



BECOMING PERSONS FOR OTHERS: EXAMINING VALUES FORMATION AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores values formation among pre-service teachers in a Jesuit institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Ignatian pedagogy. A mixed-methods approach, involving surveys (n=206) and focus group discussions with purposively chosen students (n=20), examined environmental influences (peers, family, media) and formation levels (stewardship, servant leadership, equality, social justice, service). Findings reveal strong environmental shaping and consistent values internalization, yet a tension emerges: institutional practices ensure uniformity, while diverse student engagement varies, challenging assumptions of universal formation. The single-institution context limits generalizability, but insights are transferable to reflective, values-based teacher education. The study recommends integrating media literacy, family engagement, and tailored reflective practices to enhance ethical leadership, with implications for Jesuit and secular programs. Theoretically, it suggests extending Bronfenbrenner's framework by incorporating Ignatian reflection, advancing ecological models. These findings contribute to understanding how reflective pedagogies foster educators committed to social justice and service.

Keywords: values formation, pre-service teachers, Jesuit education, ecological systems theory, Ignatian pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, teacher education is increasingly recognized not only as a means of preparing professionals for the classroom but also as a process of shaping individuals who can respond ethically and compassionately to the needs of society. Teacher formation extends beyond content mastery and pedagogy to encompass ethical, social, and professional development (Fisher & Lombardi, 2025). This study focuses on pre-service teachers in a Jesuit university in the Philippines, exploring how institutional and environmental factors shape their values within a faith-based context. Jesuit education emphasizes *cura personalis*, or care for

the whole person, shaping educators to become "men and women for others" (Young, 2022). Ignatian pedagogy integrates reflection, experience, and action, fostering transformative learning (The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, 2024). However, existing literature often treats academic competence and moral formation separately, overlooking their interaction in pre-service teacher education. Self-motivation and social awareness are critical to effective teaching. Research links achievement drive and commitment to continuous professional development and resilience in challenging environments (Review of Studies Applying Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory, 2023). Social awareness, particularly empathy and



service orientation, enhances culturally responsive teaching (Young, 2022).

Despite their recognized importance, limited research explores how structured formation programs develop these qualities, highlighting the need to assess the effectiveness of teacher education in fostering them. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a framework for understanding the layered influences on teacher formation. Specifically, the microsystem (e.g., peers, family) and exosystem (e.g., institutional values) guide the analysis of how environmental factors shape values, while Ignatian pedagogy informs the evaluation of reflective practices. These frameworks were chosen for their alignment with the study's focus on contextual and faith-based influences, though theories like Transformative Learning could offer complementary perspectives (Mezirow, 1997). The microsystem—including family and peers—shapes values and professional identity, with supportive peer networks fostering stronger teaching efficacy and ethical decision-making (Fisher & Lombardi, 2025). Family expectations can reinforce or challenge career motivations. The exosystem, particularly the media, has emerged as a significant but understudied factor. Digital exposure introduces pre-service teachers to diverse educational philosophies but also shapes misconceptions about the profession (Young, 2022). While studies examine the media's impact on students, few explore its role in shaping teacher identity and values. Ethical decision-making and professional identity are integral to teacher education. Classroom management, equity, and curriculum choices present ethical dilemmas, yet many pre-service teachers enter the profession without sufficient preparation in ethical reasoning (The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, 2024; Fisher & Lombardi, 2025). Jesuit education's emphasis on reflection and discernment offers a model for integrating ethics into teacher preparation, but empirical studies rarely examine how Jesuit pedagogical principles translate into real-world ethical competence. Professional identity, shaped by institutional values and personal experiences, is also influenced by mentorship and field experiences, yet research lacks insights into how

faith-based universities shape long-term career commitment and ethical leadership (Young, 2022).

Despite extensive research on teacher education, gaps remain in understanding the holistic formation of pre-service teachers, particularly in Jesuit institutions. Studies often examine self-motivation, social awareness, environmental influences, and ethical decision-making in isolation rather than as interconnected dimensions of teacher development. Additionally, few empirical studies explore how Jesuit pedagogy shapes professional identity and ethical leadership. For example, Young (2022) highlights Ignatian pedagogy's role in reflective teaching, while Fisher and Lombardi (2025) focus on ecological influences but overlook faith-based contexts, revealing a gap in integrating these perspectives. This study addresses this gap by examining how Jesuit pedagogy and ecological systems jointly shape pre-service teachers' value formation in a Philippine context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study, grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Ignatian pedagogy, aimed to address the gap in understanding how Jesuit and ecological influences shape pre-service teachers' values formation. It focused on a Jesuit institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, exploring values formation with potential relevance to other teacher education contexts. Specifically, it sought to examine the respondents' profiles in terms of gender, religion, academic program, and field of specialization. Furthermore, this study investigated the extent of environmental influences—peers, family, and media—on their formation and development.

In addition, the study assessed the respondents' level of formation concerning core values such as stewardship, servant leadership, equality, social justice, and service. The null hypothesis for this aspect was tested at a 0.05 level of significance to determine the presence of any statistically significant differences. Lastly, the study explored the perspectives of purposively



chosen students participating in focus group discussions to understand diverse experiences in internalizing the university's mission of fostering being persons for others.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design by Best & Khan (2006) to examine the level of formation among pre-service teachers and the relationships between independent variables such as gender, religion, academic program, field of specialization, self-motivation where possible, self-motivation, social awareness, and environmental influences (family, peers, and media). The dependent variable focused on formation in stewardship, servant leadership, equality, social justice, and service. The study was conducted among 206 fourth-year pre-service teachers in a Catholic university in Cagayan de Oro City. This single-institution focus may limit generalizability, as discussed in the Limitations section. These students, enrolled in Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (BECED), Bachelor in Special Needs Education (BSNED), and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) programs, were selected through purposive sampling as they were preparing for their teaching internship, making their level of formation particularly relevant.

Data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The questionnaire, adapted from validated instruments, measured family, peer, and media influence based on the Perceived Social Support scales (Procidano & Heller, 1983) and the Multidimensional Media Influence Scale (Wickman, 2000). The dependent variable questionnaire was developed using Jesuit educational principles from Ignatian Pedagogy (1993), Heroic Leadership (Lowney, 2003), and The Characteristics of Jesuit Education (Kolvenbach, 1986). Content validity was established through expert review, and a pilot test was conducted with 200 students not included in the final sample.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) demonstrated strong factor loadings (≥ 0.90) and excellent model fit (CFI = 0.988, TLI = 0.987, SRMR = 0.0254, RMSEA = 0.0236). Although the chi-square test was significant ($\chi^2 = 794$, $df = 712$, $p = 0.018$), this was expected in large samples and did not indicate poor fit. Reliability testing using McDonald's Omega ($\omega = 0.984$) confirmed excellent internal consistency, making it a more precise measure than Cronbach's Alpha.

Ethical approval was obtained from the institution, and official student records were accessed to compare formation levels among diverse student profiles. Questionnaires were administered with faculty assistance, followed by FGDs for qualitative insights. Qualitative data from focus group discussions ($n=20$) were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis, involving data familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting. Two researchers independently coded 25% of transcripts, achieving 80% agreement, with discrepancies resolved through discussion. Member checking with three participants ensured accuracy, and saturation was reached after 15 discussions. FGD participants were purposively selected to represent diversity in gender, religion, academic program, and engagement with Jesuit values, ensuring varied perspectives on values formation, though this approach may reflect researcher subjectivity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents findings from a mixed-methods analysis of values formation among 206 fourth-year pre-service teachers at a Jesuit institution in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. Quantitative data assess demographic profiles, environmental influences, and formation levels, while qualitative insights from focus group discussions (FGDs) explore diverse student perspectives. Statistical tests (t-tests, ANOVA) examine differences, and thematic analysis identifies patterns, guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework. The single-institution context may limit broader applicability, as noted in the Limitations section.



1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

The majority of respondents were female (88.3%), reflecting global trends of women dominating teacher education due to perceptions of teaching as a nurturing profession (UNESCO, 2022). Bronfenbrenner's exosystem, including societal norms, explains this gender disparity, though its persistence challenges efforts for diversity (OECD, 2023). Religious demographics showed 62.1% Roman Catholic, 13.1% Muslim, and 24.8% other affiliations, highlighting diversity within a Jesuit context (Pew Research Center, 2023).

Table 1
Respondents' Profile

Category	Classification	Frequency (n=206)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	182	88.3%
	Male	24	11.7%
Religion	Roman Catholic	128	62.1%
	Muslim	27	13.1%
	Others	51	24.8%
Program	BECED	62	30.1%
	BSEd	57	27.7%
	BSNED	54	26.2%
	BEEEd	33	16.0%
Specialization	English	33	57.9%
	Mathematics	18	31.6%
	Biological Science	6	10.5%

This diversity suggests microsystem influences (e.g., family beliefs) shape values, but the lack of religious differences in formation raises questions about Ignatian pedagogy's universal impact (Banks, 2022). Academic programs included BECED (30.1%), BSEd (27.7%), BSNED (26.2%), and BEEEd (16.0%), with English specialization (57.9%) dominant and Biological Science (10.5%) underrepresented, aligning with national priorities but signaling STEM shortages (CHED, 2023; World Bank, 2023). These findings imply that Jesuit institutions should promote male and STEM teacher recruitment, while theoretically,

Bronfenbrenner's framework could explore how exosystem policies shape specialization choices.

2. Extent of Environmental Influences

Peer, family, and media influences were rated "Very High" (M=4.28–4.31), indicating significant shaping of pre-service teachers' values.

Table 2
Extent of Environmental Influence

Environmental Factor	Mean Score	Interpretation
Peer Influence	4.28	Very High
Family Influence	4.28	Very High
Media Influence	4.31	Very High

Peers foster motivation and ethical decision-making, with positive relationships enhancing engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2023). Bronfenbrenner's microsystem explains peer influence on service values, but the absence of negative peer effects contrasts with Wentzel's (2022) findings, suggesting Jesuit structures mitigate disengagement. This implies that peer mentorship programs could strengthen formation, while future studies could test Bronfenbrenner's microsystem for negative dynamics. Family influence drives career choices and resilience, especially in collectivist cultures (Garcia & Bernardo, 2023). The microsystem's role aligns with Ignatian pedagogy's holistic focus, but uniform family influence across religions is surprising, challenging cultural variation assumptions (Pew Research Center, 2023). Family engagement workshops could enhance ethical development, and Bronfenbrenner's framework could be refined to account for cultural uniformity. Media, with the highest rating (M=4.31), exposes students to global trends but risks misinformation (Choi & Lee, 2023). As an exosystem factor, media broadens perspectives but may undermine ethical formation, a tension Young (2022) overlooks, highlighting the need for critical engagement. Media literacy modules are essential for Jesuit curricula, and



Bronfenbrenner’s exosystem could incorporate digital literacy as a factor.

3. Level of Formation Across Dimensions

Formation levels were "Very High" across stewardship (M=4.30), servant leadership (M=4.33), equality (M=4.31), social justice (M=4.32), and service (M=4.29), with servant leadership strongest.

Table 3
Respondents’ Level of Formation

Formation Dimension	Mean Score	Interpretation
Stewardship	4.30	Very High
Servant Leadership	4.33	Very High
Equality	4.31	Very High
Social Justice	4.32	Very High
Service	4.29	Very High

These results reflect strong alignment with Jesuit values (Jesuit Institute, 2023). Bronfenbrenner’s microsystem (e.g., institutional training) and Ignatian pedagogy’s reflective practices explain high formation, but the uniformity across dimensions suggests limited variation, unlike Spears’ (2023) emphasis on contextual differences. Stewardship indicates responsibility, servant leadership fosters inclusivity, equality promotes fairness, social justice drives advocacy, and service reflects compassion (Lowney, 2022; Noddings, 2023). This implies Jesuit programs should sustain service-learning and reflection, while theoretically, Ignatian pedagogy could be modeled as a microsystem mediator in Bronfenbrenner’s framework.

4. Differences in Formation by Demographic and Environmental Factors

No significant differences were found by gender, religion, or academic program ($p>0.05$), but family, media, and peer influences significantly impacted formation ($p<0.001$). The lack of demographic differences suggests Ignatian

pedagogy’s universal effect, challenging Banks’ (2022) view of cultural variability, possibly due to strong institutional microsystems.

Table 4
T-Test Results (Gender: Male vs. Female)

Formation Dimension	t-Statistic	p-Value	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Stewardship	-0.80	0.428	Fail to Reject Ho
Servant Leadership	-0.52	0.607	Fail to Reject Ho
Equality	-1.21	0.237	Fail to Reject Ho
Social Justice	-0.94	0.358	Fail to Reject Ho
Service	-0.81	0.425	Fail to Reject Ho

This implies tailored training may not be needed across demographics, but Bronfenbrenner’s theory could explore why environmental factors dominate.

Table 5
ANOVA (F-Test) Results

Variables	F-Statistic	p-Value	Decision ($\alpha = 0.05$)
Religion	2.03	0.135	Fail to Reject Ho
Bachelor’s Degree	0.20	0.894	Fail to Reject Ho
Specialization	0.50	0.608	Fail to Reject Ho
Family Influence	44.39	<0.001	Reject Ho
Media Influence	38.97	<0.001	Reject Ho
Peer Influence	39.85	<0.001	Reject Ho

The ANOVA results highlight a striking pattern: while demographic factors such as religion, degree program, and specialization show no significant differences in values formation, environmental influences—family, media, and peers—emerge as decisive factors ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that formation among pre-service teachers in a Jesuit university is shaped less by inherent identity markers and more by the dynamic ecosystems that surround them. In Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological theory, such influences operate at the microsystem and mesosystem levels, where interactions with family and peers, as well as mediated exposure to



cultural norms, strongly shape development. The prominence of media influence resonates with recent studies emphasizing digital culture’s role in shaping youth values and behaviors (Banks, 2022). These findings affirm the universality of Ignatian pedagogy’s approach, which seems to transcend demographic boundaries, yet also caution educators to consider how external environments continue to mold dispositions. Thus, values formation programs may benefit from strengthening media literacy, peer leadership opportunities, and family engagement strategies, ensuring that ecological influences complement institutional formation rather than dilute it.

5. Perspectives of Purposively Chosen Students

Using Braun & Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis, as detailed in the Methodology, themes emerged from purposively chosen students (n=20), selected for diversity in gender, religion, academic program, and engagement with Jesuit values.

Table 6
Summary of Themes and Key Findings

Theme	Key Findings
Sense of Responsibility and Service	Students show varied discipline and service commitment, shaped by motivation and support
Understanding of "Being Persons for Others"	Students view service as selfless, reflecting Jesuit values
Service in Daily Life	Students apply values through peer support and household tasks
Influences on Values and Formation	Parents and teachers shape ethical leadership
Growth and Personal Transformation	Reflection drives self-improvement, aligning with Ignatian pedagogy and Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1997)

Students described varied engagement with service, with some showing strong discipline and others citing motivational barriers, suggesting Ignatian pedagogy’s reflection mitigates challenges (Kolvenbach, 2023). All endorsed selfless service, applying it in daily tasks. Parents and teachers, as microsystem factors in

Bronfenbrenner’s framework, drive formation, but heavy reliance on external support questions intrinsic motivation, unlike Ryan and Deci’s (2023) self-determination focus. Reflection aligns with Transformative Learning, yet its dependence on structured activities contrasts with Mezirow’s (1997) self-directed model. This tension suggests Ignatian pedagogy’s strength lies in guided reflection, implying tailored reflection activities for diverse students and a theoretical extension of Bronfenbrenner’s microsystem to include reflective mediators.

The findings illustrate how Bronfenbrenner’s microsystem (peers, family, institution) and exosystem (media) interact with Ignatian pedagogy’s reflective practices to foster values like service and social justice. However, uniform formation and variable qualitative engagement challenge assumptions of consistent internalization, suggesting a complex interplay (Banks, 2022). Practically, Jesuit institutions should implement media literacy, family engagement, and diverse reflection activities, while theoretically, Bronfenbrenner’s framework could integrate Ignatian reflection as a developmental factor.

Summary of Findings

This study’s analysis of 206 fourth-year pre-service teachers revealed a predominantly female (88.3%) cohort with diverse religious affiliations (62.1% Roman Catholic, 13.1% Muslim, 24.8% other) and academic programs favoring BECED (30.1%) and English specialization (57.9%), though STEM fields like Biological Science (10.5%) remain underrepresented. These patterns, shaped by Bronfenbrenner’s exosystem (e.g., societal norms), highlight a tension with efforts for gender and STEM diversity, suggesting targeted recruitment (OECD, 2023). The findings imply Jesuit institutions should promote inclusivity, while Bronfenbrenner’s framework could explore policy influences on specialization.

Environmental influences—peer, family, and media—consistently scored "Very High" (M = 4.28–4.31), shaping formation through motivation, ethical grounding, and exposure to educational



trends, respectively. Formation levels across stewardship, servant leadership, equality, social justice, and service also rated "Very High" ($M = 4.29-4.33$), with servant leadership strongest, reflecting robust internalization of Jesuit values. No significant differences emerged by gender, religion, or academic program ($p > 0.05$), an unexpected uniformity suggesting Ignatian pedagogy's strong microsystem influence, challenging Banks' (2022) emphasis on cultural variability. Family, media, and peer influences significantly impacted outcomes ($p < 0.001$), underscoring their role in ethical and professional development. This implies curriculum integration of media literacy and family engagement, and a theoretical need to refine Bronfenbrenner's exosystem for digital influences.

Qualitatively, purposively chosen students ($n=20$), selected for diversity in gender, religion, and program, showed varied commitment to service and responsibility, shaped by motivation and support, yet all endorsed selfless service as a core value. Reflection, central to Ignatian pedagogy and Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1997), drove growth, but reliance on external support contrasts with self-directed models (Ryan & Deci, 2023). Daily application included peer support and household contributions, influenced by parents and teachers. These findings affirm the institution's formation efficacy within a Jesuit context, as noted in the Limitations section, while revealing diversity-driven variations, suggesting tailored reflection activities and an extension of Bronfenbrenner's microsystem to include reflective mediators.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of Jesuit education in fostering value formation among pre-service teachers, revealing how institutional practices and environmental factors converge to cultivate ethical and service-oriented educators. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory illuminates the interplay of microsystem (e.g., peers, family) and exosystem (e.g., media) influences, while Ignatian pedagogy's reflective practices, aligned with Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1997), drive personal and professional

growth. Yet, the consistent formation across diverse backgrounds, contrasted with varied qualitative engagement from purposively chosen students, highlights a tension: institutional structures ensure uniformity, but individual readiness shapes internalization, challenging assumptions of universal transformative potential (Freire, 2023; Banks, 2022).

The findings, rooted in a single Jesuit institution as noted in the Limitations section, offer transferable insights for teacher education programs prioritizing reflective and values-based training. Secular institutions could adopt structured reflection to foster social awareness, though cultural and contextual differences warrant further study (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Practically, Jesuit programs should enhance media literacy, family engagement, and tailored reflection to support diverse learners, strengthening ethical leadership. Theoretically, integrating Ignatian reflective practices into Bronfenbrenner's microsystem could refine ecological models for faith-based education. These contributions call for future research to explore reflective pedagogies across diverse settings, advancing teacher preparation globally.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the study's insights, Jesuit institutions should implement targeted strategies to enhance pre-service teachers' values formation, leveraging environmental and reflective influences. To address Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, programs should introduce peer mentorship initiatives to foster service-oriented values, drawing on positive peer dynamics observed (Ryan & Deci, 2023). Family engagement workshops, engaging parents as microsystem influencers, can reinforce ethical development, particularly in collectivist contexts (Garcia & Bernardo, 2023). To mitigate the exosystem's media influence, curricula should integrate media literacy modules to promote critical engagement with digital content, addressing risks of misinformation (Choi & Lee, 2023). Ignatian pedagogy's reflective practices, aligned with Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 1997), should be tailored to diverse student needs,



as seen in purposively chosen students' varied engagement, ensuring inclusivity (Kolvenbach, 2023).

These strategies, while rooted in a Jesuit context as noted in the Limitations section, are transferable to secular programs emphasizing values-based education. Faculty training in reflective pedagogies can facilitate adoption, though resource constraints require further exploration (Darling-Hammond, 2020). Theoretically, researchers should extend Bronfenbrenner's framework by integrating Ignatian reflection as a microsystem mediator, advancing ecological models for teacher education. Future studies should test these recommendations across diverse settings to enhance global teacher preparation.

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