

How do education processes and religiosity interact in the development of moral judgment competence?



Iuliana Lupu (iuliana.lupu@uni-konstanz.de) and
Georg Lind (Georg.lind@uni-konstanz.de) (University of Konstanz, Germany)

Association for Moral Education
35th Conference

Theoretical Concepts

The Dual-Aspect Theory of Moral Behavior: Moral behavior exhibits certain moral orientations (the affective aspect) and a certain *moral judgment competence* (the cognitive aspect) (cf. Lind, 2008)

Education Theory of Moral Development: Education is the most important factor of the development of moral competence (cf. Lind, 2002).

Favorable learning environment: Opportunities for role taking and guided reflection contribute substantially to the moral development of students (cf. Sprinthall et al., 1993).

Religiosity: Students from countries, in which the religious institutions are very influential, have a lower level of moral competence than students from secular, west European countries (Lind, 2003). Certain forms of religiosity are related to prejudice and lower level of moral competence (Allport, 1967).

Research Questions

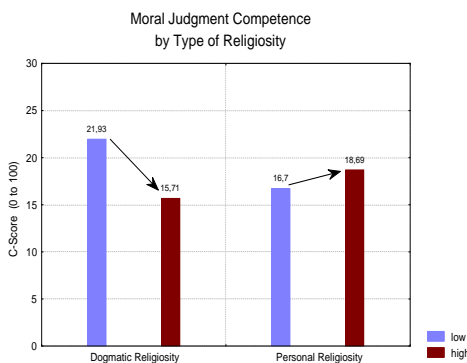
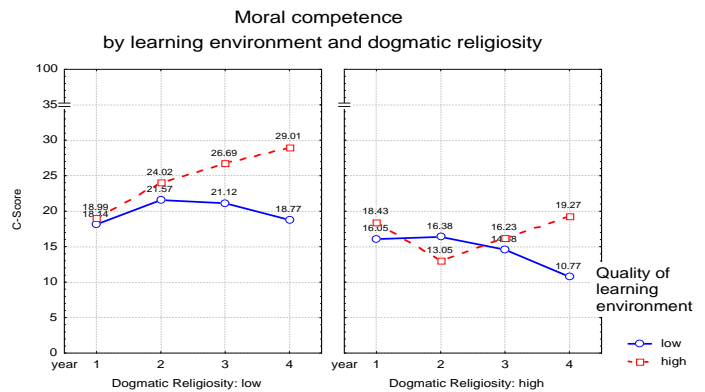
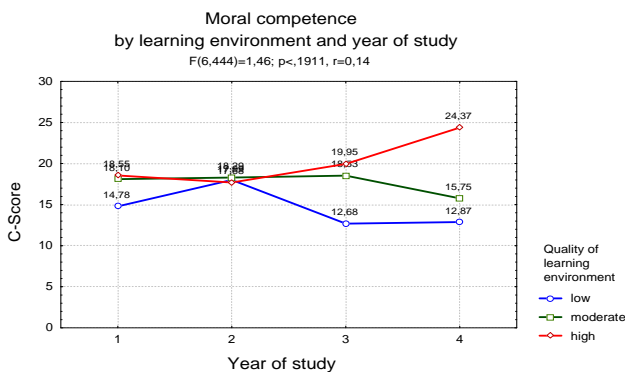
- Does the learning environment in Romania contribute to the moral development of students?
- Which form of religiosity has a negative impact on the development of moral competence?
- How interact education processes and religiosity on the development of moral judgment competence?

Research Design

- Procedure:** Questionnaires filled out in the classrooms
- Participants:** 477 Students from the Universities „Al. I. Cuza“ and „Petre Andrei“ Iassy, Romania
 - Age: 21.80 (SD = 3.1)
 - 384 women and 93 men

- Independent Variables:**
 - Year of Study: 1st year (N = 145), 2nd year (N = 131), 3rd year (N = 137), 4th year (N = 54)
 - Role-taking and guided reflection opportunities (ORIGIN/u Scale, Lind & Schillinger, 2002)
 - Religiosity: dogmatic and personal religiosity (new scale based on the “Religiosity scale” by Boos-Nünning, 1972)
- Dependent Variable:** Moral Judgment Competence (MJT, Lind, 2008)

Results



Findings	Effect size
Study length had no effect on moral judgment competence. $F(3, 453) = 0,16, p < 0,05$	$r = 0,03$
Role-taking and guided reflection opportunities lead to a moderate increase of moral judgment competence during study. $F(6,444)=1,46; p>0,05$	$r = 0,15$
Dogmatic religiosity had a negative effect on moral judgment competence. $F(1,454)=27,30; p<0,001$	$r = 0,24$
Personal religiosity had a positive, moderate effect on moral judgment competence. $F(1,454)=2,67; p>0,05$	$r = 0,08$
In the group of non-dogmatic religious students, study length had a moderate positive effect. $F(3, 152) = 1,2, p = 0,3$	$r = 0,15$
In non-dogmatic religious students, role taking and guided reflection opportunities had a strong, positive effect on development of moral judgment competence. $F(3,54) = 1; p > 0,05$	$r = 0,23$

Discussion

Education has a fostering effect on moral judgment competence, yet only if it provides opportunities for role-taking and guided reflection. This positive effect of education on moral development is hampered by dogmatic religiosity.

However, as our analyses also revealed, highly dogmatic religious students can grow some moral judgment competence if they are offered opportunities of guided reflection (e.g., discussion with relevant persons; reflection). Further research is needed to find out whether their moral judgment competence can be stimulated more strongly by teaching methods like the *Konstanz Method of Dilemma Discussion (KMDD)* are used (Lind, 2009).

Literature

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