

Original Research Article

# **Determinants of Values in Bhutanese Youth: An Empirical Study**

## **Abstract**

The study examines and assesses the various factors that contribute to instilling values in youth and the effectiveness of the Integrity Clubs respectively. The study used the data from the Youth Integrity Assessment (YIA) 2022 conducted by the Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan (ACC). The findings reveal that positive social influence, being accountable for one's actions, and believing in ethical conduct are the prerequisite conditions for leading a successful life, significantly impacting positive values in youth. Moreover, having an Integrity Club in the school has a positive influence. Similarly, the club members are assured that they can lead an ethical living and succeed in life. Females, in general, and more mature youth in the schools with Integrity Club are shown to possess and portray more values in life.

**Key Words:** Integrity, Responsibility, Social Influence, Beliefs.

## **1. Introduction**

Young people have been the focal point of significance in all development processes and discourse aspects. Every nation that aspires to a more prosperous future places youth at the forefront of its priorities. To construct a nation characterized by honesty and moral uprightness, it is crucial to instill robust principles and individual dedication to integrity in the younger generation.

At a national level, considering the importance of having ethical and accountable citizens, various initiatives have been instituted to instill values from an early stage of life. Similarly, the Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan (ACC) has instituted Integrity Clubs in multiple schools (21 schools in 20 Districts) nationwide in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development. The integrity clubs advocated integrity, trust, respect, ownership, leadership, teamwork, and patriotism to students and staff through their activities (ACC, 2024).

More importantly, it is commonly recognized that during the early stages of a child's development, their character and values are primarily influenced by a combination of personal and social interactions with parents, siblings, friends, and teachers, which play a significant role in shaping these influences (Lexmond & Reeves, 2009).

The general education structure in Bhutan comprises of six primary and six secondary education years. After the twelfth Standard, students who qualify can attend public colleges and vocational institutes within the country. Education until high school is free, and beyond that, the top-performing students receive scholarships to pursue tertiary studies. When everything is provided free of cost, people tend to use it lavishly as it does not concern them directly. To optimize the use and minimize the waste, youth, mostly in schools, should shoulder the responsibility of considering school property as their own.

Therefore, this study examines the various factors contributing to inculcating values in youth (refer to Annexure 1 for the mental model). Moreover, it can also serve as an assessment to understand the effectiveness of the Integrity Club in instilling ethical attributes during the upbringing process of youth.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Values in Youth**

Values are those principles or standards that help improve quality of life. They form the basis of character and personality development. Such values can be love, compassion, sympathy, empathy, tolerance, etc., and they lay the foundation for externally practiced values like integrity, honesty, discipline, punctuality, and loyalty. Values tend to influence attitude and behavior, and they help to solve everyday human problems, the results of which provide answers to questions as to why people do what they do and in what order they choose to do them. Individuals with moral principles demonstrate ethical conduct and treat others respectfully, decreasing illegal actions (Jain & Patodia, 2022).

It is crucial for young individuals to see their significance and value in society and to appreciate themselves as contributors to the prosperity and advancement of any community. Young individuals should be dedicated to acquiring and maintaining moral principles throughout their lives, as they will influence their thoughts, speech, and behavior (George & D. Uyanga, 2014). The zeal and enthusiasm of young people can facilitate the revival of moral principles in contemporary society. To maintain moral principles, young people must demonstrate self-control and refrain from engaging in immoral actions that could ultimately deteriorate their moral compass.

### **Social Influence**

Social influence has positive and negative effects on the youth's behavior and mentality and imparting/imbibing values. Individuals should imbibe values that enable them to stand against social or peer pressure and refrain from indulging in unethical acts. The social influence component tries to determine the environment the youth live in, such as the community, schools, and people (parents, teachers, and friends) they are surrounded with.

Young individuals also exhibit a heightened moral consciousness and comprehension of the qualities that define a morally upright individual. Primary students showed a higher tendency than secondary students to place faith in their instructors and regard them as significant moral authorities (Huat See, 2018). This is crucial for youths from households without positive role models. For schools and teachers to contribute to young individuals' moral and ethical growth, it

is necessary to establish trust and respect. Teachers might contribute by exemplifying the desired behavior in young individuals. On the other hand, socialization decline, negative parental and peer influence on children, worsening education quality, and the nuclear family are significant factors contributing to the deterioration of ethical and moral values among youth(Bhat, 2020).

### **Responsibility**

The level of responsibility that one shoulder reveals the height of maturity. This component measures the responsibility of self, which means the youth are accountable for their actions. Responsibility also means taking the lead in reporting unethical behaviors, which allows one to be responsible for one's actions.

Responsibility is a fundamental characteristic of an individual, encompassing an understanding of its nature, possession of moral attributes and values, the capacity to assess and anticipate the outcomes of acts, and the willingness to assume accountability for them. The student's age is considered a critical phase of responsibility for young students, characterized by significant psychological and pedagogical aspects(Rozvadovska, 2020). These include the development of self-identity and worldview, establishing one's role in society, becoming a central figure, and recognizing one's contribution to positive social transformations.

### **Beliefs**

Beliefs are bound to differ for individuals, yet they can be unique and familiar. Beliefs are guided by the community we live in, the religion we follow, our family background, the values we subscribe to, and many more. They are also different regarding certain understandings and circumstances. In the case of this study, Beliefs are measured in terms of one's attitude toward measuring success.

A correlation exists between attitudes towards success and failure in youth and personality qualities. The study revealed that young men and women exhibit favorable perceptions of others, genuine happiness and admiration for their achievements, and sympathy for their failures. The success of others is a significant source of motivation for pupils to strive for similar achievements and fosters personal growth(Serdakova et al., 2023).

### 3. Data and Methodology

#### 3.1.Data

The paper used the YIA 2022 conducted by the ACC. The main objective of the assessment was to examine the level of integrity among the youth. This was the second such study since 2012. The study aimed to establish a baseline for integrity regarding awareness, values, perception, behavior, and readiness to fight corruption. Separate interviews were conducted with teachers and parents to understand their integrity better.

The study consists of information on the level of integrity, which was contributed by the index on Integrity Awareness, Values, Youth's Perception of Corruption, and parents and teachers' Perceptions towards Youth.

The survey was conducted in October 2021 and covered 3,558 youth respondents, 580 teachers, and 365 parents. To validate the findings from the survey, 24 FGDs were conducted in different schools, colleges, and institutions across the country (ACC, 2022).

#### 3.2. Econometric Model

##### 3.2.1. Dependent Variable

Values in Youth: 7 survey items.

##### 3.2.2. Independent Variable

Social Influence: 12 survey items.

Responsibility: 3 survey items.

Beliefs: 3 survey items.

(refer Annexure 2)

The YIA 2022 used a 5-point Likert scale to capture the respondents' perception (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree). The average of the survey items is used to construct the respective dependent and independent variables.

A baseline Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression method is used to estimate the causal relationship between Values in Youth, Social Influence, Responsibility, and Beliefs.

$$value_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 social_i + \beta_2 responsibility_i + \beta_3 belief_i + \epsilon_i \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where  $value_i$  is the perception of youth towards the standards necessary to improve the quality of life,  $social_i$  is the perception of youth towards the environment they reside and its impact on their behavior,  $responsibility_i$  is the perception of youth on understanding the importance of being accountable, and  $belief_i$  is the perception of youth towards how they measure success.

$$value_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 social_i + \beta_2 responsibility_i + \beta_3 belief_i + \beta_4 X_i + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

To overcome the endogeneity problems that may arise, all the observed factors that may influence the Values in Youth have been included.  $X_i$  is a control variable that includes demographic control like age, a dummy variable for gender (1 if female and otherwise), and grade (1st standard till Post Graduate Diploma). For this OLS method, the parameters of interest are  $\beta_1, \beta_2,$  and  $\beta_3$ , as it will capture the impact of Social Influence, Responsibility, and Beliefs on Values in Youth.

### 3.3. Summary Statistics

Table 1 shows the summary statistics of the variables used in the empirical analysis to provide overview information about the samples. The study uses a sample of 3558 from the YIA 2022, restricted to only youths.

Variables	Count	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	3558	18.38	2.69	15	24
Female	3558	0.50	0.50	0	1
Grade	3260	11.30	2.22	1	16
Integrity Club Member	694	0.19	0.39	0	1
School with Integrity Club	3558	0.09	0.29	0	1
Values in Youth	3558	3.48	0.73	1	5
Social Influence	3558	3.64	0.58	2	5
Responsibility	3558	3.11	0.77	1	5
Beliefs	3558	3.86	0.78	1	5

Table 1: Summary Statistics

The sample consists of individuals aged fifteen to twenty-four, with an average age of eighteen. The proportion of females is 50% (1,779) compared to 50% (1,779) for males. The distribution of grades varies from first standard to Postgraduate Diploma, with an average schooling level of 11 years (High school). The proportion of integrity club members from 694 samples is 19% (131), and the school with integrity club from the total sample is 9% (320).

The respondents tend to agree with the positive impact of the attributes mentioned above, with an average score of 3.48 for Values in Youth, 3.64 for Social Influence, 3.11 for Responsibility, and 3.86 for Beliefs.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Empirical Finding

Table 2 shows that the respondents in the lower grades (first and second) agree on the positive influence of the surrounding environment and the requirement of ethical conduct to lead a successful life. The respondents with the highest qualifications understand the importance of accountability for their actions and are more responsible. On the other hand, respondents from the fourth grade have differing views.

Grade	Count	Values in Youth	Social Influence	Responsibility	Beliefs
1st Grade	1	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
2nd Grade	1	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00
3rd Grade	7	3.57	3.71	3.00	3.71
4th Grade	4	2.75	3.00	2.50	3.50
5th Grade	1	3.00	4.00	3.00	3.00
6th Grade	4	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50
7th Grade	76	3.39	3.67	3.09	3.64
8th Grade	147	3.50	3.80	3.24	3.97
9th Grade	457	3.54	3.74	3.08	3.90
10th Grade	588	3.46	3.70	3.06	3.96
11th Grade	465	3.43	3.64	3.00	3.92
12th Grade	797	3.45	3.58	3.17	3.81
Certificates	127	3.48	3.60	3.21	3.65
Diploma	46	3.33	3.39	3.15	3.61
Bachelor's Degree	534	3.43	3.41	3.13	3.70
PG Diploma	5	3.40	3.60	3.80	3.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>3260</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>3.62</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>3.84</b>

Table 2: Grade and Variables

Table 3 shows that, on average, the female respondents agree on the positive influence of the surrounding environment, the requirement of ethical conduct to lead a successful life, and the importance of accountability for their actions. They are more responsible than male respondents.

Gender	Count	Values in	Social	Responsibility	Beliefs
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		<b>Youth</b>	<b>Influence</b>		
Male	1778	3.43	3.64	3.10	3.84
Female	1780	3.53	3.64	3.13	3.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>3558</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>3.86</b>

Table 3: Gender and Variables

Table 4 shows that younger respondents (15 and 16 years old) agree more with the positive influence of the surrounding environment and the requirement of ethical conduct to lead a successful life than older respondents (23 and 24 years old). On the other hand, older respondents understand the importance of accountability for their actions and are more responsible than younger respondents.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Values in Youth</b>	<b>Social Influence</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Beliefs</b>
15	537	3.55	3.80	3.08	3.94
16	566	3.49	3.75	3.06	3.95
17	504	3.45	3.68	3.06	3.93
18	460	3.50	3.64	3.10	3.92
19	368	3.48	3.57	3.10	3.89
20	275	3.42	3.56	3.13	3.75
21	284	3.50	3.49	3.21	3.72
22	184	3.45	3.47	3.17	3.74
23	178	3.40	3.53	3.24	3.60
24	202	3.49	3.51	3.24	3.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>3558</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>3.86</b>

Table 4: Age and Variables

### Correlation

The Pearson correlation coefficient shows that all the variables are positively correlated. The coefficients in Table 5 are positive (between 0 and 1) and significant at 0.05. It implies that an increase in one variable is directly associated with an increase in another variable and vice versa.

	Values in Youth	Social Influence	Responsibility	Beliefs
Values in Youth	1	-	-	-
Social Influence	0.2785*	1	-	-
Responsibility	0.1777*	0.0804*	1	-
Beliefs	0.3248*	0.2344*	0.0702*	1

Note: Significant at 0.05 level

Table 5: Correlation among variables

### Hypothesis Testing

A sample t-test was used to compare the differences in youths' perceptions of Values in Youth, Social Influence, Responsibility, and Beliefs among genders (male and female), Integrity Club members and non-members, and schools with and without Integrity Club. The two-sample t-tests in Table 6 show that perceptions of Values in Youth differ for the three comparing groups. The results with a p-value of more than 0.1 indicates that the result fails to reject the null hypothesis. This illustrates that the two samples do not have different variances, which means there is no difference in the perception of the variables among the comparing groups.

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Integrity Club Member</b>	<b>School with Integrity Club</b>
	$H_0: \text{mean}(\text{Male}) - \text{mean}(\text{Female}) = 0$ $H_1: \text{mean}(\text{Male}) - \text{mean}(\text{Female}) \neq 0$	$H_0: \text{mean}(\text{Yes}) - \text{mean}(\text{No}) = 0$ $H_1: \text{mean}(\text{Yes}) - \text{mean}(\text{No}) \neq 0$	$H_0: \text{mean}(\text{Yes}) - \text{mean}(\text{No}) = 0$ $H_1: \text{mean}(\text{Yes}) - \text{mean}(\text{No}) \neq 0$
Values in Youth	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0001$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0000$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0237$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>
Social Influence	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.9703$ <b>Fail to Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0026$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0045$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>
Responsibility	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.3274$ <b>Fail to Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.1939$ <b>Fail to Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0375$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>
Beliefs	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0847$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0000$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>	$\Pr( T  >  t ) == 0.0000$ <b>Reject Null Hypothesis</b>

Note:  $< 0.1 = \text{Reject Null Hypothesis}$

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

The results in Table 7 present the effect of Social Influence, Responsibility, and Beliefs on Values in Youth. The effects on all the samples are presented in columns 1 and 2. On average, Social Influence has more impact on Values in Youth than other variables, i.e., one unit increase in Social Influence increases Values in Youth by 0.257 units. However, after including the control variables, Belief tends to have more effect on Values, i.e., one unit increase in Beliefs increases the Values in Youth by 0.246 units. Similarly, on average, females are 0.101 units more likely to have Values than their male counterparts. However, age and grade showed no impact, as the coefficients were statistically insignificant.

Further, a sub-sample analysis was conducted to assess the impact of the various variables on the members of the Integrity Club, and the results are presented in columns 3 and 4. The coefficients for the effects of Responsibility were statistically insignificant even after including the control variables. The sub-sample analysis shows that belief has more impact on values. On average, one unit increase in beliefs increases values by 0.340 units and 0.343 units when control variables are included. The control variables like age, gender, and grade have no impact, as the coefficients were statistically insignificant.

Another sub-sample analysis was included to assess the impact of the variables on the respondents who were in a school with an Integrity Club, and the results are presented in columns 5 and 6. While comparing the effect of the various variables, Social Influence was found to have more impact on Values in Youth than other variables. On average, one unit increase in Social Influence increases the Values in Youth by 0.394 units and 0.417 units when control variables are included. Moreover, the sub-sample analysis shows that, on average, a one-year increase in age increases the Values in Youth by 0.048 units. Similar to the overall and Integrity Club member sub-sample analysis, the impact of grade (schooling level/years) was statistically insignificant.

	(1) All	(2) All	(3) Club Member	(4) Club Member	(5) School with Club	(6) School with Club
Social Influence	0.257*** (0.0211)	0.242*** (0.0224)	0.273** (0.116)	0.296** (0.133)	0.394*** (0.0747)	0.417*** (0.0765)
Responsibility	0.135*** (0.0160)	0.137*** (0.0170)	0.0658 (0.0669)	0.0538 (0.0698)	0.156*** (0.0505)	0.146*** (0.0507)

Beliefs	0.248 <sup>***</sup> (0.0152)	0.246 <sup>***</sup> (0.0161)	0.340 <sup>***</sup> (0.0930)	0.343 <sup>***</sup> (0.0916)	0.212 <sup>***</sup> (0.0566)	0.215 <sup>***</sup> (0.0573)
Age		0.00718 (0.00600)		0.0232 (0.0355)		0.0480 <sup>**</sup> (0.0239)
Female		0.101 <sup>***</sup> (0.0234)		-0.0690 (0.123)		0.0591 (0.0734)
Grade		0.00174 (0.00713)		-0.00562 (0.0385)		-0.0275 (0.0319)
<i>N</i>	3558	3260	130	130	326	326
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.169	0.166	0.211	0.217	0.205	0.217

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 7: Main Result

## 4.2. Discussion

As a youth, most of their time is spent with their parents, friends, and in education institutes. Besides their parents and community, they spend most of their time growing and learning. At the same time, the environment they live in also determines the person they become. Therefore, parents, teachers, friends, and school management types have specific roles in embedding values in Youth. As students, they may not be able to know everything happening in and around the schools, but they will have their perceptions of the school. Based on how the school performs its duty, students will have their judgment over the results, which will have a definite impact on them. The results also show that positive social influence instills values that encourage the youth to promote ethical practices even when no one is there to guide and supervise them. More importantly, the respondents who belong to a school with an Integrity Club, regardless of whether they are a member, tend to inculcate more values from having a positive influence. It can be understood that having an Integrity Club in the school allows the members to share the importance of possessing values geared towards potentially becoming ethical individuals to the other non-members.

Formal and nonformal educators have a significant chance to promote ethical conduct among young individuals. During youth, individuals may experience a conflict between their personal needs and the societal expectations placed upon them. The task for educators is to help youths understand that these two objectives are consistent with each other. Learning environments that

consciously decide to become nurturing communities provide the most significant potential for attaining this objective(Carlos, 1996).

Responsibility usually accounts for what you do and what others do. One should be accountable for what you do, and equally, one should be in a position to fix the accountability of others. Moreover, suppose the youths are complacent and tolerate unethical behaviors. In that case, it can indicate that they are not responsible enough to report wrongdoings, which may lead to a severe breach of norms. Being considerate of such behavior may pose a serious risk of getting it normalized. However, this solely depends on the surrounding environment to encourage and provide avenues for reporting.

Similarly, the results also show that the youths who are responsible for their actions and understand the importance of accountability are likely to inculcate values that will enable them to be more respectful and promote honest behaviors. Swatt, Schwartz, and Kramer (2019) found that youths view themselves as accountable, influential actors in the organization and supervision of significant life responsibilities and the performance of specific abilities. Moreover, the youths with an Integrity Club in their school are more likely to shoulder responsibility and have a positive attitude towards having positive values than those who do not have an Integrity Club.

Generally, youths should feel that an honest individual with personal integrity has more chances to succeed in life, and people ready to lie, cheat, break laws, and corrupt will not succeed. The results have substantiated this, as those youth with a strong belief in promoting ethical behavior tend to possess more values that allow them to stay honest despite hardship or circumstances. Moreover, the youths who are Integrity Club members tend to have a stronger belief in understanding the importance of upholding honesty and ethical behaviors to lead a successful life. Self-efficacy is considered the strongest predictor of optimism in youth toward success in later life(Keating & Melis, 2022).

The comparative analysis between the two genders showed that, in general, female youths are more likely to display values that portray ethical behaviors and are more accountable for their actions than their male counterparts. This is consistent with the study conducted by Ismail (2015), which found that females prioritize personal values associated with "ethics" and "citizenship" more significantly, while males place a greater focus on "masculinity." Moreover, in

the schools with Integrity Club, the older a youth gets, the more likely they are to have values that uphold taking responsibility and being more respectful to their surrounding environment. Self-transcendence values are considered to be more prevalent with maturity (Robinson, 2013).

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## **5. Conclusion**

The study's findings reveal that positive social influence, being accountable for one's actions, and believing in ethical conduct are the prerequisite conditions for leading a successful life, significantly impacting positive values in youth.

Moreover, having an Integrity Club in the school has a positive influence. Similarly, the club members are assured they can lead an ethical living and succeed in life. Females, in general, and more mature youth in the schools with Integrity Club are shown to possess and portray more values in life.

Hence, depending on the study's results, it is recommended that the schools having an Integrity Club that focuses on handling practical ethical dilemmas provides more opportunities to share them with other non-members.

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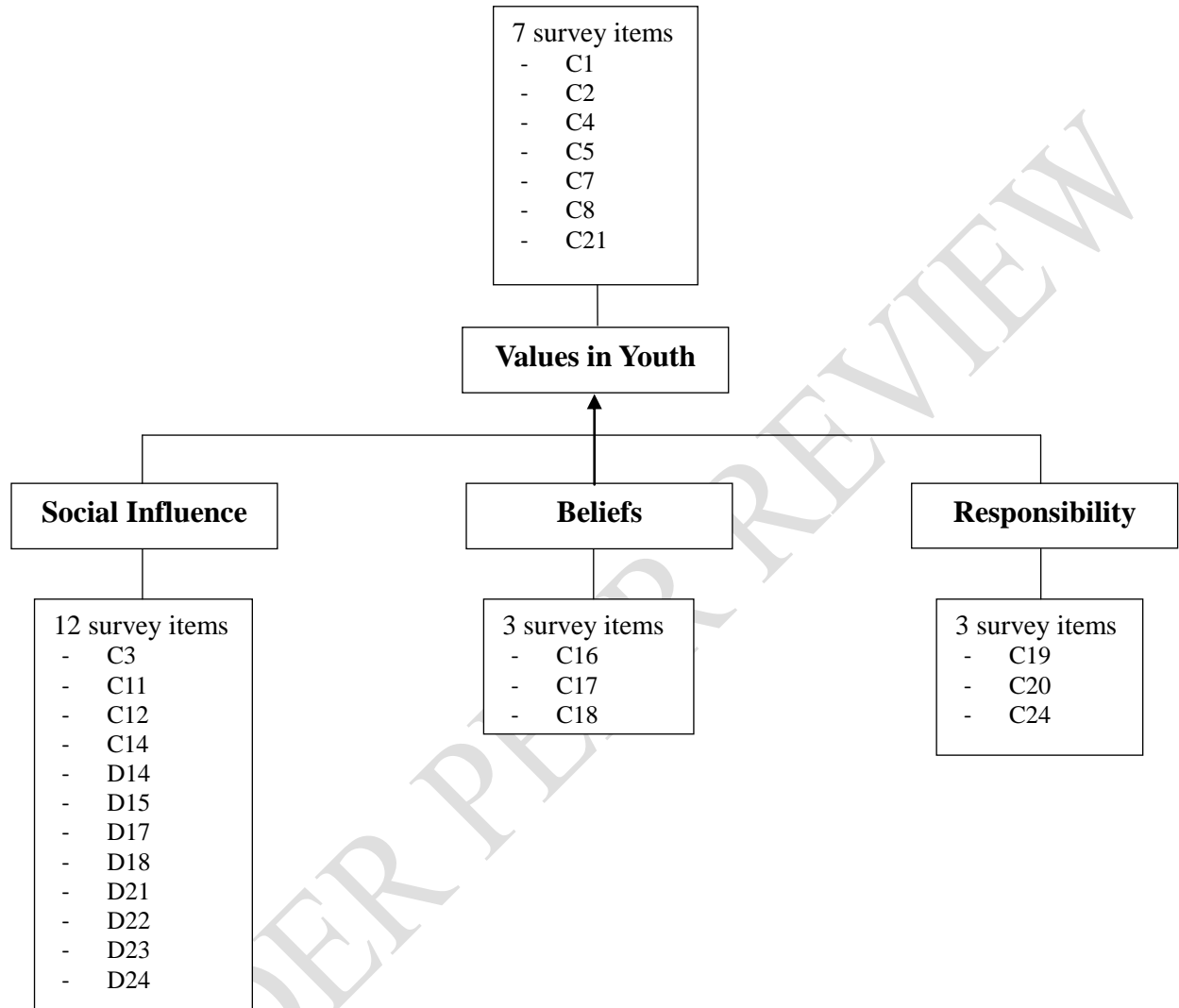
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## Annexure

### 1. Mental Model



## 2. Latent and Manifest Variables

Variables	Question	Survey Item
Values	C1	You are generally well behaved only when you are watched over either by parents or teachers/lecturers.
	C2	You would lie to either your parents or teachers/lecturers to get out of a difficult situation.
	C4	You take care of school/institute/agency property in the same way that you handle home property.
	C5	You are willing to cheat or lie if it is going to benefit you.
	C7	You would try to break the queue to avail the services faster (eg. hospitals, banks, etc.).
	C8	If it was the only way to get admission into a better school/institute/agency, you would be willing to lie/bribe/go to somebody with influence for help.
	C21	During SUPW periods, you work because the teacher/lecturer is watching over you and if you don't work, you get low grades.
Social Influence	C3	Your parents keep their promise. If at all they are not able to keep their promise, they explain to you the reasons as to why they were not able to keep their promise.
	C11	You break school/institute/agency rules because you can't say "no" to your friends.
	C12	Your friends sometimes bribe/bully to get what they want.
	C14	You are happy and satisfied with what you have.
	D14	When teachers/lecturers sometimes make mistakes, they accept that they have made a mistake and correct it.
	D15	The school explains how they have used the money earned from concerts, fete, and other contributions to the whole school/institute/agency.
	D17	Teacher/lecturer/supervisor in this school/institute/agency take their work very seriously.
	D18	The school/institute/agency management makes judicious use of the school/institute/agency resources (human, finance, and materials).
	D21	Teachers/Lecturers are partial towards students whose parents are rich and hold important positions.
	D22	If there is a problem between a captain and other students, the teacher/lecturer supports the captain, even if he/she is in the wrong.
D23	Student assessments (CA) are done with integrity and fairness.	
D24	School/College/Institutes mess in-charges manage funds transparently with integrity.	
Beliefs	C16	I take responsibility and am accountable for my actions (I don't make excuses or blame others).
	C17	You notice your friend cheating in the exams, you would report to the teachers/lecturers /principal.
	C18	Your teachers/lecturers does not come to class on a regular basis, always on the pretext of being busy one time or the other. You would report to the principal.
Responsibility	C19	People who are ready to lie, cheat, break laws and corrupt has more chance to succeed in life.
	C20	An honest person, with personal integrity, has more chances to succeed in life.
	C24	Finding ways to increase the family income is the most important and it is acceptable to abuse power to attain this objective.

Table 8: Latent and Manifest Variables