

An Empirical Analysis of Ethical Values and Norms-Variations based on Education and Gender on Justification of Violence

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Abstract: Ethics reflect beliefs about what is right, what is wrong, what is just, what is unjust, what is good, and what is bad in terms of a person's behavior. Do ethical values differ based on gender? Do the ethical values differ based on education and age? The objective of this paper is to explore variations based on the factors of gender and education on the three ethical variables namely, 'Justifiable a man beating his wife', 'Justifiable Parents beating their children', and Justifiable violence against others'. The paper uses the primary data collected from the seventh wave of the world values survey especially taking the data (N=1200) of Iraq. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test are run to explore the variations based on gender and education respectively. The finding includes that there is significant variation exists between males and females and based on education. Another finding is for all categories of education (lower, middle, and higher), the mean values of the female are higher than the male which means that for females regardless of their education level 'parents beating children' is more justifiable than for males. The paper suggests some recommendations based on the findings.

Keywords: Ethical Values and Norms, Gender, Education, Variance, Violence

1. Introduction

Ethics are the set of moral principles that guide people's behavior. Social norms, cultural practices, and religious influences are factors that shape these morals. Ethics reflect beliefs about what is right, what is wrong, what is just, what is unjust, what is good, and what is bad in terms of a person's behavior. Ethics serves as a compass to direct how people should behave toward each other, understand and fulfill their responsibilities to society, and live their lives (Lumen, 2021).

The study conducted here is exploratory research where the concepts like ethics and values are considered important to the study. The main aim of this paper is to build a concrete base for the conceptualization and in-depth analysis for the three variables; justifying – a man beating his wife, parents beating children, and

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violence against other people. Another objective of this paper is to explore the variance based on gender, education, and age on the above-mentioned variables. Undoubtedly these days, we come across the news related to domestic violence and atrocity against other people based on caste, religion as well as race. According to UN Women, globally an estimated 736 million women, almost one-third of them have been subjected to physical and or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (Organization, 2021). Hence there is a need for a study on this issue. The paper states that education plays a major role in promoting peace and harmony in society. Teaching value starts in the family, it is not only the government's responsibility. Therefore, this paper focused on the variables that can give hints about the perception of violence among members of Iraqi society. Today's most obvious fact is moral decadence.

According to the generally accepted belief, domestic violence is more in the eastern countries and less in countries such as Europe, North America, Canada, however, studies show that this is a very common problem around the world. Domestic violence as a global phenomenon is an act of violent behavior amongst family members with the intent of causing physical pain and injury (Shiraz, 2016). As cited in Loyd (2018) concerning statistics from the Department of Education of the United Kingdom which shows the percentage of children in need according to identified criteria the most common factor was domestic violence which applied to % 49.9 of children in need; this included violence directed at children or adult in the household. Domestic violence has been conceptualized by taking it both direct and indirect forms (Lloyd, 2018). Interparental violence, which refers to violence between parents and its dominant types includes physical violence such as wife-battery, sexual violence, emotional violence intimidation and humiliation, and controlling behaviors (Solanke, 2018), where children are not the subject of direct abuse. However, children who witness or hear interparental violence, even if they do not see it, can feel and experience its effects (Baker & Cunningham, 2009). Interparental violence has a significant impact on children's and families' functioning. For example, children are more vulnerable to adjustment problems, these children have greater internalizing, externalizing, and academic problems. Moreover, interparental violence is also linked to increased levels of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse among children (DeBoard-Lucas & Grych, 2011). The connections between three variables, that this study is elaborated on and analysis showed that these three variables affect and trigger each other because children who are exposed to domestic violence are more prone to violence in the future. Those children who witness men (their fathers) beating women (their mothers) or are themselves beaten by their parents (mother and father) do this themselves, even if they know it is wrong and they don't want to do it.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ethical Values and Norms

According to Kovac (1996), there are three meanings of ethics. The first one, ethics is commonly used as a synonym for morality, the second one – ethics is a well-known branch of philosophy that studies the sources of human values and standards, and the third one is professional ethics. On the other hand, Churchill (1982) stated that morals, values, and ethics are surrounded by a wide range of misconceptions and misunderstandings which hinder arrival at the accurate definition and correct explanation. Many professionals and students cannot find the sharp distinction between the term 'ethics' which is frequently used as a more consensual word than 'morals' which is less favoured (Chowdhury, 2018; McGavin, 2013).

2.2 Does People's Education Level Affect Their Perception of Ethical Values and Norms?

The review and scrutiny of the literature showed that researchers have focused on the teaching of ethical (moral) values and norms, integration of them into education systems, to the professional life of companies, organizations, and other professions (medical sphere – doctors, nurses; engineering sphere, field of law, administrative positions, teachers, civil servants, public and private sector employees) (Ćurko et al., 2015; Gilman, 2005; Jaghannath, 2016; Lindgren & Blount La Wanna, 2011; Naagarazan, 2007; O'Flaherty & Gleeson, 2017; Osbeck, Franck, Lilja, & Sporre, 2018; Sparks, 1995; Sunar & Tabancali, 2012). However, almost no research has been published that attempts to find whether people's level of education affects their ethical values and norms or their perception of ethical values and norms.

The perception of the world and education begins from the moment a child is born even earlier in the prenatal period in the mother's womb. Children are not animals which we can start training as soon as they are old enough (Aivanhov, 2013). In fact, ethical values and norms such as; for a man to beat his wife, parents beating children, violence against other people have the potential to get generated in the womb through the harmony of mother's thoughts, acts, and feelings and continue once the baby is born, and they are highly sensitive to their environments. Therefore, people's ethical values and norms, and their perception about these values and norms are primarily affected by their families, by the way of upbringing, by the relatives, by the environment, and by the cultural norms of society, then educational institutions are in the secondary level. On the other hand, the economy of the country, its level of development and prosperity (welfare), whether the country is a war zone, or whether the people of the country are subjected to persecution and oppression, or an ethnic or religious group/s is/are more dominant over the other/s ethnic and religious group/s, or a person grows up in an orphanage, or being a child of an immigrant family, or being an immigrant himself, being a child of a divorced family, being (study) in a private or in public school, or a school or a class for gifted or top students, all of these factors have vital effects on the formation of ethical values and norms.

Nevertheless, among little empirical research which shows the association between education level and ethical attitudes (Lin, 2009; Sparks, 1995), some studies showed that students who study abroad demonstrated significant growth in principled moral reasoning (McNeel, 1994). College students who interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds, with students who have divergent intellectual and social perspectives showed higher levels of moral development (Derryberry & Thoma, 2000). Moreover, some studies have found a positive association between Cognitive Moral Development (CMD) and education (Derryberry & Thoma, 2000; Goolsby & Hunt, 1992; Sparks, 1995). A study conducted by Begum (2021) on the variance based on the gender on the economic values variable using the world values survey found that there is a significant variance exists between male and female and this research also explores the same but on another variable.

3. Methodology

The paper used the primary data collected through the seventh wave of the World Values Survey (WVS) (Haerpfer et al.) which is conducted around the world. In this paper, the data collected from Iraq is used. The total respondents are 1200 among which 602 are male and 592 are female respondents. As this is a

representative sample taken by the team of WVS the data is reliable and can be used for generalizing a single country's findings.

Mann-Whitney U Test is run to explore the variance between males and females, and the Kruskal Wallis test is run to look at the variance based on Education level and age of the respondents. Mean values are taken to investigate in-depth differences. The data passes through the assumption of the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test, as the dependent variable is ordinal or continuous, that is 'not justifiable at all' to 'always justifiable' with a scale of one to ten, (1 being not at all justifiable and 10 being always justifiable) (Singh et al., 2013; Statistics, 2015). The independent variable gender is a categorical independent group of males and females as well as different respondents for education and age groups.

4. Analysis Findings and Interpretations

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the variables

Descriptive Statistics				
		Justifiable: For a man to beat his wife	Justifiable: Parents beating children	Justifiable: Violence against other people
N	Valid	1200	1200	1200
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2.62	3.34	2.49
Median		2.00	3.00	2.00
Mode		1	1	1
Std. Deviation		2.083	2.250	1.967
Skewness		1.265	.644	1.234
Minimum		1	1	1
Maximum		10	10	10

Source: Own Computation data from WVS Survey

Table 1, depicts the descriptive statistics of the three variables taken for this study. The minimum value is 1 which states not at all justifiable and it is also the Mode value for all the variables. The Standard Deviation falls within a close point of Mean values.

Table 2: Group statistics for the gender

<i>Group Statistics</i>					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Justifiable: For a man to beat his wife	Male	608	2.67	2.133	.087
	Female	592	2.56	2.031	.083
Justifiable: Parents beating children	Male	608	3.21	2.273	.092
	Female	592	3.48	2.219	.091
Justifiable: Violence against other people	Male	608	2.52	1.977	.080
	Female	592	2.46	1.958	.080

Source: Own Computation data from WVS Survey

Table 2 depicts, the Group Statistics where gender wise Mean can be found. For all the three variables the Mean values for the male and female are found different. From the data, it can be stated that the higher the mean higher the person justifying the concept. For the first variable for a man to beat his wife males justify it more than females. For the second variable parents beating children, women justify it more than men. For violence against other people, males justify it more than females.

Table 3: Mean values with education and gender cross tabulation

Report				
Mean				
Education	Gender	Justifiable: for a man to beat his wife	Justifiable: Parents beating children	Justifiable: Violence against other people
Lower	Male	2.91	3.17	2.83
	Female	2.65	3.41	2.47
	Total	2.76	3.30	2.63
Middle	Male	2.95	3.43	2.64
	Female	2.50	3.51	2.61
	Total	2.77	3.46	2.63
Higher	Male	2.04	3.09	1.93
	Female	2.35	3.59	2.33
	Total	2.18	3.32	2.11
Total	Male	2.67	3.21	2.53
	Female	2.55	3.47	2.46
	Total	2.61	3.34	2.50

Source: Own Computation data from WVS Survey

From Table 3, it can be observed that the higher educated male has a lower mean than the lower educated male for the variable for a man to beat his wife. In all categories of education female mean is higher than the male mean for the variable parents to beat their children. For the third variable, violence against other people higher educated males have a lower mean than the higher educated female.

Table 4: Mean values with education and gender and age cross tabulation

Report					
Mean					
Education	Gender	Age recoded (6 intervals)	Justifiable: For a man to beat his wife	Justifiable: Parents beating children	Justifiable: Violence against other people
Lower	Male	16-24	2.88	2.96	2.79
		25-34	3.14	3.19	2.85
		35-44	2.74	3.40	2.67
		45-54	2.95	2.95	3.00
		55-64	2.72	3.17	2.76
		65 and more years"	2.80	4.00	3.30
		Total	2.91	3.17	2.83
	Female	16-24	3.07	3.30	2.78
		25-34	2.45	3.14	2.27
		35-44	2.43	3.41	2.29
		45-54	3.01	4.19	2.90
		55-64	2.39	2.91	2.20
		65 and more years"	1.87	3.50	1.63
		Total	2.65	3.41	2.47
Middle	Male	16-24	2.72	3.64	2.60
		25-34	3.59	3.74	3.13
		35-44	2.54	3.33	2.04
		45-54	2.93	3.03	2.62
		55-64	2.73	2.55	2.36

Higher		65 and more years"	3.00	3.00	4.00
		Total	2.95	3.43	2.64
	Female	16-24	2.73	3.41	2.59
		25-34	2.26	3.37	2.51
		35-44	2.00	3.46	2.31
		45-54	3.44	5.11	3.78
		55-64	1.83	2.83	2.17
		Total	2.50	3.51	2.61
	Male	16-24	2.33	2.71	2.19
		25-34	1.93	3.07	1.99
		35-44	2.07	3.18	1.64
		45-54	1.96	3.09	1.87
		55-64	2.50	4.00	2.75
65 and more years"		1.00	2.00	1.00	
Total		2.04	3.09	1.93	
Female	16-24	2.88	3.54	2.65	
	25-34	2.38	3.43	2.48	
	35-44	1.91	3.83	1.94	
	45-54	2.46	3.77	2.31	
	55-64	1.80	3.20	2.20	
	65 and more years"	2.50	4.50	1.00	
	Total	2.35	3.59	2.33	

Source: Own Computation data from WVS Survey

From Table 4 above with regard to age – the older people get, regardless of their level of education and gender the less they justify ‘a man beat his wife’. Middle education and middle-aged females (45-54) have the highest mean compared to the higher and lower education level females to justify ‘parents beating their children’.

According to the results, contradictory to the gender softness belief the female justify parents beating their children. For all categories of Education – lower, middle, higher the mean values of the female are higher than the male which means that for females regardless of their education level ‘parents beating children’ is more justifiable than for males.

Higher education level people regardless of their gender as older they get lesser they justify ‘violence against other people’. Higher educated men do not justify the ‘man beating his wife’ variable with the lowest mean value of 2.04. On the other hand, the men with the lower and middle education with the mean value of 2.91 and 2.95 justify the ‘man beating their wife’ variable.

The results showed that ‘violence against other people’ is more justifiable for the people of lower and middle education level with the means of 2.83 for males of lower education level and 2.47 for the females of lower education level, 2.64 for males of middle education level and 2.61 for females of middle education level. However, higher education level males do not justify ‘violence against other people’ with the difference of means (2.83-1.93=0.9) 0.90.

Table 5: Hypothesis test summary to find the variance between male and female

Hypothesis Test Summary				
S. No.	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Justifiable: For a man to beat his wife is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent Samples Mann Whitney U Test	0.31	Retain the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of Justifiable: Parents beating children is the same across categories of Gender	Independent Samples Mann Whitney U Test	0.022	Reject the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of Justifiable: Voilence against other people is the same across categories of Gender	Independent Samples Mann Whitney U Test	0.411	Retain the null hypothesis
Asymtotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05				

Source: Own Computation using SPSS Version 25 data from WVS Survey

1. From the above Table 5, it can be observed that for the variable ‘for the man to beat his wife,’ it is the same across categories of gender with the significant value of 3.10, according to Man – Whitney U Test. This means there is no difference of opinion between males and females for this variable.
2. The variable justifiable ‘parent beating children, is not the same among males and females, as the null hypothesis is rejected with the value of 0.022 which is less than 0.05.
3. For the third variable justifiable ‘violence against other people’ is the same among the categories of gender. There is no significant variance between males and females for this variable, with a significant value of 0.411, and the null hypothesis is retained.

Table 6: Hypothesis test summary to find the variance between different categories of age

Hypothesis Test Summary				
S. No.	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Justifiable: For a man to beat his wife is the same across categories of Age recorded (6 intervals)	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0.1	Reject the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of Justifiable: Parents beating children is the same across categories of Age recorded (6 intervals)	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0.225	Retain the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of Justifiable: Voilence against other people is the same across categories of Age recorded (6 intervals)	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0.006	Reject the null hypothesis
Asymtotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05				

Source: Own Computation using SPSS Version 26 data from WVS Survey

From the above Table 6, where the Kruskal Wallis test is conducted to find the difference of opinion among the different age groups, it can be observed that for the variable justifiable 'for a man to beat his wife' and the variable justifiable 'violence against other people' are not the same across the categories of age with the significant values of 0.010 and 0.006. The null hypotheses are rejected; as significant values are lesser than 0.05. However, the variable 'parents beating children' is the same across categories of age with the significant value of 0.225.

Table 7: Hypothesis test summary to find the variance between different categories of education

Hypothesis Test Summary				
S. No.	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Justifiable: For a man to beat his wife is the same across categories of Highest Education level: Respondent (recoded into 3 groups)	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0	Reject the null hypothesis
2	The distribution of Justifiable: Parents beating children is the same across categories of Highest Education level: Respondent (recoded into 3 groups)	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0.473	Retain the null hypothesis
3	The distribution of Justifiable: Voilence against other people is the same across categories of Highest Education level: Respondent (recoded into 3 groups)	Independent Samples Kruskal - Wallis Test	0.002	Reject the null hypothesis
Asymtotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05				

From the above Table 7, where Kruskal-Well Test is applied to find the variance based on Education, it can be observed that, for the variables justifiable for a man to beat his wife, and violence against other people. The test result showed that there is significant variance with the value of 0.000 and 0.002 respectively. However, the variable justifiable ‘parents beating children’ is the same across categories of education with the significant value of 0.473. Hence the null hypothesis is retained.

5. Discussion

The study revealed that the respondents based on the data collected from Iraq, there is no difference of opinion for a man beating his wife among male and female. This is a matter of discussion that for parents beating children there is a difference of opinion among males and females. According to studies conducted by (Peled & Gil, 2011; Pels, Lünemann, & Steketee, 2011) during periods of interparental violence mothers continuously struggle to control their parenting behavior.

There is concrete evidence that for the variable ‘violence against other people’ also there is no difference of opinion among different categories of gender. (Table 5). It is found that education level plays a major role in the opinions on justifying a man beating his wife, and violence against other people (Ackerson, Kawachi, Barbeau, & Subramanian, 2008; Roustit et al., 2009; Solanke, 2018). Irrespective of education level ‘parents beating children’ variable is justified by all categories. (Table 4)

The study confirms that there is a significant difference among the age categories in justifying variables; - for a man beating his wife, and violence against other people. On the other hand, the variable parents beating children does not show a difference across the age categories. (Table 6). The findings of the table (7) showed that 'parents beating children' is justifiable across all categories of education. In further studies, the reason could be explored. With the regard to the effect of education for the man to have an opinion of justifying beating his wife, there is a significant effect based on education level.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine and explore whether ethical values and norms differ by gender, education, and age. Systematic literature review and analysis of the survey data prove that there is variance in the mean values of males and females as well as the variance of perception based on education and age. However, the variance is not the same for all the three variables taken for this study. For the first variable, 'Justifiability for a man beating his wife' there is no significant variance based on gender according to Mann-Whitney-U-Test. (Table 5) but there is significant variance based on Education (Table 6) and Age (Table 7).

For the second variable 'Justifiability for parents beating their children' there is significant variance based on gender (Table 5). But there is no variance based on education (Table 6) and Age (Table 7).

For the third variable 'justifiability violence against other people' there is no significant variance based on gender (Table 5). But there is significant variance based on education (Table 6) and age (Table 7).

This study proved that there is an inverse relationship between the level of education and opinion on justifying violence against other people. In order to have peace and harmony in society education of the citizens should be given the highest priority.

7. Recommendation

From the analysis, it is observed that higher educated people less justify violence against others. Hence, it is strongly recommended that for the societies to have peace and harmony and to attain a non-violent society, providing higher education must be given utmost priority by the policymakers of a nation.

In any case, it is reasonable to assert that one aims of a college education is to enable students to learn and apply ethical values in real life because during the education period people are exposed to new thoughts, ideas, and approaches. Therefore, it is believed that education could enhance a person's knowledge and ethical sensitivity to various norms and moral codes.

8. Limitations

The finding of the study is limited to one country (Iraq) survey data only, hence cannot be generalized.

9. Future Study

The researchers plan to study and analyze all the seventh wave data of all countries so that generalization for the variable studied can be achieved.

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