

Abstract

Several new phenomena such as school-related violence, negative peer pressure, the absence of positive interpersonal relations and the global compromise of personal integrity are all prime examples for the urgent need for moral training amongst educators. These issues indicate that moral training of teachers in the public school system is greatly lacking, both locally and globally. This type of training is aimed at strengthening not only students' moral perception but also routine daily function. Despite the fact that Israeli education devotes a large portion of its efforts to developing ethical decorum in students, few studies have described programs for teacher moral training, both in Israel and worldwide.

The following research concerning student moral education was carried out at teachers training state colleges and was defined by these goals:

- 1) Examination of the policies and instruction techniques of moral education in different fields;
- 2) Compilation of an up-to-date status report and research of the existing knowledge in the field of moral education;
- 3) Elucidation of the moral values of both students and lecturers in state colleges for education.

The methodological contribution of this research to what was already known in the field focuses on developing unique research tools for examining teacher moral training and building a comprehensive mapping sentence for this field.

The primary research question this dissertation attempted to answer was elucidating the policies, atmosphere, targets and the training programs available for moral education. Further, we analyzed the attitudes of both students and lecturers toward moral education as well as the influence of their preexisting background. The research assumptions include the following: examination of the differences between lecturers and students belonging to different ethnic groups (Jewish religious, Jewish secular and Arab), their values and the existence of moral values as part of them. In addition, different attitudes and behaviors toward moral education in general and in the college in which it is being taught in particular were examined. Finally, these attitudes were analyzed in respect to the extent they are being used by both lecturers and students.

Their educational endeavor, which includes constructive teaching strategies as well as unique moral teaching strategies were also thoroughly examined.

This research has both quantitative and qualitative aspects to it. It was carried out in eight different teachers training state colleges of three main school sub-systems: The Jewish secular, the Jewish religious and the Arab school system. One hundred twenty seven lecturers and 536 students took part in the research.

For analyzing the quantitative part of the research, we used printed questionnaires comprised of five sections:

- 1) **The desirable student character.** The objective of this part was to examine the collection of values and the existence of moral values in the eyes of the subjects.
- 2) **Attitudes toward moral education.** The purpose of this section was to investigate the attitudes and behavior of the subjects toward moral education.
- 3) **Evaluation of the college.** The aim of this part was to determine the studying polices as well as the social involvement of the college, from the perspectives of the students.
- 4) **Constructive teaching strategies.** The objective of this part was to examine to what extent the subjects implement different levels of cognitive teaching strategies.
- 5) **Unique moral teaching strategies.** The purpose of this section was to examine the extent of which the subjects use specific moral education program strategies.

Each of the above questionnaires underwent the Cronbach alpha reliability analysis, factor analysis, and structural validation using the smallest space analysis (SSA). To reach a satisfactory qualitative analysis, we held half a dozen semi-formal in-depth interviews with six lecturers who held different positions at teachers training state colleges as well as with six students in different training programs. In addition, the content of a sample of relevant course syllabi and field notes were examined. The results were processed into categories by topic which have much significance to the moral education discipline.

The primary findings of this research reveal a lack of straightforward training, as well as the lack of discussing diverse moral education theories in the classroom.

Moreover, it is evident that there is a lack of methodological teaching of moral education. The fact is that moral education is being taught in teachers training state colleges on an intuitive, subjective and incidental basis. This gloomy reality is evident in the training program curriculum. In addition, both lecturers and students in teachers training state colleges claim that they are not familiar with a clear college policy regarding moral education, and they do not feel a substantial moral atmosphere or encouragement to be involved in social activities on behalf of the administration of these institutions. Students also expressed their disappointment in the lack of moral education in the curriculum.

In addition to the above, lecturers and students from all ethnic groups claim that they are not equipped with the skills to implement moral education in the classroom. However, lecturers from all sectors and students from the official Jewish religious and secular sub-school systems exhibit openness to the issue. This is in contrast to students originating in the Arab sub-school system who exhibit more conservative and traditional attitudes toward moral education in the classroom. Furthermore, lecturers and female students from humanistic fields of study exhibit more positive attitudes toward moral education, compared to those from other fields.

In light of these results, one can arrive at two conclusions: first, the more moral issues in the curriculum, the more emphasis is placed on social, religious and democratic education values; second, there is a positive correlation between the number of moral issues in the curriculum and the extent of positive attitudes exhibited toward moral education, to the use of unique moral teaching strategies and the use of highly developed cognitive teaching strategies by both students and lecturers.

Finally, the findings of this research have been examined extensively and varied explanations have been proposed to explain them. In addition, practical recommendations for both initiating change as well as future research have been proposed.