

## Moral Thinking Among Physical Education Teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines moral thinking among physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province, as it constitutes a fundamental part of the educational process. From this perspective, a teacher must possess moral thinking, which is considered one of the various cognitive processes that work together to shape the teacher's personality and achieve specific objectives. This enables the teacher to play an effective and proper role in serving the school, students, and the educational process as a whole. The researchers employed the descriptive survey method due to its suitability for the nature of the study. The research population consisted of physical education teachers in the General Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province, covering all its departments, with a total of 846 teachers. The study sample for scale construction, application, and the pilot experiment included 200 teachers. The researchers developed a moral thinking scale after establishing its scientific foundations and applying appropriate statistical methods. The results indicated that physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province possess moral thinking

**Keywords:** *Moral Thinking, Physical Education Teachers, Educational Process, Descriptive Method, Thi Qar Province*

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Sports psychology seeks to scientifically study individual behavior, experiences, and cognitive processes related to thinking, which holds a crucial place in life due to its connection with higher mental functions, decision-making, and problem-solving. Thinking also plays a vital role in analyzing information to create new, more comprehensive, and distinctive insights.

Moral thinking is one of the fundamental pillars that reinforce values and principles in any professional field. It is a cognitive process aimed at making correct decisions based on ethical and human values. In the field of physical education, moral thinking holds particular importance, as teachers are not only responsible for teaching sports skills but also for shaping students' personalities and promoting values such as cooperation, responsibility, integrity, and respect. Additionally, moral thinking helps physical education teachers navigate ethical challenges, such as dealing with bias, inappropriate behavior, or unfair competition.

#### Research Problem

Moral thinking is a critical issue that directly influences the professional performance of physical education teachers and the nature of their work environment. The teaching profession requires a strong commitment to ethical values in interactions with students, colleagues, and administration, as these values play a significant role in shaping students' characters and fostering a positive educational atmosphere.

The absence or weakness of moral thinking among teachers may lead to professional behaviors that contradict educational values, such as bias in dealing with students, unfair distribution of opportunities in sports activities, or poor conflict resolution skills. Furthermore, a lack of support and recognition for ethical thinking may decrease teachers' motivation to engage in ethical reasoning and balanced decision-making.

Therefore, the researcher aims to investigate moral thinking among physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province.

## Research Objectives

1. Develop and validate a moral thinking scale for physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province.
2. Assess the level of moral thinking among physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province.

## Research Scope

- ✓ Human Scope: A sample of physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province.
- ✓ Spatial Scope: Schools under the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province.
- ✓ Temporal Scope: Academic year 2024-2025.

## Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

The researchers addressed topics related to the study, particularly moral thinking as a social phenomenon that reflects individuals' activities and serves as a form of cognition. Additionally, previous studies relevant to the research were reviewed .

## Moral Thinking

Moral thinking refers to the ethical evaluation of events or objects, preceding any moral behavior or action. It is concerned with how an individual arrives at a judgment regarding what is right or wrong. While many people may agree that theft is wrong, they may differ in how they reach this conclusion. Some may base their judgment on adherence to societal norms, others on legal obedience, and some on general principles advocating for the protection of others and their property .

Moral behavior, on the other hand, is a complex process that involves multiple elements, with moral thinking being just one of these components. (i) " .

Moral thinking is a type of cognition that involves ethical evaluation of events and objects, preceding any moral action or behavior. It is not merely the application or execution of an existing system or law but rather a reasoning process that underlies the choice between right and wrong. Moral thinking is concerned with how an individual arrives at a judgment and the justifications behind that choice. (ii)" .

It refers to the nature of the moral decisions an individual adopts and the associated rational justifications for what is considered acceptable or unacceptable. (iii) " .

Chapter Three Research Methodology and Field Procedures

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive method was chosen using the survey approach, as it is suitable for addressing the research problem and finding solutions .

### Research Population and Sample

The research population consists of physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Thi Qar Province for the academic year 2024-2025, totaling 846 teachers .

To conduct the study, the researcher selected a random sample of 200 teachers, representing 23.64% of the total population. The sample was divided as follows :

#### 1. Construction Sample :

100 - teachers (11.82% of the research population .

- Used to establish the scientific foundations of the measurement scale .

#### 2. Pilot Study Sample :

10 - teachers (1.18% of the research population .

- Used to test the scale's clarity and applicability .

#### 3. Application Sample :

90 - teachers (10.63% of the research population .(

- Used for the final implementation of the study .

These methodological procedures ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings.

**Table (1) Shows the distribution of the sample members.**

#	Section	Original Population	Sample Construction	Percentage	Application Sample	Percentage	Pilot Study	Percentage
1	Nasiriyah Section	149	19	%12,75	15	%10,06	10	%6,71
2	Shatra Section	91	9	%9,89	9	%9,89		
3	Souq Al-Shuyoukh Section	88	8	%9,09	10	%11,36		
4	Rifai Section	86	9	%10,46	10	%11,62		
5	Al-Jabesha Section	66	7	%10,60	7	%10,60		
6	Al-Fuhud Section	65	8	%12,30	6	%9,23		
7	Al-Islah Section	54	7	%12,96	7	%12,96		
8	Al-Qala'a Section	77	9	%11,68	8	%10,38		
9	Al-Dawaya Section	44	7	%15,90	6	%13,63		
10	Al-Nassir Section	71	9	%12,67	7	%9,85		
11	Al-Gharaf Section	55	8	%14,54	5	%9,09		
	Total	846	100	%11,82	90	%10,63	10	%1,18

### Field Research Procedures

- Determining the Scale Domains

The moral thinking scale for physical education teachers was developed by reviewing various sources, previous studies, and personal interviews with experts in sports psychology. Based on the theoretical framework, nine domains were initially identified and presented to a panel of experts in the field .

After analyzing the experts' responses using the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, the researcher finalized the following four domains :

1. Thinking Toward Oneself
2. Thinking Toward Law and Order
3. Behavior Toward Others
4. Thinking Toward Professional Ethics

### Formulation of Scale Items

The researcher formulated the scale items after reviewing relevant sources and conducting interviews with experts. A total of 60 items were developed, distributed across four domains :

1. Thinking Toward Oneself – 15 items

2. Thinking Toward Law and Order – 15 items
3. Behavior Toward Others – 15 items
4. Thinking Toward Professional Ethics – 15 items

### Presentation of the Preliminary Scale

The initial version of the scale was submitted to a panel of 15 experts specializing in educational psychology, sports psychology, and management & organization. The purpose was to evaluate the appropriateness and validity of the scale items in relation to their respective domains .

The experts' responses and feedback were analyzed using the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test for a single sample. The analysis indicated that all items met the required statistical significance, meaning no items were deleted from the scale.

### Selection of the Rating Scale

The researcher adopted a three-point rating scale (High, Medium, Low) to measure moral thinking among physical education teachers .

Experts unanimously agreed (100% approval) on the appropriateness of this rating scale, confirming its validity for the study .

The weighting of responses was assigned according to the direction of the item, as illustrated in Table (2).

**Table (2) Shows the grades of the rating scale.**

Moral Reasoning			
Paragraph Direction	High Degree	Medium Degree	Low Degree
Positive	3	2	1
Negative	1	2	3

### Main Experiment: Analyzing the Scale Items on the Sample for Construction

The main experiment was conducted from December 3, 2024, to December 15, 2024. A total of 100 teachers were selected, and questionnaires were distributed to them. After the teachers completed their responses, the researcher carefully reviewed each questionnaire to ensure that the instructions were followed and that all items were answered.

### Statistical Analysis of the Scale Items

The purpose of statistical analysis of the items is to improve the quality of the test by identifying weak items. If any item is found to be ineffective or inadequate, the researcher can either rephrase it or exclude it from the scale.(iv) " .

### Discriminatory Power of the Scale Items

The term discriminatory power refers to the ability of the items to distinguish between teachers with higher levels and those with lower levels of performance, specifically regarding the domain that the items are designed to measure .

This concept ensures that the items are effective in identifying variations in moral thinking among physical education teachers with differing levels of expertise or experience(v) " .

### Calculation of Discriminatory Power

To calculate the discriminatory power of the scale items, the researcher followed the steps outlined below:

1. Assigning Scores:

Each respondent's score for each item in the scale was assigned. The total score for each individual was then calculated by summing the scores across all items.

2. Ranking the Scores:

The scores of the sample were arranged in descending order, from the highest to the lowest.

3. Dividing the Sample:

Two groups were selected:

- The top 27% of the individuals, who received the highest scores.

- The bottom 27%, who received the lowest scores.

This 27% criterion is widely accepted for comparing the two extreme groups because it provides the maximum differentiation when the score distribution follows a normal distribution curve.

Each group consisted of 27 respondents, leading to the formation of the high and low groups.

#### 4. Statistical Analysis:

To compute the discriminatory power for each of the 60 items, the researcher used the t-test through the SPSS software. The statistically significant t-values served as indicators for distinguishing between the two groups and assessing the discriminatory power of each item.

This method ensures that the scale items are capable of distinguishing between respondents with high and low levels of moral thinking, as required by the research.

#### Internal Consistency Coefficient:

The discriminatory power of the items does not determine their coherence in measuring the intended phenomenon. There may be items with similar discriminatory power, but they might measure different dimensions. This method assumes that the total score serves as a measure of the scale's validity. An item is removed if its correlation with the total score is low, as this indicates that the item does not measure the phenomenon that the scale is intended to measure.

Using the internal consistency method offers important advantages, including:

1. Internal consistency is part of the construction process of the scale.
2. Internal consistency measures the reliability of the items, ensuring that all the items contribute to measuring the same construct.

Internal consistency refers to the degree of interrelatedness among the items in the scale and the extent to which each item correlates with the overall test score. A non-zero correlation between the items confirms that they all measure the same thing, which is the intended phenomenon.

To calculate this measure, the researcher used Pearson's correlation coefficient to analyze the relationship between each item and the total score of the scale, and a second method to examine the correlation between the total score and each domain of the scale. This was done for a sample of 100 participants using the SPSS software.

#### Scientific Basis of the Scale:

##### 1. Content Validity:

Content validity refers to the extent to which the scale items represent the full range of the concept being measured. To ensure content validity, the scale was evaluated by a group of experts to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the items for measuring the intended construct.

1. The content validity was confirmed by presenting the initial draft of the scale to experts in the field, and feedback was used to refine the scale further.
2. Method of Extreme Groups:

The discriminatory power of the items was assessed by comparing the performance of two groups: individuals who scored the highest and those who scored the lowest. This method provides evidence of construct validity, as the ability of the items to distinguish between these two groups indicates that the scale effectively measures the intended construct.

By applying these methods, the researcher ensured that the scale was both valid and reliable in measuring the phenomenon of moral thinking among physical education teachers.

#### Internal Consistency of Each Item and the Total Score of the Scale:

The researcher utilized the internal consistency coefficient to analyze the scale items. This involves calculating the validity of the items using an internal criterion by determining the correlation between the score of each item and the total score for the dimension it belongs to, as well as the total score for the entire scale. This type of validity was confirmed using the Pearson correlation coefficient to illustrate the internal consistency of the moral thinking scale.

#### Half-Split Method for the Scale:

To calculate the reliability of the scale, the researcher used the half-split method. This method involved splitting the scale into two equal parts: one set of 30 individual items and another set of 30 paired items. The total score for each individual in the sample (100 teachers) was calculated for each item. The researcher then used Pearson's correlation coefficient to analyze the relationship between the results of the two halves of the scale. After calculating the correlation coefficient, the reliability of the scale was determined.

**Main Experiment:**

After completing all the requirements and procedures for designing and constructing the moral thinking scale, which consists of four dimensions and a total of 60 items, the researcher applied the final version of the scale to a sample of 90 physical education teachers during the period from December 17, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

**Statistical Methods Used:**

The data were processed using the SPSS statistical software, and the following methods were applied:

1. Arithmetic Mean (Mean)
2. Percentage
3. Standard Deviation
4. Independent Sample t-Test
5. Pearson Correlation Coefficient
6. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
7. Chi-Square Test ( $\chi^2$ )
8. One-Sample t-Test
9. Skewness Coefficient (Skewness)

These methods helped in analyzing the results of the scale and ensuring the reliability and validity of the measure of moral thinking among the teachers.

**Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results**

**Table (3) Identification of the Moral Thinking Scale among Physical Education Teachers in the Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar Governorate**

#	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Error	Skewness	Leve
1	90	150,53	4,345	120	0,768	1,44	high

To achieve this goal, the Moral Thinking Scale was applied to 90 physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar Governorate. After analyzing and statistically processing their responses, it was found that the mean score was 150.53, with a standard deviation of 4.345, which is higher than the hypothetical mean of 120, indicating a high level. The standard error was 0.768, a small value that indicates the internal consistency of the sample's results. The skewness coefficient was 1.44, indicating a normal distribution of the sample on the normal curve. The sample is considered to be normally distributed since the skewness value lies between +3 and -3, indicating the homogeneity of the sample (vi)".

The researcher believes that the teachers' high level of performance on the Moral Thinking Scale indicates that when a physical education teacher thinks ethically, it leaves no room for doubt or despair in their mind. Their thinking helps build self-confidence, leading them to positive actions and high performance under any circumstances, no matter how difficult. Ethical thinking helps the teacher free themselves from negative and incorrect thoughts and avoid conflicts and procrastination, which paralyze an individual's ability to think. Ethical thoughts empower and guide the teacher toward achieving specific goals that contribute to the success of the educational process, enabling them to act wisely when facing problems, thus ensuring success in fulfilling their duties and contributing to the success of the educational process. This is linked to the teacher's level of motivation and professionalism, as they strive to carry out their work in the best possible way.

The teacher works to practice their profession in the classroom by influencing all parties involved in the educational process, such as students, school administration, colleagues, and other staff, in a way that aligns with their role. This role requires them to be trustworthy, rely on the ethics of their profession, and be knowledgeable in their work. Managing physical education students during lessons is a technical skill gained through experience and knowledge. All of this is only possible if the teacher possesses the qualities that enable them to be an educational leader with high professional ethics .

The human relationships that the teacher forms with their environment, including students or any individuals, require adequate awareness of all aspects related to the educational institution in which they work. In particular, it is crucial to have skills in ethical thinking, among other critical thinking skills. Additionally, following experiences and continuously developing oneself, paying attention to abilities, inclinations, and attitudes, and motivating the teacher to improve their skills for integration into the teaching profession and the ability to guide students' behavior correctly, are key factors in the teacher's

professional development.

The teacher who is characterized by ethical thinking always focuses on solutions in any challenge they face and turns challenges to their advantage. Good thinking leads to positive actions, which in turn lead to positive results. Often, we see that a teacher with ethical thinking excels in their work and enjoys it more. Ethical thinking is the beginning of the path to success in any activity the teacher undertakes. Consequently, they become capable of benefiting from their experiences and skills and can offer their best performance while carrying out their work.

This is confirmed by Ali Yusuf (2015), who stated: "Ethical thinking plays a prominent and important role in the educational and sports field, especially in physical education lessons and sports activities, as well as the influences and challenges faced by the teacher that affect the thinking process. Motor behavior is the result of thought, and thought generates mood, which in turn generates behavior. Most of the events we encounter are natural events, but the difference lies in how we think about and interpret them ".(vii)".

This is also agreed upon by Brian Tracy (2006), who stated: "The mind can hold only one thought at a time. If we introduce a positive thought into our minds, it will replace the negative thought that opposes it, because the mind does not accept emptiness. If we do not fill it with positive thoughts, it will be filled with negative thoughts. (viii) " "

This is also mentioned by Mukhaymir (1991), who stated: "The educational environment helps to speed up thinking due to the presence of various forms of activity and its diversity, which lead to constructive social interactions and relationships. These interactions are based on the teacher and revolve around the student, providing an opportunity for positive attitudes between the student and the teacher, as well as between the teacher and themselves, with the foundation being the enjoyment of ethical and creative thinking. (ix) " "

Hajaj (1984) stated: "There is a relationship represented by moral judgments, ethical behavior, and thinking that influences decisions. It is believed that one makes the right decision and behaves ethically when facing an ethical situation. The internal moral values and principles are simply instructions formed from a series of individual decisions stemming from the person's own self. Ethical thinking represents the pattern of thinking used to solve the moral problem according to Kohlberg's theory. (x) " "

### 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

In light of the research findings and statistical data analysis obtained through the ethical thinking scale, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

1. The scale developed by the researcher (Ethical Thinking) and its scientific criteria is capable of identifying what it was designed for and is suitable for the target group (the research sample) under study .
2. Physical education teachers in the Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar distinguish themselves through their actual knowledge in all the fields for which the scale was developed.

#### Recommendations

1. The ethical thinking scale should be used to assess the character of the teacher, as it was built based on sound scientific principles. It serves as a guide for how physical education teachers interact with students based on a precise understanding of the traits of ethical thinking .
2. Researchers and graduate students should be encouraged to explore sources and studies in psychology, as they contain concepts of importance to physical education teachers and students, which can be applied in practical fields.

#### Ethical Thinking Scale

Dear Physical Education Teacher, The researcher is conducting a study titled "Ethical Thinking Among Physical Education Teachers in the Directorate of Education in Dhi Qar Province." Since you are an essential part of this study, we kindly ask you to read the statements on the scale carefully and respond with honesty and objectivity. Please mark with a (□) the statement that aligns with your perspective, under one of the appropriate scale points provided in the form (high degree – medium degree – low degree)

Ethical Thinking: The principles, ideas, and practical rules that characterize the behavior of a physical education teacher and are welcomed and accepted by others, without conflicting with societal principles and standards.

We appreciate your cooperation in support of scientific research and the educational process in our beloved Iraq. Thank you for your valuable contribution.

Note :

- There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your response should reflect what you genuinely feel .
- The information you provide will only be used for scientific research purposes.

#	Item	High	Moderately	weak
1	You feel upset due to the lack of resources in the school.			
2	You care about your professional affiliation and hold your work in high regard.			
3	You welcome helping others.			
4	You value yourself and your national identity.			
5	You enjoy doing your work greatly.			
6	You care about your appearance and sportswear.			
7	You take care of public and private property.			
8	You understand that respecting the law is respecting yourself.			
9	You are committed to dealing honestly with everyone.			
10	You control yourself when you are upset.			
11	You feel a personal responsibility towards the school.			
12	You feel upset by failure.			
13	You understand your rights and do not discriminate against others.			
14	You are open to modern methods in your work.			
15	You develop yourself through reading and research.			
16	You encourage respecting the law.			
17	You believe in applying the system correctly.			

18	You adhere to instructions and regulations.			
19	You make sure to implement the ministry's instructions.			
20	You balance authority and responsibility.			
21	You consider applying the law a duty of work.			
22	You ensure the lesson plan follows instructions.			
23	You hesitate to make decisions and apply them.			
24	You commit to attending work and signing the attendance register.			
25	You benefit from feedback and criticism.			
26	You rely on thinking to overcome difficulties.			
27	You believe that applying the system is important for everyone.			
28	You understand that applying the law is a necessity of life.			
29	You always emphasize the necessity of adhering to systems and laws.			
30	You rely on the administration's role in monitoring.			
31	You adjust the method according to the students' needs.			
32	You communicate with the administration to follow up on the students.			
33	You establish good relationships with everyone.			
34	You improve your behavior with everyone around you.			
35	You consider others' feelings.			
36	You avoid wrong behaviors in dealing with others.			
37	You understand the surrounding environment and its impact.			
38	You deal with others with an educational perspective.			
39	You consider the differences between students.			
40	You control your emotions when dealing with			

	others.			
41	You focus on equality among students.			
42	You see interaction with students as a human condition.			
43	You support and encourage students to learn.			
44	You have the ability to gain everyone's trust.			
45	You share students' ideas to motivate them.			
46	You discover talents through the lesson.			
47	You deal honestly and with integrity with everyone.			
48	You consider adhering to ethics as one of the principles.			
49	You respect the laws of the profession and adhere to them.			
50	You act according to professional ethics.			
51	You respect and honor the profession.			
52	You deal with ethics and general principles.			
53	You encourage participation in sports activities.			
54	You maintain the school's reputation.			
55	You give up some of your rights to perform your duty.			
56	You maintain ethics and principles.			
57	You ensure to arrive early for work.			
58	You dedicate your time to the lesson and avoid other distractions.			
59	You carefully choose the words you use with students.			
60	You facilitate the educational process for students			

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