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Research Papers

ASSESSMENT OF MORALITY AMONG ADOLESCENTS OF SAMBA DISTRICT OF JAMMU, J&K

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to determine the level of morality among adolescents and to further, assess it as a function of their age and gender. The sample comprised of 160 adolescents in the age group of 13-18 years. Half of these adolescents were in the early adolescence (13-15 years) and rest in the late adolescence (16-18 years) age range. The sample was selected by random sampling procedure from rural areas of Samba District, Jammu, J&K. The standardized Moral Values Scale (A.S. Gupta and A.K. Singh) was used for data collection.

The result reveals that majority of the sample adolescents had moderate to low morality level. None of the sample adolescents had very high morality and those having high moral values were also few in number. Early adolescents had significantly higher levels of morality than late adolescents as revealed by statistical procedures. However, no significant differences were found in the moral values of boys and girls. The results highlight that the age of adolescents has significant influence on their morality levels.

KEY WORDS: MORALITY, ADOLESCENTS, SEX, AGE

INTRODUCTION:

Adolescents undergo a series of changes in socio-cognitive and socio-emotive skills. There is increase in abstract thinking skills, forethought, perspective taking, and hypothetical – deductive reasoning skills which are associated with increase in moral reasoning and sympathy (Terav and Pakaslahti, 2004). The significant changes in socio-cognitive skills and affective responses during this period are believed to foster the development of moral reasoning and altruistic tendencies. Therefore, adolescence would be expected to be a period of growth for moral and prosocial dispositions, cognitions and behaviour. Moral reasoning continues to mature during adolescence and into adulthood. Moral reasoning (for judgement), depending on its conceptualization, reflects the structure and content of an individual's reasoning about hypothetical or real-life moral dilemmas – that is, how an individual justifies his or her moral decisions (Eisenberg et al, 1991; Krettenauer et al, 2010).

Self-reflective and internalized modes of moral reasoning (e.g. reasoning pertaining to role taking; positive or negative affect based on the consequences of behavioural choices; positive affect related to living up to internalized values; internalized norms, rule, and law reasoning; generalized

reciprocity) increase in use, whereas stereotypic reasoning (e.g. reference to expected or normative behaviour, e.g. "It's nice to help") continue to decrease in use from childhood until the late teens. However, hedonistic reasoning increase modestly in mid adolescence and then again in late adolescence primarily for males (Heubner, 1993, Eisenberg et. al., 1991).

With this as background the present study was conducted to assess morality among adolescents of Samba District of Jammu, J&K. Further, differences if any in the moral reasoning according to the age and sex of the adolescents were also assessed.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: The methodological framework for the study is as follows:
1. Sample: The sample group for study comprised 160 adolescents both boys and girls in the age group of 13-18 years. Half of these adolescents were in the early adolescence (13-15 years) and the rest in the late adolescence (16-18 years) age range.
2. Locale of the Study: The entire study was carried out in two educational zones namely Purmandal Zone and Vijaypur Zone of Samba district, Jammu.
3. Sampling Technique: The sample for the present study was selected by random sampling procedure from Samba district. A comprehensive list of high schools and higher secondary schools was prepared. Then eight schools were selected by lottery method. Out of which half were high school and the rest were higher secondary schools. Then from each school twenty students were selected who were in the age range of 13-15 years and 16-18 years by systematic random sampling technique.
4. Criteria for sample selection:
i.   Adolescents should be resident of rural area of Samba district.
ii.   Only school going adolescents were selected for the study.
iii.   Half of the adolescents were boys and the rest were girls.
iv.   All selected adolescents should belong to middle socio-economic status families.
5. Data Collection: For data collection a standardized moral values scale developed by Alpana Sen Gupta and Arun Kumar Singh was used. The maximum possible score for the present scale is 36, children are asked to read the questions carefully and ask to place tick mark (ü) on either "Yes" or "No". This scale consists of two types of items, positive and negative. All the positive items that are endorsed by the children or subjects as "Yes" and all the negative items that are endorsed by the subjects as "No" are given a score of +1. A score of zero is awarded to all other answers. Thus high score on this scale indicates high moral values and low score indicates low moral values on the part of the subject.
6. Data Analysis: The data obtained was compiled, percentage of respondents falling in various categories were calculated and tabulated. Appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, chi square were applied to derive the results.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: The results of the study are presented as under:
1. Age of Adolescents

Table 1

Age of Adolescents

Age (in years)	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
13	-	-	2	2.5	2	2.5
14	10	12.5	15	18.75	25	31.25
15	30	37.5	23	28.75	53	66.25
16	13	16.25	12	15	25	31.25
17	16	20	21	26.25	37	46.25
18	11	13.75	7	8.75	18	22.5
Total	80	100	80	100	160	200

Boys $\overline{X}$ = 15.82, S.D. = 1.25
Girls $\overline{X}$ = 15.57, S.D. = 1.79
t-value of age between boys and girls = 1.62, insignificant.

Table 1 reveals that majority of the sample adolescents were either 15 years (66.25%) or (46.25%) were 17 years old. Statistical calculation reveals that mean age of boys was 15.82 while that for girls 15.57 showing that the sample boys and girls had similar ages.

2. Class level of Adolescents

Table 2

Class level of Adolescents

Class	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
8	2	2.5	4	5	6	3.75
9	35	43.75	25	31.25	60	37.5
10	3	3.75	11	13.75	14	8.75
11	40	50	40	50	80	50
Total	**80**	**100**	**80**	**100**	**160**	**100**

Class wise bifurcation of the sample adolescents reveals that they were spread over classes 8th to 11th. Table 2 reveals that most of the sample adolescents (50%) were studying in 11th class and 37.5% were in 9th class, 8.75% were in 10th class. Thus, majority of the respondents were students of classes 9th and 11th.

3. Level of Morality Among Adolescents

Table 3

Morality Level of Adolescents

Morality Level	Boys		Girls		Total		Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents		Total	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Very High	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High	9	11.25	8	10	17	10.62	11	13.75	6	7.5	17	10.62
Middle	31	38.75	37	46.25	68	42.5	49	61.25	19	23.75	68	42.5
Low	33	41.25	28	35	61	38.12	19	23.75	42	52.5	61	38.12
Very Low	7	8.75	7	8.75	14	8.75	1	1.25	13	16.25	14	8.75
Total	**80**	**100**	**80**	**100**	**160**	**100**	**80**	**100**	**80**	**100**	**160**	**100**

For Boys and Girls: χ^2 = 0.99, Table value = 7.81, insignificant
For early and late adolescents: χ^2 = 33.6*, Table value = 7.81, * significant at 0.5%.

Table 3 reveals that on the whole majority of the sample adolescents (42.5%) had middle/moderate morality level. None of the sample adolescents had very high morality level and just 10.62% has high levels of morality. 38.12% of the adolescents had low levels of morality, followed by another 8.75% having very low levels of morality. This indicates that more adolescents had moderate to low level of morality rather than having high levels of it. Probably because the adolescents are still growing their morality is also prpbably undergoing some change as well. Calculated c2 reveals insignificant difference in the morality level of boys and girls but at the same time there was significant difference in the morality level of early and late adolescents. Nonetheless, 11.25% of boys as compared to 10.62% of girls had high morality level, whereas 38.12% of girls as compared to 41.25% of boys had low morality level. Most early adolescents (61.25%) and late adolescents (52.5%) had middle and low morality levels respectively. This indicates that early adolescents had higher level of morality than late adolescents. Overall, the results imply that age of the sample adolescents had significant influence on their morality levels. Generally, most sample adolescents had middle/moderate level of morality.4. Sex and Age Differences in Moral Values:

The moral value of the adolescents were analysed according to their sex and age.

4 (a) Sex Differences in Moral Values:

Table 4(a)

Mean scores and t-scores of boys and girls

Areas	Boys		Girls		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Moral values	20.43	4.43	21.18	4.54	-1.168

*Significant at 0.05% level.

Table 4(a) contains data on the mean scores of adolescent boys and girls on moral value scale. The mean score of girls on moral values was slightly higher than boys. But calculation of the t value reveals that there was no significant difference in the moral values of the sample boys and girls. Hence, sex has little or no influence on the moral values of the sample adolescents.

4 (b) Age Differences in Moral Values:

Table 4(b)

Mean scores and t-scores of early and late adolescents.

Areas	Early Adolescents		Late Adolescents		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Moral values	22.45	3.83	19.17	4.53	4.77*

*Significant at 0.05% level.

Table 4(b) has data on the mean scores of early adolescents and late adolescents. The mean scores of early adolescents in the area of moral values was higher than late adolescents showing that early adolescents had higher moral values. Calculation of 't'-value show significant differences in the moral values of early adolescents and late adolescents, indicating that morality is a function of age of adolescents.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

An assessment into the morality of the adolescents reveals that most of them tend to have moderate to low morality level. The incidence of the adolescents having high morality was low and very high morality was completely absent for the sample group. Probably because the adolescents are in an ephemeral phase of their development so it is likely that their moral values are also transitory in nature. As far as the influence of sex and age was concerned it was noted that though a slightly larger number of girls had higher morality than the boys but statistically there was no significant difference in the morality levels according to sex of the sample adolescents. These results are similar to the finding of Khaled (2008) that there are no significant gender differences in the adolescent's moral reasoning. However, at the same time it was found that early adolescents had higher moral values than late adolescents. Hence, confirming that age had a significant influence on the moral values of the adolescents. Barr et al (2007) and Carlo et al (2007) had also mentioned the effect of age on the moral reasoning of adolescents. Probably as the adolescents grow they tend to become more aware of the realities of the world around them and hence their moral values also become more pragmatic than idealistic. Hence, it is concluded that adolescence is a stage of vital importance when it comes to the development of morality and further, that moral values remain more or less similar between males and females but with age morality can get altered.

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