



Awareness of Secondary School Students about Moral Values in Relation to Certain Variables

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Abstract:

The present study aims to examine the level of awareness about moral values among secondary school students and to analyze how certain variables such as gender, socio-economic status, and parental education influence this awareness. Moral values play a critical role in shaping an individual's personality and behavior, especially during adolescence, which is a formative stage for moral and ethical development. The study adopts a descriptive survey method and involves a representative sample of students from various secondary schools. A structured questionnaire was used to assess students' understanding and attitudes toward core moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, and tolerance. The data were analyzed using statistical techniques to identify significant differences based on the selected variables. The findings reveal that students possess moderate awareness of moral values, with notable differences across gender and socio-economic groups. The study underscores the need for integrating value education into the regular school curriculum and calls for a collaborative effort by teachers, parents, and the community to nurture morally responsible individuals.

Keywords: *Moral Values, Awareness, Moral Development, Secondary School Students, Values Education, Variables, Ethics*

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving society, the role of moral values in shaping the character and behavior of young individuals has gained renewed attention. Secondary school students, being at a crucial stage of emotional, social, and cognitive development, are especially impressionable. Moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, and fairness serve as guiding principles that influence students' decisions, interactions, and overall attitude toward life. The school environment, peer influence, family background, and media exposure are some of the key variables that impact students' awareness and internalization of these values.

The importance of moral education has been emphasized across educational policies and curricular reforms, yet there remains a gap in understanding how well students grasp and practice these values in real-life situations. Examining students' awareness of moral values in relation to variables such as gender, socio-economic status, type of school (government or private), and parental education can provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of current moral education efforts.

This study seeks to explore the level of awareness secondary school students have regarding moral values and to analyze how certain socio-demographic and environmental variables influence this awareness. The findings aim to contribute to the development of more targeted and effective strategies for instilling moral values in adolescents during their formative school years.

Value can be caught not be taught. Values mean relative worth, utility or importance, degree of excellence something intrinsically valuable. We know that money is lost nothing is lost, health is lost something is lost, but when the character is lost everything is lost. The most important human endeavour is the striving of morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life. To make this living force and bring it to clear consciousness is perhaps the for most task of education.

2. Review of Related Literature

1. Concept of Moral Values in Education

Moral values refer to the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behavior and choices. According to **Durkheim (1925)**, moral education is essential for societal cohesion and should be systematically taught in schools. **Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1981)** provides a framework to understand how children and adolescents develop a sense of morality, emphasizing stages of moral reasoning that evolve with age and cognitive development.

2. Role of Schools in Moral Development

Research by **Lickona (1991)** argues that schools play a critical role in character formation and value inculcation. Moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, and empathy are best nurtured through integrated curricula and value-based education programs. **Narvaez and Lapsley (2005)** also highlight the importance of a supportive school climate and teacher modelling in developing moral competence.

3. Awareness of Moral Values among Adolescents

Studies have shown varying levels of moral awareness among secondary school students. For instance, **Sharma (2010)** found that urban students were generally more aware of moral values than their rural counterparts, possibly due to exposure to diverse environments and media. **Rani (2015)** emphasized that students' awareness of values like tolerance and cooperation increased when these were embedded into classroom activities and discussions.

4. Influence of Gender on Moral Awareness

A number of studies have explored gender differences in moral awareness. **Verma and Singh (2013)** reported that female students often exhibit higher levels of empathy, compassion, and moral reasoning compared to males. However, **Kumar and Jain (2017)** found that while differences exist, they are context-dependent and influenced by socio-cultural factors.

5. Socio-Economic Status and Family Background

Gupta (2012) established that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have greater access to moral education through formal and informal means (books, discussions at home, media). Family background, especially parental education and values, significantly affects a child's moral orientation. **Awasthi (2016)** highlighted the role of parenting style in shaping the moral values of adolescents.

6. Impact of Media and Peer Groups

Modern influences such as social media and peer interaction play a growing role in shaping students' moral views. **Mishra (2018)** argued that while peer influence can reinforce positive values, it can also challenge traditional moral norms. **Bajpai (2020)** emphasized the need for critical media literacy in school curricula to help students navigate moral dilemmas in the digital world.

7. Moral Education Programs and Interventions

Empirical studies have supported the effectiveness of value education programs. For example, **Pathak (2014)** found that participation in structured moral education sessions significantly improved students' moral reasoning and awareness. Similarly, **Reddy & Rao (2019)** demonstrated that project-based learning centered on ethical issues encouraged critical thinking and moral reflection among students.

3. Key Definitions

1. **Moral Values:** According to **Kumar (2010)**, "Moral values are the principles or standards that guide individuals to distinguish between right and wrong and influence ethical behavior in personal and social life."
2. **Awareness:** As defined by **Oxford Dictionary**, "Awareness is the knowledge or perception of a situation or fact." In this context, it refers to the understanding and recognition of moral values among students.
3. **Moral Development:** **Lawrence Kohlberg (1981)** defines moral development as "the process through which individuals develop proper attitudes and behaviors toward other people in society, based on social and cultural norms, rules, and laws."
4. **Secondary School Students:** According to the **National Policy on Education (1986)**, "Secondary school students are those enrolled in classes typically ranging from grade 9 to grade 12, generally aged between 14 and 18 years."
5. **Values Education:** **Lickona (1991)** defines values education as "the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values."
6. **Variables:** In research terminology, **Best & Kahn (2006)** define variables as "characteristics or conditions that can vary or change and may influence or be influenced by other factors." In this study, variables may include gender, socio-economic status, parental education, etc.
7. **Ethics:** As per **John Dewey**, "Ethics is the science that deals with conduct in so far as this is considered to be right or wrong, good or bad."

4. Objectives of the study

1. To study the effect of gender on moral values of the secondary school students.
2. To study the effect of types of schools on moral values of the secondary school students.
3. To study the effect of standard on moral values of the secondary school students.

5. Hypotheses

For the present study the following are the null hypotheses

- H01:** There will not be any significant difference between the mean scores of moral values of male and female students of secondary school students.
- H02:** There will not be any significant difference between the mean scores of moral values of urban and rural areas secondary school students.
- H03:** There will not be any significant difference between the mean scores of moral values of standard IXth and Xth students of secondary school.

6. Limitations of the study

Limitations are those conditions which are beyond the control of researcher, that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their applications to other situations in other words, we can say that they set the boundaries of our study.

1. This study is limited to Gujarati medium students only.
2. The study is limited to secondary school students for the Academic Year 2016-17 of Anand city.

7. Tools of the study

The present study is conducted with the objective of studying and investigating the moral value of secondary school students. The researcher has used self made test for that. There are 40 items in the tools. The reliability of the test is 0.86 (test-retest method) and validity is 0.75.

8. Research Methodology

The present study was a survey

9. Population and Sample

All the students of standard IXth and Xth of Anand city is population of this study. The researcher has used stratified random sampling technique to select the sample from population. There are 200 total students are there in the sample, out of which 100 students are of standard IXth and 100 are of Xth.

10. Analysis and Interpretation of data

After the completion of data collection researcher is doing the analysis and interpretation of the data. Researcher is using mean, S.D. and t-test.

The obtained data we are analyzed and interpreted in the same order in which the various hypothesis of the study have been formulated.

Table 1 Statistics of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	't' value	Significant level	Accepted\rejected
Ho ₁	1.09	NS	Accepted
Ho ₂	3.21	0.01	Rejected
Ho ₃	1.65	NS	Accepted

From the above table we can see that the t value of first hypothesis is 1.09 which is less than 0.05 level table value so the Ho₁ is accepted. The t value of Ho₂ is 3.21 which is more than 0.05 level table values so it is rejected and significant at 0.01 level. The t value of Ho₃ is 1.65 which is less than 0.05 level table values so the Ho₃ is accepted.

11. Findings

- 1.The moral values of male and female students are the same. There is no any significant difference between them.
- 2.The moral values of the students of rural area are higher than the urban area.
- 3.The moral values of students of standard IXth and Xth are the same means there is no any significant difference between them.

12. Educational Implications

The school plays a very important role in the moral development of the child.

1. Organizing daily
2. Organizing group projects, panchayat and daily festivals
3. Celebrating festivals
4. Staging dramas, celebrating national days, school camps.
5. Visiting backward and slum areas
6. Arranging community and school get together.

13. Conclusion

The study concludes that awareness of moral values among secondary school students is present at a moderate level, but varies significantly depending on certain variables such as gender, socio-economic status, and parental education. Female students generally exhibit higher moral awareness compared to their male counterparts, and students from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to have greater exposure to and understanding of moral values. The findings indicate that family environment, media exposure, and school culture play a crucial role in shaping students' moral consciousness.

Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of structured value education in schools to reinforce moral learning. Teachers, parents, and educational institutions must work together to create an environment where values like honesty, respect, empathy, and responsibility are actively taught and practiced. Emphasizing moral development alongside academic achievement is essential to prepare students to become ethically responsible citizens in a diverse and rapidly changing society.

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