

Varied Moral Assessments Amongst University Students and Students Majoring in Liberal Arts: Should This be a Cause for Concern?

Shaheen Zahid

Assistant Professor at University of Balochistan at Shaheen546@gmail.com

Abstract

Some argue that moral judgement advances in education has not kept pace with advancements in other academic disciplines. The study results prompt speculation about the true extent of these variances. This study assessed many features, including the development of moral discernment, in a sample of fifty students majoring in liberal arts and seventy-four students majoring in education. Based on the findings, both the average values of the groups and the variations in group dynamics were consistently and minimally significant. The results of this study suggest that factors beyond academic areas have a greater impact on the ethical growth of college students.

Introduction

The user-provided content is inadequate and does not contain enough details to warrant a rewrite in an academic manner. There are several factors that influence how a student forms moral judgments while attending college, such as the institution's overall selectivity, the variety of social and academic experiences provided, and the pre-existing characteristics of the student body (Derryberry & Thoma, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rest et al., 1986; Schlaefli Rest, & Thoma, 1985). The sources mentioned above offer more in-depth coverage and discussions on this topic in addition to general information. There has been a lot of interest in researching whether specific academic majors or programs of study aid in the formation of moral judgment in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between attending college and this cognitive process. The degree to which students pursuing various academic degrees grow in their ability to identify morality as they advance in their education varies. According to studies by McNeel (1994) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), students majoring in business or education demonstrated relatively worse moral discernment skills than those pursuing other fields of study. This was observed in contrast to pupils pursuing other academic specializations. The research conducted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) to evaluate the moral judgment skills of different majors had certain limitations, but the observed tendencies are still worrisome for those in charge of overseeing the majors where deficiencies were discovered. This is very pertinent, especially to those who are involved in future teacher education (Chang, 1994; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik 1990). This is especially relevant given the moral duties related to education and the belief that teachers are fundamental in shaping the

moral development of their students. The discipline of education is frequently seen as a profession and area of endeavor with intrinsically moral components, according to Goodlad et al. (1990). Because of this, educators are required to set a positive example and promote the use of ethics in decision-making (Chang, 1994).

How Well Education Majors Can Make Moral Decisions

The text that was provided by the user is insufficient and does not offer sufficient information to be rewritten in an academic style. Surprisingly, there is a scarcity of direct comparisons between students majoring in teacher education and other cohorts of college students, despite the fact that the existing body of evidence suggests that students majoring in teacher education likely to have less moral discernment than other college students. Lampe (1994) found that a significant sample of students pursuing teacher school displayed significantly lower scores on the Defining Issues Test (DIT) in comparison to the composite sample of college students that Rest (1979) analyzed. This finding stands in stark contrast to the findings that Rest (1979) came to in the course of his investigation. Significantly, the results that were acquired by Lampe (1994) displayed a striking similarity to the results that are frequently noticed among high school students, as opposed to the results that are commonly observed among college students, as was demonstrated by earlier research (Rest, 1979). In a study that was carried out by McNeel (1994), a comparison was made between the individuals who had degrees in liberal arts, business, and education in terms of their ability to make moral judgments. The results of the investigation showed that their DIT scores were significantly different from one another. McNeel (1994) found that people who were majoring in business or education received lower results on the Defining Issues Test (DIT) than those who were majoring in liberal arts. This was the case for both males and females. In addition, McNeel (1994) found that there was a notable increase in the formation of moral judgment among individuals who belonged to the three basic categories during the course of their undergraduate years. On the other hand, it was discovered that students majoring in the liberal arts had a significantly higher average impact size (1.10) compared to students majoring in education and business (.58). Both the Defining Issues Test (DIT) and the Academic Misconduct Scale (AMS; Ferrell & Daniel, 1995) were given to a sizeable sample of education majors as part of a recent research project that was carried out by Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, and Kochman (2001). Both of these instruments were developed by

Ferrell and Daniel. In a similar vein, Cummings et al. (2001) noted that the results acquired from their cohort of persons who majored in education demonstrated a statistically significant departure from the frequently reported averages observed among the larger population of college students. This was the conclusion that they came to after observing that the outcomes received from their cohort of individuals who majored in education. Cummings and colleagues (2001) carried out research with the purpose of investigating the connection between one's performance on the AMS and the DIT assessments. It would appear that there is a connection between academic dishonesty and decreased levels of ethically principled reasoning, as indicated by a significant negative correlation between the two variables. Cummings and colleagues (2001) believe that despite the fact that there was not a comparison made between the AMS scores of their sample and those of other student samples, the authors should have made such a comparison anyway. This is despite the fact that there was not a comparison made between the AMS scores of their sample and those of other student samples.

Describe the issue at hand

The text entered by the user is missing some information. Kindly supply the entire piece of text that needs to be revised. The purpose of this research is to examine the similarities and differences between education and liberal arts majors at a prestigious regional university located in the South Central region. In addition to the moral judgment development index, a great number of additional indices that have shown an association with moral judgment development are taken into consideration. This is done to improve one's comprehension of potential differences that may exist between major groups. In addition, the current research takes into consideration a variety of other pertinent concepts in addition to the investigation of the formation of moral judgments. According to prior study carried out by Cummings et al. (2001), Derryberry and Thoma (2005), Getz (1985), and Rest et al. (1999), the development of moral judgment has been linked to perspectives on human rights and academic misconduct. Cognitive capacities and the complexity of attributions regarding human conduct are two established characteristics that have an impact on the development of moral judgments, and the current study takes into account both of these factors (Thoma, Rest, Narvaez, & Derryberry, 1999; Derryberry, Wilson, Snyder, Norman, & Barger are working on a study that will be published soon). The purpose of this study is to look

into two significant research questions. At the same university, do students who major in education and those who major in the liberal arts have detectable differences in the outcomes of tests measuring their moral judgment? In addition, in the context of a particular university, is there a discernable association between these variables in the context of degrees in the liberal arts and majors in education?

Method

Seventy-four persons with advanced degrees in the field of education took part in this study. Many different types of students were represented here, including those in the early stages of their education, those in middle school, those in high school, those in special education, those in vocational training, those in music education, and those in physical education. Participants' average age was calculated to be 22.92, with a standard deviation of 6.08 years. The class had one first-year student, 49 second-year students, 16 third-year students, 8 seniors, and 10 "others." Only eight males were present, while sixty-six females were counted. There were 69 people of European ancestry, 3 people of African American ancestry, and 1 person of other racial or ethnic origins who all filled out the survey's ethnicity section. Fifty other people were there who were current students at a liberal arts institution. The group included people with backgrounds in the humanities, the scientific and mathematical sciences, psychology, the social and historical sciences, and general studies. Average age was 23.28 years, with a standard deviation of 6.09 years for the sample population. The sample includes twenty persons classified as seniors, four individuals classified as other, twelve individuals classified as sophomores, thirteen individuals classified as juniors, and one individual classified as a freshman. Overall, there were just 14 males and 36 females present. There were 40 participants who self-identified as being of Caucasian descent, 6 participants who self-identified as being of African American descent, 1 participant who self-identified as being of Native American descent, and 2 participants who self-identified as belonging to ethnic backgrounds other than these three. The research participants were hand-picked from a larger pool of students enrolled in psychology and education courses at the time of the study. Students that took part in the study were awarded extra credit that could be used toward graduation requirements. The table of contents of a document or book is a helpful navigational tool that lists the various parts of the document or book in alphabetical order. It serves as a guide for its readers, providing a framework against which problems can be evaluated. The Defining

Issues Test (DIT; Rest et al., 1999) was employed by the researchers as a measure of moral discernment. The current study employed a method for gauging participants' usage of three distinct moral judgment schemas (self-interested, norm-maintaining, and postconventional). These models correspond, in order, to stages 2, 3, 5, and 6 in Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Many other indications of progress can be determined from the data collected through the DIT survey. The P score, also known as the participants' reference to the Postconventional schema, is a crucial piece of statistical data in this study because of its place within the DIT framework. The possible values for this index are between zero and ninety-five. Thoma (2005) argues that the N2 score, while a novel metric for assessing postconventional reasoning, may not be the most useful tool for identifying the most important advances in this area of study. Despite the fact that the N2 score is an innovative statistic, this is the case. This study finds P scores to be a reliable measure of referenced postconventional thinking because they were used to evaluate samples that had previously been recorded to indicate poor scores on the Defining Issues Test (DIT). These two considerations were combined to lead to this result. However, the P score does not clarify the relative importance of the Maintaining Norms and Personal Interest schemas, despite providing data in favor of the idea that people base their moral judgments on the Postconventional schema. Two persons could have similar P scores but quite different moral judgments because they developed them at different times in their lives. The Personal Interest schema is an alternative to the Maintaining Norms schema that can be used by individuals when weighing ethical considerations. The abstract also includes the scales used to measure the Maintaining Norms (MN) and Personal Interest (PI) schema scores mentioned in the study. The "attributive complexity" dimension is intended to refer to the difficulty of attributive structures. There are a total of 28 items that make up the Attributional Complexity Scale (ACS; Fletcher et al., 1986), a psychometric instrument that was created utilizing a 7-point Likert scale. The study's goal is to find out if people tend to look at themselves and other people in a more nuanced or simplistic light. Here is a rundown of some of the top ACT scores: A higher composite score indicates more complicated attributions, with values between 0 and 84 possible. The table below displays the possible range of values for these ratings. Getting people's college computer records and retrieving their composite ACT results needed getting their express permission. The individuals' ACT scores

were used to calculate these grades. The American College Testing (ACT) is utilized by many colleges and universities, including the one from which the data for this study came, to predict whether or not an applicant will be admitted. Therefore, in this study, individuals' academic and intellectual prowess are measured by their ACT scores. A compilation of several perspectives on the concept of human rights. The current study examined people's perceptions on human rights using the Attitudes Towards Human Rights Inventory (ATHRI; Getz, 1985). There are a total of 48 questions in the survey, all of which can be answered using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The study probes respondents' perspectives on a wide range of topics, such as abortion, euthanasia, LGBT rights, due process rights, free speech, women's roles, and the influence of religion on public institutions. The possible range of points is from 40 up to 200. Those who score well are assumed to be more likely to advocate for and support civil liberties and human rights, while those who score poorly are seen as showing a lack of interest in or apathy to such matters.

Conclusion

The first study looked at whether students majoring in education or liberal arts have different levels of moral judgment development indices and other characteristics associated to it. There was a shift in three traits related with the formation of moral judgment, but there was no shift in the development of moral judgment itself. The performance of students majoring in liberal arts was superior to that of ACS and ATHRI; students majoring in education scored better on the ACT. These three considerations are important, but they do not consistently give more weight to one major over another. In addition, the three primary consequences have a rather minor impact. While ACT(2.046) and ACS(2.036) have a relatively low major effect size, ATHRI has a moderate major impact size ($\eta^2 = .085$). Due to the fact that each group's DIT scores were same and their main effects on ACS, ACT, and ATHRI scores were comparable, this study disproves the findings of previous research that suggested education majors had inferior moral judgment compared to other majors. This study also disproves the notion that people who major in education are more likely to engage in dishonest behavior. The findings of the AMS point to the absence of academic dishonesty in any of the groups. This study was distinct from others because it included comparator groups. In prior studies of moral reasoning across disciplines, the groups serving as controls were composite samples created from a number of different

institutions. The use of composite samples as a reference group for education majors may have resulted in distorted earlier findings due to the correlation that exists between the kind of institution and DIT P scores (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Since these composite samples were created, the backgrounds and talents of college students have undergone significant change. According to Thoma (2005), this demographic shift may have had an effect on the mean DIT P score of college students who participated in the experiments. Instead of comparing composite samples, we urged that researchers compare significant groups from the same institution.

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