

Preparing Lecturers for Moral Value Integration in Teaching the Digital Generation at Malaysian Vocational Colleges

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Abstract

The integration of moral values in education is a priority in shaping a generation that is virtuous, knowledgeable, and highly skilled. However, the integration of moral values in the teaching and learning process within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions remains fragmented and unsystematic, potentially resulting in ineffective value delivery and graduates who are insufficiently prepared to meet professional expectations. Therefore, this study aims to explore the preparation process of business management lecturers in integrating moral values for the digital generation. Four experts from Malaysian Vocational Colleges were selected through snowball sampling. Data saturation was achieved by the fourth interview. The findings revealed four interrelated dimensions of lecturers' readiness: knowledge, skills, awareness, and emotional management. These dimensions operate collectively rather than independently, shaping lecturers' capacity to integrate moral values effectively within teaching and learning activities. In conclusion, these dimensions formed a conceptual understanding of a lecturers' readiness framework for moral value integration. This study suggests a foundation for the development of structured lecturer development initiatives, supportive institutional practices, and policy frameworks aimed at strengthening systematic moral value integration across TVET institutions.

1. Introduction

The integration of moral values has become an increasingly important agenda in Malaysian TVET institutions due to growing concerns regarding ethical behaviour, social responsibility, and character development among younger generations, particularly within the field of business management. The strong emphasis on organisational performance and economic outcomes inadvertently reduces attention to ethical considerations, resulting in moral values being treated as a secondary aspect of students' professional development (Kazi, 1995). Beyond academic achievement and technical competence, TVET institutions are expected to nurture individuals who demonstrate integrity, professionalism, and responsible citizenship. This aspiration is reflected in the National Education Philosophy, which emphasises holistic student development encompassing intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and moral dimensions (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2025). Consequently, moral value integration has become an

essential component of educational practice in preparing students to meet both societal and workplace expectations.

The importance of value-based education becomes even more significant when educating the digital generation. Growing up in an environment characterised by rapid technological advancement and unrestricted access to information, the digital generation of students faces moral and behavioural challenges that differ considerably from those experienced by previous generations. While digital technologies have expanded opportunities for learning and communication, they have also exposed students to various influences that may shape attitudes, behaviours, and ethical decision-making (Haidt, 2024). As a result, educators are increasingly expected to ensure that moral values remain embedded within teaching and learning processes to support students' personal and professional development.

Holistically viewed, TVET institutions are responsible for producing graduates who possess both technical competencies and professional attributes required by industry. However, educational practices often prioritise technical knowledge and skill acquisition, creating concerns regarding the development of ethical values, professionalism, and social responsibility among graduates (Haron et al., 2024; Hassan et al., 2022). This issue is particularly relevant as employers increasingly seek graduates who demonstrate integrity, accountability, teamwork, and ethical conduct alongside technical expertise.

Previous studies have reported various challenges associated with moral value integration, including limited professional training, inadequate instructional resources, the absence of clear assessment guidelines, insufficient institutional support, and difficulties in embedding values across disciplines (Balakrishnan, 2023; Hassan et al., 2022; Kogindran & Nadarajan, 2022). These challenges are further compounded by the complexities of educating digital generation students whose learning behaviours, social experiences, and value systems differ significantly from previous generations (Haidt, 2024; Dimock, 2019). Consequently, lecturers are increasingly expected to play a dual role as knowledge facilitators and character developers within contemporary TVET environments.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of moral value integration, limited attention has been given to understanding the dimensions of readiness that enable lecturers to integrate moral values effectively when teaching digital generation students in Malaysian TVET institutions. Existing studies have largely focused on institutional constraints, implementation barriers, and the importance of value-based education, while the readiness required of lecturers to implement moral value integration remains insufficiently explored. Understanding this readiness is essential, as lecturers play a central role in shaping students' character and ethical development through their teaching practices and professional interactions (Bandura, 1986).

Therefore, this study explores how business management lecturers prepare themselves to integrate moral values into teaching and learning activities for the digital generation in Malaysian Vocational Colleges. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research question: How do lecturers prepare themselves to integrate moral values into the teaching of business management in Vocational Colleges?

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore lecturers' readiness in integrating moral values for the digital generation in Malaysian Vocational Colleges. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, and practices within their real-life experiences (Yin, 2009). Therefore, a qualitative approach was deemed necessary to obtain rich and detailed insights into how lecturers prepare themselves to integrate moral values in business management courses. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, adopting an inductive approach to allow the progressive development of findings throughout the research process. This approach allowed participants to share their experiences, reflections, and strategies while providing flexibility for the researcher to explore emerging issues in greater depth (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Four experts were selected using the snowball sampling technique, covering three regional zones across Malaysia, which are the southern, northern, and Borneo regions. Although the number of experts was relatively small, it was considered appropriate given the qualitative and exploratory nature of the study, which emphasised depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The objective was to obtain rich and in-depth insights from carefully selected experts who possessed substantial experience in integrating moral values within Business Management courses. The inclusion of experts from different geographical regions further enhanced the diversity of perspectives and experiences captured in the study.

At the initial stage, the researcher contacted an expert who met the established criteria of the study and subsequently obtained recommendations for other experts who possessed relevant experience and knowledge related to the integration of moral values in the teaching and learning of business management courses. All experts had a minimum of five years of experience as lecturers in business management courses. The experts' teaching experiences also exhibited interesting and varied dynamics influenced by their service locations. Involving experts from different regions allowed the researcher to gain wider insight into various teaching approaches across

institutions. Therefore, snowball sampling helped to identify suitable experts while ensuring diversity is both meaningful and significant (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The snowball sampling process was conducted iteratively. Following each interview session, preliminary data analysis was undertaken to identify emerging codes, subthemes, and themes related to lecturers' readiness for moral value integration. Recommendations from each expert were subsequently used to identify additional experts who met the study criteria. Expert recruitment continued until no substantial new themes or insights emerged from the data. By the fourth interview, thematic patterns had become consistent and data saturation was achieved, indicating that additional interviews were unlikely to generate new conceptual insights. The four themes identified through this process subsequently formed the conceptual basis for understanding lecturers' readiness for moral value integration and are further discussed in the findings. The experts' profile is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 *Profile of Experts*

Experts	Role	Work Experiences	Regions
Expert 1	Senior Lecturer	18 Years	South
Expert 2	Programme Coordinator	15 Years	North
Expert 3	Head of Department	24 Years	Borneo
Expert 4	Senior Lecturer	7 Years	Borneo

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by a carefully constructed interview protocol. This protocol consisted of five types of questions: introductory, hypothetical, counterfactual, ideal, and aspirational, all designed to elicit comprehensive responses aligned with the research questions. The interviews were conducted entirely online, considering the geographical dispersion of experts. Each session was recorded with consent, and field notes were taken to document additional observations. The recorded interviews were transcribed using the transcription software to ensure accuracy, and the transcripts were later verified by the experts through member checking to enhance data credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Jasmi, 2012). The data analysis followed an inductive approach, adapting the thematic analysis procedures outlined by Othman Talib (2013). The process involved open coding to identify initial concepts, axial coding to establish relationships among the codes, and the development of sub-themes leading to the identification of main themes. This systematic procedure enabled the researcher to construct a coherent understanding of the experts' preparation strategies and experiences in integrating moral values.

The operational procedures of this study were designed with consideration for time constraints, geographical distances, and financial limitations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The data collection process was conducted over five months, from February 2025 to June 2025. This duration is deemed sufficient, as referenced by several qualitative case studies that were also conducted within a similar timeframe (Salleh et al., 2001). Accordingly, the researcher structured the operational procedures into three distinct phases: the pre-interview phase, the interview phase, and the post-interview phase. These phases ensured that the research was conducted in a structured and systematic manner. The pre-interview phase encompassed all formal processes necessary to secure ethical approval and experts consent for the interviews.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. Three experts were consulted: two qualitative research specialists from Tun Hussein Onn University of Malaysia (UTHM) and a business management expert from Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM). Their input was critical in validating the data interpretation and analytical processes. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained throughout the research process to document decisions, reflections, and methodological steps, ensuring transparency and dependability. Through these rigorous procedures, the study ensured that the insights generated were credible, dependable, and reflective of the experts' authentic experiences in preparing to integrate moral values within the teaching and learning activities for the digital generation in Malaysian Vocational Colleges.

Therefore, to systematically structure the research findings, this study employed data mapping, which involved establishing relationships between initial codes, sub-themes, and overarching themes. This mapping process was conducted after the coding phase, focusing on the alignment of meanings and the recurring patterns observed in experts' narratives. Each code generated from the interviews was compared and grouped based on similar meanings, which were then synthesised into sub-themes. These sub-themes were further consolidated into broader themes that provided a holistic view across the various expert transcripts. Through this mapping process, the researcher was able to trace the continuity between lecturers' experiences, perspectives, and practices. This approach aligned with Braun and Clarke's (2006) emphasis on the importance of organising data into thematic structures to enable a comprehensive and meaningful understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3. Findings

The mapping process resulted in the identification of four main themes: (1) knowledge, (2) skills, (3) awareness, and (4) emotional management.

3.1 Theme 1: Knowledge

The findings revealed that knowledge represents an important dimension of lecturers' readiness in integrating moral values into teaching and learning practices. The experts demonstrated that their preparedness was developed through their understanding of students, moral values, instructional resources, and institutional requirements. The knowledge dimension comprised four interrelated sub-themes: (i) understanding the characteristics of the digital generation students, (ii) comprehension of moral values, (iii) mastery of curriculum resources, and (iv) knowledge of accreditation requirements.

3.1.1 Understanding the Characteristics of Digital Generation Students

The first sub-theme highlights the experts developed their readiness by understanding the characteristics, behaviours, and learning tendencies of current students, particularly those influenced by digital technology. Majority of the experts indicated that observing students' behaviours enabled them to identify students' engagement patterns, attention levels, and learning needs. Such understanding assisted them in adapting their teaching approaches according to students' characteristics.

"They appear to be somewhat unfocused, possibly due to frequently checking on their phones."

(Expert 1)

"...for the younger generation, our approach to instilling values should place greater emphasis on internet technology, as they have essentially grown up with the internet from the moment they were born."

(Expert 3)

"The use of gadget has become an integral part of their lives and is a reality that cannot be ignored or restricted."

(Expert 4)

The experts perceived that students' frequent interaction with digital devices influenced their classroom attention and learning behaviours. Consequently, understanding the characteristics and behavioural tendencies of digital-generation students was considered an important aspect of lecturers' preparation when planning teaching and learning activities, particularly for the integration of moral values.

3.1.2 Comprehension of Moral Values

The second sub-theme reflects lecturers' understanding and interpretation of moral values. The findings revealed that experts viewed moral values as an essential component of students' holistic development rather than merely an additional element of instruction. Expert 1 and Expert 3 both agreed that moral values serve as the foundation for shaping students' character and should be integrated alongside the development of technical competencies.

"I understand that these values are important to practice. We should not focus only on technical skills. These values are, in a way, the foundation for developing students' character."

(Expert 1)

"The emphasis on moral values in shaping graduates of vocational colleges is very important. This is something that I have personally observed..."

(Expert 3)

Furthermore, experts highlighted the importance of emphasising moral values in vocational education to ensure that graduates possess not only technical competencies but also positive personal attributes and ethical conduct. On the other hand, Expert 2 perceived moral values as being developed continuously through interactions with lecturers, peers, parents, and other social influences throughout students' lives.

"Moral values are something they gain throughout...what do you call it...lifelong learning, right? They get them from their friends, from us as lecturers, and from their parents."

(Expert 2)

The experts recognised that the cultivation of moral values extends beyond formal classroom teaching and occurs through ongoing learning experiences. This understanding suggests that lecturers perceived moral values as a lifelong developmental process that contributes to students' personal growth and character formation.

3.1.3 Mastery of Curriculum Resources

The third sub-theme reflects lecturers' knowledge of curriculum requirements related to moral value integration. The findings revealed that experts were aware of the moral value elements embedded within curriculum documents and instructional plans. They demonstrated knowledge of where and how moral values were incorporated into modules, course learning outcomes, and affective domain requirements, which guided the integration of moral values during teaching and learning activities.

"Indeed, especially for vocational certified students (SVM), we refer to the practical teaching plan before the implementation. It is because the moral values differ from one module to another."

(Expert 1)

"In teaching and learning, particularly at the diploma level, the student learning outcomes are already stated in the Course Outline. Students are expected to achieve the affective domain outcomes specified for the course."

(Expert 2)

"Each topic specifies the values that students are expected to practice within that particular topic."

(Expert 4)

The findings indicate that experts possessed knowledge of curriculum documents that support moral value integration. They understood that moral values were not implemented arbitrarily but were embedded within instructional plans, course outlines, learning outcomes, and topic requirements. This knowledge enabled lecturers to identify appropriate values for integration according to the objectives and content of each course or module.

3.1.4 Knowledge of Accreditation Requirements

The final sub-theme demonstrates that lecturers' knowledge readiness was influenced by their understanding of accreditation standards, institutional policies, and regulatory requirements governing vocational education. Experts demonstrated familiarity with guidelines issued by relevant authorities, including curriculum documents, teaching plans, audit requirements, and professional development initiatives. These standards served as important references that guided teaching practices and ensured that educational delivery aligned with institutional and national expectations.

"Therefore, we refer to the practical teaching plan provided by JPK and BPLTV under the Ministry of Education, as that serves as our guideline."

(Expert 1)

"If JPK does not approve it, for example during an audit where they inspect our facilities, teaching staff, and instructional materials, and these do not meet the required specifications, we may lose our accreditation."

(Expert 2)

"At the beginning of the vocational college transformation, lecturers were continuously sent to specialised training programmes across Peninsular Malaysia to ensure that we remained aligned with the needs of our students."

(Expert 3)

"It would be better if guidance came directly from the higher authorities so that implementation could be standardised."

(Expert 4)

The findings indicate that experts possessed knowledge of the standards and requirements established by relevant authorities to maintain educational quality and programme accreditation. This knowledge enabled lecturers to align their teaching practices with institutional expectations while ensuring consistency in the implementation of moral value integration. Furthermore, experts recognised the importance of continuous professional development and adherence to established guidelines in supporting effective teaching and learning practices.

3.2 Theme 2: Skills

The findings revealed that skills constitute an important dimension of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values into teaching and learning activities. Experts demonstrated various competencies that enabled them to effectively incorporate moral values into classroom practices, adapt instructional approaches, assess students' value development, and collaborate with colleagues. The Skills theme comprised four interrelated sub-themes: (i) pedagogical mastery, (ii) effective lesson planning, (iii) application of assessment instruments, and (iv) professional learning and collaboration. Together, these sub-themes illustrate the practical competencies that supported lecturers in implementing moral value integration in a systematic and meaningful manner.

3.2.1 Pedagogical Mastery

The first sub-theme highlights lecturers' pedagogical mastery in integrating moral values into teaching and learning activities. Experts demonstrated the ability to critically evaluate their teaching practices and make instructional adjustments based on students' responses and learning needs. Reflective practice was viewed as an important mechanism for improving the effectiveness of moral value integration and ensuring that teaching approaches remained relevant and meaningful to students.

"I always reflect after teaching. If the students didn't respond well, I would rework my delivery or change the method entirely."

(Expert 1)

The findings indicate that lecturers utilised reflection to assess the effectiveness of their instructional strategies and refine their pedagogical practices. Through continuous evaluation of classroom experiences, lecturers were able to adapt their approaches to better support students' learning and moral development. Beyond reflective practice, experts also highlighted the importance of role modelling as a pedagogical approach for moral value integration. They believed that students often learned values through observing lecturers' behaviours and interactions.

"They observe what we do more than what we say. If we're fair, respectful, and responsible, they follow."

(Expert 3)

This suggests that pedagogical mastery extends beyond instructional delivery and encompasses lecturers' ability to model desirable values through their professional conduct. By demonstrating positive behaviours, lecturers created authentic learning experiences that reinforced the moral values taught in the classroom.

3.2.2 Effective Lesson Planning

The second sub-theme reflects lecturers' ability to plan learning activities that intentionally incorporate moral values into teaching and learning processes. Experts emphasised the importance of establishing clear objectives and embedding moral values throughout different stages of the lesson. They described how moral values were incorporated into lesson plans and explicitly linked to classroom activities to ensure that students understood their relevance.

"I always set value-based objectives. Even when students don't ask, I tell them why this activity reflects teamwork or honesty."

(Expert 2)

"Even in the lesson plan, we write down what we intend to convey during the first five minutes of the lesson."

(Expert 4)

The findings indicate that lecturers deliberately integrated moral values into lesson objectives, learning activities, and classroom discussions. Experts viewed lesson planning as an essential process for ensuring that moral values were systematically incorporated rather than addressed incidentally. The inclusion of value-related elements in lesson plans further demonstrates lecturers' ability to organise learning experiences that support both academic and character development. By explicitly connecting learning activities to specific values, lecturers encouraged students to recognise and apply moral values within authentic learning contexts.

3.2.3 Application of Assessment Instruments

The third sub-theme demonstrates lecturers' competence in applying assessment instruments to evaluate students' moral value development. Experts reported using both formal and informal assessment approaches, including rubrics, classroom observations, and behavioural indicators, to assess values such as responsibility, cooperation, and discipline. These assessment practices enabled lecturers to gather evidence of students' value development beyond conventional academic performance.

"I observe their attitude, like how they help each other, how responsible they are during group tasks, which tells me more than just exam scores."

(Expert 1)

The findings indicate that lecturers utilised continuous observation alongside formal assessment instruments to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of students' moral development. Experts recognised that students' behaviours and interactions during learning activities often provided valuable evidence of value acquisition that

could not be adequately measured through academic assessments alone. Experts also emphasised the importance of ensuring that assessment instruments accurately reflected the values being evaluated. They described reviewing and refining assessment criteria to improve the relevance and effectiveness of value-based assessments.

"We need to make sure that the rubric we use actually reflects the values we want to see. Sometimes I revise it after class if I find something unclear."

(Expert 3)

This finding suggests that lecturers possessed the ability to apply, evaluate, and refine assessment instruments to ensure that moral value outcomes were assessed appropriately. Such practices contributed to a more systematic and meaningful evaluation of students' moral value development within teaching and learning activities.

3.2.4 Professional Learning and Collaboration

The final sub-theme highlights lecturers' engagement in professional learning and collaboration as a means of strengthening moral value integration in teaching and learning activities. Experts described various opportunities for professional interaction, including mentor-mentee programmes, peer learning, and departmental initiatives that supported the consistent implementation of moral values within the institution.

"We also have mentor-mentee sessions. For me, several students from my programme are assigned as my mentees."

(Expert 2)

"Sometimes I learn from younger teachers who are not even 30 years old yet. They have their own strengths and weaknesses, and I learn from them as well."

(Expert 3)

"We also have departmental assemblies once or twice a month. The management usually provides points for us to communicate, and there is always something related to manners and proper conduct."

(Expert 4)

The findings indicate that lecturers viewed professional learning and collaboration as important mechanisms for enhancing their capacity to integrate moral values. Experts recognised the value of learning from colleagues, engaging with students through mentoring relationships, and participating in departmental activities that reinforced shared expectations regarding moral conduct. These collaborative experiences facilitated the exchange of knowledge, mutual support, and continuous professional learning, which contributed to more effective and consistent implementation of moral values in teaching and learning practices.

3.3 Theme 3: Awareness

The findings revealed that awareness constitutes an important dimension of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values into teaching and learning activities. Experts demonstrated a strong awareness of the significance of moral values in education, their responsibility in shaping students' character, and the role of moral values in preparing graduates for future employment. This awareness was informed by their professional experiences, interactions with students, and observations of the challenges associated with educating the digital generation.

Therefore, the Awareness theme comprised three interrelated sub-themes: (i) values as the foundation of education, (ii) educators' role in student character development, and (iii) moral values as essential for graduate employability. Together, these sub-themes illustrate how lecturers' awareness influenced their commitment to integrating moral values within teaching and learning practices.

3.3.1 Values as the Foundation of Education

The first sub-theme highlights lecturers' awareness that moral values constitute a fundamental component of education. Experts recognised that education should not focus solely on the development of technical knowledge and skills but must also contribute to students' character formation. They viewed moral values as the foundation upon which positive attitudes, behaviours, and personal qualities could be developed.

"We must deliberately shape their character, just like we teach technical knowledge."

(Expert 1)

"The emphasis on moral values in shaping graduates of vocational colleges is very important. This is something that I have personally observed."

(Expert 3)

The findings indicate that experts were highly aware of the importance of moral values in supporting holistic education. They believed that the development of students' character should be given equal attention alongside academic and technical competencies. This awareness reflects lecturers' recognition that moral values serve as a foundation for producing well-rounded individuals who are capable of contributing positively to society and the workplace.

3.3.2 Educators' Role in Student Character Development

The second sub-theme reflects lecturers' awareness of their responsibility as educators in shaping students' character. Experts recognised that their role extends beyond the delivery of knowledge and technical skills to include guiding students' personal, moral, and social development. They viewed character formation as an integral part of the educational process and believed that lecturers should actively support students' growth both inside and outside the classroom.

"It's not enough to teach skills. I tell my students, I'm here to shape you as people too, not just workers."
(Expert 1)

The findings indicate that experts were aware of their influence on students' attitudes, behaviours, and personal development. Through their interactions with students, lecturers increasingly viewed themselves as mentors and role models who contribute to students' character formation alongside academic learning. Experts also acknowledged that fulfilling this responsibility requires an understanding of the challenges faced by the younger generation. They observed that students are increasingly exposed to digital environments that shape their values, behaviours, and perspectives.

"Their values are shaped more by what they see on social media than what we try to teach. That's a huge gap we must acknowledge."
(Expert 2)

This finding suggests that lecturers were aware of the influence of digital and social media environments on students' moral development. Consequently, experts recognised the need to understand generational differences and adapt their approaches to effectively guide students' character development in contemporary educational settings.

3.3.3 Moral Values as Essential for Graduate Employability

The third sub-theme demonstrates lecturers' awareness of the importance of moral values in preparing students for employment and professional life. Experts recognised that graduate success extends beyond academic achievement and technical competence to include ethical conduct, responsibility, integrity, and professionalism. They believed that moral values play a critical role in enabling graduates to meet workplace expectations and adapt to professional environments.

"Their values are shaped more by what they see on social media than what we try to teach. That's a huge gap we must acknowledge."
(Expert 2)

Experts indicated that their awareness of employability requirements was strengthened through interactions with industry representatives, feedback from employers, and observations of workplace expectations. They recognised that employers increasingly value personal attributes and ethical behaviour alongside technical competencies.

"Industry wants workers who are trustworthy, not just skilled. If we don't teach values now, they'll struggle later."
(Expert 4)

The findings suggest that experts viewed moral values as an essential component of graduate employability and long-term career success. They believed that attributes such as integrity, responsibility, trustworthiness, and professionalism enhance graduates' ability to function effectively in the workplace. This awareness reinforced the importance of integrating moral values within teaching and learning activities to ensure that students are adequately prepared for both professional and societal responsibilities.

3.4 Theme 4: Emotional Management

The findings revealed that emotional management constitutes an important dimension of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values into teaching and learning activities. Experts recognised that the effective integration of moral values requires not only knowledge and pedagogical skills but also the ability to manage emotions when interacting with students. This included maintaining patience, responding appropriately to students' behavioural challenges, fostering positive relationships, and creating a supportive learning environment that facilitates moral development. The Emotional Management theme comprised two interconnected sub-themes: (i) self-reflection and (ii) two-way communication. Together, these sub-themes illustrate how lecturers utilised emotional awareness and interpersonal engagement to support the integration of moral values within educational settings.

3.4.1 Self-Reflection

The first sub-theme highlights lecturers' efforts to regulate their emotions through self-reflection. Experts explained that they frequently evaluated their emotional responses, particularly when dealing with students who displayed undesirable behaviours or attitudes. This reflective process enabled them to respond more professionally and avoid making decisions based solely on emotions.

"I remind myself not to scold based on emotions. If I'm too angry, I wait and speak later when I'm calmer."
(Expert 4)

The findings indicate that lecturers consciously regulated their emotional reactions to ensure that disciplinary actions and moral guidance were delivered constructively. Rather than responding impulsively, experts preferred to reassess situations carefully before engaging with students. This practice helped maintain positive relationships and created a more supportive environment for moral value integration. Experts also viewed emotional regulation as part of their professional responsibility. Through self-reflection, lecturers were able to model patience, self-control, and respect in their interactions with students. This not only enhanced the effectiveness of moral guidance but also allowed lecturers to demonstrate the very values they sought to cultivate among their students.

3.4.2 Two-Way Communication

The second sub-theme reflects lecturers' use of two-way communication as a strategy for managing emotions and strengthening relationships with students. Experts reported that open communication enabled them to better understand students' circumstances, perspectives, and personal challenges. By engaging in meaningful dialogue, lecturers were able to respond more appropriately to students' behaviours and avoid making premature judgements.

"I remind myself not to scold based on emotions. If I'm too angry, I wait and speak later when I'm calmer."
(Expert 1)

The findings suggest that two-way communication fostered mutual understanding between lecturers and students. Through active listening and open dialogue, lecturers were able to reduce misunderstandings, demonstrate empathy, and regulate their emotional responses more effectively. Experts also believed that encouraging students to express their views and concerns helped establish trust and strengthen students' receptiveness to moral guidance. Consequently, two-way communication contributed to a more supportive and respectful learning environment that facilitated the integration of moral values.

4. Discussion

Taken together, each of the themes formed a comprehensive framework of lecturers' readiness in integrating moral values. The framework comprises (i) knowledge as a foundation, (ii) skills as a mechanism, (iii) awareness as a motivational driver, and (iv) emotional management in enhancing lecturers' readiness, which function as interconnected dimensions that influence lecturers' capacity to effectively embed moral values within educational practices.

4.1 Knowledge as the Foundation of Lecturer Readiness

The findings demonstrate that knowledge serves as a fundamental dimension of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values within the teaching and learning process. The study revealed that lecturers' knowledge extends beyond the understanding of moral concepts alone and encompasses four interconnected areas: understanding the characteristics of digital-generation students, comprehension of moral values, mastery of information resources, and compliance with accreditation standards. These findings suggest that readiness for moral value

integration requires a comprehensive knowledge base that combines contextual, pedagogical, moral, and institutional understanding.

One significant finding is the importance of understanding the characteristics of digital-generation students. Participants highlighted that observing students' behaviours, emotional tendencies, and technology usage enabled them to adapt their teaching approaches more effectively. This finding supports the work of Prensky (2001), who argues that contemporary learners are shaped by digital technologies and therefore require learning experiences that differ from those used with previous generations. The findings also resonate with the arguments of Haidt (2024), who emphasises that extensive exposure to digital technology and social media influences young people's attention, behaviour, and emotional development. In the present study, lecturers demonstrated awareness of these influences and regarded such understanding as essential for planning meaningful moral value integration. This finding extends existing literature by suggesting that understanding learner characteristics is not merely a pedagogical requirement but also a prerequisite for effective moral value integration among digital-native learners.

The findings further indicate that lecturers' readiness is influenced by their understanding of moral values themselves. Participants viewed moral values as a lifelong developmental process shaped by multiple social agents, including educators, peers, and families. This finding aligns with the perspective of Lickona (1991), who argues that moral education extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and involves the continuous cultivation of moral understanding, moral feeling, and moral action. The findings also support previous studies by Sabilan et al. (2018) and Md Soh et al. (2021), which emphasise that moral values are internalised through sustained socialisation and modelling rather than through direct instruction alone. However, the variation observed in participants' interpretations of moral values suggests that lecturers' conceptual understanding may differ according to individual experiences and professional backgrounds. This highlights the need for greater consistency in developing a shared understanding of moral value integration within vocational education contexts.

Another important finding concerns lecturers' mastery of information resources. Participants demonstrated efforts to utilise case studies, teaching materials, and digital technologies to make moral values more relevant to students. This finding reflects the increasing importance of technology-enhanced pedagogy in contemporary education. As argued by Kogindran & Nadarajan (2022), moral education must evolve to remain meaningful within increasingly digital learning environments. The present study extends this argument by showing that lecturers' readiness depends not only on their willingness to integrate technology but also on their ability to identify, adapt, and utilise appropriate resources to support value-based learning. Nevertheless, participants also highlighted challenges associated with limited and inconsistent instructional resources, suggesting that institutional support remains necessary to facilitate effective implementation.

The findings additionally reveal that compliance with accreditation standards plays an important role in shaping lecturers' readiness. Participants relied on curriculum documents, assessment rubrics, and accreditation requirements to guide their teaching practices. This finding supports the arguments of Bishop (2002) and Zinn et al. (2019), who emphasise that educational standards and institutional frameworks provide important structures for ensuring consistency and accountability in educational practice. Within the context of moral value integration, accreditation requirements appear to function not merely as quality assurance mechanisms but also as practical references that enable lecturers to systematically embed moral values within teaching and assessment processes. This finding is particularly significant because accreditation literacy has received limited attention in studies of moral value integration, despite its practical influence on curriculum implementation and assessment practices within TVET institutions.

Collectively, these findings suggest that knowledge readiness is multidimensional rather than limited to moral awareness alone. The study contributes to the existing TVET literature by demonstrating that lecturers' readiness for moral value integration is constructed through the interaction of four interrelated knowledge domains: understanding digital-generation learners, comprehending moral value concepts, mastering instructional resources, and navigating accreditation requirements. While previous studies have largely emphasised pedagogical competence or moral awareness independently, the present study proposes a more comprehensive knowledge structure that integrates pedagogical, contextual, moral, and institutional dimensions. This finding provides a clearer understanding of the knowledge foundations required for effective moral value integration and offers a basis for developing lecturer training programmes and professional competency frameworks within TVET institutions.

4.2 Skills as a Mechanism in Strengthening Lecturers' Readiness

The findings of this study indicate that skills represent a critical dimension of lecturers' readiness to strengthen moral value integration among business management students. While knowledge provides the conceptual foundation for understanding moral values, skills determine lecturers' ability to transform these values into meaningful teaching and learning practices. The findings suggest that effective value integration depends on a combination of pedagogical competence, deliberate instructional planning, collaborative professional practices,

and meaningful assessment strategies. These competencies collectively enable lecturers to embed moral values systematically within educational activities rather than treating value education as a separate component of instruction.

Pedagogical mastery emerged as a critical component of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values effectively within business management education. The findings suggest that lecturers who possess strong pedagogical skills are more capable of embedding moral values naturally within teaching and learning activities rather than presenting them as isolated concepts. This highlights the importance of instructional approaches that encourage ethical awareness, responsibility, and professional conduct through authentic learning experiences. The finding supports previous studies that emphasise educators' central role in shaping students' values through pedagogical practices (Bandura, 1986; Campbell, 2003). However, the present study extends existing literature by demonstrating that pedagogical competence functions not only as a mechanism for knowledge transmission but also as a strategy for character formation. Within business management education, this is particularly significant because students are expected to develop ethical judgement and professional behaviour alongside technical competencies required in future workplace environments.

Beyond pedagogical competence, the findings indicate that successful value integration requires deliberate instructional planning. Participants emphasised the importance of embedding moral values within learning objectives, instructional activities, and course delivery plans. This suggests that value integration cannot rely solely on spontaneous classroom interactions but requires intentional and systematic preparation. The ability to design value-oriented learning experiences reflects a higher level of instructional competency whereby lecturers consider not only the knowledge students should acquire but also the attitudes, behaviours, and ethical dispositions that should be cultivated throughout the learning process. This finding supports Othman (2016), who argues that moral values should be explicitly integrated within instructional frameworks. More importantly, the findings demonstrate that value integration becomes more sustainable and meaningful when it is systematically planned and aligned with broader educational outcomes.

Another important aspect of lecturers' readiness concerns their engagement in professional collaboration. The findings reveal that collaboration provides opportunities for educators to exchange experiences, refine teaching strategies, and strengthen their confidence in implementing moral values within their courses. This suggests that value integration should not be viewed solely as an individual responsibility but rather as a collective institutional effort. The finding is consistent with the concept of professional learning communities, where continuous interaction among educators contributes to improvements in teaching practices and student development. Within the TVET context, collaboration appears particularly important because lecturers frequently encounter challenges related to limited instructional resources, inconsistent implementation guidelines, and diverse student needs. Consequently, professional collaboration functions as an important mechanism for promoting greater consistency and sustainability in value integration practices across programmes and institutions.

A further dimension identified in this study relates to assessment competence. The findings suggest that assessment practices significantly influence the extent to which moral values are perceived, internalised, and practised by students. When values are incorporated into assessment activities, students are encouraged to demonstrate these values through their learning behaviours, decision-making processes, and practical applications. However, assessing moral values remains a considerable challenge because moral development involves internal beliefs, attitudes, and behavioural changes that are often difficult to observe directly. This finding highlights a persistent challenge in moral education, namely the difficulty of translating abstract moral constructs into measurable learning outcomes. Consequently, lecturers require specialised assessment competencies and appropriate instruments capable of capturing students' value development within authentic learning contexts. Strengthening assessment competency is therefore essential to ensure that moral value integration moves beyond theoretical discussions and contributes to observable educational outcomes.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that skills function as the operational dimension that enables lecturers to transform value education from intention into practice. While knowledge provides the conceptual foundation for moral value integration, skills determine the extent to which moral values can be systematically planned, delivered, assessed, and reinforced within the teaching and learning process. The study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that effective moral value integration requires a combination of pedagogical, planning, assessment, and collaborative competencies rather than reliance on individual commitment alone. This finding provides further support for the development of a lecturer readiness framework in which professional skills serve as a critical mechanism for translating moral values into meaningful educational experiences within TVET institutions.

4.3 Awareness as a Motivational Driver

The findings indicate that awareness represents a crucial dimension of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values within the teaching and learning process. Unlike knowledge, which provides understanding, and skills, which enable implementation, awareness serves as the motivational driver that shapes lecturers' commitment

towards value integration. The findings suggest that lecturers' readiness is influenced by their recognition of moral values as a foundation of education, their responsibility as character developers, and the growing importance of ethical competencies for graduate employability. These forms of awareness collectively strengthen lecturers' willingness to integrate moral values consistently and purposefully within educational practice.

One notable finding is the recognition of moral values as a fundamental component of education. Participants acknowledged that technical knowledge and academic achievement alone are insufficient to prepare students for future personal and professional responsibilities. This finding aligns with the National Education Philosophy, which emphasises holistic human development encompassing intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and moral dimensions. It also supports Lickona (1991) assertion that moral education is an essential component of character formation rather than a supplementary aspect of schooling. The findings suggest that lecturers increasingly recognise that the development of ethical values requires intentional effort and sustained educational intervention. Such awareness is particularly significant within TVET institutions, where educational success has traditionally been associated with technical competence and workforce preparation.

The findings further reveal that lecturers increasingly perceive themselves as character developers rather than solely providers of academic knowledge. Participants demonstrated an awareness that their responsibilities extend beyond content delivery and include guiding students' moral and personal development. This finding supports Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasises the role of significant social models in influencing behaviour and value formation. However, the present study extends existing discussions by highlighting how lecturers consciously reposition themselves as mentors who actively shape students' character through everyday interactions, guidance, and role modelling. This suggests that moral value integration is strengthened when lecturers view character development as an integral component of their professional identity.

Another important insight emerging from the findings concerns the relationship between moral values and graduate employability. Participants recognised that contemporary employers increasingly seek graduates who possess integrity, responsibility, professionalism, and ethical decision-making capabilities in addition to technical expertise. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the growing importance of employability skills within TVET education. However, the present study further demonstrates that lecturers' awareness of industry expectations serves as a motivating factor for integrating moral values into teaching practices. Rather than viewing moral education as an independent educational objective, lecturers perceived value integration as a necessary strategy for preparing graduates to meet workplace expectations and navigate professional challenges effectively.

The findings also suggest that awareness is developed through continuous reflection on students' behaviours, changing generational characteristics, and evolving societal expectations. Through direct engagement with students and industry stakeholders, lecturers become increasingly conscious of the challenges associated with educating digital-native learners who are exposed to diverse influences through technology and social media. This awareness appears to strengthen lecturers' commitment to ensuring that moral values remain relevant and meaningful within contemporary educational contexts.

In summary, these findings suggest that awareness functions as the motivational dimension of lecturers' readiness for moral value integration. While knowledge provides understanding and skills facilitate implementation, awareness sustains lecturers' commitment to value-based education by reinforcing the significance of moral development, professional responsibility, and graduate employability. The study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that readiness for moral value integration is influenced not only by competence but also by lecturers' beliefs regarding the purpose of education and their role in shaping future professionals. This finding further supports the development of a lecturer readiness framework in which awareness serves as a key catalyst for sustained and meaningful moral value integration within TVET institutions.

4.4 Emotional Management in Enhancing Lecturers' Readiness

The findings indicate that emotional management represents a crucial dimension of lecturers' readiness to integrate moral values within the teaching and learning process. While knowledge provides understanding, skills facilitate implementation, and awareness sustains commitment, emotional management enables lecturers to maintain constructive relationships that support the effective transmission of moral values. The findings suggest that lecturers' readiness in this regard is developed through continuous self-reflection and meaningful two-way communication with students. Together, these practices allow lecturers to manage emotional challenges while fostering a learning environment that is conducive to character development.

One notable finding concerns the role of self-reflection in strengthening lecturers' emotional regulation. Participants demonstrated an awareness of the importance of evaluating their emotional responses, particularly when dealing with student misconduct, disengagement, or behavioural challenges. Rather than reacting impulsively, lecturers described consciously regulating their emotions and responding in a professional and measured manner. This finding aligns with Jennings and Greenberg (2009), who argue that educators' social and emotional competencies are essential for creating positive learning environments. The findings further suggest that emotional self-regulation enables lecturers to communicate moral expectations more effectively, as students

are more likely to respond positively to guidance delivered through patience, respect, and professionalism. In this context, emotional management becomes an important mechanism for modelling the very values that lecturers seek to cultivate among students.

Beyond self-reflection, the findings highlight the importance of two-way communication in supporting moral value integration. Participants emphasised that listening to students' perspectives, understanding their personal circumstances, and maintaining open communication helped reduce misunderstandings and strengthen educational relationships. This finding supports Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasises the influence of social interactions on behavioural development. The findings suggest that students are more receptive to moral guidance when they feel respected, understood, and valued within the learning environment. Consequently, moral value integration appears to be strengthened not only through instructional practices but also through the quality of relationships established between lecturers and students.

A further insight emerging from the findings is that emotional management enables lecturers to navigate the complexities associated with educating digital-generation students. Participants recognised that contemporary learners are exposed to diverse influences through technology, social media, and rapidly changing social environments. These realities often create behavioural and attitudinal challenges that require lecturers to exercise empathy, patience, and emotional resilience. Rather than relying solely on authority or disciplinary measures, lecturers demonstrated a preference for relationship-based approaches that encourage dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect. This finding suggests that emotional management is particularly important within contemporary educational settings where moral development is increasingly influenced by external social and technological factors.

The findings also indicate that emotional management contributes to the creation of psychologically safe learning environments where students feel comfortable expressing opinions, discussing ethical issues, and reflecting on personal values. Such environments provide important opportunities for meaningful moral learning because students are more willing to engage in self-reflection and ethical discussions when interpersonal relationships are characterised by trust and respect. This observation reinforces the view that moral education is not solely a cognitive process but also a relational and emotional experience.

Taken together, these findings suggest that emotional management functions as the relational dimension of lecturers' readiness for moral value integration. The study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting emotional management as a distinct yet interconnected component of lecturer readiness, an aspect that has received comparatively limited attention within discussions of moral education in TVET contexts. While previous studies have frequently focused on pedagogical competence and moral awareness, the present study demonstrates that the successful integration of moral values also depends on lecturers' ability to regulate emotions, foster meaningful communication, and establish supportive educational relationships. This finding further strengthens the proposed lecturer readiness framework by illustrating that sustainable moral value integration requires not only cognitive, operational, and motivational readiness, but also relational readiness.

5. Conclusions

Understanding lecturers' readiness for moral value integration highlights a multidimensional framework that is particularly relevant for educating the digital generation. The findings suggest that lecturers require knowledge as a foundation, skills as an operational mechanism, awareness as a motivational driver, and emotional management as a relational component that supports meaningful engagement with students. Together, these dimensions influence lecturers' capacity to understand, implement, sustain, and evaluate moral value integration in response to change learner characteristics, technological developments, and evolving industry expectations. This understanding provides a new perspective on how lecturers should prepare themselves to respond to the professional demands of teaching the digital generation. Consequently, the proposed lecturers' readiness framework offers a conceptual basis for strengthening lecturer development initiatives and advancing value-based education within TVET institutions.

The findings also carry important implications for TVET institutions and policymakers. Challenges such as limited instructional resources, time constraints, excessive non-teaching responsibilities, inconsistent implementation practices, and the growing influence of digital culture suggest that moral value integration cannot rely solely on individual lecturers' efforts. Therefore, strengthening value-based education requires institutional commitment, supportive policies, and continuous professional development to ensure that lecturers are adequately equipped to integrate moral values effectively and consistently. Ultimately, the findings highlight the need for a more systematic and collaborative approach to develop morally grounded graduates who are capable of meeting both societal and workplace expectations.

Therefore, several recommendations are proposed. At the policy level, the Ministry of Education is encouraged to develop a structured Moral Competency Framework for TVET lecturers that explicitly positions value-based education as a core component of professional practice alongside technical and pedagogical competencies. Continuous professional development programmes focusing on value-based pedagogy, assessment strategies, emotional regulation, reflective practice, and digital-age teaching approaches should also be

strengthened. In addition, evidence-based assessment instruments should be developed to support the systematic evaluation of moral value integration across TVET institutions.

At the institutional level, vocational colleges are encouraged to establish collaborative professional learning communities, mentoring programmes, and value-focused teaching teams to strengthen lecturers' confidence and consistency in implementing moral values across disciplines. Institutions should also review workload distribution to reduce excessive administrative responsibilities that may hinder lecturers' capacity to integrate values effectively. Furthermore, the development of context-specific teaching materials, including industry-based case studies, digital learning resources, and interactive learning tools, may enhance the relevance of moral education for digital-generation learners. Collaboration with parents, communities, industries, and non-governmental organisations should also be strengthened to ensure that value development extends beyond the classroom and is reinforced through authentic learning experiences.

Future research may further validate the proposed lecturers' readiness framework through a mixed-methods approach involving larger participant groups across different TVET disciplines and institutional settings. Additional studies may also explore the relationship between moral value integration, graduate employability, workplace ethics, and long-term character development outcomes. Such efforts would provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of value-based education and further strengthen the role of moral development within contemporary TVET systems.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

*The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Siti Rukiah Jalie Abd Jalil, Alias Masek; **data collection:** Siti Rukiah Jalie Abd Jalil; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Siti Rukiah Jalie Abd Jalil; **draft manuscript preparation:** Siti Rukiah Jalie Abd Jalil, Alias Masek. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.*

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