

Perceptions of Virtue: An Experimental Approach

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Case 1 – Traditional Virtue Ethics (Habit & Practice):

Students failed to complete their homework for the third time in a row, leading to a conversation with their teacher. Their teacher tells them that responsibility and diligence are qualities that must be practiced regularly in order to form good habits. They remind the student that homework isn't just about the grades, but perseverance. The teacher also encourages the students to establish a routine and that responsibility becomes second nature if done through repeated effort. The students internalize this lesson, making completing their homework a regular part of their daily lives.

Abstract:

Youth will favor conditions that resemble situational approaches to virtue, regardless of their conscientiousness levels. Researcher select a random sample of high school students aged 14- 18 ($\alpha = .95$). Two groups of students will be divided based on their scores on a provided conscientiousness measure. Both groups will read the same scenarios relevant to them: homework, peer groups, parents, etc. with various virtue twists. Students will be asked to select the option that they resonate with the most. I present the foundations for thinking about how to test virtue ethics expiermentally.

Case 2 – Factitious Virtue Approach (Appearance of Virtue Without Substance):

Students failed to complete their homework for the third time in a row, leading to a conversation with their teacher. The teacher tells them how accountable they were at the start of the school year, consistently reinforcing how they are good at time management and making time for things that are important. When students furrow at the sound of this, thinking their homework is not as important, the teacher reminds them how open-minded and courageous they are to try new things. The students internalize this lesson, making completing their homework a regular part of their daily lives.

Case 3 – Traditional/Factitious Virtue Approach (Sympathy and Understanding)

Students failed to complete their homework for the third time in a row, leading to a conversation with their teacher. The teacher sits with each table group/row of students to take the time and try and understand why the students have been struggling to get their work done. The teacher reminds the group that they are responsible for their own learning, and that their education is valuable. By adjusting tone and manner to each group, the student feels more heard and are thus more motivated to internalize this lesson, making completing their homework a regular part of their daily lives.

Case 4 – Situational (Psychological Priming Instead of Ethical Framing):

Students failed to complete their homework for the third time in a row, leading to a conversation with their teacher. The teacher takes a survey of each students favourite snack, and learns that the vast majority of students prefer freshly baked chocolate chip cookies from other alternatives. The next day, the teacher brings freshly baked cookies to her class. The teacher clarifies that only the students who get their homework done the next day will one. The students internalize this lesson, making completing their homework a regular part of their daily lives.