

# Development of Moral Reasoning in the Context of Intelligence and Socio-Economic Status Following Value Clarification

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## Abstract

In the present experimental study an attempt has been made to study the effect of Value Clarification Model on Moral Reasoning of Children in Relation to Socio Economic Status and Intelligence. The sample comprised 100 subjects studying in 9th class from Bahadurgarh and surrounding rural areas. Some standardized moral dilemmas by Raths, Kohlberg and others and adapted by the investigators were used to test moral reasoning among children. Treatment for one month was given to the subjects in each school to clarify their values with the help of some moral dilemmas which were different from the ones used in Pre-test. After the treatment was over the students were Post-tested on the moral dilemmas used in Pre-test to see the effect of training/treatment on development of moral reasoning. To obtain data on independent variables of the study like intelligence and socio-economic status standardized tools were used. Mean, S.D and t values were computed for testing the significant difference between students(Note 1) performance in pre and post test and the mean gain scores of the subjects. The following conclusions were drawn:-

- Value Clarification technique has a positive significant effect on the development of moral reasoning of Children.
- Socio economic status of children does not have a significant effect on the development of moral reasoning as a result of value clarification.
- Intelligence has a positive significant effect on the development of moral reasoning of children as a result of value clarification.

## 1. Introduction

The Concept of morality is essentially a social phenomenon; yet its development in an individual relates to a host of factors like motivation, practices of child-rearing adopted by the parents, general social milieu, culture of the society in which one happens to live, individual traits like intelligence, sociability etc.

The individual and the social group have always passed on to the young their values and views about what is right and what is wrong. Without this kind of value transmission families and larger human groups would cease to function as effective units. For this reason, the moral and value education of the young has never been far from the minds of the adult community. In order to develop various aspects of human values, a number of theories and models of teaching have been developed. Such models provide a broad based pedagogy to mobilize feeling, to guide thinking and to sustain action. Value Clarification model is one of such models.

Democratic living by its very nature requires making value choices and value decisions in areas like love, friendship, politics, property, sex, religion etc. Many influences such as parental, peer group, family, school, religion etc, which often tend to contradict one another intervene in the way of making such choices and make them more difficult and confusing. The schools do not provide any value education directly so that such confusion can be removed. The students go on learning values through hidden curriculum. But quite often what is learnt through such unstated value curriculum is obedience to authority and the awareness that adults do not conform to their own standards and values which they profess to others, thereby creating more value confusion among children.

In order to solve such problems, Louis Raths, Merrill Harmin and Sidney Simen (1973) developed value clarification model. It is designed to make intelligent value choices through a process of choosing, prizing and behaving. Value clarification is the application of critical thinking skill to the affective domain. Krischenbaum (1977) is of the opinion that this model essentially involves social discourse or communication. To accomplish this task the teacher/investigator utilizes specifically designed techniques or exercises to help students clarify their values with the help of probing questions and illustrative examples. The sub processes of this model are (i)

choosing freely (ii) choosing from alternatives (iii) choosing after considering the consequences (iv) prizing and cherishing (v) affirming (vi) acting upon reality and (vii) repeating.

Many investigators in the field attempted to study the effect of value clarification model and the role of intelligence and socio economic status on the development of moral reasoning of children. Synoptic view of a few studies is presented below:

Grimes (1974) and Colby and Kohlberg (1977) found that moral discussions with children led to higher stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg (1963) and Bhargava (1986) found that SES was positively related with Moral Judgment. However, Bandopadhyaya (1981) and Vandana (1993) concluded that there was no significant association between moral judgment and SES in general. Johnson (1962), Paul H. Whiteman & Kenneth P. Kasier (1964) and Taruna (2002) indicate that there is a positive relationship of intelligence with the development of moral reasoning.

The studies conducted to investigate the effect of value clarification model on moral reasoning of children in relation to intelligence and socio economic status are thus not conclusive. It is for this reason that the present investigators visualized a need to investigate empirically the relationship that holds good between clarification of values and development of moral maturity in the context of intelligence and socio economic status.

## 2. Objectives

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives in view:

1. To study the effect of value clarification on moral reasoning of children.
2. To compare the effect of value clarification on the development of moral reasoning of children belonging to different socio-economic status.
3. To compare the effect of value clarification on the development of moral reasoning of children at different levels of intelligence.

## 3. Hypotheses

In order to carry out the study, the objectives were translated into corresponding hypotheses which are stated as below:

1. Value clarification has a positive significant effect on the development of moral reasoning of children.
2. In the development of moral reasoning of children through value clarification socio economic status is not a significant factor.
3. In the development of moral reasoning of children through value clarification intelligence is a significant factor.

## 4. Procedure & Design of the Study

### *Sample*

In order to achieve the objectives stated above and to test the corresponding hypotheses a sample of 100 subjects studying in 9th class of different schools from Bahadurgarh and surrounding rural areas was taken. Schools were selected randomly and the entire section from a particular class was taken as a cluster in any school the investigator visited for the collection of data.

### *Tools used*

The following tools were used for data collection:

1. Standardized moral dilemmas developed by Raths, Kohlberg and others and adapted by the investigators.
2. Group test of mental ability (intelligence) revised edition by S.S. Jalota (1972).
3. Socio-economic status scale by Rajiv Lochan, Kumari Shama Gupta and Narinder Singh Chauhan (1980).

Certain standardized moral dilemmas by Raths, Kohlberg and others were chosen and were adapted in Hindi by the investigators as the sample included subjects from rural areas as well. In adaptation the original moral dilemma situations were given to a small sample of 15 subjects and the adapted version was given again to the same sample after a gap of 3 weeks. The correlation coefficient between the two tests was computed which was found to be .91. Statistically this correlation coefficient is highly reliable.

In order to obtain moral reasoning scores of subjects under study, rapport was established with the subjects and proper instructions for filling up the answer sheets of the tests were given. In pre test, five moral dilemmas were administered to each subject and their moral reasoning scores were computed. In keeping with the objective of the study, training in value clarification for one month in each school was given to all the subjects under study.

During the course of training the investigator clarified values of the subjects through probing questions, illustrative examples and some moral dilemmas which were different from the ones used in Pre-test. When the training was over the subjects were post tested on the moral dilemmas used in pre test to see the effect of training/treatment on development of moral reasoning. After obtaining data on independent and dependent variables the responses of the subjects were scored strictly according to the norms as provided in the tools used for the research in view of the study.

*Statistical Techniques Used*

Mean, Standard Deviation and t values were computed for testing the significant difference between students' performance in pre and post test and the mean gain scores of subjects. The tables pertaining to different objectives and corresponding hypotheses are given below:

Hypothesis No.1 states that value clarification has a positive significant effect on the development of moral reasoning of children. The results pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:--> Table of t value between pre and post test scores on moral reasoning of children

Test	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T Value
Pre	100	15.2100	3.517	9.13 **
Post	100	17.1800	2.739	

\*\* = Significant at .01 level of significance

A perusal of Table 1 shows that the mean score of pre test on moral reasoning of children is 15.2100 with a standard deviation of 3.517. In the case of post test, the mean score is found to be 17.1800 with a standard deviation of 2.739. These mean scores of pre test and post test differ significantly because the t value comes out to be 9.13 which is significant at .01 level of significance. It shows that as a result of value clarification the moral reasoning scores of children increase significantly. Therefore Hypothesis No.1 is accepted.

Hypothesis No.2 states that in the development of moral reasoning of children through value clarification socio-economic status is not a significant factor. The results pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2:--> Table of t value between gain scores on moral reasoning of children at different levels of socio-economic status.

Variables	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T Value
High S.E.S	33	1.9394	1.968	.94 NS
Low S.E.S	34	1.4118	2.572	

NS = Not Significant.

A perusal of Table-2 shows that the difference of means between pre-test & post-test (mean gain scores) on moral reasoning of children of high socio-economic status is 1.9394 with a standard deviation of 1.968. In the case of low socio-economic status group of children the difference of means between pre and post test (mean gain scores) on moral reasoning is found to be 1.4118 with a standard deviation of 2.572. These gain scores in pre and post test of the two groups do not differ significantly because the t-value comes out to be .94 which is not significant even at .05 level of significance. Therefore the null Hypothesis No.2 stating that in the development of moral reasoning of children through value clarification socio-economic status is not a significant factor, is retained.

Hypothesis No.3 states that in the development of moral reasoning of children through value clarification intelligence is a significant factor. The results pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Table of t value between gain scores on moral reasoning of children at different levels of intelligence

Variables	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T Value
High Intelligence	33	3.0909	1.608	3.74**
Low Intelligence	34	1.7647	1.281	

\*\* = Significant at .01 level of significance

A perusal of Table 3 shows that the difference of means between Pre test & Post test (mean gain scores) on moral reasoning of children of high intelligence is 3.0909 with a standard deviation of 1.608. In the case of children of low intelligence group the difference of means between pre and post test (mean gain scores) on moral reasoning is found to be 1.7647 with a standard deviation of 1.281. These gain scores in pre and post test of the two groups differ significantly because the t-value comes out to be 3.74 which is significant at .01 level of significance. Looking at the mean scores of the two groups as a result of value clarification the mean gain score of the high intelligence group on moral reasoning is higher than that of the low intelligence group. This clearly shows that as a result of value clarification the high intelligence group of children gains significantly higher in moral reasoning than the low intelligence group. Therefore Hypothesis No. 3 stating that in the development of moral reasoning of children through value clarification intelligence is a significant factor, is retained.

### 5. Discussion of Results

- Since the technique of value clarification basically aims at removal of confusion in the choice of particular value obviously, helping the child clarify his/her values on the part of a teacher enhances moral maturity or moral reasoning of the child. This finding corroborates well with the findings of Grimes (1974), Singh and Singh (1989) and Colby and Kohlberg et al (1977) who concluded that moral discussions with children led to higher stages of moral reasoning. Hence, the finding is supported by empirical evidence as well as with the conceptual framework of value clarification envisaged by Raths et. al. (1969).
- It is a common sense logic that for the development of moral reasoning it is not mere the socio-economic status but the cultural nurturing of the child and psychological treatment of the significant others (teachers, parents, etc.) which matter the most. Therefore, this finding is theoretically tenable and empirically confirmed as a result of present investigation. The finding of the present investigation that in the development of moral reasoning in children through value clarification socio-economic status is not a significant factor is also substantiated by the finding of Bandopadhyaya (1981) and Vandana (1993) who found that there was no significant association between moral judgement and socio-economic status in general.
- So far as the effect of intelligence on the development of moral reasoning is concerned the present investigation clearly holds that there is a direct positive relationship of intelligence with the development of moral reasoning as a result of value clarification technique. At the theoretical backdrop this appears to be quite understandable because moral reasoning is essentially reasoning which is an essential component of intelligence. According to Piaget (1932) there is a progressive development of morality, which concurs with cognitive developmental stages. This finding is well in tune with the findings of Johnson (1962), Paul H. Whiteman & Kenneth P. Kasier (1964) and Taruna (2002) who found that maturity of moral judgement is a function of increase in mental age rather than advances in chronological age alone.

#### Findings

1. Value clarification technique has a positive significant effect on the development of moral reasoning of children.
2. Socio-economic status of children does not have a significant effect on the development of moral reasoning as a result of value clarification.
3. Intelligence has a positive significant effect on the development of moral reasoning of children as a result of value clarification.

#### The Final Word

In nutshell it can be said that there is a significant positive impact of value clarification technique on the development of moral reasoning of children. Parents and teachers should, therefore, try to clarify children's values to decrease value confusion and thus help them to make value choices and value decisions. Intelligence is found to have significant bearing on the development of moral reasoning, the development of which is more or less determined on the basis of heredity. Yet suitable physical, social and psychological environment may be

provided to the children to enable them to unfold this inborn ability which is originally enfolded in the child and may remain inchoate in the absence of a meaningful exposure.

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