

THE CONTENT OF THE CONCEPT OF MORAL SELF-AWARENESS

Uchqun Mamanazarov

Oriental University

Department of "Pedagogy and Psychology"

uchqunmamanazarov115@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article explores the content of the concept of moral self-awareness, examining its significance in moral psychology and ethical decision-making. The concept of moral self-awareness encompasses the content of an individual's understanding, reflection, and evaluation of their own moral values, beliefs, and actions. This article provides an overview of the content of moral self-awareness, highlighting its significance in moral psychology and ethical decision-making. Through a multidimensional lens, moral self-awareness involves an understanding of one's moral values, an examination of moral emotions, an assessment of moral reasoning, and an awareness of moral strengths and weaknesses. By exploring the content of moral self-awareness, individuals can develop a heightened sense of moral responsibility, make informed ethical choices, and contribute to personal growth and the advancement of an ethical society.

Keywords: *moral self-awareness, ethics, moral psychology, ethical decision-making, personal growth.*

INTRODUCTION

Moral self-awareness is a fundamental aspect of human consciousness that pertains to an individual's ability to recognize, reflect upon, and evaluate their own moral values, beliefs, and actions. It involves a deep understanding of one's ethical

principles and an ongoing examination of how one's behavior aligns with those principles. This introspective process plays a crucial role in moral psychology and ethical decision-making, as it allows individuals to navigate complex moral dilemmas and make ethically informed choices. The literature suggests that the moral sense is based on innate abilities. In fact, it has been shown that children show the capacity for moral discernment, emotions and prosocial motivations from an early age. However, the moral sense is a complex construct of an evolutionary and social nature that evolves under the influence of interpersonal relationships. The emergence and development of moral sense is a challenge that has prompted many research studies with the aim of achieving a clear comprehension of moral development. However, success has been scarce, and studies relevant to this subject are limited. Thus, a systematic review of studies relevant to this topic was conducted to clearly establish how moral sense emerges and develops.(Limone & Toto, 2022). Several authors suggested that, with age, some abilities decline and others improve (Baltes, 1987; Pascual-Leone, 1993). In psychometric terms, it was supposed that fluid intelligence declines from early adulthood onwards and crystallized intelligence develops until late in age). (Demetriou & Bakracevic, 2009). Life-span cognitive developmental research adds to the picture of development depicted by the psychometric and information processing studies summarized above.

This line of research, in particular, implies that there is a succession of postformal stages of cognitive development that follow the stage of formal operations and reflect the adult's key intellectual attainments. That is, it is said that as a person progresses through these post-formal stages, cognition shifts from a logical examination of the universe, which is the fundamental feature of formal thought, to a largely relativistic and dialectical approach to reality. This shift in orientation enables mature adults to consider various or alternative views, both in regard to different individuals and to one's own developing experience, allowing for a more informed decision-making process.

METHODS

The concept of moral self-awareness is multidimensional and encompasses several key components. Researchers have employed various methods to study and measure moral self-awareness, including self-report questionnaires, interviews, and experimental designs. These approaches aim to capture individuals' awareness of their moral values, moral emotions, moral reasoning, and the recognition of moral strengths and weaknesses.

RESULTS

Research on moral self-awareness has revealed significant findings regarding its content. Firstly, moral self-awareness involves an understanding of one's own moral values and the ability to articulate and defend them. It requires individuals to critically evaluate the origins and justifications for their ethical beliefs, considering factors such as culture, upbringing, and personal experiences.

Secondly, moral self-awareness entails an examination of one's moral emotions and their influence on ethical decision-making. Recognizing and reflecting upon emotions such as guilt, empathy, and moral outrage allows individuals to better understand their moral responses and how they shape their behavior.

Thirdly, moral self-awareness involves an assessment of one's moral reasoning abilities. It requires individuals to reflect on the principles and reasoning processes they employ when faced with moral dilemmas, identifying potential biases, inconsistencies, or contradictions.

Lastly, moral self-awareness encompasses an awareness of one's moral strengths and weaknesses. It involves acknowledging areas where moral improvement is needed and developing strategies to align behavior with personal values. This aspect of moral self-awareness is closely linked to personal growth and ethical development.

DISCUSSION

The content of moral self-awareness has important implications for individuals and society as a whole. By cultivating moral self-awareness, individuals can enhance their ethical decision-making processes. Understanding one's moral values, emotions, reasoning, and areas for improvement enables individuals to make conscious choices that align with their principles and contribute positively to society.

Additionally, moral self-awareness fosters a sense of moral responsibility and accountability. It encourages individuals to take ownership of their actions and consider the ethical implications of their behavior. This heightened awareness can lead to increased empathy, compassion, and social awareness, promoting a more just and ethical society.

Educational institutions, organizations, and policymakers can play a vital role in promoting moral self-awareness. By incorporating ethics education and fostering environments that encourage introspection and reflection, individuals can develop the cognitive and emotional skills necessary for moral self-awareness. Moreover, interventions aimed at enhancing moral self-awareness can have positive effects on ethical decision-making and behavior.

In conclusion, the concept of moral self-awareness encompasses various dimensions, including moral values, emotions, reasoning, and personal growth. By exploring its content, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of their own ethical beliefs and behaviors. Cultivating moral self-awareness has the potential to enhance ethical decision-making, foster personal growth, and contribute to a more ethical and responsible society.

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