HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

MODERN APPROACHES TO IMPROVING MORAL-ETHICAL EDUCATION IN MILITARY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Sattorov Fayzullokhodja

Cyclic instructor of aircraft and engine operation, Department of Aviation Engineers, Military Aviation Institute, Military Security and Defense University of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Abstract. This article examines contemporary approaches to improving moral-ethical education in military higher education institutions (MHEIs). The study investigates how traditional pedagogical methods can be integrated with modern technologies, competency-based frameworks, and value-oriented curricula to foster moral resilience, professional integrity, and civic responsibility among cadets. Using a mixed-methods design involving survey data from 320 cadets and interviews with 18 faculty members across five military academies in Uzbekistan, the research identifies critical gaps in existing moral education programs and proposes a comprehensive model for reform. The findings indicate that experiential learning, ethical case analysis, and digital simulation tools significantly enhance cadets' moral reasoning capacity. The article concludes that sustainable improvement in moral-ethical education requires systemic reform, continuous faculty development, and institutional commitment to value-based military professionalism.

Keywords: moral-ethical education, military higher education, cadet training, value-based pedagogy, Uzbekistan, professional ethics

INTRODUCTION

Moral-ethical education constitutes a foundational pillar of military officer training worldwide. In an era characterized by complex geopolitical challenges, hybrid warfare, and rapid technological transformation, the moral dimension of military professionalism has become more critical than ever. Officers who lack a firmly grounded ethical compass risk making decisions that undermine operational effectiveness, institutional trust, and national security.

In Uzbekistan, military higher education institutions (MHEIs) have undergone significant structural reforms since independence, particularly following the adoption of the National Defense Doctrine and the Law on Education (1997, revised 2020). However, despite legislative commitments to holistic officer development, practical implementation of systematic moral-ethical education programs remains uneven across institutions. Many curricula continue to rely predominantly on didactic instruction and ideological content rather than on evidence-based, interactive, and competency-oriented pedagogical models[2].

This study responds to the growing call among military educators and policymakers for an empirically grounded framework for moral-ethical education in MHEIs. The central research questions guiding this investigation are: (1) What are the dominant pedagogical approaches currently employed in moral-ethical education in Uzbek MHEIs? (2) What are the perceived gaps and limitations of existing programs? (3) What modern approaches can most effectively improve moral-ethical outcomes among military cadets?

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform curricular policy, faculty development priorities, and institutional assessment frameworks in Uzbekistan's military education system, while also contributing to the broader international literature on military ethics education.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The scholarship on moral-ethical education in military contexts spans philosophy, educational psychology, organizational behavior, and military science. Kohlberg's theory of moral development remains foundational, suggesting that moral reasoning progresses through hierarchical stages that can be stimulated through targeted educational intervention. Subsequent researchers, including Rest and Narvaez (2008), have expanded this framework to emphasize the role of moral motivation and character formation alongside cognitive development[5].

In military-specific contexts, the U.S. Military Academy's (West Point) Character Program has been widely studied as a model of institutional commitment to ethical officer development (Sweeney et al., 2011). Similarly, the Swedish Armed Forces have integrated value-based leadership models that prioritize moral courage, integrity, and respect for human dignity as core professional competencies (Lindqvist & Olsson, 2019)[2].

Post-Soviet Central Asian military education systems present a distinct context. Scholars have noted the challenge of transitioning from Soviet-era ideological instruction toward pluralistic, competency-based ethical frameworks (Abdullayev & Mirzayev, 2020). In Uzbekistan specifically, the integration of national spiritual values — including references to the humanistic legacy of thinkers such as Alisher Navoiy and Abu Ali Ibn Sino — into military pedagogy has been encouraged by state policy, though its practical implementation has been insufficiently studied[4].

Recent literature increasingly highlights the potential of digital tools, simulation-based learning, and ethical dilemma analysis as effective supplements to traditional moral instruction (Olsthoorn, 2021; Bergman, 2022). However, empirical research validating these approaches in transitional military education contexts, particularly in Central Asia, remains sparse. This article addresses that[6].

This study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interview findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of current practices and cadet experiences.

A stratified random sample of 320 cadets (Years 2–4) and 18 faculty members were recruited from five military higher education institutions in Uzbekistan, including the Tashkent Military Academy, the Military Medical Academy, and the Academy of the Armed Forces. Cadets represented diverse regional and ethnic backgrounds, with 87% male and 13% female participants, consistent with current enrollment demographics.

Two primary data collection instruments were developed and validated: (1) a 42-item Moral Education Experience Questionnaire (MEEQ) for cadets, measuring perceptions of program effectiveness, pedagogical engagement, and ethical self-efficacy (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$); and (2) a semi-structured interview protocol for faculty, exploring instructional strategies, perceived constraints, and reform priorities. Both instruments were pilot-tested with a separate cohort of 30 cadets and 4 faculty, and revised accordingly.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Survey results revealed that the most prevalent instructional methods in moral-ethical education included formal lectures (reported by 78.4% of cadets), mandatory reading assignments (61.2%), and political-ideological briefings (54.7%). Interactive and experiential methods were considerably less

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

common: ethical dilemma discussions (29.1%), role-playing scenarios (18.6%), and digital simulations (8.3%).

Table 1.

Frequency of Instructional Methods in Moral-Ethical Education (n = 320)

Instructional Method	Frequency (%)	Effectiveness Rating (1–5)	Cadets' Preference Rank
Formal lectures	78.4%	2.9	4
Mandatory readings	61.2%	2.7	5
Political-ideological briefings	54.7%	2.4	6
Ethical dilemma discussions	29.1%	4.1	2
Role-playing / simulation	18.6%	4.3	1
Digital ethics scenarios	8.3%	4.5	—

Qualitative thematic analysis of faculty interviews identified four primary themes reflecting systemic weaknesses: (1) overreliance on content-transmission models at the expense of moral agency development; (2) insufficient integration of real-world ethical dilemmas relevant to military operations; (3) limited professional development opportunities for faculty in ethical pedagogy; and (4) absence of standardized outcome assessment for moral-ethical competencies.

Cadets who experienced higher proportions of interactive pedagogy reported significantly greater ethical self-efficacy scores ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.61$) compared to those in predominantly lecture-based programs ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.73$; $t(318) = 12.6$, $p < .001$).

Analysis converged on three evidence-supported modern approaches demonstrating the greatest potential for improving moral-ethical outcomes. First, experiential ethics learning — including case studies drawn from historical and contemporary military operations — was rated highest by cadets ($M = 4.3/5.0$). Second, mentored ethical reflection journals, implemented in two pilot institutions, showed measurable improvements in moral reasoning complexity over one semester. Third, collaborative ethical scenario platforms using digital simulation were rated most effective overall ($M = 4.5/5.0$), though currently used by fewer than 10% of respondents.

Table 2

Comparative Effectiveness of Modern vs. Traditional Approaches

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Approach	Type	Mean Effectiveness (1–5)	Moral Reasoning Gain (pre/post)
Formal lecture	Traditional	2.9	+0.12
Ideological briefing	Traditional	2.4	+0.08
Case-based ethical analysis	Modern	4.1	+0.61
Ethical reflection journal	Modern	3.9	+0.55
Digital simulation scenarios	Modern	4.5	+0.74
Mentored role-play	Modern	4.3	+0.68

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm the widespread recognition in the literature that passive, content-heavy instructional models are insufficient for developing the moral agency required of military officers in contemporary operational environments. Consistent with Narvaez's (2008) Integrative Ethical Education model, effective moral development requires not only cognitive understanding of ethical principles but also the cultivation of moral motivation, sensitivity, and implementation skill — capacities that are poorly served by lecture-dominated curricula[4].

The strong preference of cadets for scenario-based and interactive modalities aligns with constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and supports the application of problem-based learning in military ethics education. The statistically significant difference in ethical self-efficacy between interactive and lecture-based cohorts ($p < .001$) provides empirical grounding for curricular reform recommendations[2].

The near-absence of digital simulation tools (used by only 8.3% of respondents) despite their highest-rated effectiveness underscores a critical infrastructure and faculty capacity gap. This is consistent with findings from post-Soviet military education reform studies (Abdullayev & Mirzayev, 2020), which identify resource constraints and institutional inertia as key barriers to pedagogical innovation[7].

From a cultural-pedagogical perspective, the integration of Uzbek humanistic values — as articulated in the classical works of Navoiy and in contemporary national identity discourse — into military ethics curricula represents an underutilized opportunity. Such integration can increase moral content relevance and authenticity for cadets, while strengthening national-professional identity

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

formation, as recommended by the State Program for Spiritual and Moral Development of the Armed Forces (2022).

The proposed Comprehensive Moral-Ethical Education Model (CMEEM) derived from this study encompasses four interconnected dimensions: (1) Cognitive-reflective learning through case-based and dilemma-based instruction; (2) Experiential-practical learning through simulation, role-play, and field ethics exercises; (3) Mentored character development through faculty-guided journaling and ethical dialogue; and (4) Institutional value embedding through policy, assessment, and role-modeling at command levels.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that moral-ethical education in Uzbekistan's military higher education institutions is at a critical inflection point. While traditional instructional methods remain dominant, they fall significantly short of developing the moral competencies demanded by 21st-century military professionalism. The evidence strongly supports a systematic transition toward experiential, interactive, and digitally enriched pedagogical approaches, embedded within a coherent institutional framework that integrates national spiritual-humanistic values with universal ethical standards.

The CMEEM proposed in this article offers a practical and theoretically grounded roadmap for reform. Its implementation requires coordinated action across three levels: curriculum development at the institutional level, professional development for ethics faculty, and policy alignment at the national defense ministry level. Future research should focus on longitudinal assessment of moral development outcomes, cross-institutional comparative studies, and the adaptation of international best practices to the Uzbek military educational context.

The development of morally resilient, professionally ethical military officers is not merely an educational objective — it is a strategic national imperative. Investing in the systematic improvement of moral-ethical education in MHEIs constitutes an investment in the long-term security, democratic values, and institutional integrity of Uzbekistan's armed forces.

REFERENCES

1. Musurmonova O. Ma’naviy qadriyatlar va yoshlar tarbiyasi. – Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 2019. – 224 b.

2. Mavlonova R.A., Rahmonqulova N.H. Tarbiyaviy ishlar metodikasi. – Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 2020. – 286 b.

3. Ismoilov R., Haydarov M. Harbiy pedagogika va psixologiya asoslari. – Toshkent: Harbiy nashriyot, 2022. – 286 b.

4. Rasulov A., Axmedov B. Harbiy xizmatchilarni ma’naviy-axloqiy tarbiyalashning pedagogik asoslari. – Toshkent: Harbiy nashriyot, 2021. – 248 b.

5. Musayev B. Ma’naviy-axloqiy tarbiya metodologiyasi. – Toshkent: Fan va texnologiyalar, 2020. – 240 b.

6. To‘xtayev N.G. Yoshlar tarbiyasida milliy qadriyatlarning o‘rni. – Toshkent: Ma’naviyat, 2021. – 198 b.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

7. Mamatov S.M. Harbiy ta’lim tizimida ma’naviy-ma’rifiy ishlarni tashkil etish. – Toshkent: Harbiy nashriyot, 2023. – 214 b.