



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Role of University Education in Moral Development of Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study aimed at exploring the moral development of university students. The major objective of the study was to find out the difference between moral development of newly admitted university students and final semester university students. The study was quantitative in nature. So, the data were collected by applying survey technique. Students studying in first semester and last semester were taken sample of the study. A questionnaire consisting of ten dilemmas addressing moral factors of the students was used as a research tool for the study. Data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed by applying statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage and independent sample t-test by using SPSS 22 version to find out the results of the study. The study concluded that final semester students were more morally developed than the newly inducted university students whereas no significant difference in moral development was found among the students of the four departments under study. The study recommended that the university curriculum and syllabus might be revised giving moral development a central place.

**KEYWORDS** Dilemmas, Moral Development, University Education

**Introduction**

Morality and ethics have become a global focus for academics, philosophers, sociologists, policy makers, students and their parents. The phenomena of moral development have been discussed by all anthropologists (Santos, 2019). Morality plays a vital role in human life. The course of education enables an individual to differentiate between right and wrong. It is very important to know to what extent our academic achievements develop morality traits in our students' behavior (Owen, 2019).

Education has now become one of the 21st century's most influential businesses in terms of globalization and the rise of competition. In this fast-paced country, education and technology are the key keys to Pakistan's survival and prosperity, respectively (Barber, Donnelly & Rizvi, 2012). Pakistan is committed to responding to emerging needs, opportunities and challenges of globalization. Education is one of the golden keys that is regarded as a great change and progress. The country's progress and prosperity depend on the type of education that is offered (Fägerlind & Saha, 2016).

To impart education is one of the major objectives of the government on which it spends billions of rupees. Students are getting degrees with high grades. However the crime rate is also high with continuous improvement in literacy rate (Santos, 2019). People involved in crimes are often well educated. Some of dishonest ministers and officials are lawyers, economists, doctors, and educationists. After getting quality education and high grades, these people still commit white-collar crimes (Vis, 2018). Many cases have been reported where young people who are enrolled in higher education institutions get themselves involved in criminal activities like murder, theft, and rape. Many educated people lack patience, honesty, discipline, brotherhood, faithfulness and kindness. These are the attributes expected from an educated person. Why the students having reasonable educational background have criminal tendency? This is the question which needs to be focused in today's educational scenario (Dahl, 2019). The elimination of the moral education

is the main reason behind these all. The objective of the moral education is to help students develop into honest, kindhearted and responsible individuals. It makes a huge difference in the life of people to react in different circumstances (Place, 2019).

### **Literature Review**

Moral education is one of the most important priorities in school lifetime. Moral character and learning principled and ethical goals is the main and fundamental goal of education, that has been emphasized by many a teacher (Vertsberger & Knafo-Noam, 2019). A prominent 20th-century scholar and philosopher viewed 'moral education as the center of schooling'. From infancy to adolescence, education seems to play a vital role. Some researchers are of the opinion that schools should have a culture of ethics on their premises that may have a lasting impact on students' development (Korotaeva & Chugaeva, 2019). Schools focus on general learner development such as intelligence, ethics, social, emotional, physical, etc. There is a great need for children to learn the right ways to live successfully, morally and socially (Gibbs, 2019). As a result of the institutional climate and the teacher's inability to resolve ethical issues in the classroom, students often become victims of emotional, psychological, and behavioral problems. The lack of moral education in the country's public schools is also a main cause of these difficulties (Thompson & Carlo, 2019). In accordance with Hardy & Baldwin (2019), education was revitalized in schools because of declining school values. School break-ins, crime, delinquency, and drop-out problems have forced administrators to consider changing schools as a 'value burden'.

Stewart, Sprinthall & Shafer (2019) studied that restraining spiritual pupils showed that they worked harder and scored bigger success as compared to material students. As we desperately desire well-behaved people, all educational programs should give priority to good characters before they can become academics, professionals and experts. Schwamberger & Curtner-Smith (2019) have pointed out that religion has also become a pool of internationally recognized values. Every religion in the universe shows us how to serve a better and lower standard of living and helps to solve our social problems.

Stevens, Grimwood, & Caton (2019), argue that the child has no morals, and values. It is a basic human right to learn these features from the education system. In developed countries, such as China's moral education is not a family obligation, rather, it shall be the responsibility of schools, colleges, and universities to impart moral education from the basic level to the tertiary level (Elm, 2019).

Piaget suggested pupils thought procedure developed fast in case of creative feature. The aim is to introduce the students to have psychological conflicts, so that they are able to think critically about the termination of, or solutions (Montealegre, R. 2016). Kohlberg supports the brand claims that the experiences of childhood lead to a deeper understanding of the moral ideas such as justice, equality, human unity, justice, and goodness (Mathes, 2021). Gilligan (1998) argues that women have a moral objection to be taken into consideration in the field of law and justice. Moral education leads to moral improvement. Kohlberg (1984) suggested that moral growth is a way of working with people to help in the decision-making process. Such decisions have a profound effect on them and on others. The school environment is very important in improving student morals (Zhang, & Zhao, 2017). Kohlberg and his colleagues in the 'Just Community approach' have proven that school ethics is critical to improving student morals (Garrigan, Adlam, & Langdon, 2018). The 'Just Community Approach' is a democratic schooling process that involves the joint establishment of laws and obligations that take tangible conditions instead of constructive dialogue (Sukma, Ananda, Gistituati, & Daharnis, 2019).

. The main focus in this approach is on how the environment of the school can be resolved in a democratic society, and the impact of the environment on the student's moral growth rate (Maxwell et al. 2017). Ethics education is a basic education, which can be obtained from two different types of subjects in the schools, namely, the formal curriculum, and is the most important targets, such as the hidden curriculum. In spite of the formal investigation, Kohlberg suggests that this is a hidden program that works much better than

the written questions, in order to ensure the development of the student's behavior (Orón Semper & Blasco, 2018). Malti et al (2019) also suggest that the school is a place where students are taught the values needed to survive. These are values that are instilled in students through formal and informal behaviors, and development of the course. It includes the school's rules and regulations, health, mental health, and physical environment, and it is a clear interaction between the leaders and the teachers.

**Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no significant difference in the moral development of newly admitted university students and final semester university students

**Material and Methods**

**Research Design**

A cross-sectional survey research design was used for the collection of data.

**Population**

For the data collection about the moral development of university students, population of the study included all students enrolled in Sargodha University. The target population consisted of two groups of the students stated as under:

- i. All the students enrolled in first semester in University of Sargodha.
- ii. All the students enrolled in last semester in University of Sargodha

**Sample**

University of Sargodha was the target population. In University of Sargodha, there are seven faculties i.e. Agriculture, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Sciences, Engineering, Healthcare Science and Pharmacy. Four teaching departments; two from faculty of science i.e., Physics and Computer Science & IT and two from faculty of social sciences i.e., Education and Business Studies, were selected randomly for data collection. The sampling was carried out according to the following steps;

1. First of all, from the two faculties, two departments were randomly selected from each faculty for sampling
2. Hundred students from each department, 50 from junior most semester and 50 from senior most semester, were taken as sample.

**Research Instrument**

In order to measure the variables involved in the study i.e. difference between moral development of university students, a questionnaire consisting 10 dilemmas was used to collect data from sample of the study.

**Data Collection**

Researcher himself collected all the data and, for this purpose, questionnaire from each selected department with complete instruction were personally administered to the students.

**Data Analysis**

After finishing the data collection procedure, collected data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software for the analysis.

**Table 1  
Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma one**

Dilemmas 1	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land individual right	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Justice cheating	First	58(75.3%)	Nil	9(11.7%)	10(13.0%)	Nil	Nil	1.62	1.124
	Last	65(74.7%)	Nil	3(3.4%)	19(21.8%)	Nil	Nil	1.72	1.264

Table 1 dilemma 1 depicts that 75.3% students of first semester with mean score 1.62 were at punishment and obedience (1<sup>st</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 11.7% students were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level), and 13% students were at law and order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) in first dilemma of justice. While dilemma 1 also depicts that 74.7% students of last semester with mean score 1.72 were at punishment and obedience (1<sup>st</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 3.0% students were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) and 21.8% were at law an order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) in first dilemma of justice

**Table 2  
Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma two**

Dilemmas 2	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land individual right	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tolerance Sectarian	First	Nil	Nil	62(80.5%)	15(19.7%)	Nil	Nil	3.19	0.399
	Last	Nil	1(1.1%)	63(72.4%)	23(26.4%)	Nil	Nil	3.25	0.463

Table 2 dilemma 2 depicts that 80.5% students of first semester with mean score 3.19 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 19.7% students were at law and order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) in second dilemma of tolerance. While dilemma 2 depicts that 72.0% students of last semester with mean score 3.25 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 26.4% students were law and order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) and 1.1% were at reward orientation (2<sup>nd</sup> level) in 2<sup>nd</sup> dilemma of tolerance

**Table 3  
Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma three**

Dilemmas 3	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land individual right	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lawfulness Over Speed	First	Nil	Nil	Nil	77(100.0%)	Nil	Nil	4.00	0.000
	Last	Nil	Nil	Nil	81(93.1%)	6(6.9%)	Nil	4.07	0.255

Table 3 dilemma 3 depicts that 100% students of first semester with mean score 4.00 were at law an order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, in third dilemma of lawfulness. While dilemma 3 depicts that 93.1% students of last semester with mean score 4.07 were at law an order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 6.9% students were at moral and legal right in third dilemma of lawfulness.

**Table 4**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma four**

Dilemmas 4	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land individual	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sacrifices Conductor and Passenger	First	Nil	Nil	60(77.9%)	17(22.1%)	Nil	Nil	3.22	0.477
	Last	Nil	Nil	86(96.9%)	1(1.1%)	Nil	Nil	3.01	0.107

Table 4 dilemma 4 depicts that 77.9% students of first semester with mean score 3.22 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 22.1% students were at law and order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) in fourth dilemma of sacrifices. While Table dilemma 4 depicts that 98.9% students of last semester with mean score 3.01 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 1.1% students were at law an order orientation in ninth dilemma of sacrifices.

**Table 5**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma five**

Dilemmas 5	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land individual	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Honesty, Hard Talk between Students	First	40(51.9%)	Nil	37(48.1%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	1.96	1.006
	Last	Nil	Nil	87(100.0%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	3.0	0.00

Table 5 dilemma 5 depicts that 51.9% students with mean score 1.96 were at punishment and obedience (1<sup>st</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 48.1% students were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) in fifth dilemma of honesty. While dilemma 5 depicts that 100.0% students with mean score 3.0 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development in fifth dilemma of honesty.

**Table 6**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma six**

Dilemmas 6	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land individual right	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Equality Fond of Cricket	First	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	77(100%)	Nil	5.0	0.00
	Last	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	87(100.0%)	Nil	5.0	0.00

Table 6 dilemma 6 depicts that 100% students of first semester with mean score 5.00 were at moral and individual right (5<sup>th</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development in sixth dilemma of equality. While dilemma 6 depicts that 100.0% students

with mean score 5.0 were at moral and legal right (5<sup>th</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development in sixth dilemma of equality.

**Table 7**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma seven**

Dilemmas 7	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral and individual right	Universal Principles	Means	Std. Deviation
Politeness Road Accident	First	Nil	Nil	45(58.4%)	32(41.6%)	Nil	Nil	3.42	0.469
	Last	Nil	Nil	30(34.5%)	56(64.4%)	1(1.1%)	Nil	3.76	0.498

Table 7 dilemma 7 depicts that 58.4% students of first semester with mean score 3.42 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 41.6% students were at law and order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) in seventh dilemma of politeness. While dilemma 7 depicts that 64.4% students with mean score 3.67 were at law an order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 34.5% students were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) and 1.1% were at moral and legal right (5<sup>th</sup> level), in ninth dilemma of politeness.

**Table 8**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma eight**

Dilemmas 8	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral and individual right	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Respectfulness Comments	First	Nil	Nil	51(66.2%)	Nil	26(33.8%)	Nil	3.68	0.952
	Last	NNil	NNil	59(67.8%)	Nil	28(32.2%)	Nil	3.64	0.940

Table 8 dilemma 8 depicts that 66.2% students of first semester with mean score 3.68 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 33.8% students were at moral and legal right orientation (5<sup>th</sup> level) in eighth dilemma of respectfulness. While dilemma 8 depicts that 67.8% students of last semester with mean score 3.64 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 32.2% students were at moral and legal right in eighth dilemma of respectfulness.

**Table 9**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma nine**

Dilemmas 9	Semester	Punishment and obedience	Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral and individual right	Universal Principles	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cooperation Counsel to	FFirst	NNil	NNil	57(74.0%)	Nil	20(26.0%)	Nil	3.52	0.883
	LLast	NNil	NNil	41(47.1%)	1(1.1%)	45(51.7%)	Nil	4.63	0.55

Table 9 dilemma 9 depicts that 74.0% students of first semester with mean score 3.52 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral

development, 26.0% students were at moral and legal right in ninth dilemma of cooperation. While dilemma 9 depicts that 51.7% students with mean score 4.63 were at moral and legal right (5<sup>th</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 47.1% students were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level), 1.1% students were at law an order orientation (4<sup>th</sup> level) in ninth dilemma of cooperation.

**Table 10**  
**Comparison of first semester and last semester students score in dilemma ten**

Dilemma	Semester	Punishment and Reward	Good boy Nice girl	Law and order	Moral land	Universal Principle	Mean	Std. Deviation
s 10 Responsibility	First	Nil	76(98.9%)	1(1.3%)	Nil	Nil	3.01	0.114
	Last	Nil	87(100.0%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	3.0	0.00

Table 10 dilemma 10 depicts that 98.7% students of first semester with mean score 3.01 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, 1.0% students were at law an order orientation in tenth dilemma of responsibility. While Table dilemma 10 depicts that 100.0% students of last semester with mean score 3.0 were at good boy nice girl orientation (3<sup>rd</sup> level) of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development in ninth dilemma of responsibility.

**Table 11**  
**Difference between the moral development of the newly admitted and final semester university students**

Semester	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
First Semester	77	32.62	2.201	- 5.535	162	.000
Last Semester	87	34.43	1.969			

Table 11 shows the statistics that answer the research question stating, “Is there any significant difference between moral development of the newly admitted and final semester university students?” There was significant difference between first semester students and last semester students’ moral development. As shown by the t value -5.535 with df=162 and p value .000 < 0.05, that indicates the significant difference between these two variables. The greater mean score 34.43 showed that last semester students are at better level of moral development than students of first semester (mean score 32.62).

**Table 12**  
**Comparison among four teaching departments regarding moral development of the students through One Way ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.204	3	.401	.100	.960
Within Groups	332.061	83			
Total	333.264	86			

Table 12 shows that there was no significant difference between departments. As shown by t value .401 with df 3 and p value .960 > 0.05 that there is no significant difference between the departments. Students of all departments under study were at the similar level of moral development level.

## **Conclusion**

The main goal of the study was exploring the moral development of university students. It was found that there was a significant difference between newly admitted university students and final semester university students. This finding was supported by Sher Zaman (2012) which found that there is age wise significant difference in the moral development of the students studying in schools. The study finds that newly admitted university students at some points were morally unable to solve the different problems occur in their daily life routines. The possible reason is that they are at low level and seek others' approval to solve the naturally occurring problems.

The study found that the final semester university students were at higher level in their moral reasoning and to solve naturally occurring problems. Majority of the final semester students thought logically and reasonably well in their moral judgment. During their university time period they seek moral attributes which help them in solving naturally occurring problems. The study by Osman, Y. (2019) supported and proved that childhood and adulthood was full of growing qualities and adolescent's moral life had these qualities to face new challenges and opportunities. It was also brought forth that the students of the four departments under study were at similar level of moral development.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of research findings, following recommendations have been made for the stake holders.

1. The curriculum and syllabus should be revised giving moral development a central place. Objectives and questions should be added in the course content related to moral development of the students.
2. Most of the students at good boy nice girl orientation mostly seek others' approval for their moral judgment rather than applying their own reasoning. Therefore students should be engaged in problem solving situations by enhancing their critical and logical thinking abilities.
3. The gap between content knowledge and real life demands should be focused by the teachers at the university level to develop the desired morals among the students to optimum level.



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