



Fading values amongst students in the Digital Age

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Abstract:

This conceptual study highlights the importance of values as core foundations for online activities in digital age where technology is taking the Centre stage and governing the moral compass in individual's life. A framework is made in this research attempting to inculcate values in students during online class or using internet, as in real life scenario, which will try to help reducing the erosion of values amongst students. As technology is taking over the educational sector a shift in values is being seen amongst students. The reasons may be many which requires in-depth further studies. Studies have shown threats like cyber bullying being serious matter of concern in digital world, with lack of privacy and false information adding the list. This research allows scope of further investigation regarding the detailed reasons for value erosion from the contemporary education.

Keywords: Change, Technology, Education, Students, Values, Online, Digital.

Introduction:

The rapid evolution of technology has caused great changes in our society as well as our education systems. Technology is now playing a large role in shaping society, thus creating a greater level of interdependence between education system and the digital world. Traditional tools such as blackboards, encyclopedias, and notebooks have largely been replaced by the integration of smart boards, online learning platforms, laptops, and voice automated assistants (Naidoo & Breed, 2024). While this rapid expansion of technology has allowed for a better, immediate flow of information, it also has created many new challenges in the form of a loss of personal privacy and cyberbullying (Jones, Mitchell & Beseler, 2024). As a result, the overall risks to student safety and moral and ethical development are increasing. For technology to truly serve education, a robust ethical framework promoted collaboratively by teachers, students and parents will be required.

Review of the Related Literature:

Role of Schools in Imparting Education and Values

Education has always been the foundation of the development of society and it has helped to develop and empower communities Education through amalgamation of knowledge, skill and values makes better future citizens (Imam, 2020). .Observable decline in values and ethics were seen amongst student and 42 percent

teachers felt students don't give importance to values which was observed from Pearson voice of teacher survey which was conducted in 49 cities of Andhra Pradesh and 24 cities in Telangana. (Reddy, 2016) There is emerging evidence of a gradual decline of value-oriented education in schools and in society over the last several years due to emphasis on tangible accomplishments rather than values. (Bhasa& Ramana, 2018). Governments, NGOs, and various commissions have consistently advocated for value-based education to help raise the moral and ethical standards of students. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 while emphasizing digital literacy supports value-based education to meet contemporary needs of the population (Ministry of Education, 2020). Value development comes from families, society, schools, peers and friendships, indicating the need for partnerships between schools and families to support the development of student values and ethics. (Vijaya Lakshmi & Paul, 2018). Amid evolving educational landscapes, parents and teachers bear significant responsibility for instilling relevant values in the current generation.

Changing Scenario of Education

In the past, schools were the primary means of learning about academics and morals (Gulcan, 2014). As we are in 21st century, with technological, the way we learn has changed (Jansen & van der Merwe, 2015). Today's schools reflect the development with teachers being experienced facilitators of the learning experience to students rather than teachers as the sole source of knowledge (Patel, Goel & Deshmukh, 2021). In contemporary education students becoming active participants in their own learning experiences (Alam, 2023).

The rise of Technology in Education:

Since late 20th Century technology has evolved bringing massive change in education with internet and computer aided teaching taking a grip (Li, 2023). In the year 1998, Google was born (Google, n.d). It was then the entire educational scenario changed; the library and books-based education shifted to getting information at mouse clicks. The late 1990's and 2000 experienced instant access to information, multitasking, and immediate results (Frاند, 2000). Social media sites like Facebook became popular during 2012 (McIntyre,2014). Junco (2012) in his study highlighted the positive and negative shift in students' behavior due to Facebook usage. A paradigm shift from traditional pedagogy to digital pedagogy was seen in 2019, as schools shifted from traditional classrooms to online classrooms using mobiles and laptops (Bussu,et al, 2023). Currently as we are in 2025, artificial intelligence (AI) has captured the education world changing the teaching learning process (Ahmad,et al, 2021).

Fading Values When Online:

Due to the technological advancement, there has been rapid educational transition which has brought change in values and ethics (Govindarajoo, et al,2025). Shifting from real world to digital world, bullying has changed to cyberbullying (Li, Wang et al, 2022). The cyber bullying often goes unmonitored. Many students have experienced both cyberbullying and online misconduct, as highlighted by research. Nixon (2014) conducted a study on the effects of cyberbullying on adolescents, finding that those who were victimized experienced increased levels of depression, The presence of anxiety or feelings of loneliness or suicidal thoughts and physical symptoms. In a separate study, the Pew Research Centre found that 46% of American teenagers aged 13-17 were victims of cyberbullying in 2022. Older teenage girls were most victims, 54% were affected through behaviors like rumor-spreading and explicit threats (Anderson, 2022). Researches conducted on a regional census of high school students, reported cyberbullying victimization rates were of 15.8%, which was often linked to psychological distress and overlapping with school-based bullying. Schneider et al. (2012).

Thus, with a growing reliance on online education as a resource, there should be some type of protocol established for online behavior.

Significance of the Study:

- The study will shed light on the need of value-based education for technologically driven society, addressing digital threats and creating ethical awareness amongst stake holders in schools and in education sector.
- The study will provide a value-based framework for teachers and parents to deliberately pass on core human values (Respect, Empathy, Honesty, Responsibility) in the present society that is dominated by technology and gadgets.

Objective of the Study:

- To explore how digital technology impacts on the way that we teach and learn human values in school.
- To understand how teachers and parents can intentionally incorporate basic human values into the use of digital tools for educational purposes.
- To develop a value-based framework to be used when using technology which allows for technology to enhance rather than inhibit the value development of students.

Research Methodology:

Being conceptual study, integrative review approach (Torraco, 2016; Snyder, 2019) was used, combining 21 scholarly literatures on the topic between 2000 and 2025. These studies were critically synthesized to develop new conceptual framework for the present study. Only secondary sources were used which were selected through a systematic review using Google Scholar, reputable journal sites, newspapers peer-reviewed journals.

Discussion:

After a detailed study of the review of literature, a framework - “Values first” is created as follows which makes values a priority in offline and online classes helping reduce erosion of values, involving students, teachers and parents fostering collaborative social learning of values.

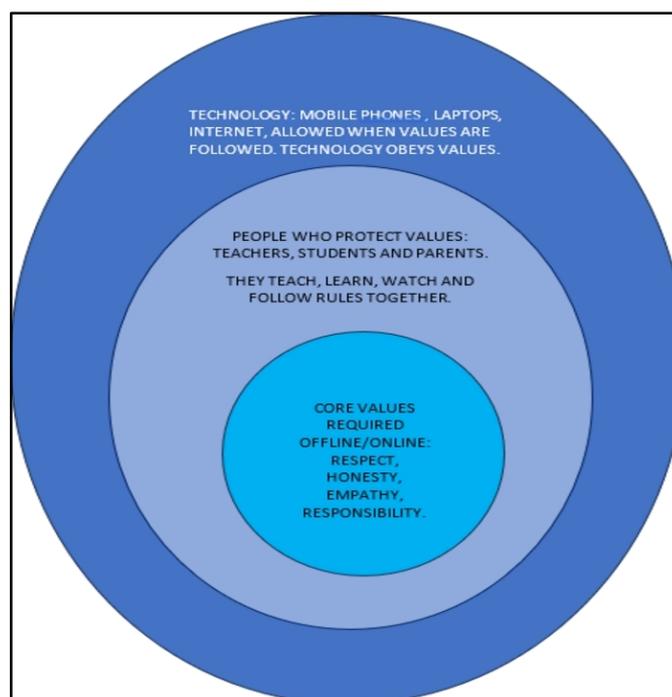


Figure 1: “Values First” Framework

The “Values First” framework illustrated in Figure 1, provides a conceptual framework to navigate online class with core non-negotiable human values respect, empathy, honesty, and responsibility, forming backbone of online ethics in schools. Analyzing the framework, it puts core values at the innermost circle, emphasizing it is important to have these values, offline as well as online. Next is the protective middle circle with parents, teachers as well as students, actively modelling, monitoring, and discussing these values daily. The outermost circle explains that devices, apps, and online platforms are permitted only when they align with and reinforce the inner values. The framework puts forth that students should be socially and morally responsible, having respect for others, be empathetic and honest to avail the gadgets and digital world, using this teachers and parents can transform potential digital risks into opportunities for genuine moral growth.

Scope for Further Studies:

The current study provides a basis for future research on ethical decline in students focusing on areas excessive screen time, type of digital content consumed or parenting practices of Millennial parents. By clearly identifying the causes of these declines, researchers will have more precise and evidence-based recommendations for interventions.

Conclusion:

Technology must enhance, not overshadow human qualities in the digital world. Putting core values as top priority will help students navigate digital world safely and be better digital citizens. When technology is built on principles of value, the erosion of value will reduce. Ultimately, true education is not only about gadgets, it is about growing better human beings.

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