

Assessment of Gender and Age Differentials in the Effectiveness of 'Teaching Values' Programme for Children Between 5-7 Years of Age

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ABSTRACT The present study was undertaken to assess the impact of 'teaching values' programme on 5-7 years old urban children. The study was based upon the sample of 450 children of a randomly selected school of Ludhiana city. A 'teaching values' programme was designed to inculcate eleven universal values in children by means of stories, songs, discussion, art etc. A self-structured socio-demographic performa and 'teaching values' questionnaire were used to collect relevant data for the present study. The results revealed no significant gender differences among children between 5-7 years of age in both experimental and control group. It was found that statistically significant differences were present among children of experimental and control group across all age levels.

INTRODUCTION

High expositions of the laws of morality, discovery and evolving those basic and general principles on which all rules of moral conduct must depend are cardinal to all the religions. *Dharma* is the name for the code of conduct prescribed for doing what is proper right and good. *Padam Puran* has provided ten chief practices of *Dharma* – nonviolence, forgiveness, truth, shyness, faith, control of senses, charity, sacrifice, contemplation and knowledge. These are recommended to be followed strictly by the one who desires to lead a *dharmic* (moral) life. The well known "*Panch Tantra*" also very efficiently instills moral values among common people through the medium of stories.

What in children's life stimulate them to moral maturity? Why do some children eventually develop into paragons of moral virtue, whereas others develop into misfits of society?

What is about children's socialization context that contributes to such different developmental trajectories and outcomes? Development of values is a function of interaction between many factors. Broadly we can divide them as personal factors and environmental factors. Personal factors point out that development of values may vary due to age, sex and intelligence. Whereas environmental factors indicate that social economic status, parent child relationship, quality of home environment, school environment all play significant role in the development of values in children.

Moral education is becoming an increasingly popular topic in the fields of psychology and education. Media reports of increased crime rate, suicide and teenage pregnancy have caused many to declare a moral crises in the society while not all of these social concerns are moral in nature and most have complex origins. There is a growing trend towards linking the solutions to these and related social problems to the teaching of moral and social values in our schools.

Children around the world are increasingly affected by violence, growing social problems and a lack of respect for each other and the world around them. It is a matter of concern for both parents and educators. It is assumed that a part of the solution is an emphasis on teaching values to children as early as possible. In view of the above, the present study was planned with the following specific objective - to assess and ascertain the gender and age differentials in the effectiveness of 'teaching values' programme for children between 5-7 years of age.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study was collected from one school of Ludhiana City (Punjab), namely D.A.V. Public school. Four sections were randomly selected from each class/standard i.e. UKG, 1st and IInd class. Two of the four sections were randomly labeled as the control group and the other two as the experimental group. All children who met the criteria of age were selected

from each section and formed the final sample for the given age range. The children of 4½ - 5½ years were considered as 5 years, those in the range of 5½ - 6½ years as 6 years and children between 6½ - 7½ years as 7 years in age. Thus 150 children from each of the three classes i.e. UKG, 1st and IInd grade comprised the sample (N=450) for the present study. The background information was collected from the parents of selected children.

Following in-depth examination of literature, eleven universal values were identified which were either personal or social. A value education programme was then designed to inculcate these among children. These were Peace, Respect, Love, Responsibility, Happiness, Cooperation, Honesty, Humility, Tolerance, Simplicity and Unity. The programme included stories, sharing and discussion, songs, artistic-expression-activities and action-oriented-activities for each value.

Children's knowledge about different values was assessed using a self-structured questionnaire, which was pre-tested for its reliability. Test-retest method was used to find the reliability of the questionnaire. The children were approached in their respective classrooms. The 'teaching values' programme for each value was conducted for one week in each of the selected experimental group. Selected subjects both from experimental and control groups were assessed for their knowledge about different values using the self structured 'teaching values' questionnaire. Information regarding each of these values was collected using questionnaire and interview method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the distribution of mean scores

for 'all values' combined of 'teaching values' programme in the experimental group by gender across 5-7 years old children. At 5 years of age, females scored (36.669) slightly higher than males (36.252) in learning the "teaching values" programme though statistically insignificant. The difference of the mean scores of females (36.952) and males (36.950) is negligible at 6 years of age. No difference in the mean scores of female and male children was found at 7 years of age. These observations point towards no gender differences in the mean scores at all age levels in the experimental group.

The coefficient of variability of mean scores was observed to be higher among males (CV=3.534) than females (CV 2.099) at 5 years of age. The variation observed in mean scores reduced substantially at 6 years of age irrespective of gender. Subsequently at 7 years, it was non-existent in both males and females.

The above observations revealed no significant gender differences in children between 5-7 years of age. Differences among age levels were significant only between 5-6 years and 7 year of age. The interaction of age with gender of the child was also found to be non-significant.

Distribution of mean scores for 'all values' combined of 'teaching values' programme in the control group by gender across 5-7 year old children is presented in table 2. At each age level i.e. 5 years, 6 years and 7 years males scored 18.448, 21.140, 24.008 respectively which was higher than that of females (18.261, 20.753, 23.110). The coefficient of variability of mean scores in respect of males was 28.799 at 5 years, 25.366 at 6 years and 17.319 at 7 years which was seen to be higher than that of females (5 years = 27.200, 6 years = 23.328 and 7 years=17.009). Female children recorded maximum coefficient of variability in mean scores at 5 years, followed by

Table 1: Distribution of mean scores ($\pm$ SD) for 'all values' combined of 'teaching values' programme in the experimental group by gender across 5-7 years old children

Age	Female Mean ($\pm$ SD)	C.V.	Male Mean ($\pm$ SD)	C.V.	(Female & Male Combined) Mean
5 years	36.669 ($\pm$ 0.769)	2.099	36.252 ($\pm$ 1.28)	3.534	36.460 ($\pm$ 1.037)
6 years	36.952 ($\pm$ 0.165)	0.448	36.950 ($\pm$ 0.143)	0.389	36.950 ($\pm$ 0.153)
7 years	37.00(-)	-	37.00(-)	-	37.00(-)
Mean	36.872 ($\pm$ 0.472)	1.280	36.730 ($\pm$ 0.823)	2.240	-

CD (Age between 5-7 years) at 5% level of significance = 0.173

CD (Gender) – NS

CD (Age x gender) – NS

Table 2: Distribution of mean scores for 'all values' combined of teaching value' programme in the control group by gender across 5-7 years old children

Age	Female Mean ($\pm$ SD)	C.V.	Male Mean ($\pm$ SD)	C.V.	(Female & Male Combined) Mean
5 years	18.261 ($\pm$ 4.967)	27.200	18.448 ($\pm$ 5.312)	28.799	18.355 ($\pm$ 5.140)
6 years	20.753 ($\pm$ 4.841)	23.328	21.140 ($\pm$ 5.362)	25.366	20.946 ($\pm$ 5.101)
7 years	23.110 ($\pm$ 4.170)	17.009	24.008 ($\pm$ 4.217)	17.319	23.559 ($\pm$ 4.069)
Mean	20.710 ($\pm$ 5.007)	24.170	21.190 ($\pm$ 5.473)	25.820	

CD (Age between 5-7 years) at 5% level of significant - 1.49

CD (Gender) - NS

CD (Age x gender) - NS

six years and least at 7 years of age. A similar trend for variation in mean scores was also observed for males. The trend was comparable for all age levels.

Statistically significant differences were observed between the mean scores for 'all values' combined of 'teaching values' programme for children (female-male combined) between 5-7 years of age in the control group (Table 2). There were no significant sex differences at any age level. The interaction between age and gender was also found to be non-significant. The children were observed to score more with increase in age irrespective of gender and experimental and control group.

The results of the study of Tripathi and Mishra (1981) yielded a significant positive interaction between age, sex, socio-economic status and moral development. Also Rodrigues (1983) studied the effect of socio economic status, sex and age on the moral development of young children (6-12 years). He found that socio-economic status had a positive influence on the moral judgement of children, younger children showed less mature judgement, females were slightly mature than males of the same age group. This confirms present findings that age is an important factor in moral development. In the present study also, the results have shown that children at five years of age were significantly different from their counterparts of seven years than six years of age. Whereas both males and females were equal in learning moral values imparted by the researcher in the present study. The above researches have also taken into account the socio-economic status of the families, which might have contributed to the differences in males and females. The socio-economic status of the family was controlled in the present study

thus, leading to non-significant gender differences. Gfellner (1986) also found that sex differences favour females with regard to ego development. Srivastava and Romani (1988) revealed a difference in the value pattern among the age groups and between the two sexes. Older children and females were better in learning values than the younger children and males. Which is in consonance with the findings of the present study. Silberman (1990) studied the relationship between childrens' level of moral reasoning and family environment and found gender differences favouring girls which is similar to the findings of Joshi and Pooranchand (1994). They found adolescent girls from joint families having higher moral values than the adolescent boys from joint families. The study by Saraswati and Sundaresan (1989) found no sex differences in the development of moral judgement among Indian children as has been found in the present study.

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