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(IJEPC)**[www.ijepec.com](http://www.ijepec.com)**THE POWER OF VALUES:  
A COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING MODEL FOR MIDDLE  
LEADERS IN EDUCATION**

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**Abstract:**

The educational ecosystem is at risk due to the significant value decline among educators and students, which requires innovative leadership development strategies. This endeavour aims to overcome the gaps between academic knowledge and the practical implementation of values in educational leadership. This will be achieved by developing a comprehensive training model designed explicitly for middle-level leaders. The research utilised a Modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT) with seven experts from different backgrounds to identify and prioritise essential leadership ideals. This approach was based on Al-Ghazali's ethical leadership principles and contemporary leadership theories. The study identified three key factors: Personality, Interactions and Relationships, and Actions and Work. Within each factor, self-discipline, positive psychology, and courage were shown to be the most important priority, respectively. These findings influenced the development of the Integrated Values in Leadership for the Middle Leader Team (IVFMLT) paradigm. This model highlights the interconnected relationship between personal values, interpersonal skills, and meaningful behaviours. The IVFMLT model enhances the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive framework for developing leadership skills that

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specifically cater to the distinct issues encountered in educational environments. This research has profound implications for developing leadership training programs, which can revolutionize educational leadership practices and cultivate favorable school environments. Subsequent research should investigate the efficacy of the model in various educational settings and its enduring influence on academic achievements.

**Keywords:**

Educational Leadership, Values In Leadership, Middle-Leaders, Leadership Development, Ethical Leadership, Nominal Group Technique

## Introduction

In the continuously shifting landscape of education, how values shape the learning environment becomes more critical. Recent studies at various educational institutions expose a worrying trend: teachers' and students' exposure to fundamental values decreases. This deterioration of values seriously threatens the educational ecology, compromising school communities' general well-being and possibly instruction quality (Ellyatt, 2022; Houser, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to address this complex problem directly and recognize its significant impact on the future of education.

Declining values in educational environments manifest as a lack of respect, honesty, and sincerity among teachers and pupils. These problems are linked rather than apart; they form a complicated web endangering the very basis of our schools. Brown et al. (2021) observed that the erosion of core values in schools creates a ripple effect, impacting academic performance and students' social and emotional development. This realization emphasizes how urgently our institutions' value crisis must be resolved.

One cannot stress the need to address this issue. Ensuring that future generations have the knowledge and the values required for personal and professional success depends on maintaining the integrity of the educational system (Poitras&Glaude, 2022). Teachers and researchers are responsible for creating an environment where ethical standards and good values are taught and actively engaged inside the school community. This is consistent with Thompson's (2019) observations that highlight the significance of value-based education as the fundamental basis for developing individuals who possess the necessary skills to negotiate the complexities of the modern world.

Emphasizing the power of values, this study intends to create and use a thorough training model for middle-level education leaders, considering these difficulties and their relevance. Three main goals underlie this study: to improve middle-level leaders' leadership abilities, advance ethical ideals across the educational system, and create a good school environment supporting these values. By reaching these goals, we hope to build a stronger and more resilient educational system equipped to meet present and upcoming demands.

This study relies on the Žydzīūnaitė (2018) framework, highlighting and providing common and flexible values important for leadership training, especially in education. Furthermore, this training design integrates values to develop middle leaders' essential role in forming school environments. Targeting this fundamental layer of educational leadership will help us to generate a chain of reaction that benefits the front-line teachers and students as well as the

higher levels of school administration. We intend to empower middle leaders to contribute to good change within their respective institutions by utilizing a training approach carefully developed from the ground up and integrating values, leadership skills, and ethical ideals.

### Research Aims

The main goal of this study is to create a complete, value-based training model for middle-level education leaders using a modified Nominal Group Technique. Combining Al-Ghazali's (1097) ethical leadership principles with contemporary leadership framework, the study aims to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application of values in educational leadership. The research seeks to improve leadership skills, promote ethical values, and cultivate a positive school culture.

### Literature Review

The significance of values in leadership has garnered substantial critical focus in recent years. Multiple studies have emphasised the crucial importance of values in influencing successful leadership strategies, especially in educational environments. Alblooshi et al. (2021) examined leadership research extensively over the last twenty years. They found that leadership based on values is connected to better results for organisations, such as higher employee satisfaction and improved student performance in educational settings.

The theoretical foundations of value-based leadership have been examined from several perspectives. Al-Ghazali's theory of ethical leadership, based on Islamic philosophy, offers a strong foundation for comprehending how moral ideals might be incorporated into leadership practices. Al-Ghazali highlighted the significance of self-purification and moral advancement as essential conditions for proficient leadership (Al Hinai, 2022; Fakhry, 2009; Fontaine, R. (2008). This viewpoint is consistent with modern leadership models, such as transformational leadership theory, which suggests that leaders can inspire and motivate their followers by embodying and supporting fundamental principles (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Although Al-Ghazali's theory is the primary theoretical basis for this study, it is essential to acknowledge its consistency with other notable leadership models. As described by Greenleaf (1977) and expanded upon by modern researchers such as van Dierendonck (2011), the servant leadership idea highlights the leader's responsibility to serve others and prioritise their development and welfare. This method closely adheres to Al-Ghazali's emphasis on the moral obligation and ethical behaviour required in leadership.

Although there is a wealth of theoretical knowledge and a growing body of research on the value of leadership, these concepts still have a significant gap that needs to be implemented more practically, especially in leadership training programs for middle-level leaders in education. Žydzūnaitė (2018) analyzed that although theoretical research on "leadership values" and "values-based leadership" are two separate concepts, each of them individually describes and represents a broad complexity. Furthermore, Pérez et al. (2020) observed that although numerous studies have examined the significance of values in leadership from a conceptual standpoint, few have effectively translated these understandings into practical and implementable training frameworks. This shortfall is particularly noticeable in education, where middle managers are a crucial link between the upper administration and the frontline educators and students. However, there seems to be a lack of specific models or training initiatives incorporating values to develop leadership roles.

The present study aims to address this gap by developing a comprehensive training framework that integrates Al-Ghazali's ethical leadership principles (1097) with practical leadership skills tailored for middle-level educational leaders. Building on Žydzūnaitė's framework (2018) of combining values with theories, this study expands on the research on values in leadership by testing a model that clarifies the roles of leader values and behaviour along with a critical contextual variable in generating effective leader performance and outcomes. Additionally, the study strives to bridge the divide between theoretical understanding and practical application by presenting a framework that can be implemented in natural educational settings. Mincu (2022) argues that translating leadership principles from theory to practice is a significant challenge in advancing educational leadership. This study addresses this challenge by offering a systematic approach to integrating values into leadership training programs.

## Methodology

### *Research Design*

This study utilised a qualitative research approach and employed the Modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to construct a comprehensive training model for middle-level executives in the field of education. The Modified NGT is a systematic approach that promotes collaboration and agreement among people by facilitating ideas' creation, ranking, and debate (Delbecq et al., 1975; Van de Ven & Delbecq, 1974). This strategy was selected based on its capacity to utilise individuals' collective knowledge and skills while reducing the risk of one person dominating or the occurrence of groupthink that can commonly happen in conventional focus groups (Harvey & Holmes, 2012).

The Modified NGT, as employed in this investigation, deviates from the original NGT in some crucial respects. Our updated technique retained the fundamental framework of idea creation and prioritisation but introduced extra rounds of discussion and refinement. This enabled a more iterative and comprehensive investigation of the subject matter. This alteration was motivated by the research conducted by Varga-Atkins et al. (2017), which showcased the efficacy of customised NGT techniques in educational research settings.

Three distinct NGT sessions were carried out, with each session specifically targeting a certain component of the construction of the training model:

- Identification and ranking of fundamental principles for educational leadership
- Methods for incorporating values into leadership practices
- Methods for assessing and evaluating value-based leadership training

Each discussion adhered to a planned approach, following the significant concepts described by Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson (1975) in their influential work on NGT. The scholars emphasized the importance of employing a systematic strategy for ideation and decision-making processes. They emphasised that the nominal group process is a meticulously constructed series of procedures that yields many possible answers (Delbecq et. al, 1975). Adhering to this systematic method ensured that every participant had an equitable opportunity to contribute and that a diverse array of viewpoints was considered.

### *Selection Of Expert Panel*

The study comprised a meticulously chosen cohort of seven specialists from diverse domains within the area of education, providing a wide array of viewpoints on leadership and values in educational environments. The expert or participant group consisted of three middle leader

teachers (MLTs) who had at least ten years of experience, one school administrator with extensive expertise in educational management, one educational expert who held a Doctorate in Leadership, and two experts in Islamic studies who provided insights into Al-Ghazali's theory and its contemporary applications in leadership. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling is an essential method in qualitative research to identify cases that provide much information about the phenomenon being studied. The selection criteria for these cases include having at least ten years of experience in their respective fields, showing expertise in leadership, education, or Islamic studies, and being willing to participate in collaborative and consensus-building processes. It was crucial to involve experts in Islamic studies in this study because it was based on Al-Ghazali's work, which aligns with Nowotny et al.'s (2016) suggestion of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. The study comprised a meticulously chosen cohort of seven specialists from diverse domains within the area of education, providing a wide array of viewpoints on leadership and values in educational environments.

### ***Instrument***

This study used a well-crafted list of values and the Žydžiūnaitė framework (Žydžiūnaitė, 2018) as its primary instrument. The Žydžiūnaitė framework, introduced in 2018, provides a comprehensive approach to assessing leadership values in education. This paradigm was chosen because it fits our research on middle-level educators. Modern leadership studies have revived Al-Ghazali's 11th-century ethical leadership theory, which informed the values list (Fontaine, 2008; Beekun, 2012). In 1097, Al-Ghazali stated that leadership requires morality and ethics. Our project is on value-based education leadership; therefore, this fits perfectly. Using the Žydžiūnaitė framework and Al-Ghazali's ethical leadership theory, we devised a tool that combines modern leadership analysis with timeless ethical standards. This values in leadership instrument list was created after thoroughly analysing the existing literature on value-based leadership and educational management, including widely accepted leadership principles and those specifically relevant to educational settings. The Modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT) process allows participants to be assigned multiple responsibilities, including evaluating and prioritizing these values in terms of their importance for middle-level educational leaders. In addition, this process also develops strategies for integrating these values into leadership training programs. It suggests methods for teaching, practising, and assessing these values within leadership development—this complex involvement aimed to guarantee a thorough comprehension and incorporation of fundamental principles in educational leadership models.

### ***Data Collection***

This research adopted a systematic and sequential method, utilising the Modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT), to create an all-encompassing training framework for educational leaders at the middle-leader teacher. This process entailed stages of explanation to ensure shared comprehension, individual vote casting and ordering to establish idea prioritisation, collective deliberations to reach an agreement on crucial components, and subsequent refinement cycles to enhance these concepts. This approach ensured a fair and inclusive assessment of suggestions, efficiently combining the expertise and perspectives of experts to tackle intricate problems. The methodology relied on meticulously documenting ideas, conversations, and choices using individual sheets, group notes, vote results, and consensus summaries. Additionally, all sessions were videotaped and transcribed to ensure accuracy. The



research aims to build a leadership development framework based on expert consensus & linked with theoretical and practical components, focusing on values.

## Findings

This study utilised a Modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to investigate and rank the fundamental values crucial for middle-level leaders in education. The research sought to provide a thorough, value-centered training approach that bridges the divide between theoretical comprehension and practical implementation of leadership values in educational environments. Nine specialists from diverse educational disciplines engaged in structured NGT sessions, emphasizing three fundamental concepts: Personality, Interactions and Relationships, and Actions and Work. The results uncover a sophisticated comprehension of leadership principles, highlighting the interdependence of individual attributes, interpersonal abilities, and influential behaviours. This is consistent with current leadership theories, such as authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), while also emphasising distinctive elements that are relevant to educational settings.

### Construct 1: Personality

The results of the Personality construct demonstrate a significant focus on personal attributes crucial for effective leadership in educational environments. The data shown in Table 1 demonstrate that all seven items within this construct received favourable ratings, with percentages ranging from 83.67% to 93.88%. This indicates a significant level of agreement among the expert participants.

Self-discipline was seen as the most essential virtue, ranking 93.88%. Integrity and personal development were closely followed, both with a ranking of 91.84%. This is consistent with prior research that emphasises the significance of self-management and ethical conduct in educational leadership (Leithwood et al., 2020). The prominent status of self-discipline implies that middle leaders in education should possess the ability to establish unambiguous objectives and sustain unwavering concentration in attaining them despite the prevalent obstacles and diversions encountered in educational settings. Table 1 below focuses on leaders' personal qualities and characteristics, such as respect, integrity, authenticity, humility, wisdom, self-discipline, and personal development. These traits are essential for effective leadership and fostering a positive work environment.

**Table 1: Represent Construct of Personality**

Items / Elements	Voter1	Voter2	Voter3	Voter4	Voter5	Voter6	Voter7	Total item score	Percentage	Rank Priority	Voter Consensus
<b>Respect</b>											
-Consider hearing my team's explanations or ideas first before deciding. <i>Indicator Example: Providing opportunities to deserving people by respecting their opinions</i>	7	7	3	6	7	6	7	43	87.76	4	Suitable

<b>Integrity</b> -Ensure that my actions align with my words and values. <i>Indicator: Acting consistently with stated values and principles.</i>	7	6	6	6	7	6	7	45	91.84	2	Suitable
<b>Authenticity</b> -Be transparent about my values and beliefs, and act consistently with them. <i>Indicator: Sharing personal values openly and acting following them.</i>	6	7	4	6	7	6	7	43	87.76	4	Suitable
<b>Humility</b> -Acknowledge my limitations and be open to learning from others. <i>Indicator: Seeking feedback and learning opportunities from team members.</i>	7	7	5	6	5	6	5	41	83.67	5	Suitable
<b>Wisdom</b> -Consider the long-term impact of my decisions and balance the interests of all stakeholders. <i>Indicator: Making decisions that benefit the team and organization in the long run.</i>	7	6	7	6	5	7	6	44	89.8	3	Suitable
<b>Self-Discipline</b> -Prioritize my goals and consistently work towards them, even in the face of distractions. <i>Indicator: Setting clear goals and maintaining focus on achieving them.</i>	7	6	6	7	7	7	6	46	93.88	1	Suitable
<b>Personal Development</b> -Actively seek opportunities for personal and professional growth. <i>Indicator: Engaging in continuous learning and development activities.</i>	7	7	5	6	7	7	6	45	91.84	2	Suitable

Integrity, the second most important virtue, emphasises the crucial necessity for leaders to ensure that their actions are consistent with their statements and ideals. This discovery corroborates the research conducted by Bryk and Schneider (2002), who highlighted the significance of honesty in fostering trust within school communities. The emphasis on personal development signifies an acknowledgment that effective leadership necessitates ongoing learning and advancement, a principle firmly established in the literature on educational leadership (Day & Gurr, 2014).

Respect, genuineness, and wisdom were similarly highly rated, ranging from 87.76% to 89.8%. This implies that middle leaders must effectively manage various personal attributes, such as considering other viewpoints, remaining authentic to their principles, and making judgments that weigh long-term consequences. The modestly diminished position of humility (83.67%) is intriguing and may necessitate additional investigation in future studies.

### **Construct 2: Interactions and Relationships**

The results for the Interactions and Relationships construct, as indicated in Table 2, highlight the utmost significance of interpersonal skills and positive psychology in educational leadership. The ratings for all four items in this construct were consistently high, ranging from 87.76% to 95.92%. This suggests a solid consensus among the expert participants. The prominence of positive psychology was evident as it received the highest rating of 95.92%.

This indicates that middle leaders consider it essential to concentrate on strengths and cultivate a sense of meaning and purpose in their jobs. This is consistent with the increasing amount of research on good leadership in education, which has demonstrated substantial advantages for both the well-being of staff and the outcomes of students (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018).

The values of teamwork and belief in human potential were scored identically at 91.84%, emphasising the significance of fostering collaborative situations and supporting individual development. This discovery provides evidence for the idea of distributed leadership in schools, which involves sharing leadership tasks and acknowledging and enhancing the ability of all team members (Harris, 2013).

The high acceptance rating for complexity (87.76%) recognises educational leadership's demanding and diverse nature. This finding is consistent with previous studies on adaptive leadership in education, highlighting the importance of adaptable leaders and embracing ambiguity (Heifetz et al., 2009). Table 2's findings are based on construct, interactions, and relationships.

**Table 2: Finding for the Interactions and Relationship Construct**

Items / Elements	Voter1	Voter2	Voter3	Voter4	Voter5	Voter6	Voter7	Total item score	Percentage	Rank Priority	Voter Consensus
<b>Respect of Teamwork</b> -Value each team member's contributions and foster a collaborative environment. Providing opponent. <i>Indicator: Encouraging team members to share their ideas and contributions.</i>	7	6	5	7	7	7	6	45	91.84	2	Suitable
<b>Belief in Human Potential</b> -Recognize and nurture the potential in each team member, providing growth opportunities. <i>Indicator: Offering development opportunities to team members.</i>	7	7	6	5	6	7	7	45	91.84	2	Suitable
<b>The Power of Positive Psychology</b> -Focus on the strengths of each team member and help them find meaning and purpose in their work. <i>Indicator: Highlighting team members' strengths and their positive impact on the team</i>	7	7	5	7	7	7	7	47	95.92	1	Suitable
<b>Acceptance of Complexity</b> -Embrace the complexity of leadership and encourage adaptability and learning. <i>Indicator: Encouraging team members to adapt to new challenges and learn from experiences.</i>	6	6	5	6	6	7	7	43	87.76	3	Suitable



**Construct 3: Actions and Work**

The Actions and Work construct results, as shown in Table 3, demonstrate the significance of influential and intentional leadership behaviours. The ratings for this construct exhibited a modest decrease overall compared to the previous two, ranging from 73.47% to 87.76%. This suggests that experts may have a greater variety of perspectives about these aspects of leadership.

The values of courage and service were found to have the highest ratings, scoring 87.76%. This highlights the importance of middle leaders displaying bravery and prioritising the needs of others. This discovery is consistent with moral leadership in education, highlighting the importance of making ethical decisions and being dedicated to helping the school community (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Making a distinction obtained a slightly diminished grade of 81.63%; however, it still underscores its significance in the capacity of middle leaders. This implies that although significant action is appreciated, it may be regarded because of other leadership attributes rather than a main priority. Below are Table 3 findings based on construct actions and works:

**Table 3: Finding Action and Work Construct**

Items / Elements	Voter1	Voter2	Voter3	Voter4	Voter5	Voter6	Voter7	Total item score	Percentage	Rank Priority	Voter Consensus
<b>Making a Difference</b> -Strive to make a positive impact on individuals, systems, and organizations. <i>Indicator: Implementing initiatives that have a measurable positive impact</i>	6	6	4	6	6	5	7	40	81.63	2	Suitable
<b>Courage</b> - Have the courage to take a stand and act boldly in the face of adversity. <i>Indicator: Standing up for what is right, even when it is difficult.</i>	7	6	5	6	7	7	5	43	87.76	1	Suitable
<b>Service</b> -Prioritize the needs of others and the greater cause, demonstrating a commitment to service. <i>Indicator: Actively supporting team members and the community.</i>	7	6	6	7	7	5	5	43	87.76	1	Suitable
<b>Meaningful Work</b> -Ensure that the work we do has a clear purpose and makes a meaningful impact. <i>Indicator: Aligning work with the organization's mission and values.</i>	6	5	4	6	5	4	6	36	73.47	3	Suitable

Surprisingly, meaningful labour was given the lowest rating (73.47%) of all the components under the three categories. Although still seen as significant, this diminished ranking implies that experts perceive meaning as an outcome that arises from other facets of leadership rather than being the primary objective of leadership acts.

### ***Implications for the Training Model***

According to these findings, a thorough training program for middle leaders in education should include courses that cover all three constructs:

- i. Personal Development: Emphasising self-discipline, ethics, and ongoing education.
- ii. Interpersonal Skills: Focussing on positive psychology, collaboration, and fostering individual potential.
- iii. Leadership Actions: Building strength, focusing on serving others, and making decisions that have a significant impact.

The approach should incorporate activities that enable leaders to contemplate their beliefs, cultivate constructive interactions with team members, and participate in scenario-based learning to implement these principles in practical contexts. Possible assessment approaches may encompass the use of self-reflection diaries, obtaining input from colleagues through a 360-degree evaluation, and engaging in action research projects that showcase the practical implementation of values in school development endeavours (Bannet, 2014; O'Sullivan; 2021).

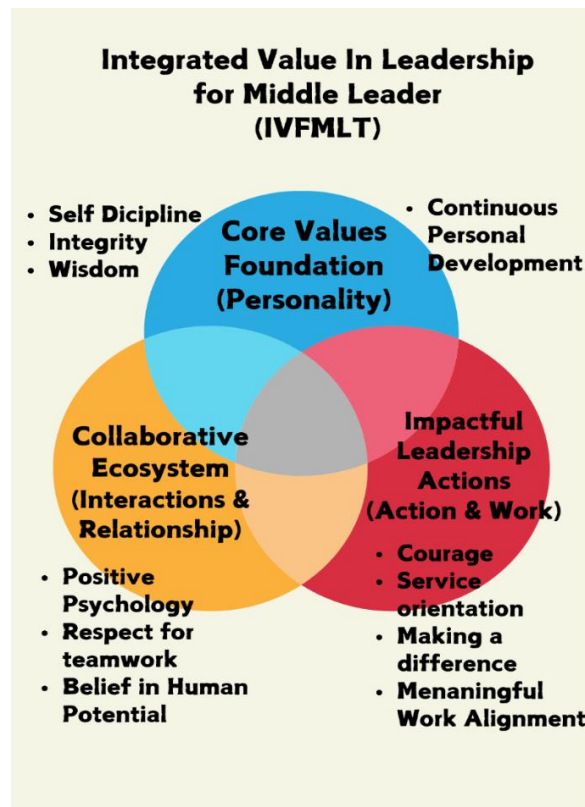
Ultimately, this study offers significant perspectives on the fundamental principles that should be integrated into leadership training for middle-level education leaders. The suggested training approach aims to cultivate leaders who possess personal attributes, engage in positive interactions, and undertake effective activities. These leaders will be equipped to traverse the intricate realm of educational leadership while simultaneously building positive school cultures and enhancing student outcomes.

### ***Model IVFMLT and Its Proposed Use***

This research has illuminated the importance of values in developing solid educational leadership at the intermediate level. Using a modified nominal group technique, we have prioritised important values across three basic constructs: personality, interactions and relationships, and actions and work.

According to the research, integrating personal growth, positive interpersonal dynamics, and purposeful action is crucial for leadership development. Our proposal for middle-level leaders is the "Integrated Values in Leadership for Middle Leader Teacher (IVFMLT) model, based on these insights and draws from Al-Ghazali's ethical leadership principles. The three parts that make up this model are:

- i. Core Values Foundation (*Personality*): Self-discipline, Integrity, Continuous personal development and Wisdom
- ii. Collaborative Ecosystem (*Interactions and Relationships*): Positive psychology, Respect for teamwork, Belief in human potential, Acceptance of complexity
- iii. Impactful Leadership Actions (*Actions and Work*): Courage, Service orientation, Making a difference, Meaningful work alignment



**Figure 1: Model IVMLT**

The IVFMLT model identifies the foundation of effective leadership as integrating personal values, positive interpersonal dynamics, and purposeful actions. The model highlights the dynamic interplay between these components, perfectly suiting the unique requirements of educational settings while also being in line with current ideas of leadership.

Action research, scenario-based learning, and reflective practices should all be part of any leadership training program that adopts this methodology. Evidence of school improvement activities, self-reflection journals, and 360-degree feedback could all be part of the assessment. Although this study lays a solid groundwork for value-based leadership training in schools, future studies should investigate how well the model works in different types of schools and cultural environments. Longitudinal studies could also evaluate how this strategy affects school climate, teacher happiness, and student achievement in the long run.

Finally, the IVFMLT model provides a thorough framework for training middle-level administrators to faithfully handle the challenges of educational leadership, cultivate productive school climates, and increase student achievement. This strategy can help create more effective, ethical, and influential school leadership by establishing leadership development on fundamental principles.

## Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable knowledge about creating a thorough training framework for mid-level education leaders, with a focus on the crucial importance of values in leadership. The findings emphasize three essential elements—personality, Interactions and

Relationships, and Actions and Work—each contributing to effective leadership in educational environments.

The strong emphasis on self-discipline, honesty, and personal growth in the *Personality* construct is consistent with modern leadership theories, namely authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006). These findings indicate that training programs designed for middle-level executives should prioritize personal development and the cultivation of ethical decision-making skills. The *Interactions and Relationships* highlight the significance of cultivating an effective and empowering school climate construct's heavy weighting of positive psychology and faith in human potential, which aligns with transformational leadership theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This is consistent with recent research conducted by Leithwood et al. (2020), who highlighted promoting a collaborative culture as a crucial aspect of effective school leadership. The *Actions and Work* construct, which emphasizes bravery and dedication, embodies principles of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992). This implies that training programs should have ethical decision-making and community service modules.

When comparing these data with the current literature, we can see confirmations of previous research and fresh ideas. Previous research has firmly established the significance of integrity and self-discipline in educational leadership (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Day et al., 2014), and our findings support this conclusion. Nevertheless, the prominent position of positive psychology in leadership interactions introduces a relatively new focus in middle-level leadership training. This is consistent with recent studies on the advantages of positive leadership in education (Cherkowski & Walker, 2018). However, it indicates a requirement for more targeted incorporation of these concepts into programs that aim to improve leadership skills. The comparatively lower "meaningful work" ranking in the *Actions and Work* construct deviates somewhat from the research highlighting purpose's significance in educational leadership (Fullan, 2020). This disparity suggests that additional investigation is required to understand how middle-level leaders perceive and implement meaningful work in their positions.

Implementing the Modified Nominal Group Technique (NGT) in this study is efficient and confining. An advantage of the NGT was its ability to facilitate organized and fair involvement from various specialists, reducing the risk of certain voices overpowering others (Varga-Atkins et al., 2017). This methodology probably influenced the diverse and comprehensive results of the three constructs. Nevertheless, a limitation of this approach is its dependence on a relatively limited cohort of specialists, thereby constraining the applicability of the results. In addition, although the instrument used in this study was extensive and encompassed a broad spectrum of leadership ideals, it is possible that it did not cover all pertinent facets of educational leadership. Considering these preliminary discoveries, subsequent investigations could gain advantages by broadening the range of participants and enhancing the instrument's accuracy. Although there are some limitations, this study establishes a strong basis for creating training programs prioritizing value-based leadership for middle-level educational leaders. It explains the complex connection between personal attributes, interpersonal abilities, and leadership behaviors in educational environments.

## Conclusion

Considering the findings, values in leadership are essential for reversing the decreasing ethical standards in schools (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Using a Modified Nominal Group Technique, we determined that three significant constructs—personality, interactions and relationships, and actions and work—are necessary for educational leaders at the middle level. Aligning with modern leadership theories and overcoming the specific difficulties of educational settings, these frameworks emphasised self-discipline, positive psychology, and bravery (Leithwood et al., 2020; Cherkowski & Walker, 2018).

The results highlight the importance of a well-rounded strategy for leadership development that incorporates introspection, constructive relationships, and meaningful endeavors. These ideas align with contemporary notions of genuine and transformational leadership and Al-Ghazali's ethical leadership principles (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2006). By providing a thorough framework, the Integrated Values in Leadership for Middle Leader Team (IVFMLT) model produces middle-leader teachers who can competently and honestly handle the challenges of educational leadership.

Future studies should examine how the IVFMLT model works in different types of classrooms. Longitudinal studies are required to determine how this strategy affects school climate, teacher happiness, and student achievement in the long run (Day et al., 2014). It is also possible that the model may require adaptation for use in other cultural settings; this could be investigated in cross-cultural studies.

Our recommendation for educational institutions looking to implement the IVFMLT model is to include it in their leadership development programs. Aspiring and current middle-level leaders can implement and internalise the main values highlighted in this study by creating reflective practice workshops, scenario-based learning modules, and action research projects. To further emphasise the importance of ethical concerns in leadership practice and evaluation, policymakers can consider including values-based leadership criteria in educational leaders' professional standards (Fullan, 2020).

In summary, the IVFMLT model greatly improves on previous attempts to bridge the gap between educational leadership theory and practice. This method, which grounds leadership development in core values and ethical principles, can transform educational leadership practices, foster positive school cultures, and ultimately contribute to improved student educational outcomes.

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