

ABSTRACT

This research, mounted on a sample of 194 third form/grade nine students in Jamaica, sought to investigate the relationship of certain factors with the development of morality in these students. Six independent variables were selected, two of these being merged for the purposes of the discussion. Besides this, a case study on the impact of pro-religious music was also done with the entire work being moderated along the lines of gender and school type (in the latter case, High versus New Secondary schools).

Every care was taken to ensure the validity and reliability both of procedure and of findings. Consequent on this, the major findings were that there was a significant difference in moral maturity between girls and boys at this level (approximately ages 13 - 15 years) with girls carrying the stronger mean, contrary to what has been found in research done elsewhere. The criterion, Moral Values, correlated at the 1 percent level with all the independent variables, excepting Family influence, where it correlated at the 5 percent level. Family, therefore, seems to have a relatively weaker effect on the formation of moral values in Jamaica, than the other variables: Attitude to, and Attendance at, Church; Personal Identity; Life Style; and School Influences.

Other major findings include the fact that when the sample was moderated along the lines of Gender, girls' attitude to church seemed to influence their moral maturity more than that of boys; and, on the whole, the girls also tended to be influenced by a greater number of environmental factors. When moderated along the lines of School Type, there was a more positive influence of Environmental Factors on moral values for High schools than for New Secondary schools. Besides all this, the case study showed a definite relationship between familiarity with popular pro-religious music and the values displayed in the sample and its sub-sections.

Among recommendations made here are a new look at the socialization of boys designed to take the glamour out of irresponsibility; and a school court and "moral dilemma" style discussion, all aimed at improving the rate of moral development in Jamaican schools generally (since these will have to play the role of surrogate families) and boys in particular.