mentorship that considers teachers' engagement in social media and real school scenarios to strengthen their ethical actions and community engagements.

Policy makers should be serious about implementing ethical guidelines for teachers in social media use and actions in school and the community. Codes of ethics provide teachers with frameworks for addressing ethical challenges and maintaining professional integrity (Strike & Soltis, 2009). Ethics committees must be established in schools. This guides the teachers through ethical conflicts, ensuring consistency in ethical practice.

In the complexity of the world, which involves moral decisions while presenting themselves as role models to students, institutionalized ethical standards can help teachers be confident to face situations with high moral standards while influencing students to have good character development.

In addition, Teachers' evaluation and professional assessment are an effective approach. Stakeholders and school assessment of teachers' ethical decisions in their classroom practices and interactions with students make the teacher morally conscious. Studies indicate that when ethics is embedded in performance reviews, teachers become more intentional in modelling and reinforcing ethical behavior among students (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of teachers' ethics training needs collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Character formation is a collective effort that extends beyond the classroom, and teachers need support from parents and community leaders to reinforce ethical values (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Schools work on their first

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initiative on teachers' community engagement with stakeholders, which emphasizes ethical educational activities such as service-learning projects and ethical leadership initiatives. With these, not only can the teachers avail the opportunities to practice ethical decision-making in practical settings, but also students, as they share participation and engagement.

Strategies for Integrating Character Education in Daily Teaching Practices

Various strategies can be integrated for shaping the character building of the students. Direct instruction, modelling ethical behavior, and incorporating character building in all learning tasks, the learning area can be applied in daily teaching instruction.

Direct instruction involves explicitly teaching moral values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility through discussions, storytelling, and literature (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). In teaching, the teachers can lead the students to real-life scenarios or case studies, where the students will use their critical thinking and employ moral decision-making.

Research suggests that students learn moral values by observing and imitating the behavior of their teachers (Lickona, 1996). When teachers demonstrate fairness, empathy, and integrity in their interactions, students are more likely to adopt these behaviors. This is true that when a student is treated with respect in the classroom, conflict resolution, a positive classroom environment are established.

Collaborative learning and service -learning projects can encourage teamwork. Students learn to communicate in problem-solving. Cooperative learning encourages teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, reinforcing values like respect and responsibility (Battistich, 2003). Service-learning initiatives, where students engage in community service, provide hands-on opportunities to practice ethical behavior in real-life contexts. Studies show that students involved in service-learning develop a stronger sense of social responsibility and civic engagement (Billig, 2000).

The experiential learning of the students teaches them to have ethical principles. In their interaction, their character is developed, and they will apply it beyond their classroom.

Another way to teach character education is through storytelling and literature. Literature provides students with moral narratives that illustrate virtues and ethical dilemmas, helping them reflect on their values and actions (Narvaez, 2002). Teachers use novels, historical events, and biographies to engage students in discussions about moral choices and their consequences. Research indicates that storytelling enhances moral reasoning by allowing students to empathize with characters and understand different perspectives (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). Through guided discussions, teachers can help students draw connections between literature and their own lives, making character education more meaningful. Literature can help the learner develop their ethical disposition through text-to-self connections. This is an effective approach that makes the child adopt real-life decision-making based on their takeaways from an anecdote, legend, poetry, and other literary pieces

. Plato, a Greek philosopher, asserts, " *Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.".* This also means that when a child is taught good values from birth. Values are exercised through life experience, and as a child grows, they will have positive growth through their intellect, will, emotions, and spiritual aspect.

V. CONCLUSION

Educators as role models must have a strong belief and determination. Courage to do what is right and wrong is an ultimate choice when confronted with the different challenges brought by the continuous change of society. The first teachers in the family are parents, and the children's home creates the foundation of their good moral character. Parents and teachers go hand in hand to foster role modelling of moral and ethical choices. Character education in school must be strengthened through ethics policies and ethical guidelines. Qualification of teachers must include moral standards as an essential criterion so that they will become moral agents who can contribute to a broader and deeper influence in shaping students' character formation. This study will offer valuable concepts to school leaders who will

create the direct and indirect influences through teachers as role models of their learners, ensuring ethical growth of their students.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the ethical role of teachers in shaping student character. First, teacher education programs should include comprehensive ethics training that covers moral decision-making and practical value judgments related to real-life dilemmas. This foundation helps teachers consistently model ethical behavior in their professional practice (Sockett, 1993; Campbell, 2003).

Second, ongoing professional development is essential. Schools and educational institutions should offer ethics-focused workshops, mentorship opportunities, and reflective seminars to help teachers stay aware of their ethical responsibilities and navigate challenges effectively (Strike & Soltis, 2009). Encouraging reflective teaching practices, such as maintaining journals and engaging in collaborative discussions, can further support teachers' personal and professional ethical growth (Schön, 1983).

Third, schools need to foster a culture that prioritizes ethical behavior, where all staff members model integrity and moral principles, and where these values are embedded in school policies and daily practices (Lickona, 1991). Additionally, establishing clear ethical guidelines and support systems, such as codes of ethics, counseling services, and peer support networks, can help teachers manage complex moral situations with confidence (Campbell, 2008).

Finally, collaboration between schools, families, and communities should be strengthened to ensure consistent values are shared across environments. Such partnerships reinforce character education efforts and contribute to a cohesive moral framework that supports student development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

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