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Beyond Academics: Alumni Perspectives on the Influence of the School on Value Systems

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ABSTRACT:

Schools are expected to help mold learners to acquire knowledge, skills, and values that will direct them to become responsible, ethical, and independent people of society. Thus, this study aimed to determine the alumni' s perceptions of Aldersgate College Inc.'s influence on developing learners' socio-cultural values, work values, values to self, and values to others. The study used a descriptive research design, and 100 alumni respondents answered a survey questionnaire adapted from related studies. Results were interpreted using descriptive statistics. Alumni rated Aldersgate College Inc.'s influence on values development as very strong, with an overall mean of 3.45. The socio-cultural values and values to others domains had the highest domain mean (3.47). This was followed by values to self (mean = 3.46) and work values (mean = 3.41). The indicator addressing bullying, discrimination, and peer-on-peer abuse had the highest rating (3.85). Tact (3.65), honesty (3.59), and self-respect (3.52) had the highest ratings in their respective domains. Based on the results, Aldersgate College Inc. strongly influences how alumni develop the personal, professional, and social values they carry into their lives.

Keywords: *Value Systems, Aldersgate College, Inc., Personal Values, Professional Values, Social Values*

INTRODUCTION

While schools teach facts and skills, education's enduring aim is to inculcate values in all learners, enabling them to become reflective and independent thinkers. Building the proper value system in school ensures that graduates are ethical, respectful, responsible, accountable, and disciplined members of society.

The main purpose of this survey was to determine alumni perspectives on the school's influence on the development of values among its graduates. These values include:

1. socio-cultural values
2. work values
3. values to self
4. values related to others.

Values associated with family, culture, or society are often called socio-cultural values. Socio-cultural values are beliefs, norms, attitudes, and principles about oneself, others, and how individuals should behave in society. More importantly, families, schools, communities, and cultures shape and reinforce values. Multiple studies in contemporary literature further demonstrate the contribution of culture and social relationships to learners' values formation.

According to UNESCO (2023), "culture and education are closely linked". The statement was made in relation to how culture-based education can help learners become more understanding of, and respectful towards, cultures, values, and ways of life that differ from their own. Therefore, education was conceptualized as a means to transmit culture, as well as important social environments where learners become aware of who they are, how they should relate to others, and how they can participate in society.

Kim (2023), who recently published a study on learners' perceptions of value in education, found that undergraduate students from different socio-cultural backgrounds and fields of study perceived the value of learning differently. As a result, participants did not form neutral perceptions of what it means to be an engaged learner; instead, some students from homogeneous societies viewed mandatory education as worthless. Kim's findings align with the idea that learners' socio-cultural and educational environments influence how they practice and value certain aspects of their learning experience.

Contextualization may be especially important in the Philippine setting because learners come from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Kilag, Mercado-Toruño, Lantican, and Endriga (2023) stated that values education should be integrated across learning areas and should be contextualized according to students' culture and experiences. The researchers found that cultural contextualization, integration across learning areas, and authentic learning experiences are crucial in helping students strengthen their values. By presenting learners with real-life situations that occur in their families, schools, communities, and societies, education becomes a relevant tool for practicing social values.

In a similar study, Villa (2023) found that students' awareness of their cultural heritage was directly related to how they respected their own culture and others' cultures. The researchers gathered data from senior high school students who answered questions about Philippine culture and arts. The findings suggest that when students learn about cultural practices, they can come to respect their own social identity and those of others. This means that learners' socio-cultural

values are strengthened when education provides them the opportunity to recognize, analyze, and appreciate various cultural traditions.

Multiple values relate to Filipinos' socio-cultural identities. Madrona, Empuerto, and Cabahug (2023) surveyed Filipino Millennials and Zoomers to determine which personal and cultural values they identified with. Using Schwartz's theory of basic values and Filipino cultural values, the researchers found that self-transcendence was the value that Filipino Millennials and Zoomers strived for most. While the study also identified Filipino hospitality and being fun-loving as two cultural values Filipinos rate highly, Millennials and Zoomers perceived some values differently. This includes Filipinos' close family ties, which Zoomers rated lower than Millennials did. Madrona and colleagues' study shows that newer generations can either retain or change culture-based values.

Schools and universities can help students retain values that promote healthy social relationships. Yildirim, Becerikli, and Demirel (2023) found that teachers, students, and parents valued respect, love, honesty, being helpful, and tolerance. Beyond identifying important educational values, the researchers found that teachers should practice what they teach and that parents should take an active role in their children's education. Learners should also participate in activities that promote values formation. The study provides evidence that values are cultivated through relationships, practice, modeling, and direct experience.

The Philippine school system recognizes values formation by integrating the values of DepEd: Maka-Diyos, Maka-tao, Maka-kalikasan, and Maka-bansa. Monterola and Basilan (2023) stated that values education develops learners into people who care for others, the environment, and the nation. Education, particularly the K-12 program in the Philippines, allows students to learn and internalize values that make them more socially aware. Because educational institutions integrate local culture into the curriculum, students can also connect their socio-cultural values with their social responsibilities.

Palennari, Baloto, Abellana II, de Joya, and Ogena (2023) found that local culture can influence students' character. Through interviews and focus group discussions, the researchers identified several values within two Philippine indigenous cultural systems. Relevant values include honesty, courage, strong work ethic, teamwork, and spirituality. Their study suggests that educators can connect what students learn in school with what they experience in their local community. As previous studies show, education can sustain and apply cultural values in modern contexts.

To summarize, students learn socio-cultural values through culture, family practices, school practices, community practices, and personal experiences. School life and education play a significant role in students' values formation. Schools give students opportunities to meet others, practice social responsibility, respect authority and classmates, and learn about their identity. These values can stay with alumni long after graduation. As a result, studying alumni perceptions is important to understand how education has helped Filipino youth practice important socio-cultural values.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive method. A total of 100 alumni-respondents participated in this survey. The survey questionnaire was the main data-gathering instrument used and was adapted from several studies. Values were interpreted using the following scale:

Range	Qualitative Descriptions/Interpretations
3.25 – 4.00	Very Strong Influence
2.50 – 3.24	Strong Influence
1.75 – 2.49	Moderate Influence
1.00 – 1.74	Weak Influence

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that alumni perceive the school's influence on value development as very strong. As students carry these values beyond the school when they establish themselves in the outside world, they cultivate their character and become the best versions of themselves. With this self-awareness, they can build strong relationships with those around them and contribute to a more harmonious and productive society, making the world a better place to live in.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents according to Gender

	f	%
Male	37	37%
Female	63	63%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 1 presents the distribution of alumni respondents according to gender. Out of 100 alumni respondents, 37% were males and 63% were females. This aligns with historical institutional enrollment data showing more female enrollees than male enrollees over the years.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents according to Level Graduated

	f	%
High School	68	68%
College	7	7%
Graduate School	6	6%
High School & College	9	9%
High School & Graduate School	1	1%
College & Graduate School	6	6%
High School, College & Graduate School	3	3%
Total	**100**	**100%**

As shown in Table 2, most alumni respondents (68%) graduated from the high school department. This is followed by 9% graduating from high school and college, and 7% graduating from the college department. Analysis indicates a pattern where high school graduates often pursue higher education elsewhere, presenting an opportunity for strategic internal recruitment for collegiate programs.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents according to Year Graduated

	f	%
1958 – 1963	1	1%
1964 – 1969		
1970 – 1975	1	1%
1976 – 1981		
1982 – 1987	1	1%
1988 – 1993	4	4%
1994 – 1999	8	8%
2000 – 2005	13	13%
2006 – 2011	16	16%
2012 – 2017	12	12%
2018 – 2023	44	44%
Total	100	100%

Table 3 captures perspectives spanning over five decades (1958 to 2023), with the largest representation coming from alumni respondents who graduated between 2018 and 2023. This is followed by alumni respondents who graduated between 2006 and 2011 and then alumni respondents who graduated between 2000 and 2005. Enrollment data shows that the highest enrollment in the high school was in 2018 - 2023.

Table 4
Alumni Perspective on the Influence of the School on the Development of Values

	Mean	Qualitative Descriptions/Interpretations
Socio-cultural Values	3.47	Very Strong Influence
Work Values	3.41	Very Strong Influence
Values to Self	3.46	Very Strong Influence
Values Related to Others	3.47	Very Strong Influence
Mean	**3.45**	**Very Strong Influence**
Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 4 summarizes the alumni perspective on the influence of the school on the development of values along 1) socio-cultural values, 2) work values, 3) values to self, and 4) values related to others.
Overall, alumni perceive the school's influence on value development as very strong, as shown by a mean score of **3.45.**

This confirms that the school successfully nurtures values among its graduates. This is significant because a country's progress and decline depend on the value system of its people (Mohamad, 2019). Aldersgate College Inc. learners are ethically sound graduates who can contribute to national development and progress in the face of social dilemmas.

Socio-Cultural Values

Socio-cultural values shape how individuals approach risk, view careers, perceive money, and define an ideal lifestyle (Tanner, 2021).

Survey findings show that alumni perceive school as having a very strong influence on the development of socio-cultural values (3.47). Alumni indicated that the institution excels in creating environments where bullying and discrimination are actively addressed

Criteria with the highest rating include*: "creates an environment in which bullying, discrimination, peer-on-peer abuses are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently, and effectively"* (3.85), "*fosters willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting, and cultural opportunities"* (3.63), *encourages and motivates all pupils to achieve school goals* (3.59), "*enables pupils to organize their learning increasing, independently and to work on their own learning ability*," and "*helps engender an appreciation of human creativity*" both with a mean of (3.58)

At the bottom of the scale include the following socio-cultural values: *"develops and encourages understanding for the preservation of the natural environment"* (3.39), *"cultivates a range of social skills in different contexts, for example, working and socializing with other pupils including those from different religious, ethnic, or socio-economic backgrounds"* (3.45), "*appreciates and tolerates other people's faith or believes that may be different from one's own"* (3.45), *"sets high expectations for every pupil"* (3.45), and *"is based on Christian values"* (3.46).

Work Values

Work values are defined as a collection of qualities, principles, ideals, and beliefs that relate to the workplace. They underpin the motivation, attitude, and behavior that influence each individual's working style and the decisions that one makes at work and throughout his or her career (What are Work Values, 2022).

The alumni respondents ranked the work values as follows: *honesty* (3.59), *analytical and critical learning* (3.57), and *obedience and neatness* (3.54).

At the bottom rung are: *contentiousness* (3.31), *patience* (3.40), and *sense of commitment* (3.43).

As graduates of Aldersgate College Inc., alumni in their different workplaces are expected to appreciate the responsibilities they undertake and develop a sense of belonging and involvement in the workplace. The work values they learn from school can significantly impact how well they can work with others, the personal goals and aspirations that they set for themselves, and the milestones that they accomplish in their chosen fields of expertise or specialization. As working professionals, Aldersgate College Inc. alumni, the core work values they imbibe can help determine the stability of their careers and the direction their professions can take them.

Values to Self

Values to self, or personal values, are guiding principles and beliefs that help individuals distinguish between "good" and "bad." These personal values influence behaviors, relationships, and everyday life. They guide important decisions, shape personal development, and help define an ideal career path.

Survey results show that alumni respondents ranked these values as follows: *self-respect* (3.52), *love of oneself* (3.49), s*elf-reliance* (3.46), and *self-confidence* (3.46).

Graduates of Aldersgate College Inc. are expected to have developed a strong sense of self, identify the actions and initiatives that make them feel fulfilled, maintain a healthy sense of well-being, and feel confidence and pride in their ability and self-respect.

When actions align with values, people are more likely to feel satisfied with their decisions and build healthy, nurturing relationships.

Values related to others

Values related to others, also relationship values, reflect how individuals relate to other people, such as friends, family, teachers, managers, etc. Relationship values include openness, trust, generosity, and caring. Relationships are complex and require sustained effort over time, built on shared values.

Alumni respondents ranked the values related to others as follows: tact (3.65), respect for others (3.57), open-mindedness (3.44), and sound judgment (3.32).

Aldersgate College Inc. graduates are expected to have been instilled with core values that guide the relationships they build with the people around them. Results show that tact, or sensitivity in dealing with others or with difficult issues, was ranked first among the values. They recognize the importance of clearly expressing feelings and needs and having the skills to actively listen to and understand each other. This creates communication channels that allow productive conversations and the resolution of issues in the relationships they keep, making them sustainable.

SUMMARY

Schools are recognized as one of society's most influential agents, responsible for inculcating knowledge and skills, as well as behaviors and values, across generations.

This survey found that Aldersgate College Inc. has strongly influenced the development of values such as socio-cultural values, work values, values to self, and values related to others among its students over the past 58 years. As students carry these values beyond the school when they enter the outside world, they cultivate their character and become the best versions of themselves. With this self-awareness, they can forge strong relationships with the people around them, contribute to a more harmonious and productive society, and help make the world a better place to live in.

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