



## RESEARCH PAPER

### Head Teachers' Level of Morality in Relation to their Age and Experience

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#### ABSTRACT

The study was designed to determine the relationship between head teachers of secondary schools' level of morality with their age and administrative experience. Data were collected from 200 head teachers of secondary schools selected as sample of the study from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan. Kohlberg's Form A of MJI -Moral Judgment Interviews- was used as an instrument for data collection. Standard Issue Scoring Manual was used to determine head teachers' GS Scores and Weighted Average Scores (WAS). It was concluded that there was significant negative relationship between moral reasoning and age of head teachers of secondary schools. It means the younger head teachers secured the better stage of moral reasoning as compare to male heads. However, no relationship was detected between moral reasoning stage and administrative experience.

**KEYWORDS** Administrative Experience, Age, Moral Judgment, Morality, Standard Issue Scoring Manual

#### Introduction

Schools are the places where children are educated and trained for future life. Education enables them to lead their individual and collective life successfully. Training students for future does not require to give them only the information in the classrooms but it demands a lot from the part of institutions. Today's employers, too, do not want encyclopaedias to recruit. But they want competent persons with all round developed personalities.

Competency does not come from just pouring the information into the minds of students in schools but it requires more. Besides other life skills, It requires developing persons morally. That's why moral development is considered as the basic objective of schooling (Sprinthhal & Sprinthhal, 1990) and in classrooms moral issues should be discussed (Farooq, Farooq, Tabassum, & Khan, 2018).

At school, students require role models not the harsh critics to follow because personality of the role model works as hidden curriculum and greatly influence the students' personalities. Students cannot live in isolation in their daily life but they have to interact with other people. They observe their role models and learn from them ways to deal and tackle the people in the best manner following the basic principles of social interaction like justice, equality, and human rights. And if they don't, they cannot be able to live their life successfully. Colby & Kohlberg (1987) were of the view that values are caught not taught. For that very reason it is essential for students to have mentors with high moral values. So, it is of immense importance to know the head teachers' level of morality because they work as role models for their teachers and students

The process of development remains continue till the end of one's life. But it is also a reality that with the passage of time human nerves weaken. Does this weakness of the

nerves affect moral decision making of a person or not? And at school, heads interact with teachers, students and community. Whether these experiences in their day-to-day business influence their moral reasoning or not? are valid questions and require the attention of today's researchers.

Worldwide research has been generated by Kohlberg's theory (Farooq, Farooq, Tabassum, & Khan, 2018). But unfortunately, insufficient attention has been paid by the researchers throughout the world to determine the association of age and experience with morality. There is a requirement of more exploration of in regards to moral reasoning using instruments that are standardised (Lavell, 2002). That's why there is scarcity of literature on the topic. So, it was of great importance to study in the area of morality considering the above mentioned variables. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the head teachers' level of morality and its relationship with their age and administrative experience.

### **Literature Review**

Hammersley and Traianou, (2017) were of the view that morality is the behavioural belief of right and wrong. Santrock (2005), moral development involves thoughts, feelings, and behaviour in connection with standards of good/right and bad/wrong. It has two dimensions i.e. intrapersonal and interpersonal. The intrapersonal dimension focuses on person's fundamental values and his sense of self. It regulates the person's behaviour when he is not involved in social interaction. On the other hand, interpersonal dimension considers his interaction with others and regulates his behaviour in the process (Santrock, 2006).

Goolsby and Hunt (1992) were of the opinion that for understanding moral reasoning Kohlberg's stages are widely used. Levine, Kohlberg, & Hower (1985) made three assumptions considering Kohlberg's model, 1- This model is universal, 2- CMD (Cognitive Moral Development) is based on rules and principles, and 3- For resolving interpersonal and social conflicts, moral judgment plays a pivotal role.

Kohlberg identified preconventional, conventional, and postconventional reasoning as the three levels of moral reasoning. At preconventional reasoning, individual's judgments are based on rules of those people who may control rewards and punishment (Santrock, 2006). Children do not have understanding of society's rules. According to them morality is determined by its consequences. As for as conventional level is concerned, Judgment is based on others' approval (Santrock, 2005). To some extent conventions are rigid, at this level and rules are not questioned. At this level there is intermediate internalization of moral values as individuals internally abide by standards imposed by others. At the post conventional level moral reasoning is completely internalized. The individuals develop their own abstract moral principles (Santrock, 2006).

Kohlberg identified six stages of moral reasoning. At stage 1, according to Kohlberg, motives are dominated by fear of punishment. Here people judge actions in terms of their physical consequences. They obey as they want to avoid punishment (Sanders, 2019). Persons at stage 2 do not consider others' needs unless they think that will help them to do so. At stage 3 of Kohlberg's theory social approval determines behaviour (Sanders, 2019), an individual concern about the group of people and his motive is to be accepted as nice guy. Preserving the society is the focus of people at stage 4. They are more concern for the order in the society. Individuals at stage 5 consider that right is what whole society decides. Society can change any law and these changes can be made in the best interest of people. At Universal ethical principle, the sixth stage, what is right is decided by one's conscience. Justice, equality, and right to life are most basic ethical principles (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1990)

## **Hypotheses of the study**

For achieving objective 1 and 2 the null hypotheses that were tested are mentioned below;

Ho1; “there is no significant relationship between secondary schools’ administrators’ morality scores and their age scores”.

Ho2; “there exists no significant relationship between secondary schools’ heads’ moral reasoning scores and their administrative experience scores.

For rejecting or accepting the above mentioned null hypotheses, the level of significance was 0.05.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Sample**

In order to investigate the relationship of school heads’ morality with their age and administrative experience, 200 head teachers of secondary schools were selected as sample from Punjab and Pakhtunkhwa. The sample was selected from male and female, and rural and urban areas.

All the head teachers included in sample of the study were master (M.A/ MSc) degree holders and had at least three years administrative experience and 85 percent of them were at the age of 40 and above.

The data of 160 head teachers were analyzed because the interview forms of 40 head teachers were rejected as they were incomplete and could not be scored. Among them six head teachers did not mention their age and four heads their experience. So, they were also excluded from the analysis.

### **Research Instrument**

In order to explore Weighted Average Scores of the respondents Kohlberg’s MJI (Moral Judgment Interview) Form A was used. The researcher conducted written interviews as it is only feasible method for the collection of data from large number of respondents.

The interview form has 3 (three) dilemmas including the “Heinz and the druggist” dilemma. The researcher modified these dilemmas slightly according to the culture, for example he replaced Heinz with Farjad, Joe became Ali and US dollars replaced by Pakistani rupees.

The interview form also included a demographic sheet to obtain information relating to subjects’ age and administrative experience.

### **Data collection**

For data collection, the investigator visited the selected secondary schools personally. However, he took the help of a female research assistant for the collection of data from female head teachers. She was trained for the purpose. During the data collection process, the researcher directed the respondents that they may choose any of the solution they liked but the important thing to be kept in mind was that the interviewer’s interest is in answering to “why” questions than to “what” questions. If they did not explain “why they think it is right” long description of “what” was of no help

## **Analysis of Data**

The researcher used Standard Issue Scoring Manual and adopted following procedure to score the dilemmas. The interview material was broken down into IJs (interview judgments). Then he went for the match between the IJs (Interview Judgments) and the CJs (Criterion Judgments). Finally On the basis of this match, he was able to assign a stage score. On the acceptance of IJs-CJs match, the researcher entered the score in the interview form and also in the score sheet. He used one score sheet for the three dilemmas in the interview. When he didn't find IJ-CJ match, then he assigned a guess score on the basis of CJ stage structure in the manual. The guess score was assigned only when IJ-CJ match was not found. "No material" was written in the score sheet if he didn't find any reason in the material. This procedure was repeated for all the three dilemmas.

For the calculation of GSS (global stage score), 3 points were assigned to pure stage score for chosen issue. For transitional stage, 1 1/2 point was assigned to each, and when there was a major and a minor, 2 of the 3 were assigned to major and one to minor. For non-chosen issue, 2 points were assigned to pure stage score. He assigned 1 point to each for transitional stage. The stage that secured 25% of the total was considered as GS (global stage). If not, mix score was assigned.

The investigator calculated Weighted Average Score (WAS) of each subject by multiplying each stage represented in the interview by weighted points for that stage. Then he added the product of all the stages. After this, the sum of the products was divided by total number of weighted points and then it was multiplied by 100.

In order to determine the relationship of heads' morality with their age and administrative experience Pearson Correlation was performed.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Moral reasoning and age**

Ho1; "there is no significant relationship between secondary schools heads' morality and their age.

Correlation was performed to determine the significant correspondence between moral reasoning (Weighted Average Sores) and age of 154 secondary school head teachers (as 6 head teachers did not mention their age in their interview forms). The result was  $r = -0.375$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded that there was significant negative correspondence between moral reasoning and age of secondary schools' head teachers. That means that the younger head teachers were at the higher stage of moral reasoning than the older head teachers. This finding is not consistent with the previous research and opens a new window for researcher.

### **Moral Reasoning and Administrative Experience**

Ho2; "there is no significant relationship between secondary schools heads' moral reasoning and their administrative experience.

To examine the relationship between moral reasoning and administrative experience of 156 secondary school head teachers, Pearson Correlation was performed (as 4 head teachers did not mention their experience in their interview forms). The result was  $r = -0.121$ . Therefore the above null hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that there was no significant relationship between moral reasoning and administrative experience of the secondary schools' head teachers.

This finding supports the work of Shank (2005).

## **Discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between secondary schools heads' morality with their age, and administrative experience. Regarding the relationship between age and moral reasoning, it was concluded that there was significant negative correspondence between moral reasoning and age of secondary school head teachers. It means that the younger heads secured the higher stage of moral reasoning than the older head teachers. This finding opened a new window for future research as it is not consistent with the previous studies. For example, Gibbs and Lieberman (1983) studied the relationship between moral reasoning and age and concluded that there was clear relationship between age and moral judgment stage. McNair, Okan, Hadjichristides and Bruine (2018) also concluded that the moral judgments of older adults were significantly higher. The age of the sample of their study ranged from 10 to 36 years, while in the present study 85 percent of the sample was above 40. Barba, (2002) compared the older group of professionals with middle school and high school students and found positive effect on the moral growth. Colby & Kohlberg (1987) and Farooq (2009) were also of the view that moral reasoning grows with age. On the subject of the relationship between moral reasoning and administrative experience, this study supports the work of Shank (2005) who found no significant relationship between moral reasoning and administrative experience

## **Conclusions**

- 1- Significant negative relationship ( $r = -0.375$ ) was detected between secondary school head teachers' morality scores and their age. That means that the younger head teachers were at the higher stage of moral reasoning than the older head teachers.
- 2- There was no significant relationship ( $r = -0.121$ ) between moral reasoning and experience of secondary schools' head teachers.

## **Recommendations**

The results of this study require further confirmation through future research for the following reasons

1. The sample of this study was taken from only Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces of Pakistan. The study be replicated in other areas of the country having different culture and traditions and also in the other organizations of the country
2. The present study was limited only to head teachers of government secondary schools. Future studies may consist on sample from private schools too, so that the results be soundly generalized to the whole country.

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