

**Fostering Morality in accordance with the St Teresa way for Students at
St Teresa International University**

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Abstract

This mixed-method study aimed to examine how morality was fostered according to the St Teresa way, as well as the moral characteristics of students and graduates at St Teresa International University.

The research was conducted in three phases. The first two phases involved qualitative methods, including document analysis, focus groups, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. The third phase employed a quantitative approach using a researcher-designed questionnaire. The data were analyzed using mean scores.

The study's findings revealed that: 1) Three elements made up the morality of the St Teresa way as practiced by the students at St Teresa International University: Peace, Love-Kindness, and Public Consciousness. 2) Fostering morality in accordance with the St Teresa way was accomplished through two stages: the design phase, which focused on developing meaningful morality, and the implementation phase, which focused on attaining the expected learning outcomes (ELO) and developing the desired characteristics of stakeholders.

3) Among first-year to fourth-year students from the academic years 2015–2024, the morality level in accordance with the St Teresa way had a high average value with a tendency to continually increase. The degree of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired from the 2020–2024 academic years also had a high average value and tended to rise steadily.

Keyword: Fostering Morality, Student Morality according to the St Teresa Way, Graduate Characteristics according to the St Teresa way

1. Introduction

While rapid technological breakthroughs have contributed to economic growth, they have also neglected the development of young people's and university students' minds, particularly in the area of morals, which is essential for a good society. This has impacted people's quality of life and is the cause of increasingly serious social issues (Osathanugrh, 2006; Shumeiko et al., 2015; Bautista, 2016; Theerawit, 2018).

In terms of professional competency and social morality, higher education institutions are the primary organizations that society expects to have the responsibility of producing graduates of high caliber. Therefore, in order to produce graduates who are not only academically and professionally excellent but also morally upright, respectful of others, and capable of leading fulfilling lives in society, higher education institutions must place a high priority on helping students develop their moral character (Bautista, 2018; Shah, 2018; Loyola, 2022).

The methods used to teach morals to students at different universities are diverse and unique. Using religious morality as a guide is an intriguing approach. For example, Buddhist morality has been used to develop monastic and lay students in Thai Buddhist universities (Khumlek et al., 2020); morality has been fostered in Christian universities (Sriboonthai et al., 2022); students at Sangtham College have developed characteristics in accordance with their Catholic educational identity (Kitcharoen, 2021); students in Thai Catholic higher education institutions have developed characteristics in accordance with their Catholic educational identities (Chuenboon et al., 2020); and the spiritual well-being of Catholic students in the Philippines has been developed to a similar approach (Oracion and Madrigal, 2020).

As a higher education institution, St Teresa International University has been utilizing the teachings of St. Therese Lisieux as the foundational principles of educational administration since the academic year 2001. These teachings are used to develop academic and professional competence as well as to foster and instill morality in young people (Office of Planning and Policy, 2009).

Simple yet profound are the teachings of St Teresa Lisieux. One of her main lessons is to have "The Little Way of Love." "Holiness is not found in great deeds, but in doing small things with great love in daily life," she said. This entails diligent study habits, responsible assignment completion, voluntarily lending a hand to friends, and kindness toward others. It is a minor issue, but when handled with compassion, it will result in moral development. In addition to training students to "face difficulties," she also discussed the importance of "learning to forgive when others treat you badly and practicing patience with disappointment in order to live with others in society." Therefore, the teachings of St Teresa Lisieux are religious principles that are appropriate for developing university students (Vitz and Lynch, 2007; Lamb, 2020).

Thus, when St Teresa International University has been using religious principles to instill morality in students, known as "Fostering morality according to the St Teresa Way," since the academic year 2001, the research team believed that a study on instilling morality according to the St Teresa way of students should be conducted. This study would benefit university administrators, faculties, deans, those in charge of the curriculum, and related lecturers. The study's findings would also be used to advance the process of instilling morality according to the St Teresa way.

Those interested in educational management might also find it helpful to use other religious ideas to teach morals to students and young people so that it could be widely used in the future.

2. Research Objectives

- 2.1 Analyze the elements of morality with St Teresa International University students in accordance with the St Teresa way.
- 2.2 Research the development of morals in accordance with St Teresa International University students' St Teresa way
- 2.3 Assess students' and graduates' moral character in accordance with the St Teresa way at St Teresa International University

3. Research Methodology

There were three main steps in this mixed-methods study, which combined qualitative and quantitative methods:

Step 1: Examining morality's components using the St Teresa way. There were three sub-steps to the qualitative research study in this step:

1) A survey of components of morality, carried out through the examination of papers such as meeting minutes, personnel manuals, student handbooks, university strategic plans, annual action plans, annual performance reports, self-evaluation reports, and performance summaries under various projects.

2) An analysis of the moral components

In order to conduct in-depth interviews, a structured interview form was created using the findings from the analysis of many documents. The founders of St Teresa International University, the president and vice president of the university council, members of the academic council, deans, presidents, and vice presidents of the university served as the sample group. They collaborated from the institution's founding until the start of classes. A total of twelve key informants were involved. Using the Snowball technique, key informants were chosen.

3) The validation of moral components

In-depth interviews were conducted for the study, and the outcomes of the interviews were analyzed. Five key informants, comprising the founders of St Teresa International University, comprised the sample group. The procedure of developing morality in accordance with the St Teresa way was designed using the moral components of her approach.

Step 2: The study of the morality fostering process in accordance with the St Teresa way

There were two sub-steps in this qualitative research process:

1) Designing a process for fostering morality in accordance with the St Teresa way

Both formal and in-depth interviews were used in the study. The sample group included the deans of the faculties of business administration, humanities and social sciences, and nursing who served during the 2006–2015 academic year, as well as the vice presidents for planning, academic affairs, and student affairs. Ten key informants were involved.

2) The implementation of morality fostering in accordance with the St Teresa way, in line with the designed procedure.

The study was conducted using participatory observation and focus group discussions. The sample group consisted of Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, Vice Presidents for Student Affairs, Deans of the Business Administration, Humanities and Social Sciences, Nursing, Public Health, and Education faculties who served in their capacities during the academic years 2013-2017. There were a total of nine key informants.

Step 3: The study of the morality level of students and graduates.

This step was a quantitative research. There were two sub-steps:

1) The study of the morality level according to the St Teresa way of students

It was a self-evaluation of students' behavior. The population was St Teresa International University students, 1st to 4th years. The survey was conducted from the academic year 2015-2024, totaling 1,400 people/year. The sample group consisted of students from all 4 years, totaling 302 people/year. The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire created by the researcher. It had a discrimination power of .46-.90 and a reliability of .89. The statistics used in the research was the mean value.

2) The study of the morality Level of St Teresa International University graduates according to the opinions of graduate users.

The population was graduate users of St Teresa International University in all faculties, namely the Deans of the Faculty of Business Administration, Humanities and Social Sciences, Nursing, Public Health, and Education. The survey was conducted from the academic year 2020-2024, with 500 people/year. The sample group was users of graduates from all 5 faculties, with 217 people/year.

A questionnaire that the researcher had created was the tool employed. It had a reliability of .91 and a discrimination power of .47-.92. The mean value served as the research's statistical basis.

The investigation was carried out by the researcher between June 2013 and December 2024 in the three major steps.

4. Research Results

The study's findings would be given by the researcher in the context of all three major steps for the St Teresa way of morality fostering of St Teresa International University students. Important discoveries from each major step were as follows:

4.1 Components of morality according to the St Teresa way

The results of the study of the main moral principles of St. Therese Lisieux, which the university used to determine moral characteristics and used as a principle for educational administration to create morality according to the way of St. Therese, consisted of 3 main elements:

There were three primary elements to the findings of the research of St. Therese Lisieux'core moral principles, which the university employed to identify moral characteristics and as a guideline for educational administration to establish morality in accordance with her teachings:

(1) Element of Love-Kindness

The love-kindness component means that those who will be successful must have self-love, love for others, and love for God or love for the Prophet.

Those who have love and compassion for themselves are those who initially wish well for themselves by studying diligently, researching, and striving to learn all the time. They are also those who know how to take good care of their physical and mental health by knowing how to live an aesthetic life that takes into account the value of life, knowing how to live mindfully, knowing how to contemplate, and reaching deep meditation.

Those who have love and compassion for others must be the ones who wish well for others by serving. Good service requires serving others wholeheartedly, serving without conditions, helping others who are suffering, the disadvantaged, and those who need support. Being a good serving person is also required to know how to forgive others' mistakes.

Those who have love and compassion for God or the Prophet are considered to have an important love. Expressing love for Him must be expressed by knowing the value of meditation, the value of silence, being a person who has faith in the principles that He has

shown, and being a person who brings the principles that God or the Prophet has shown to consistent practice.

(2) Element of Peace

The element of peace refers to those who are polite, humble, and listen to others' opinions sincerely. They will be the ones who create peace in society. A polite and humble person is someone who lives a peaceful life, does not act aggressively or invade others, and treats others with respect, honor, and mutual assistance amidst differences in religion and culture. Therefore, they can live happily with others.

(3) Element of Public Consciousness

The element of public consciousness means that those who will be accepted by others must have a kind heart and be willing to help others without expecting anything in return.

A compassionate heart is someone who control themselves, control others, and control their work with understanding others, understanding and sympathizing with those who are in distress, taking action to solve problems, or jointly creating good things to alleviate suffering with physical strength and intelligence, according to their abilities and when they have the opportunity.

Those who are willing to help others without expecting anything in return are those who control themselves, people, and work by volunteering to help society, doing things for the benefit of the community, using their physical strength and intelligence to create development or prosperity in the community without expecting anything in return.

4.2 Fostering morality according to the St Teresa way

The results of the study on fostering morality according to the St Teresa way that the university used to instill morality in students found that it consisted of 2 processes: the process of designing the fostering of morality according to the St Teresa way, and the process of implementing the fostering of morality according to the St Teresa way.

4.2.1 The process of designing the fostering of morality according to the St Teresa way

The process of fostering morality is designed to create meaningful morality through raising awareness, engaging in learning activities, and altering behavior.

Raising awareness is a process of communicating to students from the beginning of their registration as students to create awareness of the morality according to the St Teresa way naturally through various projects such as the English Intensive Program, sophomores helping to take care of freshmen, alumni sharing tips for success, etc., Dorm Night project, to give a few examples.

Engaging in learning activities is a process that allows learners to put what they have learned into practice by themselves. It is assigned to instructors to integrate moral activities according to the St Teresa Way into learning management, and to assign student affairs instructors to integrate them into extra-curricular activities.

Altering behavior is a process of following up on the implementation of the morality of St Teresa way seriously until they become behaviors. Advisors are assigned to provide advice, assistance and evaluation each academic year, and instructors responsible for the curriculum follow up on evaluations from stakeholders.

4.2.2 The process of fostering morality according to the St Teresa way, with an aim to create Year Learning Outcome (YLO), to achieve the Expected Learning Outcome (ELO) of the university, and to create characteristics that stakeholders desired

The process of fostering morality according to the St Teresa way through various activities and projects was carried out in accordance with the religious and cultural diversity of the learners. The activities were divided into 3 types as follows:

(1) Activities for all learners are activities that allow learners to learn and put the morality of the St Teresa way into practice, such as singing the College Hymn before starting various activities, doing volunteer activities, doing academic service activities with the community, doing activities to continue arts and culture with the community on various occasions, learning about oneself, developing oneself, creating work and a portfolio of one's own work, etc.

(2) Organizing activities for Catholic students is an activity that allows students to learn through various religious activities, such as attending Wednesday Mass, attending Mass on important religious days, attending Mass with the community, doing activities/providing academic services to the Catholic community, participating in activities with the Catholic Journalists Association, the Catholic Education Association, etc.

(3) Organizing activities initiated by students is an activity that allows students to open up to apply the morality of St Teresa way to create self-learning, such as making short films, creating Nakhon Nayok Channel, etc. The relationship between learning outcomes from applying the morality of St Teresa way to practice and the graduate characteristics that stakeholders desire can be summarized as follows:

Year	Learning outcomes from the practice of St Teresa's morality		
	Love – Kindness	Peace	Public Consciousness
1	-Searching for new knowledge	-Polite, humble, modest	-Sharing knowledge with classmates
2	-Continuous self-development -Helping/advising juniors	-Respecting others' opinions -Collaborating with others	-Volunteering for community work -Participating in social activities
3	-Creating works/knowledge -Using knowledge to help others	-Helping each other to complete work -Being a good leader and follower	-Organizing volunteer projects -Joining in solving community problems
4	-Using knowledge to help society	-Living happily with others	-Creating good things in society
Graduates	Behaving as givers, sharers	Being a capable team member	Being someone who benefits the community
	Sharing and Caring	Unity in Diversity	Trustworthiness Responsibility
Characteristics of Graduates that Stakeholders Desire			

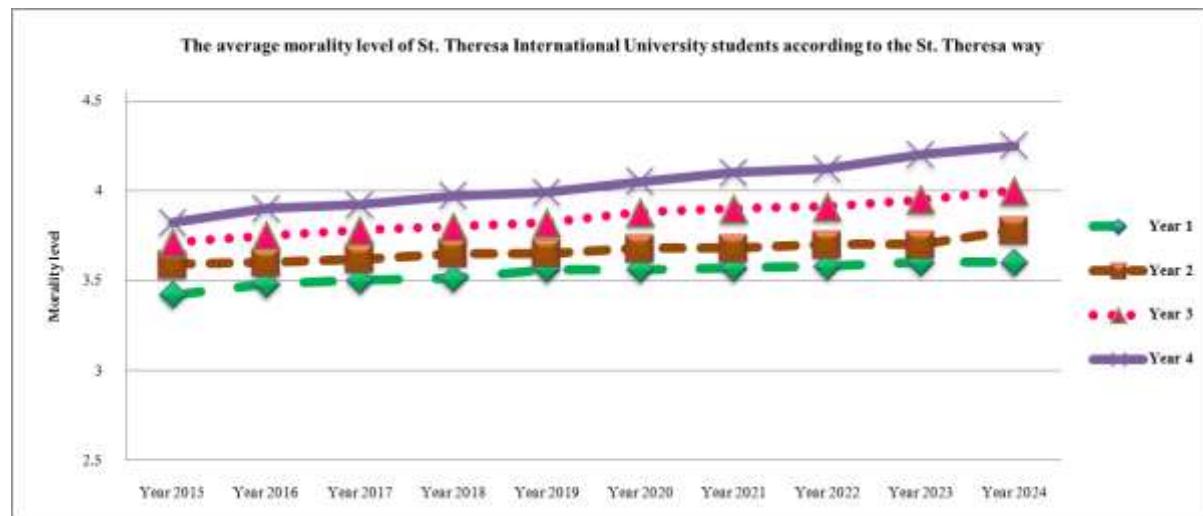
4.3 Morality level of students and graduates

The results of the study on morality level resulting from the process of instilling morality according to the St Teresa way that the university uses to instill morality in students and graduates from the academic years 2015-2024 have the following results:

4.3.1 Students' morality level according to the St Teresa way

The results of the self-evaluation of the moral conduct according to the St Teresa way of St Teresa International University students, obtained from the evaluation of students of

every year level, i.e. year 1 - year 4 from the academic years 2015 - 2024, have an average morality level as shown in Graph 1.

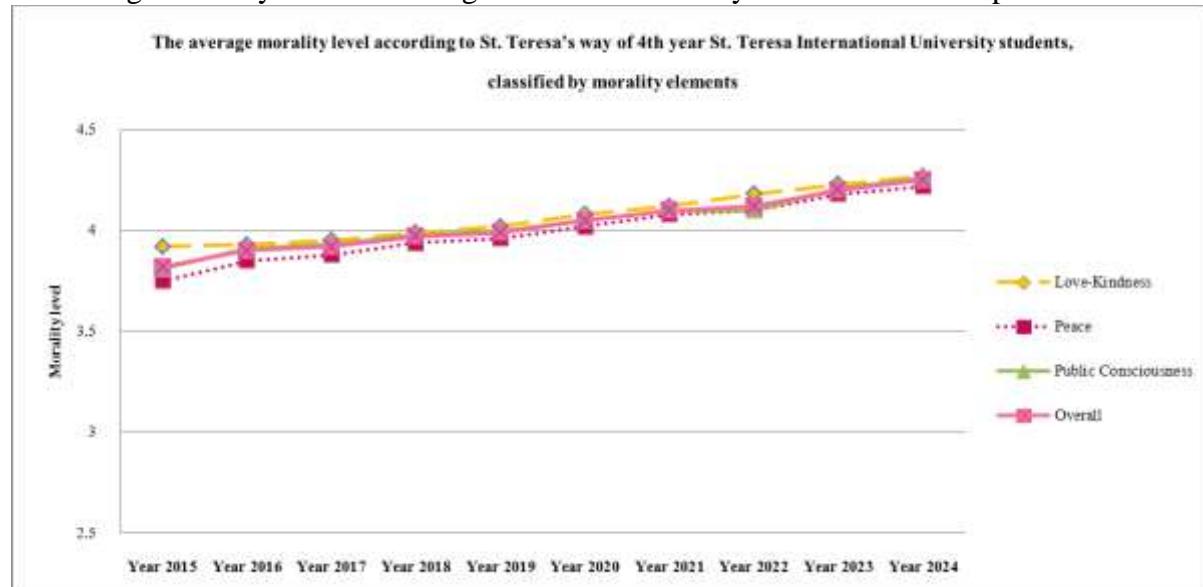


Graph 1 The average morality level of St Teresa International University students according to the St Teresa way

Graph 1 demonstrates that the students' overall morality level according to St Teresa's way increased according to the year of study, with the 4th year having the highest average morality level according to St Teresa's way of life.

It was also found that the students' overall morality level according to St Teresa's way increased according to the duration of the practice. The results of the practice in the academic year 2024 had the highest mortality level according to St Teresa's way.

From the results of the self-evaluation of the moral conduct according to the St Teresa way of the 4th year students of St Teresa International University in each element, namely Love-Kindness, Peace, and Public Consciousness, from the academic years 2015-2024, the average morality level according to the St Teresa way is as shown in Graph 2.



Graph 2 The average morality level according to St Teresa's way of 4th year St Teresa

International University students, classified by morality elements

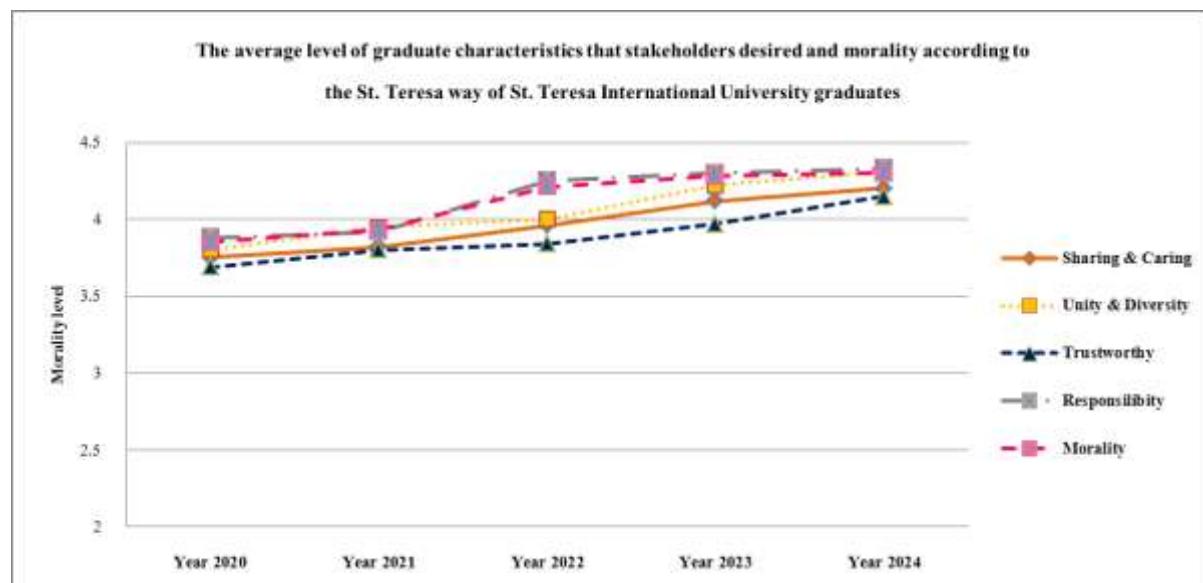
As shown in Graph 2, in each academic year,

the element of love-compassion had a higher average morality level than the overall average morality level, while the component of peace was lower than the overall average morality level.

It was also found that the morality level according to the St Teresa way in all 3 elements tended to increase according to the duration of practice. The results of practice in the academic year 2024 had the highest average morality level according to the St Teresa way.

4.3.2 Morality level of St Teresa International University graduates according to the opinions of graduate users.

The average of the results of the evaluation of the morality level of graduates of St Teresa International University from the academic years 2020-2024 is an evaluation of satisfaction with the graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired and an evaluation of the morality according to the St Teresa way of graduates as a whole, as shown in Graph 3.



Graph 3 The average level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired and morality according to the St Teresa way of St Teresa International University graduates

Data in Graph 3 reveals that graduate users viewed that graduates of St Teresa International University had a high average level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired, and a high average morality level in every academic year.

In addition, it was found that the average level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired, and the average morality level of graduates tended to increase according to the duration of practice, with the evaluation results in the academic year 2024 having the highest average.

Furthermore, the average of graduate characteristics in the area of responsibility was higher than the average of overall morality, and the average of graduate characteristics in the area of reliability was lower than the average of overall morality.

5. Summary of the research results

The results of the study on the fostering of morality according to the St Teresa way of St Teresa International University students can be summarized as follows:

5.1 The moral components of the St Teresa Way of St Teresa International University students consisted of 3 elements: love-compassion, peace, and public consciousness.

5.1.1 Love-compassion means being a person who has love for oneself, love for others, and love for God or love for the prophet, which are elements that drive the characteristics of mutual support and kindness.

5.1.2 Peace means a person who is polite, humble and always ready to listen to others' opinions sincerely, which is an element that drives the characteristics of group unity.

5.1.3 Public Consciousness means being a person with a kind heart, managing oneself, managing people, and managing work with understanding, and being willing to help others to solve problems or jointly create new things according to opportunities and abilities without expecting anything in return. This is an element that drives the creation of two important characteristics: trust and responsibility.

5.2 The process of fostering morality in students according to the St Teresa way

St Teresa International University operated in 2 processes: designing the fostering of morality, and implementing the fostering of morality

5.2.1 The process of designing the fostering of morality was designed to be “meaningful morality creation” that emphasized learners to be aware of and see the value of the morality that had to be learned. It consisted of 3 steps: designing methods to raise awareness, designing learning activities, and designing follow-up results of student altering behavior.

5.2.2 The process of fostering morality

This was carried out by St Teresa International University as follows:

1) Defining the Expected Learning Outcome (ELO) or learning outcomes according to the St Teresa way

2) Implementation of the plan/project/activity in 3 ways.

3) Examining the Year Learning Outcome (YLO)

4) Evaluation and development of the implementation of the plan/project/activity to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the learners, resulting in graduate characteristics that stakeholders desire, and

5) Evaluation of the graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired from graduate users after 1 year of graduation.

5.3 According to the findings of the study, the average morality level of students and graduates tended to rise steadily as a result of fostering morality in accordance with the St Teresa way.

5.3.1 First-year to fourth-year students from the academic year 2015–2024 had a high average morality level in accordance with St Teresa's way, that tended to rise annually. The average value of the morality level according to the St Teresa's way of fourth-year students from the academic year 2015–2024 in all three components—love-kindness, peace, and public-mindedness—had a high average value and tended to increase annually, according to the analysis of students' morality levels in each component.

5.3.2 There was a high average value and a tendency for the level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired to increase annually, as well as a high average value for the level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired from the academic year 2020–2024 in all four areas: unity, compassion, responsibility, and dependability.

5.4 Principles of educational management to foster morality according to the St Teresa way

This was implemented by using the teachings of St Teresa Lisieux to set the morality practice according to the St Teresa way, consisting of 3 components, creating a plan/project/activity to develop learners according to the specified morality principles, developing learners to behave according to the morality principles, to be graduates with characteristics that stakeholders desired in 4 areas. There was an assessment of morality level according to the St Teresa way as well as the level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired annually. The implementation format is as shown in Figure 1.

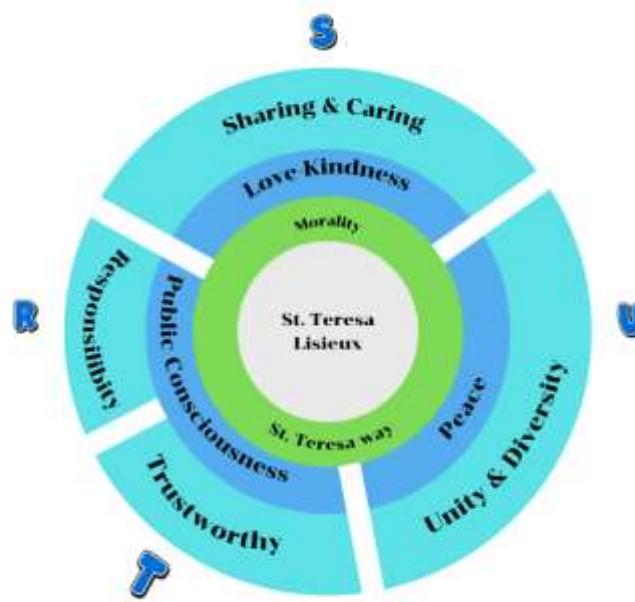


Figure 1 - Morality-fostering educational management principles based on the St Teresa way

6. Recommendations

6.1 Recommendations for applying the research results

The survey revealed that students' morality according to the St Teresa way of life was high overall and in each component, with each component increasing annually. Nevertheless, it was also discovered that the average morality in the peace component was lower than the average morality in the entire image. In order to elevate the morality of peace to a higher level, university administrators, deans, and instructors responsible for the curriculum should review the plans, projects, and activities aimed at fostering students' peace component.

Based on the research, it was discovered that the level of graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired was high on average and rose annually in each area. Nevertheless, it was also shown that the average reliability of graduate characteristics was lower than the average moral level. Therefore, in order to develop the year learning outcome (YLO) and achieve the expected learning outcomes (ELO), deans, heads of programs, and lecturers should look at the factors affecting the reliability of stakeholders to cover all groups. Plan events that will encourage university graduates and students to be dependable in order to meet graduate users' expectations.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

According to the study results, students' morality in accordance with the St Teresa way was high on average in both general and each component, and they also had high averages in graduate characteristics that stakeholders desired in both general and specific aspects. Nonetheless, a comparative analysis of the morality of students in each professional group should be conducted in order to establish a clear picture of the evolution of morality in accordance with the St Teresa way to encompass stakeholders in each group, each subject, and each faculty.

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