

RESEARCH PAPER

Inter-relation between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of high school children

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Abstract: Inter-relation between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of high school children was studied on a sample of 72 adolescents of 13 to 16 years studying in 8th to 10th standards in Government and Private schools from urban area and Government schools from rural area of Dharwad taluk, Karnataka. Gupta's (2010) Moral Judgment Test and Singh *et.al*'s (2006) Spiritual Intelligence Test were used. Chi square was used to know the association between levels of moral judgment and spiritual intelligence as well as by age and gender. Higher percentage (86.1%) of children had moderate level of moral judgment while the rest had high level. The spiritual intelligence of children was in higher proportion (59.7%) in average level while 34.7 per cent had high level and only 5.6 per cent children fell in low category. Significant association between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence was observed. Children with high spiritual intelligence had high moral judgment ability. There was no significant association between age and gender with level of moral judgement nor spiritual intelligence.

Key words: Children, High school, Moral judgment, Spiritual intelligence

Introduction

Children in high school are in the stage of adolescence where in there is rapid change in physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual outlook. At no other period in life, people are likely to be as concerned with moral values and principles as they are in adolescence. They assume that it is their solemn duty to reform their parents and the world following their own personal standards. They extend their relationships beyond parents and family and are intensely influenced by their peers and the outside world. Adolescents' moral behavior is moderated by a number of factors such as social and economic factors. It has been observed that the degree of morality or immorality of individual is related to the social-cultural values, emphasized by a particular environment.

Spiritual intelligence is another construct that affects morality of children. It is a new paradigm which appeared after multiple intelligences of Gardner in his "Frames of mind". It is human capacity to search, ask and find questions about life meaning and simultaneously experiences a concrete connection between every human and a world in which they live. It is an instrument to solve problems regarding their status, meaning and value. It is also known as soul's intelligence by which one can access one's deepest meanings, purposes, and highest motivations in life. It is one of the several types of intelligence that can be developed independently and contributes to psychological well being and overall healthy human development (Vaughan, 2003). Spirituality plays a significant role in the development of personal values, which may influence moral reasoning. Consequently, many scientists and philosophers have theorized about the relationships between spirituality and moral reasoning. Tekkeveettil (2005) asserted that "The transformative power of spiritual quotient (SQ) distinguishes it from intellectual quotient (IQ) and emotional quotient (EQ). Intellectual quotient (IQ) primarily solves logical problems. Emotional quotient (EQ) allows judging the situation

and behaving appropriately. Spiritual quotient (SQ) allows to ask if person wants to be in that situation in the first place. It might motivate to create a new one. This may in turn bring the moral and social message to the child in a more concrete fashion.

Very less research has directly explored the spiritual intelligence and moral judgment and its inter-relation. Hence, this study aimed to explore the inter-relation between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of high school children of Dharwad taluk.

Material and methods

High school children studying in 8th to 10th grade in Government and Private schools from urban area and Government schools from rural area (as there were few Private schools in rural area) of Dharwad taluk, Karnataka during the year 2013-2015 formed the population. Four schools from urban area with two each from Private and Government and two Government schools from rural area of Dharwad taluk were selected for the study and from each standard (8th to 10th) two boys and two girls were randomly selected for the study. The sample constituted 72 children where 24 were from rural and 48 were from urban area. A correlation research design was employed to know the relation between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence among high school children.

Gupta's (2010) Moral Judgment Test (MJT) was employed to know the moral judgment ability of children. The MJT is a self reporting questionnaire to assess the judgment ability of adolescents based on their moral values. The test consists of twenty stories, followed by questions with alternative answers that have been organized according to the Indian context on the basis of moral values. There are five components viz. Immanent Justice, Moral realism, Retributive vs. Restitutive, Efficacy of severe punishment and Communicable

responsibility. The scores of the five dimensions are summated to obtain the total score which ranges from 39-123 and categorized into low (39 - 67), moderate (68 - 96) and high (97-123).

Singh *et al.* (2006) Spiritual Intelligence Test, which is for the age group of 13-19 years, was used. It includes 120 items with positive and negative statements with options 'always', 'mostly', 'some time', 'rarely', 'never' with a score anchored from 5 to 1 which ranges from 220 - 345. Based on total score children were categorized into three categories *viz.* high (304 - 345), average (262 - 303) and low (220 - 261).

Results and discussion

The Percentage distribution of children by levels of moral judgment is presented in Table 1. None of the children fell in low level of moral judgment. Majority (86.1%) of children were in moderate level and 13.9 percent in high level of moral judgment.

Table 1a represents the association between gender and moral judgment of children. Majority (80.6%) of boys showed moderate level, followed by high (19.4%) level of moral judgment. Among girls, highest (91.7%) proportion had high level while 8.3percent had average level of moral judgment. None of the boys and girls were in low level. However Chi square analysis showed non-significant association between gender and moral judgment. The investigation is in line with Gupta and Puja (2011) who found no significant difference in moral judgment of boys and girls in age group of 9 to 11 years; Baqutayan (2011) also observed non-significant difference among high school children. Louis and Emersion (2011) found that children 14-18 years of both the gender had good moral reasoning skill. Similarly, Laddu and Kapadia (2007) supported that children of 10-12 years of both the gender had good moral reasoning skills probably contributed by their parental involvement, peer relationships, effective conflict resolution strategies and also social competence. The non-significant difference between boys and girls on moral judgment may be because of non differential treatment provided to the children in home and school by parents and teachers. However Zandaanbeh and Zakerian (2011) reported that female students responded more emotionally compared to male student and the

female were more care oriented in their moral judgment. Similarly, Singh (2013) found significant gender difference in moral judgment, where female adolescents had better moral judgment than male (14-19 years) adolescents.

The association between age and moral judgment of children is displayed in Table 1b. It was observed that 85.4 percent of children in age range of 13 to 14 years had moderate level of moral judgment followed by high (14.6) level. Similar trend was observed in older age (15-16 years) group where majority (87.5%) of them were in moderate level followed by high (12.5%) level of moral judgment. None of the adolescents in both age groups fell in low level of moral judgment category. The association between age and moral judgment was non-significant as indicated by chi square value (0.06). Similarly, Cabrales *et al.* (2013) reported that age was not correlated to the moral attitude level of college students. Zhang (2012) also confirmed the non-significant association between age (12-27 years) and moral judgment of adolescents. However Laddu and Kapadia (2007) confirmed that age of the children was significantly related with moral judgment and reasoning in justice vignettes, where older children (10-12years) were giving preference to the intention behind the act, whereas younger children (6-8years) were considering the outcome of act. Similarly, Lazarescu (2012) found that understanding of moral notion was significantly associated with the age of subjects (6-12 years).

The percentage distribution of children by levels of spiritual intelligence is presented in Table 2. Higher (59.7%) proportion of children had average spiritual intelligence followed by high level (34.7%) and only 5.6 per cent fell in low category.

Table 2a. represents the association between gender and spiritual intelligence of children. Majority (50.0%) of boys had average level followed by high (38.9%) and only 11.1 per cent were in low level of spiritual intelligence. Among girls 69.4 per cent had average level while 30.6 per cent were in high level of spiritual intelligence. None of the girls fell in the low level of spiritual intelligence. However the association between gender and spiritual intelligence was found non-significant ($\chi^2=5.50$). Kotnala, 2015; Nazam, 2014 also found non-significant

Table 1. Percentage distribution of children by levels of moral judgment N=72

Levels	Frequency	Per cent
High	10	13.9
Moderate	62	86.1
Low	-	-

Table 1a. Association between gender and level of moral judgment of children N=72

Gender	Level of moral judgment			Modified χ^2
	Moderate	High	Total	
Boys	29(80.6)	7(19.4)	36(100.00)	1.86 ^{NS}
Girls	33(91.7)	3(8.3)	36(100.00)	

Figure in Parenthesis indicates percentage

NS- Non Significant

Table 1b. Association between age and level of moral judgment of children N=72

Age	Level of moral judgment			Modified χ^2	Correlation Coefficient (r-value)
	Moderate	High	Total		
Younger (13 - 14 year)	41 (85.4)	7 (14.6)	48 (100.00)	0.06 ^{NS}	0.028 ^{NS}
Older (15 -16year)	21 (87.5)	3 (12.5)	24 (100.00)		

Figure in Parenthesis indicates percentage

NS- Non Significant

Table 2. Percentage distribution of children by levels of spiritual intelligence N=72

Levels	Frequency	Per cent
High	25	34.7
Average	43	59.7
Low	4	5.6

Inter-relation between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence

Table 2a. Association between gender and level of spiritual intelligence of children N=72

Gender	Spiritual intelligence				Modified χ^2
	Low	Average	High	Total	
Boys	4 (11.1)	18 (50.0)	14 (38.9)	36 (100.0)	5.50 ^{NS}
Girls	-	25 (69.4)	11 (30.6)	36 (100.0)	

Figure in Parenthesis indicates percentage

NS- Non Significant

Table 2b. Association between age and level of spiritual intelligence of children N=72

Age	Spiritual intelligence				Modified χ^2
	Low	Average	High	Total	
Younger (13-14 year)	4(8.3)	26(54.2)	18(37.5)	48(100.0)	3.06 ^{NS}
Older (15-16year)	-	17(70.8)	7(29.2)	24(100.0)	

Figure in Parenthesis indicates percentage

NS- Non Significant

association between gender and spiritual intelligence of adolescents. Similarly, Siddiqui (2013) found that gender of adolescents was not significantly associated with spiritual intelligence. He reported that boys as well as girls were from same family background and social culture and the lesson or teaching or training toward spirituality and motivational levels from their family were much more similar and also they belonged to the same religion. That is why this variable has no impact on spiritual intelligence.

The association between age and spiritual intelligence is depicted in Table 2b. As it can be observed from the table that most (54.2%) of the children in age range of 13-14years had average followed by high (37.5%) and 8.3 percent had low level of spiritual intelligence. In case of older age group (15-16 years), majority (70.8%) of them were in average level followed by high (29.2%) level of spiritual intelligence. None of the children in older age groups (15-16 years) fell in low level of spiritual intelligence. However, chi square analysis showed non-significant association between age and spiritual intelligence. The finding of Sahebalzamani, (2013) and Yang and Wu (2011) support that age did not have any influence on spiritual intelligence of adolescents. Similarly, Shabani *et al.* (2010) reported that age was not associated with spiritual intelligence of high school students.

The association between spiritual intelligence and moral judgment of children is given in Table 3 and Fig. 3. Out of 62 children with moderate moral judgment, 64.5 per cent had average spiritual intelligence followed by high (29.0%) and 6.5 per cent of children had low spiritual intelligence. In case of high moral judgment, 70.0 per cent children had high spiritual intelligence and 30.0 per cent had average spiritual intelligence. There was significant association between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of children as revealed by chi square

Table 3. Association between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of children N=72

Level of moral judgment	Level of spiritual intelligence				Modified χ^2	Correlation coefficient (r- value)
	Low	Average	High	Total		
Moderate	4 (6.5)	40 (64.5)	18 (29.0)	62 (100.0)	6.57*	0.092 ^{NS}
High	-	3 (30.0)	7 (70.0)	10 (100.0)		

Figures in Parenthesis indicates percentage

**Significant at 1 per cent level

NS- Non Significant

Table 3a. Mean scores of moral judgment of children by level of spiritual intelligence N=72

Level of spiritual intelligence	Moral judgment		F-value
	Mean	SD	
Low	86.25	4.11	1.197 ^{NS}
Average	85.13	5.60	
High	87.56	7.36	
Total	86.04	6.24	
S.Em	0.735		
C.D.	-		

NS-Non Significant

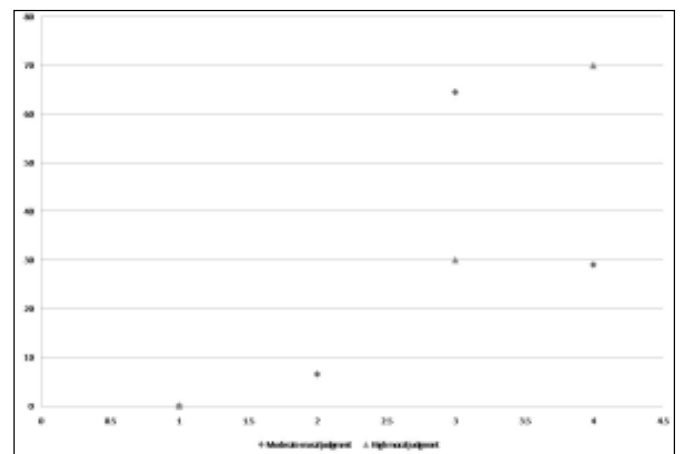


Fig. Correlation between moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of adolescents

analysis. But on comparison of mean scores of moral judgment of children by level of spiritual intelligence (Table 3a), it was observed that high school children with high spiritual intelligence had high (87.56) moral judgment, than the low (86.25) and average (85.13) spiritual intelligence and statistical analysis ($F= 1.197$) through one way ANOVA revealed non-significant difference. The correlation coefficient ($r=0.09$) was also non-significant but positive in direction (Fig. 1 and Table).

The association between spiritual intelligence and moral judgment of children as observed in this study is consistent with earlier research conducted by Baumsteiger and Chenneville (2001) who also reported positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and moral decisions of undergraduate students. This may be because spiritual intelligence is an instrument to solve problems regarding their status, meaning and value. It is also

known as soul's intelligence by which one can access his/her deepest meanings, purposes, and highest motivations in life. It plays a significant role in the development of personal values, which influence moral reasoning. Similarly Hernandez (2013) revealed that college students (17 -22 years) with higher level of moral development also reported greater spirituality than those at low level of moral development. He states that period of adolescence is the carving stage of personality. Every child possesses the quality of being spiritual. It is human capacity to search and ask final questions about life meaning and simultaneously experience a concrete connection between human

and a world in which they live. It plays a significant role in the development of personal values, which influence moral reasoning.

Conclusion: The results revealed significant association between level of moral judgment and spiritual intelligence of children, where children with high spiritual intelligence had high moral judgment ability than children with low spiritual intelligence. Non-significant but positive correlation was also found between level of moral judgment and spiritual intelligence. However, age and gender were not associated with level of moral judgment and spiritual intelligence.

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