

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It cannot be denied that our society today is experiencing spiritual and moral crisis. Drug abuse, drug trafficking, corruption, misappropriation of funds, personal aggrandizements and hedonism are some examples of the societal problems that we face. It is about time that we devote more efforts into finding ways to minimize these problems. Educating our youngsters with proper moral values, for example, may help solve some of these problems.

In the past, moral and values education have been regarded as the responsibility of parents and religious teachers. This was true because prior to the arrival of the British, children were attending Quran schools. In the Quran schools, they learned to recite the quran as well as the religious values. Today, the inculcation of values is left to the parents and teachers and it begins both at home and schools starting from early childhood. Since children today spend most of their waking hours in schools, the role of imparting moral values need to be equally shared by the schools. Dewey (1959) stressed that it was erroneous to attempt to separate values from intellectual development and regarded the school as a moral and value-laden enterprise.

The inculcation of values has all this while been carried out implicitly by our teachers. It is high time that

we look into its teaching in a more explicit manner. The explicit inculcation of values is not an easy task. Teachers need to understand the cognitive and affective complexity of the developing child and provide learning experiences which capitalize upon the availability of value conflicts in students' daily lives (Lambert, 1980).

The education system today is geared towards equipping students with certificates and occupational skills only. Having certificates and university degrees alone is not enough. Neither do we consider a student as a 'total' person if he or she is equipped with occupational skills only. However, our society continues giving emphasis on academic achievement and excellence to the exclusion of other factors contributing to the well-being of young people. It is for this reason perhaps that our Education Minister, Encik Anwar Ibrahim strongly recommends:

Schools should also teach positive values such as discipline and high morals because education is not a mere assimilation of knowledge to enable people to hold positions and power (New Straits Times, 1987).

In view of this recommendation, our education system has been restructured to give due emphasis to the overall development of the individual who will later help contribute to the progress of our religion, race, and nation.

The new structure of our education system is well-explained in the proposed curriculum of the New Integrated Secondary Curriculum (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah, KBSM). The main purpose of formulating the KBSM was to help students increase their overall potentials - intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical, in a comprehensive and integrated manner. According to the Ministry of Education (Curriculum Development Centre, 1989), individuals with comprehensive and wholistic development can play effective and productive roles in the process of national harmony and development. This can be achieved by integrating the four main elements of education, that is, knowledge, skills, values and language.

The inculcation of values in the new curriculum may not be an easy task because it needs greater effort on the part of the teacher to prepare his or her lesson to include values education. In this study, a method called moral dilemmas or values dilemma approach is used to determine if it can be used enhance students' moral values and at the same time improve their academic performance.

Background of the Study

In the light of the importance of values in the overall development of students, the KBSM was formulated in 1980. Its formulation stemmed from the Cabinet Committee Report

which was written in 1979. The Committee studied all aspects of the primary and secondary curriculum implementation. Its main aim was to develop a united, disciplined and trained society. It also gave due emphasis to the problem of ethics or moral education. The Committee has realized that manpower needs should not only depend on quantity, and the types of knowledge and skills students possess, but also on discipline, honesty, dedication, competence, ability to think, responsibility and moral principles of the students (Ministry of Education, 1984).

According to the Ministry of Education (1988), the role of education is two-fold: humanities development; and fulfilling the manpower needs. Humanities development aims at producing a good and noble person who is honest, responsible and patriotic towards the nation. Fulfilling the manpower needs means not only promoting the quantity but also the quality of the manpower. To provide quality manpower, students should be exposed to the value-laden nature of science and technology.

With the new needs of our education system, a revised philosophy of education has to be documented. According to the Curriculum Development Centre (1989), the revised philosophy of education for Malaysia reads:

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort dedicated towards developing the potential of individuals wholistically and in an integrated

manner so that their development, based on belief in God, is intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, competent, possessing high moral standards and are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the society and the nation at large.

This philosophy became the determining factor for the new direction and inspiration in our educational programmes. It emphasizes that the main aim of education in Malaysia is to make a continuous effort towards building a total and integrated development of the individual potential and to create a harmonious and well-balanced citizen. Total development of the individual depends on the development of each of the following aspects: the intellectual, the spiritual, the emotional and the physical aspects (Ministry of Education, 1988)

The development of the students' intellectual aspect includes the gaining of useful knowledge; possession of creative thinking; being innovative; and possession of logical and analytical reasoning. The development of the spiritual and emotional aspects include the strengthening of religious belief, that is, faith in God; internalizing the values and norms of the society; and willingness to render services and sacrifices for the nation. The development of the physical aspect refers to the development and

maintenance of physical fitness and personal health.

The KBSM that has been formulated by the Curriculum Development Centre is giving importance to such overall self-development of the students. It is hoped that knowledge as well as the right moral and ethical values that they possess during their school life will make them ready to face life in our ever-challenging world.

The moral values of any society has its foundation in religion. Every religion in the world has its main aim at producing good moral persons. In Malaysia, the Ethics Education Committee was established in 1976. Its main aim was to study the various values that can be promoted from various religions in the country. The committee recommended sixteen moral values for the students to possess. Such a list is shown in Appendix A.

Many approaches have been identified for inculcating such values into schools. One of the ways is by infusing the values across the curriculum, as part of the subject matter. In the science curriculum, for example, a list of values which could be infused through the teaching of the subject has been identified (Refer to Appendix B). Its underlying theme was "man as the trustee/steward (Khilafah) of the world" (Ministry of Education, 1988, 9). According to Ziauddin Sardar (1983, 7), khilafah is defined as:

the man who has no exclusive right
to anything and who is responsible

for maintaining and preserving the integrity of the abode and his terrestrial journey.

According to this definition, the students need to study science not only to acquire knowledge and skills in science but also to internalize the values that are inherent in the concepts being studied. In other words, science should be able to create harmony between man and man and between man and nature.

There are a number of ways in which values can be inculcated in the classroom. Raths et.al., (1966), for example, quoted several ways in which moral values can be fostered among school children. One of the ways was using the traditional approach such as giving examples either directly or indirectly, presenting arguments and reasons for certain sets of values, setting up rules and regulations and presenting cultural and religious dogma. Other methods include clarifying the values, discussing the values, role-playing, using open-ended questions, decision-making and interviewing.

In this study, a method called moral dilemmas approach was chosen. This method was used to inculcate moral values among Form One students in science lessons. A number of studies have been carried out by various people using the moral dilemmas approach for improving moral values among students, for example, Johnson (1979), Stahl (1979), Hunt

(1981) and Okatahi (1984). Johnson found that reading children's stories and discussion of the moral dilemmas contained in the stories did accelerate the growth of moral values. Stahl used the moral dilemmas approach with junior and senior high school students and found that the students did show a more positive attitude towards good moral. The findings of Stahl were supported by Hunt (1981). Okatahi (1984) also conducted a study using moral dilemma discussions and found that they did enhance the students' moral reasoning ability.

The most frequent way of using the moral dilemmas approach is to present moral dilemma episodes at the end of every lesson followed by small group discussions on moral values. In the moral values discussion, students are exposed to a higher stage of moral reasoning as proposed by Kohlberg (1975). According to Kohlberg, the moral development of individuals has three levels as shown in Table 1 (Science Teacher, 1986). Each level has two stages. The full explanation of each level is provided in Chapter 2.

It is hoped that through the small group discussions on moral values, the students could develop more complex moral reasoning patterns. This can be done by encouraging the students to discuss the reasons for their value choices and positions. It is also hoped that through the discussions, the students could increase their level of moral reasoning.

TABLE 1

Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Development

Level I -- Preconventional (Ages 7-10)

Stage 1 - The individual is mainly motivated to act in a certain way to avoid punishment by some superior power.

Stage 2 - The individual's concern is based on the desire to satisfy his/her own needs and occasionally those of others.

Level II -- Conventional (Ages 10-13)

Stage 3 - Good behavior is that which pleases others. The individual will always act to avoid social or peer disapproval through conforming.

Stage 4 - The individual is motivated by the "norms or unwritten rules of the society". One must show respect for authority.

Level III - Postconventional (Ages 13-adult)

Stage 5 - The individual is sensitive about infringing on the rights of others or violating arbitrary rules made by peers.

Stage 6 - While respecting the values and attitudes of others, the individual relies heavily on his own intellect and values for making his/her personal decisions.

The aim of the present study will be to study whether the above method could be used to promote higher levels of moral values among school children in Malaysia. The moral values of boys and girls will also be investigated to see whether differences exist between them. This is done because most studies using Kohlberg's moral dilemmas revealed controversial findings regarding the achievement of boys and girls on moral values. Gilligan's study on sex differences has accused Kohlberg's stages as being sex biased resulting in girls being placed at a lower stage than boys. This was due to the fact that females are more concerned about welfare, caring and responsibility which is equivalent to Stage Three in Kohlberg's moral reasoning stages (Baumrind, 1986).

The third area of investigation was to study the effects of the moral dilemmas approach on academic performance. This is done to see whether the moral dilemma episodes that are given to the students at the end of the science lessons could have an adverse effect on their academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

There were two groups of students participating in this study, the experimental (EG) and the control groups (CG). Both groups were given the pretest and posttest but only the EG was given the treatment.

More specifically, the questions asked in this study are:

1. Are there differences between the experimental and control groups with regards to their moral reasoning after being exposed to the moral dilemma episodes ?
2. Are there significant increases in the student's level of moral reasoning in any of five areas of moral values (compassion, cleanliness, co-operation, honesty and responsibility) after being exposed to the moral dilemma episodes?
3. Are there differences between boys and girls with regards to their moral values after being exposed to the moral dilemma episodes?
4. Do students perform better academically after being exposed to the moral dilemma episodes?

Hypotheses to be tested

The above questions were answered by testing the following null hypotheses :

1. There is no significant difference between students who have been exposed to the moral dilemma episodes and those who have not with regards to their moral reasoning
2. There is no significant difference in the students' level of moral reasoning in any one of the moral value

areas after being exposed to the moral dilemma episodes.

3. There is no significant difference between boys and girls who have been exposed to the moral dilemma episodes with regards to their moral values.
4. There is no significant difference between students who have been exposed to the moral dilemma episodes and those who have not with regards to their academic performance.

Significance of the study

In the KBSM, emphasis has been placed on the incorporation of values into the content areas of school subjects. One approach to incorporating the values into the content areas involves the presentation of moral dilemma episodes at the end of every lesson followed by a discussion of the dilemma concerned. Kohlberg (1975) used the moral dilemma approach to help increase the students levels of moral reasoning and moral judgment.

The main reason to carry out this study was to find out the suitability of using moral dilemma episodes as a method to promote students' moral values in science lessons. If the investigation revealed favourable results, then it could be suggested that:

1. Our science teachers should use this method as one.

- approach to the teaching of values in their science lessons.
2. Pre- and in-service courses should train teachers on how to use this approach and on how to write their own moral dilemma episodes.
 3. Textbook writers may include examples of moral dilemma episodes in science textbooks.
 4. Other subject teachers may also use this method. When combined with the science teachers, the method can help students get an overall picture of the values that need be inculcated in the new curriculum.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted with an awareness that certain limitations were inherent in the design. These limitations include:

1. The population inferred in the study was all Form One students studying in co-educational schools in Wilayah Persekutuan. There are about thirty co-educational schools in Wilayah Persekutuan and the sample was chosen based on the willingness of the teachers to take part in the study. It would have been better if all the teachers had undergone KBSM in-service courses but only two of them had.
2. Due to administrative problems, it was not possible to break the classes into randomly selected experimental

- and control groups. Existing classes were used for both the control and experimental groups.
3. The Moral Values Questionnaire (MVQ) covers only five areas of moral values that were emphasized in the first topic of the Form One Specification of syllabus for science. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to cover all moral values recommended by the Ministry.
 4. The items in the Science Achievement Test (SAT) cover only three areas of the cognitive domain. The findings cannot be generalized to cover all levels of cognitive domain as suggested by Bloom.
 5. The number of samples decreased slightly immediately after the pretest was given because many of the students were transferred to better schools.
 6. Some of the students managed to obtain high marks in both the SAT and MVQ. High marks in the SAT could be due to the fact that they have attended tuition classes. High marks in the MVQ could be due to the fact that that they have had good moral upbringing.
 7. The teachers had planned to teach the relevant chapter for about nine to ten weeks but could not finish it on time because of public holidays and their involvement in co-curricular activities.
 8. There were a few students in the experimental group whose medium of instruction in the primary schools had been either in Mandarin or Tamil. This group of

students had an additional year (Remove Class) to study before entering Form One. These students were found to have difficulty in understanding the moral dilemma episodes which were written in Bahasa Malaysia.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used :

Moral Dilemma

Moral dilemma refers to conflicting moral issues in which an individual is forced to make a decision. In the study, moral dilemma episodes were used with small group discussions at the end of which each student had to make a decision as to what the character in the story should do in conflicting situations. The aim was to help students develop more complex moral reasoning patterns based on higher set of values. The students were urged to discuss the reasons for their value choices and positions, not merely to share with others, but to foster change in the stages of reasoning.

Moral Values

Moral values refer to the scores of individual students on the Moral Values Questionnaire (MVQ) which were given to the students before and after treatment. The treatment was in the form of moral dilemma episodes which were presented to the students at the end of their science lessons. Five areas of moral values were used in this study. They were taken

from the list of sixteen moral values recommended by KBSM and the list of values stated in the KBSM science syllabus. The values chosen are compassion, honesty, cleanliness, co-operation and responsibility. Only five values were chosen because they were the only ones relevant to the content being studied in the first topic of the Form One Specification of syllabus for science, that is, 'Introduction to Science'. Refer to Appendix C.

Compassion

Compassion refers to the act of being sincerely concerned for the feelings and welfare of others. A compassionate person is one who is sympathetic and generous.

Honesty

Honesty refers to the act of not lying, cheating or stealing. An honest person is one who is trustworthy and sincere.

Cleanliness

Cleanliness refers to physical cleanliness, that is, the act of being concerned for one's personal hygiene and one's surroundings.

Co-operation

Co-operation refers to the act of making joint efforts with others for the benefit of all. A cooperative person is one who does something without reward and shows tolerance for others.

Responsibility

Responsibility refers to the act of doing a duty or fulfilling obligations, burden or trust.

Inculcation of Values

Throughout the study, the phrase 'inculcation of values' rather than 'teaching of values' was used. The phrase refers to the act of continually reinforcing certain qualities that are acceptable by the society to the students. In this study, the method used to inculcate the values to the students is called moral dilemmas. (See moral dilemma)

Academic Performance

The academic performance of the students is defined as the scores of individual students on the science achievement test on the topic 'Introduction to Science'. The test was administered before and at the end of the teaching-learning of the above topic. The items that were included in the test were categorized under three levels of Bloom's cognitive domain : knowledge, comprehension and application.

Knowledge

Knowledge refers to the academic performance which emphasizes remembering; for example, the students could recognize or recall ideas, materials or phenomena taught in the instruction.

Comprehension

Comprehension refers to the academic performance which emphasizes understanding, that is, student's ability to use ideas, rules, procedures, principles and theories to solve problems that are familiar to them.

Application

Application refers to the academic performance which emphasizes student's ability to use ideas, rules, procedures, principles and theories to solve problems that are not familiar to them.

Experimental group

Experimental group refers to the group of students who were exposed to the moral dilemma episodes at the end of their science lessons. This group was given the pretest and the posttest using the Moral Values Questionnaire (MVQ) and the Science Achievement Test (SAT).

Control Group

Control group refers to the group of students who were given the same science lessons as the experimental group but they were not given the moral dilemma episodes at the end of the lesson. This group was also administered the pretest and posttest.