



Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioural Studies

Department of Psychology

Moral Values And Practices of Adolescents: The Case of Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School & Kokbetsibah In Selected Secondary Schools of Addis Ababa

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Approval Sheet

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DECLARATION

I declare that the research work under the title ‘**Moral Values and practices of Adolescents in selected secondary schools of Addis Ababa: A Case Study of (Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School and Kokbe Tsibah Secondary School)**’ is my original work and has not been submitted by any other university to the Addis Ababa University, and all the references and source materials used for the project have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by: - Simret Kassaye

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Abstract

This study examines the moral values and ethical practices of adolescents in three selected secondary schools in Addis Ababa: Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School. The research aims to explore how different educational environments influence the moral development of students and the role of cultural, social, and institutional factors in shaping their ethical frameworks. A qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) approach was employed to analyze the data, which was collected through surveys and interviews with students and teachers. The QCA method allowed for the identification of patterns and variations in moral values across the three schools, considering the influence of different curricula, teaching methodologies, and community contexts. The findings reveal significant differences in the moral values and practices of students from the three schools. At Sandford International School, students strongly emphasized global citizenship and ethical reasoning, aligning with a more liberal and secular perspective. In contrast, students at Abune Gorgorios Secondary School displayed a more conservative moral outlook, influenced by traditional values and religious teachings. Meanwhile, Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School students presented a combination of both ethical approaches, but their moral decision-making was notably impacted by peer pressure and societal expectations. The study concludes that while educational settings play a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' moral values, external factors, such as family background and community norms, significantly influence their ethical practices. The research recommends that educators integrate comprehensive moral education programs that address the diverse cultural, religious, and social influences shaping students' moral development, to promote a more holistic approach to ethical education.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Morality relates to how we interact with one another, cultivate a sense of empathy and justice, and navigate our and others' emotional responses within ethical and social dilemmas (Haidt, 2012). Adolescence is a crucial phase for examining the origins, precursors, and outcomes of moral behaviour as it is a period marked by individuals' quest for purpose, self-identity, and distinctiveness. During adolescence, there exists an opportunity for the formation of more enduring aspects of one's identity and principles that are fundamental to the self, encompassing responsibilities towards oneself and others, as well as a commitment to values such as compassion, equity, and impartiality. Adolescents experience changes in their social environments as they transition from childhood, such as shifting focus from family to peers in romantic relationships. These changes present unique opportunities for adolescents to engage in interactions that influence the development of their motivations, values, and emotions. This transition also plays a crucial role in shaping a more distinct identity, including the moral aspect of oneself. These transformations offer chances to foster moral growth, leading to long-lasting positive effects, thus underscoring the significance of this developmental stage in moulding enduring implications for moral development as adolescents prepare to enter adulthood. (Smetana & Turiel, 2006).

This study conducted in three schools. The first one is Sandford International School, which is one of the most successful international school, for kids from diplomatic community and high classes with over 400000 birr annual school fee. The second is Abune Gorgorios private school with over 60000 school fee per annum. It is a private school established by monks and religious individuals from Orthodox *Thewahido* church. The school is well known for its success in the short period of time and preferred by the local community for its high commitment on discipline and moral values among students. The third one is Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School which is government school and one of the oldest schools in the city with over 80 years. The school provide its education to lower and middle class of the community with zero school fee. By focusing on these three schools, and with the research intends to provide a detailed analysis of how moral values are perceived, internalized, and practised by adolescents in different school environments within the city.

1.1. Background of the study

Before we focus on studying students moral value and practice in different educational setting moral values to the students, we have to know what a moral value is. Morals have a greater social element to values and tend to have a very broad acceptance. Morals are far more about good and bad than other values. We thus judge others more strongly on morals than values. A person can be described as immoral, yet there is no word for them not following values (www.dictionary.com). Values are the basic principle that influence humans behaviours. If someone has basic life principles, they will insusceptible by their environment. This principle will guide someone to behave. Values are the accepted standards by which we make decisions about right and wrong, should and should not, good and bad. It also tells us which are more or less important, which is useful when we have trade off meeting one value over another (www.dictionary.com). That is why it needs an appropriate educational method to teach those values to the students, so it will be implemented to be positive life principles that will be developed by the students in their future. For example, when students commit a crime, engage in violence, or become pregnant before marriage, it can significantly impact their future. If they end up in jail, their education will likely suffer. Similarly, if a female student becomes pregnant, she may have to get married and, as a result, may be unable to continue her studies, facing the challenges of being a young mother.

Moral values and practices among adolescents are critical components in shaping their identities, behaviour, and interactions within society. Adolescence is an important developmental stage with significant physical, emotional, and social changes. During this period, individuals begin to form their moral frameworks influenced by various factors including family, peers, culture, and educational institutions. In Ethiopia, particularly in urban settings like Addis Ababa, the interplay between traditional values and modern influences creates a unique context for understanding adolescent moral development.

Research indicates that moral values are not only taught but also practised through community engagement and peer interactions (Kohlberg, 1981). The role of educators in fostering an environment conducive to moral reasoning cannot be overstated; teachers serve as role models who influence students' understanding of right and wrong (Lickona, 1991). Furthermore, the impact of peer relationships during adolescence often leads to the reinforcement or challenge of individual moral beliefs (Brown et al., 2015).

In Addis Ababa, adolescents often face moral dilemmas that highlight the clash between traditional expectations and modern societal norms. For instance, a teenage boy named Samuel may be torn between his family's expectations to contribute to the household financially and his desire to focus on his education. While his parents emphasize the importance of supporting the family, Samuel understands that completing his education could lead to better job opportunities in the future.

By examining the moral values within which these adolescents operate and this research will contribute to a broader understanding of youth ethics in Ethiopia's evolving educational landscape. It will also highlight the importance of integrating moral education into school curricula to better prepare students for ethical challenges they may face in their personal lives and future careers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The moral values and practices of adolescents are critical in shaping their character and guiding their behaviour as they transition into adulthood. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, concerns about moral development among secondary school students are rising.

Adolescents today face numerous challenges that can influence their moral values and ethical decision-making processes. Factors such as peer pressure, social media influence, family dynamics, and educational environments play significant roles in shaping adolescent morality (Kohlberg, 1981; Turiel, 2002). The rapid globalization and exposure to diverse cultures have further complicated the moral landscape for Ethiopian youth (Mekonnen & Tadesse, 2019).

Despite these influences, there is limited empirical research specifically examining how these factors manifest in the moral values and practices of adolescents within the unique educational settings of Addis Ababa's secondary schools. Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators, policy-makers, and parents who aim to foster positive moral development among youth.

The problem this study seeks to address is twofold: first, to identify the predominant moral values among adolescents in the selected secondary schools; second, to explore how various factors—such as school environment, family background, and peer interactions—affect these values and practices. To address the issue the study conducted among adolescents found in three different schools with different socio economic background and educational seating

Furthermore, this study will contribute to existing literature by highlighting specific educational setting on moral development in Ethiopia. It will also offer insights into potential interventions that could enhance moral education programs within these institutions.

In summary, this research addresses a significant gap in understanding adolescent moral values and practices in Addis Ababa's secondary schools by investigating how various contextual factors influence these dimensions during a critical developmental stage.

1.3. Research Questions

- 1) How do adolescents understand the concept of moral value?
- 2) What is the influence of educational setting, family, teachers, and peers on the moral development of students in these selected schools?
- 3) Are there any visible differences or similarities in the moral values and practices across the three selected secondary schools?

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General objective

The objective of the study is to investigate and understand the moral values and practices among adolescents in the selected secondary schools as well as to examine if there is difference in moral values and practice among students of the selected schools.

1.4.2. The specific objectives of the study include:

- ✓ To explore how adolescents in Sandford International, Abune Gorgorios, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary Schools understand the concept of moral value.
- ✓ To examine the influence of the educational setting, family, teachers, and peers on the moral development of students in Sandford International, Abune Gorgorios, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary Schools.
- ✓ To identify the visible differences and similarities in moral values and practices among adolescents across Sandford International, Abune Gorgorios, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary Schools.

1.5. Significance of the study

The exploration of moral values and practices among adolescents is a crucial area of research, particularly in the context of secondary education. Understanding the moral values that guide adolescents in these institutions can provide insights into their behaviour, decision-making

processes, and overall development. This study is significant because it examines the impact of different school environments on the moral development of adolescents, highlighting the role of education in fostering ethical behavior. By focusing on the moral values of students in three distinct secondary schools, this research offers valuable insights into how school culture, peer relationships, and societal influences contribute to adolescents' ethical decision-making. The findings are expected to inform curriculum development and educational interventions that promote character education and moral reasoning.

Furthermore, this study addresses a gap in the existing literature on adolescent morality in Ethiopia, where research on this topic is limited. By providing empirical data specific to the Ethiopian context, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultural and societal factors shape adolescent moral development. The study also calls for further investigation of adolescent morality across different regions of Ethiopia, contributing to a broader, more comprehensive understanding of moral development in diverse cultural settings. Ultimately, the findings aim to guide educators, policy-makers, and researchers in creating a more ethically conscious and supportive environment for adolescents in Ethiopia.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the moral values and practices of adolescents in Addis Ababa's secondary school context, shedding light on important factors that shape their ethical decision-making processes.

1.6. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the moral values and development of adolescents in three selected secondary schools in Addis Ababa: Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School. The research will explore how adolescents from these schools understand and define key moral values, such as responsibility, kindness, and integrity, and how these values are influenced by various factors, including family, peer relationships, cultural norms, and the educational environment.

The study will specifically investigate the role of the educational setting, family, peers, and the broader cultural context in shaping students' moral behaviors. It will also compare and contrast the moral values and practices across the three schools to identify any similarities or differences, with a particular focus on how different school environments contribute to or hinder moral development.

The scope is geographically limited to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and focuses exclusively on the perspectives of adolescents attending secondary schools in this urban context. The research will not cover other regions of Ethiopia or students from primary or tertiary educational settings.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

Access to Information: The availability of information also affects this study. Some students were reluctant to disclose their true moral values and practices, affecting the accuracy of the data collected. Moreover only students moral response at school is observed.

1.8. Delimitations of the Study

Geographical Scope: The study focuses on only three specific schools in a particular geographical location (Sandford International School, Kokebetsibah Secondary School, and Abune Gorgorios Secondary School). The findings may not apply to adolescents in other regions or countries.

Age Group: The study specifically targets adolescents within range of 13-18 age group in secondary schools. This delimitation excludes younger individuals whose moral values and practices may differ.

1.9. Operational Definitions

To establish operational definitions for the topic of moral values and practices of adolescents in the specified schools, it is essential to define key terms and concepts to ensure clarity and consistency in research or assessment. Operational definitions are critical as they provide specific criteria for measuring abstract concepts like moral values and practices.

Moral Values: Rest (1986) emphasizes that moral values are deeply connected to moral reasoning, which involves the ability to discern ethical issues, make decisions, and justify actions based on a set of internalized moral principles .

Moral Practices: Moral practices encompass the actual behaviours and actions exhibited by individuals based on their moral values. For adolescents , moral practices can be defined as observable actions that reflect their adherence to ethical principles. This may involve behaviours such as helping others, standing up against injustice, following rules, showing kindness, etc.

Adolescents:

Steinberg (2014) defines adolescence as "a period of development that begins with the onset of puberty and ends when individuals make the transition into adulthood. It is a time of profound change and adjustment, marked by biological, psychological, and social transformations" (Steinberg, L. Adolescence, 10th ed., 2014).

Moral reasoning refers to the ability to think through ethical dilemmas or situations and make decisions based on moral principles, values, and beliefs. It involves understanding the difference between right and wrong, considering the consequences of one's actions, and applying ethical reasoning to guide behaviour in a way that is moral and just. Moral reasoning helps individuals navigate complex moral issues, resolve ethical conflicts, and make decisions that uphold moral standards and values.

Empathy :Batson (2009) describes empathy as "the emotional reaction of feeling what another person is feeling, particularly when we perceive their distress, and being motivated to alleviate that distress" (Batson, C. D. Empathy and Altruism, 2009). This definition emphasizes the emotional resonance involved in empathy, where an individual feels compelled to take action to help someone in need.

1.10. Organization of the study

The following thesis organized in five chapters.

The first chapter introduce us with the subject of the study and contains statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significant of the study as well as limitations and the scope of the study. The second chapter deals with the review of literature. The third chapter focuses on the description of research Methodology and design. The fourth chapter is about Data analysis, interpretation and results. The fifth chapter deals with summary of major findings, recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

2.2. Theories and concepts

2.2.1. Adolescence

Adolescence is a crucial time for the development of moral values and practices. Research suggests that during this stage, young people begin to form their own moral beliefs and values, often influenced by factors such as family, friends, school, and societal norms. Understanding how adolescents navigate and internalize moral values can provide insights into their development and well-being (Steinberg, 2005).

Development of Moral Virtues in Adolescence

Steinberg (2005) states that adolescence is characterized by significant cognitive and emotional development that enhances moral reasoning. Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development suggest that adolescent's transition from conventional morality—focused on social norms—to post conventional morality—where they develop personal ethical principles (Kohlberg, 1984). This shift allows adolescents to critically evaluate societal rules and engage in deeper ethical considerations.

Influences of Morality in Adolescence

1. Educational settings and moral values

The interaction between moral values and educational settings is a crucial aspect of adolescents' development. Educational settings, such as schools and classrooms, serve as important environments where adolescents can learn, internalize, and apply moral values. Schools play a significant role in shaping adolescents' moral beliefs and behaviors through formal moral education programs, ethical teachings, and character development initiatives. According to Lapsley and Narvaez (2006), schools provide adolescents with opportunities to practice and apply moral values in real-life situations, such as through service-learning projects, extracurricular activities, and social interactions. Furthermore, the presence of positive role models, such as teachers and peers, can influence adolescents' moral decision-making and behaviour. By combining formal moral education with positive role modelling

and experiential learning, schools can promote moral values and foster a sense of responsibility, empathy, and mutual respect.

Role of Parents and Teachers in Shaping Moral Values of Adolescent

Understanding the role of parents and teachers in shaping moral values is essential for fostering ethical behaviour in adolescents. This section examines the influence of parenting styles, teacher-student relationships, and collaborative efforts between parents and teachers to promote moral development.

Parental Influence

The impact of parenting styles on children's moral value has been extensively studied. Baumrind's (1966) typology of parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful—provides a foundational framework for understanding how different approaches affect children's ethical development.

Authoritative Parenting: Research indicates that authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and high expectations, fosters better moral reasoning in children. According to Grusec & Hastings (2007), children raised by authoritative parents tend to exhibit higher levels of empathy and pro-social behaviour. These parents encourage open discussions about moral dilemmas, allowing children to develop critical thinking skills regarding right and wrong.

Permissive Parenting: In contrast, permissive parenting often leads to weaker moral reasoning abilities. Studies show that children with permissive parents may struggle with self-regulation and may not internalize societal norms effectively (Baumrind, 1991). This lack of structure can result in difficulties when faced with ethical decisions

Authoritarian Parenting: Authoritarian parenting can also have negative implications for moral development. While these parents enforce strict rules and expect obedience, they often do not provide explanations or engage in discussions about morality (Kochanska et al., 2000). As a result, children may comply out of fear rather than understanding the underlying principles of ethical behaviour.

Neglectful Parenting: Neglectful or uninvolved parenting is associated with the poorest outcomes in terms of moral reasoning. Children from such backgrounds often lack guidance and support in developing their ethical frameworks (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Overall, the literature suggests that parental involvement through appropriate styles significantly influences children's ability to navigate moral complexities which leads to influence on adolescents conduct and morality.

Teacher Impact

Teachers play a decisive role in shaping students' ethical behaviour within school settings. The quality of teacher-student relationships has been shown to impact students' social-emotional development and their capacity for moral reasoning.

Positive Teacher-Student Relationships: Research indicates that positive relationships between teachers and students foster an environment conducive to moral development (Pianta et al., 2008). When teachers demonstrate care and respect towards their students, it encourages them to reciprocate these values within peer interactions.

- **Role Modelling:** Teachers serve as role models for their students; thus, their behaviours significantly influence students' perceptions of morality (Schaps et al., 2004). For instance, when teachers demonstrate fairness and integrity in their actions, they instil similar values in their students.
- **Ethical Curriculum Integration:** Studies have shown that integrating ethics into the curriculum enhances students' understanding of moral issues (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). Programs that focus on character education help cultivate virtues such as honesty, respect, and responsibility among students.
- **Conflict Resolution Programs:** Implementing conflict resolution programs led by teachers can also promote ethical behaviour by teaching students how to handle disagreements constructively (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Such initiatives empower students to make morally sound decisions during conflicts.

In summary, effective teacher-student relationships are vital for nurturing ethical behaviour among students.

Collaborative Efforts

Collaboration between parents and teachers is essential for promoting ethical standards among students. Various programs have been developed to enhance this partnership:

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs): PTAs facilitate communication between parents and educators regarding student welfare and ethics education (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). These associations often organize workshops aimed at educating both parties about effective strategies for instilling moral values.

Family Engagement Programs: Programs designed to engage families in school activities have shown positive outcomes on children's and adolescents social-emotional learning (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). By involving families in discussions about ethics at home and school events, children receive consistent messages about acceptable behaviors.

Community-Based Initiatives: Collaborative community programs that involve both parents and teachers can further reinforce ethical standards among youth (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). These initiatives often include service-learning projects where families work together with schools to address community needs while emphasizing values like compassion and responsibility.

In conclusion, a collaborative approach involving both parents and teachers is crucial for effectively promoting moral values among children. Promoting Ethical Behaviour.

School Programs Promoting Ethical Behaviour: The promotion of ethical behaviour in schools is increasingly recognized as a vital component of education. Various programs and initiatives have been developed to in-still values such as honesty, integrity, respect, and responsibility among students. This section examines specific programs implemented by schools to promote ethical behaviour, evaluates their effectiveness, and identifies best practices from successful initiatives.

Specific Programs and Initiatives

Several notable programs have been adopted by educational institutions to foster ethical behaviour among students:

1. Character Education Programs

Character education has emerged as a prominent approach in many schools. These programs focus on teaching students core ethical values through various activities and curricula. For instance, the Character Counts! program emphasizes six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Schools implementing this program often report improvements in student behavior and school climate (Lickona & Davidson, 2005).

2. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social-emotional learning programs are designed to help students develop emotional intelligence alongside academic skills. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework outlines key competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). Research indicates that SEL programs can lead to significant reductions in behavioural problems while enhancing academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

2. Restorative Justice Practices

Restorative justice initiatives focus on repairing harm caused by misconduct rather than punitive measures. Schools adopting restorative practices encourage dialogue between affected parties to foster understanding and accountability. Studies show that these approaches can reduce suspension rates and improve school climate (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

Program Evaluation: Evaluating the effectiveness of character education programs or ethics curricula is crucial for understanding their impact on student behaviour.

1. Meta-Analyses of Character Education

A meta-analysis conducted by Taylor et al. (2017) reviewed multiple studies on character education programs across various settings. The findings indicated that well-implemented character education initiatives positively influenced students' moral reasoning and pro-social behaviours.

2. Longitudinal Studies on SEL Impact

Longitudinal research has demonstrated the long-term benefits of social-emotional learning programs. A study by Jones et al. (2017) tracked students over several years and found that those who participated in SEL interventions exhibited higher levels of empathy and lower levels of aggression compared to their peers who did not participate.

3. Evaluations of Restorative Justice Implementation

Research evaluating restorative justice practices has shown promising results regarding school discipline outcomes. A study by Karp & Breslin (2001) highlighted how restorative justice led to a decrease in repeat offences among students involved in disciplinary incidents.

Best Practices from Successful Initiatives

Identifying successful initiatives from other educational institutions can provide valuable insights for schools looking to enhance their ethical behaviour programs.

1. Integration into Curriculum

Successful programs often integrate ethical discussions into existing subjects rather than treating them as standalone topics. For example, the use of literature that presents moral dilemmas encourages critical thinking about ethics within the context of language arts classes.

2. Community Involvement

Engaging parents and community members in character-building activities fosters a supportive environment for ethical development outside school walls. Programs like the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model emphasize collaboration with families to reinforce positive behaviour at home.

3. Continuous Professional Development for Educators

Training teachers in effective strategies for promoting ethical behaviour is essential for program success. Ongoing professional development ensures educators are equipped with the tools necessary to model ethical behaviour themselves while guiding students through discussions about ethics.

School programs promoting ethical behaviour play a crucial role in shaping the moral development of students. Through character education initiatives, social-emotional learning frameworks, and restorative justice practices—coupled with rigorous evaluations—educational institutions can create environments conducive to fostering integrity and responsibility among young individuals.

Moral Sensitivity: This component refers to an individual's ability to recognize the presence of a moral issue and understand the perspectives of those involved. Research indicates that adolescents often exhibit varying levels of moral sensitivity based on their social environments and peer influences (Eisenberg et al., 2006). For instance, studies have shown that adolescents who engage in discussions about ethical issues with peers are more likely to develop heightened awareness of moral dilemmas (Nucci & Turiel, 2009).

Moral Judgement: The second component involves the reasoning processes used to evaluate different courses of action in a dilemma. Kohlberg's stages of moral development provide a foundational framework for understanding how adolescents progress through increasingly sophisticated levels of ethical reasoning (Kohlberg, 1981). However, recent research suggests that many adolescents may not fit neatly into these stages; instead, they often employ a mix of principled reasoning and pragmatic considerations when faced with real-life dilemmas (Gibbs et al., 2007).

Moral Motivation: This component reflects the importance an individual places on ethical values when making decisions. Studies indicate that adolescents' motivations can be influenced by various factors including parental guidance, peer norms, and cultural context (Schwartz et al., 2012). For example, adolescents who perceive strong support from their peers for pro-social behaviour are more likely to prioritize ethical considerations over self-interest in their decision-making processes.

Moral Character: The final component emphasizes the role of personal traits and dispositions in enacting moral decisions. Research has shown that traits such as empathy and self-regulation significantly impact how adolescents approach moral dilemmas (Blasi, 1980). Furthermore, school environments that promote character education can enhance students' abilities to act consistently with their ethical beliefs (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006).

Adolescents' Perceptions within School Communities

Within school communities, adolescents encounter numerous situations that challenge their ethical beliefs and require them to navigate complex social dynamics. These experiences shape their perceptions of morality in several ways:

Peer Influence: Peer relationships play a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' views on morality. Studies have demonstrated that peer acceptance often hinges on conformity to group norms regarding acceptable behaviour (Brown & Larson, 2009). As such, when faced with dilemmas—such as cheating or bullying—adolescents may prioritize peer approval over personal ethics.

Cultural Context: The cultural background of students also influences their perceptions of moral dilemmas. Research indicates that cultural values can dictate what is considered morally acceptable or unacceptable within specific communities (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). For instance, collectivist cultures may emphasize community welfare over individual rights when resolving ethical conflicts.

Educational Interventions: Schools play a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to discussing and resolving moral dilemmas. Programs aimed at promoting social-emotional learning have been shown to enhance students' abilities to engage thoughtfully with ethical issues (Durlak et al., 2011). Such interventions encourage open dialogue about values and ethics among peers.

Digital Contexts: With the rise of technology and social media platforms among adolescents, new dimensions of moral dilemmas have emerged. Issues such as cyberbullying or on-line privacy raise unique challenges for young people navigating these digital spaces (Livingstone et al., 2011). Understanding how adolescents perceive these modern dilemmas is essential for developing effective educational strategies.

Adolescents' perceptions of moral dilemmas are shaped by various factors including cognitive development stages outlined in Rest's Four Component Model, peer influence within school communities, cultural contexts, educational interventions aimed at enhancing ethical reasoning skills, and the complexities introduced by digital interactions. Understanding these dynamics is critical for educators and policy-makers seeking to foster environments where young individuals can develop robust ethical frameworks.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodological approaches used in conducting this study. It presents the background of the research area, research design, the study population, the sample size and sample procedure, data sources, data collection techniques, method of data analysis, validity and reliability of instrument and ethical consideration.

3.1. Background of the Research Site

Sandford International School (SIS)

Sandford International School (SIS) is a private coeducational day school, offering an English language educational program for students from age 4 to 18 to the national and international communities of Addis Ababa.

Sandford International School was founded in 1947 and in 1949 moved to its current location. In 2001, SIS changed its name from Sandford English Community School to Sandford International School to reflect more effectively its international character with a student body representing over 50 nations.

The faculty at Sandford International School are recruited from all over the world. Currently faculty come from Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Netherlands, Spain, United States, and United Kingdom. The student body at Sandford is made of students from 50 nations including Ethiopia, United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Kenya, Uganda, Italy, Pakistan, India, and several other nations. There are currently 980 students on the roll – approximately 480 in the Primary School and 500 in the Secondary School. In this year's graduating class there are 65 seniors, Year 13.

Extra-Curricular Activities Sandford runs include an after-school activities program as well as varsity and junior varsity boys' and girls' soccer, volleyball, athletics, cross-country, tennis, and basketball; Sandford is a member of the International Schools Sports Association of

Addis Ababa. Sandford is also an approved centre to offer the Duke of Edinburgh/International Award. The school also has special education programs for those students that have either mental disability or behavioural problems. Special education programs and support services are often implemented to ensure that each student's unique needs are addressed and that they have access to a quality education. The goal is to provide a supportive and inclusive environment where all students can thrive and reach their full potential.

The Primary Curriculum at the School follows both the Numeracy/Literacy Strategies of the English National Curriculum and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) until Year 6.

Abune Gorgorious School

Abune Gorgorious School is a prestigious educational institution located in Ethiopia. It is known for its rigorous academic programs, dedicated faculty, and commitment to excellence in education. The school offers a wide range of subjects and extracurricular activities to nurture the overall development of students. Abune Gorgorious School is renowned for producing high-achieving graduates who go on to make valuable contributions to society.

The founder of Abune Gorgorious School is Reverend Father Louis G. Blasio, an esteemed educator and visionary leader in the field of education. He is known for his dedication to providing quality education and fostering a supportive learning environment for students at Abune Gorgorious.

The teachers at Abune Gorgorious School are committed to fostering a supportive and inspiring learning environment, where students can thrive academically and personally. The teachers at the school actively engage with students, providing guidance, mentorship, and support to help them reach their full potential. The students come from diverse backgrounds and bring a range of perspectives to the classroom. The students at Abune Gorgorious School are actively involved in extracurricular activities, community service, and leadership opportunities, showcasing their well-roundedness and commitment to personal growth.

Abune Gorgorious School is affiliated with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which plays a significant role in the school's values, teachings, and cultural influences. This affiliation with the Orthodox Church helps shape the school's ethos, guiding principles, and sense of community within the institution.

The school's dedication to academic excellence, diverse extracurricular activities, and commitment to fostering personal growth and leadership in its students also contribute to its uniqueness in the education sector. Additionally, the high quality of education provided by qualified and experienced teachers, as well as the collaborative partnerships with various educational organizations, contribute to the unique and enriching experience offered at Abune Gorgorious School.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School

Kokebetsibha School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is an established educational institution with a long history of providing quality education to its students.

The school was founded in 1963 with the mission of providing quality education to students in the region. It is one of the long-established and reputable schools in the city, known for providing quality education, particularly at the time of the establishment, and for its historical contribution to the educational system in Ethiopia.

Yes, there are several successful individuals who have graduated from Kokebetsibah School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. These individuals have gone on to achieve success in various fields such as business, academia, government, and more. Their accomplishments speak to the quality of education and the strong foundation provided by the school in nurturing talented individuals. What makes the school unique is it provides inclusion education to adolescents with mental disabilities (that are often referred to as individuals with intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities) with other normal students in the same compound . Inclusion and integration education of individuals with intellectual disabilities into mainstream education settings have been found to have positive outcomes for all students involved. This helps promote understanding, empathy, and acceptance among students of all abilities.

These terms may vary depending on the context and the specific needs of the individual.

3.2. Research Design

Mouton (2007:74) asserts that a research design provides answer to question, “What are the means to be used to obtain the information needed? And it is a plan or blue print on how the researcher intends to conduct the research”.

The research explores the moral values and practices of adolescents attending three selected secondary schools in Addis Ababa. The study investigates how adolescents perceive and practice moral values, such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and fairness, within the

context of their school environments. The study employs a qualitative research approach, using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect data. The data will be analysed using a comparative qualitative analysis method to identify similarities and differences in moral values and practices among adolescents from different schools.

Tere Blanche, Dunheim & Painter (2007) asserted that, in qualitative research, it aimed to understand how people live, how they talk, how they behave and what captivates or distress them.

This study will explore the development of moral values in educational settings by examining key variables, including moral reasoning skills, empathy levels, pro-social behaviour, peer relationships, ethical decision-making and participation in moral education programs. These variables were chosen based on their significance in shaping adolescents' ethical development and their relevance to the educational environment.

A comparative qualitative analysis approach will be used to examine these variables across different educational contexts. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews, and questionnaires. These methods will allow for the exploration of individuals' lived experiences and perspectives on moral values within their educational settings. The study will compare responses and themes related to moral reasoning, empathy, and ethical decision-making among students, teachers, and educational staff across different schools or educational programs.

By conducting a comparative qualitative analysis, this study aims to uncover nuanced differences and similarities in how moral values are understood, nurtured, and enacted in various educational environments. The insights gained from these comparisons will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of schools and moral education in shaping ethical development among adolescents.

3.3. Study Population, Sample Design and Sampling Procedure

3.3.1. Study Population

Adolescents between the age of 13 and 18 who are students of the selected schools constitute the study population. There are about 2147 schools in the eleven sub-cities. Based on their accessibility the three schools were chosen purposely for the study.

Attempt has been made to diversify the school setting as much as possible. The rationales for the selection of the schools are that the students in these schools come from different socio

economic class of the city dwellers, previous knowledge and access of the researcher to the schools and the presence of educational guidance and support programs in the schools under study. As explained earlier the primary objective of the study is not to generalize for the general population rather to find out specific knowledge and student's moral value and moral response of students in the selected schools.

3.3.2. Sample and size determination

The need for sampling in this study result from the desire to obtain validity and also to eliminate problems associated with most researches such as population size, cost in terms of finance, time greater speed and accuracy as well as accessibility to the population. Consequently out of the total adolescent pupil (13-18 age class) of the three sampled schools 150 respondents were drawn for the study. Mouton (2001) identified that the aim of sampling in social research is to produce representative selections of population elements (p. 132). In the course of the process of sampling the main aim is to get a sample of that which is as representative as possible of the target population.

3.3.3. Sample Procedure

The study used a stratified sampling technique, which involved purposively selecting participants from each of the three schools chosen for the study. According to Babbie (2007), stratified sampling is a method that aims to improve the representativeness of the sample by reducing sampling error, rather than selecting participants randomly from the entire population. In this study, the stratified sampling method was used to divide respondents into three age groups: 13 to 15, 15 to 17, and 17 and older. From each age group in all three schools, 16 or 17 participants were selected randomly, resulting in a total of 50 participants per school. This brought the overall sample size to 150 participants. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, and all were returned, representing a 100% response rate. In addition, three participants from each school were purposively selected for interviews, which provided detailed qualitative data to support the study.

3.4. Data Sources of the Study

In this study, both primary and secondary sources of data were used as important sources of data. The researchers gathered primary data from the selected respondents through the questionnaire, in depth interview. Face to face interview is conducted for three respondents from each school. That is a total of nine interview. These provide an opportunity of getting

reliable data, and a chance for the interviewer and interviewees to have better interaction and clarification of issues.

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

The following research data collection instruments were used at the different levels and stages of this study:

3.5.1. Questionnaire

One of the instruments used for this study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire items used closed-ended format to generate qualitative data as intended. It was self-administered tool. The questionnaire was first constructed in English and then translated in Amharic for Abune gorgorios and kokebe-Tsibah students for better understanding of the questions asked and for easier comprehension of the respondents. This is avoid eliminated the possibility of misinterpretation. The scale-based response categories are preferred because, in addition to other advantages, they ensure greater comparability of responses across the different settlements

3.5.2. Interview

The interview was used as a supplementary tool for this research. A total of nine participants were purposively selected, with three interviewees from each school. Efforts were made to include participants from different age groups to capture a range of perspectives on adolescent moral development. This approach was chosen to gather in-depth insights into adolescents' understanding of moral concepts, such as fairness and empathy, and how their moral reasoning evolves as they mature. It also aimed to explore their ability to navigate complex ethical decisions as they grow older.

The interview guide was first developed in English and then translated into Amharic to ensure clarity and ease of understanding for the respondents. Both structured and unstructured interviews were conducted. The structured interviews allowed for standardized data collection from all participants, while the unstructured interviews provided the flexibility for respondents to elaborate on their answers, offering richer, more detailed responses. The in-depth interviews serving as the primary source of qualitative information for the study.

This methodology was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of adolescents' moral development in a way that could not be fully captured by questionnaires alone. The qualitative nature of the interviews allowed for a more comprehensive exploration of the topic. Newman (2000, p: 121-122) emphasized that “qualitative researchers usually try to present authentic interpretations that are sensitive to specific socio historical contexts and conduction of detailed examinations of cases that arise in the natural flow of social life”.

3.6. Data collection procedure

The data collected included demographic information about the adolescent respondents. Adolescents typically develop their moral values through a combination of influences, including their upbringing, personal experiences, and social interactions.

3.7. Method of Data Analysis

As it is stated under the sub topic of 'type of research', this research is a mixed method which means, quantities and qualitative approaches.

Accordingly, for realization and successful accomplishment of the study, data collected from different primary and secondary sources were organized and arranged. After the data has been arranged, it was a coded as the primary tasks. The respondents' scores were summarized and, it was analysed using both simple statistical techniques and descriptive narrations. The simple statics were includes tables, diagrams and percentages. The interview questions were analysed using descriptive narrations. Finally, all these were followed by the necessary interpretations and discussions so as to achieve the desired research goals.

3.8. Reliability and Validity of Data

Reliability refers to the consistency with which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. According to Engel and Schutt (2009), reliability means that "a measurement procedure yields consistent or equivalent scores when the phenomenon being measured is not changing, and that it is affected less by random error or chance variation than if it is unreliable" (p. 94). In other words, reliability ensures that a measuring instrument consistently produces stable and predictable results over time.

To ensure the validity of the tools used, particularly face validity, the items on the questionnaire were reviewed by experts in research from the Faculty of Arts. This review process helped identify and correct minor errors, with revisions made based on feedback from

the research advisor. These steps helped ensure that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure and that it was appropriate for the study.

3.9. Ethics of the Study

The aim of protecting the participants from compromising situation that could affect their self-esteem gives credence to adhere strictly by researchers to a set of ethical guidelines or standards (Bailey 1988:128). The researchers „key ethical principles were informed consent, where by the “subjects must base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved” (Babbie 2007:64). Even after participation in a study, the respondents must be given a briefing in explaining the study procedures that are involved. This research followed the following ethical consideration as a context:

- Informed consent given to participant by someone competent must be voluntary adequately informed.
- Avoiding harm for participants in collecting data.
- The necessity of in informing the participants about the nature of procedures before their participating in the research.
- Maintaining anonymity of respondents willing to participate.
- Refraining from giving any part(s) of the research materials such as tapes etc used at any stage of data generation for this study, for advertisement without prior written permission from subjects.
- Doing justice to participant in analysing the data.
- Confidentiality in writing about the research.

In this study, the sampled schools were given consent verbally and authorizing letter from head of department was shown to them before their participating in the research study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The study aimed to assess the Moral values and practices of adolescents at Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School.

Different questions asked to measure and understand students Moral reasoning skills, Empathy levels; Pro-social behaviours; Peer relationships; Ethical decision-making; Attitudes towards ethical dilemmas and Participation in moral education programs

These variables are assessed through various methods, such as surveys questionnaires, observations and interviews. The study use scales or indicators to quantify and evaluate adolescents' moral values within educational settings, providing valuable insights into the moral value and practice of students and the impact of educational seating on ethical development.

4.2. Analysis of the survey data

The data was collected using questionnaires designed to capture adolescents' views on their moral values, ethical decision-making and personal experiences in educational settings. Unlike traditional quantitative approaches, the responses to these questions were analysed qualitatively to identify key themes and patterns in participants' perspectives.

The qualitative data collected from the three sampled schools will be analysed using a comparative qualitative analysis approach. Responses from the questionnaires were examined for recurring themes and nuanced differences across the schools. The analysis focused on themes such as personality traits, virtues and morality, personal values and behaviours, beliefs and actions, character development, and perceptions of goodness. By comparing these themes across the different educational contexts, the study seeks to explore how moral values are understood and enacted by adolescents in varying school environments.

4.2.1. Theme: Personality Traits:

1. I am friendly and welcoming to others
- 2 . I am trustworthy and loyal
- 3 . I am a person with values
4. I never think badly of myself
5. I am cheerful and always look on the bright side

Table 1. Questionnaire Data Analysis on **Personality Traits**

Questions	Sandford International School					Abune Gorgorios					Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School				
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
Q1	2	4	8	26	10	18	13	9	2	8	26	12	6	4	2
Q2	5	5	10	10	20	25	14	5	4	2	24	14	7	3	2
Q3	2	2	2	24	22	16	19	7	6	2	15	17	8	6	4
Q4	8	12	10	15	5	22	13	6	7	2	14	11	6	11	8
Q5	2	20	10	10	8	32	10	4	3	1	22	17	3	3	2

To analyse the table based on the theme of Personality Traits and in response to the research questions, we will examine the data from three selected secondary schools (Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School) using the Likert scale responses: Strongly Disagree (SDA), Disagree (DA), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).

How do adolescents understand the concept of moral value?

To explore how adolescents understand moral values, we can look for patterns in their responses across the schools, particularly in questions related to their beliefs about right and wrong, and their alignment with social and cultural norms.

Sandford International School (SIS) shows a trend of higher agreement (A and SA) for most items, particularly in Question 3 (Q3), which suggests a more positive or confident understanding of moral values. Adolescents in SIS tend to strongly agree (26 students) or

agree (10 students) more frequently with items related to moral concepts, indicating a solid alignment with moral principles and values.

Abune Gorgorios has a slightly more neutral trend, with several respondents answering "Neutral" (N), particularly in Question 1 (Q1) and Question 5 (Q5). This suggests that adolescents from this school might have mixed feelings or less clarity about moral values compared to their counterparts at SIS. However, there is still a substantial number of students who agree or strongly agree, especially in Q2, where 25 students strongly agree about the importance of moral values.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School exhibits a more divided response, with students often choosing "Neutral" (N) and "Disagree" (DA) more frequently. For example, in Q3, there were 19 students answering Neutral, suggesting some uncertainty or lack of confidence in their moral values. This could point to either a lack of understanding or uncertainty regarding moral issues.

In summary, Sandford International School students show a clearer, stronger understanding of moral values, whereas Abune Gorgorios and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School students show more ambivalence or uncertainty, with a larger number of neutral or disagree responses.

What is the influence of educational setting, family, teachers, and peers on the moral development of students in these selected schools?

This question focuses on how external factors such as educational settings, family, teachers, and peers influence the students' moral development. From the table, we can infer certain patterns in how students' personalities and responses to moral issues are shaped by their environment.

Sandford International School appears to have higher levels of agreement on questions related to moral values (Q1, Q3, Q2). This could suggest that students in this school are likely influenced by an educational environment that promotes moral development through teaching, guidance, or peer interactions. The higher frequency of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses suggests that teachers and peers at SIS may be more active in promoting moral and ethical discussions or activities.

Abune Gorgorios has a slightly less strong alignment, with more students in the "Neutral" or "Disagree" categories, particularly in Q1 and Q2. This could suggest that the moral development of students in this school might be more dependent on familial influences or less structured educational support for moral development. The number of "Neutral" responses

indicates that students may feel less clear on the moral values instilled by teachers or peers, or that the school's approach might not emphasize moral education as strongly.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School shows more variation in responses, with higher levels of "Disagree" (DA) and "Neutral" (N) answers across the board. This could indicate that students are either more influenced by family or external factors, or there may be less focus on moral education within the school. The larger portion of "Neutral" responses may also reflect a more passive or indifferent stance on moral teachings, suggesting that either the school's moral education framework is weak, or students are not as influenced by their educational setting compared to their peers at SIS.

Is there any visible difference or similarity in the moral values and practices across the three selected secondary schools?

This question looks for observable differences or similarities in the moral values and practices of students from each school.

Sandford International School shows a clear trend of agreement on most questions, particularly in Q1, Q3, and Q2, with a larger portion of students in the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories. This suggests that the students here share a strong alignment with common moral values and have a consistent understanding of ethical principles. There is less divergence in responses, implying a more uniform moral framework across the student body.

Abune Gorgorios demonstrates a moderate spread of responses, with a mix of "Neutral" and "Agree" categories. However, there are fewer instances of "Strongly Agree," particularly in Q3, where only 16 students agreed strongly. This indicates that while students might generally agree on some moral values, there is a larger variation in how they interpret or apply these values. Thus, the moral values at Abune Gorgorios seem to be somewhat divergent among students, possibly due to differing influences from home, peers, or school.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School presents the most divergent responses. The higher frequency of "Neutral" and "Disagree" (DA) answers, especially in Q1 and Q3, suggests a more divided approach to moral values. Some students may be uncertain about their moral beliefs, while others may feel disconnected from the school's moral teachings. This variation may reflect differences in individual family influences, peer groups, or the school's teaching methods.

Summary of differences across Schools:

Sandford International School has more uniform moral values, with a stronger emphasis on agreement and shared understanding.

Abune Gorgorios shows moderate variation, with a mixed set of responses indicating that students' moral views might be influenced more by family and personal experiences than by school.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School demonstrates more uncertainty and disagreement, suggesting a weaker or more divided approach to moral development, which could be attributed to less emphasis on moral education or varying external influences.

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that students from Sandford International School tend to have a more consistent and positive understanding of moral values, likely influenced by a strong educational and peer environment. In contrast, students from Abune Gorgorios and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School show more variation and uncertainty in their moral values, possibly influenced by external factors like family and community. The differences in responses across the three schools highlight the important role that educational setting, peer interactions, and family influences play in shaping adolescents' understanding of moral values and their overall moral development.

Overall, this comparison suggests that there are differences in how respondents from each school perceive themselves in terms of these personality traits. Further analysis or discussions could help explore the underlying reasons for these differences and provide a more in-depth understanding of the self-perceptions of students at each school.

4.2.2. Theme 2--Virtue and Morality:

The second research question regarding virtue and morality among adolescents can be explored through various avenues of study. Before going to the data lets discuss on the topic. Researches on the pertained issue has shown that adolescence is a critical period for the development and formation of moral values and virtues, as individuals begin to grapple with questions of right and wrong, ethical decision-making, empathy, and social responsibility.

Research in this area often focuses on the ways in which adolescents perceive virtue, make moral judgement, demonstrate empathy and compassion, engage in pro social behaviour, and navigate ethical dilemmas.

Through empirical research, scholars seek to better understand how adolescents develop moral reasoning skills, cultivate virtuous qualities such as honesty, compassion, and integrity, and navigate ethical challenges in their interactions with peers, family, and society at large.

By examining the role of virtue and morality in adolescent development, researchers can gain insights into the factors that promote ethical behaviour, moral decision-making, and the cultivation of positive character traits in young people.

With the intention to measure virtue and morality of respondents from the three sampled schools five questions are asked and sample units expected to rate from 1 to 5 depending on their level of agreement

Q.6. I have a religious faith

Q.7. I never think badly of other people

Q.8. I know that thinking good thoughts is important

Q.9. I know that doing good acts is important

Q.10. I am a virtuous person

The responses are summarized and presented on the table below. The data collected provides insight into the moral values and practices of adolescents.

Table 1 Questionnaire analysis for Virtue and Morality

Ques tions	Sandford International School					Abune Gorgorios Secondary School					Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School				
	SD A	DA	N	A	SA	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
Q6	12	17	2	8	11	0	0	0	8	42	1	1	3	13	32
Q7	4	10	8	18	10	5	6	6	12	21	4	5	11	11	19
Q8	10	5	8	10	12	1	3	0	3	43	2	3	9	7	23
Q9	0	12	20	15	3	3	1	0	9	37	2	3	4	8	26
Q10	5	25	10	5	5	2	3	12	15	18	3	3	8	5	24

Across three secondary schools: Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School. By analysing the responses to the five Likert-scale questions (Q6 to Q10), we can gain a deeper understanding of how students in these

schools view virtue, morality, and moral behaviour, as well as the influences of their educational setting, family, teachers, and peers.

These questions reflect the central themes of virtue, moral thought, and moral action, which can be interpreted in the context of personal morality and moral development influenced by internal beliefs and external factors (family, teachers, and peers).

Moral Understanding: Religious Faith, Good Thoughts, and Good Acts (Q6, Q8, Q9)

Sandford International School:

The responses to Q6 (religious faith) indicate a relatively balanced view, with 12 students strongly disagreeing and 17 disagreeing with the statement. This suggests that a significant portion of students at Sandford International School may not place a strong emphasis on religious faith, possibly due to the school's international or secular orientation.

Q8 and Q9 show high positive engagement, with many students agreeing that thinking good thoughts and doing good acts are important (Q8: 43 agree, Q9: 37 agree). This suggests that moral reflection and the importance of actions are seen as significant, aligning with the school's potential focus on values like social responsibility or ethical behavior.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

On Q6 (religious faith), no students strongly disagree or disagree, and only a small proportion (8 neutral, 10 agree) indicate a somewhat more positive view of religious faith compared to Sandford International School. This might suggest that students at Abune Gorgorios, likely a more traditional or religiously influenced school, may have a stronger connection to religious values in their moral framework.

However, responses to Q8 and Q9 show more mixed feelings. Only 3 students strongly agree that thinking good thoughts is important, and similarly, there is a smaller proportion of "Strongly Agree" responses to doing good acts (only 5 strongly agree). This might indicate that although there is some belief in the importance of good behavior, students are less vocal or more neutral about it, possibly influenced by external factors like peer groups or lack of reinforcement at the school level.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School:

Kokebe Tsibah's responses to Q6 (religious faith) show a very different pattern, with 32 students strongly disagreeing, suggesting a significant lack of religious engagement in the school environment. This could point to a more secular or perhaps a more diverse student

body with varied beliefs, where religious faith plays a lesser role in shaping moral development.

On Q8 and Q9, Kokebe Tsibah shows strong "Agree" responses (23 strongly agree to Q8, 26 strongly agree to Q9), which indicates that although students might not emphasize religious faith, they still value good thoughts and good actions. This could imply that their moral values are shaped more by external influences such as peer pressure, social norms, or teacher expectations.

Moral Practice: Good Thoughts, Good Acts, and Virtue (Q7, Q10)

Sandford International School:

Students at Sandford International School show a fairly positive outlook on moral behavior (Q7 - "I never think badly of others"), with a relatively high number of agreeing responses (18 agree, 10 disagree). This suggests that, despite a somewhat secular view on religious faith (Q6), students hold important moral beliefs about treating others well. This may reflect the school's emphasis on respect, tolerance, and global citizenship.

When asked whether they view themselves as virtuous (Q10), students showed a more neutral stance, with 25 students disagreeing and 10 agreeing. This suggests that while the students might adhere to moral principles such as not thinking badly about others, they may not fully internalize or identify with being virtuous, potentially due to a focus on personal achievement or academic performance over virtue.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

On Q7 (thinking badly of others), students show a mixed response, with 18 agreeing that they never think badly of others, but 12 students remaining neutral. This could indicate a level of moral sensitivity, where students at Abune Gorgorios express a more moderate or cautious view on how they treat others, possibly reflecting the influence of family or community values.

In terms of virtue (Q10), the responses are quite neutral (25 disagree, 5 strongly agree). This suggests that students in Abune Gorgorios are perhaps not as strongly aligned with seeing themselves as "virtuous," or they may not have had enough positive reinforcement in terms of moral role modelling from either peers or educators.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School:

Kokebe Tsibah shows strong disagreement (32 strongly disagree) with the idea of being virtuous (Q10), indicating a significant portion of students either don't perceive themselves as virtuous or feel that they are not living up to certain moral standards. This could suggest a lack of moral education or diminished emphasis on virtues within the school environment.

On Q7 (thinking badly of others), Kokebe Tsibah has a neutral-to-negative response as well, with 15 students agreeing that they never think badly of others, which is lower than the other schools. This might indicate that negative thoughts about others, such as prejudices or biases, may be more prevalent here compared to the other schools.

Influence of Educational Setting, Family, Teachers, and Peers

The moral values in these schools are shaped differently by the external factors (family, teachers, peers, and religious or cultural contexts). Based on the data, we can infer the following:

Sandford International School may have a more global or secular approach to moral development, focusing on universal virtues like respect, tolerance, and good actions, while placing less emphasis on religious faith. This is likely due to its international nature and the diverse backgrounds of the students.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School seems to have a more religiously influenced moral framework, with family and community values possibly playing a significant role. However, the students may struggle with internalizing the moral virtues (as indicated by the low responses to self-perception of virtue), potentially due to less emphasis on practical application of these values.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School, with the most significant proportion of students rejecting religious faith, shows the most neutral or negative responses to both the internalization of good thoughts and virtuous behavior. This could be due to peer influences, societal pressures, or a lack of moral education and reinforcement within the school.

The comparative analysis of the data shows distinct patterns in the way students in these three schools perceive and practice moral values. The Sandford International School students have a more secular, action-oriented approach to morality, while Abune Gorgorios reflects a more religiously influenced framework with some challenges in applying these values. Kokebe Tsibah shows a relatively weak connection to both religious faith and personal virtue, indicating potential gaps in moral development or education.

4.2.3. Theme: Personal Values and Behaviour

Q.11. I am responsible

Q.12. I want to be good in all situations

Q13. I try not to be unkind to friends, even if they annoy me

Q14. I do not give up when things are hard

Q15. It is important for me that my friend thinks well of me

Table 2 Questionnaire analysis for Personal Values and Behaviour

Questions	Sandford International School					Abune Gorgorios Secondary School					Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School				
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
Q11	5	6	9	15	15	0	2	9	18	18	2	4	5	12	20
Q12	0	2	10	25	8	1	2	6	24	14	3	2	4	14	20
Q13	0	16	10	15	4	6	4	8	12	17	5	3	6	13	16
Q14	0	2	15	20	8	1	3	8	15	20	3	4	3	5	28
Q15	0	7	4	15	18	0	2	9	18	18	3	4	10	10	17

Moral values, as reflected in the survey responses, are understood by adolescents as a complex interplay of individual responsibility, emotional regulation (kindness and perseverance), and concern for others' perceptions (friendship and reputation).

Responsibility (Q11): Adolescents across all three schools express a strong sense of responsibility, with high levels of agreement (SDA and DA) on the statement, "I am responsible." However, Sandford International School shows a higher concentration of students identifying strongly with this value (SDA = 5, DA = 6, N = 9, A = 15, SA = 15). This suggests that the students from this school may perceive themselves as particularly responsible, possibly due to stronger social or educational reinforcement of personal accountability.

Goodness in all situations (Q12): When asked about the desire to "be good in all situations," responses across the schools vary. Sandford International School shows a relatively low

agreement (SDA = 0, DA = 2, N = 10, A = 25, SA = 8), which could indicate that these students recognize the complexity of maintaining goodness in every situation. This is in contrast to Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School, where students show slightly more agreement (SDA = 2, DA = 4, N = 5, A = 12, SA = 17), possibly reflecting a stronger desire or belief in adhering to moral standards at all times.

Kindness (Q13): Regarding kindness, especially in situations where friends may annoy them, responses indicate varying levels of emotional control and empathy. Sandford International School shows a more mixed approach, with students evenly spread across the response categories (SDA = 0, DA = 16, N = 10, A = 15, SA = 4), suggesting that they may value kindness but also struggle to maintain it when faced with challenges. On the other hand, Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School students are more consistent in showing kindness (SDA = 5, DA = 3, N = 6, A = 13, SA = 16), implying that they might exhibit a higher degree of emotional regulation or greater social cohesion.

Perseverance (Q14): Perseverance in difficult situations is a core value for many students, and again, Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School stands out. The responses here show a significant commitment to not giving up when things are hard (SDA = 3, DA = 4, N = 3, A = 5, SA = 28), which may reflect an educational or cultural emphasis on resilience. Comparatively, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School shows a more varied response pattern (SDA = 1, DA = 3, N = 8, A = 15, SA = 20), which may indicate less consistency in the value of perseverance.

Friendship and reputation (Q15): The concern for how friends think of them is expressed more strongly in Sandford International School (SDA = 0, DA = 7, N = 4, A = 15, SA = 18), suggesting that students in this setting may be more socially attuned and concerned about their peer relationships. However, Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School also shows a notable response (SDA = 3, DA = 4, N = 10, A = 10, SA = 17), demonstrating a clear concern for reputation, though less intense compared to Sandford.

The educational setting, with its values and practices, plays a significant role in shaping moral development. Sandford International School seems to prioritize individual responsibility and social success, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School promotes a more balanced but less consistent moral outlook, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School appears to emphasize emotional regulation, perseverance, and social cohesion more effectively.

There are both similarities and differences in the moral values and practices across the schools.

Similarities: All three schools value responsibility and perseverance, indicating that these are foundational moral principles recognized across different educational settings. Additionally, there is a shared concern for friendship and reputation, particularly at Sandford International School and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School, where students are more likely to be influenced by their peers.

Differences: The degree of emotional regulation (kindness and perseverance) and social responsibility (desire to be good) varies considerably:

Sandford International School students exhibit a strong focus on responsibility and social harmony but show mixed results for kindness in difficult situations.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School students are more moderate in their responses, suggesting a more balanced but less intense internalization of moral values.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School stands out for its students' strong perseverance and emotional control (kindness), reflecting an environment that may prioritize social cohesion, emotional intelligence, and community support.

While there are common values across the three schools, the depth and consistency with which these values are internalized and practiced show clear differences, largely influenced by the educational and social environment within each school. Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School appears to emphasize moral development more consistently, while Sandford International School and Abune Gorgorios Secondary School show more variation in how moral values are expressed. This may be due to differences in school culture, teaching practices, and peer interactions.

Character Development:

Q19. My friends have influence on my character

Q20. My teacher helps me to develop my character

Q21. My school helps me to rebuild my positive character

Q22. I am only friends with people who are good

Table 3 Questionnaire analysis for Character Development

Ques tions	Sandford International					Abune Gorgorios					Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School				
	SD A	DA	N	A	SA	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
Q19	0	7	5	20	18	8	2	7	13	20	0	5	10	17	18
Q20	0	10	17	18	5	10	5	7	13	12	9	7	4	12	18
Q21	0	18	10	10	7	7	0	5	20	15	6	11	3	12	18
Q22	2	15	8	10	8	1	2	6	14	26	2	8	3	7	30

From the responses to the four questions on character development, we can infer that adolescents view moral values as interconnected with social influence (peers and teachers), the educational environment, and individual choice (choosing friends based on moral character).

Peer Influence (Q19): A majority of students across all schools agree that their friends have a significant influence on their character. The responses from Sandford International School (SDA = 0, DA = 7, N = 5, A = 20, SA = 18) suggest that students strongly recognize peer influence, with many agreeing that friends shape their character. This is consistent with Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School (SDA = 0, DA = 5, N = 10, A = 17, SA = 18), where peer influence is also strongly acknowledged. In Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, the responses are more mixed (SDA = 8, DA = 2, N = 7, A = 13, SA = 20), indicating a more neutral to positive outlook on the role of peers in character development.

Adolescents generally view peer relationships as integral to character development, suggesting that social interactions play a major role in shaping their moral outlook. The slightly higher agreement in Sandford International and Kokebe Tsibah indicates a stronger belief in the active role of peers in their moral growth.

Teacher Influence (Q20): The question of whether teachers help students develop their character shows some interesting contrasts across schools. Sandford International students largely agree that teachers are influential in their character development (SDA = 0, DA = 10, N = 17, A = 18, SA = 5), with a solid portion acknowledging the positive role of teachers. Kokebe Tsibah students also show a positive outlook (SDA = 9, DA = 7, N = 4, A = 12, SA =

18), but their responses are more evenly distributed, suggesting some variance in how they perceive their teachers' influence. Abune Gorgorios shows a more varied response (SDA = 10, DA = 5, N = 7, A = 13, SA = 12), implying that students here may feel that teacher influence is less consistent or impactful.

Adolescents across all schools recognize the role of teachers in character development, though the intensity of this perception varies. Sandford International School students seem to benefit from a structured, perhaps more formal approach to character development through teachers, while Abune Gorgorios Secondary School students appear less certain about their teachers' role in shaping their moral values.

School's Role in Rebuilding Positive Character (Q21): Responses about the school's role in rebuilding positive character show a clearer divide. Sandford International has a higher percentage of students who disagree or are neutral (SDA = 0, DA = 18, N = 10, A = 10, SA = 7), indicating that while the school is seen as having a role in character development, it may not be seen as actively rebuilding or reinforcing positive character traits. In Kokebe Tsibah, the responses are more evenly spread but show a stronger neutral or agree stance (SDA = 6, DA = 11, N = 3, A = 12, SA = 18), suggesting a moderate belief in the school's role in moral education. Abune Gorgorios students are more split, with a noticeable portion agreeing (SDA = 7, DA = 7, N = 0, A = 5, SA = 20), signaling a more positive view of the school's influence on character rebuilding.

The role of the school in rebuilding character is more prominent in Kokebe Tsibah and Abune Gorgorios, while Sandford International students may see their school more as a secondary influence on character development. This could point to different educational philosophies or practices in each school regarding moral and character education.

Friendship Selection Based on Moral Character (Q22): The final question examines how adolescents view their friends' moral character and its importance in their selection of friendships. Kokebe Tsibah students show the strongest agreement (SDA = 2, DA = 8, N = 3, A = 7, SA = 30), suggesting that they place a high value on choosing friends based on moral character. Sandford International also shows strong agreement (SDA = 2, DA = 15, N = 8, A = 10, SA = 8), though to a slightly lesser extent. Abune Gorgorios shows more mixed responses (SDA = 1, DA = 2, N = 6, A = 14, SA = 26), indicating that while they generally care about moral character, the intensity of this value may vary more across students.

The importance of moral character in friendships is highly valued across the schools, especially at Kokebe Tsibah, where students express the strongest belief in forming friendships based on ethical principles. This suggests a potentially strong moral community within this school.

Peer Influence: Adolescents at Kokebe Tsibah and Sandford International report a strong belief in the role of peers in shaping character, which could indicate a strong peer culture that promotes moral values and positive behaviors. Abune Gorgorios shows more mixed responses, which might suggest a less cohesive peer influence in comparison.

Teacher Influence: Sandford International students appear to see teachers as playing a more direct role in character development, which may reflect a more structured, teacher-driven moral education program. Kokebe Tsibah students recognize teacher influence but seem to place more emphasis on peer and community-based support. Abune Gorgorios students show a more neutral stance, possibly indicating less confidence in the teachers' role in moral development or a different emphasis in educational practice.

School Environment: Kokebe Tsibah and Abune Gorgorios students see their school as a more active participant in the rebuilding of character, while Sandford International students seem less likely to view the school as a central force in character reinforcement. This could reflect different school cultures and teaching philosophies, with the first two schools possibly incorporating more formal moral education or character development programs.

Family Influence: The family influence is not directly addressed in the data, but we can infer that school and peer influences seem to have a stronger immediate impact on character development in these settings. **Similarities:** Across all three schools, peer influence and the importance of moral character in friendships are highly valued. Students from all three schools acknowledge that their friends impact their character and express a preference for friends who have good moral values. Additionally, the influence of teachers on character development is recognized in all schools, though the intensity of this belief varies.

Differences: The primary differences lie in the perceived role of the school and teacher influence:

Sandford International students show the most agreement with teacher influence on character, yet they seem to view the school as less actively involved in rebuilding positive character compared to students at Kokebe Tsibah and Abune Gorgorios.

Kokebe Tsibah students strongly emphasize the importance of moral character in friendships and believe the school plays a crucial role in moral development, while Sandford International students may prioritize individual responsibility more.

While there are some key similarities, such as the belief in the importance of peer influence and moral friendships, there are notable differences in how teachers and schools are perceived in the character development process. The more community-based approach in Kokebe Tsibah contrasts with the more individualized or teacher-driven approach in Sandford International. Abune Gorgorios appears somewhere in between, with students showing a more neutral stance on the school's role in moral development.

4.3. Interview analysis

The next part deals with the qualitative analysis of data gathered through interview. The analysis is done through scrutiny of statement and words and the meaning attaching with them. Research Question 1: How do adolescents understand the concept of moral value?

Question 1. What does “moral value” mean to you?

Theme Analysis:

Basic and Foundational Understanding (Ages 13-14):

Across all three schools, younger adolescents (13-14 years old) show a simpler, more concrete understanding of moral values as external rules for distinguishing right from wrong. The emphasis at this stage is often on clear behavioral outcomes, such as making “choices that reflect goodness” or recognizing actions as right or wrong.

For example, Respondent 1 from Sandford (13 years old) states: “Moral values are rules for deciding what’s right and wrong.”

Similarly, Respondent 2 from Abune Gorgorios (14 years old) mentions: “Moral values help me make choices that are good and not bad.”

These statements suggest that, at this age, adolescents view moral values as external, fixed principles that guide decisions, aligning with Kohlberg’s early stages of moral reasoning.

Development of Complexity and Social Responsibility (Age 15):

As adolescents grow older (around age 15), their understanding becomes more nuanced. They begin to recognize that moral values not only help differentiate right from wrong, but also include considerations like respect for others and self-respect.

A 15-year-old respondent from Kokebe Tsibah states: “Moral value is about knowing what’s right and wrong and acting in a way that respects others and myself.” This reflects a growing awareness of social responsibility and the importance of respect in moral decision-making.

A similar sentiment is shared by a 15-year-old from Sandford International who says: “Moral values are beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and they guide me to treat others fairly.” This shows an understanding of morality not just as rules, but as part of social interaction and personal values.

This shift suggests that students are entering Kohlberg’s conventional stage, where moral reasoning becomes centred around societal norms, relationships, and mutual respect.

Introspection and Individualization (Ages 16-18):

By ages 16-18, adolescents start to internalize their understanding of moral values, reflecting deeply on how these values inform their personal identity and life decisions.

A 17-year-old from Abune Gorgorios states: “Moral values give me a foundation for the values I choose to live by, like honesty and fairness. They shape who I am.” This reflects a more abstract, internalized view of moral values as foundational to one's identity.

A 16-year-old from Kokebe Tsibah says: “Moral values are a set of principles that guide your behaviour in life, not just to avoid bad things, but to make the right choices in difficult situations.” This more complex view suggests that adolescents are beginning to see moral values as overarching principles that guide long-term life decisions, aligning with Kohlberg’s post-conventional stage.

In summary, adolescents' understanding of moral values moves from a concrete, rule-based approach to a more abstract, personalized, and socially responsible understanding as they age.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of educational settings, family, teachers, and peers on the moral development of students in these selected schools?

Educational Environment:

Students from Sandford International and Abune Gorgorios tend to show a more structured and formalized understanding of moral values, suggesting that these schools provide a curriculum or environment conducive to moral education and reflection.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) mentions: “In our school, we talk about what is right or wrong in a lot of classes. It helps me think about how I treat others.” This suggests

that structured discussions or curricular activities at Sandford encourage deeper thinking about moral issues, promoting a more reflective approach to morality.

Similarly, a student from Abune Gorgorios (16 years old) says: “Teachers here often ask us to think about why something is right or wrong, not just what’s right and wrong.” This suggests that the school environment encourages philosophical and reflective thinking about moral issues, likely fostering a deeper understanding of abstract moral values.

Family and Peer Influence:

Though family and peers are not directly mentioned in the interviews, there are subtle indicators of these influences in the students' responses, particularly in their emphasis on social respect and responsibility.

For example, the 15-year-old from Kokebe Tsibah highlights the importance of acting in ways that respect both one and others: “Moral value is about knowing what’s right and wrong and acting in a way that respects others and myself.” This suggests that their moral development is likely shaped by family and community values that emphasize mutual respect and interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, adolescents are likely influenced by their increasing interactions with peers. As they grow older, their understanding of moral values shifts toward an emphasis on social norms and group dynamics, as evidenced by the emphasis on fairness and respect across all age groups.

Commonalities:

Moral values as guiding principles: Across all three schools, adolescents consistently view moral values as guiding principles for distinguishing right from wrong. Regardless of the school setting, all students recognize that moral values help to guide their behaviour and decisions.

For example, the 14-year-old from Abune Gorgorios states: “Moral values help me make choices that are good and not bad,” while the 13-year-old from Sandford similarly remarks: *“Moral values are rules for deciding what’s right and wrong.”*

Social aspect of moral values: Students from all three schools emphasize the social aspect of moral values, recognizing that these principles guide not only personal behaviour but also interactions with others. They all speak of respect for others and fairness as integral parts of moral decision-making.

A 15-year-old from Sandford mentions: “Moral values are beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and they guide me to treat others fairly.”

Similarly, a 16-year-old from Kokebe Tsibah states: “Moral values are a set of principles that guide your behaviour in life, not just to avoid bad things, but to make the right choices in difficult situations.”

These commonalities highlight a shared developmental trajectory where younger students focus on clear right vs. wrong distinctions, while older students emphasize social responsibility and personal beliefs.

Differences:

The complexity of moral reasoning seems to vary across the schools. For example, Abune Gorgorios students tend to demonstrate more abstract thinking about moral values. A 17-year-old from Abune Gorgorios states: “Moral values give me a foundation for the values I choose to live by, like honesty and fairness. They shape who I am,” reflecting a more philosophical approach to moral development.

In contrast, students from Sandford International appear to have a more structured, perhaps globally standardized view of moral values. A 15-year-old from Sandford says: “Moral values are beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong, and they guide me to treat others fairly.” This suggests that Sandford’s international curriculum may influence students to adopt more universal and standardized definitions of moral values.

Kokebe Tsibah students, on the other hand, seem to place a higher value on moral idealism at younger ages, focusing on clear distinctions between good and bad, but they show a shift toward more abstract thinking as they grow older.

A 15-year-old from Kokebe Tsibah states: “Moral value is about knowing what’s right and wrong and acting in a way that respects others and myself,” indicating a more socially-oriented view at this age.

The analysis demonstrates that adolescents’ understandings of moral values evolve in complexity as they grow older, with a shared developmental trajectory across all three schools. Younger students (13-14 years old) focus on simple right vs. wrong distinctions, while older students (16-18 years old) begin to incorporate more complex, abstract, and individualized views of moral values, emphasizing personal beliefs, social responsibility, and introspection.

Though there are similarities across the three schools in the overall pattern of moral development, the way students conceptualize moral values differs subtly based on their educational settings and cultural contexts. Students from Abune Gorgorios show a more abstract, philosophical approach, those from Sandford International emphasize more standardized principles, and students from Kokebe Tsibah demonstrate a shift from idealism to a more reflective moral framework as they mature. Educational settings, family values, and peer influences all play a significant role in shaping these evolving conceptions of moral values.

Question 2: Can you name some moral values that you think are important?

The goal is to compare how their understandings of moral values evolve with age, and how these values are shaped by their educational, familial, and social contexts.

Sandford International School Responses

Interviewee 1 (Age 13):

"Some important moral values to me are honesty, respect."

At age 13, this response reflects a foundational understanding of moral values. Honesty and respect are straightforward, concrete values that adolescents in this age group might emphasize as they begin to understand social rules and interactions. This basic moral framework suggests a focus on interpersonal relationships and adherence to social norms, reflecting Kohlberg's early stages of moral reasoning.

Interviewee 2 (Age 15):

"Honesty, integrity, compassion, and fairness."

The inclusion of integrity and compassion marks a deeper understanding of morality at age 15. Integrity extends beyond honesty, indicating an awareness of ethical consistency even in the absence of external validation. Compassion shows sensitivity to others' emotional needs, while fairness highlights growing concerns with justice and equity, suggesting a shift to a more complex and socially aware view of morality. These values align with Kohlberg's second stage, where social interactions and group fairness become central.

Interviewee 3 (Age 18):

"I think honesty, kindness, and responsibility are really important. Honesty helps build trust, kindness makes the world a better place, and being responsible shows that you can be counted on."

At age 18, this response demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of moral values. The interviewee connects honesty to trust, kindness to societal betterment, and responsibility to personal accountability—values essential for adult life. These insights reflect not only a personal commitment to ethical behaviour but also an understanding of how values impact relationships and broader societal dynamics, indicating a transition into post-conventional moral reasoning.

Analysis for Sandford International School:

Across the three age groups, there is a clear developmental trajectory: The younger respondent (age 13) identifies basic, relational values like honesty and respect, while the 15-year-old introduces more abstract values like integrity and compassion, pointing to a broader, socially aware morality. The 18-year-old then articulates these values in a more interconnected and practical way, highlighting the societal importance of values such as kindness and responsibility.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School Responses

Respondent 1 (Age 14):

"Some moral values I think are important are honesty, integrity, compassion, and fairness."

At age 14, this response mirrors the values of older adolescents at Sandford. Honesty, integrity, and fairness suggest a recognition of moral values that govern both personal behaviour and societal fairness. Compassion further underscores an awareness of the emotional needs of others, indicating a holistic view of morality that includes both emotional and social considerations.

Respondent 2 (Age 15):

"Honesty, empathy, respect, responsibility."

This response from a 15-year-old introduces empathy alongside honesty and respect, emphasizing a growing capacity for emotional intelligence and an awareness of the feelings of others. Responsibility suggests that this respondent is increasingly aware of their

accountability and role in maintaining social harmony, which is particularly important as they approach adulthood.

Respondent 3 (Age 18):

"Honesty, empathy, respect, responsibility, building trust and environment."

The 18-year-old response builds upon previous answers with a clear emphasis on the real-world applications of moral values. The inclusion of building trust and fostering a positive environment signals that this respondent has internalized the importance of moral values for creating healthy relationships and community dynamics. The focus on trust suggests an understanding of how moral behaviour impacts both personal relationships and collective well-being.

Analysis for Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Similar to Sandford, there is a progression from basic moral principles (honesty and integrity) in the younger adolescents to more relational and socially-oriented values like empathy and responsibility in the older respondents. The 18-year-old's reflection on trust and the environment highlights the growing significance of values in fostering not just personal behaviour but also broader community cohesion.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School Responses

Respondent 1 (Age 15):

"Honesty, respect, kindness, and responsibility are really important. They guide how we treat each other."

This response highlights the foundational nature of these values in guiding social interactions, particularly in a school setting. Respect and honesty remain central, but the addition of kindness indicates a growing sensitivity to others' feelings, suggesting a shift toward emotional intelligence and community-oriented values.

Respondent 2 (Age 16):

"Fairness, loyalty, and empathy are really crucial. They help us live together in harmony."

At age 16, the respondent's focus on fairness and loyalty suggests a deeper concern with social dynamics, particularly group harmony and the role of values in maintaining supportive friendships. Empathy is emphasized as essential for understanding others' perspectives, pointing to a mature view of social relationships.

Respondent 3 (Age 14):

"Our school promotes kindness through various programs, like community service. It really inspires us to help others."

The 14-year-old's response shows how institutional support can shape adolescents' understanding of moral values. The school's active promotion of kindness through programs like community service reinforces the idea that moral values are not just theoretical, but should be practiced through action. This underscores a pragmatic, value-driven approach to moral development, highlighting how adolescents internalize values through direct engagement and action.

Analysis for Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School:

In Kokebe Tsibah, moral values are deeply connected to social cohesion and the role of emotional intelligence. The values of honesty, respect, and kindness dominate early on, and as adolescents mature, they become more concerned with social dynamics, such as fairness, loyalty, and empathy. The inclusion of school programs like community service shows how the school environment can play a significant role in encouraging active moral behavior, reinforcing the idea that values are not only discussed but are also lived through collective action.

Commonalities across the Schools:

Core Values: Across all three schools, there is a consistent emphasis on foundational moral values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility. These values form the base upon which more complex and abstract moral principles are built.

Social and Emotional Awareness: As adolescents grow older, there is a marked shift toward values that promote social harmony, such as empathy, fairness, and compassion. These values reflect an increasing awareness of interpersonal relationships and the emotional needs of others.

Developmental Progression: All three schools show a developmental progression from a simpler understanding of moral values at younger ages (e.g., honesty and respect) to a more complex and integrated understanding at older ages, where values like integrity, loyalty, empathy, and trust emerge as important guiding principles.

Differences between the Schools:

Kokebe Tsibah places a strong emphasis on community service and practical engagement with moral values. The 14-year-old in Kokebe Tsibah, for example, emphasizes the impact of the school's programs in teaching values through action.

Sandford and Abune Gorgorios respondents, particularly at ages 15 and 18, express a more abstract and philosophical understanding of moral values, such as the link between honesty and trust, and fairness as a concept tied to social justice.

Conclusion:

The analysis reveals that while adolescents across all three schools share a basic understanding of moral values, their grasp of these values evolves in complexity with age. Younger adolescents focus on straightforward relational values like honesty and respect, while older adolescents move towards more abstract concepts like integrity, empathy, fairness, and the societal implications of these values. The findings also suggest that educational environments and school initiatives play a significant role in fostering moral development, encouraging adolescents to not only reflect on but also live out their values through practical experiences and community engagement.

Question. 3 How do you think your school influences your moral values?

The analysis explores how adolescents understand and internalize moral values within their school environments, based on the responses to the question: The responses from students at Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, and Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School are analysed through key themes: core values promoted by the schools, the role of teachers and programs in moral education, focus on community and peer influence, individual vs. structured approaches to moral development, and perceived influence of the school environment on moral values.

Core Values Promoted by the Schools

All three schools emphasize values like kindness, respect, fairness, and teamwork, but the emphasis and framing of these values vary.

Sandford International School places a strong emphasis on kindness, fairness, and integrity. Respondent 1 (Age 13) notes that, "My school influences my moral values by providing a supportive environment that encourages kindness, fairness, and integrity." This suggests that kindness and fairness are not just ideals, but fundamental aspects of the school culture.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) further highlights personal growth, saying, “The focus of the school is on personal growth and self-improvement,” reinforcing that the school promotes a climate of mutual respect where students can build their moral compass in a safe space.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School also promotes kindness and respect but incorporates religious education into its framework of moral values. Respondent 1 (Age 14) says, “My school influences my moral values by providing a nurturing environment, religious education that encourages us to be our best selves and to treat others with respect.” The emphasis on being our best selves indicates that the moral framework at this school is closely aligned with both personal and religious growth.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School underscores values like respect and teamwork. Respondent 1 (Age 15) mentions, “Our school emphasizes respect and teamwork,” while also noting that assemblies often focus on integrity, which encourages students to “think more about my actions.” This focus on integrity suggests that Kokebe Tsibah fosters an environment where students are continually prompted to reflect on the ethical implications of their behaviour. Respondent 2 (Age 16) adds that teachers promote honesty and fairness, further reinforcing the school’s emphasis on ethical reasoning through regular discussions.

Role of Teachers and Programs in Moral Education

The role of teachers and structured programs in moral education varies across the schools, reflecting different approaches to shaping students' moral values.

Sandford International School offers structured programs to instil moral values like integrity and teamwork. Respondent 3 (Age 18) explains, “My school promotes a lot of positive values, like respect and teamwork. We have programs that encourage us to help each other, and teachers often talk about the importance of integrity.” This indicates a formalized approach, where teachers play a pivotal role in creating and delivering structured moral education.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, while promoting similar values, also integrates religious education as a core component of moral development. Respondent 2 (Age 15) notes, “My school influences my moral values by providing a supportive environment that encourages me to be a good person and to treat others with kindness and respect.” The emphasis on personal growth and the internalization of moral values is rooted in religious teachings, suggesting a holistic, values-based approach.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School appears to rely more on individual teacher efforts and discussions about ethical issues. Respondent 2 (Age 16) states, “My teachers encourage us to

be honest and fair. We often have discussions about ethical issues, which shape our perspectives.” This suggests that while moral education at Kokebe Tsibah is structured around discussions and interactions with teachers, it is less formalized compared to Sandford International School, with teachers playing a central role in fostering individual moral reasoning.

Focus on Community and Peer Influence

All three schools emphasize the importance of community and peer interactions in shaping students' moral values, though they approach it differently.

Sandford International School fosters a community atmosphere where values like respect and teamwork are emphasized through structured programs. Respondent 3 (Age 18) notes, “We have programs that encourage us to help each other,” pointing to the school’s efforts to create a supportive and collaborative environment where students are encouraged to interact positively with peers.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School places strong emphasis on community in a religious context. Respondent 3 (Age 17) states, “Our school emphasizes the importance of community and teamwork. We often have discussions and activities that focus on respect and helping each other.” This suggests that community engagement is both a moral value and a practice, promoted through religious and group activities that reinforce students’ sense of responsibility to others.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School integrates community service and outreach programs, connecting moral development with real-world actions. Respondent 1 (Age 15) explains, “We have assemblies where we talk about integrity, which makes me think more about my actions,” and further adds that the school organizes community service programs that “teach us the importance of helping others.” This practical approach helps students engage in ethical behaviour through hands-on, community-based activities.

Individual vs. Structured Approaches to Moral Development

The degree of structure in moral education varies across the schools, with Sandford International School and Abune Gorgorios adopting more formalized programs compared to Kokebe Tsibah.

Sandford International School offers a structured approach to moral education, with dedicated programs that instil values like integrity and teamwork. Respondent 3 (Age 18) highlights

that the school “promotes a lot of positive values,” suggesting that the school creates a systematic environment to foster these virtues.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School combines structured religious teachings with a nurturing environment, where values like kindness and respect are emphasized. The school appears to have a more integrated approach to moral education, intertwining religious and personal growth, which may be less formalized but still profoundly impactful. Respondent 1 (Age 14) explains, “Religious education encourages us to be our best selves,” indicating a personalized moral framework based on ethical and religious teachings.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School, while providing ethical discussions and community service opportunities, appears to rely more on individual teacher commitment and community engagement for moral education. Respondent 2 (Age 16) states, “My teachers encourage us to be honest and fair,” but also notes that much of the moral education happens through informal discussions, pointing to a less structured but still engaged approach.

Perceived Influence of the School Environment on Moral Values

The perceived influence of the school environment on moral development varies slightly across the schools.

Sandford International School students describe the school’s environment as supportive and structured, creating an atmosphere where moral values like kindness and integrity are not just taught but actively practised. Respondent 1 (Age 13) notes, “The school encourages kindness, fairness, and integrity,” suggesting that these values are integral to the school’s ethos and its students' moral development.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School also fosters a nurturing environment that emphasizes respect and religious teachings, influencing students’ moral development through a personalized and spiritual lens. Respondent 2 (Age 15) states, “The school encourages me to be a good person and to treat others with kindness and respect,” indicating that the school’s environment plays a central role in shaping personal morality based on religious values.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School students emphasize the school’s role in fostering community involvement and real-world moral engagement. Respondent 1 (Age 15) mentions that the school’s focus on community service teaches them the importance of helping others, reinforcing the practical application of moral values. The school’s approach seems to connect moral education directly with students’ everyday lives and actions.

Similarities: Across all three schools, there is a shared emphasis on kindness, respect, teamwork, and fairness as core moral values. Teachers play an essential role in fostering these values, and community—whether religious, social, or service-oriented—is central to the moral education in all three environments.

Differences: The schools differ in the structure of their moral education. Sandford International School uses structured programs and discussions to instill values like integrity and teamwork, whereas Abune Gorgorios Secondary School incorporates religious education to support students' personal and spiritual growth. Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School provides a more individualized approach through teacher-driven discussions and community service, emphasizing the practical application of moral values.

In conclusion, while the core values across all three schools are similar, the approach to teaching and internalizing these values—whether through structured programs, religious education, or community engagement—varies. This suggests that the educational setting, teacher involvement, and school culture have distinct impacts on how adolescents understand and apply moral values.

The responses from adolescents at Sandford International School provide valuable insights into their understanding of moral values and the factors influencing their decision-making. In this analysis, I will explore the themes of moral decision-making, the influence of values such as respect, honesty, and integrity, and the emotional and social challenges adolescents face when confronted with moral dilemmas. The analysis also considers the influence of teachers, peers, and personal values as related to the research questions.

Moral Decision-Making and Social Responsibility

A common theme in these responses is the role of moral decision-making in social situations, particularly when the individual must choose between doing what is ethically right or taking a more passive route. The adolescents' experiences reflect the development of social responsibility and the importance of standing up for others in situations of injustice.

Respondent 1 (Age 13) describes a situation where they witnessed bullying:

“Once, I saw a classmate being bullied, and I had to decide whether to intervene or not. I chose to stand up for them because I believe in treating others with respect.”

This decision highlights the moral value of respect and the importance of standing up for others, even when it requires personal effort or courage. Respondent 1’s choice to intervene

demonstrates an understanding of social responsibility—taking action against wrongdoing to ensure that others are treated with dignity.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) shares a similar experience involving bullying:

“There was a time when I saw a classmate being bullied. I had to decide whether to speak up or just walk away. I chose to tell a teacher and support the student being bullied. It felt right to stand up for them, even though I was nervous.”

Here, the emotional challenge of making a moral decision is emphasized. The adolescent expresses internal conflict and nervousness, yet still chooses to report the bullying. This highlights the emotional complexity often involved in moral decision-making. It shows that moral values are not always easy to act on, especially when it requires confronting discomfort or fear, but the choice to act suggests a growing sense of moral responsibility and social justice.

Both respondents in these bullying situations demonstrate a commitment to respect, fairness, and courage. These values align with the broader social expectations for adolescents to support peers and oppose harmful behaviour, reflecting a maturing sense of ethical responsibility.

Honesty, Integrity, and Personal Morality

Another major theme is the importance of honesty and integrity in moral decision-making. In contrast to the earlier social situation involving bullying, this moral dilemma is more focused on individual morality and personal choices, even in the absence of others being directly affected.

Respondent 3 (Age 18) recounts a situation where they found a wallet with money in it:

“Once, I found a wallet with money in it, and I had to decide whether to keep the money or return it to its owner. I chose to return it because I believe in honesty and doing the right thing.”

This decision highlights the importance of honesty as a core value. The respondent’s choice to return the wallet shows a clear commitment to integrity, reinforcing the idea that moral decision-making can occur in everyday situations. Unlike the social dilemma of bullying, this moral choice involves an individual (the finder of the wallet) acting on personal principles of right and wrong.

The distinction between the moral dilemmas faced by Respondent 1 and Respondent 2 (bullying) and Respondent 3 (finding lost property) underscores the different dimensions of moral development: one focused on social justice and the other on personal integrity. Respondent 3's moral decision is a more private act, grounded in personal values of honesty and doing the right thing, even when there is no immediate peer or social pressure to act.

Emotional Challenges and Moral Decision-Making

A prominent aspect of the responses is the emotional complexity involved in moral decision-making. Adolescents are often faced with situations where they must weigh ethical values against emotional discomfort or fear.

Respondent 2 acknowledges feeling nervous when they decided to speak up about bullying:

“It felt right to stand up for them, even though I was nervous.”

This quote illustrates the emotional struggle that accompanies moral choices, especially when they involve confronting injustice or challenging social dynamics. The nervousness felt in this situation suggests that moral decisions are not always straightforward or easy, even for adolescents who understand the ethical stakes. This highlights how moral decision-making often requires courage and the ability to act despite personal discomfort.

This emotional aspect of moral decision-making is a key developmental challenge for adolescents, who are navigating complex social environments while trying to define and uphold their own values. The fear of standing out or being judged by peers can be a significant barrier to moral action, yet the responses show that these students are still willing to act on their values, even when faced with emotional discomfort.

Influence of Values on Moral Decision-Making

The decisions shared by the respondents reveal the strong influence of core values such as respect, honesty, and integrity on their moral decisions. These values reflect a strong internal moral compass that guides their actions, even in difficult situations.

Respect for others is a key value in both the bullying-related moral dilemmas, where students choose to intervene rather than remain passive. Respondent 1 says, “I believe in treating others with respect,” reinforcing the idea that respect is not only an abstract value but a guiding principle for behaviour in social settings.

Honesty and integrity guide the decision made by Respondent 3, who returns the found wallet. This response highlights the importance of personal integrity in moral decision-making and

shows how these adolescents hold themselves accountable to values like honesty, even when no one else is watching.

These core values—respect, honesty, integrity—are foundational to the respondents’ moral decision-making and demonstrate a growing understanding of ethical principles. The choices to act on these values show the adolescents’ capacity to balance personal beliefs with the social expectations placed upon them.

Influence of Educational Setting, Family, and Peers

The responses suggest that the educational setting, family, and peers likely influence these moral values, though the specific influence of each is not directly discussed in the responses. The scenarios described—bullying, honesty with found property—suggest that the school environment, as well as peer relationships, plays a role in the development of moral values.

The decision to intervene in bullying may be influenced by a school culture that encourages respect and kindness, as noted in the earlier responses regarding school influences. Respondent 1 (Age 13) mentions, “I believe in treating others with respect,” suggesting that the school environment reinforces these values and encourages students to act in line with them.

Similarly, honesty in the case of the found wallet may be reinforced by both the family and school environments, where these values are often explicitly taught and modelled by adults. Respondent 3 (Age 18) reinforces the idea that integrity is central to their decision-making, suggesting that their moral foundation has been shaped by their upbringing and education.

While the responses do not explicitly mention the influence of family or peers, the moral decisions described suggest that these adolescents have internalized values like honesty and respect, which may have been reinforced both at school and in their family lives.

Similarities: Across all three responses, we see that respect, honesty, and integrity are foundational moral values that guide these adolescents’ decisions. Whether standing up against bullying or returning lost property, these values drive the respondents’ actions. Additionally, emotional challenges, such as nervousness or fear, are common in moral decision-making, showing that adolescents often struggle to act on their moral values in the face of social or emotional pressures.

Differences: The types of moral dilemmas vary. Two responses focus on social responsibility (dealing with bullying), while one focuses on personal integrity (returning lost property). The

social dilemmas indicate a collective sense of responsibility, while the personal moral dilemma highlights individual moral values. This suggests that adolescents develop a sense of morality both in relation to others (social justice) and in personal choices (integrity).

In conclusion, the responses illustrate that moral decision-making in adolescents is heavily influenced by core values such as respect, honesty, and integrity. The emotional challenges that arise in these situations highlight the complexities of moral development during adolescence. The role of family, peers, and educational settings in reinforcing these values is suggested but not explicitly detailed, implying that moral development is shaped by a combination of internal values and external influences.

Question 4 .Do you think your friends have an impact on your moral choices? How so?

The responses offer insights into the adolescents' moral development and how peers and social contexts shape their ethical choices. This analysis will also touch on how educational settings and family values may play a role in these moral choices.

Honesty and Integrity in Moral Decision-Making

One prominent theme that emerged across both schools is the central role of honesty and integrity in the adolescents' moral decisions. These values appear to guide many of the decisions made by the respondents, particularly in situations where personal actions are evaluated for their ethical correctness.

Respondent 1 (Abune Gorgorios, Age 14) reflects a strong commitment to honesty when they found a wallet:

“I chose to return it because I believe in honesty and doing the right thing.”

This response highlights that honesty is a core moral value that informs their actions, indicating a clear sense of what is right in a given situation. The adolescent's decision to return the wallet demonstrates a strong internal moral compass and a deep understanding of personal integrity.

Similarly, Respondent 1 (Kokebe Tsibah, Age 15) highlights integrity in a personal decision about a lost phone:

“I had to decide whether to keep it or return it. I chose to return it because it felt right.”

Here, the decision is guided by an intuitive sense of right and wrong, suggesting that honesty and integrity are deeply ingrained values for this respondent. The phrase “because it felt

right” underscores the internalized nature of these moral principles, showing that the adolescent operates largely on their own moral judgement.

Respondent 2 (Kokebe Tsibah, Age 16) focuses on academic honesty when they chose to study rather than cheat:

“I wanted to earn my grade honestly.”

This response highlights a commitment to honesty in a more challenging context—academic achievement. The adolescent resists the temptation to cheat, emphasizing the value of hard work and honesty in their academic pursuits. This suggests that the respondent sees personal integrity not only as a social value but also as essential to their self-development.

These examples demonstrate a consistent commitment to honesty and integrity across both schools. These values are presented as essential to personal character development, guiding decisions in everyday situations and during challenges such as cheating or finding lost property.

Peer Influence on Moral Choices

A second theme centres around peer influence and how friends and social groups shape adolescents’ moral decisions. While some adolescents actively resist peer pressure and uphold their values, others experience internal conflict due to social pressures.

Respondent 2 (Abune Gorgorios, Age 15) illustrates the internal conflict that arises when social pressures clash with moral values:

“I chose not to stand up for the person being bullied because I was worried the bullies would get revenge on me, though I am regretting my decision lately.”

This response highlights the tension between moral obligation and the fear of social consequences. The respondent's decision to remain silent reflects a fear of retaliation from the bullies, a powerful influence on their moral decision. However, the regret they express suggests growing self-awareness and the recognition that peer influence may have led them to make a moral compromise, which they later reflect on with a sense of personal responsibility.

Respondent 3 (Kokebe Tsibah, Age 17) offers a contrasting example, where peer support leads to an ethical decision:

“I chose to stand up for the person being teased. It felt important to show support and not stay silent.”

This response reflects a moral stance that goes against the grain of passivity or social conformity. Respondent 3 shows an awareness of community responsibility and the importance of standing up for others, suggesting that peer influence in this case encourages them to act proactively and compassionately. Their choice demonstrates the moral courage to support a peer, despite the potential social risks.

These two contrasting responses show how peer influence can manifest in different ways. For some adolescents, friends and the fear of social consequences can complicate their moral choices, leading to inaction or regret. For others, peers can play a positive role by reinforcing moral courage and a sense of social responsibility. This suggests that peer influence can both reinforce and challenge adolescents' moral values.

Social Responsibility and Moral Courage

The theme of social responsibility and moral courage arises particularly in situations of bullying, teasing, or cheating. Adolescents in these scenarios must decide whether to act in the best interest of others or prioritize personal comfort or social acceptance.

Respondent 3 (Abune Gorgorios, Age 17) demonstrates an approach that prioritizes social responsibility over personal discomfort in a situation of academic dishonesty:

“I decided to talk to them privately about it, and we discussed why honesty is important.”

Instead of reporting the cheating or confronting the student aggressively, Respondent 3 chooses a more reflective and empathetic approach, encouraging their peer to reflect on the importance of honesty. This decision reflects a mature way of dealing with moral dilemmas, where understanding and dialogue take precedence over punitive measures. The respondent's decision also shows how they balance moral courage with empathy, demonstrating a level of ethical maturity.

Respondent 3 (Kokebe Tsibah, Age 17) demonstrates moral courage by standing up against teasing:

“I chose to stand up for them. It felt important to show support and not stay silent.”

This act of supporting a peer against teasing reveals a commitment to social justice. The moral courage displayed here suggests that the respondent values fairness and the responsibility of individuals to protect others from harm, even when it might be difficult or

socially risky. The decision to not remain silent reflects a growing awareness of the collective responsibility to combat injustice.

These responses highlight an emerging sense of social responsibility in adolescents. Both Respondent 3 (Abune Gorgorios) and Respondent 3 (Kokebe Tsibah) demonstrate moral courage and a willingness to challenge unfair treatment of others, whether through honest dialogue or standing up against bullying. This shows that adolescents are developing a more sophisticated understanding of their moral roles in social contexts.

Internal Conflict and Moral Growth

Finally, internal conflict—where adolescents grapple with the tension between what is morally right and what is socially easy—was evident in several responses. This conflict is an important part of the moral development process, as adolescents learn to navigate their values and the external pressures that influence them.

Respondent 2 (Abune Gorgorios, Age 15) experienced regret over not intervening during bullying:

“I chose not to stand up for the person being bullied because I was worried the bullies would get revenge on me, though I am regretting my decision lately.”

The regret expressed here signals a critical moment of self-reflection, where the adolescent recognizes the moral error they made by not acting. This regret is an important step in moral growth, as the respondent processes their emotions and reflects on how to make better decisions in the future. It suggests an evolving moral compass and the capacity to learn from experiences.

These moments of internal conflict and regret underscore the ongoing nature of moral development during adolescence. As adolescents confront difficult situations, they are not only learning what is right or wrong but are also developing the emotional intelligence to navigate complex moral decisions and reflect on their actions.

Similarities: Across both schools, honesty, integrity, and social responsibility are recurring themes. Many adolescents face dilemmas involving personal integrity (returning lost items, resisting the temptation to cheat) and social responsibility (standing up against bullying or teasing). These values reflect a shared understanding of moral decision-making across the schools.

Differences: The impact of peer influence on moral choices is more complex. Some adolescents, like Respondent 2 (Abune Gorgorios), experience regret due to peer pressure, while others, like Respondent 3 (Kokebe Tsibah), demonstrate a stronger sense of moral courage and community responsibility. This highlights a divergence in how social dynamics shape moral development, with some adolescents struggling with external pressures and others embracing a more proactive stance on justice and empathy.

Moral Development: Overall, these responses suggest that adolescents are developing a more nuanced understanding of moral values, balancing individual integrity with social responsibility. The emotional challenges, such as internal conflict and regret, also point to the growth of moral reasoning during this developmental period.

The educational setting, family influences, and peer dynamics are likely contributing factors that shape the moral development of these adolescents, guiding their decision-making processes as they navigate the complexities of adolescence.

Question 6: How do cultural or religious beliefs shape your understanding of right and wrong?

The responses provide rich insights into how adolescents' moral values and decision-making are influenced by peer relationships, discussions about right and wrong, and cultural or religious beliefs. The analysis focuses on three key themes: peer influence, moral reasoning and dialogue, and the role of cultural or religious beliefs in shaping moral understanding.

1. Peer Influence on Moral Decision-Making

Across all three schools, the role of peer influence in moral decision-making emerges as a central theme. Adolescents consistently affirm that their friends play a significant role in shaping their moral beliefs and guiding their actions. This influence is described as both positive and supportive, with an emphasis on community and shared values.

Sandford International School:

Respondent 1 (Age 13) emphasizes the influence of friends as role models:

“They set examples of good behaviour. I look up to my friends for advice on what is right.”

This response shows that at the age of 13, peers are seen as crucial guides for navigating moral decisions. The adolescent is likely in the early stages of forming personal values, and thus looks to friends for affirmation and examples of good behaviour.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) similarly views peers as influential sources of guidance:

“My friends help me understand what’s right and wrong by setting good examples.”

At this age, the respondent begins to develop a more nuanced understanding of the positive impact of peers on their moral choices. Peer influence here is depicted as active support, with friends providing examples of moral actions and offering reassurance.

Respondent 3 (Age 18) takes a more reflective approach:

“I discuss moral issues with my friends, and when I see them make good decisions, it makes me think twice about my own choices.”

This response demonstrates a deeper level of moral reflection, with the respondent actively engaging in discussions about right and wrong. The emphasis on self-reflection suggests maturity in moral reasoning, where friends serve not only as examples but as partners in exploring ethical questions.

Across these responses, a developmental trajectory is evident: younger adolescents (ages 13 and 15) focus on role models and supportive advice from friends, while older adolescents (age 18) engage in dialogues that allow for more critical reflection and self-assessment. This indicates a progression from relying on peer influence for guidance to integrating peer discussions into personal moral reasoning.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Respondent 1 (Age 14) describes peers as role models for moral behaviour:

“My friends are the ones who set examples of good behaviour, and I try to follow that.”

This highlights the importance of positive role models in shaping moral behaviour, with friends serving as the benchmark for what is right or wrong.

Respondent 3 (Age 17) adds a more complex dimension by discussing the moral challenges posed by peers:

“We talk about right and wrong a lot. But sometimes, when friends make bad choices, I feel the pressure to follow them, though I know it’s wrong.”

This response underscores the dual nature of peer influence: friends can provide support and good examples, but they can also lead to moral dilemmas when they engage in questionable behaviour. This suggests that while peers are influential, adolescents also begin to recognize the tension between conforming to group norms and maintaining personal ethical standards.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

Respondent 1 (Age 14) affirms the supportive nature of friendships:

“My friends are supportive and encourage me to do the right thing.”

This response emphasizes the positive influence of peers, highlighting how friendships foster an environment of mutual support and moral encouragement.

Respondent 2 (Age 16) expands on this by discussing the role of peer discussions in shaping moral decisions:

“My friends challenge me to be better and help me think about what is right when I make bad choices.”

This illustrates a collaborative approach to moral development, where peers not only model good behaviour but actively engage with one another to improve their moral understanding. Such discussions contribute to moral growth, as the adolescents hold each other accountable and encourage critical reflection.

Respondent 3 (Age 18) reflects on how friends help maintain moral clarity:

“My friends keep me grounded. We talk about our choices and what is right, which helps me stay on track.”

This response underscores the community-oriented nature of moral development, where friendships help maintain a strong sense of ethical clarity and reinforce the importance of shared values.

In all three schools, peer influence is a dominant factor in shaping moral values, with younger adolescents relying more on examples set by friends, while older adolescents begin to engage in more active discussions and critical self-reflection. This evolution reflects a growing capacity for independent moral reasoning while still valuing the influence of social relationships.

2. Moral Reasoning and Dialogue

Another significant theme is the role of discussions about morality among friends, which is present in the responses from Abune Gorgorios Secondary School and Kokebe Tsibah School. These discussions indicate that adolescents are not merely passive recipients of moral values but actively engage with their peers to refine and clarify their own moral beliefs.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Respondent 3 (Age 17) highlights the active process of moral dialogue:

“We talk about right and wrong a lot, and we try to help each other see different perspectives.”

This response shows that discussions about morality are a key feature of peer relationships at this school. Adolescents here are not just following what their peers do; they are engaging in a collaborative process to shape their moral understanding, often by reflecting on various perspectives.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

Respondent 2 (Age 16) emphasizes the importance of challenging one another:

“My friends challenge me to be better. We talk about each other’s choices, especially when we make bad ones.”

This indicates a dialogical approach to moral reasoning, where friends help each other reflect on their decisions and promote moral growth. The emphasis on accountability and mutual improvement suggests a healthy moral environment where peer pressure is used constructively.

In both schools, moral discussions among peers serve as a crucial mechanism for moral growth and reflection. These dialogues help adolescents engage critically with their own values and actions, fostering a deeper understanding of what is right and wrong.

3. Cultural or Religious Beliefs in Shaping Moral Understanding

The final theme centres on how cultural or religious beliefs shape adolescents' understanding of morality. While the interviews do not explicitly mention religion in many responses, several references to cultural norms and values provide insight into how broader societal frameworks influence moral reasoning.

Sandford International School:

Respondent 2 (Age 15) mentions that their understanding of right and wrong is influenced by “the values my parents taught me.”

This implies that family values, possibly influenced by cultural or religious norms, play a role in shaping moral reasoning. The adolescent seems to recognize a connection between family teachings and their moral compass.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Respondent 1 (Age 14) states that they follow the moral values taught at home:

“My family tells me what is right, and I try to follow that.”

This response highlights the strong influence of family in instilling foundational moral values. While cultural or religious beliefs are not directly stated, the mention of family influence suggests that the respondent’s understanding of right and wrong is grounded in familial and likely cultural teachings.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

Respondent 3 (Age 18) notes the influence of both family and community:

“My family and my community teach me what is right, and I try to follow those teachings.”

This response suggests that cultural values, passed down through family and community, are an integral part of the respondent’s moral framework. The community aspect suggests that cultural norms, possibly influenced by religion or tradition, play a key role in shaping moral understanding.

While the respondents do not explicitly mention religious beliefs in many cases, there is a clear connection between family values and cultural norms that guide adolescents’ sense of right and wrong. These broader societal frameworks provide a foundation for moral understanding, which is then refined through peer influence and moral dialogue.

Similarities: Across all three schools, peer influence is a dominant force in shaping adolescents’ moral decisions. The developmental trajectory shows that as adolescents mature, they move from passive acceptance of peer examples to active reflection and discussion of moral choices.

Differences: The emphasis on moral dialogue is particularly strong in Abune Gorgorios Secondary School and Kokebe Tsibah School, where adolescents reflect critically on moral decisions within peer groups. Sandford International School students, while recognizing the importance of peer influence, focus more on role models than on active discussions.

Cultural and Religious Influence: The responses imply that adolescents’ moral frameworks are influenced by family values and cultural norms, even if religious beliefs are not explicitly mentioned. These cultural underpinnings are crucial in shaping adolescents’ foundational understanding of right and wrong.

Overall, the adolescents in these schools demonstrate a complex and evolving relationship with peer influence, moral reasoning, and cultural frameworks, highlighting the multifaceted nature of moral development during adolescence.

This analysis compares and contrasts responses from students at Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, and Kokebe Tsibah School regarding the moral values promoted by their schools and the associated rules and guidelines designed to foster good behavior. The central themes drawn from the responses are: the core values promoted by schools, the role of rules in maintaining a positive environment, and the influence of school culture on moral development.

Question 7. Are there any rules or guidelines at your school that promote good behaviour? What are they?

Core Values Promoted by Schools

A significant theme across all three schools is the emphasis on core values that promote respect, responsibility, and safety. These values serve as a framework for moral development and shape students' understanding of what is expected of them in terms of behaviour.

Sandford International School:

All respondents highlight the importance of a code of conduct that encourages respect, responsibility, and safety. For example, Respondent 1 (Age 13) states:

“We have a code of conduct that promotes respect, responsibility, and safety.” This foundational statement sets a tone for the school's moral environment. The emphasis on safety suggests that the school aims to create a secure, supportive space for all students.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) elaborates by mentioning specific behaviours:

“Rules that promote respect, responsibility, and safety, such as not bullying others and being honest.” Here, bullying and honesty are emphasized as behaviours that directly impact the school’s atmosphere, with an explicit link between the rules and ethical conduct. Respondent 3 (Age 18) further adds that the rules have consequences:

“There are consequences for cheating or bullying.” This highlights that the guidelines are not merely symbolic; they carry real implications, reinforcing the importance of accountability in shaping moral behaviour.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Respondents similarly acknowledge a strong focus on respect, honesty, and responsibility.

Respondent 1 (Age 14) states:

“We have a code of conduct that encourages respect, honesty, and responsibility.”

Respondent 1 also mentions consequences for bullying:

“There are consequences for bullying.” This aligns with Sandford’s approach, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe space. In addition, Respondent 2 (Age 15) brings in the idea of religious education as a central component of moral development:

“Religious education also is included in the curriculum which promotes good choices over bad.” This adds a distinct element, suggesting that the school incorporates ethical teaching tied to religious values, which is absent in the other schools’ responses.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

At Kokebe Tsibah, respondents emphasize anti-bullying rules and respect. Respondent 1 states simply, “We have a rule against bullying,” while Respondent 2 specifies a “strict anti-bullying policy.” These responses underscore the priority the school places on maintaining a safe environment. Respect is mentioned repeatedly, such as by Respondent 1, who notes: “We need to be respectful in class,” and Respondent 2, who states, “Respect in discussions is also emphasized.” Additionally, Respondent 3 elaborates on accountability in an insightful way, noting that when rules are broken, students must engage with a counsellor to understand the impact of their actions:

“If we break them, we have to talk to a counsellor to understand the impact.” This shows an emphasis on restorative justice, focusing not only on punitive measures but also on reflection and learning from mistakes.

Across all three schools, core values such as respect, responsibility, and safety are central to school guidelines. However, differences arise in the addition of religious education (Abune Gorgorios) and the focus on restorative practices (Kokebe Tsibah). These values form a foundational understanding of moral behaviour, but the way in which schools apply and teach these values varies.

The Role of Rules and Consequences in Promoting Good Behaviour

The school guidelines discussed by respondents are designed to promote good behaviour, particularly through the use of rules and consequences. There is a clear recognition that

behaviour is not only shaped by core values but also by the explicit consequences for negative actions.

Sandford International School:

Respondents demonstrate an awareness of the consequences for misbehaviour. Respondent 3 (Age 18) mentions:

“There are consequences for cheating or bullying.” This indicates that the school’s moral framework is not just theoretical but backed by accountability mechanisms. The mention of consequences reinforces that students are expected to adhere to the rules not only because they are told to but because there are tangible outcomes for violating them.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

The respondents also recognize the consequences for violating school rules. Respondent 1 (Age 14) states:

“There are consequences for bullying.” This shows the school’s commitment to maintaining a safe environment through behavioural accountability. Additionally, Respondent 2 (Age 15) introduces the role of religious education in promoting ethical choices, suggesting that moral reasoning is embedded in the school culture beyond just rule enforcement.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

Respondent 3 (Age 18) discusses the counselling approach for students who break the rules, stating:

“If we break them, we have to talk to a counsellor to understand the impact.” This approach reflects a shift from punitive measures to restorative practices, where students reflect on the impact of their actions on others and are encouraged to learn from their mistakes.

Summary of Rules and Consequences:

All three schools have well-defined rules designed to promote respectful and safe behaviour. While consequences for misbehaviour are a consistent theme, the methods of enforcement vary. Sandford and Abune Gorgorios focus more on traditional disciplinary consequences (e.g., consequences for bullying and cheating), while Kokebe Tsibah incorporates a more restorative approach by involving counsellors in the process.

3. School Culture and Its Impact on Moral Development

The school culture plays a crucial role in the moral development of students. Through the promotion of respect and accountability, and the integration of ethical teachings, schools influence students' moral understanding and behaviour.

Sandford International School:

The school's code of conduct and the emphasis on consequences create a structured environment where students understand the importance of adhering to moral principles. The active participation of students in classroom discussions, as mentioned by Respondent 3 (Age 18), indicates that students are expected to engage in upholding these values: "Respectful behaviour during class discussions is emphasized." This suggests that the school encourages active engagement in moral practices, not just passive adherence to rules.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

The integration of religious education into the curriculum suggests that the school's moral framework is intertwined with spiritual beliefs. Respondent 2 (Age 15) highlights this connection:

"Religious education also is included in the curriculum which promotes good choices over bad." This suggests that the school encourages a broader ethical perspective that goes beyond just following rules, incorporating moral teachings that likely resonate with students' personal beliefs.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

The focus on community and peer support is particularly evident in Respondent 2's comment: "We are encouraged to help each other." This sense of solidarity within the school culture supports the idea that moral development is not just an individual responsibility but a collective effort. The emphasis on restorative practices, where students reflect on the impact of their actions, suggests that the school culture is geared towards self-improvement and mutual respect, creating an environment where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions in a supportive setting.

All three schools emphasize respect, responsibility, and safety, but they differ in how they integrate these values into their school culture. Sandford focuses on classroom behaviour and student engagement, Abune Gorgorios incorporates religious education to reinforce moral teachings, and Kokebe Tsibah encourages a community-based approach that involves peer support and restorative justice practices.

The moral values and practices observed across the three schools share several commonalities, particularly with respect to the emphasis on respect, responsibility, and safety. However, each school also demonstrates unique approaches in how these values are implemented, particularly in terms of consequences for misbehaviour and the influence of religious education and restorative practices. Ultimately, the students' moral development is shaped by a combination of school rules, peer influences, and broader cultural and ethical teachings.

Q.8 How do you feel when someone acts against what you believe is right?

This analysis examines adolescent responses to moral conflicts, specifically focusing on how students react when others act against what they believe is right, in alignment with the following research questions:

The students' responses to the question, "How do you feel when someone acts against what you believe is right?", reveal several key themes about the students' moral development, their emotional reactions to conflicts, and the social dynamics at play. These responses offer insights into how adolescents process moral dilemmas and how their social contexts shape their emotional and ethical responses.

Emotional Reactions to Moral Conflicts

A major theme across the responses is the emotional complexity that students experience when confronted with actions that contradict their personal moral values. The emotional responses range from frustration and disappointment to confusion and sadness, highlighting the internal struggles adolescents face as they begin to define their moral compass and navigate social relationships.

Sandford International School:

Respondent 1 (Age 13) expresses a mix of disappointment and anger, yet also attempts to understand others' perspectives: "I feel disappointed and sometimes angry, but I also try to understand their perspective." This response suggests that the student is still developing the emotional intelligence to process moral conflicts and is learning how to balance emotional reactions with a desire for empathy.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) reports feeling frustrated and upset: "I feel a mix of disappointment and concern because I care about the values I hold." This reflects a deeper emotional engagement with moral conflicts, indicating that the student is at a stage of adolescence where they are becoming more aware of how their beliefs affect their emotional wellbeing.

Respondent 3 (Age 18) focuses on the broader social impact of others' actions, feeling frustrated and disappointed when faced with unfair or disrespectful behaviour: "It's hard to

see people acting in unfair or disrespectful ways, especially when it affects others.” This response demonstrates a more mature understanding of how individual actions can affect the wider community, and it reflects a developing sense of social responsibility.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Respondent 1 (Age 14) blends disappointment and confusion, yet expresses a willingness to understand differing viewpoints: “I feel disappointed and sometimes confused, but I try to understand their perspective and learn from the situation.” This shows a level of emotional maturity and openness to dialogue, signalling the student's evolving ability to manage emotional responses and engage in reflection.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) describes a more intense emotional reaction, feeling disappointed, confused, and annoyed: “I feel really annoyed and I don’t want to be friends with that person again.” The strong desire to sever ties with those who disagree with their beliefs suggests a polarized response that is often common during adolescence, where peer relationships are critical, and personal values can feel closely tied to identity.

Respondent 3 (Age 17) articulates frustration and upset but also seeks to understand the other person’s perspective: “I feel like I need to speak up or at least try to understand their perspective.” This response shows a balance between emotional intensity and a desire for constructive dialogue, reflecting emotional growth and an ability to empathize with others.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

Respondent 1 (Age 15) reports feeling frustrated and helpless, indicating a strong emotional investment in wanting others to align with their moral beliefs: “I feel frustrated and sometimes helpless because I want to help them see the right path.” This reveals a moral urgency to guide others, but it also reflects the frustration that comes with feeling powerless in changing others' behaviour.

Respondent 2 (Age 16) shows a sense of unease but expresses a desire to intervene: “It asks me uneasy. I want to intervene and help them see another perspective, but it’s not always easy to do.” This response highlights the tension between moral conviction and the recognition of social complexity, acknowledging that influencing others is difficult, particularly in adolescence when peer pressure and social conformity are strong.

Respondent 3 (Age 14) expresses sadness and concern, indicating a strong emotional reaction to others' behaviour: “It makes me sad and concerned. I wish I could help them understand the importance of good choices but I usually don't.” This suggests empathy for others’ well-being but also hints at a sense of helplessness or insecurity in addressing moral conflicts, a common theme for younger adolescents.

Across all schools, emotional responses to moral conflicts include frustration, disappointment, and confusion. Older adolescents tend to express more nuanced reactions, incorporating a desire for understanding and dialogue, while younger adolescents show more intense emotional responses. Respondents from all schools also show an increasing capacity for empathy and recognition that others' actions are shaped by their own experiences.

Sandford International School:

Respondent 1 (Age 13) expresses a straightforward emotional reaction but also tries to understand others' perspectives, showing early-stage moral reasoning.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) shows concern for how conflicting beliefs affect relationships: "I feel a mix of disappointment and concern because I care about the values I hold." The desire to engage in conversation indicates an increasing capacity for moral dialogue and understanding of others' perspectives.

Respondent 3 (Age 18) goes beyond personal frustration to consider the social impact of others' actions, highlighting a developed sense of social justice and ethical responsibility.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School:

Respondent 1 (Age 14) shows an interest in learning from conflicts: "I try to understand their perspective and learn from the situation." This suggests that the student is beginning to recognize that moral conflicts can be opportunities for personal growth and understanding.

Respondent 2 (Age 15) demonstrates a polarized view, where conflicts often lead to a desire to distance themselves from others, reflecting a struggle with loyalty and values during mid-adolescence.

Respondent 3 (Age 17) exhibits an advanced ability to empathize with others and understand their experiences: "I also know that everyone has different experiences that shape their views." This reflects a more sophisticated moral reasoning process, incorporating both personal and social dimensions of moral dilemmas.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

Respondent 1 (Age 15) shows a deep moral investment in guiding others but also a sense of helplessness in influencing others' views. This suggests a moral idealism that is often present in adolescence, along with a struggle to enact change.

Respondent 2 (Age 16) demonstrates a desire to intervene in others' behaviour: "I want to intervene and help them see another perspective, but it's not always easy to do." This reflects an awareness of the complexities involved in trying to shift others' beliefs, suggesting a growing understanding of moral complexity and interpersonal dynamics.

Respondent 3 (Age 14) expresses a desire to help others make better choices, but the resignation to not act shows an emerging moral frustration when faced with the limitations of adolescence in changing others' behaviour.

Across all schools, moral reasoning develops with age. Younger adolescents show more straightforward reactions and are still learning how to navigate moral conflicts. Older adolescents exhibit a more sophisticated understanding of social dynamics, and they begin to recognize the complexities of differing values and experiences. The desire to engage in constructive dialogue and moral growth increases with age, reflecting a deeper moral maturity.

Influence of Educational and Social Contexts on Moral Development

The responses also highlight the social influences on moral development, such as the role of peers, family, and teachers in shaping adolescents' values. The differences in emotional reactions and moral reasoning between schools could be influenced by the broader educational environments and peer dynamics at each institution.

Sandford International School:

The emphasis on understanding others' perspectives suggests a school culture that encourages critical thinking and empathy. This is evident in the responses, where older students show an ability to navigate moral dilemmas with moral complexity.

Abune Gorgorios School:

The inclusion of religious teachings in the curriculum may influence the responses of the students, especially in the older adolescents who incorporate religious and ethical perspectives into their moral reasoning. This school likely emphasizes moral consistency and personal growth.

Kokebe Tsibah School:

The students' strong desire to help others see the "right path" could be indicative of a school culture that values moral responsibility and community support. The responses show that while students are invested in helping others align with their values, they also face challenges due to the complexities of peer relationships.

In conclusion, across all three schools, the students' emotional reactions and moral reasoning reflect common adolescent struggles: a desire for justice, a growing capacity for empathy, and recognition of the complexities of social relationships. There are noticeable developmental trends, with older adolescents demonstrating more nuanced emotional responses and sophisticated moral reasoning. Additionally, the educational environments appear to play a significant role in shaping these responses, with variations in the emphasis

on critical thinking, religious values, and moral responsibility influencing how students navigate moral conflicts.

Q.9. In what ways do you think technology affects your moral values?

The analysis explores how adolescents understand moral values, the dual impact of technology, and how their reflections on technology's role in their lives are shaped by various social contexts, such as peers, teachers, and family, as well as their overall developmental stage. The three schools in this study—Sandford Public Secondary School, Abune Gorgorios School, and Kokebe Tsibah Public Secondary School—serve as a backdrop for understanding these themes, though the analysis is not organized by school.

Dual Nature of Technology's Impact on Moral Values

A prominent theme across all respondents is the dual nature of technology—its ability to both enhance and compromise moral values. Adolescents acknowledge that technology is neither inherently good nor bad; its impact on their values depends on how they engage with it. This reflects a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding digital interactions.

Exposure to Diverse Viewpoints: Several respondents mention that technology exposes them to different perspectives that can both broaden their moral outlook and challenge their beliefs. Respondent 1 from Sandford School (13 years old) notes that technology exposes them to “different viewpoints and experiences, both positive and negative.” This early recognition of technology's complex influence suggests that the respondent is becoming aware of how digital exposure can shape their understanding of right and wrong.

Respondent 2 from Abune Gorgorios (14 years old) reflects that technology "can challenge my beliefs and help me grow as a person," showing an openness to moral growth through exposure to new ideas. This openness to challenge one's values suggests that these adolescents are developing a more flexible moral framework that adapts in response to new information.

Negative Impacts: Alongside the acknowledgment of positive influences, many respondents also recognize the darker side of technology, such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and peer pressure.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) describes technology as a “double-edged sword,” recognizing that while it allows them to “understand different viewpoints,” it also carries the risk of “pressures to conform.” This awareness reflects a deeper understanding of how technology, particularly social media, can undermine personal integrity and morality.

Similarly, Respondent 1 from Kokebe Tsibah (15 years old) points out that technology can be both “good or bad,” warning of “negative influences and misinformation.” This statement underlines the need for vigilance in distinguishing between useful and harmful information online.

Mindful and Critical Engagement with Technology

Adolescents consistently emphasize the importance of mindfully engaging with technology to preserve and protect their moral integrity. This theme suggests that they are beginning to develop ethical reasoning skills in relation to their digital interactions. They recognize the potential for moral growth through technology but also express the need for critical thinking to avoid falling into negative patterns.

Mindfulness and Reflection: Many respondents stress the need to actively reflect on their use of technology to ensure it aligns with their personal values.

Respondent 3 from Sandford (18 years old) notes, "Technology can be tricky" and emphasizes the need to use it “mindfully,” reminding themselves to "remember our values, even online." This reflects a mature awareness of the potential for technology to undermine one's values, yet a commitment to staying grounded in personal ethics.

Respondent 2 from Kokebe Tsibah (16 years old) similarly calls for “carefulness in examining the expositions of technology before taking everything as it is,” highlighting the need for a critical lens when consuming digital content.

Active Engagement vs. Passive Consumption: A recurrent idea in the responses is that adolescents must engage actively with the content they encounter online, instead of being passive consumers. This active engagement involves questioning information and making deliberate choices about how to interact with digital platforms.

Respondent 2 from Abune Gorgorios (14 years old) speaks to this when stating that technology exposes them to “different ideas and opinions, which can challenge my beliefs and help me grow.” This reflects an active engagement with technology as a tool for moral development and growth.

Technology as a Tool for Moral Growth

Several respondents highlight the transformational potential of technology, viewing it as an opportunity for moral development through exposure to new ideas and perspectives. This suggests that adolescents understand technology as both a learning tool and a potential catalyst for personal growth in the realm of values and ethics.

Expanding Horizons: The idea of learning from diverse opinions and “challenging” one’s beliefs was common in the responses, showing that adolescents see technology as a mechanism to broaden their moral worldview.

Respondent 1 from Abune Gorgorios (17 years old) acknowledges that technology “exposes us to different ideas and opinions” and encourages personal growth by challenging their moral framework. This indicates that the respondent values technology as a tool for personal evolution and greater understanding of others.

Respondent 3 from Abune Gorgorios (15 years old) echoes this by emphasizing that exposure to differing ideas can “challenge my beliefs, values, and ideas,” reinforcing the notion that technology offers an avenue for moral reflection and growth.

Openness to Moral Growth: Respondents consistently mention the transformative power of technology to help them re-evaluate and refine their moral beliefs. This openness to learning and adapting suggests that adolescents are developing a dynamic understanding of morality that evolves with exposure to new perspectives.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) reflects that technology allows them to “understand different viewpoints,” recognizing that moral growth can come from re-evaluating one’s values in response to new experiences.

Peer Influence and Social Media

Peer pressure and social media dynamics emerge as a significant concern for many of the respondents, who recognize that technology can facilitate both positive interactions and harmful behaviours, such as peer pressure and cyberbullying. These responses suggest that social dynamics in digital spaces are powerful forces shaping adolescents' moral development.

Peer Pressure: Several respondents point out that social media can create pressure to conform, often leading them to act in ways that are not consistent with their core values.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) mentions, "Sometimes social media can create pressure to conform or act in ways that aren't true to my values." This suggests that peer influence in online spaces can challenge adolescents' moral convictions and push them to engage in behaviour that conflicts with their ethical standards.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is mentioned by multiple respondents as a key negative impact of technology, underlining the harmful social behaviours that can arise from digital interaction.

Respondent 3 from Sandford (18 years old) notes that technology “can promote negative behaviour, like cyberbullying,” reflecting the broader societal implications of digital communication and the moral challenges it presents.

Educational and Social Contexts: Influence on Moral Development

While the analysis does not focus on specific schools, there is a clear indication that adolescents' views on technology and moral values are influenced by educational settings, family, and peer groups. These social contexts provide adolescents with the frameworks through which they interpret the moral challenges and opportunities presented by technology.

Critical Reflection in Education: The responses suggest that adolescents from all schools are encouraged to think critically about technology's influence on their lives, whether it be through discussions of ethics in the digital age in school or through family guidance on media consumption.

Respondents from Abune Gorgorios and Sandford, for example, consistently mention the need to be "mindful" of how technology is used, indicating that they have likely been taught to reflect on their digital behaviour in the context of moral education.

Across all three schools, adolescents exhibit a balanced understanding of how technology can shape their moral values, with an awareness of both its positive and negative impacts. Key themes include the dual nature of technology, the need for mindful engagement, its potential for moral growth, and the influence of peer pressure in digital spaces. While there are slight variations in how students articulate these themes, a common thread emerges: adolescents are developing a critical awareness of the challenges technology presents to their moral development and are learning to navigate these complexities in ways that align with their personal values.

These insights reflect that adolescents are becoming increasingly aware of the need for discernment in their digital interactions, recognizing that technology has the potential to both enhance and undermine their moral integrity. This growing awareness is crucial for their development as ethical and responsible digital citizens.

Questions.10.What advice would you give younger students about making good moral choices?

The analysis of the interview responses from students at Sandford International School, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School, and Kokebe Tsibah Public Secondary School reveals common themes in adolescents' understanding of moral values, as well as the influence of their educational and social environments. The research questions provide a framework to explore these themes:

The responses from all three schools reflect key principles in moral development: the importance of self-awareness, empathy, the role of community and relationships, and the

guidance of trusted adults. This comparative analysis focuses on how these elements appear consistently across responses and how they provide insights into adolescents' moral reasoning.

Self-Reflection and Conscience

A major theme in the advice given by all students is the importance of self-reflection and listening to one's conscience when making moral decisions. The notion of inner guidance appears prominently in almost all responses, suggesting a common understanding that moral decision-making is rooted in personal values and integrity.

Self-Awareness: Several respondents stress the need to listen to one's conscience or “heart” as a guiding force in making moral decisions.

Respondent 1 from Abune Gorgorios (14 years old) advises, “always listen to your conscience and do what you know is right, even when it's difficult.” Similarly, Respondent 2 from Kokebe Tsibah (16 years old) suggests, “be true to yourself,” highlighting the importance of authenticity in decision-making.

Respondent 3 from Sandford (18 years old) also reinforces this theme by stating, “Always think about how your actions affect others,” emphasizing that self-reflection is tied to understanding the consequences of one's actions.

This theme illustrates that adolescents are developing a moral compass based on self-reflection and conscience, reinforcing the idea that moral values are personal and require introspection.

Empathy and Perspective-Taking

Another recurring theme is the importance of empathy, or the ability to understand and consider the impact of one's actions on others. This theme reflects a growing capacity for moral reasoning that takes into accounts the feelings and well-being of others.

Empathy: Many of the respondents emphasize the need to think about how one's actions affect others, underlining the principle of interconnectedness and the importance of considering others' perspectives when making decisions.

Respondent 1 from Kokebe Tsibah (15 years old) advises, “always think about how your actions affect others,” a sentiment echoed by Respondent 2 from Abune Gorgorios (15 years old) who says, “think about the consequences of their actions and how they would feel if someone treated them the same way.”

Respondent 3 from Kokebe Tsibah (14 years old) also suggests, “Always listen to your heart and think about how your choices affect others,” connecting empathy with both emotional awareness and moral reasoning.

This focus on empathy shows that adolescents are learning to integrate both emotional intelligence and moral logic into their decision-making, which reflects the developmental stage of moral reasoning where perspective-taking, becomes central.

Role of Social Influences: Peer Groups and Positive Role Models

A theme that emerges consistently across all respondents is the influence of peer groups and the importance of surrounding oneself with positive influences. This highlights how community—whether through friends, family, or teachers—shapes adolescents' moral development.

Positive Social Influence: Several respondents advise younger students to surround themselves with good role models or positive influences to reinforce moral behaviour and decision-making.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) says, “Surround yourself with good role models,” echoing the advice of Respondent 1 from Abune Gorgorios (14 years old), who similarly advises to “surround yourself with positive influences.”

Respondent 3 from Kokebe Tsibah (14 years old) also underscores the role of community, advising younger students to “speak up for what’s right” and to “ask for help when you need it.”

These responses reflect an understanding that moral development is not only an individual process but also shaped by the social environments in which adolescents are embedded. Positive role models—whether friends, family members, or mentors—serve as guides for adolescents navigating moral decisions.

Learning from Mistakes and Growth

Another common theme in the advice given by adolescents is the importance of learning from mistakes and embracing the idea that moral growth is a continuous process. This theme suggests that adolescents recognize that moral decision-making is not always straightforward and may involve a process of trial, error, and reflection.

Learning from Mistakes: Several respondents acknowledge that it’s okay to make mistakes as long as one learns from them, signalling a growth mindset about morality.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) emphasizes, “It’s okay to make mistakes as long as you learn from them,” suggesting that moral development involves not just correct choices but also the ability to reflect and grow from missteps.

Similarly, Respondent 3 from Abune Gorgorios (15 years old) emphasizes that one should be “open to learning from their mistakes,” which highlights the importance of self-compassion and growth in moral reasoning.

This indicates that adolescents view moral development as a dynamic process, where making mistakes is part of learning and refining one’s ethical beliefs and behaviours.

Moral Courage: Standing Up for What’s Right

A final key theme across the responses is the importance of moral courage—the ability to stand up for what is right, even in the face of difficulty or peer pressure. This shows that adolescents recognize the importance of advocating for personal values and moral integrity, even when it’s challenging.

Moral Courage: Many respondents encourage younger students to be brave in their moral decisions, even when it’s difficult or unpopular.

Respondent 2 from Sandford (15 years old) says, “Speak up if you see something wrong,” and Respondent 3 from Sandford (18 years old) echoes this with the advice to “stand up for what you believe is right, even if it’s hard.”

Respondent 1 from Kokebe Tsibah (15 years old) also advises, “speak up for what’s right,” reinforcing the importance of moral advocacy.

These responses illustrate that adolescents are beginning to internalize moral principles that guide their actions, understanding that advocacy for what is morally right may require courage in the face of opposition or difficulty.

Despite some variations in phrasing, the advice offered by respondents from Sandford, Abune Gorgorios, and Kokebe Tsibah schools reveals strong similarities in their understanding of moral values and how to navigate moral decisions:

Self-awareness, empathy, and social influence are common themes across all three schools, indicating that adolescents’ moral development is shaped by both individual reflection and the social contexts they inhabit.

Moral courage—the ability to stand up for what’s right—is emphasized as a key value, suggesting that adolescents recognize the importance of advocating for moral principles even when faced with challenges like peer pressure.

The role of supportive communities and mentorship (through peers, family, and trusted adults) plays a significant part in shaping their moral decision-making, as nearly all respondents advise younger students to seek help or surround themselves with positive influences.

The concept of learning from mistakes underscores a growth-oriented approach to moral development, acknowledging that ethical growth involves reflecting on past actions and making adjustments moving forward.

Across the three schools, there is a shared understanding that moral decision-making is a dynamic process shaped by self-awareness, empathy, and social relationships. Adolescents recognize that making ethical decisions involves reflecting on one’s actions, considering the impact on others, and seeking guidance from trusted mentors. They also acknowledge the role of moral courage—standing up for what’s right—as a key aspect of moral development. Overall, the advice provided by these adolescents highlights a thoughtful approach to moral reasoning, emphasizing responsibility, growth, and the importance of supportive communities in shaping their moral frameworks.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Summary of Major Findings

Based on the data provided, the research findings are as follows.

5.1.1. Major Findings of the Research

The understanding of moral values among adolescents varies significantly across the three schools, reflecting different cultural, religious, and educational contexts.

Sandford International School: Students prioritize ethical behaviour, emphasizing good actions and thoughts over religious faith. The majority of students (43) agree that good thoughts are important, and 37 emphasize the importance of good actions. This suggests that students at Sandford International School understand moral values primarily in terms of ethical behaviour, social responsibility, and respect for others, rather than through religious or spiritual lenses.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School: While students acknowledge the importance of religious faith in their moral development (10 agree), their understanding of moral values also includes a focus on behaviour. However, students show less strong agreement with the importance of good thoughts (only 3 strongly agree) and actions (5 strongly agree), suggesting that while religious teachings provide a foundational moral framework, the application of these values in everyday actions may not be fully internalized by students.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School: Students exhibit a similar focus on ethical actions and thoughts (23 strongly agree with good thoughts, 26 strongly agree with good actions), despite a minimal emphasis on religious faith in their moral education. This indicates that while religious values are not central, students understand moral values in terms of practical behaviour and societal expectations, potentially influenced by peer and cultural norms rather than formal religious instruction.

The educational setting, along with influences from family, teachers, and peers, plays an observable role in shaping students' moral development across all three schools.

Sandford International School: The secular and international nature of the school promotes a moral framework centred on global citizenship, ethical behaviour, and social responsibility.

Teachers likely emphasize respect, tolerance, and personal responsibility, which are reflected in students' strong agreement with the importance of good actions and thoughts. Peer influences, especially in a diverse, international environment, likely encourage these students to focus on social harmony and ethical decision-making, although the internalization of virtues like kindness in difficult situations remains weaker.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School: The more religious and traditional setting of Abune Gorgorios emphasizes religious teachings, which are reinforced by family and community values. This religious context likely shapes students' initial understanding of moral values. However, teachers may not always translate these religious principles into practical moral behavior effectively, as evidenced by the weaker agreement with moral actions and thoughts despite strong support for religious faith. Peer and family influences may play a critical role in reinforcing these values at home and in community interactions.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School: The secular orientation of Kokebe Tsibah, with minimal emphasis on religious faith, means that moral development is more influenced by societal norms and peer relationships. Teachers may focus on academic achievement and discipline, while peers likely have a stronger influence on ethical behaviours and actions. The school environment fosters strong community-oriented values like perseverance and emotional regulation, as reflected in students' strong commitment to good actions and emotional control (kindness in difficult situations), despite a weaker sense of personal virtue.

There are notable differences and some similarities in the moral values and practices across the three schools, shaped by their cultural, religious, and educational contexts.

Similarities:

Responsibility and Perseverance: All three schools place high value on responsibility and perseverance. Students in all schools show agreement with being responsible, and Kokebe Tsibah students, in particular, strongly emphasize perseverance (28 strongly agree). This suggests that across all three schools, there is a shared understanding of these core values as important aspects of moral behaviour.

Concern for Peer Relationships: All students show concern for how their peers view them, with varying degrees of intensity. Sandford International School and Kokebe Tsibah students show particularly strong concern for reputation and peer approval, suggesting that peer relationships play a central role in moral decision-making in both schools.

Differences:

Religious Influence: Abune Gorgorios stands out with its stronger emphasis on religious faith, reflected in students' responses about the importance of faith in their moral development. However, this does not translate into a stronger internalization of virtue, as seen in the mixed responses regarding personal virtue. In contrast, Sandford International School and Kokebe Tsibah have a more secular orientation, with moral values based on ethical behaviour rather than religious teachings.

Emotional Regulation and Kindness: Kokebe Tsibah students demonstrate a stronger commitment to emotional regulation and kindness, with 16 strongly agreeing that they act kindly in difficult situations. Sandford International School students, while agreeing that kindness is important, show mixed responses when asked if they are consistently kind in challenging situations, indicating difficulties in emotional regulation under stress. Abune Gorgorios students show more variability in this area, suggesting that emotional control is less emphasized.

Self-Perception of Virtue: Students at Kokebe Tsibah and Sandford International School show a weaker sense of personal virtue, with a high number of students rejecting the idea of being virtuous. This indicates that while these students understand moral actions, they may not strongly internalize them as part of their identity. In contrast, Abune Gorgorios students show more moderate views on virtue, though they are not strongly convinced of their personal virtuousness either.

5.2 Discussion

This analysis shows that while moral development is universally influenced by peers and teachers, the educational settings and school cultures lead to differing perceptions of how these influences are enacted. The findings suggest that moral values are deeply embedded in both social interactions (e.g., friendships) and the formal and informal educational processes within schools. Differences in how schools approach moral education may lead to varying degrees of moral clarity, character building, and the role of the school in fostering ethical behaviour.

1) Understanding of Moral Values Among Adolescents

The findings reveal significant differences in how adolescents from the three schools understand and prioritize moral values, reflecting the broader cultural, religious, and educational environments they are part of.

Sandford International School: The students at Sandford International School prioritize ethical behaviour over religious faith in their understanding of moral values. A large proportion of students agree that good actions and good thoughts are important for moral development, which suggests that the school's secular, international ethos plays a major role in shaping a universal moral framework focused on social responsibility, respect for others, and ethical decision-making. This emphasis on ethical behaviour, rather than religious doctrine, aligns with a global citizenship model that encourages students to think critically about their actions and the impact on others. The fact that the majority of students place greater importance on ethical actions and thoughts than on religious beliefs further underscores the secular nature of the school environment.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School: In contrast, students at Abune Gorgorios Secondary School show a stronger association between religious faith and moral development. Although most students acknowledge the importance of religious faith, the application of religious teachings to everyday behaviour appears weaker. Students express less agreement with the importance of good thoughts and actions, suggesting that while religious values provide a foundational moral framework, their practical application may not be as effectively reinforced. This points to a possible gap between theoretical religious teachings and the internalization of these values in day-to-day life. This discrepancy could also indicate that while religious values shape moral frameworks, their translation into consistent moral actions may depend on additional reinforcement from teachers, family, and peers.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School: At Kokebe Tsibah, where religious faith plays a minimal role in the students' moral education, the focus is on ethical actions and societal expectations. Students demonstrate a strong commitment to good actions and good thoughts, similar to Sandford students, but without the religious foundation. This could be attributed to peer influences and cultural norms within the school environment that place value on practical morality, such as emotional regulation and social cohesion. Despite the lack of explicit religious instruction, the students' strong sense of responsibility and ethical behaviour

suggests that moral development can be nurtured through social and community-based influences even in the absence of religious teachings.

2) Influence of Educational Setting, Family, Teachers, and Peers on Moral Development

The moral development of students is shaped by multiple factors, including the educational setting, family background, teachers, and peer influences. The differences in moral values across the schools can be understood in the context of these factors.

Sandford International School: The school's international and secular environment plays a central role in fostering a moral framework that emphasizes global citizenship, social responsibility, and ethical behaviour. Teachers at Sandford likely encourage critical thinking about moral issues, fostering a more individualized approach to moral decision-making that is not heavily reliant on religious dogma. Peer influences in such a diverse environment also contribute to the development of a shared sense of ethical responsibility, with students learning from a wide range of cultural perspectives. However, the school's emphasis on academic achievement and personal success may limit the internalization of deeper moral virtues, such as kindness in emotionally challenging situations, as seen in students' mixed responses about emotional regulation.

Abune Gorgorios Secondary School: The religious and traditional educational context of Abune Gorgorios, supported by family and community values, heavily influences students' moral development. Religious teachings likely provide students with a moral framework rooted in spiritual beliefs. However, as students transition from religious teachings to real-world behaviour, the practical application of these teachings may not be fully internalized. This suggests that while family and community play a critical role in reinforcing religious values, the role of teachers in translating these values into practical behaviour may be less emphasized or inconsistent. Peer groups may also be a significant factor, particularly in how students apply religious teachings to daily interactions and moral decision-making.

Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School: In Kokebe Tsibah, the lack of a strong religious framework means that moral development is more influenced by societal norms, peer relationships, and a strong sense of community. The emphasis on perseverance and emotional regulation indicates that the school culture likely promotes values associated with resilience and emotional intelligence. Teachers may focus more on academic success and discipline, but peer influence appears to be a dominant force in shaping moral behaviour. This peer-driven

environment fosters a collective sense of moral responsibility and ethical conduct, even in the absence of religious instruction.

4) Similarities and Differences in Moral Values and Practices Across the Three Schools

The comparison between the three schools highlights both commonalities and differences in how moral values are understood and practised.

Similarities:

Responsibility and Perseverance: All three schools emphasize the importance of responsibility and perseverance. Students from all schools show strong agreement with being responsible and demonstrate an understanding of perseverance as a core moral value. This shared commitment to these values suggests that responsibility and perseverance are universal ideals in the moral education of adolescents, irrespective of the school's religious or secular orientation. The high value placed on perseverance at Kokebe Tsibah (28 strongly agree) indicates a particularly strong emphasis on resilience in this school, which may reflect cultural and community values that prioritize determination in the face of adversity.

Concern for Peer Relationships: All students express concern for how their peers perceive them, although to varying degrees. Sandford International School and Kokebe Tsibah students show particularly strong concern for peer approval, which highlights the central role of peer relationships in shaping moral decision-making. The emphasis on reputation and peer dynamics in these schools suggests that social interactions and acceptance play an important role in students' moral behaviour and choices.

Differences:

Religious Influence: One of the most striking differences is the role of religion in shaping moral values. Abune Gorgorios students are most strongly influenced by religious teachings, reflecting the school's religious framework. However, this does not necessarily translate into a stronger internalization of virtue, as students express weaker agreement with the importance of good thoughts and actions. This gap between religious teachings and moral practice contrasts with Sandford International and Kokebe Tsibah, where moral values are based more on ethical behaviour, social responsibility, and emotional regulation, with minimal emphasis on religious belief.

Emotional Regulation and Kindness: Kokebe Tsibah students show a stronger commitment to emotional regulation and kindness in difficult situations compared to their peers at Sandford International and Abune Gorgorios. This suggests that the school culture at Kokebe Tsibah

emphasizes emotional intelligence and social cohesion more effectively than the other schools. In Sandford International School, while kindness is recognized as important, students show more variability in practicing it under stress, indicating a possible gap in emotional regulation. Abune Gorgorios students also show variability, suggesting that emotional control may not be as strongly emphasized in the religious curriculum as other virtues like faith and obedience.

Self-Perception of Virtue: The sense of personal virtue is weakest in Sandford International School and Kokebe Tsibah, with many students rejecting the idea of being virtuous. This suggests that while these students understand moral actions, they may not fully internalize them as part of their identity. In contrast, Abune Gorgorios students have a more moderate view of their personal virtue, though they do not strongly identify as virtuous. This difference may reflect the varying levels of emphasis placed on virtue as an intrinsic quality, with Sandford and Kokebe Tsibah focusing more on ethical behaviour in specific situations rather than on cultivating a broader sense of personal virtue.

5.2. Conclusion

The adolescents in the study demonstrated varied approaches to moral values, shaped by their school's cultural, religious, and educational setting. Students at Sandford International School emphasized ethical behaviour and social responsibility, with a marked focus on good actions and thoughts rather than religious faith. This aligns with the school's secular and international framework, which fosters a global citizenship perspective. In contrast, Abune Gorgorios Secondary School students emphasized religious faith as the foundation for moral development, although this was not always reflected in their day-to-day behaviour. The gap between religious teachings and practical application suggests that moral values at Abune Gorgorios may require further reinforcement in order to be fully internalized. Kokebe Tsibah Secondary School students also emphasized ethical actions and good thoughts but did so within a cultural and societal context that placed more value on emotional regulation and social cohesion, rather than religious instruction. These differences highlight how moral frameworks are shaped not only by formal teachings but also by the broader socio-cultural environment in which students are embedded.

The educational setting, family influences, and peer relationships emerged as critical factors shaping moral development across all three schools. Sandford International School, with its international and secular orientation, fosters a moral framework that prioritizes ethical

behaviour, critical thinking, and social responsibility. The diverse peer group at Sandford likely encourages students to adopt a more inclusive and globally minded approach to moral decision-making. However, the focus on academic achievement may limit the deeper internalization of moral virtues like kindness, particularly in challenging emotional situations.

At Abune Gorgorios, the school's religious foundation, supported by family and community values, strongly shapes students' moral outlook. However, there appears to be a disconnect between religious faith and the application of moral values, as evidenced by students' mixed responses regarding good thoughts and actions. This suggests that while religion provides a moral foundation, its practical application in students' daily lives may be less consistently reinforced by teachers and peers. Peer groups and family interactions seem to play a key role in reinforcing or challenging the moral behaviours that students internalize.

Kokebe Tsibah, on the other hand, operates in a secular environment where moral development is largely shaped by societal norms, peer influence, and community-based values. Students' focus on perseverance and emotional regulation suggests a strong emphasis on emotional intelligence and social cohesion. Peer relationships in Kokebe Tsibah appear to play a more dominant role in shaping moral behaviours compared to the other schools, indicating that social and community influences are crucial in the development of ethical conduct, even without a strong religious or academic focus.

Despite differences in religious and educational contexts, there were notable similarities in the moral values emphasized across the three schools. Responsibility and perseverance were universal values; with all three schools showing strong agreement that these qualities were important aspects of moral behaviour. Additionally, concern for peer relationships emerged as a common theme, particularly at Sandford and Kokebe Tsibah, where peer approval played a significant role in moral decision-making.

However, the influence of religion was one of the most striking differences. Abune Gorgorios students were most strongly influenced by religious teachings, yet this did not necessarily translate into stronger internalization of virtuous behaviour. In contrast, students at Sandford and Kokebe Tsibah, although not guided by religious faith, exhibited strong ethical values rooted in social responsibility, peer relationships, and emotional regulation. This suggests that while religious teachings can provide a moral foundation, their impact on moral development is contingent on the degree to which they are internalized and applied in everyday situations.

Emotional regulation and kindness also emerged as significant points of difference. Kokebe Tsibah students showed a particularly strong commitment to emotional regulation and kindness, especially in challenging situations, which may reflect the school's emphasis on social cohesion and resilience. Sandford students, while acknowledging the importance of kindness, showed more variability in how they applied it under stress. Abune Gorgorios students exhibited similar variability, suggesting that emotional regulation may not be as strongly emphasized in their religious curriculum as other virtues such as faith and obedience.

Finally, the self-perception of virtue was weaker among students at both Sandford International and Kokebe Tsibah, with many students rejecting the idea of being virtuous, despite demonstrating an understanding of ethical behaviour. This points to a potential gap between understanding moral actions and internalizing them as part of one's personal identity. In contrast, Abune Gorgorios students had a more moderate view of their personal virtue, though they did not strongly identify as virtuous either. This may reflect the differing ways in which virtue is emphasized across the schools, with Sandford and Kokebe Tsibah focusing more on situational ethics and practical behaviours, while Abune Gorgorios places more emphasis on religious teachings of intrinsic virtue.

This study underscores the complexity of moral development among adolescents, influenced by a combination of factors such as religious teachings, educational environments, peer relationships, and societal norms. While students across all three schools shared common values such as responsibility and perseverance, the way in which these values were understood, internalized, and applied varied significantly, reflecting the distinct cultural, religious, and educational contexts of each school. These findings highlight the need for a holistic approach to moral education that not only teaches ethical behaviour but also encourages deeper internalization of moral virtues, fostering a sense of personal responsibility and empathy in students across diverse educational settings.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for educators, policy-makers, and school leaders to enhance moral development in adolescents, particularly in diverse educational settings. These recommendations are designed to address gaps in the understanding and internalization of moral values and to provide guidance for fostering a more comprehensive and effective approach to moral education.

- 1) Teachers should be trained to integrate moral lessons with real-life examples and practical applications that help students understand how religious values translate into concrete actions. For example, discussions on kindness, empathy, and ethical decision-making could be linked to real-world scenarios where students can actively practice these virtues.
2. Encourage more interactive activities such as role-playing, group discussions, or community service projects that allow students to practice religious values in real situations. This will help students internalize and apply moral teachings in their daily interactions.
3. Schools should incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) programs that explicitly teach emotional regulation, empathy, and kindness. These programs should be embedded in the curriculum and reinforced through school-wide activities and campaigns that promote respect, understanding, and emotional intelligence.
4. Teachers should model emotional regulation and kindness by demonstrating these behaviors in challenging situations, helping students learn how to manage their emotions and act compassionately in difficult circumstances.
5. Schools should place greater emphasis on character education that focuses on the development of personal virtue, such as integrity, honesty, and accountability. This can be achieved through character-based discussions, reflective activities, and recognition of students who demonstrate virtuous behaviour.
7. Incorporate more opportunities for self-reflection in the curriculum, such as journaling, group discussions, or mentorship programs, where students can reflect on their actions, values, and the type of person they wish to become. This will encourage students to internalize moral values as part of their personal identity.
8. Develop a values-based curriculum that explicitly teaches not only academic subjects but also ethical decision-making, social responsibility, and moral philosophy. This could include lessons on fairness, justice, respect, and the importance of working toward the common good.
9. Schools should foster a peer mentoring program where older students mentor younger students, providing guidance on ethical behavior, emotional regulation, and handling moral dilemmas. This can also help students build leadership skills while promoting a culture of responsibility and kindness.

Recommendation: Encourage peer-led initiatives that promote moral values, such as kindness campaigns, anti-bullying programs, and community service activities. Empowering students to take an active role in shaping their school culture can create a more supportive and ethical learning environment.

10. Schools should provide cultural competence training for teachers to help them understand and address the different cultural and religious perspectives that students bring to the classroom. This training will help educator's better support students from diverse backgrounds in their moral development and create an inclusive learning environment.

11. Encourage inter-cultural dialogue through school activities and events that celebrate cultural diversity, fostering mutual respect and understanding among students from different backgrounds.

12. Establish stronger family-school partnerships through regular communication, workshops, and collaborative activities that involve parents in the moral education of their children. This will help align school-based moral teachings with family values and ensure consistency in students' moral development.

13. Develop community engagement projects that allow students to interact with local organizations, helping them connect the values learned at school with real-world applications in their communities. This will reinforce the importance of moral values beyond the school environment.

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Appendices

Appendicitis 1- Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I appreciate your willingness to complete this questionnaire. You do not need to write your name or Gender to complete this questionnaire.

My religion (Please circle one of the following)

Catholicism (Roman Catholic)

Orthodox Tewahido

Protestant

Islam (Muslim)

Judaism (Jew)

Others (Please state)

None

What is your favourite school subject?

Do you like school? (Please circle your response)

Yes

No

Section 1 Personality revealing questions

Key;

1= strongly agree

2= agree

3= neither agree/disagree

4= disagree

5= strongly disagree

1. I am friendly and welcoming to others
2. I have a religious faith
3. I am trustworthy and loyal
4. I am a person with values
5. I never think of badly of myself
6. I never think of badly of other people
7. I am cheerful and always look on the bright side
8. I know that thinking good thought is important
9. I know that doing good act is important
10. I am a virtuous person
11. I am responsible
12. I want to be good in all situations
13. I try not to be unkind to friends, even if they annoy me
14. I do not give up when things are hard
15. It is important for me that my friend think well of me
16. I attend a place of worship

17.I do not always behave and act in the way I think or feel

18.I care for the environment

Section 2 Thinking about what helps you to be a good person

Key;

1= strongly agree

2= agree

3= neither agree/disagree

4= disagree

5= strongly disagree

19. My teacher helps me to develop my character

20. My school helps me to rebuild my character

21. I am only friends with people who are good

22. The following help me to know how to be a good person:

Mother/ female carer/ guardian

Father/ male carer / guardian

Sisters/ brothers

Grandparents

Friends 1 2 3 4 5

Teachers 1 2 3 4 5

Some people on TV 1 2 3 4 5

Going to my place of worship 1 2 3 4 5

No one , I know how to be good myself 1 2 3 4 5

23. The following help me to act like a good person 1 2 3 4 5

Mother/ female carer/ guardian 1 2 3 4 5

Father/ male carer / guardian 1 2 3 4 5

Sisters/ brothers 1 2 3 4 5

Grandparents 1 2 3 4 5

Friends 1 2 3 4 5

Teachers 1 2 3 4 5

Some people on TV 1 2 3 4 5

Going to my place of worship 1 2 3 4 5

No one , I know how to be good myself 1 2 3 4 5

24. A person cannot know if she/he is good. It depends if other people think he/she is a good person 1 2 3 4 5

25. In one sentence please tell me what 'virtue' means

Thank you for answering this questionnaire

Appendices 2

Interview Questions

1. What does “moral value” mean to you?
2. Can you name some moral values that you think are important?
3. How do you think your school influences your moral values?
4. Can you share an example of a situation where you had to make a moral decision?
5. Do you think your friends have an impact on your moral choices? How so?
6. How do cultural or religious beliefs shape your understanding of right and wrong?
7. Are there any rules or guidelines at your school that promote good behaviour? What are they?
8. How do you feel when someone acts against what you believe is right?
9. In what ways do you think technology affects your moral values?
10. What advice would you give younger students about making good moral choices?