



Parenting and the Development of Moral Judgement among Adolescents in the City of Maroua

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Abstract

This study focuses on parental function and moral judgement among adolescents in the city of Maroua. It is based on the observation that adolescents in the city of Maroua are increasingly developing antisocial behaviour and that they have difficulty distinguishing between good and bad. This raises the problem of the quality of moral judgement in adolescents as a result of the way in which parents intervene in their upbringing, which leads to the research question: Does the exercise of parental authority influence moral judgement in adolescents? Our general aim was therefore to verify whether there is a link between parenting and moral judgement in adolescents. We opted for quantitative research. By way of methodology, a questionnaire was drawn up and administered to a sample of four hundred and three (403) adolescents aged 13-18, who were selected by means of simple random sampling. The study was based on four theories: Piaget's, Kohlberg's and Bronfenbrenner's theories of the development of moral judgement and Poussin's theory of the parental function. The data collected were subjected to a simple linear regression test using SPSS software version 20.2. Our hypotheses HR1 and HR2 were tested at 0.000 with $F_{\text{cal}} < F_{\text{tab}}$ and a $ddl1=1$, $ddl2=59$ and the hypothesis HR3 was tested at 0.002 with $F_{\text{cal}} < F_{\text{tab}}$ and a $ddl1=1$, $ddl2=35$. As a result, our three hypotheses were confirmed with a margin of error of 5%. We arrived at the results according to which the exercise of the parental function influences the moral judgement of adolescents.

Keywords: Parenting, Moral judgement, Adolescents, Parenting, Development

Introduction

Moral judgement is the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. It is a complex reality, as it is often the result of cultural values and religious norms. A number of studies¹⁻³ have been carried out in this field to determine its level of development and to understand how it is applied in everyday life. Individuals by nature do not make the same moral judgement on the events of their environment, despite the fact that theorists believe that at a certain age, especially in adolescence, the

individual behaves according to the established will, but the reality seems to be becoming increasingly different in the town of Maroua. The aim of this study is to examine the question of moral judgement among adolescents in the Far North in general and in Maroua in particular. Specifically, our study consists of presenting the particularity of the participation of the whole community in the education of the adolescent for a moral judgement that meets the norms of the community.

The traditional family in the Far North has always

constituted the fundamental basis of societal functioning, and its organisation ensures the cohesion and coherence of its various members, with the added bonus of respect for a certain patriarchal hierarchy. This hierarchy is characterised by

- The primacy of the father over other family members;
- The primacy of parents over teenagers;
- Two-parent families are encouraged and facilitated to the detriment of other family types (single-parent families, same-sex families);
- Preference for polygamy over other systems.

The family remains the primary setting in which social values and norms are built up, thanks to the role it plays in the day-to-day well-being of its members. Parents convey cultural traits and beliefs such as altruism, risk aversion and participation in active and religious life. This mechanism ensures initiation into different cultural practices. In this way, the father positions himself as the head of the family, at the apex of all authoritarian power and the fixer of family rules, while the mother, assuming a supportive role, ensures strict compliance with these rules, which the children are forced to respect, silently.⁴

Given that moral behaviour is a phenomenon that is part of human life in general and that antisocial behaviour refers to any form of behaviour whose aim is to harm or hurt another individual.⁵ In fact, the impulses that generate antisocial behaviour are present in all human beings and manifest themselves through various behaviours that can be observed when the individual makes a judgement (for example: clenching fists, insults, stealing, fighting, etc.). However, it is when these behaviours persist or intensify that they become reprehensible and point to the problems of poor moral judgement. Thus several facts explain the antisocial behaviour of adolescents, thus on 22 November 2018, DAVE Menendi, 18 years old, a student in the final year of secondary school was stabbed to death by his classmate Cabrel FANKAM TALIEDI, at the Institut Polyvalent Bilingue 'La Sophia' in Nkolfoulou. On 29 March 2019 in Douala, TSANOU OSMANE Bleriot, aged 17, a pupil at the bilingual secondary school in Deido, was stabbed to death by a 16-year-old teenager who had been expelled from the school some time. On

Tuesday 15 January 2020, DJONI TCHAKOUNTE Maurice, a mathematics teacher at Nkolbisson high school in Yaoundé, was stabbed to death by a 15-year-old teenager in 4th grade. On Wednesday 06 April 2022, AMADOU Hamadjam, a 16-year-old teenager, stabbed the principal of Yona secondary school and on 7 May 2022, a 15-year-old teenager by the name of Darel NJILO from Ebolowo technical secondary school stabbed his classmate ATANGANA Junior from the same secondary school.

Our study is justified by the fact that no recent study has highlighted the difficulties for parents in the Far North, caught between tradition and modernity, to invest effectively in the management of adolescents prone to antisocial behaviour as a result of pubertal crises and other factors due to psychosocial changes. We asked ourselves the following main question: does the exercise of the parental function influence moral judgement in adolescents? In other words, does the presence of parents influence moral judgement in adolescents? Does the parents' educational style have an impact on the moral judgement of adolescents? And finally, do parent/adolescent interactions have an impact on moral judgement in adolescents? To this end, the following hypothesis is put forward: parenting influences moral judgement in adolescents.

Methodology

Our study is of the correlational type, in that it aims to establish a correlation between the independent variable (parenting) and the dependent variable (moral judgement) in adolescents. It is quantitative in that we will be using a questionnaire as our data collection tool.

Study site

The research is taking place in the town of Maroua, capital of the Diamaré department in the Far North region of Cameroon. Created on 22 August 1983 by Presidential Decree N°83/390 as a Province and transformed by Presidential Decree N°2008/376 of 12 November 2008 on the administrative organisation of the Republic of Cameroon, the Far North region covers an area of 34263 km², with an estimated population of 3480414 inhabitants (RGPH, 2005) spread over six Departments: Diamaré, Logone et Chari, Mayo-Danay, Mayo-Kani, Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga.

It is actually taking place in schools in the town of Maroua, namely the Collège Jacques de Bernon, the Collège Abou Daoud, the bilingual lycée of Maroua-Domayo and the lycée of Doualaré.

Mother population

This study focuses on parental function and moral judgement among adolescents in the city of Maroua. The population concerned by this study is therefore all adolescents in the city of Maroua. Moral judgement is a situation that is becoming increasingly complex among adolescents. This study concerns adolescents aged 13-18.

There are several reasons for our choice:

- The majority of the city's population is made up of adolescents;(Statistique démocratique, 2021)
- Morality is in crisis in the city of Maroua, as evidenced by the antisocial behaviour of adolescents;(DGS-EN, 2021)
- We hope to identify the factors that influence the moral judgement of adolescents;
- We want to show the importance of the role played by those around adolescents in the process of constructing moral judgement;
- We want to understand specifically the influence of the roles played by parents in relation to adolescents (Table 1).

Table 1: Management of secondary schools in the town of Maroua.

School	Workforce		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Government bilingual high school of Maroua-Domayo	1236	1201	2437
Abou Daoud Islamic College	751	626	1377
Jacques de Bernon Bilingual College	952	1010	1962
Lycée de Doualare Maroua.	1085	721	1806
TOTAL	4024	3558	7582
Percentage	53,07	46,93	100

Source: The management of secondary schools in the town of Maroua (Maroua-Domayo bilingual secondary school, Aboub Daoud secondary school, Jacques de Bernon bilingual secondary school, Doualare secondary school).

Sample

Our sample consisted of 403 adolescents (204 boys and 199 girls) drawn from our parent population using simple random sampling. It was drawn from four different backgrounds, as indicated above. These included adolescents in the city of Maroua attending certain secondary schools in the city of Maroua. The gender breakdown of our sample is shown in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2: Breakdown of the sample by sex and by school.

Sex				
	Boys	Girls	Total	Percent
Govment bilingual high school of Maroua-Domayo	48	53	101	100
Abou Daoud Islamic College	53	47	100	100
Jacques de Bernon bilingual College	42	59	101	100
Lycée de Doualare Maroua.	61	40	101	100
TOTAL	204	199	403	100

Source: The management of secondary schools in Maroua (Maroua-Domayo bilingual secondary school, Aboub Daoud secondary school, Jacques de Bernon bilingual secondary school, Doualare secondary school).

Data collection instrument

A questionnaire is a technique for collecting quantifiable data in the form of a series of questions asked in a specific order. It provides the researcher with a viewpoint on all the concerns that will enable us to carry out our investigations with complete objectivity. This questionnaire was sent to adolescents in secondary schools in the city of Maroua. The aim of our questionnaire was to understand whether the exercise of parental functions influences moral judgment among adolescents.

Data analysis instrument

To process the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire, we used SPSS or Statistical Package for Social Science version 20.0, a computer programme commonly used in the social sciences for processing and analysing statistical data. We chose the Statistical Package for Social Sciences because it provides clearly analysable statistical results. Ease of use and access are other advantages of this data processing tool.

Procedure

Once we had validated our data collection tool, we proceeded to collect data in the field. We began by briefly explaining the questionnaires to the research participants and answering a number of questions. The data was collected only from pupils in the lycées and collèges selected in advance.

Ethics

For professional ethical reasons, we explained the aims of the research to the students. We voluntarily asked them to sign an informed consent form to underline their free participation in the research. They were given the opportunity to refuse to answer the questionnaire, to withhold their answers or simply to ask for the questionnaire to be destroyed at the end. They were not coerced in any way and were not paid to respond. They responded voluntarily.

Results

In this part of the work, we present the individual's personal information, i.e. age, class and gender (Table 3).

Source: Survey results

Table 3, which shows the distribution of respondents by age, shows that of the 403 adolescents in our sample, 187 were in the 13 to 15 age group, i.e. 46.4%, and 216 were in the 16 to 18 age group, i.e. 53.6%. In view of the data, we can see that adolescents in the 16 to 18 age group are more important in terms of numbers, simply because the older ones are more available to take part in the survey than the younger ones.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by age of adolescents.

Type	Number	Percentage
13 à 15 years	187	46,4
16 à 18 year olds	216	53,6
Total	403	100,0

A. Gender

Source: Survey results

Table 4, which shows the distribution of respondents by age, shows that there were 198 girls (49.1%) and 205 boys (50.9%). In terms of numbers, there were more boys than girls. This is due to the fact that girls were not always available for the survey and also because there were significantly fewer of them than boys in each class.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by sex of adolescent.

Type	Number	Percentage
Girls	198	49,1
Boys	205	50,9
Total	403	100,0

B. Verification of research hypothesis 1

HR1: The presence of parents influences moral judgement in adolescents.

Ha: There is a linear relationship between the presence of parents and moral judgement in adolescents.

Ho: There is no linear relationship between parental presence and moral judgement in adolescents.

According to the simple linear regression model. This table shows that the correlation coefficient (R), which is of the order of 0.243, demonstrates a positive and significant correlation, as it moves away from the figure 0 and towards the figure 1, and the coefficient of determination R² is of the order of (0.59)=59%. This shows that VI1: 'the presence of parents' explains the VD 'the moral judgement of adolescents' at 59% and the remaining 41% is predicted by factors outside the

model. This means that the relationship between VI1 and VD is significant.

In terms of the change in the statistics, all the values of the simple linear regression test for our research hypothesis were verified. This change in the statistics shows that the variation in R^2 is of the order of $(0.59)=59\%$, which means that the coefficient of determination shows that the VI varies the DV by 59%. The variation of F calculated, which is of the order of 10.804, is greater than the degree of freedom 1.59 (ddl1 is 1 and ddl2 is 59) which is the Flu according to the $F_{cal} > F_{lu}$ rule. We also observe the significance (P) of the variation in F, which is of the order of 0.003 below alpha (0.05). This provisionally predicts that the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

In conclusion, with a margin of error of 5%, HR1 is confirmed. This means that the presence of parents plays a fundamental role in the way adolescents judge things in everyday life. This is why POUSSIN 2004, states that parents must be constantly with adolescents to guide them. In view of all this, we can affirm that there is a relationship between the presence of parents and moral judgement in adolescents.

C. Verification of hypothesis 2

a. Parents' educational style has an impact on adolescents' moral judgement.

b. It should be remembered that our research hypothesis was formulated as follows: parents' educational style has an impact on adolescents' moral judgement.

According to Fisher's F test of significance, the statistical hypotheses are as follows:

a. Ha: there is a linear relationship between parents' educational style and adolescents' moral judgement.

b. H0: there is no linear relationship between parents' educational style and adolescents' moral judgement.

According to the simple linear regression model. This table shows that the coefficient of correlation (R), which is around 0.199, shows a very weak and insignificant positive correlation, as it moves further and further away from the figure 1, and the coefficient

of determination (R^2) is around $0.0040=40\%$. This shows that VI2: 'the educational style exercised by parents has repercussions' explains the VD 'moral judgement' at 40% and the 60% is predicted by factors outside the model. This shows that the relationship between VI2 and VD is weak.

In terms of the change in the statistics, we observed verification of all the values of the simple linear regression test for our research hypothesis. This change in the statistics shows that the variation in R^2 is of the order of $(0.40)=40\%$, which means that the coefficient of determination shows that the VI varies the VD by 40%. The variation in F calculated, which is of the order of 5.490, is greater than the 1.40 degree of freedom (ddl1 is 1 and ddl2 is 40%) which is the Flu according to the $F_{cal} > F_{lu}$ rule. We also observe the significance (P) of the variation in F, which is of the order of 0.003 below alpha (0.05). This provisionally predicts that the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

In conclusion, with a margin of error of 5%, HR2 is confirmed. Consequently, there is a linear relationship between the educational style exercised by parents and moral judgement in adolescents.

D. Verification of research hypothesis 3

a. HR3: Parent-adolescent interactions have an impact on moral judgement in adolescents.

b. Ha: there is a linear relationship between parent/adolescent interactions and moral judgement in adolescents.

c. H0: there is no linear relationship between parent-adolescent interactions and moral judgement in adolescents.

According to the simple linear regression model. The table shows that the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.189 indicates a positive and significant correlation and the coefficient of determination (R^2) is $0.36=3.6\%$. This shows that VI3: 'parent/adolescent interactions' explains the VD: 'moral judgement in adolescents' at 3.6% and the remaining 96.4% is predicted by factors outside the model. This means that the relationship between VI3 and VD is very weak.

With regard to the change in the statistics, all the values of the simple linear regression test for our

research hypothesis were verified. This change in the statistics shows that the variation in R^2 is of the order of $(0.36)=3.6\%$, which means that the coefficient of determination shows that the IV varies the DV by 3.6%. The calculated F variation of 4.919 is greater than the 1.59 degree of freedom (ddl_1 is 1 and ddl_2 is 36) which is the F_{crit} according to the $F_{cal} > F_{crit}$ rule. We also observe the significance (P) of the variation in F, which is of the order of 0.004 below alpha (0.05). This provisionally predicts that the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

Discussion

Does the presence of parent's influence adolescents' moral judgement? This was the research question related to this hypothesis. After analysis and verification of the data from the respondents, it was confirmed with $D(3,399)=8.310$ and $P=0.000$ is less than 0.5. H_0 is therefore rejected and H_a is accepted. This shows that the presence of parents influences adolescents' moral judgement.

In view of the result, 25.6% of adolescents are influenced by the physical presence of their parents, which is in line with the work of Piaget (1969), who asserts that parents have an obligation to be present with adolescents, as this constitutes considerable emotional capital that boosts the adolescent's moral judgement. When parents are physically present with adolescents, the latter tend to adopt responsible behaviour in order to please their parents, as explained in the work of Kohlberg² on moral judgement, who explains that at the conventional stage, adolescents tend to behave better in order to be appreciated by others. In the same vein, Galy in his article 'parental guidance and the emotional development of adolescents in the city of Maroua, Cameroon', believes that it is very important for parents to be present with adolescents in order to supervise them, as this is the most important and most complex stage in their development, and parents must therefore be present to provide guidance. He also explains that teenagers can transfer family behaviour to public places.

Parents 'educational style has an impact on teenagers' judgement. At the end of the data analysis, this hypothesis was confirmed, with $D(3,399)=5.490$ and $P=0.001$ is less than 0.5. H_0 is therefore rejected and H_a is accepted. So adolescents' moral judgement may

depend on the type of educational style practised by their parents. This is in line with the work of Baumrind,⁶ who distinguishes three types for this purpose, namely: The democratic style, the authoritarian style and the permissive style.

The democratic style is characterised by a great deal of affection, communication, supervision and expectations, with fewer constraints on the adolescent. This is what Poussin advocates when he suggests that parents adopt the democratic educational style. In his view, it allows adolescents to express themselves freely on decisions that concern them and the whole family. As a result, 121 adolescents (30%) said that their parents were democratic towards them, which facilitated communication and often made adolescents responsible for the activities they carried out. Along the same lines, Melby and Conger believe that adolescents of parents whose rules are clear and consistently applied are much less likely to be rebellious or delinquent and have high self-esteem. This state of affairs has repercussions on the moral judgement of adolescents, which is why they feel it is normal to respect their parents' decisions, since their decision counts in the life of the family.

The authoritarian style, characterised by a lot of supervision and expectation, but little affection and communication, Thus 92 adolescents, or 22.8%, felt that the authoritarian style influenced their moral judgement, due to the fact that parents impose the rules to be respected, and failure to respect these rules leads directly to sanctions from the moment the decision is made. In the same vein, Rokhaya believes that given that the family in Central and West Africa is mainly patriarchal, the father reigns as absolute master and the mother is only a helper, so adolescents are called upon to accept paternal decisions.

Our hypothesis that the educational style used by parents has an impact on moral judgement in adolescents is confirmed, suggesting that educational style plays a fundamental role in the way adolescents judge things. However, there are other factors that have an impact on moral judgement in adolescents, regardless of the educational style used by parents.

With regard to the sharing of experiences with parents, which can have an impact on adolescents' moral judgement, 25.8% of the 403 adolescents said that

their parents always discussed their experiences with them, which reinforces the logic that parents should always discuss their experiences with adolescents, especially in the context of the city of Maroua, where the transmission of social education is still largely oral. Moreover, the work of Delion⁷ considers that parents and adolescents need to cultivate a field of dialogue to facilitate understanding of society's expectations. The fact that adolescents have the opportunity to discuss their experiences with parents can have an impact on moral judgement, but other factors can have an impact on moral judgement, which is why 50.9% think that they only sometimes discuss their experiences with parents, which may show that they seem to be affected by other factors such as the media. This is also the concern of Cloutier⁸ who believes that the media have a considerable impact on the moral judgement of adolescents, which may be justified by the fact that adolescents consider it normal to copy the models conveyed by the media without measuring the possible consequences. Finally, 23.3% said that they never discuss their experiences with their parents, which may have a negative impact on the moral judgement of adolescents, as they will be tempted to share their experiences with others if their parents are not willing to do so. This, moreover, reinforces the work Cannard⁹ which believes that parents should talk with adolescents. Thus, because of the evolution of the city of Maroua, it seems urgent for parents and adolescents to share experiences. The absence of dialogue to share experiences can lead adolescents to trivialise theft.

Failure to establish interaction between teenagers and their parents may be the cause of the use of psychoactive substances. In fact, 45.4% of the 403 adolescents thought it was normal to use these substances, arguing that their use diluted their worries and helped them overcome the stresses of daily life. This shows that a large proportion of adolescents do not judge things according to community standards. It should also be noted that the use of these substances is the cause of a great deal of damage, such as rape and other anti-social behaviour. Similarly, Boyd and Bee¹⁰ argue that parent/adolescent interactions are moments of learning about community norms. It is understandable that in order for the adolescent to have adequate morals and be able to judge things according to societal norms, parents must prioritise interactions. Interactions therefore have an impact on moral

judgement in adolescents, but there are other factors that have a considerable impact on moral judgement in adolescents.

Conclusion

Our study focused on parenting and moral judgement among adolescents in the city of Maroua. To make this question operational, we used the concepts of Poussin who talks to us, among other things, about the presence of parents with adolescents being a supervisory function, the style exercised by parents to explain how parents must educate adolescents and finally the interactions parents/adolescents to say the need for dialogue with adolescents to better know and educate them. The main question guided us in the formulation of our theoretical hypothesis, which is stated in these terms: 'the exercise of the parental function influences moral judgement in adolescents'.

This research set itself the task of explaining the parental function, advocating parental responsibility in order to enable adolescents to develop an adequate moral code, which they must be educated by their parents in order to facilitate successful social integration. We urge other researchers to explore this field further so that society understands the role of parents in the development of moral judgement.¹¹⁻¹⁸

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Conflict of interests

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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