

A Comparative Analysis of South Asian Countries and East Asian Countries on Moral Education

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Abstract

Background: Moral education in East and South Asian countries promotes sustainable development. For this purpose, all the schools and teachers play a significant role in the development of moral education.

Research Aim: This comparative study aimed to explore the factors that contribute to the development of moral education in South and East Asian countries.

Results: It was observed that the factors that influence moral education in East Asian and South Asian countries include socioeconomic disparities, education system, religion and traditional values, the role of family, cultural influence and Confucian philosophy.

Conclusion: To conclude, an understanding of the variations and similarities would help in the successful implementation of moral education in society. Also, the implementation of moral education with combined factors of formal and informal influence would yield more productive outcomes.

Key words: *Moral Education, Comparative Analysis, Cultural Differences, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

Introduction

Education is something that enhances the overall individual's growth which includes ethical, mental and moral growth (Akhtar et al., 2022). Moral education is considered necessary in every era but is observed to be degenerating rapidly (Mariaye, 2006). Moral education in an individual will help him/her to inspire, in learning skills, awareness and values which would help in the development of a better future. In every religion and society, there are set standards of moral values. Every country is unique in its traditions and culture and these rituals, culture and traditions of any nation form the moral values (Sulaiman et al., 2022). The phenomenon that has impacted the moral education standard around the world includes modernism, globalization and Westernization (Lukens-Bull, 2000). Every nation has its unique codes and moral standards that should be followed by its people (Almani et al., 2012).

It has been believed that an individual learns moral education more in schools by the teachers (Kohlberg, 1975). According to Akhtar et al. (2022), teachers should be perfect in morals and discipline since they are contributing to the future of the nation. It can be said that moral education and the teacher transform the society and for this teachers must be aware of the basic principles and skills when making their own decisions in routine life. To achieve the goal of moral education, the teacher must be trained enough and fully understand the basics of moral education because the opinions, decisions, choices and guidelines of a teacher are influenced by their belief (Hansen, 2008).

South Asian Countries

In South Asian Countries, moral education is based on religious values that include history and traditions (Asif et al., 2020). Pakistan's moral education development is all based on the teaching of Islam and its history. The Islamic system believes in Tauheed (Ones of God) and highlights the fundamental rights of humanity for both Muslims and non-Muslims. Islamic morality emphasizes on conducting life following the morals prescribed in Islam (Fahrettin, 2017). Pakistan National Education Policy of 1998-2010, emphasizes the importance of Islamic and religious education in the schools (Shah et al., 2022). According to Memon (2022), the Pakistani education and moral system entails Madaras where the children are sent to get religious teachings. The role of a teacher is to inculcate religious and moral education in the students.

In Bangladesh, the development of moral education is considered important which thrives to inculcate ethical values, integrity and culture. The Government of Bangladesh has recognized the significant importance of moral education in shaping the society and responsible citizens (Woods, 2023). Bangladesh's moral education not only depends upon a curriculum which emphasizes the teaching of Islam but also teaches universal moral values (Chowdhury et al., 2019). It was believed that this curriculum would develop honesty, compassion and responsibility among the students (Pereira, 2016). However, Bangladesh's educational policies continuously evolved to ensure the successful implementation of moral education among the students. As Bangladesh advances, the integration of moral education remains an important element in building nations into responsible and socially sound citizens (Zafarullah & Huque, 2001).

Moral education in India holds an important place in the development of the country's educational system. Moral values in India include respect for the native language, diverse cultural values and history of the country (Thomas, 2023). The basis of the moral education of India is promoting the national dignity and development of moral and spiritual values among the students (Reddy et al., 2008). The schools in India focus on the development of the moral, cultural and as well as intellectual life of the students, this will enhance the basic knowledge and skills along with promoting self-development, self-education and creativity. According to Mefodeva et al. (2016), India's moral education purpose is to develop a harmonious personality, mind, body and soul which strives continuously for self-improvement.

East Asian Countries

In China, moral education only emphasizes the education of citizens (Ping et al., 2004). In China, the principles of ideologies are established on the theories given by Marx, Den Xiaoping and Mao. In China, moral education principles are deeply rooted with historical, traditional, and cultural values, and the teachings are heavily influenced by Confucian philosophy (Yu, 2008). The approach of moral education has evolved with time which contains contemporary education which reflects the Confucian principle and modern challenges. The Chinese government has laid such policies that stress the importance of moral and ethical education which acts as a means of promoting social stability, integrity, harmony and responsible citizenship (Tianlong, 2013). According to Wanxue and Hanwei (2004), moral education is an important part of the curriculum in China which is officially incorporated in schools as a separate subject and tends to focus on developing moral and ethical values along with socially responsible citizens.

Moral education in South Korea is different from other countries because Korea implements moral education as a separate subject in schools which was recognized as a separate subject in the 20th century (Chu et al., 1996). This has benefitted Korean society with the comprehensive moral knowledge and skills that are needed to survive in this complex modern world. The educational policies in South Korea have stressed character building. It helps in building national identity, patriotic attitude, and systematic ideological sense which leads them to choose between the authoritarian and communist way of life (Ping et al., 2004). Moral education in South Korea helps in developing values of respect, integrity and responsibility (Tan et al., 2018).

Moral education in Japan is a fundamental aspect of the educational system as it instils the virtues, values, and ethical principles in students and considers these principles as their holistic development (Junaedi & Syukur, 2017). According to Tu (1996), Moral education in Japan is the fusion of both traditional values including Confucian teachings along with contemporary perspectives. Moral education in Japan aims to develop Japanese citizens who are ethically and morally strong and never lose respect for their fellow partners, in their homes and their daily life. Moreover, Japan continuously adopted educational policies for the effective implementation of moral education in schools (Bamkin, 2022).

Research Aim

To conduct a comparative analysis of the development of moral education in South Asian countries (Pakistan, Bangladesh, India) and East Asian countries (China, Japan, South Korea) and to examine the factors that are influencing moral education in these regions.

Research Objectives

- To explore the factors that result in the development of moral education in South and East Asian countries.
- To analyze the impact of moral education on the behaviour and values of an individual.

Literature Review

Moral education, a significant component of holistic education, encompasses teaching ethics, values, and social norms that guide behavior and interpersonal interactions. The approaches to moral education vary across cultures and regions, with notable differences between South Asian and East Asian countries.

South Asian Countries

South Asia comprises a diverse range of cultures, religions, and educational systems. Moral

education in this region is often intertwined with religious teachings and traditional practices. In countries like India and Pakistan, religious education is an integral part of the curriculum, often with an emphasis on Hinduism and Islam, respectively. Studies by Kumar (2018) indicate that moral education in India often involves a blend of religious stories, cultural values, and philosophical teachings, emphasizing principles like non-violence, respect, and community harmony.

In Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, moral education also reflects religious influences, with a focus on Buddhism and Islam, respectively. According to Jayasinghe (2019), moral education in Sri Lanka emphasizes Buddhist teachings, with an approach that encourages meditation, mindfulness, and compassion. In contrast, the moral education system in Bangladesh, as explored by Rahman (2020), tends to focus on Islamic principles, emphasizing community service, family values, and modesty.

East Asian Countries

East Asia, comprising countries like China, Japan, and South Korea, often emphasizes a more structured and state-guided approach to moral education. Confucian principles heavily influence moral education in China, with a strong focus on respect for authority, family hierarchy, and social harmony (Zhang, 2017). In Japan, moral education is integrated into the national curriculum, emphasizing group harmony, discipline, and respect for others (Tanaka, 2018).

South Korea's approach to moral education, as highlighted by Kim (2019), involves a blend of Confucian values and modern educational practices. The emphasis is on creating responsible citizens, with a focus on civic duties and social responsibility. This approach is structured and systematic, with clear guidelines for educators on how to incorporate moral education into the broader curriculum.

Comparative Analysis

The key difference between South Asian and East Asian approaches to moral education lies in the degree of religious influence and the structure of the educational systems. South Asian countries tend to incorporate religious and cultural teachings, with moral education often delivered in a more fluid, narrative-based manner. East Asian countries, on the other hand, employ a more formalized approach, with clear state guidelines and a focus on creating disciplined and harmonious citizens.

Both approaches have their strengths and challenges. South Asian countries' reliance on religious

teachings can lead to a more profound personal connection with moral values but may face challenges in multicultural contexts. East Asian countries' structured approach ensures consistency but can sometimes lead to rigidity and a lack of flexibility in addressing individual

Discussion

Factors Involved in Moral Education of East Asian and South Asian Countries

Religion versus Traditional Values

In South Asian countries, it was found that in Pakistan moral development is mostly based upon Islamic teachings (Asif et al., 2020), because Islam believes that humanity is connected morally by God, by this world of capitalism brings about new connections every day in our life which includes community, family, friends and country. In Bangladesh, the fusion of Bengali culture and Islamic principles results in the formation of moral development (Kabeer, 2005). In India, diverse religious practices influence the development of moral values (Chan & Ananthram, 2019). It was found that religion is a factor that greatly influences moral education in an individual in South Asian countries, this finding was consistent with the findings of Ali et al. (2022), which state that individuals in South Asian countries are driven by ecological and religious values.

On the other hand, in Japan, the influence of traditional and contemporary moral teachings was found to be on moral development. Whereas, In China and South Korea the influence of Confucian values in the development of moral education. So, it was found that traditional and cultural values are a factor that affects moral education in an individual of East Asian countries, this finding was consistent with the study conducted by Schmidt (2018), which states that East Asian countries are influenced by traditional values.

Socio-Economic Differences

In South Asian countries, the economic differences lack access to moral education, since an individual with less financials has less access to education, health and social resources in comparison to those who have high economic status. Similarly, the socio-economic differences along with inequalities of the caste system were observed in the less development of moral values. It was found that socioeconomic disparities affect moral education in an individual in South Asia, the findings were similar to the study of Babu et al. (2017), which claims that socioeconomic disparities and inequality result in a lack of development in moral education.

Likewise in East Asian countries, the impact of socioeconomic differences along with the education system influences moral development. To conclude, it was found that socioeconomic

disparity is a factor affecting moral education in an individual in East Asian countries, this finding was consistent with the study conducted by Chao and Tseng (2002), which state that socioeconomic difference affects the belief in moral development in East Asian countries.

Education System

The findings reveal that educational policies and systems have a great influence on moral education and development in South Asian countries. The implementation of moral education in formal schooling and curriculum because it is believed that moral education programs in curriculum result in character and morality building along with community development (Vessels & Huitt, 2005). The findings were similar to the study carried out by Saeed et al. (2020), which stated that the educational sector and educational policies have a great impact on framing of the moral education in South Asian countries.

Similarly in East Asian countries, it is believed that moral education is a balance between traditional values with modern education and the institutions have to develop with the rapid change of technology (Parray, 2011). Moral education has been taught as a separate subject to the children in the institutions of East Asia so that children can adopt positive values. It was found that the education system is a factor that greatly influences moral education in East Asian countries, this finding was similar to the study conducted by Kim and Taylor (2017), which states that East Asian countries believe in education that is structured and righteous that emphasized discipline, academic achievement, honesty and in development of moral education.

Cultural Influence versus Confucian Philosophy

In South Asian countries, there has been an influence of culture in shaping moral values. The traditional values, customs, history, community and collectivism impact the moral teachings (Wainryb, 2006). This teaches an individual to focus on the community rather than on itself. Similar results were found by Karunaratne (2023), who stated that cultural values and familial experiences influence the development of moral education.

In East Asian countries, there has been found an influence of Confucian philosophy in the development of moral values. Confucian values emphasized relationships and social harmony, filial piety which means to be respectful towards parents and ancestors and stresses righteousness, wisdom and sincerity (Wang, 2011). The findings were consistent with the study conducted by Marginson (2011), which claims that Confucian values in East Asia have a great influence on an educational system that intends to form an individual's norms, values and ideas.

Role of Family

In South and East Asian countries, it was found that parents and family play a pivotal role in the development of moral education because it is considered that family and parents are role models for their children (Jeynes, 2005). It is the family with whom a child or an individual spends most of their time, they are the family who teaches honesty, kindness and generosity which help in shaping morality (Lickona, 2004). The actions and reactions of parents and family teach a child how to react. According to Kolachi and Memon (2022), parents play an important role in shaping a child's character. The findings reveal that the role of the family is a factor that affects the moral education in an individual in South Asian and East Asian countries, was similar to the study conducted by Shwalb et al. (2014), there is a significant role of the family in the development of moral education which affects lives of children and adolescents.

The comparative analysis revealed that similar factors impacting moral education in South Asian and East Asian countries include socioeconomic, educational dynamics, culture and role of family that results in the development of moral education in these countries. The different factors include the influence of religion and culture in South Asian countries in the development of moral values. Whereas, the influence of traditional values and Confucian philosophy in developing the moral values within an individual.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis between these two regions has revealed similar and distinct factors in the development of moral education. In South Asian countries, there was found to be an impact of diverse culture and religion which includes religion, caste system and diverse history on the development of moral values. Whereas, the East Asian countries are heavily influenced by traditional values and Confucian philosophy which emphasized structured education and social harmony. Despite these differences, these regions shared common factors including socioeconomic differences, the role of family and the education system, where the common goal of these regions is to use education as a tool to instil moral ethics and values among the children and youth, so understanding the differences will help in better understanding, enhancement and implementation of effective strategies of moral education in both South and East Asian countries. Moreover, moral education combining both formal education and informal societal impact tends to produce strong and positive results in shaping the societal values as well as behaviours of an individual.

Implications of the Study

The implications of a study comparing moral education in South Asian and East Asian countries are far-reaching, with relevance to academia, educational institutions, and global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here's a comprehensive analysis of these implications, focusing on the impact on schools, colleges, and universities, alignment with SDG 2030, and potential future research directions.

Implications for Academia (Schools, Colleges, Universities)

Curriculum Development

For educational institutions, the study's findings highlight the need to integrate culturally relevant moral education into curricula at all levels. Schools, colleges, and universities can leverage this comparative analysis to design programs that foster ethical thinking and cross-cultural understanding. By examining the strengths of moral education in both South Asian and East Asian contexts, educators can create a balanced approach that blends traditional values with contemporary educational methods.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

The study suggests that educators require training to effectively deliver moral education that respects cultural diversity while promoting universal values. Teacher training programs could be designed to include modules on moral education, emphasizing pedagogical techniques that encourage critical thinking, empathy, and social responsibility. This approach would empower teachers to guide students through complex moral dilemmas while respecting cultural nuances.

Cross-Cultural Exchange

The comparative nature of the study encourages academic institutions to foster cross-cultural exchanges between South Asia and East Asia. This could involve student exchange programs, collaborative research projects, and joint educational initiatives. Such exchanges can enrich moral education by exposing students and educators to diverse perspectives and fostering a global outlook.

Implications for SDG 2030

Quality Education (SDG 4)

This study aligns with SDG 4, which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education. By exploring different approaches to moral education, the study provides insights into how

educational systems can be made more inclusive and culturally sensitive. The findings can guide policymakers in developing educational frameworks that support ethical development while respecting cultural diversity.

Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)

The study's focus on comparative analysis contributes to SDG 10, which aims to reduce inequalities. By examining moral education across different regions, the study sheds light on potential disparities in educational approaches. This information can guide efforts to create more equitable educational systems, ensuring that all students receive a comprehensive moral education regardless of cultural background.

Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17)

The study encourages collaborative partnerships, supporting SDG 17. By fostering academic exchanges and partnerships between South Asian and East Asian educational institutions, the study contributes to building a global network focused on enhancing moral education. These partnerships can promote knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving, ultimately advancing the SDGs.

Future Research Directions

Globalization and Moral Education

Future research could explore the impact of globalization on moral education in both South Asian and East Asian contexts. This would involve examining how global cultural influences affect traditional moral values and identifying strategies to maintain cultural integrity while embracing global trends.

Technological Integration in Moral Education

Another research direction could focus on the role of technology in moral education. This could involve exploring how digital platforms, online learning, and virtual exchanges can enhance moral education and promote cross-cultural understanding. Researchers could investigate the effectiveness of technology-based approaches in fostering ethical behavior and critical thinking among students.

Longitudinal Studies on Moral Development

Longitudinal studies could be conducted to track the moral development of students over time in different educational systems. This would provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of various approaches to moral education and guide educators in refining teaching methods to achieve optimal outcomes.

These implications and future research directions demonstrate the significant impact that the study's findings can have on academia, the SDGs, and the broader field of moral education. They provide a roadmap for educators, policymakers, and researchers to work toward a more inclusive, equitable, and effective approach to moral education in a rapidly changing world

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