

Promoting Character Education in Business Schools from an Integral Perspective: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

Character education shapes people's values and behaviors and fosters a sense of responsibility and empathy for others. While some argue that character development should be the sole responsibility of families and communities, it is essential that educational institutions actively engage in the teaching of ethics, morals, civic values, and citizenship. By integrating these elements into the curriculum, schools can help reduce societal problems resulting from a lack of character education. This article aims to highlight this concept and propose a conceptual framework based on Ken Wilber's integral theory for the emergence of a virtuous profile in business schools.

Keywords

Character Education, Business Schools, Integral Theory, Ken Wilber

1. Introduction

Postgraduate education equips students with a comprehensive range of knowledge and skills. It fosters critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and an enduring passion for lifelong learning. This development enables graduates to adapt to a rapidly evolving world and to participate effectively in a range of fields. Ultimately, the value of higher education is found in its capacity to educate students in such a way that they become well-rounded, empathetic citizens capable of positively impacting society.

These attributes and skills encompass academic knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, and collaboration. Universities acknowledge the significance of fostering the development of well-rounded individuals who are

capable of making meaningful contributions to their communities and addressing complex societal challenges. By placing an emphasis on holistic education and the fostering of socially engaged mindsets, universities seek to equip students with the requisite tools to flourish in an increasingly fast-paced and evolving world.

It is possible that universities may experience difficulty in adequately preparing students for the challenges they will encounter in their personal and professional lives unless there is a clear and explicit understanding of the relevance of character and flourishing. The creation of a consistent vocabulary and framework around these notions can help to bridge the gap between the academic and the real world, ensuring that graduates have the requisite knowledge and skills for success, resilience, flexibility and an ethical foundation.

The objective of the Framework is to facilitate a deeper comprehension and more effective implementation of character development within higher education institutions by providing a conceptual taxonomy. It acknowledges the significance of character formation in equipping students with the necessary skills to navigate a rapidly evolving global landscape. The framework places particular emphasis on the role of universities in fostering student flourishing. The objective of this study is to enhance the comprehension and implementation of character development in business schools by presenting a conceptual taxonomy. The document places particular emphasis on the role of business schools in encouraging student development. It acknowledges the importance of character education in equipping students with the skills to navigate an ever-changing world.

This article seeks to address this deficit by offering a comprehensive structure that integrates philosophical rigour with practical application. It provides students with a framework for navigating complex ethical dilemmas and making informed decisions that align with their personal values. Furthermore, it equips them with the ability to analyse and critically evaluate disparate perspectives, thereby facilitating a more profound comprehension of their surrounding environment.

This article addresses the question of whether business schools can currently produce graduates with a virtuous profile. In order to answer this question, the article is divided into three main sections. The first section presents a literature review on the concepts of “character” and “character education”. The second section proposes a theoretical framework for the emergence of a virtuous profile in business schools, based on Ken Wilber’s integral theory. The article concludes by suggesting possible avenues for future research and empirical investigation into character education practices in business schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of “Character”

A significant area of debate within the field of psychology is the question of

whether character is innate or shaped by external factors such as upbringing and environment. Some scholars posit that specific characteristics are intrinsic to individuals. Conversely, other theorists posit that character is shaped through experiences and social interactions. Consequently, it was inevitable that discussions of character would be characterised by conflicting definitions and endless personal and ideological battles.

The term “character” has come to signify physical attributes and the distinctive combination of attributes and qualities that identify a person. The specific behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that an individual exhibits shape their identity and influence their actions. This concept emphasises that each individual possesses a distinctive character, which is shaped by a combination of innate and acquired factors.

The aforementioned sources offer disparate perspectives on the defining characteristics of a virtuous character. Aristotelian thought places emphasis on the cultivation of virtues through habit and practice, whereas Judeo-Christian beliefs emphasise the importance of moral values and virtues in guiding one’s actions. The Confucian tradition places significant emphasis on the cultivation of personal character traits that facilitate harmonious relationships within society. Similarly, the Lakota Sioux emphasise characteristics that are valued within their cultural context. In conclusion, contemporary secular perspectives offer conceptual frameworks for analysing the influence of character on social structures.

The concept of character is a complex and multifaceted one, which has been the subject of investigation from a number of different perspectives. Scholars from a range of disciplines have sought to define character, offering insights and interpretations that are specific to their respective fields. A comprehensive understanding of this concept and its significance across academic fields can be achieved by examining the diverse definitions.

In his 1860 work, John Stuart Mill posited that a character is not solely determined by innate qualities. Nevertheless, it is influenced by the cultural context in which one is situated. He emphasises that personal desires and impulses play a crucial role in defining an individual’s character. He asserts that a lack of these elements renders one as devoid of nature as a mere machine, stating that “a person whose desires and impulses are not his own has no character, no more than a steam engine has a character.”

Hunter (2000) identifies three essential components of character: moral discipline, moral commitment, and moral autonomy. These components influence an individual’s character and inform their actions and decisions. Moral discipline is defined as the capacity to adhere to ethical principles and values. Conversely, moral commitment entails a profound dedication to the practice of acting in accordance with those principles. Finally, moral autonomy emphasises the significance of independent thinking and ethical choices based on sound judgement and understanding.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) posit that character encompasses both moral and social dimensions, underscoring the significance of cultivating an individu-

al's character. In this regard, [Peterson and Park \(2006\)](#) expand on this concept by emphasising that character is a multidimensional construct, suggesting that it encompasses various traits and behaviours that contribute to an individual's overall character development. [Wright and Goodstein \(2007\)](#) define character as an essential aspect of an individual's identity, positing that it can significantly influence their behaviour and decision-making processes. It encompasses traits such as integrity, honesty, and empathy. These traits shape how individuals interact with others and contribute to society's overall wellbeing. [Gentile \(2010\)](#) posits that character is not simply about having beliefs but also about the strength and resilience to uphold them. It implies that an individual's true nature is revealed when they are tested and have to make difficult choices that align with their beliefs.

[Wright & Lauer \(2013\)](#) put forth the assertion that character is comprised of three interrelated dimensions: moral discipline, attachment, and autonomy. These dimensions are inextricably linked and exert a significant influence on an individual's ethical decision-making process. Moral discipline pertains to the capacity to adhere to moral principles and resist temptations. Moral attachment underscores the significance of social connections and relationships in the formation of character. Finally, moral autonomy is the capacity to make independent ethical judgments and take responsibility for one's actions.

[Arthur \(2019\)](#) postulates that character is not merely a conglomeration of traits; rather, it represents a dynamic and multifaceted construct encompassing moral virtues, personal values, and ethical decision-making processes. He underscores the pivotal role of character in guiding individuals towards the formulation of morally upright decisions and the pursuit of virtue. Furthermore, Arthur posits that character is not an innate or predetermined entity. Nonetheless, it may be cultivated and developed through deliberate efforts and practice.

2.2. Definition of "Character Education"

As posited by [Snarey and Samuelson \(2014\)](#), the objective of character education is to cultivate particular virtues and attributes, such as honesty and responsibility, through explicit instruction and modelling. Conversely, moral education is concerned with examining ethical dilemmas and fostering critical thinking skills to enable the formulation of honest and well-informed moral judgements. These distinctions underscore the multifaceted nature of character education and underscore the importance of understanding its diverse approaches.

In his 1987 work, London posits that character education comprises two fundamental elements. 1) civic virtue education and 2) personal adjustment education. These two aspects of character education are fundamental to the development of a well-rounded individual who is aware of their civic obligations and possesses the requisite skills to engage with and contribute to their society in a constructive manner. The objective of character education is to foster the development of individuals who are able to actively engage in their communities while leading meaningful and successful lives. This is achieved through an em-

phasis on the importance of civic morality and personal adjustment.

Lickona (1988) posits that character education cultivates a constructive learning atmosphere wherein students can cultivate pivotal social and emotional competencies. Through the promotion of collaborative relationships and mutual respect, students are able to discern the value of teamwork and empathy. Moreover, the establishment of a moral community within the classroom and school environment fosters justice, care, and involvement. This instills ideals that guide children to become responsible and compassionate members of society.

Kohn (1991) has highlighted the crucial role of character education in fostering moral and ethical values in individuals. He posits that character education fosters prosocial conduct and encourages students to become responsible and compassionate members of society. Furthermore, Kohn emphasises that character education should be integrated into the curriculum and taught through real-life experiences in order to ensure its effectiveness in shaping students' characters.

Williams (2000) posits that character education is not limited to the classroom setting, but rather, it pervades all aspects of an individual's life. The objective is to foster the development of moral values, empathy, and the capacity to make sound decisions. Milson and Mehlig (2002) define character education as the process of fostering in students an understanding of, commitment to, and inclination to act in accordance with core ethical values.

Matula (2004) defines character education as a proactive strategy for cultivating virtues such as respect, responsibility, and empathy. The integration of character education into the curriculum can facilitate the establishment of a welcoming educational community, wherein students can flourish holistically. Furthermore, character education equips students with essential life skills, including decision-making, problem-solving, and ethical reasoning, which will benefit them beyond the classroom. Benninga & Tracz (2010) has attempted to define character education. He posits that character education is a term used to describe an educational approach that aims to facilitate the growth of well-mannered and socially acceptable individuals.

Moreover, Berkowitz (2012) posits that the advancement of students' ethical decision-making capabilities and the nurturing of a sense of community are pivotal to the realisation of character education. Additionally, he posits that character education should integrate the cultivation of moral reasoning and empathy into the curriculum to foster the development of well-rounded individuals. Arthur (2019) corroborates the assertion that the objective of character education is to mould an individual's overall moral character, rather than merely influencing their actions. This emphasises the importance of instilling virtues and values in children so that they may act morally throughout their lives.

In light of the preceding concepts, it can be concluded that any character education project that is limited to the teaching of character is inadequate; a more comprehensive framework is required. Consequently, the value of our study lies in its contribution to the development of a comprehensive framework for understanding character education. This comprehensive framework will be

constructed on the foundation of integral theory.

Integral theory is a multidimensional approach that considers a number of different aspects of an individual's development, including cognitive, emotional, social, and moral dimensions. The objective is to create a more comprehensive picture of character education by combining these several characteristics. Furthermore, this holistic approach acknowledges the importance of character development through explicit education and the environment, relationships, and experiences to which individuals are exposed.

2.3. Theoretical Perspective: Integral Theory

Integral thinking is an approach that aims to synthesise and integrate the diverse perspectives, knowledge, and practices that can be found in all aspects of life. It endeavours to construct a comprehensive and holistic representation of the world, eschewing simplistic reductionism and acknowledging the inherent complexity of our reality. Integral thinking integrates a multitude of viewpoints, approaches, and information in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the world. Furthermore, it encourages the development of critical thinking and the rejection of simplistic assumptions that may impede our comprehension. It endeavours to devise global and holistic solutions to our intricate challenges by adopting a "simplex" perspective.

This integral approach enables us to re-examine the issues we are currently facing. Furthermore, it allows us to establish connections between the disparate elements of our reality, whether economic, political, environmental, or social. This conceptual map enables the user to identify their position within the wider context and to gain an overview of the complete picture by establishing connections between the various components of our reality, including the individual, social, cultural, economic and political. It facilitates comprehension of the interconnections and interactions between these disparate elements, which can be both enlightening and instructive. Furthermore, it encourages a broader perspective and the analysis of all variables.

Some scholars have argued that Wilber's approach was overly simplistic and failed to account for the complexities of social systems and material structures. Nevertheless, they acknowledge the value of his contributions in advocating for a more comprehensive perspective on global issues and promoting a more nuanced understanding of reality. The unprecedented access to cultural information has provided people with new viewpoints and learning possibilities on a global scale. Furthermore, it facilitates more nuanced intercultural exchanges and mutual understanding, which contribute to the advancement of our collective intellectual heritage.

It would be beneficial to gain insight into the diversity of lifestyles, values, and goals by attempting to comprehend the teachings of these civilisations regarding human potential. A more holistic and inclusive perspective of what it means to be human in all its dimensions may be obtained if the critical points of human growth across available cultures are sought. This necessitates a comprehensive

examination and critical analysis of each concept to ascertain its interrelationship. It is of the utmost importance to seek connections and relationships between these incomplete truths in order to construct a stable conceptual structure encompassing the puzzle.

Wilber has produced a substantial corpus of books that provide a comprehensive and multidisciplinary perspective, allowing readers to investigate and utilise several fields of knowledge. Furthermore, they provide practical methods for navigating life's challenges and contributing to humanity's advancement. K. Wilber's five fundamental notions (quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types) provide the basis for the development of a comprehensive paradigm (AQAL), which incorporates all elements of reality, whether individual or communal, inner or outward. This conceptual framework provides a comprehensive and unified perspective that facilitates the comprehension and practical application of the diverse facets of human life. The integral method proposed by Wilber has been the subject of considerable criticism on the grounds of its perceived complexity. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the complexity arises from the intrinsic nature of the world itself. Indeed, the integral approach provides a holistic perspective that allows us to better understand and simplify our complex world.

2.4. Four Perspectives of Wilber's Integral Approach

In his integral approach, Wilber posits that all entities, whether objects, systems, or circumstances, can be analysed from four fundamental perspectives. These perspectives emerge from the intersection of two axes of analysis: individual-collective on the one hand and interiority-exteriority on the other.

2.4.1. Individual and Collective

The actions of individuals contribute to the shaping and transformation of society. Consequently, there is an interdependence between individuals and the communities in which they participate, whereby each individual's activities can impact the functioning and evolution of society, and vice versa. This concept of the "holon," as defined by Wilber, is critical to understanding the universe's interrelated character, whereby each portion contributes to and is influenced by the total. Furthermore, this holistic perspective allows for a greater understanding of the connections and interactions between different organisational levels. Consequently, alterations in social networks can prompt alterations in individual conduct, which in turn give rise to modifications in society as a whole. **Figure 1** illustrates the interdependence of individual conduct and group structures.

Cultural factors exert an influence on our conduct, prompting us to standardise and adapt to the expectations of others. This dynamic emphasises the role of society in shaping our individual conduct. However, it is essential to note that these standards and social influences differ from culture to culture. Consequently, what is deemed normal in one community may be regarded as unusual or unsuitable in another. It is, therefore, critical to consider cultural variety when examining and analysing how these norms are absorbed into our identities.

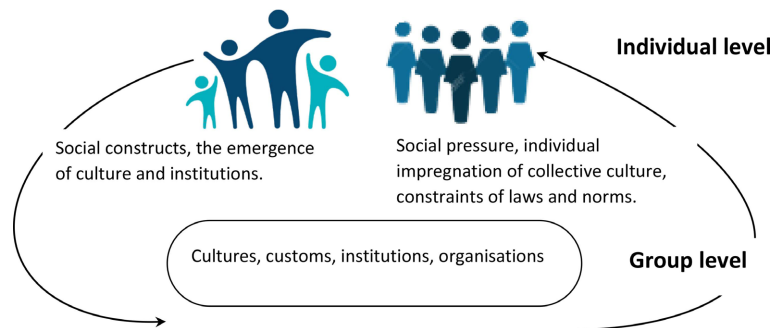


Figure 1. Interaction between individual and collective structures.

2.4.2. Interiority and Exteriority

This dimension pertains to the interaction between an individual or society and the physical, social, or cultural milieu in which they are situated. This dimension encompasses the manner in which individuals or organisations engage with their surrounding environment, and the subsequent influence this has on their identity and behaviour. It should be noted that exteriority is not limited to visible or tangible characteristics. Furthermore, it encompasses the interactions and relationships of the object, event, situation, or person with its surrounding environment and other pertinent aspects. Consequently, they can be objectively viewed and scientifically investigated. Furthermore, it facilitates communication and information exchange between individuals regarding these objects. The scientific method is the foundation of science and entails the development of hypotheses, the design of experiments, and the collection of data for objective analysis. The objective of this approach is to comprehend natural events through the application of logical concepts and the gathering of empirical evidence. In order to obtain reliable and trustworthy results, scientists must set aside their emotions and personal prejudices.

Conversely, the individual's inner self is a reflection of the inner world, comprising thoughts, emotions, and sensations. Furthermore, the inner self enables us to gain insight into our own motivations and behaviours. The inner self of each individual is distinctive and susceptible to influence from various factors, including upbringing, personal experiences, and social interactions. Furthermore, it encompasses the emotions, thoughts, and perceptions that influence how we experience our surroundings. In this way, the concept of the inner self represents a crucial element in the formation of identity and in the attainment of a comprehensive understanding of the individual.

Indeed, the study of the brain enables us to gain a deeper understanding of the physical and neurological mechanisms that underpin our ideas and actions. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that each individual's subjective experience is inherently distinctive and cannot be wholly encompassed by a purely scientific investigation of the brain. The application of brain imaging has yielded new insights into the relationship between interiority and exteriority. The advent of this technology has enabled researchers to identify correlations between neural states and conscious experience, thereby contributing to a more comprehen-

sive understanding of the intricacies of the human mind.

These two perspectives, exteriority and interiority, also exist at the collective level. The externalities of a society manifest themselves in two principal ways: firstly, in the norms and values shared by its members, which influence their collective behaviour (e.g. traffic jams on highways when vacationers leave, national enthusiasm for sporting events such as the World Cup, etc.); and secondly, in the social forms and structures that are necessary for understanding how individuals interact with one another and how society functions as a whole (e.g. political institutions, educational establishments, etc.). This field is studied by the disciplines of politics, economics, and sociology, which employ a range of approaches to enhance their understanding of these complex social processes. These include observation, surveys, statistics, and qualitative analysis. Furthermore, the external perspective allows us to comprehend the external factors that can influence the system's behaviour and evolution.

In order to gain an understanding of how a civilisation or social group functions and its collective identity, it is necessary to have an awareness of its interiority. Cultural transmission, education, social interaction and lived experience all contribute to the formation of identity. This interiority affects both individual and collective behaviour, as well as the norms and values that govern social life. This is the subject matter of social psychology, anthropology, and Anglo-Saxon cultural studies in general. These disciplines examine the processes through which individuals develop their identities and interact with their social and cultural environments. Furthermore, they examine the impact of norms, values, and beliefs on self- and other-perceptions, as well as on social behaviour.

2.4.3. At the Crossroads of Dimensions

The crossing of these two dimensions results in the emergence of four distinct perspectives, which Wilber refers to as quadrants. The aforementioned quadrants are depicted in **Figure 2** as follows:

a) The upper left quadrant represents the individual-interior perspective (I). This is the manner in which individuals perceive and interpret the world, based on their emotional responses, cognitive processes and accumulated experiences. This perspective emphasises introspection and self-awareness.

b) The Individual-Exterior (It) quadrant is located in the upper right quadrant. This is frequently associated with impartiality and a fair assessment of events. This represents the capacity to adopt a detached perspective and to evaluate situations from a distance.

c) The Collective-Interior quadrant (We) is located at the bottom left. This is the domain in which social norms and cultural practices that shape society are developed. In this quadrant, individuals interact and exchange their ideas, values, and beliefs, thereby contributing to the establishment of a common culture.

d) The Collective-Exterior (Its) is the focus of the fourth quadrant. It is essential to comprehend the manner in which collective systems operate and exert influence on individual and collective behaviour, whether in terms of social or

economic structures. Furthermore, it encompasses the examination of governmental policies and their ramifications for society.

	INTERIOR	EXTERIOR
INDIVIDUAL	<i>Individual / Interior</i> Subjectivity «I» «emotions, mental states, beliefs, intentions, individual awareness» Interiority	<i>Individual / Exterior</i> Objectivity «It» «behaviour, object, process, organism» Object
COLLECTIVE	<i>Collective / Interior</i> Intersubjectivity «We» «collective unconscious, social and collective representations, theories, ideas, values, norms » Culture	<i>Collective / Exterior</i> Interobjectivity «Its» «organisations, economy, environment, social structures » Systems

Figure 2. Quadrants derived from individual-collective and interior-exterior axes.

The grid offers a comprehensive and multifaceted viewpoint on a global scale. The grid can be used to analyse the various facets and consequences of a situation, thereby facilitating more informed judgements and a deeper comprehension of the underlying issues. What observations provide an objective view of reality and an understanding of how individuals behave in specific contexts (quadrant I-E of individual objectivity)? How the individual interprets and gives meaning to the situation (quadrant I-I of subjectivity)? What is the social structure that governs this situation (quadrant C-E of systemic objectivity)? And finally, what are the social representations, mentalities, and thus culture that exist at a collective level (quadrant C-I of intersubjectivity)?

2.5. Conceptual Perspective: Framework for Character Education in Business Schools

2.5.1. Why Business Schools?

The rationale behind the establishment of business schools is a topic worthy of further investigation. Firstly, business schools produce a significant number of managers who will work in public administrations and private companies. Secondly, business schools attract a large number of baccalaureate graduates and tend to specialise in them due to the ease of access to the labour market. Thirdly, the graduates of these institutions occupy decision-making positions.

2.5.2. Conceptual Framework

The initial quadrant (I) will concentrate on students' cognitive processes, including their thinking, reflection, and understanding of the institution's virtues, their feelings about them, and their perception of right and wrong within the institution. Furthermore, the investigation will examine the students' objectives in terms of how they are treated as individuals in relation to virtues and their perceptions of how teachers and administrators interact with them in a virtuous or vicious manner. Furthermore, an attempt will be made to comprehend their as-

pirations, requirements, and expectations of the institution in terms of their personal character development.

The second quadrant (It) is devoted to the study of behaviour, attitudes and objectivity. The focus will be on the procedures designed to instill virtue in students, as well as the measures and regulations that allow them to translate virtuous or vicious behaviour. In addition, the charters approved in the classroom, administrative processes, examinations, and extracurricular activities to promote and cultivate students' virtuous character will be examined. In this approach, we will examine the facts pertaining to these behaviours with a fresh perspective.

The third quadrant (We) pertains to the institution's culture and ethos. It is incumbent upon teachers, students, and administrators to examine and acknowledge the social and communal representations of Moroccan identity and values. In this quadrant, we will also investigate the conventional perspectives of the community and the collectivity about academic freedom, the degree of integrity and honesty in relations with students, their selection and evaluation, and the degree of mutual respect among the actors in the institution. Furthermore, the degree of transparency and credibility, equality, non-discrimination and justice, independence, involvement and decision-making, the right to defer, dialogue, and collective representations of respect for campus franchises will be given particular consideration.

In the fourth quadrant (Its), an analysis will be undertaken of the difficulties encountered by the higher education system (university presidents, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research) in conveying values and fostering character development in students. This will involve identifying the measures required to reinforce this process. Finally, an investigation will be conducted into the various pedagogical approaches that could facilitate the development of a virtuous profile among students.

3. Methods

To develop the proposed conceptual framework, a qualitative research approach was employed. This approach began with an extensive literature review on the subject of character education, drawing from a wide array of sources including academic journals, books, and relevant case studies. The objective was to establish a solid foundation of existing knowledge and identify key themes and gaps in the literature.

Following the literature review, Wilber's integral theory was applied to the specific context of business schools. The application involved analyzing how the four quadrants of the theory could be leveraged to foster character development among students. For instance, the interior individual quadrant was explored in terms of enhancing self-awareness and personal ethics, while the exterior individual quadrant focused on observable behaviors and competencies. The interior collective quadrant addressed the shared values and culture within the business school, and the exterior collective quadrant examined the institutional structures

and policies that support character education.

To operationalize the integral theory within the business school context, the study proposed various pedagogical strategies and curricular interventions. These included incorporating reflective practices, ethical case studies, and experiential learning opportunities that align with each quadrant. Additionally, interviews and focus groups with educators and students were conducted to gather insights into the practical implementation of these strategies. These qualitative methods provided rich, contextual data that informed the refinement of the conceptual framework. The feedback highlighted the importance of an integrated approach that not only addresses individual character development but also fosters a supportive and ethical learning environment.

The study aimed to create a comprehensive framework for character education in business schools, grounded in Ken Wilber's integral theory. By addressing the multidimensional nature of character development, the framework offers a holistic and practical guide for educators seeking to cultivate ethical and well-rounded business leaders.

4. Results

The findings of the present study indicate that character education in business schools can be significantly influenced by the implementation of a structured framework. The four-quadrant model, derived from Wilber's integral theory, offers a comprehensive approach to the analysis and resolution of character development issues from the perspectives of the individual, the collective, the interior, and the exterior.

1) The Individual-Interior Perspective (Quadrant I)

The Individual-Interior Perspective focuses on the internal experiences and processes within the self. This quadrant highlights the cognitive and emotional aspects of students' character development. The study found that fostering self-awareness and introspection is crucial for the cultivation of virtues such as integrity, empathy, and resilience. Interventions like reflective journals, mindfulness practices, and personal ethics workshops were identified as effective tools to enhance students' inner moral compass. These practices encourage students to critically examine their values, motivations, and actions, promoting a deeper understanding of their character and ethical beliefs.

2) The Individual-Exterior Perspective (Quadrant II)

The Individual-Exterior Perspective examines observable behaviors and institutional practices that facilitate the promotion of virtuous conduct. The study revealed that clear behavioral guidelines and consistent reinforcement of virtuous behaviors are essential in shaping students' conduct. Implementing a code of conduct, offering rewards for ethical behavior, and integrating ethical dilemmas into coursework were found to be effective strategies. These approaches ensure that students not only understand the importance of virtuous behavior but also have practical opportunities to demonstrate and reinforce these beha-

vivors in their daily activities.

3) The Collective-Interior Perspective (Quadrant III)

The Collective-Interior Perspective addresses the cultural and communal aspects intrinsic to the institution. Promoting a culture of academic freedom, integrity, mutual respect, and inclusivity was identified as a critical factor in character development. The study highlighted the importance of creating an environment where ethical discussions are encouraged, and diverse perspectives are valued. Initiatives such as collaborative projects, diversity training, and community-building activities were found to foster a sense of belonging and shared ethical commitment among students. This communal support reinforces individual efforts and helps cultivate a collective ethos of character and integrity.

4) The Collective-Exterior Perspective (Quadrant IV)

The Collective-Exterior Perspective examines the broader systemic and structural factors that impact character development. Higher education policies, leadership, and external regulatory bodies exert a profound influence on the institutional environment. The study found that supportive policies and strong ethical leadership are pivotal in creating a conducive environment for character development. This includes implementing policies that promote transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior at all levels of the institution. Additionally, the role of external accrediting bodies and regulatory agencies in setting and maintaining high ethical standards was emphasized. By aligning institutional practices with these standards, business schools can ensure a consistent and robust approach to character development.

In summary, the findings suggest that a holistic approach to character development in business schools, guided by Wilber's four-quadrant model, can significantly enhance the ethical and personal growth of students. By addressing the cognitive and emotional aspects, observable behaviors, cultural dynamics, and systemic structures, institutions can create a comprehensive framework that supports and nurtures virtuous conduct. This integrative approach not only benefits individual students but also contributes to the overall ethical climate of the institution, preparing future business leaders to navigate complex moral landscapes with integrity and empathy.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study serve to reinforce the efficacy of Wilber's integral theory as a conceptual framework for character education within the context of business schools. The four-quadrant model enables educational institutions to adopt a multifaceted approach to character development, addressing both the internal and external dimensions at the individual and collective levels.

From the individual-interior perspective, the emphasis on self-awareness and introspection is consistent with existing literature on moral development and ethical education. Prior research has indicated that reflective practices and mindfulness can markedly enhance students' ethical decision-making and emotional

intelligence (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The findings of this study corroborate the assertions previously made in this field, demonstrating that interventions such as reflective journals and mindfulness practices are efficacious in fostering virtues such as integrity, empathy, and resilience among students. This suggests that business schools should integrate these practices into their curricula in order to facilitate the development of a holistic character.

Conversely, the Individual-Exterior perspective posits that the establishment of clear behavioural guidelines and consistent reinforcement of virtuous behaviours are crucial for shaping students' conduct. This finding is consistent with the tenets of behavioural theories that emphasise the role of external reinforcement in the modification of behaviour (Skinner, 1953). The implementation of structured behavioural expectations and the recognition of virtuous actions by business schools can facilitate the creation of an environment that supports ethical behaviour and professional conduct.

The collective-interior perspective postulates that the promotion of a culture of academic freedom, integrity, mutual respect, and inclusivity is essential for the development of character. The results of the study indicate that the fostering of a supportive and inclusive institutional culture can have a significant impact on students' moral development. This is in accordance with the social learning theory, which postulates that individuals learn behaviours and values through their interactions with others (Bandura, 1977). It is therefore recommended that business schools prioritise the development of a positive organisational culture with a view to enhancing character education.

As far as the collective-exterior perspective is concerned, it indicates that the broader systemic and structural factors, such as higher education policies, leadership, and external regulatory bodies, play a significant role in shaping the institutional environment. The findings indicate that the implementation of character development programmes is contingent upon the presence of supportive leadership and clear policies. This is consistent with the tenets of organisational theory, which emphasise the pivotal role of institutional support and governance in attaining organisational objectives (Schein, 2010). It is therefore recommended that business schools advocate for policies and leadership practices that promote ethical education and character development.

It must be acknowledged that this study is limited in a number of ways that should be taken into account when considering the findings. It is important to note that the proposed framework is primarily theoretical in nature and lacks empirical validation. It would be advantageous for future research to concentrate on testing the framework through empirical studies and case analyses in a range of cultural and institutional contexts, with the objective of establishing its practical efficacy. Secondly, the study is constrained by its qualitative methodology, which, while offering detailed insights, may not fully encompass the comprehensive range of factors influencing character development in business schools. Further research could be conducted using quantitative methods in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of character education frame-

works. Finally, it is important to consider the challenges inherent to the implementation of the aforementioned framework.

6. Conclusion

This study makes a significant contribution to the expanding body of literature on character education by providing a comprehensive framework that is specifically designed for business schools. By drawing upon the tenets of Wilber's integral theory, the study presents a multifaceted approach to character education, underscoring the significance of both individual and collective, interior and exterior perspectives. The proposed framework has the potential to facilitate the integration of academic knowledge with real-world ethical challenges, thereby equipping students with the virtues necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The implementation of this framework has the potential to facilitate the creation of a more holistic and supportive environment for character education within business schools. It would be beneficial for future research to aim to empirically validate this framework and explore its applicability across different educational contexts, with a view to enhancing the understanding and practice of character development in higher education.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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