



## Promoting Instruction of Knowledge and Morality Subject in Institution of Higher Education

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### Abstract

This research had the objectives to study the scope of contents of Knowledge and Morality subject; the instructional models; and the achievement evaluation of learning outcomes in the aspect of learners' profession. It was the qualitative research. Data collection were through the analysis of various documents relating to morality-ethics in the context of institutions of Higher Education and through the in-depth interview of the sixteen key informants consisting of the institutional executives, instructors of Knowledge and Morality subject, and academicians. Data was analyzed and descriptively presented. Research findings were as follows: Scope of contents of Knowledge and Morality subject accommodated the fundamental concepts, definition, importance, components, and values in subsistence with the social conscientiousness, including the morality-ethics related activities. Such scopes of content were well in accordance with the learning outcomes the Higher Education Commission had determined. Regarding instructional models, it could be designed to be (1) Cognitive-oriented, ; (2) Participatory-oriented, (3) Psychomotor-oriented, (4) Integrated learning to assimilate morality-ethics as the intervention with the multidisciplinary sciences. All of these instructional designs were regarded as the new paradigm of promoting the instruction of Knowledge and Morality Subject in institution of Higher Education in the age of Education 4.0.

**Keywords :** Promoting Instruction, Knowledge and Morality, Subject ,Higher Education

### Introduction

The fundamental base to develop the qualified people in the knowledge-based society is through education because education help build up the civilized wisdom and human conscientiousness; implant the consciousness of having knowledge to be accompanied with the virtues/morality to subsist their lives happily; and develop the civic citizen to be competent in their profession to earn their living and family. The fundamental virtues to earn a living are honesty, diligence, patience, justice, and accountability. Their professions possessing both knowledge and virtues/morality would result in their pride and dignity and



sustainable career achievement (Bandura, 1971; Ministry of Education, Office of the Education Council, 2017).

Speeches of His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama 9) on April 5, 1976 regarding the issue of knowledge and virtues/morality was stated that “doing an accomplished job for general interest fairly required not only the knowledge, but also the honesty, sincerity, and integrity. He gave the underlying analogy to compare the knowledge as the car engine which solely enables the automobile to move. He also compared the virtues/morality as the steering wheel/rudder which enables the automobile to go to the destination with right direction and safety”. Therefore, the aspect of virtues/morality would be vividly important to bring the peaceful development to the society (as cited in Khammani T., 2003, p. 52)

Providing education corresponding to knowledge-based society needs to develop learners in all dimensions holistically. The main functions of education, according to National Education Act, B.E.2542, are to develop the learners to be “knowledgeable”, “moral/ethical”, and “happy”. And the aim of providing education of such Act in article 2, section 6 was stated that “education must be provided to Thai people to completely develop them in all aspects of body, heart, intellectual ability, knowledge, virtues/morality, and subsistent culture, so that they could live with others happily and peacefully”. Similarly, in article 4, section 23 also emphasized the appropriate combination of virtues/morality, learning processes, and the integration to suit the learners in each educational level. Virtues/ morality would be used as the interventional tools for all educational levels and curriculums of both state and private institution of higher education (Ministry of Education, Office of the Education Council, 2017, pp. 79-83).

At present time, employers pay special attention to the qualification of job applicant which are not just only the competency. The other attributes which have the equivalent or much more values are the honesty, diligence, patience, self-disciplines, social skills to live with others peacefully, and generosity. The aforementioned attributes are the detailed-oriented characteristic of virtues/morality. Graduates from the institutions of higher education should have the combination of knowledge, competency, and virtues/morality in order to let the mutual benefits of both the employers (in terms of acquiring the qualified workers) and workers (in terms of job achievement, pride and dignity). The research reports of “the employers’ satisfaction for graduate students” from many institutions of higher education could be empirically evidenced. Some university has proclaimed their university identity to apparently reflect the philosophy of virtues/morality, for example, Ramkhamhaeng University. Ramkhamhaeng University, as an open-admissions university, is Thailand’s largest public university. Ramkhamhaeng University has formulated the university identity as “Create the Graduates with Knowledge and Virtues/Morality”.

The hard attempts to actualize what is highly abstract from the university identity into the actual practices has been successfully accomplished. The survey results of the National Statistical Office, in cooperation



with the Office of the public Sector Development Commission (OPDC), has shown the employers' satisfaction for graduate students from Ramkhamhaeng University (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension, in the aspect of Quality) for the fiscal year 2012 in that the employers had been satisfied with the graduate students at the average score of 4.3480 (accounted for 86.96%) where this score was equivalent to the full 5.0000 score according to OPDC score criteria, by which the employers had placed the satisfaction at the highest level of 4.5977 (accounted for 91.95%) in the aspect of virtues/morality/professional code of conduct, followed by the satisfaction in the aspect of the academic competency and the principle knowledge, respectively. From those results, it could be concluded that university graduates who were qualified in both competency and virtues/morality attributes would receive the greater job opportunity and most satisfaction from the employers. Such favorable outcomes could be strongly proclaimed to have the positive relationship with the containment of subject: Knowledge and Morality: non-credit subject) in every educational level (bachelor, master, doctoral degree) of Ramkhamhaeng University (Delight "Employees" Had Been Satisfied Graduates from Ramkhamhaeng University who have Knowledge with Morality, 2013).

Although the Ministry of Education had been giving the significance to the virtues/morality development in the institution of higher education, the success of the learning and teaching management to correspond to such development had been limited at some degrees. The main causes stemmed from the inefficient implementation of the virtues and morality curriculum, the inconsistency of learning objectives and course specification, the insufficient alliance and networks regarding virtues and morality, limited knowledge and skills of instructors in virtues and morality concepts, lack of the integration of virtues and morality issue with other multidisciplinary subjects, and the not-up-to-date/not interesting contents of virtues and morality (Junbunjong C., 1998, p. 23).

Nowadays, society have to never-ever encounter with crisis of ethical problems/dilemma such as organ transplantation, illegal abortion, same-sex marriage, Physician-assisted suicide (mercy killing), human cloning, cyber-crime, etc. Therefore, education need to aim at revising or shifting paradigm of perceiving, analyzing, criticizing, evaluating the ethical problems/dilemma urgently to attain the learning achievement and outcomes according to the predetermined learning objectives which are the scope of study the researcher got interested to conduct this research.

### **Research of Objective**

1. To study the scope of contents of Knowledge and Morality subject
2. To study the instructional models
3. To study the achievement evaluation of learning outcomes in the aspect of learners' profession.



## Literature Review

### Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1948) first published his theory of child development and he also proposed his own theory about children's moral development. Piaget recognized that cognitive development is closely tied to moral development and was particularly interested in the way children's thoughts about morality changed over time. According to Piaget, youth develop the morality of cooperation, at the age of 10 years or older. As youth develop a morality of cooperation they realize that in order to create a cooperative society people must work together to decide what is acceptable, and what is not. Piaget believed that youth at this age begin to understand that morals represent social agreements between people and are intended to promote the common good. Furthermore, youth begin to understand the reciprocal benefit of moral decision-making; i.e., a moral decision creates the optimal solution for everyone involved, even when only two people are affected.

By middle adolescence youth expand their understanding of fairness to include ideal reciprocity. Ideal reciprocity refers to a type of fairness beyond simple reciprocity and includes a consideration of another person's best interests. According to Piaget, once ideal reciprocity has been reached moral development has been completed. Piaget also under-estimated the age at which children are able to take into account another person's moral intention. Piaget believed that this ability did not develop until late childhood, or early adolescence. Unlike Piaget's earlier theories, Kohlberg's theory of moral development has generally been supported by contemporary research.

### Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Although Kohlberg's stages of moral development were not direct parallels of Piaget's stages of cognitive development, Kohlberg was inspired by Piaget's work. By examining these two theories of development side by side, it is possible to get a sense of how our concepts of the world around us (our descriptive concepts) influence our sense of what we ought to do in that world (our normative concepts).

According to Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, there are 6 stages of moral development, separated into 3 levels: Pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. At the pre-conventional level, children are only interested in securing their own benefit. This is their idea of morality. They begin by avoiding punishment, and quickly learn that they may secure other benefits by pleasing others. No other ethical concepts are available to children this young. This Kohlberg's stage is a parallel of Piaget's sensorimotor stage—for a child whose conceptual framework does not extend beyond their own senses and movements, the moral concepts of right and wrong would be difficult to develop. According to Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, the conventional level is the stage at which children learn about rules and authority. They learn that there are certain "conventions" that govern how they should and should not behave, and learn to obey them. At this stage, no distinction is drawn between moral



principles and legal principles. What is right is what is handed down by authority, and disobeying the rules is always by definition “bad.” This level is split into two stages: First stage: Children are interested in pleasing others and securing the favor of others. Second stage: Children extend the principle to cover the whole of their society, believing that morality is what keeps the social order intact. Kohlberg believed that many people stay in this stage of moral reasoning for their whole lives, deriving moral principles from social or religious authority figures and never thinking about morality for themselves. At the post-conventional level, children have learned that there is a difference between what is right and wrong from a moral perspective, and what is right and wrong according to the rules. Although they often overlap, there are still times when breaking a rule is the right thing to do. Post-conventional moral principles are either utilitarian principles of mutual benefit (closely related to the “social order” stage, but universal and non-authoritarian in nature) (Kohlberg, 1975, 1976)

Panyaphalo P. (Phosri) (2011) studied Impacted factors toward virtue and ethics of students at Siam Technology College in Bangkok Yai District Bangkok.

The results of research were found that: Internal factor The kindness: Students have the characteristic of being a compassionate sympathy when a friend was suffering and forgiveness. The honest: Students have the honest and sincere to friend, attend regularly. This is important honest with yourself. The orderliness: Students are highly orderliness, follow the rules of the college, do not talk on the phone and do not sleep while studies. External factor The families of students: Students focus on the warmth of the family, solve problem and together in the family. College: The teacher should be punished them when students make mistakes. Social surrounding: Community does not has help the students to have a moral and ethical growth and Students imitate celebrities. Religious: Students believe that Religion can purify their minds of the people to happy and apply the teachings in their lives

Sriplung P. and Hoksawan P. (2015) conducted A study for developing ethics of students through the use of Metacognition. The results were found that ethics could be developed through managing the students' ethical development conditions that were appropriate to the students' age. Thus, ethics were comparable to metacognition of meaningful learning which was suitable and directly affects students in their age. Because of their proper age of being able to understand abstract things, ponder, realize the consequence of action and see the importance of visible and ethical self-practice, the students' practice is done comprehensibly leading to having their behavior in organizing a thinking system, having their self-behavior controlling and directing to be an ethical person, knowing how to behave themselves as well as adjust their own behavior, and developing their ethical characteristics which are the qualities of being a perfect person and the desirable skills needed by the twenty-first century academia to be permanent.



## Research Methodology

It was the qualitative research. Data collection were through the analysis of various documents relating to morality-ethics in the context of institutions of Higher Education and through the in-depth interview of the sixteen key informants consisting of the institutional executives, instructors of Knowledge and Morality subject, and academicians. Data was analyzed and descriptively presented.

## Result of Research

Research findings were as follows: Regarding the scope of contents, Knowledge and Morality subject accommodated the fundamental concepts, definition, importance, components, and values in subsistence with the social conscientiousness, including the morality-ethics related activities. Such scopes of content were well in accordance with the learning outcomes the Higher Education Commission had determined.

Regarding instructional models, it could be designed to be (1) Cognitive-oriented, i.e. the group discussion learning, projected- based learning, integrated learning, 4 MAT learning approach; (2) Participatory-oriented, i.e. participatory learning, learning by group process (or group dynamics), collaborative learning; (3) Psychomotor-oriented, i.e. instructions relating to model, affective-domain learning, case study, role play, and simulation; (4) Integrated learning to assimilate morality-ethics as the intervention with the multidisciplinary sciences.

Regarding the authentic evaluation of learning outcomes, it was found the difficulties because the morality-ethics was naturally and highly abstract. The measurement could not be just limited through the written examination only. The wide variety of pre-learning, formative and summative measurements with the continuity should be adopted and implemented to evaluated the achievement of learning outcomes compared with the learning objectives predetermined. The aforementioned evaluation took quite a lot of time and didn't limit to the context of classroom only. Therefore, employers' satisfaction and expectations on the overall performance of graduates would be another critical and authentic indicator as well.

Measurement tool to evaluate the learning outcomes of virtues/morality were virtues/morality test. To reasonably assure the validity and reliability of such evaluation, the behavioral observation and the data collection from the intimated persons should be adopted. However, the pattern of learning and teaching in the university didn't contribute to such nature. Therefore, the evaluation of the virtues/morality learning outcomes in the university normally were limited through the use of Test and student's self-report/portfolio. To reduce the deviation/measurement error from reviewing the students' self-report/portfolio, instructors should design the self-report into 2 patterns (i.e. patterns which were based on Harter's and Likert's concepts) in order to reciprocally check the data validity.



## Discussion of Research Results

In order to let the measurement and evaluation of virtues/morality learning outcomes be completely effective, three domains of learning which are Cognitive (or intellectual skill), Affective (emotion/feeling/thought/values/belief) and Psychomotor (skill, expertise, fluency) should be accommodated. Mostly, instructors had measured only the Cognitive domain. The other two domains might face some difficulties of measurement techniques to evaluation the learning outcomes. The measuring (1) the aspect of virtues/morality “Knowledge” could be done through the six major categories of cognitive domains: Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The measuring (2) the aspect of virtues/morality could be done through the five major categories of affective domains: Receiving phenomena, responds to phenomena, valuing, organizing, and internalized values (or characterization). The measuring (3) the aspect of virtues/morality of “Reasoning” could adopt the Kohlberg theory of “Moral Reasoning”. And the measuring (4) the aspect of virtues/morality “Behaviors” could apply the measurement tools of observation records. Each aspect could be weighted by instructors’ team according to its perceived importance. Instructors should construct criteria/norms to evaluate the virtues/morality so that the achievement scores of 4 categories of virtues/morality “Knowledge/Attitude/Reasoning /Behavior” would be combined and compared with the criteria/norms to enable judging the categories of learners whether they possessed the virtues/morality level in which levels of very high, high, moderate, low, and very low. Ellemer N., Toorn J.V., Paunov Y., and Leeuwen T.V.(2019)sad We review empirical research on (social) psychology of morality to identify which issues and relations are well documented by existing data and which areas of inquiry are in need of further empirical evidence. An electronic literature search yielded a total of 1,278 relevant research articles published from 1940 through 2017. These were subjected to expert content analysis and standardized bibliometric analysis to classify research questions and relate these to (trends in) empirical approaches that characterize research on morality. We categorize the research questions addressed in this literature into five different themes and consider how empirical approaches within each of these themes have addressed psychological antecedents and implications of moral behavior. We conclude that some key features of theoretical questions relating to human morality are not systematically captured in empirical research and are in need of further investigation.

In addition, instructors should construct the operational definitions and determine “Behavioral Anchored Rating Scales” for the desired behaviors to support the validity and reliability measurement. The wide variety and combination of the measurements tools for evaluating of virtues/morality learning outcomes should be used with the continuity.

## Suggestion and Recommendation



Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (Phra Thammakosachan) was a famous and influential Thai ascetic-philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He mentioned his point of view as recommendation that education would cover 3 parts which were (1) multidisciplinary learning (2) vocational learning and (3) virtue/morality learning. Nowadays, however, virtue/morality learning is unfortunately missing, like a fox without a tail. He pointed out that the promotion of virtue/morality in educational institutes had been initiated and attempted for a long time, however, it isn't successful at a significant degree. He analyzed and pointed out the cause of such problem that is because the educational institutes push the virtue/morality subjects, instead of the real life, as the major output. And this characteristic reflects the world educational problems. Wijit Srisa-arn, a former Thai politician and was appointed Minister of Education in 2006 by a military junta following a successful military coup, mentioned that if instructors brought virtues/morality to be contained as subjects, virtues/morality wouldn't be occurred because virtues/morality was not a subject. On the other hand, Virtues/morality was a way of lives which should be implemented it into the actual practices to exploit its benefits. He further mentioned that the fundamental base of virtues/morality learning was "culture". Educational institutions must associate themselves with the community to welcome the cultural base. Learner's family/his community were the most important instructors along the learner's live long learning.

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