

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE INDUCTIVE METHOD TO THE TEACHING OF MILITARY ETHICS

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## Aportes del método inductivo a la enseñanza de la ética militar

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### Abstract

The ethical training of military forces is essential for democracy as it guides respect for human rights, observance of the laws of war, and protection of institutional legitimacy. For this reason, military ethics has become a crucial tool to guide the behavior of the military in complex environments and ensure responsible decision-making. In this context, this article evaluates the impact of the Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course and its inductive approach on the attitudes and behaviors of Colombian military personnel. Using a quantitative methodology, a study was conducted with 230 course participants at the General Rafael Reyes Prieto Higher War School in Colombia to measure attitudes about military ethics, rules of engagement, and operational effectiveness. The main results identified that the course positively impacted the participants' attitudes about the importance of military ethics, its contribution to unit cohesion, and its influence on responsible decision-making. It is concluded that training in military ethics, through innovative methods such as inductive, prepares the military to face the challenges of today's world and responsibly fulfill their mission.

### Keywords

Ethics, Inductive, Method, Learning, Military Forces, Teaching.

### Resumen

La formación ética de las fuerzas militares es esencial para la democracia, pues orienta el respeto por los derEcos humanos, la observancia de las leyes de la guerra y la protección de la legitimidad institucional. Por tal motivo, la ética militar se convierte en una herramienta crucial para guiar el comportamiento de los militares en entornos complejos y garantizar la toma de decisiones responsables. En ese contexto, este artículo evalúa el impacto del curso Conceptos Básicos en Ética Militar y su enfoque inductivo en las actitudes y comportamientos del personal militar colombiano. A través de una metodología con un enfoque cuantitativo, se realizó un estudio con 230 participantes del curso en la Escuela Superior de Guerra General Rafael Reyes Prieto (ESDEG) de Colombia, para medir las actitudes sobre la ética militar, las reglas de enfrentamiento (RE) y la efectividad operacional. Dentro de los principales resultados se identificó que el curso tuvo un impacto positivo en las actitudes de los participantes sobre la importancia de la ética militar, su contribución a la cohesión de las unidades y su influencia en la toma de decisiones responsables. Se concluye que la formación en ética militar, a través de métodos innovadores como el inductivo, prepara a los militares para enfrentar los desafíos del mundo actual y garantizar el cumplimiento de su misión de manera responsable.

### Palabras clave

Aprendizaje, enseñanza, ética, fuerzas militares, método, inductivo.

## Introduction

Ethics, as a philosophical discipline that deals with reflecting on human morality, seeks to examine the universal principles that guide the behavior of people in society. These principles, such as justice, equity, and solidarity, are grounded in reason and provide a framework for examining human behavior.

This leads to ethics encompassing several philosophical frameworks that seek to define and justify moral precepts (Horner, 2003),



which can be considered as a fundamental element in decision-making processes, professional behavior and the functioning of public institutions (Bradley, 2023; Treviño *et al.*, 2006). In this way, it seeks to guide individuals and societies in the pursuit of the common good.

Complementarily, applied ethics focuses on the practical use of ethical theories on specific issues and everyday scenarios, so that it guides individuals and organizations in making decisions that align with moral values while facing complex situations (Bowen, 2004). By addressing the dilemmas that arise in complex professional domains, where individuals have a great responsibility in decision-making, applied ethics projects the general principles of ethics to concrete and specific scenarios. In this regard, Cortina (1966) argues that “it is practical philosophy, and specifically ethics or moral philosophy, which puts the greatest effort into being applied, in guiding the action and decisions of human beings” (p. 119). Applied ethics, rather than posing abstract questions about the nature of good and evil, deals with solving practical moral problems that arise in various areas of human life. Although applied ethics is a specialized discipline, like everyday morals, it seeks to provide practical guidelines for decision-making in specific situations (Cortina, 1996).

This is the case with military ethics, which, as a specialized form of applied ethics, examines the principles and moral standards that govern the conduct of military personnel. In this way, it addresses unique challenges faced by the military, such as the ethical implications of war, the treatment of combatants and non-combatants, and the responsibilities of soldiers in combat situations (Jokic, 2017; Sucharov, 2005).

While the military provides institutional guidance to its personnel in dealing with critical situations, the unpredictable nature of human behavior in overwhelming circumstances underscores the need for specific training in military ethics. For this reason, the use of innovative instructional techniques, such as the inductive method and its application in education, is especially important when dealing with complex issues such as military ethics. The inductive method effectively contributes to improving the relevant problem-solving skills of military personnel in their future roles and responsibilities by integrating classroom exercises with real-life challenges.

Despite its importance, the teaching of military ethics is often limited to the context analysis of just war theory, which values moral justification for engaging in war and ethical conduct during war (Jennings & Hannah, 2011). In addition, it restricts itself to the analysis of leadership and motivation, so that military personnel are encouraged to follow



exemplary behavior through compliance with established rules. This approach is problematic because, although it provides standards of conduct, it does not evaluate the effects that military ethics teaching processes have and the applicability of their contents in the fulfillment of military tasks. Similarly, the teaching of military ethics is marked by scenarios of complexity, where, as Joaquín Robles and Ortiz Granja (2020) suggest, “new schemes must be developed that drive the evolution of each human being in all its potential and of the human species in its entirety” (p. 176).

Given this context, the objective of this article is to examine the results of the Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course, offered by the Military Ethics Center of King's College London (KCL) for students of the General Rafael Reyes Prieto War College (ESDEG) in the city of Bogotá, Colombia, during 2023. The research argues that an education in military ethics, such as that offered by KCL, which covers real issues and dilemmas of the military forces using novel tools and didactic resources, positively contributes to the attitude of the uniformed about the importance of military ethics, its contribution to improve the cohesion of military units, the relationship with the rules of engagement (RE), the influence on military effectiveness and the use of force, and their professional behavior.

This research is important for the strengthening of the military forces and democracy, especially in light of the current conflict, for various aspects. First, it helps to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law, understood as a set of rules that seek to limit human suffering in armed conflict and protect civilians. Second, it strengthens the legitimacy of military actions in the eyes of national and international public opinion, which builds trust in the armed institutions. Finally, it helps to promote an organizational culture based on respect for human rights, justice and equity, in such a way that it contributes to improving the internal cohesion of the military forces and preventing inappropriate behavior.

The study used a quantitative methodology, in which a structured questionnaire was applied, and the statistical analysis of a sample composed of 230 officers of the Colombian military forces was carried out. A positivist approach was used to obtain objective measurements, which are presented distributed in five sections: the first analyzes the importance of teaching military ethics; the second presents the methodology of the study carried out; the third discusses the application of the inductive method in the teaching of military ethics; the fourth describes and discusses the results of the research; the last section presents some conclusions as a starting point for new studies.

## Importance of teaching military ethics

Authors such as Aguilar Gordón (2008) argue that education is a process of self-training that empowers the individual to act autonomously and responsibly. By developing skills and knowledge, education allows people to interpret the world and make informed decisions, while ethics provides the framework of values for this action. In a complementary way, Touriñán López (2022) suggests that educational training always seeks a balance between preserving the valuable of the past (tradition) and adapting to new needs (innovation), in addition, it fosters personal development and promotes a broader vision of society.

In this sense, having ethically military personnel is a fundamental need that transcends traditional strategies to defeat the adversary and fulfill the institutional mission. Given that the military profession, by its nature, involves the use of lethal force and decision-making that can have far-reaching consequences, ethics assume crucial relevance for the protection of life.

Military forces composed of individuals with a deep sense of ethics and morals not only ensure compliance with international and national standards, but also contribute to the legitimacy of military institutions and the trust of civil society. Moreover, a strong sense of ethics helps prevent abuses of power, ensuring that the military respects the human rights of all individuals, including enemies. This attitude is not only a moral imperative, but also contributes to the effectiveness of military missions by facilitating cooperation with other military forces and strengthening international alliances.

In particular, military ethics are not limited to the prohibition of reprehensible conduct and actions, but also involve the promotion of positive values, such as honor, duty, and loyalty. These values are fundamental to the development of a strong moral character in the military, enabling them to make difficult decisions in complex situations and fulfill their duty to protect their nation.

Specifically, military ethics focuses on analyzing the appropriate behavior and actions of soldiers, for which it encompasses fundamental principles and values, the role of the military in society and the development of the individual (Baumann, 2007; CWRU, 2023). For this reason, it is essential that military personnel understand and employ an ethical framework to successfully overcome the complex challenges of their profession and maintain the highest standards of conduct. Thus, a morally sound military officer is more likely to follow orders, work as a team, and



maintain the highest standards of conduct. Studies have shown that military units with high levels of cohesion and morale perform better on the battlefield (Miron *et al.*, 2024; Primoratz, 2016; Whetham, 2023).

By contrast, declining support from society, violation of human rights, damage to national reputation, loss of allies, reduced military effectiveness, prolonged instability, denial of medical assistance to adversaries, and the possibility of committing war crimes are some of the most serious consequences of using military force without deep ethical training (Blocq, 2006; Bricknell & Miron, 2021; Imbeault, 2018). As military personnel generally operate in an intricate environment, subject to stringent standards and civilian oversight, where they must make critical decisions in highly stressful circumstances, compliance with legal and ethical standards is essential to meet mission objectives and maintain public trust.

Improving individual capabilities and understanding the circumstances and complexities of efficient decision-making in high-tension settings, such as armed conflict, are tasks that face significant challenges. Indeed, as argued by Whetham *et al.* (2021), the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VICA) nature of military operations frequently exposes personnel to high-intensity stressors. These include the scarcity and inaccuracy of information available for courses of action, the limited time available for decision-making, the haste to use force and the ability to affect military weaponry and its possible collateral damage. These problems can greatly hamper the effectiveness of military operations.

Faced with these challenges, providing a robust education in military ethics can significantly improve the military's ability to mitigate complex situations and improve the military decision-making process (PMTD), which is defined by the U.S. military as a "methodical process that allows commanders and their personnel to apply critical and innovative thinking and doctrine to solve problems and build the framework and conditions for efficient decision-making" (Kuczynski, 2023, p. III).

## Study Methodology

Reed *et al.* (2016) argue that "when comparing alternative courses of action, modern military decision makers must often consider both the military effectiveness and the ethical consequences of available alternatives" (p. 195). This is one of the advantages of implementing ESDEG's Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course. As the only joint higher education institution (army, navy, and air force) in Colombia, senior officers who are



responsible for the future of institutions and for tactical, operational, and strategic decision-making are accessible (ESDEG, 2024).

The Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course is part of the academic meshes of the General Staff Course (CEM) and the Military Information Course (CIM), which must be taken by officers of major grade or corvette captain (OF-3, according to the NATO classification). Taking advantage of this opportunity and after the course was implemented in the second semester of 2023, an anonymous questionnaire of 50 questions was conducted to assess the impact of students and collect information on the learning tools used.

The questionnaire followed institutional ethical procedures and obtained the informed consent of the participants. It was conducted through the SparkChart™ platform with responses rated on a 10-point Likert scale, with 10 being the highest score in terms of importance. In addition to structured questions, the survey included a free text field for additional comments. Data were collected from October 25 to November 10, 2023 and 230 responses were obtained, which correspond to 83.0% of voluntary participation with respect to the total number of students.

The group of participants of the questionnaire is made up of 204 men and 26 women, of which 223 were major or lieutenant captains (OF-3 NATO) and 7 lieutenant colonels or frigate captains (OF-4 NATO) of the army, navy and air force ( $N = 230$ ). Of this group, 166 officers belonged to the combat corps, i.e., “those trained with the main purpose of exercising command and conduct of the combat support elements [...] at all levels of the military hierarchy” (Decree Law 1790, 2000, art. 12).

Similarly, 22 officers belonged to the logistics corps, i.e.,

Graduates of regular training school courses trained to perform technical functions, command and conduct combat service support elements of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. (art. 16)

In addition, 42 officers belonged to the administrative corps, i.e., “professionals with a university degree in accordance with the norms of higher education in force at all times, staggered in the Army, Navy and Air Force for the purpose of exercising their profession in the Military Forces” (art. 17).

29.1% of the participants (67 officers) were between 35 and 39 years old, 66.8% (155 individuals) between 40 and 44 years old, and 4.0% (8 officers) between 45 and 49 years old. The entire group had more than 14 total years of service in the military. 15.7% of participants (36 officers) had from 14-18; 82.6% (190 officers) from 19-23, and 1.7% (4 officers)





from 24 or over. In addition, 2.6% of participants (6 officers) had undergraduate education, 20.4% (47 officers) specialized, 75.7% (174 officers) master's, and 1.3% (3 officers) doctoral.

This means that the participating group not only had sufficient preparation and differential professional approach to know the various ethical dilemmas present in the military career, but considerable experience in the leadership and decision-making of military forces that face an armed conflict of more than sixty years against various adversaries and instability factors (Acevedo Navas, 2023; Acevedo Navas *et al.*, 2022; Villalba García *et al.*, 2022a and b).

## The inductive method in the teaching of military ethics



The inductive method has application in various educational contexts, including traditional tools, such as master classes, lectures and workshops, however, its potential lies in that it encourages interaction between professors and students. By employing novel approaches, such as inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based learning, discovery, and just-in-time learning (Prince & Felder, 2007), the inductive method allows the educational process to evolve from specific observations to formulating general rules based on empirical evidence. In addition, it manages to prioritize the understanding of the underlying structure of arguments over mechanical memorization.

A fundamental element of the inductive method is the identification of shared human behaviors or cognitive patterns, which serve as the basis for student exploration and lead to student-centered teaching and learning. This means that a greater responsibility is imposed on the student for his own learning, compared to the traditional deductive approach (Prince & Felder, 2006). Professors guide students in formulating rules from these observations and subsequently introduce counter-factual elements to challenge and refine these rules. This iterative process cultivates critical thinking and, in particular, a deep understanding of ethical complexities.

When applied to the teaching of military ethics, the inductive method improves the development of moral competence and integrity, even though there is a natural tension between the need to obtain results and that of respecting higher ethical standards (Imbeault, 2018), through practical application and experiential learning (Todd & Tripodi, 2018; Whetham, 2011). By emphasizing the recognition of human dimensions,



understanding conflicting values, formulating sound judgments, effective communication, morally responsible actions, justifying determinations, and accountability for decisions (Hurtado, 2017), the inductive method offers the military a fundamental guide to confronting modern warfare.

Integrating ethical considerations into military training and operations is essential to foster a culture of ethical decision-making among military personnel. This includes understanding the legal and moral limits of military actions, as well as the implications of the loyalties health care providers may face in combat zones (Lundberg *et al.*, 2019). By promoting ethical awareness and reflexivity, military ethics aim not only to prevent unethical behavior, but also to inspire a commitment to higher moral standards among service members (Lucas, 2015; Robinson *et al.*, 2008).

Likewise, relating philosophical considerations (Robinson, 2007) and the particularities of the conduct of individuals in military ethical training is crucial for them to overcome the gap between perceived and actual ethical behavior, as well as for them to understand, without distinction of their spiritual orientation, the interaction between intuitive and rational decision-making, amid internal, organizational and situational factors. In this way, the inductive method in experiential learning fosters the moral reasoning and decision-making skills essential to addressing complex ethical dilemmas in military contexts.

While it is recognized that it is important for members of the military to receive an adequate education in military ethics, there is still no uniform approach to this preparation in the world, there is a lack of coherence between existing programs and there is still disagreement about the need to carry them out (Robinson, 2007; Robinson *et al.*, 2008; Wertheimer, 2010). Precisely, this is the shortcoming that has sought to solve since 2015 the Center for Military Ethics of King's College London (KCME) through its contents and, especially, the course Basic Concepts in Military Ethics.

This course explores, through 18 virtual modules, the principles and applications of ethics in the military field. It covers both the fundamental theory and practical aspects of military ethics, preparing participants to face ethical challenges arising on the battlefield and in society at large. As a complement to the course contents, innovative tools have been developed, such as game cards on military ethics and a mobile application available for iOS and Android devices, which stimulates reflection and the exchange of ideas on ethical dilemmas. The questions in the letters, drawn up by ethics experts, academics, and practitioners, are based on input from legal advisors and military ethics education curricula and seek to encourage discussion of common situations that arise in military units.



In addition, this tool guides participants to a website that offers additional information and resources for further research.

In this scenario, which encourages interaction between the teacher and the students, the inductive method has a fundamental role. Using inquiry-based learning and with the assistance of the teacher, course participants develop the activities of the modules and solve their concerns through participatory forums and representations of their own professional experiences. Likewise, using problem-based and case-based learning, professors ask questions related to the development of military operations to build consensus that transcends differences. For example, the question “Is it always acceptable to defy orders from a superior?” motivates participants to freely express their opinion and, collectively, to arrive a general assessment that allow them to understand the expected patterns of behavior in light of legal regulations (Whetham, 2018). The flexibility of this type of ethics education, which encourages students’ sincere participation, not only discourages them from deviating from established norms, but also provides them with the essential skills to perform comprehensive emotional and intellectual analyzes, make decisions with discernment, and perform on the battlefield.

An innate quality of the human being is that it aspires to acquire knowledge in a conscious and rational way, so that when individuals face an ethical problem, an inherent desire to solve it and adopt a definitive point of view is generated. Once this need materializes in a tangible reality, teaching methodologies can be employed to effectively stimulate and sustain the sense of positive existence associated with an ethical commitment. In this sense, the inductive method emerges as an approach that allows to adequately meet these expectations and requirements.

The inductive method offers practical advantages in relation to classroom dynamics and student participation, as by incorporating interactive activities, case studies and group projects, professors can create dynamic and stimulate learning environments. This active learning approach improves students’ motivation because they actively participate in their learning process. In addition, the inductive method allows for personalized instruction, because professors can tailor the examples and exercises to the specific needs and interests of their students.

This personalization of the learning process promotes individual growth and ensures that each student can fully understand the concepts addressed. These practical advantages of the inductive method and its ability to foster critical thinking and ethical reasoning make it a valuable tool for training future’s ethical decision makers. By using the inducti-

ve method, professors can instill a deep understanding of military ethics and equip students with the skills needed to navigate the complex moral landscape of the modern world.

## Results and discussion

A first significant result is that 93% of participants (214 officers) considered that the Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course effectively prepared them to perform their duties as officers and 95.2% (219 officers) noted that military ethics is very important for their professional life. Identical results were obtained when investigating the importance of military ethics for the other members of the forces (Table 1). This is relevant because while teaching military ethics is crucial to use cases and examples that are familiar and relevant to students' professional lives, it is common for these cases to be based on real experiences of individuals, which limits discussion with other service members. Nevertheless, any existing material that meets these characteristics should be used to the fullest, since the main objective of the examples is to sensitize students to the ethical dilemmas that arise in the military context and to promote understanding of the contributions of military ethics to the performance of the functions of men and women.

**Table 1**  
**Importance of military ethics**

Value	On a personal level		For other members of the force	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
10 (Very important)	219	95.2%	219	95.2%
9	4	1.7%	4	1.7%
8	2	0.9%	2	0.9%
7	3	1.3%	3	1.3%
6	1	0.4%	1	0.4%
5	1	0.4%	1	0.4%
4	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
1 (Not important)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

In addition, 88.3% of participants (203 officers) indicated that military ethics help to improve cohesion, both within a military unit and between different military units (Table 2). Cohesion is one of the critical aspects in troop morale and unity among members of the military forces (Elron *et al.*, 2000; King, 2021; Thorald, 2011), and it contributes to the transformation processes in military institutions (Ciro & Correa, 2014; Fernández Osorio, 2015; Fernández Osorio *et al.*, 2023). In this sense, a common understanding of how the military operates can contribute to improved interoperability and organizational performance.

These results allow us to infer that the teaching of military ethics through the inductive method is not only effective in the formation of critical individuals, but also promotes cohesion between military units. By exploring ethical concepts through specific examples and cases, service members are encouraged to analyze and discuss situations from diverse perspectives, which helps them develop critical thinking and understand the complexities of military ethics. In addition, this approach promotes open debate and the exchange of ideas, in such a way that it improves the military's understanding of the different perspectives that can arise in the face of the same ethical dilemma. This, in turn, fosters mutual respect and the ability to work as a team, even in the face of disagreements.

By questioning assumptions and assessing available evidence, military personnel learn to make their own sound ethical judgments. This skill is crucial on the battlefield, where quick and accurate decisions can make the difference between success and failure. Indeed, the inductive method exposes soldiers to the wide range of ethical challenges they may face in their service. Thus, by analyzing real-life scenarios and moral dilemmas, service members develop the capacity to make responsible and informed ethical decisions.

Table 2  
Contribution of military ethics to improving  
the cohesion of military units

Value	Inside a military unit		Between various military units	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
10 (Very important)	203	88.3%	203	88.3%
9	10	4.3%	9	3.9%
8	14	6.1%	10	4.3%

Value	Inside a military unit		Between various military units	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
7	0	0.0%	3	1.3%
6	2	0.9%	2	0.9%
5	1	0.4%	2	0.9%
4	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
1 (Not important)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	230	100%	230	100%



This finding is also essential because the unification of criteria for discernment and action among members of military units—both foreign and domestic—contributes to the fulfillment of ERs, understood as the parameters that define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and ways in which the use of force can be applied (Bricknell & Kelly, 2023; Hosang, 2020). In this way, it facilitates the observance of ERs and the understanding of their relationship with the applicable legal regulations (Table 3).

However, incorporating real-life scenarios that correspond to the use of ER in the teaching of military ethics presents challenges for professors, since the complexity of the life stories of students does not always allow to convey clearly and concisely the concepts that are sought to teach. Each anecdote can have multiple interpretations and it is up to the instructor to guide the students towards the relevant aspects. To overcome this challenge, some professors choose to use simplified cases that are directly linked to a specific topic throughout the discussion. This approach allows a deeper exploration of the concept in question and facilitates understanding by students, but its main disadvantage is the lack of narrative continuity typical of hypothetical stories. In addition, the realism of real-life scenarios is also an advantage, as it allows students to face the complexity and unpredictability of real situations.

One solution to exploit the advantages of both approaches and achieve more effective teaching is to combine the presentation of concrete cases at the beginning of the class with a fictional story or more developed real-life cases, which stimulates a lively discussion among students.

Table 3  
Relationship between military ethics and ERs

Value	Military Ethics Facilitates Compliance with ERs		Military Ethics is compatible with ER in Colombia	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	181	78.7%	174	75.7%
9	18	7.8%	20	8.7%
8	17	7.4%	21	9.1%
7	4	1.7%	7	3.0%
6	0	0.0%	2	0.9%
5	6	2.6%	2	0.9%
4	2	0.9%	2	0.9%
3	0	0.0%	1	0.4%
2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not important	2	0.9%	1	0.4%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

The finding on military ethics and ERs can be explored under the logic of the interrelationship between military ethics and effectiveness, since 86.1% of participants considered that there is a correlation between these elements (Table 4). Indeed, military ethics provide a foundation for mediating between the military’s responsibilities in carrying out the mission – including new challenges, such as ensuring medical assistance (Armstrong & Hegarty, 2024), the use of lethal autonomous weapons (Kohn *et al.*, 2024), and the use of artificial intelligence (Stanley Lockman, 2021) – and duties under international law (Hosang, 2020).

Table 4  
Influence of military ethics  
on military effectiveness and use of force

Value	Is military ethics negatively correlated with military effectiveness?		Did the military ethics course influence your perception of the use of lethal force?	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	13.9%	183	79.6%
No	198	86.1%	47	20.4%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

Table 5 presents a crucial finding: officers’ understanding of the importance of behaving ethically in their decisions and in the use of force even if the opponent does not (Shereshevsky, 2022; Simmons, 2021; Sixpence & Chilunjika, 2020). This aspect is perhaps one of the most essential in the light of the application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Given that adversaries and instability factors in internal conflicts, such as the Colombian one, rarely adopt behaviors that respect the rights of the civilian population and its opponents (Acevedo Navas *et al.*, 2022; Arévalo Ramírez, 2022; Gangi, 2023; Ortega Guzmán & Gil Osorio, 2022; Quintero, 2018; Torres & Velandia, 2022; Villegas Arévalo, 2021), including a gender approach (Atencio, 2020; Bermúdez, 2015; Sepúlveda & Rivas, 2017), there are great challenges for members of the military to understand that their value to society and the law is intimately linked to compliance with ethical standards and regulations.

For this reason, even in spite of possible previous errors in the application of force by the Colombian military, the thinking of the officers responsible for future decision-making in military institutions corresponds to ethical behavior adjusted to the standards expected by Colombian society and to the normal development of civil-military relations (Cujabante Villamil *et al.*, 2023; Rivera Páez & Uribe Cáceres, 2022).

**Table 5**  
**Influence of military ethics on the behavior**  
**of the military**

Value	Is there an obligation to behave ethically even if your opponent does not?		Does Military Ethics Depend on Cultural Specificities?	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	222	96.5%	121	52.6%
No	8	3.5%	109	47.4%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

The use e-learning as a method of “fully virtualized distance education through new electronic channels” (MINTIC, 2024) to improve the development of basic knowledge and skills has gained popularity in recent years. Although e-learning has been shown to be useful for teaching job and managerial skills (Ha & So, 2023; Ruslan *et al.*, 2021), there is still a knowledge gap about its usefulness in military education.



While the COVID-19 pandemic brought new adaptation opportunities for military institutions to ensure the training of their personnel (Ahir *et al.*, 2020; Jalili, 2022), there are still great possibilities to use new tools such as e-learning, especially on issues such as military ethics. In this regard, Table 6 presents the perception that participants have about the course and its contents. These data, together with the views of the professors, provide initiatives to continue improving the content and the pedagogical and didactic tools.

**Table 6**  
**Perception of the course Basic concepts in Military Ethics**

Value	Has the military ethics course been well structured and easy to complete?		Were the course topics explained in detail and clearly?	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	209	90.9%	221	96.1%
No	21	9.1%	9	3.9%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

One of the issues to be determined is whether information technology can strengthen the capacity for moral reasoning by reinforcing important steps of the inductive method, such as detailed case analysis, the Socratic method and class participation. For this reason, the Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course develops at least three strengths of e-learning in military education.

First, it employs the design and presentation of lessons, as well as the provision of additional resources to the teacher, which can be done through technology. In this regard, Suárez and González (2021) suggest that although some didactic resources “are usually common in ethics classes [...], the function of these strategies is usually nothing but to be means that allow to reach the true critical thinking based on a rational clarification based on logical analysis” (p. 187). Second, integration into the classroom through the use of digital tools to facilitate discussion and learning can be part of the inductive approach in the classroom. Finally, e-learning facilitates the improvement of inductive activities, since students can participate in more interactive and attractive activities with the help of technology.

Table 7 allows to identify the perception of participants about the structure of the military ethics course. These results are revealing, as cu-

rrrent military ethics training programs are largely based on the development of critical reasoning skills through the study of philosophical texts, an approach that may be effective for civilian students, but whose application in the military context presents challenges. Instead of focusing on abstract theory, this course proposes a more practical approach using content and curricula developed by military ethicists. Designed specifically for the military community, these resources provide tools and concrete examples that enable students to develop ethical decision-making skills in real-life situations.

This change in approach has several advantages. First, a greater relevance, since the contents of the course allow students to relate the ethical principles with real scenarios that they could face in the development of their work. Second, more effective learning, because by using practical and relevant examples, learners can better understand ethical concepts and apply them from their own experience. Finally, the development of skills, because the training in military ethics must focus on the development of practical skills for ethical decision-making in complex situations.

**Table 7**  
**Perception on the Course Tools Basic**  
**Concepts in Military Ethics**

Value	¿Did the use of the content facilitate the learning of military ethics?		¿Do you consider the platform interface design to be appropriate?	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	222	96.5%	221	96.1%
No	8	3.5%	9	3.9%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

This course proposes to remodel the training in military ethics to make it more relevant, effective and practical for students. Thus, in order to better prepare members of the military forces to face the ethical challenges that they will inevitably face in their career, content and curricula developed by specialists in military ethics are used. The results of Table 8 show that the course can partly solve these challenges, which could pose a challenge to traditional teaching methods.

Table 8  
Course review of Basic concepts in Military Ethics

Value	Overall course assessment		Assessment of the tools used in the course	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
10 (Very important)	163	70.9%	150	65.2%
9	23	10.0%	31	13.5%
8	25	10.9%	31	13.5%
7	11	4.8%	10	4.3%
6	0	0.0%	3	1.3%
5	5	2.2%	1	0.4%
4	1	0.4%	3	1.3%
3	1	0.4%	1	0.4%
2	1	0.4%	0	0.0%
1 (Not important)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	230	100%	230	100%

In military education, there are two teaching methods that dominate the landscape: lectures and group discussions. While both have their value, they have limitations and neither fully exploits the potential of the inductive method, particularly suitable for teaching ethics. Despite acknowledging the shortcomings of traditional lectures, many professors continue to use them. The reason is simple: the inductive method is sometimes unknown by a good part of professors, so its value and the potential of its tools go unnoticed or are considered unnecessary. However, its effectiveness has been demonstrated in various fields and its advantages over conventional methods make it an invaluable tool for teaching military ethics.

The inductive method, on the other hand, offers a dynamic and participatory approach that encourages active learning and critical reflection. Through the analysis of real cases and concrete examples, students not only acquire ethical knowledge, they also develop skills to identify, analyze and solve complex ethical dilemmas. Thus, the following benefits of the inductive method can be highlighted in the teaching of military ethics: first, meaningful learning promotes a deep understanding of ethical principles and their application in real situations; second, the deve-

lopment of critical thinking skills that strengthen the ability to analyze information, identify biases and formulate sound arguments; third, preparation for ethical decision-making provides students with the necessary tools to make sound ethical decisions in challenging situations.

## Conclusions

In today's world, military forces operate in increasingly confusing scenarios, where critical decisions must be made under very stressful circumstances and under the pressure of strict legal and ethical standards. In this context, military ethics is a fundamental tool to guide soldiers' behavior and ensure that their mission is carried out in a responsible and respectful manner with human rights. On the contrary, the absence of a solid background in military ethics can lead to serious consequences and even the commission of war crimes.

A comprehensive training in military ethics allows members of the forces to develop the necessary skills and understanding to overcome the complex challenges of their profession. This training provides them with a solid framework that guides them in making responsible, thoughtful decisions based on essential principles and values. In this challenging context, the inductive method is a valuable educational tool for training in military ethics, as it allows students to develop relevant problem-solving skills in their profession, for which it integrates classroom exercises with real-life challenges. In this way, through active learning and critical reflection, students deepen their understanding of ethical principles and their application in specific situations.

Considering that one of the purposes of the inductive method is to discover and clearly expose the hidden truths that underlie a notion, it is crucial that the topic developed is fully explained. For this reason, the nature and importance of a comprehensive education in military ethics makes evident the countless possibilities of the inductive method.

Indeed, the inductive method provides an opportunity to extract universal principles, concepts, and truths from specific examples. In the realm of ethics, these particular events represent the objective truths that underpin morality. To fully grasp its message and develop a deep understanding of ethics as a whole, it is critical to set aside personal stereotypes and beliefs, actively integrating a multitude of real-life events and circumstances. Through this process, service members can gain a comprehensive



understanding of the complexities of decision-making and use ethics as a guide for their actions.

While there is no absolute authority in the realm of military ethics training, the Basic Concepts in Military Ethics course, with its methodology, allows members of the forces to cultivate a deep understanding of cause-effect connections, while refining their observation and analysis skills. This experience fosters a personal development attitude that urges service members to accept challenges, gain knowledge of both achievements and setbacks, and equip themselves with the tools and strategies needed to competently address these issues.

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Declaration of Authorship - Taxonomy CRediT	
Authors	Contributions
Andrés Eduardo Fernández Osorio Marina Miron David Whetham	Conceptualization, data analysys, formal analysis, research, methodology, project management, validation, visualization, drafting – original draft, and drafting – revision and editing.

Artificial Intelligence Use Statement
<p><b>Andrés Eduardo Fernández Osorio, Marina Miron and David Whetham</b>, DECLARE that the elaboration of the article <i>Contributions of the inductive method to the teaching of military ethics</i>, had the support of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to optimize the quality and efficiency of the research.</p> <p>Artificial Intelligence in this article was used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Comprehensive bibliographic review:</b> AI allowed to identify and analyze a greater number of relevant sources in less time, ensuring that the theoretical framework of the article was solid and updated.</li><li>• <b>Improved writing and style:</b> AI tools were used to refine the writing, ensure stylistic coherence, and detect possible grammatical or syntax errors, which contributed to greater clarity and accuracy in the presentation of ideas.</li><li>• <b>Translation verification:</b> In the case of contributions from authors whose native language is not the English language, AI was used as a support tool to verify the accuracy of the translation and maintain the original meaning of the translation.</li><li>• <b>Adjustment to the journal's standards:</b> AI facilitated the adaptation of the article to the format and style requirements of Sophia Magazine, optimizing the submission and evaluation process.</li></ul>

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