

A study on moral judgement ability of school students

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ABSTRACT

Moral development is an important aspect in human life along with physical, social, cognitive and emotional development. Many research studies have indicated that home and school environment, involvement in social activities, parental involvement and education etc. has a great impact on children's moral development. The present study is an attempt to study the moral judgement ability of school students and to find out if there is any gender difference in moral judgement ability. The sample consisted of 100 students, out of which 50 were girls and 50 were boys. The moral judgement was measured by using Moral Judgement Test developed by Verma and Sinha (1971). Result revealed that there is average and above average moral judgement ability among school students but girls have high moral judgement ability than boys which is significant at 0.05 significant level.

INTRODUCTION

Moral development is the manner or behaviour that helps an individual to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong and also the way of accomplishing tasks. Moral judgment is the judgment of some specific behaviour or action which determines whether something is right or wrong based on an individual's feelings of right and wrong. Moral judgment depends on the cognitive capacity of an individual and it develops gradually with age. Moral judgement varies from society to society depending on the moral norms set by the society. Hence, moral judgement can be the assessment

of actions as 'good or bad' based on norms and values established in a society. An individual internalizes the moral values and codes sanctioned by the society which becomes the integral part of individual's personality.

Along with other developments that occur during the early years of life, the moral concept and behaviour also develops at this stage which helps a child to behave appropriately in later life. Therefore, the ability to make moral judgement is an important part of development for a child. A child's moral development is influenced by interaction with parents, peer group, neighbours, school environment, etc. The quality of social interaction is conceived as key to moral development (Kagan, 1984

and Matthews, 1987), whether at home (Dunn, 1987) or at school (Donaldson, 2006 and 1978). Moral learning is said to occur among peers as they play (Dunn, 1987 and Gilligan and Wiggins, 1987) and is also facilitated by adults (Crawford, 2001 and Dunn, 1987) in school and at home. Children should be taught moral values from childhood onwards so that they will be able to differentiate between right and wrong properly. Parents and teachers play an important role in teaching moral values to children. Their behaviours have maximum impact on children personality. Because teachers and parents are the role models for children and they tend to imitate their behaviour. That is why it is necessary to focus on moral development of children along with academic education during childhood onwards. Since the educational system tends to give more emphasis on acquiring intellectual skills and gives less emphasis to the moral development, this study has been undertaken with following objectives:

- To assess the moral judgement ability of school children.
- To find out if there is any gender difference in moral judgement ability.

Hypothesis :

- The moral judgment ability among school students is low.
- There is no significant gender difference in moral judgment ability.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Sivasagar district of Assam. The sample consisted of 100 students (50 girls and 50 boys) in the age group of 10-11 years studying in two different schools of Nazira town of Sivasagar district of Assam. The samples were selected through simple random sampling technique. Moral judgment test (MJT) developed by Verma and Sinha

(1971) was used to assess the moral judgement ability of students. Data were collected separately from the students of class 6 and 7. The questionnaires were distributed to the students with proper instruction. After data collection, scores for moral judgment were calculated and per centile were calculated to assess the moral judgement ability of the students. Mean, standard deviation and t-score values were computerized in the view of the findings and the results were interpreted. Data was collected during the calendar year 2016.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Data were examined to assess the moral judgement ability of the students and the response received has been presented in the form of table.

Hypothesis 1:

The moral judgment ability among school students is low.

Table 1 reveals that maximum respondents fall under ‘very high ability’ and ‘average ability’ category while only a few respondents were under ‘low average ability’ category. This indicates that more number of students had average (32) and above average (32) ability to make moral judgment. Hence, it can be interpreted from the present study that the moral judgment ability among school students is average and above average. It may be because of the joint effort of teachers and parents to inculcate moral values in students. The finding can be supported by the study of Awasthi (2014), which focused that providing value based education to the children from early childhood especially during adolescence age group; can help in overcoming the problem of deteriorating moral values in the youth.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant gender difference in moral Judgment ability.

Variable	Very high ability	High ability	Average ability	Low average ability	Low ability	Total
Moral judgement	32	28	32	6	2	100

	Very high ability	High ability	Average ability	Low average ability	Low ability	Total
Girls	18	16	14	2	0	50
Boys	14	12	18	4	2	50
Total	32	28	32	6	2	100

Table 3 : Mean, standard deviation and t-value in moral judgment ability of boys and girls						
Groups	N	Mean	Std. deviation	t	df	p
Girls	50	36.68	5.282	3.010*	98	0.0033
Boys	50	33.30	5.929			

* indicates significance of value at P=0.05 level

It was found that maximum girls (18 numbers) have very high ability of moral judgement while maximum boys (18 numbers) have average moral judgement ability. It was also found that, low ability of moral judgement in case of girls was nil while 2 numbers of boys had low moral judgement ability. Walker and Henning (1999) in their study indicated that parent's interaction styles, ego functioning and level of moral reasoning used in discussion with children has greater impact on child's subsequent moral reasoning.

The p-value is $p = 0.019$. This is below the .05 standard. This means we decide in favour of the alternative hypothesis. We're deciding that the population mean is not 72.

Findings of the Table 3 shows that $t(98) = 3.010$ and $p < .05$ (2 tailed) which indicates that the result is statistically significant. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected and it can be said that there exist gender difference in moral judgement ability and as compared to male students, female students have high moral judgment ability. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Upadhyaya (2015) which revealed that female students had high moral judgment as compared to their male counterparts. Chaudhary and Madhuri (2014); Gupta and Pooja (2010); Hooda (2015); Molchanov (2013); Nazar (2001); Rahiem and Rahiem (2012); Rana (2014); Singh (2011) and Singh and Singh (2015) have also studied on the related topic and the results found were more or less similar to the present investigation.

Conclusion :

It can be conclude that students have good ability of moral judgement but girls have high moral judgement ability as compared to boys which means that there is a significant difference in moral judgement ability between girls and boys. It may be because of the environment and experiences they get. And from other researches, it has been found that moral development and moral judgement ability of the children depends on the cognitive ability and becomes more mature with increase in age.

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