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Original Article

Examination of the Relation Between Moral Development and Happiness with Educational Improvement of Girl's high School Students in 17th Region of Tehran

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ABSTRACT

This article is done to examine the relation between moral development and happiness with educational improvement of girl's high school students in 17th region of Tehran. Mental, moral, psychological and spiritual trainings of students is the goal that Ministry of Education has set for itself, and whereas there is no research about the effect of moral development and happiness on educational improvement so doing such a research seems obligatory. To examine moral development we used the DIT exam of moral development and for happiness investigating we made use of Oxford's happiness questionnaire and to test the educational improvement we applied the average of students in last year. Statistical society in this research is the whole girl's high school students in 17th region of Tehran. The sample was selected by available sampling method and from the Hazrate Fatemeh high school in the 17th region of Tehran. 230 questionnaires were applied in this high school on first grade which were reduced 200 after abscission. Analysis of received data shows that there is a meaningful relation between moral development and educational improvement at the level of 99%. Also there is relation between happiness and educational progress at the level of 99%. Regression analysis shows that one unit increase in happiness variable results 0.26 in educational improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Students' educational improvement is one of the most important factors in evaluating educational system and all efforts in this system try to make it real. In other words, society and especially Ministry of Education are concerned about person's destiny and his successful evolution and his situation in society and expect the person have such a successful progress in different aspects such as cognitive aspects and achieving ability in personality aspects, emotional and behavioral. [1]

Nowadays one of the factors that have effect on educational improvement is the level of moral development. Moral development is the process that people find their behavioral adoptive ability with correct and incorrect factors through it. [2] Whereas a person's knowledge about correct or incorrect things, good or bad probably has short term (expects, evaluation and documents) and long term (beliefs and theories) cognitive aspects, so they are always under control of greatest cognitive mechanism (intelligent and automatic) that identify his behavior (educational improvement as an example). [3]

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We can consider the vast and deep research of Piaget as a main resource of cognitive-developmental tradition in moral developmental area. In the view of Piaget a child after the period of "pre-moral" that no moral command has meaning to him, enter to the first step of moral evolution which becomes "behavioral realism". In this stage the child's relation with "significant others" has decisive role in moral thought and make the unilateral respect for him without any logrolling. The rules are holly and should be done. Rules' sprits are not important and making connection between the responsibility of persons' behaviors and their motivations is not allowed. In next stage the child reaches to "mutual moral thought" that Piaget names that "moral relativism". In this stage, moral behavior is not proposed as unquestioning obedience but the rules are considered as society made social contract. The spirit of social rules is perceived and compliance with law has internal motives. [4]

Kohlberg (1969) followed Piaget's work and gained new layout of stages of moral development but it was committed to the cognitive theory framework and was agreed with coordinated development of emotional, cognitive and social aspects of psychological life as a parallel to each other. [5] In fact he modified Piaget's work and developed it. Coordinating with Piaget's view, he believes that children reach to different kinds of thoughts through their experiences which include understanding moral concepts such as justice, rights, equality and welfare. Kohlberg pursued the growth of moral judgment in beyond ages studied by Piaget and determined that the process of attaining moral maturity is more gradual and longer than the Piaget pointed. In Kohlberg's model 3 levels and 6 stages are identified for process of moral changes. The first level is the level of pre conventional morality. The second is the level of conventional morality which contains "good girl, good boy" and also morality according to law and order. The third level is beyond conventional which includes the steps of morality based on social conventions and morality based on universal principals. Then he considered 2 steps as subsets of each moral level, totally he considers 6 stages for moral development. [6]

The characteristics of child in different levels and different moral development:

The level of pre conventional morality

The child in this level mostly has good behavior. This moral behavior of child is according to avoid punishment and gains reward. In this level he is sensitive to good and bad moral judgments of environment. Interpretation of his behavior is simple according to material consequences of that behavior (punishment, encouragement, giving lovely things to him) or the power of persons who make the rules for him(usually mother and father). In this period the moral doesn't be internal yet and moral factors don't exist in real. This level of moral development includes 2 different stages:

First level: punishment and obeying based moral: in this stage being moral of everything or good and bad manner is defined according to their material consequences.

In this stage, the moral regulations have no value by itself, but they only represent which behavior would be the reason for punishment. In this stage, there is no moral commitment. Group and social profits and the others' rights have no meaning for the child. He/she only thinks about his/her needs and feelings and if he/she does not perform an immoral action, it is only because of fear of punishment or surrendering to a greater power. [7]

Second stage: relative tool-like morality: in this stage, the child turns to compatibility and coordination with the rules in order to get rewards. The human's relationship eventuates commercially and as a mutual dealing. This dealing is carried out in a practical style and further for rectifying the child's demands and it is not based on a real feeling of justice, generosity, sympathy or compassion and pity: "you give me mercy. I'll give you mercy too".

The individual's moral characteristic is his/her pleasure in this stage. If the individual is surrendered to a particular moral regulation, it is mainly because of the rewards and profits he/she expects from that law. [6]

Level of conceptual morality

The individual's moral behavior in this level is for compatibility and cooperation with the social order and tendency to keep and maintain this order. Although the child resembles with his/her parents in this period and accommodates with what they present as true and false, the main motivation and stimulant for this compatibility and cooperation is resemblance to the parents and yet, it cannot be stated that the moral criteria have been intrinsic in this period. This level also includes two stages:

Third stage: good morality of boy and girl:

In this stage, good behavior is that it should accompany the others' permission and approval and it should maintain good relationships with them so and it is why the child proceeds to coordinate and be compatible with the moral criteria of friends or family members. There is the most compatibility with the group in this stage. In this stage, the child wants psychological pleasure (enjoying the others' satisfaction) instead of material pleasures.

In this stage, for the first time, the child differentiates between the individual's intention and his/her action and evaluates the individual's only based on its results and outcomes. [8]

Fourth stage: morality based on rule and order:

In this stage, the individual accepts the social contracts and rules blindly and he/she believes that the individuals should keep watching the rules of society and abstain from cavil and criticizing the rule. The individual has

understood that all people should follow one social rule, otherwise the order of society disrupts. In this stage, the individual believes that everyone should perform his/her task in order to prevent from anarchy. [6]

Level of over-contractual morality

In this period, the individuals' moral arguments and judgments become internal and the moral behavior is conducted through an internal moral code. In this period, the morality is based on a global principle and preferable to social contracts and the moral behavior does not depend on other persons' approval and permission or prevention and forbidding and it is independent from the authority of groups supporting it. [9] The moral encounters are solved based on public morality principles and disobeying it creates feelings of innocence and condemnation for the individual. This level is also divided into two stages:

Fifth stage: morality based on social contract:

In this stage, a correct behavior is the one which is carried out in the framework of individuals' general rights and based on the acceptable criteria of all individuals in the society. In this stage, both personal rights and public rules and rights are considered. The morality is based on agreement between the individuals of society to accommodate freely with those norms of society which are essential to maintain social order and rights of individuals in the society. These methods are social contracts and agreements. If people comprehend logically that there are also other norms which may be more useful, the previous methods are modifiable and changeable. In this stage both rules and moral beliefs are flexible. [10]

Sixth stage: morality based on global principles:

Currently, correct or incorrect behavior depends on the individual's self-conscious decision and selection and it is founded based on individual conscience and universal and fixed moral principles which are absolute and general. Individuals who achieve this level of moral development both accommodate with social criteria and cooperate with their intrinsic goals. Their motivation for moral behavior is mainly that they should have been acted in following their consciences calling, not paying attention to criticize the others. [11]

Those who achieve this stage, have many moral beliefs in their individual principles which might be even sometimes contradicted to the social order accepted by vast majority of society. In this stage which is the most complete stage of moral development in Kohlberg's opinion, the meaning of morality becomes obvious from his view. He believes that the moral principles of the sixth stage which are global include a concept of justice. Justice means that we should achieve a solution which everyone find it appropriate [12]. Appropriate solution is obtained when anyone assumes himself/herself in the others' place fairly. In the Kohlberg's opinion, if an

individual achieves a high level of moral development (especially the sixth stage), he/she would not come back to the previous stages again. In general, the moral development is advancing to higher stages and there is no return in it to the previous stages. According to the studies carried out by him in different societies (such as U.S, Taiwan, Turkey, Yucatán and Mexico), he concluded that most of the individuals do not achieve to higher stages of moral development. Of course, he pays attention that the cultural and economic factors influences both on the rate of moral development and on its final level which the individual achieves to, and the individuals and cultures are different to each other in this respect [6].

Another variable which is investigated in this research and its relationship with the moral development is investigated is happiness [13]. Happiness is the name of a scientific term which is used for individuals' evaluation of their lives. The individuals may investigate and evaluate their lives as general judgment (such as satisfaction of life or feeling of satisfaction) or as evaluating the particular domains of their lives (such as marriage or work) or their recent emotional feelings with respect to what is occurred for them (pleasant emotions which are resulted from the positive evaluations of personal experiences and low levels of unpleasant feelings which are resulted from the negative evaluations of personal experiences) [14] In the view of [15], three main components of happiness are: positive excitement, satisfaction of life and lack of negative excitations including depression and anxiety. Therefore, happiness is a concept which has several basic components. At first, it has an emotional component which causes that the happy individual is always happy morally. Second is that it has a social component which is following the development of social relationships. And third is that it has a cognitive component which makes the happy individual have a kind of his/her thought and particular information processing and interpret the daily events such that follows his/her optimism. Happy individuals are active, creative and optimistic and see a new manifestation in everything and learn a lesson from any experience. Results of many researches confirm the positive influences of happiness on the human's psychological health. Happy humans can encounter the problems and difficulties better and overcome them and happiness causes increase in learning.

This paper attempts to follow the below targets through investigating on the relationship between the moral development and happiness and educational improvement:

The idealistic aim of this research is to provide a bed for further moral development of the society and mothers and fathers of tomorrow in this land. The overall aim is more consideration of students' moral and psychological education and the influences which may be on their educations. The particular aim is to investigate on the relationship between the moral development of the

female students and their happiness and educational improvement. It is hoped that the results of this research is considered by the relevant authorities in the education and training who have also the responsibility to plan for students' moral development.

The questions of this investigation are as below:

- 1- Is there any relationship between the moral development and educational improvement of the female students of region 17 of Tehran?
- 2- Is there any relationship between the happiness and educational improvement of the female students of region 17 of Tehran?

METHODOLOGY

Tools of evaluation

Moral development questionnaire (DIT)

In this research, to evaluate the moral development, moral development test (DIT) is used which is written and applied by Rest et al in 1972. The DIT test is used to measure the development of the moral judgment. The test has six moral stories and its short form contains three moral stories which each one of the stories makes the testable encounter moral contradiction. Analysis of the answers of the testable and the reasons of selecting the answer determines the position of testable in the moral stages. The test may be implemented both individually and in a group. To implement its complete form, an hour is sufficient, and its short form (three stories) takes 35 minutes. In this research, its short form (three stories) is used. The method of implementation is so that the testable reads a story at first and then states his/her view about 12 phrases being expressed about the subject of the story in terms of importance. Finally,

he/she selects and prioritizes four of the most important phrases he/she has written. [16]

After prioritizing four important phrases related to each story by the testable, the levels of moral stages corresponding to each phrase is found according to the below table.

After determining the stage of moral judgment corresponding to each phrase and on this basis that finally, we have four prioritized phrases in each story, we give the stage which is selected as the first priority, 4 scores, the stage which is in the second priority, 3 scores, the stage which has the third priority, 2 scores and the moral stage which is placed in the final priority, one score. These scores are then transferred to the below table:

Table 1:

Stories	Stages of moral development							
	2	3	4	5	6	A	M	P
Pharmacy								
Possessing a building								
Prisoner								
Doctor								
Mechanic								
Journalism								
Total score of stage								

Table 2:

Twelve phrases of each story	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Pharmacy	4	3	2	M	3	4	M	6	1	5	3	5
Possessing a building	3	4	2	5	5	3	6	4	3	1	5	4
Prisoner	3	4	1	4	6	M	3	4	3	4	5	5
Doctor	3	4	1	2	5	M	3	6	4	5	4	5
Mechanic	4	4	3	2	6	1	5	5	5	3	4	3
Journalism	4	4	2	4	M	5	3	3	5	5	4	3

Meaning of M is questions which are prioritized because of the appearance of the sentence, lack of motivation, ambiguity or inaccuracy of the testable and the total of their scores should not be more than 8 in 6 stories (complete form), because in this way, the obtained result would be lacking validity. A is the score of the moral judgment. P is the score of the moral development (fundamental morality) which is the sum of the scores in stages 5 and 6 of moral judgment.

[17] validated the DIT test through the criterion group. [18] also used the method of criterion group to validate the DIT test. The test could differentiate meaningfully between the labors, managers and supervisors in terms of stages 2, 3, 4 and fundamental morality and stages 5 and 6 in the development of the judgment with the values of F equal to 30.390, 16.3, 80.4 and 7.4 respectively. [18] In a research carried out by [18], the coefficients of the test stability were calculated using the Cronbach's alpha

and split-half stability methods which were 0.74 and 0.82 respectively.

Oxford happiness questionnaire

Oxford happiness questionnaire is an appropriate tool and a complicated and multi-choice criterion with a high stability and validity. Oxford happiness questionnaire is provided by [15] in 1989 and it is published in 1990. Since Beck's depression test is one of the most successful scales of depression, [15] reversed the sentences of Beck's depression scale after consultation with him. In this way, 21 sections were provided and 11 other materials were also added to them to encompass the other aspects of happiness. Then they were applied to some of the students and according to the face validity of the questions and removal of some sections, the final form of 29 question sections of questionnaire was prepared.

Argile et al have reported the Alpha coefficient of 0.90 with 347 testable and Farnham and Brewing (1990) have reported alpha coefficient of 0.87. Francis (1998) has obtained alpha 0.93 in an intercultural investigation on four different countries with coefficients of 0.89, 0.90, 0.89 and 0.89, while obtaining the validity of the test as 0.83, found after three weeks that the stability of the retest in this questionnaire, the public health and the scale of depression is also more. [19]

The Oxford happiness questionnaire is translated to Persian by [20] and the correctness of its translation is confirmed by 8 experts (psychologist and psychiatrist), then it is implemented on some students preliminarily and some modifications are carried out on it. Also, this test was translated to Persian by Mahmoud Golzari in 2003 and it was applied to 446 girl and boy students in 2004 with $\sigma=9295$ and four factors were obtained in factor analysis. With implementing the final form of the test, the statistical indices including the internal consistency of the test and its Cronbach's alpha were calculated which the Cronbach's alpha was 0.93. Using the splitting method, value of 0.92 is reported in Spearman-Brown method and value of 0.91 is reported in Guttman's method. To investigate on the face reliability of the questionnaire, 10 experts (psychiatrist and psychology) are polled and all of them have confirmed it. In order to investigate on the factor reliability, factor analysis method is used and 5 factors were specified through availing of the method of extracting the main components and rotation and Ery-max. The five factors could explain 0.57 of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha reported for the five factors, i.e. satisfaction of life, positive temper, health, efficiency and self-esteem are: 0.89, 0.84, 0.81, 0.68 and 0.58 respectively. The data represent that five aspects of happiness are reducible in one aspect and the mentioned factor determines 0.97 of the changes in happiness.

Oxford happiness questionnaire has 29 four-choice questions and if the testable selects one of the choices a, b, c and d to answer each question, he/she is given 0, 1, 2

and 3 scores respectively and consequently, the final score of happiness is obtained between 0 and 87.

FINDINGS

According to the findings of this research, after performing the correlation test between the moral development and the educational advance, the below table is obtained:

Table 3:

Coefficient name	Value of coefficient	Level of meaningfulness	Result
Crammer's V	0.535	.000	Existence of relation
Phi	0.378	.000	Existence of relation

This table represents that there is a meaningful relation between the moral development and the educational improvement in the level of 99%. It means that change in the level of moral development is along with some changes in the individuals' educational improvement. Also, the below table was obtained about the relationship between the moral development and happiness after carrying out the correlation test:

Table 4:

Coefficient name	Value of coefficient	Level of meaningfulness	Result
Coefficient of Pierson's correlation	0.351	.000	Existence of relation

Based on the above table, it may be stated that there is a meaningful relation between happiness and educational improvement at the level of 99%. It means that change in the level of happiness is along with some changes in the individual's educational improvement.

To study the synchronous influence of the variables on the educational improvement, multiple regression analysis is used with step-by-step method. Using the regression, the level of effectiveness of each stage of moral development and also happiness in the educational improvement may be compared to each other to make clear which one has had more influence on the educational improvement. The result of this test is given in the below tables:

Table 5:

Method of importing variables	of the correlation coefficient of R	Coefficient of determination R^2	Coefficient of adjusted determination	Error of criterion	Level of meaningfulness
Step-by-step	.539	.291	.273	.869	.000

Variables affecting educational improvement	Beta	S.E	T	Sig
Constant value	17.59	0.377	46.70	.000
Happiness	0.26	0.005	5.44	.000
Second stage of moral development	-0.110	0.032	-3.405	0.001
Third stage of moral development	-0.056	0.016	-3.501	0.001
Fifth stage of moral development	0.705	0.022	3.464	0.001
Sixth stage of moral development	0.112	0.47	2.368	0.019

According to the results, the coefficient of regression (beta) for the variable of happiness equals to 0.26 and for the variable of the second stage of moral development equals to -0.110 and for the variable of third stage of moral development equals to -0.056 and for the variable of fifth stage of moral development equals to 0.705 and for the variable of sixth stage of moral development equals to 0.112. This means that a unit increase in the variable of happiness causes an increase in the individual's educational improvement equal to 0.26. Also with a unit increase in the variable of the second stage of the moral development, an equivalent of 0.110 is reduced from the individual's educational improvement (because of negativity of this coefficient). Also, a unit increase in the variable of the third stage of moral development, an equivalent of 0.056 is reduced from the individual's educational improvement (because of negativity of this coefficient). Also, a unit increase in the variable of the fifth stage of the moral development causes an increase of 0.705 to be added to the educational improvement and also a unit increase in the variable of the sixth stage of moral development causes an increase of 0.112 to be added to the educational improvement.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) in this study equals to 0.291. This means that the five variables applied to the equation, i.e. happiness and the second, third, fifth and sixth stages of moral development could have explained a variance of 0.291 for the changes related to the variable of educational improvement. According to the meaningfulness level of 0.00, it can be stated that the results of regression are meaningful at the level of 99%. Other research variables (first and fourth stages of moral development) were removed from the regression equation because they had a slight contribution in describing the social compatibility.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

After investigation on the results, it can be stated that a meaningful relation was observed between the moral development, happiness and educational improvement of female high school students in the region 17 of Tehran city. Based on the findings of the present investigation,

there is a positive meaningful relationship between the highest stage of moral development (third stage which includes fifth and sixth levels) and educational improvement; i.e. the student's higher score in these levels was along with their more educational improvement. It is while an inverse relationship was observed between the lower stages (second and third levels) and the educational improvement; i.e. whatever the individual's score is higher in these levels, lower educational improvement is observed by them. Also, there was a positive relation between happiness and educational improvement. As it was stated in the introduction, the level of moral development is among the factors influencing on individuals' educational improvement in the modern world. The moral development is a process which the individuals achieve to the ability of accommodating their behavior to correct and incorrect criteria through it. Since a person's knowledge about what is correct or wrong and good or bad (moral fundamentals) probably has short-term (expectations, evaluation and documents) and long-term (beliefs and assumptions) cognitive aspects, they are permanently reviewed and controlled using excellent cognitive mechanisms (conscious and automatic) which determine his/her behavior (e.g. educational improvement).

Also, the individuals are happy, active, creative and optimist and see a new manifestation in anything and they learn one lesson from each experience. Results of many researches confirm positive influences of happiness on the human's psychological health. Happy humans can better encounter the problems and difficulties and overcome them and "the happiness causes increase in learning".

Based on the results of this research, utilizing the below suggestions may be influential on promoting the students' educational improvement:

- Workshops of happiness and moral judgment training should be held in the high school levels.
- Educative and teaching methods should be used which helps promoting the students' happiness.

- It should be acted according to the third (fifth and sixth) level of moral judgment while judging about the students' disciplinary performance.

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