UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ASSESSING MORAL REASONING AND MORAL JUDGEMENT

AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VIOLATING

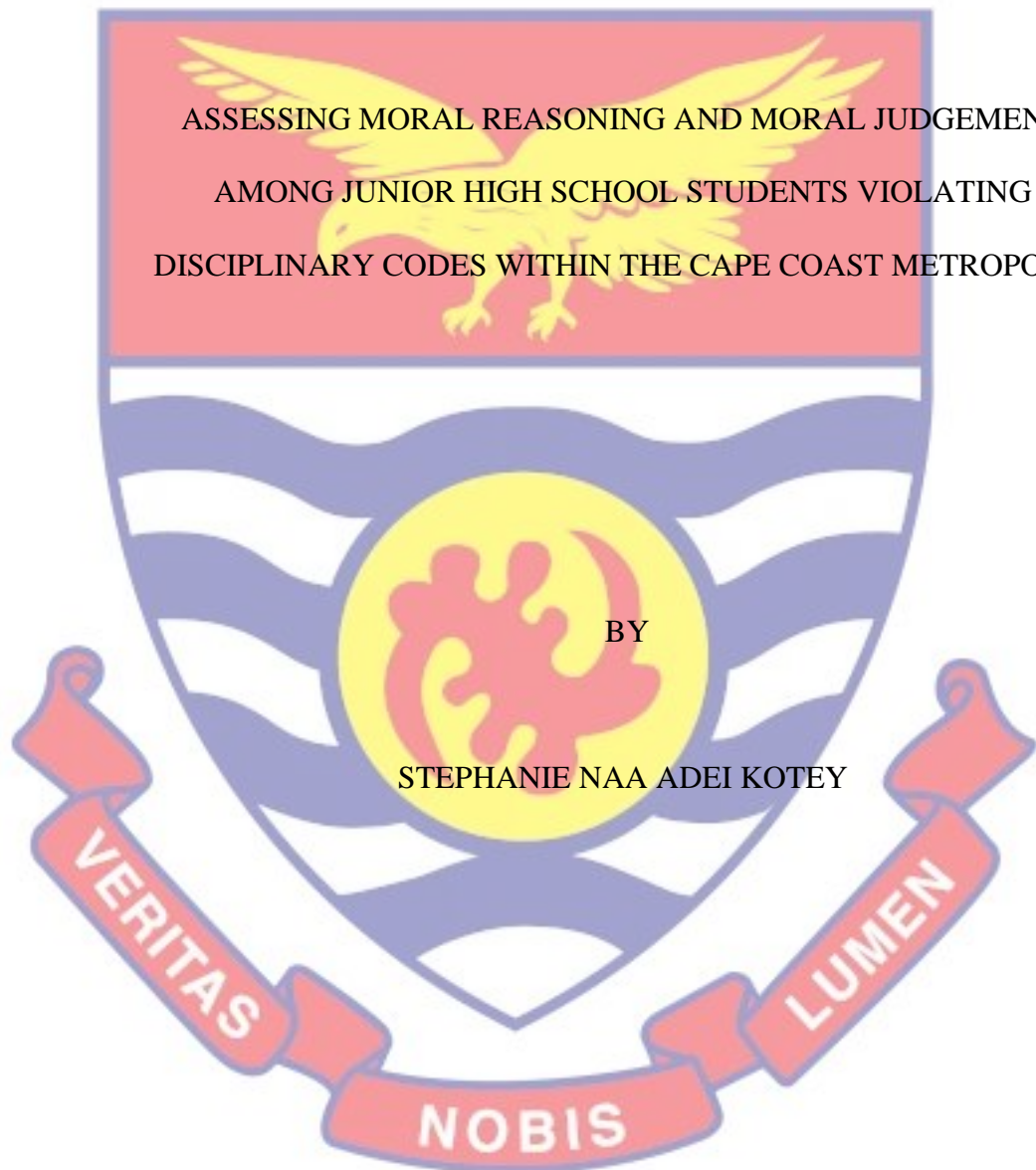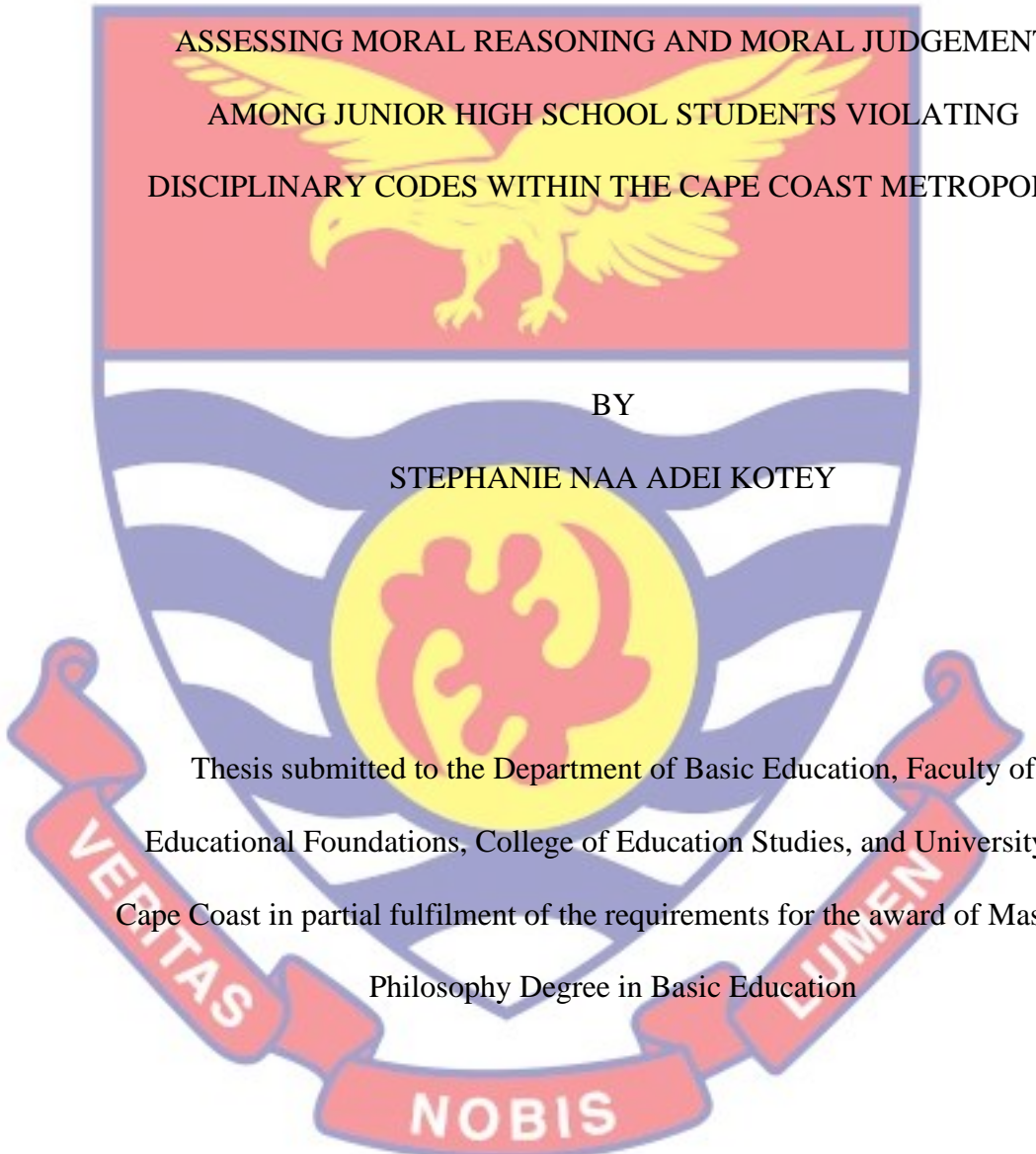DISCIPLINARY CODES WITHIN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS

BY

STEPHANIE NAA ADEI KOTEY

2021

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ASSESSING MORAL REASONING AND MORAL JUDGEMENT

AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VIOLATING

DISCIPLINARY CODES WITHIN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS

BY

STEPHANIE NAA ADEI KOTEY

Thesis submitted to the Department of Basic Education, Faculty of

Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, and University of

Cape Coast in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of

Philosophy Degree in Basic Education

NOVEMBER 2021

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of this work has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

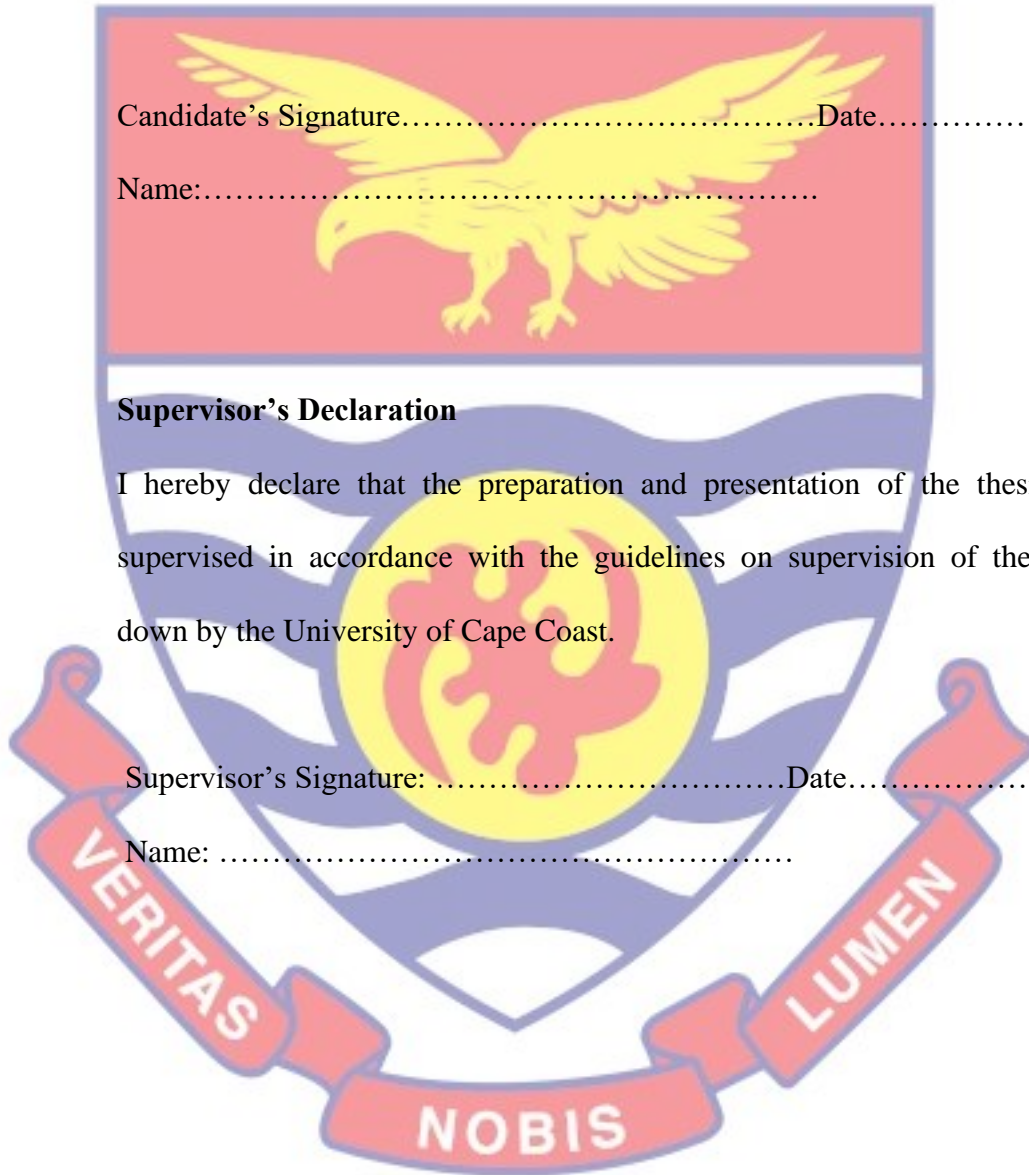Candidate's Signature…………………………………Date…………………....

Name:………………………………………………….

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: …………………………Date……………………...

Name: ……………………………………………

ABSTRACT

Violation of disciplinary codes, which is an inappropriate behaviour or immoral act, has become the order of the day among the youth in today's century, and such behaviour is destroying the moral fibres of society and the country as a whole. Hence, the purpose of this study was to determine moral reasoning and moral judgement among junior high school students violating disciplinary codes within Cape Coast metropolis. The study employed the ex-post facto design and also used the quantitative approach for the study. Also, 400 students from ten (10) public junior high schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis were selected to respond to the self-administered questionnaire which was the measuring tool for the study. The data were analysed using the descriptive statistical tools (frequency and percentages) and the independent t-test was used with the help of SPSS version 26.0. In the findings, the researcher found out that students who tend to violate disciplinary codes in schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis were said to have moderate levels of moral reasoning and moral judgement. Thus, they were identified to be within the category of the heteronomous stage of moral reasoning and the conventional stage of moral development. Therefore, the study recommends that teachers should help students better learn and understand that to be able to arrive at a well-informed decision, it would be very important to consider The Four Component Model developed by Rest in moral decision-making to avoid violating laid down disciplinary codes of an institution.

KEY WORDS
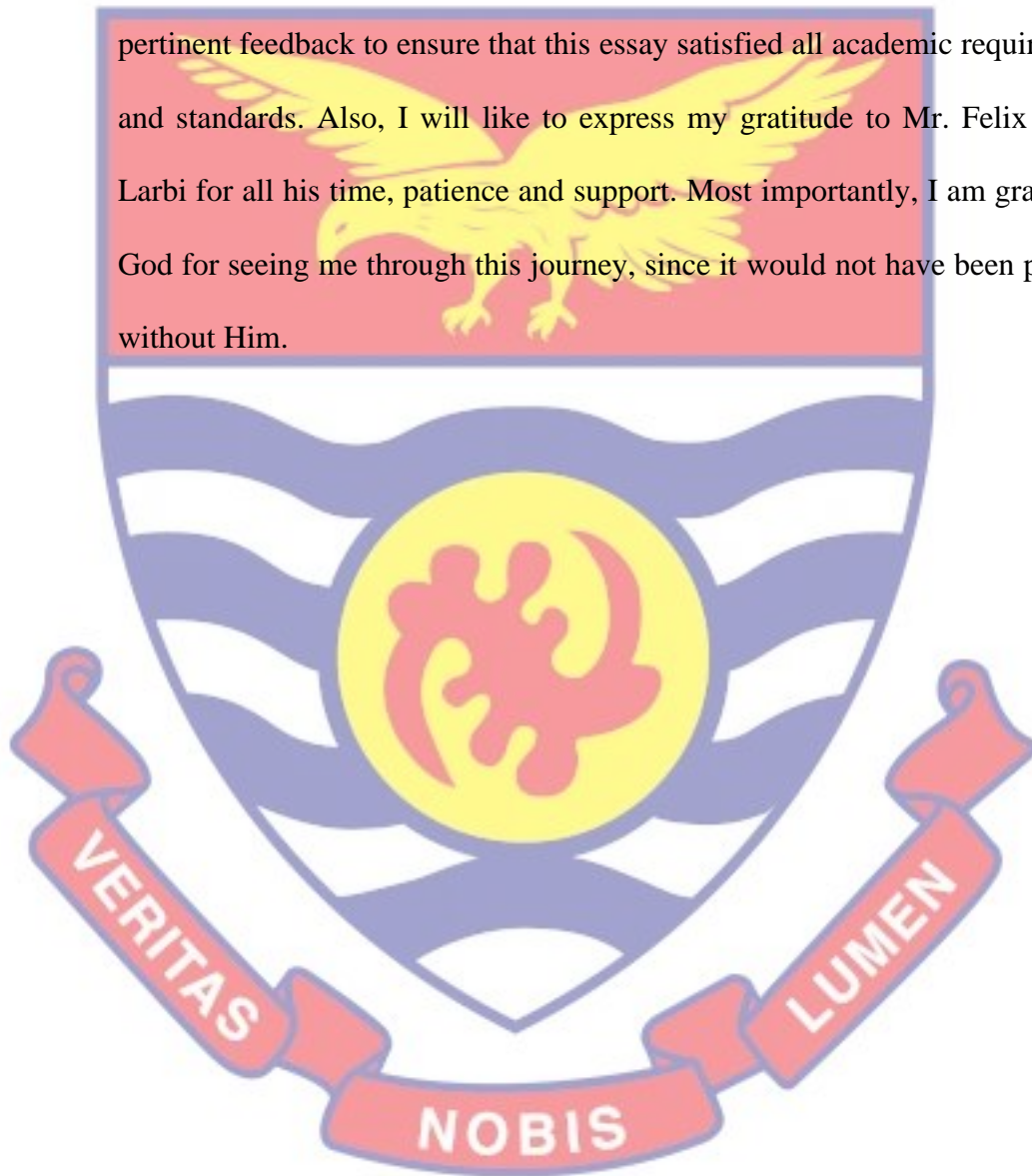
Morality

Moral Reasoning

Moral Judgement

Disciplinary codes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all who have been instrumental in my undertaking this research. My heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Thompson Mumuni, for his direction, support, and advice throughout this project. He was quite prompt in responding to my write-ups and providing pertinent feedback to ensure that this essay satisfied all academic requirements and standards. Also, I will like to express my gratitude to Mr. Felix Asante Larbi for all his time, patience and support. Most importantly, I am grateful to God for seeing me through this journey, since it would not have been possible without Him.

DEDICATION

To my entire family and friend s who helped me in the work.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

JHS   Junior High School

SHS   Senior High School

VDN   Violators of Disciplinary Codes

NVDN   Non- Violators of Disciplinary Codes

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Koekemoer (2017), states that 'all men are moral and no man can be without a moral context, thus no man can be truly immoral' (p.37). This is to say that all humans inherently have a bit of the ability to determine between right and wrong as well as live in a society that helps them develop morally. Hence, there is no man entirely born immoral, for their morals tend to be twisted if their values contradict those of society. Koekemoer continues to argue that some morals are universally accepted and an example of such a morality includes killing, which is said to be wrong. Furthermore, it can also be said that killing is subjective based on the culture of a particular society. For example, certain cultures believe that the killing of witches is a good act.

Morality is a very complicated entity and for one to be able to understand it as well as to judge an act as right or wrong; one must take into account one's upbringing, parental behaviour, peers, and the sort of community in which we grew up and lived, as well as any other similar factors. This is because an act in a particular locality might be seen as appropriate while an act in another locality might be considered inappropriate and vice versa (Gogo, 2020). Hence, morality refers to a compliance framework with principles of correct or wrongdoing. The term morality encompasses notions such as moral values as they relate to behaviour, moral obligations as they relate to our principles, and moral identities, or those who are proficient in acting appropriately or incorrectly. Since each society has stipulated norms, universally stated norms, and the individual's values and

1

principles to adhere to, but because our societies are unique in terms of their beliefs, customs, and traditions, when faced with a moral dilemma, it becomes difficult to make the right moral decision (Gbedey, 2018).

According to Quaye (2020), the youth worldwide are precious assets in terms of the significant impact they have on their communities' economic and social growth of the country. Currently, however, there have been issues raised over the high rate of indiscipline among the youth who are said to be the future leaders of the country. In support of the above assertion made by Quaye (2020), the youth of today's century appear to be morally bankrupt, which has caused a great intensity of deterioration of moral, social, and educational values in society (Chima, 2010; Nkechi, 2016). Such moral bankruptcy, as purported by Sule and Shettima (2018), ranges from examination malpractice, violence, theft, corruption, sexual promiscuity, social abuse, insubordination, disregard for the existing authorities and rules.

In the same vein, Ofori, Tordzro, and Achiaa (2018) argued that there are increasing instances of apparent deterioration of our moral fibres affecting the universe and, in particular, Ghanaians. Ofori *et al.* (2018), continued to explain that in the 2002 Independence speech to school children and the country as a whole, His Excellency Aliu Mahama, former Vice President of Ghana, declared that the rate at which indiscipline was growing was very alarming and it had become a threat to the peaceful coexistence of Ghanaians. He further asserted, "Today, intolerance, impatience, violence and fruits of indiscipline are seen in all facets of the country, including students at Junior High School" (Daily Graphic, 7th March, 2002, pg3) as cited by (Ofori *et al.*, 2018). A study by the Culture and Media Institute, as stipulated by Basome

and Vencie (2018), estimated that about 74% of Americans see the nation as being in deep moral trouble, and they attribute this to the entertainment and media industries playing a major role. Also, a report in New Vision (Thursday 15th February 2006) as cited by Basome and Vencie (2018) suggested that many schools in Uganda have been said to be ravaged by vices such as teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, homosexuality, and inappropriate dressing, to mention but a few. For example, Iganga, a district located in Uganda, is noted for being the cause of moral decay in the country, and this can be proven by the deliberate disclosure of examination misconduct in various sections of the country in 2017 which began in Iganga District (The Observer, November 1st, 2017) as cited by (Basome & Vencie , 2018).

Again in Ghana, research studies by Adjei, Britwum, Britwum, & Nyamekye (2020), have revealed that there is a rise in sexual intercourse among students in junior high schools (JHS) within the basic schools. In addition, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and World Health Organization (WHO) undertook a comprehensive study in 2003 as cited by Adjei et al., (2020) on the drug abuse by junior high school students and examples of such medications used include heroin, weed, tobacco, etc. Based on the above assertions, all these forms of immoral acts such as violations of disciplinary codes, riots, occultism, drinking, and so on are common among students, especially from elementary to university, and it can be concluded that moral decadence is now very rampant among the young, and hence this phenomenon must be given immediate attention.

Violation of disciplinary codes, which is an example of an immoral act, is now the norm among most students. It appears that traditionally,

grandparents, aunts and mothers socialized children as they were warned about social norms and standards as well as the implications of breaches of these requirements. Today, the internet is said to have a significant impact on influencing the behaviour of the current generation, which tends to cause more harm than good (Atenya & Wekesa 2020). Accordingly, schools are faced with destructive and punitive actions such as breaching of the laws, obstruction and theft of school properties, resistance, fighting and vandalism. Ofori et al. (2018) also claim that basic schools today have contempt for authority, report late to school, fight among themselves, fail to do their assignments and are fond of wearing inappropriate dresses. Some of the students go to the degree of destroying school properties and attacking teachers for punishing them.

Again, pre-marital sex, drug abuse, and drunkenness are stated to be prevalent in Ghana among basic schools (Asare & Twene, 2003; Ofori et al., 2018). Hence, school rules and regulations, or disciplinary codes, are established processes to help manage, regulate, and impede such aggressive attitudes of students to create a conducive atmosphere for learning (Atenya & Wekesa, 2020). In light of the above assertion made by Atenya and Wekesa (2020), it appears that these students tend to violate disciplinary codes, especially when they realise that their needs or interests are not in agreement with those of societal and moral values, so when they happen to be in an event of a conflict situation, they make decisions based on their moral judgement.

Moral judgement is said not to be contingent on only norms that are socially agreed upon but must also be influenced by individuals' perceptions of human welfare and just treatment shape their behaviours. This time, however,

4

during the socialization process, children do not easily receive what is being said passively, but just like adults, they tend to actively interpret and reflect upon what is being said, and by so doing, they either choose to accept what is being said, doubt, question or even reject it (Neff & Helwig, 2002; Wainryb, 2006; Thornberg 2010). Also, from the perspective of cognitive theory, Thornberg (2010) explains that it is as a consequence of the relationship between individuals and the environment that cognitive frameworks are formed and structured inside the confines of fundamental categories, or what are referred to as domains. On this basis, the theory states that children develop their social awareness in three areas; the moral domain (interpersonal relationships), the conventional domain (societal norms), and the personal domain (personal needs).

Furthermore, Thomberg (2010) explains that students tend to discriminate between the moral domain and that of the conventional domain by giving more importance to the moral domain (interpersonal relationship). For example, rules in a school demand that students not use the back gate before school closes. Since it appears that most students tend to cherish their interpersonal relationships with their colleagues and would not want to trade them for anything in this world, they are ready to violate the school rules if their colleagues ask them to do so, just so that they can still remain friends. This justifies the assertion that implies that ethical rules are given more relevance than conventional rules and personal rules.

Subsequently, Hindriks (2015) suggests that it is indeed a requirement as demanded by folk wisdom for one to think before he/she acts since people tend to regret actions done impulsively. Hindrick further revealed that Albert

5

Bandura's experiment that deals with moral disengagement asserts that moral thinking frequently makes an important contribution to the formulation of moral judgements. Hence, it must be noted that our moral reasoning has both negative and positive influences on the development of our moral judgments.

On the other hand, Aleixo and Norris (2019), reported that there have been studies carried out to explain the reasons for students' violating rules. They further argued that Kohlberg's notion of moral thinking as a cognitive growth process has been applied as a clarification for students breaking rules by envisaging that the conditions under which violation of laws would be considered as morally probable are more common at the very lower stages of moral reasoning than that of the higher stages. Thus, those lawbreakers are said to be at a lower stage of moral reasoning than the non-law breakers. Also, Kramar and Cooke (2017), reported that as children tend to reach a stage in their lives, their moral reasoning skills tend to advance, making them able to morally perceive an act as just or fair by identifying themselves with those who commit an immoral act since there might be a reason for doing so. Hence, students' moral reasoning affects the way they morally perceive an act. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the moral reasoning and moral judgement of JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.
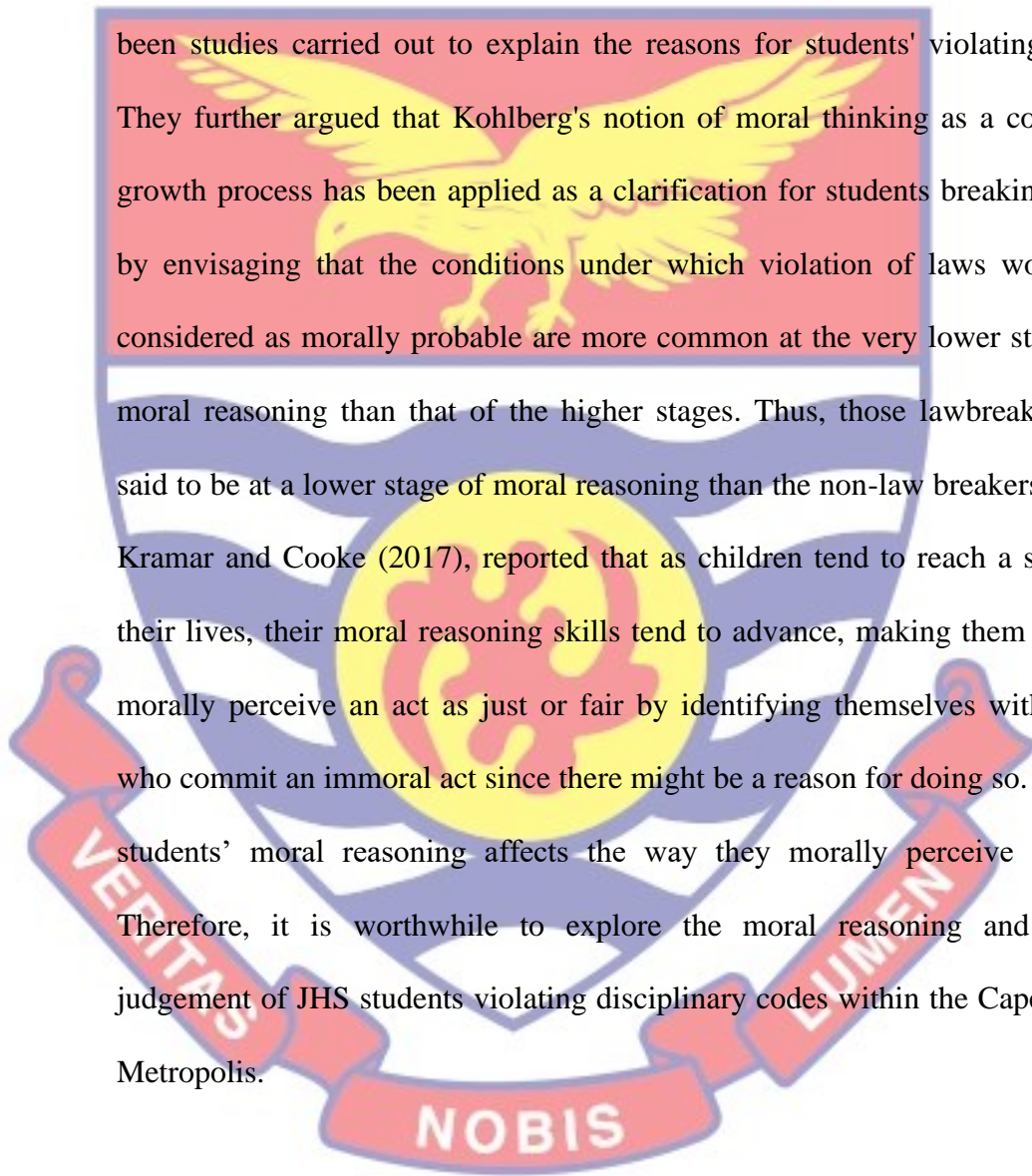
Statement of the Problem

Strong academic performance and, most importantly, moral integrity have been recognized to be the hallmark of students in junior high schools (Anzene, 2014). Furthermore, Anzene continues to argue that these days, junior high schools are closely associated with an insane environment of examination malpractice, drug abuse, fighting, obstruction and theft of school properties, the use of offensive language on teachers, pre-marital sex, and other forms of unethical behavior, which are all examples of violating disciplinary codes in schools. Subsequently, (Merryl & Taylor, 2005), explained that students violating disciplinary codes in junior high schools are dealt with by facing the disciplinary committee depending on the seriousness of the offence. When these students violate these codes, they are said to have gone against the expectations for moral behaviour expressed in the school environment.

Merryl and Taylor (2005) continue to stipulate that for an individual to carry out the right moral behavior in reaching a moral decision, they are expected to be able to recognize a situation as having a moral dimension, distinguish right from wrong, choose the right course of action from a wide range of alternative competitive options, and then go ahead to implement the chosen alternative. This is commonly known as The Four Component Model developed by Rest as cited by Haines (2008) to assist in making a moral decision.

7

During this moral action process, it is expected that individual's reason morally to be able to reach a final moral judgement, but it has been realized that students in junior high schools today tend to violate rules without taking into account the repercussions of their actions. For instance, on the 6th of August 2020, the Ghanaweb.com reported that several senior high school students from the Tweneboa Kodua Senior High School in the Ashanti Region refused to cooperate during their Integrated Science paper on the 3rd of August 2020 because the teachers did not allow them to engage in examination malpractice since they complained that the questions were difficult.

Also, Ghanaweb.com indicated that some WASSCE final year students were seen in viral videos showing gross disrespect to His Excellency Nana Akuffo Addo Danquah for being behind the difficult questions. On the other hand, while the behaviours displayed by these students were absurd, it appears that they are acting in this manner as a result of witnessing either their parents or other adults insulting others, and thus conclude that there is nothing wrong with reigning insults on anyone. It is believed that these acts of examination malpractice and the use of abusive language, which are forms of violating disciplinary codes, cut across almost all cycles of education.

During my on-campus teaching practice in the year 2018 at the Tuwuhofo Holy International School located at Akotokyir within the Cape Coast Metropolis, I had an encounter with a couple of JHS students who came to school late and when I asked why they were late, these students disrespectfully said that I had no right to ask such questions since I was not a permanent staff. These same students came to school with phones,

inappropriately dressed and among others. Finally, the Report of the Chief Examiner (2019), explained that inquiries into the cases of examination malpractice found during the science BECE examination, 173 results were cancelled by candidates for carrying foreign content to the examination room, for bringing cell phones into the examination hall, 19 candidates had their entire results cancelled and 2,479 were subject results held back due to an ongoing investigation into a claim made in regards to examination malpractice. Hence, this required the need for extensive research to find out why these students do what they do by assessing the moral reasoning and moral judgement among junior high school students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Study findings on morality and their associated variables, coupled with the violation of disciplinary codes, appear to be limited. A review of literature within the international context revealed that research in this field of enquiry appears to be limited. However, the available literature on moral judgement focused on young offenders (Aleixo & Norris, 2019), juvenile delinquents (Stams et al., 2006), adolescent offenders (Romeral, 2018), adolescents in relation to their home and school environment (Madhuri & Choudhary, 2017), university students with regard to emotional intelligence (Aybek et al., 2014), and students violating university disciplinary code. The remaining literature veered off from the school setting with an emphasis on morality and disciplinary codes, particularly in the workplace and organizational settings such as in the educational districts (Amanor-Afari, 2010).

Also, a thorough review of literature within the Ghanaian context seems to reveal that only one study has been conducted assessing the moral

9

judgement of senior high school students violating disciplinary codes at Bawku Senior High School (Thompson, 2010). This dearth in literature warranted the need for research to be conducted in this field to further expose the pertinent issues surrounding moral judgement. The study by Thompson (2010) explored only the moral judgement of students. This present study incorporated that of moral reasoning together with moral judgement to better help understand the phenomenon. Again, participants for the study by Thompson (2010) were drawn from SHS. This present study, however, relied on JHS students as respondents for the study because it is believed that they are in the period of moral formation and reasoning and will be deemed appropriate as respondents for the study.

Contextually, most studies on moral judgement were done within western settings, except for the study by Thompson (2010), which was done in the Ghanaian context, specifically in Bawku. This explains why the researcher finds it very necessary to also try and explore this study here in the Ghanaian context, specifically, in the Cape Coast Metropolis, to help make comparisons in terms of the findings, which will go a long way in making accurate generalizations and, in turn, contribute to the literature.

Furthermore, studies on gender differences when it has to do with moral reasoning and moral judgement continue to raise controversial issues (Capraro & Sippel, 2017). It is stipulated that according to Kohlberg's theory, both males and females go through the six stages of moral development to be able to reach the stage of justice and fairness in justification of their moral actions and inactions, but then Capraro and Sippel argue that Kohlberg believes that females are unable to go beyond the third stage of moral

development as compared to males. On the other hand, Gilligan's moral growth theory disagrees with Kohlberg's. Gilligan's concept tends to focus on caring where she believes that females are more sensitive when it comes to moral issues and can handle them with ease as they reason morally to reach a final moral judgement as compared to males (Capraro & Sippel, 2017). However, the assertion made by Capraro and Sippel (2017) explains that there is a bone of contention when it comes to the issues of gender difference in relation to reasoning morally to make good judgements. Again, the findings of 'Dunkel, Gladden and Mathes (2016), established that cognitive skills are a prerequisite for moral reasoning and making well-informed judgements. This is to say that in order to make a well-informed decision, it is very essential to think and reflect before we act. In light of this, it appears that there is a higher possibility of controversies being raised with regards to gender differences in terms of moral reasoning, since females are said to act based on their emotions when faced with moral dilemmas and males to act based on their intellect. Hence, this gave the researcher the impetus to assess the sex differences in moral thinking and moral judgement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the moral reasoning and moral judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Specifically, the objectives of the study included:

- assessing moral reasoning among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis;

11

- investigating moral judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis;

- determining the difference in moral reasoning among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis;

- finding the difference in moral judgement among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis;

- finding the difference in moral reasoning among males and females JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis;

- finding the difference in moral judgement among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide in the study;

1. What is the moral reasoning among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis?

2. What is the moral judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis?

Research Hypothesis

1. H_o: There is no statistically significant differences in moral reasoning among JHS students who violate disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

2. H_o: There is no statistically significant differences in moral judgement among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

3. H_o: There is no statistically significant differences in moral reasoning among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

4. H_o: There is no statistically significant differences in moral judgement among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Significance of the Study

The results of the study would go a long way to being of great and immense benefit to students at various educational levels, teachers, school counsellors, government officials in the education sector, as well as researchers. The result of the study would enable students learn and understand that to be able to make well-informed choices, it would be very important to consider The Four Component Model developed by Rest in moral decision-making to avoid violating laid-down disciplinary codes of an institution. Also, teachers would learn to appreciate the fact that these students grow at different levels when it comes to moral reasoning and moral judgment, which could affect the moral actions they take when faced with any moral issue. Furthermore, the results of the study would help school counsellors be able to apply these findings to help come up with better ways to handle children who are identified to have lower levels of moral development. Finally, researchers in the field of child psychology could also advance more

studies in this area of study and how these components operate interdependently.

Delimitation of the Study

This research work was delimited to the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana. The study only took into consideration JHS students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes in schools. Also, moral judgement and moral reasoning were the only variables that were studied in the study. Again, the ex-post-facto design was the design for the study. Finally, only quantitative data was collected and analysed for this study.

Limitation of the Study

Limitations are variables that have an impact on the study's outcome but are frequently overlooked (Mugenda & Mugenda 2008). Hence, the researcher had a limited time to complete the study within the stipulated period allocated by the university but then despite the time factor, the researcher managed to through the process and finished with the study within the time frame given. In addition, it was also somewhat difficult at certain times to access information from the respondents at the selected schools, since some teachers were not ready to give out their teaching periods as well as some head teachers were always postponing when the researcher was to come and collect the required data from the respondents but then the researcher, the head teachers and teachers agreed to reschedule appropriate days and times to come in order to avoid such difficulties. Also, most of the respondents were being a bit reluctant to take part in the exercise but then the researcher explained to them that the data process was for academic purpose and that confidentiality and anonymity on their part was ensured. Finally, the nature of the study did not

14

include a conceptual framework making it a limitation to the study hence, recommendations for further studies will be made to consider including a conceptual framework to help expose pertinent issues surrounding the variables.

Operational Definition of Terms

Morality: Morality basically deals with students being able to differentiate appropriate behaviour from that of inappropriate ones.

Moral Reasoning: Moral reasoning involves students being able to think morally when faced with moral dilemmas.

Moral Judgement: Moral judgment deals with students being able to reason morally amidst moral dilemmas and hence, making the right moral decisions.

Disciplinary Codes: Disciplinary codes are rules and regulations that helps students to act in appropriate ways.

Organisation of the Study

The first chapter discussed the background to the study, the problem statement, the purpose and specific objectives, the research questions, the study's importance, the study's delimitation, its constraints, the definition of terminology, and the study's organization. Secondly, chapter two included a review of the literature. Third chapter discussed the research methodology, which comprised the research design, the study area, the population, sampling methodologies, the research instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Fourth chapter discussed the findings of the research and their interpretation. Finally, chapter five summarized the findings provided, conclusions and recommendations as well as suggestions for future research and action.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presented the literature reviewed for the study. The review first covered the theoretical framework followed by the review of the key these raised in the research questions.

Theoretical Framework

Jean Piaget's Cognitive Theory of Moral Development

Since psychological science came into being, the nature, cognitive, and emotional determinants of moral judgment have been studied empirically (Yilmaz, Sevi & Hassan, 2019). They continued to explain that although one of the first theories was initiated by Piaget (1965), Lawrence Kohlberg introduced the first systematic theory based on empirical research (1969). Additionally, Mallari (2017), asserted that the focus of moral development is on the emergence, change, and comprehension of morality from childhood to adulthood. In the study of moral growth, morality is described as rules governing how individuals should be treated, including principles of justice, the welfare of others, and their rights. As regards the assertion made by Mallari (2017), she believed that it is very important to measure one's faith, sentiments, attitudes, and behaviours that add to the understanding of morality in order to help investigate how they understand morality. Hence, the term "moral development" is the process through which individuals eventually gain an awareness of what is good and bad, acceptable and inappropriate. This is why development basically deals with human moral sensibility, which is often

16

understood as a progression from basic and finite explanations to more complex ways of distinguishing between right and wrong (Dorough, 2011).

Jean Piaget cognitive theory of moral development as cited by Asare-Danso (2018) explains that cognitive development happens as a result of the combination of inherent abilities and environmental experiences, and is followed by a sequence of qualitatively distinct hierarchical stages. Piaget maintains that children, regardless of their culture, go through the same developmental stages. He continues to assert that children's capability to think about moral concerns is related to their overall ability to think generally. This is why children's reasoning abilities develop in phases as they grow older and why older children can morally judge issues with moral dimensions as compared to that of the younger ones.

Piaget's Methodology

According to Asare-Danso (2018), Piaget began his investigation into how children's knowledge and moral awareness evolve with age by examining children's attitudes toward rules. He chose to assess their moral awareness through the use of two interrelating strategies by using the marble games and then the telling of stories. This is because Piaget believed that the relevance of morality is found in rules, and so he decided to use the game of marble, which has multiple rules, in order to help ascertain children's perceptions. Children, independently of adult influence, make and implement their own rules for the marble game (Asare - Danso, 2018).

17

Furthermore, Asare-Danso reports that in the game of marbles played by a group of children, Piaget appeared to be unaware of the regulations and so asked the children to clarify them. They were to inform him of the regulations' origins, who created them, and whether these rules might be amended.

Findings

Piaget discovered that children between the ages of 5 and 9 believed that rules about the game had always existed and were established by adults or even God, and in the eyes of children, the rules were sacrosanct and so could not be altered in any manner (Asare-Danso, 2018). The other group of children aged 10 and above also understood that rules were made by children when playing the game and it could only be changed when all players agreed. Piaget as cited by Asare-Danso (2018), explained that these children demonstrated that the rules' purpose was to prevent quarrels and promote fairness. These older children followed the rules and also deliberated openly the consequences of any rule adjustments they made when deemed necessary. Piaget defined this moral orientation toward cooperation with peers as mutual regard, in contrast to the younger children's moral orientation toward adults or God, which he defined as unilateral respect.

Use of Pair of Stories to Determine Moral Perception

According to Awuah and Afriye (2010), Piaget's second technique used pairings of hypothetical stories in which accidents occurred or children misbehaved.

First Pair of Stories:

1 (a) A young man named John was invited to dinner from his room. As he approached the dining room door, he opened the door and behind it had a chair along with a tray containing fifteen glasses. John was unaware, and as a result, he accidentally knocked the tray on the chair over, shattering all the cups.

1. (b) Henry attempted to retrieve some jam from the pantry one day when his mother was at the market. Henry had to climb a chair to reach the cupboard, but in doing so, he knocked over a cup, which dropped and broke.

Second Pair of Stories:

2. (a) Marie desired to provide a lovely surprise for her mother and thus cut out a piece of fabric for her. Due to her inability to handle scissors properly, she ended up creating a large hole in her clothing.

2. (b) Margret went for a pair of scissors to play with in the absence of her mother and ended up with a hole in her dress due to her lack of knowledge on how to properly handle the scissors.

Responses of children aged 5 to 9 in the cases of stories 1(a) and 2 (a)

According to Piaget, as described by Awuah and Afriyie (2010), children were asked which of the children in the stories was more naughty and deserving of punishment. Piaget was more concerned with the justifications people provided for their responses than with the responses themselves. While this set of children was able to distinguish between intentional and inadvertent acts, they made their determination largely on the magnitude of the damage produced. According to reports, John smashed numerous cups while Marie ripped a large tear in her dress. Awuah and Afriyie (2010) maintained that

19

these children believed that misbehaving individuals should pay for their actions. The children concluded that punishment is viewed as having been determined by authority and must therefore be considered as just due to its source (moral realism).

Responses of Children aged 10 and above in the Cases of Stories 1(b) and 2 (b)

Compared to the younger children's responses, the older children deemed Henry and Margret to be naughtier. While they recognized that the damage they inflicted was unintentional, they considered the intent behind the act to be the determining factor in assessing the degree of naughtiness (Awuah & Afriyie, 2010). Piaget suggested that older children viewed punishment as a means of educating the offender about the nature of the offense and also acting as a deterrence in the future. Piaget hypothesized two stages of moral development based on his observations and responses.

Piaget's Stages of Moral Development

McLeod (2015) asserts that Piaget emphasized two stages; the heteronomous and autonomous moral stage, because the research was based on children aged 5 and above, but then he decided to add a third stage, the amoral stage, which explained the early years of children. The following vividly explains the stages of moral development:

Amoral Stage

This stage lasts from birth to the age of four years. Children at this age lack an understanding of what makes a rule, are incapable of making judgments, and see no harm in breaking rules. Their cognitive capacity is

20

incapable of reasoning about moral matters. They are neither moral nor immoral at this stage, but rather amoral (McLeod, 2015).

Heteronomous Moral Stage

This stage is also referred to as moral realism during this period (rules are imposed from the outside). Children in this stage range from 5 to 9 years. They believe that rules are made by an external authority and going contrary to them could lead to immanent justice (severe punishment). They see that rules are fixed and cannot be changed, but must be followed because changing them would incur the wrath of the authorities (McLeod, 2015).

At this point, the children understand that when they violate the rules, they deserve to be punished, since the guilty must bear the consequences of their transgression (expiatory punishment). McLeod continue to explain that children at this stage are a moral realist and tend to judge issues based on their actions.

Autonomous Moral Stage

According to McLeod (2015), children in this stage are aged 10 years and above. This stage is also known as moral relativism (rules are made within). Children here argue that there is nothing such as absolute right or wrong. Piaget thought that children at this stage, as cited by McLeod (2015), now experience a fundamental reorganization of their understanding of moral issues. They are beginning to transcend middle-age egocentricity and have developed the ability to view moral laws through the eyes of others. They are also now capable of formulating their own moral judgments.

Children now understand that laws do not come from a mysterious, "divine-like" source, and that rules are made and changed by humans. In terms of "game rules," older children understand the importance of rules to prevent conflict and ensure fair play. As a result, McLeod asserts that the autonomous moral stage is viewed as a result of communal consensus rather than as sacrosanct and immutable. In this stage, moral questions are evaluated on the basis of intent.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Zhang and Zhao (2017), argued that Kohlberg's theory of moral cognitive development, which draws on the theories of child development by Piaget and the progressive theory of ethics by Dewey, is one of the theories that has influenced contemporary western moral development psychology. Hence, its existence is said to have brought about a reformation of school moral education as well as brought to bear a great effect on the moral education practice worldwide. They continued by stating that Kohlberg's theory is centred on the many phases of cognitive moral growth. In light of this, Yimaz, Sevi and Hassan (2019) also argue that Kohlberg's theory is viewed as a rationalistic theory as it assumes that rational thinking processes are the main determinant of moral judgment, even though emotional or intuitive processes are also partially concerned with moral judgement.

Additionally, McLeod (2013), adds that while Kohlberg agreed with Jean Piaget's theory of moral development, Kohlberg chose to add another dimension to Piaget's theory.

22

Kohlberg's Methodology

According to Kohlberg, as cited by Asare-Danso (2018), moral growth is fundamentally dependent on moral reasoning and progresses in a series of stages. Kohlberg assessed people's moral reasoning further by using a moral story that required them to choose between two socially and ethically unacceptable alternatives. The Heinz Dilemma was the story he used. As a result, McLeod (2013), vividly recounts the story in the following manner:

Heinz's Dilemma

Heinz lived in Europe with his wife who was diagnosed of having cancer. The doctors indicated that there was a drug that could save his wife but then it was not in their possession but instead a local chemist discovered the drug. Heinz and his wife were happy that finally there was a cure but the sad news was that the local chemist was charging ten times that of the normal price. Heinz was able to raise half of the money with the assistance of friends and family, but when he explained to the chemist that he could only afford half of the money at the moment because his wife was dying, he should help save her, the chemist refused to say that as long as he discovered the drug, he was certain to profit from it. Because Heinz was at a loss for what to do, he decided to break into the chemist's shop at night and steal the medicine, as his wife's life was at jeopardy.

Based on this dilemma, Kohlberg as cited by Asare-Danso (2018) asked a group of boys the following;

1. Is Heinz justified in stealing the drug?

2. Was theft permissible or not permissible?

23

3. Is it a husband's responsibility to steal a medicine for his wife if there is no other way to obtain it?

4. Is a nice husband a thief?

5. Did the pharmacy have the right to charge that much given the absence of a price cap?

6. Would it make a difference if the person dying was a stranger?

7. Should the pharmacist be charged with murder if Heinz's wife dies?

Kohlberg was less concerned with whether the boys believed Heinz was correct or wrong than with the justifications they provided for their responses. He then applied this strategy to individuals from various cultures, concluding that the way individuals think is influenced by their culture and stage of moral development (Asare-Danso, 2018).

Stages of Moral Development

McLeod (2013), reported that Kohlberg hypothesized three degrees of moral development, each of which is comprised of two stages based on the responses to the dilemma. McLeod's (2013)**,** vividly explains the stages of moral development;

Pre-conventional Morality

This is the initial stage of moral development, and children who fall into this category are often between the ages of four, nine or ten. At the pre-conventional level, children lack a personal moral code; rather, moral decisions are dictated by adult principles and the penalties of following or breaking their laws. To support this, Asare-Danso (2018), argued that children at this point have no internalization of moral values and that their moral

24

thinking is subsequently influenced by external reward and punishment. This phase is divided into two stages:

Stage 1: Orientation to Obedience and Punishment. Children in this stage follow directions and rules in order to avoid punishment.

Stage 2: Individualism and Exchange. At this stage, children act in their own self-interest. They operate under the principle that 'you scratch my back, I scratch yours.'

Conventional Morality

Children between the ages of 10 to 13 years are found in this stage. They normally desire approval both from individuals and society. Moral values are internalized without questioning authority. Children in this stage are preoccupied with what others think of them, and their behaviour is predominantly focused toward others. (McLeod, 2013). There are two stages;

Stage3: Good Interpersonal Relationship. Children at this period strive to satisfy others and to be perceived as a good boy or girl. They frequently pursue parental approval by being polite, and they develop an ability to judge behaviour based on intention, such as she intended to do well. (Asare- Danso, 2018).

Stage4 - Maintaining the Social Order. Children at this point are extremely preoccupied with authority and upholding social order. They believe that fulfilling one's responsibilities include doing what is right. Adolescents, for example, adolescents may argue that in order for a community to function well, it must be safeguarded by laws that are followed by its members. (Asare-Danso, 2018).

25

Post- conventional Morality

McLeod (2013), argued that the post-conventional is the last stage of moral development as stipulated by Kohlberg. Children within this range are 13 years and above. In Kohlberg's theory of moral development, this is the greatest level. At this stage, morality is entirely internalized and is not determined by external norms. Individuals identify alternative moral paths, investigate the alternatives, and then establish a personal moral code. They make no moral appeals, as moral decisions are decided by an informed conscience. (Awuah &Afriyie, 2010). There are two stages:

Stage 5: Social Contract and Individual Rights. Children here believe that though rules or laws exist for the greater good of people in society, there are times when they can be amended when it is realized that there is an incompatibility between human needs and legal requirements. For instance, in the case of Heinz, saving lives is significantly more vital than violating anti-theft laws. (Asare-Danso, 2018).

Stage6: Universal Principle. In this case, an educated conscience establishes what is appropriate. Individuals act according to their internalized values, not out of fear, approval, or legality. Generally, the majority of people do not reach this stage. When it comes to problems of equality, justice, and human rights, individuals at this level will defy society's laws in order to protect these ideas, despite the fact that they are well aware of the consequences (Asare-Danso, 2018).

Finally, Kohlberg, as referenced by Asare-Danso (2018), notes that everyone develops thinking in the same way and in the same order, and so the ability to reason about morality is related to general reasoning capacity.

Gilligan's Theory of Moral Development

In Gilligan's view, as cited by Tsunematsu and Asai (2014), women's construction of moral problems as a matter of care and responsibility in relationships rather than as a matter of rights and rules ties their moral development to changes in their understanding of obligation and relationships just as the concept of morality as justice ties development to a logic of equality and reciprocity. Tsunematsu and Asai (2014), continued by stating that as people's moral development progressed, they began to communicate their concern and obligation through what Gilligan refers to as care and responsibility ethics. Once men developed the capacity to weigh their own arguments and those of others equally, they developed what is known as the ethics of right, which corresponds to the ethics of justice.

Stages of Moral development

Paris, Ricardo, Raymond, and Johnson (2021), analyzed that Gilligan's ideas focused on morality or the belief system, human responsibilities, care, and consideration, which represent different dimensions of ethical care. She does not claim, unlike Kohlberg or Piaget that the position is a strictly developmental sequence, but then it can only be classified here according to the profundity or subtlety of the position. Her theory is thus "semi-developmental," similarly to Maslow's motivation theory. The following are the three stages of moral development by Gilligan, as explained by Farhat, Malik, Muhammed, and Aneesa (2012);

Orientation to Self- Survival

To begin, women seek to defend their interests in order to advance to the next level. They must go through a transitional period during which they

recognize that there can be a contradiction between self-interest and their responsibility. Farhat, Malik, Muhammed, and Aneesa (2012), continued to clarify that all women want to survive and have their fundamental needs addressed, which causes them to prioritize their own needs over those of others, which is considered selfish.

Goodness as Self-Sacrifice

At this stage, women attempt to act properly in order to avoid injuring others by sacrificing themselves. They must pass through a transitional period during which they contemplate not only their obligation to avoid harming others, but also their obligation to avoid harming themselves. Here, Farhat, Malik, Muhammed, and Aneesa (2012), pointed out that women put the needs of others before themselves in order to find some sort of moral satisfaction in believing they have done a good deed.

The Morality of Nonviolence

At this point, females accept nonviolence standards as the centre of all moral behaviour when making moral judgments, as it is important to avoid harming themselves and others .Farhat, Malik, Muhammed, and Aneesa (2012) report that this stage involves making a balanced moral judgement to benefit all.

Finally, after Gilligan and her co-worker examined girls ranging in age from six to eighteen years, they discovered that girls continually revealed deep knowledge of human relationships based on listening to and witnessing what happens between individuals. They are sensitive to relationships, have unique rhythms, and frequently pursue sentimental pathways (Farhat, Malik, Muhammed & Aneesa, 2012). They concluded that Gilligan believed that girls

experience life differently than males do and that when they reach adolescence, they reach a serious turning point, but they already know that the masculine-dominated culture does not appreciate their strong interest in intimacy, even if society views women as caring and altruistic.

Conceptual Review

Morality

Morality demands that individuals do not live their lives in moral isolation, but instead live their lives within specified moral traditions (Chowdhury, 2016). This is because Althof and Berkowitz (2006), believed that for liberal democracy to yield a greater outcome within society, it is of great importance for citizens to uphold moral and civic values, but then in today's world, the advancement in science and technology has ripped off the importance of morals, ethics, and values and their relevance to society. According to Black (2017), the term morality began when a community of hunters gathered to mete out punishment to one of their members for violating their speculated rules governing them. Black further explains that morality varies from situation to situation, making it relative rather than universal. Also, Churchland in his book, *Touching a Nerve,* as cited by Thagard (2019), argued that morality originated from organisms that produce chemicals called oxytocin and vasopressin that enable them to care for their young ones.

In the same manner, human beings, which are examples of mammals, also tend to produce this same chemical which helps them to form long-term relationships as well as care for their young ones. Hence, Thagard believed caring has its biological root in morality as well as in social relations. He further postulated that the early humans lived in small groups, but these

groups expanded due to agriculture and the development of intellectual values, which resulted in an increase in compassion, sympathy, and empathy not just among the group but also extended to other immediate groups. Eventually, moral theories were proposed which helped turn caring for others into a universal principle, since it appears that morality is based on the right of everyone. Morality comes from the Latin word "moralitas", meaning manner or proper behaviour, which has two basic and important meanings as identified by Gert and Gert (2020), and they include the following:

First and foremost is the descriptive usage of morality. This usage sees morality as a code of ethics that helps to distinguish good from bad behaviours. This is to say that this usage does not give an explanation as to which behaviour should be considered right or wrong but then it only helps to classify them in terms of the benefits or harm they pose. This then does not make it an encompassing standard for all. For example, if a claim is made that, killing is an immoral act as suggested by Gert and Gert (2020), the descriptive usage will not necessarily disagree with the claim but instead, will say that what people think about killing, is it moral or immoral? Thus, this usage seeks to find out what people think is right or wrong.

Lastly, there is the normative and universal usage of morality. Gert and Gert (2020) further explains that morality in this sense is seen as a standardized form of code of conduct that should be accepted by all rational people under any specified condition. So, this usage will then agree with the claim that says killing is an immoral act. This usage normally deals with how people should act.

In line with the above assertion, Steinberg (2020), argued that although morality is practically accepted worldwide because it is an important entity, it is said to be equally complex, which gives rise to public disagreement. In respect to the above assertion, Benard Gert, as cited by Steinberg (2020), further explains that due to the complex nature of morality, it is inappropriate for anyone to try to define morality since it is believed that the term "morality" is a human construct that cannot be assessed empirically. Hence, Hooda (2015), described morality as a public informal structure that extends to all reasonable people which regulates their conduct that affects others and seeks to minimize evil or harm. In the same vein, Gogo (2020), described morality as a social, cultural, and personal code of behaviour that plays an important role in the lives of both individuals and the community as a whole. In other words, Gogo believes that morality has to do with the values or codes of conduct derived from individuals, society, and culture, which help to put us in check and to regulate how we relate with others in society. Also, Anderson (2012), tends to share a similar view with Gogo (2020) as he describes morality as established societal norms and rules intended to regulate the behaviour of people in a community. Anderson (2012), further argued that these norms and rules have their foundations or basis enshrined in the beliefs of people that have to do with right and wrong conduct. Again, Anderson (2012), stipulated that morality is social and emerges due to the way individuals relate with others. Hence, he explains that morality would not exist if there was no human society. Shomali (2008), who seems to share the same idea as Gogo (2020) and Anderson (2012), also describes morality as socially and culturally approved regulations that direct and regulate our actions, as

failure to comply brings about punishment while conformity brings about praise.

Furthermore, Fagothey (1959), as cited by Anderson (2012), also described morality as the distinctive attribute of human acts which are normally said to be either good or bad, right or wrong. In short, Fagothey sees morality as the theory of interpretation that enables one to evaluate the quality of human acts as right or wrong concerning the standardised set of codes. In support of Fagothey's description of morality, due to the distinctive characteristics of human beings living together, there is the possibility of individuals stepping on each other's toes, which might bring about anarchy in society. Hence, there must be a system put in place to help determine which behaviour is appropriate and inappropriate. To this effect, Ellemers, van der Toorn, and van Leeuwen (2019) indicate that morality deals with spelling out what the right and inappropriate means of conducting oneself are in order to learn to treat people equally without favouritism, since this is considered of interest to highlight the social behaviour of humans staying together in groups.

Finally, morality refers to 'concepts of human wellbeing, fairness, and rights that emerge as a result of the intrinsic characteristics of interpersonal relations' (Nucci, 2001, p. 7). This is to state that morality is based on considerations of the intrinsic repercussions of one's conduct on the welfare of other people, and examples of inherent characteristics of interpersonal connections include treating others fairly, refraining from hitting, kicking, or harassing them. In support of the description of morality by Nucci, Ayeni (2012) believes that morality is a social phenomenon whose aim is to ensure a

32

harmonious social relationship between people by taking fair and equitable account of all the interests in the relationship.

Determinants of Morality

According to Bradley (2018), to be able to objectively determine an act as morally right, the culpability of an individual who performed that act must be considered. This then brings to light the three moral determinants, which include the object, the motive, and then, finally, the circumstances (time and place) surrounding the action. Before any behaviour can be considered morally justifiable, all three determinants must be good and free of any personal alleviating factor. Furthermore, Andhra (2015), explained that to be morally right, the act of an individual must be in agreement with the three moral determinants, and hence, the absence of these determinants will make an action morally inappropriate. The following gives some explanations of the three moral determinants.

The Object of an Action

The object of an action is the first and most important aspect to deal with when morally assessing an action. It is the free will one chooses or refuses to choose which manifests in our thoughts, deeds or words. This object of an act distinguishes it from all other acts (Andhra, 2015).He continues to stipulate that this object can either be appropriate, inappropriate or indifferent. This is to say that lying or telling the truth are actions that are different as determined by moral criteria. Hence, three principles help to apply to the object of every action as described by Andhra (2015) and they include,

- An object of an action that is inherently bad remains bad and neither intentions nor circumstances nor purpose can change it. For instance, a

33

lie that is defined as speaking opposite to what is in the speaker's mind remains a lie irrespective of its purpose or intention.

- An object of an action that is good can become bad due to circumstances or intentions surrounding it. For instance, we all know that telling the truth is good, but then doing that in order to ruin another's good name or reputation becomes a bad act because of the speaker's intentions.

- Finally, an object of an action that is indifferent, thus neither good nor bad, can become good or bad because of its circumstances. For instance, walking or taking a stroll is neither good nor bad, but when you decide to walk into a store to steal, it becomes morally evil because of the purpose.

The Motive of an Action

Uttar (2020), argued that the purpose of an action is the ulterior objective the doer of the action has in mind while performing that act. This can be that people can normally have either one or more intentions for doing something. Hence, Uttar came out with three principles that are based on the motives in the mind when acting.

- An action that is neither good nor bad because of its object can become good or bad because of the motive behind it. For example, jogging is an act of good exercise to help maintain good health, which, in an actual sense, becomes a good act because of its benefits, but then jogging to a particular location to commit murder becomes an intrinsically evil act.

34

- An action that is good due to its object may either become better or less good or even bad because of its purpose. For example, the act of giving alms to the needy and the poor is a form of showing love and care to them, which inherently is a good deed, but then giving the same alms to them so they just have to leave your presence is also a good deed, but it becomes less good. The act then becomes extremely evil if the alms given is to lure them into doing something bad.

- An action that is bad due to its object can become more evil or less evil due to the purpose surrounding such a situation. For example, telling a heinous lie to defame another is very evil but then telling lie to protect another person or to stay out of trouble is still a lie but then it becomes less evil because of its purpose. Hence, a good end does not prove a bad means.

The Circumstance of an Action

This is the last part in helping to assess an action as morally right or wrong. The circumstances of an action as described by Uttar (2020), have to do with the act of taking place at either a particular time, place, manner, or agent. Hitting someone as a form of self-defence is one thing, and hitting another person without any form of provocation is also another story. Thus, moral circumstances can either make an action right or wrong. He further postulates that some moral circumstances are exasperating, which tend to either increase the goodness or badness of an act, such as stealing from a poor person tends to increase the badness of an already evil act, while other moral circumstances are extenuating, which tend to decrease the badness of an

35

action, such as stealing money from the bank is not as evil as stealing from the homeless.

The difficulty in determining if an act is right or wrong often makes morality either relative or subjective since we cannot prevent individuals from giving different opposed views to the meaning of an action. This is to say, what is appropriate for one person tends to be inappropriate for a different person (Uttar, 2020).

Concept of Moral Reasoning

Piaget (1932), first put forward the concept of moral reasoning in his research into the cognitive development of children and was later expanded by Kohlberg (Palmer, 2016). Palmer (2016), continued to argue that Kohlberg (1969) proposes that moral reasoning, together with cognitive evolution, becomes more complicated and abstract as individuals progress successively through the six stages.

According to Saunders (2015), an increase in empirical data seems to dare the claim that moral judgment is only the use of general domain reasoning to moral issues and that moral reasoning produces all moral judgments. Given this, moral reasoning as defined by Saunders (2015) involves the use of domain-general thinking to moral issues of which the act is conscious, effortful and intentional. In the same vein, Bucciarelli, Khemlani & Johnson-Laird (2008), as cited by Saunders (2015), noted that moral reasoning is defined as "reasoning that uses "deontic propositions" as evidences, which are assertions about "what you may, should, and should not do or leave undone." (p. 124). This is to say that moral reasoning is a mindful and intentional act that allows individuals to systematically think through moral

issues in other to make well-informed decisions that are right and appropriate (ethical duty or obligation).

Furthermore, Hadit (2001) as cited by Saunders (2015), defined moral reasoning as a "conscious mental activity that consists of transforming given information about people to reach a moral judgment" (p. 818). Hadit continues to explain that moral reasoning involves mental exertion, it is an intentional act and directed of which the reasoner is normally aware of what is happening. In addition, moral reasoning is a "conscious mental activity through which one evaluates a moral judgment for its consistency with other moral commitments, where these commitments are to one or moral principles and (in some cases) particular moral judgments" (Paxton & Greene, 2010, p. 6).

Haidt, the avowed supporter of the widely influential social model of moral judgment, believed that moral thinking plays a pervasive and critical causal role in moral judgment, but by this claim, it means something completely different. According to its social intuitionistic pattern, moral judgment is caused largely by moral intuition which is characterized as a rapid appearance in awareness or on the edge of awareness, accompanied by an evaluation of the sensation of a person's nature or actions without consciously noticing that one has gone through the steps involving scrutinizing, assessing the importance of evidence and even making conclusions (Haidt & Bjorklund, 2008a).

Also, Palmer (2016), defined moral reasoning as to how people think and justify their behaviours on moral issues. This is to say that when people find themselves in a conflicting moral situation, they try to reason and identify

themselves with the situation and hence make moral deductions based on what they feel is appropriate at that very instance.

Finally, moral thinking is the process through which judgments are formed in accordance with principles of other people's welfare, rights, and justice. (Dahl & Killen, 2018).

Moral Reasoning Strategy

Henderson (2005), established the fact that in order for an individual faced with a moral dilemma to have a deeper and greater understanding of the situation at hand as well as to arrive at the right solution, he developed a strategy known as the PAVE moral reasoning strategy to aid in making a well-informed moral decision. Furthermore, White (1998), as cited by Henderson (2005), explained this by stating that;

> *While the capacity for sound reasoning is important to the concept of intelligence, intelligence alone cannot ensure morality. In order to recognise the 'correct' decision and pass judgment on our own and others' behaviours constitutes a rational deed. To prioritize morality and to make the 'correct' choice is a character act. The relationship between intelligence and decision-making "makes the whole idea of morality possible in the first place...that's ultimately why we hold people responsible for what they do – because their intelligence gives them the power to choose how they'll behave"* (p.72).

When paving a track, stones are set to create a stable footing. The connection between this procedure and the reasoning approach also lends credence to the acronym PAVE, as the reasoning approach is a step-by-step procedure that leads to alternative outcomes from a moral dilemma

38

(Henderson, 2005). Hence, the following explains the acronym PAVE, used as a moral reasoning strategy:

- **Principles (P).** To determine if an action is right can be seen from the principles which are upheld. Principles are similar to obligations or norms that apply to any set of situations. Thus, when someone argues that killing is never acceptable, they consider their ideals. Principles are extremely important when dealing with huge groups of people. Numerous pieces of legislation are predicated on principles. Some fundamental values include the following: do no harm, always tell the truth, maintain your promises, and be fair.

- **Agreements (A).** What determines if an activity is appropriate is whether it conforms to social expectations of a group of people. People sign contracts willingly due to how they agree to treat one another, either formally or informally, written or spoken.

- **Virtues (V).** What makes an action appropriate can be determined if the action was done by a virtuous person. Courage, compassion, and integrity are all examples of character attributes. A good man will continually do the correct thing as it is inherent in his nature.

- **End (E).** What determines whether an action is correct is whether it has a beneficial consequence. That is, if it benefits the affected people's welfare. "Good" could refer to happiness, well-being, enjoyment, interest, or satisfaction. When a large number of individuals are impacted, it may be prudent to consider the greatest benefit for the greatest number (Jewell, 2003), as cited by Henderson (2005).

39

The strategy of PAVE moral reasoning emboldens individuals to mirror the significant issues instead of allowing them to act without thinking. It enables them to make rational moral decisions, to understand and develop the skills to negotiate positive results based on moral choices (Henderson, 2005).

Concept of Moral Judgement

Hooker (2017), reported that it is difficult to make a moral judgment that no credible thinker has ever disputed (a proposition that is not self-refuting). However, Hooker continues to explain that if we begin by defining moral judgment as the normative judgment concerned with making decisions based on requests, prohibitions, and authorisations, or, at the very least, reasons favouring or disfavouring activities, guidelines, strategies, charisma provisions, and arrangements. This is why Hooker believed that normativity is a necessary moral characteristic of judgments, and hence of moral judgments that do not rely on requirements, prohibitions, or permissions, or on the reasons why requirements, prohibitions, or permissions are not identifiable as moral judgments.

Cullity (2011), purported that the word "moral judgment" refers to an action, a state, a state's content, a capability, or a virtue. The act of moral judgment is to consider whether something has a moral character. The thing being evaluated may be an act, person, society, or state of affairs, and the character may be either universal (for example, correct or incorrect) or specifically (trustworthiness or unfairness). Cullity continues by stating that when an individual engages in this activity and contemplates it, it results in a

psychological condition known as 'the state of judging that the thing possesses the characteristic.

Finally, as cited by Aybek, avdar, and zabac (2015), Kohlberg defined moral judgement as an ability that aids in making well-informed choices and judgments that are said to be morally acceptable. This capacity is connected to behaviours that people consider to be morally relevant.

Requirements for Moral Judgement

There is no complete list describing the requirements for moral judgements, but then making accurate moral judgements must be sound, centred on facts, and equally established on sound ethical principles. Moral judgements made showing an exemption from these factors are said to be weak and hence open to criticism (Shaw & Barry, 2019). The requirements for moral judgement as stipulated by Shaw and Barry (2019) are explained as follows:

First, moral judgement should be logical. It implies several things to say that moral judgments should be logical, and one of them has to do with making moral judgments that follow soundly from their evidence (Shaw & Barry). As a result, the relationship between (1) the standard, (2) behaviour or policy, and (3) moral judgment should logically imply. This then goes on to explain that instead of making moral judgments based solely on emotion, feelings, or social or individual preferences, our moral judgments must be supported by reason and evidence.

Shaw and Barry continued to argue that developing rational moral beliefs entails ensuring that our actual moral judgment is constant with the other moral and non-moral convictions we wish to escape. They further explained by saying that many philosophers agree that when we make moral

41

judgements, for example, it was wrong for Mr. Dawson to change the figures she gave out to external auditors. This means that we must therefore be willing to make the same judgment under similar circumstances. Also, for instance, if a friend, wife, or father changed the figures, we must make no exceptions by making judgments in their favour whereas judging others who did similar things.

Second, moral judgement must be centred on facts. Shaw and Barry (2019), pointed out that making adequate moral judgement cannot be done in isolation but instead must involve gathering information before making a moral decision. They specifically stated that the amassed facts collected must be relevant in the sense that they must relate to the judgement going to be made; they must be whole, accurate, and inclusive of all significant data.

Finally, moral judgement must be based on sound principles. It is believed that reliable moral judgements arrived at are based on moral standards or principles which can withstand any form of critical analysis and scrutiny (Shaw & Barry, 2019).

In addition, Shaw and Barry argue that one of the most perplexing concerns raised by the study of morality is what constitutes a sound or acceptable moral belief. But it is worth mentioning that one criterion for answering such a question as stipulated by most philosophers is "considered moral convictions." These convictions contrast with the beliefs we uphold, perhaps because of ignorance or harm. Our beliefs are the ones we have only held after a careful effort to attain maximum concrete precision, obtain all the appropriate information, and reason rationally and impartially about their implications, as Professor of Philosophy, Mr. Tom Regan, points out (Shay &

42

Barry, 2019). When it conflicts with such beliefs, we have grounds to doubt a moral principle.

Concept of Disciplinary Codes

Education is intended to shape our behaviour desirably, to build good citizens, to develop a personality all around and to develop human beings to become morally oriented (Mumthas, Jouhar & Gafoor, 2014). Hence, Mumthas, Jouhar, and Gafoor explained that discipline refers to decent behaviour that contributes to harmony, respect for authority and orderliness, a determined commitment to the regular and efficient performance of tasks, and an enhanced sense of accountability that fosters the development of a social conscience. The explanation given by Mumthas, Jouhar and Gafoor makes discipline important in all systems of schools. Due to this, Maheshwari (2014) also argued that discipline is an art that requires knowledge, sensitivity and trust. Like any art, you master it through constant training experience as well as with practice, which makes it easier. Maheshwari (2014), further stipulated that discipline is the required action of a teacher concerning a student, especially after the behaviour is disruptive to the continuing teaching activities, pre-established rules by the teacher, the school authorities, or society as a whole, since he believes that discipline is a significant element of training because the teacher cannot carry out the teaching and learning process when he does not maintain decorum in the classroom. It is the first step towards building an environment of learning**.**

Maheshwari (2014), in his book, *The Child's Path to Freedom: Modern Development in Educational Practices,* enumerated the three classifications of

43

discipline based on psychological beliefs, and they are vividly explained as follows:

- **Repressionistic Discipline**. This type of discipline, as explained by Maheshwari, is likened to that of the ancient belief of repression, where a child is said to be inherently evil and, hence, strict punishment as well as fear must be used to control such behaviour. He continues to postulate that most educationists with such an ideology believe that rules or disciplinary codes must be enforced by using cruel and harsh methods to help students act out the predetermined behaviour expected by these teachers, since they believe that when the rod is spared, the child will get out of control. On the other hand, though Maheshwari (2014), argued that most teachers believe that fear and punishment can help reform a child, such a method creates hatred in these children, which will make them more rebellious and undisciplined. Hence, it then tends to impair the normal moral development of these children.

- **Impressionistic Discipline**. Maheshwari (2014) says that most people who are idealists fall under this category where they are totally against the use of fear and punishment in controlling the inappropriate behaviours of children. He again explained that in other to maintain discipline in our various schools the teacher should exercise the influence of his personality to maintain class order. A teacher must try, using his skill, behaviour and character, to structure a role model environment for these children to form a character of high order through teacher imitation. The problem of discipline will not arise

44

under the influence of the profoundly creative personality of the teacher (Maheshwari, 2014).

In addition, Maheshwari justified the process of educational development continues smoothly with impressionistic discipline since teacher-child relationships are based on love, sympathy and respect. Children will want to reach their teacher's achievements and act desirably, making them develop normally and naturally, as it is a mid-way between arbitrary freedom and repressive authority. Sadly, Maheshwari believed that in today's world, it is very difficult to find such teachers whose characters can be modelled by students, thus making this belief far away from reality.

- **Emancipationistic Discipline**. Finally, Maheshwari (2014), argued that this school of thought believes that children are good and if the right conducive environment is created, such goodness will blossom like that of a flower. In this sense, as a child does and learns all his activities freely and by experience, he develops naturally the characteristics of self-discipline, autonomy, and auto-dynamism. Since freedom is the basic privilege of a man, it is not appropriate to restrict the child and limit the child's liberty. Emancipatory discipline leads to proper and smooth self-discipline. Furthermore, Maheshwari (2014), explained that animal instincts are generally the innate tendencies of a child and that the child will harm society in different ways if he/she can express his crude instincts. A child cannot differentiate between good and bad, so to encourage this capacity, a mature person's interference is vital. Hence, improper liberty can hurt the child. In the

45

same vein, Maheshwari argues that though a child needs freedom to develop properly, that does not mean that liberty without restrictions and control should be allowed. A child should only have as much freedom as is vital to his development in the right direction.

Hence, according to Atenya and Wekasa (2020), disciplinary codes are established processes to help manage, regulate and impede aggressive attitudes or behaviours of students to create a conducive atmosphere for learning. In this same vein, Pierre and Vusi (2018), also explained that disciplinary codes establish a purposeful school environment to promote quality teaching and learning in a school. Also, Mthiyane (2013) reported that disciplinary codes stipulate the rules for school student behaviour and shows which corrective systems should be implemented in schools to prevent the misconduct of students. Finally, disciplinary codes in schools include documents typically included by education systems that set out procedures to determine sanctions for students in the event of misconduct, wrongdoing, or other forms of an act which are specified as unwanted to create an atmosphere conducive to carrying out daily activities (Meyer-Sahling & Mikkelsen, 2020).
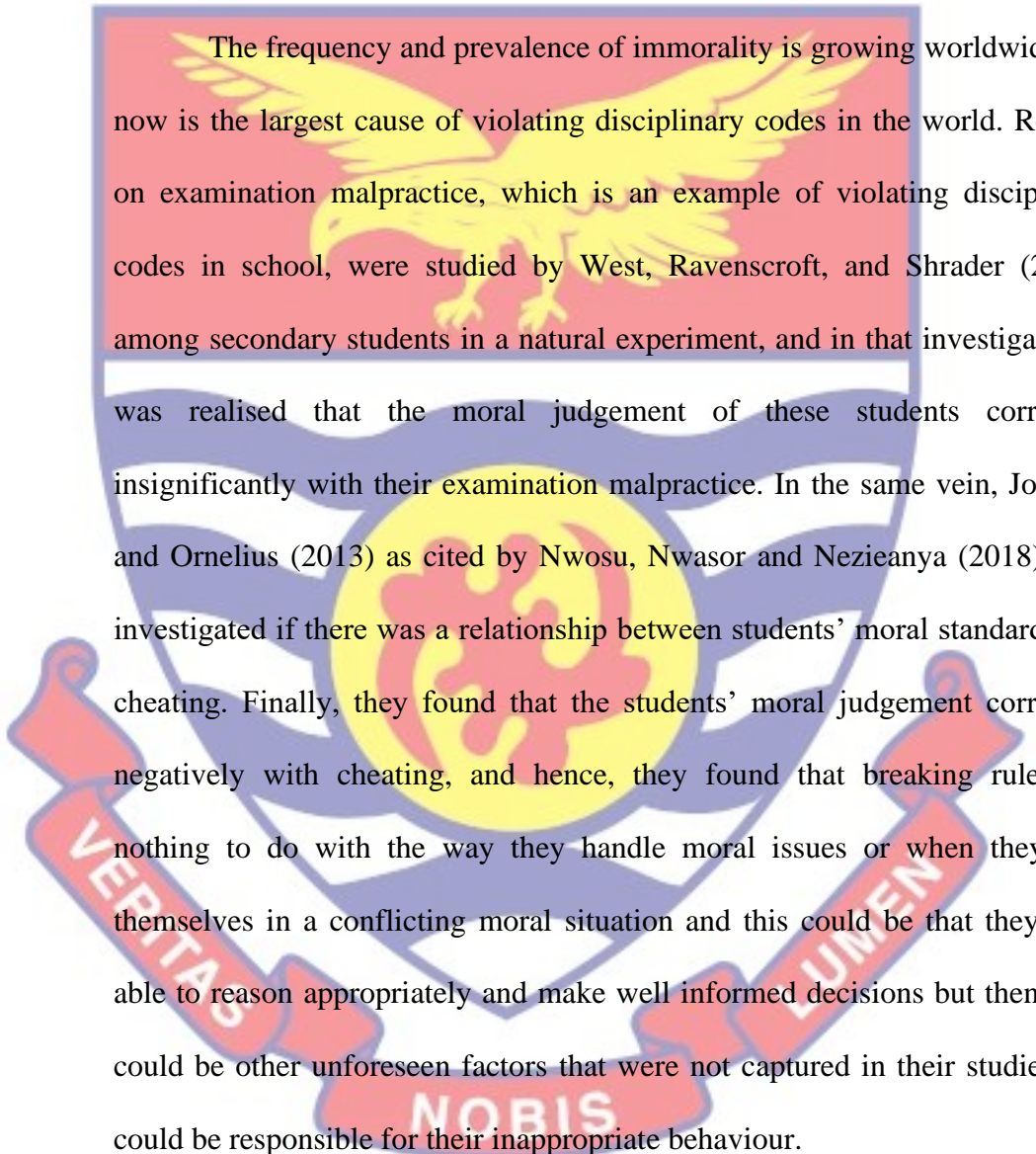
Empirical Review

Moral Reasoning among JHS students violating disciplinary codes

In a study conducted by Orathinkal (2013) on, "*The stages or levels of moral reasoning among students who violated disciplinary codes*", a set of MACH-IV (an instrument used in measuring the moral reasoning of individuals) was given to 583 participants to respond. He then analysed the data collected and found out that 50 per cent of students who violated disciplinary codes were in Piaget's amoral stage of moral reasoning.

46

According to Orathinkal (2013), and Asare-Danso (2018), people in this category are unable to distinguish between what is right and wrong, and as a result, they end up breaking the rules because their cognitive level cannot reason about issues with moral dimensions.

Moral Judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes

The frequency and prevalence of immorality is growing worldwide and now is the largest cause of violating disciplinary codes in the world. Reports on examination malpractice, which is an example of violating disciplinary codes in school, were studied by West, Ravenscroft, and Shrader (2004), among secondary students in a natural experiment, and in that investigation it was realised that the moral judgement of these students correlated insignificantly with their examination malpractice. In the same vein, Johnson and Ornelius (2013) as cited by Nwosu, Nwasor and Nezieanya (2018), also investigated if there was a relationship between students' moral standards and cheating. Finally, they found that the students' moral judgement correlated negatively with cheating, and hence, they found that breaking rules has nothing to do with the way they handle moral issues or when they find themselves in a conflicting moral situation and this could be that they were able to reason appropriately and make well informed decisions but then there could be other unforeseen factors that were not captured in their studies that could be responsible for their inappropriate behaviour.

The differences in Moral Reasoning among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes

Biesara (2014) concluded in his research that most students who violated disciplinary codes were egocentric. In addition to ego-centeredness,

47

another feature is that they are classified under the pre-conventional stage of moral reasoning, where their interests are always considered and if they are not met, they go contrary to what is expected of them, while those who do not violate disciplinary codes are found at the post-conventional stage. In line with Asare-Danso (2018), Biesara (2014), explained that the post-conventional level is governed by trying to maintain good relationships with others as well as getting their approval as they try to do the right thing having the people they cherish at heart. Also, they become aware that societal orders exist as well as human needs, and so when faced with a situation where there tends to be a conflict between societal orders and those of human needs, which becomes a conflict situation, they reason carefully in order to arrive at a well-informed decision which will bring about the greater good for all. Hence, these findings by Biesera (2014), indicated that there is indeed a significant difference in moral reasoning between students who violate disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes.

The differences in Moral Judgement among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes

Research conducted by Merryl and Taylor (2005), to evaluate the difference in moral judgements among students who violate disciplinary codes (comparison group) and those who do not violate disciplinary codes (control group) indicated that after the data was collected from the subjects of the study and evaluated, the code violators had a mean difference of 5.4468 whiles the non-code violators had a mean difference of 5.4468 concluding that the difference between the group means was not statistically significant at $\alpha = .05$.

48

Hence there was no difference among students who violated and those do not violate disciplinary codes when it comes to their moral judgements.

On the other hand, Thompson (2010), in his study on, '*The moral judgement of students violating a senior high school disciplinary codes'* and as part of the requirements in testing his hypothesis if there was a difference in the moral judgement of students violating disciplinary codes and those do not violate disciplinary codes concluded that the findings showcased a significant difference (p=0.001) in terms of the moral judgement scores between code violators and those who do not violate since the mean score for those who do not violate was 31.58 whiles those who violate had a mean score of 26.13 indicating that the means for each group differed by 5.45 points. Hence, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in moral judgement among students who violated disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes.

The differences in Moral Reasoning among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes

In a study, '*Moral reasoning among Kuwaiti Adolescents'* by Khaled (2008), he found out that there was no gender difference among these Kuwaiti adolescences when it comes to their moral reasoning in terms of violating disciplinary codes. In support of the findings by Khaled (2008), Oranthikal (2013), in his studies with 14 students as his subjects (8 boys and 6 girls), concluded that there is no proof in this study to show that there is a statistically significant difference in the moral reasoning among males and females when it comes to going contrary to disciplinary codes in a school. In addition, Gupta and Puja (2010) in their studies on the "*Moral Judgment*

Ability of Pre-Adolescent Children (9-11 Years) in Public Schools" have shown that moral reasoning in women and men also focuses on various topics and concerns. While women frequently express a care perspective and men a justice standpoint, the gender disparity is not mutually exclusive, nor are the two orientations outright. Thus, there is no statistically significant difference among the genders.
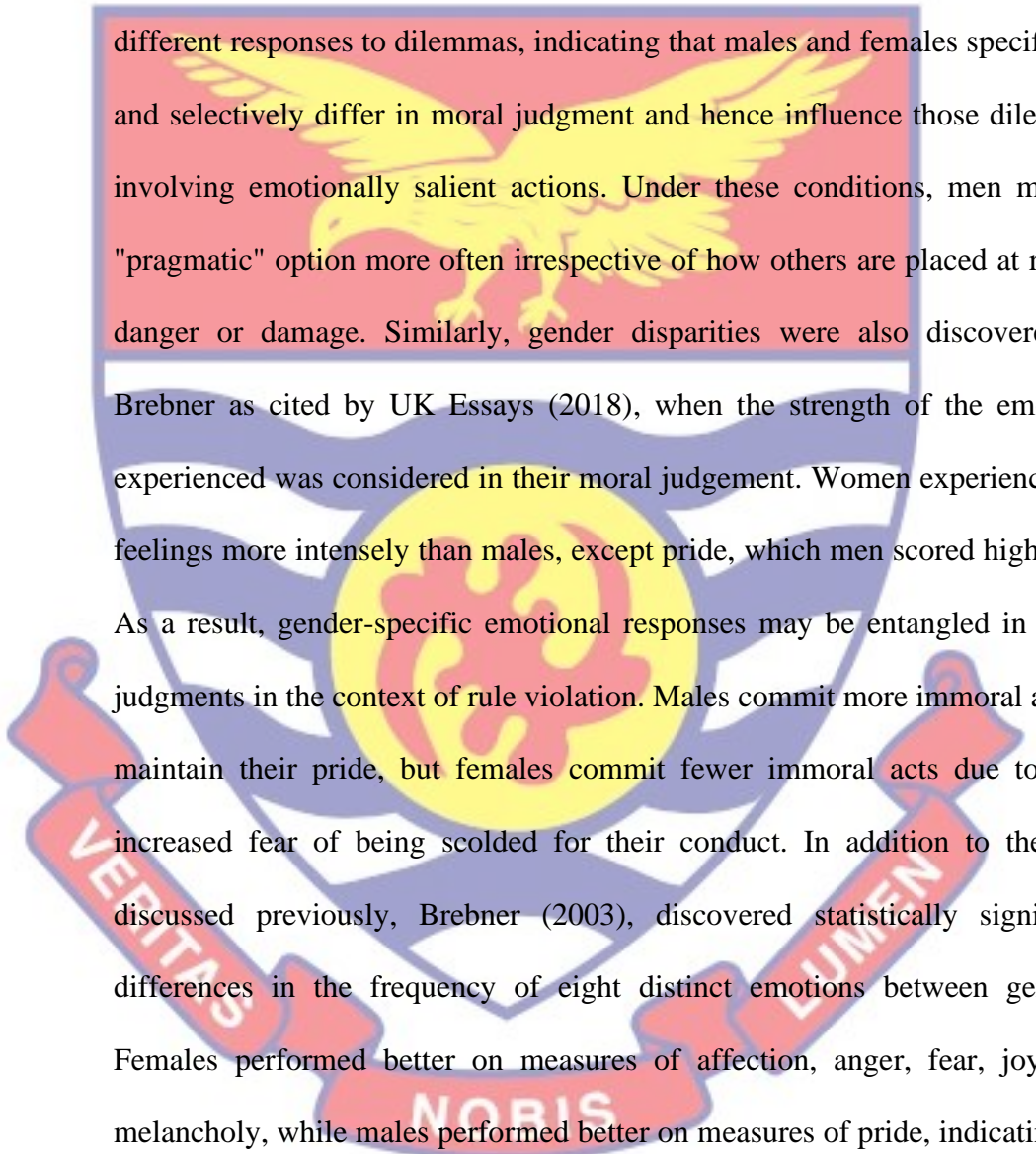
On the other hand, in a study undertaken by Beller and Stoll (1995), and Gardner and Janelle (2002), as cited by the UK Essays (2018), they argued that when males are compared to females in terms of their moral reasoning, both young and adult males' score much lower with larger levels of aggression viewed as valid behaviour. In addition, Boardley and Kavussanu (2007), as cited by UK Essays (2018), reported that males significantly have lower levels of moral reasoning as compared to females, indicating a significant difference with regards to moral reasoning when it comes to gender.

The differences in Moral Judgement among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes

Walker (1984), realised in his studies that there were no consistent gender differences in the stages at which people were scored when responding to Kohlberg's dilemmas rather he believed that the moral judgement of males and females is more similar than different. Similarly, in a current study by Pangat (2019) on, '*Moral Judgement of Secondary School Students Concerning Their Socio-Economic Status and Parental Behaviour',* he realized that the mean score difference for males was 69.10 with a standard deviation of 8.950 whiles that of the females was 70.21 with a standard

deviation of 8.813 and a value of 0.812 indicating there is no significant difference between the moral judgement of females and males.

On the contrary, Fumagalli, Ferrucci, Mameli, Marcegila, Mrakic-Sposta, and Priori (2010), studies on "*Gender-related differences in moral judgment*" discovered that moral judgment differs among genders based on the different responses to dilemmas, indicating that males and females specifically and selectively differ in moral judgment and hence influence those dilemmas involving emotionally salient actions. Under these conditions, men make a "pragmatic" option more often irrespective of how others are placed at risk of danger or damage. Similarly, gender disparities were also discovered by Brebner as cited by UK Essays (2018), when the strength of the emotions experienced was considered in their moral judgement. Women experienced all feelings more intensely than males, except pride, which men scored higher on. As a result, gender-specific emotional responses may be entangled in moral judgments in the context of rule violation. Males commit more immoral acts to maintain their pride, but females commit fewer immoral acts due to their increased fear of being scolded for their conduct. In addition to the data discussed previously, Brebner (2003), discovered statistically significant differences in the frequency of eight distinct emotions between genders. Females performed better on measures of affection, anger, fear, joy, and melancholy, while males performed better on measures of pride, indicating the significant difference in moral judgement among genders when it comes to the violation of codes.

Table 1: Summary of the Studies Reviewed

Author(s)	Year	Title	Study Type of Research
Oranthinkal	2013	The stages or levels of moral reasoning among students who violated disciplinary codes	Quantitative
Asare-Danso	2018	Philosophical and psychological foundations to religious and moral education	Quantitative
West *et al.*	2004	Cheating and Moral Judgment in the College Classroom: A Natural Experiment	Quantitative
Nwosu *et al.*	2018	Moral judgements of Nigerian secondary school students of examination malpractices: The pre-during-and-post examination scenarios	Quantitative
Biesera	2014	Moral Judgement of delinquents	Quantitative
Merryl & Taylor	2005	The Moral judgment of students violating a university disciplinary code	Quantitative
Thompson	2010	The moral judgement of students violating a senior high school disciplinary codes	Quantitative
Khaled	2008	Moral reasoning among Kuwaiti adolescents	Quantitative
Gupta & Puja	2010	Moral judgement ability of pre- adolescent children(9-11) of public schools	Quantitative
Walker	1984	Sex differences in the development of moral reasoning: A critical review.	Quantitative
Pangat	2019	Moral judgement of secondary school students	Quantitative
Fumagalli *et al.*	2010	Gender-related differences in moral judgement	Quantitative

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Chapter Summary

The study's literature review was discussed in this chapter. The chapter began by clarifying the theories and principles used in the analysis. The study employed first, the Piaget's theory of moral development. The study also utilized Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theory. Literature was re-examined on the various concepts in the chapter. Finally, this section addressed related literature on moral reasoning, and moral judgements among students who violated disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes as well as the differences among male and female students who violate disciplinary codes when it has to do with their level of moral reasoning and moral judgement.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter presents the methods for the study. These methods and approaches are under sub-sections such as: these sub-sections included: research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, pilot testing of the instrument, sources of data, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Research Paradigm

Research is largely informed by a philosophical assumption, which in turn is further influenced by the research problem being studied, the audience of the study, and the personal experiences of the researcher. As observed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhil (2016), the term research paradigm, often referred to as study philosophy, is a collection of beliefs and assumptions about data formation. A researcher's beliefs frame the use of a strong qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approach in their study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Saunders et al (2016), listed five major philosophies that have shaped social science research over the years: critical realism, interpretivism, positivism, postmodernism and pragmatism. Hence, this study used that of the positivist paradigm.

Saunders et al. (2016) noted that positivism is the philosophical system that holds topics that can be scientifically tested and hence generalise the findings. Therefore, positivists emphasize the importance of research procedures that would lead to the generation of facts that are not influenced by

human interpretation. With the positivism paradigm, the researcher was able to collect quantitative data from students in the junior high schools to address the stated research questions using standardized tools such as the questionnaire. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012), further presupposed that quantitative research normally tests theories by thoroughly examining the relationship between variables that can be analysed statistically. These researchers report that using quantitative research helps to answer questions between variables to explain, predict and control them. With the same approach, the researcher worked under this notion of objectivity. This was proposed on the belief that there is an objective reality to be observed by significant others for its existence and features. Finally, the choice of this paradigm helped the researchers obtain a valid and reliable outcome that enabled them to make accurate generalizations about the population.

Research Approach

The study approach implemented by the researcher in this study was the quantitative approach. Patel and Davidson (2003), stated that quantitative research comprises measurement of data collection and statistical processing of the data. In addition, Bryman and Bell (2003), explained that quantitative research offers some gains to the researcher more than qualitative research in terms of administration, time and cost, no interviewer inconsistency, the absence of interviewer effect or convenience for respondents. Quantitative research is inexpensive compared to qualitative research.

The quantitative approach has been considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect information through structured collection processes based on extremely standardized analysis tools and precise research

55

concepts and associated variables (Zickmund, 2000). Quantitative testing is inexpensive when opposed to qualitative analysis. On the other hand, quantitative research also has drawbacks that ignore a very important human aspect, such as the respondent's emotions, behaviour and feelings.

Research Design

A research design according to Akhtar (2016), is the general framework of every research which serves as a "glue" since it helps to put together the various components in research work. In short, it is a detailed map for proposed research work by helping fulfil the purpose and to answer questions that have been identified. The success of any study will depend on the type of research design adopted, so it is vital to determine the type of data, the method of collecting data, and the type of sampling to be used in a study. In an attempt to select the sample size from the general population for the study, the researcher adopted the causal-comparative design (ex-post facto) to assess the moral judgement and moral reasoning among JHS students violating disciplinary codes.

According to Salkind (2021), ex-post facto is a type of research design that helps to study a situation after the event has occurred without any interference from the researcher. The decision to use an ex-post facto design occurs when the study is non-experimental, making it difficult to control certain variables, especially when it has to do with examining thoroughly their future impact on a dependent variable (Sharma, 2019). This is to say that the researcher sought to determine a presumed relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable after the situation had occurred by comparing two or more groups of individuals. The Ex-post facto design

helps to give a great sense of direction when conducting experimental research which is more expensive, not practical and when the independent variable is said to lie beyond the control of the researcher.

Population

A population has been described as including all elements within the reach of a survey and from which the study selects a representative sample (Dadi-Klutse, 2016). In terms of some combination of geography and demography, a research population is sometimes specified (Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). Hence, the population is the structure formed from a mass of fragments that meet an established set of criteria.

This study was conducted among JHS students violating disciplinary codes in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The target population for the study included all JHS students violating disciplinary codes in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The accessible population for the study was made up of all public JHS students who violated disciplinary codes in the basic schools within Cape Coast. JHS students were selected for this study because it appears that the various stages of moral development as propounded by Piaget and Kohlberg explains that this category of people with their ages are expected to able to reason morally and to make the right moral judgement but instead they are going contrary to what expected of them. Hence, the researcher decided to include them in the study so as to find out why they do what they do.

Sample Size

Singleton and Straits (2010) explained that a sample of human respondents is studied to get a better understanding of an entire population for the aim of generalizing the results reached. They further argued that the

57

selected sample includes individuals from different age groups, sex, social class, regions and others. The sample size of every study could be influenced by the research paradigm directing the study as well as that of the inherent feature of the target population. (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

In this case, when the researcher was selecting the sample size, the researcher took into account these two main factors stipulated by Tashakkori & Teddlie (2010). The majority of researchers make use of quantitative statistical methods in deciding on the appropriate sample size to be used for their studies to reduce sampling error (Sarantakos, 2013). In an attempt to avoid these errors, the researcher used the formula proposed by Yamane (1967) as cited by Otabor and Obahiagbon (2016) in determining the right sample size to be used for the study. The formula is stated below:

$n = N/1 + N(e)^2$

Where n= sample size

N= population size and

E= level of precision/margin of error.

The target population of the students for the study comprised of students in junior high schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis from 123 schools with a total population of 12,208. The accessible population was made up of all public junior high school students from 64 schools with a total population of 8,538. Since the sample size is to be obtained from the accessible population, the following explains how it was calculated using the stated formula by Yamen (1967);

$n = N/1 + N(e)2$

$8538/1 + 8538(0.05)2$

58

8538/1+8538(0.0025)

8538/ 1+21.345

8538/22.345

= 382

Sampling Technique

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) described sampling as the step-by-step way to select a few interviewees from an expanded population to be used to determine the prevalence of the data of interest to one population. It should be noted that a sample usually depends on the size of the people, the available resources, and the degree of uniformity and the method of sampling. In support of the assertion made by Leedy and Ormrod (2010), Garson (2012) argues that sampling is extremely necessary as it is not feasible to sample all population members in virtually every case. Also, Arnold and Randall (2010) stipulated that in sampling, the respondents are chosen in such a way that they reflect the overall population as much as possible.

Sampling includes the process of choosing a part of the population to represent the whole population. In this study, the multi-stage sampling method was used. 10 schools were chosen out of the 64 public schools using the simple random method specifically the lottery method with replacement. Also, students who happened to violate disciplinary codes were purposively selected after the researcher had made formal visits to all the 10 public junior high schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis earlier to find out from the head teachers the number of students that have been identified to mostly violate school rules. This was done by going through the document known as the punishment or blue book/positive discipline book.

59

Finally, the convenience sampling procedure was used for those who do not violate disciplinary codes.

Table 2: Selected Public Junior High Schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis and their Number of Enrolments

Names of selected public schools	Total number of students	No. of students who are VDN– purposive sampling	No. of students who are NVDN- convenience sampling
Ola Girls JHS	84	20	20
St. Augustine Practice JHS	132	20	20
St. Nicholas Anglican JHS	469	20	20
Dunwell Methodist JHS	129	20	20
Kwaprow M/A JHS	277	20	20
Church of Christ M/S JHS	95	20	20
Bakatsir Methodist PRY/JHS	90	20	20
Cape Coast Presbyterian JHS	232	20	20
Cape Coast A.M.E. Zion PRY/JHS	127	20	20
Ayifua St. Mary's School	209	20	20
Total		**200**	**200**

Source: Cape Coast Metro JHS Data (2020)

The study ascertained the demographic information of the sampled respondents for the study. The various demographic information investigated about the respondents included the class of the respondents, the age and the gender of the respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of total sample by classes

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
JHS 1	127	33.2
JHS 2	140	36.6
JHS 3	115	30.1
Total	**382**	**100.0**

Source: Field survey (2021)

The researcher realised that from Table 3, 127 students selected as part of the sample (382) were found in JHS 1, 140 were in JHS2 and 115 in JHS 3.

Age of Respondents

The age of respondents was thought to be important to the study, therefore the researcher sought to establish the mean age of the respondents. The average age of respondents in this study was approximately 14 years (SD = 1.43). This is considered significant since the majority of students in JHS are between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

Table 4: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	183	47.9
Female	199	52.1
Total	**382**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey (2021)

From Table 4, the researchers found out that more than half of the respondents were females, representing (52.1%) of the total sample size, while

the other (47.9 %) represented the males who were also respondents to the study.

Students Violating Disciplinary Codes

To attain the purpose of the study, there was the need to identify the number of students who violated disciplinary codes as compared to students who did not violate disciplinary codes in school. Thus, Table 5 shows the number of students who violated disciplinary codes in school as against those who did not.

Table 5: Students Violating Disciplinary Codes

Code violation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Violators	193	50.5
Non-violators	189	49.5
Total	**382**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey (2021)

It is clear that from Table 5, most of the participants (50.5%) violated disciplinary codes at school. However, those who were reported to not violate disciplinary codes at school were almost as many as those who violated disciplinary codes (49.5%). From this, it can be stated that whereas some students violate disciplinary codes in school, a slim majority have problems adhering to disciplinary codes.

Source of Data

The primary source and secondary data were used for this research. Thus, the data collected was obtained from the specified target group related to this study. Ajay (2017), defined primary data as the first-hand information obtained by the researcher either through questionnaire, interview or survey

62

which is normally authentic and factual in nature as well as used to serve as an evidence base to confirm or disconfirm the research hypotheses and to support research claims. Secondary data, on the other hand, is explained by Ajay (2017), as the second hand of information which already exists and it is easy as well as fast to come by through journals, websites, dissertations, thesis, government publications or articles. Both sources of data are key elements in the research work due to the degree of originality and relevance it has to the study.

Data Collection Instrument

A self-report data collection instrument that consists of questions concerning the study's objectives and hypotheses to be answered by the respondents was administered to the target group and collected after two weeks. This instrument provided with certainty high reliability in terms of collecting data as well as making accurate generalizations in terms of the findings as stipulated by (Plano & Badiee, 2017). Creswell, Plano and Vicki (2011) emphasised, however, that the questionnaire is not versatile in that it becomes difficult to adjust the categories of data collected once a questionnaire has been designed and distributed. A questionnaire was employed for this research since it is a self-reported measure that ensures confidentiality and hence is more likely to elicit the precise response to the respondents' information required.

The instrument included closed-ended questions that required respondents to select from a predetermined list of possibilities or options. The closed-ended questions included a seven-point Likert scale, which is more useful when it is appropriate to test behaviour or other phenomena of interest

in a spectrum, with only two choices or multi-option questions, where multiple answers will be available to choose from (Brace, 2018). The instrument was made up of 3 sections. Section A consisted of demographic information about the students. The second section (Section B) was made up of items concerning the moral reasoning of JHS students who violate disciplinary codes, and finally, the third section included items concerning the moral judgement of JHS students who violated disciplinary codes.

The Machiavelli IV scale (Mach-IV) was used for the study. This instrument is a three-dimensional 20-item self-report 7 Likert-scale personality survey developed by Christie and Geis (1970) as cited by Liang (2017) to study changes in human behaviour based on their moral reasoning. The scale is scored based on agreement or disagreement where Strongly Disagree (SD)=1, Disagree (D)=2, Slightly Disagree (SD)=3, Neutral (N)=4, Slightly Agree (SA)=5, Agree (A)=6, Strongly Agree (SA)=7. The scale measures three dimensions, which include tactics (9 items, .70), views (9 items, .61) and morality (2 items, .70).

Also, a written assessment test for moral judgement, the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT2), was part of the instrument used for the study. This instrument was designed by Rest, Narvaez, Thomas and Bebeau (1999) to measure the moral judgement stages stated by Kohlberg (1970). The DIT2 helped the researcher gather information with regards to moral judgement from students who responded to 12 issues statements on 4 dilemma stories. Participants were asked to rank their responses in order of importance. The scale has a reliability coefficient of .70.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument's reliability was established in several ways. First, the instrument's statements were kept brief and precise, while also being easily understood by the participants. Finally, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the test items' reliability and internal consistency. Thus, the researcher determined that the instrument's overall reliability for internal consistency of the items for the main study which was.750, while the reliability for measures of moral reasoning and moral judgment was .692 and .673, respectively, as noted in Appendix E. It was also realised that the reliability coefficient of the pilot test was .720. This then explains why if a Cronbach Alpha value of .70 is recorded for internal consistency of a measuring instrument then that instrument in indeed considered reliable and appropriate for measuring the construct under consideration (Pallant, 2016).

Validity of the Instrument

Testing for the validity of a data collection instrument is a very key consideration when choosing the appropriate instrument for data collection (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Several measures were put in place to ensure the validity of the instrument since Saunders, et al. (2016) argued that before an instrument can be considered genuine, it must be dependable, which implies that it must be consistently repeatable; and that once this is done, the instrument may be evaluated to see whether it is what it professes to be. Hence, to establish the instruments' validity, the researcher studied the pertinent instrument that served as proof and substantiated the responses obtained through the questionnaire, with relevance decided by the nature of their study topic and their judgment (Saunders, et al., 2009). Additionally, the

65

created questionnaire was reviewed, corrected, and approved by the project supervisor before distribution to the respondents.

Pilot Testing of Instrument

The pilot testing of the instrument aided the researcher to determine the quantity of time that was needed for the main study as well as determine the actual number of research assistants that were needed to help in the collecting of data activities. Also, the pilot testing exercise aided the researcher to locate, make corrections and get rid of items that were not showing practical and sensible ideas of what is to be achieved and finally, to also avoid any item that was opened to more than one interpretation that will be produced from the responses during the exercise. The instrument was pilot tested on 40 students each in Bronyibima M/A Basic School and Elmina Methodist JHS respectively within the KEEA (Komenda, Edina, Eguafo and Abirem) municipal at Elmina, because it has similar characteristics to that of the selected sample.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher gathered primary and secondary data for the study. The primary data were extracted from students and teachers from the various schools while the secondary data were from journal articles, theses, databases and publications.

Permission to undertake this study was initially requested from the University of Cape Coast's Institutional Review Board (IRB) by submitting my proposal, instrument and the informed consent form for critical examination and approval. Furthermore, a preliminary letter was collected from the Department of Basic Education and presented to the various heads of

the schools, indicating the purpose of the study and what kind of data was needed.

As part of the preparations towards the administration of the questionnaires, two graduates from the Department of Basic Education with abreast knowledge and skills in research were selected and given a three-day intense workshop exposing them to the objectives and purpose of the study as well as thoroughly discussing each item on the instrument for a better understanding. Also, these two assistants were coached on the data collection procedures concerning the questionnaire. These assistants were exposed to ethical issues related to research, such as the establishment of rapport, obtaining the permission of respondents, and also informing them of the voluntary nature of the whole activity.

Formal visits were made to the various heads of schools for introduction and seeking of permission as well as to explain to them the purpose of the study, and for allowing this study to take place in their schools and the related ethical issues involved. When the heads of the schools gave their approval, then arrangements with regards to time and days that favoured both parties were scheduled. The respondents were required a maximum of 30 minutes to respond to the items. The questionnaire was administered on the 20th of July, 2021, and the whole process was completed on the 15th of August, 2021, with a 95% response rate recorded since the 400 questionnaires administered were not all returned accordingly.

The issue of confidentiality and anonymity was thoroughly discussed with the various heads, teachers and students by indicating that their names were not needed as they answered the questionnaires. The respondents could decide

whether to take part in the exercise or not, as well as be assured that they could leave if they wanted to, since they would not be forced to partake.

The ethical issues concerning research were taken into consideration so that the results, findings and conclusions obtained were accurate and reliable.

Data Processing and Analysis

Descriptive statistics help to summarize data collected from an entire population or sample size of the population. It further helps to understand and describe the nature of data through the use of a measure of central tendencies such as the mean, mode, and median, as well as a measure of dispersion which deals with the standard deviation, rages, and variance. The descriptive statistical tools were used in analysing the moral reasoning and moral judgement among students who violate disciplinary codes and those who do not in the Junior High Schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis as they were represented using the frequency tables as well indicating the frequencies and percentages. The closed-ended data collected was edited and coded to make sure there's accuracy in the responses. With regards to the hypotheses, inferential statistics were used to analyse them. An independent sample was used to determine the significant differences between the two unrelated groups. Thus, students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes, and in order to use this effectively, there were underlying assumptions that were tested to ensure that they were met. In particular, the variables involved must be continuous and categorical in nature, the data must be normally distributed, with equal homogeneity of variance, and then simple random samples from the population.

Chapter Summary

This chapter's purpose was to describe the procedures used to accomplish the study's objective. It has exposed the study design as well as the researcher's reasoning for selecting such a design. The population, as well as the study's sample size and sampling methodology, had all been thoroughly discussed. Also, the chapter focused on the procedures for collecting data and the equipment used to collect data for analysis purposes. Finally, the chapter has provided sufficient information about data analysis and adhering to an ethical perspective. The fourth chapter, which follows, presents the findings of the collected and analysed data.

69
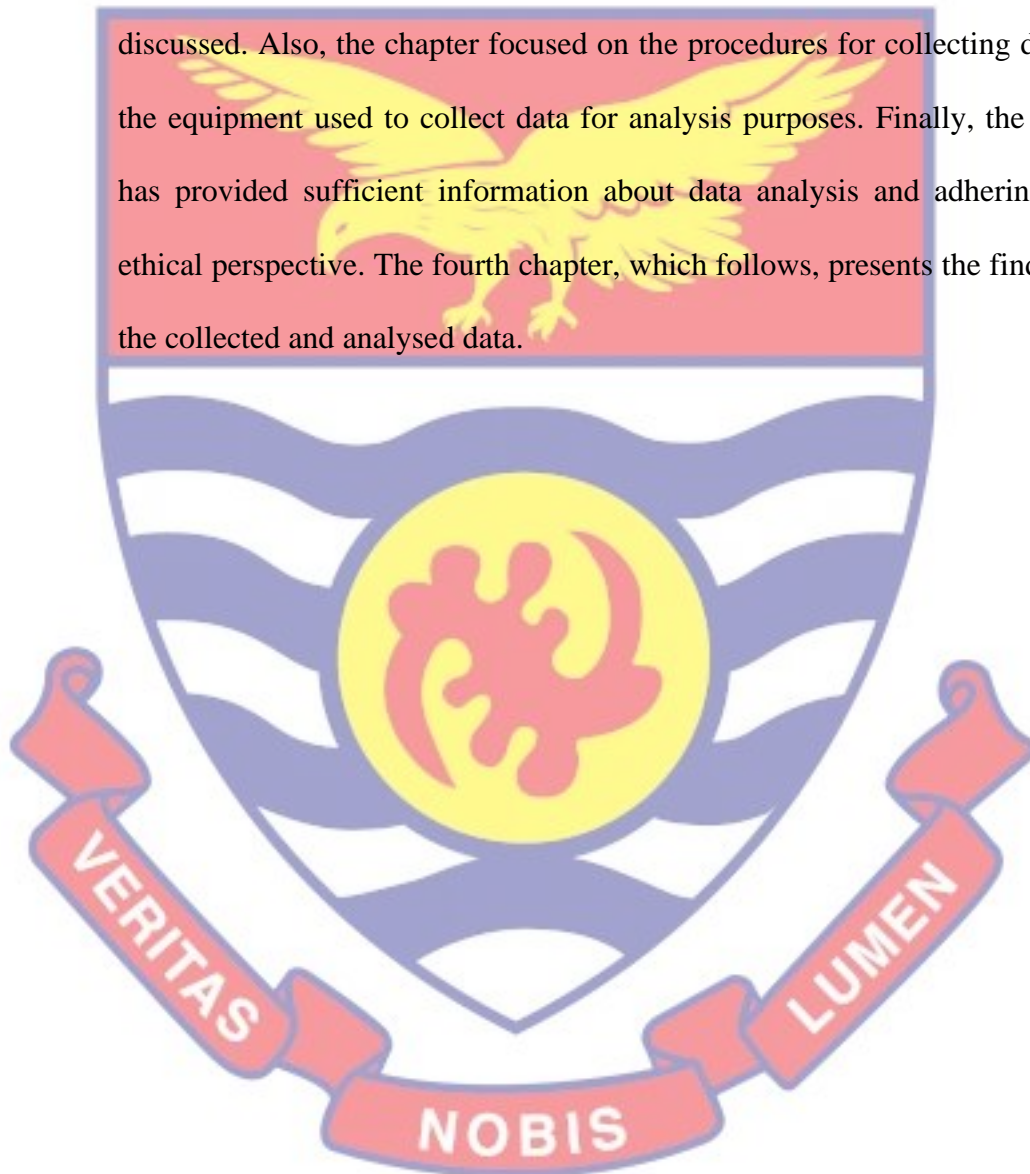
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results and discussions analysis of field data. This chapter ascertains the moral reasoning and moral judgement among junior high school students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Again, this chapter determines the differences in moral reasoning and moral judgement among junior high school students who violate disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes. Furthermore, this chapter helps to explain the differences in moral reasoning and moral judgement among male and female junior high school students who violated disciplinary codes. The statistical tools employed here include frequencies, percentages, and the independent sample test. The results are presented in tables to enable accurate readings of the results. In keeping up with the study's purpose, this chapter discusses the study's primary research objectives which were established in chapter one.

With a target of 382 respondents, all individuals participated in the study, giving a 100% response rate. The results from the data analyzed have been presented. It covers the results from the data analyses on the research questions, and results from the hypothesis tested. Tables have been presented to support the results of the findings.

Results of Main Data

Analysis of Data on Research Questions

The study's two research questions have been addressed using the findings from the data analysis.

Research Question 1: What is the level of moral reasoning among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis?

The first research question was to find the moral reasoning abilities of junior high school children who breach disciplinary standards in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse data for this research question. The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Level of Moral Reasoning among JHS students violating codes Cape Coast

Moral reasoning	Score range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	20.0 – 45.0	-	-
Moderate	46.0 – 95.0	157	81.3
High	96 and above	36	18.7
Total		**193**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey (2021).

From Table 6, it can be discerned that more than two-thirds (81.3%) of the respondents in the study had a moderate level of moral reasoning. A high level of moral reasoning was reported among 36 (18.7%) of the respondents. However, none of the respondents reported a low level of moral reasoning. Based on the results, it is apparent that while many students who violated disciplinary codes in schools reported a satisfactory level of moral reasoning, just a handful demonstrated a high level of moral reasoning. That perhaps means that since most of the students were seen to have a moderate and high level of moral reasoning, none had a lower level of moral reasoning. It is then expected of them to act appropriately, but hence, they end up acting contrary to stated expectations.

71

Research Question 2: What is the level of moral judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis?

Research question two aimed to investigating the level of moral judgement of JHS students who violate disciplinary codes in the Cape Coast Metropolis. To analyse the data for this research question, the mean and standard deviations were used. Moral judgment was classified as low, moderate, and high. Thus, the results were to show the number of students with poor moral judgment as compared to those with good moral judgement. The results of the analysis of the data on students' moral judgement are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Moral Judgement of Participants

Moral Judgement	Score range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	48.0 – 80.0	-	-
Moderate	81.0 – 160.0	94	48.7
High	161 and above	99	51.3
Total		**193**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey (2021)

As illustrated in Table 7, a little over half (51.3%) of the respondents in the study had a high level of moral judgment. Also, almost half (48.7%) of the participants demonstrated a moderate level of moral judgement. Interestingly, none of the students who violated disciplinary codes demonstrated a low level of moral judgment. By implication, it means that while many students who violated disciplinary codes have relatively satisfactory levels of moral judgement and thus can tell right from wrong,

72

which perhaps means that since most of the students were seen to have a moderate and high level of moral judgement, whilst none had a lower level of moral judgement, it is then expected of them to act appropriately, but then they tend to act otherwise.

Research Hypothesis 1

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in moral reasoning among JHS students who violate disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis

An independent sample t-test was used to find out the mean differences in moral reasoning between students who breach disciplinary codes and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Students (those who violated disciplinary regulations and those who did not) served as the independent variable, whilst moral reasoning served as the dependent variable. Tables 7 and 8 and the next sections detail the group statistics and t-test results for independent samples.

Table 8: Group Statistics for Students

Student	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Violate	193	84.50	12.90
Non-violate	189	84.24	13.15

Source: Field Survey (2021)

From Table 8, it can be discerned that the number of students who violate disciplinary codes (84.50, 12.90) was 193 in total, whilst students who do not violate disciplinary codes (84.24, 13.15) were 189, which clearly indicates that those who violate disciplinary codes are more than the non-violators.

73

Table 9: Differences in Moral Reasoning based on Violators and Non-Violators

Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference
.924	.191	380	.849	.254
	.855	1.242	379.39	.254

Source: Field Survey (2021)

The outcome of the independent sample t-test is shown in Table 9. With equal variances assumed (p=.924), the independent t-test tables demonstrated no significant difference in the means of students who breach disciplinary rules and those who did not violate disciplinary codes for moral reasoning. From the table, t (380) =.191, p >.05, given that p>.05, this indicates that there is no discernible difference in the moral reasoning of students who breach disciplinary regulations and those who did not. The null hypothesis was not rejected when p value was at .05.

Research Hypothesis 2

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in moral judgement among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

To establish the mean differences that existed in moral judgement among students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The independent variables were students (violating disciplinary codes and non-violators of disciplinary codes), whilst the dependent variable was on moral judgement. Table 10 and 11 and others show the group statistics and results from the independent sample t-test results respectively.

74

Table 10: Group Statistics for Students

Student	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Violate	193	144.08	15.99
Non-violate	189	142.03	16.37

Source: Field Survey (2021)

It can be discerned from Table 10 that the number of students who violated disciplinary codes (144.08, 15.99) was 193 in total, whereas students who did not violate disciplinary codes (142.03, 16.37) were 189, which clearly indicated that those who violated disciplinary codes were more than the non-violators. Hence, it can be concluded that, though the school is playing its role as one of the moral agents in the moral development of students, the other moral agents such as the home, religious bodies, and communities are not doing their best.

Table 11: Differences in Moral Judgement based on Violators and Non-Violators

Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference
.855	1.242	380	.215	2.06
	1.241	379.25	.215	2.06

Source: Field Survey (2021)

The independent sample t-test result is illustrated in Table 11. With equal variances assumed (p=.855), the findings from the independent t-test tables indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes in terms of moral judgment. From the table, t (380)

75

= 1.24, p greater than.05. Since p>.05, there is no discernible difference in moral judgment between pupils who violated and those who did not break school-based moral rules. The null hypothesis was not rejected when the p value was greater than.05.

Research Hypothesis 3

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in moral reasoning among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

To determine the mean differences in moral reasoning between male and female students in the Cape Coast Metropolis, an independent sample t-test was used. Gender (male and female) was used as an independent variable, whereas moral reasoning was used as a dependent variable. Tables 12 and 13 and the following sections summarize the group statistics and the independent samples t-test results, respectively.

Table 12: Group Statistics for Students

Gender	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Male	183	83.94	11.75
Female	199	84.77	14.09

Source: Field Survey (2021)

From Table 12, it was realised that the number of males who violated disciplinary codes with regard to their moral reasoning (83.94, 11.75) was 183 in total, whilst female students who violated disciplinary codes (84.77, 14.09) was 199, which clearly indicated that female students who violated disciplinary codes were more often than male students who violated them.

76

Table 13: Differences in Moral Reasoning based on Gender

Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference
.021	-.622	380	.535	-.829
	-.626	376.44	.531	-.829

Source: Field Survey (2021)

The independent sample t-test result is shown in Table 13. Without assuming equal variances based on Levene's test for equality of variance (p=.021), the findings of the independent t-test tables indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the means of male and female students in terms of moral reasoning. From the table, t (376.4) = -.626, p > .05. Since p >.05, it shows that there is moral reasoning among students regardless of their gender. With p > .05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Hypothesis 4

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in moral judgements among male and female JHS students who violated disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

To investigate the mean differences that existed in moral judgements in relation to the gender of students within the Cape Coast Metropolis, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The independent variable was gender (male and female), while the dependent variable was moral judgements. Table 14 and 15 and below show the group statistics and results from the independent sample t-test respectively.

77

Table 14: Group Statistics for Students

Gender	N	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Male	183	142.52	15.59
Female	199	143.57	16.75

Source: Field Survey (2021)

From Table 14, it was realised that the number of males who violated disciplinary codes with regard to their moral judgement (142.54, 15.59) was 183 in total, whilst female students who violated disciplinary codes (143.57, 16.75) was 199, which clearly indicates that female students who violate disciplinary codes more often than male students who violate them.

Table 15: Differences in Moral Judgement based on Gender

Levene's Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference
.227	-.632	380	.528	-1.049
	-.634	397.940	.527	-1.049

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 15 shows the result, from the independent sample t-test conducted. With equal variances assumed based on Levene's test for equality of variance (p=.227), the results from the independent t-test tables has shown that there is no significant difference between the means of male and female students with respect to moral judgements. From the table, $t(380) = -.632$, $p > .05$. Since $p > .05$, it is shown that there are moral judgements among students regardless of their gender. With $p > .05$, the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

Discussions

Thorough discussions were done on the findings on the moral reasoning of JHS students who violated disciplinary codes. Furthermore, discussions were also held on the findings on moral reasoning among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes. In addition, discussions were also done on the findings on the hypothesis based on the differences in moral judgement among JHS students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes. Again, there were thorough discussions made on the hypothesis on the difference in moral reasoning among male and female JHS students who violated disciplinary codes and then finally, discussions were made on the findings of the difference in moral judgement among male and female JHS students who violated disciplinary codes.

Results

Research Question 1: Moral Reasoning among JHS Students who Violate Disciplinary Codes

The first research question sought to examine the level of moral reasoning among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The findings revealed that most JHS students who tend to violate disciplinary codes, had a moderate level of moral reasoning whereas a few had a high level of moral reasoning. These findings tend to be somewhat inconsistent with the findings of Orathinkal (2013), which explained that students who violated disciplinary codes were said to have a lower level of moral reasoning (amoral stage). With this current study, the researcher finds out that students who violated disciplinary codes were seen to have a moderate level of moral reasoning which is likened to that of Piaget's heteronomous

79

stage of moral reasoning. Thus, though the findings of this current study revealed that most students who violated codes were seen to have a moderate level of moral reasoning but then it appears that the traits of the amoral stage of moral reasoning were still traceable in these students, who were unable to differentiate between what is right and wrong, which turns out that they end up breaking laid-down rules because their cognitive domain cannot reason about issues with moral dimensions. On the other hand, though they also had the traits of the second and third level of moral reasoning, which is the heteronomous and autonomous stage of moral reasoning, where they know that rules exist and when broken will incur some form of punishment, they somewhat end up violating rules and regulations.

Oranthinkal (2013), clearly stated that students who violated rules did so because they had a lower level of reasoning, but then the current study results revealed that those students who broke rules had a moderate ability to reason morally. Also, these inconsistencies could be a result of different cultural contexts or settings, sets of respondents, design for the study, as well as the instruments or tools used in the previous and current studies. Irrespective of inconsistencies, much attention must be given to these students who tend to violate disciplinary codes when it comes to their holistic development, as explained by Thornberg (2010). In Thornberg's (2010) Cognitive Theory, he explained that the relationships between children and the environment help them to develop social awareness in three areas, which include the moral domain, the conventional domain, and the personal domain.

Research Question 2: Moral Judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes

The second research question sought to examine the level of moral judgement among JHS students who violate disciplinary codes in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The findings revealed that half of the students who violated disciplinary codes had a relatively high level of moral judgement and the others a moderate level of moral judgement. In the previous findings by West, Ravenscroft and Shrader (2004), Johnson and Ornelius (2013) as cited by Nwosu, Nwasor and Nezieanya (2018) revealed that students who tended to violate disciplinary codes were in no way affected by the way they judge moral issues.

With the findings of this current study, these students are found within the second level of moral reasoning as propounded by Kohlberg, which is the conventional stage where individuals within this category tend to also violate stipulated rules just like those at the pre-conventional stage. According to Asare-Danso (2018), at the conventional stage, individuals equally break rules, and that is because their needs are not met, just like at the pre-conventional stage. It is clear that they had not completely abandoned the first level of moral reasoning, which is the pre-conventional stage in which individuals in this category are very egocentric (selfish) and will only do the right thing to avoid punishment or to receive something in return. Whereas the second level has some level of egocentrism but then tries to at least consider others.

These inconsistencies identified could be due to the different cultural contexts or settings, respondents, design as well as the instrument or tool used for the studies. It has also been realised that the findings of the previous

81

studies explained that though the students who violated rules were not affected by their moral judgements, they knew rules existed and were to be upheld as well as known that going against them brings about serious repercussions yet they still went ahead to break rules. This current findings of this study also postulated that students who violated rules were said to be in the second stage of Kohlberg's theory were they ae believed to be able to do what is expected of them but still end up flouting the rules. Hence, much attention must be given to help students understand why rules exist or are made and the damaging effect it has on them and society when rules are violated or broken. Also, further studies must be conducted to reveal the other factors causing students to violate rules.

Hypothesis One: The differences in Moral Reasoning among JHS students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes

The first hypothesis sought to ascertain whether the differences in moral reasoning among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis and it was discovered that with equal variances assumed, the results from the independent- test revealed that there is no significant difference in the moral reasoning among students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes meaning that they reasoned at the same level.

These findings are inconsistent with Biesara (2014) in which his study concluded that most students who violated disciplinary codes were egocentric. In addition to egocentrism, another feature is that they were categorised under the pre-conventional stage of moral reasoning where their interest always is considered and if it is not met, they go contrary to what is expected of them

whilst those who did not violate disciplinary codes were found at the post-conventional stage level. In line with Asare-Danso (2018), and Biesara (2014) the post-conventional level is governed by trying to maintain good relationships with others as well as getting their approval, they try to do the right thing having the people they cherish at heart. Also, they become aware that societal orders exist as well as human needs and so when faced with a situation where there tends to be a conflict between societal orders and that of human needs which becomes a conflict situation making them reason carefully and to arrive at a well-informed decision which will bring about the greater good for all. Hence, these findings by Biesera (2014) indicated that there is indeed a significant difference in moral reasoning between students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes.

These inconsistencies identified could be due to the different cultural contexts or settings, respondents, design as well as the instrument or tool used for the studies. It could also be realized that since these students who happen to have a moderate and high level of both moral reasoning and moral judgement and thus, it is expected that they act appropriately but then are acting others could be as a result of other factors that were not considered in this study.

Hypothesis Two: The differences in Moral Judgement among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes

The second hypothesis of this study was to explore the differences in moral judgement among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The findings revealed that with equal variance assumed from the results from the independent t-test, there is no significant difference between the means of those who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes. These findings are consistent with the study by Merryl and Taylor (2005) which also indicated that there was no difference among students who violated disciplinary codes and those who did not violate disciplinary codes when it comes to their moral judgements.

On the other hand, Thompson (2010), in his study on "*The moral judgement of students violating senior high school disciplinary codes"* and as part of the requirements in testing his hypothesis that there was a significant difference (p=0.001) in terms of the moral judgement scores between code violators and those who did not violate the codes, concluded that the findings showcased a significant difference (p=0.001) in terms of the moral judgement scores between code violators and non-violators," since the mean score for those who did not violate was 31.58 while those who did not violated Hence, it indicated that there is a significant difference in moral judgement among students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes in the sense that those who violate disciplinary codes had a lower level making judgements which makes it impossible to make right moral judgement as compared to those who do not violate disciplinary codes since they have a higher level moral judgement where they will be able to make well informed decisions without breaking rules. These discrepancies in the findings of the previous studies and those of the current study could be as a result of different cultural contexts or settings, respondents, design, as well as the instrument or tool used for the study.

However, despite these discrepancies, it must be understood that all children progress through the various stages of moral judgement, and their ability to reason is linked to their ability to make moral judgements, as explained by Asare-Danso (2018). Hence, much attention must be given to them from the very start of their moral development journey since each child is unique and might actually develop at their own time.

Hypothesis Three: The differences in Moral Reasoning among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes

The third hypothesis of this study was to determine whether the differences in moral reasoning among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes and the findings of this current study concluded that with equal variance not assumed, the results from the independent t-test revealed that there is no significant difference in moral reasoning among males and females who violated disciplinary codes. In the same vein, in a study by Khaled (2008), he found out that there was no gender difference when it comes to their moral reasoning in terms of violating disciplinary codes. In support of the findings by Khaled (2008) and Oranthikal (2013), in his studies also concluded that there is no proof in this study to show that there is a statistically significant difference in the moral reasoning among males and females when it comes to going contrary to disciplinary codes in a school. Similarly, in a study by Gupta and Puja (2010), they argued that when males are compared to females in terms of their moral reasoning, there is no significant difference between the two.

Furthermore, the current study's findings are consistent with those of Gupta and Puja (2010), who found out that there is no statistically significant

85

difference between the genders when it comes to their moral reasoning. Also, Boardley and Kavussanu (2007), as cited by UK Essays (2018), reported that males significantly have lower levels of moral reasoning as compared to females, indicating a significant difference with regard to moral reasoning when it comes to gender.

The findings in the previous studies and those of the current study tend to be very consistent when it comes to the moral reasoning of males and females who violated disciplinary codes, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference.

However, though it is believed that both males and females progress at the same rate when it comes to moral development, according to Gilligan's theory of moral development as cited by Tsunematsu and Asai (2014), Kohlberg believed that there is a huge difference between males and females when it comes to judging moral issues, but then Gilligan reported that such a difference is not significant. Hence, these inconsistencies in the findings of the previous and current studies could be as a result of the different cultural contexts or settings, respondents, design as well as the instrument or tool used for the studies. Again, since these students who violate disciplinary codes in this current study have moderate and high level of moral reasoning and moral judgement then it can be said that they are to be able to moral reason appropriate and to make well informed decision when face by a moral dilemma but ten they rather act otherwise. This could also be as result of other factors not captured in this study being responsible for them acting as such.

Hypothesis Four: The differences in Moral Judgement among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes

The final hypothesis (hyp. 4) of this study was to find out whether there are differences in moral judgement among male and female JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female students who violated disciplinary codes. In line with this finding, Walker (1984), realised in his studies that there were no consistent gender differences in the stages at which people were scored when responding to Kohlberg's dilemmas. Similarly, in a current study by Pangat (2019), he realized that there is no significant difference between females and males when it comes to their moral judgement.

On the other hand, the current study was inconsistent with another previous study by Fumagalli, Ferrucci, Mameli, Marcegila, Mrakic-Sposta, and Priori (2010), where they discovered that moral judgments differ among gender based on the different responses from dilemmas indicating that males and females specifically and selectively differ in moral judgment. Again, Brebner as cited by UK Essays (2018) identified that there is a huge difference when it comes to the moral judgment of both males and females. In addition to the data discussed previously, Brebner (2003) discovered that there is statistically significant differences in moral judgement among genders when it comes to the violation of codes.

These inconsistencies in the findings of the previous and current studies could be as a result of the different cultural context or settings, respondents, design as well as the instrument or tool used for the

87

studies. Notwithstanding that in this current study, students who happen to violate disciplinary codes have moderate and high level of both moral reasoning and moral judgement as students who do not violate disciplinary codes which means that then they are to go by the stipulated rules but then they rather act in appropriately. This could be as a result of other factors not revealed in this study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on assessing the moral reasoning and moral judgement among JHS students who violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Furthermore, this chapter provided the findings and discussions which replicate the core study objectives. The first section of this chapter discussed the demographic characteristics of the sampled respondents which centred on the class of respondents, age and gender of respondents. Also, the second section of this section addressed the precise research objectives, which included the research questions and hypotheses of the study. Hence, the goals of these specific objectives were attained.

88
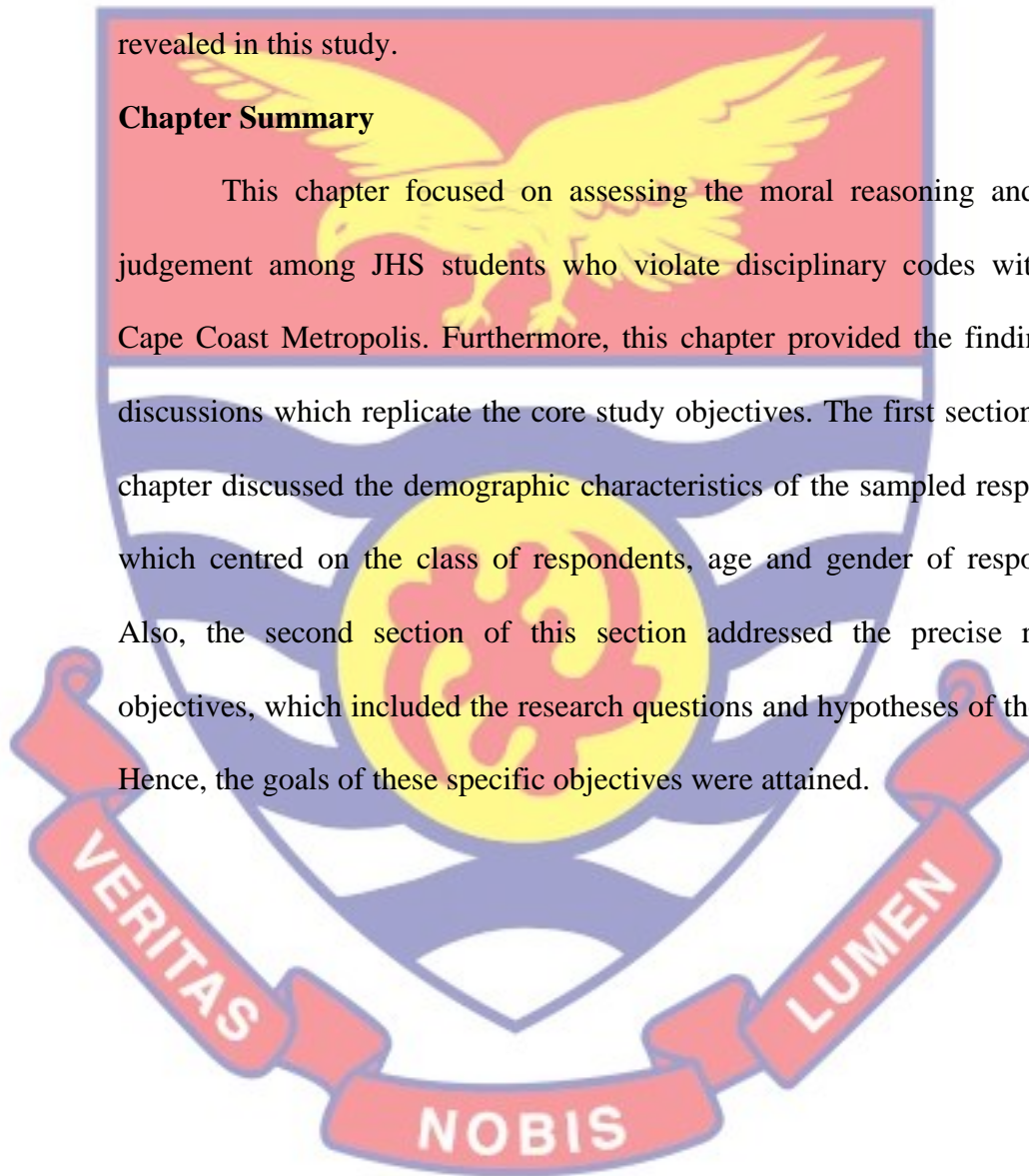
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for the study.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to assess the moral reasoning and moral judgement among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes. The study emphasised students in selected public junior high schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis. The schools were purposively selected based on the information the researcher had from the schools with the help of the head teachers in identifying those who violated disciplinary codes. The students who violated disciplinary codes were then selected using the simple random sampling technique, specifically the lottery method, with replacements based on the names of these students who violated disciplinary codes as recorded in the punishment or blue book. Furthermore, the others who did not violate were arbitrarily chosen. The study implemented a quantitative design and that of the ex-post facto approach. Subsequently, a questionnaire was designed and hence administered to 400 respondents, of which 382 were used for the study.

The study focused on six (6) objectives: assessing moral reasoning among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis; investigating moral judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis; determining the difference in moral reasoning among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis; finding

the difference in moral judgement among JHS students who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis; finding the difference in moral reasoning among male and female JHS students who violated With the objectives, the responses obtained from the respondents by the researcher were quantitatively analysed. Hence, the following key findings were attained and summarized according to the research objectives.

The first research question was to examine the moral reasoning among JHS students who violated disciplinary codes. In the findings, it was revealed that majority of the students, about 157 (81.3%), had a moderate level of moral reasoning, while the remaining about 36 (18.7%) were reported to have a high level of moral reasoning. Based on the results, it was indicated that students who violated disciplinary codes were in the category of those with a moderate and a high level of moral reasoning. This explains that though most previous studies concluded that students who violated disciplinary codes were said to have a lower level of moral reasoning, which is likened to the amoral stage by Piaget, where they are unable to differentiate right from wrong, this current study realised that students who violated disciplinary codes had a moderate and high level of moral reasoning, which is likened to that of the heteronomous and autonomous stage of moral reasoning, where they can do some form of abstract thinking when it comes to moral issues and make well informed decisions but yet still end up violating disciplinary codes.

Furthermore, the second objective of this study looked at finding out the moral judgement among students who violated disciplinary codes. The results revealed that majority of the students, about 99 (51.3%), had a high

level of moral judgement while the remaining students, 94 (48.7%), had a moderate level of moral reasoning. Interestingly, the findings did support the findings of many previous studies which indicated that students who violated disciplinary codes had a moderate and lower level of moral judgement, which is the pre-conventional and post- conventional stage of moral judgement by Kohlberg, where individuals at the pre- conventional stage are still a bit selfish and will only do what is right if it directly benefits them if not, then they tend to violate codes. Also, those found at the post- conventional stage are said to be able to reason morally and hence, make the right moral judgement. Both findings agreed that these students who violate disciplinary codes are not affected by their level of moral judgement but by other factors that were not revealed in this current study.

The third question sought to ascertain the differences in moral reasoning among JHS students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in moral reasoning among those who violated and those who did not violate since the p-value (.924) was greater than alpha value of .05. Hence, supporting the null hypothesis, there is no significant difference in moral reasoning among students who violated and those who did not violate disciplinary codes. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

The fourth question, on the other hand, sought to determine the differences in moral judgement among JHS students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. In the findings, it was revealed that there was no meaningful difference between the students who violated and those who did

91

not violate disciplinary codes. This means that the p-value (.924) is greater than that of.05, which indicates that there is indeed no significant difference in the moral judgement among students who violate and those who do not violate. As a result, despite differences in what is expected of them, both groups tend to morally judge moral issues from the same moral level. The findings supported the null hypothesis, *Ho:* there is no significant difference in moral judgement among those who violate and those who do not violate disciplinary codes, which indicates that the null hypothesis was not rejected. Though previous studies have suggested that there is a significant difference between those who violate and those who do not violate, believing that they judge issues at different levels, this current study suggests the opposite.

The fifth question was to find the differences in moral reasoning among male and female JHS students who violated disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. In the findings, it was realised that there was no significant difference among the means of male and female students with respect to moral reasoning when it comes to violating disciplinary codes, which tends to support the third hypothesis of the researcher, indicating that the null hypothesis was not ejected. These findings however tend to contradict the findings of previous studies which support Kohlberg's explanations, which indicated that males can go through all three levels of their moral stages and, hence, can make well-informed decisions when it comes to moral issues, as compared to females who are mostly unable to go beyond the second stage and so find it difficult to handle moral issues. These findings tend to support Gilligan's assertion, which indicates that females' caring nature has a bit of an influence on their moral reasoning, while males also have traits of justice that

play a role in their reasoning morally. Hence, Gilligan explains that despite these traits, there is no difference in males and females when it comes to reasoning morally.

Finally, the last question was to find the difference in moral judgement among male and female students who violated disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis. The researcher reported in the findings that the p-value (.227) from the results happens to be greater than.05, which revealed that there is no difference among male and female students who violated disciplinary codes. Hence, the findings supported the null hypothesis stated by the researcher, indicating that the null hypothesis was not rejected. These current findings tend to contradict most findings that concluded by saying that there was a difference in moral judgment among males and females because females make moral judgments based on their emotions when faced with moral dilemmas, while males act based on their intellect. Therefore, there is a difference between these genders when it comes to judging moral issues but then this current study concludes that there is no difference at all and this could be as a result of other factors not captured.

Conclusions

While a high level of moral development is undoubtedly important for ethical behaviour but it cannot always prevent people from being driven by wholly different ideas in certain instances. Individuals are capable of perfectly explaining the greatest moral standards while simultaneously acting in ways that contradict the explanation. Actions, not nice words, are what make a true impact on a person's environment. Educational systems dominated by militaristic traits (during and after the dictatorship era) obstruct students' moral

93

development and with it, the development of a particular state's social potential. Only unusual circumstances necessitate the establishment of principles compatible with the level of law and power in such circumstances. In this context, a thorough assessment of educational objectives, the core function of education, and the teacher's position within it is both necessary and the first step toward maximizing a country's population's creative potential. A child who remains focused on his or her own being develops an image of himself or herself as a physical entity while also considering the existence of other physical entities. As a result, during the subsequent stage, the development and fulfilment of personal desires becomes a major concern for children's thinking.

It can be concluded that students who violated disciplinary codes are said to have lower levels of moral reasoning and moral judgment, whereas those who did not violate disciplinary codes have higher levels of moral reasoning and moral judgment. However, the findings in this current study revealed that students who violated disciplinary codes had moderate and high levels of moral reasoning and moral judgment, and that there was no form of difference between those who violated and those who did not violate when it comes to moral reasoning and moral judgment. This suggests that there could be other factors responsible for this state of affairs, such as religious affiliation and place of residency, marital status of parents, educational level, socio-economic to mention but a few might have accounted for such results or findings which were not considered and hence, will require immediate attention in further studies.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following considered recommendations were made to elucidate the complexities that define students' moral thinking and moral judgment at various stages of moral growth, as well as why they breach disciplinary regulations, in order to assist curb this occurrence.

- First, teachers should learn to understand that though it is expected that children go through the same various stages of moral reasoning and moral judgment during their moral development, the findings of the study suggest that not all will be able to achieve that at the same time, since each child develops at their own pace, and so teachers should then learn to appreciate the uniqueness of each student and handle such moral issues accordingly.

- Second, students should be helped by teachers, school counsellors and head teachers to understand that to make well-informed decisions is an intricate issue layered by complexities. In order to overcome such complexities, the four component model of moral decision should be used as a guide. This model requires that; individuals when encountered with a moral dilemma should be able to identify if such situation has a moral dimension, should be able to have a list of options or choices, then weigh the advantages and disadvantages of these options before making a choice and then finally the chosen option should be implemented bearing in mind the responsibilities that come with it should be used.

95

- Third, government officials in the education sectors should have a better understanding of how children develop morally so that the various codes of conduct and the punishment that comes with flouting any of such codes should be explained very well to all head teachers, teachers and school counsellors of the various basic schools so they know which broken rule goes which particular punishment since it is believed that not explaining to children why they are being punished will cause them to repeat such inappropriate behaviour.

- Finally, head teachers of the various schools should organise symposiums that are environmentally friendly, where students will be able, by so doing, to express how they feel and explain why they end up going contrary to the disciplinary codes. This will go a long way towards creating that rapport between the teachers, head teachers, school counsellors, and the students, so they can easily approach them when they feel troubled about making the right moral decision.

Suggestions for Future Research

Following the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made to guide future research. First, the subject matter was limited to that of students in junior high school; hence, future focus of future studies should use students in upper primary and basic schools as respondents to expand the understanding of the variables of the study. It will also be very constructive if private schools are also used in any future studies.

Second, this recent study used purposive sampling, stratified, simple random, convenient sampling procedures, and a quantitative approach. Future studies should then seek to explore other sampling procedures and that of the

96

qualitative approach to help broaden existing literature on the effect of moral reasoning and moral judgement on students violating disciplinary codes in schools.

Thirdly, this current study refused to capture other unforeseen factors such as student's place of residency, level of education, religious affiliation, socio- economic status to mention but a few must be considered in further studies so as to help expose other pertinent issues surrounding why students happen to violate disciplinary codes despite having the appropriate levels of moral reasoning and moral judgement.

Finally, this current study focused on the Cape Coast Metropolis as the setting for the study. Hence, future research should try to extend the context to other settings to widen literature pertinent to this issue as well as ensure more accurate representativeness.
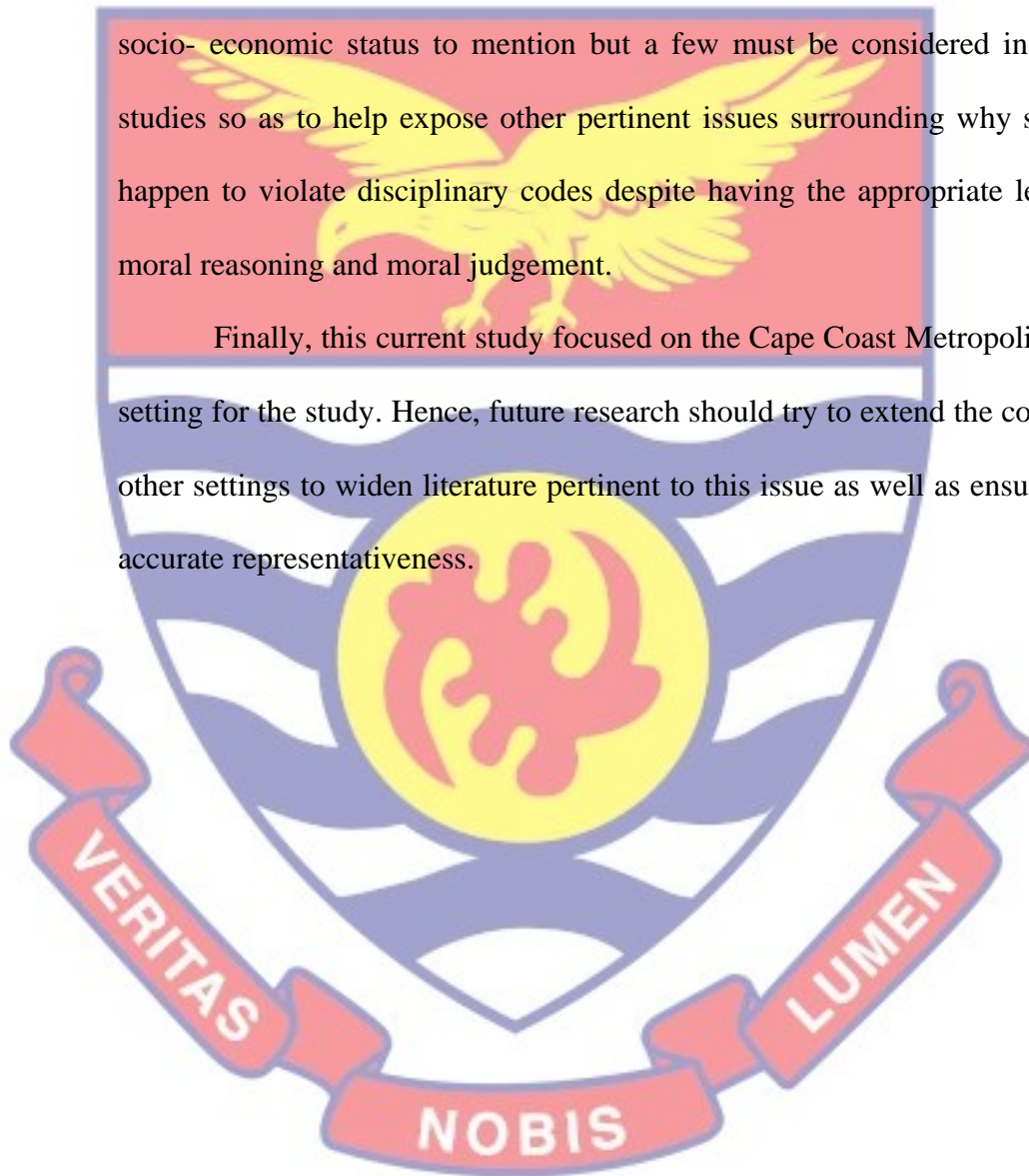
REFERENCES

Adjei, E., Britwum, F., Britwum, A.B., & Nyamekye, F. (2020). Perceived causes and effects of moral decadence among some selected senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies, 8*(5), 245-251.

Ajay, O.V. (2017). *Primary source of data and secondary source of data.* Makurdi: Benue State University Press.

Akhtar, M.I. (2016). *Research design*. New Delhi: Sage Publication.

Aleixo, A.P., & Norris, E.C. (2019). *Personality and moral reasoning in young offenders*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Alleyne, P., Devonish, D., Allman, J., Wayne, C.S., & Ayanna, Y.M. (2016). Measuring ethical perceptions and intentions among undergraduate students in Barbados. *The Journal of American Academy of Business, Cambridge, 15*(2), 319-326.

Althof, W., & Berkowitz, M. W. (2006). Moral education and character education: Their relationship and roles in citizenship education. *Journal of Moral Education, 35*(4), 495-518.

Amanor-Afari, D. (2010). *Challenges in managing discipline in the educational districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana.* Cape Coast: UCC Press.

Anderson, G. (2013). Religion and morality in Ghana: A reflection. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 1*(3), 162-170.

Anzene, S. J. (2014). Trends in examination malpractice. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (AJHSS), 2*(3), 2320-9720.

Arnold, J., & Randall, R. (2010). *Work psychology: Understanding human behaviour in the workplace*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education.

Asare, D., & Twene, M. R. (2003). Research report a national survey on prevalence and social consequences of substance (drug) use among second cycle and out of school youth in Ghana. *Science Journal of Public Health, 5*(3), 205-214.

Asare-Danso, S. (2018). *Philosophical and psychological foundations of religious and moral education*. Cape Coast: Beret Outlook Press.

Atenya, R.W., & Wekesa, M.H. (2020). School rules commonly violated and aspects of the rules that influence their violation among public schools of Butere sub county of Kakamega. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 25*(7), 31-48.

Awuah, G.J., &Afriyie, O. (2010). *General introduction to moral religious and moral education for higher level education*. Cape Coast: UCC Press.

Aybek, E.C., Cavdar, D., & Ozabaci, T.M. (2015). *University students' moral judgment and emotional intelligence level: A model Testing*. Turkey: Elsevier Ltd.

Ayeni, M.A. (2012). The concept of morality in education discourse. *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE), 3*(2), 725-730.

Ball. L. (2010). *The philosophy of moral development*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.

Basome, S., & Vencie, A. (2018). Moral decline in schools: Reflections on public secondary schools in Iganga District, Uganda. *Baraton Interdisciplinary Research Journal, 8*(2), 1-9.

Biesara, J. (2014). Moral judgement of delinquents. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences, 1*(4), 449-445.

Black, D. (2017). On the origin of morality. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *7*(1), 107-118.

Bradely, E. (2018). Moral determinants. *Church Militant*, *4*(1), 1749-1756.

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2003). Breaking down the quantitative/qualitative divide. *Business Research Methods*, *2*(1), 465-478.

Capraro, V., & Sippel, J. (2017). *Gender differences in moral judgment and the evaluation of gender-specified moral agents.* Germany: Springer's Publishers.

Chief Examiner's Report (2019). *Release of provisional results for the basic education certificate examination (BECE) for school candidates*, *53* (9), 1-10.

Chowdhury, M. (2016). Emphasizing morals, values, ethics, and character education in science education and science teaching. *The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science, 4*(2), 1-16.

Cooper, D., & Schindler, P. (2008). *Business research methods* (10th ed.). New York, McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research.* New York: SAGE publications.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. New York: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J.W., Plano. C, & Vicki, L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). New York: SAGE Publications Inc.

Cullity, G. (2011). Moral judgement. *In The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Taylor and Francis. 1*(1), 10- 29. Retrieved 14 June, 2021 from https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/moral-judgement/v-2.

Dadi- Klutse, D. (2016). *Determining research population*. Canada: Oxford University Press.

Dahl, A., & Killen, M. (2018). *Moral reasoning: Theory and research in developmental science.* New York: Wiley.

Dorough, S. (2011). *Moral development*. Boston: Springer, Cham.

Dunkel, C.S., Gladden, P.R., & Mathes, E.W. (2016). Sex differences in moral reasoning: The role of intelligence and life history strategy. *Human Ethology Bulletin*, *31*(2), 5-16.

Farhat, K., Malik, G.G., M.K. (2012). The moral reasoning of adolescent boys and girls in the light of Gilligan's theory. *International Education Studies, 5*(3), 15-23.

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). New York: Mc Graw Hill.

Fumagalli, M., Ferrucci, R., Mameli, F., Marcegila, S., Mrakic-Sposta, S., &Priori, A. (2010). Gender-related differences in moral judgments. *Research Report*, *11* (2), 219-226.

Garson, G. D. (2012). *Testing statistical assumptions*. Asheboro, NC: Statistical Associates Publishing.

Gbedy, D., (2018). *Religious and moral education for primary schools.* Accra: Sedco Publishing Ltd.

Gert, B., & Gert, J. (2020). The definition of morality. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.

GhanaWeb. (2020). WASSCE: Indiscipline exhibited by students disheartening. Accra: Africa Web Publishers.

Gogo, J. O. (2020). The contribution of education to moral decay in Kenya challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science, 3*(1), 20-32.

Gupta, P., & Puja, P. (2010). A study on moral judgement ability of pre-adolescent children (9-11 Year) of public schools. *International Journal of Education and Allied Sciences. 2* (2), 73-86.

Haidt, J., & Bjorklund, F. (2008a). *The cognitive science of morality: Intuition and diversity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Haines, R. (2008). The influence of perceived importance of an ethical issue on moral judgement, moral obligation and moral intent. *Journal of Business Ethics, 4*(5), 387-399.

Henderson, L. (2005). Combining moral philosophy and moral reasoning: The PAVE moral reasoning strategy. *International Educational Journal, 6* (2), 184-193.

Hindricks, F. (2015). How does reasoning (fail to) contribute to moral judgment? Dumbfounding and disengagement. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, 8*(2), 237-250.

Hooda, M. (2015). Moral judgment of adolescent students in relation to their gender, locality and social maturity. *International Journal of Informative & Futuristic Research, 2*(10), 3542-3550.

Hooker. B. (2017). What makes a judgement a moral judgement? *Journal of Political Theory and Philosophy, 1*(1), 97-112.

Khaled, M.M.S. (2008). Moral reasoning among Kuwaiti adolescents. *Social Behaviour and Personality, 36*(1), 115-122.

Kincheloe, J.L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy: An introduction.* Dorderct, London: Springer.

Koekemoer, H. (2017). A qualitative study on the moral development of adolescents. *Journal of Human Development, 5* (2)*,* 954-965.

Kramar, M., &Cooke, C.M. (2017). Children's moral reasoning and their perceptions of television violence. *Communication Research*, *21*(2), 516–546.

Kumari, C., & Khanna, A. (2016). Parenting styles and moral judgment among adolescent. *International Journal of Applied Research, 2*(2), 572-574.

Láng A. (2017). Machiavellianism scale (Mach-IV). New York City: Springer, Cham.

Leedy, P., & Ormrod, J. (2010). *Practical research planning and design.* Boston: Pearson Education.

Madhuri, G., & Choudhary, P. (2017). Moral judgment of adolescents with respect to their home and school environment. *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science and English Language, 4*(19), 4309-4315.

Mahshwari, V.K. (2014). *Concept of discipline in educational philosophies.* India: Roorkee Press.

Mallari, S.D. (2017). *The concept of moral development*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Centre Working Paper Series.

McLeod, S. A. (2015). *Piaget's theory of moral development*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.

McLeod, S.A. (2013). *Kohlberg's theory of moral development*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.

Merryl, H., & Taylor, C. (2005). *The moral judgment of students violating a university disciplinary code*. Tallahassee: Florida State University, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Meyer- Sahling, J.H., & Mikkelsen, K.S. (2020). *Codes of ethics, disciplinary codes and the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks: Evidence from a survey civil servants in Poland.* Nottingham: The Guilford Press.

Mthiyane, S.E. (2013). *Dynamics of school-based violence: Exploring school governing bodies in addressing violence in post-conflict South African schools.* Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Mugenda, O., & Mugenda, A. (2008). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Nairobi: Act Press.

Mumthas, N.S., Jouhar, M., & Gafoor, A. (2014). Student and teacher perception of disciplinary practices: Types, reasons, consequences and alternatives. *Guru Journal of Behavioural and Social Sciences, 2*(4), 301-308.

Neff, K.D., &Helwig, C.C. (2002). A constructivist approach to understanding the development of reasoning about rights and authority within cultural contexts. *Cognitive Development*, *17*(2), 1429–1450.

Nkechi, C.N. (2016). Teachers' perception on the dimensions of moral decadence among secondary school students in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(4), 187-191.

Nucci, L.P. (2001). *Education in the moral domain*. Chicago: Cambridge University Press.

Nwosu, C.K., Nwasor, C.V., & Nezieanya, C.A. (2018). Moral judgement of Nigeria secondary school students on examination malpractices: The pre, during and post examinations scenarios. *Journal Plus Education*, *10*(1), 116-130.

Ofori, K.N., Tordzro, G., & Achiaa, A.E. (2018). The effects of indiscipline on academic performance of junior high school students in the Fanteakwa District of Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice, 9*(21), 109-117.

Oranthinkal. J. (2013). Stages of moral reasoning among university students in Papua New Guinea. *Journal of Human Values, 19*(1) 55–64.

Otabor, J.O., & Obahiagbon, K. (2016). Statistical approach to the link between internal service quality and employee job satisfaction: A case

study. *American Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistics, 4*(6), 178-184.

Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS program (6th ed.).* London, UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Palmer, E.L. (2016). *Moral reasoning assessment*. New York City: Springer, Cham.

Pangat, F. (2019). Moral judgement of secondary school students in relation to their socio economic status and parental behaviour. *Pramana Research Journal, 9*(5), 1159-1169.

Paris, G., Ricardo, E., Raymond, H., & Johnson, A. (2021). *Cognitive theorists*. California: College of Canyons.

Patel, R., & Davidson, B. (2003). *Fundamentals of research methodology: Planning, conducting and reporting a survey.* Texas: Runa Patel, Bo Davidson.

Paxton, J. M., & Greene, J. D. (2010). Moral reasoning: Hints and allegations. *Topics in Cognitive Science*, *2*(3), 1-17.

Pierre, D. P., & Vusi, M. (2018). *Formulation and implementationof a code of conduct for learners: A strategy for improving disciline in schools.* Johannesburg: Hodder and Stoughton.

Plano, L., & Bladiee. D. (2017). Quantitative research methods. *In The Routledge handbook of instructed second language acquisition* .Taylor and Francis Inc, *10*(3), 505-521.

Powell, D. (2019). Trajectories of delinquency from adolescence to adulthood. *Youth & Society*, *4*(1), 475-502.

Quaye, S., (2020). *The youth, safer sex behaviour and HIV/AIDS prevention: A case study of Agogo.* Legon: University of Ghana. Thesis, Medicine.

Rest, J.R., Narvaez, D., Bebeau, M.J., & Thoma, S.J. (1999). *Post-conventional moral thinking: A neo-Kohlbergian approach.* Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Romeral, F.L. (2018). Moral reasoning in adolescent offenders: A meta-analysis. *Journal Scholar Metrics, 30*(3), 289-294.

Salkind, N. (2021). *Encyclopedia of research design.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social research.* (4th ed). Germany: Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan.

Saunders, L.F. (2015). What is moral reasoning? *Philosophical Psychology, 28(1)*, 1-20.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2016). R*esearch methods for business students.* Nueva York: Pearson Education.

Sawn, T. (2016). *Carol Gilligan's ethics of care.* New York: University of Oxford.

Sharma, S. (2019). *Experimental and ex-post facto design.* Paris: Horizons University Press.

Shaw, W., & Barry, V. (2019). *Moral issues in business.* Belmont CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Shomali, M.A. (2008). Human nature and nature of morality. *Journal of Religious Thought: A Quarterly of Shiraz University, 25*(2), 1-10.

Singleton, R., & Straits, B.C. (2010). *Approaches to social research.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Stams, J.G., Brugman, D., Dekovic, M., van Rosemalen, L., van Deer Laan, P., & Gibbs, C.J.(2006). The moral judgment of juvenile delinquents: A meta-Analysis. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 34*(5), 697-713.

Steinberg D. (2020). *Morality: The multidisciplinary nature of morality and applied ethics*. Boston: Springer, Cham.

Sule, M.M, & Shettima, A. (2018). Between moral decadence and melting pot in Nigeria: An islamic perspective. *International Journal of Humanities, Art and Social Studies (IJHAS), 3*(2), 30-40.

Tashkorri, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). Putting the human back in "human research methodology'': The researcher in mixed method research. *Journal of Mixed Method Research, 4*(4), 271-277.

Thargard, P. (2019). *The origins of morality*. Canada: Oxford University Press.

Thomberg, R. (2010). A study of children's of school rules by investigating their judgment of transgressions in the absence of rules. *An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology, 30*(5), 583-603.

Thompson, M. (2010). The moral judgement of students violating a senior high school disciplinary code. *Ghana Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance, 2* (1), 17-30.

Tsunematsu, K., & Asai, A. (2014). Analysis of "care" and "justice" involved in moral reasoning of nurse based on the Gilligan theory: A literature review using the Gilligan's protocol. *Open Journal of Nursing, 4*(2), 101-109.

UKEssays. (2018, March). Stages and Reasoning behind Moral Development. Retrieved from https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/factors-for-moral-development.

Uttar, P. (2020). *Determinants of ethics*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Wainryb, C. (2006). "Moral development in culture: Diversity, tolerance, and justice". In *Handbook of moral development*, *6*(2), 211–240.

Walker, L.J. (1984). Sex differences in the development of moral reasoning: A critical review. *Child Development*, *55* (1), 677 - 691.

West, T., Ravenscroft, S., & Shrader, C.B. (2004). Cheating and moral judgment in the college classroom: A natural experiment. *Journal Business Ethics, 54* (1), 345-357.

Yilmaz, O., Hassan, G.B., & Sevi, B. (2019). *Theory of moral development*. Switzerland: Springer, Cham.

Zikmund, W. G. (2000). *Business research methods* (6th ed.). Chicago: The Dryden Press.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

This questionnaire aims to gather information on moral reasoning and moral judgement among junior high school students violating disciplinary codes. Information obtained will be exclusively for academic purposes. Participation is voluntary, and the respondent is assured that no information will be revealed to any third party without their consent. Thank you.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Respondents are required to please tick the appropriate responses.

1.   **Age**……………………………….......

2.   **Form**

JHS 1   [   ]

JHS 2   [   ]

JHS 3   [   ]

3.   **Gender:** Male [   ] Female [   ]

SECTION B

Instructions: Kindly indicate the response that is deemed appropriate for the following statements by ticking to the right of each statement. The responses ranges from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Slightly Disagree (SD), Neutral (N), Agree (A), Slightly Agree (SA) and Strongly Agree (SA).

	STATEMENTS	SD	D	SD	N	A	SA	SA
1	Never tell anyone the reason you did something unless it is useful to do so.							
2	The best way to handle a person is to tell them what they want to hear.							
3	One should take action only when sure it is morally right.							
4	Most people are basically good and kind.							
5	It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak and it will come out when given a chance.							
6	Honesty is the best policy in all cases.							
7	There is no excuse for lying to someone else.							
8	Generally speaking, people will not work hard unless they are forced to do so.							
9	All in all, it is better to be humble and honest than to be important and dishonest.							
10	When you ask someone to do something for you, it is best to give real reasons for wanting it rather than giving reasons which carry more weight.							
11	Most people who get ahead in the world lead clean and moral lives.							

111

12	Anyone who completely trusts anyone else is asking for trouble.								
13	The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that the criminals are stupid enough to get caught.								
14	Most people are brave.								
15	It is wise to flatter important people.								
16	It is possible to be good in all respects.								
17	Kofi is wrong when he says that a person who deceives others is born every minute.								
18	It is hard to get ahead than without cutting corners here and there.								
19	People suffering from incurable disease should have the choice of being put painlessly to death.								
20	Most people easily forget the death of their parents than the loss of their properties.								

SECTION C

Instruction: Read the short stories and then kindly indicate if you are in support of what the main character of the stories did by ticking any of these; Strongly Favour, Favour (F), Slightly Favour, Neutral, Disfavour, Slightly Disfavour and Strongly Disfavour. Then rate the following issue statements in terms of importance, ranging from 1=Great, 2=Much, 3=Some, 4=Little, and 5=No alongside each item.

Story 1- Famine

A town in the Cape Coast Metropolis known as Akotokyir has experienced famine before, but this year it is worse than ever. Some families are even trying to feed themselves by making soup from tree bark. Mr.

112

Amissah's family is near starvation. He has heard that a rich man in his neighborhood has supplies of food stored away and is hoarding food while its price goes higher so that he can sell the food later at a huge profit. Mr. Amissah is desperate and thinks about stealing some food from the rich man's warehouse. The small amount of food that he needs for his family probably would not even be missed.   What should Mr. Amissah do? Are you in favour of the action taken by Mr. Amissah? (Tick one)

☐ Strongly Favor

☐ Favor

☐ Slightly Favor

☐ Neutral

☐ Slightly Disfavor

☐ Disfavor

☐ Strongly Disfavor

Rate the following issues in terms of importance (1=great, 2=much, 3=some, 4=little, 5=no). Please put a number from 1 to 5 alongside every item.

1. Is Mr. Amissah courageous enough to risk getting caught for stealing? [ ]

2. Is it not only natural for a loving father to care so much for his family that he would steal? [   ]

3. Shouldn't the community's laws be upheld? [   ]

4. Does Mr. Amissah know a good recipe for preparing soup from tree bark? [ ]

5. Does the rich man have any legal right to store food when other people are starving? [ ]

6. Is the motive of Mr. Amissah to steal for himself or to steal for his family? [   ]

7. 7. Is Mr. Amissah intention to steal considered as the basis for social cooperation? [   ]

8. Is the epitome of eating reconcilable with the culpability of stealing? [   ]

9. Does the rich man deserve to be robbed for being so greedy? [   ]

10. Isn't public property an institution to enable the rich to exploit the poor? [   ]

11. Would stealing bring about more total good for everybody concerned or not? [   ]

12. Are laws getting in the way of the most basic claim of any member of a society? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 1st most important? [ ] (write in the number of the item)

Which of these 12 issues is the 2nd most important? [ ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 3rd most important? [ ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 4th most important? [   ]

Story2- Reporter

Miss Dawason has been a news reporter for The Daily Graphic newspaper for over a decade. She recently learnt that one of the parliamentary candidates for the Central Region, Mr. Edward Owusu, had in the past been arrested for shop-lifting 20 years earlier. Reporter Dawson found out that early

114

in Mr. Owusu's life he had done things he later regretted. Mr. Owusu has not only turned a new leaf but has built for himself a distinguished record of providing help for the poor and needy as well as completing numerous projects in the communities. Now, Reporter Dawson regards Mr. Owusu as the best candidate in the field and likely to go on to important leadership positions. Reporter Dawson wonders whether or not she should write the story about Mr. Owusu's earlier troubles because in the upcoming close and heated election, she fears that such a news story could wreck his chance of winning. What should Miss Dawson do? Do you favour the action of reporting the story? (Tick one)

☐ Strongly Favor

☐ Favor

☐ Slightly Favor

☐ Neutral

☐ Slightly Disfavor

☐ Disfavor

☐ Strongly Disfavor

Rate the following issues in terms of importance (1=great, 2=much, 3=some, 4=little, 5=no). Please put a number from 1 to 5 alongside every item.

1. Doesn't the public have all the right to know all about the candidates for office? [   ]

2. Would publishing the story help the Reporter Dawson's reputation for investigative reporting? [   ]

115

3. If Dawson doesn't publish the story wouldn't another reporter get the story anyway and get the credits for investigative reporting? [   ]

4. Since voting is such a joke nowadays, does it make any difference what Reporter Dawson does? [   ]

5. Hasn't Mr. Owusu shown in the past 20 years that he is now a better person than his earlier years of shop- lifting? [   ]

6. Would reporting best serve the society? [   ]

7. If the story is true, how can it be wrong to report it? [   ]

8. How could Reporter Dawson be cruel and heartless as to report the damaging story about candidate Owusu? [   ]

9. Does the right of 'habeas corpus' meaning the accused must be sent to court for the court to determine whether they are guilty or not actually applies in this case? [   ]

10. Would the election be fair with or without reporting the story? [   ]

11. Should Miss Dawson treat all candidates for office in the same way by reporting everything she learns about them whether good or bad? [   ]

12. Isn't a reporter's duty to report all the news regardless the circumstances? [ ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 1st most important? [   ] (write in the number of the item)

Which of these 12 issues is the 2nd most important? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 3rd most important? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 4th most important? [   ]

Story 3- School Board

Mr. Thompson has been elected to be the Chairman of the School Board District. The district is bitterly divided over the closing of one of the schools in the district. The school is to be closed for financial reasons, but there is no agreement over which school is to be closed. During his election to office, Mr. Thompson had proposed a series of "opening meetings" in which members of the community could voice their opinions. He hoped that such meetings would make the community realize the necessity of closing one school. Also, he hoped that through the open discussion, the difficulty of the decision would be appreciated and they would ultimately support the school board decision. The first open meeting was a disaster. Later that week, the school board members received threatening phone calls. Mr. Thompson wonders if he ought to call off the next opening meeting. What should Mr. Thompson do? Do you favor calling off the next open meeting?

☐ Strongly Favor

☐ Favor

☐ Slightly Favor

☐ Neutral

☐ Slightly Disfavor

☐ Disfavor

☐ Strongly Disfavor

117

Rate the following issues in terms of importance (1=great, 2=much, 3=some, 4=little, 5=no). Please put a number from 1 to 5 alongside every item.

1. Is Mr. Thompson required by law to have Open Meetings on major school board decisions? [ ]

2. Would Mr. Thompson be breaking his campaign promises to the community by discontinuing the Open Meeting? [ ]

3. Would the community be angry with Mr. Thompson if he stopped the Open Meetings? [ ]

4. Would the change in plans prevent scientific assessment? [ ]

5. If the school board is threatened, does the chairman have the legal right to protect the Board by making decisions in closed meetings? [ ]

6. Would the community regard Mr. Thompson as a coward if he stopped the Open Meetings? [ ]

7. Does Mr. Thompson have another procedure for ensuring that divergent views are heard? [ ]

8. Does Mr. Thompson have the right to expel troublemakers from the meeting?   [ ]

9. Are some people deliberating undermining school board process by playing some sort of power game? [ ]

10. What effect would stopping the discussion have on the community's ability to handle controversial issues in the future? [ ]

11. Is the community in general really fair-minded and democratic? [ ]

12. What is the likelihood that a good decision would be made without open discussions from the community? [ ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 1st most important?   [   ] (write in the number

of the item)

Which of these 12 issues is the 2nd most important? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 3rd most important? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 4th most important? [   ]

Story 4- Cancer

 Mrs. Debrah is 62 years old and in the last phase of colon cancer. She

is in terrible pain and asks the doctor to give her more pain killer medications.

The doctor has already given her the maximum safe dosage and so he is

reluctant to increase the dosage since it would hasten her death. In a clear and

rational mental state, Mr. Debrah knew the implications of the request she

made, but then she wanted to put an end to her suffering, even if it meant

ending her life. Should the doctor give her an increased dose or do you favor

the action of the doctor giving more dosage?

☐ Strongly Favor

☐ Favor

☐ Slightly Favor

☐ Neutral

☐ Slightly Disfavor

☐ Disfavor

☐ Strongly Disfavor

Rate the following issues in terms of importance (1=great, 2=much, 3=some, 4=little, 5=no). Please put a number from 1 to 5 alongside every item.

1. Isn't the doctor obliged by the same laws as everyone else if giving an overdose would be the same as killing her? [   ]

2. Wouldn't society be better off without so many laws about what doctors can and cannot do? [   ]

3. If Mrs. Debrah dies would the doctor be legally responsible for malpractice? [   ]

4. Does the family of Mrs. Debrah agree that she should get more pain killers? [   ]

5. Is the painkiller an active death drug? [   ]

6. Does the state have the right to force people to continue to live if they do not want to? [   ]

7. Is helping to end another's life ever our responsibility? [   ]

8. Would the doctor show more sympathy for Mrs. Debrah by giving the medicine or no? [   ]

9. Wouldn't the doctor feel guilty from giving Mrs. Debrah so much drug that she died? [   ]

10. Should God decide when a person's life should end? [   ]

11. Shouldn't society protect everyone from being killed? [   ]

12. Should society draw a line between protecting life and allowing someone to die if they want to? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 1st most important? [   ] (write in the number of the item)

120

Which of these 12 issues is the 2nd most important? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 3rd most important? [   ]

Which of these 12 issues is the 4th most important? [   ]

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Telephone: +233-(0)3321 33379	UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
Cables: University, Cape Coast	CAPE COAST, GHANA
Email: basiceducc@gmail.com	

Our Ref: DBE/32/V.2

15th June, 2021

Your Ref:

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

This is to inform you that Kotey Stephanie Naa Adei **(EF/BEP/19/0002)** is an M.Phil student at the Department of Basic Education, University of Cape Coast.

She is undertaking a study on **"ASSESSING MORAL REASONING AND MORAL JUDGMENT AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VIOLATING DISCIPLINARY CODES WITHIN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS".** In connection with this, she needs to collect data.

The study is academic in purpose and data collected will be treated as confidential. We would therefore be grateful if you could give her the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Mumuni Thompson
FOR: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST

122

APPENDIX C- ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: CES-ERB/ucc.edu/v5/21-67

Date: 2nd July, 2021

Your Ref: ....

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

The bearer, Stephanie N.A. Koley., Reg. No. EF/BEP/19/0002 is an M.Phil. / Ph.D. student in the Department of .. Basic .. Education .... in the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to undertake a research study on the topic:

Assessing moral reasoning and moral judgment among Junior High School students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed his/her proposal and confirm that the proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Omotosho
jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0243784739

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
lforde@ucc.edu.gh
0244786680

123

APPENDIX D- INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY

Assessing Moral Reasoning and Moral Judgement among Junior High School students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Name: Dr. Mumuni Thompson

Department: Department of Basic Education.

Address: tmumuni@ucc.edu.gh

Phone: +233550143825

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. The ultimate purpose of this study is to assess moral reasoning and moral judgement among Junior High School students violating disciplinary codes within the Cape Coast Metropolis.

STUDY PROCEDURES

The participants will be introduced to the research subject, purpose, and significance of the study. Participants who agree to take part in the study will fill out a questionnaire. The items on the questionnaire will be clarified and interpreted for the participants, as well as translated for those who are unable to read. The questionnaire will take about 25 to 35 minutes to complete for each participant. Participants are encouraged to ask questions when they are in doubt. Where appropriate, data will be collected with the assistance of assistants. The research assistants will receive instruction to help them understand the research instrument's modalities as well as how to administer it effectively.

124

RISKS

There are no obvious physical complications and participants will not receive any potentially harmful care. During the interview process, however, participants can suffer some kind of emotional damage. You have the option of declining to answer any or all questions, as well as terminating your participation at any time.

BENEFITS

Participants will be able to express their feelings towards their illness and how it affects them. This will provide information to teachers, cognitive and moral psychologists, researchers in the field of child psychology, and finally, policy makers of disciplinary codes, in understanding the moral reasoning and moral judgments among students when faced with a moral dilemma. Participants should note that there is no form of payment for participating in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Please do not write any identifying information on your survey. OR For the purposes of this research study, your comments will not be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator please contact the Ethical Review Board of University of Cape Coast or the Supervisor of this thesis on +233550143825.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

126

APPENDIX E- RELIABILITY OF MEASURING INSTRUMENT

Reliability Statistics for Moral Reasoning Construct

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.685	.692	20

Reliability Statistics for Moral Judgement Construct

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.683	.673	52

Reliability Statistics for both constructs

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.698	.750	72

127

APPENDIX F- CAPE COAST JHS DATA (2020)

	NAME OF SCHOOL	CIRCUIT	JHS1		JHS2		JHS3	GRAND TOTAL
			G	B	G	B	G	
1	ABAKAM CRAN PRESBY BASIC SCHOOL	OLA	17	8	12	6	7	70
2	ABOOM A.M.E ZION 'B' BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM	17	26	21	30	9	137
3	ABOOM A.M.E ZION 'C' SCHOOLS	ABOOM	26	20	16	21	13	114
4	ABURA AHMADIYYA BASIC SCHOOL 'A'	PEDU/ABURA	28	24	18	25	23	149
5	ABURA AHMADIYYA BASIC SCHOOL 'B'	PEDU/ABURA	27	17	25	17	24	130
6	ABURA ENGLISH/ARABIC BASIC SCHOOL	PEDU/ABURA	15	13	14	15	22	94
7	AMAMOMA PRESBY MODEL BASIC SCHOOL	OLA	17	14	17	12	20	98
8	AMANFUL CATHOLIC BOYS' BASIC SCHOOL	CAPE COAST		26		8	15	71
9	ANKAFUL BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	40	24	25	14	28	162
10	ANTEM M/A BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM	4	11	3	7	8	44
11	APEWOSIKA M/A BASIC SCHOOL	OLA	51	40	42	40	33	250
12	ARCHBISHOP AMISSAH MEMORIAL CATHOLIC BASIC SCHOL (OKYESO)	OLA	19	20	18	10	18	104
13	AYIFUA ST. MARY'S ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOLS	PEDU/ABURA	30	41	24	19	56	209
14	BAKATSIR METHODIST PRY/J.H.S	BAKAANO	15	16	20	9	13	90
15	BESAKROM M/A BASIC	PEDU/ABURA	11	3	7			37
16	BRABEDZI M/A BASIC	EFUTU						0
17	CAPE COAST A.M.E ZION 'A' BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO	35	21	25	30	23	167
18	CAPE COAST A.M.E ZION 'D' PRIMARY & JHS SCHOOL	BAKAANO	24	27	20	17	14	127
19	CAPE COAST PRESBYTERIAN JHS SCHOOL	BAKAANO	27	50	25	42	20	232
20	CAPE COAST SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF/BLIND BASIC SCHOOL	CAPE COAST	23	20	16	15	12	124
21	CATHOLIC JUBILEE BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM		42		43		136
22	CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM M/A BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO	4	6	3	9	10	37
23	CHRIST CHURCH ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM	20	21	16	14	20	112

24	CHURCH OF CHRIST M/A JHS	BAKAANO	19	18	13	17	14	95
25	DEHIA ENGLISH/ARABIC BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	11	16	5	8	3	46
26	DUNWELL METHODIST J.H.S.	ABOOM	23	29	17	18	16	129
27	EBUBONKO M/A BASIC SCHOOL	PEDU/ABURA	30	28	28	18	21	148
28	EFUTU M/A BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	51	32	36	18	18	192
29	EFUTU MAMPON M/A BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	11	6	6	12	10	56
30	EKON M/A J.H.S	CAPE COAST	39	29	33	36	27	209
31	ESUEKYIR M/A J.H.S	PEDU/ABURA	25	41	30	28	36	191
32	FALAHIYA ISLAMIC BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM	15	12	15	6	7	62
33	GHANA NATIONAL INCLUSIVE BASIC SCHOOL	CAPE COAST	28	45	27	30	20	190
34	HASSANIYA ISLAMIC BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	14	11	14	14	13	75
35	IMAM KHOMEINI ISLAMIC BASIC SCHOOL	OLA	36	28	21	20	24	147
36	JACOB WILSON SEY M/A BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO	19	11	10	15	17	83
37	KAKOMDO M/A BASIC SCHOOL	PEDU/ABURA	42	37	41	28	27	217
38	KUBEASE M/A BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	12	17	22	17	22	104
39	KWAPROW M/A J.H.S	OLA	56	41	59	39	45	277
40	KWEGYIR AGGREY BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM	9	12	8	9	8	57
41	MENSAH SARBAH BASIC SCHOOL	CAPE COAST	15	12	15	8	12	72
42	MPEASEM A.M.E ZION BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	22	28	21	22	26	149
43	NKANFOA ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC BASIC SCHOOL	CAPE COAST	26	26	22	23	20	145
44	NYINASIN M/A BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	23	20	17	2	18	107
45	OLA GIRLS J.H.S	OLA	34		27		23	84
46	OLA PRESBY BASIC SCHOOL	OLA	22	17	20	27	19	128
47	PEDU M/A 'B' BAISC SCHOOL	PEDU/ABURA	29	17	14	15	22	115
48	PEDU M/A BASIC SCHOOL 'A'	PEDU/ABURA	21	23	23	11	11	112
49	PHILIP QUAQUE BOYS' BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO		35		26		93
50	PHILIP QUAQUE GIRLS BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO	43		34		34	111

51	POLICE BASIC SCHOOL	ABOOM	42	38	18	27	18	174
52	REV. ALEC JONES MEMORIAL METHODIST BASIC SCHOOL	CAPE COAST	47	54	54	50	30	297
53	REV. MARKIN MEMORIAL METH. BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	11					17
54	ST. ANDREWS ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	14	24	20	15	16	103
55	ST. ANTHONY'S ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOL	PEDU/ABURA	20	16	20	14	14	102
56	ST. AUGUSTINE'S PRACTICE J.H.S	BAKAANO	16	17	23	25	19	132
57	ST. CYPRIAN'S ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	14	6	17	10	11	79
58	ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC 'A' BASIC SCHOOL	PEDU/ABURA	22	26	35	25	14	154
59	ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC BASIC 'B'	PEDU/ABURA	31	28	33	22	21	165
60	ST. MICHAEL'S GIRLS' BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO	30		32		26	88
61	ST. MONICA'S GIRL'S J.H.S	ABOOM	182		155		136	473
62	ST. NICHOLAS ANGLICAN J.H.S	ABOOM	70	95	66	91	51	469
63	ST. PETER'S ANGLICAN BASIC SCHOOL	EFUTU	15	15	15	15	18	98
64	WESLEY GIRLS' BASIC SCHOOL	BAKAANO	37		30		32	99

NOTE

TOTAL NO. OF PUBLIC BASIC	**80**
TOTAL NO. OF PRIVATE BASIC	**117**
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC JHS SCHOOL	**64**
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRIVATE JHS SCHOOL	**59**
ENROLMENT TOTAL JHS PRIVATE	**3,670**
ENROLMENT TOTAL JHS PUBLIC	**8,538**