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Teaching Moral Dilemmas through Kyrgyz Epic Literature: An Experimental Study in Higher Education

Nauczanie dylematów moralnych poprzez kirgiską literaturę epicką: badanie eksperymentalne w szkolnictwie wyższym

Keywords: character behaviour, mature personality, worldview, ethical principles, higher education
Słowa kluczowe: model zachowania, dojrzała osobowość, światopogląd, zasady etyczne, szkolnictwo wyższe

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the pedagogical potential of Kyrgyz epics for the development of students' moral consciousness in the educational process. The methodology included structural analysis, abstraction, and a historical and cultural approach applied to investigate the moral content of epics and the possibilities of their integration into innovative educational strategies. The study found that the epics "Manas", "Semetey", and "Seytek" contain deep moral and ethical conflicts reflecting universal values, including duty, honour, sacrifice, and civic responsibility. The findings demonstrate that structural analysis enables the identification of the internal logic of moral plots and typical situations of moral choice that can be adapted to the educational environment. The effectiveness of innovative methods – such as discussion-based learning, case study, gamification, and project-based learning – in combination with epic materials was examined in relation to students' reflection and moral reasoning. Additionally, the method of abstraction helps to distinguish universal moral categories beyond specific narrative contexts, contributing to their actualisation in higher education. The analysis of behavioural models of characters and their motivational orientations allowed for a deeper understanding of the internal factors of moral choice. The synthesis of these elements contributed to the formation of a generalised concept of moral worldview embedded in the epic narrative. The cultural and historical role of the epic as a moral code of Kyrgyz society remains relevant in contemporary educational practice. The study also shows that the integration of epics with active teaching methods enhances students' capacity for ethical reflection, independent judgement, and responsible decision-making. The practical significance of the study lies in the development of a conceptual model for integrating epic material into moral education in higher education.

Introduction

In higher education, increasing attention is paid to the development of students' ethical worldview and critical thinking, which requires the introduction of new approaches to teaching moral and philosophical topics. Epics, as sources of moral reflection and representations of characters' behaviour in complex situations, have significant potential for developing students' moral consciousness. In this regard, the study of innovative methods of presenting moral problems embedded in epic texts contributes to the enrichment of the educational process, increases interest in the study of literary heritage, and creates conditions for understanding value orientations.

In recent years (2022–2025), there has been a steady interest in innovative methods of teaching humanities, in particular, the moral aspects inherent in epic works. Recent studies demonstrate diverse approaches to integrating ethical content into humanities education. For example, Mohammed Mujahid Irfan and Pulla Sammaiah (2025) focused on integrating the Experimental Physics and Industrial Control System (EPICS) course into technical education, demonstrating how project-based service learning could effectively engage students in ethical think-

ing through interdisciplinary tasks. Their findings highlight the role of socially oriented projects in developing moral competencies among students. The study by Baurzhan Yerdembekov et al. (2025) focused on teaching essays in higher education and demonstrated the importance of an individual approach to interpreting moral themes in creativity. The researcher used digital tools to create a flexible learning environment that allowed students to better understand ethical dilemmas.

In particular, Altynkyz Mamatova et al. (2024) considered the use of advanced technologies for teaching the work of folk poets, including digital platforms and multimedia, which enhanced students' moral engagement with folklore heritage. Innovative methods, such as virtual performances, have significant potential in shaping critical thinking and value attitudes towards traditional culture. Aline Nardo and Matthew Gaydos (2021) introduced the concept of complex moral dilemmas in the format of educational games, contributing to the development of ethical thinking through a gamified approach. These games provided a multi-vector analysis of situations that resembled moral dilemmas in epic narratives, and allowed students to consider alternative scenarios for the development of events. The study by Samara Osmonova et al. (2021) analysed the experience of moral education in Kyrgyzstan at the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, where the emphasis was placed on traditional forms of ethical education. The researchers emphasised the importance of restoring cultural heritage and combining it with the latest methods to preserve the moral content of epic works in higher education.

The introduction of artificial intelligence in higher education in South Africa was considered by Shahiem Patel and Mahlatse Ragolane (2024), focusing on the potential of adaptive learning and ethical challenges. Although the study was not directly related to epic works, it emphasised the importance of the moral aspect in working with technology, which can be useful in developing digital solutions for teaching ethics in epics. Maria Rosienkiewicz et al. (2024) investigated the implementation of innovation models in international educational projects, in particular, in the ecosystem of entrepreneurship in higher education institutions. Their approach, based on cross-cultural exchange and project-based learning, also had the potential to use epic heritage as a source of moral guidance in the student environment.

Abdullah Sahin (2021) saw the love of knowledge as the foundation of humanistic pedagogy, using the Islamic traditions of higher education. He emphasised the moral depth of the texts and the need to immerse students in reflection on the behaviour of the characters, which found a response in epic literature. Research by Norah Muflih Alruwaili et al. (2025) showed that the use of contemporary pedagogical strategies, such as e-learning technologies, blended learning, and interactive platforms, significantly increases students' academic motivation, which, in turn, had

a positive impact on their mental well-being. These approaches can also be effectively applied in the teaching of epic texts, which highlight complex moral dilemmas. Some studies also apply quantitative approaches to examine the relationship between student engagement, emotional response, and the perception of ethical values. Rusnan Hadi et al. (2025) further emphasised the role of the teacher as both a knowledge provider and a moral model, underlining the importance of pedagogical and emotional competence in creating an ethically rich educational environment. Innovative teaching methods, including problem-based learning, case analysis, and role-playing, support the development of moral thinking, empathy, and reflective skills.

Despite the aspects highlighted by the aforementioned researchers, the gaps included a lack of attention to the systematic integration of epic literature into interdisciplinary learning, and limited use of interactive platforms to understand moral dilemmas. There was a lack of research focusing on culturally adapted approaches to teaching moral issues in the national epics of different peoples.

The aim of this study was to determine the pedagogical potential of Kyrgyz epics for the development of moral qualities of students. To achieve this goal, the study addressed the following objectives: (1) to analyse the moral and ethical content of the epics "Manas", "Semetey", and "Seytek"; (2) to compare key moral conflicts and dilemmas in these works; (3) to develop recommendations for integrating epic material into moral education through innovative teaching methods.

Materials and Methods

The study used a number of theoretical methods, in particular structural analysis of the epics "Manas", "Semetey" and "Seytek" (Baidzhiev 2019), which helped to identify their internal composition, main storylines, the structure of moral conflicts, and the distribution of roles between the characters. The analysis of these epics was carried out based on such criteria as the presence of a clearly defined moral choice, the system of values of the characters, the development of collective responsibility within the community, and typical situations of moral dilemma in which the characters had to choose between personal interest and public duty. Special attention was paid to the dynamics of the development of moral qualities of the characters, which were examined through their actions, dialogues, and reactions to external challenges. The analysis also considered the nature of conflicts (internal and external), which served as indicators of deeper moral and ethical foundations laid down in the epic narrative. In addition, the level of modelling of social relations and ethical norms of behaviour inherent in traditional

Kyrgyz society was evaluated to determine their potential for application in the educational environment. These criteria were used to identify key moral themes and their relevance for educational application.

The method of abstraction was applied, involving highlighting general moral ideas presented in texts, outside of specific event contexts. This approach made it possible to focus on universal moral categories – virtue, loyalty, courage, duty, and sacrifice – that were relevant in the context of contemporary higher education. In addition, analysis and synthesis were applied. The analysis helped to examine the content of the epics based on individual moral and ethical components: behavioural models of the characters, motivational factors of their actions, typical conflicts between personal desires and duty to society. The synthesis, in turn, integrated these individual elements into a single conceptual picture of the moral worldview presented in epic works, and enabled an assessment of its alignment with educational goals.

In the study, a series of experimental classes was conducted with 48 third- and fourth-year students of the Speciality in Philology at the Kyrgyz National University named after Jusup Balasagyn. The sample was formed on the principle of voluntary consent, with compliance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Students who met the following criteria were invited to participate: a) had full academic performance in professional disciplines; b) completed a preliminary course in pedagogy; c) provided written informed consent to participate in the study. The sample did not include students who were on academic leave or had a conflict of interest regarding participation in thematic classes. The study was conducted in compliance with the basic ethical principles provided for in the code of ethics of a researcher in the field of social and humanitarian sciences (European Code…, 2023). All participants were informed about the purpose, forms of participation, and the right to withdraw without any consequences. The collected data were anonymised and used exclusively for research purposes.

Experimental classes included the following methods: discussion-based learning, case method, gamification, and project-based learning. In particular, participants were offered cases with elements of moral choice in the educational environment. A case study was modelled in which students had to imagine themselves as a class teacher who must decide how to respond to a conflict between students, one of whom demands a public apology, while the other preferred to keep quiet. As part of this situation, the participants looked for the best options and discussed which option would be morally justified and how to agree on it. Students were also asked to create a game situation based on a moral conflict from "Semetey", where participants in the game had to take on the roles of heroes and act according to moral principles that they themselves defined. These methods

were chosen because of their effectiveness in stimulating critical thinking, reflection, and moral choice among students. Interactive online platforms, in particular Padlet (for collaborative idea collection) and Mentimeter (for real-time voting and visualisation), were used to support student interaction and data collection.

Results

Moral Structures in Kyrgyz Epics: Results of Structural Analysis

The analysis shows that ethical tensions play a central role in Kyrgyz epics, as these works emerged as a form of oral folk pedagogy that passed down vital values from generation to generation. As a result, the heroes of the epics not only fight enemies or overcome natural elements – they are constantly faced with value-based choices, such as how to act in the face of betrayal, whether to prioritise personal well-being or service to society, and whether restraint may be preferable to revenge (Baidzhiev 2019: 23–25). This is illustrated by "Semetey", where the hero is forced to decide whether to punish an older warrior who did not comply with the order, which constitutes both a challenge to leadership authority, and a test of moral flexibility, reflecting broader patterns of internal moral conflicts and personal responsibility characteristic of this part of the epic tradition (Baidzhiev 2019: 205–215). Such episodes indicate that ethical conflicts in the epic tradition are not resolved through fixed norms, but require situational judgement.

These findings indicate that such situations lack a single correct solution, which makes them particularly valuable for value-oriented learning. This open-endedness makes them applicable in an educational context, where ethical evaluation depends on the comparison of competing values rather than adherence to predetermined rules. Epics serve as a moral mirror, helping students better understand their culture and articulate ethical positions (Shynkaruk 2025).

Structural analysis demonstrates that in the epic "Manas" ethical tensions are closely related to the idea of sacrifice for the common good and the struggle for collective freedom and justice. In key episodes of the epic, the hero continues to fight for the independence and well-being of his people, even under conditions of hardship and personal risk. His decision to engage in battle, even when it threatens his life, demonstrates the superiority of public duty over his own interests, which corresponds to the traditional representation of the hero as a defender of collective values and unity (Baidzhiev 2019: 52–60). This pattern reflects a stable model of collectivist ethics embedded in the narrative.

The analysis of "Semetey" reveals that the theme of continuity of responsibility and leadership comes to the fore. Semetey, as the son of Manas, faces the challenge of not only preserving his father's authority but also developing his own, which is expressed through intensified interpersonal tensions and internal conflicts (Baidzhiev 2019: 205–215). His trajectory moves from uncertainty to deliberate decision-making, marking a shift from inherited authority to constructed agency.

The analysis of "Seytek" highlights that the narrative develops ideas of reconciliation, restraint, and spiritual growth, continuing the logic of restoring social balance after earlier conflicts. In a key episode, the hero refuses revenge despite social pressure and personal resentment. This decision is framed as a higher-order ethical choice (Baidzhiev 2019: 274–295), foregrounding a restorative model in which strength is expressed through restraint rather than retaliation.

In the course of the analysis, it was established that each of the epics represents a certain type of moral conflict: "Manas" – an external conflict between the hero and social threats; "Semetey" – an internal conflict between the expectations of ancestors and their own uncertainty; "Seytek" – a moral and ethical conflict between the right to revenge and the call for peace, which corresponds to the differentiation of heroic, personal, and restorative narrative layers within the epic trilogy (Baidzhiev 2019: 52–60; 205–215; 274–295). This differentiation suggests a progression from external to internal and, ultimately, to reconciliatory modes of moral reasoning.

In general, the results of structural analysis indicate that Kyrgyz epics have a high potential for use in the educational process not only as examples of cultural heritage, but also as structured representations of ethical choice. Table 1 provides a general overview of key scenes from the analysed epics, their moral content, and possible educational interpretation.

Table 1. Moral issues in the epics of Kyrgyzstan: Key episodes and ethical burden

Epic	Key episode	Moral question	Potential for education
Manas	Choice between personal peace and war for the people	Self-sacrifice for the good of the community	Reflections on duty, heroism, and the common good
Semetey	Affirmation of leadership after the death of his father	Responsibility to inheritance, character development	Development of emotional intelligence, identity
Seytek	Refusal of revenge	Forgiveness as the highest form of moral power	Education of peacemaking mindset, reflection

Source: compiled by the authors based on Mar Baidzhiev (2019).

Table 1 shows that each epic represents both a separate historical or mythological event and a moral and ethical experience. The analysed material indicates that these narratives function as structured representations of moral choice, combining individual and social dimensions, where dilemmas are framed through tensions between personal judgement and collective expectations.

Empirical Findings from Experimental Teaching Practice

The empirical findings obtained during the experimental classes corroborate the patterns identified in the structural analysis. For example, when discussing an episode from the epic "Seytek", where the main character chooses the path of reconciliation instead of revenge, students expressed their own opinion, shared personal experience, and formulated arguments about why one course of action is morally more appropriate than the other. In this context, ethical judgement emerged from students' own reasoning processes rather than being externally imposed.

The results of the experimental classes indicate that the most frequent responses of students to the proposed case focused on a morally balanced and pedagogically appropriate solution to a conflict situation. In particular, 41% of participants considered it best to conduct a private conversation with each student separately, followed by finding a compromise solution. Another 33% of students supported the idea of a facilitation group conversation with the entire class, during which ways to discuss nonviolent conflict resolution could be explored. The option to support a student who sought a public apology, but in a form that does not humiliate the dignity of another participant in the conflict, was chosen by 19% of respondents. By contrast, 7% of students considered it appropriate not to interfere, arguing that children have the right to resolve interpersonal contradictions on their own. This distribution demonstrates a clear preference for mediation over punitive approaches, which aligns with the collectivist conflict-resolution patterns identified in "Manas".

Following the introduction of gamification and project-based learning, students more frequently proposed collectively oriented solutions, prioritising shared outcomes over individual interests. This pattern suggests that interactive formats reinforce value orientations embedded in the epic material.

Another experimental component involved reflexive essays. After analysing the epics, students wrote short texts about which act of the hero made the greatest impression on them and why. Most responses moved beyond retelling and included explicit value-based interpretation. Participants, in particular, focused on the need to be able to forgive, even when it comes to a strong personality, and

also discussed the topic of true leadership, which consists not only in winning, but also in the ability to maintain team cohesion. This indicates a shift from narrative comprehension to ethical interpretation.

Overall, the data show that the use of interactive methods is associated with a shift from reproductive reading to reflective engagement with ethical content. Across formats (discussion, case analysis, gamification, project work), students demonstrated the ability to formulate arguments, compare positions, and justify decisions in ethical terms. This was particularly evident in discussions of "Manas", where students consistently framed the narrative in terms of competing obligations (personal vs collective). A similar pattern was observed in responses to "Semetey", where students emphasised the tension between justice and conflict avoidance.

Gamification was associated with increased emotional engagement and more nuanced ethical reasoning. Role-based scenarios were associated with engagement in situations of moral choice under conditions of perceived responsibility and uncertainty. This was particularly evident in relation to "Seytek", where the main character refuses revenge.

The project-based learning method was associated with the transfer of ethical themes into applied contexts, including student-generated interpretative and project outputs. Overall, the use of these methods was linked to a more active engagement with epic material as a source of ethical reflection. Table 2 shows the main forms of relationships between individual methods and types of moral problems contained in epic works.

Table 2. Interrelation of innovative teaching methods and moral aspects of Kyrgyz epics

Innovative method	Epic element	Moral issues	Educational effect
Discussion training	Arguments of heroes in "Manas"	Choice between personal and collective	Development of argumentation and ethical thinking
Case method	Dilemmas in "Semetey"	Leadership responsibility, justice	Analysis of moral decisions and consequences
Gamification	Internal conflict in "Seytek"	Forgiveness, emotional ethics	Empathy, reflection through role-playing interaction
Project method	Values of the entire trilogy	Transfer of cultural and moral heritage	Connection of the epic with the present, active position

Source: compiled by the authors.

All these methods produced a consistent pattern of engagement across analytical, emotional, and applied dimensions. Across the instructional sequence, students moved from initial comprehension of narrative material to analytical

discussion and, subsequently, to applied and experiential forms of engagement. This progression was accompanied by a shift from descriptive responses to interpretative and evaluative reasoning.

In the project-based component, students produced independent outputs that reflected the internalisation of ethical themes and their reinterpretation in contemporary contexts. The combination of analytical, experiential, and creative formats was associated with students' ability to articulate and justify their own ethical positions.

The results point to increased moral sensitivity, ethical reasoning, and reflective judgement. In this context, the use of Kyrgyz epics provided concrete narrative cases for analysing ethical choice. Structural analysis revealed how conflicts unfold between personal and social values, including tensions between honour and duty and between family loyalty and social expectations. During the experimental sessions, these tensions were actively discussed and reinterpreted by students in relation to their own experiences. This was associated with deeper engagement with ethical content and the development of reflective and communicative competences. Overall, the findings suggest that the integration of epic material through interactive methods supports both personal and professional development.

Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the Kyrgyz epics "Manas", "Semetey" and "Seytek", a set of recommendations for the use of epic material in moral education can be formulated. The integration of epic material requires not merely the transfer of texts, but its alignment with pedagogical approaches that support critical thinking, reflective engagement, and students' personal development. Epic texts combine narrative form with ethically significant content, which underpins their pedagogical value.

The epic "Manas" foregrounds dilemmas related to sacrifice for the common good. In the educational process, such motives can serve as a basis for situational analysis, where students examine the relationship between personal interests and responsibilities to the community. This supports ethical reasoning and empathy.

The development of ethical competences is strengthened through interactive pedagogical formats. For example, role-playing or modelling alternative storylines enable students to engage with moral conflicts in an experiential mode, supporting reflection and emotional awareness (Yesmaganbet and Kairbekov 2025). This approach is especially useful when working with epic narratives where characters face choices between personal benefit and social duty. In "Semetey", episodes of leadership formation can be used to examine the relationship between personal

uncertainty and responsibility. In an educational context, this can be implemented through project-based tasks, where students analyse situations, identify ethical dimensions, and propose solutions.

Equally important is the use of the epic "Seytek", which foregrounds reconciliation and forgiveness. These themes are particularly relevant in contemporary contexts, where issues of tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution are central. Engagement with such episodes supports the development of dialogue, compromise, and peacemaking skills. The effectiveness of this approach depends on the selected instructional formats. Traditional passive reading does not ensure sufficient engagement or the development of value orientations. In contrast, interactive and problem-based methods encourage active participation, which is necessary for the internalisation of ethical norms.

The use of interactive, problem-based and reflexive methods encourages an active position, which is a necessary condition for internal assimilation of moral norms (Ilieva 2021). In particular, discussion training and the case method allow students to work through complex moral dilemmas, analyse the behaviour of characters from different opinions, and compare historical and modern contexts. The combination of textual, visual, and creative formats broadens interpretative engagement. For example, creation of comics or theatrical productions based on an epic supports both engagement and interpretation of character motivation.

When working with epics, an interdisciplinary approach can be applied, combining history, literature, philosophy, and psychology. This enables a multidimensional analysis of ethical problems and their contexts. Analysing moral choices within their historical context helps to explain how social and cultural conditions shape ethical norms (Mazhiyev et al. 2024). Psychological perspectives, in turn, help to interpret character motivation. Contextual reinterpretation makes these moral problems accessible in contemporary settings. In particular, conflicts related to loyalty, responsibility, or forgiveness can be discussed with reference to present-day situations in family, educational, or digital environments (Karassayev et al. 2024).

In addition, it is important to develop students' skills of independent work with epic material, in particular, through the search, analysis, and comparison of different versions of texts, research of comments and interpretations, and writing their own reflections and essays. Such activities support deeper engagement with ethical content and the development of critical interpretation.

Thus, the use of epic material in moral education is most effective when traditional textual analysis is combined with interactive and context-sensitive pedagogical approaches.

Discussion

The use of innovative methods of teaching moral problems in epic works in higher education enhanced students' cognitive, emotional, and ethical engagement, as well as their critical thinking and moral self-determination. The results indicate the need to modernise conventional methods of teaching literature, which previously mainly relied on reproductive approaches. As noted by Anilkumar Krishnannair et al. (2021), institutions of higher education must adapt to the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution by transforming the educational environment into an innovative space where moral concepts are explored through personal reflection, media analysis, and interdisciplinary dialogue. Similarly, Perdoor Sreeramana Aithal and Shubhrajyotsna Aithal (2023), in their analytical model of incubation-based training, emphasised the importance of introducing educational innovations aimed not only at professional, but also at moral preparation of young people for social challenges. The study also found that the combination of digital interaction tools with narrative analysis, such as interactive discussion of texts through platforms with visualisation, facilitated a deeper understanding of such moral categories as honour, dignity, justice, revenge, and sacrifice, which are often represented in epics. This approach corresponds to the findings of Tiffani Apps et al. (2023), who investigated the impact of digital platforms on reading in the educational process and showed that digitalisation contributes to the personalised involvement of students in the analysis of literary texts, especially when it comes to moral content. Taken together, these findings suggest that digital and interactive approaches not only increase engagement but also reshape the way moral content is interpreted by students.

Interdisciplinary projects drawing on history, philosophy, sociology, and ethics enabled both the actualisation of moral dilemmas and the formation of students' own evaluative positions (Kravchenko et al. 2025). This result is in line with the findings of Surendra Reddy Bandi et al. (2023), who, in a systematic analysis of teacher training, emphasised that moral education is more effective in a format of student social engagement, where morality is understood through action. However, some findings diverged from those reported in previous studies. This partly contrasts with the statement of Jan Frick (2020), who argued that the internationalisation of education and digital technologies tend to reduce disciplinary barriers to the perception of humanitarian content. In the present study, moral reception was found to depend on students' professional orientation. This discrepancy suggests that the effects of digitalisation on moral perception are not uniform, but are mediated by disciplinary and contextual factors.

The active use of meta-analysis of epic plots, aimed at identifying moral problems, reflects practices in other educational contexts that promote reflexive engagement with cultural texts (Tsyrfa 2013). In particular, Manuel Garcia (2023), in a study of innovative approaches to education through hackathons, emphasised that students better master value content through short, intensive educational practices that combine creativity, discussion, and analysis. There was also a tendency for moral problems to be addressed more effectively through simulations, debates, and modelling dialogues between epic characters, which was associated with an increase in moral empathy. This is consistent with the approaches described by Khaing Phyu Htut et al. (2022), who showed that even in the unstable context of reforms, student involvement in moral discussion through simulation techniques allowed for increased moral resilience and critical awareness.

Special attention was paid to the use of virtual reality in the study of the epic, in particular, in the creation of stage reconstructions of fragments of epic works. A similar practice was noted in the study by Sanaa Kaddoura and Fatima Al Husseiny (2023) and was associated with the transition of education to the meta-universe, where moral dilemmas can be experienced in an embodied and empathetic way. The results showed that students who participated in VR modelling of plots demonstrated a higher readiness for moral justification of characters' actions. However, not all aspects of the innovation approach were unambiguously effective. Some students pointed out the difficulty of emotional interaction with characters in full digitalisation, which echoes the criticism outlined by Awad Alhassan (2021), who analysed the problems of teachers in the context of English-language teaching in Oman. He noted that digitalisation sometimes reduces the depth of personal contact, especially in the humanities. These findings highlight the ambivalent role of digital environments, which can both enhance immersion and limit interpersonal engagement. The experience of using moral cases based on the epic proved effective for developing students' ability to make moral judgements (Kairbekov 2016; Zhanabergenova and Kairbekov 2024). This corresponds to the findings of A. Shaji George et al. (2023), who investigated the development of engineering ethics through the interpretation of social and cultural cases. The use of literary sources as a basis for ethical analysis provided an immersive effect, supporting the development of moral self-perception.

The study by Ji Eun Lee and In Ok Sim (2020) focused on the gap between theoretical teaching and practical application of knowledge in the field of nursing. Although the subject area was different, a similar problem was found in the teaching of the epic, as students often did not realise the relevance of the moral dilemmas described in classical works. The integration of innovative forms of

learning helped to overcome this alienation, translating the moral content of the epic narrative into the plane of personal experience. This transformation of the educational process reflected broader trends in the modernisation of higher education, as discussed by Rohit Madhukar Nikam et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of qualitative assessment of internal learning processes. In this context, the observations are consistent with the findings of Santosh Madeva Naik and Surendra Bandi (2025), who confirmed the effectiveness of service training in the development of social responsibility of engineering students. Epic texts, which foreground themes of sacrifice, duty, good and evil, gain particular pedagogical value when students engage with these categories through socially oriented projects, linking literary analysis with real-life moral contexts.

These findings also correspond to the model of educational integration of moral and religious foundations proposed by Süleyman Oktar (2022). The researcher described a system where knowledge about the world was combined with religious and ethical principles, which resembled the way the epic was taught in the culture of the East. The results indicate that the impact of epic narratives on moral interpretation increases under conditions of cultural contextualisation, that is, when the events of the epic are compared with the historical, religious, and social features of modernity.

Nandita Mishra and Perdoor Sreeramana Aithal (2023) emphasised the importance of the ancient Indian education system as a source of moral education. These findings suggest that the return to authentic sources, provided that innovative interpretive strategies were used, enhances personal understanding of moral content. This approach aligns with the idea of combining tradition and modernity as a key educational principle (Doroshko and Tsyrfa 2021). The methods of visualising epic text through the creation of interactive maps used in this study allowed students to trace the moral evolution of characters and understand the topography of moral choices. This is in line with the findings of Jing Tian et al. (2021), who demonstrated the effectiveness of geographic information technologies in the development of critical thinking in the humanities. Marián Queiruga-Dios et al. (2021) emphasised the importance of reflexive assessment in project-based learning. In the context of teaching moral problems in epics, the use of self-assessment and mutual evaluation contributed not only to academic understanding, but also to the development of moral autonomy. This suggests that reflective practices play a key role in transforming literary analysis into value-based judgement. This, in turn, indicates an increased capacity to analyse ethics not only in the educational process, but also in the daily life of students.

The data obtained partially differed from the observations of Linda-Dianne Willis and Beryl Exley (2022), who focused on the use of social media in moral

literacy research. Although the study used interactive platforms, students did not always show a willingness to openly discuss moral dilemmas in public, which was probably due to cultural factors. This demonstrated the limitations of social media as a universal tool for moral dialogue in higher education. This is in line with the findings of Negar Sohaee and Rokhsareh Farsad (2025), who emphasised the need to foster moral responsibility through educational practices focused on sustainable development. Moral issues in epics, namely, the fight against evil, environmental harmony, and justice, can be interpreted as part of global education for a sustainable future.

The study by Michael James Scott et al. (2021) emphasised the importance of using game techniques to develop interpersonal and ethical skills among students. The use of gamified forms in the process of analysing the epic, in particular, the creation of alternative solutions for literary characters in the format of role-playing games or simulations, stimulated discussion and enhanced understanding of moral content. This approach supports the development of skills of moral choice and critical attitude to the actions of characters in various ethical contexts.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that the Kyrgyz epics "Manas", "Semetey" and "Seytek" have strong potential for shaping students' moral consciousness due to their deep ethical and philosophical basis. These narratives provide a structured representation of moral dilemmas, which makes them applicable as a tool for value-oriented education. Epic works reflect not only the historical and cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people, but also universal moral models of behaviour relevant in the context of contemporary pedagogy.

Innovative teaching methods used in the study, including discussion-based learning, case analysis, gamification, and project-based approaches, facilitated active student engagement in the interpretation of moral content. The results show that structural analysis helped to identify the internal logic of ethical conflicts, plot dynamics, and transformation of moral qualities of characters. These methods also supported the development of critical thinking, moral argumentation, and the ability to apply ethical reasoning in practice. In addition, they diversified the educational process and enabled students to understand moral situations in the context of their own experience. This integrated approach contributed to the development of moral consciousness, the ability to make informed decisions and take responsibility for their actions both in their professional and personal lives.

Students participated in the analysis, modelling, and rethinking of epic situations, demonstrating the ability to make independent moral judgments, which was important both personally and professionally. Such engagement was associated with increased reflection, empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect. The combination of personality-oriented and professionally oriented training ensured the integrity of the development of moral and ethical attitudes among future specialists. Thus, the integration of Kyrgyz epic heritage through innovative teaching methods can be considered an effective strategy for moral education, combining cultural tradition with active and reflective learning practices. The prospect of further research includes exploring the impact of innovative teaching methods on the development of moral competence among students from various ethno-cultural environments.

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