

Strategic Remedies for Moral Ambiguities among Students at Secondary School Level

Muhammad Saleem^{*}, Niaz Muhammad Aajiz[†], Khisro Kaleem Raza[‡]

Abstract

The focal point of the study was to analyze moral ambiguities found in Secondary School Students in Peshawar, Pakistan, and to surface some strategic remedies to cope with them in the best possible way. The main objectives of the study were; to identify specific moral ambiguities among secondary school students, to determine the causes of moral ambiguities of the students, and to suggest remedies for these moral ambiguities of students. The population of the study was all the secondary school students, teachers and parents of KP. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The major findings of the research include, the use of inappropriate language by students, becoming jealous of better students, involvement in fooling, misuse of cell phones, smoking in school premises, argumentation with teachers, and lame excuses for homework etc. The study recommended the parents' teachers collaboration for moral development, action plan for guiding and counseling, arrangement of seminars and workshops, judicious use of mobile phone, formation of character-building societies on school level.

Keywords: strategic, remedies, moral ambiguities, morality, immorality

Introduction

The main objective of education is not only to inform its students on a large scale but their mental as well as spiritual grooming is also worked out, hence to provide the society with human beings whose rationale knows what is good and what is not. The environment of schools must be appropriate for the promotion of moral cognition, emotion and practice (Bao, 2010, p. 6), Otherwise students will promote moral ambiguities. Students sometimes do not comprehend the right position of their behavior and therefore, moral ambiguities are developed. The same researcher describes that “moral education, as a process, involves educators continually constructing, changing and increasing the effectiveness of the conditions in an appropriate environment” (p. 6). Moral education is the top priority of education system and it needs an abridgement with changing condition of the world. The study aims to answer the questions what those moral ambiguities are, how to establish them, and how to solve them? All these necessary steps are taken to reach

^{*}Ph.D. Scholar Sarhad University of Information & Technology Peshawar.

[†] Assistant Professor Islamia College University Peshawar.

[‡] Assistant Professor Sarhad University Peshawar

a conclusion. It will not only benefit our students and education system but will also provide a base for giving out society a fit-to-need based people who come to make progress and compete with international sharpest minds for placing our country at its best level (Zegwaard& Campbell, 2011).

Islam is a complete code and conduct of life. Islam has such options for moral development, as no other religion of the world has. The prophet (peace be upon him) was a practical example of the morality devised by the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an says "...to spend of your substance, out of love, for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves...such are the people of truth, the Allah fearing" (Al-Qur'an. 2:17). Doing things of illicit manner and harming others are strictly forbidden in Islam, as said, "say: that things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against the truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge" (Al-Qur'an. 7:33).

Moral ambiguity is an umbrella term that manifests morality and immorality that needs a thorough understanding in the light of researchers and philosophers' viewpoints. The coinage of the word morality is seen as used in two separate broad senses. The one is descriptive sense while the other is normative sense (Yap, 2014). In addition, some evolutionary and comparative psychologists believe that some aspects of morality are present there in non-humans as well (De Wall, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Moral values in society in general, and in students in particular are on the decline. Parents prefer maximum marks of their children. They pay due attention to students' academic excellence and ignore their moral behavior, therefore, students become prey to moral confusions like pretending and telling lies about attendance, calling names, use of unfair means in examination and inappropriate language etc. So the idea led to the selection of the topic is to dig out remedial solutions for the moral ambiguities among the students at Secondary School level.

Rationale of the Study

It is the prime responsibility of the teachers and parents to train their students not only in academic excellence but also in moral grounds. Secondary School level is the critical stage in student's life. Students waste their time using social media and take keen interest in electronic media. In fact, students are the backbone of any society and the leaders of tomorrow.

If they are spoilt, the future is lost. The main objective of the education is to make students beneficial humans, contributing, and fruitful citizen of the society. The aim of this study was to find out remedial solution of the moral ambiguities of the students as well.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify moral ambiguities among secondary school students in District Peshawar.
- To determine the causes of moral ambiguities among secondary school level students.
- To suggest remedies for moral ambiguities among the students at secondary school level.

Research Questions

- What are the moral ambiguities among secondary school students?
- Why do moral ambiguities take place among secondary school students?
- How can moral ambiguities be overcome among secondary school students?

Literature Review

A host of critics, researchers and educationists have been in pursuit of institutionalization the implied and (un)conscious variables of the academics' mental faculties to feed education as well educationists with such an insight that can be reached out to satisfy the crying need of the day. Unlike the moralization of the students of the day: the realism is altogether different. Most of today's students are suffering from moral ambiguities. They do not understand what is moral and what is immoral which in a sense leads to immoral behavior. This has become a phenomenal issue and an esoteric challenge for the people of letters. Therefore, the issue has been addressed by the educationists as well as psychologists beyond frontiers; from ancients to modern, from quixotic to ideational, to pragmatics. Bulky books being written every day, different suggestions are made and applied but the things seem to be going on the same direction.

The ultimate goal of education is the moral corrigibility of the students which is at premium since long. Stonehouse& Carr (2009) argued

by citing Plato's view that without providing good environment and proper training an individual cannot become a good man. Therefore, education is responsible for the morality of students. While comparing the literate and illiterate person Khan (2009) raised the same point and said that it was Aristotle who is more sensible towards the mistakes of educated rather than uneducated. Character building must be the ultimate goal of education. It is an umbrella term that is used for a variety of aspects responsible for spiritual development of students.

Manzoor (2010) points out the three levels of human psychology i.e. sense, mind and ethics these can be rightfully augmented by education. Otherwise the aim of educational institutions is debased. Similarly, counter proposal by coterie is too credible to be denied as Penz, Drydyk, & Bose (2011) describes that all the psychological aspects of the students' needs validation.

By social development we mean ostensible change in society as well as in behavior and citizens' moral faculties. This is only possible through education. Goteborg (2010) suggested that all those who are related to education in one sense or the other should work to change the education system up to the extent of feeding the society with remunerative people and culture. He was of the opinion that people should work together for historical, geographical and cultural aspects to retrieve the society and prosperity for better tomorrow. Otherwise we will be scourged bitterly. Highest standard of life is most desirable by all as Sullivan (2009) in his *Christian Perspective of Education* says "education may be bound by any number of codes of ethics as established by governing agencies and professional associations, ethical educational leaders must elect to govern themselves by the highest of standards" (p. 1).

In addition, Redcliff & Grasso (2013) observes the same danger and states that giving education in mind and not in ethical is to create a social menace" (p. 13). Therefore, the early ethical development and moral grooming must be the prerequisite of every society and school.

The overall literature review surfaced the fact that education system needs to change its objectives from time to time in the wake of national interest and changing international perspectives, hence there must be clear cut moral indicators before them when they prepare their curriculum. Those moral ambiguities should be addressed, this way by writing on them; we may be able to remove them during schooling.

Methodology

The study was attempted to investigate possible remedies for moral ambiguities among students. The study was descriptive in nature

and was of mixed qualitative and quantitative survey type research. A questionnaire was developed for data collection to find out the views of secondary school teachers. Interviews were conducted with the Parents and Principals. Collected data was further tabulated and interpreted.

Population of the Study

The target population was all the secondary school teachers of District Peshawar. However, the research population of the study was 994, government secondary school teachers in the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sample of the Study

Convenient sampling technique was adopted for sample selection. The sample was selected from targeted population as per Krejci & Morgan's (1970) table of sampling. Sample of the study was 278 Secondary Schools Teachers.

Instruments of the Study

Self-developed questionnaires and interviews have been used as research tools for data collection. Questionnaires guide are administered to 278 Secondary School Teachers (SSTs) while interviews are conducted with 20 principals and 20 parents.

Data Analysis & Discussion

S/N	Statements	5	4	3	2	1	
A	How do you rate general manners of your students?						
1	Students of school use inappropriate language.	98 35%	89 32%	21 8%	15 5%	55 20%	278
2	Students of school are involved in misuse of cellular phone	89 32%	98 35%	15 5%	20 7%	56 20%	278
3	Students of school initiate quarrel among themselves on unimportant matters.	80 29%	106 38%	17 6%	18 6%	57 21%	278
B	How do you judge the student's behaviors?						

4	Students of school do not value the teachers' directions	80 29%	94 34%	33 12%	15 5%	56 20%	278
5	Students of school lie/pretending about attendance	93 33%	78 28%	42 15%	25 9%	40 14%	278
6	Students of school do not complete assigned tasks in time	83 30%	88 32%	42 15%	25 9%	40 14%	278
7	Students come up with lame excuses on the tasks assigned	98 35%	72 26%	33 12%	45 16%	30 11%	278
C	Do you think that your students are confused about gender roles?						
8	Indecent/Immoral materials have been recovered from students of our school.	99 36%	81 29%	31 11%	35 13%	32 12%	278
9	Students of school are often found flirting with their schoolmates or class fellows.	85 31%	80 29%	51 18%	33 12%	29 10%	278
D	How common is socially destructive behavior in your Students?						
10	Students of school calling names to their schoolmates	78 28%	68 24%	62 22%	28 10%	42 15%	278
11	Students of school deliberately destroy school or any other private property in school	93 33%	69 25%	53 19%	28 10%	35 13%	278
E	How many of your students Moral Consciousness are developed?						
12	Students of our school use unfair means in the examination.	88 32%	71 26%	42 15%	32 12%	45 16%	278
13	Students of our school are not punctual	91 33%	78 28%	31 11%	36 13%	42 15%	278
14	Students of our school like to violate discipline	97 35%	75 27%	28 10%	42 15%	36 13%	278

It is the matter of fact that both the findings of quantitative & qualitative are matching and their outcome has been found significant. It was observed that students use indecent and inappropriate language at the secondary level while during interviews conducted with parents and principals had accepted that above moral ambiguities exist due to multi-cultural and moral degeneration of the society. Strategic remedies for these moral ambiguities are the Proper concentration on students regarding Moral issues of the society.

It was also observed in the quantitative type of study that students are telling lies during attendance at schools and during interviews parents and Principals admitted that students pretend at the time of attendance. Parents stated that the main reason for telling lies regarding attendance is the absence of coordination among the teachers and parents. Principals were agreed that collaboration of parents and teachers should be carried out permanently. Truth is spoken while lie is told; the former is natural while the latter is artificial. The existence of lies regarding attendance and other activities are found.

It was also noted that students are involved in unfair means although parents and principals agreed that this kind of moral ambiguity exists in students. It is cleared by the parents that the main reason of opting unfair means is lack of proper guidance and counseling in schools. There is no stress on motivation for the Morality but emphasize on Marks. So, it exerts pressure on students to select unfair means in the examination. In the present world due to tough competition for various employments and jobs, students try different sources to get high marks, is a phenomenon which leads to such kind of compulsions. By unfair we mean different sources like getting into exam halls with written materials and using electronic gadgets etc.

This study revealed that students use a cellular phone and social media. They spend maximum time on social media at home. The main reason for these moral ambiguities is, parents are not consistent to keep check and balance so principals of the schools suggested that keep an eye on the students at home and school are necessary. In a study conducted by Bjornson et al. (2017) it was shown that students pay four hours of their time on daily basis engaged in social media particularly school going students. Bayless, Clipson and Wison (2013) found that the “most interesting, challenging and controversial technology to be introduced does not come from the instructor, but rather the students bringing electronic devices into the schools. In a survey conducted by Tindell & Bohlander (2012) of 269 university students, said that this act is a distraction and if students are spending time texting, they are not paying attention in class. Drouin& Driver (2012) found that they negatively affect

students' literacy. Our findings also coincide with these in term of the misuse of cellular phone.

It was also noted that students participate in cheating, while parents and principals acknowledged the existence of this moral ambiguity among students. It is clear from parents that the main reason for choosing unfair means is the lack of proper guidance and guidance in school. There is no motivation for morality but emphasis on signs. So you put pressure on students to choose unfair means in the exam. In today's world because of intense competition for different jobs and jobs, students are trying different sources to get high marks, a phenomenon that leads to such coercions. In unfair terms, we mean many sources, such as access to examination rooms with written materials, use of electronic tools, etc.

Most of the teachers found out that students do not following direction properly. It is due to lack of moral and ethical teaching. Principals were of the opinion that workshops, seminars, and motivational speeches may be conducted for Moral development. Proper application of co-curricular activities should be arranged at the schools.

Findings

The data analysis revealed that students used inappropriate language in the school.

The data analysis concluded that Students in school become jealous of their better classmates.

The data analysis indicated that Students in school are involved in misuse of cellular phone.

The data analysis revealed that Students in school use unfair means during examinations.

The data analysis showed that Students in school lie/cheat about attendance.

The data analysis explored that Students in school do not complete assigned tasks in time.

Findings Based upon the Interview Conducted with Parents

The main cause of using inappropriate language is due to effects of cross culture and Moral Degeneration in the society. Company of bad colleagues is also matter. Main reason of telling lies regarding attendance is lack of coordination among the parents and teachers. The main reason behind opting unfair means is lack of proper guidance and counseling in

the school. There is no motivation for the Morality but emphasize on Marks. The main reason behind using social media and cellular phone is uncaring parenting. Students are not following proper direction is due to Lack of Moral/ethical teaching.

Findings Based upon the Interview Conducted with Principals

Proper check and balance on students regarding Moral degradation of the society. Parents & teachers' collaboration for student's Moral development and proper check. Motivational lecture may also be given to students in order to avoid from these unfair means in the examination. Parents should be made aware of the student's use of social media and cellular phones. Workshops, seminars and motivational speeches for Moral development. Proper application of co-curricular activities should be required at the schools.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the reasons behind them found to be cross-cultural complexity and moral degeneration of the society, uncaring parents, lack of an effective system of guidance and absence of psychological counseling. The students particularly, are not concerned to think about this matter; even they do not understand this issue. Hence, they are immoral; therefore, our schools and other educational organization must provide/create an environment which may prove to be the place where they get moral treatment.

In fact, secondary school level is physically and psychologically a period of transition in the life of any student. This crucial period can make or break a student's life, so at this stage of life special attention is required. Parents, as well as teachers and students, should collaborate to minimize the moral ambiguities among the students at this crucial stage of lives of students by arranging regular meetings between parents and teachers. The research study also emphasizes a proper and comprehensive system of guidance and counseling in the school. Moreover, a large number of students are involved in the misuse of social and electronic media, even this can be termed as an umbrella term for other hitherto immoralities. The study recommends steps to be taken to ensure a ban on the use of phones in schools. Following the findings of this research study aimed at exploring and institutionalizing the ethical ambiguities of Peshawar High School students and proposing strategic remedies for these mysterious psychological phenomena

Recommendations

The following recommendations were forwarded from the given study: PTC meetings may be held regularly with the only agenda for discussion about the ethical behavior of students. A guidance counseling committee may be established to solve students' ethical problems. Wise and judicious use of electronic and social media should be ensured so that students can obtain relevant information and get rid of unethical things. Workshops, seminars and motivational speeches can be planned and applied in schools for the harmonious development. Adequate verification of students may be ensured in order to protect them from moral degradation in society and intercultural values. Effective moral evaluation should be planned outside the curriculum and implemented. Reward and punishment criteria must be specified. Character building societies should be formed and made operational under the supervision of the school administration. A code of ethical conduct may be published and posted on billboards and other important places in the school and must be strictly adhered to. Education must be restorative and improve and can be reflected in students' personality. Bad behavior should not be encouraged. Personal development and ethical lessons may be included in the students' moral development program. Students must be assessed, promoted and rewarded based on their school ethical behavior and academic excellence.

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