

## **A Comparison of Moral Development and Conceptual Movement Ability in Primary School First Graders with and Without Receiving Preschool Educations in a Number of City Schools Arsanjan in November and December 2011**

**Javad Eskandari<sup>1</sup>, Younes Mohammadzadeh<sup>2</sup>, Shahrbanoo Haghighat<sup>3</sup>, Sareh Rahimi<sup>4</sup>, Atefeh Hosseini<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>M.A. Student of Preschool Education, Arsanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor, Faculty of Humanities, Arsanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan, Iran

<sup>3</sup>Assistant professor, Faculty of Humanities, Arsanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan, Iran

<sup>4</sup>Young Researchers Club, Arsanjan branch, Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan, Iran

<sup>5</sup>Ph.D. Student of Organizational and Industrial Psychology, Andhra University

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The present study was conducted in November and December 2011 in sama, shahid jokar, fatemeh zahra, hafez, shahid ali reza eskandari, and shahid azad mohammadi primary schools in arsanjan. The main purpose of this study was to compare moral development and improvement of conceptual movement ability among first grade primary school students with and without receiving preschool educations. The sample under study included 60 students (30 males and 30 females) chosen through simple random sampling among the research population. The participants' moral development was tested through Kolberg's Questionnaire and their conceptual movement skills via Linklen's and Ozerteski's Questionnaire. Then, the collected data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics such as t-test. The results of the study indicated that there was no significant difference between two groups of participants with regard to the effects of preschool educations on participants' moral development. The results also suggested that there was no significant difference between moral development of male and female students, but their preschool educations caused a significant difference in their conceptual movement skills. Besides, it was noted that conceptual movement ability of male and female students did not improve significantly.

**KEYWORDS:** moral growth, conceptual movement ability, preschool education.

---

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Children's preparation to enter school and their subsequent success in their studies is associated with their development at different stages. In the past, many practitioners believed that children's entry to school is the beginning of their learning and success in all developmental aspects. However, today in the light of attempts made by various professionals, the line of thinking and planning has been shifted towards fertilizing preschool educations as a prerequisite for children's entry to school (Mofidi, 1996).

Many educational philosophers (e.g. Plato, Aristotle, Comines, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi) have emphasized the importance of training from children's early ages (even from their mothers' laps). Frobel believed that early life years serve as a basis for one's development in subsequent years (Hejazi and Seif, 1999).

There are critical periods to human's learning and development. The results of recent studies indicate that learning and development period goes back to early infancy and childhood years. As a result, it is imperative to start educating children in appropriate conditions namely the time when environmental encounters have the most impact on a child's talents growth. This period is called critical period of human development (Mackgera, 1977; parnian, 2009.) which includes preschool and school education. Preschool education has been considered as a distinct stage of education and learning in Iran for many years. This period has considerable and undeniable influences on emotional and mental aspects, ethical values, growth of talents, mental and moral development, and children's perceptual and kinetic abilities. A glance at developments and changes made in preschool education during the last half century is indicative of the fact that the preschool period is vital in adoption of morally accepted behaviors (Bartoon, Foordi, Rimer, & Korbi, 2005).

---

\*Corresponding Author: Sareh Rahimi, Young Researchers Club, Arsanjan branch, Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan, Iran\*Email: (sarehrahimi@gmail.com)

A proper preschool program can pave the way for a child to enter school i.e. the child gets familiar with verbal and physical skills and concepts needed for reading, writing, and computing at the level of primary school. Such a program can also contribute to the development of other child's capabilities (Aqa Zadeh, 2004).

Piaget believes that correct characteristics such as intelligence, games, and language enter the child's development process through persistent and systematic stages. Each continuous stage will lead to a higher stage of moral awareness. In addition, each developmental stage is dependent on the child's cognitive growth.

The relevance of ethical educations to children's age properties has been emphasized by some authors. For instance, Karimi suggests: The instruction of moral concepts should be appropriate to children's cognitive capabilities at the level of their moral judgment as any postponement or prematurity may bring about serious ethical harms to children (Karimi, 1991).

The goal of perceptual and kinetic programs is to create activities for children to accelerate the development process of their basic (perceptual, kinetic, and moral) abilities. Therefore, such programs are based on the assumption that the improvement of perceptual abilities through kinetic activities will result in the improvement of individuals' cognitive functions in school and personal life (Hivood, 1993; translated in Namazi Zadeh, 1998).

Mofidi (1996) has stressed the significance of children's emotional-kinetic preparation in preschool period. He has first tried to identify the early childhood years with an ideal stage for learning kinetic skills and then he has considered children's capabilities in terms of mental-kinetic skills. Studies done on mental-kinetic skills and the effects of preparation programs in preschool period on the improvement of such skills have come up with contradicting results (Zachoopooloo et al, 2004; Katner, 1993; Yan and Yan, 1991; Hay, 1987; Moore, 1984; Khalaji and Emad, 2002, Allahyari, 2002; Jalali, 1997; Balyani, 1998; Rohbanfard, 1998; and Fallah, 1997). Although a significant part of such studies have reported the positive effects of preschool education on mental-kinetic skills, some of them have considered as such programs as ineffective (Rohbanfard, 1998) and even some have reported their negative impacts. Based on what has been mentioned, the development of moral, perceptual, and kinetic skills is considered as one of the important aspects of individuals' development and bears high significance. Besides, development of moral, perceptual, and kinetic skills is concurrent with preschool ages. As a result, the present study aims to compare students' moral, perceptual, and kinetic development with and without experiencing preschool educations.

In this line, the main objective of the study is to investigate the effects of preschool education on students' moral, perceptual, and kinetic development.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is a causal comparative research in which the independent variable (preschool education) which happened previously and dependant variables (moral development and perceptual and kinetic skills) have been measured.

The population under study included all primary school students in Arsanjan (a city in Fars Province, Iran) in 2011-2012 educational year. The sample under study included 60 1<sup>st</sup> grade-primary students (30 students received preschool educations and 30 students had no preschool educations) who were selected through simple random sampling. Of every two urban and rural regions in Arsanjan 6 primary schools (3 schools for boys and 3 schools for girls) were chosen. Besides, 10 students (5 educated students and 5 uneducated students) were selected from each school randomly and were tested through the study. To measure changes in students' moral development Piaget and Kohlberg have developed different stories followed by a number of questions whose answers require making moral judgment by respondents. Each story is presented orally to the students and their responses are recorded appropriately. Then, the answers are scored, analyzed, and morally classified.

Kohlberg's Moral Development Test includes two stories followed by a number of tests developed by Karimi (1994). The tester reads the stories and encourages the children to use their judgment and reasoning in order to answer the questions. Of course, stories can be prepared based on the type of measure employed and their theme is taken from events, needs, real and experiential circumstances in childhood period that are familiar with children's mental world. The reliability of Kohlberg's moral development test was determined through scores given by raters to the test as equal to 94%. The formal validity of the test was determined by through professionals in the field (Parnain, 2009). The scoring method was chosen based on the testees' responses in a range of 0 to 5 scores.

The second instrument we chose to measure conceptual movement skills in this study was the Linklen's and Ozerteski's Questionnaire —Short Form. The fifteen question LOQ-SF is based on the long form of the LOQ and is designed to measure of motor function in children (Mohamadi, 2009).

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (e.g. independent sample t-test) were used to analyze the data and to test the research hypotheses.

## THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

**Table 1: Comparing the moral development in children with and without preschool educations**

Group	Frequency	Mean	SD	t	df	Level of sig.
Educated	30	3.40	1	-1.92	58	NS/17
Non-educated	30	2.93	0.86			

As shown in Table 1, there is no significant difference between the mean of moral development for the two groups. Of course, the mean score for the children who received preschool educations is higher than those who had no preschool educations. But this has not resulted in a significance difference in the mean scores for the two groups. In other words, preschool education has not resulted in a significant difference in the students' moral development. Conventionally, it is supposed that children who receive preschool educations should have better outcome regarding their moral growth. However, the present study did not confirm this assumption.

A point that should be taken into account is that the role of teachers and school members should not be disregarded in enhancing children's moral growth. Moral growth is one of the categories that all school authorities must adhere to it.

**Table 2: Comparing conceptual movement skills for the two groups**

Group	Frequency	Mean	SD	t	df	Level of sig.
Educated	30	2.43	0.72	-1.92	58	0.028
Non-educated	30	2.10	0.60			

P > 0.05

As indicted by Table 2, the mean score for the children who received preschool educations is higher than the mean score for those who had no preschool educations, which has led to a significant difference in their means. In other words, preschool education has resulted in a significant difference in students' conceptual movement skills. What can be observed through Gotman's Kinetic Perspective Theory and Kopart's Conceptual movement Theory is that these theories emphasize strongly the acquisition of basic kinetic patterns and their role in attainment of what has been called as perception. As a result, the acquisition of more kinetic skills is regarded as important in achieving higher levels. It is clear that an environment enriched with kinetic experiences in early childhood years will lead to the improvement of such activities in children and facilitates their attainment to higher levels (Cratty, 1975).

**Table 3: Comparing moral growth for male and female students**

Group	Frequency	Mean	SD	t	df	Level of sig.
Educated	30	3.13	0.89	-0.26	58	NS 0.21
Non-educated	30	3.20	1.03			

P > 0.05

As shown in Table 3, there is no significant difference between the mean score gained by female students and that obtained by male students. Of course, the mean score for the males is higher than the mean for females. But this has not resulted in a significance difference in the mean scores for the two groups. In other words, the rate of moral development is the same for both male and female students and both groups are at the same skill level, indicating no group is superior over the other.

Perhaps it can be said that the nonexistence of a significant difference in moral understanding between the two genders is a function of their physical growth and kinetic skills as in early ages, mental and physical growth happens almost in the same way for males and females.

**Table 4: Comparing conceptual movement skills for male and female students**

Group	Frequency	Mean	SD	t	df	Level of sig.
Educated	30	2.23	0.67	-0.37	58	NS 0.24
Non-educated	30	2.30	0.70			

P > 0.05

As shown in Table 3, there is no significant difference between the mean score gained by female students and that obtained by male students. Although, the mean score for the males is higher than the mean for females, this has not resulted in a significance difference in the mean scores for the two groups.

The quality of educational material, the amount of space available at school, and the significance of sports and exercises are among important factors influencing the development of conceptual movement skills and the experience of experiencing preschool education is not by itself sufficient to create a significant difference between male and female students. Besides, since the preschool education is performed in the same way for both male and female students it is possible that such education eliminates gender differences in the development of students' conceptual movement skills.

During early childhood years, gender differences have no considerable effect on students' kinetic skills. However, possible effects of education cannot be ignored on the development of such skills. But there are no significant differences between males and females regarding their kinetic skills.

## DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to compare the moral growth and the development of conceptual movement skills among primary first graders with and without receiving preschool educations in Arsanjan. To do so, Kolberg's Questionnaire and Linklen's and Ozerteski's Questionnaire were administered among primary first graders including those who received preschool educations and those who had no experience of such educations before entering primary school. The results of the study indicated that preschool educations had no effect on students' moral growth but they have been efficient in the development of their conceptual movement skills. It is expected that the findings of the present study to be taken a useful step in the improvement of preschool and school educational planning and the practitioners in the field benefit the most from these findings.

Since preschool educations have a positive impact on students' conceptual movement, therefore preschool educations must be paid attention to and emphasized by educational authorities. In addition, some programs for the instruction of conceptual movement skills and their related exercises should be incorporated in preschool curricula.

In spite of insignificant effect of preschool educations on students' moral development it is recommended such educations be emphasized and incorporated into school programs to the full capacity. Besides, it should be noted that the results of this study cannot reject the possibility of enhancing moral development as these results may have been influenced by different factors.

## REFERENCES

- 1- Aghazadeh, A. (2004). *Problems of Iran's Educational System*. Tehran: SAMT Publication.
- 2- Barton, C.; Fordy, C.; Rimer, K.; & Kirby, K. (2005). The important of value development of motor skills in children. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*. 11 (10): 99-103.
- 3- Cratty, B.J. (1975). Perceptual and motor development in infant children. University of California, Loss Angeles, p: 30-40.
- 4-Hejazi, E. & Seif, S. (1999). Effects of preschool educations on the academic achievement of elementary students. Proceedings of Scientific Congress on Preschoolers, November, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 1999: UNICEF Children's Bureau.
- 5-Hey Wood, Kathleen M. (1993). Motor skills development during life. Translated in Namazi
- 6-Karimi, Y. (1991). *Social Psychology* : ARASBARAN Publications.
- 7-Mofidi, F. (1996). The significance of children's bodily and motor skill fitness in preschool period. *Journal of Research on Educational Issues*, No. 5 & 6, pp. 84-74.
- 8-Mohamadi,A. (2009). Effect of Farmed games on the conceptual movement ability of first grade students with and without preschool education in Kohrang. M.A Thesis: Islamic Azad University of Arsanjan.
- 9-Zadeh, M. & Aslankhani, M.A. (1998). Tehran: SAMT Publications Parnain, M. (2009). Effect of show games on the moral development of pre-school beginners in Jahrom. M.A Thesis: Islamic Azad University of Arsanjan.
- 10-Rohbanfard, H. (1998). Effects of an action program on cognitive movement abilities of mentally retarded male students (10-13 years old). M.A Thesis: Tehran University